Asha for Education Started: 11/1/17

Site Visit Report

Organization Bodh Siksha Samiti

visited:

Places Manas Ganga Senior Secondary Residential Girls School, Bodh

visited: Administration office, mess or cafeteria in Bodh parisar

Dates of November 12 – November 16, 2017

visit:

Our names: Durgesh Gupta (from CNJ chapter of AfE in NJ)

Ashok Gupta (husband of Durgesh)

Background: I was introduced to Bodh by a relative who was working with IVolunteer in New Delhi and have been involved with them for the past five years, in addition to being a donor myself. First time I visited the place alone and stayed there almost a week and worked with students helping them as needed. During day time I used to teach in the classes and at late evenings and early mornings I worked with about 25 girls residing in girls hostel. Working with the girls who are ever ready to work hard and looking for extra help as they have no support at home front is very fulfilling.
My second visit was with my husband for about a week and in addition to helping the girls in class rooms, we visited 3 village schools very efficiently run by Bodh with the help of local communities. This time I couldn't find the group of hostel girls. There were only four 12th grade girls left, as they had run out of funds and the school staff and administrative personnel could only support 4 girls by themselves. I was very saddened to hear this as I had talked to the girls last time and could hear about their future dreams and desires to be something and bring change in society and in the lives of other girls growing up in villages. I decided to raise funds myself and was able to successfully sponsor 15 girls for the year 2016 to 2017. However, as the manas ganga facility can support far more individuals, in April 2017, we contacted AEF Princeton with the project request. In September this year, we got a proposal from Bodh requesting a total of 25 lakhs for a full year’s education and residential school costs for 20 girls for the year 2018 to 2019.

AEF Princeton could not prioritize the project, so I conducted this site visit to help evaluate it as a project for the CNJ chapter. My visit started on the 12th of November and I worked with the girls at the Manas Ganga facility for four days as part of this site visit so I can get a thorough sense of the facilities operations, the effectiveness of the program run by Bodh and first hand see how the girls participating in the residential school are doing. I was happy to see that all the girls were extremely joyful to be there and getting quality education with love and care. The residential facility has clean, airy and spacious rooms. Two or three girls share a room with their own bed and space to keep their personal belongings.
Sanitation and ventilation in bathrooms and open air space was impressive.

I visited the cafeteria where girls get their breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks and milk and dinner. I had lunch and dinner with them. Care was taken to ensure the quality of the diet and ensure it is balanced. They get one seasonal fruit, dal, rice, chapati, vegatable, salad and yogurt.

During day school the girls study in their respective class rooms and they do self-study in their rooms and outer space of the hostel in groups or individually. After the day school and after some break the girls come in the field for sports. They play different games and time to time staff members join them in their games. They are assigned some jobs to help maintain the facility and retain pride of ownership in keeping the space clean and beautiful. The founder and chairman of the organization, Yogendraji works with them directly, extending a helping hand with chores, studies and any other issues they may have. It was good to see that Bodh is providing not only book education to the girls but trying to bring all round development in their life. They have library, computer facility, art room, music room. They do yoga and celebrate timely events.

When I reached there this time, they were celebrating children's day event by putting some food and game stalls. As I was staying at the facility, I used to hear beautiful singing voices of KG and 1st graders in the morning in the open air ground.

I took the permission to go in the class rooms and observe. I could really feel the impact the teachers are making on the kids by providing quality education using new teaching methods designed by Bodh. Bodh is helping Government schools by providing training to their principals of the new teaching methods and syllabus.

I was in constant touch with all the girls for about four days. I asked them about food, lodging facilities, studies etc. their answers were very positive and satisfactory. They all were feeling fortunate to be there. For now the director and the founder of Bodh is fulfilling the responsibility of the girls hostel warden and is looking to hire someone.

The school provides them medical insurance and medical facilities as needed. Electricity and clean water has been taken care of. I saw good developments in the building maintenance, courses, teaching methods and syllabus. I met new dedicated teachers. Their future plans were very encouraging and innovative. They have subject wise resource rooms where girls can avail the necessary books, charts, posters and other subject related material in one room. Things were simple, but focused on effectiveness and providing easy access, which seems to be the principle of how everything operates.

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Recommendations: As the primary focus of AFE is to support the education for under privileged children, Bodh’s Manas Ganga facility is a strong choice as I could tangibly feel that it is making a meaningful difference in the girl’s lives. To get started with this organization, I would recommend moving forward with partial funding for this project by sponsoring 10 girls as a start.

Photos: Photos taken during this visit of the residential facility and the Manas Ganga school can be viewed at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qZU34YwuSXTyPgNC2>

 Additionally the girls profiles can be viewed in the attached note. 