The Uttor Chandipur Community Society
Supporting a rural community: creative solutions to education and health

Suchana is a community group working in rural West Bengal, focusing on education and health. The Education Resource Centre grew out of the Early Learning Group which started in 2004. The resource centre is open 7 days a week, and aims to support literacy and make learning relevant, enjoyable and accessible to very marginalised children. Currently, about 180 children participate, facilitated by paid and volunteer teachers from within the community.

Our health project in six villages explores primary health in participatory ways and links villagers in with locally existing health services.

If you would like more information, please contact us at suchana.india@gmail.com

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Christmas Cards are available!!

Cards are available in the following sets of six, with a choice of “With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year” or “Season’s Greetings” inside:

- “Our house”
- “Village Celebration”
- “Indian Elephant”

This series of ‘Joyful Play’ photo cards is available for year-round use, blank inside:

All cards @ £3.50 for a set of six.

Please contact Angela Stoddart: angela@claresforstal.plus.com

We really appreciate hearing about other places or individuals who want to buy or sell cards.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

Events Update:

Programme News

Suchana’s new work is now almost one year old, and the programmes have really taken shape. The Preschool now has 20 three-to-five year olds, about half from a big village which is new to Suchana’s work. Nearly all of the children are Santali, and we are lucky to have Bhabini, a Santal teacher, to help them build their education foundations in their first language.

The Tuitions team now teaches 40 classes a week to children aged 11-15, helping them cope with their school curricula and thinking up ways of using Suchana’s resources – such as the library and the internet - to bring their text books alive.

The Computer Course is teaching the third batch of children, with the younger ones eagerly awaiting their turn. In a way this is Suchana’s most pioneering input – we still have not heard of any computer initiatives locally that are located actually in the villages, nor that are teaching middle school-age children. Alongside the children’s course, we are now running a similar course for young adults from the villages – those who missed out on Suchana’s other learning opportunities. This course, now in its second round, is charged at a nominal cost which covers teachers’ wages.

The Open House Library is flourishing, and has made a visible difference to the children’s relationship with books. It is always open when children come in for different courses, making the books accessible and inviting in a way that was simply not possible when they were only available twice a week.

The Early Learning Group has been carrying on its core work developing literacy, numeracy, environmental science, creative writing and art and craft with child-friendly methods.

The Activity Groups, a programme that grew out of the library activities and offers children 2-month courses in various crafts and skills, are just entering their third round. Children have so far learned Kora drumming, puppet making, bamboo basket making, photography, mask making, tie dye, loom weaving amongst many other skills.

Children’s Mela

Saturday, 6th November 2011, from 3pm

For those of you nearby – please come to our Children’s Mela, at Suchana in Khanjanpur. There will be lots of fun, games and food, all organised and run by the children: Steel-glass Skittles; Light-the-Candle; Apple Bobbing; Hari Banga; Tombola; Tyre Rolling; Lucky Dip; Jalmuri; Gugni; Balloons and more!!

Tickets: Rs 5/- for any 3 games, at the gate.
One of the Activity Groups, the Vegetable Garden Care group, produced a fine crop of maize in the fast-developing vegetable patch during the monsoon. With some extra friends, they carefully barbequed the cobs and gave everyone delicious tiffin during several sessions.

In September, two students with special talents in art took part in a Young People’s Art Exhibition organised by Shikshamitra, an alternative school in Kolkata. Besides the event being a very stimulating artists’ exchange, both students sold art work to well wishers and collectors.

In a spectacular effort to recycle used clothes, Mustard Seeds, Kolkata organised a collection at Calcutta International School, and carefully sorted and sized the clothes. Packages sent to Suchana were then organised into outfits for individual children by Suchana’s teachers, and these were given out in a lovely celebration assembly on 24th October.

Suchana girls in their ‘new’ outfits

Coming soon ...
Suchana’s Sports Day has been brought forward this year to December 4th - this change will help us accommodate the significant changes in government school schedules this year: the new academic year in schools will begin in January 2011, instead of March.

In early January we will be starting six weeks of preparation for the Annual Show in February. Teachers are already busy preparing scripts, looking out for songs and mulling dance routines for our multi-lingual extravaganza of cultural exchange and learning.

Keep track of these and other Suchana events on facebook at ‘Suchana Community’!

Can you make a Standing Order to Suchana?
Standing Orders give Suchana security and sustainability. A number of regular, small donations cumulatively makes a very reassuring steady income which, besides running the programmes, can enable us to improve our planning and offer a measure of guarantee to the Suchana children.

Friends of Suchana in UK would be very happy to increase to the number of Standing Orders (monthly, quarterly or annually). If you can help please contact Angela Stoddart angela@claresforstal.plus.com ph: +44 (0)1795 890210

Don’t worry about our admin costs in the case of small amounts – there are none.