

Site Visit of project “Asha Mumbai Center”

Project Steward Information (Asha volunteer responsible for the project at the CO chapter):

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Site Visitor's Information:

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A) Preparation before visiting the Project:

I had collected Project Proposal from the Project Steward, Dr.Smita Puniyani and Nikhil Jadhav had informally talked about project every time I came to Mumbai (from US), this project being central to existence of Mumbai chapter the details were known to many volunteers like me who are connected to Mumbai. The trust factor was already established before the site visit.

B) Visit:

Date: 22th June, 2010. Afternoon 4 pm to 8 pm

Name of Project: Asha Mumbai Center

Name of the organization running the project (if different): Asha Mumbai

Was your site visit planned and known to the project, or was it a surprise visit?

Site visit was planned and known to the Project.

Guidelines for carrying out

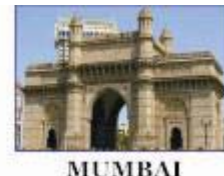
Questions related to Monitoring and Evaluation of a project

1. What is the background and commitment of people involved in the organization?
2. What is the administrative structure of the organization and how democratic is its functioning? How is the relationship between the main volunteers of the organization (or people who run the organization) and the grassroots level volunteers? (Grassroots level volunteers are the people involved in running daily operations, e.g. teachers, ayahs, trainers etc.)

Answer to Question 1 &2: Asha Mumbai has been in existence since almost 10 years, the new generation of Asha chapter volunteers is now running the chapter. [The team I was part of is not active now]. I saw that Asha Mumbai new team is as committed as any stable & good Asha chapter. Dr. Smita Puniyani who coordinates the chapter activities now is very passionate about education and the center; volunteers Nikhil Jadhav, Sangeetha , Latha, Meena- do regularly involve in and manage the activities of the project. All are from Urban, professional



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background. They have teaching staff which helps them to manage the project. I met Navneet and Usha, who actually worked on ground day to day, the whole group looks like solid team.

3. How many women hold key positions or play an important role in the decision making within the organization's hierarchy?

Apart from Nikhil Jadhav, the project is run by women only and in all capacities.

4. Are the grass roots volunteers local or from outside?

All the teachers are local.

5. Do the main volunteers perform only administrative duties or actually spend time at the grassroots?

Main volunteers spend lot of time at grassroots. Even in the smallest activities they take interest.

6. Project:

It is Non-Formal Education centre.

7. If it is a Non-Formal Education (NFE) center being run by the organization how many of the children attending this program go to other formal schools in the area? (This question should be asked to the children and not the teachers or the volunteers of the organization.)

All students attending this program go to formal schools. Many children go to BMC School and other go to private schools. Students attending the program are from 3 different schools.

8. Which are the other funding agencies giving money to the organization and for what programs?

It was remarkable to see that Asha Mumbai was raising good funding itself to run the project. The organization and its activities are typically funded through Smita Puniyani's personal drive and some additional donations raised by other Asha Mumbai Volunteers.

9. What are the daily school hours? How many days of the month/year is the school open?

Schools run in two session :

Morning- 9 to 12, Afternoon 4 to 6.30 , Evening 6:30-9 , Computer Classes 2 to 4 pm

Teachers/Volunteers:

1. What is the teacher student ratio?

1:25

2. How many volunteers/teachers are from the local community?

All teachers are from local community, plus five volunteers in core team mentioned above.



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3. What is their level of education?(Most of them are graduate or 12th standard pass etc.)

6 Teachers are B.Ed., rest are doing B.Ed.

4. What is their professional background? (Working as a teacher from long time, or have teaching experience or some kind of training, or housewife and volunteering first time etc.)

2 of them are junior college teachers, the rest are teaching in other schools/ ngos. They are recruited and paid for their expertise in particular subjects, after analyzing the lags and gaps in the progress of students the recruitment decisions were taken.

5. What is the motivation for them to work here?

Motivation is to work here started from getting part time job, but they are well mixed up with community and lead volunteers.

6. How long have they been with the organization/project?

Actual activity of project in education fields started since 2007.

7. Have they committed personal finances to the project?

Dr. Smita Puniyani and team is committed good amount of personal finances and raised funds.

8. Where do they live, and what is the commute time to work here?

They live close by, commuting is not an issue.

9. How much are they paid, is it at par with other similar projects in that area?

They get 2500/-per month. Yes, it is at par with other similar projects in Mumbai.

10. Are they satisfied with their salaries?

Yes

11. How many teachers/volunteers have left the project in the previous year? Why?

No

12. How many new teachers/volunteers have joined in the previous year?

Four teachers joined the organization

13. Does the organization train the teachers? If yes, how do they provide the training?

No

14. How many volunteers are paid and how many are unpaid volunteers?

9 (teachers) are paid. 5 volunteers are unpaid.

