

Asha for Education™

Site Visit Questionnaire

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www.asha-zurich.ch

Dear Volunteer

Thanks for conducting this site visit.

The following set of questions is only a suggested guideline. Some of the following questions may not be relevant or applicable to the particular project you are visiting, but please do try to answer as many of them as possible. Please note that Parts B & C necessitate that the information be gathered through conversations with the children and their parents, and not simply the group's teachers and staff.

Please feel free to attach any documents/photos you feel are pertinent to the project.

Thanks.

- Asha for Education

Date: 31.03.2016

Name of the Project: Natun Aalo

Name of the Organisation Running the Project (if different): Sabuj Sangha

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned X No, it was a surprise visit

	Project Contact	You Name (Asha volunteer conducting the visit)
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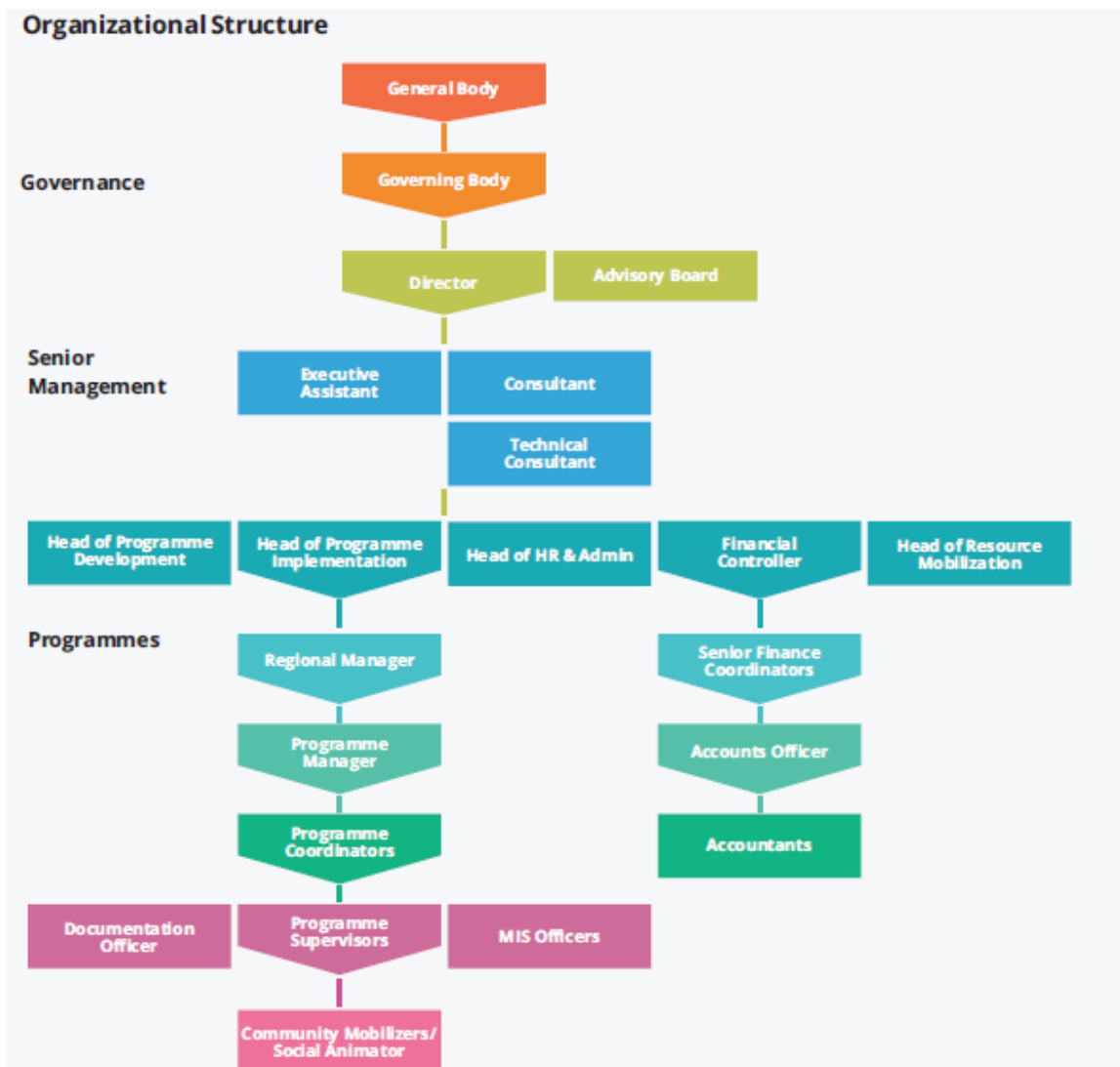
PART A: Particulars about the organization and its environment

1. What are the different focus areas of the organization? (give a rough estimate of the % of their total effort/funding)

