Site Visit Report

**Project:** Jagriti Bal Vikas Samiti (Apna Skool)

http://ashanet.org/project/?pid=81

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**Project Location:** Kanpur Nagar U.P. India

I recently got an opportunity to visit two of the Apna Skool centres out of 25 being run in Kanpur. The project is unique in itself. It aims to help those at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid. The immediate beneficiaries of the project are children of migrant workers working at brick kilns in Kanpur. They come here from different parts of the country in search of seasonal employment. This movement deprives their children from a stable education. Apna Skools fill this gap and acts as catalyst for proper schooling & nurturing.

I reached Kanpur central bus station @ 9:30 am. I was picked up by members of Apna Skool and we started towards INDIRA-2 centre which is in the outskirts of Kanpur. Following are some details about the centre.

**CENTRE START DATE-** 2014

**LOCATION** – Indra 2 Brick Kiln, Sarsaul

**NATIVE OF-** Bihar, MP ,Chhatisgarh, UP(Mahoba, Hamirpur districts)

**TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** – 109  (Grade 1 to 5)

**SCHOOL TIMING-** 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**TEACHERS NAME-** Shachi, Sadhana and Priyanka.

The school has small building which has been donated by brick kiln owner. Many times the classes happen in the backyard of the school in open air. During my visit, 50-60 students were present in the school. On arrival, I was greeted...
warmly by students. They introduced themselves in English and asked me as to where I belonged. After some friendly chat, I asked them how good they are at mathematical tables & many of them confidently replied that they know the multiplication tables from 1 to 10.

To create a fun competitive environment, I divided the students into two groups. After that, students came forward one at a time, introduced themselves and led the class to go through the table of number that I gave. Students were fired up and brimming with enthusiasm when they volunteered to lead the class in this exercise.

Many students raised hands to lead the class. After this exercise, it was the time to move to the next level of competition for addition, subtraction and multiplication. I was thrilled to see the enthusiasm of the students to participate and the enjoyment they were getting out of it. We then moved to English spelling and sentence translation. Some students performed with singing songs and poem recitations. I was really touched by energy of students and the zeal to rise to the occasion.

Students got chocolates and bananas as reward of their participation. I was living one of the best moments and wanted to spend some more time with the students. Asha also sponsors the mid day meal. Teachers showed me the meal plan and I visited the small kitchen and talked to the cook and helper. Teachers seem to be passionate about what they are doing. Two of the teachers have their daughters in the class as well. I asked if they were satisfied with their salary, and though they didn’t complain it seemed like they should be compensated a little more for their hard work and dedication to this cause. I left to meet the students of Tatyaganj center with a big smile & enormous satisfaction in my heart.
I reached Tatyaganj center around 1 PM. It was lunchtime at school & all the students were eating their lunch (Kadhi, with roti and rice). I was also very hungry & proposed that I would like to share the same lunch. The preparation was home-made and I loved it very much. Below are some details about the Tatyaganj center.

CENTRE STARTED IN- 2011
LOCATION - Tatiyaganj (Chaubeypur)
NATIVE OF- Bihar, MP, Chhatisgarh, UP (Mahoba, Hamirpur districts)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS – 103 (class 1 to 5)
STUDENTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS – 18 (Class –6 to Graduation)
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS – 121
SCHOOL TIMING- 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
TEACHERS NAME- Pradeep Yadav, Nirmala Kashyap, Urmila Verma, Chandan Chaurasiya, Sanyogita Yadav.

After lunch, I got opportunity to be introduced with students of class 4 & 5. It was language period for them and they were reading their text book. I wanted to participate in a fun activity with them too, so I told them that we were going to write a story together. I would initiate it with the first couple of lines and then students needed to pick up the cue and add to the story. Students were happy to participate; some were a little shy and needed some encouragement. I asked about who they aspired to become when they grew up. Remarkably, one student replied that he wanted to become Mahatma Gandhi because then he would see his photograph in Indian rupees. It was pure joy to observe the imagination of the students not held back by any boundaries. Two students also presented their creative projects. Rajeet had made a device to pluck high hanging fruits from tree and Sachin had made a toy gun with bamboo, cycle wheel spike and rubber band.

After meeting with these students, I went to meet students of class 1st and 2nd grade. All the kids
seemed to be very happy. To engage with them, I asked them to take out their slates and draw picture of myself. Students were thrilled draw cartoons based off myself and I felt that a lot of creativity was canvassed to their slates that day.

After having a blast with first and second grade students, I was introduced to the band of Apna school. In the band, students learn to play various kinds of instruments e.g. guitar, tabla, keyboard violin and mandolin etc. Students played together a popular song in Hindi (“Hum honge Kamyab” - phrase meaning is “we will be successful one day”) along with their instruments. Music is a new initiative in this school and is currently a work in progress but is coming together nicely.

After the music concert, three students gave a presentation about their science model on global warming and one girl gave a presentation on her homemade all purpose cleaner. She seemed to be a natural speaker with no hesitation whatsoever and her energy and confidence was really heart warming.

My overall impression of the school and the students was that of a healthy, and nurturing environment where students love to learn and are naturally willing to come forward to participate in various activities offered. All the credit for this wonderful environment goes to the dedicated staff and teachers of Apna Skool who are working to better the future of these awesome kids. Students presented me with a few parting gifts which they made during their vocational training. I left the center around 5 PM to catch a bus back home. It was really a wonderful experience to spend a day in Apna SKool.