

Asha for Education™

Site Visit Questionnaire

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Dear Volunteer

Thanks for conducting this site visit.

The following set of questions is only a suggested guideline. Some of the following questions may not be relevant or applicable to the particular project you are visiting, but please do try to answer as many of them as possible. Please note that Parts B & C necessitate that the information be gathered through conversations with the children and their parents, and not simply the group's teachers and staff.

Please feel free to attach any documents/photos you feel are pertinent to the project.

Thanks.

- Asha for Education

Date: 10.12.2022

Name of the Project: Vishwa Mandal Sevashram (VMS)

Name of the Organisation Running the Project (if different): N.A

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned ☒

No, it was a surprise visit ☐

| | Project Contact | You Name (Asha volunteer conducting the visit) |
|----------|--|---|
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PART A: Particulars about the organization and its environment

1. What are the different focus areas of the organization? (give a rough estimate of the % of their total effort/funding)

Community development 50% Education 50% Health %

Other % (please specify)

Not Applicable to current scope of site visit. The current scope entailed visit to 2-3 schools / classrooms operating under the aegis of VMS Shirpur and undertaking discussions with teachers, students, coordinators, accounting staff and Father Consti.

2. What is the administrative structure of the group (e.g. Board of Directors/Grassroots-based)?

There are 5 board of directors. 1 coordinator for Advocacy group, 1 coordinator for Boys boarding and 1 coordinator for Palas. There are 3 supervisors, and each supervisor has 7-10 teachers under them.

3. Are there any other organizations working in the area providing any one or all of the services provided by the visited organization? (Briefly mention their names and their objectives)

Not Applicable to current scope of site visit

| Organization | Objectives of the organization |
|--------------|---|
| Anand Sadan | Provide health, education with boarding and women empowerment |
| | |
| | |

PART B: The organization and the community it serves

(Information to be gathered from parents and children)

1. Approximately how many families live in the area? 150 households, average household has 4-5 members

2. What do the parents do for a living? (Agricultural worker, daily wage laborer etc.)

80-90% are agriculture workers, 10-15% are daily wage labourer or they go to other state for work (these are landless people)

3. At the time of enrolment, does the school ask for the names of both parents?

Yes ☒

No, just the father's name ☐

No, just the mother's name ☐

4. How often do the teachers meet the parents?

The classrooms / schools set up with VMS at Shirpur serve as an additional avenue for education for the children. The focus of these schools is imparting strong foundational education & knowledge, over and above the formal education that most of the children take through Government schools. The special focus is on English language as well as basics of mathematics and science (including hygiene). The catchment area for each school / classroom is few kms of radius and generally the specific village where each school is located. Therefore, most the teachers, parents & students have a direct personal knowledge & connect with each other. Due to this, parents are generally well aware of child's development at school, attendance or absenteeism, problems, etc. There is no formal timetable for parents-teachers meeting and that could be one of the improvement areas going forward – to encourage teachers & coordinators to meet parents of each child every 3 months.

5. How do the parents participate in the organization's activities? (e.g. by contributing their time, money or labor in the school's activities etc.)

The parents' contribution to the organization's activities seems minimal. However, the contribution of some of the teachers met during the site visit seems immense. These teachers are not only devoting time for this activity, but also using their own premises for conducting classes – part of the house is used for classroom purposes and part for own accommodation. The teachers interacted during the site visit were fairly motivated to assist children from their locality / villages to obtain strong foundational education.

6. Are there any Government Schools in the area? YES; most of the children studying in VMS schools also attend formal education with Government schools**7. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community?** The government schools are within short proximity to VMS schools. VMS reviews the quality of teaching in those schools and accordingly decides whether to run parallel schools in the same padas.**8. Why did the parents choose this school over the Government School?**

Both sites act as learning centers in addition to formal schooling. Most kids attend both the organization's centers and govt. school. It is mandatory for kids to attend formal government schools which was not the case few years back when only VMS schools were operating.

9. When you visited, how many children were present in the class? Close to full strength

What is the regular class strength? About 25-30 students **Comments:** We visited 2 schools during the visit. Each had approx. 20-25 students.

10. Do the children seem to enjoy coming to school?

The children seem to enjoy and appreciate the time spent & learning at these centers. We interacted with few kids during the site visit and it appeared that they were quite keen to attend these learning centers / schools regularly, even though it was in addition to their regular government school. Also, during the site visit, the enthusiasm displayed by some kids for answering questions & participating in various activities was visibly high and also infectious – some children were very forthcoming & it also inspired other students to stand up & participate.

PART C: Project particulars

(Information to be gathered from students and staff)

1. What is the mode of teaching in the school? (Check the appropriate choices)

- A. Formal (State Board, Central Board etc.) ☐ **till what class?** Commonly until 8-10th
B. Non-Formal Education (NFE) ☒ **do the students also attend formal school?**
C. Vocational ☐
D. Other ☐. Please specify _____

2. If A (Formal), up to what grade (LKG, 5th, 7th etc.) does the school conduct classes?

N.A

3. If B (Non-Formal Education) how many of the children also attend formal schools in the area?

Most of the children attend formal schools. It appears that this additional time spent at non-formal learning is targeted towards imparting strong basics. Discussions with coordinators & Father Consti seems to suggest that there is a larger proportion of students (who attend VMS learning centers) going ahead into senior standards / high schools / colleges compared to students who are not part of VMS programme. It would be useful to track statistics of academic progress made by students to measure effectiveness of the VMS learning centers.

