

Akanksha Public Charitable Trust

B 404, The Atrium, 49 Kalakshetra Road, Thiruvannamipur, Chennai 600 041, India

Tel: +91 99266 83778 www.imleemahuaa.org www.facebook.com/ImleeMahuaa

Annual Report 2015-16

ABOUT AKANKSHA

Akanksha was born when a group of friends started volunteering on weekends at public hospitals and homes for destitute children and women in Chennai in 1998. Akanksha Public Charitable Trust was created on July 15, 2000 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu and registered soon after when some of its volunteers decided to devote more time and energy to Akanksha to make it their primary work.

PURPOSE

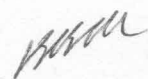
Akanksha's purpose has evolved over the years. Today, Akanksha works to learn along with and support individuals caught up in life's unfortunate circumstances through collaborative initiatives in areas of education, health and livelihoods engaging especially with the young and with women.

ACTIVITIES

Over the last decade, Akanksha's work has involved the following activities:

- Volunteering at state owned 'children's observation homes' to help them deliver better by organizing activities for their children and helping children who have strayed away from their homes to get in touch with their families and return home.
- Volunteering at state owned hospitals for women and children, helping cancer afflicted children and their families cope with hospitalization and medical treatment by organizing recreational activities and financial aid for them.
- Providing relief material to those affected by earthquakes and tsunamis.
- Augmenting the work of other not for profit organizations whose work is closely aligned with that of Akanksha by providing voluntary services and / or financial assistance to such organizations.
- Sponsoring medical expenses of needy people especially women and children.
- Sponsoring the educational expenses of needy children.
- Establishing and operating a rural school in a tribal area.

Today, Akanksha's work primarily revolves significantly around the last three activities.



THE YEAR THAT WAS

During the year 2015-16, Akanksha continued to build on the work undertaken during the earlier years.

The bulk of the work of the Trust was located in Balenga Para and Kumhar Para villages in Kondagaon district of Chhattisgarh state and in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The highlights of Akanksha's work during the year are summarized below:

- **Educational Support**

The Trust took up the responsibility of supporting another 2 children (in all 13) in Chennai and 45 new children in Kumhar Para village in Chhattisgarh all belonging to families below the official poverty line. These rural children belong to families of traditional craftspeople, subsistence farmers and landless laborers.

- **Medical Relief**

The Trust continued to provide primary medical care for minor ailments to people in and around Balenga Para village in Chhattisgarh and sponsored their medical treatment in a good hospital in Jagdalpur whenever needed.

- **Imlee Mahuaa School**

60 students (35 girls and 25 boys) continued to study at Imlee Mahuaa School in grades nursery to seven in multiple age groups that called themselves Sapri (the name of a local indigenous variety of rice, Semar (the bombax tree found in plenty in the School's neighborhood), Seetaaphal (custard apple) and Soorajmukhi (sunflower). 75 percent of the children are members of the Scheduled Tribes, 10 percent are from the Scheduled Castes and the rest from the Other Backward Classes. 58 out of 60 children come from families whose incomes are below the official poverty line.

The School worked in two shifts until September 30, 2015 from 7.30 to 12.30 and from 12.30 to 5.30 and thereafter in a single shift from 7.30 to 5.30 with flexible timings until the end of the year.

Towards the end of the year 6 children left the School and 4 new children were admitted into the School. As on April 1, 2016 the School has 2 vacant seats for students, both of which have been allocated to girls.

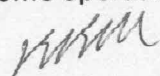
10 senior students (all girls) worked in entrepreneurship development projects run in the School through the year as follows:

- School teaching, administration and entrepreneurship (4 students)
- Pottery and ceramics (2 students)
- Library, reading room and book shop (4 students)

Their project work involved teaching children in grades nursery through two; making clay articles and toys, firing them in the School kiln and selling them in the village market; and running the School's library which is used by the children of the neighboring state owned middle school too. The children worked on these projects for approximately 8 hours every week. 8 more children have enrolled in these projects on April 1, 2016.

