

Comments/Update from Saurabh : Based on replies below, space and transportation seem to be somewhat of an issue at the moment limiting supporting more children. Updates to presentation file on groups: Number of children post-summer'09 session is now 31 students (none of the students that just joined are able to pay the usual Rs 1000/- per child; one pays nothing); number of teachers is at 7; an auto-rickshaw has been added to transport to support 2 children and a teacher rides with these children.

Answers to questions asked in 07/29/2009 Asha-SV meeting :

Q1 : how has the progress been in the past 2 years? (can we say who is at what level of ability now vs what level of ability they were at when they started at the school)

Q2 : do they progress through certain levels of disability/learning?

(from Dr Deepti Misra @ Sankalp):

ans 1... it is hard to document the progress of each child but largely all of them have shown improvements in varying degrees. this depends of the degree and type of disability of the child, the parallel efforts made at home, child's regularity at the school and presence of any associated medical problem, especially epilepsy. to monitor the progress, we revise the individual teaching plans of each child every 3 months and see if there are any problems in achieving the goals and the changes that have to be made. we give the reports of the children once a year in may and the initial assessment of each child is also documented in their file for comparison.

ans 2... I'm giving a few examples of how the children have progressed.

1... a 9 yr old girl Bulbul with downs syndrome was unable to speak anything clearly and communicated through gestures and few unclear monosyllables when she was admitted about 2yrs back. now she can speak 3-4 word sentences and her words are fairly clear. this has given her immense self confidence which has resulted in better performances in all other areas.

2... a 6 yr old autistic boy Jagnain Singh was unable to recognise any alphabets and numbers when admitted 2 years back. now he can write numbers upto 200, can do simple 1 digit additions and can do meaningful counting ie. count and sort the object kind of activity. He can also match simple spellings with the objects and write 3 letter simple spellings.

3... a 29yrs old boy who had severe learning disability, borderline retardation and extremely low self esteem Rahul Mishra could not do simple things, even those that didn't concern his academic abilities. by using behaviour modification techniques during last 1 1/2 yrs, he is now the most responsible student. he is the first one to greet and take care of every new child, feeds the younger children who can't eat themselves and takes care of each child and their belongings while in the school van.

4... a 12 yr old boy Ajai Kumar Raidas who has cerebral palsy affecting mainly his legs could not stand or walk when he was admitted about 1 yr back. Now, with regular physiotherapy, he can stand and walk without support though tends to fall down.

5... a 14yrs old girl Vrinda who has downs syndrome and severe mental retardation could not interact in any way when she was admitted 2 yrs back. now, with constant training, she is following simple one step commands like put this thing there, can eat herself, has started indicating for toilet and goes independently too sometimes though still needs time to be completely independent for toileting.

it is a long list. if you need more let me know.

Q3 : Are any kids turned away? How are the kids selected? Any turned away for lack of teachers or lack of ability to pay or lack of space?

(from Dr Deepti Misra @ Sankalp):

ans 3... no, we do not turn down any admission queries. the queries that have not been attended were mostly because of the conveyance problem. few children didn't turn up because the parents felt that they might get negative influences from the children with more severe problems. this can be avoided if the grouping can be done more uniformly. this is lacking to a certain extent because of lack of space. usually, grouping is done on basis of degree of disability as well as the age group. but we are largely following the disability criteria only at present.

Q4 : Do the teachers/helpers also come on the van?

(from Dr Deepti Misra @ Sankalp):

ans 4... only one teacher is coming with 2 children in a hired autorickshaw because the children can not be trusted for their safety in an autorickshaw. those coming in van are safe so there is no attendant with them.

(Saurabh's comment: See progress section also; an older student Rahul Misra is able to manage other students in the van.)

Q5 : Is the fee fixed? Or can they pay a portion etc.? How is it decided who can/should pay less?

(from Dr Deepti Misra @ Sankalp):

ans 5... no, the fees is not fixed. it is almost like voluntary but fixed contribution from the parents' side. this criteria was developed over a period of time so that no child is denied the schooling due to lack of money or due to lack of parents inclination to spend on a disabled child(this too has to be taken into consideration because ultimately it is the child who suffers because of this attitude). we can make

some strict rules regarding this like showing the income certificate but then, that too is not fool proof in our set-up.

