Site Visit Guidelines and Questionnaire

Asha Zurich

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for taking the time to conduct this site visit. Your visit will provide us valuable, first-hand information about the project, enabling us to better understand its circumstances and its needs. The following questionnaire is designed as a basic guide to assist you in conducting your visit.

The following set of questions is only a suggested guideline. Some of the following questions may not be relevant or applicable to the particular project you are visiting, but please do try to answer as many of them as possible. Please note that much of the information requested in this document has been collected from the project in their proposal. We would like this information validated by a visitor. It is best to talk to as many people as possible and infer the answers based on their responses, rather than than treating this document as a questionnaire. Parts B & C necessitate that the information be gathered through conversations with the children and their parents, and not simply the group's teachers and staff.

Please feel free to attach any documents/photos you feel are pertinent to the project.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate the project steward responsible for the project at Stanford. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and observations through this review, and thank you once again for your help. Together we can make a difference!

Thank you,
Asha for Education, Zurich Chapter

Preparing for your visit

1. You should be able to collect the following information about the project from the project steward (Asha volunteer responsible for the project at Stanford) prior to your visit:
   - Project proposal
   - Past correspondence with the project
   - Any specific information that the project steward is looking for, from the site visit.

2. You also need to have some understanding of Asha for Education and our mission. This will help you to tailor your site visit in a more fruitful manner for Asha. You can get detailed information about Asha for Education from our web site at http://www.ashanet.org. Our site visit volunteers often find it helpful to study this web site (and this document!) before-hand, and have a copy of the original or modified project proposal with them before starting their visit.

3. We encourage you to talk individually to a broad cross-section of people, including some students, teachers, as well as community members who are not directly associated with the NGO. Such informal interaction is often the best way to learn about the project.

4. We also strongly encourage you to fill out this document yourself, rather than showing it to the project coordinators in India and asking them to fill it out.

5. This document is only designed as a basic guide. Please include any additional information/insights that you consider relevant with your review.

6. We look forward to meeting with you in person and hearing about your experiences, if this is possible. The project steward at Stanford will discuss the possibility of scheduling a presentation at an Asha meeting with you after your visit.

7. We encourage you to take some photographs/videos during your site visit, as they will help us see and hear what is going on at the project. As the old saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words!

8. If the organization is running many centers and it may not be possible for you to visit all of them, visits should be made to centers randomly selected by you rather than letting the organization show you centers of their choice. Organizations are known to run their sample centers which they would prefer to show to you.

Basic information

Date of the site visit: *7-10.01.2018*

Name of the Project: *Lok Biradri Prakalp*

Name of the Organization Running the Project (if different): *Maharogi Sewa Samiti*

Was your site visit announced?   *Yes, it was planned*

	Project Contact's Information	**Site Visitor's (Your) Information (Volunteer conducting the visit)**
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Affiliation to project	President	None
Affiliation to Asha	Sponsored Project Contact	Volunteer, Project Coordinator

PART A: Particulars about the organization and its environment (cross-validation of information presented in proposal)

1. What is the main ideology of the organization behind the project?
   Education is the only way in which the tribal people can be made aware of their condition and therefore strive to improve it

2. How old is the organization?
   1976

3. How and why was it founded?
   The Madia Gond tribes were not only cut off from the civilization, but even from the forms of basic rural existence. As a result, they were malnourished, faced high mortality rates and were completely ignorant of life beyond the jungles. After independence, their list of problems only in creased with large-scale exploitation by forest officials, traders and merchants who rampaged the forests for their own benefit. This condition of theirs prompted Baba Amte to begin a school.
   Lok Biradari volunteers embarked on door-to-door campaigns to persuade parents and make them aware of the various benefits of a good education. The school finally started under a tree, with 25 students on the first day.

4. What are the different focus areas of the organization? (give a rough estimate of the % of their total effort/funding)
   - Community development ___*10*___ %
   - Education __*40*_____ %
   - Health ___*50*___ %
   - Other _____ % (please specify) _____

5. What is the administrative structure of the group (e.g. Board of Directors/Grassroots-based/Volunteer based)?
   There is a Board of Trustees who meet regularly for major decisions.

