

## **KIDDERPORE Site Visit 2019** (by Manidipa Mukherjee)

I visited Institute of Social Work (ISW) in MominPur, Kolkata on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. I was greeted by two girls of age 14-15. The rented house where we went was 0.5 km from the main road.

About 40 years past with the help of dedicated women like Nupur, in an area of majority muslim culture, this institute started. First they had to convince men in the area that it is NOT a family planning center. Then 10 older women came and received training for doing chikon handicraft, making baskets, leather bags etc. Gradually mothers started to come with children, mainly girls, to learn various skills and some education too. Today it is a safe place for coaching dropouts, school going pre-primary to adolescent girls. Talking to a large number of girls, I can't emphasize enough how much they depend on this center. It is like their dream to graduate school, join college and join work force and have their dignity. I saw photos of several years graduate who are now serving the society in different capacities. Out of 30 students served, at least 4-5 graduate college! Impressive.

Among the dedicated teachers, I met chemistry teacher, a graduate of Bethune College. I am also a proud graduate of the same college. She expressed her pleasure to help girls with their learning.

Other than education, there is also training by Rupanjali for sewing. She has strict standard for the finished product. I credit her for instilling pride in the girls' work.

Nutritional help is also provided 6 days a week.



ISW Coaching Center



ISW Coaching Center



ISW Coaching Center

## **BARASAT Site Visit 2019** (by Manidipa Mukherjee)

Sishu Bikash Bharati

West Ichapore, Barasat

Kolkata

Sishu Bikash Bharati is located in 25 km north of Salt Lake, Kolkata. I went to visit the school with Nupur Sanyal on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019. I went to the same school five years past with Nupur. The difference is that now they have 60 kindergarteners from 10:45 to 3:30. Previously there was KG through fourth grade. It is the result of a problem of accreditation with Government school system. There are three teachers. Students eat lunch at school. They are very happy to come to school. They were enthusiastic to sing and show me that they can read. When I asked the teachers what would they wish more than what they have now, they asked for few cots. Some students fall asleep sometimes. The cots will be helpful to transfer the sleepy children from the chairs.

It was close to 3:30, parents came to pick up their children. Two parents were still not there, so the two children started crying immediately. They were consoled by one of the teacher. Soon their parents arrived. I asked some parents how they rate the school. They are very appreciative of the school. Their children can read and eat lunch in school is assuring to them of good care.



Sishu Bikash Bharati Students





Sishu Bikash Bharati Students

Different higher grades of about 80 students come in the afternoon for receiving coaching after school. There are about total six classrooms in two floors in a separate building but in the same compound. Students are well motivated who come here for coaching. Teachers are also very sincere in helping students.

There is an area in the school compound where recently students performed drama and various cultural activities. Parents, some of them, though at first didn't let their children ever perform in public, finally agreed. Students enjoyed the performances. The school also held Swaraswati Puja and irrespective of religion, parents join the festival.



Coaching center at SBB

The need for after school coaching is **enormous**. I visited one of the three other coaching centers run by Nupur also. It is located in Taldharia, Purbapara, P.O. Kapasia. It is held in a delapidated porch of a well wisher of dimension 3.5 ft X 25 ft for 50 students! It is held three days per week, 3:30-

5:30, mainly for english and mathematics upto grade six. Students are coming from very very poor household. There were women around who leave by sewing clothes, bedcovers etc.



Taldharia Coaching Center



Taldharia Coaching Center

### Additional follow-up questions on ISW site visits:

#### **School children + attendance:**

1a) How many children attend each school: i) Kidderpore (~80), ii) Barasat (60 enrolled, 42 were present on that day, usually ~50 are present on the average, in the coaching center in same facility there is ~60 students while I was there)?

1b) What is the approx ratio of girls to boys / number for each? (4:1 in Khidirpore) (1:1 in Barasat)

1c) Approximate age of children taught at the schools? (6-19 in Khidirpore) (4-5 yrs in KG and 12-17 years in coaching center; in Taldharia coaching center 50 students from grade I to VI)

1d) How many children did you speak to during your site visit? ~3-4 students in each class in each space

2a) How many students are generally present in the class?

2b) What is the attendance generally like (i.e. what percentage of enrolled students attend on a regular basis)? 60-70 % in KG and ~90% in coaching centers

2c) What was attendance like on the day you visited? Same as I said above

3a) What percentage of students have dropped out of the ISW programs? Rarely drop out in Barasat, very few in Khidirpore

3b) What happens after students drop out? Are any of these kids reintegrated into Government schools? They go to Govt. school and come to ISW for coaching and usually don't drop out from the coaching center! They are reintegrated in Govt. school after they catch up the content in the lost time.

4a) What percentage of the students successfully graduate from the ISW programs? 10-15 graduate high school in Khidirpore and 4-5 of them graduate college, all kinder gardeners graduate in Barasat

4b) What do students go on to do after they graduate? ~80% go to college or vocational education in Khidirpore, if they can afford it.

