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Educational Quality Improvement Program
Classrooms • Schools • Communities

Reaching and Educating At Risk Children (REACH India)

For the period of October 1, 2005 to September 31, 2006



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I. Executive Summary

REACH India, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), aims to strengthen the capacity of India non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to contribute to achieving India's constitutionally-mandated goal of Universal Elementary Education.

In order to contribute to this goal, REACH India provides selected NGOs with grant funding to implement projects defined by the terms of project proposals. The proposals were reviewed and approved by REACH India project staff, a project selection committee and USAID. In addition to grant funds, REACH India provides administrative and technical support to the organizations selected to receive grants.

The project area of REACH India comprises six regions of India, three urban (Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai) and three rural (Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, North Karnataka). The project aims to benefit 200,000 children via a variety of NGO interventions such as bridge courses for out of school children; coaching support for in-school children at-risk of dropping out; through teacher training and other means. Two types of grants are made to NGOs: direct service delivery grants for NGOs implementing projects themselves and capacity building grants for NGOs who, in turn, will select and provide capacity building assistance to another range of NGOs.

Beginning in September 2003 the project has passed through several, overlapping phases that have been reported on in prior six monthly reports:

Phase 1: Project establishment—office, staffing, Advisory Board and Grant Selection Committee, development and approval of project procedures and methods;

Phase 2: Grant announcement, review and selection process begins; finalization of Project Monitoring Plan;

Phase 3: Grant selection process in additional regions; initial technical assistance workshops with NGO grantees conducted; project implementation by selected NGO partners begins; project monitoring and evaluation tools developed and/or modified including the individual student profile, the student tracking tool, the education quality checklist, and the organization development checklist;

Phase 4: Grantee selection process in additional regions; initial technical assistance workshops with NGO grantees conducted; newly selected grantees begin project implementation; technical assistance in quality education; financial management and organization development provided to NGO grantees selected earlier; REACH India national conference organized and conducted; including production of film on REACH India; quality education workshop series (Learning Classroom Series) designed and first sessions held in Delhi; reviews of financial practices of grantees conducted followed by development and implementation of plans for improvement.

By the beginning of this reporting period (April 2006), the grant roll-out process had been completed in all six regions. Implementation by Delhi grantees began in October 2004; in Jharkhand in December 2004; in Kolkata in January 2005; in Chhattisgarh in June 2005; in Mumbai in October 2005 and, finally, in North Karnataka in November 2005. In all, \$9.4 million in grant funds were committed to 33 NGO partner grantees (including LSS of Chhattisgarh), 22 (including LSS) direct service delivery grantees, 11 capacity building grantees and 68 sub-grantees of capacity building grantees.

The annual report will focus on the progress made by these grantees in implementing their projects, on the technical assistance provided to grantees via the REACH India project and on the monitoring and evaluation efforts conducted.

REACH India, during this reporting period, exceeded most of the established quantitative targets.

As on 31 August 2006, a total of 94,471 children aged six to fourteen were directly benefiting from project implementation by REACH India supported grantees against the target of 60,000 mentioned in the Performance Monitoring Plan thereby exceeding the year II target by 57% (cumulative). (See page 1 of PMP Annexure)

Another highlight of the year II findings is that overall retention rate for REACH India grantees was 87% as compared to the target of 75% set for Year 2. Students in formal schools being offered remediation services through a REACH India funded program demonstrated a retention rate of 95%. (See page 2 of PMP Annexure)

Currently, 3870 people are contributing to the project results reported. In the process, they are also gaining valuable experience and training that has potential for increasing their capacity to contribute in the future to achieving India's goal of universal elementary education.

Teacher training has emerged as an even larger component of the REACH India project than initially anticipated. As of September 2006, 2288 formal school teachers and 1060 formal school administrators have been trained. By extension, it is estimated that there are some 91,520 children benefiting from improved teaching/instructional methods. This shift toward the provision of more teacher trainings than originally anticipated in the project document and PMP, is indicative of the flexibility and responsiveness of the project to the changes circumstances that are resulting from the government's implementation of SSA. (See page 8 of PMP Annexure)

Significant technical assistance initiatives have been conducted related to education quality, student tracking, organization development and financial and grant administration. These various initiatives were developed following substantial consultation with grantees regarding their needs and were based on an examination of the baseline data pertaining to quality education provided by the NGOs. There has been positive feedback from REACH India grantees on the usefulness of these various technical assistance efforts. Further, there are increasing indications that tools and methods encouraged by REACH India projects will have a sustaining impact on the plans, programs and practices of participating NGOs. These efforts also lay a base for further initiatives in the next phase of the project. (See Quality Education, Monitoring & Evaluation and Organization Development Sections of the Report for further elaboration)

The financial administration practices of REACH India grantees have been reviewed via individualized reviews of each organization's financial practice. REACH India contracted with Price, Waterhouse and Cooper to conduct a financial review of REACH India grantees in Delhi. From this review a framework was developed for REACH India finance staff to review the financial practices of REACH India grantees in all the other regions. Where needed, plans have been developed, and are being implemented, for addressing issues that have arisen in these reviews. There are many instances where NGOs have taken affirmative steps to strengthen the transparency, efficiency and professionalism of their financial administration systems. (See the section on Finance & Grants Administration for further elaboration)

The REACH India project staffing structure has been revised to address the challenges associated with monitoring the activities of 33 REACH India grantees, to improve project capacities, to review grantee work plans and related budgets, and to provide more consistent and effective technical assistance to grantees. This contributed to better coordination between the area program officers and the grants and finance officers, clearer and more effective communications with our grantees and a strengthened capacity to measure project progress in relation to project expenditures. (See the section on Finance & Grants Administration for further elaboration)

While networks among NGOs and between NGOs and government require strengthening in the remaining phases of the project, there are increasing instances of NGO-government communication, cooperation and action at the state, district and block levels. (See project update section of each of the six regions) Built into the design of REACH India is the development of support relationships/networks between capacity building grantees and their sub-grantees. The nature of these working relationships has taken different shapes depending upon the strengths of the capacity building NGOs and the needs and projects proposed by their sub-grantees. Within the REACH India network, grantee NGOs can be grouped around specific areas of competence and interest (inclusive education, teacher training, bridge camps and coaching centers, community involvement etc). In the next phase of the project, REACH India will build on these areas of affinity and expertise.

Other Developments

Following an extensive period of uncertainty, final decisions were taken by USAID to reduce the overall REACH India budget by \$4.5 million from \$20 million to \$15.5 million. The decision was also taken to extend the project by six months to March 31, 2008. This decision has been communicated to the REACH India grantees who have been asked to indicate whether they want to apply for a no-cost extension of their project grants.

Given budget reductions several adjustments have had to be made to the project: The funds in the budget for grants were reduced from \$11.2 million to \$8.7 million. As \$9.4 had already been committed to grantees a strategy for addressing

this issue was developed with the aim of causing minimal disruption to funded projects. Plans for making additional grants had to be scuttled.

Resources available for communications, dissemination, documentation and research were significantly cut-back. The international partner agreement with Michigan State University, related to these tasks was cancelled and the staff position of communications officer was vacated. Plans for two further national conferences were abandoned as was the plan for another film on REACH India documenting progress and challenges.

A mid-term review was conducted of the REACH India project by two independent consultants supported by USAID. The report's executive summary concluded with the following:

“In the remaining period, REACH and its Partners may focus their attention on these aspects in a systematic manner and explore ways of ensuring continuity of efforts. The first is to sustain the interventions of capacity building of grantees – it has been noted already that REACH has undertaken efforts to create strong, vibrant organizations which can effectively address the agenda of UEE for vulnerable children. These processes must be consolidated. Secondly, to ensure that the ideas generated during the REACH intervention must find their way into the larger government system. For this, it has already been noted that a deliberate strategy needs to be out in place. Only when innovative ideas and approaches enter the government system is there hope of change on a wider, larger scale. Thirdly, we have mentioned the need for a more rigorous approach to working with community based institutions like PTAs, School Development Committees and Panchayats. The agenda of local education governance is a key area that needs urgent attention. These three complementary aspects must be focused upon in the coming 18-20 months of REACH India. If this happens, it is likely that a strong foundation can be laid for future work and for sustaining children's learning.”

These findings and recommendations have been shared with REACH India grantees and the recommendations will be encouraged wherever possible and appropriate.

Discussions were initiated by grantees regarding the future of REACH India. Initial observations have been that there should be serious consideration of REACH India continuing beyond the period of the USAID cooperative agreement in some form as many organizations have articulated the benefits of being part of such a network.

There have been some changes in management during this project period at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and at USAID. At AIR, in Washington DC, the headquarters project directorship was changed. (Joseph Lombardo replaced Cory Heyman) In New Delhi, a new CTO at USAID was appointed. (Sourav Banerjee replaced Mamta Kohli)

Steps for the Next Six Months

A format has been developed and sent to grantees for applying for no-cost extensions to their projects. All but a few grantees have indicated their interest in applying for such extension. As the applications are received, they will be reviewed and ultimately approved or rejected based on criteria identified in the application guidelines.

Grantee final stage budgets and requests for advance funds and grantee expenditure patterns need to be assessed carefully with the aim of assuring that there is a close match between grantee projections for funds needed and what they actually are able to spend to meet project objectives. Based on analysis, decisions will be made as to whether individual organizations will be able to expend all their remaining funds effectively, whether adjustments need to be made in the levels of contributions to grantees (upward or downward) and/or whether some grant funds should be shifted to supporting other aspects of the project (technical assistance, information and expertise sharing on special issues via meetings and other means, identification of best practices and research on key issues, networking, advocacy and policy development).

Additional technical assistance initiatives will be undertaken based on a continuing assessment of NGO interests, needs and capacities, and building on the success of such efforts to date.

Now that the REACH India “network” is fully operational and sufficient time has passed in implementation under the various grants, REACH India monitoring and information collection efforts will turn more vigorously to the process of documenting lessons learned and best practices, along with the dissemination of same.

Plans will be put in place for the orderly close out of the project with special emphasis on providing encouragement and technical assistance to grantee NGOs in developing and implementing sustainability plans.

II. Introduction

REACH India is a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that aims to improve access of vulnerable children to quality basic education. The project complements the Government of India's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a key component of the Universal Elementary Education (UEE) program.

The project provides grants and technical assistance to NGOs is to address the basic education needs of at-risk children -- defined for this purpose as children (especially girls), up to 14 years of age, who are either out of school or are in school but in danger of dropping out. This is done by:

- Strengthening NGOs to scale up delivery of educational services to out-of-school children and improve the quality of education in schools
- Building the capacity of smaller NGOs to do likewise

REACH India provides two types of grants:

- Direct Service Delivery Grants: to NGOs for direct delivery of educational services to vulnerable children in formal and alternative educational programs.
- Capacity Building Support Grants: to enable NGOs to mentor and support grassroots NGOs in providing basic education services to vulnerable children in formal and alternative educational programs. Organizations receiving Capacity Building Support Grants help selected Grassroots NGOs in two ways: a) Give them sub-grants to implement the Grassroots NGOs' educational programs; and b) Use their expertise and experience to boost the capabilities of Grassroots NGOs and local educational systems.

The direct and indirect outcome of REACH India is the delivery of educational services to vulnerable out-of-school (and vulnerable in-school) children and the essential measure of that outcome is the numbers of children, especially girls, to have received these services. The project aims to benefit 200,000 children via a variety of NGO interventions such as bridge courses for out of school children, coaching support for in-school children at-risk of dropping out, through teacher training and other means.

Other purposes are promoted via the project as well including:

- Promoting the adoption of best practices within the NGO and educational communities.
- Encouraging stronger and more complementary relationships between NGOs and government in promoting UEE objectives.
- Encouraging strengthened supportive and resource networks among NGOs to address issues pertaining to the achievement of UEE.

The first region to be given a grant was Delhi and the NGOs began implementation in October 2004, while the last was Northern Karnataka, which began implementation in November 2005.

III. Achievements

- Against a target of 60,000 agreed to in the Performance Monitoring Plan, as on 31 August 2006, a total of 94,471 children aged six to fourteen were directly benefiting from the REACH India project. This exceeded the year II target by 57% (cumulative).
- The overall retention rate for REACH India grantees was 87% as compared to the target of 75% set for Year 2. Students in formal schools being offered remediation services through a REACH India funded program demonstrated a retention rate of 95%.
- Currently, 3870 people are contributing to the project results. In the process, they are also gaining valuable experience and training that has potential for increasing their capacity to contribute in the future to achieving India's goal of universal elementary education.
- Teacher training has emerged as a larger component of the REACH India project than initially anticipated. As of September 2006, 2288 formal school teachers and 1060 formal school administrators have been trained. By extension, it is estimated that some 91,520 children are benefiting from improved teaching/instructional methods.
- This shift toward provision of more teacher-trainings than originally anticipated in the project document is indicative of the flexibility and responsiveness of the project to the changes in circumstances that are resulting from the government's implementation of SSA.
- All 32 grantees have demonstrated improvements in financial systems. Of these, almost 94% scored 75 and above on the checklist.
- 89% grantee NGOs demonstrated improvement over baseline in the area of technical capacity in educational service delivery for vulnerable children and scored 61% on the quality education checklist for non formal education programs, as against the target of 40%.
- The number of formal schools covered through REACH India interventions is 942 as against the target of 100 in year I, 350 in year II and 475 in year III (cumulative).
- The tools developed by the REACH India team (such as, Individual Student Profile, baseline coversheet, quality education assessment tool) are being used not only for the REACH India project but also for some non-REACH projects as well.
- The network building/ strengthening between REACH India grantees and government education departments is happening slowly but steadily. 50% of REACH India grantees are members of Advisory bodies at national/ state/ district/ block level and are addressing/ lobbying for issues related to child education from different perspectives.
- Coordination with education departments in some regions has ensured that issues pertaining to mainstreaming, retention of children and training of formal school teachers are addressed.
- Out of the 28 NGOs for which REACH India received 2 periods of complete data, 25 of the NGOs showed improvement in their technical capacity to deliver non-formal education services. This represents 89% (25) of the 28 NGOs, while 11% (3) of those NGOs did not show improvement. The overall average improvement above the baseline was 35%.
- The Quality Education Assessment Tool, developed by REACH India, to help NGOs assess their progress in improving the quality of education has been translated in Hindi for use in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh; and in Kannada for Karnataka.
- Based on the Learning Classroom Series, many of the NGO partners in Delhi and Jharkhand have either developed new or re-aligned their old curriculum to address their specific needs.

- Capacity building initiatives in Chhattisgarh have led to the partners reorganizing their learning centres for better implementation. Student absenteeism has dropped and community teachers have become more equipped in working with new methodologies and have become more confident of their skills. There has been a review of the program strategy and new activities, which include TLMs, and additional exposure visits have been included so as to further strengthen the educational quality in their programs.
- Under the Specific Learning Disabilities project implemented by Manovikas Kendra, in the first year of implementation, 82% of children identified as learning disabled, transitioned into the next academic session against the target of 50%.
- CINI Asha in Kolkata has held workshops with the Education Department Representative and Sub-Inspectors of Schools to introduce their sub-grantees and share their challenges. As a result, the SSA appointed a Nodal Officer to coordinate the activities between SSA and CINI Asha.
- The former Principal Secretary, Department of Education, Government of West Bengal has been instrumental in supporting the NGO partners in Kolkata in facilitating their engagement with the formal schools, both for mainstreaming of children and training of formal school teachers. The Principal Secretary's engagement ensured that other department officials, and the SSA office take note of the REACH India project in Kolkata and its activities.
- Digdarshika has been networking on the disability issues with the Chhattisgarh department of social welfare for inclusive education and has negotiated with the government on recognition of the three month certification course on disability. This will be made mandatory for the government schools and the MOU between the two is in process.
- Naandi has been able to get the corporate sector to contribute to the project to benefit tribal children. In the process their cost share has increased from the original Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 1.5 crores.
- A detailed checklist was developed to facilitate in carrying out systematic financial reviews of all grantee organizations at regular intervals. This tool covered aspects ranging from simple accounting and book-keeping to advanced financial management issues. It further includes other crucial issues such as compliance with the provisions of the Grant Agreement and measures related to Internal Control.
- A form had been designed to standardise the process of applying for Grant Modifications to USAID. It was particularly useful in defining the information to be sent to USAID for such modifications uniformly across all regions. The same was used for budget enhancement of CWD in Jharkhand and Disha in the Delhi region.
- The administration of duty travel by employees was streamlined to a great extent by introducing a consolidated Travel Claim Form which is being used to claim reimbursement of expenses incurred while on official visits. In the process, an effort was also made to promote payments through cheques which minimised the quantum of expenses being incurred in cash by REACH India.

IV. Project Update – Regions

Summarized below, by region, are examples of individual project progress.

A Delhi

Delhi has completed two years of its implementation. Several visits were made to the NGOs during this phase by AIR, USAID and by REACH India especially on rectification of Audit Observations and finalization of second year budgets.

In Delhi, this period saw a wide range of interaction with the government officials with efforts from both REACH India and the partner NGOs. The result of these interactions became apparent in the form of a highly interactive meeting with the Education Department of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). This meeting took place in a spirit of collaboration and both MCD department and the NGOs appreciated the interaction and showed the willingness to carry it forward. A major outcome of this meeting was that several circulars were issued by the Education Department which would help the NGOs in ensuring admission and retention of children into government schools. The NGOs also came forward and offered to help the MCD in their efforts to improve the quality of education. A school assessment format was finalized by the Delhi grantees based on discussions in the meeting held with the MCD.

The following will give a specific list of NGO activities & achievements.

a. Direct Service Delivery Grantees

1. AADI

The program focuses on providing inclusive education via five government demonstration schools in Delhi as well as transforming the AADI School into one that serves both abled and differently-abled children. Other activities include community-based educational services for out-of-school children with disabilities and action research.

Achievements:

- Enrolled 101 children in four (out of five) government school which are the mainstream demonstration schools.
- Placed 28 children from cluster services to regular / special schools.
- Created Workbooks for Nursery and KG in the AADI school.
- Revised admission policy, fee structure and safety security policy, leading to 33 new admissions this year.
- Tool developed for assessing collaboration of parents.

Activities:

- Organized training of assistant teachers of the five government schools together for five days at AADI.
- Organized parent teacher meetings in two schools which were well attended by parents.
- Intervention and modeling of practices fostering inclusion in schools.
- Continuous reviewing and sharing of teaching learning process and progress of individual child with parents taking place.
- Ongoing capacity building led to a higher level of technical skill development of the teams, new therapy was developed, educational aids acquired, resulting in better quality services for children, and substantial improvement in activities and therapy for children .
- Frequency of days of the East Delhi cluster were increased from 2 to 3 days a week, as suggested by the parents and also felt by the teams that increasing the number of days would be beneficial.
- Completed data collection of school baseline survey of one more school and initiated data collection in two other schools.
- On the request of the UEE the team submitted a draft proposal for the conduct of a survey to identify out of school and in school children with disability. The team actively participated in formulation of State guidelines for evaluation of children with disabilities.
- Consultants for an evaluation of impact of SSA for children with disabilities in seven states.

2. CEMD

The project is undertaken in partnership with the Department of Education and UEE Mission of the Delhi State Government, and involves working to improve the quality of education provided in the formal school system in one district, Southwest A, as well as enhancing achievement capacity of the UEE cell by expanding its "management bandwidth."

However, the entire staff resigned en masse as of 1 April 2006. This resulted in no activities for some time. Meanwhile, the grant to CEMD was suspended pending hiring of staff and revising of the proposal to accommodate the lost time.

The following steps have been taken toward possible lifting of the suspension of the grant:

- A new director of CEMD hired.
- Revised proposal submitted.

3. Disha

Disha works with vulnerable children i.e., street children, working children and children of sex workers, in six slum clusters of the Mayapuri industrial area (Phase II) in Southwest Delhi. Activities include developing need-based strategies like alternative education centers, bridge courses, transit classes, remedial classes and camp schools for vulnerable children for access, retention, quality and linkage with the formal education system. They also incorporate puppetry, storytelling, theatre, mime and photography in their pedagogy to make it relevant and innovative.

Disha had proposed an increase in their existing budget; this was approved keeping in view the results of Disha's efforts and their grant amount was increased from US \$ 149,983 to US \$ 191,821.

Achievements:

- Disha was nominated as member of Vidyalay Shiksha Samiti in Municipal Corporation Primary School, Nangal Raya, New Delhi.
- A get-together of all the children from the centres was organized in Bal Bhavan. Children took part in activities like film showing, visits to the aquarium, exhibitions, rides, games, dancing, painting and drawing, display, toy train rides, and debating. Exposure visits were also organized to Delhi's cultural attractions such as Mogul Garden, India Gate, Rajghat, Lal Quila and Gandhi Smriti.
- Based on the training received in the Learning Classroom Series, the resource team prepared a new curriculum for level-I and II for Hindi, Math, EVS and non scholastic areas, and the rubric for all four levels for assessment, question papers and reporting formats.

Activities:

- Held a seminar with participation from various government officials involved in providing primary education. This seminar was spearheaded by Shri S. Regunathan, Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi, Prof. Krishna Kumar, Director, NCERT, Shri K.R. Chandrasekaran, Director, NIOS, Smt. Rashmi Singh, Joint Director, Department of Social Welfare, eminent educationists, school officials who deliberated on the challenges and opportunities for education of vulnerable children.
- Held a media advocacy seminar on 'Challenges and Opportunities for Education of Vulnerable Children' with fifty participants. Participants included Acharya Ramamurti, Razia Ismail, Convenor of India Alliance for Child Rights, Rahul Dev of Janmaat TV Channel, Ashok Aggarwal, Right to Education Task Force Dr. G.C.Upadhyay, NCERT and professors from media and communication institutes.
- Networked with Right to Education Task Force (RETF), National Alliance for Fundamental Rights for Education, Social Jurist, MV Foundation, Indian Alliance for Child Rights.
- Presented puppet shows to provide information about the enrollment drive and the admission for out of school children into the formal schools. An educational *mela* (festival) was also organized for parents, children, local leaders, school head masters, teachers and supervisory staff. Children performed group dances, *bal geet* and drama while the instructors presented a play and a puppet show.
- Senator Michael B. Enzi, Senator Lamar Alexander, Senator Johnny Isakson and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings from the USA visited DISHA in April, 2006. They appreciated the work with the children. Fifty six head teachers from various schools of USA interacted with Disha's children during their visit to India in alliance with the American Embassy School in Delhi.

4. Katha

Katha works in three camps in the Govindpuri slums in South Delhi and targets the vulnerable children through a spectrum of initiatives including community bridge schools, full alternative programs, library on wheels, and remedial classes for formal school students and sharing of the NGO's renowned teaching materials and pedagogy with teachers in the formal schools.

(Katha did not provide the information required from grantees in order to indicate achievements and activities in this report based on their reporting.)

5. SARD

The program will benefit at-risk vulnerable children aged 3-14 years who live in 30 resettlement colonies in Southwest District that fall within the Najafgarh zone of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). SARD's interventions include bridge schools, remedial classes, balwadis, training and sensitization of teachers in the formal schools in the area and community mobilization to ensure that children go to school.

Achievements:

- Research Design for two research studies were completed: a study to understand the parental perception and involvement in their children's education; and a study to understand the phenomenon of seasonal migration/extended absence and its impact on children's performance.
- Monthly parent-teacher meetings were held where topics like progress of children, importance of punctuality, importance of such meetings, assessments, girls' education, cleanliness, balanced diet, HIV/AIDS, identifying children for bridge centres, vocational training etc. were discussed.
- Teaching Learning Materials and Worksheet Development workshops were held to help teachers develop novel and innovative TLMs for an effective classroom teaching. This involves a brainstorming session to generate creative ideas for making new TLMs as well as worksheets. Teachers develop TLM for all the subjects being taught in the learning centres including Math, Environment, Hindi and English.

Activities:

- Conducted training for SARD-REACH India's teachers to develop clarity on pedagogical aspects and educational terminology. This also included training on curriculum, pedagogy, TLM, enriching the class room teaching, participatory methodology, maintenance records like registers, teachers diary etc., child centered education, community mobilization, development of teaching tools, etc.
- Training was also conducted for the MCD teachers to build their capacity in the area of pedagogy. These sessions were on TLM development, Effective Classroom practices and Curriculum development.
- A two-day creativity workshop was attended by selected teachers and students of various learning centres. This workshop primarily focused on fostering creativity in area of story telling, story writing, story dramatization and representing stories through drawings.
- SARD's teachers from balwadis, bridge and remedial courses, accompanied by the cluster coordinators were taken on an exposure visit to Mumbai. The main objective of this visit was to orient the teachers to the various educational programs run by the Aga Khan Education Service India.
- Independence Day and Teachers' day were celebrated with great vigour and joy all learning centers. The children were informed about the importance of these days and why they are celebrated.

B. Capacity Building Grantees

6. Deepalaya

The project builds the capacities of six NGOs to enable them to better deliver educational services to disadvantaged children in North, Northwest, West and Southwest Delhi.

Achievements:

- Against a target of 3000 children to be mainstreamed by July 2007, 3367 have already been mainstreamed as on 31st August 06.
- A new syllabus for 4 subjects and 2 levels of bridge course learning centres has been developed by the subgrantee NGOs; an outcome of the capacity enhancing program conducted by Deepalaya (April to September 06)

Activities:

- Held training programs (10 in all) on issues like Resource Mobilization, Curriculum Development, SLOs and Indicators, Quality Education Assessment, Exchange of Experiences. 200 personnel from the 6 partners participated in this program.
- Carried out 245 monitoring visits to 98 Learning Centers of the 6 partners.
- One of the subgrantee NGOs (NIRMANA, Rohini) had to re-locate 2 of their Learning Centers following the demolition of slums. The affected families, numbering 3,000 were re-located at Bawana and Narela. Nirmana opened 4 Learning Centers at Bawana where out of school children who were already in Bawana as well as the enrolled children who came from earlier area were enrolled. Children who had already been mainstreamed earlier had to be again admitted to the schools at Bawana.

7. Prayas

Prayas proposes to work with smaller, grassroots NGOs to strengthen their organizational capacities and scale up their educational services for mainstreaming out-of-school children; through the REACH India grant it also aims to improve the quality of education in schools, and form a network for advocacy on educational issues for at-risk children.

Achievements:

- Changed their strategy to include remedial education centres for children who are mainstreamed from the bridge courses and through direct enrollment.
- Organised study tour to Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur to learn to provide equitable, quality education for children from deprived communities in urban and rural areas. Also, to learn how to work with government schools to provide technical and academic support for improving quality of education, the concept of mother teachers in the learning centres, involving the community for the education of deprived children, and learn to develop a vibrant and reflective group of teachers and academic supporters in the realm of early and elementary school education.

Activities:

- Formed a parent Teacher Associations, Kshetra Education Committees / Basti Education Committees.
- Conducted trainings and workshops on several topics for the subgrantee staff: juvenile justice, documentation, process documentation, report and proposal writing, using computers for data analysis, gender sensitivity, organization development and organization behaviour, and orientation on National Institute of Open Schooling.
- Organised orientation of head teachers of MCD schools for mainstreaming and building better relations between NGOs and MCD.
- Held training for Teachers on Course Curriculum Development, Teaching learning methodology, Mathematic Teaching in Multi-Grade context and preparing TLMs.

B JHARKHAND

Jharkhand is the second oldest region of the REACH India project. In this state, the project is supported by 4 NGO partners: 3 direct service delivery and 1 capacity building.

In Jharkhand, the NGO partners have shared a good relationship with the government officials. This is quite evident by the fact that some of the NGOs have been invited over by them to participate and help in improving the quality of education by training SSA teachers.

Further improvement in the relationship with the Government has been experienced during this period. For example, the Government Referral Hospital had selected two of CWD's Balwadi Teachers from Birta Balwadi Centre as "Health Representatives". They have been assigned the task of Supervision of the ANMs appointed by the Government and for working for the village Birta.

Through the workshops for Government school teachers held this year as well as the previous year, a good rapport has been established with these Government schools.

In this reporting period, the Jharkhand partner NGOs were exposed to a program and finance review by the REACH India staff, a mid term review by USAID consultants and a technical assistance workshop “Learning Classroom Series”

All the NGOs have gained from this workshop tremendously and are making use of its teachings in their everyday working.

The past year also saw commencement of a ‘regional network’, initiated by the REACH India partners. The network members met twice in the last six months and formalized the basic objectives of the network. This network gained further importance when some non REACH India NGOs became its members, thus opening venues for future partnerships for the REACH India NGOs.

The following will give an NGO-specific list of activities & achievements.

a. Direct Service Delivery Grantees

1. Badlao Foundation

The project aims at providing educational access to at risk children in identified 6 remote blocks, through direct educational intervention with the help of Bal Vatikas & Lok Shikshan Kendras. They are running 72 educational centers and providing learning opportunities to tribals, dalits, other backward communities & minorities.

Achievements:

- Mainstreaming of At-Risk Children is one of the main goals of the project. Although, the assessment of students is a continuous ongoing process, but especially to ascertain the capability of students towards mainstreaming, the progress of students was assessed through an annual exam conducted after the lapse of one year. The mainstreamed children were awarded formal report cards to indicate their performance.
- Special attention was paid to the students identified as slow learners by teachers through separate and additional classes, so as to try to understand the basic causes of slow comprehension and thus helping in correcting the same.
- Feedback from the local formal schools have indicated that as compared to the students already studying in schools, the students who have been mainstreamed from Badlao centres have developed distinctive personalities, in as much as they are much better behaved;punctual and regular in their attendance; attentive in class and regular in their studies; active and smart; neat and Clean; takes active interest in cultural activities, arts and crafts, athletics, games and sports, etc.
- In order to introduce the concept of Panchayati Raj among the children, a Bal Panchayat was established in each of the centers. This has helped and enriched the existing standards of morality among the children. The children were encouraged to identify various problems, their root causes and the probable solutions. This experiment has helped to create an enabling environment thus building up leadership qualities among children right from an early age, strengthening their communication skills, making them more articulate, helping them to manage their own problems in a democratic spirit, arranging adequate and clean drinking water in the center and making sure to maintain cleanliness and also the infrastructure in the center. The Bal Panchayat members have also proved to be of immense help in visiting the sick children and to motivate them to remain absent for minimum number of days.
- Regular monthly Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings have shown positive impacts such as visits by community to the center and an active participation in center management, reduction in instances of drop-out, retention of students in the center increased.

Activities:

- Continuation of ongoing process and workshop on *Santhali* and *Paharia* tribal language primers and their field testing.

- Dissemination of the learnings of the ‘Learning Classroom Series’ workshops happened in the form of workshop at the cluster level, Individual orientation of instructors, visit to individual centers for imparting orientation to teachers on various topics such as Lesson design preparation, Cooperative learning, Assessment tools, Blueprint to design question papers and its framework, Continuous comprehensive evaluation- weekly evaluation of students –one subject per week, Reporting system, Scholastic activity and non-scholastic activity.
- Prepared TLMs using local resources, such as Abacus made of bamboo sticks, Colored Sticks to support elementary arithmetic calculations, Match box for cognitive development, Play board (similar to Ludo), Toys from mud & palm-leaf, Use of waste paper for preparation of toys, such as wind wheel, boat, fan, frog, etc., Flash Cards for identification of English & Hindi Alphabets and Numbers, Finger Puppets for story-telling, Pocket Board for simple arithmetical calculations by the teachers/instructors and students under the guidance of cluster coordinators and education activists.
- Continued liaisoning with government officials such as joining hands with all the state-run schools in the neighborhood for mainstreaming of students; Invitation to and persuading all village/block/district level officials like government school teachers, BDO & other block/district level education department officials to attend the annual function of Badlao Foundation; Mobilization of text-books and other books for mini-library; Mobilization of standard teaching aids like maps, globes, etc for the learning centres.

2. Banvasi Vikas Ashram

The project aims to scale up Residential Bridge Camp schooling for out of school girls, from the disadvantaged sections of the society. The belief behind the aim is that ‘each educated girl can in turn educate an entire family and hence the next generation’. This year by end of October’06, the second batch of girls enrolled in the residential school would be completing the bridge course.

The bridge course has completed 3 semesters of 2 two-months each, and educational activities up to grade 3 have been conducted. To simplify the camp structure after the experience of the last years, the team has structured the entire course into 5 learning grades represented from lowest to highest in order as Kislai, Suman, Upwan, Vatika and Fulwari.

Achievements:

- Of the 101 girls of previous batch, 72 girls were mainstreamed into formal schools. Of these, 11 girls were mainstreamed to full alternative schools at grade VI level (in Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalay) and remaining 61 girls were mainstreamed to formal schools.
- Developed new Teaching and Learning Materials; For example for Language – Fishing Card, Shape Cards, Faction value cards ; for Maths – Crosswords for sentence making, Roulette game, matching wheels ; for EVS - Water cycle diagram, Immunization chart and clay models, Good habits chart.

Some of the notable achievements are in the field of dissemination –

- Banvasi has emerged as a resource agency along with CINI (Kolkata) for capacity building of SSA bridge course educators in Jharkhand.
- A 3-tier module has been developed for the in-house training of Master Trainers, Block Master Trainers and Bridge Course Educators on bridge course schooling.
- Two-phase training was organized for developing 40 Master Trainers from 11 districts of Jharkhand.
- Two half-yearly newsletters on quality education have been published under the REACH India project to initiate local level discussion on quality education and encourage good practices in formal education system.

Activities:

- Finalized the bridge course curriculum with the help of learnings of the REACH India “Learning Classroom series”. This 3-phase workshop also helped the teachers to better understand the curriculum and make necessary adjustments within it for more congruity with local settings.
- The EVS classes have become more integrated and also included language and numerical efficiency.

- During this session, teachers have also introduced Rubric method for the continuous evaluation of children. This has helped teachers gain insights for corrective actions required by individual children. By the end of March, the teachers identified a specific problem with syllables among girls. Since the girls are more accustomed to vernacular, the language proficiency was rather slow, and extra classes with some games, worksheets and practice helped them to overcome the problem.
- Provided vocational training in 3 skills, namely, acrylic painting, crafts and tailoring to the bridge course students.

3. Centre for Women's Development

The project is following a two-pronged approach. They are providing Balwadis for the children in the age group 3-6 years and simultaneously working to improve the learning situations for the children in the age group 6-14 years by a) training the teachers in formal & informal schools, b) providing additional teachers in the formal schools and c) training a group of teachers to provide classes during out-of-school hours in the identified 15 villages.

CWD had proposed an increase in their existing budget; this was approved keeping in view the results of their efforts and their grant amount was increased from US \$ 115,540 to US \$ 150,310

Achievements:

- Meetings were organized in the villages with coaching centres with large numbers of enrolled children for the purpose of requesting that staff from the centers seek to keep an extra teacher at the center financed through a small payment by the village.
- As planned and budgeted, TLMs and project operational materials were provided to the centres.
- In order to attract more students CWD has begun providing nutritional supplement to balwadis during this six-month period. This practice has encouraged the children to come to the centres particularly during April to September, when there is food scarcity.
- A major achievement of CWD was the ability to link 22 of its balwadis with the local school/ EGS/ Anganwadi, so that the balwadi children could get the meal/ snack provided there. Earlier these balwadies were being supported by Catholic Relief Services, but this support came to an end in September'06. And as food is a major attraction in this otherwise food scarce area, inability to provide meals would have resulted in high drop-out rates.
- 11 Model Balwadi Centres were identified based on teacher's activities, quality of teaching, satisfactory use of teaching materials and children's work in the classrooms, exhibition of TLMs, cleanliness, sanitation, status of Children & Balwadi, community participation and activeness of Village Education Committee (VEC) and Self Help Groups (SHG). With the objective of enhancing the quality of the rest of the balwadi centres, a "Cross Visit" program was organized in the month of April. In these Cross Visits, the VECs of the rest of the balwadis visited and observed these model balwadi centres, interacted with teachers, SHGs, VEC and the Community.
- The awareness programs conducted by CWD are having a wider impact on the villagers. This became very obvious when the men folk also joined in the awareness programs whereas earlier it was attended by women only.
- The balwadi teachers have also been motivated to quite an extent and the results are very heartening. Many of the balwadi teachers are quite active. For example, the balwadi teacher of Kotanger, although being new and untrained, is quite enthusiastic in running her centre. She takes classes even in the evening and immediately contacts the absentee children's parents to find out the cause of absenteeism. Similarly the teachers of Lathuratoli, Manhatu Raitoli, Birta, Jhatintoli, Banstoli, Palsa, Jari, Raitoli (Torpa), Pesam etc. The teachers of Birta, Bishunpur, Baghia, Jhatintoli, Jalmandi, Gutuhatu, Dimbukel, Turigarha, Ollanger, Kedaoda, Mahuatoli, Ubka, Sode Ghansitoli etc. under Elementary Education Programme are also very active.
- Parents of the children at CWD Balwadi are quite happy to see their children learning well. The children practice the songs, dance and activities at home. It has been found that the awareness of villagers about health is increasing, and they are taking care of their children's health. In many cases it is found that the children themselves are insisting that their parents send them neat & tidy.

Community support has increased in almost all the blocks where the project is operating. The following examples confirm this.

- In Sode, Birta, Kamda, Jiblong, Jhatintoli and Mahuatoli, seeing that the number of students is very large in the coaching centres, the villagers arranged an extra teacher, the payment of which is managed by them.
- In the balwadi centres of Turigarha, Birta, Regemda, Pandra and Gangaitoli, parents provide vegetables. It is mixed with the daily food provided to the children by which the nutritional value as well as the taste is enhanced. This is the outcome of the street plays on “Nutrition” shown under the awareness program. This is a sure indicator of the impact of the message from the plays and the villagers’ understanding of the importance of education and nutrition.

Activities:

- Conducted two on-going training programs of 2 days each for the new balwadi teachers. There was also a revision of the previous training, and the teachers were given an opportunity to develop and practice lessons.
- Organised a one-day training program focused on developing teaching English and Math for 15 tutors and 10 single-teacher school teachers.
- Balwadi teachers participated in two workshops; one on “Curriculum Design” and the other on “Lesson Design”. These workshops were held in order to pass on what CWD trainers had learnt in the “Learning Classroom Series” workshops.
- Conducted meetings with the VECs of the centres in the two blocks. The meeting with VECs of the Torpa Block was held at CWD and that of Rania block at Regemda (Rania). Balwadi-related issues on education, health, monitoring, community participation, role of VEC, nutritional aspect etc. were discussed. All the participating VEC members were quite interested and suggested that CWD organize this type of a meeting at least once a year. It is hoped that through these awareness programmes for VECs, they will be enabled to “own” their centres and take more responsibility for its effective functioning.
- Conducted two workshops of 2 days each for primary school teachers of Government schools focused on Science and Math. 40 teachers from each of the 20 chosen schools were invited for each of these trainings.
- Conducted three awareness programs in each of the 55 villages for the villagers. Two were on seasonal work, conducted in the months of March and May. The villagers were made aware of the importance of education, so as to motivate them to send the children for studying regularly even during the periods of absolute engagement in agricultural activities. Street plays demonstrated how parents usually have the children with them on these occasions and how such efforts hamper the children’s ability to study and regularly attend school. The village SHG women and the teachers themselves wrote the plays and acted in them.
- Conducted another awareness program on “Seasonal Migration”. A number of landless households migrate for work for about 6 months each year. This adversely affects the children’s education. Through street plays prepared and enacted by women SHG members, school children and balwadi teachers, the villagers were made aware of the importance of education and ways and means for engagement in Government programs like “Gramin Rojgar Gurantee Kanoon” (Rural employment guarantee law) by which they can arrange for their livelihood in the village itself. The purpose is to influence and reduce the migration period which will allow them to educate their children.

b. Capacity Building Grantees

4. Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra

NBJK is the only capacity building grantee in this region. It has 10 sub grantees and has been working with them for the past 1 year. The project aims at strengthening the capacity of the sub grantees and thus enabling them to work better for the educating & mainstreaming the out of school children.

Achievements:

- Prepared & published a play book with a view to promote joyful teaching & learning within small premises of education centre. The book is a compilation of various local plays, which are generally played in rural areas.
- Organized a workshop for its sub grantees on the TLM. Through the workshops with supervisors and by taking references of standard books, a text book each for standard I & II was prepared and printed. In the month of April ’06, 10,000 copies of this text book were distributed in all the BBN centre of NBJK’s sub grantees.

- Carried out a mid term participatory review of the program with its sub-grantees. During the review, the Project coordination staff of NBJK presented their findings of their visits to the sub-grantees' areas and of their visits to the formal schools running in the respective sub-grantees' project area. Similarly, the sub-grantees also presented their perspective on the progress of the project. Some of the major findings of the evaluation were that community still needed to know the importance of education in order to create educational environment in the rural areas, better coordination with the Govt. education department is needed, Language and culture of the areas affected the Quality of education in the centers, most of the children were working and hence a problem of centre timings.
- NBJK made following suggestions to overcome these issues –
 - More efforts should be made to mobilize local resources in order to procure more text books and TLMs.
 - Efforts should be made to ensure joyful education.
 - Efforts should be given to strengthen Parents-Teacher association.
 - Causes of drop outs, irregular attendance, and absenteeism should be properly analyzed and efforts should be made for its proper solutions. Moreover, regular tracking should be done for the absenteeism.
 - There is a need to do advocacy at district, state and at national level to make changes in the govt. education policy and to raise the issues like changes in govt. school timing, changes in the policies of non-teaching assignment to the teachers, not functioning of EGS and SSA schools and high corruption in the appointment of Para-teachers and EGS teachers, etc.

Activities:

- Organized a number of meetings/ training workshops for its sub-grantees on various topics including, budget modification, assessment & evaluation, on student tracking tool, and on finance administration.
- Developed a monthly planning & reporting format for the supervisor/project coordinator of sub-grantees. The sub-grantees are now directed to prepare annual activity plan 06-07 based on this tool.
- Regular networking liaison with identified NGOs was done during the period for better execution of the project. Apart from the NGOs, regular contact was made with State office of SSA Ranchi and with concerned district officials.

C KOLKATA

In Kolkata, five NGO partners have been implementing their program since January 2005. One more was added to this list in November 2005. In all now there are 6 partner NGOs: three capacity building grantees and three direct service delivery grantees.

The Kolkata region has strong ties between the NGOs and the Government officials. This period also saw the same and the former Secretary Education himself attended part of the Learning Classroom Series, a workshop on quality education organised by REACH India for the Kolkata grantees and thus provided his encouragement for these efforts.

CINI Asha, a capacity building organisation has had close interaction with the government departments strengthening the linkages between the sub-grantee partners and the SSA. This collaboration has helped in establishing contacts and working with the formal school systems in Kolkata. Its sub-grantees have also conducted regular meetings with the respective School Inspectors and other authorities thus, establishing an individual rapport with them to complement and supplement the efforts of SSA.

The other Capacity Building Organisation, Vikramshila received crucial support from the former Principal Secretary, School Education Department, Govt. of West Bengal. The Principal Secretary facilitated the project activities by issuing recommendations for three of the sub-grantee partners as part of their application for FCRA approval. He also issued letters of introduction to the various upper primary schools where Vikramshila's partners are working. In addition, he called a meeting of head masters and head mistresses of the government schools Vikramshila is working with to discuss project outcomes and constraints in implementation. He has also met with school leaders and management committee members of both recognized and unrecognized schools of the Narkeldanga area, where BES found that access to schools, especially Urdu medium schools, to be a major issue. The interest taken by the Principal Secretary has ensured that other department officials, and the SSA office has also taken notice of the project and its activities.

The Kolkata partner NGOs were exposed to a programmatic and financial review by the REACH India staff, a mid term review by USAID consultants and a technical assistance workshop “Learning Classroom Series”

All the six NGOs have been engaged in participating in the Learning Classroom Series workshop which commenced in March 2006 and will conclude in November 2006. The two workshops held till dates have been attended by staff from both the partners and the sub-grantee partners.

The following will give an NGO specific list of activities & achievements.

a. Direct Service Delivery Grantees

1. Institute of Psychological & Educational Research (IPER)

IPER is implementing a Project “*Access to Education --- A Right for All Children*” in seven Wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

IPER with its experience of more than 20 years proposed to address the need for access, enrollment, retention and completion of primary education for all the targeted at-risk children, with special focus on girls. Over the years they have been focused on research in psychology and education, trying to understand the psyche behind dropping out of school & thus trying innovative methods to bring back the children to school.

To fulfill their proposal, they have been making use of a three-pronged approach: a) Improving the quality of primary schools, b) Establishing Community based learning centers to improve access to all vulnerable children and c) Converting Government schools into model schools.

Achievements:

- To combat the resistance of the government formal schools and make an inroad into the system, IPER made use of a different strategy. IPER facilitated the health checkup of more than 300 children in seven formal schools. Children requiring treatment were then referred to hospitals and specialists.
- Conducted a series of street dramas for sensitizing the community of the need for free compulsory primary education for all children up to 14 years of age.

Activities:

- Conducted trainings to build the capacity of the Quality Management team and the teachers engaged in the Community Learning Centers. The trainings focused on improvement of teaching methods, handling multi-grade classrooms, communication skills and disabilities.
- Conducted two day training for formal school teachers to engage with them on the reasons and solutions for drop outs and illiterate children.
- Continued to hold community awareness program meetings in all the seven targeted wards to help facilitate the interaction between teachers and parents. Community members extended full cooperation and participated in educational camps held.
- School on Wheels continued operating in different areas reaching-out to children who are unable to come to the CLCs.
- The ongoing Mobile Visual Presentation Unit has created interest in children and lessons in English, Hindi, Bengali and Numbers are taught.
- Held two training sessions for its CLC teachers after being exposed to Learning Classroom Series. One for the curriculum development and the other for formulating strategies for active learning. The IPER staff who had attended the Learning Classroom Series were the resource persons for these training sessions.

- Has undertaken action research in 2006. The research covers assessment of the learning levels of children studying in the Community Learning Centres through four educational camps. Analysis of learning levels has been completed. IPER has visited and observed CLCs and solicited feedback from the teachers. The data has been instrumental in developing solutions of the identified problems.

2. Manovikas Kendra

The project proposes to ‘Reach out and educate ‘at risk’ children with specific learning disabilities’. They also go a step forward and ensure progress towards educational advancement, through Pre – NIOS, Pre - Vocational/technical skills training, to mainstream the vulnerable children in normal schools.

Under the project remedial teaching related to Specific Learning Disabilities started in 20 formal government aided schools in January 2005. Two additional schools were included in the program in January 2006.

Achievements:

- Manovikas Kendra had been facing the problem of inconsistent student attendance level and a low motivation level in the teachers. It was able to make a break in both the problems. While the former was sorted out with the help of the principals the later was attended to by the means of trainings, workshops and regular visits to the schools.
- Followed a new strategy and invited mothers of students to the joyful learning program; It was observed that an increase in the participation of mothers led to a direct increase in the attendance of children at schools.
- Developed Individualized Remedial Education Plan (IREP) for children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) in order to shift the method of learning from teacher centric to student centric, in addition to customizing the plan according to the needs of each student. Techniques of peer tutoring, project based learning and a focus on practical based learning has been undertaken to strengthen the conceptual skills among the children.

Activities:

- Continued remedial teaching in selected government schools over the project period with the support of trained Special Educators and Resource Teachers from Manovikas Kendra. Teaching material has been supplied to selected students in all the 22 schools.
- Remedial classes held for SLD students undergo a process of planning, monitoring and regular evaluation of class categorized lesson plans. Supervisors from Manovikas assess the overall performance of the children in addition to the monthly evaluation conducted on the basis of the data collected. Lesson plans are compiled on a monthly basis and new ideas of teaching are incorporated in order to make the learning easier and interesting. Outlining of student-specific goals has helped the teaching learning process to be more scientific.
- In March 2006, students attending remedial class appeared at tests conducted by Manovikas which proved useful as a tool for evaluation of the performance and progress of students. While students showed improvements in comprehension, handwriting, spelling and problem solving sums continue to be weak areas that will be addressed in the following academic session.
- Selected students of different schools were given the opportunity to visit the joyful learning programs on Sundays at the campus of Manovikas. Students have been exposed to various extra-curricular activities like dance, music, games, gym, yoga, craft, etc during the weekly joyful learning program. There has been an increase in the self-confidence, self-esteem and communication skills of the children.
- One-to-one interactions have been held with formal school teachers to enhance their motivation.
- Brought together representatives of management committees of various schools, headmasters / headmistresses and other teaching staff of various schools to different workshops to make them aware of the problems of the children with specific learning disabilities and the scope of remediation.
- Maintained close links with the Department of School Education, Government of West Bengal, with the objective of getting their support in opening Resource Centres in different schools for the sustainability of provision of support to ‘at risk’ children with SLD problems.

3. Sanlaap

SANLAAP is a children and women's rights organization, working on combating trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution.

REACH India approved the grant to SANLAAP in November 2005 and thus the project begun in January 2006. The project proposes to facilitate a healthy physical, mental, social and economic environment for the holistic development of at risk street children and children of women in prostitution from the red light areas of Kolkata metropolis.

Achievements:

- In the month of June 2006, 13 children were mainstreamed in the formal schools from Sovabajar and Bowbajar areas, 2 of the red-light areas where work is being done.
- Sanlaap has engaged in regular dialogue with the teachers and principals of formal schools. Talks have focused on admission of children who have completed the bridge course. In North and South Kolkata schools, apart from daily visits, there have been five meetings with the school authorities. One of the positive outcomes of this activity is that one school in Sovabajar, North Kolkata (Shri Vidya Niketan) has agreed to provide their classrooms to accommodate children from a learning center suffering from space constraint.

Activities:

- Recruitment of project staff was completed by February 2006 and thereafter a project orientation was held.
- Conducted the baseline survey and identified 322 children who are either out of school or are at the risk of dropping out in the catchments area.
- Held a training session to equip the staff with the data storage & analysis tool 'Student Tracking Tool' .
- Started dialogue with the school authorities and some schools had expressed their keen interest to enroll children.
- Organized Teachers training in February and March 2006 for the teachers of the drop-in centers
- Held a training session for teachers emphasizing on curriculum development and teaching methods. This training has helped the teachers in creating a child friendly curriculum, lesson designing, developing multi-grade teaching skills and various child friendly teaching methods, a curriculum for the out of school children.
- There have been two meetings with the Coordinator, Supervisors, Teachers and helpers about creating a follow up mechanism for the drop out children from learning centres and schools and following up of drop out and never been to school children from the baseline survey to bring them to Sanlaap's Learning Centres. A schedule was created to thoroughly under take the follow up activity for drop out children.
- Held meetings with mothers on a regular basis. These meetings emphasize the importance of education, health and hygiene of children. Initially, the attendance was as low as 30% and Sanlaap hopes to work closely with the community to increase the attendance to at least 60% in the next two months.

b. Capacity Building Grantees

4. CINI Asha

Under the REACH India project, CINI Asha aims to reach out to the most vulnerable children aged between 5-14 years in Kolkata city who are deprived of the basic right of elementary education. The program undertakes a capacity building approach with 12 partner sub-grantee organizations and proposes to reach out to approximately 30,000 vulnerable children during the project period. Six of the partner organizations are engaged in mainstreaming out of school children while the other six partner organizations undertake child tracking in formal schools to enhance retention of children in formal schools.

CINI Asha has reached out to 25,183 deprived urban children in 45 Kolkata Municipal Corporation wards. Within the program, there are 79 preparatory centers covering out-of-school children and school-going children are being tracked in 163 formal schools in Kolkata. School going children are being retained in formal schools through 68 back-up support centres to enhance retention. The children who have been mainstreamed have received back-up support through 47 coaching centres.

Achievements:

- Organized an enrolment drive in schools with low enrolment rates. A total of 198 children aged 5-6 years were enrolled into 20 formal schools through this drive.
- Completed the one-year pilot direct service delivery program with 1,000 upper primary age-group children for transferring the lessons learnt to the sub-grantee partners.
- Commencement of networking among the 12 sub grantees to form Sanjog (“coming together”), a platform to share thoughts and/or experiences and formulate plans for advocacy.
- Held workshops with the Education Department Representative and Sub-Inspectors of Schools to introduce sub-grantees and share their challenges. As a result, SSA appointed a Nodal Officer to coordinate the activities between SSA and CINI Asha.

Activities:

- Conducted Training of Trainers workshop and Community Volunteer programs for better program implementation for sub-grantee partners.
- Developed training modules and manuals for technical assistance in program and finance/HR management issues.
- Formed participatory monitoring teams for finance, administration and programmatic issues to better oversee the resource management capacities of implementing partners.
- Workshops on mainstreaming children with the parents were conducted by formal school teachers in order to sensitize parents and orient them on the mainstreaming process.
- Conducted an Organizational Assessment exercise with nine partner organizations and follow up was done to share findings.
- Held Summer Camps in six formal schools for children with irregular attendance in school in order to enhance their retention.
- Organized workshops on developing an organizational Child Protection Policy.
- CINI Asha has formed program, finance and human resource management monitoring teams, comprising of representatives from both CINI ASHA and different sub-grantee partners in order to support the progress of the project in a participatory way. The internal monitoring exercises conducted have facilitated the sharing of experiences and learnings between partners, which as a result, has strengthened program and finance, and human resource management abilities of partners.
- An exposure visit to the community-based camp of CINI ASHA was conducted for the partners due to implement similar strategies in the second year. The visit was followed by a discussion on the related activities required to be undertaken for implementation of non-residential community based camps.
- Organized a meeting with DPO (SSA), School Inspectors of all circles and partner organisations on the REACH India project in the month of February 2006. In the meetings the details of the project together the nature of assistance expected from SSA had been discussed.

5. CLPOA

City Level Program of Action for Street and Working Children (CLPOA)’s project is being implemented by five sub-grantee partner organizations working to prepare out-of-school children for enrolling them into formal schools through Full Alternative Schools. The project extends mainstreaming support to 1000 in-school children in order to retain them through remedial coaching. CLPOA’s project envisages building the skills of NGO staff in areas of project management, monitoring and evaluation, survey and data compilation and academic training for the teachers involved in REACH India

project. This project also attempts to raise motivation level among the community about the importance of child education.

Sub-grantee partners of CLPOA are running Full Alternative Schools for out of school children. There are 59 Bengali medium FAS, 12 Hindi medium FAS and 29 Urdu medium FAS.

Achievements:

- Children in targeted 400 schools have been supported with coaching and other materials like exercise books, shoes, etc.
- Compressed the syllabi to facilitate speedier learning by children and for easy transition to formal schools by the end of the project period.

Activities:

- Conducted academic trainings for teachers of Full Alternative Schools on language teaching, math, classroom management, child psychology, etc
- Training sessions for sub-grantee organizations were held in the fields of monitoring and evaluation, project management, financial management and survey and data compilation.
- A one-day orientation program was held for 20 remedial teachers.
- A supervising team has been formed to pay regular visits to the FAS run by sub-grantees. CLPoA has developed a format to capture the academic and non-academic aspects of the centers and discuss the feedback with the sub-grantees of the respective centers during the monthly review meetings.
- The first evaluation of learners was held in all FAS in January 2006 to assess competency of each child in math and language.

6. Vikramshila

Vikramshila has five sub-grantee organizations working to extend quality interventions to the selected middle schools. The five partners implement 12 alternative learning centers, including balwadis, alternative primary and after school remediation. There are remediation programs in ten government schools during school hours.

Achievements:

- Developed and implemented a new module for individual capacity building of teachers in participatory teaching-learning.
- Conducted a foundation course on technology-aided learning with a core group of teachers from each organization over a period of 10 days in two phases.

Activities:

- Held small workshops with individual sub-grantees on identified needs such as community development, networking.
- Workshop on learners' knowledge constructions conducted by Samya Samaj, a sub-grantee was attended by all partners of Vikramshila and NGO partners in Kolkata.
- Held meetings with the Principal Secretary, Department of Education and sub-grantees to facilitate dialogue with community leaders and government school administration.
- Collaborated between learning centers run by sub-grantees and nearby Nabadisha centers.
- Organized an exposure visit to Mirambika School, New Delhi.
- Have redesigned their training plans for their sub grantees on the basis of the feedback and analysis after the first combined training session. A new plan has been drawn out wherein each organization will have its individual training session thus giving more exposure and more freedom to raise their doubts and concerns. All organizations would experience approximately 10 days of training, over a period of three months, in a round

robin pattern. In the second year, Vikramshila will bring them back for centralized workshops when the partners have achieved a similar level of expertise.

D CHHATTISGARH

In this region, there are five partner NGOs, comprising of three direct service delivery partners and two capacity building ones. All five NGOs are now one year and four months into project implementation and are working within the broader framework of the Indian Government's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and other similar ongoing initiatives.

Chhattisgarh as a new state of the Indian Republic has its own series of problems. As a result of which the NGO partners are still much behind their counterparts in other states vis-à-vis relationship with the government system.

But at the same time the REACH partners are constantly making effort to make some foray with the government. The two capacity building partners (Naandi and Digdarshika) in this state have been relatively successful in doing so.

They have been able to begin a dialogue for partnership with the state government at various levels. As a result, Naandi was asked to contribute in the formulation of SSA annual plans for Chhattisgarh and Digdarshika was invited to contribute to the state plans for inclusive education. Digdarshika was also able to raise Chhattisgarh Government's interest in its awareness development program following which a dialogue is in progress with the government for partnership. The synergy of an effective awareness program, piggy backing on the Government network is bound to yield significant results for the disability sector in Chhattisgarh state.

As a part of the venture to provide technical assistance to NGOs, REACH India conducted a joint programmatic and financial review of all the partner NGOs. This joint financial and programmatic review led to better documentation and provided a much required link between the program activities and the finance.

Apart from the review, three Chhattisgarh NGO Partners, namely Vanvasi Chetna Ashram (VCC), Lokshakti Samajsevi Sansthan (LSS) and AASHA were provided customized technical assistance in the form of an exposure into the nuances of education and on how to run effective educational programs. Nalanda, a resource agency facilitated the process and conducted these trainings which were aimed to build the capacity of these NGOs in improving the quality aspect of the bridge centres.

The following will give an NGO specific list of activities & achievements.

a. Direct Service Delivery Grantees

1. AASHA

The project aims at enrolling and retaining at-risk children, through bridge programs and balwadis. The program aims to enroll and retain the children of 3-14 years by mobilizing and empowering community. Out of the 32 centers, 14 are bridge centres and 18 remedial centres.

Achievements:

- Have directly enrolled 104 students into the formal government schools
- Have enrolled 591 children in the bridge centres and 352 children in the remedial centres.
- Held a one day meeting with the government school teachers from the seven panchayats, in which 22 teachers participated.
- Updated the village Map and Population Survey of 7 Panchayat.

Activities:

- Reconstituted their bridge centres for better program management.
- Held an awareness rally by children in each Panchayat with govt. school children for the promotion of education.
- Balpanchayat formed in all the seven Panchayats.

- Organized capacity building exercise for staff including exposure visit to AASHA's other programs.
- Developed Teacher training kit & curriculum for centers.

2. Lokshakti Samajsevi Santhan

- They are largely focused on ensuring the re-enrollment of dropout children and enrollment of out-of-school children in bridge schools, with mainstreaming as the final objective. Subsequently, equal focus is on retaining the mainstreamed and at-risk children in the formal/alternative schools. For a better and effective implementation of the program, LSS was advised by REACH India to reorganize their 250 learning centers. And thus they now run 150 bridge and 35 remedial centres.

Achievements:

- In all LSS report that they have enrolled 3,700 children and as on date have mainstreamed 1900 children in the formal schools.
- LSS has been holding regular meetings with the officials at various levels for better coordination between the formal schools and the bridge centres.
- The number of community grain banks has gone up to 69 from 38. The funds collected through the working of the grain banks are being utilized for running the bridge camp centres in the respective villages.

3. Vanvasi Chetna Ashram

This project is serving the tribal children of the remote villages of Dantewada block. It aims to enroll and retain all the children in the age group 6 to 14 years. They run bridge camps for out-of-the-school children and remedial classes for the mainstreamed children. VCA is running 26 bridge camps and 22 remedial centres.

Achievements:

- 509 children have been enrolled in the bridge camps and 674 children have been enrolled in the remedial centres.
- Against a target of 950 VCA recorded a direct enrollment of 930 children. Out of these, 792 children have been enrolled in Formal Schools and 138 in Government Alternative Schools.

Activities:

- Held batch wise training for the 125 formal school teachers on teacher-student interaction and teaching –learning methodology.
- Conducted workshop with local administration to address the issues of midday meals, availability of study materials and enrollment of children through out the year.
- Held a one-day advocacy workshop to ensure the accessibility to the beneficiaries (children) of the various schemes of Government and in identifying the gaps in implementation of these programs. The District Collector led the workshop; the various District level dignitaries of various Govt. Departments and some representatives of Non Govt. Organization attended the workshop.
- Organised a district level rally against the growing menace of naxalism. Initiated a civil non-violent movement to peacefully negotiate with the government and the naxals.

b. Capacity Building Grantees

4. Digdarshika

Digdarshika focuses their efforts in building a model on inclusive education in Chhattisgarh state and help 5 NGOs in strengthening their capacities, so as to provide inclusive education and training to children with disabilities, as far as possible. Project on 'TEAM' for the Children with disabilities, is an innovative project being implemented in 3 Phases- model building, collaboration phase and independent implementation phase.

Digdarshika has 5 sub grantees as partners to work under the REACH India project and it is building their capacity with a rigour. Regular training is imparted for running of assessment camps, teacher training for the formal school teachers and for the NGOs' systems enhancement.

Achievements:

- Organised Assessment camps for identifying disabled children in the proposed project coverage area. This time the sub grantees organized the camps on their own, under the guidance of Digdarshika. So far 906 children have been registered, 482 of which have been issued certificates and 225 have been given various aids and appliances.
- The success and ample media coverage of these camps had earlier resulted in an invitation from the SSA to partner with them and contribute to the state plan on dealing with disability. Now the Chhattisgarh government has agreed for the 3 months certificate course on disability for the formal teachers. Digdarshika is running this course and is in the process of signing an MOU with the government.

Activities:

- *Vishesh Acharyas* ("special teachers") have been identified for all the sub grantees also and they are being provided training.
- Organized training for the formal school teachers where the children with minor disability are to be mainstreamed in the sub grantees' project region.
- Awareness material development is an integral part of Digdarshika's program and 3 workshops have been held for this purpose. These workshops were attended by writers, poets, dramatist and theatre artistes, folk artistes, street play artistes, painters and cartoonists, puppet artistes, music directors, composers, musicians and vocalists, media experts and photographers, sports persons. The Street play, songs and Puppet show prepared during the workshop are now being used for actual awareness building in the community by the artistes who attended and learnt them.
- The Government of Chhattisgarh, Department of School education and the Department of Social Welfare showed keen interest to liaison with Digdarshika in the awareness development program for the state. A dialogue with Government is in progress for the same. The synergy of an effective awareness program, piggy backing on the Government network will yield very significant results for the disability sector in Chhattisgarh state.

5. Naandi Foundation

The project focuses on improving the quality of elementary education in government school in the district of Dantewada, Bastar and Kanker in Chhattisgarh state.

Naandi identified its four sub grantees and is providing technical assistance to them build their capacities.

Achievements:

- Was invited by the Government's Department of Education, Chhattisgarh to participate in the process of developing the Annual Work Plan for Kanker District (2006-'07).
- Partnered with Educational Initiatives to develop a set of tools for assessing learning levels of children in government schools, and to study the community's changing perception about school.
- Was invited by the Chhattisgarh Government to get involved in an 'Education Quality Assessment Study'. The study attempted to understand class specific learning outcomes of children, the role of support systems in ensuring quality education, understanding the relationship between communities and their schools and lastly, to understand why children were out of schools.

Activities:

- 30 reading writing camps were held in 30 villages for a duration of 45 days. These camps were attended by low performers from the formal school. The community teachers for the camps were identified by the panchayat.
- Trained 30 community teachers in running of the reading writing camps and in preparing of TLMs. The training was designed to help volunteers prepare attractive teaching learning material to make learning interactive and interesting.

- Conducted house Hold Survey to collect information about children (6-14 years) of each village of Naandi's project area
- Held a two day exposure visit for the state government officials at their project site in Kanker.
- Collaborated with Nanhi Kali (K.C. Mahindra Trust) to provide financial support for education to 5000 girl child in the REACH project and also with Room to Read to set up village libraries in 30 villages of Kanker.
- Revised their program strategy and instead of running short duration reading & writing camp they are now indulging in a more comprehensive and holistic strategy of running Academic Resource Centres (ARC) in the formal Schools. ARC with its trained community teachers will continue to provide support to the identified children during the academic session.
- Kala Jatha (cultural) groups have been formed in each of the three blocks of Kanker district. These groups, through effective use of music and theatre are creating awareness among villagers about various education related issues. Naandi conducted three-day training for three cultural teams - one from each block.

E Mumbai

Mumbai has six direct service delivery grantees. These are Avehi-Abacus, Doorstep, Sahaara Charitable Society, Save the Children India, Shelter Don Bosco and Ummeed. The region is just one year into the project, having begun implementation in September 2005.

Ummeed, the NGO working on developmental disabilities, had signed the agreement but had not accepted funds, as they did not have registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). They were using their own funds, as they were keen to become part of the REACH India network and participate in all interactions and benefit from the association. Their FCRA was received in July 2006 and they were given their first installment right away.

The Mumbai REACH India network formed early on by the grantees themselves is working together and taking assistance from each other. Door Step School has conducted trainings for Save the Children India and Shelter Don Bosco.

However, over the last year Mumbai has experienced a series of events, which have had an impact on the city and thus on the status of education and conditions of children. The rains in Mumbai led to flooding, especially the slums in low-lying areas of Mumbai. The residents and the schools too bore the brunt, as materials, buildings were destroyed. Slum demolitions in various parts of Mumbai have been another major factor, which has adversely affected the education of school going children. Many children have been compelled to drop out of school. Also, the bomb blasts led to a setback for a while. Classes had to be suspended in some areas, but as is the case in Mumbai, it sprung back to normalcy soon enough.

The NGO partners in Mumbai in general share good ties with the Government system and this helped them in starting up of their projects without much delay. Also, many NGOs have their offices in Government schools. However, there have been many changes within the government system, especially in the first six months of this academic year - the appointment of a new Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Education, following the retirement of the previous AMC. The earlier structure of the Education Department was revamped, with decentralizing taking place. Also the administrative officers and the community development officers will also now be involved in the academics as well as school administration.

There is an increasing tendency to replicate experiments as they are tried in other areas, without necessarily taking the context into account, as the education officer is new and would like to show results. An example is the introduction of a 65 day remedial teaching program by the Education Minister, Maharashtra State. The program was introduced suddenly without any prior notice right at the beginning of the academic year. The aim was to focus on children who have poor reading and writing skills. As part of this program the teachers were asked to focus their complete attention on these students. All other programs which would otherwise be a part of the school schedule including Avehi Abacus' and Save the Children's were put on hold. The in service training for orientation to changed curriculum and new textbooks of Standard I, V, and VII teachers and SSA too was postponed.

Meanwhile, the NGOs are collectively trying to speak with the government regarding the REACH India program in Mumbai, now that we are one year into the project and there are results to be seen.

The following will give an NGO specific list of activities & achievements.

a. Direct Service Delivery Grantees

1. Avehi-Abacus

The Project is aimed at strengthening the quality and content of education imparted to children of 9 to 14 years of age studying in classes 5 to 7. The focus is on government schools as these schools have the largest outreach with almost all the children enrolled belonging to poor and marginalized families. The three-year foundation course package - Sangati develops children's skills in thinking, analyzing and making choices, emphasizing on values that will help them live and work together in a spirit of understanding and harmony. It comprises a series of 6 teaching-learning kits with interlinked themes.

Achievements:

- Kit 6 was finalized and mass production of kit 1 and children's material took place and these kits were distributed in Zone I (Colaba to Mahim) and Zone II (Bandra to Andheri areas)
- Contribution was made in finalizing curriculum and formulation of EVS textbooks for NCERT. Relevant sessions from Sangati have been included in the textbooks
- Organised the next Open House discussion, not only as a perspective building exercise but also as a platform for the participating organizations to work out a concrete plan in the context of status of education in Mumbai.

Activities:

- The second round of Sangati orientation workshops for middle level Supervisory officials of MMC (Superintendents, Beat Officers, In-service training department, Research Unit), school principals and Administrative officers in all 24 wards was held.
- Liaison meetings were held with the Additional Municipal Commissioner to discuss the difficulties faced during implementation of the program, and with middle level supervisory officials for follow up regarding implementation of Sangati in schools.
- A presentation on Sangati for Education Officer, Deputy Education Officers, Superintendents, In-service training department, Research Unit, Community Development Department of MMC was made.
- School visits were made to orient standard V teachers to Sangati.
- Recruited new staff as part of expansion and their orientation and capacity building of present staff was undertaken.
- The Beat Officer responsible for MMC schools for mentally challenged children is exploring possibilities of using Sangati in schools for the mentally challenged children. She also invited the project representatives for a half day orientation with the teachers of these schools. The kits were distributed sessions have begun in some schools. For the first time the Sangati curriculum will be used in schools for children with special needs.
- Participated in public hearing on 'Right to Education', in campaign against malnutrition initiated by Bal Haq Abhiyan, and in 'Right to Housing' agitation for demolition affected residents of Mandala.

2. Doorstep

The project runs 10 community based study classes in Mumbai. It aims to provide facilities for improving academic performance of students of classes 1 through 5, living in slum communities and ensuring that these children are at par with the studies going on in class and do not lag behind, and also to provide all these services at flexible timings and at suitable locations be it in slums or pavements or streets or schools. The teacher focuses on the regular school curriculum, while developing and reinforcing literacy skills.

Achievements:

- The year end results of the academic year (05-06) found that 20 children from the study classes stood among the first 10 in their respective class in school and another 10 ranked between 6 - 20.

Activities:

- To facilitate a clear understanding between the teachers who take the community based study classes and the teachers in the BMC schools that the children attend, an interaction was organized at the beginning of the academic year. The school informed teachers of the changes in the examination pattern introduced in the academic year, to enable the teachers to train the children better.
- To help children to realize the practical implications of being educated, an activity taken up this year was a “form filling” activity, where children had to fill in personal information. While filling in their name was easy, other information was not, as they did not have any practice. This was an important realization for both the teachers and the students.
- Reading, essay and drawing competitions were conducted in all classes in August. The activities were planned to suit the level of the children.
- Raksha Bandhan, Janamasthami, Guru Purnima, Ganesh Chaturthi and Independence Day celebrations were held, along with stories for most festivals. The students of the study classes participated in the flag hoisting in their respective communities.
- Parents’ meetings were organized for all classes at the start of the academic year. The School principal was invited to talk to the parents in the Babasaheb Ambedkar Nagar, who emphasized the need for regularity in school and in the study classes. He also spoke of the role parents can play in facilitating their child’s schooling.

3. Sahaara Charitable Society

The project focuses on delivering quality education through remediation, to one of the most disadvantaged groups of children in Mumbai city, i.e. children in Remand Homes. Children leaving the only Observation Home would be tracked and mainstreamed into formal education. Also, ten centers across the city are to be set up to provide quality early childhood education as well as remediation to slum children.

After six balwadis were started in Reay road, Asalpha, Sakinaka, Dharavi, Colaba, and Govandi, four new balwadis have begun in key locations such as Ghatkopar, Gorai, Kandivali and Chembur.

Achievements:

- Has started working with the commercial sex worker population after initial resistance to intervention. Most children are first generation learners. Balwadi classes and coaching classes for these children are functional in Ghatkopar.

Activities:

- All the remand homes in Mumbai city are being covered. From conducting remediation classes for students of one standard in two children’s homes, it has now expanded to teaching children in many more standards in five homes.
- Educational material has been purchased to enhance teaching learning relationships.
- Teacher training for all these classes have taken place.

4. Save the Children India

The project aims to provide pre-school education to slum children through Balwadis, increase the enrollment and retention of children by providing a conducive environment for learning and improving the quality of education, and involve the community in the development of the children.

Achievements:

- 30 teachers and 12 supervisors were trained by Door Step School for 6 days on various activities in balwadi and their relevance and for supervisors on effective supervision.

- Progress cards were distributed at all centers at the end of the term and a parent-teacher meeting held to discuss each child's progress.

Activities:

- To assess balwadis an observation sheet for an Ideal Balwadi was developed where each balwadi was rated on physical environment, qualities of the teacher -personal, language, behavioral, teaching methodology, time and space management, reporting and record keeping. The first 30 teachers will be trained to become trainers.
- 58 summer camps (27 in municipal schools and 31 in slum communities) were conducted for children from 3-14 yrs of age. The theme for this year's summer camp was -"7 Wonders of The World". This was chosen with a view to introduce these children to the global world , culture of these countries, history, geography through the medium of various activities like art and craft, song and music, dance and drama, fancy dress, personality development. The material was then displayed for a month at the STCI office for about 5000 children, parents and NGO staff people.
- Sensitizing and training sessions for BMC administrators and Community development Officers about STCI and the importance of Balwadi and Study centers were held. Sessions were held on Effective Teaching Practices. Their feedback on last years STCI program in BMC Schools was taken, and what more could be included in the program was also discussed. They were also briefed about the STCI expectations and the problems faced the previous year. The strategy for the year was then finalized.
- Parents meetings were held in all Balwadis. They were told about the program and importance of pre school education for their children. Also new VPTA members were selected.
- As a part of STCI Annual activity health camps were organized for all children enrolled in community centers. Thorough medical check up was done for every child.

5. Shelter Don Bosco

The project aims to ensure the enrolment of vulnerable children in formal or alternative education and ensure their retention. This is done by running bridge courses and after school study classes.

Achievements:

- English classes were started for 5 to 8 year olds as an additional input for children of Akshar Dhara to overcome their barrier in achieving success.

Activities:

- There has been a constant growth in the number of children being enrolled in the classes. All the classes have been provided by the communities. Many communities have provided closed spaces to conducted classes but, some are still held on pavements or any other open space close to the community.
- Organised summer camps for children during the summer vacation. Various activities like educational visits, picnics and games were organized aimed at their physical and mental development.
- Teaching material was bought for use during classes to ensure the strengthening of present learning process, including well illustrated, simple and culture specific story books. A specific time has been kept for library in class time table.
- Children were taken for exposure visit to Salt Lake to learn about salt manufacturing, types of salts and marketing. Another visit was to Marathi Vigyan Parishad, where they were introduced to basic science concepts such as body parts, types of animals, solar energy, school gardens, method of making bonsai, experiments, maps etc.
- Teacher training was held to improve teaching skills with the help of creative methods and for the preparation of annual and weekly planning for classes. Training by Door Step School was held to enhance the capacity of teachers in effective teaching methods, classroom management, and child friendly teaching for both bridge as well as study class teachers.
- The Meena series by UNICEF was shown to teachers to build an understanding on various social issues like importance of girls' education, gender discrimination, exploitation, child labour and cleanliness.
- The staff participated in the Public Hearing held in Mumbai on Universalisation of elementary education and learnt to participate in movements and influencing policy changes.

6. Ummeed

The program's main focus is to facilitate inclusive education and improve the quality of education and social adjustment for children with emotional disturbances and behavioral difficulties. In addition, the project aims to provide support and training to teachers in order to manage behavioral disturbances that arise in the classroom and improve overall classroom management skills. One of major reasons for school drop-out is behavioral disturbances. Through teacher training targeted at behavioral difficulties the project aims to positively influence retention.

Ummeed received its registration under FCRA and was able to get its funds from REACH India.

Achievements:

- Conducted special sessions on Disaster Management with students of Standard V to Standard X after the July bomb blasts in order to help children cope with this event and a psycho-educational session was held for students of Standard VII.

Activities:

- For Little Flower school a full time counselor was recruited.
- Observation of students in the classroom and outside the class to check for disruptive behavior, disabilities and emotional disturbances, as well as observation of classroom management by teachers was done.
- Interactions with students during individual sessions in the school, and family and community visits which involved interactions and counseling with members of the family was carried out.
- Clinical assessments were set up for children who were observed to have difficulties in the school.
- Conducted a Teacher Training Program on normal development and developmental milestones and on the importance of providing clear and concise directions, looking at things from the student's perspective, how to deal with situations which may go out of control and the importance of being flexible.
- Teacher questionnaires developed by the Ummeed team were administered to the Holy Name High School teachers from std I through IV. All teachers were addressed independently; these meetings facilitated rapport building and providing more information about the project. Moreover teachers appreciated this personalized aspect of the approach as through the discussion and exchanging examples they were able to make frequent referrals of children in their class for further assessment.
- Several students have been referred for formal clinical assessments to Ummeed. These include Attention Deficit Disorder, Learning Disabilities and Speech Therapy.
- A core project activity was meeting with students for individual sessions on a need basis. In this school, the Ummeed team has been working with 23 children on a one on one basis to address issues relating to academic performance, behaviour and emotional disturbances.
- A teacher orientation session was conducted at Holy Name High School to highlight the aims, process and expected outcomes of the REACH project, the multi-faceted approach to child development and care, and child development and inclusive education for children with developmental disabilities. Also, a team building exercise was carried out with the group to make the teachers comfortable with the classroom observation procedures that would be an ongoing part of the project.

F Karnataka

In November 2005, project proposals of five organizations were selected for the REACH India grant support in Karnataka. Of these five organizations, Akshara Foundation (Akshara) and Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) were awarded capacity building grants and Agastya International Foundation (Agastya), Tropical Research and Development Centre (TRDC) and The Teacher Foundation (TTF) were awarded direct service delivery grants.

Grant agreements were signed in December 2005 with all organizations except (TTF), as it did not have the Government of India's permission to receive foreign funds. The Government gave the permission to TTF in April 2006; subsequently REACH India signed the grant agreement with TTF in May 2006.

The projects supported by REACH India in Northern Karnataka address the problems of child labor, poor science instruction, and poor teacher training as well as lack of effective pedagogy. The overall low education and socio-economic indicators of the Northeast Karnataka clearly show that this region has yet to benefit from the economic prosperity of the southern portion of the state, where IT – hub Bangalore is situated.

A programmatic and financial review of the grantee projects was undertaken on completion of six months of the grant support in Karnataka. The objectives of this joint program and finance review were to understand the progress made by the grantees in project implementation, the challenges they were facing in implementing the project and to provide technical assistance to the grantees in program and finance management to enhance project implementation.

The NGOs in Karnataka are facing more success than some of their other counterparts in gaining favour with the government system.

TRDC is closely working with the Education Department at the district level. The Block Education Officer of Savanur, one of the regions where TRDC is working, has positively responded to TRDC's initiatives of providing bridge school and supplementary education for dropouts and slow learners. He has sent instructions to all the schools in the Savanur Taluk to provide all support. Hence some of the TRDC's supplementary education centers (SECs) are run in the rooms provided at village primary schools.

The Teacher Foundation (TTF) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and thus would be training the government teachers.

Another organization Akshara has been able to convince the Commissioner of Public Instruction enough so that a letter has been issued to all the District Education officers to extend all kind of support to Akshara sub-grantees implementing the REACH India project.

The following will give an NGO specific list of activities & achievements.

a. Direct Service Delivery Grantees

1. Agastya International Foundation

Agastya's project is based on a multi-pronged strategy comprising Mobile Labs, science fairs, science centers and teacher training to spark interest for learning among disadvantaged children in Koppal district. The organization focuses on science since it believes that science can be a gateway to catalyzing children's interest in learning as well as spreading scientific temper among India's poor.

Implementation of the project began in end March / April first week as Agastya decided to change the project location from Raichur district to the adjoining Koppal district. Agastya felt that it would be able to implement its project better in Koppal since three other REACH India grantees were already implementing projects in Raichur and it made more sense to work in another backward district, which would contribute in increasing the REACH India coverage in Karnataka.

REACH India program at Agastya Foundation has four components: a mobile science lab for out of school children, a mobile science lab for in school children, a science lab in the private school (Kukanoor) and teacher trainings (80 teachers per year).

Achievements:

- 82 villages were visited in May, 552 school drop-out children were exposed to mobile laboratories and four science fairs were conducted.
- Till April 2006, 400 out of school children have been reached in 67 villages through the mobile science labs.
- Held a residential young instructor-training program for in school children. Thirty students were identified and trained as Young Instructors for the mobile lab activities. These Young Instructors then demonstrated

experiments and conducted science sessions in villages as also at the Science fairs. This has had a tremendous impact on the other village children as well as on the village community.

- During the summer holidays when Schools were closed down, an innovative Outreach program was launched with the help of a local group. Agastya's mobile labs visited the villages in Koppal district's four *Talukas* in the mornings and evenings as many children are working children and are not available during the daytime. Also this strategy targeted the parents and adults of the villages; to give them a glimpse of what could be in store for their children and in turn for themselves in the longer run, if their children started going to school.

Activities:

- Has set up its field office and science centre in the campus of Vidyanand Guru School, Kuknoor in Koppal district in June. This school is run by a trust and has been functioning in the district since 1920.
- Three bridge course centers were initiated in Kuknoor (new activity, not part of the proposal).
- Two Science Fairs were held in March 2006 covering 500 children and these were held in Kanakgiri in Gangawathi *Taluka* and Hasgal in Koppal *Taluka*.
- Baseline information has been collected for 87 villages.
- As part of preparation for teachers training, Agastya has identified the training content for the Science subjects.

2. Tropical Research and Development Centre

The Tropical Research and Development Center project (*Ashakiran*) supported by REACH India aims to reduce the incidence of child labor by providing easily accessible education opportunities to working children. TRDC is running 30 bridge learning centers and 20 supplementary education centers in *Savanur Taluk of Haveri* district.

Achievements:

- 912 out of school children have been enrolled in TRDC learning centers
- 707 children are attending TRDC supplementary education centers.
- In the month of March, 405 children mainstreamed in Government schools.

Activities:

- Fifty parents associations for 30 bridge centres and 20 supplementary education centers have been initiated by TRDC and meetings are held once in a month wherein awareness building for parents on child education is undertaken.
- 122 members of the forty-one SDMCs in *Savanur Taluk* have been given one round of training on child rights and child labor.

3. The Teacher's Foundation

The Teacher Foundation (TTF) works with schools, principals, school-administrators, teachers and teacher educators in the areas of school development & improvement, teacher development, technology-enabled training and support, design and production of teaching aids and classroom-resources. It is managed by the Shraddha Trust, a registered public non-profit trust that is committed to promoting the interests and development of educators from all categories of schools throughout India and the sub-continent. In the present project TTF is expected to work with 300 Government primary school teachers in *Gulbarga* and *Raichur* districts of North Karnataka.

The Teacher Foundation received Prior Permission under FCRA from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India in April and subsequently signed the grant agreement with REACH India and the project was flagged off in May 2006. Actual project activities of TTF began in June / July 2006.

Achievements:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between The Teacher Foundation (TTF) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). As per the MoU, SSA will allocate 425 teachers (150-Gulbarga, 150-Raichur, 50-

Mysore, 50-Mangalore, 25-Bangalore) for 10 days of Sustained Teacher Development Program interspersed with 5 days of School Based Support during 2006-07.

Activities:

- Train the Trainer program (in house training for TTF trainers) was conducted in 3 batches of 3 days each in Bangalore. These were conducted in June; July; August and September.
- Teacher trainings in *Gulbarga* and *Raichur* have commenced from the month of August 2006.

b. Capacity Building Grantees

4. Akshara Foundation

The Akshara REACH India project is being implemented through 7 sub-grantees. The project has two major components. One part is a remedial education intervention called the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) that aims to teach *in school children* of classes 6, 7 and 8 to read simple text in *Kannada* language and do basic math in 45 days. The other part is to run bridge courses for *out of school children* to prepare them for mainstreaming or to take open school exams. The project is being implemented in twenty villages each of 7 backward Blocks of North Karnataka.

Actual project implementation has begun from April 2006. The period prior to this was spent in finalizing sub-grantees as well as obtaining approval from REACH India to partner with them.

Achievements & Activities:

- The Managing Trustee held meetings with NGOs and requested them to submit proposals for the REACH India project.
- Sub Grantees were selected after a rigorous process.
- Project planning meet was held with sub-grantees.
- Training on how to conduct baseline survey was held for sub-grantees.
- Opening of offices at Raichur and Bijapur
- Baseline survey carried out by every sub grantee in their selected villages.
- Training program for Accountants of all sub grantees was held.
- Education camps were held for out of school children.
- Training was held for Master Resource Persons
- Individual workshops with Sub Grantees were held for analyzing baseline data.
- Training programs were held for Volunteers of Sub Grantees.

5. Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement

SVYM is a capacity building grantee and under this project will build capacities of 8 sub-grantees in making village School Development Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) more accountable and involved in the functioning of Government primary and middle schools. These sub grantees will be provided adequate support in the field of grant administration, project management, financial accounting and management, community mobilization, working with communities, building partnerships, documentation, monitoring and evaluation, education delivery systems of the Government, working with school development and monitoring committees (SDMCs), education and development, quality learning outcomes, methodologies, assessment methods, working with Panchayats, life skills education, child rights, use of mass campaign materials, gender and equity issues.

Each sub-grantee will work with 50 schools / SDMCs of a Taluk with the purpose of ensuring quality elementary education to at risk children and also to form a federation of the SDMCs so that it can act as an effective pressure group.

The activities undertaken by SVYM during this period have been more or less in accordance with the work plan. Education intervention plan, *Shikshanavahini*, supplements and complements the goals of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Project implementation began in the month of May.

Achievements & Activities:

- SVYM has selected 8 NGOs, after due process of publicity, short-listing and site visits.
- All 8 sub-grantees have set up field office in their *Taluk* head quarters. The sub-grantees selected 50 villages each and selected one higher primary school with more than 200 children in each village in their respective *Taluk*. Villages have been selected based on the number of drop out children. Project staff met the village leaders, SDMC & gram panchayat members during this period.
- A four-day capacity building workshop on financial accounting was held for project coordinators and accountants of sub-grantee NGOs.
- A four-day capacity building workshop on education intervention plan of *Shikshanavahini* was held for project staff wherein 6 personnel from each sub-grantee NGO participated.
- Field visits were undertaken to give on site guidance on program implementation to sub-grantees.
- Process has been initiated to have MoU signed & strengthen linkages with education department & Deputy Director of Public Instruction.
- Staff of sub-grantee organizations along with teaching staff of Government schools organized enrolment campaigns in their project areas. Children were motivated to go schools and Staff visited the houses of dropout children and explained the importance of education and encouraged the parents to send children to schools. So far, the staff has facilitated the admission of nearly 40- 100 out-of-school children into Government schools.
- Pocket calendars on child rights were printed and distributed to all the sub-grantees as a part of awareness building program

V. Project Technical Assistance Update - Components

Educational quality at REACH India includes the dynamics of learners, environments, content, processes and outcomes that serve to enhance the participation of children in education. As a part of technical assistance, strategies are being provided to NGO partners to both strengthen the quality of education in their learning centers and to inform educational quality interventions provided at the government schools. The following points capture the highlights of the components on educational quality that were addressed at REACH India:

a. Quality Education Assessment Tool

The Quality Education Assessment Tool, developed by REACH India was instrumental in informing the planning and content for technical assistance workshops to be conducted with NGO partners. The tool is designed to help NGOs assess their progress in improving the quality of education in the classrooms of the learning centers that they operate and in the government schools where they work. NGO partners self-administered this tool at the start of their interventions and thereafter, would administer it on an annual basis. The Quality Education Assessment Tool will enable the NGOs to collect high quality data that will help REACH India evaluate the interventions, and in addition, help the NGOs monitor and improve the quality of their own programs. In addition to the Quality Education Checklist, a user manual was prepared to provide guidelines to NGO partners for sampling and self-administering the Checklist. Operational definitions to the indicators in the Checklist were provided as a guide in the user manual.

While the initial tool was comprehensive in nature, there was a felt need voiced by the NGO partners and staff at REACH India to simplify and streamline the tool and make it more user-friendly. The tool was revised to better gauge the impact of technical assistance provided by REACH to NGO partners. The revised version is streamlined with fewer schedules and a self-scoring spreadsheet, enabling the NGOs to enter data and generate a summary page that is sent back to REACH India. The draft of the revised version was shared with NGO partners in a workshop in Delhi in April 2006. The tool was introduced individually and in a workshop mode with NGO partners in Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Mumbai, which included grants, made within the second year of the project. Responding to the needs of several NGO partners, REACH India produced a version in Hindi for use of NGOs in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. NGOs in Karnataka have translated the Tool into Kannada and thereafter used it.

b. Technical Assistance Workshops

1. Learning Classroom Series

The Learning Classroom Series (LCS) is one of the core interventions of REACH India's quality of education improvement efforts. The LCS comprises three serialized workshops aim to improve the efforts of partner NGO efforts in accommodating greater use of improved teaching and learning and assessment strategies that accommodate the specific needs of at risk children, often in multi-grade settings. The series of three LCS workshops have been conducted already for all REACH India partner NGOs in New Delhi, Jharkhand, and the LCS in Kolkata will be complete in November 2006. The series of LCS workshops have been held with the assistance of Jayshree Oza, an external consultant hired for helping REACH staff to design and deliver the same. The content of the LCS was conceived in response to consultations with NGOs as well as data that was gathered from the NGOs the Quality of Education Assessment Tool.

The LCS has been designed to serve a range of participants from each participating NGO. The participants include the heads of the NGOs' educational programs, project coordinators of the NGOs' REACH interventions, project field coordinators, learning centre supervisors, and selected teaching staff who are responsible to work on quality of education strategies. REACH India has consistently requested the participation of the same core group of individuals to each of the three workshops, thus helping to develop a cadre of staff in each NGO who are aware of quality of education issues and committed to assisting their organizations in developing an internal strategy for improvements in educational programming.

In November 2005, the LCS model and the experiences of the Delhi and Jharkhand workshops were shared with the Kolkata partner NGOs. Following a visit of REACH staff and the consultant to assess the needs of the NGO partners in Kolkata, the LCS series commenced in March 2006, following with the second workshop held in June 2006. The third and closing workshop of the series will be held in Kolkata in the end of October 2006.

In order to measure the impact of the inputs from the Learning Classroom Series, an assessment rubric has been developed. Anticipated follow-up visits have been held with the NGO partners in Delhi and Jharkhand on a consistent basis from September 2005 through May 2006. During these follow-up visits, REACH staff accompanied the external consultant to adequately guide the implementation of action plans formulated by NGO partners at the Learning Classroom Series workshops. It was observed that many of the NGO partners in Delhi and Jharkhand have either developed new or re-aligned their old curriculum to address their specific needs.

Follow up meetings have been held with partner NGOs in Kolkata in the latter half of July 2006 as part of the follow-up plans under the Learning Classroom Series. A two day workshop was held with partner NGOs from Kolkata on developing organizational strategies for institutionalizing and sustaining the objectives of the Learning Classroom Series. The workshop was facilitated by the external consultant, Jayshree Oza and was attended by senior management and staff of the partner organizations who participated in the Learning Classroom Series.

2. Capacity Building Initiative with NGO Partners of Chhattisgarh

Reach India staff visited the NGO partners in Chhattisgarh to gauge the needs of organizations in the areas of quality education and organizational development. It was observed that three of the NGOs had requirements for immediate inputs in addressing quality education concerns in their interventions, and those needs would be served by a well-defined, hands-on approach. For this purpose, REACH India undertook a selection process among short listed technical resource agencies. Nalanda, a resource agency based in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh was selected for delivering technical assistance activities to NGO partners in Chhattisgarh.

The technical assistance activities that were conducted through a workshop mode for the next six months were designed to provide an opportunity for REACH India's partner NGOs to participate in sharing and learning activities at the workshops and utilize the interim period of three-four weeks between the workshops for experimenting with and applying the practices in the field. The activities subsumed two workshops and three monthly meetings closely linked to each other.

Nalanda conducted a ten-day foundation course with the NGO partners in Lucknow in April 2006. The participants were identified from organizational staff in a manner that would facilitate the creation of a core group that aimed at implementing quality educational service delivery of their programs. Following the workshop, Nalanda took the workshop participants for a one-day exposure visit to Nalanda's UNICEF-funded project site in Bhadohi, Uttar Pradesh. The foundation course workshop was followed by refresher training for the NGOs at their project site. The process included program management team at organizations and trained them further in teaching methodologies, in addition to ensuring that the competencies of the core group get strengthened. Nalanda as part of monitoring and reviewing have been regularly visiting the learning centre and providing direct feedback to the NGO staff on further improvements of their program.

There has been a positive impact of the technical assistance that has been provided to NGO partners in Chhattisgarh. The partners have reorganized their learning centres for better implementation. Student absenteeism has dropped and community teachers have become more equipped in working with new methodologies and have become more confident of their skills. There has been a review of the program strategy and new activities, which include, TLMs, and additional exposure visits have been included so as to further strengthen the educational quality in their programs.

c. Site Visits

NGO partners in Mumbai were visited by REACH India staff in February 2006 to assess their needs towards Quality of Education and Organizational Development. The visit revealed that organizations had existing good practices that could be shared and a requirement for creation of a forum for facilitating the exchange of these good practices emerged. Many of the organizations also expressed a need for technical guidance on assessment. In June 2006, REACH staff made an additional visit to the Mumbai partners and individually met with the partner organizations. As a consequence of the visits made by REACH staff to Mumbai, it was decided that the intervention and technical assistance would be tailored largely to a "core" group of NGOs (Doorstep, Don Bosco, Sahaara, and Save the Children) who share common activities (remedial learning centres, balwadis, some NFE centres). The technical assistance to be given to NGO partners in Mumbai is scheduled to commence by the end of 2006.

Follow-up visits were made to Badlao Foundation in September 2005 to assist them in enriching their curriculum after the first part of the Learning Classroom Series. DISHA was visited in December 2005 and March 2006 to guide their strategy on developing a curriculum post the Learning Classroom Series.

REACH India staff visited the NGO partners in Karnataka in May 2006 to assess their needs in the areas of quality education and organizational development. During the visit, it was observed that two partner NGOs in Karnataka are in most urgent need for technical assistance in the area of quality education. Both the organizations are engaged in setting up and implementing bridge courses and lack prior experience in similar interventions. REACH India plans to commence assisting the NGO partners in Karnataka by the end of 2006.

d. Exposure Visits

One of the capacity building grantees in Delhi, Deepalaya successfully organized an exposure visit for their sub-grantees to Bodh Shiksha Samiti in Jaipur. The exposure visit was fruitful in acquainting the sub-grantee organizations to an urban and rural education program and in building their capacity by familiarizing them with good practices.

The NGO partners from Chhattisgarh participating in the REACH assisted foundation course facilitated by Nalanda will be taken on a one-day exposure visit to the project site of Nalanda for better internalization of the workshop content.

B Monitoring and Evaluation

REACH India is responsible for helping NGOs improve their ability to monitor the results of their interventions and to use the monitoring information for improving service delivery. This is accomplished through monitoring and evaluation support provided through modules in REACH India workshops as well as one-to-one interactions that focus on three different aspects of monitoring and evaluation: preparation of monitoring and evaluation plans; development of monitoring instruments; and data analysis. The first deals with development of indicators related to project goals and establishing links between indicators and means of verification, as well as the preparation of a monitoring and evaluation

plan. The second focuses on developing and using data collection tools that correspond to key indicators. The third deals with techniques to reduce data to manageable formats and to integrate and interpret data in relation to expected outcomes.

a. Capacity building of grantee NGOs

- M&E workshops were conducted for North Karnataka and Mumbai to familiarize the grantees with their responsibilities regarding reporting of data to REACH India. The workshops served to familiarize the grantees with the results framework, a basic approach needed to prepare their respective Monitoring & Evaluation plans. The workshops also served as the mechanism for sharing various monitoring templates with the grantees.
- The Student Tracking Tool was installed on the computers of five out of six grantee NGOs of Mumbai and Four out of five grantee NGOs of North Karnataka. Individualized training via site visits to grantees helped to further develop capacity in use of the STT. As a follow up, refresher training was provided to grantee NGOs in the Mumbai, Chhattisgarh and North Karnataka regions.
- Monitoring conducted with grantee staff indicated that a number of them still had challenges with use of the STT. Additionally, in reviewing the STT data submitted by grantees, M&E found errors in data entry. Follow-up consultations was provided by M&E staff to help them to fix the problems in their individual STT sheets.
- REACH India M&E team together with an international consultant from Juarez & Associates, carried out two workshops on 'Data analysis using Excel'- one each for Delhi and Kolkata grantees. During the workshops, participants learned how to use Excel for analyzing data and for generating meaningful tables and charts that can be used for data interpretation. Participants were provided hands-on experience on Excel for data analysis.
- REACH India M&E staff provide each grantee with at least two (2) training workshops in monitoring and evaluation and focused training on the use of the STT for data collection, entry and use. Grantee staff in organizations like CLPOA, NBJK, CINI Asha, and Badlao Foundation reported benefiting from the suggestions provided by M&E team in further streamlining their own monitoring systems. Additionally, staff in a few organizations reported that, after receiving training from REACH India, they adapted some of the REACH India M&E tools and templates for use in their other programs. Other examples of how grantees have profited from the M&E training include the following:
 - CLPOA, the Kolkata-based capacity building grantee in REACH India, adapted the M&E-designed baseline coversheet for use in their successful bid submitted to UNICEF for conducting a health survey of 50,000 children residing in and around the city of Kolkata. The organization has also adapted the M&E tool in their successful proposal on a water and sanitation project.
 - Digdarshika, the Chhattisgarh-based capacity building grantee, adapted the REACH M&E-designed Individual Student Profile (ISP) and included additional columns for gathering detailed information for a separate project focused on disabled children.

b. Development/ modifications of monitoring templates

- For the purpose of monitoring the work of grantees in the field, a site verification template was developed, comprising two sections.
- Modified and updated the Student Tracking Tool user manual and also the Individual Student Profile user manual.
- Prepared a write-up on 'Student Tracking Tool – genesis and development'

c. Consolidation of REACH India targets

After the grant roll out process in all six regions was completed and there was a clear picture available on the number of children being reached in each of the six regions, the M&E team re-consolidated the targets for the number of children to be impacted in next two years and the number of teachers (formal/non-formal schools) and administrators to be trained in next two years. The PMP with the revised targets was submitted to and approved by USAID.

d. Other achievements

REACH India M&E team also carried out the following activities:

- Developed a template for securing information from all the REACH India grantees about the total number of persons working on REACH India-funded project. The template is supported with a set of guidelines provided to NGOs to facilitate the process of providing this information.
- Developed a standardized template for tracking expenses incurred by REACH India on training programs.
- Compiled all data received from all the REACH India grantee NGOs about the total number of formal school teachers and administrators and the non-formal program teachers and Supervisors trained by them between October 2005 – July 2006 and also the projections of the number of teachers and administrators to be trained between August – September 2006 through REACH India grant.
- Developed a template for capturing details on the types of people trained and on the quality education trainings conducted by grantee NGOs as part of REACH India project.
- Assisted the staff of the education quality component by fine tuning the quality education self scoring templates – formal schools and non-formal schools. The fine tuning effort involved incorporation of instruction columns/ rows for making the template more user-friendly and self-explanatory, incorporating protection in the worksheets, etc.

e. Lessons Learned

The REACH India Monitoring & Evaluation team continued providing grantees with technical services in data entry, data analysis and data processes. The M&E support was intended as a way to continue improvements in monitoring systems, by providing refresher trainings on use of the student tracking tool and on using the data for project management. Among the lessons learned to this point that the M&E team has identified are the following:

- Change in attitudes toward the value of M&E: The REACH India M&E component is changing the attitudes of grantee staff regarding the value of project monitoring and evaluation. Organizations like CLPOA, NBJK, CINI Asha, and Badlao Foundation have all requested additional assistance in designing or refining monitoring systems for their organizations. All benefited from the suggestions provided by M&E team in further streamlining their monitoring systems. For some, they now have monitoring systems in place where none existed prior to REACH India; in others, they are now using data for improved project management.
- M&E developed tools are viewed as valuable beyond the REACH India project: The tools developed by the M&E team are being used not only for the REACH India project but some grantees are using the tools for non-REACH projects as well. These projects may be in economic development, health or others social sectors. For instance Digdarshika adapted the Individual Student Profile (ISP) and is using it for conducting a detailed baseline survey of the disabled children. Similarly, CLPOA, the Kolkata-based capacity building grantee adapted the baseline coversheet to win an award from UNICEF for doing health survey of 50,000 children residing in and around the city of Kolkata as well as for successfully bidding on a WATSAN (Water and sanitation) project. Note this contributes to the organization's self-sustainability.
- Need for Continuous Training: Due to high staff turnover among the grantees' own M&E personnel, there is a need for constant and continuous training in use of the tools developed for project reporting. REACH India may be inadvertently contributing to high staff turnover in the sense that once trained, local staff may be in a better position to obtain higher-paid jobs in other economic sectors.
- Importance of Needs Assessments: The M&E team worked closely with the grantees in designing the tools for monitoring and tracking of students. The needs assessments conducted by the M&E team provided knowledge on what the grantees would need and identified the resources available to them. Working with the grantees in identifying their needs for data and the most helpful types of tools has contributed to use of the M&E developed tools among grantees.

f. PMP Findings

Performance Monitoring Plan presents findings on performance data for Year II from grantees funded through the REACH India program. Data are presented for enrollment and retention, organizational development, educational quality, finance, and development of networks.

