On the occasion of Celebrating Three Decades of Deepalaya
Deepalaya is in existence for three decades and celebrating. Why and what makes us celebrate.

If one looks at the vision of Deepalaya, it projects a long term perspective of a transformed ‘Society’. The mission identifies Deepalaya with vulnerable sections of Society and commits to work towards emancipation in partnership with all stakeholders.

Deepalaya was founded with the explicit purpose of serving the deprived / under privileged, oppressed, exploited humanity with focus on children and education. Gaining experience by implementing Programs, Deepalaya has reiterated its mandate as a pro-poor, secular and non-political organization.

In Deepalaya change is a “Constant” factor. It started with the slogan “Lighted to Enlighten”, which helped us to concentrate on education, leading people from darkness towards light or enlightenment. At a second stage, the organization took cognizance of the complicated socio-economic status of the hardcore clients and addressed their issues through Integrated Community Development and used the term “Enable the child look beyond slums”. This change addressed the future of the children, their families and communities and integrated their needs, aspirations and achievements. At the present, the by-line is “Enabling Self-Reliance”, a movement to nurture, through constant change of the suffering, neglected, exploited humanity by providing them with self-worth and self-confidence to capture their future. The continuum, Lighted to Enlighten, Enable the child look beyond slums, Enabling Self-Reliance, has deep connections with the vision and mission.

Hence, Deepalaya’s strategic approach to emancipation of poor emphasized on “Fundamental Rights”. It worked towards “Change”, change in socio-economic disparity, improvement in intellectual capacitation, bringing about equilibrium in civil society.

Deepalaya management depicts a pro-poor, rights based approach. It mandates involvement of beneficiaries to make them stakeholders and practice decentralized control.

Deepalaya believes that activities and programs undertaken should lead to results, which
in turn should impact the life of people who are participating. The beneficiary categories of Deepalaya are, children of the Poor, children who are Disabled, Working children, Runaways, Girl children who are denied their opportunities, women who are Marginalized, youth who are not able to pursue higher education, etc., their families and communities, creating “WHOLE” societies.

Deepalaya as it is celebrating three decades of its functioning, decided to document the impact it has made in the lives of people who are served by Deepalaya.

This document attempts to put forth case stories of those who have changed their lives, even when they were disadvantaged, physically, mentally, economically, socially, culturally and educationally. The case stories are a sample of large numbers who benefited out of Deepalaya intervention and made them independent, self-reliant and sustainable, contributing to a ‘Nation Building’ process. We anticipate the document “Impacting Lives” will offer insights into Deepalaya approach, strategy, philosophy, values, ethics, systems, controls, programs, activities, achievements and the impact thereof on the poor.

Rtn. T.K. MATHEW
Secretary & Chief Executive

An Overview of Deepalaya At Three Decades

Deepalaya (meaning ‘the abode of light’) is an India-based non-profit organization that supports the overall development of poor children, their families and communities in rural and urban areas with special focus on children in difficult circumstances. Deepalaya, through sustained national and international efforts, provides basic education and amenities; and imparts life skills, training and capacity building opportunities.

Social conditions and economic hardships force tens of thousands of children in Delhi and surrounding areas out of school for years altogether. The lack of education, sanitation and basic health and hygiene facilities push them, their families and communities, deeper into a life of unequal opportunities and misery.

For over three decades Deepalaya has been striving to provide those less fortunate with a sense of physical and emotional security, instilling in them a sense of self-belief and pride – all the while keeping their sense of independence intact. ‘Every child deserves a chance’ is what we believe in and what we work towards. Our area of work covers the urban slums of Delhi and stretches to the neighbouring states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The History Sheet

Deepalaya Gram, Gusbethi

Founder Members

Seven like minded individuals who shared a similar perception about service to society, joined hands to form a group, with the idea of serving the poor through education. They pooled in financial resources out of their personal contribution, to fund the first Deepalaya School set up on 16th July 1979 in Chittaranjan Park in South Delhi. The seven people who were instrumental in the establishment of Deepalaya include:

1. Mrs. Grace Thomas
2. Mr. C. M. Mathai
3. Mr. Punnoose Thomas
4. Mr. T.K. Mathew
5. Mr. Y. Chackochan
6. Mr. T.M. Abraham
7. Mr. P.J. Thomas

Rtn. T.K. MATHEW
Secretary & Chief Executive
**History**

The first school, in a rented house in Chittaranjan Park in South Delhi had on day one five students and a budget of Rs. 17,500. A rickshaw-puller, an ayah and two teachers were the initial staff of the school. Initially the school charged Rs. 30/- as fees to cover only operational costs. The management soon decided to enroll only poor children as it would help them reach out better. “Quality education at affordable costs”

**Vision**

To build a society based on legitimate rights, equity, justice, honesty, social sensitivity and a culture of service in which all people are self-reliant.

**Mission**

Work with the economically and socially deprived, the physically and mentally challenged – starting with children, so that they become educated, skilled and aware

Enable them to be self-reliant and enjoy a healthy, dignified and sustainable life

And in order to accomplish that, act as a resource to and collaborate with other agencies – governmental and non-governmental, as well as suitably intervene in policy formulation.

**Leadership and Governance**

Deepalaya has two types of board members – Executive Committee comprising of eight members and Annual General Body of thirteen members. The Executive Body members are involved in policy planning and decision-making processes. The term of the Executive Committee is fixed and elections take place every three years. Board Members contribute to framing policies for all areas of activities of the society including resource mobilization. The resource mobilization budget and plan, and other key decisions are decided and finalized by the senior management staff under the direct guidance of the Chief Executive. The senior management team takes all key decisions subject to the ratification by the Chief Executive. In arriving at decisions on broad strategic issues, leadership frequently solicit views of Deepalaya’s stakeholders.

**Organizational Structure**

The organizational structure encourages the different parts of Deepalaya to function more as autonomous units, than interdependent parts of the same organization.

**Programmes**

Deepalaya started with education for the underprivileged expanding to other areas affecting them. Education is at the heart of our core programs. It is the oldest and largest of Deepalaya’s programs and it continues to be the main thrust area of our interventions. Education is the cornerstone of a nation’s progress and an important indicator of a developed economy. It is a tool that empowers the marginalized to make informed choices, resist oppression, claim their rights and expand their opportunities to realise their full potential. A nation needs educated, healthy children to make the best use of opportunities that are offered through a globalised economy, in the new millennium. To respond to the challenges of an effective education program we initiated other activities and developed them into full-fledged programs.

- To bring education to lodges of out of school children we started Education Programmes
- To enhance attendance of our school children we started the Community Health Program
- To increase enrolment of girls in our school and empower women we started the Gender Equity Program
- To facilitate mainstreaming of differently abled children we started the Differently Abled Program
To provide education to homeless children, we started the Institutional Care program.

To broaden the outreach of our programs, we started training and capacity building of NGOs.

To use our experience based knowledge and influence public policy, we participate in Advocacy and Networking with other NGOs.

**Implementation Strategy**

Integrated Community Development is part of our long-term strategy to uplift the entire community through three levels, i.e., the child, the family, and the community with extra emphasis on rights of the child, specially girl child, street child and the differently abled child. The activities that are undertaken for implementing our strategy include:

- Micro-planning with Government Schools/partnership with Government
- Human Resource interventions directed to growth of personnel through proper planning and training
- Formation of Self Help Groups within the community to promote long-term sustainability with special emphasis on Gender empowerment
- Creating Gender sensitivity amongst the staff to enable the same in the communities
- Reproductive health, HIV/AIDS awareness
- Identification and training of key personnel in the area of disability, Linking of the key persons with professional centers
- Networking/Training/Linkage with other NGOs and Government for Capacity building and Advocacy

**Infrastructural Resources - Our Infrastructural Resources Include**

- Deepalaya School and Vocational Training Centre, Kalkaji
- Deepalaya School, Sanjay Colony
- Deepalaya School, Gole Kuan
- Human Resource Centre, Janak Puri
- Deepalaya School, Gusbethi
- Two transit homes for boys and girls in Gusbethi
- Vocational Training Institute, Gusbethi

**We Raise Funds Through**

- Donation Boxes
- Greeting Cards
- Individual Donations
- Direct Mailing
- Pay Roll giving
- Corporate Partnership
- Project Marketing

**Milestones and Achievements**

- Reached out, educated and mainstreamed over 40,000 children – Girl children (percentage 69%), street and working children, differently abled
- Largest operational NGO in Delhi with 321 staff in 11 locations
- Raises 43% of resources locally and growing towards self-reliance
- Infra-structure (10 buildings) covering 1,20,000 sq. ft. of floor area

**Awards and Recognitions**

- Deepalaya has been an outstanding NGO winning many awards over the years. The major ones are:
  - Regional Awardee of INDIAN NGO AWARD for the medium category in North India by The Resource Alliance and The Nand and Jeet Khemka Foundation for transparency, accountability and credibility - 2007
  - Award from World Forum 2006
  - Cancer Foundation Award for Outstanding Contribution – 2006
  - Mumbai Marathon Award for the Highest Pledge Raiser – 2005

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Deepalaya's Global Presence

Deepalaya’s global presence has been growing steadily since the year 2000. Committed donors based overseas act as Deepalaya ambassadors and help the organisation raise funds from other countries such as UK, US and Germany. Our collaboration with UK came about in 1999 through Mr. Chris Tuppen, of British Telecom (BT) who along with his wife raised 4000 Sterling Pounds for Deepalaya. A few friends of Deepalaya, including the Tuppens, have registered themselves at Deepalaya Friends in UK under a Trust, approved by the UK Charity Commissioner.

In the year 2000 Deepalaya set out to establish Deepalaya Foundation in Houston, Texas. Our sponsor base in the USA has been growing steadily. Deepalaya Foundation USA has enabled us to form partnerships with several corporations, e.g. Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard (HP).

A group of German tourists on a trip to India in 1992 brought some gifts with them to be given to slum children through a credible NGO. They chose Deepalaya and visited our projects. Convinced about its sincerity and commitment they supported Deepalaya by transferring financial resources through an account in Germany. Later the idea got extended through the setting up of a registered NGO ‘Foerderverein Deepalaya Niederrhein e.V.’ in Germany.

Thanks to the philanthropic efforts of the generous hearted, Deepalaya continues to broaden its international presence.

Merit cum Means Loan Scholarship

A revolving corpus fund is instituted to provide loan scholarships to support meritorious children wanting to enroll in professional courses. The loan is repayable with minimal interest over a fixed period of time after a student obtains a job.

Deepalaya Firsts

- The first NGO run school is Deepalaya School, Kalkaji Extension which was set up for the benefit of children of the slums. The school is three storied with a sprawling playground and laboratories.

- Deepalaya was the first NGO to establish its presence in the electronic media. Around 1990 Deepalaya produced a film with the help of some of its media contacts. This film went on to win awards and was aired by leading electronic channels like Star TV and Zee TV.

