

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Asha for Education
Bringing hope through education
Austin chapter

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Asha Community,

2021 was a year of significant progress for our chapter. Despite the continuing challenges and lockdowns from the ongoing pandemic, we had our best year of fundraising as well as project disbursements since inception. Our volunteers went above and beyond to find alternative sources of fundraising. We were able to support the salaries of teachers and staff of all our current active projects and increase the level of funding during these unprecedented times. All of our projects had either virtual classes and/or mini-schools going on to ensure engagement with the students in ways possible. We were able to conduct virtual site visits to most of our projects to understand the ground situation better.

We also continued to disburse funds towards relief and rehabilitation efforts for Covid-19. In addition, we inducted three new projects with two focusing on girl child education and/or women empowerment this year, and one focusing on alternate education in rural areas. To fill the void due to several canceled races, we organized our own 5k/10k Run to Educate, a Friends and Family Spring Run event, which was a big success. We were also able to restart our Team Asha half-marathon training program for the 2021-22 season.

2022 will be our 25th anniversary year and we look forward to continuing on our mission and vision over the years to come as we still have a lot to do. Asha Austin recognizes the massive education gap due to Covid-19 lockdowns with 80+ weeks of no formal schooling and is committed to doing our best to help bridge this gap in the coming years. We are grateful for your continued support and being a part of our community.

With gratitude,

Shruti Motiwale and Shruti Ramana



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To learn more about the chapter, please visit our website [here](#).

OUR IMPACT IN 2021

States reached

7

Project partners

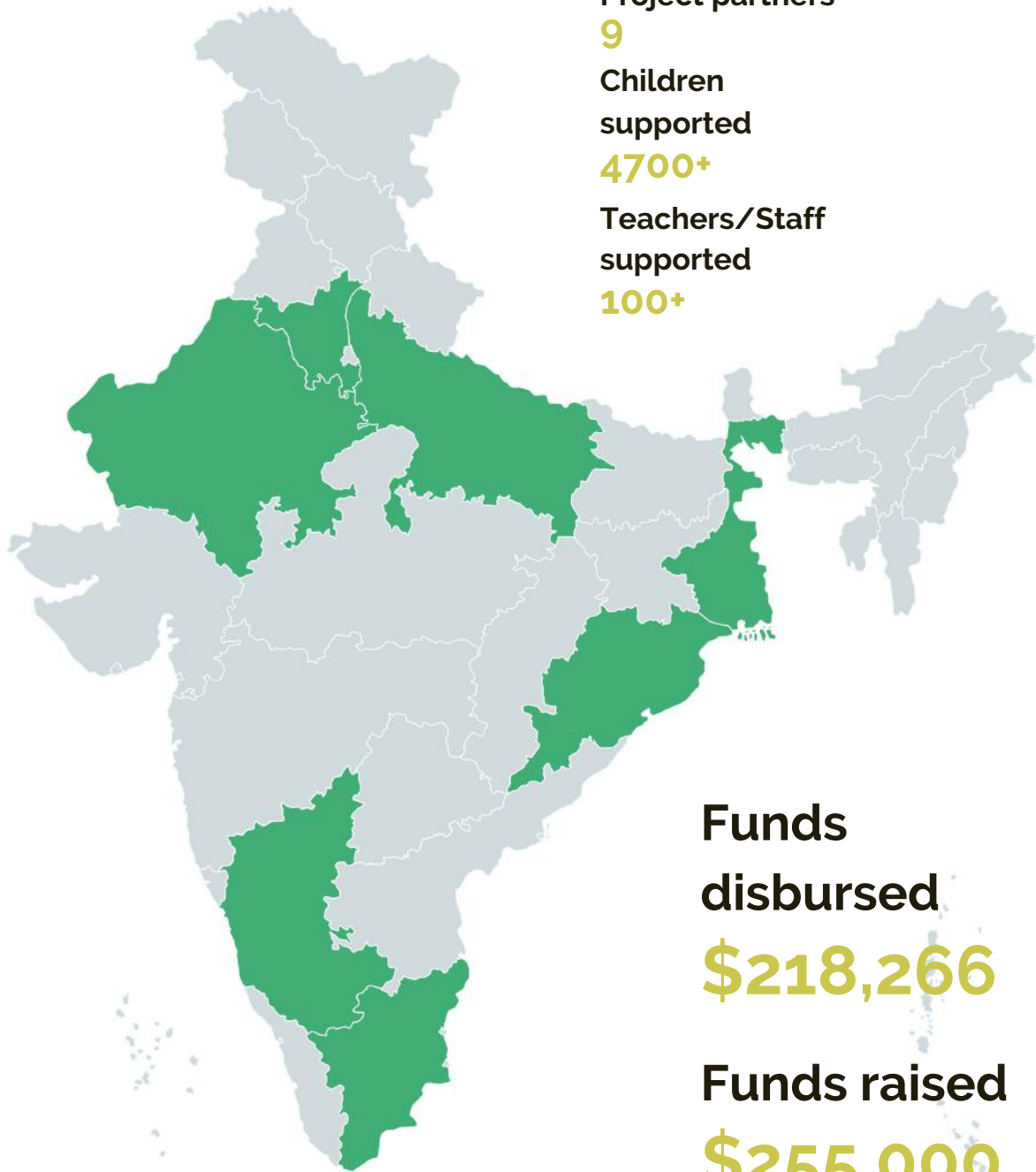
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Children supported

4700+

Teachers/Staff supported

100+



Funds disbursed

\$218,266

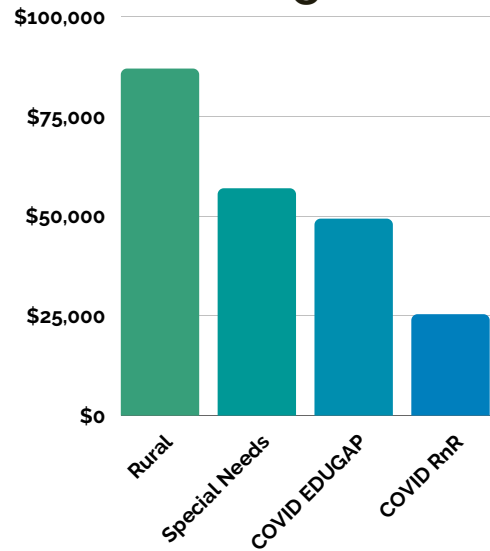
Funds raised

\$255,000

OUR IMPACT IN 2021

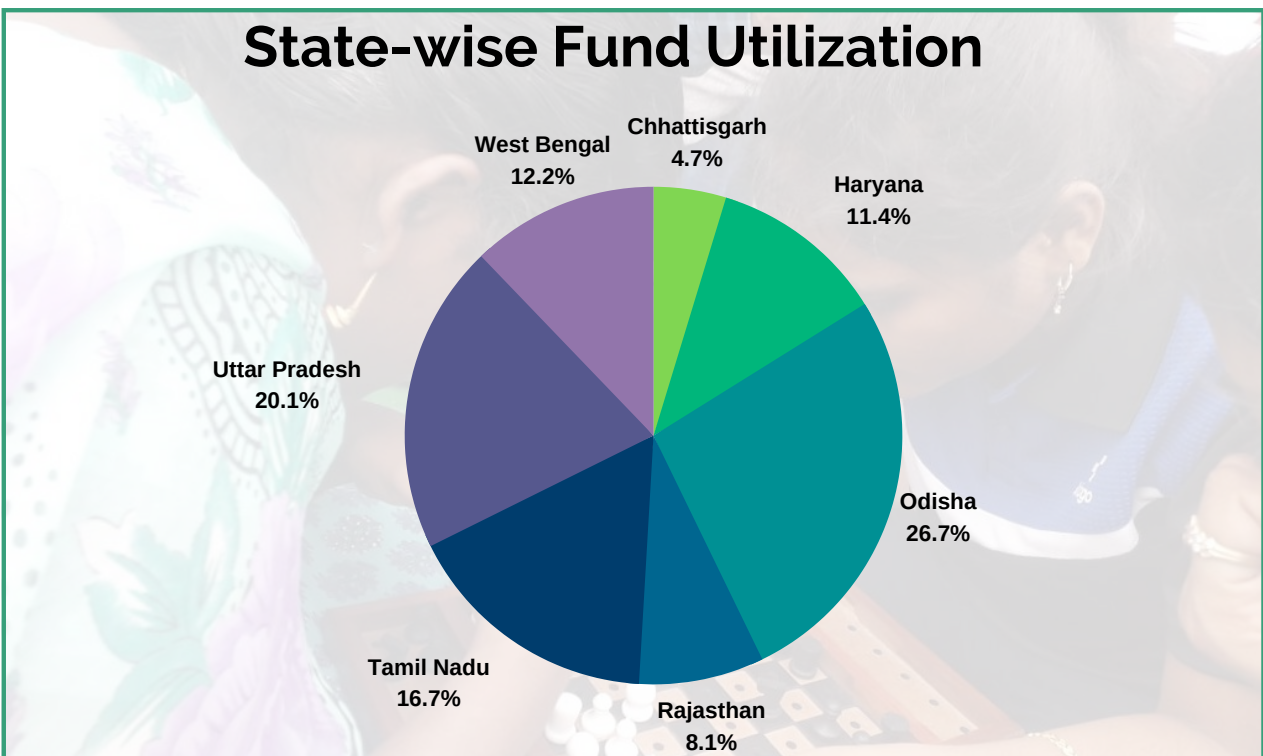


Fund Disbursement Categories



The main focus areas of our chapter are Special Needs and Alternative Education. Last year, we also disbursed funds for the Education gap due to COVID.

State-wise Fund Utilization



We are constantly working to reach new states and communities, and in 2021 our greatest impact occurred in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.

ASHA AUSTIN'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Delta wave of COVID-19 hit India very hard, with an exponential rise in cases, straining the medical system causing shortages of medical facilities in both urban and rural areas. With a staggering impact on human life, COVID-19 deeply disrupted access to education, which became a second priority, and thereby affected about 247 million students nationwide with school closures for more than 80+ weeks since the onset of the pandemic.

Asha Austin has worked to go beyond meeting the near-term commitments to our project partners to ensure salaries of teachers were continued to be paid out with minimal impact on the operations of the project partner; and education in some form continued to be delivered to the children attending the schools of our support. Additionally, Asha Austin provided short term relief material in the form of medical kits and food for the marginalized communities in dire need.

Bridging Covid-19 Induced Educational Learning Gap