A. Sample

Eighty-seven (87) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), both direct and capacity building organizations, have been funded through the REACH India project since the project's inception. Among grantees, ten (10) grantees are capacity-building organizations with a number of sub-grantees as part of their projects. Grantees reflect work in the following regions: Delhi, Jharkhand, Kolkata, Chhattisgarh, Mumbai, and North Karnataka.

The following data reported covers all components of the REACH India efforts. Data included in this report incorporate enrollment and retention information only for those grantees working directly to enroll students in educational programs. Other data provided in this report also addresses grantee performance in the following technical areas:

- Improvements in educational quality;
- Organizational development;
- Participation in networks; and
- Improvements in financial systems.

B. Methodology

The data provided in this report are collected through a variety of instruments developed for use in the REACH India Project including the following:

- Student Tracking Tool: Enrollment, retention and completion data are compiled via the information provided by grantees through the Student Tracking Tool. The tool is an Excel-based spreadsheet developed during Year 1 of the project and provided to each grantee to facilitate data processing and reporting. Training in its use is continuous.
- Financial Status Checklist: A checklist used by the Finance Department personnel to assess the capacities of grantee financial systems and staff via site visits and interviews.
- Organizational Development Checklist: A self-administered checklist used by the REACH India grantees to examine change in the organizational management capacities of each grantee.
- An Educational Quality Checklist: An instrument developed by REACH India staff and used by NGOs to rate their educational programs on basic items that contribute to the overall quality of an educational program.
- Networking: A brief electronic survey questionnaire self-administered by NGO staff.

C. Limitations

A total of 32 direct and capacity-building grantees are implementing REACH India-funded educational interventions. Data is available from all grantees during this reporting period although not every grantee reported on all aspects of their program as some reporting requirements did not apply to some grantees (e.g., STT). Not all grantee data was included for analysis due to any of the following reasons:

- M&E: STT data from some sub-grantees was received too late to be included in this reporting period;
- One capacity-building grantee in Chhattisgarh has yet to begin implementing its direct program with students and has not received training in the STT and appropriate data entry;
- Organizational Development: Baseline data is supplied for this reporting period. Grantees will be submitting Year 2 data as of November 1, 2006.

Findings for Year II

The remaining section of the PMP Report describes targets and achievements for Year II organized by Intermediate Results (IRs) required of REACH India. The reader is cautioned that for REACH India, the baseline for all projects is zero (0). Thus, data are compared to cumulative targets, where targets were set for Year II. Targets were revised in the PMP for IR 17.1.1 and submitted to USAID April, 2006.

Highlights of Year II findings include:

- Enrollment targets were exceeded by over 57% (cumulative);(we enrolled 94,471 children against 60,000)
- Overall retention rate for REACH India grantees was 87% as compared to the target of 75% set for Year 2. Students in formal schools being offered remediation services through a REACH India funded program demonstrated a retention rate of 95%.

(See Annexure PMP for further reference)

C Dissemination and Network Development

The REACH India dissemination plan was created with two major objectives: 1. To ensure that the information disseminated helps stakeholders in reaching decisions, making changes, or taking other specific actions designed to improve the outcomes of their programs; and 2. To bring stakeholders together on common platforms and create channels of communication and collaboration among them that remain long after this project has ended.

During this period, the REACH India semi-annual report was compiled. This involved getting information from all the NGOs and putting it together. The same was distributed to partner NGOs in hard copy.

a. Dissemination products

1. Website

The website was updated with a list of all NGOs – region wise to facilitate better networking among the NGOs. A new section on technical assistance was added. Articles were also put up on the home page; additional pieces were added to the articles section and the downloads section of the site. Project briefs of Mumbai and Karnataka grantees were added.

2. Reports / Newsletters / Calender

REACH India semi-annual report was prepared with details of all the NGOs and all the effort which is being put in managing the project across the six regions and collaborating with approx. 100 NGOS. This report was disseminated to partner NGOs and other stakeholders.

Two print newsletters and three E-newsletters were created and distributed the REACH India partner NGOs and other stakeholders. Contributions came from the NGOs as well.

The REACH India 2006 calendar was created and distributed. Work involved identifying at-risk children categories, liaising with NGOs to get quotes from children, getting a partner NGO to share some of their children's paintings with us, writing up introduction, editing descriptions of at-risk children and creating a matrix that shows which NGOs in the geographical regions are working with which categories of children.

3. Network Meetings

Several network meetings were held: in Kolkata, Jharkhand, Mumbai and Delhi. Some of these were initiated by REACH India, while some were spontaneously organized by the NGOs themselves.

4. National Conference

The national conference 2005 document was prepared and disseminated to partner NGOs and other stakeholders.

b. Network Development

This period saw an increased interaction between REACH India and the Government bodies, both at the central as well as the state level.

REACH India officials attended a seminar organized by Disha, a Delhi grantee on Challenges and Opportunities for Education of Vulnerable Children, met with USAID and consultants for providing inputs on mainstream madrasa education and shared information with them about Nalanda, Lucknow, a resource agency working with madrasas in Uttar Pradesh.

Several meetings were held with different stakeholders in the field of education such as with Mr. Manish Subharwal of Students Partnership Worldwide to explore possibilities of collaboration and sustainability of REACH India, Mr. Biswajit Sen, Livelihood Specialist, World Bank and Ms. Lata Menon, Chhattisgarh UNICEF State Officer.

A one on one meeting was held with the advisory board members.

A field visit was also made to residential bridge camp run by advisory board member Dr. Shanta Sinha, who heads the MV Foundation, Hyderabad.

REACH India facilitated a visit to Katha, a Delhi grantee, for the US Embassy visitor, Mrs. Ellen Roughead, Ms. Tiffany Hill (Mrs. Roughead's assistant), LT Verma (Indian navy escort officer), Mrs. Suzanne Hall (wife of the assistant US Naval Attaché), and Mrs. Elizabeth Soderholm (wife of the US Naval Attaché). A visit to Prayas, another Delhi grantee, was organised for the USAID interns.

REACH India officials attended a meeting organized by USAID, with the Joint Secretary Education, Government of India and made a presentation about the REACH India project. As a follow up to the meeting, information was sent to the Government of India via USAID on NGOs that are focusing on upper primary, urban areas, disability etc region wise, a list of REACH India NGO partners that could function as resource institutions and an update on achievements in year I. At the same time, a note was prepared for USAID on REACH India's interface with the government school system.

REACH India also assisted USAID in setting up meetings between Jharkhand grantees and the USAID assessment team for a study of "Workforce development issues particularly under-privileged youth", as part of USAID's "Jobs for the 21st Century Initiative", where India is one of the countries being covered.

At state level, different kinds of interactions with the government were undertaken. REACH India staff member accompanied the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (Education) officials on an exposure visit to NGOs in Hyderabad, organized by SARD, a Delhi grantee. As a follow-up to this visit, the MCD Education officials came to a highly interactive meeting with the REACH India Delhi NGOs, including the sub-grantees.

The other meetings attended by REACH India staff - A meeting of the SSA Delhi Core Group, aimed to coordinate the Training of Community Leaders organised through CEMD; a valedictory function of a self-defense course organised for its women teachers and adolescent girls, in cooperation with the Delhi Police by SARD; a valedictory ceremony for the 20-day teacher training of Delhi government teachers organised by CEMD; fund-raising events held by Prayas and AADI; National Teachers Convention on the theme 'Dignity of the Teaching Profession at Stake' organised by Vikramshila in Allahabad.

Other than attending the meetings organised by the REACH India NGO partners, REACH India staff attended various other conferences and seminars also, like the National Conference on Autonomous and Accountable Teacher for Quality Education, organized by Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore; a seminar of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce concerning education and training opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth, a talk by Professor Krishna Kumar, Director NCERT on The National Curriculum Framework and the Transformed Classroom; the release of and discussion on Pratham's provisional Annual Status of Education (ASER) report, a study coordinated by Pratham and conducted by 20,000 volunteers in 509 rural districts; a workshop on "Out of school children of 11-14 years age group", held at NIEPA, and organized by the Ministry of Human resources Development.

In the month of January, a PORT Team visited REACH India; held meetings with 3 Delhi partners- SARD, Disha and Prayas and also had discussions with the entire REACH India staff both individually and in group. They also met members of REACH India Advisory Board.

The other visitors include Jeanet Korput of Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands, who met with REACH India staff and showed an interest in providing support for pre-primary or primary education for tribes in Chhattisgarh; Ms. Kim Archea, Foreign Affairs Officer, Department of State, Bureau of South & Central Asia who visited Katha, a Delhi grantee.

Ms. Rukmini Banerjee from Pratham gave a presentation at REACH India of Pratham’s provisional Annual Status of Education (ASER) report, and discussed ways of involving the Jharkhand grantees to take this process forward.

A presentation was made and disseminated on “Corporate social responsibility and education for vulnerable children”, at the workshop on Social Accountability 8000, held by the Confederation of Indian Industries in Pune for Indian industries in the western region.

D Finance and Grants Administration

In the finance and administration area, REACH went through a significant shift in terms of job description as the third year of the project was marked by a shift of phases. From a start up and design phase in the first year of the project and a selection and roll out phase in the second year of the project, REACH entered the third phase of monitoring and guidance. In essence the third phase was to prove as testing ground for efficacy of technical assistance provided in phase two and was designed to bridge the gap (if any) between REACH India’s expectations and the prevalent ground realities.

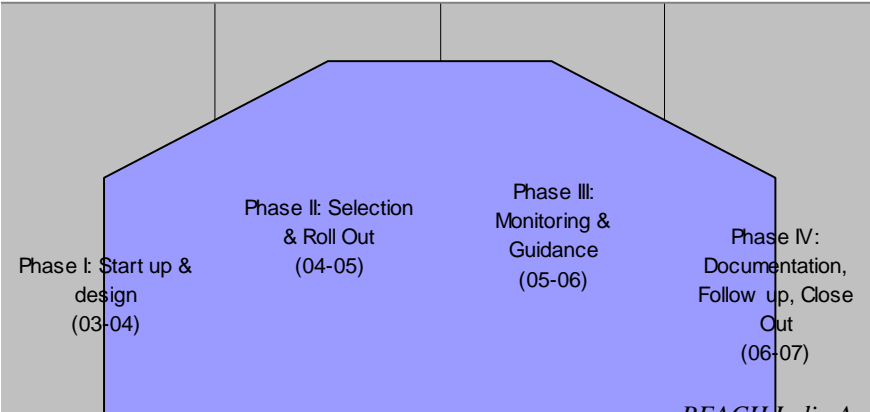
The ‘Month-end Reporting’ continued to be one of the main segments of the work activities of REACH India’s finance team. Month-end closings were done and reports were generated for submission to AIR after quarterly reports, cash requests from grantees were reviewed.

Pipeline data and worksheets for monthly pipeline projections for AIR and USAID were set-up to ensure regular flow of funds to REACH India and grantees.

On the administration side, three finance officers joined REACH India for grants and financial administration, bringing the total strength of the department to four. The six project regions were divided among the four finance officers. Each regions team consists of two finance officers and one program person. Other financial responsibilities have also been allocated to each finance officer.

In order to monitor the progress of projects in all regions, REACH India conducted finance reviews in all regions of its operations. The reviews were aimed at narrowing the gap between project's expectation of financial management of its funds provided to the grantees and the realities prevalent in the field. The finance reviews also proved to be ground for on the spot technical assistance to be provided to grantees and often resulted in a new and improved practice in the financial management of grantee organisations.

REACH Project Phases



*REACH India Annual Report
October 2005-September 2006*

As a result, there were significant changes in strategy on how to best achieve this, beginning with an expansion of finance team at REACH India and recruitment of three additional staff members, culled from specially chosen backgrounds and specializations. However, in order to ensure consistency with reporting of earlier years, work conducted under the finance and administration area, though uniquely different for each project year, is documented and divided in the following broad categories:

a. Internal financial and administrative management of REACH office

With the expansion of finance team in place, the foremost task was to organize the team in a fashion that promoted teamwork yet established individual responsibility centers for different tasks. As a result, the finance and administration tasks were listed, processes and flow charts were defined and responsibilities were mutually fixed for each member of the finance team. Almost all the processes entailed involvement of more than one member of the finance team thus strengthening the internal controls, creating a healthy teamwork environment and ensuring that work got carried on smoothly even in the absence of any one member.

Some of the tasks of the finance team that were revamped with a view to increasing transparency, instilling internal checks and balances and simplification to enable employee friendly systems are listed below:

- 1. New travel claim process:** Under the new travel claim process, new forms were developed (Refer: Finance Annexure 1) that revealed a clearer summary of the movement of employee during official travel along with monetary details of advances, actual expenditures, personal expenses etc. Under the new system, all and any expense relating to a particular travel are attached with one claim only. This results in not only avoiding any duplicate or missed payments but in also revealing the overall expense for a particular travel. Such information on total cost per visit helps in the cost benefit analysis of either outsourcing a particular type of activity or doing it in-house. It also provides as a reference of future expenses on travel of similar nature and is also useful in forecasting REACH India's future expenses. The employees were also offered the flexibility of making their own travel arrangements within the prescribed categories and settling the bills in the field itself. This provided flexibility to staff to adapt to any last minute changes in the field and facilitated on the spot checking of bill by the traveling employee himself. The travel claim also gets documented with an approved scope of work and individual trip report submitted by the employee on completion of travel. The new process therefore provides a complete audit trail under the much significant part of REACH India's cost i.e. Travel.
- 2. Improved payroll management processes:** Payroll disbursement systems was significantly strengthened by introducing new leave forms, attendance and leave approval procedures, employee tax management system etc. All compensation related payouts to employees were now made on one day at the end of the month, thus helping in smooth and more systematized administration of payroll and better recording for tax declaration purposes. Statutory obligations connected to payroll payments were complied with. Year end tax certificates (Form 16's) were issued to all employees. The organization was made compliant with the new E-TDS requirement for filing of payroll related tax returns online.
- 3. Cash payments streamlined:** The level of expenses incurred in cash at REACH was a bit a higher than the usual limit set for the field by headquarters. Even though, REACH had obtained permission for a higher limit, fresh attempts were made at rethinking systems and reducing the level of expenses settled in cash. By effecting process related changes in various quarters of administration e.g. making travel payments through cheques to vendors or employees as advances, making overtime payments in cheques instead of cash, making payments for diesel through cheques etc, REACH succeeded in significantly reducing the level of cash expenses. Also, to improve the internal control, responsibility of handling cash was shifted from finance to the administrative assistant. All these measures have contributed to ensuring several best practices in place in REACH.
- 4. Improvement in Pipeline Systems (future expense forecasting methods):** Efforts were made to improve the accuracy of the forecasting model used to estimate and request money from headquarters for REACH India's own administration as well as grant disbursement to partners. A new participative process was put in place whereby all employees planned future activities in conjunction with the finance staff and provided their inputs on upcoming costs related to each employee's responsibilities. As we strive to achieve perfection in this process, significant improvements on forecasting estimates have been observed in this year.

5. Miscellaneous efforts to improve quality of financial administration: In general, efforts were made to raise the standards of the way in which REACH conducted its financial affairs. Several areas of finance and administration were identified in the organization that needed improvement. One of the areas was the depth of information provided in various clauses of contracts entered into with contractors/consultants. Efforts were made to churn out more detailed contracts that addressed several issues and circumstances and were adequately equitable to self interest of REACH. Another area addressed was finishing the lease of old cars (that were frequently requiring repairs) and replacing them by leasing brand new cars. This saved a lot of administrative hassle and time for REACH. In financial management, several processes were optimized to ensure that REACH does not retain high bank balances at the end of the month and passes on (or spends) the funds for the purposes they were requested. We have been consistently achieving low bank balances for the last 10 months. Last but not least, several attempts were made to document policy decisions, setting up and documenting internal limits for expenses etc. to enable clear and transparent flow of information to employees and to enable a clear audit trail for future.

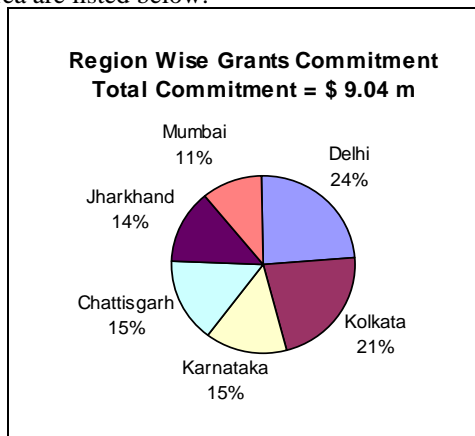
The general mandate of the finance team in this year has been to improve the strength of internal systems and protect the interests of the organization in all areas yet maintaining a very friendly and equitable relationship with the external environment such as vendors and partner organizations.

b. External management of partner organizations on financial aspects

In managing the other aspect of the finance team i.e. handling of the grant related responsibilities, the finance team was arranged in a way that three finance staff members were given direct responsibility of handling two regions each. In addition to the direct responsibility, a support role was also devised and each member was given an additional support role to assist the member having a direct responsibility. Working on similar principles, this arrangement also insured that more than one team member were involved in handling a region and in the absence of any member of the team, work would not be affected.