At the Dubai Shopping Festival in 2002 Deepalaya was the first NGO to obtain a stall free of cost to market itself. In a month we were able to raise a hundred child sponsorships.

A unique playground at Deepalaya School Kalkaji Extension designed by International artists was inaugurated by Swiss Ambassador Dr. Walter Gygier in 2002.

Deepalaya had the distinction of leading a group of 10 NGO leaders from Delhi to USA and hosting 13 NGO leaders in India under an exchange programme funded by Department of State, USA.

Sixty children from Deepalaya schools were financed by the Dutch Foundation to visit Holland and give cultural presentations under an exchange programme. This idea came up in discussion between the Foundation for Christian Education, Holland with Deepalaya. Deepalaya was the first NGO to have sent slum children abroad like this.

The year 2007 was particularly significant, as it was a proud and honourable moment for Deepalaya when Her Royal Highness, the Queen of Netherlands visited Deepalaya School, Kalkaji Extension.

Juniper Networks Foundation Fund (JNFF), the charity arm of Juniper Networks Inc. gave its first international donation to Deepalaya.

Oriflame India, the wholly owned subsidiary of the Swedish Direct Selling Cosmetic Company Oriflame launched its mega Charity initiative “The Oriflame Girl Child” in 2006. Under this project, Oriflame has been sponsoring the education of 1000 girls for a period of three years under the aegis of Deepalaya.
DEEPALAYA - Impacting Lives

ANIL RANA - Determined To Succeed

Anil was born into a family that was struggling to make both ends meet. His father is a pattern master at a garment shop earning a meager income, while his mother is a homemaker. He is the youngest child and the most privileged in his family. He began his education at Deepalaya when he was enrolled into LKG.

Deepalaya’s basic philosophy is that a child’s development should be attempted holistically. Thus equal stress is placed on academic excellence and extra-curricular activities. Anil is grateful to this approach of Deepalaya. Deepalaya has been actively encouraging him in his artistic ventures. This enabled him to pick up the silver medal in the painting competition organized by the NGO, Search Year. Anil’s prize winning painting was among those presented in the International Exhibition on Creative Arts by children held in Japan in 2000.

Though Anil was average in his studies, he displayed leadership qualities and his co-students looked on him as a role model. Anil’s brother and sister did their schooling at Deepalaya. While the former is working in an export house, the latter is married and a housewife. Of the siblings it was Anil who went on to complete his graduation. After working with Air France for a year, Anil is currently working for Amex at Gurgaon.

Anil has shown that with grit and determination and a little support one can rise in life.

“... and miles to go before I sleep.”

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APARNA - Transforming Lives

A bright, spirited student of Deepalaya - Aparna values and cherishes the wonderful years of her life spent at school. After her years of schooling, she undertook the Panch Karma Therapist course from the Moodboard Hospital for three and a half years and worked there for a year.

She is presently working as a Dronacharya Vr在外面 at Radiosor, at Greater Kailash Part I earning a salary of Rs.7000/-, relieving people of aches, pains and bodily ailments. She see Lata Mangeshkar as her role model, saying that she would love to sing as melodiously as Lataji. She is pursuing music as a hobby too. Aparna has done well despite her difficult background. Her father is employed in an export house, joining clothes and her mother is a housewife. She is now married and lives happily with her husband and son who is five years old. It is because of her great love for Deepalaya and all that it offered her that she is desirous that her son too should study where she did.

She is grateful to her sponsor, Leu Pevinyves, from whose support she has benefitted immensely. She remembers having received number of gifts and affectionate letters from her sponsor. She speaks of an immense satisfaction that she derives from her job which entails helping people through Ayurveda. She attributes her success in life to Deepalaya which afforded numerous opportunities to develop her latent talents. She is especially grateful for the freedom she had that helped her to evolve gradually. Aparna classifies the work that Deepalaya is involved as “pure service to the nation”.

“You are what your deep driving desire is. As your deep driving desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed.”

ANAND PRAKASH - Energy And Persistence Conquer All Things

Anand Prakash Diwakar is not just another average eighteen year old. Along with being a brilliant student, he is actively involved in various extracurricular activities. He is currently in the twelfth grade, and is also pursuing his graduation alongside. He is doing his Bachelor’s in Music, a five-year degree course from the prestigious Gandharva Maharashtriyayala.

Anand’s father works as tailor in an export factory. A good public school education for his son was a cherished dream. But the necessary finances was the constraint. Anand joined Deepalaya in Class V. “My father was not keen to admit me in a Government School because he was not happy with the education system there. Even though the School is not recognized we were confident that at Deepalaya I would learn well.” And today the family is indeed happy that they made a right decision.

Anand Prakash’s day starts as early as four thirty in the morning with an hour of riaz after which he leaves for school. Anand Prakash has been actively involved in a number of school activities and is the President of the Interact Club this year. Further, he was the House Captain for two years. Anand Prakash still remembers his early days at Deepalaya. He found the going very difficult because he had no friends and was extremely shy. Today he is happy that he is popular among the students. He also plays a variety of sports including football, basketball, badminton and cricket. Other than sports, Anand Prakash has won prizes in elocution writing and composition and orations.

Anand Prakash is extremely grateful to the teachers at Deepalaya, for steering his life on the right path. He feels that but for them, he would not have gone through Gandharva Maharashtriyayala. He is very enthusiastic about learning new things and his approach towards education is very positive. “Being educated is very important today. Getting a job, depends on how well educated a particular candidate is and without the requisite qualifications, one will be taken seriously...” is what he has to say.

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“... and miles to go before I sleep.”
GEETA PAL - Moulding Lives

“But it's not just learning a thing that's important. It's learning what to do with what you learn and learning why you learn at all that matters.”

Geeta Pal, an ex-student of Deepalaya and now a teacher bears out this often repeated quote with panache. She joined the school way back in 1992 when Deepalaya started a pre-school in Transient Camp A-Block, Kalakaji with only a handful of students. She cleared her Class XII exams in 2003 and applied in Deepalaya for a job as a teacher in the same year, clearing the interview with flying colours.

She is presently pursuing her BSW from IGNOU and is in the third year. Filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude she says, “I am thankful to Deepalaya where I learnt the Art of Living. Deepalaya is my second home. The continual support and encouragement from teachers here has made me stand upright, my head held high- independent and self-reliant. I will never forget the words of my teacher who told me that I would have to be a good student to become a good teacher.”

She is presently teaching in the primary section at Deepalaya School, Kalkaji Extension. Her students are continually encouraged to voice their feelings openly without being hesitant or shy. They look up to her for guidance, love and attention. She is their mentor and role model. Realizing that it is a great responsibility that she has undertaken - carefully and purposefully to mould their life.

HARENDER – Reaching The Skies

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world” Gandhiji.

In search of better opportunities, Harender’s family migrated from Uttar Pradesh to Delhi. They settled down in a slum cluster at Gole Kuan, Tughlakabad. Harender’s father supported his entire family consisting of five children with his meager income earned by vending clothes.

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The continuous association with Deepalaya motivated Harender to chase his dream of becoming an engineer. To achieve this end, he completed the three years diploma course in Electronics and Communications at Pusa Polytechnic Institute. He is now working at Tata Consultancy Services, New Delhi drawing a salary of Rs.10,000/- per month. He gratefully acknowledges that Deepalaya is the strength behind all his accomplishments.

KIRAN PANDEY – Overcoming Obstacles

Kiran Pandey’s family had to come to grips with the sudden adversity that struck them. Her father, the only earning member of the family, fell seriously ill and was diagnosed with AIDS. After getting over the emotional trauma, the womanfolk struggled to make a living. They started earning a meager income by cutting cloth for export houses in their neighbourhood. The family had to support the grandmother, the mother, Kiran and her two sisters. The difficult financial circumstances forced the family to stop sending Kiran to school.

At this juncture, Deepalaya intervened and with its support Kiran rejoined School. An active and bright student, Kiran recognizes the crucial intervention of Deepalaya which enabled her to successfully complete the X through NIOS in 2008.

The hard work, dedication and perseverance of Kiran were the factors that enabled her to complete her schooling. Always among the top 3 in class, Kiran had an all round personality. She was active in the school Netball team and was a member of the Interact Club of Deepalaya, too.

Following a career counseling session, Kiran has joined the first year of the Ancillary Nursing and Midwifery Course at SOS Nursing School, Faridabad. Her teachers see the potential in her and are sure that Kiran will make a wonderful career in her life. On her part, Kiran acknowledges the timely intervention of Deepalaya at a trying time in her life. That, she feels, has made all the difference and has given her hope to look forward to a bright future.

KOMAL – A Proud Recipient Of The President’s Award

Komal, belongs to a family of seven children. Her father Mr. Girdhari Lal is a manual worker and she was admitted in Deepalaya School in LKG. Komal is thankful to Deepalaya...
Amid all the whirling, contentions and confusion produced in peoples minds on the feasibility of educating a girl child, Komal has yet again proved the debate as redundant. Komal is presently studying in class XI in a Government Senior Secondary School in Kalkaji and proposing to do a course in mass-communication and become a news reporter though she wants to explore other career options too. Her younger sister is now studying in Deepalaya. Considering Komal’s success story it is evident that Deepalaya has stood the test of time, producing future leaders and an enlightened new generation which is ready to take on the new brave world.

MAMTA SHANKAR – Unshaken And Undeterred

“The most essential factor is persistence— the determination never to allow your energy or enthusiasm be dampened by the discouragement that must inevitably come” – ‘James whit comb Rilay’.

Mamta Shankar’s persistence to overcome the calamity that struck her family has saved her from sinking into great depths of disillusionment with the guidance of Deepalaya.

Mamta’s family, natives of West Bengal, migrated to Delhi eight yeas ago in search of a secure future. Her father worked as a labourer, her mother was a housewife and she had a brother. Mamta was shattered when her parents met with an accident and both their legs had to be amputated. The grandmother kept the family going despite the calamity that befell them. The father lost his job and the family’s financial condition deteriorated further.

Her fate took a new turn when she joined Deepalaya School in class lll. Currently, Mamta is studying in class Vll today. Mamta’s academic performance, has been excellent throughout. She has always been a topper in her class. She is good at drawing, painting and singing and went on to win the Parkash Devi Kochar Memorial Award in 2005-06 for her all round performance. MAMTA RATHODE – An All Rounder

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LATA SRIVASTAVA – Dreams Fulfilled

“‘A teacher affects eternity; no one can tell where his influence stops’ said Henry Adam.
Lata completely agree with her and is appreciative of the guidance given by Deepalaya’s teachers and believes that it did go a long way into shaping who she is today.

Lata’s father, a private company employee and her mother who was earlier a teacher at Deepalaya Non-formal education classes and now a house wife were particular that their three daughters be well educated. The community that Lata comes from does not place importance on girls’ education, but with the support of Deepalaya, they have been able to move towards their goal.

