

SITE VISIT REPORT OF 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 have taught Maths to students of class IX and X at Asha Center from April 2013 to September 2013. The trust factor was already established before the site visit.

B. Visit Date: 14 May 2014. 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.

C. Background:

The teaching staff at Asha works on an honorary basis. They provide students who are already going to school with the extra help that they require with their studies. There is someone to help the students with each and every subject for all classes from 1st to 10th. ASHA Center works from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm (with the breaks in between). The children come in shifts or batches according to their school timings. Other than the teachers, there are students who come from St Xavier's college under Social Involvement Program. NSS students from IIT Mumbai also come on a regular basis.

Questions related to Monitoring and Evaluation of a project:

1. What is the background and commitment of people involved in the organization?

Dr. Smita Puniyani, Mr Nikhil Jadhav, Ms Sangeetha, Ms Latha and Ms Meena are all from urban, professional background. Dr Smita Puniyani has a private clinic and practices medicine, Ms Sangeetha Teaches in a Private School, Ms Latha is a visiting lecturer at various colleges and Mr Nikhil is doing his PhD at ICT Mumbai. They are all very passionate about education and the center and regularly involve themselves in and manage

the activities of the project. They have committed teaching staff which helps them to manage the project.

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.)**

All the members work at equal level of hierarchy and they communicate to each other before taking any decision. The environment is of full co-operation and consultation with each other. It functions fully with the democratic principles. The communication between the volunteers and the teaching staff is good. The whole group works as a team.

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

Apart from Mr 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 grass root volunteers are local.

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

Main volunteers involve themselves in very many activities and take keen interest in the day to day functioning.

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. Most of the 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?**

Asha Mumbai was raising good funding by itself to run the project. The organization and its activities are typically funded through Dr 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?**

As such the center is open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. The children come in shifts or batches according to their school timings ie either before their regular school or after their school. The center is open throughout the year and is also accessible to those who may need it on holidays.

Teachers/Volunteers:

- 1. What is the teacher student ratio?**
1:25
- 2. How many volunteers/teachers are from the local community?**
All the volunteers and teachers are from local community.
- 3. What is their level of education?**
Most of the teachers are B.Ed. qualified, rest are doing B.Ed. All are either graduate or 12th standard pass.
- 4. What is their professional background? (Have they been working as a teacher from long time, or do they have teaching experience or some kind of training, or are they housewives and volunteering first time etc.)**
Yes, they have been working as a teacher for some time now and one of them is B.Ed. and two of them are trying to do some further courses to enhance their qualifications.
- 5. What is the motivation for them to work here?**
Motivation to work here started from getting a 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 ,Sangeetha ,Lata and Nikhil all keep raising small funds from their friends and relatives for activities off and on. They have committed a good amount of personal finances as well.
- 8. Where do they live, and what is the commute time to work here?**
They all live close by which is within 10 to 15 minutes walking distance.
- 9. How much are they paid, is it at par with other similar projects in that area?**
They are paid an honorarium of Rs 3500/- to 8000/- 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?**
One teacher has left as she got married.
- 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 the organization does not train teachers.
- 14. How many volunteers are paid and how many are unpaid volunteers?**
5 (teachers) are paid. 5 volunteers are unpaid.

Students:

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

38

- 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, the children enjoy coming to ASHA. They come willingly and are regular.

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

Most students come from very low income families and have numerous responsibilities at home. They help in the household chores. Most girls help their mother in cooking and other works. Boys do help their fathers in work as well as cooking.

- 6. What is their motivation for attending the school?**

The students who come here are self-motivated and have realised that education is the only way to better their living condition. The factor that the project is not charging any fees makes them join the center. Many come because they need help with studies and are unable to pay for private tuitions. Some students say that they cannot study at home because of the atmosphere. Some do not have the space or adequate lighting at home.

- 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. Once they have joined and experienced the facilities that are offered at ASHA they do not leave. ASHA Center is not rigid. It is willing to allow the student, specially the older ones to decide want kind of help he or she wants.

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

Most schools are within 10 - 15 minutes walking distance for children of classes 1st to 7th. Some of the older children do travel from and to Bhandup or Vikhroli .

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

General trend in community is to admit the children to the municipal school.

- 10. Why do they not attend this school?**

This school provides additional coaching to students. The teaching standard at Municipal School suffers because the classes are overcrowded and the teacher strength is low. The children are also able to revise their lessons in ASHA.

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

Yes, as stated above, most of them attend a Municipal School.

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

All the students who come to join are admitted, however, the school is already getting crowded. More children are likely to join if more space is made available. Thus the project needs more place and place is a 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?

Yes all records are well maintained and are available.

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 Center's 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 a distinct improvement in performance.

Local People/Parents/Community:

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

The relationship between the local people and the organization at the work location is very friendly.

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

The extent of involvement of the local people in the organizations work is marginal.

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

The organization is well established and known for the educational help it provides. ASHA enjoys a good reputation in the Community.

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 put in a lot of effort. The community does not help much in terms of money. They attend events though.

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. The volunteers use their own vehicles.

- 2. Are the buildings permanent or temporary constructions?**

The place is rented.

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

Physical condition the building is good.

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

There are 3 Classrooms and at a time 25 - 30 students can occupy each class room.

- 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. It is Opposite IIT Main Gate. Thus it is an advantage for the organization and for the children. It is located in a rented apartment.

- 6. Infrastructure:**

The center is run in an apartment that is taken on a lease/rent. It has 3 rooms, a corridor or passage and 2 toilets. Area is can accommodate about 90 students at a time. It is furnished with 3 large white boards, blackboards, benches, computers, laptops, Library of academic and story books, good drinking water facility, electricity (1 fan & 1 tube light 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 get 3500/- to 8000/- pm as an 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. Around 10000 /-to 15000/- is spent on food and clothes in the whole year.

- 3. Do they have detailed records of past funding and spending? If yes can you get copies of that?**

Yes, detailed records of past funding and spending and annual financial statements are available.

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

Yes, an annual report is available.

My Observations of Project:

ASHA Mumbai does excellent work in providing the students with the environment and facilities required to study. Students who come here are from the very low income group and do not get too much help or encouragement from their homes. Most children who come here would never have had any access to computers had it not been for ASHA. It also inculcates a sense of cooperation in the children. Very often you find the older children willing helping the younger ones. Other than studies, children here are also exposed to a lot of co-curricular activities such as dance, drama and art. ASHA holds an Annual day function in which children take part in Dance and Drama. The National Festivals of Republic Day and Independence Day are celebrated. Many of the regional festivals are also celebrated. ASHA also instils patriotism in the children and promotes communal harmony.