Site Visit Report: Sankalp Day Care Kanpur
Date: September 13th 2014

Prof. Deepak Gupta, Prof. SSK Iyer and myself visited Sankalp Day Care center on Saturday, September 13th. We reached the center around 10:00 am and children were just getting ready for morning assembly. We informed Ms. Monica Shukla, the teacher in charge that we had come to visit the centre. She welcomed us to the school. The children were just starting the day.

Dr. Dipti and Dr. Ashish also joined us a few minutes later time. Currently total 49 children (32 in day care + 17 in vocational training) are enrolled in Sankalp. Usually all children come to the day care center, but since it was a Saturday, the number of children present was less. There are total 10 teachers (7 at day care center and 3 at vocational training center) apart from a speech therapist, a physiotherapist and a psychologist. Also there are 5 staff members including 2 drivers.

After the morning assembly, children were divided into 7 classes (sections) depending on the degree of their learning disability. Sometimes these classes are combined when a teacher is not present. The usual timings for the center are 10:00AM to 2:00PM and children bring their lunch. Learning to eat their lunch without help is also a part of their training. We visited different classrooms and briefly interacted with children. Children for most part seemed happy and engaged in their activities.

We had a brief discussion with Dr. Ashish and Dipti-ji regarding pressing concerns, one of which was that teachers were not paid for the month of July and August, though Asha Kanpur has money designated for this. It was agreed that vouchers from teachers would be collected and given to Asha Kanpur for release of check towards teachers’ salary. [Dipti-ji has since collected the money from Asha Kanpur and the payment to the teachers has been made. The vouchers would be given to Mr. Mahesh Pandey.]

From the day care centre we left for the vocational training centre, which is run in another rented building about 10-15 minutes drive from the day care center. This building where this centre is run belongs to a relative of one of the children. The center has just started (about 1-2 months back) and the goal is to train these children in some kind of vocation. At present these children (mostly older children) are learning some household work like making and serving tea, cutting vegetables etc. while continuing with some sort of literacy training (reading and writing). Children are also engaged in some crafts work (paper bags, greeting cards etc.) and some basic electrical work. The property owner wants to open a photocopy center in one of the room for his relative (in Sankalp). This location is the center of a market, but it was felt that there is not much market for what these children could make/build to due to volume. It was suggested, that in the beginning these children could work on something small tasks or making of simple articles (like making electrical boards,
paper bags etc.) for local shops for free and to keep the children engaged and learning. At a later point in time, these could be sold at some nominal charges bringing some income to the children.

We (Prof. Iyer and myself) enjoyed a cup of tea prepared by one of the children and some biscuits. It was good to see that this youth has managed to learn these skills and is to that extent self reliant.

All of us then took leave around 12:30PM.

Anshu

Some picture from the visit: