



# REAL SAMACHAR

A note from Hemakshi....

Welcome to REAL's first e-newsletter! With this newsletter we hope to keep you informed of REAL's programs in rural India, our activities in the US, and current topics relevant to our work. Our high school newsletter committee has selected some great topics and their perspective is eye opening. The youth board and youth volunteers are working hard to keep their supporters informed and appreciate your continued interest in education for all. Please view the first issue of the newsletter, [the Fall 2012 newsletter](#) by going to our website.

## Inspiration through Education

### Making a difference in our community

As a part of our community outreach to create awareness for the need for national and global literacy and education, we, REAL: Youth To Youth, are presenting a free educational event, INSPIRATION through EDUCATION, on Sunday, April 14, 2013 at the Beaverton Library, targeting disadvantaged children through Washington County Early Intervention, Head Start and other outreach organizations in the Portland metropolitan area.

At the event, REAL high school youth board members and volunteers will be promoting literacy and education with engaging hands-on reading, math and science games and activities to PRE-K-5th grade children. Our goal is to inspire and engage children with creative and thought provoking activities. We are putting on this event to address the current education in the U.S., especially in regards to its failure to provide an adequate education to disadvantaged populations, and to spread awareness on the necessity of global education.

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### The Beginning of a Cycle of Change

The Pardada Pardadi Educational Society (PPES) is a unique organization. Located in the province of Uttar Pradesh in northern India, PPES is strictly focused upon breaking the cycle of poverty of the most vulnerable population in rural India: young women. The aim of PPES is to empower women and lift them out of poverty by providing both vocational and higher education as well as employment.

Three of PPES's four schools focus on elementary education while the fourth is a junior high/high school combination. At these schools, girls are taught a myriad of life skills intended to give them the ability to facilitate change and challenge tradition. These skills include: public speaking, gender issues, current events, and money management. In addition, the traditional curriculum of math, science, language, et cetera is taught to all ages.

Change is desperately needed to compensate for gender disparities between men and women in all of India, but most sorely in Uttar Pradesh. Females are considered less important than males from infancy, as demonstrated by the high rates of female infanticide. The ratio of men to women is only 898 women per 1000 men in Uttar Pradesh, compared to 933 women per 1000 men nationally. This is not only due to infanticide, but to numerous factors such as: domestic violence, economic disparity, maternal mortality, and nutritional disparity. The state of Uttar Pradesh has an overall literacy rate of 69.2%, but a female literacy rate of 59.3%. This is why schools like PPES are so important.

Unfortunately, PPES has many expenses. In addition to education, PPES provides its students with uniforms, hygiene products, three meals a day, and transportation. Fortunately, REAL youth to youth has stepped in to help. For the last three years, we have been providing aid to PPES, and fully intend to continue to do so. So please, help PPES prepare Indian women to challenge cultural expectations.



Schoolchildren in Gujarat, receiving meals provided by Akshaya Patra.

### The Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Eliminating classroom hunger, increasing school enrollment and attendance, fostering socialization between castes, confronting malnutrition among children, and empowering women. These are the goals of the Akshaya Patra Foundation, an NGO based in India that provides free mid-day meals to over 1.3 million children every day. Since its start in 2000, Akshaya Patra has been spreading its reach across India, establishing kitchens throughout the country, and has given children a reason to go to school.

With nineteen kitchens across nine Indian states, Akshaya Patra has become one the largest school lunch programs in the world. The mid-day meal program has been implemented in 9,075 schools across the country, and the foundation plans on increasing that number by the hundreds.

Stories of hope is much below the poverty line, lunch is oftentimes the only meal they can get all day. With lunch in the middle of the day, the students are able to get the sustenance necessary for productive learning and proper growth.

Akshaya Patra uses desserts as an incentive for children to come to school. The organization picks a day of the week at random to serve dessert in the hopes that children will come on most days of the week, hopeful that sweets will be served that day. Not only does Akshaya Patra help fuel India's children, they also empower women throughout the country by providing them with a well paying job, year round. The giant kitchens across the country that cook between 50,000 to 150,000 meals daily require supervision, and many women have found steady jobs within the organization. To see an Akshaya Patra kitchen in action, click here: [http://youtu.be/UHu\\_XtYyXFw](http://youtu.be/UHu_XtYyXFw)

To hear an NPR story on Akshaya Patra, please visit: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2012/04/06/149867092/indian-engineers-build-a-stronger-society-with-school-lunch-program>

## Corporal Punishment in India

Forty second graders, packed into a dusty classroom, obediently took out their writing notebooks for their teacher to check. The teacher sauntered around the room, glancing at their work and commenting on it.

