



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: Nov. 30, 19

Name of the Project: BTS-PathBhavan

Name of the Organisation Running the Project (if different): BTS (Baikunthapur Tarun Sangha)

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 & Livelihoods 10%

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

Board of Directors - 9
Project Director/Co-Ordinator - 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
Ramkrishna Mission Ashram	Religious faith based organisation promoting community development

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 4 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, Rickshaw-pulling for carrying goods and passengers, Fish & Vegetable vending, Daily wage labor, Agricultural labor.

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?

Once a week

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 contribute a minimum of tuition fees and attending parent-teachers meetings.
The tuition fee is fixed at Rs. 60/- per month.

6. Are there any Government Schools in the area?

Yes ☒

No ☐

7. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community?

The nearest Govt. School is a 30-45 minute walk from Baikanthapur Village. Since there are no school buses or pool cars, the distance makes it very difficult for young children to walk to the Govt. School. The vagaries of the weather in the summer months and the monsoon season further complicate access to the Govt. School.

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

The Govt. School in the area is over-crowded, with teacher-student ratios that inhibit teaching and learning. In addition, the teachers are not from the community and stay far away from school - sometimes even 50 km away. Typical to the pattern of behavior in government schools, teachers are frequently absent and do not stay back beyond office hours to help the school children.

In contrast, at BTS-PathBhavan School the free and joyful learning atmosphere, and use of novel Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) translate to better academic results. Children from BTS-Pathabhavan excel academically in the Govt. School during their post primary education. The teachers are all from the community, and beyond school hours, there is special care and additional free coaching provided to students to support their learning needs.

9. When you visited, how many children were present in the class?

The school has 6 Classes - Lower KG, Upper KG, Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 and Class 4. There were a total of 201 students during our visit. Enquiries revealed an attendance of 97%.

What is the regular class strength? The regular class strength varies between 22 - 34 students.

Comments: The admission session for the next batch was on during our visit. Since the school has been recognized by the State Government in December'15, it is estimated that the overall student population will increase to 250 in the next couple of years. There is a state government directive to upgrade the school to Class 5. However, since this is not a state government aided school, the costs of upgrading the infrastructure and the human resources will have to be borne by BTS through endowments and grants from external sponsors such as ASHA for Education.

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

Since this is the only school in the village, and there is a Mid-day Meal Scheme the attendance levels are impressive (around 97%). Preliminary enquiries with students, though in presence of school staff, revealed that children enjoyed coming to school.

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.) ☐ **till what class?** Class 4
B. Non-Formal Education (NFE) ☒ **do the students also attend formal school?**
C. Vocational ☒
D. Other ☐. Please specify _____

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

From the 2019 academic session, the school is providing primary education upto Class 5.
BTS-Pathabhavan is considering initiating procedures to be formally affiliated to the West Bengal Board of Primary Education (<http://www.wbbpe.org/>).

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

Since the school offers education upto Class 5, all students have to pursue further studies in formal / Government schools beyond Class 5.

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-Pathabhavan School sources books and other Teaching & Learning Materials (TLMs) with a special emphasis on English, Mathematics & Science subjects.

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

Vocational Courses for the students include craft based activities - Making Chalk, Greeting Cards, Clay Models etc. In addition students are introduced to computers at the Computer Center in school.

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

Eight (8) Staff members are from the local community in Baikanthapur Village.

How many of the staff are women?

Three (3) of the Staff members are women.

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

There have been NO teachers who have left the school in the past year.

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

In the past year, two (2) teachers have joined.

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?

Average Rs. 2,500 ~ 3,000 per month; this is way below the salaries for Government funded teachers. There is need to consider an endowment model to provide incentives and/or higher salaries to the teachers (at par with salaries for government funded teachers)

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 budgetary needs are far higher than the financial resources provided by ASHA-Cornell. The current disbursement from ASHA-Cornell varies from Rs. 4,20,000 ~ 4,50,000. However, the annual running cost is about Rs. 9,50,000. Therefore there is need for additional financial resources to meet the deficit of about Rs 4,00,000.

I have included a detailed itemized budget with reasoning for each item in the following section.

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.

I have listed below items that are of immediate need and the financial cost associated with each. The total cost for Items 1~4 is Rs. 15,70,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Seventy Thousand*).

Item #5 is a proposed endowment model that needs a financial commitment of Rs.75,00,000/- (Rupees Seventy Five Lakh*) spread over the next 3~5 years.