While the pandemic caused many schools to shut down, some continued to provide virtual lessons. We observed that rural schools fared better than urban schools by going back to traditional means, with clusters of students studying with one teacher in a socially-distanced manner. Technology was used where possible to ensure lessons were being imparted along with study material and work assignments.

A few of our project partners, working on special needs, continued on their mission with teacher visits to homes, working with parents to continue therapy and zoom/whatsapp video calls. Therapy is a regular part of their special needs education and is necessary to prevent any deterioration in their health. Our project partners were able to navigate this challenge during the ongoing pandemic.

With its core vision and mission as a beacon, Asha Austin has been diligently working with its project partners to set up new specialized programs to ensure that children go back to school and work towards bridging the educational learning gap due to COVID-19.



Our project partners made impressive efforts on several fronts to bridge the educational gap. Below are a few highlights of each project that Asha Austin worked with in 2021.

Antyoday Anath Ashram: As the schools were shut, teachers were given special training for online teaching skills, and they persistently tried various ways to hold online classes. The teachers distributed the study material and worksheets in person with periodic visits to the student's homes. Asha Austin has additionally helped with support of their vocational training unit.

Garima -Sankalp Ek Prayas: Sankalp Ek Prayas executed "Activity Based Learning / Mobile Based Teaching" as a Covid-19 response Model. A Massive drive "Education at Your Door" based on the concept of mini-schools was set up in 60 villages. Their efforts enabled the continuation of education for about 6000 children during the lockdown.