6. Are there any other organizations working in the area providing any one or all of the services provided by the visited organization? (Briefly mention their names and their objectives)

Organization(s)	Objectives of the organization(s)
2 other NGOs exist in the area	*we were told to search in the district news*
Mother Theresa school	*education; we noticed it when making a visit in the*

	surroundings

7. Is the organization/founder involved with any other social issues/causes/projects other than running the project proposed?
Yes, they are running a hospital since 1973 and a wild animals orphanage.
Recently they helped a community create a pond for water accumulation during rainy season, which could then be used during the whole year for more crops rotations and for fish harvesting.

8. When was the project of interest started?
The hospital was started in 1973, and the school in 1976.

9. What is their vision about the future of the project?
They want to create the 11&12 classes with science focus.

10. What were the initial challenges faced by the organization and by the founder when starting the project? How did he/she overcome them? Who helped them through the initial stages?
First challenge was to convince the tribal people about the importance of education - this was overcame with the help of volunteers.
The next challenge was the tribal dialect, Maria, and the fact that they had to redesign the whole curricula in this language. This is still a limitation as all teachers need to learn it in order to teach the kids.
Finally the infrastructure was a challenge - first lessons were taking place under a tree.

11. Has the organization ever approached the government for funding? If so, what was the outcome? If not, why not?
15 out of the 25 teachers are paid by the government.

12. Currently, what are the main problems the organization faces for running this project?
The fact that they can only admit 50 new students every year, while 400 are applying.
The fact that most students are sent to school not primarily for education, but rather for access to healthcare, good food, good shelter, clothes etc

13. How many centers/schools does the project run? How many of those were you able to visit?

2, I was able to visit both of them.

14. Were you able to choose the project centers to visit? Or were all centers visited suggested by the project partner?
They were suggested, but I saw all of them and the showed me everything I asked.

PART B: The beneficiaries and the community

(Information to be gathered from parents and children)

1. Approximately how many families live in the area?
Not sure, but every year 400 students are brought to the school for enrollment.

2. What do the parents do for a living? (Agricultural worker, Daily wage laborer etc.)
They are tribals, they mostly to hunting and gathering and to a certain extent some started to do agriculture, mainly rice.

3. What is the religious/economic/educational background of the parents/community? (Are the parents able to pay any fees? Are the parents literate? etc.)
Most parents are illiterate and the students are the first generation to go to school. They have a tribal religion, inspired to an extent by Hindu; sexual relationships are accepted between unmarried couples. Most parents live in the forests and re hunters-gatherers, some ar working at the project locations or have some limited commercial activity.

4. Does the project/school target specific families (e.g. agricultural workers, families with specific backgrounds, illiterate parents, first generation learners, orphans, sex workers, etc.)
The admission criteria prioritizes families farther away from Hemalkasa, who live deeper in the forest, they select only 1 child per family and equal number of boys and girls.

5. How often do the teachers meet the parents?
There is a parents meeting on Wednesdays, where by rotation some parents are participating. The purpose is to consult them in decision making.

6. How do the parents/the community view the efforts taken by the organization that runs the project?
The project is very well seen not only in the region, but in the whole state.

7. What is the motivation for the parents to send their children to school?
Access to healthcare, good food, shelter, clothes and education.

8. How do the parents participate in the organization's activities? (e.g. by contributing their time, money or labor in the school's activities etc.)
They are consulted in making decisions.
Some tribal people are working at the project location - either in maintenance and administration, or in artisanal work.

9. Has the community supported the project (e.g. financially, donating land, volunteering, etc.)?
At the new school the land is being rented for a modest amount. There are many volunteers, not sure if from the near community.

10. Are there any Government Schools in the area? (Circle one)
   x Yes
     No

11. **If yes**, how far are the Government Schools from the community?
Not far away but they are not well maintained; the teachers are not maintaining the schools and motivating the students, often they do not come invoking the dangers of the rebels; the controls are not working due to corruption.

