Site Visit Report  
Project: Sandnya Sanwardhan Sanstha, Butibori, Nagpur, Maharashtra

Date of Visit: 19th Dec 2019

Sandnya Sanwardhan Sanstha has been supported by Asha for Education since 2006. Asha Athens has been the primary supporting and stewarding chapter while there have been significant contributions from other Asha Chapters like Silicon Valley, Philadelphia, NYC/NJ and Portland.

This report is short and only provides updates available since the previous visit by another volunteer just months ago in Aug 2019 Site Visit

The wheelchair school bus project

For years, Sandnya had been pursuing a project of a custom-built special equipped bus that can accommodate wheelchairs for students with physical disabilities. The need for such a bus, the specific features required and the struggle to procure has been well documented in these documents over the last few years. These documents can also be found on the Sandnya project page on the Asha website

Sep 2017 Site Visit  
Oct 2016 Plan for Bus Project  
Jul 2016 Bus Proposal Budget  
Jan 2016 Bus Features  
Jan 2016 Bus Proposal

After significant efforts and delays the bus was ready and was delivered to Sandnya in late 2019 and I was quite curious and excited to finally see it on campus when I visited. Navin sir gave a demo of its various features with the hydraulic lift, special wheelchairs that fit in the bus, harness and straps to lock the wheelchairs in place. The bus has a capacity to accommodate up to 20 wheelchairs. The bus will be able to accommodate up to 5 staff in addition to the driver. These individuals will assist with boarding and deboarding of wheelchair bound students during the daily trips.

The bus wasn’t put in operation as Sandnya was in the process of recruiting a dedicated full time driver. Drivers on contract have been used in past on other buses but Sandnya has had less than satisfactory experience with their driving certifications and safety of the students was a concern so the school has resorted to hiring drivers as full-time employees.

A short demo video of the bus is available here

Parent Relief Center

Taking care of a mentally challenged child can be an exhausting endeavor for any parent. In the case of families of many students this can cause instability within the family. The school provides learning to a great extent so that the students can try to be self-reliant in many day-to-day activities. But while the school can provide some learning to mentally challenged child in a way parents cannot, the student still needs to heavily rely on their parents for many activities on a daily basis.

The school started offering to take care of few students for a period of few days with the help of a caretaker who resides on campus. A few rooms in the school were converted into living quarters with the aim of allowing the student to reside on a short-term basis (up to a week). There’s also a fully
functional kitchen on campus to provide meals. This allowed the parents to take a much needed break when they need one. The concept has been well received by the parents. However, the limited capacity and staff available to be dedicated for this purpose limits the number of students that can be accommodated.

Over the years the school has come to take care of 2-3 students who have become full-time residents on school campus for various reasons like needing intensive care or being abandoned by family. The school responded to such events by converting few of its classrooms as living quarters and allowed the students and a caretaker to reside on campus. The parent relief program was a natural extension to the concept of student dorm on campus.

Thanks

Akshay Bhole

Asha Boston