Gramin Shiksha Kendra: In a classic case of community coming together in times of need, GSK continued with its education model via mini-schools with the strong support of the community in Girirajpura. Children in small groups were engaged in a socially distanced manner with attendance rates close to 90%. More than 75% of the time, classes continued to be held and ensured that the education gap was minimal.

Khushboo Welfare Society: Teachers and therapists designed home-based innovative and integrative schedules for each special needs child. This helped empower parents and enabled them to handle any behavioral issues of their child. They were provided guided therapy online sessions on Zoom and/or Whatsapp when the school was shut down.

Navjyoti Swavalamban Sewa Sansthan: During school closures, children came to the school following Covid protocols, and were given books and stationery along with masks. Online English classes were also conducted. Two new classrooms were also constructed with support from Asha Austin.

Reward Trust: REWARD teachers conducted in-person classes in their neighboring streets, for all the students irrespective of their schools, while following all pandemic protocols. Teachers also utilized this time in broadening and deepening their academic knowledge base and learned to utilize online teaching-learning tools, getting involved in group activities and discussions.

Samarth (GDOHWA): Samarth provided support for the beneficiaries in their homes for both food and medical, while continuing to engage with the children when the center was closed with in-person visits by their staff team of teachers and therapists. Asha Austin helped with a school van fully fitted for special needs, to help the beneficiaries get to their schools and colleges on time and back to the center.

Sangamam Rajatalab: To address the lack of engagement with the children in the 2020-21 academic year, Asha Austin worked with the project to implement Asha-Chennai's successful mini-school model, to provide education for the children attending the government schools in 2021-22. Teachers continued their efforts on the computer based lessons. Asha Austin helped with the setup of a computer center to impart vocational training for adolescent girls.

Fellowship Siddamma: Asha Austin helped provide a new vehicle for Siddamma to replace her 15+ year old vehicle to help continue with her efforts of community empowerment and to bring the children into education.



COVID-19 Relief and Rehabilitation Efforts

Antyodoy Anath Ashram: Asha Austin helped with the nutrition, hygiene and educational kit for each beneficiary of the primary school and the orphanage at INR 850 per child for a total of INR 3.4 lacs for 408 beneficiaries.

Navjyoti Swavalamban Sewa Sansthan: Asha Austin helped with medical kits for INR 3.8 lacs and provided nutrition and hygiene kits for 250 children of the school and 300 adolescent girls of the Kishori Kendra program for INR 3.8 lacs.

Samarth (GDOHWA): Asha Austin provided dry food ration support for families of the 45 special needs children attending Samarth, families of the 11 staff members, and 200 persons with disabilities in the region at INR 1500 per family as a short-term relief of INR 3.8 lacs.

Sangamam Rajatalab: Asha Austin provided support for 50 medical kits, health and hygiene kits for 500 adolescent girls and dry ration support for 100 needy families for INR 3.6 lacs; nutrition, hygiene and educational kits for 750 children attending the project for INR 6.5 lacs.

GIRL CHILD EMPOWERMENT

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report of 2021, India ranked 140 out of 156 countries on a Global Gender Gap Index. We need interventions at all levels to attempt to close this gap, and Asha Austin is committed to do our bit in this endeavor. Asha Austin supported three projects in 2021 that focused on furthering gender equality and women empowerment. We are also grateful to our donors, Mr. Pradeep Bhatia and Mrs. Lori Bhatia and Cirrus Logic Inc., who supported us by donating towards this specific cause and enabled us to take on two new projects to support the girl child in 2021.

GARIMA, a project of SANKALP EK PRAYAS, is a women empowerment program supporting 1600 adolescent girls in 60 villages of Durg and Balod district. The project focuses on the pressing issues relating to adolescent girls impacting their upbringing in remote and interior underdeveloped geographies. They conduct workshops on topics such as menstrual hygiene, health and wellness, self-identity and purpose, effective communication, substance abuse and personal safety, including cyber safety. After only a few workshops, the girls have become more confident, and are able to discuss their concerns during workshops without hesitation. Many girls did not have a close confidant at their home or within their friend circle to discuss such issues, and now feel more supported by being able to share them with someone.



