



*The Uttor Chandipur Community Society
A non Profit Organisation*

Suchana Annual Report 2014-2015

Transforming Children's Lives: Innovating positive education for marginalised children

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



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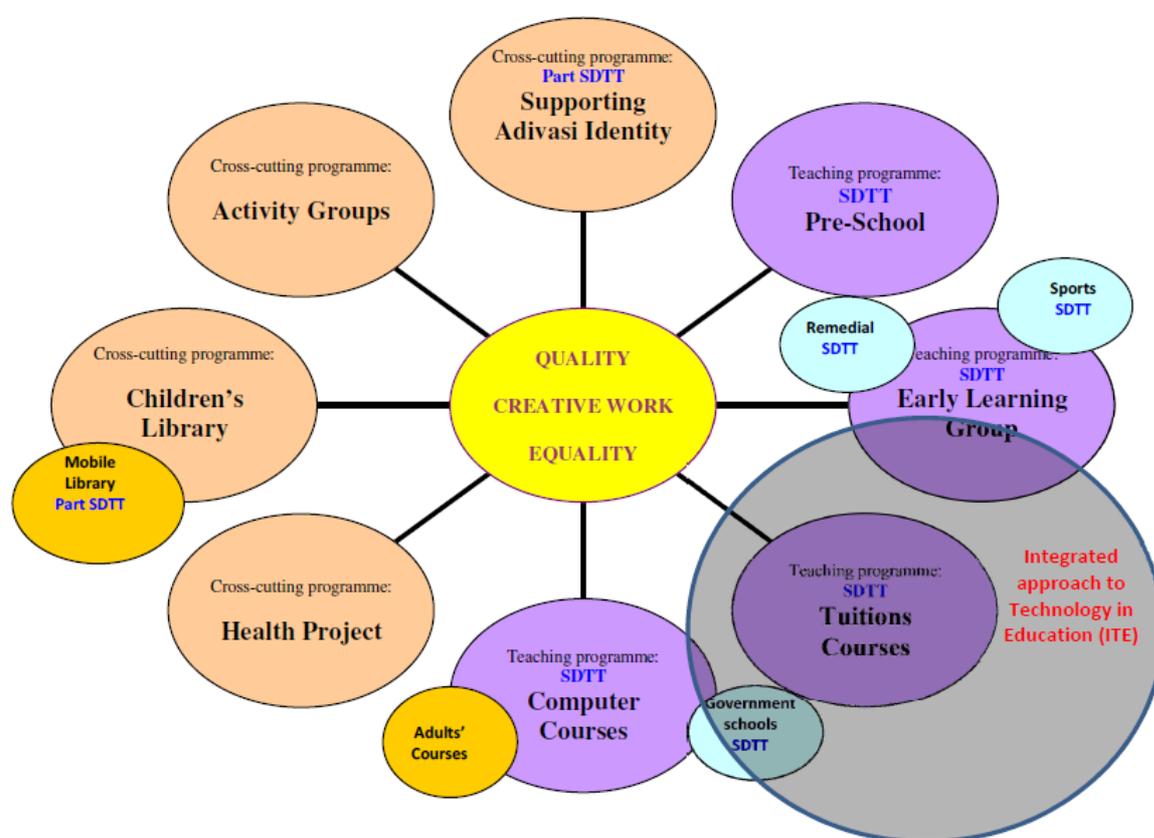
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1. Overview:

The organisation continues to mature and now runs 8 programmes and a number of sub-programmes (see Figure 1). It now works with 1320 children, 370 of these intensively in teaching programmes through the preschool, the early learning group, and tuitions programmes, and a further 950 less intensively through the mobile library. The New Mobile Library, beginning in March 2015 and adding 14 villages to the current 10, has added 600 members to the mobile library, and may add more this year. The profile of the children has changed a little from last year (see Annex 1) as work with Jadavpur High School has not developed this year (which included Muslim children) while work in the new Mobile Tuitions Centres 2a and 2b, targeting mainly Santal children, has strengthened and the mobile library, targeting Santal and Kora children, has successfully expanded.

