



The Uttor Chandipur Community Society

Annual report April 2012- March 2013

An Integrated Education Resource Centre programme in adivasi and scheduled caste communities in Birbhum, West Bengal



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Suchana Uttor Chandipur Community Society
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
2012-13

	Name	Address	Father/husband Name	Occupation	Description
1.	Kumkum Konra	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Kumaresh Konra	Student	President
2.	Sushanto Ghosh	PO and Village: Khanjanpur via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Chittaranjan Ghosh	Farmer	Vice-President
3.	Somnath Dolui	Subhashpalli, Shyambati, Santiniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 235	Nilmoni Dolui	Teacher	Secretary
4.	Rahul Bose	'Uttor Phalguni', PO and Village: Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Sanat Bose	Documentary film maker	Treasurer
5.	Jhuma Gonrai	Village: Kamalakantapur, PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Debi Gonrai	Teacher	Assistant Secretary
6.	Bhabini Baski	Village: Bishnupati, PO Sattor, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Khorda Baski	Student	Executive Member
7.	Gopal Saha	Village: Ballavpurdanga, PO Santiniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 235	Ballai Chandra Saha	Artist	Do
8.	Krishna Kora	Village: Aliabad (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Sohodeb Kora	Health Worker	Do
9.	Putul Hembrom	PO and Village: Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Buro Hembrom	Farmer	Do
10.	Soumen Das	Village: Srichandapur; PO Sattor Birbhum; West Bengal 731 236	Habal Das	Farmer	DO
11.	Lakshmi Konra	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Dulal Kora	Farmer	Do
12.	Kartik Konra	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Paban Kora	Farmer	Do
13.	Jolly Kora	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Anil Das	Housewife	Do
14.	Kishor Mahato	Hanuman Mandir, PO and Village: Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Baro Mahato	Farmer	Do
15.	Shibu Mondol	Village; Vidyadharpur, P.O. Khonjonpur, Via Sriniketan, Birbhum; West Bengal 731236		Farmer	Do
16.	Makhan Ghosh	PO and Village: Khanjanpur via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Basanta Ghosh	Farmer	Do
17.	Santo Kora	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Balaram Kora	Student	Do
18.	Santana Konra	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Madhab Kora	Housewife; Seasonal daily labour	Do

19.	Rubai Hazda	Village: Phuldanga, Shyambati, Santiniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 721 235	Balu Hazda	Sports Teacher	Do
20.	Saraswati Kora	Village: Aliabad (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Gopinath Kora	Housewife, Seasonal daily labour	Do
21.	Sumitra Tudu	Village: Bandhlodanga, PO Khanjanpur, Via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal, 731 236	Somiran Tudu	Seasonal daily labour	Do
22.	Lakshmi Soren	Village: Bandhlodanga, PO Khanjanpur, Via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal, 731 236	Lokkiram Soren	Seasonal daily labour	Do
23.	Dolun Khan	Village: Kamalakantapur, PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Bikash Khan	Artisan	Do
24.	Kabita Kora	Village: Ringdanga (Kamalakantapur), PO Khanjanpur, via Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal 731 236	Bhamdas Kora	Seasonal daily labour	Do

Annual Report 2012-2013

1. Summary:

During 2012, the project ran 4 teaching programmes, catering to different age groups:

- **The pre-school**
- **The Early Learning Group (ELG),**
- **Tuitions courses**
- **Computer courses for children and adults**

It also ran 4 cross-cutting programmes, catering to mixed age groups and running alongside the teaching framework:

- **Supporting Adivasi Identity**
- **The Health Project; At ELG and with the Mobile Library**
- **The Children's Library, and it's sub-programme the Mobile Library**
- **Activity Groups**

Under the Early Learning Group Programme, three sub-programmes were also implemented:

- **Sports**
- **Remedial work**
- **Supporting Government Schools**

Three core themes inform all of the Education Resource Centre programmes: Quality, Equality and Creative work. These themes guide the approach of the programmes, as well as teaching methods and personal interactions (See Figure 1).

Suchana has run smoothly and innovatively over the year adding a new idea to its repertoire; the '**Tuition Assembly**', held every Saturday afternoons in Suchana's new upstairs. The tuition students and the programmes' lead teachers gather to discuss various problems/issues that the students might face, and resolve them.

In terms of outputs, 99 Pre-School sessions were held with 25 children, and a further 23 afternoon sessions with 40 children. The ELG ran 88 sessions with 132 children. In addition, 48 sports sessions were held with 80-100 children, three 4-month 'remedial' courses were conducted at Suchana, and 58 one to one remedial sessions were held at one government primary school where this relationship has been achieved.

The Tuitions programme has run 2447 classes, and four Madyamik candidates (2nd. Batch) appeared for their their Class 10 Madhymik exams and are now waiting for the results. Suchana also added English tuitions for class 11 kids to facilitate their class 12, Higher Secondary or Uccho Madhyamik exams in 2014. The Computer programme held four 60-session courses with 10 students each batch and is currently teaching Class 4 children. Our computer teachers Babu and Uma assembled and started computer courses in July in a local government high school in response to the Head Master's request.

In Health Work, Krishna our health worker attended 48 ELG sessions and made 50 village visits. She has also started to accompany the Mobile Library twice a week.

The Supporting Adivasi Identity programme this year produced an alphabet chart in Kora, A CD of alphabet songs in Kora, a Kora translated version of 'Kishalaya' and 6 books for 6-9 year olds based on Santali folk tales recorded by Norwegian missionary PO Bodding, at the end of the 19th century.

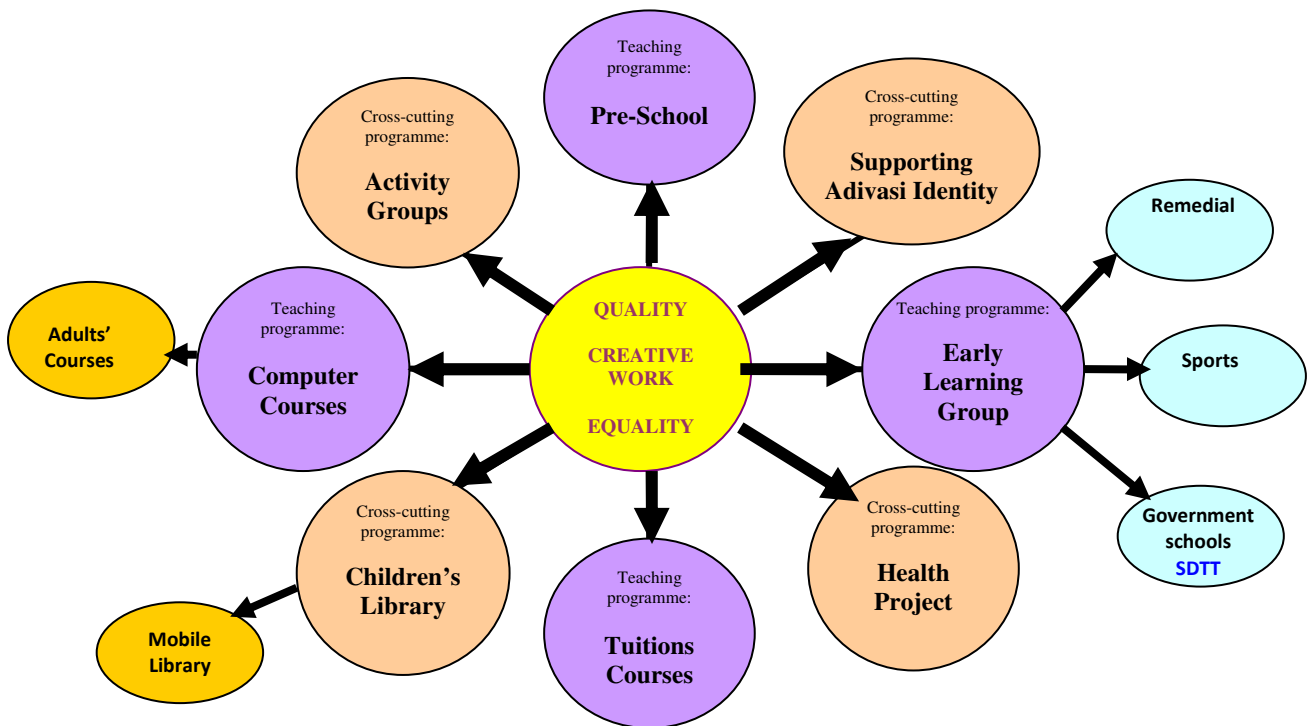
In terms of events, the Annual Function was held in February 2013; followed by the annual picnic and educational tour in March 2013. In September 2012, 52 tuitions students were taken on a 2-day educational tour to Murshidabad, the pre-British capital of Bengal. A Children's Mela was held, a Sports Day, and as a new event, a Science Mela, in which students demonstrated science experiments to many visitors. As one-off events, a Laughing with Clowns performance took place, a workshop on Learning to Clown and Aboriginal Art, and an Earth Science Workshop was held. ELG children also had a complete health check by a visiting paediatrician, and a blood group testing camp for the children and the staff was held. For the majority, this was the first time that blood grouping was done. Also in October we had the privilege to hear Prof. Soumya Chakravorty's talk on the God's Particle, a remarkable presentation indeed.

A variety of capacity building inputs were held and participated in: 2 teachers attended an ICT in the Classroom training; and a follow up training, and as a result held their own 2-day introduction to computer integration with Suchana teachers and students from classes 7-9.

Five teachers attended Loreto's barefoot teacher training, and four attended a Middle School Maths training at Suchana. Four attended a primary teaching for adivasi children training held by a local organisation. Two computer software trainings took place; one day of the Pratichi Trust's Annual Teachers Conference, with teachers from all over West Bengal, was hosted at Suchana, and two staff members attended SDTT's Financial Management Training.

A peer to peer workshop was held with teachers from local primary schools, 7 Guardian Meetings, 8 Committee Meetings, one AGM, 3 lesson plan workshops, 55 Teachers' Meetings, 10 programme workshops, 2 budget meetings and a participatory budget development workshop were also held.

Figure 1: Suchana's Programmes and Sub-Programmes 2012



2. Background:

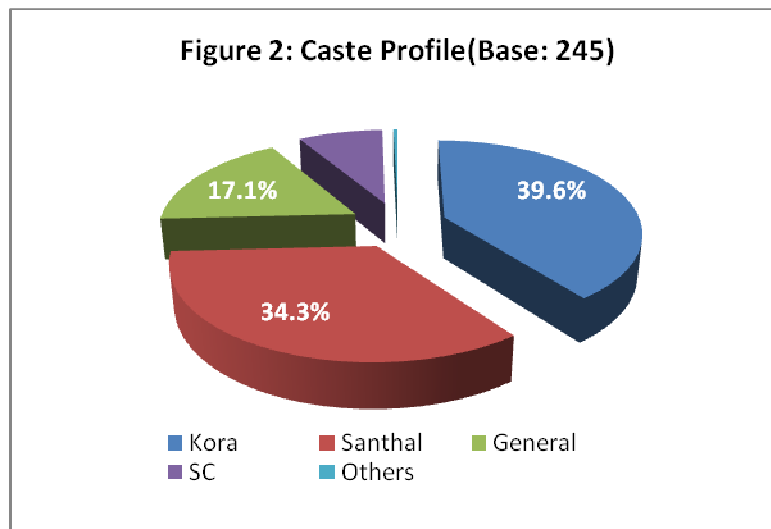
The project area

Suchana works in Birbhum, West Bengal. While district level data is not available recent data from National University of Educational Planning and Administration (2012) shows that education in West Bengal is deficient in relation to other states on several significant counts:

- Average number of instructional days is the fifth lowest of 35 areas.
- It has the second highest percentage of schools with less than 220 working days.
- The proportion of government upper primary schools with a student classroom ratio of more than 35 is much higher, at 72%, than all but 2 other states.
- Only 29% of schools have an electricity connection.
- Ranks 30 of 35 in the composite Education Development Index at upper primary level.

Birbhum, where Suchana works, has a relatively high adivasi population and through new outreach with the Mobile Library, Suchana has added three more Adivasi villages to its range this year, and now works in twelve villages in Birbhum, West Bengal. The organisation founded and manages the programmes of an Education Resource Centre which now works with 240 children, 74% of whom are adivasi and a further 8% Scheduled Caste.

Suchana's working area consists mainly of adivasi villages representing two tribal groups – Koras (Koda) and Santals. These are also two distinct language groups. Suchana also works with three mixed, majority Scheduled Caste villages, and two General Caste villages.



While the canvas of education has been changing over the last few years in this working area, certain themes remain prevalent:

- Education achievement is strongly marked by caste, with few adivasis managing – without additional support – to stay in education beyond class 5-8, and a minority never seriously entering education at all.
- Early marriage is common, especially among girls, but may be as much a response to drop out from school as a pull factor for drop out.
- Nearly all adivasis are first generation formal learners, with most having at least one parent who cannot read, and the majority having two. Therefore practical support for education is not generally available from home.
- The quality of teaching and learning and of schools functioning is undergoing change but a range of components of the RTE (Right to Education) Act are yet to be implemented.

