

# hope

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## 02 Asha Turns 30: special edition

To mark the splendid thirty years of Asha's work in Delhi slums, we had a week-long celebration of events attended by our Global Friends of Asha from across the world. This is a special edition dedicated to the recent celebrations. We take this opportunity to thank each one of our supporters for being a part of this wonderful journey. If not for your sincere support, achieving this milestone would have been impossible.

### **Tribute to the Founder by Asha graduate Zubair**

She is her own comparison. There is no one in the world she can be compared with.

Her story is imprinted on the heart of every child.

She is the light that shines on the storms of our lives.

She has purchased all our anxieties and troubles with her love.

She is the one who saves us from drowning in our sorrows like a sailor in the sea saving drowning lives.

Her heart is always open with compassion for us all.

With both of her hands she pours compassion on us all.

She is a human, but to us her character and life are God like, she is like God.

**Asha is a community health and development society dedicated to improving the lives of slum dwellers in Dehi.**

Find us at:

[asha-india.org](http://asha-india.org)

[facebook.com/ashasociety1](https://facebook.com/ashasociety1)

[twitter.com/ashasociety](https://twitter.com/ashasociety)

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## 03 Spotlight



### Asha is my solace, it is my hope: Kajal

Kajal, a diligent girl from Dr. Ambedkar slum colony, faced tremendous challenges, yet she stood strong. Many people in her circumstances would have given up. But this young woman took up every challenge that came her way and turned them into opportunities. Below is her journey in her own words that she shared at the 30th Year Anniversary celebration at the British High Commissioner's residence.

"When I was two years old, my father left us. My mother remarried, and my stepfather didn't accept me. Each day, I felt unwanted and unworthy. I questioned my own existence.

One day, my mother told me to go and live with my grandparents because she couldn't bear to see me suffer. But life at my grandparents' home wasn't a bed of roses either. They asked me to leave as well. I was standing alone on the road, scared and hurt. Tears kept rolling down my face. I asked myself, could it get any worse? The belief that I was worthy of a better life kept me going.

That is when Asha came in my life. I was amazed to meet so many caring people who made me feel worthy and loved. Today, whatever I am, I owe it to Asha. I never dreamt of finishing school, let alone going to University. But today I have graduated as one of the toppers with an Honours degree in Bachelor of Commerce from Delhi University. I feel proud to be an Asha Ambassador, responsible for shaping youngsters in my colony for a better future. Presently, I am working as a Process Associate with a US service firm Genpact. I am proud that I am now a financially independent girl.

Last year, I lost my stepfather. I forgave him. He needed peace in the final moments of his life. I wanted to give him the gift of peace. Because of what I learnt from following the Asha values, I decided to support my stepsisters financially. One day, I would like to buy my mother a home so that she can leave the slum forever. This is my dream and I am sure I will be successful as I continue to work hard".

## 04 News at a glance



### HRH Prince Edward visits Asha

We were honoured to host His Royal Highness, The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex KG GCVO, The Honourable Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, British High Commissioner to India and his wife, Lady Louise Asquith who visited our Jeevan Nagar centre on February 7, 2018, to celebrate the inspirational acts of volunteering.

His Royal Highness was delighted to learn about Asha's work particularly its health initiatives and the women association's work in the local slum. He also interacted with a group of interns

and mentees, Asha students and graduates as well as young children.

Dr Kiran Martin presented Asha's coffee table book 'A Journey of Hope' to His Royal Highness. **1**

### Celebrating Asha's 30th Anniversary at the Irish Embassy

His Excellency Brian McElduff, the Ambassador of Ireland, kindly hosted Dr. Kiran Martin, Asha volunteers, the Friends of Asha Trustees and Co-ordinators and the Asha team at his residence on February 7, to kick-start Asha's 30th Anniversary.

HE Mr McElduff in his welcome remarks said, "The Embassy of Ireland is proud to be associated with Asha and enjoys the great professional relationship we have with them. The Higher Education Programme is remarkable. I appreciate Dr. Kiran and the entire team's powerful work."

