



PRABHAT EDUCATION FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

PRABHAT EDUCATION FOUNDATION is a Public Charitable Trust registered in 2006 under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950. Donations to Prabhat are exempted from income-tax under Section 80(G) of the Income-Tax Act 1961. (As per amendment of Section 80(G), existing approval of Prabhat is in perpetuity). Prabhat is authorized to receive donations from overseas under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA Registration No.041910406). Prabhat is registered by the National Trust (Government of India) and by the Government of Gujarat as a recognized institution for persons with disabilities under The Persons with Disabilities Act (1955).

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The Prabhat Education Foundation began its journey through the preparatory years between 2003 and 2006, registering as a trust in 2006 with the mission of serving children with special needs and their families in the Ahmedabad area. The Jeevan Taleem programme innovated by Prabhat toward this goal is today its central activity. It provides outreach to homes and communities, counseling and assessment of needs, basic therapy services, opportunities for learning and self-confidence, and contacts with special institutions and authorities. Most of all, the Jeevan Taleem Centres offer a space for joyous learning and a range of opportunities to acquire capacities, confidence and dignity that are essential for these future citizens to lead normal and productive lives. Prabhat's Annual Report for 2007-08 reviewed its initial experience in locating spaces in eastern and western Ahmedabad as well as the families and children in need, setting up basic facilities, locating a team of educators, specialists and volunteers, and building their capacities while achieving the first signs of recognition for the quality of Prabhat services. The year 2008-09 has seen the consolidation of Prabhat's directions and demonstrated its ability to build a strong record of service, outreach and advocacy.

Jeevan Taleem

Infrastructure

The two Prabhat centres at Maninagar (south-east Ahmedabad) and at the Anand Niketan School in the Satellite area (west Ahmedabad) now shelter 60 and 10 children respectively. With the largest concentration of children and families in Maninagar, space was a major constraint during the year, absorbing considerable attention. Efforts were made to improve and expand the areas essential for learning, play, therapy and counseling. Toilet facilities received particular attention, most particularly the need for separate facilities for girls and for adolescent requirements. During the year Prabhat surveyed alternative space options in view of its needs as well as financial constraints. To provide a more uniform quality of service, equipment and learning materials were upgraded, toilets improved and spaces brightened. The support team of educators and volunteers increased from 15 to 30. Efforts began to provide safer and more reliable transport back-ups for children for whom mobility is a major constraint. During the year, Prabhat received Rs2 lakh grant from Unnati toward purchasing its own vehicle so as to reduce dependence on auto-rickshaws. Through the year, Prabhat continued to familiarize families with government schemes, helping several to access medical certificates as well as bus passes.

Human resources

Working on a shoe-string budget supported primarily by family resources, Prabhat has had to strive to retain its committed team, most of whom served on token salaries and honorariums or as volunteers. A proposal was received and processed from the partner organizations of Jan Vikas and Udaan to position two fellows at Prabhat to assist its programme and fund-raising needs. A major area of concentration has been lifting the capacities of Prabhat staff to serve the range of needs represented by the special situation of each child and family. Workshops for staff during the year included those in special education methods (such as dyslexia), new therapies, pedagogical methods (including art and craft), as well as opportunities for parents to be trained in home care. Ms Hasyalatha Mehta, an eminent special educator with wide experience, conducted a training programme on pedagogical techniques and documentation for Prabhat educators, who also participated in workshop opportunities at other NGOs including SEWA.

Fund-raising and Development

A principle focus has been on fund-raising, which is Prabhat's major constraint as family resources dwindle. A three year perspective plan (2008-11) was formulated to identify priority needs and funding strategies. Income from fees improved from Rs0.94L to Rs1.52L and from donations from Rs3.94L to Rs4.39L. Prabhat invested time to negotiate participation in the GiveIndia Foundation and its registration processes for on-line donations. (These were completed in March 09). It interacted with other potential donors

including the Paul Foundation (Kolkata), the Save The Children Fund (New Delhi) and with authorities concerned with FCRA procedures. Meetings were held with the Sir Ratan Tata Trust in Mumbai and work initiated for formulating a proposal for consideration by the Trust. Prabhat's proposal was submitted in December 2008 for consideration under SRTT's Small Grant Programme.

