

Antyodoy Annual Review June 2022 – Q and A

The following questions were asked during the volunteer meeting on 7th June 2022, when the annual review was held. The answers are given here after communicating with Antyodoy Ashram.

1. How are their vaccine efforts?

All adults associated with the ashram and the school and VTU have obtained their second dose. Children, 18 and younger, have not yet been cleared to get the second dose, but they have received their first dose.

Antyodoy have actively campaigned to encourage vaccination in the region and get most of the village vaccinated.

2. Do they have students dropping out of school?

There have been no drop-outs. Guardians of community kids attending KSSK want their kids to go to school. For the few who were considering pulling out their kids from school to help with family income were successfully counselled against it.

3. Do VTU students attend school?

Attending school or getting a formal education is mandatory for all school aged children attending VTU, and they attend local schools or colleges.

4. How do they plan to identify and address the covid education gap?

There has been no formal identification of covid induced education gap, but all teachers have noticed drop in the levels of learning. They feel the overall learning level is still higher than the average for the state because they have continued their schooling throughout the pandemic lockdown and restriction period using innovative strategies. The recent higher secondary state exams results were announced and some of Antyodoy ashram's students performed at a good level.

The educators have observed that the interest and capacity in learning has not diminished because of the covid and hence they concluded that the gap is not caused by a capacity to learn but rather because of not being in an environment conducive to learning, not being able to interact with peers, not having a state of mind that helps learning. They noticed that students were very happy to get back to school. Resuming normal school hours, and classroom experiences and books and resources availability is expected to bring up the pace of learning. Apart from the above, teachers are including group learnings sessions, encouraging peers at the same level to get together and work together, and giving extra attention to those that need help. They are also including more extracurricular and cultural activities to increase peer interactions and build a positive and fun environment which they feel will in turn help with academic learning.

5. Are they approaching small businesses for fundraising for building the separate VTU physical instructional space?

Local small-scale businesses have long time donors for Antyodoy. However, their capacity allows them to donate either smaller amounts or donate in kind that goes towards the maintenance and running of the ashram. They have spread the word in Kolkata, however the contribution expected from the small business will not be sufficient to raise enough to cover any substantial part of the budget requirement for building the separate space. The total budget is around 8.7 lacs, and small businesses contribute in the range of a few hundreds to a few thousand rupees. Their total contribution will be too less (unless a substantial number of small businesses contribute, which is not a viable option). Any money raised through small businesses serves them better towards maintain and operating the ashram.

Antyodoy has applied for various CSR grants and approached various companies. They have been rejected by some on the basis of this particular charitable effort not meeting the company's mission and vision. They waiting to hear back from others. They do not want companies/corporate to reject them using the reason of Antyodoy being able to raise funds through small business because for all practical purposes that will only cover a negligible portion of the funds they require.

6. Staff list for KSSK shows 3 new teachers, whereas budget shows increase of 1. Please explain.

There are three new teachers out of which two are computer instructors. The computer instructors have replaced the previous two instructors (who left for better paying jobs). Therefore, the increase in teachers is just one, as indicated in the budget.

7. How many computers do they have?

At present there are 9 computers.

8. How do they plan to use the computers?

Computers will be used for instructional purposes. Students will sit at the computer and do hands on labs and learn.

There are about 300 KSSK students and approximately 30 students in a class. The end goal is to have around 25-30 computers for the computer class. However, their present goal is to have around 15 computers so that 2 students can sit and use one computer. They have nine already, and are asking for 4 more in this year's budget, and two more will remain to reach the goal for 15 computers.

9. Is it for KSSK children or VTU ?

Computers are for KSSK students.

10. What is their current setup for computer room for children?

At present a part of the school area hosts the computer instructional area.