Antyodoy Anath Ashram runs a vocational training unit (VTU) for adolescent youth and women for empowerment and livelihood. The VTU offers training and resources to train the local community in handicraft, computer usage, tailoring, cosmetics, art and craft. In addition to the training provided, the VTU has also set up an exhibition room and a sales outlet where the finished products are displayed and sold. In 2021, between Oct-Nov, the VTU generated approximately INR 50,000 in revenue for the Ashram. As of now the products are sold locally but the market in the greater Kolkata area, and outside is being explored. Antodoy started the vocation training center to also serve the unskilled, unemployed people of Paunsi community in order to make them employable. Their efforts are apparent in the success stories of several women who are now employed and are earning steady income to support themselves and their family.



Navjyoti Swavalamban Seva Sansthan's initiative Kishori Kendra provides vocational training to adolescent girls near Varanasi, U.P, who have been left behind by the regular schooling system. At present, 286 teenage girls are learning sewing, embroidery and getting educated at 11 training centers in total. They are also trained on topics such as leadership development, self defense, domestic violence, health awareness and individual rights. They also organize a summer camp where participants get trained in computer work, handicraft, beautician skills, martial arts, dance, scooter or bike running. During their annual 'Balika Mahotsav', debate, cultural program & rally are organized on girls rights, domestic violence, drug addictions & other issues. Overtime, the girls have started to express their viewpoints more openly, speak up if they are being mistreated and have gained self-confidence. Many graduates of Kishori Kendra have become teachers in these centers or opened their own centers elsewhere, which is a testament to their success.

Pictures from Balika Mahotsav



PROJECT PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

Balaram Karanjee (Antyodoy)

Asha for Education, Austin Chapter has been a massive support since 2020 for KSSK which provides basic education for abandoned and destitute children in rural areas under the aegis of Antyodoy Anath Ashram. In the last year, they have also extended their financial support to our Vocational Training Centre. The goodwill of Asha Austin is heartening and encouraging for us. Their strong financial and moral support during the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 and the super cyclone Amphan has been instrumental for us. With the grace of Asha Austin volunteers and specially our steward Ms Subhangi Ghosh, the camaraderie between Antyodoy Anath Ashram and Asha Austin is inexplicable. They have been supporting enough to listen to our needs, rigidity and the procedure to accomplish any objects. Their advice and suggestions to sustain and enhance our activities has been a moral booster. Our best wishes to Asha Austin team for all the years to come, looking forward for many more associations.



"Their strong financial and moral support during the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 and the super cyclone Amphan has been instrumental for us"

Anandajee (Samarth)

Asha for Education has been extending its hand of cooperation since a long time, which has led organisations like ours to think of Asha as our regular partner. They are not only supporting us for education but also extending support for other essential needs, including health, regular maintenance, vocational training, communication etc. and this support allows us to reach to the poorest of the poor down trodden and helpless disabled children. Asha's cooperation during covid-19 is especially praiseworthy. The Ganjam District Orthopaedically Handicapped Welfare Association has been working for the allround development of the PWDs with the main source of Asha for Education. It is only due to the support of Asha for Education that the children with disabilities, coming from families who were hardly arranging their daily meals, are now becoming doctors, engineers and teachers and are establishing themselves as the successful people of the society.



"Due to the support of Asha for Education, children with disabilities are establishing themselves as successful people of the society"

ASHA AUSTIN RUN TO EDUCATE 2021

Strides of Hope, Asha Austin's marathon training program has been an important fundraising avenue for Asha Austin. However, the Covid-19 shutdowns resulted in all the major Austin area marathons being canceled which usually take place from December through February. Complete loss of this critical avenue of local fundraising threatened Asha Austin's ability to continue supporting the projects while the project partner needs only went up due to the local and central government-mandated shutdowns in various parts of India resulting in loss of wages as well as unavailability of local funds to continue supporting educational needs of the marginalized communities. Then the largest 10K race of Texas, the Statesman Cap10K race that usually takes place on the first weekend of April was also canceled. In light of all these cancellations, Austin volunteers decided to organize a 5k/10k race of our own as a family event. On May 23rd, Asha Austin held its inaugural 5k/10k Run to Educate run with our own finisher's swag and giveaways for the participants. The event was a huge success with a total of 92 participants that included 66 adults and 26 youth/children over the age of 12. Due to the cancellation of traditional races, we saw increased participation from many runners new to Team Asha who were eager to participate in a race, which increased our chapter's exposure to a wider audience. A number of new faces from the Spring run joined the Team Asha training program and a couple of them also completed a race as part of the team later in 2022. Team Asha volunteers collectively managed to raise almost \$50K to support Asha Austin's projects.