"You call this writing? Your letters are crooked. Write straighter." With every discouraging rebuke came a sharp twist of the cheek. The students offered no reaction, straight and silent, staring like zombies into empty space..

Witnessing this for the first time, I was shocked and unnerved by the sight of corporal punishment upon such young children, and by its very existence. Raised in the United States, the worst punishment I have ever endured was sacrificing a few recess minutes. Unfortunately, this punishment wasn't even severe by Indian standards, and it took place in a state that, when compared with others, has a lower punishment rate.

Teachers tend to blame overwhelming classroom numbers for making corporal punishment essential, however there are other factors. The lack of materials and unsatisfactory training contribute to the rise of corporal punishment. Culturally, gender and caste system also influence the teachers' actions towards their students.

In 2010, legislation was passed banning physical punishment in schools following the suicide of Rouvanjit Rawla, a 12-year-old who had been caned and humiliated by the principal of his school. The first act of corporal punishment will result in a year of imprisonment, a fine of 50,000 rupees, or both. Further violations would result in extended imprisonment and additional fines of 25,000 rupees.

The principals of schools are responsible for preventing physical punishment. However, many are helpless to stop it. Many find it difficult to figure out when it happens, or they are aware of it but lack the bandwidth to fire the teacher as well as train and hire a new one.

Unlike schooling in the United States, where learning is more focused on successes and encouragement, many schools in India concentrate on students' flaws and failures. Degrading remarks coupled with inflicted pain leaves a mark on students. Corporal punishment leads to dropping out, lowered self-esteem, and another generation that is taught such punishment is acceptable. Though laws have been passed in the attempt to stop physical punishment, more must be done to enforce these laws.

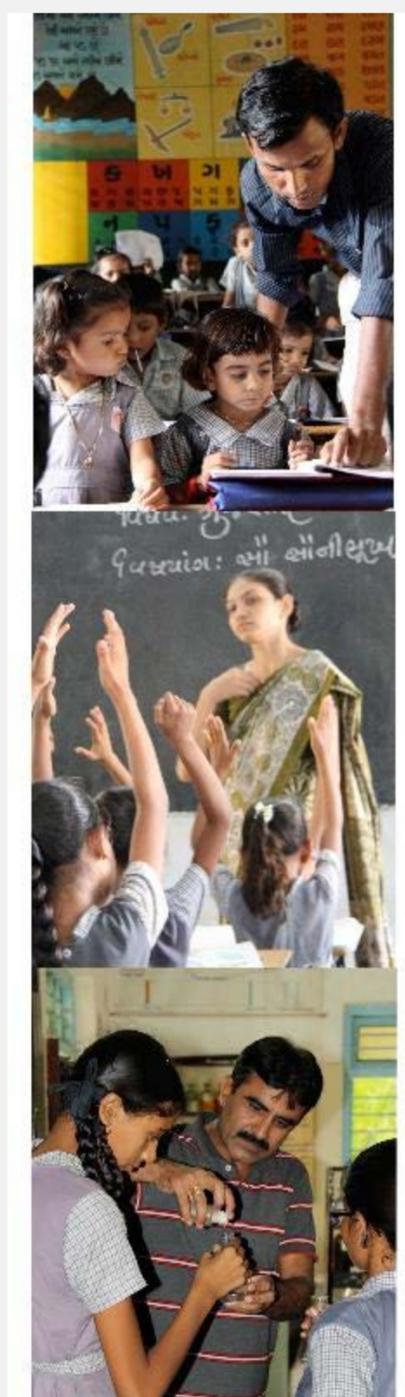
## Corporal punishment in India

### Reports by children

State	Yes (%)	No (%)
Andhra Pradesh	50.03	46.97
Assam	99.56	0.44
Bihar	47.45	52.55
Delhi	69.11	30.89
Goa	34.25	65.75
Gujarat	48.97	51.03
Kerala	57.58	42.42
Madhya Pradesh	48.73	51.27
Maharashtra	75.9	24.1
Mizoram	90.86	9.14
Rajasthan	17.87	82.13
Uttar Pradesh	81.59	18.41
West Bengal	55.56	44.44
Total	65.01	34.99