Some of the major tasks conducted by the finance team in this area are listed below:

1. Completion of Roll Out: the beginning of third project year was marked by rolling out of final two regions Mumbai and North Karnataka. In completing the roll out, the budgets were obtained from grantees of both the regions after providing them instructions on how to prepare the budgets according to prior established principles. Upon review and corrective action taken on the budgets, site visits to actually verify the strength of organizations systems on ground were undertaken. Findings from these activities were then



shared with the selection committee and wherever necessary, additional revisions in proposal and budget were sought from prospective partner organizations. On completion of this process, the grant proposals and ensuing budgets were submitted to USAID for obtaining final approval. Once the approval was received, grant agreements were prepared and a grants management workshop was conducted to familiarize the partner organizations with various important terms and conditions of the grant agreement. In addition to the one day grant management workshop, a more extensive finance workshop was also organized to familiarize the grantees on REACH India's disbursement cycles of funds, reporting formats etc. The workshop also provided guidance on compliance with statutory laws such as Foreign Contribution Remittance Act (FCRA), REACH India's expectation of the level of documentation for expenses, level of internal controls etc. Pre developed sample forms for inventory control, leave and salary sheets, time sheets, conveyance claim formats were shared. The workshop also provided hands-on coaching of the accounting software Tally to be used on the project. With this

workshop, completion of the roll out process in all six regions was achieved and marked the transition of phases within the project.

2. **Shift in strategy on how to provide Technical Assistance:** given the need to fulfill the mission of the new phase of monitoring and guidance and the inherent requirement to continue designing and providing technical assistance, a shift in strategy was sought to satisfy both the requirements. Under the new strategy, it was decided that instead of creating common platforms via a regional workshop mode, a more personalized approach would be adopted wherein the needs of each organization would be studied in the context of the program being implemented by it and in addressing the relevant problems arising from the same. This would solve the dual purpose of checking the state of affairs of actual practices conducted so far (monitoring) and providing customized solutions for each organization by giving them individual attention (guidance). As a result, it was decided that semi annual Finance Reviews would be conducted in each region and the finance team, by using in house developed tools would monitor the activities of partner organizations so far, provide on the spot technical assistance and create a follow up system post the review to ensure that corrections be carried out. One of the important outcomes of putting this strategy in place was that the Finance Team, after conducting its first round of reviews across all regions would also be in a position to play the role of a facilitator on Cross Learning and sharing of Best Practices amongst regions and partner organizations.

The important deliverables achieved from implementation of this strategy are listed below:

- An exhaustive Finance Review Checklist was developed to guide the design of financial review to be conducted in each organization. It covered various areas ranging from grant agreement compliance, compliance with generally accepted accounting principles, compliance with statutory provisions, management of cash, bank fixed assets, payroll records etc. (Refer: Finance Annexure 2)
 - A reporting format was developed which could be clubbed with a coinciding semi annual program review thereby providing a consolidated report on the program and finance review of each region.
 - On completion of each program and finance review, follow up letters were issued to partner organizations addressing areas that required correction, follow up and improvement and provided a feedback on our impression form their review.
3. **General grant management procedures:** Various procedures in administering a grant were conducted during the year. Some of the work conducted included processing of quarterly financial reports, processing of cash requests by scrutinizing their reasonableness, requesting funds from head quarters and releasing them to the partners etc. Modifications to grant agreements to address the needs of (a) increasing the obligated amount to partners (b) reducing a grant amount and (c) increasing a grant amount were affected. Different formats for affecting a modification were developed and upon approval received from head quarters and/or USAID, the modifications were affected. Correspondence on follow up of Audits in the Delhi region was conducted and audit observations were complied with to a major extent. The process is nearing completion providing ground for conducting the next round of financial review.

E Organisational Development

REACH India defines the organizational approach to capacity building as 'systems enhancement processes' for effective and efficient service delivery in the area of education.

REACH India tracks changes in two aspects of organizational development, namely organizational management systems and technical capacity to deliver educational services to vulnerable children.

To track changes in organizational management systems, REACH India has developed an Organisation Development (OD) checklist (described below) that plots level of achievements in organization development required for long term sustainability as well as for achieving the outcomes of the project.

To track the technical capacity in education, REACH India uses a Quality of Education Assessment Tool (QEAT). This tool determines the technical expertise in education as well as academic management, both of which reflect on the organization's capacity.

Organizational Development Checklist and Results

The OD checklist, which was developed by REACH India staff, includes commonly recognized elements of best practices in the area of organizational culture, management processes & procedures and strategic planning.

The OD checklist was self-administered by the NGOs. It was a pre-requisite that this checklist was to be administered by a core group that would comprise of least 10% of the overall NGO staff, and that it has to include employees from different departments, levels and with varied years of experience in the organization. As such the OD checklist tool is meant to reflect the overall OD status of the NGO and not just the status of the team that implements the REACH India project.

The administering of this checklist is considered to be the first OD intervention of REACH India project. REACH India staff first orients the NGO staff, on a one-on-one basis, on how to properly administer the OD checklist. The recommended process is for each of the staff members to first fill out the checklist on their own. The core group should then meet and discuss their respective responses in order to achieve a consensus on each item. The consensus responses should be entered into a final version of the checklist and sent to REACH India.

OD checklists were to be administered by each NGO within the first quarter after beginning their REACH India projects. Between June 2005 and September 2006, the checklist was administered in five regions - Delhi, Jharkhand, Kolkata, Chhattisgarh and Mumbai. Of the 28 NGO partners in the five regions, 16 reported on the OD checklists (57% the partners) as of 30 September 2006.

Overall, the analysis of the OD checklist showed the following highlights:

- HR practices needs to be strengthened in the organization. In particular, an *organization handbook* needs to be developed for many NGO partners;
- There is a need to improve *practices* pertaining to *institutional memory* which could include process documentation, MIS and reflective practices;
- NGOs may need support in how to cope with organizational growth, including issues of accountability and transparency; and
- Some NGOs need to conduct a *strategic planning exercise*. This would focus on the organization's mission (and vision and/or values), goals to work toward the mission, strategies to achieve the goals, and action planning.

Overall organizations reported 58% achievements on improved organizational systems.

The Capacity Building NGOs scored 67.2% compared to 57.9% for the Direct Grantee NGOs

Region-wise the scores are as follows:

REGION	Baseline achievement levels	Participating NGOs
Delhi	60%	4
Jharkhand	62%	3
Kolkata	69%	4
Chhattisgarh	56%	2
Mumbai	50%	4

Baseline scores:

Range	No. of NGOs
Below 40%	2
41% - 50%	1
51% - 60%	8
61% - 70	1
Above 70%	4

The first administering of the OD checklist serves as the baseline. Thereafter, NGOs will administer the OD checklist on a yearly basis (once in September/October 2006, and then again in 2007). It is hoped that by the end of 2007, there would be OD checklist results for three periods.

Naturally, with only one period of data, it is currently not possible to conduct a quantitative comparison of change. For the purposes of this report, we can only speculate that the following activities and results have led to improved organizational systems in most of the NGOs.

OD Interventions and Results

1. For almost all the NGOs, this was the first time the NGO staff members from different levels came together and participated in discussions about the organization's environment and development.

This exercise led to some unexpected outcomes. Many NGO partners reflected on the organisation's practices and immediately put in some corrective measures. Although we currently lack quantitative data on this, several NGOs have informed us that the OD checklist exercise prompted them to start more careful documentation of their meetings, and to display the vision/mission statements in prominent places. Many of the NGOs even have developed an organogram following the completion of the exercise. Though these are organizational changes that are relatively easy to implement, but they represent a good start and demonstrate the commitment of the NGO to bring about change in their practices.

The other OD interventions that have been administered since the OD checklist baseline was administered are:

2. Follow-up on learning Classroom Series – Institutionalization of Quality Education in the NGO's educational interventions.

The Learning Classroom Series (LCS) focuses on helping NGOs institutionalize new practices on curriculum enrichment, learner-centered teaching methods and active assessment. While the consultant does pre and post visits to partner NGOs, REACH India staff does the follow up visits to each NGO to check on the institutionalization process, the constraints that NGOs are facing as they try to integrate LCS concepts into organizational practice, and the strategies they are developing to do so. This one-on-one consultation by REACH India staff is an important part of an OD process.

3. Training on the administration and usage of the Quality Education Assessment Tool (QEAT).

A comprehensive Quality Education Assessment Tool has been developed by Reach India for all NGO partners to plot levels of their achievements in enhancing quality of education in their programs. This activity included:

- Training the NGO on how to use the Quality Education Assessment Tool;
- The NGOs choosing samples and conducting field observations and interviews to collect data;
- The NGOs compiling the data in excel spreadsheets.

It is expected that the NGOs will use the data to assess and improve their institutions and performance. This would then constitute an organizational development intervention that would benefit REACH India partner NGOs over the long-term. REACH India intends to assist the NGOs in how to analyze and use this data.

4. Program and Finance joint review of the REACH – NGO project

Program and finance reviews have been carried over in the six regions, the program activities were tallied with the financial expenses. NGOs were advised on proper documentation and good practices in maintaining financial systems. REACH India was satisfied to see that most of the NGOs adhered to good practices in the area of documentation and finance and imbibed the practices in the REACH project. Few NGOs institutionalized such practices in the organization.

5. Workshop to Explore Capacity Building

In early April, 2006, a three day meeting was scheduled to bring together senior staff of ten capacity building NGOs to explore the issues and modalities of providing capacity building services to NGO sub grantees. This meeting was in response to expressed needs of several capacity building NGOs for assistance in trying to clarify their roles vis-à-vis their sub grantees. The NGO partners together explored the various models for capacity building. REACH India as a technical assistance provider facilitated the understanding of what capacity building is all about and helped the NGOs to formulate strategies that will help them to effectively build capacities of the Partner NGOs (sub grantees).

VI. Other Issues

A Mid Term Review

A mid-term review was conducted of the REACH India project by two independent consultants supported by USAID. The objective of the review was to reflect on the progress, achievements and gaps in the program and to consider any strategies, actions and linkages that could help sustain its interventions beyond the project.

The review methodology included desk study of relevant literature, discussion with REACH and USAID staff, and field visits to selected regions and partners. Different types of grantees (direct and capacity building grantees and sub-grantees) were visited in Delhi, Kolkata, Jharkhand and North Karnataka. The grantees were selected for interactions with the review team keeping the following criteria in mind – volume of funds, type of grantee (direct or capacity building), rural/urban location and population, duration of intervention in REACH program, and focus areas/strategies followed. The visits included discussions and interviews with partner staff, teachers, children, parents and community, as well as government officials from the education department, besides field visits to the actual sites/centers of learning. A questionnaire was circulated to all partners, even those not visited by the review team, to elicit their responses.

The report's executive summary concluded with the following:

“In the remaining period, REACH and its Partners may focus their attention on these aspects in a systematic manner and explore ways of ensuring continuity of efforts. The first is to sustain the interventions of capacity building of grantees – it has been noted already that REACH has undertaken efforts to create strong, vibrant organizations which can effectively address the agenda of UEE for vulnerable children. These processes must be consolidated. Secondly, to ensure that the ideas generated during the REACH intervention must find their way into the larger government system. For this, it has already been noted that a deliberate strategy needs to be out in place. Only when innovative ideas and approaches enter the government system is there hope of change on a wider, larger scale. Thirdly, we have mentioned the need for a more rigorous approach to working with community based institutions like PTAs, School Development Committees and Panchayats. The agenda of local education governance is a key area that needs urgent attention. These three complementary aspects must be focused upon in the coming 18-20 months of REACH India. If this happens, it is likely that a strong foundation can be laid for future work and for sustaining children's learning.”

These findings and recommendations have been shared with REACH India grantees and the recommendations will be encouraged wherever possible and appropriate.

B Reduction in Grant

Following an extensive period of uncertainty, final decisions were taken by USAID to reduce the overall REACH India budget by \$4.5 million from \$20 million to \$15.5 million. Given budget reductions several adjustments have had to be made to the project.

The funds in the budget for grants were reduced from \$11.2 million to \$8.7 million. As \$9.4 had already been committed to grantees a strategy for addressing this issue was developed with the aim of causing minimal disruption to funded projects. Plans for making additional grants had to be scuttled.

Funds for managing the project were also reduced. Resources available for communications, dissemination, documentation and research were significantly cut-back. The international partner agreement with Michigan State University, related to these tasks, was cancelled and the staff position of communications officer was vacated. Plans for two further national conferences were abandoned as was the plan for another film on REACH India documenting progress and challenges.

C No cost Extension

Discussions were initiated by grantees regarding the future of REACH India. Initial observations have been that there should be serious consideration of REACH India continuing beyond the period of the USAID cooperative agreement in some form as many organizations have articulated the benefits of being part of such a network.

At the same time, discussions were going on with USAID to extend the time period of the project by one year. Finally, decision was taken to extend the project by six months to March 31, 2008, based also on the budget cuts. It was decided to give the extension to the NGOs until 31 December 2007. The capacity building grantees could, in turn, offer extensions up to 30 November 2007 to the sub grantees on a case by case basis.

The extension is not automatic for those grantees wanting one. The decision as to whether to approve a no-cost extension application would be based on the extent to which it can be assured that an extension would produce results. These results could take the form of increased numbers of beneficiaries, increased positive impact of the project on beneficiaries, increased institutional strengthening, increased possibilities for sustainability. Requesting extension of the project because it is anticipated there would be unexpended funds would not be considered as a reason for a project extension. Also, the NGO must have exhibited satisfactory programmatic and financial performance during the original project phase.

REACH India grantees were also encouraged to take advantage of this extension to intensify efforts to identify those project elements which are exemplary and need documentation, dissemination, continuation and/or scaling up as good practices; as well as consider ways in which REACH funds could be utilized to leverage support from other donors for additional activities within, or going beyond, the timeframes of the current REACH project. This decision was communicated to the REACH India grantees who were asked to indicate whether they would like to apply for a no-cost extension of their project grants

D Changes in management structure

There have been several changes in management during this project period at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), at REACH India and at USAID. At AIR, in Washington DC, the headquarters project directorship was changed: Joseph Lombardo replaced Cory Heyman. At the REACH India office in New Delhi, Janet Wise, the Finance Director resigned and was not replaced. Instead, there are now four finance officers. The communications Officer left and was not replaced because of budget cuts. In New Delhi, a new CTO at USAID was appointed: Sourav Banerjee replaced Mamta Kohli.

E Advisory Board

Advisory Board meetings could not be held during this period, despite the desire to do so. Initially, REACH India was not sure about the grant reduction and then about the No cost extension. In addition, the mid-term review was taking place and the report was expected. The uncertainty of the situation made it very difficult to hold a meaningful Advisory Board meeting; especially as most of the members are very busy people and REACH India would like to use their time more productively.

Once REACH India had received clarity on these issues, an attempt was made to bring together at least a quorum and have a meeting. This proved to be impossible. Thus, as an interim measure, the Chief of Party met each of the members separately to get their views on the developments in the project.

VII. Challenges

The challenges for the future are:

Implementation

- Implementing the key recommendations of the mid-term review in the time left for the project.
- Ensuring that the NGOs pay heed to the recommendations made by the review and take up the activities suggested.
- Ensuring that the ideas developed as part of REACH interventions, which have the potential to strengthen the quality of the government schools can strengthening practices in the government schooling system.
- Attempting to continue strengthening NGO relationships with the government both at local and state levels, especially to make a change in the functioning of government schools.
- Managing the large number of grantees, their workplans, budgets, reporting.
- Ensuring that the NGOs report timely for smooth functioning of the REACH India project.

Documentation and dissemination

- Process documentation and field research towards policy analysis, including good practices.
- Sharing, learning and wider dissemination amongst the REACH India network as well as beyond.
- Using the large amount of data generated by the project for reflection and analysis beyond the project; using data to have a wider understanding, influence and impact.

Sustainability

- Sustainability of the processes set in motion by REACH India as well as the future of REACH India as an organization to be able to take it forward.
- Supporting NGOs during the phasing out process to raise funds and leveraging government and other resources
- Consolidating and ensuring that the capacity building efforts for the NGOs get institutionalized.
- Ensuring that REACH India is able to consolidate and showcase the work undertaken in the program towards policy advocacy on effectively including children at risk in the formal education system.

Phase Out

- Ensuring that underspending does not happen and that funds get reallocated and reprogrammed wherever required.
- Closing out issues

Results	Indicator definitions	Target	Performance for Year 2005 - 2006		
			Target for Year II	Achievement against target for year II	Remarks
IR 17.1.1. Out-of-School Children provided with Alternative Schooling and mainstreamed into Formal Elementary Schools.					
1.1 Enrolment in direct NGO interventions: Vulnerable children provided access to education.	Number of out-of-school children (4-14 years of age) who enroll in an educational program supported by REACH India. These are centers/programs that are operated directly by the grantee NGOs (apart from the Full Alternative schools).	Approximately 29,800 out-of-school children enrolled in year I. Approximately 50,000 out-of-school children enrolled by year II (cumulative). Approximately 75,000 out-of-school children enrolled by year III (cumulative).	50,000	94,471	REACH India has awarded funds to grantees in all six regions. Data was available for reporting from 77 grantees. Exceeded targets due to: 1) more enrollments than expected in North Karnataka and Mumbai grantees. See Annexure I.
1.2 Completion in Direct NGO Interventions: Vulnerable children receive educational services and complete NGO intervention programs	Of the number of children enrolled as above, the percent of children who complete the program. Completion is defined as remaining enrolled for the entire program and acquiring skills/competencies as defined by the NGOs.	80% of the children enrolled in each intervention would complete the program.	No year wise target was set up.	46% for ECE/Balwari 40% for Bridge 6.8 % for AES	Grantees are running bridge courses of 2-year duration and thus, no completion of such has taken place. See Annexure 1.
1.3 Transition from direct NGO interventions: Vulnerable children enroll or transit from Bridge Programme/ ECE Programme into the formal schooling system	Of the number of children enrolled, as identified in 1.1 above, percent of children who subsequently enroll in the formal schooling system	Approximately 12% of the children to be mainstreamed in year I. Approximately 57% of the children to be mainstreamed by year II (cumulative). Approximately 75% of the children to be	Approximately 57% of the enrolled children to be mainstreamed in year II.	Overall rate: 27.3% students were mainstreamed from NGO programs into formal schooling system Within programs, rates differ: ECE/Balwari: 48%	Once again, the NGO programs are 2-year programs and we expect to see this rate increase in Year III of the project. See Annexure 1.

Results	Indicator definitions	Target	Performance for Year 2005 - 2006		
			Target for Year II	Achievement against target for year II	Remarks
		mainstreamed by year III (cumulative).		Bridge: 39% AES: 7%	
1.4 Direct Enrolment in schools: Direct enrollment of vulnerable children in the formal schooling system as a result of REACH India supported efforts	Number of vulnerable children of primary school age, directly enrolled in the formal schooling system as a result of efforts by a REACH India grantee during a given year.	Approximately 3,600 children in year I. Approximately 10,000 children by year II (cumulative). Approximately 13,000 children by year III (cumulative).	10,000	8,393	See Annexure 1. The children being targeted and enrolled by NGO grantees require additional attention to build school-readiness skills and habits.
1.5 Retention of vulnerable children: Children who enter in the formal schooling system continue in subsequent years either at the same or advanced level	Of the children enrolled in the formal schooling system through REACH efforts (either directly or through Bridge programs) in a particular year, percentage that continues in the subsequent year, either at the same or at an advanced level.	Approximately 75% of those enrolled in year I (either directly or through Bridge courses) continue into year II. Approximately 80% of the REACH target children who are in school in year II continue in year III.	Approximately 75% of those enrolled in year I (either directly or through Bridge courses) continue into year II.	Overall retention rate for August, 2006: 87% Retention rates by program: ECE/Balwari: 87% Bridge: 60% Direct Enrollment in formal school: 85% Remediation with In-school student: 95% SLD: 70% AES: 95%	Retention rates for the programs are higher than targeted for most programs. This may be due to the quality education interventions instituted by REACH India as well as. See Annexure 1.

