

Site Visit Report

Year: 2012

Asha Project: Sikshana

Reported By: Sudhi Gulur

Rajkumar from Sikshana foundation coordinated a trip for me to visit the Asha -funded schools in the Kanakapura taluk on Dec 26th, 2012. We left Bangalore early and along the way he gave me an update on what Sikshana had accomplished in 2012 and the recognition they had received from various agencies. He then shared with me that they had extended their [Gurupuskar](#) program in 2013 to recognize the best teachers from across the state and not just from schools adopted by Sikshana. In the past years Sikshana had recognized teachers by sending them abroad to interact with peers in educational institutions and learn from that experience. We arrived first at their office in Kanakapura. This was the same office I visited last year. In addition to the visual charts that tracked progress across the schools I saw the metrics the local staff and mentors were capturing to track progress among the students in Kannada and mathematics.



Rajkumar and the Sikshana staff shared with me that they had also introduced a popular [Sikshana Star](#) program. Students at the Sikshana schools were handed stars when they actively participated in class and answered questions from mentors and teachers. The students could redeem the stars for writing instruments like erasers and pencils.



I was told that the program was very popular and that students felt so proud upon receiving these stars that they wore them on their dresses and displayed them to others in their community. I found this

concept a very innovative idea to inspire the students. I had taken some art supplies and handed them over to the Sikshana staff to distribute them to the students as part of the star program.



We then proceeded to the school in Shivanahalli. This was the same school I visited in 2011. We went into one of the class rooms and I was introduced as the Asha representative. Some of the students were able to recognize me from my last visit. Rajkumar then engaged the students by asking them to share what they were learning. As students shared their learning's they were handed Sikshana stars.



I got the opportunity to engage with the students again and this time I asked the students what they wanted to become when they grow up and why. I heard choices like policeman, teacher, doctor, software engineer and it was very interesting to hear their reasons why they wanted to choose that profession.



One of the students in the class then spoke about her experience travelling to New Delhi as part of a Sikshana-sponsored program. This is again a novel idea that has been introduced to inspire students from the Sikshana-run schools to do well and compete to be selected for this all-expense paid [trip to New Delhi](#).



The student shared how this program gave her, a student from the village, an opportunity to see other places and interact with other students and learn new things. We then left this class room and headed to the elementary class room in the adjacent building. Rajkumar took me to this class room to show me the “Nali Kali” program that had been introduced in government schools. “Nali Kali” stands for joyful learning and was introduced by Karnataka government and UNICEF. Learning takes place systematically in groups organized according to age wise competencies in an interactive manner. When children master the competency of one group, they move on to another group to learn the next competency. More information about this wonderful program can be found at: <http://schooleducation.kar.nic.in/pdf/files/NaliKali.pdf>.



The teacher in the class shared with me examples of the instruction material that students use as part of this program. I visited each of the learning stages to understand more about what they were learning.



We then proceeded to the school's computer lab. Here I am standing along with the principal of the school (to the left of me) and the Sikshana staff.



We then proceeded to the principal's office. Here I learned that Sikshana had also been encouraging students from this school who are good in sports by offering them free coaching and associated sports gear (e.g. running shoes). On the wall of the principal's office was also a certificate of achievement from Sikshana showcasing the school's academic achievements.



We left this school and then went to another government school, also managed by Asha funds, in Kallahalli in Kanakapura taluk. We went into one of the class rooms and I was saddened to see how the class room was stuffed at the back with extra additional desks and benches. We learned from the principal of this school that they did not have additional storage place and that they risked losing these desks and benches if they requested their removal from the school



Here again Rajkumar engaged with the students and asked them to showcase their talents. The students entertained us with a group song and dance.



As you can see from the smiling and proud faces of these students they were having fun. Few of the students also demonstrated their reading skills by reading the local Kannada newspaper.



The students were recognized with Sikshana stars and it was clear that it was a popular inspirational tool in this school as well as I could see many students proudly displaying their stars on their dresses.



We then bid goodbye to the students and headed back towards Bangalore. As we drove back I reflected on the transformation that Sikshana had introduced in these government-run schools. I saw first-hand how Sikshana had effectively partnered with the school officials, teachers and built strong relationships with them and the students and had made a tangible impact in the lives of the students through innovative programs (e.g. Siksha Star, Trip to Delhi, Gurupuraskar) and direct interaction.

This trip was indeed a rewarding learning experience for me and I sincerely thank Prasanna, Rajkumar and the Sikshana team for coordinating this site visit. Kudos to Prasanna and the Sikshana team for all the wonderful work they are doing.