

Borderless World Foundation (BWF) Site Visit Report for Asha Seattle Chapter, August 2026

- By Alok Mahajan

As an introduction I, Alok Mahajan, am a long time (25 plus years) resident of Silicon Valley area. My educational background includes engineering from IIT Roorkee and MBA from University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Professionally, the last 20 years of my career have been spent in the corporate consulting world as part of a 'Big 4' firm. I was an active participant with the local Team Asha biking program from 2011 and 2018 and then again for one season post covid. Most of these years, I also served as captain - helping slow and new riders get up to speed, complete a 100K bike ride and fundraise for Asha. All these years I have stayed in touch with key Team Asha leaders of the Bay Area.

Recently during my family visit to India, Sridhar of Seattle chapter and Anup Som of Bay Area chapter informed me of a need for site visit for BWF in J&K. I had met the BWF founder during his bay area visit 10+ years back and was aware of the cause. I was able to make it happen by taking some time away from family and visiting BWF homes over two days (Aug 12 and 13) and kept a very packed schedule during this time. I did this visit at my own expense.

Here are some of the details of the visit.

I took an early morning flight on Aug 12, 2026 from my home base in India such that I landed at Srinagar airport at approximately 9.30 AM. I was out by 10 AM and stayed coordinated with Adhik (BWF founder and main person) who picked me up from outside the airport.

Beerwah Home:

Straight from the airport we headed to Beerwah location which is approximately 2 to 2.5 hrs drive away. Adhik had only given them very short notice of my visit to keep interruption to their daily routine to a minimum. I was warmly greeted by very young (many seemed to be elementary or early middle school age) who even performed a 'welcome' song/ dance. Kids seemed to be healthy, in good spirits and engaged. I saw all the facilities, kitchen, rooms, equipment and condition of the home. A special session was a conversation with the kids where I told them about things in California, kids asked questions and later each of the kid introduced themselves and shared their dream of what they will become upon growing up. These goals ranged from being a teacher, doctor, IPS officer and in one case even president! Adhik was not in the room so that I

could freely converse but home wardens were there to facilitate. Some of the wardens were present (most of them seemed to be girls who were residents of this home, got good education and good jobs but chose to come back to give back and inspire). Some pics from this home:

They welcomed me with a bouquet:



And a welcome performance:



Interactive session:



Kids presented hand written cards and this poster signed by everyone at home which expressed their immense gratitude towards Asha. I felt both privileged and overwhelmed to be representing Asha. Asha seemed to be very big for them - among the top couple of donors.





I'm holding cards handmade and given by the kids. Would love to give these to Asha Seattle chapter. Please note that during the entire day, I chose to wear my Asha tee shirt! - that's visible in the picture above.

Kupwara

After a light lunch we headed straight to another home in Kupwara. This location was another 2-3 drive from Beervah. During the drive I got to see some areas of Kashmir passing by, both immense beauty and evidence and stories of unimaginable violence over decades. When I looked up the map on my phone, it was a bit thrilling to be so close to the LOC or line of control. And that's precisely why this area was so prone to violence, leaving kids orphaned and thus a good choice for a BWF home given its charter and purposes.

I was greeted again warmly upon arrival at this home. At the home again I saw kids who were anywhere from young to middle school aged. After the meet and greet, kid

interaction session we also went through the plan, outlook and demand for this home (as in kids who want to enter the home but there is no capacity).

Some photos from Kupwarah:





Another poster signed by all expressing gratitude to Asha.

Interaction with kids at this home also was quite inspiring and they seemed to be in a very positive spirit. We wrapped up this home visit around 8 PM or so and left for Srinagar where I had taken a hotel room. Adhik dropped me to my hotel room around 11 PM.

During this entire day of driving with Adhik the founder, his wife was also present. She seemed to be an equally dedicated volunteer to this cause - and being a woman able to better relate to some aspects of the girls' lives. Esp older girls.

Note: My first day was such a blur, travel and site visits from 6 AM to 11 PM that I may have mixed up pictures of the two sites (Beervah vs Kupwara) above. Pl view it accordingly.

Day 2 - August 13:

This day started with breakfast at my hotel with Adhik and his wife. This day also happened to be Adhik's birthday and to celebrate that we picked up a cake for the kids on our way to our next home visit. This home is located in Srinagar itself and caters towards older kids, say 17 to 18 plus who are ready to go to university and have 'graduated' from other houses in more remote areas. I remember one of them saying that she had arrived at BWF age of 2 and was now almost 20 plus and nearly a graduate and very grateful to have this life vs what it could have been.

Session with older kids:



And their signature farewell with a hand-signed poster. (I plan to hand over one of these posters to Asha Seattle):



After Srinagar home visit (or Basera homes), I was also able to visit a MMU or mobile medical unit. I joined the one that was boat based and saw how it organized a medical camp in villages across Dal Lake.

Please note that these MMUs are run based on funds received from Indian corporate CSR budgets (not from funds from organizations like Asha). But these result in direct cost savings for Basera homes. A child welfare act passed by the state legislature (I think around 2017 or 2019) limits the number of children in homes like this and requires certain medical staff. MMUs fulfill that medical staff requirement and are thus MMUs are complimentary to running of children homes.

BWF MMU:



And a medical camp at one of the islands for the villagers (see next page)::



After MMU and medical camp visit, I headed straight to the airport. Along the way I picked up some fresh Kashmir apples for my family.

Other notes regarding the visit, summary and overall recommendation:

On both of the days I was able to meet with most of the kids key staff members such as wardens as well as overall program coordinator who works closely with Adhik.

On an overall basis I regard the trip to be very satisfactory and successful. On a more personal level. It was very fulfilling for me to see all these kids and the results of this organization's efforts over the last 20 or so years so I would like to thank Asha Seattle, since I was able to visit on your behalf.

As noted earlier I was able to meet with most if not all of the kids and had an interaction with them. Adhik let me have this conversation without him being present for a free exchange.

The kids look mostly very happy very excited, enormously grateful to Asha and showed optimism towards their future and each one seem to have a goal or a dream

I also noticed that some of the kids who went on to become successful such as software engineer or other avocations, chose a more fulfilling path and came back as warden or otherwise helper of this organization. In my day job for the last 20 years, I have analyzed many entities, businesses and organizations, and to me this particular point would be a strong positive indicator of health , effectiveness and emotional bonding of this organization and group. I further noticed that younger kids would really look up to these older returnees and see them as role models.

I was further able to verify and take pictures of some of their recent purchases that Sridhar had wanted me to confirm. Major items include the generator, the carpet and all the trunks (which, by the way, kids really appreciated as it gave them some level of independence and privacy).

I was also able to have an exchange with Adhik and key members regarding some of their near future and long-term needs, which I'll be happy to discuss further later.

I want to close this report with my full endorsement that we as Asha should continue to support and release requisite funding. It's a great cause and all the money is going towards the right use. Please note that I have kept this report on a briefer side and in some ways it could be read as an extension of previous visits by other Asha volunteers. If needed I can come down to Seattle to meet with key chapter folks to discuss any of these aspects in detail.

I further confirm that I am completely independent from BWF and have no personal interests there. This visit was solely to help Asha fulfil the requirement so that funding could be considered and, if approved, released.

Signed. Alok Mahajan, September 10, 2026.