Results	Indicator definitions	Target	Performance for Year 2005 - 2006		
			Target for Year II	Achievement against target for year II	Remarks
IR 17.1.2. Strengthened Formal and Alternative School Capacity for enrolment and retention of vulnerable children, especially girls.					
<p>2.1 NGO capacity enhanced to plan and implement: REACH India NGOs (NGOs Grantees and Sub-Grantees) demonstrate overall improved financial, managerial and technical capacities to plan and implement education programs for vulnerable children.¹</p>	<p>Percentage of REACH India-supported NGOs demonstrate improvement in financial systems.</p>	<p>Approximately 40% in year II (cumulative). Approximately 75% in year III (cumulative).</p>	<p>Approximately 40% in year II (cumulative).</p>	<p>All grantees (32) have demonstrated improvements in financial systems. Of these, 93.8% scored 75 and above on the checklist.</p>	<p>Descriptive data is provided in Annexure II.</p>
	<p>Percentage of NGOs demonstrate improvement in organizational management systems.</p>	<p>Approximately 40% in year II (cumulative). Approximately 75% in year III (cumulative).</p>	<p>Approximately 40% in year II (cumulative).</p>	<p>Baseline data: Direct Grantees reported at 57.9%; Capacity-building grantees reported at 67.2%</p>	<p>Grantees will report Yr. 2 data as of 11/1/06. See Annexure III for narrative on organizational development.</p>
	<p>Percentage of NGOs demonstrate improvement in technical capacity in educational service delivery for vulnerable children.</p>	<p>Approximately 40% in year II (cumulative). Approximately 75% in year III (cumulative).</p> <p>Total number of NGOs (grantees and sub-grantees) to be covered over LOP: 99.</p>	<p>Approximately 40% in year II (cumulative).</p>	<p>89% of NGOs demonstrated improvement over baseline.</p>	<p>See Annexure IV a for narrative description of results.</p>

¹ For IR 2.1, in year I, as per the approved PMP a descriptive report of the capacity-building work done with NGOs is provided; year II and III will have quantitative indicators.

Results	Indicator definitions	Target	Performance for Year 2005 - 2006		
			Target for Year II	Achievement against target for year II	Remarks
<p>2.2 Improved quality of educational services: Adoption of quality practices in the formal schooling system by schools and teachers covered through the REACH India initiatives.</p>	<p>Percentage of schools showing substantial improvement (more than 75% improvement over baseline status) in teaching learning practices, as evident through improved teaching and learning processes, better classroom and school environment and strengthened school-community linkages.</p>	<p>Approximately 20% of the schools strengthened through REACH efforts to show substantial improvement in year I, 40% schools to show significant improvement by year II and 75% schools by year III.</p> <p>The number of intervention schools are 100 in year I, 350 in year II and 475 in year III.</p> <p>(Approximately 60,000 additional children will be affected.)</p>	<p>Target for yr II 350 schools.</p>	<p>Only 1 NGO working with formal schools provided data for 2 periods; this NGO demonstrated a 23% improvement over baseline. Data from others will be available in Year III.</p> <p>The number of formal schools covered through REACH India interventions are 942.</p> <p>(An estimated 91,520 additional children are benefiting through REACH India funded teacher training initiatives.)</p>	<p>See Annexure IVb for a narrative description of the education quality results for formal schools.</p>
<p>2.3 Increased retention rate of schools: The schools in the formal schooling system with REACH India interventions show an increased rate of retention across all grades</p>	<p>The schools in the formal schooling system with REACH interventions show an increase in the retention rate, as defined under the last column, over baseline figures.</p>	<p>Increase in the retention rate of the intervention schools by 10 percentage points by year II.</p> <p>Increase in the retention rate of the intervention schools by 15 percentage points by year III.</p>	<p>Increase in the retention rate of the intervention schools by 10 percentage points by year II.</p>	<p>Quantifiable achievements would be available in year III annual report.</p> <p>The number of formal schools covered through REACH India interventions are 942.</p>	<p>Refer Annexure IVb for explanation.</p>

Results	Indicator definitions	Target	Performance for Year 2005 - 2006		
			Target for Year II	Achievement against target for year II	Remarks
		The number of intervention schools are 100 in year I, 350 in year II and 475 in year III.			
IR 17.1.3. Promoting system reform for improved decentralized educational services, such as EMIS, micro-planning and monitoring					
3.1 Collaborative decision-making enhanced at State/District/Block-level Education Departments: The respective Education Departments in target regions involve NGOs in decision making on issues related to education of vulnerable children	Number of NGOs involved in decision-making or in Advisory bodies with respective State/District/Block Education Departments.	<p>10% of existing grantees are involved in the decision making or in Advisory bodies by year I.*</p> <p>30% of grantees are involved in the decision-making or in Advisory bodies by year II (cumulative).</p> <p>50% of grantees are involved in the decision-making or in Advisory bodies by year III (cumulative).</p> <p>* Only those NGOs will be counted that have been REACH India grantees for at least three months.</p>	<p>10 grantee NGOs (cumulative)</p> <p>(Total existing NGO grantees =32)</p>	<p>17 grantee NGOs (cumulative)</p> <p>For details refer to Annexure V.</p>	

Results	Indicator definitions	Target	Performance for Year 2005 - 2006		
			Target for Year II	Achievement against target for year II	Remarks
<p>3.2 Strengthened networks to promote systems reform on education issues: Coordination for educational intervention programs and knowledge sharing among all 99 REACH India NGOs (Grantees and Sub-grantees), and between NGOs and the Government, established/strengthened/reactivated through facilitation by REACH India</p>	<p>Number of networks (NGOs, civil society organizations/ groups) established/strengthened/ reactivated for advocacy, knowledge sharing and/or coordination on educational issues through REACH India efforts.</p> <p>Number of networks linked to the respective State Government Education Departments.</p>	<p>16 networks.</p> <p>One network per geographical region</p>		<p>7 networks created/ re-activated (cumulative).</p> <p>For details refer Annexure V.</p> <p>NIL in year II.</p>	<p>No year wise target was set up.</p>

REACH India
Consolidated Travel Expense Statement

Name of the Employee	
Purpose of the Journey	

1. Per Diems

Date	Time	Place / Organisation Visited	Amount	Total
Total daily allowance				

2. Actual Hotel Expenses

From (Date)	To (Date)	Details : Name of the Hotel / Bill No.	Amount	Total
Less : Personal Expenses				NET

3. Transport Expenses (Air Fare / Train Fare)

From (Place)	To (Place)	Details : Dates / Ticket No.	Amount	Total
Less : Personal Expenses				NET

4. Ground Conveyance (Road Transport / Taxi etc.)

Date	Details	Amount	Total
Less : Personal Expenses			NET

5. Other / Miscellaneous Expenses

Date	Details	Amount	Total
Less : Personal Expenses			NET

NOTES

1: Pls. do not fill cells marked in grey	OVERALL TOTAL EXPENSES (Gross)	
2: Kindly attach original bills for all expenses (excluding per diems)	Less : Advance Received	
3: Please submit this claim with a Trip report a.s.a.p. but not later than 2 weeks after the trip, else no balance per diems shall be paid.	Less : Air/Train fare paid by REACH	
	Balance Payable / Receivable	

Signature of the Employee : _____ Dated _____

Approval by COP: _____ Dated _____

**FINANCIAL REVIEW CHECKLIST
(REACH INDIA internal document)**

Nature of compliances to be Verified.

1. Compliances to Statutory requirements as per Local Laws and verification of Legal Documents. Applicable laws are :
 - i. FCRA
 - ii. Income Tax Act / TDS
 - iii. EPF and Miscellaneous Provisions Act.
 - iv. ESI Act
 - v. Payment of Gratuity Act
2. Compliances to Accounting Standards and Guidelines Issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)
3. Compliance to various Grant Agreement Conditions.
4. Compliance to their own internal Bye Laws, Policies etc.

Preparatory Steps before the Finance Review :

1. Analyse the latest Quarterly Financial Report, Cash Request and the Financial Statements generated from TALLY and note the issues / discrepancies to be taken up directly with the organisation.
2. Ascertain scope for capacity building of the project staff i.e. areas where the Accountant or Finance-in-Charge needs to be given advice / recommendation / training.
3. Match and link Project activities as per the work-plan with the detailed budget and the previous spending patterns as per the Quarterly Financial Reports and indicate any substantial deviations and budgetary implications.
4. Follow up on the observations of the previous Finance Review reports (if any).
5. Record the status of any pending / due budget revisions / modifications to be issued / any other pending / unresolved issues with the grantees.

Documents to be taken along for the Review :

- a. Latest Quarterly Financial Report and cash Request
- b. Copy of detailed Budget and Work-plan
- c. Updated Grantee Tracking Sheet
- d. Ongoing correspondence of any pending / unresolved Finance issues
- e. Previous Finance Review Reports and the response of the organisation to the same.

Reporting Format

Observations appearing in the final report should be classified into the following two categories :

Section A: Observations having grave implications – Cost are either disallowed or suggested remedial measures need to be implemented to avoid disallowance.

Section B : Observations having implications stemming from unsound practices in Accounting, Internal Control, Clerical Errors etc. Suggested remedial measures to be implemented to correct such errors and ensure transparent and efficient practices.

Compliance to Grant Agreement Conditions

- a. Do the expenses incurred fall within the duration of the agreement
- b. Do the expenses booked fall under any of the following categories :
 - Private expenses of the officials of the Grantee organisation
 - Expenses not associated with activities described under REACH India Agreement
 - Expenses incurred in excess of the obligated amount
- c. Do expenses correspond / are provided for and approved in the budget
- d. Do all expenses fall under the categories - Allowable / Allocable / Reasonable
- e. Is the ratio of Admin Vs. Core Project Expenses maintained at 80-20%
- f. Have all the sub contracts / agreements been approved by REACH India
- g. Are there any budget modifications (beyond 10%), which require prior approval of REACH India.
- h. Has the grantee been submitting proper financial reports and on time.
- i. Conditions associated with Equipment:
 - Has the equipment been procured in accordance with the provisions of the agreement
 - Is the equipment associated with the need of the project
 - Has any Depreciation been charged to REACH India.
 - Has any equipment been booked as expense?
 - Has any equipment been disposed without the approval of REACH.
 - Is a proper inventory indicating purchase and disposal being maintained?
 - Any other issues related to ownership and insurance.
- j. Are separate books of accounts being maintained which provide full disclosure in a transparent manner.
- k. Does an independent auditor conduct an Annual Audit?
- l. Has the grantee earned any interest on REACH Funds in excess of \$250 and has this been accounted for towards REACH.

Verification of other Financial Management Issues

1. Fixed Assets

- 1.1 Have all fixed assets been bought in the name of the Grantee Organisation
- 1.2 Whether these assets are being reflected in the REACH India Balance Sheet and the Consolidated Balance sheet.
- 1.3 Whether the rules of AIR specified in the agreement regarding purchase of assets are followed.
- 1.4 Is the cost of acquisition/ addition within the budgeted amount.
- 1.5 In case any assets have been disposed off during the year.
 - a) Was REACH India's approval sought
 - b) Was a reasonable and justified amount realised on the disposal
 - c) Have sale proceeds been shown as Funds received from REACH or have been deducted from gross expenses.
- 1.6 Has any depreciation been charged on assets bought out of REACH Funds.
- 1.7 Whether fixed assets purchased out of REACH funds are in good working condition and are properly maintained.
- 1.8 Has insurance of assets been taken wherever necessary.
- 1.9 Are the assets being used for the purpose of the project only.
- 1.10 Is an inventory of the assets being maintained.

2. Investments

- 2.1 Whether any fixed deposits were made out of REACH funds.
- 2.2 Does this practice affect the progress of the project for want of funds.
- 2.3 Does this practice contribute to diverted funds for income generation and consequently results in under achievement of primary goals.
- 2.4 Are there any investments which are of speculative nature.
- 2.5 Are investments/ FDRs, available for physical verification.
- 2.6 Whether all investments are in the name of the grantee organisation
- 2.7 Whether any investment(s) has been pledged for securing personal loans or issuing guarantees.

3. Incomes

- 3.1 Whether any interest income beyond \$250 on REACH funds has been shown as funds received from REACH in the Income and Expenditure statement.
- 3.2 Have the proceeds from any sale of assets been properly reflected
- 3.3 Is the organisation taking any contribution or charging any fee from the beneficiaries and whether this is being reported to the donors.
- 3.4 Are incomes from any other Revenue Generation Activity such as Consultancies / fee / etc. being accounted for properly to REACH India

4. Bank

- 4.1 Whether a list of authorised signatories is available
- 4.2 Whether any discrepancy was found while vouching.
- 4.3 Whether Balance Confirmation certificates were obtained from the banks
- 4.4 Whether Bank Reconciliation statement is prepared.
- 4.5 Whether any bearer cheques were issued beyond Rs. 10,000.-
- 4.7 Whether FCRA funds are received in a designated bank account and these funds are not mixed with domestic funds.
- 4.8 Whether any loan has been taken from the bank(s). If yes then
(i) amount of loan (ii) security offered (iii) purpose of loan

5. Cash

- 5.1 Whether any material discrepancy was noted while vouching
- 5.2 Are cash balances in excess of normal requirements or norms
- 5.3 Are periodic physical cash verifications conducted by the authorised officials
- 5.4 Whether any cash payments in excess of Rs. 20,000.- were made
- 5.5 Whether cash balance was physically verified and arithmetical accuracy of books checked with the petty cash report
- 5.6 Is the cashier separate from Accountant and the bank-authorised signatory
- 5.7 Has the organisation set any formal limit for Cash payment.

6. Loans & Advances

- 6.1 Whether advances to sub grantees or consultants are supported by relevant clauses in their agreements.
- 6.2 Are advances for project activities shown as advances or expenses
- 6.3 Are there any advances to staff and are they within reasonable limits
- 6.4 Whether any advances are made to third parties/vendors and are valid contracts available.
- 6.5 Whether any advances are long outstanding (more than 6 months)
- 6.6 Is there a procedure for settlement/review of advances and their classification

- 6.7 Are there any advances from REACH Funds which have been written off.
- 6.8 Does the scrutiny of advances reveal old outstanding or other balances which in the opinion of the Grantee, are not recoverable.
- 6.9 Whether funds from REACH have been advanced / utilised for project activities funded by other donors.

7. REACH India Capital Account (Sources of Funds)

- 7.1 Whether Reach India grants, the value of which is shown in the Balance Sheet of the grantee, is reconciled with Reach India.
- 7.2 Whether 'surplus' arrived at in the Income and expenditure A/c is shown as liability towards Reach India
- 7.3 Whether interest income and other proceeds (on disposal/ lease etc.) are shown as part of Reach grant.

8. Capital Expenditure

- 8.1 Whether such expenditure is budgeted under the agreement with Reach and was approved in the action plan.
- 8.2 Whether authorised officials have approved such expenditure
- 8.3 Whether all documents and records (Bills/Quotations) relevant to such expenditure are properly maintained and stored.
- 8.4 Whether any expense of capital nature is treated as revenue item.
- 8.5 Whether the prescribed purchase procedure is followed before incurring such expenditure.

9. Internal Control System

- 9.1 Are the functions Cashier, Storekeeper, Accountant, Purchasing person etc. separated ?
- 9.2 Are the personnel for authorisation of payments / authorisation of expenses and bank signatories separate.
- 9.3 Whether any personal expenses of NGO officer(s)/ management/ trustees have been included as revenue expenditure
- 9.4 Whether any meetings on Financial matters were held ? Check the Minutes of such meetings and decisions taken.
- 9.5 Does a general scrutiny of the books of accounts indicate whether they have been properly maintained.
- 9.6 Whether any independent Auditor is auditing the accounts of the Grantee Annually.
- 9.7 Are there any comments of the auditors which concern the project financed by Reach India.
- 9.8 Are the Response / Management comments to previous audit reports available.
- 9.9 Whether the following subsidiary books / records are being maintained :
 - Salary / Time Sheets / Attendance / Overtime work record.
 - Vehicle log Book
 - Assets Register
 - List of Loans and Advances
 - List of Investments
 - Stocks / Inventories
 - Petty Cash report
 - List of sub contracts and agreements
 - Reconciliation Statements such as
 - Bank Reconciliation Statement
 - Reconciliation between HO and Field Units

- Reconciliation with the books of the donor

10. General tests

- 10.1 Whether a certificate of proper utilisation of Reach India funds is furnished by the Auditors.
- 10.2 Whether the basis of accounting is cash, mercantile or mixed. Indicate whether there is any change from the method of accounting employed in the immediately preceding previous year.
- 10.3 Whether all expenditures are in accordance with the budget/ agreement.
- 10.4 Whether funds have been utilised appropriately and in line with the objectives of the project.
- 10.5 Whether there is any major variance in the budgeted and actual expenditure incurred by the Grantee
- 10.6 Whether there were any illegal/irregular/improper expenses incurred or whether any failure or omission led to loss / wastage /or misapplication / misappropriation of funds.
- 10.7 Assessment of Financial / Accounting System :
 - Book Keeping (Vouchers and Accounting Statements)
 - Quarterly reports (Timely prepared, Approved, Accurate, Complete)
 - Under / Over spending w.r.t. Budget
 - Realistic Forecast for cash request and basis for pipeline planning
 - Budget Preparation and procedure
 - Budget Comparison Statement
- 10.8 Are common expenses such as Vehicle maintenance / Rent / Salaries amongst being allocated amongst all donors on a logical basis.
- 10.9 Are any non cash expenses such as Depreciation, Rent for own premises, patents etc. charged to REACH
- 10.10 Are there any funds such as Revolving Funds / Corpus Funds / Other Specific or General Funds being created out of Reach India funds.
- 10.11 Are contracts such as consultancy Contracts, Maintenance Contracts, Other Contracts (Rent / Lease / Hire purchase agreements) etc. signed and available for verification.
- 10.12 Are consultancy contracts / Sub grant agreements financed out of REACH India funds in accordance with the terms specified and subsequently approved by Reach India.

11. Legal Matters

- 11.1 Whether the NGO is approved under FCRA.
- 11.2 Whether Reach India funds have been routed through the designated FCRA Account.
- 11.3 Are the Income Tax returns being filed on time
- 11.4 Are the annual Foreign Contribution returns being filed regularly.
- 11.5 Where the NGO has sought Income Tax exemption.
- 11.6 Is the NGO covered under the EPF or ESI acts and are the provisions being followed.
- 11.7 Are the provisions of TDS being applied.
- 11.8 Whether the NGO has renewed its certificate under section 80G of the Income-Tax Act.

12 Specifically for co-funded projects

- 12.1 What is the ratio of funding contributions amongst different donors
- 12.2 Are the expenses / incomes being allocated proportionately amongst donors
- 12.3 Is the ownership of assets clear and justified
- 12.4 Are there any contributions from communities

- 12.5 Are there any contributions in kind from any source. Are these being reflected appropriately.
- 12.6 Do financial statements such as Expense reports / Cash Requests and Budget comparison statements reflect the cost share arrangement clearly.

BASIC DOCUMENTATION FOR A PRE FUNDING APPRAISAL (BEFORE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT)

- 1 Organisational Profile
 - a. Vision / Mission / Objectives
 - b. Nature of Interventions / Focus Areas
 - c. Type of Beneficiaries and Nos.
 - d. Geographical coverage
 - e. Names of Donors and Nos.
 - f. Total Financial Turnover / Outlay
 - g. No. of ongoing programs and their financial volume
- 2 Organogram of the organization with Names and Designations of the personnel in the Governing Body.
- 3 Documents related to the Registration of the NGO as a Society/Trust/Non Profit Company etc..
- 4 Copy of the bye laws of the organization – Memorandum and Articles of Association
- 5 Copy of the FCRA Registration and Income Tax Registration
- 6 Consolidated Financial Statements and Audit reports for the last three years.
- 7 Copies of the FC3 Returns, IT Returns and ROC returns (in case of a company) for the last three years.
- 8 List of affiliations to other networks and alliances
- 9 Reports of any past internal / external evaluations (if any) indicating the SWOT of the Organisation and its achievements.
- 10 List of field units being run by the organization along with information on the degree of centralization / decentralization w.r.t. financial and operational issues.
- 11 Any policy / rules and regulations / manuals related to Financial Management an internal control / HR / Administration etc. etc.