

Site visit report – Society for Health and Educational Development (SHED) --- Asha for Education, Seattle Chapter

Organization Contact

Society for Health and Educational Development (SHED)

Mr. Hiren Saikia

Sonapur, Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, P.O Digaru, Assam, 782401, INDIA

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School Overview

SHED was founded in 2007 by Lanu Aimol.

It is a residential school for disabled children with classrooms, boarding and associated facilities. In addition to hostellers, SHED also provides schooling to day scholars, who are disabled, and to evening students, who attend local government schools and come after their regular school gets over. The integrated school gives a chance for children with disabilities to mix with regular children that promotes the well-being of
Asha for Education, Seattle chapter has provided support to SHED since 2014. More details are in the project web-page <https://ashanet.org/project/?pid=1214>.

Goal and Mission:

To provide a safe and positive environment for children with special needs. Care and rehabilitation, education and proper healthcare so that they can lead lives with dignity and better quality.

Site Visit Contact and Dates

This site visit was conducted virtually by Amit, Nabanita Majumdar and Satyajit on behalf of Asha for Education, Seattle Chapter on Oct 21st, 2021.

Site Visit Write up and Observations

Amit did an introduction of the project and introduced Hiren Saikia and the stewards. Hiren Saikia also gave a synopsis of the school and its mission.

The school had just re-opened after more than a year of Covid Closure because the government had just lifted restrictions for students from Class 5 onwards, but it has not yet opened for younger primary school kids. So the school was still not at full capacity.

We were lucky to be able to view the school in session in the morning at around 10.00 am and interact with the current students and teachers in each class. It was really heartening to be able to visually see and meet everyone.

Everyone seemed to be relieved and happy to be back and learning again.

According to the teachers, the students who could not attend school during COVID, had lost touch with some of the material, and they are having to re-instruct the students, so there has been a bit of a setback.

Community Hall-Cum-Office-Cum-Classrooms-Cum-Vocational Training-Cum-Entertainment

Their school is comprised of a very big hall that is divided up into 5 sections by temporary bamboo partitions, to create multiple classrooms and even an entertainment/TV room

The Office room is carved out of the same hall, and it is also used as a multipurpose room - for computer and vocational training, and for keeping books and other workshop materials.

As seen in the picture below, as part of the vocational training the students are taught to create beautiful artificial flowers which are then bought by various charity groups. This continued during COVID for the hostellers though the sewing/tailoring activities were closed last year.



At present some tables and shelves in the Office room are being used to house these artifacts. We discussed the possibility of some dedicated storage units for both these as well as books, in the office. The books can gradually be expanded to a larger library collection than they currently have.

The two computer units that you see were donated by the National Institute of Mentally Handicapped (NIMH) and are being used to provide basic computer instruction such as Microsoft word to some of the students who are able to type in the computers, and it seems they are making great progress.

Note that there is no internet connectivity in the school, and they are still trying to get a connection.

As for the classrooms, as seen below, each section is divided by age and ability with different instructional teachers catering to each group.

