



Friends of ASHA (Ireland)

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 5th April 2023

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 5th April 2023 including the audited accounts for that period.

1.0 Reference and Administrative Details

For general matters and enquiries:
Friends of Asha (Ireland)
c/o Mrs. Victoria Thampi
95 Sydenham Avenue
Belfast BT4 2DL

For financial matters:
Friends of Asha (Ireland)
c/o Mr. Norman Graham
8 Beaumont Hill
Ballymena BT43 6BJ

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 101268)

2.0 Charity Trustees

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were:

Mrs. Valerie Alexander
Mrs. Pearl Donnelly
Mr. Norman (Barney) Graham
Mr. Freddy Martin
Mrs. Lynn Montgomery
Mrs. Victoria Thampi
Mr. Gareth Williams

3.0 Principal Office Bearers

Chairperson:	Mrs. Victoria Thampi
Secretary:	Mrs. Pearl Donnelly
Hon. Treasurer:	Mr. Norman (Barney) Graham

4.0 Accountant

A1 Accounting
17 Millreagh Drive
Dundonald
Belfast BT16 1WP

5.0 Independent Examiner

Time is Limited, Chartered Accountants

6.0 Bankers

Ulster Bank Limited
Arches Retail Park
Connswater
Belfast BT5 4AF

7.0 Description and Purpose of Friends of ASHA (Ireland) [FOA(I)]

FOA(I) was formed in 2002 as the all-Ireland support group for the ASHA charity which is based in Delhi, India. FOA(I) has a strong Christian ethos and enjoys full UK charitable status under the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland. It also has HMRC Tax Exemption – Ref XR 37459. All work carried out by the charity is done by unpaid volunteers.

There are currently 7 Trustees (see details above) and no employees.

8.0 Description of Asha Society

The Asha Society (www.asha-india.org) is a charity established in Delhi in 1989 that is dedicated to improving the lives of the urban poor through programmes covering health, education, empowerment, environment, infrastructure development and financial inclusion. Asha works amongst nearly one million slum inhabitants covering 95 slums in the city of Delhi. Asha's interventions focus on the rights of slum dwellers and it works in partnership with them and the Government to bring about sustainable poverty reduction and positive change.

9.0 The year 6th April 2022 – 5th April 2023 for FOA(I)

Thankfully this year saw a slow and steady recovery to more normal pre-Covid activities for FOA(I). We were delighted to have a visit from Freddy Martin (Asha) from 19th to 28th November. During this time, he undertook speaking engagements in a number of schools and Churches. A celebratory meal to mark the visit, with our special guests Freddy and Shiv, a young man from a slum community who has graduated from a Delhi university, held in a Belfast City Centre Pan Asian restaurant with over 70 people in attendance.

The trustees were delighted to see the first teams from N. Ireland since Covid starting to visit Asha in Delhi again. Two teams from Northern Ireland travelled to Delhi to work alongside the slum communities there. The first team to go out to Delhi in February 2023 was from Dunclug College, Ballymena and was led by Mrs. Valerie Alexander, a FOA(I) Trustee. The team visited a number of slum communities and interacted with the children's clubs (Bal Mandals) and young people. They also managed to raise an amazing £11,400 which was gratefully received by Asha.

The second team to travel in early March 2023 was one from the Ballymena area to build a home for a slum dweller in a colony called Savda Gevhra in NW Delhi. The team was coordinated by Tony Farquhar, but unfortunately, he sustained a hand injury at work at the last minute which meant that he was unable to travel and lead the team. However, they appeared to manage well without him and had a very successful trip. They had worked hard in the months before they travelled and managed to fundraise a fantastic total of £14,105 which was sufficient to get the property completed after their 2-week work trip, with any surplus going to Asha general funds.

Income for the year was slightly down on the previous year, but FOA(I) has a strong base of regular personal contributors who, along with Church and school donations, meant that over £90,000 was transferred to Asha over the period. The trustees are extremely grateful to all donors and we look forward to working closely with them in the year ahead. We are aware that some more schools are planning trips to Delhi and that is so encouraging! We know that both pupils and teachers will really enjoy their visit to the slums of Delhi where they will receive a very warm welcome. The experience will be a memorable one and for some, will be life-changing.

FOA(I) look forward to February 2024 when Asha will celebrate its 35th anniversary. We hope to have an early celebration of this event when Freddy Martin visits N. Ireland again in November 2023. The Trustees also continue to consider new fundraising ideas and partners so that we can continue to help meet the needs of the slum dwellers that Asha work with.

10.0 The year April 2022 - March 2023 for Asha

In the health sector, Asha regularly conducted regular clinics with would-be mothers, children under five years of age, the elderly, and patients having diabetes, hypertension and respiratory issues, along with general clinics. There was no maternal death, and the child Survival rate was 99.7. All pregnant women had their deliveries by trained health workers. 98% of children were fully immunised.

Love and Lunch. This initiative ensured that the neediest, poor and abandoned elderly men and women in the slums received better nutrition through delicious lunches prepared and served by the Asha team at every community centre six days a week. An atmosphere of love, joy, and compassion is fostered, and the recipients are doing much better with this care and attention.

Specialised nutritional care programmes for hundreds of malnourished children and women continues in the slums, medical checks being done regularly.

Asha ensured all children were enrolled in school. Around 220 students were supported for university education in India. Twenty-three college students were assisted to undergo summer internships at different multinational companies like Macquarie Global, and Irish Embassy and New Zealand High Commission. Nine hundred fifty high school students accessed the library and study centres at the Asha resource centres. 1200 school and college students accessed IT labs in the slums.

Asha accomplished another milestone by sending the first girl, Mohini to pursue a master's at the University of Queensland, with a full scholarship. Along with her, two more students, Sunny and Sumit, received the opportunity to study master's at the University of Sydney on an equity scholarship. They joined Tushar, who is already pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations at the University of Sydney and Chandan, who is pursuing PhD in maths at the University of Melbourne.

Asha continued to empower more than 600 women and 650 children, and they continued to work as agents of change in their slum communities by liaising with elected legislative members and officials from government agencies. The women's group ensured that all the infrastructure in the slum, including community toilet complexes, parks, and garbage disposal depots, were properly maintained and repaired from time to time.

Asha also provided emergency relief to slum communities affected by floods and demolition. Food, medicines and temporary shelter was given to the affected families

Asha India also hosted two teams from Ballymena, Northern Ireland: team of builders and team of students and teachers from Dunclug College. The builders were able to construct a home in Sawada Ghevra, this home like in the past provides housing and shelter to the poorest of the poor families. The Dunclug team spend a fortnight in a slum in south Delhi doing various activities with children, young people and elderly.

Asha has embraced the "Asha Way of Life" values like generosity, justice, compassion, dignity, affirmation and others are practiced in the slums. Asha has renewed its commitment to work together and become a force for liberation and transformation through empowering others. It continues to emphasise servanthood in leadership, fostering mutual acceptance and appreciation. Every member of the Asha family and community has practised the "Asha Way of Life" in their own way- writing gratitude letters, donating clothes, and items of need, sharing food, practising the value of affirmation with each other and other innovative ways.



Victoria Thampi
Chairperson, FOA(I)