These contacts led the Sir Ratan Tata Trust to encourage Prabhat to network with other institutions serving special needs. SRTT invited Director Keshav Chatterjee to attend a two-day workshop in Dehra Dun in December 2008. This important opportunity strengthened Prabhat's contacts with key organizations including the Lotika Roy Foundation (Dehra Dun), ComDEALL (Bangalore/Mumbai), RMKM (Rajasthan), Ashadeep (Assam) as well as Setu in Ahmedabad. The interaction provided exposure to early intervention methods, reverse inclusion, activity based strategies, current practices in networking, capacity-building and advocacy and in anticipating future challenges. Following the workshop, Prabhat reviewed its original proposals to SRTT and modified some of these to reflect best practices and models absorbed at the workshop. This review was to lead later in 2009 to a detailed reviewed of special education challenges and Prabhat's role. (A Community-based Rehabilitation Programme was introduced in July 2009)

Dialogue with other special educators helped Prabhat during the year to commence work on two directions that will be central to future strategies for service. One is a strengthened home-based training and support, which began in October to provide sustained support outside the Prabhat environment and to reach children unable to attend Prabhat Centres. Linked to this is the Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme, through which Prabhat will seek to build a community-led support system for special children and their families. This approach recognizes the need for communities to express their interest and concern for special children, and to move away from stigma and discrimination toward greater ownership, pride and care.

Building networks of support

Networking was further strengthened during the year through contact with the National Trust as well as the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (New Delhi) to share current directions and seek guidance. Supplementing the SRTT opportunity in Dehra Dun, Prabhat worked with Educational Initiatives (Ahmedabad) to train college students toward the special needs sector. With the new policy and legal environment that supports the rights of special children, Prabhat commenced assistance to Government schools in assessment methods and in orientation for teachers on the basics of special education. Contacts were forged during the year with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (toward serving the needs of teachers and special children within the Municipal School system) and with the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan on access to learning materials.

An advocacy direction developed during the year was in encouraging local service and educational institutions to build their awareness of and contact with special education. In Ahmedabad, training and service partnerships were developed with SEWA, St Xavier's College, C U Shah College, Ambedkar University, Bhoj University (Madhya Pradesh), the Sarada School (Ahmedabad). The Riverside School, one of Ahmedabad's finest, emerged as a major partner and supporter of efforts to link special children with their peers in mainstream schools. A 'buddy' system was initiated with Riverside to promote and sustain such contacts at a child-to-child level, which soon proved enormously beneficial to both groups. The location of a Jeevan Taleem centre at Anand Niketan School's Satellite campus has provided a most important opportunity to build such relationships of support and advocacy. A citywide 'Aproch' effort to serve children in need also offered Prabhat children with opportunities for outings and interaction. To build on this foundation of contacts, a consultation was held with three leading Ahmedabad NGOs (Janvikas, Udaan and Centre for Social Justice) toward a joint effort using Prabhat as a catalyst for awareness and action in special education within Ahmedabad. The proposal includes surveying needs in deprived areas throughout the city. Prabhat recognizes the great importance of special events which can help special children and their families with enjoyable opportunities for interaction with other children and citizens, building their own sense of normalcy and self-worth.

Other outreach & co-curricular activities

The year saw the introduction of monthly outings to places of special interest and enjoyment, made possible to transport donated by the Riverside Foundation. Festive celebrations have become an important element in this strategy. Prabhat's Holi, Uttarayan and Navratri celebrations during the year were not only joyous and very well attended. They also served to demonstrate how children and families that yesterday despaired of hope could be seen to be enjoying themselves, dancing and singing with siblings, neighbours and local communities. Children's Day, World Disability Day, World-Day for Mental Retardation provided other opportunities to celebrate and network with other activists. Prabhat children participated in the Annual Sports Day organized by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and in camps by the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. The Aproch programme offered Prabhat children with a pizza treat at Christmas, and the AMC invited them to experience new amusement facilities at Kankaria. Using the experience gained through initial steps in home-based and community-led approaches, Prabhat began planning its 2009 Summer Workshop as a major opportunity to bring special children and their families as full participants within the mainstream.

