



REAL SAMACHAR

The Importance of Education

By Victoria Panwala

As fall nears, stores like “Target” and “Wal-Mart” burst into bloom with all kinds of colorful educational instruments from backpacks to highlighters. This is just the start of a whole boatload of evidence about how much we take education for granted. In the United States and other developed countries, education has become routine. But children in developing nations are not quite as lucky. In India, for example, the female youth literacy rate is a mere 74% compared to a male youth literacy rate of 88%. Clearly, different groups of children receive different treatment.

Education has many far reaching and surprising benefits. It can: make people healthier, increase income, promote women’s rights, fosters peace, reduce poverty, reduce child mortality, boost economic growth, and even raise crop yields. According to globalpartnership.org, education for women can have a profound effect on birthrates and child and infant mortality. Each additional year of schooling after primary education reduces the likelihood of a woman becoming a mother by at least 7.3%. An even more shocking statistic is that a child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5.

One extra year of schooling can increase an individual’s income by up to 10%. Yet all over the world children are pulled out of school for a variety of reasons, including work, the high cost of education, or early marriage. It is truly as Benjamin Franklin said: “an investment in knowledge pays the best interest”.

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The Mobile Science Program will be modeled off the preexisting Mobile Library, which has been a huge success for the Thane Program. For more information please email Anisha@REALyouth.org.

Goal for the Year: The Mobile Science Program

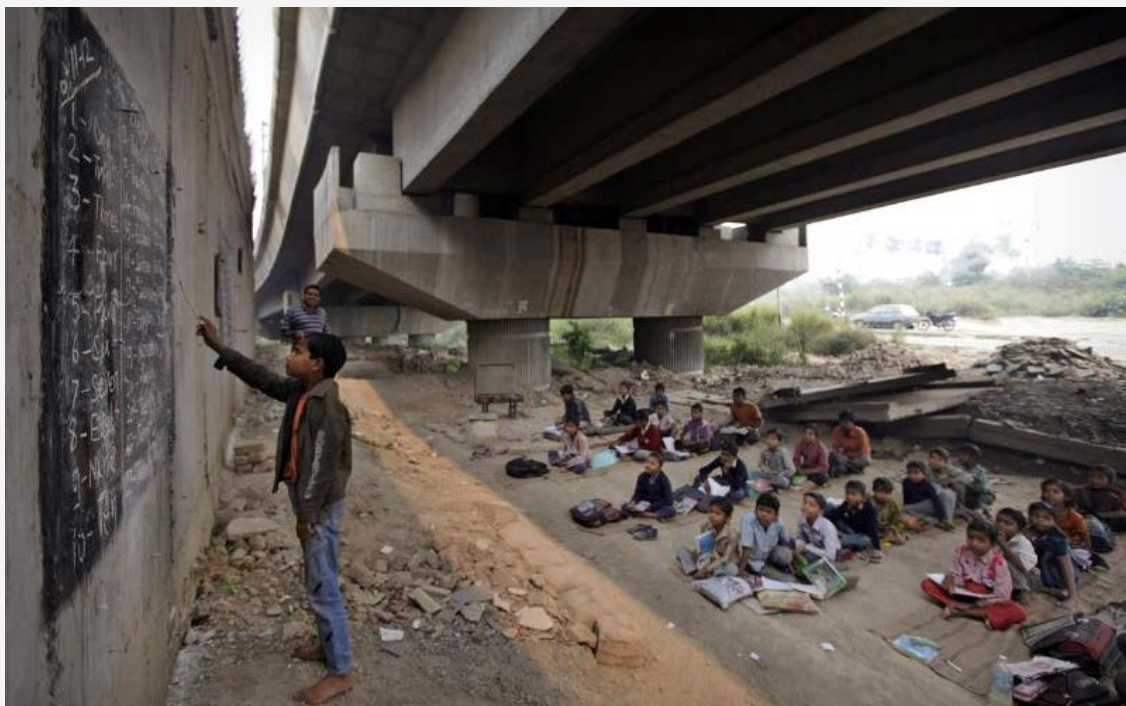
By Anisha Adke

At our May board meeting, we made a very ambitious goal: to raise \$25,000 by next June to pilot the Mobile Science program, and match that sum the following year. For a nonprofit organization composed of less than fifty volunteers, most of whom are high schoolers, this is a huge goal. However, we believe we can do it.

