At Aseema, we strive to ensure that all our students emerge to be successful learners ready to engage actively in society as productive, problem solving and ethical citizens. We aspire that their social conscience and sense of personal responsibility will promote positive relationships with their family, their community and the environment at large.

Our students imbibe these skills and qualities during their years at Aseema starting as toddlers. Their young minds are nurtured through active participation and interaction and a uniquely designed curriculum that is challenging as well as inspiring.

The impact of the holistic high quality value based education delivered at our schools is further enhanced by a mutually respectful partnership with parents and the broader community.

Our students are spread across the following schools:

**Mumbai**
- Pali Chimbai Municipal School (PCMS)
- Santacruz (W) Municipal School (SMS)
- Kherwadi Municipal School (KMS)

**Igatpuri**
- Aseema Sitabai Kavji Mengal Anganwadi (ASKMA)
- Aseema Bal Shaikshanik Kendra (ABSK)

In this edition of our annual report we have a new feature. One of our senior teachers reminisces on the journey of a child at Aseema from Pre-Primary to Secondary Section as well as her journey from a teacher to a facilitator.

She also shares with us priceless anecdotes which showcase the impact that Aseema’s unique approach has on the lives of our children. These anecdotes also give us an insight into the level of involvement and commitment our teachers have towards moulding the lives of our children, enabling them to realize their limitless potential.
Our young toddlers aged 2.5 to 5 years at our schools in Mumbai and Igatpuri walked into school, some with tears welling in their eyes, this being their first year at school. Others came excitedly to begin another year of fun and learning. However, in no time the schools became a second home for the children with activities that addressed their quest for independence within a safe and secure environment. The rhythm of repetition pacified the new children to settle down in the new environment and enabled the older children to hone their skills.

The fundamental Montessori principles of respect, freedom and independence of every child continued to be our primary focus. The teachers facilitated the children towards independence, love for learning, developing at their own pace and experiencing that school can be an unending adventure - one that inspires a lifetime of discovery.

A peek into the classrooms and you notice that the children are both busy and engrossed in the activities at hand.

Our teacher shares her experience in the Montessori classroom.....
“A Montessori classroom on the face of it seems like children are busy at work, but if you sit back and reflect, you will observe deep human values surfacing from the children’s actions. The whole idea behind working with a mixed age group is that the younger ones learn from the older ones and it is heartening to see this come alive in the Pre-Primary classrooms.

One child counting beads, another working on a map of Maharashtra and in another corner the teacher introducing a new language activity to a child. Each classroom is designed to provide an environment where children fulfill their natural curiosity.

Each morning the children would help me set up the environment. It is beautiful to watch the older ones help the younger ones with their task. Values of love, patience, care and teamwork, among many others begin to surface. I would sit with a small group of children and the class would continue as if I am not present. Through observations the children taught me the greatest lesson of life, they taught me that they may be little in size but they have limitless capacity to continue learning, along with having a helping and caring nature. I also learned that they took better decisions than me in problem solving. This kind of independence and learning has helped me grow from being a teacher to being a facilitator in their growth.”
Our teacher shares her experience:
“Every morning seeing young energetic faces filled with mischief would be how I start my day. Where else do you think you will be greeted by big chirpy smiles first thing in the morning? As a ritual, teachers stand at the door to receive the children. It is said that this helps build a bond between the teacher and the child but it did much more than that - for the children and for me. It made me want to come to school just to be the one waiting with open arms and a big smile to welcome the children to their second home.”

Children from Standard I to VII hopped, skipped and jumped their way into another academic year. The children undergo various changes and transitions as they continue their journey from the Pre-Primary into the Primary Section. Each year they learn to adjust to new challenges and new environments in their little world. Despite all the challenges, our children come back to school on the first day of the new academic year happily, like there was no summer break at all! The school calendar is always full of exciting academic and co-curricular activities aimed at the holistic development of our students and last year was no exception. Inculcating a love for reading is an integral part of our approach as it lays the foundation for increasing the children's comfort level in the language. During the year, various reading programmes were conducted for all our primary children. The children's sense of excitement and eagerness to read the books was contagious.

Taking forward the Montessori approach, the Activity Based Learning (ABL) approach is adopted in the Primary Section. It encourages our children to develop their opinions and form value systems based on discoveries they make themselves. Through this approach, children learnt about faraway galaxies, prehistoric eras and present day environmental issues. Each subject was brought alive and linked to the other in a seamless manner.