Q6 : What is planned as part of the Awareness campaigns? Who will be doing this? (would money spent on Awareness campaigns go to Sankalp first and they will spend or will Asha-Kanpur directly handle this)

Q7 : Proposal lists Rs. 1000 per month for awareness - has any awareness happened yet since April?

(from Dr Deepak Gupta @ Asha-Kanpur):

1. In awareness campaigns we wanted to give talks, invite talks, arrange publications of articles, call doctors to school who could tell teachers what symptoms to look for in children for early identification of challenged children, arrange nukar natak, and finally take out a rally in Kanpur..the purpose of all this is a) early detection b) sensitizing society so that stigma is removed and the parents can also walk out with their families. But, all this is theoretical....we are finding it difficult to manage to do all this...hence intend to move slowly.
2. We had meetings with doctors, but nothing tangible has emerged yet. We made a presentation to a civic group here. An intern worked in summer collecting information for writing article. She attempted something, but Dipti is not satisfied and she will work on it....I hope this gives an idea.

Q8 : How have expenses been met for last 3-4 months?

(from Dr Deepak Gupta @ Asha-Kanpur):

3. Expenses so far have been managed by personal resources.

From Asha SV Meeting Minutes from 07/29/09 -

[3] Sankalp -- new Asha Stars project [Saurabh]

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ashasv-vol/files/2009p/Sankalp/>

<http://www.sankalp-daycare.com/>

- * New project proposal in Kanpur, will function as an Asha Stars project
- * We have confirmed donors for 3 years
- * Asha Kanpur will closely monitor and visit and evaluate the project on a very regular basis
- * Typically, the chapter covers the budget in case the donors default
- * However, in this case, given SV is not taking up more projects this year, we won't be able to guarantee to cover it
- * Logistically, we need a local SV steward for the project -- Sachin is the steward for now

- * This will be an Asha SV project as well as an Asha Kanpur project
- * Special education day-school since 2 years now
- * Works with kids with varying degrees of autism, cerebral palsy, speech retardation, and other forms of mental disabilities
 - * The program is very individualized
 - * 21 children and 5 teachers (3 special educators, 2 being trained), 1 full-time speech therapist
 - * Visiting speech therapist, once a fortnight; Physiotherapist (5hrs/wk for 2hrs); Rehab psychologist
 - * Periodic medical checkups, consultation with specialists on a need-basis
 - * Facility is a rented premises in Kanpur Civil lines area (is a very centralized locality)
 - * 3 rooms w/partitions added to therapy + playground
 - * central location necessary to have this be accessible to as many folks as possible
 - * Current funds for the first 2 years were raised from local donors
 - * Q: how has the progress been in the past 2 years?
 - * Q: do they progress through certain levels of disability/learning?
 - * Kids are trained in crafts and other vocational training towards a economically self-sustained life for the kids
 - * Session with parents to educate them on the methods
 - * Fair bit of news coverage to raise awareness
 - * They started with very few kids, and by word of mouth, its increased to 21 kids
 - * The service is open to kids of all economic background
 - * Q: Are any kids turned away? How are the kids selected?
 - * There is a bus service to pick up and drop off the kids
 - * Q: Do the teachers/helpers also come on the van?
- * Fair number of students pay Rs1000 per month -- some are sponsored through some doctors
 - * Q: Is the fee fixed? Or can they pay a portion etc.?
 - * They dont have the capacity to take a lot more kids -- in terms of teachers; space is also a concern
 - * Increasing 1 teacher starting 2009-10
 - * Budget includes salaries, Van cost, Rent for the facility, Maintenance/materials etc., awareness campaigns
 - * Details are in the proposal, total cost is about Rs 57K per month
 - * They locally through fees etc. raise about Rs 22K -- and need about Rs 35K per month
 - * Q: What is planned as part of the Awareness campaigns? Who will be doing this?