Broad Objectives

In the context of the RTE which makes education compulsory and no retentions up to class 8, it has become urgent to ensure that children obliged to go to school have the opportunity to access meaningful and relevant education, and a learning experience that does not simply reproduce the social inequalities embedded in their social environment.

Suchana aims to:

- ❖ Broaden the scope of education to increase its relevance for marginalised children and provide a holistic learning environment including creative writing, art, drama and music.
- ❖ Support children in a variety of ways to prevent drop out before class 8, responding to their progression through school;
- ❖ Increase access to basic computer technology

- ❖ Promote social and gender equality, centralising the cultures and experience of adivasi children so that education speaks to their lives, and offering particular support to girls.

Programme objectives

To achieve these ends, programmes have particular focus areas, related to the broad objectives:

The pre-school aims to:

- Provide foundations to literacy and numeracy in a positive, child-centred learning environment
- Undertake first language teaching and learning (mainly Santali)
- Provide an introduction to basic Bengali (the school language)
- Promote the social, emotional and physical development of children, drawing on cultural resources such as Santali songs, rhymes and dance, and hands- on learning through play and art.
- Provide foundational experiences of equality



*Narayan with Suchana's own Santali alphabet chart
and the pre-school children*

The Early Learning Group (ELG) aims to:

- Support basic literacy and numeracy, increasing the breadth and depth of basic skills achieved by class 4
- Broaden the scope of education to increase its relevance for marginalised children and provide a holistic learning environment including creative writing, art, drama, sports and music.
- Promote first-language resources in local schools and build relationships with schools that positively work towards addressing quality issues.

- Pay particular attention to children with learning difficulties of various kinds.



Assembly with the ELG to inaugurate the new upstairs of the Resource Centre

The Tuitions programme aims to:

- Support children in a variety of ways, including practically and emotionally, responding to their progression through school;
- Provide text book based classes reinforcing school learning.
- Identify children vulnerable to drop out and offer particular support to stay in school.
- Ensure that the children have a say in matters related to and involving them, through the 'Tuition Assembly'.



The tuition children with their new geometry boxes.

The Computer Course aims to:

- Increase access to basic computer technology for primary and secondary children
- Emphasise the role ICT (Information, Communication Technology) can play in learning, and facilitate children to understand and access this role.



ICT in relation to text books - pilot workshop, Classes 7, 8, 9

The Adivasi Support programme aims to:

- Undertake activities which make learning accessible and relevant to adivasi children, acting upon the idea that if education is to be meaningful to adivasi children, then education processes also need to change to accommodate them.
- Promote first language learning for younger children and connect language and culture with education for older children.
- Research, develop and produce first language learning materials in Kora and Santali for use within Suchana's education programmes as well as for local distribution to schools, households and adivasi organisations.



Photo session for the Kora Alphabet CD Cover Design

The Health Programme aims to:

- Ensure that children are physically healthy (in the context of learning).
- Address health challenges in the community.
- Promote sanitation and hygiene within Suchana and beyond.



Krishna our health worker with the mobile library

The Library aims to;

- Make learning more interesting by providing a wide range of books and dictionaries, available to children, under our open shelf policy;
- Increase the level and depth of literacy amongst primary and secondary age children;.
- Connect education to the children's lives, and books beyond school text books.

The Mobile Library aims to;

- Make books (beyond text books) accessible to children in a wider geographic area, beyond Suchana
- Deepen literacy amongst these children;
- Disseminate Suchana's own Adivasi publications.
- Encourage appreciation of stories and connect stories with books via reading aloud.



The Mobile Library in one of the 'new' villages

The Activity Groups aim to;

- Provide opportunities to briefly learn a wide ranging skills to all of Suchana's children based on local oral tradition and taught by men/women from our villages.
- Nurture creativity and foster its relevance in regular learning.
- Bring adivasi crafts, and craft practitioners in an educational setting, thereby validating these skills and their relevance to education.
- Provide opportunities for older children to share their skills with younger children.



Chess Activity in progress



Cooking activity, learning to make Egg Curry!

The Education Resource Centre has been open for 10 hours a day, 7 days a week (7am-1pm; 3pm-7pm). Aside from using the centre for specific learning programmes for which they are registered, children also drop in at the centre during their free time for self-study, reading library books, informal sports, self-initiated art work, to practice their computer skills, and to play with games and learning resources.

The Centre has over the course of this year become a true Children's Community Centre which many children use every day, and others use two or three times a week.

Project scope

At April 2013, the programmes included the following children:

Programme	Total No	gender				community							
		M	%	F	%	Santal	%	Korā	%	SC	%	Gen + OBC	%
Pre School	42	20	48%	22	52%	23	55%	17	40%	0	0	2	5%
ELG	132	62	47%	70	53%	50	38%	46	35%	11	8%	25	19%
Tuitions	82	50	61%	32	39%	13	16%	40	49%	7	8%	22	27%
Computers	40	24	60%	16	40%	13	33%	14	35%	2	5%	11	27%
Mobile library	374					307	82%	0	-	63	17%	4	1%
Library	*												
Activity Groups	44 groups of		42%		58%	Mixed							

	about 10 children each												
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*** The library is under constant use and is open every day. Total number of books issued between October 31st to March 31st were 3250**

3. Progress

3a; Outputs

The programmes produced the following 'regular' outputs, as well as a number of supplementary outputs listed below.

Pre-School – 90 morning sessions were held with 25 children. The afternoon Pre School began late due to the delay in completing construction of the upstairs at the ERC, but sessions began in mid December and **23 sessions** were held with 40 children. The new input of the van to transport younger pre-school participants for the morning pre-school had the positive effect of stabilizing attendance but may have had the negative effect of preventing an increase in numbers as the van capacity was already reached.



An afternoon pre-school session

ELG :

- **88 ELG sessions** on Sundays and Wednesdays were held with 132 children
- **48 sports sessions** with 80-100 children.
- The **remedial** sub-programme also ran **three 'courses'** alongside the ELG, bringing 1-1 attention in literacy and numeracy to 38 members of the ELG.
- Government Schools Language Support 2 hour [remedial] sessions with named students requiring extra attention on a 1 to 1 basis were held in one government primary school, Kamalakantapur. Altogether 58 sessions were held.