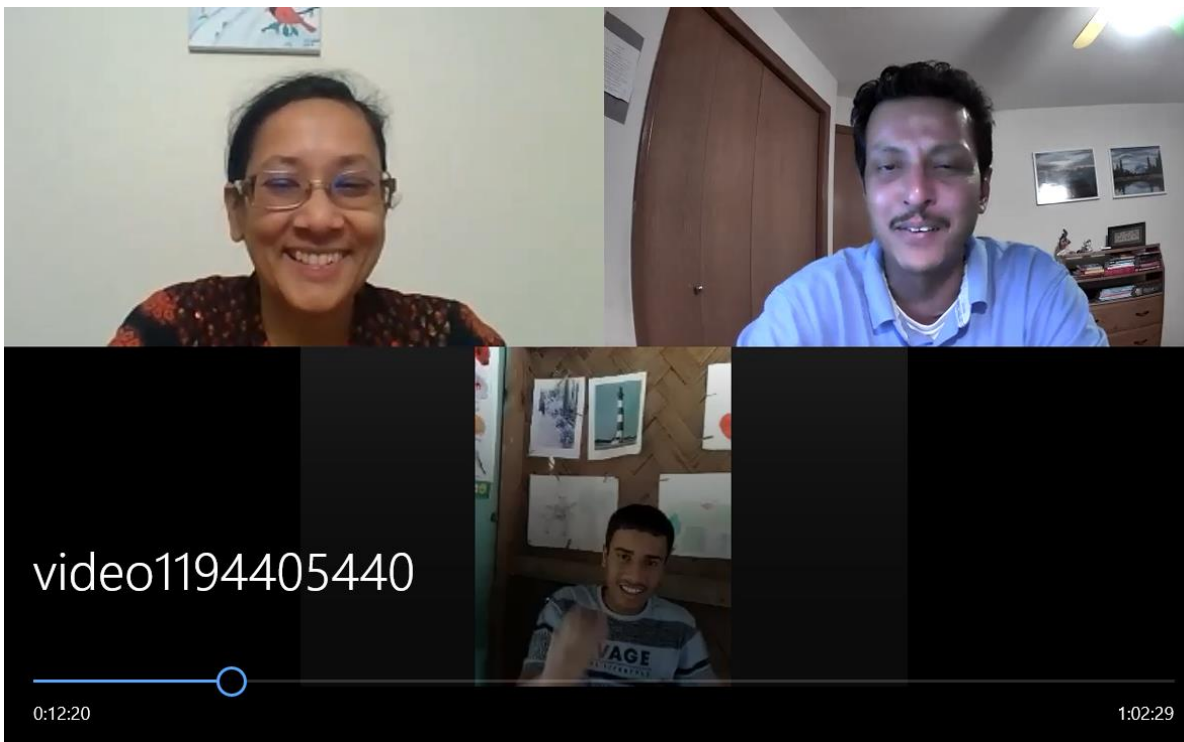
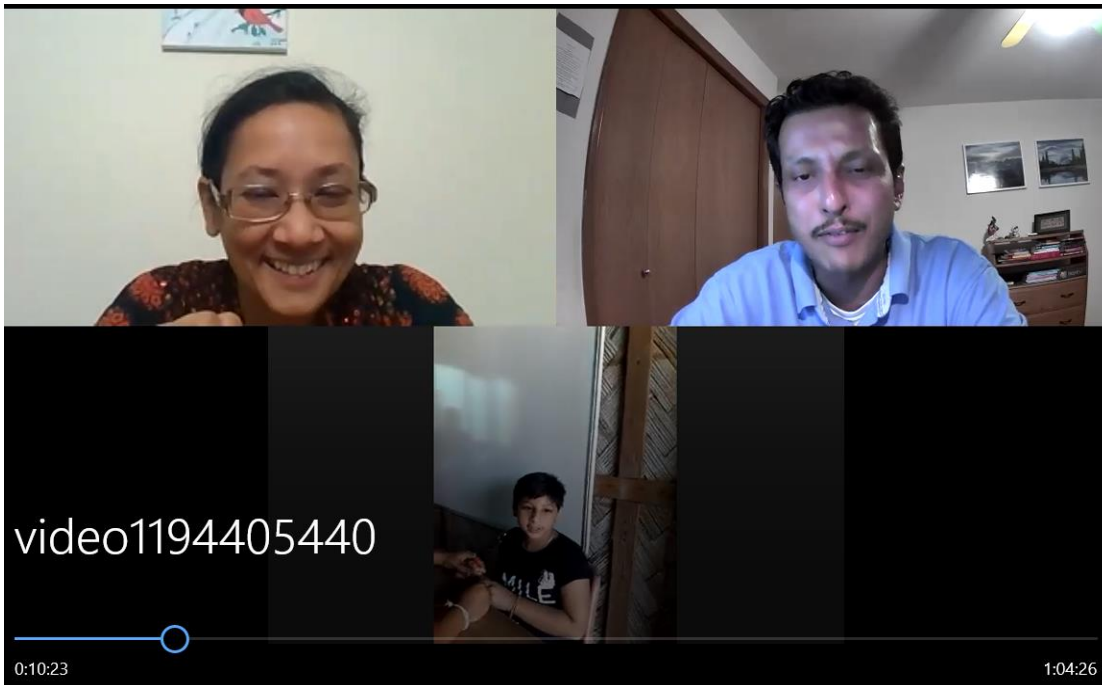
[Snapshots of our Zoom Meeting Interaction with the Students/Teachers](#)