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Dr. Kiran said, "I thank each one of you for joining us today. We have had supporters from all over the world, but the strong association that we have with the Embassy of Ireland and all other diplomatic missions in Delhi is wonderful." She also gave examples of Asha students

who are working successfully in reputed companies and diplomatic missions throughout Delhi.

Asha graduate, Sharanya, shared her amazing journey with Asha. The event ended with students from Methodist College performing a song, followed by closing remarks from Gordon Wright, trustee of Friends of Asha Ireland.

### Celebrating Asha's 30th Anniversary at the British High Commissioner's Residence

Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, the British High Commissioner to India, and Lady Louise Asquith were very kind to host Asha at their Residence on February 8, 2018, over a cocktail evening. The theme, 'Slums to University', celebrated the achievements of Asha's young University students.

In his opening remarks, Sir Dominic said, "I am glad to be associated with Asha. It is doing a wonderful job at uplifting students, graduates and Ambassadors. Working with Dr. Kiran is a real joy."

The guest of honour, Her Excellency Ms. Harinder Sidhu, the

## 05 News at a glance



Honourable High Commissioner of Australia to India, in her remarks expressed joy and pride in being a part of the 30th Anniversary celebration and praised Asha for the tremendous contribution it was making in the lives of children living in the slums.

One of the highlights of the event was the inauguration of the Asha Alumni Association. It aims to foster mutually beneficial relationships among the students in the slums and Asha graduates. Our toppers for the academic year 2016–17 were felicitated by Sir Dominic. The evening also saw two young Asha students, Kajal and Venugopal, share their heart-warming stories of struggle and transformation, that moved the entire gathering. **3**

### Celebration Of 30 Years in Asha's Slum Communities

Asha's 30th Anniversary celebration witnessed some wonderful events in the presence of our friends and supporters from across the world.

The celebratory week witnessed the inauguration of the state of the art Physiotherapy Centre at the Asha Headquarters, bringing all the physiotherapy facilities under one roof, and the opening of the pre school activity room for slum children in Ekta Vihar slum colony, called 'The Starlight Room', the brain-child of Dr. Kiran and Asha volunteer, Heather Brown.

A thanksgiving celebration was also held, followed by Asha friends' and supporters' visit to the slum communities, where each centre had organized a cultural programme to celebrate the 30th year. **4**

### Asha Turns 30: The Final Celebrations

Asha's 30th year celebrations concluded with a gala event on February 10, 2018 at the India Habitat Centre, where the



presence of honoured guests from High Commissions and Embassies, Global Friends of Asha, supporters, women, children and students from Asha supported slum communities made for a unique celebration.

The event saw a mix of cultural performances by Asha's very enthusiastic and talented children and students and first-hand stories from the

communities, showcasing Asha's role in the transformation of slum dwellers lives in the last 30 years. Audiences were taken on a 30 year journey through a photo slide show. Asha graduates also expressed their gratitude towards Dr. Kiran through a video and poems. Asha's supporters from various walks of life were felicitated for their dedication and contributions towards the work of Asha. **5**

## 06 Spotlight



### **I will continue to serve my community as long as I live: Meena**

Meena, now in her mid-40s, is a proud Community Health Volunteer (CHV) from Dr. Ambedkar slum colony who, despite facing a life-threatening disease, never lost hope. She has been serving her community for the past 30 years. Here is her incredible story in her own words.

“Prior to Asha’s intervention, my colony was in a terrible shape. There were small makeshift shanties covered in dirt with no water or electricity. People suffered from cholera, TB, diarrhoea, pneumonia etc. The children were malnourished and didn’t receive vaccinations. Pregnant women never went for antenatal check-ups. There was no concept of family planning.

I vividly remember August 1988. It was during a cholera epidemic in the slum when Dr. Kiran sat under a tree and started treating the sick. Slowly things changed for the better. The toilet was the first thing that was constructed, roads and drainage systems followed. The best thing that happened was that we started believing we deserved better. Experiencing change in not just our lives but in our children’s lives, we felt liberated. Our children now go to university and work in good companies. I was no longer stuck inside the four walls of my house. Rather, I was out there with other women, treating patients in our colony. The feeling I got from serving people was overwhelming.

