

November 2, 2012

An Appeal, and an opportunity

During our existence of less than a year and a half, the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD) has already been able to develop a number of projects in different parts of the country. All of these projects focus on holistic development in economically deprived rural areas, through sustainable development of heritage assets.

Education is, of course, the key to any program of meaningful sustainable development. Government facilities are, for the most part, inadequate and unsatisfactory in rural areas. Development of alternative educational facilities is thus a necessary component of all our projects, if there is to be meaningful long-term benefit to the community. We therefore plan to establish primary schools in all project areas, incorporating several basic concepts. These include:

- Training of local residents, especially young women, to serve as faculty, thus insuring stability and sensitivity to local concerns, as well as providing employment;
- Development of curricula that include sensitivity to cultural and heritage concerns, and a focus on the nurturing of creativity, as well as successful mastery of standard curricula ;
- Provision of health, nutrition, and other needs that enable young minds and bodies to flourish, so that they will face later challenges with confidence and self-belief.

The first such project is just beginning in the village of Hariharpur, Azamgarh District, U.P. This is a village with a rich and vibrant music tradition, but with a severe lack of educational and medical facilities, civic infrastructure, and opportunity. The "Chacha Nehru" primary school will shortly open. Rather than waiting until we had sufficient resources to construct the school building, we are beginning in temporary quarters of two village houses, one donated by village residents and one being taken on rent.

For training of faculty and curriculum development, we have entered into partnership with two schools, one based in Varanasi and one in Azamgarh. Six young women from the village are undergoing a 4-month training program in these schools, to equip them with the skills necessary for basic primary teaching of the youngest children. The community has responded with tremendous enthusiasm, and we have been overwhelmed by the eagerness of applicants for teaching training, as well as for attendance as students.

The first batch of students will join in February 2013. They will be provided with uniforms, a mid-day meal, and a stimulating educational environment. The cost will come to approximately Rs.3000/- or US\$100 per year per child. **The salient features of the proposed school are given in Annexure A.**

We would be most grateful if you and your friends would be willing to sponsor one or more children. We will send pictures and details of each child to his or her sponsor, and keep you

informed of progress. For this relatively small amount of money, you will enable us to bring sunshine and hope for the future into the lives of children who at present live with little hope for the future. We have received full FCRA clearance from the Government of India, so cheque donations in foreign currency can be sent directly to us addressed to 'Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development' and sent to the address given below:

S.K. Misra
Chairman
Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development
C-56, Nizamuddin East (ground floor)
New Delhi 110 013, India

The payment can also be made through Bank transfer the details are given below:-

Name of the beneficiary	:	Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development
Name of the Bank	:	State Bank of India
Address of the Bank	:	Nizamuddin West, New Delhi 110 013, India
Account Number	:	319 871 999 87
SWIFT Code	:	SBI NIN BB 382

Sincerely,
S.K. Misra
Chairman

ANNEXURE A

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED SCHOOLS

- The school will impart free education to all students. It will also provide uniforms, books, transport facility etc. and midday meals without any charge;
- The schools will be co-educational;
- The schools will have Pre-primary and Primary classes;
- The medium of instruction will be English;
- The schools will cater to students living within 10 kms. radius;
- The design of the building will be in keeping with the local rural architecture and natural surroundings. It will be ensured that the complex is very green and eco- friendly. The building will be constructed with low cost materials, which are easily available at the site or nearby areas. There will be minimum use of concrete and lot of open space;
- The schools will follow CBSE Curriculum; with modifications as may be considered necessary;

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- The schools will aim at inculcating the right values in the students so that they grow up to become good human beings and responsible citizens;
 - The students will be made aware of their heritage and taught to respect and take pride in their heritage;
 - The students will be taught to appreciate nature and to learn about the local flora and fauna;
 - The students will be taught dignity of labour and made to participate in keeping the school complex clean and green;
 - The schools will promote social integration among students who will be taken from all the local castes and communities;
 - The students will be taught to shed off gender bias;
 - The students will be taught to think independently and given opportunities to develop their latent talents and skills;
 - The local community will be involved in the school activities and the running of the schools; The school buildings will function as a school in the morning, a vocational centre in the afternoon and an adult education centre in the evening;
 - Teachers for the school will be selected from the same village or nearby villages. They will be given appropriate training. Recruiting teachers locally will provide employment to local rural residents and also check absenteeism in schools. In case adequate number of teachers cannot be arranged from the concerned area, teachers will be recruited from other places but provided suitable residential accommodation in the village itself.