The location of the program is currently under evaluation. We will most likely use one of our current programs as a structure to begin building the program. Whether we will start immediately as a “mobile” program or begin as a strong, hands-on science program in a stationary school remains to be seen, however our eventual goal is to have it mobile so as to reach as many schools as we can with the program.

Already, our board has begun working furiously to attain the funds and reach our goals. Our new Local Business Outreach committee is working to begin reaching out to businesses to seek sponsorship. The grant writers on our board are searching for foundations whose goals will align with the Mobile Science Program.

Even though we are putting our best feet forward, we still need help. It is a huge amount of money that we are aiming to procure, and every donation will get us closer to our goal. If you are interested in the Mobile Science Program, please do not hesitate to contact us for more information. Your support is vital to our, and the program’s, success.



In the News: The School Under the Bridge

By Diana Delgado

What is a classroom? Most of us will say it is a room where there are desks, school supplies, and other materials that help the learning process. In the United States, we are lucky our schools have the essential materials to offer a good education. We are also fortunate all children have access to a free education, allowing everyone the opportunity of success. Unfortunately, not all countries are lucky enough to say the same.

In India, many children are unable to receive a good education because of financial difficulties and inconvenient locations of government schools. However, Rajesh Kumar and Laxmi Chandra are trying to change that. Around 2008, Kumar noticed children playing outside in the fields instead of attending school. Not wanting the children to end up in dead-end jobs, Kumar decided to volunteer some of his time to teach the children basic skills, such as: reading, writing, and the Pythagorean theorem. Kumar set up his classroom under a bridge. When starting the school, Kumar had difficulty getting children to attend, as the children’s parents were not too fond of the idea. Nevertheless, after seeing what Kumar and Chandra were able to do by teaching some of the children in their neighborhood, they realized the importance of education for their children and allowed them to attend.

The school currently lies on railroad property, so when Kumar and Laxmi are asked to leave, they will have no other choice. Also, since the school is not funded by the government, Kumar and Laxmi do not have the adequate materials or volunteers to help the school be efficient. Thus, they have to make do with what they can gather from generous donors. If it were not for these generous donors, the children at the school would not have the basics, such as shoes, backpacks, paper, and pencils.

To read more please click [here](#) to access the story written in *The Huffington Post*.

Our Recent Work

By Radhika Subrahmanyam

INSPIRATION through EDUCATION

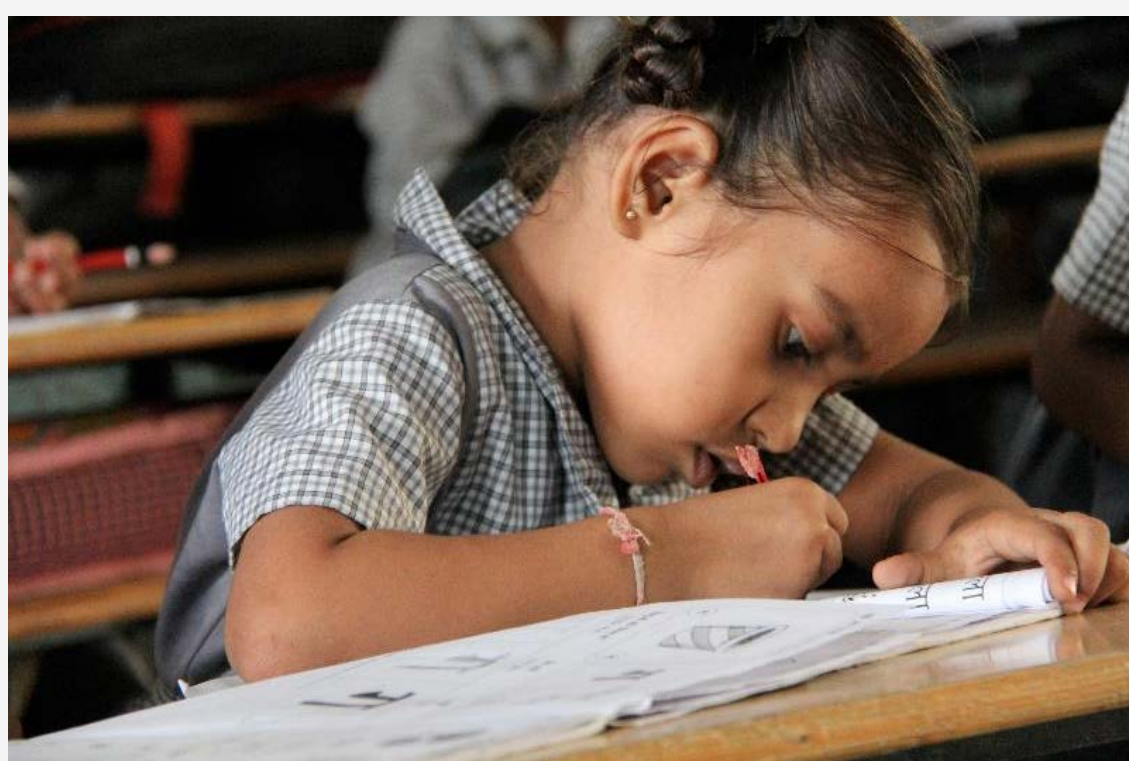
Voicing support for worldwide education, REAL's high school board members hosted a free educational event at the Beaverton Library targeted at local disadvantaged children. With a variety of activities ranging from science experiments to real-world math applications to reading, the children who took part in this event were given opportunities to learn from high school students in a casual environment. This event was quite successful and served to inspire children to value their education, and each child received a free book at the end of the event as a reward.

