

## **Mathru Foundation - site visit 27 Oct 2018 report**

by R Lakshmikanth Pai

Visited Mathru Foundation, Sarjapura-Attibele Road, Bangalore, on Saturday, 27th Oct 2018 - 4.15 pm to 5.55 pm, along with my family.

Met Mr. Krishna Reddy (KR) - the current chairperson at Mathru, 19 kids at the home and two caretakers (husband and wife couple).

Most of the kids had already assembled in the dining hall/TV room. KR was meeting a couple of other volunteers from an NGO called AISEC (?), who were keen to get teachers to the Mathru home to help the kids with some tuition type classes. Soon, KR joined us and rest of the kids too came to the hall. There were 19 kids in total. The caretakers and the two AISEC volunteers were also around most of the time.

Without any prompting, all kids introduced themselves to us, mostly in English. Then we chatted with them about their time at the Mathru home - studies, school, playtime, etc. The kids responded with short answers to our questions. KR tried to elaborate as required.

We covered many of the questions that Asha had sent. But, missed a few.

Later we went around to see the facility. The caretaker showed us around. He took us to the various rooms - kitchen, office, computer, dorms, terrace with solar water heater panels, washing machine, etc. Did not see library.

When we met the kids again, we requested them to sing - they sang a couple of devotional songs, a film song and one kid did an incredible dance for a kannada song.

A yoga teacher visited the facility at that time and started a session for the kids - It looked like a good physical activity for the kids.

Photos and videos from the visit -

<https://photos.google.com/u/1/album/AF1QipMDyp9xhmG7xKftXpopZMcqr9tBL56LBUfkeqjT>

Below are my notes against the questions that I received from Asha:

Colours -

Questions from Asha Austin Chapter

Black - answered during the visit

Orange - unanswered as mostly missed asking.

My Notes

Blue

Red for answered questions.

## Foundation Updates Related

1.

# of kids -  
currently 19

their schedule

The kids said they get up quite early in the morning - 5.30 am, have prayers, breakfast and are ready to go to school by 8 am. There are 3 different times for their school/college drop - depending on the 3 destinations - (1) government school, (2) Indus International's community school and (3) SVP (Sardar Vallabhai Patel) college. They are back at the home by 4.30pm. Studies, homework, dinner and in bed by 8.30pm.

what they do on weekends

Saturdays are half day in school and Sundays are full day off. They get time to play cricket, watch movies on TV, play indoor games, etc. during the weekend.

how often they go back home

Kids visit their homes once a year during. Their parents/guardians visit them more often, some twice a month

are they happy, what are their concerns, worries. psychological impact of being away from families.

why is it still a better option, etc.

We missed asking these questions.

More information on the day to day activities of the children and beneficiaries. What do the children do after school at the home? How do their weekends look like? Do they have any extra-curricular activities like music/games?

They have yoga in the evenings - Not sure how many days a week. There is a yoga instructor coming from Indus School. They play cricket on Sundays, watch movies on TV during weekends.

Are they provided special meals on festivals and holidays?

Yes according to the caretakers. Missed asking this to the kids.

What is their daily food intake like along with meal plan? Do they go on excursions/ watch movies/ encouraged to read story books, etc. ?

Mornings see typical south indian breakfast.

Lunch - missed asking about lunch.

Milk and biscuits in the late afternoon - after school.  
Dinner - many nights they have ragi mudde and sambar.

2. food - quality of food, daily menu if available, breakfast, lunch, dinner? quality and cleanliness of kitchen, dining, etc.

Food answered above.

Missed asking about quality.

Kitchen looked clean and kept well.

3. lodging - cleanliness of dorms, bathrooms and toilets, where do kids keep their personal stuff, do they all sleep in one big hall? washing clothes, etc.

One big dorm room has 30 beds, with two levels and fits all the kids now. Clean dorm - fairly clean toilets & bathrooms.

Missed asking where they keep their personal stuff. Don't remember seeing almirahs/cupboards.

Washing clothes - didn't ask who washes their clothes. Saw a washing machine on the terrace / 3rd floor.

4. medical - surgeries last year, vs plan for this year and kids that have been identified.