Figure 1: Suchana's Programmes and Sub-Programmes 2013-14



2. Background, Scope and Objectives :

Please see information from previous year in Annex 1

3. Project Outputs

Early Learning Group

The flagship Multi-Lingual ELG has continued to work with 103 children from different communities, developing methods for direct first language teaching in Classes 1 and 2, and for including components for first language work throughout the learning process. Over the year, 73 sessions were held, with an average attendance of nearly 60 %. In addition, 123 children took part in the Annual Show for which 14 practice sessions were held. Three guardian meetings were also held to maintain close communication with the families of ELG students.

In November 2014, the annual Children's Mela took place, which saw 118 students create and run 25 games and food stalls, the ticket counter and the book stall.

Class	Total	Boys	Girls	St	Sc	Obc	Gen
1	10	6	4	7	3		
2	12	5	7	12			
3	17	10	7	13	2		2
4	16	3	13	13	1		2
5	15	6	9	13			2
6	21	11	10	12	3		6
Admission in march	12	5	7	11	1		
Total	103	46	57	81	10		12
<i>%</i>		45	55	79	10		11

Methods and tools for first language work include using songs and music from all the communities, accessing first language books through the library, and drawing on cultural resources from all communities in performances for the ELG-led multi-lingual Annual Show which took place on 15th February.



'Hindi Dance' at the Annual Show 2015

Classes 4 to 6 also formally began using an ITE approach in English, Bangla, Life Science and Maths classes, with children developing their own curriculum-based projects using computers and cameras.

Remedial programme

As sub-programmes of the ELG, remedial classes continued to offer one-to-one support to children struggling with basic literacy and numeracy. This saw four 12 week sessions each with between 20 and 25 children selected for this one-to-one opportunity. Children are carefully monitored and continue with the programme in subsequent sessions until they have reached sufficient competency to manage well in the 'normal' classroom. 12 children progressed very well and returned to normal classes. Among those remaining in remedial classes for more than two sessions, most have specific learning difficulties, and will continue to need special support and monitoring. Suchana's skills in this are improving, but remain challenged to respond with tailored and systematised teaching methods and materials.

Sports Programme

The sports sessions once a week, and sports facilities available for free play 7 days a week, remain an important component of Suchana's integrated education programme. 46 Friday sessions were held with an average of about 80 students. 106 children participated in the Annual Sports Day in January 2015. There is a strong emphasis on the equal participation of girls, including adolescent girls, in all sports events.

During 2014 a football tournament was held with a number of mixed age and sex teams. During February 2015, a badminton tournament was held with separate girls and boys events and a total of 52 participants. A cricket tournament saw participation from 5 local mixed sex teams.



Girls playing in the football tournament, 2014

1,2,3,4 Tutions

This programme started to respond to specific requests from parents of our neighbouring village. Six teachers rotate responsibility for backing up work of 24 Kora and Santal covered during the school day. They conduct primary school text-book based classes, using as far as possible the activity-based methods promoted by Suchana, and including time for art. The time slot for this is 4 to 6 in the evening 4 days a week

Pre-School

The lead pre-school teacher returned from maternity leave during the monsoon, giving a boost to the pre-school. 97 morning sessions and 87 afternoon sessions were held. Although numbers continue to be lower than originally predicted – mainly due to parent’s difficulties with regularly transporting very small children from home to Suchana – the methods have evolved, and this output remains an excellent example of child centred learning using first languages. The afternoon preschool in particular is multilingual, using Santali and Kora, and introducing some Bangla which will be needed in school in future.

33 of the 35 children enrolled in the morning pre-school are Santal; the 44 children enrolled in the afternoon pre-school are mixed with 19 Santal children, 23 Kora children and 2 general caste / SC children. Maintaining regular attendance continues to be a challenge, with an average 43% attendance in the morning and 34% in the afternoons; Suchana’s approach continues to be to strongly encourage parental input in maintaining regular attendance, but not to try to enforce it given the challenges of facilitating children’s activities in the context of seasonal agricultural work and cycles.