Students:

1. When you visited, how many children were in the classroom?

38



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2. What is the girl boy ratio?

Girl: boy ratio was more than 1. Girls were more active than boys.

3. What is the regular class strength?

Regular class strength is 45.

4. Do the children seem to enjoy the school?

Yes, they are enjoying the school very much.

5. What are the other activities they do outside of school hours?

As from low income families, many girls help their mother in cooking and other works. Boys do help their fathers in work as well as cooking. They looked migrants.

6. What is their motivation for attending the school?

They like studying here as they are not punished and education is entertaining as well. The factor that the project is not charging any fees also counts. Some students say that they cannot study at home because of the atmosphere.

7. Does somebody try to convince them not to drop out? If so, how and how much success have they had in prevention of dropouts?

The students benefitting from the project are not seen to be dropping out.

8. How far do the children have to travel to attend school?

All schools are near to community around 10 min walking distance for 1st to 7th, older children do travel to Bhandup- one Mumbai railway station distance.

9. What do other children of the same age in the community do, that don't attend this school?

General trend in community is admitting to municipal school.

10. Why do they not attend this school?

11. Do they attend another school in the same area?

12. Are you able to accommodate all children who want to join? If not, how do you select? (What admission criteria do you use?)

Answer for Question 10, 11, 12

All the students who come to join are admitted, but the project needs more place and place is costly commodity in Mumbai.

13. Have you made attempts to increase intake of students? If so, how, and how successful has it been? If no, why not?

Volunteers and teachers do meet students and parents after their school hours and convince them that coming to Asha Mumbai center will enhance the quality.

14. Can we get a copy of the school roster and attendance records and progress reports?

Attendance sheets are well maintained and all the documents are available.



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15. Does the school have toilets that the children can use?

Yes, they have 2 toilets.

16. Can you describe a typical day in school for the students?

Students go to Centers' Afterschool tutorial according to their school timings. The details given in project proposal are followed keenly by staff and volunteer.

17. If the school has records of school-administrated tests, can you take a look at it and give your comments about how students are performing?

There is sharp increase in their performance.

Local people/parents/community:

1. What is the relationship between the local people and the organization at the work location?

2. What is the extent of involvement of the local people in the organization's work?

3. What opinion do the people of the area have about the organization?

The organization is established in education activities. People now have no doubts.

4. Do the local people contribute their time, effort or money towards the organization's activities?

Does the organization have a social support base in the area?

Local Asha volunteers do lot of efforts, community does not help much in terms of money. They attend events though.

5. Questions should also be asked of grassroots volunteers and local people outside the organization when the main volunteers (or people who run the organization) are not present to get a true picture of the state of affairs. (More like a guideline than a question)

Infrastructure:

1. How much of the infrastructure and other resources, like vehicles, are being used by the organization and how much of it lies underutilized?

The organization clearly needs more space.

2. Are the buildings permanent or temporary constructions?

The place is rented.

3. What is the current physical condition of the buildings?

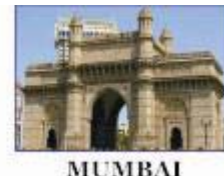
Physical condition is good.

4. How big are the classrooms? How many children do they house?

3 Classrooms (900 sq ft) at a time 60 students occupy these three class rooms. The rooms looked full.



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5. What is the geographical location of the project? Is the construction done keeping local conditions in mind, or is it a generic concrete structure?

Center is located in community itself thus it is advantage for organization and also for children.

School Infrastructure:

They have tuition centre on rent. It contains 3 rooms with 2 toilets. Area is enough to take in 130 students. It is furnished with 2 blackboards, benches, 5 computers, Library of academic and story books, good drinking water facility, electricity (1 fan & 1 tubelight in each room), TV with TATA Sky English teaching module, DVD player with speakers.

Finance:

1. Accounts related information. What is the salary/honorarium that the teachers get? Does it conform to the figures in the account books?

Teachers will get 2500/-pm as honorarium. The accounting is transparent.

2. What is the amount being spent on the children for snacks/food, clothes, etc., according to the budget and whether it conforms to the real situation?

Not much amount is spent on children for notebooks, but the books are given by the project. Nothing on food and clothes.

3. Do they have detailed records of past funding and spending? If yes can you get copies of that? (Copy of annual financial statements, for example)

Yes

4. Do they have an annual report? Can we get a copy of that?

Yes

My Observations of Project:

1. Asha Mumbai has gotten its own office and center because of this project, so the chapter and the center are interwoven.
2. The volunteer team looks dedicated, but the project needs some more enthusiastic community development activities and may be a full time person dedicated to the activity.
3. The innovative methodologies are very much welcome in the project, so the students never get bored.
4. Asha Mumbai new volunteer team was not really well connected with rest of Asha, so missed on various organisational resources. They were also not connected with ashanet.org. The blame partly goes to previous generation of Asha volunteers.