Community development 24% Education 22% Health check-ups 25%
 Other 29% (please specify) Women empowerment, disaster response etc

2. What is the administrative structure of the group (e.g. Board of Directors/Grassroots-based)?

Take a look at the annual report Page 6 for details



3. Are there any other organizations working in the area providing any one or all of the services provided by the visited organization? (Briefly mention their names and their objectives)

No, Sabuj Sangha is a unique organization operating in 26 villages of Sundarbans

Organization	Objectives of the organization

PART B: The organization and the community it serves

(Information to be gathered from parents and children)

1. Approximately how many families live in the area? 5,000

2. What do the parents do for a living? (Agricultural worker, daily wage laborer etc.)

Fishing, petty shop owners etc. Parents often migrate to cities like Kolkata, Mumbai for work. Fathers work as laborer, mother as maids.

3. At the time of enrolment, does the school ask for the names of both parents?

Yes X No, just the father's name No, just the mother's name

4. How often do the teachers meet the parents?

Once a month is mandatory. Sometimes teachers meet parents 2-3 times a month.

5. How do the parents participate in the organization's activities? (e.g. by contributing their time, money or labor in the school's activities etc.)

Many parents contribute in kind. They organize the Foundation Day on December 12, and also make small monetary contributions.

6. Are there any Government Schools in the area? Yes X No

There is a government-run primary school in the area, but it is not functional. The secondary school is ok, where the students of Sabuj Sangha also enroll after they finish class VIII.

7. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community? Within 5km

8. Why did the parents choose this school over the Government School? _____

Quality of education, non-political and non-violent environment, variety of extra-curricular activities, good student-teacher ratio, regular health check-ups.

9. When you visited, how many children were present in the class? At least 20 per class

What is the regular class strength? 22 children

Comments: Total 175 children enrolled in the school. 35 children are at the residential school who live in the dormitory.

10. Do the children seem to enjoy coming to school?

Yes, they seemed to like it.

PART C: Project particulars

(Information to be gathered from students and staff)

1. What is the mode of teaching in the school? (Check the appropriate choices)

A. Formal (State Board, Central Board etc.) till what class? _____

B. Non-Formal Education (NFE)

C. Vocational

D. Other . Please specify _____

2. If A (Formal), up to what grade (LKG, 5th, 7th etc.) does the school conduct classes?

Up to Class VIII

6. How many students are currently enrolled? 175

How many new students were enrolled in the past 12 months? 30

7. How many left in the past 12 month, and why? 0

8. How many school days were missed in the past 6 months by all students? _____

9. How many days was the school open in the past 6 months? _____

10. How many staff or volunteers are recruited from the community? 40

How many of the staff are women? 8

11. How many teachers are there in total? 13

How many new teachers have joined in the past 12 months? 1

12. How many teachers have left the school in the past 12 months, and why? 0

13. How many days did the teachers miss work in the past 3 months? _____

14. Does the organization train the teachers? Yes X No

If yes, how do they provide the training? There is a teachers training institute in the same campus. So the school gets very well trained teachers.

15. Does each child have their own books? How many books does a child have on average? Yes, 4-5 books

16. Does each child have their own school uniform? Are there enough school uniforms for all children? Yes, Sabuj Sangha provides them with uniform. All of them were wearing uniform.

17. How much is the staff paid? INR 2,500-6,00 depending on their designation

Is it on par with the salary paid to the staff in the Government schools? Yes No X
(Please have a look at the accounting books of the organization and answer the following questions)

18. Have the teacher salaries in the last 6 months been paid on time? Yes No X
Salaries are often delayed by 15-20 days, but the teachers do not stop coming.

PART D: Financial resources of the organization

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit – you may again request the accounting books/overview of Operating Expenses (OPEX))

1. Is there a deviation between the OPEX and our approved budget? Yes No X

Are all items covered in the budget? Yes X No Maybe

If yes, what is the deviation (list per item)?

2. Do you think the proposed amounts in the budget are reasonable? Yes X No Maybe

3. Is there anything you think should be added or removed from the budget?

Yes No X

4. Did you discuss the proposed changes with the project? If so, please describe their response.

I discussed the possibility of doing a separate accounting for the 35 residential students to be supported by Asha in Natun Aalo. Sabuj Sangha agreed to it.

Please continue for the subjective details of the site visit

Site visit to Natun Aalo by Sabuj Sangha

Visit done by: Prat Das Kanungo

Date: 31.03.2016



Prat with Natun Aalo students

Executive summary: Sabuj Sangha is an NGO based in Nandakumarpur in the Sundarbans, West Bengal. They are active in 26 villages in the region in areas such as healthcare, community development and women empowerment, disaster management and education. They are running a fully functional school called Kishalaya Shishu Shiksha Niketan free of cost for 175 underprivileged children. They provide residential schooling for 35 rescued child labors/orphans/trafficked children under the project Natun Aalo. These children live in a dormitory at the school campus and are taken care of by two supervisors and two matrons. The site visit consisted of a tour of the school and other facilities run by Sabuj Sangha, as well as interviews with students and teachers.