Learning through play in the pre-school

Computer Courses

Children's computer courses

Four relatively intensive computer skills evening courses- focused this year on 2 groups of children:

- i) children in Suchana Class 3 (Government Schools Class 2-3) who will be embarking this year on ITE learning after their entry into ELG Class 4. The course offers the opportunity for children to gain skills prior to beginning ITE, and greatly eases the early ITE process, allowing the focus to remain mainly on the curriculum rather than getting 'distracted' by challenges with the technology.
- ii) Children who had taken admission into Suchana later, straight into tuitions classes, for example, who had therefore missed out on the Class 4/3 Computer course but who were already doing ITE Tuitions.

Two full courses were held, (batch no 15 and 16) & 2 half courses (Batch no 14 and 17).

Batch no	No of student	Boys	Girls	St	sc	Gen-Obc	Total class held	Age
14	10	3	7	6	0	4	6	9-10
15	17	7	10	11	2	4	60	8-9
16	12	5	7	9	0	3	60	8-9
17	9	2	7	8	1	0	54	8-9
Total	48	17	31	34	3	11	180	
%		35.5%	64.5%	71%	6%	23%		



Class 3 children on the computer course

In addition, 32 classes were held to complete the running Computer Skills course for Class 9 students at Jadav Pur High School. This course was intended to supplement the ITE project due to begin at the school, but on the transfer of the Principal and the postponement of the ITE project start, the computer course was also suspended for the time being.

A much awaited step this year for the Computer Courses Programme was accessing donation-priced Windows OS for all Suchana computers. Subsequently staff and students began the transition from Open Office which had been causing a number of system faults that we were unable to solve, to donation-price Office 13, procured from the Nasscom/Bigtech software donation agency.

Adult Computer Course

This is another very popular course amongst teenagers and adults. 168 boys and girls had been trained in basic computer literacy including best use of Google search, Gmail and accessing other sources of information like Wikipedia etc. Recently both the Central and State Governments have been emphasising, more and more on **on-line activities** like filling up forms for college admissions, ST scholarships and various other schemes. But there are very few computers with proper network connections in the villages of Birbhum. As a result, people who want to access these schemes, have to go to the nearest town, which could be 10kms away and avail this facility from private kiosks, waiting in a queue and paying for the service. This is where Suchana's Adult Computer course has played an important role.

Young men and women, after they've finished the course, are encouraged to use our computers for free, so that they can access all the Government on-line subsidies and schemes easily.

Over the current reporting year Suchana had completed 4 full and 1 partial computer courses, the breakup of which is given in table below;

Batch no	Number of student	Girls	Boys	St	Sc	Gen-obc	Total class held
12	8	4	4	3	2	2	17
13	12	6	6	2	5	5	56
14	10	3	7	0	7	3	59
15	9	5	4	5	2	2	60
16	12	10	2	2	6	4	16
Total	51	28	23	12	22	16	208
%		55	45	23.50	43	31.50	

Tuitions (partly under ITE)

Suchana Centre 1 tuitions, have involved 120 students in Class 5 – 10, and in Centre 2, 100 further children. Now all classes use the Integrated Technology in Education (ITE) approach to teaching-learning, through which the central learning takes place when students create their own artefacts using technology. Subjects and weekly number of classes were increased this year, with all students now accessing at least 9 hours a week spread across Maths, English, Life Science, Physical Science, History and Geography. For the first time, local schools all implemented the RTE no-retention clause up until Class 8, and all students up to this learning group progressed to the next class. A few students were retained at class 9, the first opportunity for schools to enforce retention.

Altogether, 2875 classes were held in Centre 1 and 4511 in Centre 2, all of these running under the banner of the ITE project. 12 Guardian meetings were also held to maintain contact and communication with parents, and 11 programme workshops focused on review, planning, lesson planning, and developing community projects using ITE (to be fully reported in the ITE Y2 report).

All seven students enrolled for Madhyamik this year passed and all 4 of the 4 sitting Higher Secondary Exams this year also passed.

