

SITE VISIT TO DEEPALAYA SCHOOL, PANCHSHEEL VIHAR

Date of Visit: 27-06-2015

People Involved: Noopur, Shikha (Coordinator, Deepalaya centres), and other staff members at the Learning Centre

Address of the Learning Centre: Ramditti J R Narang Deepalaya School

B-65, Panchsheel Vihar,
Opposite Trivenicom Complex
Sheikh Sarai - I, New Delhi 110017

Hours Spent: 2.5 hours

Key points of the Visit:

There are several programmes running in the centre:

1. A community library, which is run by two American volunteers. The library was started as a school library, but then got extended to be a community library.
2. Learning Centre run as a school for classes LKG to 2nd standard. The learning centre was earlier running as a proper school from classes LKG to 10th. But, after RTE implementation, the school had to close down and was retained as only a learning centre.
3. Remedial Classes for different classes, in a Multi Grade Multi Level situation. Students are divided into different clusters: classes 1-5, 6-8 and 9-10. There are subject specialist teachers taking care of specialised subjects.
4. Computer classes and Tailoring classes (Girls only) are also run as part of the vocational training programme. The computer course is being run in collaboration with NIIT Foundation, which does an initial training for the teachers as well.
5. Father and Daughter Alliance programme, which is the remedial for only girls, with a view for streamlining the out of school girls into mainstream education.

Observations and Interactions:

1. The Learning Centre has a variety of programmes which is supported by the staff present in the centre. Most of the teachers take care of more than one class, except the library, which is entirely managed by the volunteers.
2. The remedial classes that are done using the NCERT textbooks and teachers shared that they basically teach the whole concept again to students. The observer felt there was a difference in her and the teachers' understanding of the concept of Remedial. Remedial should ideally act as a bridge and not necessarily just repeat. Especially for this group of students, since they do attend regular school, remedial should focus on bridging the gap.
3. The Father and Daughter Alliance programme has a nice concept, though not being implemented in the best way as the teachers here would like to. It is a task trying to get the fathers from the community involved, as per the teachers.

4. During interaction it was discovered that the Centre has a process in place for recruiting teachers and that they are not necessarily drawn from the same community. Though most of the teachers now had been students at Deepalaya earlier.
5. The teachers shared that the biggest challenge they face is convincing parents to send their kids to the learning centre. Parents are either not too keen, especially in the case of girls or are complaining about the nominal fees that the centre charges. They prefer sending the kids to other charity run schools around the area, which run the services free of cost.
6. The students I met at the Centre were all engaged in their work and classes. They seemed they are used to the presence of visitors, but they were not all very confident in talking, some seemed a little hesitant to talk. But many students also seemed eager to display their learning as they read out poems and such. One thing to be noted is, the students who were involved in the library programme were much more self confident, could be because of the ownership that is built in the programme.
7. During the community visit, it was noticed that the centre had a strong presence in the community. People knew of Deepalaya and the work they are doing. Many children and youngsters who we met in the community were ex students of Deepalaya and had fond memories.
8. The coordinator had questions about the project, that is when it would start and the support that would be received from Asha. She assured that a separate room would be made available for the new batch of students.

Picture Title: Community Library



Picture Title: Remedial Class



Picture Title: Remedial Class_Girls



Picture Title: Remedial Class_Girls 2