The visit: I was picked up from Behala, Kolkata by Ansuman. The journey from Kolkata to Nandakumarpur took about two and a half hours by car. The site visit included a visit to the school, the teacher training institute, the canteen including the kitchen, the guest house, the dormitory for residential students, the hospital, the self-help centers for women and the bakery. I also had the opportunity to interview some students and teachers. The entire visit lasted about 7 hours and Ansuman gave me a ride back to Kolkata. In the following is my personal impression of the project.

Impression about the school “Kishalaya Shishu Shiksha Niketan”: The school building was inaugurated in 2005. It is in very good shape. It has five classrooms from Class IV to



Kishalaya Shishu Shiksha Niketan school



Classroom of Class VI

VIII. Classes I to III are still held in the old wooden classrooms. The school also has a library with a number of Bengali and English books. During my visit, both students and teachers seemed to be very much engaged into the lectures. The school also has clean toilets for both boys and girls, a fully-functional computer lab and a common room where children display their creativity in the form of artwork.

Impression about the teaching methods: The teaching methods followed by teachers at the school were very impressive. They use a lot of teaching aids, encourage students to take part in creative projects and also give them ample freedom to do sports. Many teachers were trained at the teacher’s training institute (B.Ed college) located in the same campus.

Impression about the food: The residential students from Natun Aalo get 3 meals daily from the canteen. The kitchen, although not modern, was well staffed and well equipped to serve them. The food was both nutritious and tasty.



Classroom of Class III

Impression about the dormitory: Currently 35 students are housed in two dormitories. They have basic facilities, namely a bed with mattress and blanket, mosquito net and some basic furniture. Outside of the rooms there is a large patio with tables, benches and blackboards for them to study and attend special classes.

Impression about the Natun Aalo students: The students were in the age group of 8 to 14. In general they were very happy to be there. I saw them attending the classes and then playing cricket together. All of them are rescued through Childline help network, which informs Sabuj Sangha about child labors and abandoned or trafficked children. I talked to some of them about how their life changed after moving to Natun Aalo, and all of them reported positive experiences. They have two

residential supervisors to take care of their needs. I also asked them some basic math questions, such as addition and subtraction and to write their names in Bengali/English. Some of them could answer right away, while others struggled and needed help. However, since it was completely spontaneous, it is probably unfair to judge their performance from it.

Interviews with some key people:

I had the opportunity to have lunch with the director Mr. Sibasankar Giri, who was one of the founders of Sabuj Sangha. Currently he volunteers free of cost for the organization. He was a school teacher and belongs to the local community. He has seen the hardships the local people faces in Sundarbans due to the remoteness



The computer lab

of the villages, lack of job opportunities and hostile nature. Many local people migrate to bigger cities such as Kolkata, Delhi or Mumbai to work as laborers. As a result the families, specially young children, suffer a lot. That was the motivation for them to start the school. Mr. Giri seemed to be a very compassionate and honest person who told me only to fund them if I really



The wall magazine

1. Need for better and diverse sports facilities
2. More books in the library
3. Professional psychological counselling for some traumatized students

At the end I had tea with Mr. Bhabesh Ch. Mondol, who is also in the governing body. He is a retired school teacher as well, who has seen Sabuj Sangha growing up. He stressed the fact that Sabuj Sangha has never compromised with the quality. Even with less funding they kept the school running through personal sacrifices. That further confirms that the organization has a very good name in the community, so that people are willing to work for them even without monetary compensation.

My overall impression about Sabuj Sangha was very positive. Although I spent only 7 hours, it gave me an idea of how they operate and the impact they make on local people's lives there. There is a public primary school in the area, but still the locals send their children to the Sabuj Sangha school because of the holistic education they impart. Because of the fully residential B.Ed college on-campus, they easily get very good quality teachers.

Even though I did not spend a lot of time with them, the residential students at Natun Aalo seemed to be treated with respect and compassion. All of them have a traumatized childhood.

like the project and am convinced myself.

I also had a meeting with all the teachers of Sabuj Sangha in their staff room. The salaries of the teachers are much lower than salaries in government schools. Many of them are locals, but some come from faraway places, travelling more than two hours. They really seemed to be driven by the ideology to help the underprivileged children. Some suggestions made by the teachers were.



The school library

At Natun Aalo they are getting a holistic education, nutritious food, human care, and opportunities to play and exercise their creativity. I hope this will really help them choosing the right path in life and therefore I highly recommend funding for Natun Aalo from Asha Zurich.



The Natun Aalo dormitory