Sunny (student who has been in SHED the longest – for 11 yrs)





This is Hiren Saikia's son



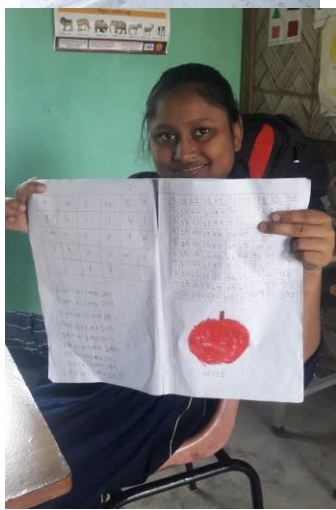
Saurav and Divya Rani



Chinmoy

Many of these students we have also personally met during our site visits so it was nice to see them in good spirits and also making progress.

The smiles on Saurav and Dhitisma's faces say it all !!!





Interaction with the caregivers and teachers.

There does seem to be an appropriate number of teachers per student and ability at this moment and there is no shortage of teaching staff right now. Teachers come both from Guwahati and from local Sonapur and there are also volunteers who are college and university graduates from Sonapur, which is good to see because it shows the involvement and positive impact SHED is having in the local community. The one negative impact of the pandemic was that teachers training was halted for the last 2 years. Usually they do a yearly training at the NIPCCD – Khanapara as well as other training from time to time.



Additional- Pre-Covid

Pictures sent by SHED when more kids were attending right before Covid.



Hostel

We were also given a virtual tour of the hostel rooms. There are 2 boys dorm rooms and 1 girls dorm room with an attached bathroom. There are also rooms for the caretakers and a separate sick room. ASHA had provided one time funds last year to put buffers for the existing ceilings due to excessive heat. However as they had to divert funds due to storm damage, and so the ceilings of 2 rooms are still not done.

A point that was brought up was that the girls and the boys hostel were close to each other and it would be good to separate them out. That will require construction of separate detached rooms. We had also discussed the possibility of expanding the girls hostel capacity to about double its size because today there is a discrepancy between the no of boys and girls that can be accommodated simply because there is no additional room for the girls. We had discussed this issue in-depth with Saikia as the issue was first observed by Anita Sra who as a donor gave us some objective feedback in this matter.



There are 2 boys rooms (one of which is a larger room) and they have bunk beds. The Girls Dorm room does not have bunk beds. The location of the rooms also makes it infeasible to use any of the boy's rooms for the girls, so the only feasible option for expansion is to create a separate building for the girls hostel that alleviates all the concerns and gives an opportunity for future growth.

Outdoor Space

It was nice that all of us were able to see all the improvements made to the school that Satyajit had written about in his Feb 2020 site visit report – the new playground equipment, the power line improvements, the garden etc.

They had also built a nice kitchen garden the last time I visited on 2018. Unfortunately, it seems that monkeys which are rampant in the area have been feasting on the garden plants as well as the kitchen supplies, so they had to abandon that effort for the time being. Big trees like banana trees are however thriving as are the flower gardens.



Music and Goodbye

During my last site visit, I met the music teacher Sumi Das (*who nowadays not only teaches music but also volunteers as a teacher and also provides computer instruction*). I still remembered the infectious enthusiasm of the kids during the song and dance routines conducted by her and the kids at the time.

As we neared the end of our site visit, Sumi and the students entertained us all with some impromptu beautiful renderings of Ham Honge Kamiyaab/We shall overcome/Assamese folks songs.





All of us standing and singing the national anthem that ended the visit on a Wonderful Note for all of us.