4 senior girls all studying in grade 7 decided to pursue the class 10 program of the National Institute of Open Schooling and having chosen their subjects, started preparing for the mathematics examination (their most preferred subject).

The School community comprising 60 children and 3 adults took significant steps towards ushering in freedom and democracy in the School. These steps included taking all policy related decisions and some operational decisions



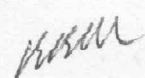
in meetings of the School community, all chaired by one of the children, and in which each member irrespective of her/his age has one vote. These decisions included:

- Granting responsibilities for different operational areas to children and adults who wished to take them up (about 14 different areas);
- Keeping the School open for all the 12 months of the year during 2016 from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm on all days except Sundays and days on which there is a death in Balenga Para village;
- Granting its members the freedom to decide the following for themselves:
 - the time when they would like to come to school and return home;
 - the activities they would like to engage in during their school hours;
 - the individual(s) or other resources they would like to learn different things and subjects from;
 - the grades they would like to study different subjects in and the books they would like to study from;
 - the days other than Sundays on which they would like to take holidays and the lengths of their respective vacations.
- Reviewing the norms of the attendance based scholarships for students and making them stricter;
- Deciding the groups that will go on long excursions during the year 2016-17 and the organizations and places they will visit;
- Making a rule for a levying a fine on any member playing specific outdoor games within the School's small compound that could dislodge the roof tiles;
- Modifying the norms for granting bicycles, charkhas and wristwatches to students;
- Aligning the norms for admitting girls and boys into the School with the sex ratio in the neighboring communities;
- Specifying periods during the year during which the School will host visitors.

The younger members of the School went on several excursions on foot in the School's neighborhood while the older ones went to places far and near on bicycles and taking buses and trains. This included a cycling trip to a seed bank that conserved indigenous varieties of paddy about 40 kilometers from the School and trips by train to Wardha, Bhopal, Amritsar and Bir in Himachal Pradesh. A parent mother always accompanied the groups on long excursions.

The School hosted during the year about 35 visitors from all over India and a few from abroad for periods ranging between a couple of days and several weeks. Visitors to the School included educationists, writers, teachers, students and individuals interested in understanding whether and how education, freedom and democracy can work together. A letter received by the School from a visitor Swetha has been reproduced in this report with her permission. Kalpavriksh, a Pune based society undertook a case study on the School's work as a part of its alternatives program.

The School continued to be an accredited study centre of the National Institute of Open Schooling, NOIDA and to be registered under the law for compulsory education with the District Education Officer, Kondagaon.



Organization

The Trust continued to be listed with Give India. This helped to spread the donor base of the Trust across a large number of individuals interested in contributing small sums to causes that interest them. Donations were received from 2527 individuals through Give India's portal.

The Trust continued to be listed by HelpYourNGO, an organization that independently reviews and rates the work of NGOs and lists them on its website and in its Yearbook. Akanksha received a 5 star Financial Score from the organization.

The distribution of donations received by Akanksha across all donors during the financial year 2015-16 is as follows.

Amount of donation (Rupees)	Individuals	Foundations and Trusts	Others	Resident	Non- resident
< 5000	2534	-	-	2534	-
5000 – 100,000	11	2	-	12	1
> 100,000	1	2	-	3	-
Donations in kind	3	-	-	3	-
Total	2549	4	-	2552	1

The average value of monetary donations received during the year ended on March 31, 2016 was Rs 861.

Members of the staff and volunteers as of March 31, 2016 were as follows:

Employees

Gautam Ram Sethiya

Milan Ram Baghel

Volunteers

Nandini Joshi

Seema Joshi



I have been finding it really hard to start writing because I am unable to look at the experience of being at Imlee Mahuaa objectively. My response to the experience is trailing very much through my own subjectivity. It is very difficult to analyse because I had no framework to analyse it through, I will attempt to sketch the physical surroundings and the dynamism I came across as I kept collecting in my basket fruits for thought.

