**Section 1: Introduction**

Welcome back Upakriti Supporters! We wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing generosity over the last 10 years!

In 19XX, Upakriti was founded by small group of Bay Area volunteers intent on making a real difference in the schooling of India’s most needy and underprivileged children. Throughout the years our organization has gone through several ups and downs; however our commitment to this most worthy of causes has never waivered.

We recognize that communication to our most important asset, our donors, has not been up to par. So in 2011 we are making it a priority to keep you in touch and involved with the critical work being done. In the coming months you will see several positive changes come to fruition.

First and foremost, Upakriti has redefined and refocused our mission.

**Official**: Upakriti's mission is to ensure education continuity for underprivileged children in India. Upakriti will fund efforts that address gaps in areas such as tuition fee, class materials, and school resources so that underprivileged children can stay in school and pursue their educational dreams.

{This is the language officially on the website. However I have rephrased it a bit. Let me know which one you prefer}

**Rephrased: Upakriti will ensure education continuity for underprivileged children in India by providing funds to cover core, basic educational needs such as: tuition fees, books, classroom resources (chalk, pencils, pens, etc.), school uniforms, and in some cases even the funds required to hire additional teachers.  This type of support will allow these eager minds to stay in school and pursue their educational dreams.**

In addition, we will:

* Publish a Quarterly communication to our supporters so that they can stay up to date with our activities
* Update the Upakriti website. Many of you have commented that it needs a major overhaul and we have listened. Stay tuned for more information on the impending release date.
* Improve our presence and visibility within our local communities through more information sessions, team building events, cross-organization events (i.e. Sevathon etc.)

**THE 411 – Jan-Jun 2011**

Thank you for your generous contribution towards Upakriti's causes. Donations were sent out to the following projects:

* [AIM for SEVA](http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=hbu4m5bab.0.0.8fhcfqbab.0&ts=S0241&p=http://www.upakriti.org/Documents/Projects/Current%2520Projects/AIM4SEVA.htm) – Need to validate?
* [SOCARE](http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=hbu4m5bab.0.0.8fhcfqbab.0&ts=S0241&p=http://www.upakriti.org/Documents/Projects/Current%2520Projects/SOCARE.htm) – Need to validate?
* GRAPH (PIE-CHART SHOWING PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN)

Your donations served to support the educational needs of 400+ children. Thanks again for helping make a difference in their lives!

**Section 2: Last Quarter in Review**

[Need concise text capturing what we did last quarter.]

**The Upakriti Board members met for a 2011 planning session. Key deliverables were defined:**

**1) Formulate a new direction for Upakriti in 2011-12. Emphasis is on continuing education based opportunities by funding tuition for underprivileged kids.**

**2) Evaluate CHES - a home for AIDS affected orphaned children that has about 70-80 children.**

**3) Revamp Upakriti website, initiate quarterly Upatrika communication, improve public relations and plan for a Q3 Upakriti event.**

**Section 3: Next Quarter Activities**

1. Fund tuition for kids in SOCARE, AIM for SEVA
2. Initiate and support the new CHES project
3. Upakriti SunFun event on Aug 6th 2011 in the Bay Area

[Need concise text capturing what we plan for next quarter--events, plans etc.  If there is a link for each event on the website, I can include that]

**Section 4: Featured Article – Upakriti and Me by Naresh Kumar**

[I think the orginial article should be presented in full. It is extremely touching and insightful. I believe trying to trim it down will detract from the message.]

**Upakriti and Me**

I am a Valley boy. My path to Silicon Valley takes a familiar trajectory - born and raised in India, post-graduate degree in the US , a cushy job in an enviable Silicon Valley company, a loving family, a house in the burbs, a large circle of friends from a similar background. The typical immigrant success story.

I would say we are a lucky bunch. We came of age just as India woke up to globalization. A time when information technology created a vast boom in jobs. Add to that an immigrant friendly western nation that welcomed us. A perfect deck of cards dealt to us and we seized it.