Lata, an Arts graduate from Delhi University and a three year diploma holder in special education (for the welfare of mentally retarded) credits her interest in the field of special education to Deepalaya. Pursuing a formal training in this field was a challenge because of high costs involved. Deepalaya stretched forward its ever willing hand in the form of Smt. Laj Rani who sponsored her entire course. This support helped Lata to fulfill her dreams of higher education. Now, she works as a special educator in a private school at South Delhi, earning a monthly salary of Rs 3000/-. She thanks Deepalaya and the sponsor for their timely help.

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MAMTA RATHODE – An All Rounder

“‘Our lives are not determined by what happens or what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life.”

Born in a poverty stricken family, Mamta Rathode had never imagined that she would achieve such high laurels in her life if Deepalaya had not provided her the opportunity to study in their school.

Mamta belongs to a poor family. Her father, a mason, earns around Rs 3000 a month. Her mother is a home maker. Of her five sisters, three are married and she has a brother. Mamta joined Deepalaya School, Sanjay Colony at the tender age of 4 years. Mamta has always been performing very well in academics and is now in Class IX. What stands out in Mamta’s case is that she excels in all the fields she takes part in. Thus she has picked numerous prizes and awards. To name some, she won the Mr. P. Thomas Memorial Award for showing exemplary all round performance in Class V. In 2000 she got a certificate of Honor in the All India Child Art Exhibition. In 2001, she picked up the third prize in the painting competition conducted by Nehru Bal Samiti. In 2003, she bagged the first prize in an Essay Competition organized by Australian High Commission. In 2006 she won the ICICI Prudential Family Insurance Policy. Mamta is adept at dancing also and has participated in a number of competitions. Clearly Mamta will do well in future.

The positive attitude instilled by Deepalaya enabled her to polish her talents and to become an all rounder. A flower with the beauty and fragrance.

Mamta and her parents are thankful to Deepalaya for grooming her and bringing her talents to the fore. They feel that it was the discipline and confidence instilled by Deepalaya that went a long way in helping Mamta become what she is today. May many more Mamta’s blossom and bring credit to Deepalaya!

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Lata completely agree with her and is appreciative of the guidance given by Deepalaya’s teachers and believes that it did go a long way into shaping who she is today.

Lata’s father, a private company employee and her mother who was earlier a teacher at Deepalaya Non-formal education classes and now a house wife were particular that their three daughters be well educated. The community that Lata comes from does not place importance on girls’ education, but with the support of Deepalaya, they have been able to move towards their goal.

Lata, an Arts graduate from Delhi University and a three year diploma holder in special education (for the welfare of mentally retarded) credits her interest in the field of special education to Deepalaya. Pursuing a formal training in this field was a challenge because of high costs involved. Deepalaya stretched forward its ever willing hand in the form of Smt. Laj Rani who sponsored her entire course. This support helped Lata to fulfill her dreams of higher education. Now, she works as a special educator in a private school at South Delhi, earning a monthly salary of Rs 3000/-. She thanks Deepalaya and the sponsor for their timely help.

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Rediscovering the joys of learning that had been discontinued, he is determined to become a star himself, and reach the Zenith of his career.

The past cannot be changed, but he knows that the future is still in his power. Deepalaya has taught him that.

As we tread this earth among the common round and tasks, there are a handful of men who suffer not so much for personal benefits but for the sake of those who struggle to come up in life like he himself did.

Though he managed to get a job with the Indian Railways, he was not satisfied as the travail of his soul was to reach out to the people who struggle to come up in life like he himself did.

"My goal is to live, not just for myself Nor for riches, nor even for fame But to serve, at any cost, by any means"

That was when he came in contact with Deepalaya. His soul became inacentent with Deepalaya and this paved a way for him to serve the society. He looks back to the empty ground at V. P. Singh colony where he started a small school. Every morning the place had to be cleaned up of the animal excreta so that the children could spread their shoes and sit down to study. Tripathy remembers gratefully the vital role played by Deepalaya in making his dream come true. The open area that served as a school then for a handful of students, became a sheltered shed and now an imposing building, all because of Deepalaya which has stood by him as a pillar of strength.

For the past 10 years Mr. Tripathy has been working as a Social Entrepreneur and earns around Rs 10000/- a month. He also shoulders responsibility as the President of ‘Adhar Shila’ - the SE Association in his colony and he is in charge of the Science and Entertainment Club and directs Self-Help Groups for women.

He motivated his wife too and now she is actively serving the society through Deepalaya. Unspeakable joy has filled Mr. Tripathy’s heart and he is ever grateful to Deepalaya for making his life more meaningful.

Within the circumstance of the frail frame of Parminder, lies a personality imbued with determination and zeal to rise above life. She lost her father at a tender age and her mother, an illiterate, could not support the three sons and two daughters. Despite these adverse circumstances, the family has stayed together. Parminder’s eldest brother, who has studied up to class X, is a property dealer with an insufficient income.

Though he managed to get a job with the Indian Railways, he was not satisfied as the travail of his soul was to reach out to the people who struggle to come up in life like he himself did.

“Deprivation doesn’t hold back the determined.” Zahid, a 20 year old young man has got what it takes to emerge victorious.

His family hails from Banaras, where his grandfather had been a weaver. His father moved to Delhi looking for better prospects. He started making a living by putting starch on clothes (Charak). Zahid is the youngest of seven siblings. His 2 sisters and a brother are married and the rest live with their parents. Hasim, one of his brothers studied at Deepalaya too, and is today the supervisor of Café Coffee Day at G.K II.

Zahid had studied only upto the eighth standard from Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel School (Neelapada). Not finding studies his cup of tea, but with his innate talents of good visualization, composition and imagination he looked for some training which would be in consonance with these. Deepalaya’s Vocational Training Centre provided a one-year course in Photography which seemed like an interesting one to pursue. Zahid completed this course successfully and started working as a freelance photographer. He would shoot and develop pictures himself. He was so good that he has been the official photographer at Deepalaya School Kalakaji Extension for the past two years.

Though he managed to get a job with the Indian Railways, he was not satisfied as the travail of his soul was to reach out to the people who struggle to come up in life like he himself did.

“My goal is to live, not just for myself Nor for riches, nor even for fame But to serve, at any cost, by any means”
Parminder, a first born child, completed classes 10 from a local school and was in dire need of financial assistance to continue her studies. Her parents were unable to afford fees for her higher education. Her second brother is employed as a cab driver and the third brother is working as a field executive at Oriental Bank of Commerce earning a salary of Rs. 6,000/- per month. Her sister too struggled hard and is pursuing Masters in Physiotherapy.

After completing school, Parminder joined Mata Sundari College (Non-collegiate) to pursue B.A (pass) course. With her classes being conducted during the holidays, she decided to join one year fashion designing and dress making course at Deepalaya Vocational Training Centre, Kalkaji Extension. Though she was not initially interested in fashion designing her mentor Ms. Mamta, was instrumental in kindling her interest and she completed the course successfully. Parminder is working as a merchandiser in an export house, Faiz Overseas earning a monthly salary of Rs. 12,000/-. She also runs a dress making business of her own.

On the impact of Deepalaya in her life, she has this to say; “Deepalaya makes children’s future bright and safe. I realized this when I completed the course. Earlier I had no way of pursuing any course as we were financially weak. I came to know about Deepalaya from one of my friends and joined the fashion designing course. And that brought about a transformation in my life. The staff there always guided me and I am now working in a good organization, earning good salary. I have no words to express my gratitude. I am who I am, only because of Deepalaya.”

Rajesh, a video editor at Live Media, fondly remembers the role of Deepalaya in his life. Rajesh rose from a very humble beginning. He belongs to a family that had migrated from Bihar. His father was a gardener and his mother was a house wife. He had an elder brother and a younger sister. But it was the schooling experience at Deepalaya which changed his life drastically. He got numerous opportunities to interact with people from various walks of life. He actively participated in the in-house and inter school competitions, extra curricular activities like drawing and painting, speeches, singing without even realizing it, he had learnt a lot.

The extremely supportive staff at Deepalaya School, Kalkaji Extension encouraged him and his self confidence sky rocketed. The most treasured moment of his life has been a meeting with the former president Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam, during a painting competition. A product of Delhi University, Rajesh currently earns Rs.12,000/- and aims to open a production house and try out all his numerous creative ideas.

Rakesh Kumar, now a mechanic in a workshop in Dwarka Sector XI, earns Rs. 2000/- per month. During his free time, he helps his father who is engaged with the Water Supply project at Dwarka, Sector IV. Deepalaya has greatly transformed his mindset and now he is a role model for his family, community and peers.

His heart overflows with thanks to Deepalaya and also to his sponsor parents Mr. M.L. Dewan for giving him a firm foundation in his life. Rakesh is filled with gratitude to Deepalaya and his sponsor and wishes to earn well and payback a little of the love that he received by himself sponsoring children at Deepalaya.

Rakesh Kumar – Passing On The Torch

Anything the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.

It was indeed a step of courage for Rakesh Kumar, a resident of Dwarka slums in South West Delhi to participate in Deepalaya’s Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) training program, a few years back. He was the breadwinner of his “extra-large” family which included his wife, aged parents, two brothers and seven sisters.

This program was an eye opener as he understood the significance of family planning. It affected him to the extent that he and his wife postponed the birth of their first child up to three years and the second child came after another two years. He shared this new insight with his own parents and they too were encouraged to attend similar training programmes. They even postponed the marriage plans of their older daughters, aged 18 and 16. Their eldest daughter got married at the age of 22.

Rakesh Kumar, now a mechanic in a workshop in Dwarka Sector XI, earns Rs. 2000/- per month. During his free time, he helps his father who is engaged with the Water Supply project at Dwarka, Sector IV.

Deepalaya has greatly transformed his mindset and now he is a role model for his family, community and peers.

Rasulla Begum – Striving Against All Odds

It’s not the victory you have won
It’s not the great wealth or fame
What really counts in life my son
Is how you have played the game

Rasulla Begum with her husband eked out a modest living as a factory hand was a proud mother of four sons until one fateful morning she noticed that her son Naushad was very slow and could not mix with other children. He was admitted into the nearby Government School, but the situation worsened. The apathy and indifference of the teachers at school added to the problems. Soon Naushad reached a stage where he was petrified even at the sight of strangers. He even dropped out of school.

It was sheer chance that the family came in touch with the Deepalaya
Naushad was admitted into one of the projects for differently abled children. Patient handling got the boy responding in a better way. When he was still in school, Rasulla had emerged as a confident and empowered mother. She visited all the referral centres and became well-versed with the issue of disability. In fact, at community meetings where parents share their concerns about their children, Rasulla enthusiastically suggested workable solutions. She was also the President of the SHG formed in the locality.

Though Naushad couldn't continue his education, he is a very well-behaved child. Again Rasulla's efforts to start a petty shop for Naushad by taking a loan of Rs.3000/- from FOD, have paid off. Naushad is working in a factory of electronics items and earns Rs.2000/- per month. Her two other sons are working and one is studying in the school.