Tuitions – **2447 tuitions classes** were held in Maths, English and Life Science for children in classes 5 to 10, each with 6-12 students. At the beginning of the 2013 school session, English was also added for the current Class 11 and Physical Science for Classes 9 and 10.

In the 2012 batch, **all four Madyamik candidates passed their Class 10** Madhymik exam: 2 boys; 2 girls; 3 of these have non-literate families.

Computer – **4 x 60-session courses** were held with 10 students each batch. In a new initiative, Suchana also ran courses at a local government high school which requested support installing and using computers they had in stock for the last 2 years. 2 courses were held for 14 students and 15 teachers.

Health – a health worker attended **49 ELG sessions** dealing with minor health complaints and advising children on sanitation; and **50 village visits** were made for minor treatment and health advice.

Library- Over the year Suchana **added books worth INR 14456 to its Library and Mobile Library**. It was open for **340 days** catering to a big cross section of children, from pre-school kids to adults. The main Library now has **over 3200 books**. Our open shelf policy is a great advantage but it also leads to some problems like misplaced books. Our own publications of Adivasi books are looking quite good in the library and are quite popular.

Mobile Library- The Mobile Library is now covering **11 villages, going out 7 days a week**. We had began with **4 villages in October 2011, going out 4 days a week**. **The Mobile Library now has over 750 books** and surprisingly the number books lost or damaged is much less than the Main Library.

Activity Groups- **45 activity groups were implemented in three phases over the year, benefiting 450 children from class 1 to 11**. We've seen that there's direct relationship between kids who participate in the Activities and their positive learning curve. Hence we at Suchana encourage parents to let their children participate in the Activities. Aruna our teacher started a new 'cooking activity' session this year and had **4 boys and 4 girls in her group**.

Supporting Adivasi Identity

Supporting Adivasi Identity undertook an ambitious programme during 2012-13. Outputs of this programme were:

1. An **alphabet chart in Kora** (designed by senior student Rajesh Kora).
2. A **CD of alphabet songs in Kora**: the songs were arranged by a working group of Suchana teachers and ex-teachers using text of the earlier publication Allo Porha, - and Kora primer using Bangla script – developed in 2009 by Shanto Kora. The CD and the Book are therefore complementary products.
3. A **Kora translated version of 'Kishalaya'**, the main class 1 Government school text book.
4. An extension of the 'my books in my language' series: **6 books for 6-9 year olds**, based on Santali folk tales recorded in the 1890s by Norwegian Missionary PO Bodding.

This latter project was a big step into building a children's literature in Santali for modern Santal children. Santals have a rich tradition of stories, passed down orally through the generations. About 120 years ago, a large number of these stories were written down, mainly by one Sagram Murmu of Mohupahari in Santal Parganas, under the guidance of P.O Bodding, Norwegian missionary and scholar of Santali culture.

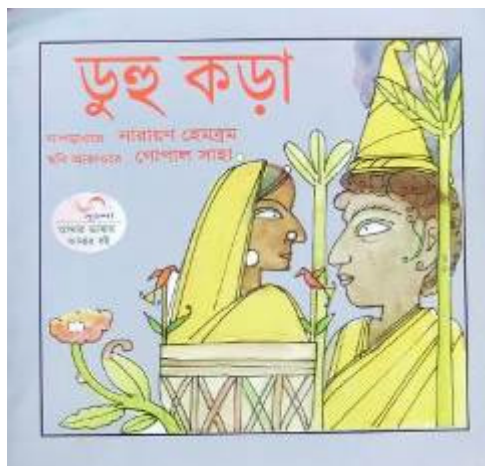
Today we live in a new world in which nearly all Santal children are going to school. Yet very few of them have the opportunity to learn in their own language, and in those places where initiatives are being made to change this, very little is available in the way of learning material supporting children's literacy in their language.

The stories recorded by P.O. Bodding represent part of the cultural history that belongs to these children. Yet few can read them: they were written originally using roman script. Several have been transcribed into Bangla script, but the language used, having evolved since these recordings, is difficult for contemporary Santal children to understand.

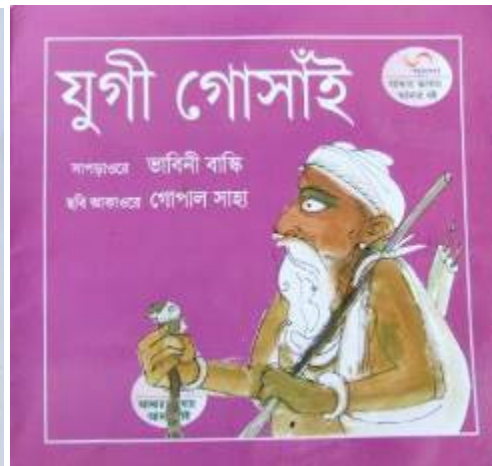
Suchana set out to make these stories available to today's Santal children, and in doing so to create resources which can help children learn to read. To achieve this, we have edited dramatically. In some cases, we have changed small parts of the stories' plots in order to fit with the very short story form we chose for these books. To those who find this deviates too far from the original texts, we offer our apologies, and ask for understanding that our priority was to make them accessible to small children.

We hope that this series will contribute to bringing Santal history and culture into the mainstream of what Santal children learn in the pursuit of literacy. We wholeheartedly acknowledge our debt to P.O Bodding who made the stories available to us.