Table 3: Students in Centres 1 and 2, 2014-15

	Enrolled Students, Centre 1, 2a, 2b, Old List 2015 and New List 2015											
	Centre-1				Centre-2A				Centre-2B			
	Old List (V-XII)		New List (V-XII)		Old List		New List		Old List		New List	
	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
Total Student	122				41		50		40		51	
Male	69	57%	67	50%	21	51%	26	52%	14	35%	19	37%
Female	54	44%	67	50%	20	49%	24	48%	26	65%	32	63%
ST	82	67%	93	69%	27	66%	33	66%	39	97.50%	50	98%
Others					14	34%	17	34%	0		0	
Kora	42	34%	42	31%	19	46%	22	44%	0		0	
Santal	40	33%	51	38%	8	20%	11	22%			50	98%
SC	16	13%	19	14%	14	34%	15	30%	1	2.50%	1	20%
others	24	20%	22	16%	0	0%	2	4%	0			

January saw a gathering of 188 ITE Students from Centre 1 and the new Centres 2A and 2B in a **Students' ITE exchange day**. This was held instead of an excursion which was looking impossible to achieve through the current budget, and was the first attempt to link students across the centres, to begin to build an ITE community of practice, and to sow the seeds for Digital Citizenship as these students being to communicate with each other using the internet. Students shared their own ITE projects, spent time exploring first language resources and books in Bengali in the library, and played badminton and other games together. The opportunity was also used to show students from Centre 2 a series of first language Community Projects made by Centre 1 students during December under the ITE grant. This exposure will hopefully be the ground work for Centre 2 students to make their own projects next year.



Sharing projects at the ITE exchange day

	Table 4: Present Students in ITE Exchange			Total	
	Centre-1	Centre-2A	Centre-2B		
Total Student	124	30	34	188	
Male	69	13	13	95	51%
Female	55	17	21	93	49%
ST	87	20	34	141	75%
Kora	44	15	0	59	31%
Santal	43	5	34	82	44%
SC	12	10	0	22	12%
others	25	0	0	25	13%

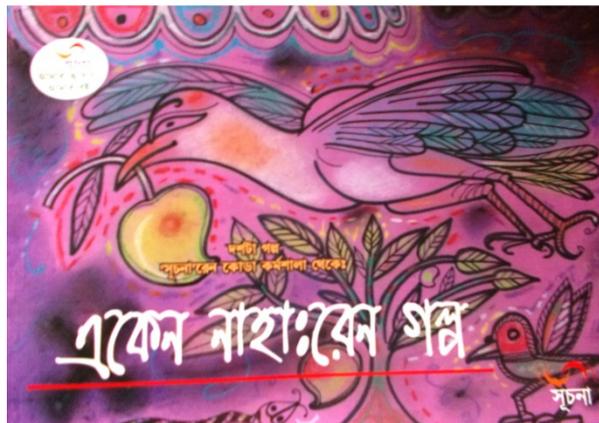
Under the tuition programme we should also mention Rajesh Kora's scholarship which is borne by Friends of Suchana UK. Rajesh is our 2nd. batch of Suchana's kids who appeared for his Higher Secondary school leaving examination this year. He's a very talented young artist and if supported properly will go far. But being Adivasi and the son of a daily wage earning family, there is little

support available at home. FOS decided to give him a scholarship so that he can finish his school exams unhindered and apply for entry to Kalabhavana the Art School at Viswa Bharati University.

Supporting Adivasi Identity

New publications

The development of first language teaching resources in Santali and Kora continued this year, which saw the completion of two new publications – ‘Eken Naharen Golpo’ “Only Contemporary Stories” in Kora – a book for 9-13 year olds developed from the fruits of writing workshops held with Kora Suchana students, teachers and community members.



Cover page of 'Eken Naharen Golpo' - Only Contemporary Stories

In Santali, 'Seday Ocktarena Galpo Katha' presents 17 stories edited and transposed into Bangla script from PO Boddling's 'Santal Folk Tales' recorded early last century. It makes these available as learning resources for contemporary Santal children now achieving literacy through Bangla script in large numbers, in the age group 9-12.



Cover page of 'Seday Ocktarena Galpo Katha' - 17 Folk Tales

Sharing resources and strengthening networks

New initiatives in this programme include co-ordinating with Bookbox / Planet Read who recently produced 5 stories in Santali in their series using Same-Language-Subtitling to support literacy through Anibooks (animated e-books). These stories use subtitles in Devanagari script, not used by school students in West Bengal. Suchana's role has involved liaising with Book box to produce subtitles using Bangla script, turning these into an excellent learning resource for local children. Work has also been done to digitalise the 6 illustrated Santali stories for younger children produced last year, turning them into lightly animated movie files for use as e-books in Santali.

