



ANNUAL REPORT 2013



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DIKSHA FOUNDATION

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About

Diksha

Diksha Foundation was started with the goal to provide quality education to children who come from socially and economically disenfranchised communities.

Since 2010 our movement has been towards creating vibrant learning spaces for children who most need them.

We believe that children are the most vulnerable members of our communities and their neglect has led to the many crises that we face today. We see education as a powerful tool to change regressive and apathetic attitudes towards gender, environmental degradation, caste biases, etc. and create awareness on social issues amongst the communities we are a part of. Our learning centres also focus on imparting skills that will allow our students to seek dignified livelihoods for themselves in future and therefore come out of the vicious cycle of unemployment and poverty.

Our work is deeply rooted in the idea of building inclusive communities with a special focus on the rights of children. Therefore we view our enterprise as an important intervention to create long lasting and sustainable change in the communities we work in.



Origin

In 1997, a group of apparitional school friends decided together to bring about a change in the education sector of India, besides following their own careers. Thirteen years later, their dream found fulfillment in Diksha Foundation. Started off by these likeminded individuals, Diksha stands for the untiring zeal and the continued efforts of many who make sure that education is not a privilege, but within everyone's reach.

Diksha Foundation was registered under Society Registration Act, 1860 on 14th July 2010. Since then our work is dedicated towards strengthening the rights of children in the collective consciousness of the society.

With support from our mentors we dreamt of bringing creative solutions to the problems that children faced while learning. We traveled to model schools across the country; we read on education pedagogies, we had conversations on what ideal learning spaces should look like and what was most missing from the learning adventures of children from economically underprivileged communities.

In December 2010 our first Knowledge Hub for Education and Learning Center was started in Patna, Bihar. We developed KHEL Patna as a learning space for children from economically disenfranchised communities of the Jagdeo Path area of the city.

In April 2011 our second KHEL center was started in the town of Hilsa, which is located in the historical district of Nalanda.

We also began work in Uttar Pradesh by partnering with Alok Charitable Trust. We set up the computer-learning centre in SRB Alok School, which is situated in the village of Gangagarh in district Bulandshaher. Our project, Prarabdhas been adding valuable learning resources in the school and training the teachers to create better learning environment for children in rural India.

In 2012 we collaborated with Maadhyam a learning centre in the Kusumpur Pahari slum community in New Delhi. The centre has been providing education to the children of the community since 2010.

Our Approach

Our approach to a learning space closely subscribes to the Japanese Concept of Ba. Ba is a mutual space where knowledge is shared, created and utilized between actors. It can be either a physical, virtual or mental space, and it is both closed and open in the sense that it is characterized by certain boundaries but also by constant interaction with its environment. In addition to providing a space for knowledge processes, but also provides the actors with energy. We have created learning spaces where children co-create an environment which encourages creativity and innovation. In the first stage we are working on developing such model learning centers. In the next stage we will be working on creating a network of collaborators who will take on this work with different government and other low-cost schools in India. And through our staff's contagious excitement we hope to accomplish these goals.

Our work revolves around several key themes

Creating vibrant learning spaces

We have put a lot of energy and thought into building the physical and mental aspects of our learning spaces. Our classrooms are filled with the creations of children and are happy and cheerful. We have added resources like books, computers and tablets which are otherwise not accessible to our students. Our team has worked to create non-violent classrooms where students are encouraged to fearlessly ask questions and seek answers. Age-old hierarchies between the teacher and the taught are broken down at our learning centers and our students are co-creators of their learning journeys.

Bridging the digital divide

Diksha's very first community needs assessment revealed that the economic divide runs parallel to the digital divide. Our experience of working with both rural and urban underprivileged communities, over a vast geographical area, has taught us that youth from these communities need access to and build comfort with new kinds of technologies to effectively break out of the poverty cycle. We have been working to bridge this digital divide by introducing Information and communication technologies like computers and tablets, access to the internet through Wi-Fi, and mapping open source content like Khan's Academy, Digital Study Hall, Project Guttenberg, Wikipedia and Google, to build a creative

common. We are equipping children with technological tools so that they can directly access open source information to make up for the lack of traditional learning support at home.

