

Door Step School (Pune, India)

Asha for Education site visit report

Supporting chapter: Asha Seattle.

Date of site visit: Thursday, 20 December 2018.

- Draft completed on 8 January 2019.
- Final report completed on 11 July 2019.

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[Door Step School website](#), [Asha project webpage](#).

Introduction

Door Step School (DSS) runs various programs to support the primary education of underprivileged communities, especially the children of migrant construction workers. The following resources provide an overview:

- [Previous site visit report from June 2018](#).
- [Seven minute video by Times Now](#).
- The [2017-18 handout](#) provides a brief description and the [2017-18 annual report](#) provides more details.

Project Foundation is one of DSS' initiatives. Education Activity Centres (EACs) are classrooms at the construction sites where DSS representatives provide childcare and non-formal education to children aged 0-14 years. EACs are typically simple sheet metal structures. The students are grouped as follows:

- Literacy class: these are for children between 6-14 years of age who are not formally enrolled in school for various reasons (e.g. recently arrived at site, parents not interested). The Right to Education Act states that all children have a right to primary education, so DSS aims to enroll the children within 6 weeks of their coming to the EAC.
- Study class: these are for children enrolled in school. Children from the literacy class move to the study class once enrolled in school. These classes are designed to assist the students in their homework and promote regular study.
- Creche and balwadi (pre-primary): for children aged 0-6 years.

In June 2018, I visited an EAC ([see report](#)) where I saw lessons in session and interacted with the teachers and students. The EACs are monitored by supervisors and coordinators who are usually DSS teachers with several years of experience. Every month the coordinators and supervisors provide an update to the DSS leadership, including the director Ms. Bhavana Kulkarni and associate director Ms. Sunila Page. During the present visit (December 2018), I attended the monthly coordinator meeting. This is an important feedback mechanism that allows the team to assess progress and address challenges. These meetings happen at the Annabhau Sathe municipal school (RB Kumthekar Road, Sadashiv Peth). It used to be a school and the building is now used as office space by several non-profit institutions. The present

visit complements the June 2018 EAC site visit as I gained a better understanding of how DSS is managed and of the system used to monitor student progress.

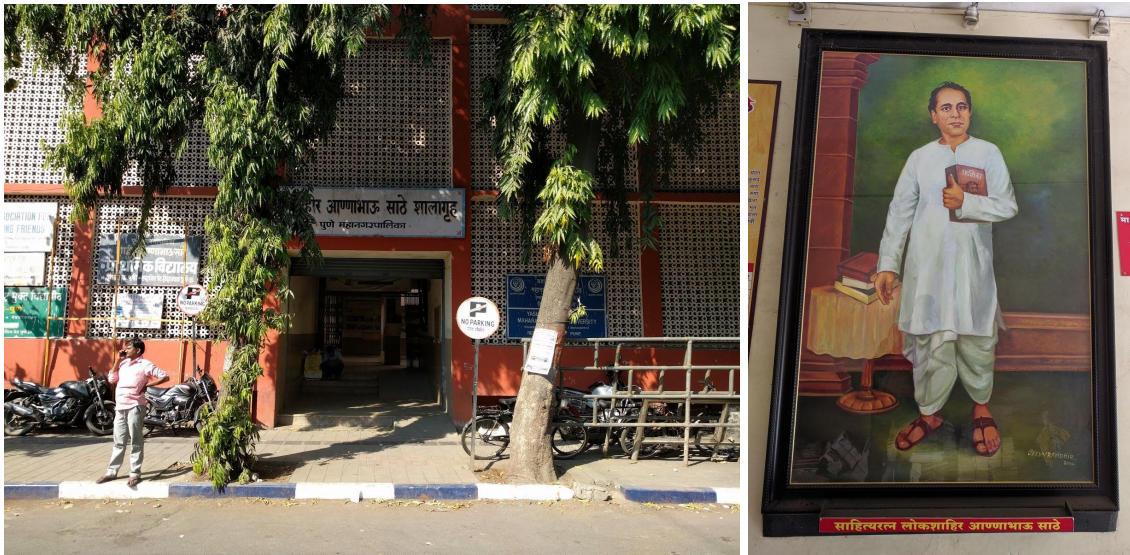


Figure 1: Entrance of Annabhau Sathe primary school (left). Portrait of social reformer Annabhau Sathe in the entrance hallway (right).