RUNNER TESTIMONIALS

Vish Balakrishnan

I cherish the opportunity of being part of 'Team Asha', focused on improving underprivileged Children's Education. As part of the Team Asha - Austin chapter, I am excited on this journey over the years, contributing to society and young children's education, concurrently focused on personal fitness, truly living to the motto of "Train. Run. Educate". Team Asha coaches and crew helped me to build endurance for my half Marathons and made running a great experience alongside raising funds. It's an enriching experience with Team Asha inculcating the essentials as part of their focused training for marathons and the culture of giving.



"It's an enriching experience with Team Asha inculcating the essentials as part of their focused training for marathons and the culture of giving."

Ravi LN

I was a runner before joining ASHA and completed a marathon and a few half marathons. After hearing from a friend about the cause to which ASHA is working on, I was really interested to be part of the organization. I joined ASHA and trained with them to run a half marathon. It was a very different experience between how I was running earlier and how I am running now. ASHA training sessions provide a detailed running plan that gives importance to stretching, rest, easy runs, mile markers, pre run diet etc. Above all, the group is so friendly, it makes running fun. Also the satisfaction of raising funds to support the education of children back in India is priceless. I feel really proud to say I RUN so that they can READ. Thank You ASHA !!!



"The satisfaction of raising funds to support the education of children back in India is priceless. ."

DONOR TESTIMONIALS

Puja and Rajat Chaudhry

"We have been associated with Asha for about 5 years now. What drew us to Asha was the emphasis on education for the underprivileged. The fact that it is entirely volunteer-led and managed means almost all the funds are spent on the programs. Our dear friend Subra being a coordinator in the Austin chapter also built our trust in the organization. We firmly believe in Asha's mission, education is the key out of poverty, prejudice, and bias. In a country like India, education for the underprivileged and especially girls is the most important factor in driving socioeconomic improvement. We are really glad to support Asha Austin's projects targeting education for special needs and disabled children in rural areas through its Support a Child initiative. We are thankful for the excellent work being done by the volunteers for such a great cause."



"We firmly believe in Asha's mission, education is the key out of poverty, prejudice, and bias."

Subba and Lakshmi Kondubhatla

"Asha's mission of empowering people through education closely resonates with our belief of education for everyone. The tremendous work of the Asha Austin volunteers is an inspiration and it's a privilege to be part of this noble cause since 2017 through its Support a Child initiative and help someone's journey to become a productive citizen of India."



"It's a privilege to be part of this noble cause and help someone's journey to become a productive citizen of India."

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIALS

Vandana Mallempati

I learned about Asha for Education through their "Strides of Hope" running program in Austin, TX. After I got to know about their vision, the projects they are involved in and the impact they make, I decided to run with the team to raise awareness of the program among my friends and family and also to raise funds for the projects. My most satisfying experience volunteering with them has been as a steward of a blind school - Nethra Vidyalaya for 3 yrs in Visakhapatnam, AP . During this time I got the opportunity to visit the school multiple times and interact with the teachers and the blind students. This gave me a unique perspective of how children cope with blindness and can do practically everything that a sighted person can. I thank Asha for giving me a chance to be a steward and hope to do it again for another project in the future. I run so the kids can read and I volunteer to educate myself.



"I thank Asha for giving me a chance to be a steward and hope to do it again for another project in the future. I run so that the kids can read and I volunteer to educate myself."