The Resource Room at the Pali Chimbai Municipal School makes learning a magical journey for the children who are brimming with diverse ideas and an impatient quest to grow and learn. With curiosity in their eyes the children look and explore for answers in subjects that range from Math to Social Studies and from Science to Languages. The career fair and weekly classes in the Resource Room ensure that the students have a platform to interact, imagine and question individually as well as collectively.

At Aseema, we encourage in our children the spirit of self-governance. This is exemplified by the elections to the Student Council which continues to grow from strength to strength. The school and the children have faith in their new leaders and the teachers are also certain that they will uphold the distinctive legacy and traditions of the school.

Throughout the year it was heartening to see the children add new chapters to their learning journey. By acknowledging each child’s individual voice and talent our classrooms became places of meaningful learning.
As our children enter and go through the final stretch of their journey toward the board exams they are also dealing with tumultuous adolescent emotions. It is a stressful time for them and our group of able teachers, aid and facilitate them to overcome their challenges in academic as well as other areas. This timely guidance and support enables our children to develop into confident individuals.

We take great pride that the 2017-18 batch of Standard X students at the Santacruz (W) Municipal School and Kherwadi Municipal School passed the S.S.C Board Examination with 100% results. Our children achieved 14 distinctions, 40 first class and 29 second class at the S.S.C Board Examinations 2018. As they move ahead they do not know where the next stop of their journey will lead them to, but we are certain that they will make positive choices for themselves and their communities.
Everything they touch, see and experience and every individual they meet, moulds our children towards a brighter future. Always buzzing with energy, they are given the opportunity to express themselves, recognize their unique talents and expand their horizons. A wide range of co-curricular activities helps the students discover, design, develop and thrive in music, art, computers, sports, library and work experience.

It is heartening to see the children match the beat and rhythm during the weekly music class. It enriches them beyond measure as it improves their cognitive skills, builds on their language skills and above all, brings in them a sense of discipline and calmness. Last year the students at the Kherwadi Municipal School (KMS) celebrated their love for singing by recording the Aseema theme song in a studio. The recording was a culmination of a year of practice and the children took great pride in their progress.

The cheering for one another and shrieks of encouragement, joy of winning and shrugging off failure are the various combinations of emotions that you see on the playground. With one hour of the much loved sports class every day our children get the much needed exercise which benefits them both physically and emotionally. Children who are inclined towards sports also get an opportunity to hone their innate talent. Over the past academic year, we achieved a tally of 150 medals in sports that included judo, langadi, kabbadi, rugby, handball, volleyball, kho-kho, basketball, football and cricket.

Project Ringtones pushes each child’s thoughts, where no mind has traversed before making each computer class a fun filled world of games and stories. Over 250 students at Pali Chimbai Municipal School and Kherwadi Municipal School take great pride in converting their ideas to stories and games thereby slowly enhancing their programming, creativity, problem solving and storytelling skills.

The ‘How to Live Programme’ which has been successfully implemented at the Kherwadi Municipal School focuses on ensuring the holistic development of the children - physical, mental and emotional.

Covering topics such as stillness, overcoming fear, courage, happiness, harmonious living, giving and love, this programme instils the right values in our children thus enabling them to develop into well balanced individuals.

At Aseema’s Bal Shaikshanik Kendra at Igatpuri our uniquely designed vocational training classes ensure that the children remain as close to their roots as possible. Through a combination of theoretical and practical classes, the children are introduced to agriculture and gardening and tailoring sessions. The agriculture and gardening classes help the children learn various tips and techniques of farming which they can then teach their parents. The tailoring classes provides them with a skill that can be explored as an alternative vocation in the future.

Our teacher recounts:
“My journey at Aseema is different and that is the true USP of this place. I met a person for the first time who said that grades were not important but tapping their potential was. Each child is different and thus respecting their differences was more important than math or science. When I think of the current education system in India the question arises that is it even possible to cater to different needs and ability all at the same time? Not only were these children first generation learners, but they also came from challenging environments. Through a wide range of co-curricular activities, the teachers take lessons of love and leadership, feeding love, values, passions and dreams to these young buzzing minds!”
Cultivating awareness in the parents and the community about the importance of education and making them active partners in the child’s journey through school is a task we take very seriously.

The Community Work Centre (CWC) at Aseema strives to strengthen parent-school partnership as only through this can learning and developmental outcomes of each child be fully achieved. Our social workers through casual as well as planned training sessions equip the parents with the means and ways to ensure that care and protection of every child is extended even beyond the school. Over the past academic year, we achieved an average attendance of 85%.