Imlee Mahuaa is a community space for children in and around Balenga Para village in Kondagaon district of Chattisgarh. I don't know its history and honestly it did not occur to me that I must find out. Another day on that. Imlee Mahuaa as it is now is a space with a climbable, breakable, unpainted, red-brick compound within which a few buildings with tiled roofs exist, but this is just a wall to climb and run on, it obstructs nothing, the songs and the spirit of the place is carried within each child running in and out of it every single day. It has about 65 people from the youngest noni who's about 9 months old now to the oldest Prayaag bhaiyya.

Although the timing of the school for the sake of convenience is declared as 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the children are free to come to school anytime during the day. Let me make it more obvious, a child, any child is free to come in at 11 am and leave by 1p.m. if that is what s/he chooses. You will see that the confluence of the children is by their own will, they are not sent by anybody or any idea or agenda. There begins the chapter of being self-motivated to do what one wants to.

The children are divided into four groups – *Semar, Sapri, Sitaphal and Soorajmukhi*. It's lovely to see how they belong with each other like a big family under a bigger canopy. The children have chosen to attend classes that they think they might enjoy ('what do they really enjoy?' is a lifelong quest, but these children will figure out more easily than the rest of us because they are not afraid of trying). Monday to Thursday there are various classes – Music, Yoga, Gardening, English, Math, Science, Library, etc. Friday is the day when they take time out to clean and sort the classrooms, take account of utensils, smear fresh gobar on the floor and bond over channa, milk and puffed rice and jaggery. On the same day, in the morning a bunch of older children list down all things they need for the coming week and head to weekly *haat*. Saturday is outdoors, now that I think of it and envy, 90% of their life is outdoors but this one happens to be in a larger group to a place away from school, needless to say that the joy is doubled when it's mostly children. Some children trek up a hill or go to the riverside while the ones who can cycle pedal away to meet their brethren in the neighbouring village. Sunday is a holiday, there is no school and it's the time I think when Prayaag takes his time to breathe.

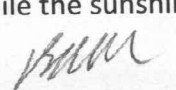
The children during the working days also learn to spin the wheel to turn cotton into yarn with the help of portable, small, yet powerful charkhas that come in handy cases that takes up very little space, brought from Sevagram. The children slowly and efficiently work on it little by little hoping to one day when they'd have produced enough to exchange it for cloth.

The children also learn how to work on the pottery wheel. The objects made during the week are fired on Thursday and sold on Friday at the Haat.

One day in Imlee Mahuaa

Kokkarakooooo !!!! [Thump! Thump! Thump! ... Prayaag's footsteps all over the campus]

Sun shines bright as it rises over the roof of the kitchen. Milan Bhaiyya teaches pottery in Imlee Mahuaa, comes by 7.00 a.m to prepare breakfast and lunch along with Prayaag who is self-taught expert in making *rotis* and *bhakris*. The *rotis* are made for the consumption at night because it's smart to "make hay while the sunshines".



Usually one of the older children arrives first. They stride-in confidently, pick-up the keys to open different rooms and greet with a "Good morning Bhaiyya" or "Good morning Didi", a wide smile and sometimes a giggle. Someone else picks up a broom and starts sweeping aside the fallen leaves. The younger ones charge-in, throw their bags and are off to play as soon as they arrive. Nobody forgets to wish here. Strangely, they don't wish each other though. They have better ways of greeting, fully, with their eyes and hands and smiles and words.

Its 9:30 a.m., the food has been cooked and eaten by the 2 cooks. At 10, the cooks coolly transform into teachers as they walk into the space joking about stuff with the students. Prayaag is going to teach English, while Milan will teach them how to make lamps on the potter's wheel. Gautam is a teacher from the neighbouring village. Youngest of the three, it takes him no time to transform into a teen or grow up into an adult. Apart from these teachers, the older children play an important role as teachers. They have taken upon themselves the responsibility to conduct classes in Yoga, Hindi, Mathematics, Music, English, Art and Library. It is in a class conducted by one of the older students that I truly experienced the success of the revised NCERT textbooks.