Subhangi Ghosh

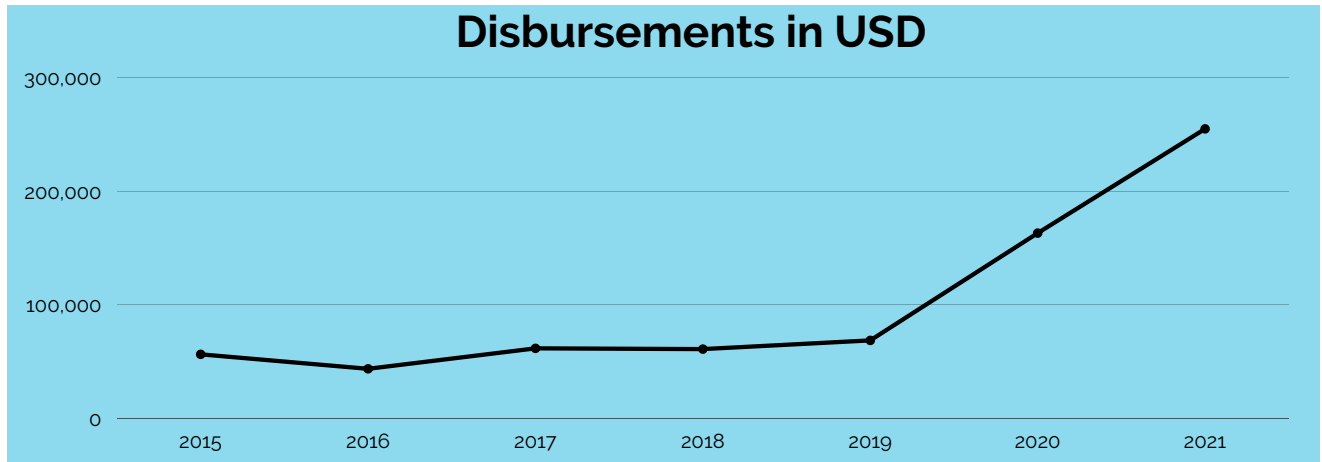
I have been a volunteer with Asha Austin since the summer of 2020 and it has been an incredibly rich experience. I have enjoyed the comradeship of my fellow volunteers, from whom I'm constantly learning. Their dedication and commitment to making education accessible to disadvantaged children is inspiring. I am humbled by the strength and attitude of children who are growing up in challenging situations but are determined to overcome their present circumstances and make a better life for themselves. It is amazing to work with our project partners who work so hard to provide the opportunities for the children they serve. I am also a part of Strides of Hope, Asha-Austin's team of runners. It has been awesome to train with them and share their enthusiasm and energy to fund raise by completing long distance races. I have been truly fortunate to have had wonderful coaches and mentors in both my running and volunteer teams. Interacting with, and knowing about, all of those associated with Asha- Austin has brought me a lot of positivity and a different perspective -- to be grateful for what I have and find joy in helping to improve circumstances for others. I am very grateful for having the opportunity to serve with Asha-Austin.



"Interacting with Asha Austin has brought me a different perspective - to be grateful for what I have and find joy in helping others"

FINANCIALS 2021

Our 2021 Disbursements Soar!



Asha Austin Chapter Impact to Date



\$1.2 Million +
Disbursed





32+
Projects
Supported



25 Years of
Service

ABOUT US

Asha for Education

- A low-overhead, 100% volunteer-driven 501c(3) organization (EIN: 77-0459884)
- Catalyze socio-economic change in India through education of underprivileged children
- A 4-star charity on Charity Navigator for past 7 consecutive years
- Austin chapter established in 1997 and has worked with 32+ project partners till date
- Chapter projects focus on special needs and/or alternate education in rural parts of India
- Visit us at <http://>  and connect with us at   

How You Can Support

- \$25 Monthly educational/ therapy support for a child
- \$50 Monthly food, educational and medical support for a special child
Monthly support for a vocational training center for adolescent girls (OR)
- \$75 Monthly teaching and learning material cost (OR)
Monthly computer-based training support
- \$100 Monthly salary of an Asha teacher for primary education
- \$150 Monthly salary of a teacher/therapist at special needs schools
- \$300 Annual support for a child's education

Asha Austin Project Partners