Diwali Wishes From SHED



Society for Health and Educational Development (SHED)
List of Hosteller, 2021-2022

Sl. No.	Name	Age/ Sex	Type of Disability	Address
1	Mouna Mugdha Nath	12/Male	MR + Autistic	Nagaon
2	Reeshov Saikia	17/Male	MR + Autistic	Sonapur
3	Dibya Rani Nath	14/Female	HI + MR	Mirza
4	Pallavi Das	11/Female	MR	Mirza
5	Sanahal Singh	17/Male	MR	Guwahati
6	Arati Ekka	20/Female	CP	Tamulpur
7	Dhitishma Das	19/Female	MR	Udalguri
8	Astha Rani Bharili	16/Female	MR + Autistic	Guwahati
9	Anuj Bora	51/Male	MR	Nagaon
10	Chinmoy Sarmah	16/Male	MR + Autistic	Guwahati
11	Jiban Kathar	19/Male	HI	Sonapur
12	Kinjal Kishar Bharadwaj	24/Male	MR + Autistic	Nagaon
13	Saddam Hussain	20/Male	MR	Guwahati
14	Sontosh Rajbonghi	24/Male	MR	Palashbari
15	Rontoo Bora	26/Male	CP	Morigaon
16	Jackey Ahmed Lyngdho	24/Male	MR	Guwahati
17	Sourav Bharali	16/Male	MR	Nalbari
18	Rakesh Das	23/Male	CP + MR	Sonapur
19	Benujyoti Karmakar	20/Male	CP + MR	Sonapur
20	Abhijit Sarmah	50/Male	MR	Tezpur
21	Afrajul Ali	14/Male	MR	Sonapur
22	Bamkim Bora	17/Male	MR	Hawajan
23	Jyotirmoy Borgohain	26/Male	MR	Guwahati

SOCIETY FOR HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (SHED)
LIST OF STUDENT (DAY SCHOLAR) 2021-22

Sl. No.	Name	Age	Sex	Type of Disability
1	Smprita Das	7	F	MR
2	Nibir Guwala	7	M	HI
3	Mayong Das	8	M	MR
4	Chandan Saikia	12	M	CP
5	Nisanta Goswami	13	M	MR
6	Samir Das	14	M	HI
7	Hirasand Boro	12	M	MR
8	Chandan Doloi	14	M	LD
9	Sangita Mandal	13	F	HI
10	Sabita Mandal	12	F	HI
11	Rima Das	12	F	MR
12	Ananya Saikia	10	F	MR
13	Jonmoni Bora	14	F	MR
14	Souni Rahang	16	F	HI
15	Bharati Tumung	15	F	HI
16	Bihu Guwala	16	M	LV
17	Riya Das	14	F	HI
18	Gunamoni Bhakta	18	F	LV
19	Bohum Giri	14	M	MR+Autistic
20	Abhijit Dutta	28	M	MR
21	Rongdemo Odoio	15	M	MR
22	Krishna Cveriveed	9	M	MR
23	Padumi Deka	30	F	HI
24	Suraj Sonar	20	M	CP
25	Bhabani Mandal	12	F	HI
26	Khusbu Paswan	10	F	HI
27	Jyotika Tamuli	12	F	HI
28	Nazira Begum	12	F	CP
29	Dhanti Saikia	22	F	MR
30	Krishna Mandal	18	M	CP
31	Raghab Boro	14	M	MR
32	Kasur Ali	14	M	MR
33	Jiyaur Ali	10	M	MR
34	Abdul Hauque	24	M	MR
35	Nur Hussain	28	M	MR
36	Rustam Ali	24	M	MR
37	Rahul Das	16	M	LD
38	Nilim Bora	14	M	LD
39	Mandit Basumatary	10	M	MR
40	Situ Mandal	16	M	MR
41	Silka Biswash	14	F	HI
42	Salya Roy	17	F	HI
43	Sumi Deka	14	F	LD
44	Suresh Deka	19	M	MR
45	Arun Mandal	18	M	MR