Our teacher recapitulates:
“As teachers and social workers we would know more about the child than the parents. I knew everything; right from what was cooked in the house to who came and what kind of fights took place. Yes, children talk...I would talk to the parents about things that happened at home and how it has impacted the child. The trust was built and the children trusted me more. They had stories to share and my work was to help the child towards positive self-expression. It is amazing to watch children who come with such disturbed situations concentrate and work ever so peacefully as if nothing else matters. This was their safe place.

The children across our schools come from economically under privileged backgrounds. And my biggest question was how to convince the parents about the importance of education when they had no clue where their next meal would come from or their house had just been demolished and they had no roof over their head or a fire had landed them in the same situation. Igatpuri being located in a tribal belt the challenge is compounded by the parents wanting to send the children to the fields to work instead of sending them to school. Constantly speaking with the parents about the importance of education and showing the progress each child has made, helped the parents hold on to their faith in us. We conducted educational exhibitions and allowed parents to come and observe ongoing classes. Keeping in mind, that seeing is believing, we have built a bond of mutual trust and understanding with the community over the years.

If we want to bring about change, we need to be an active member in this process. Children become what we are as they have this natural tendency of imitation. Hence apart from learning at school, they also learn values at home, making parents an equal partner in this journey. Invariably all our direct and indirect contact with the child helps form their personality.”
At a tender age our children are exposed to situations that are far beyond their understanding or comprehension. That is why Aseema places special importance on counselling. Our trained counsellors help the children cope with their difficulties and come out as stronger individuals.

Our teacher shares the story of one such child:

“Working with our children has taught me a lot. It is very difficult to understand what lies behind an innocent face and the sadness behind a smile. While dealing with adults is difficult, interaction with a child can become almost impossible.

I remember a young girl in our school some years ago. All she would do was silently cry. The whole day you would see tears flowing. How do you communicate with a child who only communicates through tears and not words? The only response to anything asked was tears. I knew help was required but was clueless how to proceed.

This girl has now come a long way. She now believes in herself and we never stopped believing in her. She surprised us many times over the next couple of years. From the girl who would not utter a single word she was now attempting to express herself in English. She would often be seen with her books. During lunch breaks she would be the only one in class with her books trying to learn. Remedial teachers helped her a lot during this phase of her life. She even carried books during the class picnics and while everyone was singing and enjoying themselves in the bus she was sitting in a corner reading. When asked she said, ‘I really want to pass the exams.’ Her determination and perseverance has brought her up to Standard X.

She is currently preparing for her SSC board exams and has reached here all by herself. She taught me a great lesson too. It is easy to label children but miracles happen when you believe in them. Her spirit to never give up is what brought her so far.”
Our teacher shares her experience:
“Aseema has grown in leaps and bounds. After following the Montessori approach for many years and bearing the fruit it was time to extend faith further. Many visitors and well-wishers impressed with the school and the children, have been proposing to spread this approach and finally we decided to broaden our reach by offering training to teachers at other schools. I was fortunate to train a group of teachers in this approach.

Being in a new city with new people made me realize why the need to extend support was important. Children were still being coerced and rote learning prevailed. Through the training sessions we were not only able to make a difference in the teaching and learning methods but also were able to get the children enrolled in schools.”


Aseema’s Training Center strives to produce great teachers. Training is provided by a team of 6 skilled and dedicated trainers through weekly training sessions, presentations, regular observation and feedback.

Our teachers are provided training on our unique approach. Also up-to-date information, new research on classroom management and new curriculum resources are imparted at the training sessions. Activity sessions on different topics provide the teachers with an opportunity to find solutions to common problems, share ideas, interact, communicate and work together. This further contributes to the professional growth of the team as a whole. Hence training forms a cornerstone for the school’s success.

Apart from the above internal training sessions, Aseema also conducted external training sessions for 28 teachers of the school run by the Amin Girls Inter College in Kanpur stretching from a week to 10 days. It was heartening to see each teacher striving to create a school that caters to each student and makes learning a joyful ride for the children.
We take great pride in our product division as it showcases the unique artwork of our children. This artwork is replicated on a wide range of products ranging from household items to office stationery and from kitchen ware to other personal necessities and accessories. The artwork on each of the products is a journey of self-discovery for our children starting from the drawing board to seeing the creative art work finally reflected on the product.