#### **Teachers / Staff:**

1a) How many staff / volunteers are there at schools from the community? There are three teachers, paid, in KG, all teachers are paid (minimal) in coaching centers. I saw a volunteer in kitchen of KG

1b) How many of these are paid staff / volunteers? Didn't ask about volunteer numbers, sorry

2) What percentage of the staff are women? Almost 100%

3) How are the teachers + other staff trained? What is covered in the training? In KG most of the teachers are teaching for 5 or more years, didn't ask about training.

4) What are the qualifications of the teachers? Some Khidirpore teachers are college graduates, didn't ask about numbers

5a) What is the turnover rate for teachers (i.e. what percentage of them leave)? Didn't ask this, but repeatedly came up in conversation about the teachers are there for more than 2 years

5b) What efforts are made to retain teachers? Teacher stay if they want to help young people.

5c) How often are new teachers hired for the schools? Didn't ask

5d) On average, what is the length of time most teachers have been teaching i) in general, and ii) at ISW specifically? Answered above 2-3 years if not more each teacher is there.

5e) Did you get the sense that teachers were satisfied with their roles? Were they satisfied with their pay? Other areas? I asked about their "Wish", money didn't come up.

#### **Curriculum:**

1) What are the program's primary goals e.g. get students to college / vocational training / other, based on what you observed? In Khidirpore: getting dropouts back to classroom, graduates to go to college or vocational school. Same for other coaching centers, KG to go to school prepared with basic education which is impossible to acquire from their poor families.

2) What is the curriculum i.e. the predominant content / topics taught in the schools? In coaching centers content is already set by what the schools ask for.

3) From where do they get materials for teaching i.e. do they create the materials or obtain them from



other sources? Some nursery rhymes, CDs that are hard to find now-a-days the teachers mentioned. One KG teacher downloads some teaching material to teach.

4) What is the mode of teaching employed in the schools e.g. formal, non-formal, experiential, vocational, etc? Non-formal, vocational, some experiential

5) What do they do with their sewing projects? Do they take projects home / sell in the community / other? They sell the materials through coaching center in different fairs held in Kolkata.

### **Parents engagement:**

1) How do the parents feel about the school / projects? *Parents who came to pick up KG, parents in the community are appreciative of the projects. In Khidirpore, parents let the students come to school instead of doing some odd jobs in that ime.*

2) How often parents meet with teachers? *For KG, has the opportunity to ask questions everyday.*

3) How do parents participate in / contribute to school activities? *In Barasat, they allowed their children to participate in a play about Freedom Fighter. Parents came in droves, they come for Swaraswati Puja, irrespective of religion, accept "prasad".*

### **Community:**

1a) How many families are in the community? *Didn't ask*

1b) What percentage of kids from the local community attend the ISW schools? *Almost every poor child. The coaching centers are the students' only hope to graduate school. Teachers don't teach in Govt. schools. Those teachers charge hefty amount of money in tutoring session which ISW attendees can't afford.*

2) How does the general community feel about the school / projects? *Very supportive*

3) What is the predominant industry in which the people of the community are employed? *Odd jobs, no job, day labor, single parent going through abusive marriage or divorce*

4) How many Government schools are in the area? *Each of these places have Govt. school, but with no teaching going on and these students can't afford to pay tuition for those school teacher-run tutoring!*

### **Site visit:**

1) Was this a planned visit or a surprise visit i.e. did the project partner know exactly when you would be coming by? *Planned site visit.*

2) How much time did you spend at each site? *~3 hrs in Barasat and Khidirpore each on separate days.*

3a) With whom did you speak at the project site? *I mainly spoke to teachers and students and alumni of ISW who are teaching the class.*

3b) What were the roles of these individuals within the project? Were any of them leaders within the org (+ names)?

3c) How long did you speak to these individuals? *5-6 min.*

4) Were there individuals from any other organizations or sponsors visiting during the same time you were visiting? *No*

5) With respect to nutritional health provisions, what specifically was provided to the children? *Full meals / snacks / medical support / other? Full meal is supplied for KG in Barasat. I saw the kitchen in Khidirpore but don't remember the detail of food, my note says: nutritional help is provided 6 days a week.*

### **Funding-related:**

1) Are these ISW projects only funded by Asha, or funded by other sponsors / supporters as well? *Currently only Asha is supporting.*

1b) Which other sponsors / supporters, if others?

2a) Do you think the proposed budgets are reasonable? *Yes, the budgets are reasonable.*

2b) Anything you recommend should be added or removed from the budget? *The scholarship for 15 girls to attend college or higher classes is asked. If it can be done even partly, it will be money worth spend. The students are really needy, and will get good job to support themselves. In Barasat, since there are 6 paid staff, no. of volunteers can be cut (just a suggestion).*

