



# Dr Kiran Martin

Padmashri

Founder and Director

Asha Community Health and Development Society

The founder and director of Asha, Dr Kiran Martin leads and inspires an organisation that has transformed the lives of countless slum dwellers in Delhi. She has devoted her entire working life for improving the lives of slum dwellers, and is today recognised internationally as a visionary leader in urban health and justice. Her insight, empathy and determination have brought supporters and volunteers from all parts of the world, who in turn have taken her vision of hope and transformation back into their communities.





The former Health Minister of Delhi, Dr Harsh Vardhan during an event hosted at an Asha Community. (1994)

**I**t all began with a young pediatrician single-handedly working at a borrowed table under a tree. In 1988, Dr Kiran Martin – a trained Doctor from Maulana Azad Medical College in Delhi and specialised in pediatrics from Lady Hardinge Medical College – set her foot in a slum for the first time, to treat victims of a cholera outbreak. There she saw the devastating link between poverty and ill health. She also witnessed how fear, ignorance and lack of money can prevent slum dwellers from seeking even basic healthcare.

From that single slum, Asha has grown to reach out to over 500,000 people living in the slums of Delhi. Dr Kiran's work is based on the values of social justice, active peacemaking and inherent dignity of each individual. These values reflect the contemporary notions of human rights, civil society and governance, and shape the work of Asha.

In her 27 year long journey since that first intervention, Dr Kiran has ensured the establishment of not just healthcare services on the doorstep of slum colonies, but also financial inclusion, education, and environmental improvements, thereby empowering the slum residents to improve their own lives.



## Healthcare

Asha's healthcare model has been designed by Dr Kiran to function in partnership with the local slum residents to deliver preventative healthcare services as well as treatment. Asha identifies women from slums and trains them as Community Health Volunteers. For more serious ailments, many Asha slums have a health centre staffed by part-time doctors, nurses and paramedical staff, that helps to diagnose and treat patients, perform ante-natal checks and immunise children.



Dr Kiran examining a patient at one of Asha's slum based healthcare centres. (1997)



Former Delhi Slum Commissioner Late Mr Manjeet Singh presenting an Asha CHV with her medical kit. (1990)