Figure 2: Courtyard and hallway of Annabhau Sathe primary school.



Figure 3: DSS office.

Progress report

Asha Seattle supports two EACs. In September 2018, there were 48 students attending these EACs. DSS was successful in ensuring that all the children at the construction site were attending the EAC. From April to September 2018, 90 students had migrated with their families either to another construction site or to another town. Construction workers are migrant laborers, which explains the large number of migrations.

DSS has a 120 day program for the literacy and study class students to get them up to speed with the Marathi language quickly. They track learning levels over this period. Out of 40 students in the literacy and study classes, 5 were below the expected learning levels and the rest were at or above the expected learning levels (Figure 4). The teachers have to review the previous material with each student who is below the expected learning level.

Days	Learning Alphabets	Alphabets Completed	Learning Matras	Matras Completed	Composite Words	Grand Total
1 to 25	5	1	1	1	5	13
26 to 50	4	2	2	0	5	13
51 to 70	--	1	5	2	4	12
71 to 90	--	--	--	--	2	2
91 to 120	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	9	4	8	3	16	40

Figure 4: Learning levels of students in the literacy and study classes (from April to September 2018 report).

Monthly coordinator meeting

At this particular meeting, the data from November 2018 was discussed. The EACs supported by Asha Seattle fall under Haseena tai's and Anuradha tai's regions (tai means elder sister in Marathi and is a common way of addressing the teachers). At one of the EACs there were three children whose parents were not ready to send them to school. Parents gave reasons such as i) they are going to leave the city soon so there is no point in enrolling the child in school ii) the child is too old for school iii) transport to school is too expensive. The coordinators said that they asked the site supervisor to intervene but that didn't work. Ms. Sunila Page had written a list of interventions on the blackboard and emphasized to the coordinators that it is very important to proceed with other interventions in these situations. Ms. Page regularly visits the EACs so she has a good understanding of what is happening on the ground and what interventions are appropriate.



Figure 5: DSS coordinators assembled for the monthly coordinator meeting in December 2018.

Some other items that were discussed:

- Tracking of migrated children (Figure 6).
- Some children were walking to school along a busy street, so DSS will ask the authorities to put up a road sign to drive slowly.

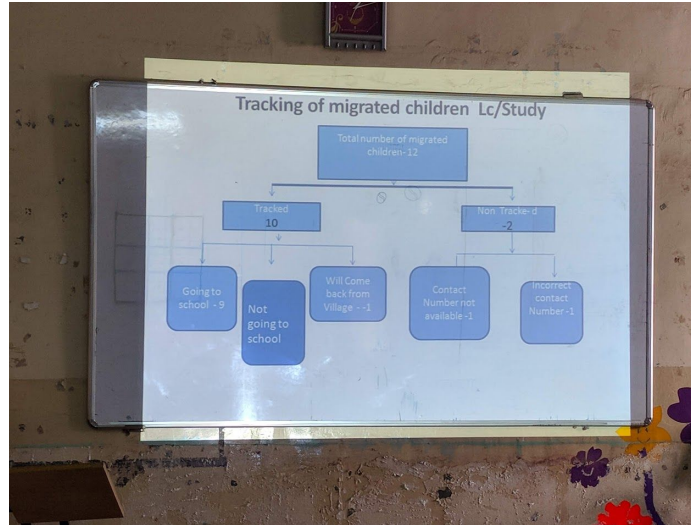


Figure 6: Coordinators present data on tracking of migrated children.



Figure 7: Coordinators Haseena tai and Anuradha tai showing the study aids created by DSS teachers.

This visit complements previous site visits to the EACs by shedding some light on how DSS addresses student dropouts and monitors student progress. Educating the children of migrant construction workers is a huge challenge, but I think the DSS leadership and staff have developed an effective system to address this challenge. I recommend that Asha Seattle continue to support DSS' efforts.