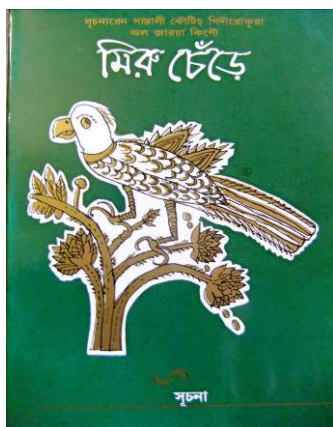


GOOD NEWS!

As a continuation of our **Supporting Adivasi Identity** programme, we have been working with children to encourage creative writing in their first languages. For many, this was a first experience of writing in their own languages, so the process was very exciting. In November 2011, we released two books of their writing and illustrations: "**Kopai Gada Hanasai**" (On the Far Side of the Kopai River) in Kora; and "**Miru Chere**" (The Parrot) in Santali. The children are very happy as some of them are now "authors"!



And in February 2012, we released more products intended to support first language learning: '**Miru Arang**' ('Cherished voices') - a CD collection of 16 Santali songs, sung by Suchana children. We had a lot of fun making the CD (and doing the photos).



Miru Arang -
Santali songs by children
available @ Rs 100
Email us at:
suchana.india@gmail.com

And finally, we printed a Santali '**Alphabet Chart**' using the Bangla script. We distributed the chart to a number of local schools, which were very happy to receive it.



EVENTS UPDATE:

Our calendar of events started with the third run of our **Children's Mela (fair)** in November – an entirely child-managed event, very well attended and enjoyed by both participants and organisers. The two years of experience clearly reflected the children's planning and event managerial skills!



This was closely followed by **Drama in Education** – techniques and activities around using drama for learning and personal development were introduced to a group of 60 mixed-aged children by a team of National School of Drama alumni in association with the National Centre for Protection of Child Rights.

A Low-cost No-cost Science Training: was held in November, conducted by retired Birla Museum director Samar Bagchi, for Suchana teachers, teachers from four further local schools, and secondary school students. This training was so popular that we are now thinking of holding a 'science fair', every year as an annual event!



And next came our annual **Sports Day** in December: true to Suchana's tradition – 76 of about 110 children won at least one prize and children who got more than two shared one of the prizes with her/his friend.

NEW WORK

The **Mobile Library** which made its first run in October 2011, has been very consistent and in much demand. Led by four teachers and the van driver, it recently added four new village locations to its itinerary, now totaling eight. While issuing books to read, the librarians also read stories to children and adults, creating a bond between the books and the recipients. And in a new initiative, Suchana's (now mobile) **health worker** accompanies the library to treat basic health issues for the children who come for books.

Programme news from the Education Resource Centre

Suchana's ERC is doing very well and a sense of community ownership of the centre continues visibly to grow amongst members. Villagers use Suchana as their mobile charging point, take shelter from the summer sun and storms; relatives of villagers on their visits will often be shown around Suchana by the children with a clearly discernable sense of pride; children drop by to see what's happening and for the **8 programmes** it runs. It's always buzzing with activities and the energy that it generates is quite infectious.

The **Pre-School** has 29 children, mostly Santals and a gender ratio of 50:50, and now borrows the mobile library's van rickshaw to offer a 'bus' service to 3 year olds. The **Early Learning Group** has 132 children, mostly Santals and Koras, and still runs on 2 days a week with sports on Fridays. The **Tuitions Classes** get bigger each year as more children enter secondary school: currently there are 74 children and 5 teachers. This year four (2 girls & 2 boys) of Suchana's students appeared for their Secondary level public exams. Amongst the four, three are first generation literates and we feel very proud of their achievement. The **Computer Courses** are in demand: children in the current batch are age 9-10, which means that all of Suchana's children from class 4 upwards now have basic computer skills. The adult course has a long waiting list and is known for being a hands-on course, with a chance of free practice sessions after completion.

The **Activity Groups** have been attracting new craft specialists into Suchana's fold; regular craft teachers have also been inspired to develop new 'products' through this process. Current activities include fabric painting; vegetable-gardening; Tagore dances; hands-on maths; crochet; Santal drumming and clay sculpture. The **Health Project's** work on basic health care and hygiene with children seems to have recently resulted in a dramatic reduction of bacterial and other skin infections. And the **Supporting Adivasi Identity** programme is running 7 new projects to develop teaching and literacy materials.

EVENTS UPDATE: CONTINUED

From January, we rehearsed for our **Annual Show**, held on 26th February and featuring songs, dance and drama in all our four languages; magic; science demonstrations; and ending with gymnastics which is quite a performance! This year we had an audience of nearly 1000 people, and our kids were very happy but rather exhausted!



Our events calendar ended with the much awaited **Annual Picnic and Trip**. This year, we took 180 children to visit a breeding dog kennel to take a look at the pedigree dogs - this was an entertaining first for most children and teachers. For the picnic we went to the spacious and shady banks of Dwarka River, which was extremely docile, although in the monsoon can create havoc for the neighbouring villages.



Friends of Suchana News

Friends of Suchana trustees have been joined by Mary Byrne, Treasurer, Alison O'Connor and Urmila Rajkhowa. Charities in the UK are reporting fewer donations in this time of economic downturn so we are looking for new ways of raising funds. We hope to find more people offering personal challenges using our subscription to Just Giving and continue to be very grateful to all supporters.

Thanks to all who have helped us recently:

To the Mere Group, who donated funds for a generator, and as a result we have been able to run the tuitions and the computer programme unhindered even during serious power cuts; Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust for a 2nd year programme grant; Paranjay Guha Thakurta; P.K Sen, Abeer Chakravorty; Jacques Elis and Vincent; Devit Yerker; Kira Wallace; Kim Moretti; Daniel Heitor; Brittany Fignar; Chandra Banerjee; Emma; Soumen and Manjushri Basu; Humkara; Peter Kirby; Ben Rogaly and Kirat Randhawa; two donors who paid our Just Giving subscription; Shreen Harmony choir; Sheldwich Primary School; St Stephens Infant School; Kirsty Reid and Highstead School; Rose Creed and Christchurch Girls' High School, New Zealand; Petrina and Michael Slaytor; Sophie Milward for sales in Worcestershire; Heather Chappell; P J Jacobs; Daphne Vivian-Neal; Mary Gray; Trustees of Mrs R Walker; Jo Lees; Joe Winter; Mrs J Woodroffe; Dr A Chatterjee; Urmila Rajkhowa; and all our generous regular donors.

Suchana: The Uttor Chandipur Community Society

Regd. Office: 'Uttor Phalguni, P.O. and Village Khanjanpur, Via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236, India
Tel: +91 (0) 3463 329278; Email: milward.bose@gmail.com