Suchana also began co-ordinating in 2015 with a World Vision project to promote first language literacy material among Santal children in Jharkhand. Suchana's series of 6 illustrated stories derived from PO Boding's collection of ***Santal Folk Tales*** is being shared for World Vision to change the script from Bangla to Devanagari so that children in Jharkhand government schools can easily read the Santali stories.

Distribution of resources locally

The local distribution of previously produced publications in Santali and Kora – now amounting to 14 products in Santali and 10 in Kora – was taken up more systematically this year. Visits to local schools and clubs with majority adivasi children were undertaken, and the products presented to interested teachers and actors in education.

Through these methods, books were distributed at sites where they can be accessed by at least 700 additional Santal children and 200 additional Kora children.

A survey was also designed to follow up these distributions during further distribution in 2015-6, in which information on usage and general response to the products will be collected at each site.

The mobile library has also been an important location for distribution of the books and dissemination of the idea of first language literacy for adivasi children. The mobile library carries several copies of each book, and they are very popular among the membership of more than 350 regular child members.



Children enjoying a Santali story at the New Mobile Library



Older boys enjoying a book in Santali at the mobile library

Mobile Library

The mobile library has continued to visit villages 7 days a week, covering 11 villages (12 paras) every week and with more than 350 sustained and regular user members. Altogether, 5580 books were issued over the year.

A deep-dive and thorough review process was undertaken during April-June 2014 to strengthen systems and put in more robust monitoring mechanisms, in preparation for the scaling up of the mobile library during March-April 2015. Strengthened systems include better communication with Guardians, more stringent systems for following up on lost books, better tracking and recording of lapsed members and worn-out books, and designing a monitoring template which tracks activity and usage each week.

The mobile library is increasingly becoming an important site at which to introduce and spread the idea of first-language learning, with children regularly accessing Suchana's own-produced Santali and Kora books, and with the use of eBooks in Santali from Bookbox. This opportunity provides fertile ground for deepening our work in first language learning in the future.

The New Mobile Library

With the New Mobile Library which started on 9th March 2015, we've reached an additional 600 children with books, covering 14 new villages within a radius of 10kms, in our Maruti Van. 6 of the teachers who went for driving training are now licensed drivers, including 2 women. This achievement of 1 ST and 1 SC women who drive the van is a great source of joy to us and the villagers refer to this vehicle as "ladies van". The new Mobile library has 1192 books. Both the

mobile libraries do a variety of child related activities to enhance reading, drawing and other skills, on top of giving out books regularly. Teachers who accompany the mobile libraries have had 'story telling' training, have basic skills in puppetry and also show a lot of animated e-books via Book Box etc.



Excellent response at the New Mobile Library villages

Activity Groups

Hands on activities of diverse kind are very important to Suchana's holistic approach to education. We have also seen that kids who attend the "activity groups" have a higher gradient of learning. Our activity resource persons come from a varied cultural background, mostly from the same economic status but more women than men They were mostly from our immediate neighbouring villages that Suchana works in. But some came from beyond this perimeter for example the adivasi lady who came to teach jewellery making from the veins of the Palm tree or the Gymnastics activity. Since students sign up to their own choice of activity there is a lot of fun and focused attention by the children

We had completed 3 full activity slots and 1 more which would end in May 2015, over the reporting year. Over the last six months there were 27 different kinds of activities, taking on board 99 students. The 1 partial slot will cover 8 activities with 83 students participation. Out of these 182 students, 119 were girls and 63 boys. The age group covered was 7-18; class 2 to class 12.

Our activity slots were very varied and covered; Spoken English, Learning to create Santali Rhymes, Vegetable Garden, rather fruitful really and other activities.



A cooking activity in progress.