If none do, does the project plan this for the future?

4. If Non-Formal Education, does the organization create its own study material (books, games)?

The teachers are responsible for creating the study material in addition to books that some of them receive from organization and govt. schools. During the site visit, we could observe that some of the teachers had devised their own micro-methods / approaches to make learning fun & interesting for children./ students. We also observed that interesting audio-video visual learning aids & pre-loaded content on laptop was available for students.

5. If C (Vocational), what do the children do after they finish training?

N.A

6. How many students are currently enrolled? Approx. 600 i.e 25/30 students per class **How many new students were enrolled in the past 12 months?** Approx 600

7. How many students left in the past 12 month, and why?

Few students have left school in the last months. During Covid, the classes were largely closed. The classes resumed post Covid and most kids have started attending classes, however, there were some drop-outs largely due to migration of families post Covid. Given the tribal set up, it is very difficult to monitor drop outs but it would be one of the improvement areas to look at for 2023

8. How many school days were missed in the past 6 months by all students?

Attendance has largely been regular for most students.

9. How many days was the school open in the past 6 months?

School was mostly open during last 6 months.

10. How many staff or volunteers are recruited from the community? Almost all teacher & coordinators belong to the local community of that region, and speak the native language which makes communication easier with the children, parents and family members.

How many of the staff are women? We visited 2 schools and teachers at both schools were women.

11. How many teachers are there in total? 7 How many new teachers have joined in the past 12 months? Each class / learning center has 1 teacher; total 25-30 teachers covering all classes

12. How many teachers have left the school in the past 12 months, and why?

There were about 2 women teachers who left due to marriage and alternative employment. The salary offered is not that attractive for them to stay permanently. Broadly, the class teachers have been with the organisation for many years and have met our volunteers even in past site visits. The length of service in general is 5-10 years and shows the commitment of the team to support education on the ground

13. How many days did the teachers miss work in the past 3 months? They attended all classes

14. Does the organization train the teachers? YES

If yes, how do they provide the training? Teachers are required to periodically (once a month / once in 2 months) attend the VMS center at Shirpur for training, collecting educational material (for teaching as well as students). Likewise, there is also a separate training program for coordinators at VMS Center at Shirpur.

15. Does each child have their own books? How many books does a child have on average?

YES, most kids had their own bags & books for writing which are provided by VMS Center. The kids

also have respective govt. schools providing books. One of the recommendation is to provide standard Practice workbooks / Handwriting books (3-line / 4-line books that are common here) which will allow for better writing practice on basic alphabets, numbers, small words, etc. The children generally gets a slate, 2 sets of book to write and reading is through common classes/through laptops/charts

16. Does each child have their own school uniform? Are there enough school uniforms for all children?

The children generally wear the govt school uniform if they are attending VMS immediately before or after the government school timings. We were given to understand that VMS also provides uniform, but we could not observe that during the visit as most children were dressed in local govt school dress.

17. How much is the staff paid? Teacher is paid 2,000 per month as salary and coordinator is paid 5,000 – 5,500 per month. Additionally, teachers & coordinators are paid allowances for travel costs, attending training, material, visits to VMS Shirpur center, etc. Also, coordinators are paid separate allowances for fuel for periodical visits to schools under their respective jurisdictions.

Is it on par with the salary paid to the staff in the Government schools? We could not carry out this comparison. However, given the inflation the cost is general is low for them to stick around for long and not look for alternative opportunities.

(Please have a look at the accounting books of the organization and answer the following questions)

18. Have the teacher salaries in the last 6 months been paid on time? YES (except one instance where as senior functionary was paid significant arrears, but were given to understand that the delay was due to delay in funding)

PART D: Financial resources of the organization

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit – you may again request the accounting books/ overview of Operating Expenses (OPEX))

1. Is there a deviation between the OPEX and our approved budget? The cost incurred was lower than budget approved due to delayed start of the class post covid.

Are all items covered in the budget? Yes

If yes, what is the deviation (list per item)? N.A

2. Do you think the proposed amounts in the budget are reasonable? Given the number of students covered by the project, the costs looks reasonable. However, the cost per student probably is the lowest since they are only imparting education (no stay/food etc).

Based on quick review of accounts at main VMS Center at Shirpur, it appears that almost all payments were being regularly made. The accounts were also fairly well updated in the Tally software till Oct/ Nov'22 (our visit was in Dec'22). However, the annual accounts prepared by an external CA firm (and provided to us for FY21 and FY20) seems to suggest that very basic accounts were prepared. The explanation in annual accounts was very limited. This could be an area of improvements and review in future.

Another observation was that there were too many ad-hoc / disparate limits & allowances / payment heads for teachers & coordinators – ranging from salary, travel, fuel, training, material, etc. It could be advisable to streamline into lesser numbers of expense heads / fixed sums to ease up accounting & calculations.

3. Is there anything you think should be added or removed from the budget?

YES

Based on our assessment we feel there are certain needs of the kids that are unaddressed in the budget. Some of the needs are listed below.

- Standardised books for practice
- More emphasis on basic hygiene & cleanliness of children before attending VMS schools – this may necessitate providing some basic wash facilities at the learning center

1.

If you recommend any changes to the budget, please explain your reasons for this.

None

4. Did you discuss the proposed changes with the project? If so, please describe their response. No. The focus was on the visit, quality of accounts maintained and any improvements required if any**PART E: Comments**

(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)