The covers of the 6 Santal Folktale books for age group 6-9



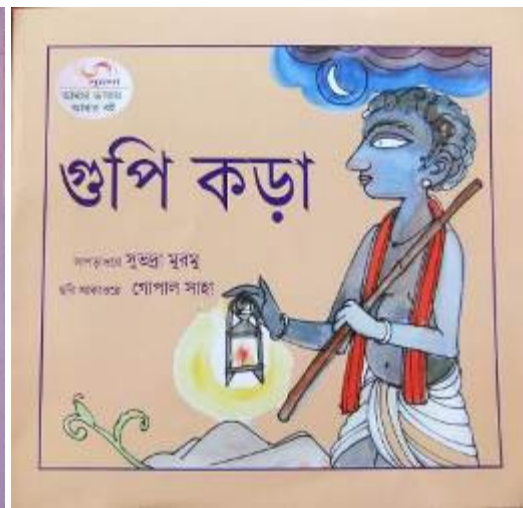
Duhu Kora



Jugi Gosai



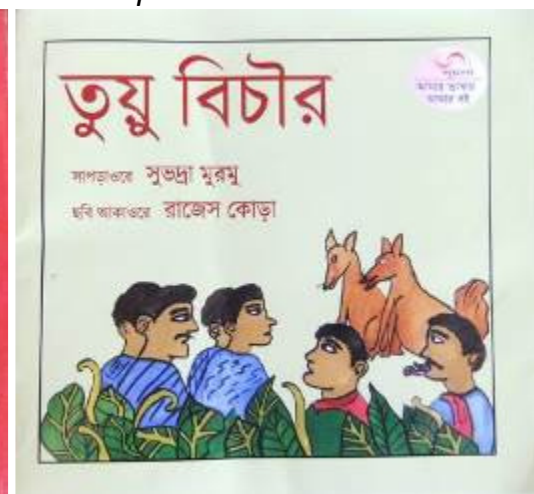
Tili ar Uniren Gutti Kora



Gupi Kora



Tuyu ar Kuloi



Tuyu Bichar



'Allo Porha Chedo Abu'
Cover of the Kora alphabet songs CD

Children's events

Annual Function

The Annual Functions was held in February 2013 – with about 160 children participating and about 700 in the audience. The annual function has now become an annual event for all the villages around us.



Santal Dance at the 2013 Annual Function

- Please see the Function Video CD

Picnic and tour

Suchana's picnic and tour was held in March 2013, following the 2013 Annual Function. All children who had attended more than 65% of their classes were eligible to come, which meant 180 kids and teachers in three buses! For the tour we visited Kankalitola a very important pilgrimage in W-Bengal. And then to the picnic spot on the banks of the Mayurakshi river.



Prayer ribbons at Konkalitola



The Food!

Nandan Mela (ELG classes 3-6)

In December, four ELG classes were taken to visit Nandan Mela, the 2-day Art fair held at Vishwa Bharati's Kala Bhavan. The trip exposed students to a variety of innovative installations and performances, as well as food snacks from all over India

Educational Tour to Murshidabad (senior students)

As a development of the tuition student's annual one day excursion, in September 2012, 52 children and 6 teachers went on two day trip to Murshidabad, the erstwhile capital of undivided Bengal under the Moghuls. This was a fascinating look at local history, which brought some of the content of school text books alive. For the majority of children it was also a first experience of sleeping alone in a bed, and with a bathroom next door.



Tuitions student's excursion to Hazarduari at Murshidabad

Children's Mela

The Children's Mela in November 2012 was appreciated by all – by those who made the stalls and set up the games, and by those who came to play. As previously, children did the shopping, sold the tickets and had to account for everything at the end of the day.



Stall makers of the "Lucky Dip" game at the Children's Mela

Successful games included: Win-a-Chicken; Apple Bobbing; Disk-Pot; Sweet Count; Lucky Dip; Light-the-Candle; Thread-the-Needles; Ball Point; Ring Ball; Magnetic Fishing; Raffle; Steel Glass Skittles and many more!

Sports day

Sports day took place in January 2013. About 120 children and 50 parents and teachers took part in 36 races and a team component. The team tournament, aiming to focus on team co-ordination as well as a site to practice leadership, was particularly close-fought this year.



Chain Race Tie Breaker at the 2013 Sports Day Team Event

Science Mela

A highlight for 2012-13 was the innovative Science Mela. Following workshops with No-Cost-Low-Cost science expert Samar Bagchi during 2011, a one day workshop was held with about 50 children from Suchana and student representatives from three government high schools. Students chose science demonstrations / experiments to demonstrate, and practiced showing these and explaining them to an audience.

On the Mela day, peer students, Suchana students, parents, government schools teachers, and students from other educational organisations were invited to take part in the Mela and ask questions to the demonstrators.



Demonstrating Bernoulli's Principle



Students demonstrating science at the 2013 SCIENCE MELA

Children's workshops / training

Beyond the regular teaching programme, the following one-off events were held in the interests of broadening the educational experience of the children:

Laughing with Clowns – A one day visit by a group from the German chapter of 'Clowns without Borders' was well appreciated. Suchana facilitated a performance at one local primary school as well as enjoying the show at the Education Resource Centre.



Visit by German Clowns – Clowns Ohne Grenzen – February 2013

Learning to Clown and Aboriginal Art: A visiting Australian/Bengali couple spent a half day with 60 children in January 2013 – half learning the basics of mime and clowning with Jyoti, and half making Animal Art on fabric, using ideas from Australian Aboriginal art as presented by Anne Riggs.



Suchana kids painting with Anne



And miming with Jyoti

Earth Science Workshop:

In August Dr Nigel Hughes, from the Dept. of Earth Sciences, University of California Riverside visited Suchana with his story book ***Monishar Pathorer Bon*** ('Monisha's Stone Forest'). This is a fascinating story, set in Suchana's neighbourhood, of a girl who finds plant fossils and sets out to discover how they got there. The workshop included a child-centred denoument of the geological principals underpinning the story. Copies of the book were given to each of the tuition children.



Computer Integration Workshop

Following the ICT in the Classroom trainings detailed below, a two day workshop was held in February 2013 with tuitions teachers and students from classes 7 to 9. Students and teachers were introduced to the approach and were asked to spend time identifying opportunities in their text book material for adding a student-created IT project into the learning process. Following this identification, students worked in groups to make their own learning artefacts in Powerpoint.

Health Check

In December, a visiting paediatrician Dr Sumita gave health check ups to all ELG children. Follow up work was conducted with one student who has severe eye problems. A second student identified as having a hole in the heart has not yet been followed up.

3c. Capacity Building

Training and Training workshops

ICT in the Classroom

In May 2013 two teachers attended the 4-day training held at Street Survivors, Mushidabad District by Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust to launch the pilot project of Integrating Technology in the Classroom. Following this training, various follow up activities to begin implementing the approach in Suchana is taking place

Barefoot Teacher training by Loreto School, Sealdah was attended by 5 Suchana teachers and trainee teachers, for 7 days in June 2012. The training focused on pre-school and Class 1 and 2 teaching, and included training in teaching English using a phonics based approach.

Middle School Maths training took place for 2 ½ days in September at Suchana by visiting trainers from Shikshamitra, Kolkata. The training focused on using manipulables and tools to help clarify concepts in fractions and decimals. Four Suchana teachers involved in maths for the Class 4-8 age group attended the training.

Loreto primary training for teachers of adivasi children - this was facilitated by a neighbouring adivasi organisation, and four Suchana teachers were invited to attend the 4 day training.