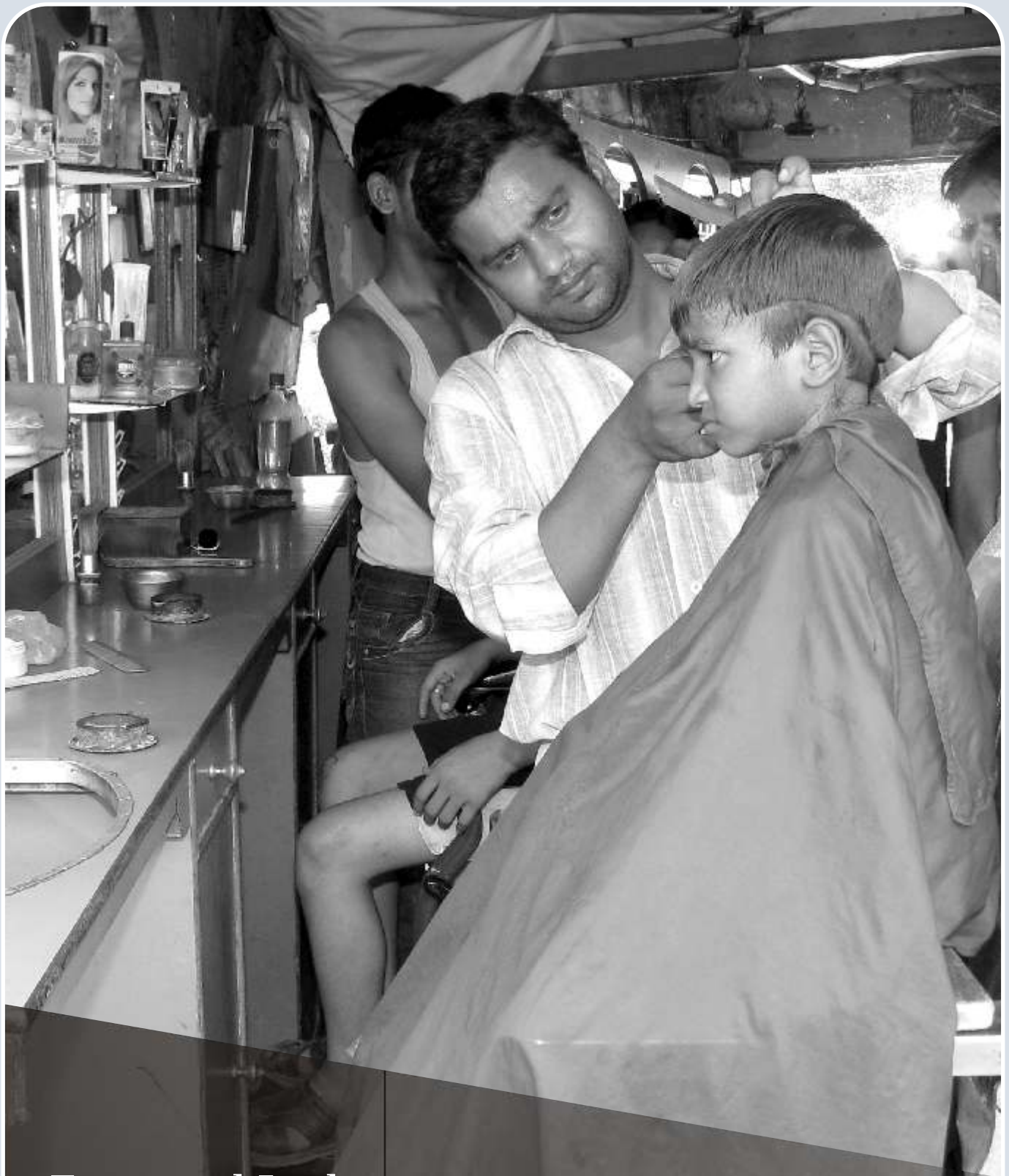


## Empowerment

Dr Kiran believes that the greatest resources in slum communities are the people, especially the women. They may be illiterate, but once aware of their rights the women quickly absorb information and eagerly pass it on to others. Over the years, Dr Kiran's model has helped people join together into influential, knowledgeable pressure groups to tackle community issues, build links with officials and ensure the community's basic rights.



Members of Asha's Women's Association at a newly installed tube well in Dr Ambedkar slum colony, R.K. Puram.



## Financial Inclusion

With the vision to provide beneficial banking services to the slum dwellers, Dr Kiran initiated Asha's Financial Inclusion Programme. Launched by India's former Finance Minister, Mr P Chidambaram in 2008, it provides equitable opportunities to every slum dweller allowing them to open savings accounts, hold recurring and fixed deposits, and take out loans for business and education.



Former Finance Minister of India, Mr P Chidambaram at an Asha Financial Inclusion Event. (2013)



An Asha borrower who has successfully grown her business.

