

# hope

News for friends of Asha Issue 83 July 2019



## 02 Batch Toppers 2019

From Slums to University

## 03 Spotlight

Asha's Higher Education Programme provides independence and dignity

## 04 News at a Glance

Updates from across the organisation

## 06 Spotlight

Asha's Financial Inclusion Programme provides empowerment and self-sufficiency

## 07 Volunteer diaries

A heartfelt thanks to our friends from all over the world

## 08 Transforming lives

Support our cause

## 02 From Slums to University– Batch 2019 Toppers



### Mehjaabeen, D/o daily wage mason, Resident of Anna Nagar Slum Community

I had some terrifying moments before the results were announced. But the emotional support I received from Asha Ambassadors is beyond words. I am happy to share that I have got admission to Bachelor of Arts in History Honours at the prestigious Kirori Mal College of Delhi University. Earlier, I was studying hard but never had a goal; with the help of Asha, I can fulfil my dreams. I couldn't believe I scored 96% in my board exam. Finally, dreams are turning into reality!



### Bilal Khan, S/o daily wage labourer, Resident of BIW Slum Community

Last year I was devastated when I met with an accident and my leg was fractured. For 2 months, I could not attend school, but Asha was always there by my side. Many times, I studied under a streetlight. I am more than happy to have scored 92.75% in my school leaving exams. Also, I have got admission to Political Science (Honours) at Ramanujan College of Delhi University. I will always be thankful to Asha for their support and guidance.



### Ahmed, S/o a labourer, Resident of Chanderpuri Slum Community

I was encouraged and inspired by the Asha Ambassadors and Team at every step. With their guidance and help, I scored 92% in my school leaving examination. I have seen my Asha family toiling day and night for my admission to university. I am glad to share that now I have got admission to Satyawati College of Delhi University.



### Sumit, S/o a daily wager, Resident of Tigri Slum Community

I scored 100 marks in the subject of Economics and 91.25% overall in class 12th. I cannot thank Asha enough for assisting me this well. With the help of my Asha family, I could secure a seat at P.G.D.A.V College of Delhi University. Now I can dream of taking my family away from the slum soon.

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

Find us at:

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

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

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

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

[instagram/ashasociety](https://instagram/ashasociety)

## 03 Spotlight



### A story of struggle and HOPE!

Lifting heavy bricks, concrete blocks and sacks of cement three times his weight had been a daily affair for Sunil's father for many years. He toiled hard as a daily-wage labourer and was the only source of income for his family of 4. With earnings of 6,000 rupees (\$84/£64) a month, Sunil's father barely managed to meet the needs of the family which was already on the breadline.

Born and brought up in Asha's Jeevan Nagar slum community, Sunil only remembers juggling the need to get a couple of meals a day and attending school while growing up. He did his schooling at a government school where the education was free but was of poor quality.

He came across Asha in class 7 and immediately enrolled himself here. He took some time to absorb the Asha values, but soon started following them. With each visit to the Asha centre, his perspective towards life changed.

It gave him the motivation to apply for higher studies. Simultaneously, he kept attending the English, Communications and Basic Computer classes at Asha. Mingling with his peers and the Asha family made him understand the value of education. However, his family's economic status kept haunting him. Trapped in poverty, Sunil's father refused to support his education any further. In fact, he asked Sunil to get a job as soon as possible.

His struggle didn't end there. With the Asha family's support, Sunil worked hard to get a place at Delhi University. Finally, he got admission to Sri Aurobindo College in Applied Psychology at Delhi University.

"Be it the admission procedure or signing on behalf of my parents, my Asha family has done it all. They also paid my college fees. What else could I ask for?" smiles Sunil.

While pursuing the final year of his bachelor's degree course, he got an opportunity to intern with Dr Bohra's Neuro-Psychiatric Centre. Soon after the completion of his graduation, Sunil started working as an Operations Officer at VFS Global. But his life took another dramatic turn when his family compelled him to marry a girl of their

choice. Within a year, his world had turned upside down. His relationship with his wife was not good and worsened with time.

His household expenses had sky-rocketed and his professional life was also in doubt. All he wanted was to be free again. After a year of legal battles, Sunil got the divorce, but he was drained financially.

