

Virtual Visit for Aralu Belaku

Organization Name: Aralu Belaku

Type of visit: Virtual Zoom meeting

Date of virtual meeting: March 31st 2023

Name of the person who does the site visit: ASHA Chicago Chapter team

Contact person of the organization: Meril

Visit goals: Virtual site visit to get an update on initiative

Attendees of virtual visit:

- From ASHA Chicago: Mounika, Archana
- From Aralu: Meril (Organizer) and other people who help him along with students

Meeting Summary:

- Following people were present at the visit along with Meril:
 - Gangaram who is working for 6 years as watchman at Belaku
 - Rathnamma who cooks for children
 - Manyamma: education facilitator
 - Johan: he helps Administrative/Technology tasks
 - Aparna: he helps with transportation asks of children
- Belaku is in Aispur village. It is around half a kilometer from Meril's house.
- Students enrolled currently range from 1st to 10th standards
- For the last 1 ½ years they have not been coming to stay for residential use, they are providing food packages and Meril sir makes sure the children do not drop out of school. Medical assistance is also provided if necessary by referring to the appropriate parties
- There are monthly meetings where the status of the children is taken: to make sure they are still enrolled in their school, find out if there is anything the child needs (foods, supplies, etc.)
- Before the entrance, we saw the water tank and multiple trees around the location
- Meril sir said there are 6 rooms and 1 main hall, and the main purpose of this location is for residential reasons but due to Covid they had to pivot the program temporarily but hope to be able to start the residential option again soon

- Meril sir said the reason why PPC has not been moved to this bigger location (as they have more children currently) is because of the convenience of the location of the drop-off for the parents would be harder as it is 5km outskirts of the village
- The 3 acres land is owned by Meril Sir and has given Aralu board a free 30 year lease
- They recently celebrated a 25 year anniversary (June 19th 2022) so they did some minor beautification of the center
- We saw the hall where the capacity is for about 70-80 members
- Meril sir showed us the various news article that Aralu has been involved with (linked all the photos to the google drive below)
- There are 30 children enrolled in this center
- There are about 50 villages around this area where Aralu volunteers/ representatives go to spread the word about Belaku and let people know about the place that provides children support (food, shelter, etc.). Most of the kids who come to Belaku come from single parent households or have no parents.
- We met about 20 children where each and every one of them introduced themselves starting with their name, parents names, how long they have stayed at Belaku and which class they are currently studying in school.
 - Some of the kids have been with this program for 5+ years and come from single parent households
 - They were all participating in a coloring activity while introductions were being made
 - The children were all different ages from 1st to 10th standards and came from 18 different villages

We met with the following people who are part of the Belaku center:

- Manyamma: She is the education facilitator and visits the villages and government schools to make sure the kids. She also focuses on finding support for kids who may need more extra assistance with learning. She is also creating more awareness on children rights and talks to principals about increasing awareness on against various topics like child marriage
- Johan: He helps with maintaining all the administrative records (income taxes, government applications, etc.) and operating any technical components that are needed (google sheets,etc.)
- Aparna: He is the auto driver and helps with the transportation of kids around the surrounding villages



Google drive link for virtual visit's recording: (Skip to 27:26 of the video for Belaku portion):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/0BzETTuR-yJs7R0Z1Ym1ISGNkUkk?resourcekey=0-flbo7QW2mBrCDtQnqUfpA>

Google drive link for article and photos:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1hjMud4HCE7kHh8A7qdPF-Ae4Cb-tj46R>