Though she still struggles, it is Deepalaya which has given her the sense of courage to face the challenges of life however harsh and biting they are. She continues to strive amidst perilous circumstances and trying situations.

Yes! Deepalaya has emboldened her to stand firm, unmoved.

Three Of Our Stars—Chandni, Shivani and Indira:

"The way to success is to pursue one great decisive aim with force and determination." Chandni, Shivani and Indira, whom Deepalaya had been nurturing, have shown how with hard work and determination, anyone can overcome the initial disadvantage of a deprived past and come up in life. Deepalaya had assisted these girls by offering them an opportunity to study a one and a half year course on Ancillary Nursing & Midwifery (ANM) at the SOS Nursing School, Faridabad. Their training was sponsored by the Devan Foundation Scholarship. Chandni got distinction with 82.5% marks in the first year's exam and topped the institute. Shivani got 78% and Indira 76%. The girls made us proud by getting selected in a campus interview in May 2008 to work at Arogyadham, a Multi-Specialty Hospital. While Indira has already joined the hospital, Chandni and Shivani will join after completing their XII exam in October 2008. Indira attended classes on Intensive Care Unit and Critical Care Unit course in the afternoons and has already been given shift duties. She earns Rs 3500/- per month. Her parents visited the hospital and having satisfied themselves about the safety of the place, consented to her joining duty.

It is a major jumpstart in life for these girls when we consider their background. Shivani's father Mr. Puran Chand Arora is an auto rickshaw driver and the mother a homemaker. Shivani feels grateful to Deepalaya and says that this is a major break in her life. The job presents an important opportunity to her to get out of the poverty trap. She wishes more girls from her community to step into a meaningful career like hers.

Indira's father is a peon and her mother is a domestic maid. Indira feels it was Deepalaya that enabled her gain confidence. She has picked up quite a number of medical skills and is happy that she is able to interact with so many people in a single day. She feels greatly satisfied that she is able to help people in miserable conditions. She feels that but for Deepalaya's emphasis on the positive discrimination of the girl child, her life could not have changed for the better.

Chandni's father is self-employed and sells export surplus clothes and earns a meager income of Rs 25,000 per annum. The mother is a housewife and the family has nine children to support. Chandni was always a top ranker in class and continued with this performance in the Nursing course too. She considers meeting and interviewing the Chief Minister of Delhi, Mrs. Sheila Dikshit and receiving a prize from the hands of the President of India for winning the drawing competition as the high points in her life. She was able to meet these personalities because Deepalaya afforded her an opportunity to first get quality education. She aspires to be a graduate.

There is a number of commonalities between these three girls. All of them come from deprived backgrounds, but all three struggled without giving up hope. They were too young to appreciate the role of Deepalaya when they got into its school. Having grown up now, and understanding the world they want to return the help they received back to society manifold.

The first step, they feel, is to encourage the girls in their communities to come out and join school like them. Deepalaya in its part feels that more than its efforts it is the support, contributions and encouragement given by numerous individuals and corporates that enabled it to expand its activities. It looks forward to the day when no child would have to struggle in life for want of education and health.

They were like the gems concealed embedded in the deep dark sea but they saw light and got recognition when they were picked up and chiseled by Deepalaya and now shining bright in the society.

TULSI DAS – A Life Changing Experience

“...”

We create our world with every thought that we think, with every word that we speak and with every action that we take.”

Le Var Burton

Due to lack of confidence, Tulsi Das, a 23 year old young man disabled his own
ability as a photographer. The realization that he was just an IX pass and that he just earned a measurer salary of Rs.2,500/- to Rs.3,000/- per month, further weakened his self-esteem. As the profession he was involved in was of his choice and passion, he enrolled himself in photography and videography course offered by the Chameli Dewan Institute for Vocational Training, Deepalaya. His steps of faith didn’t go waste.

Deepalaya was able to boost his confidence and equipped him with advanced skills. He graduated as a transformed person with a brightened outlook to life.

Tulsi Das, an employee in BSES Private Limited and earning Rs.7,500/- per month is now able to extend a helpful hand to his family. Deepalaya has not only impacted the life of Tulsi Das but has indirectly transformed the lives of his family members too.

Kishori Lal, who once worked as a rag picker, was unaware that there were bigger plans for him. It was just like any other normal day of his mundane rag picking routine, when two social workers of Deepalaya approached the surprised, wide eyed boy. That meeting, as he would remember later, changed the direction of his hitherto drab existence.

Coming from a remote district in the interiors of Uttar Pradesh, with a large family who worked as daily wage earners, he had never in his wildest dreams even visualized an education for himself. He was enrolled in the Non-Formal Education Centres, Gole Kasi and spent sleepless nights mastering tough subjects at school. He left no stone unturned. Apart from his Govt. school education, he also attended remedial classes from Deepalaya. Deepalaya became his pillar of strength and fortitude from then on. He realized his passion for dramatics and after the successful completion of his Class XII examinations; Kishori joined a 3 year certificate programme in Theatre performance.

Here again Deepalaya stood by him in his endeavours. He became an active theatre personality and a member of a group named Abhinaya Samooh. Combining instructive visual mediums of street plays and awareness programmes with teaching, he continues to pass on the blessings he’s received in life. His quest to find a panacea to the growing poverty and illiteracy in the country found its answer when he took up teaching as a full time vocation. In the year 2000, he was transformed into a Social Entrepreneur – a role which grew from the concept of a community based service providers evolved by Deepalaya.

He constantly works to be an agent of change, to do his part in transforming the society.

The 3 week trip to Netherlands as part of the Deepalaya - Edukans exchange programme was a significant milestone in his life. Amidst his busy schedule, he is also pursuing the Bachelor of Social Work course from IGNOU.
An avid reader, he secured 75% in the grade V (OBE). He has convinced his mother to send his younger brother too, to the hostel. Dharmender is now in grade I. Krishna is also friend and mentor to other children and always helps out in all activities at the hostel.

Krishna completed grade VIII. He is now enrolled in class X through the Open School. He cleared English (50%), Hindi (40%) and now appearing for Science, Maths & Social Science in the academic session 2008-2009.

Krishna is presently an apprentice to Mass Power Systems – earning a stipend of Rs.1800/- "I am saving that money after spending the bare minimum on myself. I want to give my mother some relief and also save some for my future," says a thoughtful Krishna.

It is surely Krishna’s determination, strong will and sheer grit coupled with the continual encouragement & patronage of Deepalaya, that a miracle is underway?

RINKU – Sorrow Turned Into Joy … And Hope

"Have a belief in yourself that is bigger than anyone’s disbelief ..." August Wilson.

This is a value that Deepalaya has instilled deeply in the life of its students. Rinku, the son of daily wage laborer in a village in Madhya Pradesh ran away from home for fear of confronting his father when he failed in his class VIII examination. He reached New Delhi and made the railway platform his home. He sold herbal tooth cleaner (datun) and earned Rs.10 everyday. But living on the platform exposed him to various ill habits like smoking and consuming tobacco.

In 2004, Ram Singh, a social worker from Deepalaya briefed him on the Institutional Care program. Once convinced, Rinku moved to Deepalaya Green and since then, there has been no looking back. Deepalaya helped him share his bad habits, he learnt to read and speak in English. After grade VII, Rinku was enrolled in a dress-designing training course. However, in the year 2006 he ran away, as the tailor thrashed him for wrongly cutting a piece of cloth. More than the physical pain he felt ashamed that he was not living upto the expectations of his dear Deepalaya.

He worked as a tailor in Saharanpur and after gaining confidence that he could become a full fledged tailor, he returned home. This family welcomed him with open arms as they had lost all hopes by then. Today, he earns Rs.2,500/- to Rs.3000/- per month working as a tailor in partnership with a relative.

It was indeed Sanju’s privilege to be born into a family where inspite of being a girl child, she took academics seriously and obtained 85% marks in Class VIII. Her endurance, perseverance and dedication helped her to excel in her studies and earn more so that her younger siblings can also go to school. Realising the importance of an education, Rinku does not want to give up her studies so she also works and earns so that part of her family burden is reduced.

RUBY – Rediscovering Life

Nothing can stop a person who desires to achieve. Every obstacle is simply a course to develop and strengthen oneself. Ruby is the living testimony of this fact.

Ruby comes from an extremely modest background. Her father is a sweeper and her mother works as a domestic help. She has seen poverty and deprivation at close quarters. She has grasped the debilitating conditions of her family and is determined to pave a new path towards prosperity and happiness. Ruby is pursuing her schooling from Ramdutt J. R. Narang Deepalaya School. She is in class X, but displays a maturity that’s far ahead of her years. Ruby is a sponsored child of former Miss India, Ms. Manpreet Bajaj who has promised to help her to continue with studies. Ruby speaks in amazingly good English, which is also her favorite subject.

Everyday, between 7.30 am till 9 am, Ruby works as a domestic help, doing all kind of menial labour. Then, she attends school from 10.30 am till 1.30 pm after which she goes to clean utensils a second time making a sum of Rs.400/- per month in the process. Ruby has three brothers and two sisters and the family income is meager. Therefore, she is forced to work and earn. Ruby has been under constant pressure to give up her studies and earn more so that the one who receives them, and they bless you; the giver! Barbara De Angelis.

It was indeed, Sanju’s privilege to have been born into a family where despite of the fact that she was a girl child, she had very encouraging parents who took keen interest in the welfare of their daughter.

It was an added blessing that Sanju got enrolled in Class Nursery in Deepalaya School at Sanjay Colony. Being an intelligent and ambitious girl, she took academics seriously and obtained 85% marks in Class VIII. Her endurance, perseverance and dedication helped her to excel in her studies and earn more so that her younger siblings can also go to school. Realising the importance of an education, Ruby does not want to give up her studies so she also works and earns so that part of her family burden is reduced.

She continually admonishes and explains to her siblings, the numerous advantages of education over earning a meager sum of money. She knows the myriad opportunities in store for people who are learned and trained. Therefore, she determined to complete her schooling, earn a degree, get involved in a reputed firm and carve a niche for herself! She believes that this would empower her to affect the life of her family and thereby set them on a new and exciting path to progress, self-discovering and contentment.

The hard labour and sincerity with which she works will surely enable her to scale great heights.
extra curricular activities like dancing, singing and needlework. Being a very good dancer, she participated in various competitions including the one at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and won many laurels. The teacher in her schoolyard to impart the knowledge and skills that she had acquired to the children living around her. The tuition fee was an added benefit. She organized and performed sensational dance programs along with the other children during festivals and celebrations in the community.

Sanju is now a proactive and enthusiastic commerce student of Class XI at Veer Sabhakar Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Noida Phase. She scored 66% marks in class X. She aspires to become an accountant and a bank officer. It is appreciable that she is utilizing the knowledge and skills, which she has acquired from Deepalaya for the benefit of her community.

The training given by Deepalaya has helped to polish and refine her talents. Sanju is confident that with blessings of God Almighty and support of Deepalaya she will certainly achieve success in her life.