12. Why did the parents choose this school over the Government School?
Because they are much more serious.

13. When you visited, how many children were present in the class?
Because it's a residential school, they were all present.
The second school is non-residential, about 5 kids were missing because they have chicken pox.

14. What is the average age group of the children per class? How are they handling older children that need basic education?
About 50 students per class. Most children are enrolled from 1st class, very rarely they accept students in later classes.

15. What is the regular class strength? What is the boy-girl ratio in the school?
It's half-half, as they select them like this.

16. Do the children seem to enjoy coming to school? (Site visit volunteers observation)
Yes, quite a lot.

17.   What portion of children from the local community (approx.) attends this school? What portion of children does not go to ANY school? Where do other children in the community go to school?
The children not going to LBP, go to the government schools, but the quality and and teachers attendance is really poor.

18. What activities do the children do after school hours?
They can access the computer lab if they want to use the Internet, they play, clean their dorms, sign or do sports.

19. What is the main motivation for the students to attend school?
Atmosphere at school, presence of other students, opportunity to do and learn interesting things, access to healthcare (as the hospital is at the same location) and superior nutrition.

20. What is the drop-out rate among students? Why do they leave the school? (If high, what is the organization doing regarding this?)
It is very low; the demand is much higher than the number of students they can accept.

21. What do the children feel about the school? Do they feel happy to come to school every day? (Question posed to the children to gauge their replies)
Yes, they are very happy to be there.

PART C: Details about the project and its staff

(Information to be gathered from students and staff)

1. How far is the project site from the main town/village? How do the children commute? (foot, bus, etc.)
The LBP school is residential; when they go home for vacation (twice per year during rainy season and Diwali) they walk, go by bike or someone is taking them.

At Nelgunda there are kids travelling up to 5km daily; the small ones received some bikes, the others are walking.

2. Are the children charged fees for attending school? (Either school or bus, etc.)
No.

3. What infrastructure and facilities are available at the project site you visited? (eg. Furniture, buildings, toilets, library, sports, hostels, mid-day meals etc)
Residential dorms (boys and girls separated), canteen with 3 meals per day + 1 afternoon snack, sports field, library, computer room

4.   Is the building permanent or temporary construction? Is it owned or rented? What is its physical condition? How are they being maintained at the condition?

Permanent, owned, very good condition

5. How big are the classrooms? How many children per room? How many classes (1st to 3rd etc) per room?

Classrooms have normal size, 50 students in each class from 1st to 12th.

6. What is the medium of instruction? Is this the student's mother tongue?

Blackboard teaching, but also several innovative techniques are attempted; teaching language is Marathi, but teachers can speak also the Maria local dialect./language.

The small classes have a small blackboard which they can re-use every day.

7. What is the mode of teaching in the school? (Check the appropriate choices)

- Formal (State Board, Central Board etc) upto ____*12th*_____ grade (LKG, 5th etc)

- Non-Formal Education (NFE), do the students also attend formal school?__*No*__

- Vocational - *they have also some focus on vocational learning, but incorporated in*

- Other. Please specify _____

8. **If Non-Formal Education,** how many of the children also attend formal schools in the area? **If none,** does the project plan this for the future- either by setting up formal schools or by setting up a process to send children to mainstream schools? *Not applicable.*

9. **If Non-Formal Education,** does the organization create its own study material (books, games)? Or does it use NCERT/NIOS books?

Not applicable

10. **If Vocational,** what do the children do after they finish training?

Vocational training is part of the curriculum.

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

About 8h/day, with breaks, on Mon-Fri and half-day on Sat.

12. How many staff or volunteers are involved in the project? (Full-time/Part-time/Volunteers) What are their roles? Give breakdown by roll (eg. 2 full-time teachers, 1 full-time volunteer teacher, 1 cook, 1 administrator, etc.)

Around 200 volunteers (paid) for the entire project (school, hospital and animal shelter). Out of these 10 are teachers.

13. How many of them are from the local community?

Most of them are from the community, but not the teachers.

14. How many of the staff are women? What are their roles?

Within the teachers, only 5 out 25 are women. Among other roles women are taking care of the kitchen, canteen, bookshop, library and other support roles. There is a very little tendency to have women in the standard feminine roles, but this might often because of preference, as gender equality of opportunities is highly encouraged.