Building partners across India and the world

We at Desha firmly believe in building critical connections with like-minded organizations, individuals and communities that we work with. Our work is deeply rooted in the idea of collaborations, cross learning and sharing our own learning with a wide audience. Our partners include organizations like Commutiny - the Youth Collective, Pravah, Manzil, The Honey Bee Network, Alok Charitable Trust, National Innovation Foundation and many others. We have supported and nurtured the work of independent projects like Maadhyam and made them our own.

We believe that the important task of building communities can only happen by creating a strong web of partners with diverse expertise and interests pooling in energies towards a common goal.

Promoting volunteerism

Through engaging people in our work we nurture the spirit of volunteerism. By actively engaging with our volunteers we have enabled them to move out of their comfort zones and engage with other communities.

Being creative

The hallmark of children is their ability to think out of the box and express boldly how they view the world around them. This is what we have learnt from the children we work with. We have brought a lot of creativity in our lives and our programs. This has been the most rewarding aspect of our work.

Our Programs

KHEL-Patna

The Knowledge Hub for Education and Learning (KHEL) Centre in Patna, Bihar was started in December 2010. The children coming to the center



are from different slum and low -income housing settlements in the Jagdeo Path area. These include communities living in Tesh Lal Verma Nagar, and other communities from Lalu Nagar, Ashiyana More and Arah Garden.

The children are first generation learners and we provide them support in learning English, mathematics, and computers. Apart from after school supplementary education we have developed an environment of creative learning and our students engage in art and craft, dance and theatre and other such exciting extra-curricular activities.

KHEL – Hilsa

Hilsa is a small town in the district of Nalanda, Bihar. The status of children’s education in Hilsa, like most underdeveloped towns in the state is not at par with India’s average educational levels. KHEL Hilsa is therefore a much-needed intervention in the area.

We provide after school supplementary education to the children to plug the gaps that are left by school teaching. Our idea is to assist the schools in carrying out their teaching duties by becoming a strong support system to many first generation learners. We also have computer classes and a library for the children and like KHEL Patna we add extra-curricular activities to our teaching so that the children get a holistic learning environment.



Prarabdh – Uttar Pradesh

Diksha collaborated with the Alok Charitable Trust in 2010. The Trust has been running the SRB Alok School in the village of Gangagarh in the district of Bulandshaher in Uttar Pradesh since 1988. The school caters to the learning needs of children from the neighboring eight villages.

The Diksha team has been adding its



expertise in the area of ICT based learning. With the help of Cognizant a Multi National Company we have jointly set up a modern computer lab for the students. We have also added to the school library with mandatory library periods added to the students’ timetables. The school has an

impressive infrastructure and we have made it more lively and creative by adding concepts of BALA (Building as Learning Aid) to the school campus. We also carry out teacher training programs for the staff of the school so that our teachers are aware of the latest educational pedagogies.

Maadhyam – New Delhi

Maadhyam was set up in June 2010 in New Delhi when demolitions of slum communities were at a height in the nation's capital as a preparation for the Common Wealth Games. The centre was set up in the Kusumpur Pahari slum community, which is one of the last remaining large slums inside the city.



The centre set out to create vibrant and violence free spaces for the children of Kusumpur so that they can learn without fear. With this in mind the centre was set up inside the community near the homes of our students for easy access to the space. Maadhyam converged with Diksha in 2012. With similar goals in education and community development Maadhyam now runs as one of the learning spaces of Diksha.

Ignite 2013

The National Innovation Foundation's IGNITE campaign is an annual national competition to harness the creative and innovative spirit of school children. Students are invited to send their original ideas of technological innovations to the IGNITE team headed by Professor Anil Gupta an authority on grass root innovation in the world.



Diksha has been a partner of The IGNITE Campaign and over the last two years we have been taking the campaign to students in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

The Changelooms—Learning and Leadership Journey

Pravah and Commutiny the Youth Collective's fellowship programs have supported the activities of KHEL Patna, KHEL Hilsa and Maadhyam. Through this nation wide fellowship program Diksha has build a strong network amongst young social entrepreneurs across India.



Overview of projects and activities in 2012-13

Events and Diksha in News

Ignite 2013

IGNITE is an annual national competition to harness the creative and innovative spirit of school children. Students are invited to send their original creative technological ideas and innovations to the National Innovation Foundation. Diksha conducted the Ignite Contest in four districts in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. We reached out to 322 schools, including government and low cost private schools and saw participation of nearly 10000 students. Five students were selected for the Ignite National Award from Bihar. Dr. Kalam gave the



awards on November 10th, 2012 at IIM Ahmadabad to the students.