About 3 to 5 surgeries a year according to Krishna Reddy. They have an orthopaedic surgeon from Malleshwaram visiting them, free consultation and surgery - Mathru has to pay only the hospital charges - costs about Rs. 50 per surgery. No surgeries identified this year yet.

5. education - how was their study last academic year, 2017-18. exams. what did they learn. will they all move up the next class, where are they studying, commute, school/college times, do they take lunch?

Some of the children go to the Govt schools, some to private (Indus International CSR school) and some to the SVP (Sardar Patel) college - all nearby.

Most of the kids, except 3 or so, go to primary & high school. They are just okay in their studies.

The Govt's policy is not to fail them in any class till 8th std.

The 3 PU & college going students are doing okay in their studies.

All children commute on the Maruti Omni with the Foundation. They have 3 separate trips to the 3 different schools/college.

Lunch - not sure.

### **Role of Asha-Austin related**

6. vision - outlook for next 3 years, we believe they are in phase 3 now.

(from what we understand, they were focused on mobilizing funds to ramp up once they had their own building; phase 1 - own building, phase 2 - mobilize funds, phase 3 - ramp up with more intake of kids). With their building constructed, the reserves are geared towards a beneficiary ramp from 17 --> 100.

KR says about 8 kids left last year and more joined making the total 19 right now. When asked specifically about increasing the number of children at the home - his response gave no indications of a big number like 100. There are two floors with dorms having bunker beds - each floor can accommodate 30 beneficiaries. So, the present building can fit 60.

KR mentioned of a plan of supporting young physically handicapped adults at the home - such adults (PH from recent accidents, even from birth, struggle in their daily routine with their families and can be trained by Mathru to become independent & manage with their disabilities). This sounded like short term (about 6 months) programs that Mathru is planning to run.

We don't have 2017-18 audit report yet.

KR said he will check with Dr. Malathi about this. Auditor is not prioritizing their audit as the work is done on special rates for them.

7. When is the foundation going to bring in girl children given the second floor is now available for this?

They can't have girls in the same building - due to government regulations - separate buildings are needed. So, no plans for girl children.

8. Plans of ramp-up towards increasing beneficiary strength now that their reserves plus infrastructure is in good shape. They will definitely have to find long-term funding partners when the ramp happens along with increased operational expenses as we begin to wean off.

KR is not talking about any big numbers like 100. When asked what the plans are for the next 3 years, he only mentioned the short term programs they plan to run for PH young adults (apart from the school going children).

9. Funding situation - how was last year, plans for this year. **Nature of recurring donations - restricted vs. non-restricted.** How is their milaap fundraising coming along?

**Missed asking some of these questions.** KR was not aware of milaap campaign. KR mentioned that Dr. Malathi Holla continues to be their person in charge of fundraising. He only mentioned that they are in need of more funds to run the home. He didn't seem to be the guy we should talk to get a clear picture on the funds situation.

10. What is their biggest need and what role should Asha-Austin play.

KR mentioned that they need a new bigger vehicle for the kids' commute. The current Maruti Omni is old and nearing its 15 year RC expiry and KR felt it is not worth maintaining over the long term... too small. Estimate for a bigger vehicle is 18 to 25 lakhs - with customized fitment inside the vehicle for PH occupants.

Apart from KR, they have a car driver and a husband wife couple who are the caretakers. They wish to employ 3 more on the staff - one assistant in the kitchen and two caretakers - missed asking if these are needed for the current strength of 19 kids - I guess it is for increased strength. Operational expenses expected to go up from the present Rs. 1.5L per month to Rs 2L+ per month. KR felt that Asha's support will be very critical for this growth.

KR taking over from Dr. Malathi Holla as chairman of Mathru -

MH had to undergo a surgery recently. She had been in a lot of pain. Very hectic travel schedules of the past and an injury she had suffered some years back overseas. Surgery at that time had not gone well and had left her in pain throughout. She was forced to step down so that she can recover through rest... She is the one who has done all the fundraising and knows about the funding situation. KR himself said that he is not a funds guy. He is 66 years, retired from HAL. No other trustees are active or looking at day to day operational matters.