

Asha for Education™

Site Visit Questionnaire

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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 Part sB & 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: Sep. 16, 21

Name of the Project: Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha - Pathabhavan

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

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned ☒

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 20% Education 40% Health 15%
Other 25% (please specify) Sustainable agriculture (15%), Disaster risk reduction and livelihoods (10%)

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

Board of Directors - 9
Project Director/Coordinator - 1
Desk In Charges - 6
Project Staff - 28

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)

Organization	Objectives of the organization
Vibha (Help Them Grow Inc.)	Supports pre-school centers and ICDS centers toward quality education

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? 3400 families in four villages in the area

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

Agricultural activities, fishing, collecting non-timber forest produce, daily wage labor, fishing, rickshaw-pulling to carry goods and passengers, etc.

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

Yes ☐ No, just the father's name ☒ No, just the mother's name ☐

4. How often do the teachers meet the parents?

Weekly

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.)

Parents are involved in regular parent-teacher meetings to be appraised of their child's progress at BTS-Pathabhavan. There is also a minimum tuition fee (around Rs. 60 per month), but almost all parents have not been able to pay this due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Are there any Government Schools in the area?

Yes ☒

No ☐

7. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community? The local government school is 50 minutes walking distance from BTS. However, it is difficult for young children to go to the school on their own due to lack of local transportation, distance, and weather (monsoon season).

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

The local parents choose BTS over the traditional government school due to ease of access, low fees, and low student:teacher ratio. Additionally, the curriculum at BTS is enriching for the younger children, and it prepares them for subsequent entrance into the local government school from Class V onwards.

9. When you visited, how many children were present in the class? 240 students total (108 boys, 132 girls)

What is the regular class strength? Roughly 30 students per class from LKG to Class III

Comments: We visited a Class III Bengali class, Class II English class, and a Class III Science class. Each classroom had roughly 30 students, who were all wearing masks and seated at tables and benches.

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

All of the children seem engaged in their education and eager to learn. We spoke to a couple students from each class, and they were able to recite poems, do mental math, state basic scientific concepts, and read aloud from their textbooks. Additionally, some students showed us the artistic talents they have gained by being a student at BTS - singing and playing the harmonium, reciting poems, dancing, etc.

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.) ☐

B. Non-Formal Education (NFE) ☒

C. Vocational ☒

D. Other ☐. Please specify _____

till what class? Class IV

do the students also attend formal school?

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

BTS students attend the local government school from Class V onwards. However, the school is actively trying to expand to Class VIII.

3. If B (Non-Formal Education) how many of the children also attend formal schools in the area?

If students want to pursue formal education beyond BTS, they must attend the local government school.

If none do, does the project plan this for the future?

4. If Non-Formal Education, does the organization create its own study material (books, games)?

BTS' curriculum in English, Bengali, science, and mathematics is based on textbooks and other learning materials.

5. If C (Vocational), what do the children do after they finish training?

The vocational activities at the school include music and dance, chalk making, crafts, and yoga. Additionally, the students have a computer lab in their library where they receive weekly computer education. Some vocational activities have been cut due to decreases in class time (resulting from COVID-19 state guidelines).

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

How many of the staff are women?

7. How many teachers have left the school in the past one year, and why?

8. How many new teachers have joined in the past year?

9. Does the organization train the teachers?

Yes ☒

No ☐

If yes, how do they provide the training? Organising Training by Resource Training Institute

10. How much is the staff paid? Teachers (7) are paid Rs. 4500-13,500 per month, staff (2) are paid Rs. 3,500-8,000 per month, and the volunteer staff (1) is paid Rs. 3,500-4,000 per month.

Is it on par with the salary paid to the staff in the Government schools? Yes ☐ No ☒

PART D: Financial resources of the organization

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit)

1. Do you think the proposed amounts in the budget are reasonable? Yes ☐ No ☒ Maybe ☐

2. Are all items covered in the budget? Yes ☐ No ☒ Maybe ☐

Comments: The current budget is outside of Asha Cornell's funding limits. The usual yearly disbursement from Asha Cornell is sufficient to cover teacher salaries alone, so additional funding sources (specific to BTS Pathabhavan's educational budget and not the other aspects of the organization) are necessary.

3. Is there anything you think should be added or removed from the budget?Yes ☒ No ☐***If you recommend any changes to the budget, please explain your reasons for this.***

One-time expenses are listed for the construction of additional classrooms on the first floor and new multipurpose rooms on the east end of the school building (Rs. 8,50,000 for the classrooms and Rs. 22,50,000 for the multipurpose rooms). While these are necessary to the expansion of the school, we suggest that the current construction and repairs from the recent cyclones be completed before anything new is started.

4. Did you discuss the proposed changes with the project? If so, please describe their response.**PART E: Comments***(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)*

COVID-19 Educational Plan: During the pandemic, the state guidelines were constantly in flux, so there were multiple periods of time where students were not in school at all. Classes of 30 students were divided into batches of six students, who would gather at a single student's house and receive education from a teacher who visited. Now, with the slight relaxation in guidelines, classes are occurring six days a week with students divided into smaller batches. Evaluations and progress reports are scheduled for August and October this year. However, with the winter months approaching, there is concern for a third wave and potential changes in BTS' operations.

In order to navigate these changing situations during the pandemic, the school has opted toward virtual education when possible. Out of the 240 students, 130 students do not have phones. If students have phones, their parents oftentimes do not have the financial means to continually add money to recharge data limits. Therefore, BTS supports the costs of online teaching and do not ask parents to spend money on the phone plans. For those who do not have phones, teachers are attempting group classes at the students' homes.

Construction Projects: The school has been in the process of repairing damages caused by recent cyclones, but the construction was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, repairs are steadily in progress, and the school would also like to add additional classrooms in order to expand the curriculum to Class V.

School Concerns: The teachers and staff voiced that the highest priorities at this time are the midday meal, computer center, and coaching center. Because the midday meal is not funded, the parents are unable to provide the additional meal for their children. Furthermore, the midday meal allows children to stay at the school for a longer period of time, receive nutritious food, and reduce the burden on their parents, who are mainly daily wage earners. The computer and coaching centers are currently not sufficient to cater to the school's 240 students. There are only eight computers, so students must share while they are learning.

Project Steward Concerns: As the school aims to expand, it is evident that more teachers and staff are

necessary. For the entire student body of 240 students who are divided into smaller batches to accommodate COVID-19 protocols, there are too few teachers to adequately support all of the students. Simultaneously, this places a large burden on the existing staff to manage multiple classes. A second concern is the lack of school transportation. Children on the outskirts of the villages are unable to attend school during inclement weather or if their parents are unable to escort them to the school. Having a local bus or van through the school would eliminate this obstacle and allow for all children to come to BTS-Pathabhavan.