

ACTIVITIES REPORT 2006-2007

**"The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it,
But that it is too low and we reach it."**

- Michelangelo

We believe that we must aim high. Our children's uniqueness and creativity strengthens and renews our belief. It is your faith in our work that turns 'hope' into reality so that our increasing goals are attainable.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Rural Education Centre - Igatpuri

We have purchased a 14-acre plot at Awalkheda for our Education Centre for Tribal Children. In the first phase, a Balwadi is going to be established and eventually educational and vocational training provided to empower students with independence and a livelihood.

Our work in Igatpuri has come a long way. Two TISS students conducted a survey to create a consolidated profile of the village, Awalkheda, and the surrounding 'wadis'-Phanaswadi Jambhwadi, Gowalwadi, Jambulwadi, Warachiwadi, and Karachiwadi. Aseema is setting up a Balwadi, expecting an estimated sixty prospective students. Appointment of teachers and their training have started.

For the first time a Sports Day was held for the children of the Anganwadi at Phanaswadi that Aseema has adopted. Parents and children had a great time. The event was such a success that the teachers organized their first Annual Day in April.



Aseema has adopted an Anganwadi (Pre-Primary School) which caters to children of three wadis. Teacher training programs, teaching aids and educational material are being provided. Aseema also contributes school uniforms, a nutritious mid-day meal, and assistance to bring the children to school. The number of children enrolled has increased considerably. The present school is in a dilapidated condition and construction of a new Anganwadi is being undertaken.

A very significant development in Igatpuri is the formation of a Village Committee of eight members, including the Sarpanch. This Committee and the government officials recognize that education will transform their children's lives and their villages. An Aseema Balwadi Mahila Mandal has also been established and the members meet every Tuesday. Mahindra and Mahindra organized an Eye Camp for the elders of the village on 9 March.

The Pali Chimbai Municipal School [PCMS]

The PCMS, adopted by Aseema in 2001, is regarded as a paradigm for state-run schools in urban and rural India. The approach is child centered where children learn in an environment that is meaningful and holistic. Activities like art, music, yoga, judo and sports enrich learning.

A Library, Art Studio, Computer and Multi-media Centre, and a Counselling Centre provide an opportunity to achieve standards of excellence.

The Pre-Primary Centre

The PCMS is the only BMC School that uses the Montessori Method in an integrated way.

The Balwadi is an enriched learning environment, run entirely on Montessori lines. Teachers who believe that every child has unique potential awaken our children's creativity and intellectual curiosity.

Balvikas was established in June '06, for children of ages 5 to 7 years. The Montessori approach is used to strengthen the traditional approach, to prepare the children for Standard I.

To celebrate 100 years of the Montessori Method, The Association of Montessori Internationale in Mumbai organized a Walk on 7 February. About 100 Aseema Pre-Primary children participated with their teachers and helpers. Our little 'shishyas' overshadowed the film celebrities who had also participated.

The Support and Activity Centres

Aseema students, who attend mainstream schools, are assisted with their schoolwork at the Support Centre. Yoga, drama, judo, and music provide integrated development.

Embroidered articles are created at the Activity Centre, and these account for quick sales at the Aseema exhibitions.

Computer and Multimedia Centre

Classes at the Jim Lynn Centre (at PCMS) are conducted for students of Standard V - VII, since December '06. Students attend class twice a week where they learn Microsoft Word, Typing Tutor, and Paint Accessories.

The K-yan Machine, a knowledge vehicle, is being extensively used to bring a rich variety of resources into regular classroom teaching.

Art Studio

Deputy Education Officer of BMC, Mr. A. R. Rehman inaugurated Aseema Room13 Art Studio on 4 August 2006. TBWA India representatives, the Press and BMC's Adoption Program officer, Mrs. Geeta More Patil attended the function.

The Art Studio reflects the philosophy of a movement - 'Room 13' - where art is not 'taught' but is a unique expression of an individual child artist. Children work as co-artists with Amit Romani, the 'Artist in Residence'.

An interesting and unique feature about Aseema Room13 is the system of having the artwork of children catalogued in folders.

Unilever and TBWA/ India have commissioned the artwork of Room 13 for their campaigns.

Seven child artists participated in an event organized by Create Foundation (Children's Research in Education, Arts & Theatre Endowment). They were involved in collaborative work with renowned contemporary artists. A visitor from Ireland conducted a Basic Animation Workshop. Using a digital camera and handy cam, the children created a story line.

Aseema Room13's first exhibition of paintings took place at the end of December at the Crepe Station Café, Bandra. It is an ongoing exhibition. Children are involved in the whole process, right from the selection of works for display and pricing of each painting, to the labeling and packaging, etc.

Teacher Training/ Workshops/Seminars

Our teachers give a lot of importance to meticulous planning so that meaningful learning is ensured. They have participated in the following workshops and seminars:

- 'Innovative Teaching Methodologies' organized by Sir Shapurji Billimoria Foundation
- Building Resource Mobilization Capabilities at S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research
- Early Childhood Development – A Global Perspective organized by IAPE and SNTD.

- ‘Blending knowledge and skills into a curriculum of caring’ organized by Lions Quest in India Foundation
- The Aseema staff and volunteers [Mumbai] went on a two-day trip to Igatpuri. The staff meetings were an affirmation of Aseema's educational philosophy and strengthened our commitment to provide holistic education to every child.

Annual Exhibition

The Annual Exhibition on 19 and 20 January at the PCMS displayed the students' academic achievements. Projects, models, interactive games, wall displays reflected the impact of quality education, where learning is a joyous and meaningful experience. The Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Mr. S. S. Shinde, and all the visitors wrote glowing remarks in our Visitor's Book.