SOHAN – On The Highways Of Life

I don’t think of all the suffering,
I think of the beauty that still remains. ” – Steve Trunk

Sohan’s story is one that embodies triumph over adversity, courage in the face of calamity. Ever since his birth, he has been suffering from moderate Cerebral Palsy. He may have often wondered what life would have in store for him.

Hope sprang when he came into contact with Deepalaya’s West Delhi Disability Project and a physiotherapy treatment was promptly arranged. Currently in Class VIII in a Government School, his learning ability is satisfactory but he can only write very slowly and thus performs poorly at school. He may not be interested in learning languages but enjoys studying Science very much. Sohan’s parents are very supportive and are doing their best to make their child become independent. His father, who has passed class X, works with the Railways and earns a meager amount. However, he does not grudge spending on his child’s education.

Sohan has an elder sister who is doing MCA and a younger brother studying in V standard at DPS, Dwarka.

Deepalaya has provided Sohan with a tricycle so that he can go to school, which is about two kilometers away. His mother accompanies him everyday. He is making progress– slowly and steadily. Deepalaya is right beside him holding his hand!

VIVEK KUMAR – Sky Is The Limit

Vivek Kumar comes from a poor family. His father is a tailor and his mother, a housewife. He has two brothers and two sisters. Vivek Kumar scored 85% in class XII that he completed from G.B Pant Sarvodaya Boys Senior Secondary School, Srinivaspuri. He has been attending Deepalaya’s remedial classes at Sanjay Colony and feels that without Deepalaya’s support he would not have been able to complete his class XII. Vivek then went on to do his Bachelors in Business Studies from Jamia Millia scoring 96%. His training was sponsored by Mr. Jyoti Sagar.

Currently, he is doing his 2nd year of Master of International Business from Jamia Millia. He also wants to pursue a computer course. He has attended an adult education program and was a member of Science Club at Deepalaya. He represented Deepalaya at a cricket match and still cherishes those memories. Vivek has blossomed into a confident boy, and speaks English with great ease.

He says, “Deepalaya has given me a new lease of life. My perception towards life and society has completely altered! I owe all my achievements to Deepalaya.”

SUSHILA TIWARI – ‘I Have A Dream’

Originally from Palamu in Bihar, Sushila Devi is a resident of Jagdamba Camp (KBK). Although she may not be highly educated, Sushila’s enlightened stance to work for the betterment of the community– at-large has earned her great respect. She is happily settled with her husband, Baban Kumar Tiwari, a security guard and four children.

Consumed with the desire to be an agent of change, and inspired by Deepalaya’s work in her community, she had been successful in changing existing mindset and attitudes.

Jagdamba Camp is plagued by problems like lack of sanitation, open sewages, subhuman conditions, water scarcity and a host of malignant social problems. She took up the challenge to clean up the slums and create a healthy surrounding conducive for the overall development of the region. Everyday after finishing her household chore, she moves out of her tiny home. She has interacted with the women folks, organized cleanliness drives, made representations at the corporation office, hospitals, police station etc. addressed group meetings and organized poster campaigns. She formed an action squad in the community and continued to keep the surroundings clean, simultaneously explaining to them how lack of cleanliness and hygiene can be the source of various ailments.

When asked how she was motivated to take up this challenge, her prompt reply was, “I have been seeing Deepalaya and its social worker’s work in our slums, and felt that unless we cooperate, it is going to be an unaccomplished task. So my husband and I started motivating the Badminton Court beside him holding his hand!...
Today, she works for an NGO called “Satark Nagarik Sangathan” as a full time community mobilizer. She works from 10 am to 3 pm in Sheikh Sarai 1. Her salary is Rs.3000/- per month. She is also involved with issues of Women Empowerment and Human rights. She is definitely making a difference!

**VIJENDER DIXIT** - A Beautiful Life

Vijender Dixit comes from a poor family. His father is a fruit seller and his mother a home maker. His two brothers and two sisters are in school. After completing his XII from a government school, Vijender joined Deepalaya Vocational Training Centre at Kalkaji Extension in the computer hardware stream. He picked up the basics quickly and became confident at handling computers. After successfully completing the course, he joined Laxman Public School as a Coordinator. He is in charge of 5 labs equipped with 120 computers. He earns a monthly salary of Rs. 10,000/-. Besides this, he has been repairing computers at a small shop he opened at Sangam Vihar for the last five months and his total income is more than Rs.25000/- per month. Vijender says that he has become very confident now and can handle any kind of situation. He appreciates the role of Deepalaya which imparted specialized skills, quality education and sound training at a cost he could afford. The individual attention that he received there enabled him to grow into a radiant Young man!

**KULDEEP TIWARI** - On Higher Ground

Kuldeep Tiwari feels blessed to have come in contact with Deepalaya which has enabled him to realize his dream of becoming a IT Professional. He recalls the loss of his father when he was barely seven. His two older sisters were married with financial help from his relatives. His mother worked in a crèche to support him and the family. Kuldeep completed his XII from the government school and joined the one year computer hardware course at Deepalaya Vocational Training Centre. He did well in the course. He then joined Indo Alusys Industries Ltd, New Delhi, as a System Administrator earning a salary of Rs.8,000/- per month, after which he completed the Microsoft certified professional course in window scoring 90%!. He also completed Cisco certified network association course scoring 88%. He remembers how dedicated the teachers at Deepalaya were. It was there that a solid foundation was laid.

He is now pursuing one year M.Sc (IT) from Sikkim Manipal University, as he looks forward to an even better future, he gratefully acknowledges the important role Deepalaya has played in his life.

**AJEET - Deepalaya - My Home**

‘One is taught by experience to put a premium on those few people who can appreciate you for what you are’

--- Gail Gadwin.

Ajeet, a resident of West Bengal, felt unloved and unwanted in his own home. His father a farmer wanted him to give up his studies, and work on the farms. The trauma and torture inflicted by his father became so unbearable that he ran away from his home. Having arrived at the New Delhi Railway Station, he came in contact with a Deepalaya social worker. Ajeet was one of the 19 destitute boys with whom the Transit Home at Gusbethi was started in the year 2000. Identifying his strength and interest, Deepalaya got him admitted in Delhi Public School (now known as Mewat Model School) at Tavru in Haryana. He was a focused student and doing well in school and after 8 long years, he expressed his longing to contact his family in Bengal. Without much delay Deepalaya wrote to the address he gave them. To their utter surprise, his father and uncle landed up at Deepalaya as soon as they received the message. Though Ajeet went home joyfully, he came back to Deepalaya within 10 days as he realized that Deepalaya had become his ‘home’. These eight years had bound him with chords of love that could not be easily broken.

Ajeet completed his class X with a second division. Since Electronics and Computers were his passion. Deepalaya enrolled him in a 6 months Diploma Training in Hardware at the Don Bosco Technical Institute, Lucknow. He topped his batch with flying colours and scored 79% marks. He is also enrolled into class XII through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

Ajeet is now a trainee with the IT Dept at Deepalaya, further sharpening his knowledge helping to keep the computers and networks healthy and learning the softer aspects of ‘working in an office’. Deepalaya is everything to him.

**BABLOO - Determined To Overcome**

‘They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world. Someone to love, something to do and something to hope for’

--- Tom Bodett.

Babloo, born in 1991 in Mirzapur in U.P. has sad memories of an unhappy childhood. Babloo’s mother had left the family when he was just a child. Growing up under the constant gaze of his father was not easy. Babloo helped his father who made a living by selling paddy and wheat. But Babloo never got an opportunity to go to school. Denied parental love and looking for a better life, Babloo came to Allahabad where he worked as a domestic help for sometime. But his master cheated him of his salary. Disillusioned, Babloo...
got into a train and reached Delhi. At the Railway Station, Deepalaya Social worker found him wandering and brought him to Transit Home, Gusbethi.

Shadows of shame and ignorance become portraits of trust and hope at Deepalaya. Life in Deepalaya became a turning point for Babloo. He got good food, clothes and a place to stay. He began to put heart and soul into his studies. Deepalaya's constant support and guidance put Babloo on the right track. He will be appearing for class X exam this year. He has also completed a course on Electrical Repair from Deepalaya Vocational Unit. He is currently working for a battery service firm and earns Rs.3,000/- per month.

Babloo has come a long winding road from being that deprived, oppressed little boy. Deepalaya's works to change the destiny of this child. As he looks forward expectantly to a bright future, Babloo has not forgotten his past. He wants to contribute in his own small way to Deepalaya, which taught him the essence of life.

**DIL BAHADUR THAPA : The Brave Heart**

For Dil Bahadur, a resident of Nepal life had gone from bad to worse. His dear father passed away when he was barely six. His mother was a T.B. patient and the responsibility of the household and his younger siblings fell on his frail shoulders. Financial constraints and lack of basic amenities forced him to come to Delhi. He joined as a helper at a taxi stand where he received only a meager sum of Rs.400/- per month, inspite of the long working hours that he had put in. It was a life of oppression and blatant exploitation, but he had no choice. He needed the money desperately for his folks back at home.

Finally he could not take it any more and ran away to the Railway Station. Here he came in touch with Deepalaya workers at the platform. It was a refreshing change to have someone speak to him in soft, kind tone. In the year 2000 he joined the Transit Home and gradually completed his education. He cleared his VIII grade while studying at the Deepalaya School and later enrolled in class X through the Open Schooling system.

He has also trained in a motor mechanic course and has learnt to drive too. Later he got a chance to work as an attendant in the Deepalaya School and earned Rs.1500/- per month. Four years back he brought his sister to the Deepalaya Hostel for Girls as he was sure the promise of a better future here was real.

Today, he continues working at the School and earning a substantial amount to lead a decent living. He is a very responsible employee, taking care of the office, transporting children and doing small jobs. He has become one of the reliable hands around. He stays in a rented accommodation. His sister now stays with him and studies in a public school in Delhi. He owns a bike and sends money home too. “I am a respected member of society now and look forward to completing my education. All this has been possible because of the constant support, guidance and encouragement from everyone at Deepalaya.” Says an ever-grateful, transformed Dil.

**BALADIN - From Darkness Into Light**

Deepalaya opened hitherto unknown and unprecedented doors for Baladin whose parents had wanted to educate their son and ensure that they have a secure future. His passion for theatre and drama led to his 11 year long association with Abhinay Samooh, a theatre group developed by Deepalaya. He has also completed a 3 year course in acting from the renowned National School of Drama.

On the educational front, while pursuing his final year of B.Com at Delhi University, he also teaches at the coaching centre he has opened at his residence. He teaches over 60 students hailing from various backgrounds and runs classes in 3 shifts, earning over Rs.10000/- per month. This is what we call ‘leadership with social responsibility’. He is keen to enlarge his horizons and complete a B.Ed course and become a full-fledged Accounts teacher in a school. He has also done computer hardware course from Deepalaya's vocational training centre. He wants to pursue his education further and somewhere also dreams of becoming a Chartered accountant. He is an excellent cricketer and thanks Deepalaya for the platform and support.