A sad and disheartened Sunil felt completely lost.

Dr Kiran, who has seen Sunil growing up, met with him and counselled him. She encouraged him to apply to various High Commissions and Embassies. Sunil applied to the British High Commission and was called for an interview!

The best news is that Sunil got the job from among hundreds of applicants. Today, Sunil is employed as a Visa Support Assistant at The British High Commission.

## 04 News at a glance



### Asha's Internship Launch

Asha's Internship Programme for the year 2019 was launched at the Australian High Commission on 30th May 2019. It was attended by High Commissioners, diplomats as well as corporate partners.

This year, sixty-one Asha students have completed their internships from International Monetary Fund, Embassy of Switzerland, Embassy of Peru, Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Greece, New Zealand High Commission, Australian High Commission, British High Commission, Macquarie Global Ltd., Mazars, B'Desir and Rio Tinto.



### A new horizon for Chandan

Chandan's tryst with Asha began about thirteen years ago when he joined Asha's Children Association. A big Gulmohar tree with a makeshift swing is his first memory of the Asha centre in Jeevan Nagar.

Chandan, who has been mentored by Dr Kiran herself all along, after graduating from the Delhi University, has now been chosen for the prestigious Chevening Scholarship in the United Kingdom. All of his scholastic and other expenses will be covered to help him pursue a Master's degree in Pure Mathematics at Imperial College, London this September.

From being an Asha Topper in the year 2013 to achieving the Chevening Scholarship, Chandan has stopped at nothing.

"Under the constant motivation and guidance from Dr Kiran and Asha Great Britain Trustee- Amanda Clegg, I am finally realising my dreams," says Chandan.

### Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex meets Dr Kiran

Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex and the Vice Patron of the Queens Diamond Jubilee Trust met Dr Kiran at the British High Commission on May 3. She was delighted to meet a group of enthusiastic Asha Ambassadors and hear their stories. She spoke about the importance of being a part of a loving community and expressed her deepest appreciation for the work of Asha. She remembered her husband Prince Edward telling her all about his visit to Asha last year.



## 05 News at a glance



### Global Asha Meet 2019

A unique and interactive meeting was held at Asha's Mayapuri slum centre on March 30th. Board Members and other important functionaries from Friends of Asha organisations across the UK, Ireland, USA and Australia participated. The visitors met Asha students and members of the community.

Richard Leder (National Coordinator, Australian Friends of Asha) chaired the discussion, describing the milestones in the relationship between AFOA and Asha India. He also explained the activities on resource mobilisation in their respective countries. An exciting idea of extending the brand, 'Hope and Spice', to new lines like clothing and textiles was discussed with the global team.

Richard Leder concluded the meeting, suggesting more ways of sharing and increasing visibility. The meeting was completed with a visit to the Asha community at Mayapuri.



### Counselling Clinics in Asha slum communities

Adolescents in the slums are prone to mental turmoil due to material deprivation and social vulnerability. Substance abuse and addictions can put them at the risk of developing mental illnesses.

Asha has collaborated with NGO-HASI to initiate a programme wherein mental health screening and counselling is being provided to slum patients.



### Workshop on menstrual hygiene at Asha's Kalkaji slum community

It is not inappropriate to talk about menstruation, and it is not wrong to discuss menstrual cramps.

To fight menstrual taboos in our society, a team from Macquarie Global Services in Gurugram along with the Asha Team, conducted a workshop on menstrual hygiene in Kalkaji slum community on June 21st.

They also shared some ideas on home remedies for menstrual cramps and cleanliness. Sanitary napkins were distributed to all the women at the end of the workshop.



### Asha conducts Eye Camp at Mayapuri slum

On May 18th, Asha conducted a special Eye Camp in Mayapuri slum community. A medical team of nine from Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, led by the Head of the Ophthalmology Department, Dr J Bhalla, visited the centre and held the free eye camp.

More than 116 patients attended the camp. The team of doctors examined each patient and prescribed the required treatment.

## 06 Spotlight



### The Story of Mobina

Mobina had come to Delhi more than 30 years back from the far flung Darbhanga in Bihar with her parents. Her father was a landless labourer and the family income was very inconsistent. Financial crisis in the family forced Mobina's parents to get her married at an early age to a daily wage labourer. Her hopes for a better life were shattered soon, as the grim face of stark reality stared at her. Her husband turned out to be an alcoholic which resulted in him losing his job. As a result, the family was forced into deeper financial crisis and acute poverty.