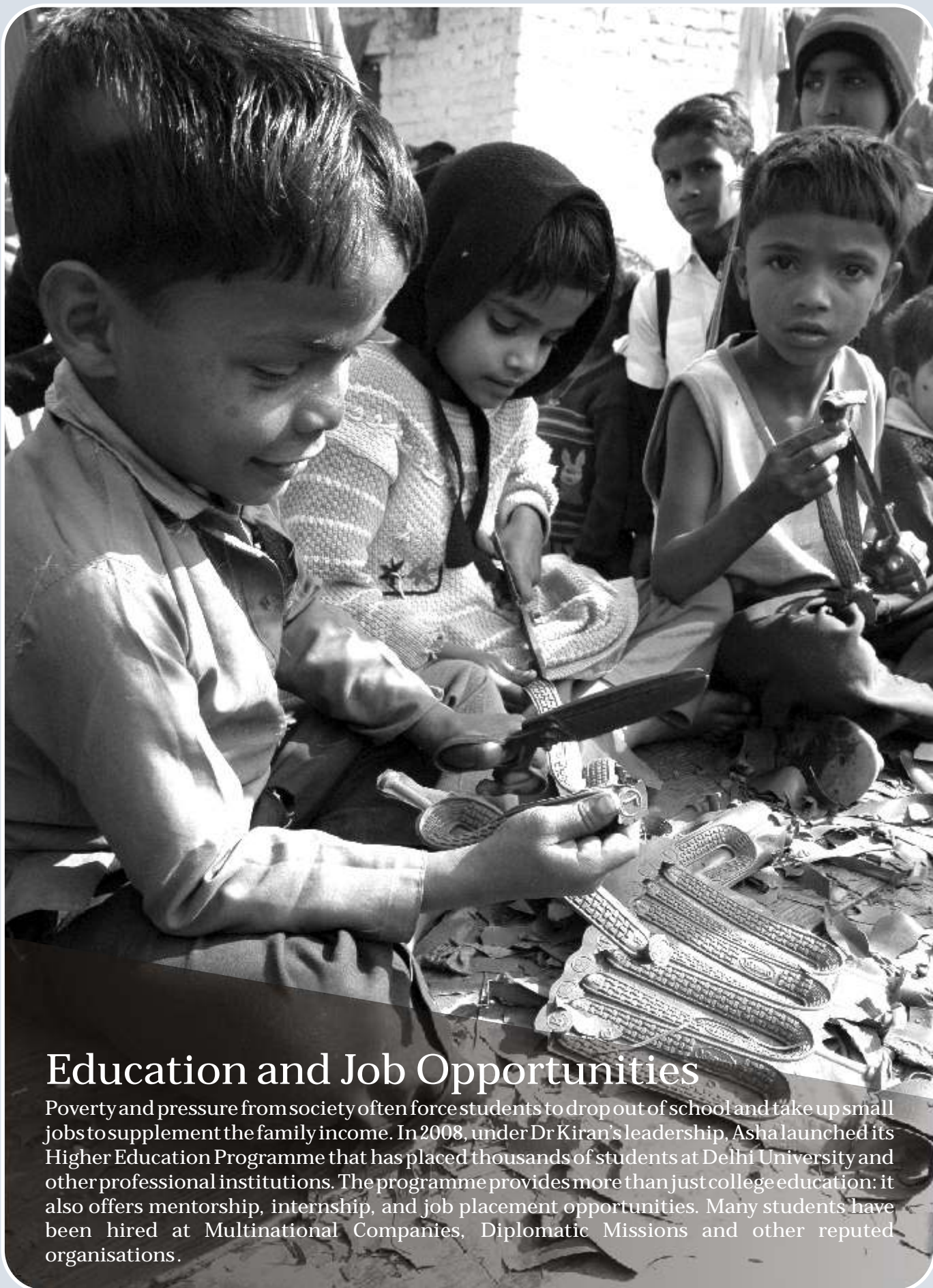


## Environmental Improvement

With knowledge, Women's and Children's Associations gain confidence and approach government officials, police and schools to help improve their environment. As a result of such efforts and Asha's help, they now have access to new toilet blocks, paved roads, access to schools, electricity meters, cleaner surroundings, better living conditions, and in some communities, even land titles.



Slum dwellers receive land titles and infrastructure at Savda Ghewra through Asha.



## Education and Job Opportunities

Poverty and pressure from society often force students to drop out of school and take up small jobs to supplement the family income. In 2008, under Dr Kiran's leadership, Asha launched its Higher Education Programme that has placed thousands of students at Delhi University and other professional institutions. The programme provides more than just college education: it also offers mentorship, internship, and job placement opportunities. Many students have been hired at Multinational Companies, Diplomatic Missions and other reputed organisations.



Students from Asha communities at Delhi University.



Many Asha students are now employed at reputed multinational companies such as Cognizant, Rio Tinto and VFS Global.



The Padmashri award being presented to Dr Kiran by Mr K.R. Narayanan, the former President of India. (2002)



Dr Kiran invited by New Zealand's Prime Minister John Key in Wellington to present the Asha Model. (2011)



Australia's Former Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP visited an Asha community to study the Asha Model. (2012)



Canadian First Lady Her Excellency Sharon Johnston being welcomed by Dr Kiran during her visit to an Asha community. (2014)



Dr Kiran with former Chief Minister of Delhi, Mr Madan Lal Khurana at an Asha event. (1994)



Dr Kiran calling on the Governor General of Australia, Hon Sir Peter Cosgrove AC MC. (2015)



Dr Kiran welcomes Mr L K Advani, former Deputy Prime Minister of India to an Asha community. (2009)



The Hon Alex Chernov AC QC, Governor of Victoria hosted a luncheon at Government House, Melbourne in honour of Dr Kiran. (2012)



Dr Kiran was invited by Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Julie Bishop at the Australian Parliament subsequent to the Minister's visit to Asha. (2014)



Dr Kiran with the Indian External Affairs Minister, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj. (2014)



Dr Kiran had a joyful meeting with His Holiness Dalai Lama at New Delhi. (2015)



L-R: Australian High Commissioner HE Patrick Suckling, Former Indian Finance Minister Mr Chidambaram, Dr Kiran, Ambassador of the United States HE Nancy Powell, New Zealand High Commissioner HE Grahame Morton and Canadian High Commissioner HE Stewart Beck, at an Asha event hosted at the Australian High Commission. (2014)



Dr Kiran presented the Asha Model to the U.S. House of Representatives. Seen here with Rep Jim McDermott (D), at the US Capitol (2003)



Dr Kiran with Congressman Mike Thompson (D) (extreme right) and his wife Mrs Janet Thompson hosting the 13th Annual Asha Day in Napa Valley, California. (2011)



The Irish Minister for Skills, Innovation and Research, Damien English TD during his visit to an Asha community. (2014)



The First Lady of Japan, Mrs Miyuki Hatoyama visiting an Asha community. (2009)



Dr Kiran with Australian Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and former Australian High Commissioner to India Mr Peter Varghese and his wife Margaret at an event hosted for Asha at the Australian High Commission, New Delhi. (2012)



British High Commissioner His Excellency Sir James Bevan KCMG presenting Dr Kiran with a memento of appreciation for her 25 years of work in Delhi slums. (2013)

## Asha Community Health and Development Society

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