Armed with paper and colors in their hands, students aged 10 years onwards discover the magic of art. Our art studio, Aseema Room 13 provides an opportunity to the children to express their unique artistic interpretations while enjoying the creative learning process. The children are encouraged to take on new tasks with confidence and curiosity. It is heartening to see them often surpass their own and our expectations! The hours they spend in the art studio not only gives them the foundation of a comprehensive art education but also develops their creative and critical thinking skills.

The projects undertaken are multi-disciplinary as they learn about different artists, their regions of origin, cultures and geography. Each child then reflects their unique interpretation, ideas and imaginations in their piece of art. Seeing their work replicated on a range of products inspires them to continuously engage in creative learning.

As they slowly learn to use art as a language to express themselves, over the past year they inspired us to create 225 products. We were also delighted to be invited to 103 exhibitions. Do visit our Product Division and embrace our children’s imaginations and creativity through the art they have created!
The Alumni represent our shining stars. Seeing them face and overcome challenges with confidence and achieve their milestones as they make their way through the world is a source of boundless joy. We have a network of 267 alumni and together we work towards broadening their horizons and harnessing their talents and energies. These students have come together to give back to their alma mater. Their insights, experiences and stories are truly inspiring and have a transformational effect on the children who are still in school.

Our alumni have taken up an eclectic range of careers and can be found as teachers leading students to climb up the ladder of knowledge, as accountants, sales executives and HR executives in big national and multinational corporations and even as stylists working in salons. Each one is a role model. The regular core committee meetings not only provide them with a platform to share their challenges but they also learn to exchange ideas with one another as well as develop valuable networking skills. With simple dreams in their hearts, we continue to cheer the grit and determination of each student as they inch closer to their dreams.

Our vision of maximizing human potential also holds true for the staff at Aseema. A team of 305 staff which includes teachers, social workers, counsellors, administrators and support staff are all working together to create a holistic environment for our children.

The unending energy level of the children is what drives our team and makes every achievement possible. We work consciously to develop the capacities of our team members and equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitude required. The staff attend a range of training and capacity building sessions on topics such as child welfare, legal awareness, expressions through art, techniques of being a good teacher and many more. Capitalizing on each one’s individual strength, the staff members come together and create centers for learning, development and excellence. We humbly acknowledge the invaluable contribution of each staff member.

We are also extremely grateful for the support offered by committed individuals, corporate and other organizations from different walks of life who have dedicated their time and efforts to help us in multiple ways. Some of them have brought in innovative ideas to help us deliver our programmes better, while others have assisted our students in their studies. Many have organized fun events and programmes for our children making their day memorable and fun, while some others have helped spread awareness of our education programmes. Thank you all for being Aseema champions and enabling our children to realize their innate potential!

After three years as we witness the Igatpuri building finally take shape and the construction workers giving the final touches, our heart swells with joy…. Joy to be humble instruments in uplifting the tribal population from dire poverty by giving them the means of empowering themselves with high quality education. Our new building houses classes from Standard I to X, a state of the art science laboratory, computer laboratory, vocational training room, resource room, medical room and library. All of these will enable our children to go out into the world as well developed individuals. We are also happy to share that we have obtained the SSC recognition for our Igatpuri School, Aseema Bal Shaikshanik Kendra.

As we look back at the year gone by and our journey this far, we feel a deep sense of gratitude towards each one of you who has been the backbone of our organization and enabled us to strive harder to fulfill our mission – of providing high quality value-based education to children from marginalized communities.
ASEEMA CHARITABLE TRUST 2017-18 PIE CHARTS

Our sincere gratitude to our generous donors for their contribution to our work. A summary of the funds received and expenses incurred in the year 2017-18 is shown here.

Donations (%)

- Donation Domestic: 35.21%
- Donation Foreign: 9.14%
- Income from Investment: 35.21%
- Miscellaneous Receipts: 0.01%
- Administration Expenses: 9.14%

Fund Utilisation (%)

- Pali Chimbai Municipal School: 1.24%
- Santacruz (W) Municipal School: 0.55%
- Kherwadi Municipal School: 0.27%
- Aseema Support Centre: 12.62%
- Aseema Sitabai Kavji Mengal Anganwadi: 9.92%
- Aseema Balshaikshanik Kendra: 6.94%
- Aseema Product Division: 21.64%
- Common Facilities: 12.33%
- Administration Expenses: 34.49%

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For any other queries, suggestions and feedback, please e-mail us on: contact@aseema.org
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