Virtual Site Visit Report- Shaaron Special School

**Site Vist Date**- 11th September 2022

**Site Visit Method**- via WhatsApp video call.

Attendees

Asha Toledo- [Krishnakant Patel](https://wiki.ashanet.org/display/~krishnapatel66@gmail.com) [Sreenath Samudrala](https://wiki.ashanet.org/display/~sreenath.samudrala@gmail.com) [Ganesh Iyer](https://wiki.ashanet.org/display/~iyerganeshp2@yahoo.com)

Shaaron School- Prema T (Principal)

Summary

1. We first enquired about the finances for the teachers salary and construction work that we funded last year. They have already provided evidence of salary slips and pictures of construction. They informed us that all that money has been consumed completely. There is Rs. 70K worth of work left, which they have put on hold due to shortage of funds. They will provide the audit report this week.
2. Discussed how the school was doing. Currently in the new year starting June 2022 there are only 23 students attending and 7 staff (which includes 4 special educators + 3 support staff). The number of students and staff have drastically reduced after Covid from 60 odd and 13 respectively. Both of these are related to non having enough funds after covid. Due to reduced funds the school is able to provide transportation (2 rickshaws as opposed to 5 before). Also the school is not able to provide food to the children due to reduced funding.
3. We enquired how much money they have in their bank and from whom are they getting money from today. They are getting about Rs 30,000/month from some friends and family donors in Madurai. The rest of the money is being put in by Miss Prema from her person money (which she raises from tuitions). They are paying a lower salary to teachers and staff right now Rs10K/month and Rs 8K/month (With the promise that they will be repaid the remaining amount of 15K/month once Ashas funds are received) and rickshaw is Rs 1500/day. Also we enquired why the money saved from last 2 year’s from operating expenses like food, electricity etc are not available in the bank to support operations this year. She told us that all that money was used for the construction of toilets, kitchen etc last year. The total expense was Rs 13+ lacks of which Asha gave Rs. 7.9Lacks. So they have no buffer money left. Normally the friends and family funds is 3x of Rs 30,000 but has dried out after Covid. Also the support from Remington foundation has stopped as they have diverted their attention to more medical support than schools. So the school is pretty much living hand to mouth right now and does not have a clear idea of how they are going to survive through the year.
4. We discussed how the school can restart mid day meals. Miss Prema is thinking if the Kitchen can be monotised for a mess that can be used to sell food and the income from that can be used to feed the children. But this needs a master Chef which is expensive to get (Rs 900/day). We also proposed the school approaches the government for mid day meals or groceries. They have approached for mid day meals but have been told that it is only available for residential schools. They can get grocery but she thinks it is sub standard. We suggested that something is better than nothing to attract more children (10-15 children not coming due to absence of food). She is open to this idea and said she will look into it. She said she will do her best to start mid day meal from Oct.
5. It is very clear that the school is struggling for money. We asked them what is the immediate need for the school. She said that even though food and transportation are high on the list, Teachers salary is the immediate requirement as she is now having to pay out of her personal fund. **So they are requesting a total support of Rs. 7,20,000 for the year for teachers immediately.** This is similar to what we have been supporting in the previous years.
6. We clearly indicated that we don’t have such kind of money in our account. If the team approves we may support part of it in September. The remaining may be funded if we have a successful WAH campaign. Also we indicated that this may be the last year we support them and we have given them enough waring fo the last 4 years. Also the situation of our own chapter makes it difficult to continue support further. Miss Prema expressed her in ability to get support from other organisations and requested our help finding other donors. We said we will try to do our best. Sreenath suggested we try to help connect them with some CSR funding. So if anyone know of any other options, pls try to suggest something. I think more than funding getting them new donors will the biggest contribution we could do the the school so that they can be independent of Asha going forward.