Sports Day

The third Annual Sports Day was held on 8 February, at Apostolic Carmel Convent for Standard I - VI, and on 15 February, for the Pre-Primary on the grounds opposite the School. Prizes were generously awarded for the events. The Team Events, Tele Games, Judo, Gymnastics, and Drill Displays won over the audience.

Annual Day

Annual Day was held on 1 March, for PCMS and on 13 April for the Pre-Primary. There were vibrant celebrations of poetry, drama, music, and dance. The students' creative expression and sense of self-esteem led one of the guests to remark, "No longer are the children of Aseema poor, they are certainly rich in academic and artistic achievements."

Field Trips and Cultural Activities

A close bond has been struck between the Pali-Chimbi Municipal School (PCMS), Bandra, and the neighbouring schools. The interaction between our children and those from a more privileged background has led to mutual respect and understanding. A melting of boundaries is experienced.

Our students were enthusiastic participants in:

- The Family Fun Day at the American School
- An Outreach Program at the Apostolic Carmel High School
- Friendship Day at Arya Vidya Mandir School at Bandra Kurla Complex.
- An exhibition at Wilson College, 'A Walk through the Western Ghats'
- A visit to the 'City of Los Angeles Museum', Matunga, Mumbai
- A day of fun and entertainment organized by the Walt Disney Group

Aseema children have become Mumbai's cultural ambassadors. Some of the places where they performed were as follows:

- Soroptimist International held a Poetry & Art Competition and ALL the Aseema participants from Grades II to VI won prizes in their respective categories
- Our students participated and some won Prizes at the Inter-School Competition organized by the BMC, Education Department
- The children sang, 'Itni Shakti Hame Dena' at the Immortal Legends Concert
- The Lions Club of North Bombay hosted a Talent Contest. The Aseema Girls' Group Dance won the First Prize and also won two First Prizes for Solo Singing
- Students of our Support Centre sang 'Mumbai Meri Jaan' at the Mumbai Festival
- The Novartis Talent Hunt -3 children have been selected for the final round, which will be held later this year
- Genesis made a short 5-minute film on Aseema as part of their 101 Film Project
- This years' Harmony Show had two young beneficiaries – 16 years old Roshni Jadhav and 14 year old Rafiq Shaikh. The award was initiated by Vasanti Muzumdar Trust in 2006

Workshops

- The Centre for Environment Research and Education [CERE] conducted a series of workshops on 'Art & Craft with Waste'. Ingenious masks, papier-mâché figures, wind chimes, and photo frames were created out of 'junk'.
- 'Rhythm and Groove', a dance workshop was organized by Raell Padamsee for our children
- Workshop on Sexual Awareness: The main purpose of these sessions was to guard against child sexual abuse, which is a very real threat to our children.
- On Children's Day, the children received a demonstration from a professional potter and were given an opportunity to make pots.

COMMUNITY WORK

Our Social Worker pays regular visits to the community. Parents are taking a keen interest in their children's education. Most children are 'first generation' learners. Parent meetings are held to monitor the child's progress and health.

A Committee of six parents oversees the cleanliness and garbage disposal in their neighbourhood.

A dental check up and follow up treatment was given to 233 children. The Lion's Medical Centre organized this camp. A health check up was also conducted.

PRODUCT DIVISION AND EXHIBITIONS

Our child artists have gained recognition and admiration for their unique, innovative creations. These can be viewed on our website: www.aseema.org

Aseema products are displayed and sold at the Bombay Bakery Company (BBC) Window, at the JW Marriott Hotel.



A sale of child art and Aseema Products, based on the children's artwork, was on display at the 12th Harmony Show, an exhibition of contemporary art.

During the year, Aseema participated in the following exhibitions:

08 May	- Novartis
02 and 16 June	- ICICI One Source Ltd., Parel and Malad
04 - 06 August	- A Fair of the Heart, Worli, Mumbai
11 August	- NGO-Fair-Lowe Lintas, Lower Parel
30 August	- Raell Padamsee's Program, Churchgate
09 September	- Tata Consultancy Services, NCPA Nariman Point
02 October	- Mahindra Founder's Day, Worli
07 - 08 October	- Tulsiwadi, Mumbai
10 October	- Larsen and Toubro Limited, Powai-Diwali Sale
13 October	- JB Petit School – Parents Day, Mumbai
14 October	- Tata Tele Services Ltd, Prabhadevi
18 - 19 October	- HSBC, Helping Hands, Bandra (West)
15 November	- Holiday Charity Mela, Juhu
01 December	- Glaxo, Worli
02 December	- American School of Bombay, Bandra (East)
02 – 03 December	- Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, Tardeo
03 December	- St. Andrew's Auditorium, Bandra (West)
15 – 16 December	- Christmas Bazaar, Bandra Gymkhana
15 December	- St Andrew's Auditorium, Bandra
26 January	- Jamnabai Narsee School, Juhu
27 - 28 January	- Tata Institute of Social Science, Chembur
09 – 11 February	- NGO Mela Concern India Foundation, Mumbai
07 March	- Saatchi & Saatchi, Lower Parel
30 March-08 April	- 12 th Harmony Art Show, Nehru Centre, Worli

THANK YOU

Aseema children have held their own; have made their mark in a very competitive world, transforming their scant resources to explore 'limitless potential'.

We would like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you and our teachers, volunteers and all members of our staff for your unstinted support and encouragement which you have whole-heartedly extended to Aseema over the years. Much has been done, more is yet to be!

To all of you thanks, and evermore thanks.