Moreover, Mobina was forced to have children every year which took a toll on her health. Soon there were seven people including five children; three daughters and two sons to feed. Poverty, deprivation and an alcoholic husband led to domestic violence as well and Mobina seemed to have been caught in a web of poverty, depression and neglect. She also remained ill for a long time due to intestinal disorders. The children were growing up uncared for, and unwanted. Surrounded by gloom, melancholy, and deprivation, Mobina had nowhere to look for a better life. She still vividly remembers the day when there was not a grain in her house to feed her wailing children and she had nobody to turn to for help.

It was when Mobina got the chance to know about Asha and rays of hope and promise began to illuminate the dark world of Mobina. With the Asha team's inspiration and motivation, Mobina decided to take the bull by its horn and turn things upside down.

The Asha team took her to a nearby hospital to get her diagnosed and treated. The team also provided rations for basic sustenance of Mobina and her family. Slowly, her health began to improve.

The Asha team leader at Zakhira encouraged Mobina to join the Women's Association (Mahila Mandal). Mobina started facing her situations with a new zeal and vigour. With their support, she decided to turn into an independent entrepreneur and got a bank loan of 10,000 INR under the Financial Inclusion programme. She started a tea-stall at Zakhira.

Initially, it was a big challenge for Mobina as throughout her life, she had never ventured out of her home. With determination and grit, she encountered and demolished the barriers and challenges. It was a refreshing change also for the residents of Zakhira to see the coy and diminutive Mobina brewing tea on one hand and interacting with the customers with ease and poise on the other. Her business began to grow rapidly, and she repaid her loan on time. All her children are going to school and one of her daughters is happily married.

A determined Mobina is economically independent now, taking care of her family and is an important voice in her community.

This story is an example of Asha's holistic model of development and demonstrates how different elements of the programme- Healthcare, Empowerment and Financial Inclusion work together to bring about transformation.

## 07 Volunteer diaries



**Megan and Jessie**  
United Kingdom

"I spent 5 weeks working with the Communications Team as a graphic designer, while my cousin, Jessie, taught English to the children of Dr Ambedkar Slum Colony. It was great being able to put my skills to use to support the team and to help spread Asha's message of hope. From the children in the slums to the staff in the office there was such a strong feeling of optimism and passion for the work Asha was doing. It was a really inspiring environment to work in for both of us and was great to get an insight into both areas. The importance of the Asha values really shone through and we loved how dedicated the team were to improving lives of the slum communities."



**Jeremy**  
USA

"My two weeks working with Asha has truly been an experience of a lifetime. Observing the amazing Dr.Sharmilla at the polyclinic taught me lessons about compassionate medical care that I'll use as a future doctor. It was inspiring to see the staff dedicate their lives to the people of Delhi. In the afternoons, the people of the Kusumpur Pahari slum would invite me into their community to witness the healthcare they provided and to teach the children at Asha. Although it initially seemed that we didn't have much in common (me being a medical student in South Carolina), we bonded over our love of family, sports, and Netflix."



**Avantika**  
India

"When I first entered the slum, for a minute, I forgot that it was the same city I live in. I could never imagine that such a beautiful bond could be built with the Kalkaji slum community, with the difference in living standards and their way of life. It felt amazing seeing the Bal Mandal (Children's Association) members eagerly waiting for me every morning. I will never be able to forget the love we shared, the food we ate together, the fun we had, and all the moments we spent. I would love to meet them again soon."

If you would like to volunteer at Asha,  
please contact [info@asha-india.org](mailto:info@asha-india.org)

## 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

£ 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 (Great Britain) aids our activities through donations, fundraising events, volunteering opportunities and raising awareness of the work we do.

#### For more information, contact:

**Dr Richard Hogben, National Coordinator, Friends of Asha GB**

[foasha.richardhogben@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**1. 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

#### 2. To donate online

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

#### 3. To donate by cheque:

Make your cheque payable to "Friends of Asha (GB)" and mail to:  
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Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3PE, UK