SOURCE: PLAN/MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

## The Sabido Method: A Novel Approach to Education



Literacy and education are major issues across the world. In order to reach a broad array of people and teach effectively, psychologists and advocates have proposed many novel techniques to aid the learning process. One very successful and tested method is the Sabido method.

Sabido's ideas have their foundation in Albert Bandura's work. Children acquire new behaviors by watching people and copying what they do. They model themselves on people known as "gatekeepers" (parents, siblings, etc). Eventually, they start to model themselves off of their favorite superheroes or characters on TV shows. We often have protagonists who are very violent, and children model those negative behaviors, and are thus come to embody those characteristics.

The Sabido method seeks to enact positive social change. For instance, in many countries, there is a severe lack of knowledge about contraceptives and disease transmission. So, Sabido and his organization create entertainment education where the viewers learn from role models. The organization, PCI uses extensive formative research before creating any entertainment education; the organization talks to community leaders, learns about the culture of the country at hand, and figures out what behaviors should be modeled before even hiring the first actor. PCI uses crafted characters, just ordinary people with normal challenges.

The characters are either positive role models, whose behavior has positive consequences, negative role models whose behavior has negative consequences, or transitional characters who begin as negative role models, but end up positive. The characters don't preach to the audience, their actions speak for themselves. At the end of each episode, a celebrity summarizes the lesson of the episode in 60 seconds, and offers up practical resources for viewers (i.e. free health clinics) that can be utilized.

One extremely relevant example to REAL is that of "Tinka Tinka Sukh" (happiness lies in small things). This was a drama that PCI broadcast in India. PCI found that Tinka Tinka Sukh increased enrollment in school for girls from 10% to 38%, and that the use of dowry was declining in the village that they studied. The success of the Sabido Method suggests that psychology has powerful implications for education, and that policymakers should make sure to incorporate its lessons into their decisions.



### Volunteer Highlight: Kimaya Gupte

Kimaya Gupte, senior at Westview, has been a part of REAL since September of 2010. In her free time, she enjoys baking, biking, and volunteering for the Oregon Food Bank. She is also a member of Westview's varsity swim team. Outside of school, she plays piano and sings Indian Vocal Classical music.

She joined REAL hoping to give back to the community and make a difference in the lives of children with limited opportunities and resources. Staying actively involved in all of REAL's work, she took on the position of Treasurer in 2011 and, now, holds the position of Youth President. She has clearly displayed leadership as she led REAL in the development of the Mobile Science Program. Through this humbling and eye opening experience, Gupte explains how she has "finally understood the value of education" as many around her take learning for granted. Gupte strives for equality, as she gives back to the community, hoping that everyone will one day have the same opportunities for education. As she leaves to college next year, she plans on majoring in biological engineering and to continue her involvement in organizations similar to REAL.

Thank you so much, Kimaya, for all your hard work and time. We wish you the best as you start college!

## Coming Soon!

Please be on the lookout for our spring newsletter. The following articles will be featured:

**Shree Shertha Kelavani Mandal**- Located in the Shertha Village in the Gandhinagar District of North Gujarat, Shertha provides education to students from preschool to high school. Shertha wants to improve its school so it can benefit its students with more enriched education. Some of Shertha's goals are: filling its library with books to read, encouraging more girls to enroll in school, and hiring more teachers to meet the needs of its growing student population.

**Volunteer Highlight** REAL: Youth To Youth volunteers are committed people. Not only do they fulfill their expectations with REAL: Youth To Youth, but they also serve the community, helping to make it a better place. In our next article, one volunteer will be interviewed and will explain how *they* became involved with REAL: Youth To Youth, what *they* do for the organization, and other volunteer work and extracurriculars they are involved with outside the organization.



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REAL: Youth To Youth, P.O. Box 253, Lake Oswego, Oregon, 97034 USA  
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