**INDU BALA - Determined And Undaunted**

Indu Bala was once living in one of those remote, far-off villages where her father, a farmer struggled to keep the family together because of the enormous financial strain. Her aunt saw the plight of their family and wisely decided to bring Indu Bala to Delhi. Indu was enrolled into the Deepalaya School at Kalkaji Extension.

Though Indu was not a topper in academics (she completed class XII) the Principal of her school saw in her a strong determination to take up the calling of a nurse. The lack of medical facilities in her village and the subsequent sufferings of people led her to choose this vocation.

Deepalaya helped her to get a sponsor Shinnyo-en, a Japanese Organisation; she is currently pursuing a 3 year General Nursing and Midwifery course at SOS Nursing School, Faridabad. Life has just begun......
JYOTI DHIMAR - Reaching Higher

Jyoti Dhimar has plodded on….slow and steady and none there’s no stopping her! Her father is a gardener at a Govt. office, while her mother, takes care of the affairs at home. She and her siblings were saved from a lifetime of drudgery when Deepalaya came to their rescue.

She studied at Deepalaya School Kalakaji Extension and successfully completed her schooling through NIOS, scoring good grades. She has completed her BA from IGNOU. She is working as an Executive, Tele-verification at VEGA Corporation Pvt Ltd, a franchise of Vodafone, earning Rs.6500/- per month and expecting a good increment this year.

Deepalaya has played an important role in her life, she acknowledges. She has definitely learnt how to be responsible, accountable, independent in every sphere of her life. As a team leader, at VEGA Corporation Pvt Ltd she trains and mentors new recruits on the tele-verification process. This confident girl says her coming from a deprived background is in no way going to hold her back from scaling newer heights everyday. Deepalaya has taught her that!

She says, “I have lost my sense of fear through my association with Deepalaya and for this I am forever grateful.”

MANISH THAKUR - “Deepalaya Is My Second Home”

When 15 year old polio afflicted Manish Thakur, a student of class X in a reputed public school of Bhopal, left home in the year 2002, he didn’t know where he was heading. Strained family relations led him to two roads- either commit suicide or run away. He chose the later and preferred to take a risk for the sake of his self respect and freedom. He packed his school bag with clothes, and left home turning back one last time to have one look at his mother, the only soul on this earth who had always stood for him. He felt guilty at having let her down.

He took the first train out of Bhopal, headed to Mumbai, then Ahmedabad and finally to Delhi. The station looked hostile. Manish made his way to a cyber cafe and looked for organizations helping children in need. The search led him to the Missionaries of Charity from where he landed at Don Bosco Ashalayam. He wanted to continue his studies, but the nearest school was more than 10 km away. Some of the boys at DBA told him about the Deepalaya Transit Home, which had a school in the same campus.

He contacted them and narrated his story. He was lying and he knew it but he had no other way. Despite all this, he was welcomed with open arms and taken into their caring fold. He was enrolled into class X, became a “Bhaiya” and role-model to the children around.
MEENA KARAKOTI - Looks Ahead

Deepalaya has always endeavoured to promote the programmes for capacity building, social transformation and empowerment. The results of our efforts is a committed cadre of Social Entrepreneurs who are now shaping their own future and community.

The story of Meena Karakoti is a story of triumph. It is about a girl who overcame all the hardships and hurdles to successfully carry forward Deepalaya’s efforts ‘to enable the child look beyond illusions.’

Meena Karakoti, with the background of knowledge and experiences because of the training by Deepalaya, worked as a Social Entrepreneur at East Delhi Project (2000 – 2003). She is now running a Play cum Preparatory school named Abhilasha in Mayur Vihar, East Delhi since April 2003. The children enrolled in her School are from the low and middle income families. Her effort is to mainstream the children into formal education when they become 5 yrs old. Till now as many as 282 children have been admitted and have been mainstreamed into formal Primary school. This is not the end of her activities. She also runs Tuition Classes in the evening from 2.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. for the primary school going children for a minimal fee.

MUKTA MANDAL - From A Student To A Dedicated Teacher

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Meena Karakoti feels proud of being a part of Deepalaya and she owes all that she has to this organization and she is thankful for Deepalaya’s support in the smooth running of her school. “I appreciate what Deepalaya does, particularly the Education Programme and innovative Education system. Now I am economically independent and self sustainable, I am confident to impart minimum level of competency to the children of Pre – primary age group. All these are due to my learning and experiences in working with Deepalaya at that time and the trainings received from the organization. This is not only with me but with other Social Entrepreneurs as well”, she mentions categorically.

MITHU ROY - Enlightening Young Minds

“Toddy, I am sure that I will be a world famous Textile Designer, and will give back to Deepalaya all that they have given me, that will be the biggest thanks I can give to everyone there. I am still part of the Deepalaya family, infact that’s my second home,” concludes Manish with a broad smile on his face.

He started teaching them English and realized life had not been bad at all to him. Some of the children had horror stories to relate about their past.

He appeared for the class X exams and later requested to learn computer for which he was enrolled in an institute at Delhi. He moved to the Delhi office, closely interacted with all the adults and particularly with a Dutch volunteer, French Van Ome - who taught him how to inculcate gentlemanly values and communicate well in English. “All I got at Deepalaya was love, compassion, encouragement, confidence and the guts to come out with the truth,” he says. He finally came out with his true story and shared every thing with Mr. Mathews. He was asked to contact his family, his mother broke down hearing his voice over the phone. The very next day his family arrived, they were also counseled by different people in the organization. They went back as one happy family, in 2003.

He has been with his family ever since. He completed X and XII class through the Open School. He enrolled into NIFT, Mumbai for Textile Design. He has been in regular touch with Deepalaya ever since he returned home. He talks to them about everything - consulting them on career choice, seeking guidance for the conflicts at home, etc.

“Today, I am sure that I will be a world famous Textile Designer, and will give back to Deepalaya all that they have given me, that will be the biggest thanks I can give to everyone there. I am still part of the Deepalaya family, infact that’s my second home,” concludes Manish with a broad smile on his face.

Mithu Roy, once a wide-eyed enthusiastic student at Deepalaya, is now a Teacher there imparting education and life skills to children, who like her have been truly blessed. Coming from a family of five, where her father was the sole bread winner, their family has certainly come a long, long way. Her elder sister and brother, who were students of Deepalaya too, are well settled and flourishing.

’re student days were fun’, she recalls, ‘teachers stressed on academics and extra-curricular activities alike.’ She proudly says ‘Deepalaya built my foundation and today I’m using those skills that were inculcated in me to motivate more children to explore their creative side.’

“I have been able to explore my identity as an independent woman only because of Deepalaya—my pillar of support”, she says, beaming.
SHAMMA PARVEEN - The Calm Performer

‘He that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.’ — Proverbs 23:24

Due to poor financial conditions, Shamma Parveen’s father who was a tailor, was unable to educate his children. He had two sons and five daughters. The eldest brother did not have a fixed job and worked as a daily wager.

Deepalaya, with its mission of developing self-reliant individuals, welcomed Shamma when she joined Deepalaya School, Kalkaji Extension in the year 2002 in Class VI. Deepalaya’s passion of imparting knowledge stirred in her the interest to study and Shamma scored an aggregate of 82% in her class X exams. She is also good at art and craft and is a part of the school Net Ball team. She is calm by nature, bright and determined to forge ahead.

Deepalaya has given her the immediate confidence to move boldly ahead.

SHIKHA SINGH - Changing Lives

Shilpa, coming from an economically weak background had to struggle to move up in life. Deepalaya enabled her to come into her own. She is now a Teacher at Deepalaya School, Gole Kuan.

Her father earned only a wage a day as a factory worker and her mother was a housewife who continued to struggle and help Shikha’s younger sister who is mentally challenged. Looking at this crisis at home, her parents had decided never to send Shikha to school.

But a team from Deepalaya convinced them of the need for sound education and finally she was enrolled in the school. Shikha has completed her Nursery Primary Teachers’ Training from Women’s Polytechnic and is currently pursuing her B.com from Delhi University (Correspondence).

Shikha proudly says, “Caring, patiently guiding, encouraging— that’s what my teachers at Deepalaya have always been. Even though I changed schools, I could always come back to Deepalaya for assistance. Today, I am married and have a son. I am able to give him quality care as Deepalaya has taught me so much more than academics. It is satisfying to motivate and teach children from the slum communities. I am a living example of how education can change lives. Therefore I want to become a teacher. I hope tochange many more and I am grateful to Deepalaya for giving me this opportunity.”

In future she wants to try her hand at the garments business. Deepalaya has given her the immediate confidence to move boldly ahead.

SHYAM NARAYAN – “Deepalaya, a friend indeed”

Life is tough enough as it is. It’s even tougher when we’re headed in the wrong direction. Encouraged by Deepalaya, Shyam Narayan embarked on the road to success. From a humble beginning, he has scaled commendable heights. His father runs a small tea stall at Odda. Shyam has two brothers and two sisters. He had no money, no comforts, stayed in a slum in South Delhi and had lots of responsibilities; yet he has achieved what many others have failed and that is self-reliance.

After his schooling in the nearby Govt. School, he went on to complete his graduation in commerce from Aurobindo College, Delhi University. He has an eleven year old association with Abhinaya Samooh, a theatre group developed by Deepalaya. Shyam acts and script plays for the group which performs street plays in and around Delhi to create awareness about education and other developmental issues.

Deepalaya’s continued to support his higher studies by arranging a scholarship through Mr. Jyoti Sagar a friend of Deepalaya. This support helped him to translate his dreams into reality. After completing the one year diploma course in Apparel Manufacturing Technology at the Apparel Training and Design Centre, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India in December 2006, he joined Sai Exports in February 2007 as a trainee, earning a stipend of Rs. 5000/- per month. His skills did not go unnoticed and in March 2008, he was appointed as Production Executive and is drawing a salary of Rs. 8000/- per month.

Shyam Narayan Verma, a winner all the way!
into his life. Enrolling Vikas and his siblings into Deepalaya was a life transforming milestone for this family.

Vikas has completed his graduation, a computer course at NIIT, been successful in his job at EBONY, a leading departmental chain, even worked as a Customer Care Associate with Van Heusen. He currently works as a Store Manager at Disney Artists Outlet Shop of Devyani Intl. Ltd, in a responsible position with 5 people working as his subordinates. Earning Rs.16000/- per month now, he enjoys his job and now wants to settle down in life.

He gives all the credit to Deepalaya—the place that instilled within him positive values, self-confidence, good manners and etiquettes, fluency in English... only to enumerate a few. He has greatly benefitted from the number of opportunities that Deepalaya provided him with.

LEKH RAJ - Miracles Do Happen

Like every other normal child of his age, Lekh Raj too desired to roam around exploring his surroundings. Instead, he was confined within the four walls of his gloomy hut in a remote slum cluster. The tragedy of his existence took a heavy toll on his self-esteem. He often pondered upon the utter meaninglessness of such a life. Lekh Raj was physically challenged, he had to crawl on all fours to get from one place to the other.