Communication efforts included improving Prabhat's website and involving local media in advocacy. Coverage of Prabhat contributions appeared in three leading dailies (Ahmedabad Mirror, Times of India, Gujarat Times, Divya Bhaskar, and DNA) and on NDTV.

Experience

Prabhat is encouraged that most of its enrollment has come through a word-of-mouth from parents. Indeed, the movement by parents from a helpless, hopeless attitude to constructive engagement with their children's progress has been significant. Home visits, an important element of Prabhat's system, have contributed to this understanding. Parents take heart from and report significant indicators, such as successful toilet training and the ability to perform small tasks of drinking, eating or communicating through expression, sound and action that once seemed impossible. Neighbours in Maninagar (including families, shopkeepers and auto drivers) have moved from curiosity to concern and an occasional helping hand. At the Anand Niketan School, teachers and children who had earlier kept Prabhat children at arm's length have now come to know them and have even volunteered to assist and play with them. These small signs of engagement could perhaps lead to greater inclusion within that School. A few children have already moved out from Prabhat into mainstream opportunities. Current concerns include parent expectations of vocational training opportunities that Prabhat plans to commence in 2009-10, and the need for male care-givers for boys in adolescence. Prabhat has been able to assist families to access government schemes including medical certificates, medical insurance opportunities, bus passes, railway passes, Sant Surdas Yojana Grants and scholarship opportunities.

Recognition

The Social Defense Dept (Govt. of Gujarat) gave Prabhat its Certificate for working with People With Disability.

Governance

Prabhat's Board of Trustees was enriched in February 2009 by the induction of Ms Hasyalatha Mehta. She brings to Prabhat her experience of many years with the Ambica Sishukendra (Kurnool) and the Spastics Society of Eastern India (Kolkata). Earlier, Ms Mehta conducted special workshops to build the capacities of Prabhat educators (see above).

Visitors

During the year, Prabhat has had the privilege of welcoming visitors from a range of local, national and international agencies. These have included Ms Devika Singh, the prominent social activist from New Delhi who helped found Mobile Creches, Gopi Venkatatraman of GiveIndia Foundation, representatives of the Rotary Club, George Taylor of the Winterline Foundation (USA) and a SEWA team that included participants from the Hincks Dellicrest Centre in Toronto (Canada), the Toronto Dept of Public Health, and the Bala Mandir Research Foundation (Chennai).

Acknowledgements

Prabhat would like to acknowledge the guidance, encouragement and support it has received from so many of its partners, colleagues and well-wishers during 2008-09. Special mention may be made of our donors, our partner educational institutions, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Rotary Club North (Ahmedabad), Riverside Education Foundation, Anand Niketan School (Ahmedabad), Sir Ratan Tata Trust, GiveIndia, Unnati: Organisation for Development Education, Centre for Environment Education, (Ahmedabad) and Prabhat family of children, parents, educators, volunteers and communities.

Donations to Prabhat Education Foundation 2008-09

Nayana Parekh Trust	Rs.25000
Aakash Tours & Cargo P Ltd	5000
Gopi Synthetics	11000
Mr P.J.Shah	25000
Mr Jayesh Rawal	5000
Mr Nripjit Singh Chawla	100000
Mr Shushil N Thakar	5000
Ms Gopi Vankatraman	10000
United HR Solutions Pvt. Ltd	5100
Mr Romesh Suri /Ms Mona Suri	20000
Mr Romesh Suri /Ms Mona Suri	10000
Ms Mona Suri/Romesh Suri	10000
Ms Mona Suri/Romesh Suri	10000
Ms Sneih Singh	25000
Mr. Vyas Dinkar Maganlal	501
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	9006
Ms. Chandravaliben N Shah	11000
Ms. Shobha Nehru	5001
Riverside Education Foundation	133750
Anala Outdoors Pvt Limited	10000
Mr. Umesh Patel	2000
Mr. Alkesh Patel	1000
Total (Revenue) Donation	438358
Unnati Organisation for Dev. Edu (Earmark Donation for VAN)	200000
Total (Capital)Donation	200000