

Site Visit Report for Uday Community School - Girirajpura - July 30th, 2016

My name is Naheed Quaisar. I live in Brookfield, CT. I am part of Asha Danbury team.

Asha Austin was looking for a volunteer to do a site visit for them and they sent an email to all chapters. Since I travel often to Rajasthan, I volunteered from the Danbury chapter.

The site visit was done on July 30th, 2016. I flew into Jaipur and took a taxi to Gramin Shiksha Kendra office in Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan. Uday Community School is an initiative of the Gramin Shiksha Kendra. At the office I met one of their academic coordinators Vishnu Gopal Meena who then came with me to Girirajpura village (a half hour drive from Sawai Madhopur)

We reached the school around 11:00am and met with the two teachers. The children had been told about the guests so you could see the anticipation and excitement on their faces.

The premises/ compound allocated by the government is pretty good sized and there is scope to do much more with the land. The school though is very small - three room small building - one room for pre-k, one room for elementary and one room used by the teachers (supplies and their living quarters). The rooms had simple rugs on the floor where the students sat. The walls had colorful posters on education and there were shelves of books.

The yard was nice and big but no playground(swings, slides etc). They had a few trees which I was told the children had planted and cared for.

Pre-K class - There were a mix age of children in this class. Starting from 3 years to 6 years. Some of the children were drawing on slate and some were practicing reading small words. The teacher showed me math-kits and math sheets they used to teach. They had an interesting assortment of tools. He also showed me some progress reports of children and talked about how they diligently measured progress. Children seemed to be happy. Some were shy but the others were brimming with energy and confidence. It seemed that the school was bringing them joy. They told me they played a lot of games outside like kho-kho and kabbadi. I have some videos showing the children coloring and reading.

Elementary class - There was again a mix of ages in this class and it was a much bigger group. Age range was from 7 years to 11 years. The children were very enthusiastic and confident. The love and encouragement given by the teachers showed in the way they responded to my questions. When asked they sang some songs - some morning

assembly songs and some poems. And then I asked them to show me their books and what they were learning. I was impressed by the content - ranging from addition to triple digit multiplication, english sentences and creative drawing. The children were confident and that to me was the biggest measure of success. I have a few videos of the children singing songs and then some pictures of their workbooks showing the content and range of work they displayed.

Future Needs and Challenges

A lot more families are relocating nearby as the government is setting up a new area for tiger reserve and the teachers feel that the number of students will go up significantly. They feel they need two more rooms to accommodate the new students and also create more space for the existing students.

There is a big tobacco problem in the area. A brand of toothpaste called the “Lal Danth Manjan” is used by young and old prolifically and it is said to have tobacco in it. Women and men, children all ages are hooked on to it. The school teachers have been trying to get the students off this addiction and also influence their families to get off this addiction. They say most of their students have now stopped using the toothpaste.

Videos and Pictures

Have been uploaded on google drive and here is the link-

<https://goo.gl/photos/mG41hHyk5weTrnyR6>

In conclusion the children of Girirajpura are flourishing - thanks to Asha Austin. This is a great initiative. Please continue to help and fund this initiative.