Site visit report of Notun Alo

Anju Das Kanungo

Supporting Asha chapter: Asha Zurich

Visit done by: Anju Das Kanungo

Project partner: Sabuj Sangha

Visit Facilitator: Arunabha Das and Ansuman Das

Location: Nandakumarpur village in Sundarbans < 3 hours from Kolkata>   
Date of visit: 2-4 February 2019   
Asha Zurich funding started from: June 2016

Project brief <as per Asha page>: Asha supports a residential school for 35 underprivileged boys.   
The students learn traditional reading, writing, arithmetic. They also learn cleanliness, community service, proper behaviour, and other skills that are not taught in a regular school.

Project description <as per Asha page>:

* + - To provide residence and meals to the boys
    - To prepare boys for formal school or vocational education
    - To monitor the quality of the teachers
    - To provide school books and stationary to the boys
    - To provide toiletries
    - To provide medical support
    - To provide casual and winter dress
    - To provide school uniforms
    - To maintain all areas of the residential school

The visit was divided into 5 parts.

1. Interaction with the boys in their dormitory.

2. Observation during sports.

3. Individual assessment of basic learning skills.

4. Looking at the accounting books

5. Meeting with the staff members

They are briefly described below

**1. Interaction with the boys in the dormitory**

There are four rooms for the boys to live. Rooms have many windows and good air circulation. There is a big balcony at the front. The balcony is used for studying and playing. Each boy has separate bed. The balcony is covered with railing. The floor has multiple toilets and shower area. Cleaning is supervised by house mother. A daily timetable and a set of dormitory rules are pasted on the wall of each room. They talk softly .No shouting is heard by me during visit. The boys seemed to be happy there. They greeted me. Some boys performed acting, singing, dancing. That was very encouraging. They also invited me for next year. They were asked to write their names in Bengali and English language. All of them were able to do it.

**2. Observation during sports**

Most of the boys are interested in football. There is a big ground where they play in the afternoon. They also play badminton. In the annual sports of the school 29 boys out of 35 got prizes. They also have cricket bat ball and wicket. Now they want some indoor games like carom board, table tennis.

**3. Individual assessment of basic learning skills**

Boys of class eight and above are asked to do some elementary arithmetic and to write one sentence in English. 60% boys could do it correctly. I have shown the paper to the supervisor .They said they would take care of them in future.

**4. Looking at the accounting books**

I talked with accountant. He showed me the accounting books. Notun alo has a separate cost center from where the project expenses can be tracked easily. For food, stationary and medical items they have fixed vendors.

**5. Meeting with the staff members**

I met with all the staff members of Notun Alo. I collected their feedback and have summarised below.

Amar Kumar Giri – superintendent

Feedback:

* Staying here for 5 years
* Has seen improvement in education
* Boys are generally disciplined and obey him
* One more superintendent will help the boys to learn their studies and other activities effectively
* Some indoor game equipment will be helpful

Ranjana Chakraborty – House mother Feedback

* She is here for two years
* Boys love her and she is very affectionate to them
* A TV set will be very useful in their idle time
* The boys interested in computers want more practice time

Palan Kumar Paik – Project coordinator

Feedback

* One more supervisor will be helpful
* If personal locker can be provided there will be no case of mixing of belonging

Bakul Shasmal – Head cook

Feedback

* Boys get fish in 5 days per week and meat once in a week
* They did not get any milk or fruit.
* One cup milk per day will be more nutritious for boys

**My feedback**

I visited the project first time. Overall the boys are happy and most of them are in a jovial mood. They love this home and do not want to go to their parental house occasionally. Some boys are good in drawing, some are interested in acting dancing, singing. They performed before me and it was good. But the knowledge in English and maths is poor. I think one more supervisor can help to improve it. One good thing is that the boys are engaged in practical gardening. Several small plots are divided & each plot is given to two boys who takes care of that plot and they grow vegetables there.

**Summary**

To conclude I am very much satisfied with the Notun Alo project of Sabuj Sangha. Most of the boys came from very poor family. One student Asadul Khan has a very pathetic past. Now he has overcome that and love to read. All the staffs are very sympathetic to the boys and try to improve them both in education and to become a good citizen. So I recommend funding for another year with some enhancement.