

Site Visit Report: ARALU

Bidar, Karnataka

Nov 20, 2017Performed by: *Amulya Lingaraju* (Asha Chicago Volunteer and Project Steward for Aralu)**Project Background:**

Aralu is an NGO based in the state of Karnataka, India. The focus of this NGO is to aide community development within the Dalit population in villages near Bidar, Karnataka by providing a stable and safe environment that bolsters and promotes education of the children of these poor and neglected Dalit communities.

Aralu-PPC: Asha-Chicago is currently working with Aralu by providing necessary funding to enable education and a mid-day meal to around 30 children (ages 3-6) in a Pre-Primary Care Center in Yedlapur village.

The primary occupation of parents of the children who attend the pre-primary care center are laborers, whose sites of work are mostly unsafe for young children. Aralu PPC provides a safe environment and a platform for basic education for these children, who would otherwise be neglected while their parents are at work.

Aralu-Belaku: Asha-Chicago also supports a residential home for about 25 children in the Belaku center. The children residing here are primarily from the Dalit communities and come from a variety of backgrounds including single mothers who work for minimum wage, parents who are unable to provide basic care for the family and in some cases are, children who do not have parents.

While Aralu-PPC and Aralu-Belaku are separate projects, they are managed by the same project partner,

Mr. K.T. Meril and his wife, **Mrs. Sunitha**, who are an integral part of the Aralu NGO.

ARALU-PPC:

I had the opportunity to meet and interact with almost all the kids who regularly attend the Pre-Primary Center (PPC) in the Yedlapur village near Bidar, Karnataka.



All the children seemed very happy to have a place like the PPC, where they could come every day with the purpose of learning, be it the alphabet or a new song. The children here are bright and love coming to the PPC. They stay at the PPC from 9am-4pm, while their parents are at work, and are exposed to the basics of education comparable to that of a Montessori school, however with fewer available facilities. I was able to witness children enthusiastically reciting the alphabet, days of the week, months of the year, names of colors and shapes, etc. They also sang their favorite songs and danced, while I was there. I was very pleased at how happy these children were and with the support they are receiving from the Aralu team.



However, as evident in the attached images, the physical conditions of the place where is PPC is based can be improved and I believe we might be able to raise some funds to improve the condition of the floors, or to enable them to rent a larger location for the PPC, so that the kids need not be cramped into a small space. Additionally, we can work towards providing these children with more reading and writing materials, educational toys and games that can bolster their enthusiasm for learning.



ARALU-BELAKU:

I had the opportunity to interact with almost all the children residing at the Aralu-Belaku residential home in Bidar, Karnataka.

This year, Aralu-Belaku has taken in an additional 5 children and currently has a total of 25 registered children, with 18 girls and 7 boys. All children residing here are enrolled in local government schools ranging from grades 2-10. Since its inception, Aralu-Belaku children have completed their schooling upto grade 10 and we expect to maintain this status moving forward as well. I had the opportunity to meet a few students who had graduated from grade 10 from the Belaku home and are currently pursuing PUC at local colleges in Bidar.



My visit this year coincided with the Belaku home's celebration of the Karnataka State Award that Aralu received for their service to welfare of underprivileged children, their work towards abolishing child labor and raising awareness about child trafficking in schools and communities near Bidar. It is a great honor for Aralu to receive this award, purely based on their work, reputation and impact on children's lives, without having applied for this award, (normally an application is required to be eligible for this particular award).



I received a very warm welcome from the children and the Aralu team at the Belaku home. They sang and danced in celebration and I had the privilege of distributing new clothes to the Belaku children, which the Aralu team does twice a year (funded by Asha-Chicago).



In summary I was happy with the project. I believe strongly that Asha's goals are being met.

As per the last site visit report, there was a discussion about the possibility of providing funds to rebuild the roof of a meeting hall, which has been successfully fulfilled by Asha-Chicago. However, there are many avenues that can be improved upon to ensure a healthy and holistic development of the children of Aralu-Belaku. Some ideas are listed below:

1. Bathrooms/toilets are in poor condition. We can discuss the possibility of raising funds to improve these facilities for the children.
2. The computers at the Beluku home are broken beyond repair (see image). We can discuss the possibility of raising funds to provide atleast 1-2 computers, with a dedicated (weekly) teacher to train the children necessary computer skills that will enable these children to be successful once they leave the Belaku home.