Suchana teachers at the training at RSV school

Behrampur Training and Exposure Visit

Two Computer Software trainings were held, the first ½ day in October 2012 and the second 1 day in February 2013. The first was a specialist training for staff of the Supporting Adivasi Identity team to learn the basics of Adobe PageMaker and Corel Draw, in order to

improve the printing process for making learning materials for Kora and Santali in this programme. It is relatively complicated to transfer text in Bangla script to printing software, and since the printer who had been making this transfer previously does not understand the the Kora and Santali texts, he does not realise when mistakes occur in the process. The result was that it had been necessary to have several time consuming rounds of proof reading in this process.

To minimize this work, this training attempted to give minimal skills to Suchana staff who know Santali and Kora to be able to make this initial transfer themselves so as to reduce language errors in the transfer process.

A relatively smooth printing process for the outputs of Adivasi Support in early 2013 suggest that this strategy has been quite successful.

The second training brought in an outside specialist to extend Suchana staff skills in using Adobe Photoshop, and to deepen the work with Corel Draw. 8 staff participated in the training.

Pratichi Peer Discussion on RTE in West Bengal – Innovation for Marginalized Groups theme

The first day of the annual 2-day workshop organised by the Pratichi Trust was hosted by Suchana. 72 teachers from various districts in West Bengal participated and a very meaningful discussion happened

Financial Management Training

Two staff participated in the 3-day Financial Management Training organised by the Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust and hosted by Cini in Kolkata. As a result of the training, various procedures were changed and added, a workshop was held with staff in February 2013.

Primary peer to peer Workshop

In November 2012 a short peer to peer workshop was held to exchange experiences with local primary school teachers and to explore how Suchana can contribute better to the schools' teaching processes. As a result of thhis workshop, one further primary school has requested assistance with remedial teaching in 2013.

Suchana's Upstairs

Thanks to Late Irene Bruegel's legacy, Suchana's much needed upstairs was completed in December 2012. We are grateful to her. Later the upstairs was officially inaugurated by Angela Stoddart of Friends of Suchana on her visit to Suchana.



Community Meetings and Camps

Blood Group Testing Camp.

In February 2013 a camp was held for all Suchana students and families to have their blood group tested and recorded. Blood Group ID cards are being prepared for all participants. It was interesting to see that hardly anyone knew their blood group.

Guardian Meetings were held on a regular basis for the ELG (3), Pre-School (2) and Tuitions students' guardians (2). In most meetings, time was divided into three parts: individual discussion between parents and class teachers; plenary information sharing by Suchana; and guardian's concerns and suggestions.

Committee Meetings: Eight Committee meetings with the 24-member community-based Executive Committee were held throughout the year, and an Annual General Meeting was held in September 2012.



Annual General Meeting, September 2012

4. Project Management:

Suchana has maintained relatively flat organisational hierarchies even while introducing a formal management structure, and has kept many communication processes as open and inclusive as possible in order to widely share information and disseminate the organisational approach. This also makes Suchana not only transparent to its staff but to the community as well

Project management was undertaken by Programme Co-ordinator, Rahul Bose, and Programme Development Officers (Jhuma Gonrai - Tuitions; Sushanto Ghosh – ELG and Computer Course; Bhabini Baski – Pre School; Rubai Hansda – Sports; Aruna Gonrai –

Remedial; Narayan Hembrom – Government Schools support; Kirsty Milward facilitated the Supporting Adivasi Identity team) for each programme.

Programme workshops:

Workshops were held over the year for each teaching programme for review, troubleshooting, and planning for changes or regular schedules and events, student admissions and lists, evaluations, curricula etc. These were attended by all staff involved in the relevant programme. One workshop was held for the Pre-School, 3 for ELG, 3 for Remedial work, 2 for Tuitions and 1 for the Computer programmes. Separately, for the ELG 3 lesson plan workshops were held to develop and strengthen curriculum design and delivery.

Budget meetings

All staff were present for two budget meetings – the first set implementation rolling on receipt of the new grant in February 2012. The second, in September 2012, was a participatory budget development workshop in anticipation of preparation of project proposals for 2013-14. All staff in each programme were asked to consider what changes should be made to their programmes budget in order to optimize the results of the programme. Suggestions for new budget items were put forward and approximately costed. These were set out on index cards and were then weighted or voted by all staff using stones to represent points in favour.

New items were then ranked according to the votes, and budgets for 2013-4 were prepared accordingly.

Weekly teachers meetings:

Approximately 55 teachers' meetings were held – 48 as regular Sunday meetings, and the rest as ad-hoc emergency meetings. These have been key for micro/short term planning as well as raising concerns and joint troubleshooting. They are open to all staff. Since it was increasingly evident that some organisation-level decision making is undertaken at these meetings, since January 2013 they are being minuted.

