

Responses to questions regarding Jagaran proposal

The following questions were raised by members of Birmingham chapter of Asha for Education. Mina Das of Nishtha responded to all the queries about the proposal.

1. What are the other 3 villages & how far away are they from the schools?

The other Three villages: Dhodbesali, Sonagachhi and Gopalpur these villages are about 4 to 5 kilometers from high school, primary school is of course, situated in the village. Jagaran does not provide transportation to the students for going to school.

2. Has Nishtha really got approval from the schools for Jagaran?

Yes, NISHTHA does not require any approval from the school authority for enrolling the children as a part of Jagaran. These children are continuing in the school from last year as they got admission during last year by NISHTHA by motivating the parents in the usual way. Our most important challenge is to retain them in the school because dropout rate here is quite high.

3. What is the exact role of the “educational volunteers” mentioned in the Jagaran proposal if the kids are being enrolled in govt. schools? What are their qualification & how will they be trained?

It is difficult to understand the exact condition of the educational system of rural areas. The schools are overcrowded. A teacher in a class has to take care of about 70 to 80 students. So personal attention of a teacher towards the individual students is very negligible. Over and above our students are first generation learners and there is no educational background in the families. So they have none to coach them in the family. More over they are seasonal laborers and they do almost all household works in the family. Over and above they get very little time to read in the home. So they require constant coaching by the educational volunteers. The qualification of the volunteers is that all are graduates. Our experts trained these educational volunteers.

4. Has Nishtha tried the approach that they specify in Jagaran on a limited basis? I read from the background information that parents take their children out of school for economic reasons so that the kids can do menial jobs to support the family. How is Jagaran going to convince the parents that this is bad? Does Jagaran believe that the parents can be convinced to put their kids back in schools and if so what is their approach and how do they plan to reduce recidivism?

Since long NISHTHA is trying hard to educate girl children of the rural areas as they have very little opportunity to get education for varied reasons and the approach that NISHTHA has prescribed, are very common and NISHTHA has

experimented with these for a long time in the past. So these are time tested approaches.

Through process of long sensitization we are trying to control over the mind of the parents of these girl children. And they are now convinced to send their children to school. We are sure that the parents are convinced to retrain their girl children in the school.

5. The budget mentions a social worker and volunteers. Do all the volunteers report to this social worker?

The volunteers will report to the social worker.

6. What is the involvement of school teachers in this program?

The teachers are supposed to give special attention to these students and pass on information about the results to the social worker. The teachers will also orient the volunteers about the methods they apply while teaching students in the school.

7. The budget mentions T.A. for monitoring apart from T.A. for social workers and volunteers. How is this different?

The social workers & volunteers will be travelling within their work area doing home visits & making sure the school teachers & the teachers outside school (provided by Nishtha) are all doing their job & helping the girls etc. The TA for monitoring is for the Nishtha staff to check on the villages once in a while. The monitoring travel will encompass a larger area but will be done less frequently. Each social worker / volunteer travel will be in a smaller area done very frequently (almost every day).

8. Do the volunteers get any remuneration? Will they be participating in this program for free?

NISHTHA does not pay any remuneration to the educational volunteers but each the educational volunteer gets that amount of money which the students under him/her gets the tuition (Rs.75.00 for each student). So the educational volunteers do not participate free of remuneration.