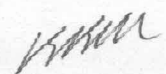
12.30 -1.30 p.m. is the lunch time. All the children bring food from home. They have a wonderful system of sharing food that I was in utter awe of. All of them gather in a room, in a circle. There is a lot of chatting, laughing, fighting, teasing that goes on for the next one hour. Sometimes friends sit together, sometimes siblings sit together, keeps changing every day. But there is never a dull moment. They open their steel boxes, no surprises here, they know exactly what they have been packed for lunch. I am saying this because lunch is such a surprise-event in some schools in Bangalore where children await that glorious moment of opening their boxes to find out what it is that their taste-buds will relish that afternoon.

Older children take a count of people present and accordingly distribute a glass of milk, a fruit and 2 dates each. That is the ration provided by the school on each day to all the children and adults. Its very funny how every day, mind you every single day, there will be this one large steel glass with milk sitting on a steel plate with 5 other empty glasses and a few worried older children trying to find out who has not had their share. One by one they ask all the probable candidates till they find out that one rogue who's been chatting away without picking up her/his glass.

Now is the best part. So, when they open their boxes and know that they don't like what they've got, they just pass the box to their neighbour. The neighbour takes a peek, if its something she likes, serves herself a little and passes it on to the next person and this goes on till the box is empty. This happens with pretty much every box! Ingenious isn't it! I wish this was the case in my school days, wouldn't have had to think of a hundred ways to throw away food without being caught for the fear of being scolded by a strict mother.

Unimaginable are the days when it slipped out of the funny brain that the food has to be disposed and the jury finds out about it. at the end of one hour, pretty much everybody's boxes have been licked clean. Rice is the staple food, along with it is dal and a great variety of greens and vegetables available locally, but all of their food is spicy in red bold and underlined capital letters. I made a trip to South America with a pinch of it, a little more would have taken me to the nearby galaxy.

The glasses, plates and boxes are first scrubbed with mud, available in plenty just beneath your feet, then dipped in a vessel number one and then in vessel number two out of which it emerges clean and sparkling and placed back in the kitchen. The next session begins around 1.30p.m before which the children quickly clean up the place off food spills and such because there could be a class that needs that space. Happy as ever, they head off, so confidently to what they want to do next. There has never been a moment where I have come across a child who said "I am bored, what do I do now?" something that I was used to in the school I previously worked in.



As the sun begins to shine brightly, announcing its time to return to its home behind the hills, one of the older girls screams to get the attention of all the busy people. Screaming here is not to be taken as a show of anger, but mere show of what the vocal chords are capable of in a buzzing place like this.

The Library is very well organised and taken care of by 4 students. They are responsible for binding the books, maintaining, organising, displaying them and assisting the younger ones help choosing books.

The library is also open for the students of the neighbouring government school. I completely took advantage of this time to bond with the little ones I have been eyeing to get some time with. They were quite happy to listen to me as I ploughed my Hindi vocabulary to tell the stories as good as I could. The children kindly corrected me without giggling at my mistakes with the *tha-thi* usual gender errors and the like. I realised that actions and sounds of things did most of the job.

In another corner, Gautum was reading out a Hindi story for an older age group. This group was asking questions, making up their own probable solutions to situations in the story and adding to the richness of the whole experience. You could see they were not in school, they were in the setting where the story was taking place.

Children love stories: I am not a great story teller, but once the story was over, they ran in to get the second book and then the third. Maybe they were enjoying my Hindi.

The orange ball has gone down, its light is still around allowing for some more time for people to pack and leave for their homes. Some have to walk an hour or so, some are only a hop away.

The older girls make sure all the school's materials are locked into the rooms before they leave on their bicycles saying good-byes and playfully tease and threaten each other. Oh so much joy in their exchanges!

The campus is quieter. The birds are now able to hear calls from their loved ones more clearly. The dogs and chicken welcome themselves to scavenge for food now that their little enemies are out.