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with a cancerous tumour in my uterus. To say the least, I was scared. But the people at Asha helped me to cope with the repeated visits to the hospital and I got a new lease of life after the successful operation to remove the tumor. I have had many joys and many struggles through my 30 year long journey with Asha. I pledge before all of you today that I will continue to serve my community as long as I live”.

## 07 Message corner

### **HE Joanna Kempkers New Zealand High Commissioner to India**

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“The New Zealand High Commission has had a long and productive partnership with Asha. We have seen from close quarters how your efforts to provide opportunities to disadvantaged communities sparked inspiring changes in many lives. The High Commission has been pleased to work with you to help create a more equitable society and play host to several hardworking interns from your organisation over the years. Each one of them impressed us with their resolve to succeed and left us motivated by their transformation. I congratulate the entire Asha family on completing 30 highly successful years and hope for many more encouraging milestones in your journey ahead.”

### **Francis X. Clooney, SJ Parkman Professor of Divinity Harvard University**

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“I am happy to hear of the 30th anniversary of Asha, so noble and valuable an organization, that has done so much good for so many people. Congratulations to Dr. Kiran Martin, the visionary guiding spirit, and to all the unsung heroes who have worked so hard for so many years to help people achieve their potential. May Asha continue to flourish and grow, bringing hope to so many!”

### **Phil and Heather Lyon. Asha supporters from UK**

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What an unbelievable amount has been done in those years, when we look back to the early days and think of the changes in the slums, the number of lives affected, not to mention

the huge number of students whose lives and prospects have been changed beyond anyone’s imagination.

Sending you our best wishes, and prayers for a time of great blessing, as you go forward together.

### **Victoria Thampi Friends of Asha Ireland**

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Warmest congratulations on 30 years of Asha. Since my first trip to Delhi in 2012 I have been privileged to meet the Asha team and all of the wonderful people in Mayapuri. The people are beautiful inside and out and their generosity of spirit and kindness will always remain with me and inspire me be generous and compassionate. May God bless you as you continue to be His hands and feet, giving hope to those who need it most.



## 08 Transforming lives

### Promoting Education

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£ 75 – One year of books for one child

£ 110 – College preparation for 30 children

£ 230 – One year of university tuition for one student

£ 450 – One year of entire university expenses for one student

### Promoting Health

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£ 18 – Vaccinations against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis for five children

£ 45 – Basic health education for 1,000 people

£ 75 – Vitamin A supplements to prevent night blindness for 60 children

£ 115 – Recovery treatment for 10 TB patients

### Promoting Empowerment

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£13 – Training for 1 Community Health Volunteer

£ 30 – Celebration of events and interactive activities

£ 45 – Collaboration with government officials

£ 65 – Training workshops on infrastructure and environmental improvement

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## Friends of Asha (Great Britain)

If you would like to contribute to the lives of poor slum dwellers in Delhi, then you can become a Friend of Asha. Friends of Asha are an integral part of our organisation and aid our activities through donations, fundraising events, volunteering and raising awareness of the work we do.

#### For more information, contact:

**Dr Richard Hogben, Coordinator,**  
**Friends of Asha GB**  
foasha.richardhogben@gmail.com

#### Donations

If you would like to make a donation to Asha, and you are a UK tax payer, you can Gift Aid your donation. Friends of Asha GB (Charity Registration No. 1085071) can collect an extra 25p for every pound you donate.

#### To donate online directly from your Bank

Make a payment to  
The Lloyds Bank account of Friends of Asha (GB);  
Sort Code 30-96-31; A/c No. 01899891

#### To donate online

Send your contribution to Asha by visiting our website at:  
<https://asha-india.org/get-involved/donate/great-britain-donations/>

#### To donate by cheque

Make your cheque payable to  
“Friends of Asha (GB)” and mail to:

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UK