

Timbaktu Site Visit

Visited by (Bangalore Volunteers): Padmanava Sen, Ankush Dixit, Swapna.
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Dates of Visit: February 1st and 2nd, 2014.

Websites for reference :

<http://timbaktu.org/> (Timbaktu Collective)

<http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=204> (Asha Timbaktu SAC project)

<https://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=1109> (Asha Timbaktu CRC project)

Site Visit Summary:

- Feb 1st
 - Meet Timbaktu Board Members
 - Visit CRC and detailed discussions with Timbaktu members
 - Visit one of 50 centers in surrounding villages
- Feb 2nd
 - Prakruti Badi visit
 - Discussions with prospective Tier II fellows under Timbaktu Fellowship program
 - Visit of CRC facilities
 - Final Discussions and departure

Overall Experience:

All the three volunteers had a wonderful weekend with kids from Timbaktu's Nature schools (residential), students from Children resource centers meant for 45 villages and food made from vegetables in Timbaktu's organic farms. Follow-ups will be required to decide on the final requirements from the Tier I and Tier II programs.

Site Visit Details:

CRC:

After reaching CK Palli on February 1st afternoon, the volunteers met Mary and other Timbaktu Board members. The volunteers were present in some parts of their monthly board meeting and asked some questions regarding the different projects Timbaktu runs, and three projects Asha has been a part of (Militha, Prakruti Badi & CRC)

Then the volunteers went to Timbaktu CRC in CK Palli village, accompanied Akhilesh and Mary to CRC. There, other Timbaktu members were present and detailed discussions regarding Asha projects happened. Timbaktu members explained different aspects of the CRC project- CRC as a resource center, Mobile CRC and their village centers. Also, they showed the appreciation letters from neighbouring schools (including the Model School in CK Palli) for the facilities available in CRC not available in schools of that area.



Fig. Discussions with Timbaktu Members

For the timing, in the winter, the CRC runs till 6/6-30 and in the summer, it runs till 7 pm. They mentioned about the different workshops and events that happen on a monthly basis (like Aug 15, Class 1-6 sports day in September involving 200+ kids from neighboring schools, senior sports day, children's day, natural paints day in December). Students of Class 6, 7, 8 from neighboring schools come to CRC since they do not have such facilities. They showed the appreciation letters.

From:
The Principal
A.P. Model School
C.K. Palli
Ananthapuram (Dt)

To:
Children Resource Centre
Timbaktu Collective
Nyamaddala Road
C.K. Palli
Ananthapuram (Dt)

Sir/Madam,

Sub: Requisition for the utilization of facilities in your resource centre. req.

Our institution teaches the children of V₁ class to intermediate. We came to know that your resource centre has the facilities like excellent library, Science lab, computer centre etc.

As we have highly enthusiastic students, it would be helpful if you permit them to utilize these facilities. Please allow the students as per the following schedules:

19/10/13 - Saturday - 6th class - 10.00am to 1.00pm

21/10/13 - Monday - 7th class - 10.00am to 1.00pm

22/10/13 - Tuesday - 8th class - 10.00am to 1.00pm

Each of the above classes has a strength of 50 students. They will be accompanied by our in-charge teachers:

1. Mr. S. Ramesh Naik - TGT Hindi
2. Mr. S. Kiran Kumar - PGT Chemistry
3. Mr. V. Kantesh Naik - PGT Civics.

19-10-13
C.K. Palli
N. Ramy
Thanking you

CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTRE
Timbaktu Collective
Chennakothapalli
Anantapur (Dist.)
A.P. - 515 101

Yours sincerely
Principal
A.P. MODEL SCHOOL
C.K. PALLI - 515 101
ANANTHAPURAM (Dt)

Fig. Letter from nearby Model School



From - V. Bhavathi
Principal
Sri Sai Jr college
Channarayana.

To
Children Resource Centre
Tumbakki Collective
Channarayana palli

Sir
Subj: Requesting to permission of Internship
to the Resource Centre regarding

Sri Sai Junior College, Channarayana Palli students
have been very happy to utilize facilities in your
Children Resource Centre. We even would like to
send Intermediate students - please allow them too.
We have another request to ^{provide} Science practical lab
facility. please try to arrange and convenience of
lab facility. our college students to have nearest of
the college. So we are happy with the utilization of
facility our college students and Teaching staff.

The details of students are as follows.
class: Intermediate I & II and year student.

Date & day: 18-11-2013 (Wednesday)

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

Strength: 050.

Thanking you.

yours faithfully,

V. Bhavathi
PRINCIPAL
SRI SAI JUNIOR COLLEGE
CHANNARAYANA PALLI

Fig. Letter of appreciation from CK Palli Junior College

CRC project has three aspects to it. Asha Bangalore supports only one component of it – the running expenses of the center. Apart from that, they have Mobile CRC where they go to remote schools and create interest in reading and science. They also have children centers (Moggas/sanghas) in 50 villages nearby. Two types of trainings happen under the children sangha program – youth who run the centers and leaders among the children. Also there is a group from Australia which spent time with the kids and suggested games focusing on girl students. Other awareness programs are run under Moggas such as the recent state-division awareness, child marriage related awareness etc.