The day is quietly ending. Prayaag has a bunch of notebooks he needs to go through. He does that amidst catching the signal for his phone to make some calls.

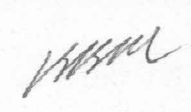
The dinner is ready. All one has to do is eat and ponder or wonder before hitting bed. There are solar powered lamps one could use. I certainly did not feel the need for it until in the last few days I panicked that I might forget some important things and had to write them down. I was happy to use the mercy light left over by the sun who's invisible after school hours to do that. Solar powered lamps are for emergencies, nay?

So that is what a day there looks like in simple words...

But you know much has happened in each ones inner side. It won't be visible in the papers but when you take a walk down the village and you hear a group of children singing a familiar song that was sung in the school's music class - sung so beautifully and effortlessly and more importantly on their own will. Nobody is making the children stand in front of a mike. They are singing because they want to sing.

What strikes me the most is the fact that the practice is what the children must take home not just the preaching. You can preach as much, but most of our behaviour is acquired by imitation and if we preach to be peaceful and ourselves yell at the slightest discomfort then it's not going to help.

And that is what I like the best about the place.



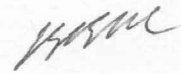
Apart from that the girl power is so striking. The girls are in full charge of the place. From being responsible not only for themselves but the learning of their sisters and brothers, to knowing and being a part of important decision making processes of the school, they have their voice marking their experience and opinions. The girls I feel are equally vocal in their personal choices and opinions. It takes time for them to warm up, but one can see that with little support these girls can do wonders because they are doing it already.

This visit to Imlee Mahua has been personally a very important one for me because when I was teaching, telling children to do things that they were not interested in and making a whole lot of effort to get them interested in the subject matter when they were not ready for it was not something I could have put up with for too long. The people I met there widened my understanding of what a life in a village in Chattisgarh is like.

If there are specific questions about the school, please write back. If I am unable to answer, then I will ask Prayaag about it.

Love,

Swetha



Abridged Financial Statements

BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 2016

	Schedule	As at March 31	
		2016 (Rupees)	2015 (Rupees)
Sources of Funds			
Corpus		88000	88000
Surplus		1853701	1882598
TOTAL		1941701	1970598
Application of Funds			
Fixed Assets		55544	55544
Current Assets			
Tax deducted at source		1398	1398
Cash and Bank Balances	1	1884759	1913656
TOTAL		1941701	1970598
Significant Accounting Policies And Notes to the Accounts	6		

Refer my report of even date

For Velu Muthu Associates For Akanksha Public Charitable Trust

Chartered Accountants

Firm Regn, No. 004590S

Velu Muthu Oswin Thayal Prayaag Joshi

Proprietor Trustee Trustee

Membership No. 22976

Place: Chennai

Date: April 11, 2016

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016

	Schedule	For the year ended March 31	
		2016 (Rupees)	2015 (Rupees)
Income			
Donations Received	2	2199079	1772766
Interest on Bank Accounts	3	126659	125018
Excess of Expenditure over Income		28897	-
TOTAL		2354635	1897784
Expenditure			
Expenditure in connection with the objects of the Trust	4	2354635	1667833
Excess of Income over Expenditure		-	229951
Add: Balance brought forward from the previous year		1882598	1652647
Balance carried to the Balance Sheet		1853701	1882598

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016

	Schedule	For the year ended March 31	
		2016 (Rupees)	2015 (Rupees)
Sources of Funds			
Donations Received	2	2199079	1772766
Interest on Bank Accounts	3	126659	125018
TOTAL		2325738	1897784
Application of Funds			
Expenditure in connection with the objects of the Trust	4	2354635	1667833
Increase or (Decrease) in Net Current Assets	5	(28897)	229951
TOTAL		2325738	1897784

Credibility Alliance Norms Compliance Report

IDENTITY

- Akanksha Public Charitable Trust ('Akanksha' or 'the Trust') was created as a public trust under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 and registered (Reg. No. 1003 of 2001 of Book 4 dated September 3, 2001) with the Office of the District Registrar Madras South.
- Akanksha is registered as a Public Charitable Trust under sections 12 AA and 80 G of the Income Tax Act, 1961 (Reg No. DIT(E) No.2(182)/2000-01) and its Permanent Account Number is AAATA6371J.
- Akanksha is registered as an Educational Association under section 6(1)(a) of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 (Reg No. 075901259).
- Scanned copies of this annual report, trust deed and the letters of registration, audited financial statements from the inception of the Trust, minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees are exhibited on our website www.imleemahuaa.org. These documents are available for inspection at the registered office too.

