

# Basic information

## *Site Visitor's Information*

Name: Anjan Nandi, M/42

Address: IISER-Kolkata, Haringhata, West Bengal 741252, India

mob: [+91 9836667780](tel:+919836667780)

email: [anjanandi@gmail.com](mailto:anjanandi@gmail.com)

## *Visit Information*

Date of visit: 15th July, 2016 (it was a planned visit)

## Places: ISW-Barasat

## About the surrounding community

- **About how many families live in the area to which the project caters?**

The project caters two villages, Paschim Ichhapur (500 families) and Chandanpur (1200 families). The centre is located in the Paschim Ichhapur village.

- **What do they do for a living?**

Most of them are vegetable vendors or daily workers, a few of them earns by driving 'toto' (a local public transport, a kind of battery operated rickshaw).

- **What are their economic/religious/educational background?**

More than half of the population are below poverty level and first generation learners. While Chandanpur village is almost fully Muslim dominated, the ratio in Paschim Ichhapur is 60:40 in favour of Hindus.

- **How do they view the efforts taken by the organization that runs the project?**

The project is running since more than 30 years has been successfully able to gain trust of local community.

- **Has the community supported the project (financially, donating land, volunteering, etc.)?**

By contributing voluntarily during annual events.

## About the project

- **How far away is the project site from the main town/village? How do children commute (foot, bus, etc.)?**

The project site is located at the Paschim Ichhapur Village which is about 3-4km far from the nearest main town Barasat. Children commute by foot only.

- **Please describe the infrastructure and facilities currently available to the project (e.g., furniture, toilets, midday meals, library, sports, residential facilities). Are the buildings permanent or temporary constructions? What is their physical condition? How big are the classrooms? How many children per each room?**

The buildings are permanent constructions, the class rooms are big and spacious (can be seen in the video) can well support 50-60 children or more, furnitures are beautifully coloured, in library books are inadequate, toilets are functioning well, there are no residential facility and mid-day meals are NOT provided.

## **About the teachers**

- **How many total full-time/part-time teachers/volunteers are involved in project?**

There are many full time teachers associated to the centre, their responsibilities are flexible enough (outlined below):

Shikha Dutta (F/56, BA, Montessori trained), associated since 28-29 years, responsibilities: nursery classes, paid (Rs. 2500/month).

Krishna Chakraborty (F/45, BA), associated since 6 years, responsibilities: nursery and elder classes coaching, paid (Rs. 2500/month).

Sangeeta Biswas (F/47, BA) associated since 3 years, responsibilities: nursery classes, paid (Rs. 1500/month).

Najmul Islam (M/45, Bsc), associated since 6 years, responsibilities: elder students coaching, paid (Rs. 2500/month).

Shyamali Chanda (F/45, 10th standard), associated since 23-24 years, responsibilities: slightly elder but illiterate kids, paid (Rs. 1000).

Lekha Mitra (F/53, BA), associated since 10-12 years, responsibilities: coaching classes, paid (Rs. 3000).

Nupur Mondal (F/60+), associated since 4-5 years, responsibilities: nursing very small kids, paid (Rs. 800/month).

Shakira Bibi (F, 30+, old student from this centre), works as bell person of the school, associated since 15 years, paid (Rs. 800/month).

Manasi Bhanja Chowdhury (On leave, have not met)

I met with three other teachers involved into teaching knitting and crafts, all are female aged between 50-60 years. I also met with the secretary Dipali Roy (F/60+).

- **How many women involved in the project and what are their responsibilities?**

Except one, all are women, responsibilities are discussed above.

- **How many volunteers/teachers are from the local community?**

All are from the local community.

- **What is their level of education and professional background?**

Discussed above.

- **What is the motivation for them to work for the project?**

They are motivated by their will to serve the society, also they love to mingle with the kids.

- **How long they have been with organization/project?**

Discussed above.

- **Where do they live, and how much they travel to work here?**

They live nearby, travel max 3-4km.

- **If paid, are they satisfied with their salaries?**

They would love to get a hike, but their passion for the young kids overcome their monetary needs.

- **How many teachers/volunteer have left the project in the previous year? How many new teachers/volunteers have joined in the previous year?**

None.

- **Does the organization train the teachers? If yes, how do they provide the training?**

No.

## **About the students**

- **What portion of children from the local community attend this school? What is the age group? Boy/girl ratio?**

All are from local community. Age group 3-15years, most of them are girls.

- **What is the socio-economic background of students? (Are they first generation learners, what is the educational and monetary background of family etc.)**

First generation learners, economically backward family.

- **What are their activities they perform outside of school hours?**

Playing, helping parents in household works.

- **What is their motivation for attending the school?**

The teachers are very caring and loving.

- **What is drop out rate among the students? What do they do after they leave the project?**

Very minimum.

- **Are the children charged fees for attending school?**

Yes, Rs 10/month for the nursery, higher students: Rs 50-150, depending on seniority.

- **What curriculum does the school follow? (State Board/ Central/ Alternative). What are the children taught? What is the medium of instruction?**

State board/Alternative. Medium: Bengali.

## Comments:

Overall, the organizers are doing a good job for the local community and should be helped so that they could continue. They desperately need to start a mid-day meal programme. The kids spend a lot of time in the school (10:30am to 3:30pm daily), and currently they are bringing food by their own. I talked to many guardians, they all said that it would be very helped if the school provide some food to the kids. They are also in shortage of a regular supply of blank exercise books. Occasionally small kids went to sleep in the classroom, but they do not have a proper place for the same; a few cots would serve good. And it would have been excellent if they could provide school dresses to the kids.