Lekhraj's chance encounter with Deepalaya transformed his dreary life completely. The personal care and initiative of a teacher named Babita enabled him to envision a bright future for himself. She coaxed him out of his cocoon and asked him to come to school.

Lekhraj was hesitant and finally confessed that he was afraid that the people outside might mock and scorn him. He knew that he would never be able to bear their derisive jeers and insults. Babita told him that he was completely mistaken. She firmly insisted that he ought to come out boldly into the bright, promising world—it was surely worth an effort!

Lekhraj finally relented. Moreover, he was deeply touched when Babita personally groomed him and took him as if she were her own child. Even in school, he often imagined how he would look like if he were to walk upright, like all those around him. He desperately longed to walk shoulder to shoulder with his friends, enjoy a stroll across the road....

'God has listened to my prayers' he says, remembering how Deepalaya was instrumental in providing him support when he was operated upon at St. Stephens Hospital. Now he can stand on his own feet and walk with the support of crutches that Deepalaya graciously provided him.

As far as his academics are concerned, he has completed his schooling and then went on to pursue a training in Electronics. He is presently enrolled with IOCL Computer Centre, Sanjay Colony.

REENA - Skating Her Way To Success

Reena's family are migrants to Delhi, in 1995 - like many more - in search of better prospect. Life had an additional challenge - a daughter and she too hearing impaired. "Nothing can happen with her," was their constant refrain. Reena's disability was encroaching upon her happiness.

However, the meeting with Deepalaya, brought Reena into the care of the Special Unit of Sanjay Colony.

Her transformation has been phenomenal! Reena today is a student of Class VIII at the Government School. She has actively participated in many cultural activities at Deepalaya School, Sanjay Colony. She is also a National Award Winner of Special Olympic Bharat for Ice Skating. In 2007, she was sent to Shenda for another Ice-Skating event, and she performed extremely well. In fact in March 2009, she is flying to America to participate in yet another Ice Skating competition. Not just sport, she loves to dance and has represented Deepalaya in many competitions. The grit and firm determination that she reflects truly captivates and inspires many.

The sensation on the skating rink, Reena says that she owes everything to Deepalaya that has given her the space to reveal her achievements and understand the beauty of life. She aspires to become a teacher and thereby share the wealth of knowledge acquired at Deepalaya.

NILOFAR KHAN - More Than A Conqueror !

Nilofar Khan, currently studying in class XII, Deepalaya School has only highlighted the truism that a deprived background is not a hindrance to attaining success. Granted that a person with such a background has to try harder but the effort is never wasted.

A little over a year and half ago, Naz Foundation approached Deepalaya to conduct a leadership program and netball practice for children coming from deprived backgrounds. As part of their project 'Goal' they were required to identify children good at sports. Naz Foundation chose to partner with Deepalaya for the same. Nilothal is a non-contact sport similar to, and derived from, basketball. Ms. Deepali Sharma, an international netball player and a volunteer associated with Naz Foundation, has been teaching 19 girls, the technique of the game twice a
Weeks at Deepalaya School. During the course of the training, Nilofar Khan stood out for her confidence and passion for the game. She had a natural talent for the game and showed rapid progress surprising even the coach. In fact, a year she progressed so well that she was chosen to play for Delhi in the under 19 category for the Nationals. Delhi subsequently won all the five matches against Chandigarh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chattisgarh. Nilofar played no small part in these matches. She won a gold medal and an individual trophy for helping her team to win. Now she is brimming with confidence and has decided to make Netball her career. Nilofar is training hard to get into the Indian team in the upcoming Commonwealth Games. Along with grueling practice sessions she also pays special attention to her dietary requirements to maintain good fitness levels. Boiled eggs and a glass of milk are part of her regular diet.

Coming from a backward socio-economic background her parents were initially skeptical about encouraging her to take up the sport. Deepalaya would not give up easily on this budding star. Repeated requests from the school authorities and assurances of their support helped change her parents’ mind. Shikha Pal, Principal at Deepalaya School Kalkaji adds, “Deepalaya took the responsibility of her making it for Netball practice at different places in Delhi and dropping her back home safely”. Deepalaya played the role of a facilitator by bringing the Naz Foundation and the child together. Nilofar’s experience is a heartening example of how a hidden talent can blossom even amidst deprived circumstances. Strong willpower coupled with determination and hard work can bring opportunities galore.

Perseverance is the steadfast pursuit of an aim. It requires persistence and coupled with a little encouragement and guidance. Here is a living example of a girl who dared to dream the impossible in her life which was made possible only by the assistance of Deepalaya.

POOJA MATHUR - Sparkle With Style

Pooja belongs to a family that has migrated from Uttar Pradesh. Her father works as a security guard at a private firm and her mother is a housewife. Her two sisters are now married. Her brother is running a STD booth. From a young age, Pooja had dreamt of going to a college and completing her XII. Having realized the importance of education, her poor parents not only allowed Pooja to complete her XII but also encouraged her to study further. With the support from Deepalaya, she completed her graduation in BA (Hons) Political Science at Dishaandh College, University of Delhi, and scoring 50%. She is now in the II year of MA Political Science, which she is pursuing from Delhi University through correspondence. Simultaneously, she has joined a one year diploma course in secretarial course from NDMC Women’s Polytechnic, Khanpur, which she would be completing in October 2008.

Pooja has been a part of the National Cadet Corps and has attended various camps held in Maharashtra, Nainital and Uttaranchal. She wants ultimately to join the Delhi Police or the Army and make a mark in her life. Pooja feels that due to her association with Deepalaya, she has been able to overcome her limitations and head towards a secure future.

DHANANJAY KUMAR - A Front Runner

Dhananjay’s father is a compounder and his mother, a homemaker. He has two brothers and one sister who are all in school. Dhananjay, who has been sponsored by Mr. Jyoti Sagar, joined Deepalaya School at an early age and completed Class X (CBSE) scoring 61%. Subsequently, he joined GB Pant Polytechnic, New Delhi to do Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. In a campus interview conducted by Flavon Daniel India for 120 students, Dhananjay is the only one who has been chosen. He has joined the company on July on a starting salary of Rs 18,500/- per month.

Dhananjay realizes the importance of the inputs that could have been given, had his parents been properly educated. However, these disadvantages are overcome if one works hard to gain knowledge in some area. Dhananjay is very meticulous and soft spoken. He is clear about what he wants from life and is willing to put in efforts. He gratefully acknowledges the sea change brought into his life by Deepalaya which has been a strong pillar by his side. Once during the demolition drive, Dhananjay’s family was literally on the streets and he had to miss his Maths exam. Nonetheless, he persevered and is now shaping into a confident individual. It needs to be pointed out that he has been acquiring knowledge in specific areas by reading on his own. His thirst for knowledge has not reduced and he dreams to rise higher in life by dint of his efforts.
Dr. Sabarimala Narasimhan was conferred the Deepalaya Award for Child Rights in the year 2000. While receiving it, Dr. Narasimhan donated the cash award for the education of two deprived children. The chosen ones, Nagamani (Class V) and her younger brother (Class IV), were living in Bangalore with their mother, a deserted wife and a domestic maid. The family was extremely poor but Nagamani’s mother was very clear that the children should go to school and not end up as domestic helps.

Dr. Narasimhan bought books and other things for the children who lived in a tiny room. They used to take care of household chores when their mother was away working. Nagamani was very studious and a number of times came first in class. Tragedy struck in the year 2003 when their mother was killed in a roadside accident. However, Nagamani did not give up her studies. She also looked after her younger brother and worked in two houses after her school to earn some money. After arranging for her brother to be admitted in an orphanage, Nagamani joined a girls’ hostel. She did well in her class-X exam, managing a first class. She went on to complete her Pre-University course.

This gutsy girl met her sponsor, Dr. Narasimhan recently to announce that she is currently in her B. Com 1 year and was also working for a computer firm making Rs. 6000/- per month. Nagamani has shown how with sheer will power and determination, one can come up in life despite odds. While the Award money given by Deepalaya was a small factor that might have helped at one point of time, there is no denying the fact that Nagamani has set an example for others in fortitude and determination.

Friends of Deepalaya, Germany

How about rewinding time, say, some 15 years back? It was in 1992, when a group of five people from Germany were planning to visit India. Little did they know that being overheard and later approached by a friend would soon turn into a new beginning. The friend, a teacher at a local nursery school, made the simplest suggestion of carrying some gifts to India for those in need. The idea was immediately taken.

In India, as these friends struggled to identify the right people to give to, two options popped up, thanks to a shopkeeper at their hotel. One of the suggestions, ‘Delhi Council for Child Welfare’, a Government entity, qualified to be their preferred choice, but fate would have it otherwise. They could never contact the agency despite several attempts.

‘Deepalaya’ was the other name. ‘It is an NGO which works for children’ was the only knowledge with which these Germans approached Mr. Mathew and invited him to touch base. This was the first meeting of ‘Friends’ and ‘Deepalaya’ who soon became ‘Friends of Deepalaya’. The amount of presents they had was more than convincing for Mr. Mathew to invite them to personally visit & distribute them to Deepalaya children. In yet another first, the group visited Deepalaya School in Sanjay Colony only to be amazed at the happiness of the receiving children, quarrelling to be the first to play with the new toys.

The entire Deepalaya experience inculcated in these visitors a belief in their choice, and a want to further support the cause. The friends offered some monetary donation, which Mr. Mathew refused to their surprise. It was illegal for an NGO to accept foreign currency then. But as the group would still insist to be a part of the cause, there came the suggestion of transferring money through a Germany-based bank account. The group liked his advice and continued to support Deepalaya in the successive years, by raising funds from friends and family members and taking up individual child sponsorships.

The support base increased. So did the contributed funds. But as the group members were worried about getting the maximum benefit out of the spent money, they did not want the high cash transfer commissions to cut their contribution in half. Therefore, the idea was extended from setting up a pooled account to funding a properly registered NGO in Germany. This way, they could take advantage of the reduced fees as well as of the tax-exemption facilities in order to increase the results.

A couple of preparations, a counter-visit from Mr. Mathew to Germany, and ‘Förderverein Deepalaya’
Niederrhein eV was born in 2003. It came up as a registered charitable entity and the collected funds continued to rise. Since then, numerous new sponsors have been able to support us from Germany. Although they are all working full time, our long time ‘Friends from Germany’, represented by Mr. Alfons Ruetter, continue to support our efforts in a remarkable way, like all these years. Alfons and his team regularly contacted and follow up with fellow Germans — exhibiting them to contribute for a cause. Today we have over 100 German sponsors.

Friends of Deepalaya, UK

The British Telecom (BT) had organized a workshop for its staff on CSR. Mr. Chris Tuppen was one of the participants from the UK (London) office. Chris Tuppen, with a social bent of mind, took CSR very seriously and wanted to visit a social development project before participating in the workshop, so as to equip himself with the reality at the ground level.