15. What is the education level/teaching experience of the teachers? What is their background?

Most of them are well educated and have a background in the domain they teach. A potential could be for continuous education as many of them are in the same roles since a long time.

16. What is the motivation for the teachers to work in this project (eg. pay, service, etc.)? What are the other employment opportunities that they have in the town/village?

Service to the community, the founder of the project is well known and inspires many volunteers to come to LBP.

17. How long have they been with this project/organization?

It varies a lot. The science teacher works at the projects since 25 years, the computer science teacher since 8. The minimum period a volunteer has to commit to stay at the project is 1 year.

18. How many teachers have left the school in the past one year, and why?

None.

19. How many new teachers have joined in the past year?

None.

20. Does the organization train the teachers? (Circle one)

- ● Yes

- X   No

21. **If yes,** how do they provide the training?

Not applicable.

22. Where do they live, and how much they travel to work here?

They live at the project location, accomodation for the staff working at LBP is offered, unless they live in the nearby community, in which case they walk or bike home. Distance is around 5-10km, but it depends from case to case.

23. How much is the staff paid? Are they happy with their salaries?

The volunteering teachers are paid 13k rupees/month, the government paid teachers are paid 30-50k rupees/month. The govt. teachers are happy, the volunteers are not necessarily unhappy but the differnce is quite significant.
The staff/workers are paid about 200 rupees/day.

24. How often do the main founders/organizers/volunteers visit the center? Do they do only administrative duties or spend time at the grassroots as well?

They live there.

25. What does the organization say about education of the child after they leave its school?

   Most students finish up to 12th grade. Some of them continue their education because there are some admission advantages for the students coming from tribal regions.

26. Were you able to look at actual work of the students? Homework/classwork/tests, etc? Comment.

Yes, but I did not understand much :) Their level of English is not really great. But at the new school in Nelgunda the language of instruction is English and the kids understand it.

PART D: Financial resources of the organization

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit)

1. What are the different sources of funding for this project? (different agencies/Govt)

   Some teachers are paid by government, otherwise donations.

2. What is the annual budget?

It is not known because it is managed together with the hospital, engineering initiatives and the wild animals shelter.

3. Are detailed records of past funding and spending available? If possible, please request a copy (of annual financial statements, for example).

   There should be, but not in big detail. I will ask with next occasion.

4. What is the largest portion of their expenses (salaries/infrastructure/etc.)?

   Accommodation and food expenses.

5. Do the salaries listed on their account books match the salaries that the teachers communicated to you?

I did not discuss salaries with the teachers, but they did not seem to be unhappy or paid unfairly.

6. Do the expenses in the proposal reflect the quality/quantity of material found at the site? (ex. Do the students have uniforms if they have been itemized? Do they have the number of computers they claim to have? Does the food seem nutritious? Are there enough books? etc.)

Yes, the students receive very good food, have uniforms, books, and there is in general at the project location a continuous attempt to improve things.

PART E: Comments

Please use this portion of the document to attach pictures and make additional comments. Remember, we need you to be our eyes and ears on the ground. Please assess the situation carefully. If it seems weird, do let us know. Some examples of red flags- The school claims to be providing students with uniforms and school has been in session for 6 months, but the uniforms look brand new, The school claims high test results for the children, but when you talk to them they are unable to answer basic questions, etc. If you sense something is wrong or the project partner is being less than honest with us, do let us know.

(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)

I visited classes 1st, 2nd 3rd and 10th and 11th. The young ones all wanted to sing songs, many of them. With the older ones we had some Q&A sessions. They asked very interesting questions about Switzerland - population, currency, exchange rate, political system, about the economy, industries. They also asked about our social life - how are the Hollywood movies, what hobbies we have, girlfriend-boyfriend relationships.

In general the project is run very well and fair. I particularly appreciated the emphasize they put on the role of the girls - they admit equal number of boys and girls, and the girls are not wearing skirts but large shorts. I was also very impressed by the dedication and energy of the volunteers.