

Virtual Site Visit Report - Samerth Talim Kendra, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Date of Visit: 3/6/2022

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Attendees Asha SV Volunteers: Rohini Prabhune, Vishal, Abhinav Tyagi

Details: Scheduled a Zoom call with Rajul who is the CEO programmes for Samerth and Ms. Alfroz who is the main lead for the kendra. Alfroz has been with the kendra from its initial year and manages day to day activities of the school.

Rajul gave the details of the program- Asha for Education started supporting Samerth Talim Kendra in 2016. In the initial few years of starting the kendra, teachers and children had no furniture and used to sit on the ground and not many regular therapists were there. With AfE involvement they were able to hire special ed teachers, physiotherapists, speech therapists, and could get specialized furniture made and add a sensory room. This gave a baseline program a strong foundation. In 2016 there were 42 kids and now they can support 105 kids.

The building where the school is located is a two story leased house which is a permanent structure. More than 80% of the children have 50% and above disability. Once a child enrolls at Samerth Talim Kendra, s/he undergoes a complete checkup and gets certified by government authorities so that they are eligible for entitlements formulated especially for the persons with disabilities. An individual action plan is then developed including check up by various therapists, specialists and developing a detailed case history. Currently the children are divided into four groups based on their age and level of disability. Apart from them we have the early intervention group, which has children ranging from 3 to 8 years. The idea is to start early and help children and manage their disabilities. Older kids who are able to manage the disability better are given vocational training like paper plate making, bead work, and photo copy machines so they can be financially independent.

We went through all the classrooms, physiotherapy sessions, sensory room sessions (equipped with all the sensory related items that is used for therapy) and vocational training areas where children were going through their regular day activities. We also talked to one of the mother who was waiting for her young child while the child was in the school. She said that her child was learning to speak and she was very happy with the opportunities and the help that her child was getting from the kendra.

One of the issues in the building is that the school has 2 floors and it is difficult to get the children on the top floor. The kids have to be carried up to the classroom. They plan to have a better place in the future where its more accessible for these children.

They are also wanting to look for an occupational therapist. Initially it was the special ed teacher and physiotherapist taking care of it. But now they realize there is a need for an occupational therapist.

Transportation is provided for pick up and drop off after school. A second teacher accompanies the children as parents are more comfortable.

Question was if there was government support available - They don't get any support from the government but they have to follow all the govt rules, registrations etc. They are audited frequently and surprise visits are conducted by the govt. authority.

Community outreach programs are conducted to spread awareness and campaigns are held. 22 kids were identified and started coming to the kendra after the last camp. This center also works with young adolescent girls and families to educate them about girl hygiene, inter family marriage and genetic pool complications etc

Few of the kids who had borderline disability were enrolled in regular schools.

Overall we spent an hour or so on the zoom and went through the details. The school seems to be in good condition and the program seems to be run efficiently.