Outreach: Beaverton Library Summer Reading

In June, REAL volunteers teamed up with the Beaverton Library to further stimulate education and literacy in our own community. We spent over 100 hours assembling over 5,750 summer reading packets for the library, in order to help stimulate continuous learning throughout the year.

India Day 2013

For many years, REAL has taken part in Portland's annual India Festival in Pioneer Courthouse Square. This year, our booth sold water, gave out balloon animals, and wrote people's names in many different Indian languages in henna. This festival was a great way for us to reach out to the community and present information to help spread the word about REAL and our mission to promote education and literacy all over the world.



A second grader studiously does her work.

Program Highlight: Shertha High School

By Ruhika Prasad

The Shree Shertha Kelavani Mandal School (Shertha High School), located in the Shertha village in the Gandhinagar District of North Gujarat teaches students ranging from preschool to 12th grade. Over 1500 students are enrolled, but unfortunately only 38% of the student body are girls. The Shertha village is home to many agriculturally-based families, and most girls work at home and in the fields, making it difficult for them to attend school. In accordance with Gujarat's school policy, girls go to the Shertha School without having to pay tuition, thus motivating more girls to enroll in the school, in spite of having to fulfill other duties.

The Sherta School hopes to educate students in all areas, including art and science. Currently, students aren't invested as much in the science track as they are in the commerce track of higher secondary learning. This urges the school to stress the importance of education in science, and the teachers at the school recognize that technology is the foundation for the real world, and the school is taking measures to make the school more technologically advanced.

The Shertha School offers financial benefits to the students who top their class, namely by letting them continue their studies for free. They also offer benefits to those who win academic competitions, like the science fair. The school also seeks donors to sponsor budding students who want to pursue a higher degree, allowing them to go to college and have a successful career.

Shertha is still in the process of making its mark on the map, but more donors have been willing to help the school and its cause. REAL has donated over \$11,200, thanks to our generous donors, several of whom have ties to the area..

REAL volunteer Anisha Adke said when visiting the school, "Compared to other schools in Gujarat, the Shertha Schools serve as an incredible learning environment. The Board of Trustees are dedicated to the students' success and the computer lab and science labs are put to use and well-maintained. Even though the Shertha Schools have undergone immeasurable progress and serve as a paragon for other schools in rural India, there can still be improvements. The student to teacher ratios are still high, and interactive classroom activities are still minimal. However, the Shertha Schools are on a path to success."

Like many other schools, Shertha school has its challenges. The classrooms are much too tiny for the number of students in each class, and the classrooms are hotter than the outside temperature. And even though physical punishment is illegal in schools in India, some teachers through-out India still use it as a form of discipline.

Despite the improvements that could be made to the school, it has come a far way. The progress that has been made over the past several years is invigorating.

Upcoming Events

By Radhika Subrahmanyam

Bollywood Dance Party

Following last year's fundraiser, REAL is looking forward to putting on another Bollywood Dance Party on Saturday, September 14th. Featuring cultural music and dancing, all proceeds from this event will go towards outreach in India. Targeted towards high school students, tickets will be on sale ahead of time and at the door.

Portland Marathon 2013

Every year at the beginning of October, REAL volunteers work at the Portland Marathon: monitoring the course, handing out finisher t-shirts, or giving each runner a rose. Just like every year, REAL volunteers will make an appearance at this year's marathon on October 6th. As always, we are looking for volunteers to work the shift with us.



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