Health

Our health worker over the years has gained a lot of confidence through her interactions with Dr Sumita a doctor from Calcutta, who has taken a lot of interest in Suchana's health needs, consistently. The health worker conducts health visits with both mobile libraries, catering to health needs of young and adults and also conducts local village visits on a rotational basis. Children at the ELG also receive regular checkups from the health worker and basic care available every Sunday.

This year an eye camp offering refraction tests and free glasses was held in conjunction with Arogya Sandhan Santoshpur and Toronto-Calcutta foundation. 210 eye checks were carried out, including to all of Suchana's Centre 1 students and 68 glasses prescribed and distributed. 140 children also received new clothes, distributed at the camp.



Events

The Children's Mela— this event in October saw groups of children plan their games, control their budget for running the game, and organising parents and other visitors to participate.



Poster for the Children's Mela, held in October 2014

Exposure visits – by SOVA, Orissa; MRSK; Vikramshila, Kolkata; GVM, Assam; and Dhubrotara from Hooghly district, West Bengal.

The year saw a series of visitors to Suchana, mainly SDTT partners connected via the Education portfolio. Suchana's focus had already been moving away from taking training to finding ways to offer 'training' – and these visits evolved this process. Visits include attention to focus areas as selected by the visiting organisation, ranging from observation of the Mobile Library, mobile ITE external centres, discussion of ITE projects, observation of multilingual education practice and activity based learning at the ELG, discussion of producing first language materials, discussion of education approach etc.

Sports Day took place in January and as previously included both an emphasis on individual achievement and mixed age team work.

Sports friendly matches also took place and more are planned – the year has seen at least 2 students' v teacher's friendly cricket matches, won fairly substantially by students and a football tournament. February - March saw the unfolding of the much awaited Badminton tournament, which children have been practicing for some time.

The Annual Show, Suchana's biggest annual multi-lingual and multi-cultural event – part funded through this grant via Early Learning Group wages – took place in February. It included songs and dancing drawn from Santali, Kora, Bengali and English cultural resources, a magic show, science demonstrations, teacher produced short dramas in Santali, Kora, Bangla and English, a highly coordinated gymnastics display and a 'Poi Party' circus event using special effects with fluorescent lighting.

Picnic and tour – trip to the Jharkhand border on 22nd February. From the picnic spot, Jharkhand's hills ('mountains') were hazy in the distance – these caused great interest as none of the children have seen mountains before. Interest generated energy: various large groups set out across the river

and the plain to reach the mountains – to get a close look and even climb one in one case. Nearly everyone, including 6 and 7 year olds, walked at least 6km in this endeavour.



Running to get closer to the 'mountains'

Nandan Mela; Like every year our ELG kids were taken to the Nandan Mela(arts fair), which is traditionally organised by the Kalabhavan or the Art School of Viswabharati University. This fair gives an exposure to young kids and adult teachers to various facets of the art world, the different media of the arts. The kids especially love the installations, the performing arts and of course the food kiosks!

4. Project Management:

The project continues to be managed overall by Rahul Bose, Programme Co-ordinator, and facilitated by Kirsty Milward. Programmes were managed individually by teachers: ELG – Jhuma Gonrai; Computer Courses – Susanta Ghosh; Pre-school – Bhabini Baski; Tutions – Shanto Kora in conjunction with Susanta Ghosh, Sandip Mahji and Sagar Tandar for ITE; Mobile Library –Kumkum Kora. Narayan Hembrom led the Santali inputs to Supporting Adivasi Identity.

Key tools for management, planning and team communication

Programme workshops:

The key tools for the programme cycle continue to be programme workshops: - Planning / Mid-cycle review / Review and next cycle planning. These continue to work well to keep programmes on track and to re-focus periodically on troubleshooting and adjustment. All programmes (Pre-School, ELG, Tutions, Computer Courses, Mobile Library) and some sub-programmes (remedial) use this model successfully for keeping on track and planning tasks. These are an important part of the knowledge flow mechanism, through which implementation changes can be made to sharpen the orientation towards objectives. For example, it was as a result of programme workshops for the remedial and

mobile library that monitoring systems were sharpened and a monthly monitoring template designed.

Lesson planning workshops have also been an increasingly useful tool for co-working towards better focused and more systematic curriculum across the ELG and, through lesson planning for the ITE, also in tuitions classes.