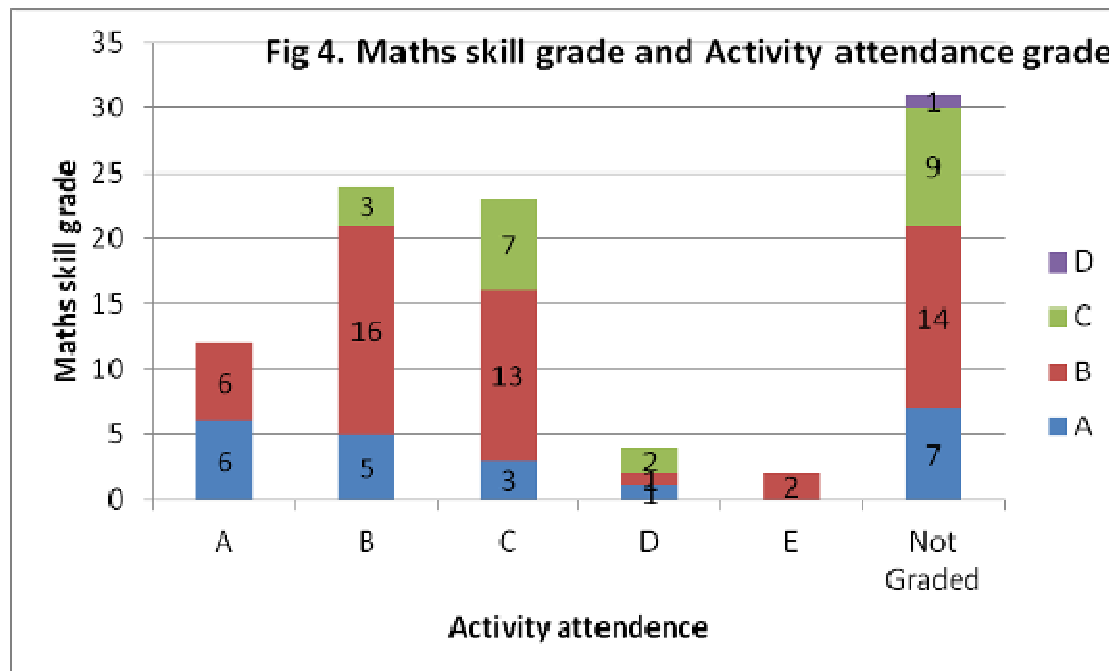
5.Improving Measurement

Tracking impact in a non-exam based 'open' education project which promotes flexibility in order to maintain maximum levels of accessibility to the population it seeks to support, is challenging. First, this is because the direct and indirect outcomes of education processes often emerge much later – in the form of increasing critical / analytical thinking in adolescent years, for example. Second, this is because where exams are rejected because 1) excessive in a supplementary programme 2) likely to produce teaching-to-exams instead of engaged, child-centred, activity based approaches and 3) likely to pressurise students into absorbing required information rather than taking the time to engage, question, look around the sides of a given issue – then it is difficult to find a tracking system that has the same 'objective' status that exam results are vested with, however mistakenly. 4. One important tracking measure in a child's life is to measure the child confidence over his/her association with Suchana in time. One clear outcome of this is when the Government

Secondary School teachers say to us that ‘Suchana’s kids who come to our school are clearly identifiable because of their confidence.’

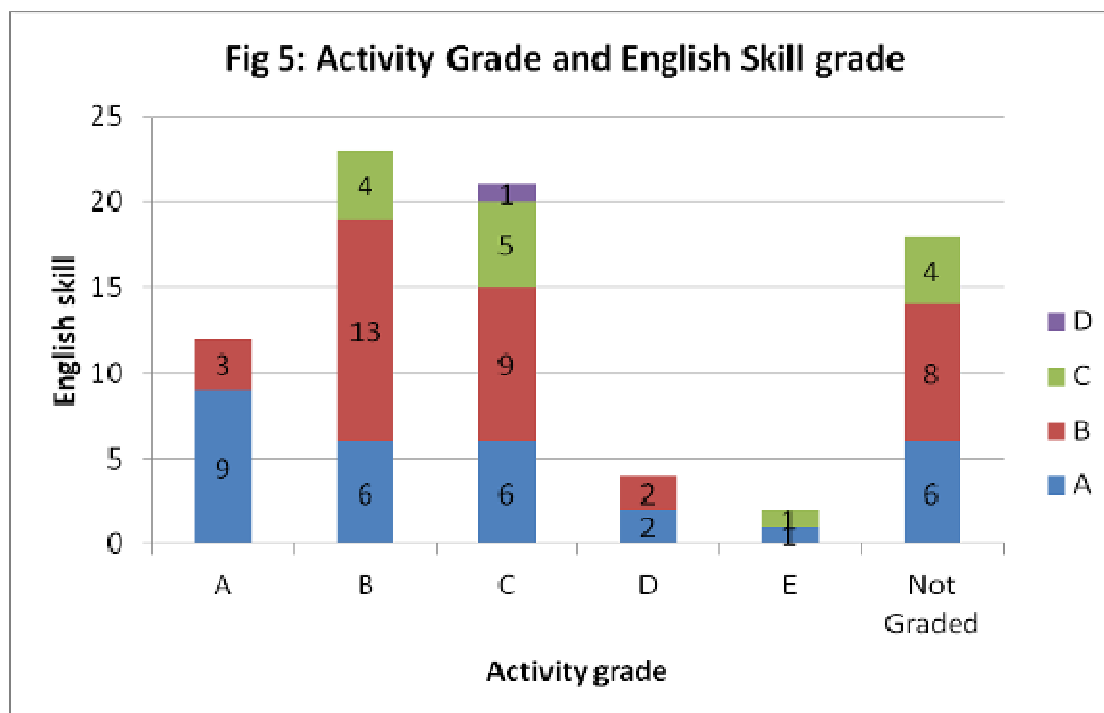
Suchana with the help of HR interns on secondment from the Tata group, has begun developing a system for tracking student information - participation, evaluation grading, school pass rates etc – which should eventually amount to a tool for measuring impact in terms of change over time.

ELG students are given a detailed, but nevertheless teacher-driven evaluation in December of each year. For the Subject-specific part of this, teachers give separate grades for Effort, Progress and Skill level, as they perceive it for each student. As shown in Figure 3, For the Maths assessment, the tracker made evident that there is a clear perception of increasingly good progress as the student progresses from class 1-6 through the ELG.