Name and address of our Main Bankers

ICICI Bank Limited, Chennai Branch, 459/1, Anna Salai Road, Teynampet, Chennai 600018

State Bank of India, L B Road, Thiruvannamipur, Chennai 600 041

Name and address of our Auditors

Velu Muthu Associates, Chartered Accountants, 1 B, Prabha, 17 Bishop Wallers Avenue (East), Mylapore, Chennai 600004

PURPOSE

Akanksha's purpose has evolved over the years. Today, Akanksha works to learn along with and support individuals caught up in life's unfortunate circumstances through collaborative initiatives in areas of education, health, livelihoods, culture and ecology especially engaging with the young and with women.

GOVERNANCE

The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees ('the Board') whose details as on March 31, 2016 are given in the table below.

Name	Age	Sex	Position on Board	Occupation	Area of Competence	Meetings Participated
Khodadad Moradian	62	M	Chairman	Business and financial consulting	Business reengineering	3/3
Oswin Thayal	45	M	Trustee	Medical practice and business	Medicine and medical diagnostics	3/3
Prayaag Joshi	51	M	Trustee	Learning and teaching	Finance and education	3/3

➤ Akanksha's Board of Trustees met thrice in FY 2015-16 on April 4, 2015 and September 30, 2015 and on March 31, 2016. Minutes of the Board meetings are documented and circulated. All members were present at each meeting of the Board, either physically or over the telephone.

➤ None of the members of the Board are related to each other by blood or by marriage. A Board Rotation Policy exists and is practiced.

➤ The Board ensures that all the activities of the Trust are in line with its stated purpose and approved objects, key decision making is consultative and roles and responsibilities are defined for staff and volunteers. The Board approves programs, budgets, annual activity reports and audited financial statements and ensures the organization's compliance with laws and regulations.

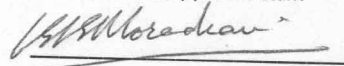
ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

- No remuneration, sitting fees or any other form of compensation has been paid since the inception of the Trust to any trustee or member of the Board.
- No reimbursements towards personal expenses were made to any Board Member during FY 2015-16.
- All staff members are issued letters of employment and draw equal remuneration, linked to their hours of work. The remuneration drawn by the highest paid staff member as on March 31, 2016 was Rs 9,000 per month and that drawn by the lowest paid staff member who worked part time was Rs 6,750 per month. There is a personnel policy in place.
- Staff details (as at March 31, 2016)

Gender	Paid full time	Paid part time	Unpaid Volunteer
Female	-	-	2
Male	1	1	-

All members of the Board are volunteers and have given their time pro bono. They are not included in the table above.

- No paid member of staff drew monthly gross salary and benefits that were less than Rs 5000. The average salary was Rs 7,875 and the median salary was Rs 7,875. The remuneration drawn by the Executive Head is zero.
- The total cost of National Travel by all members of the Board was Rs 112277, by all staff (including volunteers, independent consultants, etc) was Rs nil and by beneficiaries was Rs 227350. The total cost of Air Travel was NIL and the total cost of International Travel whether paid by Akanksha or by external sponsors was NIL.
- The financial statements indicate the method and basis of accounting. There are no serious adverse notes on any material point in the statements. The Trust has not entered into any material transaction that involves a conflict of interest between the Trust and any member(s) of the Board or between the Trust and any member(s) of the staff.



Khodadad K Moradian

Chairman April 11, 2016