Weekly teachers meetings:

Weekly teachers meetings open to any staff continue to be a crucial communication and management tool. Information on each programme is shared widely and a form of minuted joint decision making takes place. A separate weekly staff meeting for the ITE project has also continued this year.

5. Emerging impact and outstanding issues

The indications are promising that the project is having a long term impact on the education outcomes for most children attending. 10 years since the very beginning of Susana's at that time one-day-a-week programme, Suchana's oldest batch of children – 2 boys and 2 girls – sat their Higher Secondary Exams this year. All four passed and have gone on to college or vocational training. Our third batch of 7 students also sat Madhyamik Exams (5 boys, 2 girls) and all of them passed. One of the boys stood first among the boys in his Government school. That's a 100% pass rate for Board exams this year.

A gradual increase in awareness of the advantages of first language learning in the local area can also be attributed to the project, particularly among the Santal community. However, this must be weighed against an increasing trend in the Kora community to communicate with young children in Bengali in the home: this has increased markedly since the introduction of a Bengali-only Anganwadi teacher in the main Kora village.

Learning difficulties among students continue to be a major challenge, which threatens to defy the aspiration to universal literacy in the absence of more recognition of these issues and better skills to address them. Learning difficulties – major differences in the abilities and inclinations of different children – are present in any learning community – urban, rural, wealthy and poor – and these adivasi communities are no exception. However, when the major diagnosis is of poverty as the central factor limiting learning outcomes, little scrutiny is made of other important factors such as specific learning difficulties. Universal literacy will not be achieved until these are also acknowledged and strategies in place to address them.

Relationships with government schools also continue to be a challenge to maintain in the context of poor work culture and professionalisation processes associated with social status which mitigate against community involvement or participation in teaching-learning processes.

Suchana has made good progress in the broad sense of promoting a broad approach and conception of education which can then also include its new adivasi entrants. However, the context of exam

driven education narrowly focused on a limited range of rote-based methods makes progress with these aspirations beyond Suchana slow and uncertain.

6. Financial Information

Overall expenditure:

Suchana spent INR 2,35,6359 (£25,175) on programmes in 2014-15 and INR 7,74,728 (£8277) on assets, totalling at INR 31,31,087 (£33,452).

This compares with INR 15,89,963 (£15899.64)¹ on programmes in 2013-14, and INR 6,01095 (£6010.95) on assets, totalling at INR 21,91,058 (£21,910.58)

This indicates an increase in programme spending of just over INR 7,66,396 (£8188). This increase represents mainly the SDTT funded ITE project which began full operations in April 2014, and the New Mobile Library which went through full preparation including purchase of vehicle and books, and began full operation in March 2013.

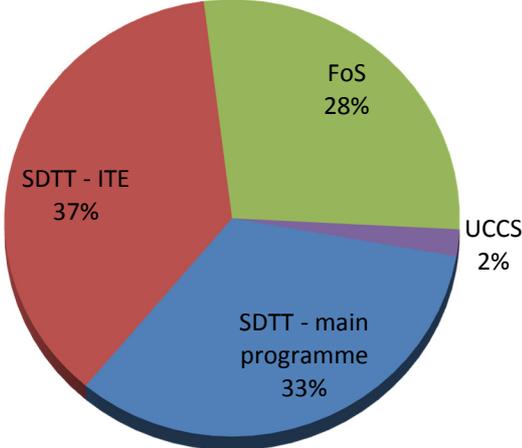
Division of funds between different donors, 2014-15:

UCCS received two separate programme grants from Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust (SDTT), one covering about 70% of Main Programme expenditure, and one grant 'over layering' the new Integrated Technology in Education (ITE) project over parts of the main programme (Tuitions). This second grant accounts for 2/3 of the Assets expenditure for this FY (more computers, camera). An FoS grant covered the New Mobile Library vehicle and the new Cycle Stand. A grant was also received in December 2014 from AID INDIA of INR 329507; this grant will be put into operation from April 2015-March 2016.

Some minimal expenditure were covered from UCCS 'unrestricted funds' – income from local sales, course fees, fundraising activities and private donations locally.