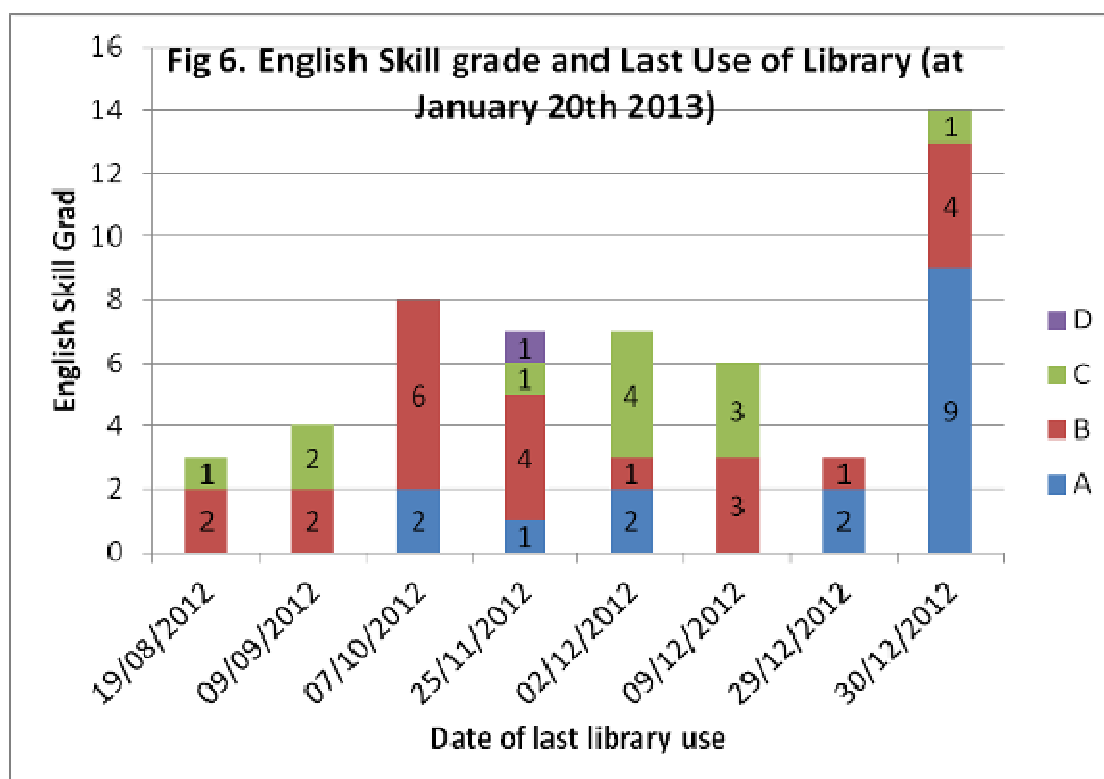


Suchana promotes several extra curricula activities for two reasons. First there is an assumption that the presence of these activities makes education processes more friendly to those whose best skills are not academic. Second, they make the educational setting more familiar to those for whom formal education is unfamiliar and perhaps forbidding, while also opening up plenty of spaces for the entry of local cultures into the classroom.

With so much effort vested in extra curricula work, Suchana is therefore interested in the correlation between extra curricula work and ‘core’ academic work, and the tracker is beginning to produce some indications of this correlation.



Participation in ‘Activity Groups’ – voluntary short courses ranging from local crafts to hands on maths and science experiments – is graded only on the grounds of attendance. ‘Not graded’ means that the student did not participate in any Activity Group. The correlation between English Skill Grade and Activity Group participation as shown in Figure 5 appears to suggest a connection between better Activity participation and higher Skill Levels in English (but Activities do not take place in English).



Similarly, some link can be seen in Figure 6 between very recent [read, regular] use of the library and English skill grade, even though most library issues are of books in Bangla [and Santali].

Impacts in relation to stated objectives – and therefore in relation to Suchana children - were discussed quite substantially in the Narrative Report for 2011-12. An added dimension of impact emerging in the 2012-13 project is the potential impact of the project beyond Suchana due to increasing components of the project entering into government schools and other local organisations:

Learning materials produced under Supporting Adivasi Identity

These have been distributed in a number of ways.

- Kora materials have been distributed to a few village clubs in other Kora villages where there are personal contacts.
- Santali materials have been hand delivered to nearby government schools where there are many Santal children, as well as to local organisations working with Santali children.
- All materials are available in several copies in the mobile library, accessed by 360 children.
- Both language materials, but especially Santali materials have been distributed at various events, including particularly the Pratichi Discussion Forum which involved committed teachers from all over West Bengal.
- Nearly 100 copies of the Santali chart have been distributed, potentially reaching perhaps 3000 children.

Beyond the direct effect of simply having first language resources available, the *idea* of first language teaching that these materials bring into focus is by itself an important impact. That language is an issue in learning for adivasi children is only just now beginning to be grasped in the regular teaching in West Bengal schools. This was one of the themes of the Pratichi Discussion Forum, and was a new issue for many teachers. At least two teachers at the Discussion knew they taught adivasi children in their schools but did not know what language they spoke.

Collaboration with government schools in Science, IT and Remedial work

Suchana's collaboration with government schools took three forms this year:

- One-to-one remedial work in one primary school
- Interaction during the Science Mela – 20 students from 3 secondary schools participated in the Mela; teachers from these schools were also involved in the Mela and brought other students to see the demonstrations. Teachers and children from three other local organisations (two NGO schools, one orphanage) attended the Mela – thus perhaps 200 non-Suchana students were reached directly by the Mela, but indirectly a further several hundred may have been reached by the spread of ideas around Hands-On-Science.
- The introduction of the computer course into one government secondary school – reaching both students and teachers, has directly reached 30 individuals but has the potential to reach the whole school once trained teachers take on the ITE approach in more depth.

7. Lessons Learned

Identifying and Addressing Learning Difficulties and Recommendations

As the RTE evolves, gradually promoting improvements to the quality of learning in schools, evidence from this project suggests that the presence of learning difficulties will become an increasingly salient issue. How to develop skills and strategies to address these as they appear in different language groups is an emerging question.

Previous to the RTE, children with learning difficulties or who just had low levels of learning in school, simply dropped out – slowly or suddenly as the case may be to find, in their perception, a more appropriate activity. But now the RTE has 1) made education compulsory and 2) increased attention to drop out, the causes of this, and methods for preventing or reversing it. One result is that children with learning difficulties are increasingly likely to be in school.

Developing methods to differentiate ('diagnose' in the light sense) different types of difficulty, to match these with promising methods for teaching, and developing human resources equipped to respond to these issues is likely to be an increasingly important / urgent task.

The RTE, exam failure and year group retention

Related to this issue, it should be noted that the RTE's clause prohibiting retention in the same grade for a second year is not being fully implemented in this area. Among Suchana middle school children, for example, 3 were 'failed' and retained, although two changed schools in order to avoid this. In some cases retention is being recommended to parents (with a certain amount of pressure) for children who do have specific difficulties related to learning. Schools continue to see retention as a positive move, intended to 'help' the child have a second chance at absorbing the required information to 'pass'.

Delinking 'passing' from 'promotion' is an important step in changing the mindset which is underpinned by ideas about the purpose of school and the content of education. That children might 'fail' an exam but still be entitled to move with the cohort into the next year group remains a puzzling idea locally. That 'failure' could in principle be addressed by special help with skill-building (rather than information transfer) in the next year group is a possibility not yet broached because up until this year those 'failures' have never been sitting in the class in which this might be thought of. The practice of retention simply assumes that if you give the child the same information in the same form again, this time he/she will get it. It has hence precluded any consideration of changing the method.

Finding ways to present the change in practice with the prohibition of retention as a positive, as an opportunity, is a challenge that deserves attention.

Annex 1 : SUCHANA PROGRAMME TIMETABLE :JANUARY 2013

[illegible]

	Sunday				
	CHILD RELATIONS				
	Somnath				
6-7					
			Computer Adults Shanto		
7-8	library			Act: Crochet	
8-9			Rupali		
		Function ELG+ Remedial Jhuma Babu Gopal Kirsty Somnath Shanto Kumkum Bhabini Aruna (Rajesh) (Subadra) Kobita	Health Work ELG Krishna		
9-10					
10-11					
11-12					
12-1					
1-2		Teacher Meeting			
2-3					
3-4	library	Tutions Dip, Sagar Babu, Jhuma	Act: Rabindra Dance		
4-5				Act: Knitting Dolun	Act: Gardening Shymol
5-6					
					DVD
6-7					