One of his colleagues at BT, who was sponsoring a child at Deepalaya, suggested that Chris should visit the organization to obtain a first-hand knowledge of the activities undertaken and also meet her sponsored child. They visited the school and project at Sanjay Colony. Chris was visibly pleased and scribbled words of appreciation in the visitor’s book.

Deepalaya did not lose the extent of the happiness and satisfaction until a call came from BT, London asking whether the funds raised for Deepalaya could be sent through the CEO of BT India.

What actually happened was the following: Chris Tuppen narrated his experience to his wife Deborah, who was a great enthusiast for social causes. They discussed among themselves how to help a genuine cause like Deepalaya. The couple worked silently, organized a backyard dinner and dance party with BT staff and local residents of Chris’s village. Chris had a large backyard extending over a hectare.

The backyard dinner and dance party collected over 4000 Pounds and the same is supporting ten students of Deepalaya on a perpetual basis. The relationship continues to grow. Deborah took an active role. Mr. Mathew visited them in their village on the outskirts of London and discussed the potential of creating a trust in UK to support Deepalaya.

A few friends of Deepalaya including the Tuppens have registered themselves as Deepalaya Friends in UK under a trust approved by the UK Charity Commissioner. The Trust has the facility to collect back revenues to the extent of 28% of the donations received by the trust from the Revenue Department of the UK Government.
Feedback From Donors & Sponsors

Being a not-for-profit organization, Deepalaya depends on socially committed and public spirited individuals to raise resources for its activities. Having seen Deepalaya’s work and being convinced of the mission and vision of the organization, a large number of these members of civil society have become our supporters. It is the contributions made by these individuals and institutions that have ultimately brought a radical transformation and some cheers into the lives of a large number of children and their families. Below we introduce you to a small representative sample of them.

I have been regularly receiving updates about the activities of Deepalaya through emails. It provides me with a sense of peace that I’m able to contribute a little, towards a cause that is improving lives of people. Although I’m not significantly contributing in terms of time but the dedicated team at Deepalaya is doing a great job. My compliments to the entire Deepalaya family for touching lives of people, and making world a better place!

Pascal Fautrat, (France, 2007 onwards)

I am not an NGO type of a guy, never have been and never thought I would be. Yes I always thought that there is too much poverty, illiteracy, pollution, population, crime and so on and always thought that it should be taken care of. All this while I never thought it is a part of my responsibility too and I need to take care of it in my own small way, whatever it may be and however it may be possible.

It was then I came across Deepalaya and we started talking, nothing major had changed since then and I thought that it is not worth it. Then my visit to Gusbethi School happened and life was never the same. I saw little kids there who obviously had not met a guy like me (tattooed and spiked hair); kids who were full of life, full of excitement and above all full of future. I was amazed to see that not only they could understand my English but were so eager and willing to give me an answer right back in English. Not that English is the universal standard of high living but still I was very much in awe of the effort. I spoke to all of them and realized each one of them had a dream, a dream that was theirs because of various reasons be it family, society, friends, TV, movies or School.

Arvind K Bansal, (Punjab)
The good part was that they had a dream and they were determined to achieve it. While I don’t know how many of them would achieve it or would leave it in mid way because of their surroundings; but at least once in their life they got a chance to be a kid, to have a dream, to live as we all live, to live with pride and above all have a smile on their face. Some of them would carry it all along their life and some won’t but even if one of them does aspire to move up the ladder to achieve the so called dream be he/she lived for, it is worth a try to do all that we can to make it possible.

This journey is only possible for those and many more including all of us because of you Deepalaya, Thanks once again!

It is a pleasure to talk about Deepalaya. This project made such an impact on my life that I am working on opening a non-profit organization to help Deepalaya with school materials. The children were so powerful and beautiful that I can not forget their smiles and greetings, “good morning sir, good morning madam”. Deepalaya deserves to be supported to grow and help more children and families.

Maria Luisa Carter, (USA)

When I first contributed to Deepalaya, I was touched to receive a photograph of the little girl who was benefited through my contribution. This has inspired a feeling in me to meet her when I come to Delhi sometime. Well, this may not be very important, but that’s the kind of experience I’m left with.

Satis Chander, (Hyderabad)

I've been talking, as well as teaching about child labour and lost childhood for many years. However it was only in 2002, when one of my many students began to work on this topic for her PhD that I got to know some children engaged in this activity personally. It was this personal contact with them that showed me how widespread this problem is and how superficial my approach to it has been. Since then, I’ve been trying to do something substantial for such children. And Deepalaya has given me an opportunity to do so. I still feel that one’s involvement should be more than just financial contribution, yet through organizations such as Deepalaya, one can at least start that process of participation in a small way. So, thank you Deepalaya.

Jeeveshu Ablawadia, (Gurgaon)

The first time I learnt about Deepalaya was 3 years back, and I missed it for cynical reasons. However I kept feeling the need to contribute to the education of the underprivileged. This year, I decided to take the plunge and just give without getting bogged down with thoughts of how effective will it be and if my money will be used for this purpose, some thoughts that stopped me from supporting Deepalaya three years back.

Amandeep Dubey, (Gurgaon)

Five months later, a group of students from Deepalaya performed a cultural program with some skits and songs. I was awestruck; these were children of the underprivileged, speaking in fluent English, and with the confidence to conquer the world. I saw the spark in their eyes that sure can light up the whole country.

I have the photographs of the students I have sponsored on the wall of my room and every day when I look at their innocent faces it fills me up for the day ahead. I know these children have a fair chance in this world because at Deepalaya they are getting such education and healthcare, which only public school students can afford and by the God’s Grace I am instrumental.

Sherry Sabbarwal, (Chandigarh)

It is heartening to see what an organization can do to make difference in life of those underprivileged children so that they can be prevented of being abused as child labour due to circumstances they are born in, with no fault of theirs. I always think what if I was in their place. I would have looked up to someone to help me. That drives me to do more for these children. I have been able to get a grant of USD 1,000 from my head office for this year. If we send more of our work, we will try and get more grants from various such organizations.

Anil Pakale, (Abu Dhabi, UAE)
Deepalaya has shown me how a little help can go a long way in changing the lives of children in need. I was fortunate enough to tour the Deepalaya facility, and meet Harsha and her brother, Mohit, in March this year. I was truly impressed by the nurturing and loving environment the children received at the school. The children were well-mannered, and respectful. They presented me with beautiful artwork and lovely notes. But for Deepalaya and the hard work of all its volunteers and employees, these children would have been on the streets of Delhi, struggling for the basics of everyday life. Three cheers to an organization that is changing the lives of the future of this world! We should all help this cause in any way we can.

Geetha Sankaran, (USA)

I would like to take this as an opportunity to thank organizations like Deepalaya in helping us give back what we earn to the society. Many of us intend to help the not-so-privileged children but are not able to convert this intention into action. Deepalaya helps us do that by providing easy and accessible ways of giving donations. I am also very happy with the regular communication from Deepalaya and the report on the children sponsored by us.

I feel humble when I look at the reports which come to me on two of the children whom we have sponsored and I show them to my children to appreciate what they have in life and I want my children also to inculcate the feeling of giving back to the society.

It was while searching for an NGO that helped children’s education that I came across Deepalaya. This was back in 1999 and after securing a firm job with a decent income, I wanted to thank God and in some way show my gratitude for the heavenly blessings thus far in my life. My wife and I both were convinced that the best way to help a needy child was to empower them to a reasonably good education. Deepalaya was doing just the right thing with slum children and we had no hesitation in becoming sponsors for a couple of needy kids.

A few months after being sponsors, we got an opportunity to visit Delhi. One hot morning we arrived at the Deepalaya office and were taken on a visit to a school teaching these wonderful kids. The school was a huge hall covered with asbestos sheets built close to the dwellings of the kids for whom this facility was meant for. It was hot and though I was determined to stay & meet the ‘special lady’, the child we were sponsoring, I was also, at the back of my mind, longing for the comfort of the air-conditioned hotel room. But the next 10 minutes changed all that. Every one, the administrative staff, the Deepalaya volunteers, the teachers and the children were cheerful and were going about their duties just like any other normal individual under normal circumstances. Not one of them had a wrinkle on their faces that hid the backdrop of the kind of effort and organizational ability it had taken to put this running school and smiling kids in place.

This really touched us and the already respectable contribution of Deepalaya and its staff was even more elevated in our minds. To impart education to a needy child is at least put it in a positive to make a decision on his/her own future is a great contribution one can make to society. We are indeed very grateful to Deepalaya for doing such a commendable job and in a small way helping us become a part of it.

All the best! May you see many more such decades of exemplary service to society.

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She but as she came, I felt an immediate connect. I told her to narrate alphabets to me and she did, without missing even one. I was so proud of her. It must have been a similar feeling to the one any parent would have for their own children, when they perform well.

I have her picture on my work desk and it gives me immense encouragement to see her smile, every time I feel bogged down. She is my strength and because of her, I have become more humane.

Certainly both as an individual and President of a foundation committed to the welfare of the underprivileged, the work done by Deepalaya in sponsoring a child is commendable. It is well organized with good follow-up and hence it should be quite effective in its aims. The money contributed by donors is well-spent in education and healthcare of children from poorer section of our country. I hope that the good work done so far will be kept up.

My association with Deepalaya has made my family & friends aware about the need to give children, who are less fortunate, a helping hand. Unfortunately, in my Western consumer-driven society, we take literacy and educational opportunity for granted. My reason for choosing Deepalaya to sponsor my two girls was that I believe the donation goes straight to benefiting the children, no wasteful luxurious lives like many other organizations. The sponsorship has made me take notice of all the events that take place in India, and the country’s emergence as a new economic power.

I love all the good work you are doing at Deepalaya and I am honoured to be a small part of the drive to give children the opportunities that they deserve.

Rachita Mittal, (New Delhi)

This is my 2nd year of association with Deepalaya and despite the fact that I am not in India most of the times, Deepalaya inspire a lot of trust in me and I am assured that the money has been channelized to the neediest child.

I am sponsoring 2 kids, Arshad and Ketki though I have never met them, I keep getting their progress updates and I am already attached to both of them. I would thank you for getting us together!

Abhishek Pathak, (New Delhi)

We cherish our partnership with Deepalaya and appreciate the tremendous work that Deepalaya is doing for marginalized children. Even amongst most deprived segment of our society, it is children who are most vulnerable.

We have seen several initiatives of Deepalaya from a close quarter and believe that Deepalaya is doing a path breaking service to humanity in most ethical and transparent manner. Our own partnership with Deepalaya has not only benefited the community but has also helped us both enrich from each others areas of specialization. In TK Mathew, they have a true visionary and leader who would help Deepalaya make a still larger impact on lives of our children

Praveen Aggarwal, Head of CSR & Sustainability, Coca Cola Inc, (Gurgaon, India)
See what happens when imagination takes flight