¹Figures in brackets convert to GBP at today's rate unless otherwise stated (not the rate at which grants were converted). The rate today is £1 = INR 93.6 (18 April 2015).

Figure 1: Different fund sources 2014-15



Annex 1: Background, Scope and Objectives of the project, as reported in Year 1.

Background:

The project area

Suchana works in Birbhum, West Bengal, the home of a substantial Adivasi population of mainly Santals, but including some Kora/Kodas. Suchana's working area consists mainly of adivasi villages representing the two tribal groups which are also two distinct language groups. Suchana also works with a small number of mixed, majority Scheduled Caste villages, and General Caste villages.

Suchana founded and manages the programmes of an Education Resource Centre which now works with 977 children, 70% of whom are adivasi and a further 8% Scheduled Caste. Suchana works intensively with 260 children (74% adivasi) from seven villages in teaching programmes and cross-cutting programmes. It also works less intensively with 588 children (91% adivasi) in a further nine villages through the mobile library, which visits once a week; and 129 children (27% Muslim; 19% adivasi) through technology support at Jadavapur High School.

The education profile of the area echoes that of the 2001 census, in particular showing a very low proportion of adivasi women having any formal education at all. Recent baseline data in the project area for the ITE project shows that 78% of adivasi mothers of Suchana ITE project children never went to school at all and less than 5% of adivasi mothers studied beyond class 5. Nearly half of adivasi fathers (46%) never went to school and only 15% studied beyond class 5. Most adults surveyed were under 30 years old, so this exclusion is not just concerning an elderly generation.²

The organisation in general aims to respond to some significant challenges in education for this population group. In particular:

- Education achievement remains 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.
- As suggested above, nearly all adivasis are first generation formal learners, with most having at least one parent who cannot read, and a large number having two. Therefore practical support for formal 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 concerning quality are yet to be implemented.
- A major challenge of first language education which is highly relevant in this context is poorly addressed by the RTE.

Project Rationale

In the context of the RTE which makes education compulsory, it has become urgent to ensure that children obliged to go to school have the opportunity to access meaningful and relevant education,

²Data from the ITE project baseline

and a learning experience that does not simply reproduce the social inequalities embedded in their social environment.

Suchana's Transforming Children's Lives project, implemented through the Education Resource Centre, broadly aims to develop and apply inputs to maximise the gains to adivasi and other marginalised children from attending mainstream schools. It is underpinned by an understanding that it is not simply that previously excluded children need to be 'brought in' to education, but that education systems and content will have to change to accommodate them if education is to sustain and support their cultural identities. Therefore the programme aims mix learning achievement objectives with objectives concerning alternative approaches to education.

Broad Objectives

Suchana's overall objectives are 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 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 and increase its use in learning processes;
- ❖ 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.

The Education Resource Centre therefore implements a broad range of programmes. These are intended to include children in across different age groups but also across a range of learning styles and learning interests. There is a focus on holistic learning and, where possible, on child led / controlled learning.

Over the last decade, the organisation has experimented with a range of methods for engaging children in learning and slowly building an education process that can support adivasi cultural identity and create equality across different social groups. The Transforming Children's Lives project represents the evolution of this process into its current form.

Programme objectives

Specific programme objectives have evolved over the last year in response mainly to the introduction of the ITE project which has brought some under-emphasised objectives into clearer focus.

Pre-School

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 on learning through play and learning through art.
- Provide foundational experiences of equality

Early Learning Group

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.
- Provide first language learning in the early years (Santali, Kora, and Bangla)
- 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.
- Integrate technology into learning processes for older ELG groups

Tuitions Classes

The Tuitions programme aims to:

- Support children in a variety of ways, including practically and emotionally, responding to their progression through school;
- Provide school curriculum based classes reinforcing school learning.
- Integrate technology into everyday learning to produce student-created learning artefacts and enhance learning outcomes
- Identify children vulnerable to drop out and offer particular support to stay in school.

Computer Courses

The Computer Course aims to:

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

Mobile Library

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 language publications.
- Encourage appreciation of stories and connect stories with books via reading aloud.

Supporting Adivasi Identity

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.