1. Building Infrastructure Improvement: The Sunderbans area, and Baikanthapur in particular have been ravaged by cyclonic storms. In the past six months two tropical cyclones (Fani & Bulbul) have caused significant damage to the school building. There is need for immediate repairs to the school building budgeted at Rs. 8,50,000; the specific items are listed below:

a. Roofing of UKG, LKG, Pre-School space	= Rs. 1,25,000/-
b. Roof insulation with plywood panels	= Rs. 1,50,000/-
c. Painting the ground floor structure	= Rs. 1,50,000/-
d. Repairing of building structure for roofing	= Rs. 3,50,000/-
e. Refurbishing of Toilets and Staircases	= Rs. 75,000/-
2. Drinking Water Station: BTS-Pathabhavan provides mid-day meals for all students; before and after meals students venture outside the school campus to wash their hands in the nearby pond. If there is a drinking water station and hand-wash facility within the school then students will not have to venture outside, reducing risks and time wasted. The drinking water station and hand wash with overhead shed will cost Rupees: 1,85,000/-
3. Electrification: BTS-Pathabhavan has applied for a power connection from the state electricity board. In 6-months an electrical connection is expected. Consequently, the entire building needs to be wired; fans and lights have to be purchased and installed. The cost of electrification along with fans and lights is estimated to cost Rs 1,35,500/-
4. Need to balance the expenditure to income deficit: The annual running cost for the school is around Rs. 9,50,000/- while the yearly disbursement from ASHA-Cornell varies from Rs. 4,20,000 ~ 4,50,000. Therefore there is an annual deficit of around Rs. 4,00,000/- which needs to be met through additional resources from ASHA for Education. If possible, another ASHA Chapter could contribute BTS-Pathbhavan to make up for the deficit of Rs. 4,00,000/-
5. Recruiting additional teachers: BTS-Pathabhavan has seven teachers; there is a need for at least three more teachers. As the school does not receive funds from the state government and is dependent on external grants, a one-time endowment that provides for teachers' honorarium would be financially beneficial This will help BTS-Pathabhavan become self-sufficient in meeting its annual recurring expenses. The amount requested for this one-time endowment is Rs. 75,00,000/- over in next 3~5 years. The endowment amount for BTS will generate Rs. 5,00,000/- (fixed deposit interest) to cover the annual running costs for teachers honorarium.

* A Lakh = Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees One Hundred Thousand).

4. Did you discuss the proposed changes with the project? If so, please describe their response.

The proposed changes to the budget were made in consultation with the teaching staff at BTS-Pathabhavan, based on their projected requirements envisioned in the short-term. Item #1~4 may be funded by ASHA-Cornell. Item #5 calls for a significantly higher magnitude of contribution, which may be funded in collaboration with other chapters of ASHA for Education.

PART E: Comments

(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)

1. Need to consider a long-term view with respect to the financial independence and self-sufficiency of BTS-Pathabhavan. The current funding model provides for annual running expenses, and funds of about Rs. 4,20,000 ~ 4,50,000/- are disbursed for this purpose. A similar amount has been disbursed annually over the past years. While this contribution ensures that annual expenses are partially met, the model is not financially sustainable. Funds are provided annually, and after meeting the expenses, there is no money left for long-term benefits.

Instead of the current annual disbursement model, we propose the creation of a substantial one-time endowment of Rs. 75,00,000/- for BTS-Pathabhavan. The amount can be invested in a nationalized bank in India; the yearly interest from the fixed deposit in the bank will provide for the annual expenses of Rs. 5,00,000/- . This entails a higher level of commitment from ASHA, but has long-term benefits for both BTS-Pathabhavan as well as for ASHA-Cornell.

2. Need to consider an additional chapter of ASHA to bridge the deficit in annual running costs amounting to about Rs. 4,00,000. The average annual disbursements from ASHA-Cornell varies between 4,20,000 ~ 4,50,000, leaving a large deficit of at least Rs. 4,00,000. Therefore there is need to urgently consider a second chapter of ASHA to contribute to BTS-Pathabhavan.

3. As the Sunderbans region is ravaged by tropical cyclones, the most recent by Cyclone Bulbul, there is an appeal to support the people in the region through financial aid. A document prepared by BTS is attached for this purpose. Hopefully, the magnitude of the disaster and urgent need for immediate humanitarian relief will catalyze the ASHA community to contribute to the relief efforts.