True, we worked hard, but no harder than our dads and moms did in their generation.

And we reap a life that makes our parents envious and proud.

Yet, the human psyche is a funny thing. Our lucky life has been taken for granted.

Wandering around our social get-togethers and listening to the conversations, I hear familiar threads of conversations - the cost of living, costly housing, costly private schools for kindergartners, envy at the friend who has hit the jackpot in a startup, the weariness of running a two income household. We are all very rich compared to 99% of Indians, yet overhearing us talk, I think we never feel that way.

I met the Upakriti folks when Googling for non-profits focused on children in India.

I connected with them over lunch.The first thing that struck me was how different the conversation was. No talk of the next million or the next hot startup. Neither was there any familiar lament on the cost of living. They only worried about how they could help more children in India effectively.

They had busy lives, families to support, yet they managed to run a non-profit in their spare time, and that too for almost a decade! The conversation was fascinating. The issues seemed familiar to a software engineer - scaling issues, quality control and future plans. Yet, the impact was real, it affected real children who now were off the streets, had clothes to wear, food to eat and books to read. Like Valley-ites they worried, but worried whether they were doing enough, whether they could be helping more, whether they could refine their message to get more help.

All they asked me was what ideas I had.

I came away from the lunch feeling different. It wasn’t just a feeling of guilt that I hadn’t done enough. But a composite set of emotions - gratitude at how lucky I have been, humility to behold how much Upakriti has done and a small zeal to make a difference in the lives of others.

Nowadays, I try to take the bigger picture. Try to stop getting irritated about traffic or meetings.

I try to be more grateful. And I try to help. Help children not lucky to have been born like me.

But children who are lucky that organizations like Upakriti exist.

So my advice to my own son as he grows up would be - Be grateful and be of help to others.

Thanks to Upakriti for helping me realize that.

**Section 5: A World In Need**

On March 11, 2011 our friends and neighbors in Japan experienced a devastating earthquake followed by a tsunami and nuclear crisis. I was traveling in Tokyo at the time and was asked by fellow Upakriti volunteers to recount my experience.

I was in the train station when the earthquake struck. At first I could not comprehend what was happening. However, I quickly came out of my shock and ran outdoors to the city sidewalk. Although I did not fall down or see any physical damage, the shaking was quite violent. I stood wobbling back and forth for several minutes. I distinctly recall looking around and seeing the same shock and bewilderment on the faces of everyone around me. It was surreal.

As a result of the earthquake they shut down all of the trains, subways, and highways for our safety and so that they could assess damage. After 3 hours I was able to finally get back to my hotel and it was just 20 miles away.  It was only after I got back to the hotel and saw the lobby full of people sleeping that I fully comprehended the impact of the event. It looked like a refugee camp with hundreds of displaced individuals.  This scene followed by the vivid images of the tsunami on CNN served to reinforce the true gravity of the situation for me. Throughout the night, I continued to experience intense aftershocks lasting 30-60 seconds. These aftershocks were much stronger than the earthquakes I’ve endured as a resident of the Bay Area.

I was scheduled to return home to U.S. the next day.  In talking to the hotel staff they recommended I leave ASAP.  An airport journey that normally takes 1 hour took 9 hours that day as the country struggled to recover. Although, I ended up missing my original flight I was lucky to be placed on a flight out to the US (Honolulu) that night.  I was literally on the last flight out before the nuclear power plant had its first explosion ...

I am personally very thankful and fortunate to have made it back safely. I can only say that I have the utmost respect and gratitude for the people and country of Japan. The people were so gracious and helpful.  In the midst of this international tragedy there was no chaos and disarray. Everyone was helping and working with one another. It is this sense of unity and honor, that has gained my deep admiration. The rebuilding efforts are just beginning and we ask all of you to help in any way you can. Several reputable charities, non-profits, and NGOs are still seeking donations including: The Red Cross, The United Way, and The Salvation Army.

 

 