Asha volunteers visited one such center and spent time with almost 40 kids. Volunteers asked about their activities in the centers and their aspirations (most common being police officer among boys and nurses among girls; collector for both; few wanted to be engineers). The students are mostly from Class 3 to 7. Students danced and enacted few plays with some learning embedded in it. Volunteers played some games with kids as well.







Fig. Pictures of kids with Volunteers

Prakuti Badi & SAC:

On the next day (Feb 2nd), the volunteers spent time with the kids (Class 1-5) in Nature School (Prakruti Badi). Children presented few dance pieces. The students introduced them and mentioned why they prefer Nature school compared to their previous schools. Most common reason is the hitting by teachers in other schools. Other reasons they did not like other residential schools include –a) very bad food in residential schools - Penukonda, worm in the food; b) No trees or birds in other schools, c) not a happy place like PB, c) only rasam and rice in the previous schools, d) lot of homework, e) private schools, the teachers play with phones and watch videos, .

Some kids had autistic tendency and Mary explained how inclusion is helping them. Later, volunteers joined the kids in Chakra Vardhana, a game.





Fig. Volunteers with Prakiti Badi kids

Then the volunteers visited CRC and had a discussion with around 50 college/intermediate students. The conversation is recorded. The focus was on the hurdles they face to continue their education towards graduation and what are the main reasons if they need to stop education.

Volunteers also visited the facilities in CRC facilities.

Finally the volunteers discussed with PB and CRC members to prioritize the needs and revisit the proposals for 2014-15.



Fig. Lab in CRC



Fig. Art works from natural colors



Fig. Playground outside CRC

Transcript of the Discussion with prospective fellowship students (intermediate and College):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B65oNBy9RwE3NG5DeG5BMXdub2s/edit?usp=sharing>

Q: What is their future Plan?

Answers:

1. B Com. 1st year, Bank job
2. B Sc. 1st year, Mass teacher
3. B Com. 1st year, police job
4. 2nd year, Police job
5. B Com. 1st year, Police job
6. Working as Children Sangha Leader (3)
7. HAC group, Govt.. Jobs
8. Wants to do Biotechnology
9. B Sc. 1st year, wants to do an M Sc. in electronics
10. B Com. 1st year, wants to be a Bank Manager
11. PEC, 1st Year
12. BPC, Teacher
13. B Com. 1st year, Bank jobs
14. B Com. 1st year, Bank manager
15. Wants to complete Degree
16. 2nd year, wants to finish degree
17. Wants to be history teacher
18. B Sc. 1st year, future plan M Com.
19. Intermediate 2nd year, wants to complete B Sc.
20. Intermediate 1st year, want to complete B Sc. (Nursing)

Some colleges are English medium and some are mix of Telugu and English.

The colleges are in Penukonda (20km), Dharmavaram (25), Roddam (40) and Ananthpur (50 km). They go by bus or shared auto. Some problems are there for bus timings or irregular buses.

Q to Girls: Why their friends dropped out?

A: Answers include

1. Mostly economic problems.
2. Parents also think girls should not study much.
3. Some are scared of atrocity against Girls.
4. After class 10, parents push for marriage.

Q to everyone: If they think they may not be able to complete, what can be the reasons?

A: Answers include

1. Financial constraints (g): Bus pass (180/month); college fees (890/year); materials and facilities cost; Books (250); Exam Fees (500)
2. Transport (g): Lives in Pedikolapolli village near Roddam and then Penukonda (8km and 10 km). The first path is tough. (Parents won't buy cycle). Now comes by shared Auto (300/month). Six girls travel together.
3. Transport (b): Walks (three of them) and cycles 12 km from his village to Roddam one way every day.
4. Financial constraints (b): Private College fees 9000 Rs and practical fees of 500. Travel cost 500/month. [Govt. colleges are cheaper 3500 Rs]

Q: Can you follow whatever is taught in college?

A: They do not have extra tuition. Time is a problem given 3-4 hrs of travel time. Govt. colleges usually have a decent attendance from teachers when there are initiatives from students. Govt. college teachers are not as good as private colleges. Govt. colleges have worse lab facilities (Roddam college has none, they have to go to Penukonda)

Q: How many may be forced to get married or are planning to get married?

A: One student mentioned that she may herself want to drop out given she is a financial burden for her mother and her mother is sick for a long period of time. Some of the girls have constant pressure from parents.

One student of age 16 mentioned her father has to travel and wants to get her married for safety reasons. When asked to remind father about the legal age of marriage of 18, they are not optimistic that father will listen.

Some guys mentioned that they do daily labour during holidays to earn their fees.

Q: Why they want to finish their studies?

A: Answers include:

- Want to care for his parents
- Want to gain a good name in society
- A good employment
- Look after the next generation
- Can help others if in a good position
- Want to make their parents proud
- To avoid depending on others
- Take responsibility of the house
- Stabilize the family and for the brothers/sisters
- Country needs smart people

Q: Will they help others in their community after becoming successful?

A: YES (one girl mentioned it is her goal)

Q: What percentage of students drops out after 12?

A: 80-90% for Girls, for boys, 10-20% at +2 level and 50% at degree level.

They asked questions about Asha. They asked if someone asked the Asha volunteers to come here or not. Volunteers explained their motivation to come for the site visit.