

# 2020 AT A GLANCE

ASHA GOND – THE STEPS I'VE TAKEN



A low-angle, close-up photograph of a person's legs and feet on a skateboard. The person is wearing dark blue cargo pants and light blue sneakers with white laces. The skateboard is on a wooden floor. In the foreground, a black microphone stand is visible, slightly out of focus. The background is blurred, showing some red and orange lights.

# **JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL**

**JANUARY 2020 – START DOING FROM YOUR HEART!**

In 2020 my learning journey started in Jaipur. I went to the Jaipur Literature Festival with my village kids. We were once again invited to participate in their outreach program. I've been there before. When I reached I came to know that I would be the coordinator for the Janwaar kids and that I have to observe them every day and have to write about their progress. I thought I would perform. I was very much surprised.

I simply accepted the fact but inside I felt very sad. I was sad because I myself would not be performing. And I love performing so much! So I saw one of my passions happening right in front of me and I could not participate. My desire was so big, I was so sad, I couldn't watch the others perform. I felt horrible. And I cried a lot.

I calmed down and said to myself : "Okay, Asha, let's get your act together and start supporting your kids!" After a two days I started observing children. I started writing about them and I enjoyed writing about their progress. I enjoyed seeing them moving forward.

This experience taught me a beautiful thing: No matter how difficult any task might be for me, if I start doing it from the heart then it will become more and more beautiful and much less difficult!



# ASHOKA FELLOW

A PLAN IS HELPING ME TO SEE WHAT I WOULDN'T SEE WITHOUT IT

I became a **Ashoka Fellow** in 2020. So did Arun. Together we attended a workshop in Bombay where we met all the other fellows from Bihar, Varanasi, Punjab, Bhopal, Bombay and two more places. In total we were 13 change makers. I had a very good experience from this workshop.

We set our goal for the next six months. We - Arun and I – decided that we set up our own little school in Janwaar. The kids in the village do not go to school, because it is not really fun. So we decided to teach the little ones basic things in a fun way within the next months. The older children who already go to school we were planning to improve their Hindi writing and reading.

We set our goal but we had no idea how to reach it. And it took us a long time to do this work properly. I was facing various problems. One problem was that the children did not come. I had to go to their house every day to call them. Only after some time the children started coming. So I started working with them. I was working with them in different ways but I wasn't able to understand how much they have learned and what they've really understood. This was another problem. After a while I asked Ulrike and Abhishek, one of our mentors, for advice.

I started writing a weekly plan (in an excel sheet) which included my learning activities with the kids, the learning outcome, which learning materials I was planning to use, how I will assess and evaluate. I also included the feedback of the kids themselves.

All this has helped me a lot. It got very easy for me to work with the children because now I know what to do with them, and how. I also realised how much the children have learned, how much they've understood. Based on my weekly evaluation and the feedback of the children, I know how to plan the next week.

Abhishek has been coordinating with me and is still doing so. These keeps me staying on track.

I would say, we now have many small children who know the alphabet and have basic knowledge of quantities. And the older children can write and read Hindi better.



# TROUBLES ARE GOOD

Ever since I've started working with the children, a lot of difficulties have come up. I was also very upset about things. But I never let my feelings die. I learned that troubles are here to face and to learn from them. I always stood up and started to believe that troubles are here for the good. If there are no troubles, nothing will happen at all. It all will stay the same, nothing will change. If I want change, then trouble has to come.



**GET IT DONE!**

**THEN YOU WILL FEEL GOOD :-)**

The Corona virus and the lockdown going along with it, brought many problems for our villagers, especially for our poor people - including my own family. There was first a scarcity of food, then food prices went up while at the same time people had much less work, sometimes none at all. Ulrike and we talked about this and we started a fundraiser. Many people and institutions have helped us and donated money. And with that money we were able to buy food. We found a vegetable seller in Panna and twice every week he sent an auto-rickshaw to Janwaar with 120-150kg vegetables and whatever else the villagers needed. This was enough food for 30 families and 11 old people who are living there alone.

My job was to distribute the food to the families in the village. But apart from this, I had another job to do from which I always ran away!!! It was accounting. Vegetables came in twice a week, sometimes even thrice, I had to write a receipt for each delivery including the amount of vegetable delivered, the costs and to whom we gave the stuff. There was this hand written receipt and then an excel sheet. This way we could easily see how much money we'd spent. But many times I did not even make the receipts, leave alone the entry into the excel sheet. Then I would get a message from Ulrike reminding me to send the receipt and update the excel sheet. Then finally I sat down with a grim face and wrote the receipts and I thought: I forget, but how does Ulrike remember?

I know very well that Ulrike never forgets anything about the work!!!  
So, I made a decision after a long time: Whenever the vegetable and fruits will come, I will write the receipt at the same time and at the same time I will send it to Ulrike and update the excel sheet!

Through the procedure I also learned to do other things on time. Yes, still sometimes I do have excuses for not being on time and doing my job, but I am much better now! For me it is very difficult to control my mind, to do all the things at the right time and do the correctly and easily. But when I am able to control my mind, I work easily. And after that I can speak comfortably .... I don't have to look for excuses. It's work, it's nothing else but simply work.

I always think of small things too big.  
I don't feel well if I know there is some work left. That I need to do something.  
It is difficult for me, but I know also when I've done the job it really makes me feel good!  
Now I always say happy: "Dude, no matter how much work I have, let me just finish it and then I know I will feel good!"

And I really enjoy doing it with great happiness!

A person with long dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt, black pants, and a black cap, is skateboarding on a concrete ramp. The ramp is part of a larger concrete structure with several levels and ramps. In the background, there are large green trees, a brown cow standing on a dirt path, and a small building with a blue roof. The scene is set in a rural area with dry ground and some low-lying vegetation.

# EXAMS ARE CLOSE

This year I also filled my application for the NIOS exams, 10th grade.  
It is for the second time. Last time I just let it pass. But now I am serious.  
I made this decision because I feel that I need to do it.  
The exams are in January/February 2021.  
I spent a lot of time studying and preparing for my exams.  
Yet I keep working with children.  
I have online sessions and also coaching classes.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Asina