January to May 2012

Taking our enthusiasm for self led learning we established a mini library for the students at our KHEL Patna Centre. Our staff also facilitates a monthly get together of our Book Club where children enthusiastically discuss the books that they have read each month.



The children were taken for an outdoor visit to the Patna Zoo. We regularly plan such visits to exciting children's spaces for our students so that their understanding of the cityscape is made bigger. Experiential learning components are a big part of our education agenda of our team.

June – September 2012

At Diksha we are lucky to have friends and supporters from across the world. In 2012 – 13 we had many visitors who enriched our classrooms by sharing their life experiences and skills with us. We would like to acknowledge them here – Mai Hata from Japan, Mohita from Hyderabad, Gaurav Nanda from Asha for Education, USA, Nishant Anand from UK, Laurence from Spain, Deep Jyoti from Pravah, New Delhi.

Our Partners the Smile Foundation supported us in starting weekly distribution of nutritious food packets amongst the students in KHEL Patna. This has enabled us to take our nurturing beyond just teaching.

October- December 2012

Mr. Anand Vardhan, from Deloitte, organized a drawing event on the theme of "Environmental Sustainability. The children made drawings and learnt about the importance of protecting the environment.

Kids presented short skits on World Aids Day on December 1st. The skits were a wonderful way for the children to discuss the importance of knowing



about health hazards and also the social stigma attached to diseases like HIV.

The Kids also participated in Zee TV's program "SABSE BADA DRAMEBAAZ" auditions. This was a great way for them to build their confidence and explore the world of television.

The children also met mathematician Sushil Kumar. He interacted with the children and dispelled some of the fear that some students have around studying mathematics.

January – March 2013

With believe that children should be at the forefront in taking leadership roles in their lives. We at Diksha believe in nurturing this spirit of leadership. We organize Open House Meetings for the children and the response has been tremendous. The children have become more assertive, participative and responsible in co-creating the centre spaces.



We introduced online classes in English & Mathematics; our volunteers conduct these sessions for the students.

Mr. Pinaki from "Smile Foundation" shared the importance of proper nutrition and the value of good health and proper hygiene.

Mr. Paul Jarvis, and Dr. Ranjana took interesting sessions on geography.

A number of activities were organized from time to time and children participated enthusiastically in Republic day celebration, one act play, Dance, Music and Quiz. They also participated in the drawing Competition on the eve of Bihar Mahotsav at Gandhi Maidan Patna. Rahul Kumar from our centre got the first position in the competition. Kundan Kumar participated in the "Children Alliance" which focuses on Child Rights organized by "Save the Children".

Our Team

Gunjan Kumar

He Joined Diksha in Feb 2011. Earlier he worked with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India) as a Development Organizer in the Skill Development Program. He works as a Coordinator and is part of various projects like KHEL Patna, KHEL Hilsa and IGNITE. He likes listening to Songs and reading. He is quiet, optimist, friendly, and open to change.

Sangeeta Devi

She joined Diksha in December, 2010 as a teacher and have been teaching kids maths and English. Earlier she was teaching in a middle income school. She likes singing qawwali with the children, read and meet people. She is Sociable, flexible and Open to learning in her words.

Suchitra Gauri

She Joined Diksha in December 2011 as a volunteer and a teacher mentor. She was working as Headmistress at DAV Public school, Patna. She has continuously engaged with the children and inspires fellow team members. She likes music, drama and singing. She is Simple hearted, Patriotic, down to earth, and truthful in her words.

Awadhesh Prasad

Anil Bharti

Awadhesh Pandey

Supriya Bharti

Our Board

Arun Gupta

Arun has a vast experience in Financial Consulting and operates a Financial Consultancy firm providing total financial solutions to large as well as Small & Medium Enterprises covering wide spectrum of

industrial sectors. He is also Trustee of Alok Charitable Trust. Earlier he served Bank of India as Vice-President of the Merchant Banking division.

Avi Karan

He joined Diksha in December, 2010 as a centre co-ordinator. He worked as a translator at Plan India before joining Diksha. He likes Singing and talking to people. He calls himself talkative, helpful, unorganized, and spontaneous at times. He has a degree in B.Pharm and is graduate in social entrepreneurship from TISS, Mumbai.

Gautam Gauri

He joined Diksha in July 2010. Earlier he was working with Cognizant as a Business Analyst. At Diksha he works as a Coordinator. He is a part of the project management and fund raising team. He is an engineering and management professional. Inspired by an IIM Professor's initiative in creativity and innovation, quit his 4 years corporate job to pursue his longstanding passion to engage with education. He likes reading and listening to interesting people & ideas. To him he is quiet, Intuitive, Friendly & Straightforward. He is a Fellow for LLJ Programme of Youth Collective.

HN Sahay

Mr. HN Sahay has a successful track record in the area of business development at national level for over 28 years. He has served a number of premier corporate houses .He moved Social Sector with Prayas; a Delhi based national level NGO in year 2003. He has handled issues concerning Child Rights and Juvenile Justice, Alternative Education and Livelihood Skills Development, Self – Help Groups and Microfinance, CSO Governance and Sustainability.

Mohita Katariyar

Mohita combines a high degree of enthusiasm and knowledge to facilitate student learning in an innovative and constructive manner. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Her interest lies in holistic development of children. She works with DPS Noida.

Pratyush Mishra

He is Human resource professional with experience in combining relevant academic training with implementable strategies to re/engineer people-focused processes. Pratyush holds MBA degree from Christ College and works in HDFC Bank.

Rashee Mehra

She has been working in the field of development for the past four years. Her area of interest has been education and she has touched many themes through this medium, such as environment, gender and youth leadership. Her area of interest is research into innovating creative learning spaces for underprivileged communities. She has been a fellow of the Learning and Leadership Journey of Commutiny. The Youth Collective.

Saurabh Kumar

has a degree in B Tech and MBA (Finance) – IIT Kanpur. He has more than 4 years of experience in financial consulting (Finance).

Vikas Gupta

He is Managing Director, Compark Group. He holds keen interest in enabling transition of masses to virtual world with the help of an innovation-based & impersonal organizational eco-system. He has earlier worked as Assistant Professor at Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad. He holds an MBA degree from Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad and has also studied Corporate Law at Institute of Company Secretaries of India

Our Partners and Supporters

Alok Charitable Trust

Since 1988, ACT has been involved in the challenging task of rural transformation through education and healthcare in backward areas of India.

Asha for Education

Asha for Education is a secular organization dedicated to change in India by focusing on basic education in the belief that education is a critical requisite for socio-economic change.

Commutiny the Youth Collective

CYC promotes youth development in India. It is a collective of like-minded professionals from diverse organizations who believe passionately in the power of young people to envision the future and to act in the present.

Honeybee Network

Is a network of like-minded individuals, innovators, farmers, scholars, academicians, policy makers, entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It has a presence in more than seventy five countries. Honey Bee signifies a philosophy of discourse, which is authentic, accountable and fair.

MANZIL

Is a non-profit organization providing a community and resources for local youth from low-income backgrounds to learn, teach, be creative, and see the world in new ways.

MEDIA GURU

is a global media services company engaged in media consulting, technology, and digital archiving solutions, with expertise across television, film, radio, new media, and print. The company's focus areas include new launches and revamping of TV channels, FM radio Stations, digital and print businesses.

PRAVAH

Works to impact issues of social justice through youth citizenship action. It is a registered organization with a team of more than 25 professionals with vast experience in diverse fields such as human resource development, theater, psychology and social sciences. They have partner with more than 40 Indian civil society groups.

SMILE FOUNDATION

Is a national level development organization directly benefitting more than 300,000 underprivileged children, youth and women annually through 158 projects in thematic areas of education, healthcare, youth employability and empowerment of.

Our Supporters

Kumar Akshay, Animesh Dubey, Ankit Katiyar, Apoorv kumar ,Pratyush mishra, Apurva Thakur, Bhagat Singh Gauri, Jalaj Murgai, Khalid Rauf, Kumari Surbhi, Kunal Kishore, Nishant Kumar, Pravesh Saha, Prem Anand Sinha, Rajesh Kumar, Ranjana Rani, Ritu Saxena, Ruchi Katiyar, Saket Jha, Shruti Makheja, Sumita Jha.

Diksha Foundation's projects are possible only due to the incredible generosity of our sponsors. From our hearts, we rejoice, and thank all those who have made donations and continue to support our various projects.

Contact us

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