**Site Visit and Evaluation Report**

Of

**Seva Mandir**

For

***Asha for Education***

By

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Seva Mandir, Udaipur, Rajasthan

1. Chaali Bhilwara Shiksha Kendra (NFE Center)
2. Akhariya na Neda Shiksha Kendra (NFE Center)
3. Undithal Government Upper Middle School Activity Center
4. Pipad Government Upper Middle School Activity Center

***Project Background***

Seva Mandir is an NGO that has been working in Udaipur/Rajsamaand region for over five decades with objective of rural institution development, sustainable livelihoods, community rights, and empowerment through education. The work of the organization spans entire Udaipur district and has been primarily divided between (a) Natural Resource Development, (b) Education, (c) Health, (d) Women and Child rights, (e) Village Institutions and Panchayati Raj. Education Program of Seva Mandir has been running since 1991, and is broadly divided into the following:

1. Shiksha Kendra or NFE Center for primary/elementary learning for children in villages and hamlets across Udaipur
2. Activity Centers for improving quality of education and building institutional sustenance of government middle/higher secondary schools (started in partnership with AfE-SV)
3. Seasonal residential learning schools or learning camps for tribal, mostly migrant laborer children
4. Teacher training and certification program for capacity building
5. Youth Resource Centers or Uurja Ghar for mobilizing youth and channeling their collective energy into constructive and participatory community building

AfE-SV started working with Seva Mandir in 2007 to support education programs in the entire Badgaon block. AfE-SV has since then supported the Badgaon block. Starting 2009-2010, AfE-SV and Seva Mandir devised a mechanism to improve quality of government schools by creating Acvitity Centers in government schools on pilot basis. Since then the pilot has expanded to 5 government schools sowing remarkable results and allowing for a greater reach to children and influencing a broader segment of children, while improving the institutional capacity of government schools.

***Site Visit Background***

This site visit is planned in conjunction with Seva Mandir ahs conduceted on behalf of AfE-SV. The focus is to validate the functioning of at Shiksha Kendras and Activity Centers, and conduct a general survey of staff, children and nearby areas to access workings and reach of these programs.

The site visit started from Badgaon block office of Seva Mandir, and a brief meeting with the block coordinator along with the education program coordinator, Anjela Jacob at 8:30 AM. The plan was to visit at least one NFE center, and a an activity center, survey the villages, and re-group in the evening for an informal session with the education program coordinator and Chief Executive of Seva Mandir.

***Chaali Bhilwara NFE Center***

We arrived at the Chaali NFE Center at 9:20 AM through a bumpy road unpaved road moving through the small mud, and often semi brick-reinforced houses, and small farms to fairly generously sized community center. There were two classes running in parallel in a large hall inside the community building when we arrived. The community building houses a kerosene & PDS distribution facility, a small ration storing facility. A fair capacity sized hall has been granted to Seva Mandir for running a Shiksha Kendra. Two group classes were running when we arrived. While our presence was met with some giggles and some stares, general class decorum prevailed and the groups after acknowledging they being observed went on to resume their activity. We observed the group sessions from the corner of the classroom, and the modus operandi became apparent – the first group of children were comparing notes and reciting from their handwritten notes one-by-one , the second group was working with the instructor on writing into their notebooks sentenced in hindi and reading them back to the group – these were language reading/writing group learning sessions. This went on for about 25 mins. When the instructor Tea Singh, asked for a break from the group to continue on their own and came down to greet us to his school, after all he has been working with this center since 2003 and has built a sense of ownership that makes him well respected as well as very effective [as we went on to learn from children as well as the parents]

[observations]

1. Center is a well maintained, clean, and seemed to have ample capacity
2. Well stocked with books, stationary, and charts, posters. A stock of teaching material kept in the community center under the community watch.
3. 37 enrolled students, and 29 present (15 boys and 14 girls) at the time of visit. A few regular children were not in attendance.
4. The center has a mandatory attendance register that had average 31 students attending regularly. The center also maintains a record of when the last log was collected by the block coordinator
5. Center has a single instructor, Teja Singh, who has been with Seva Mandir and this center since 2003.
6. Center runs from July-June cycle and has children of 6-14 age-group
7. Children are divided into 3 groups by learning levels, per Seva Mandir evaluation criteria
8. The center is a part of MIT-PAL/Seva Mandir Camera Monitoring intervention project (where children take a picture of the running class through a digital camera to catalogue presence teacher and students)
9. Monthly parent/teacher meetings with a register of past meeting participants
10. Very through details are kept, with some overhead on the instructor to keep track of things, although Teja Singh didn’t seem to be concerned about the amount of entries he needs to maintain in the registers. He sis day that it was a problem earlier but he’s used to logging information now, although the number of things to keep track of has increased lately.
11. Parents are quite happy with the school, and exhibit a lot of respect for Teka Singh
12. Village head is very supportive of the school and allocate funds from the village fund for maintenance and stationary as-needed
13. Children seemed happy and excited to be in the school although we might have caused some part of the excitement
14. 15 holidays through the calendar year and school runs through the year except for a long break for summers due to extreme weather
15. English as a alternate language is also thought in the center, and this was the first center in which this program was implemented
16. Children in higher learning grade were fairly well versed in basic English which was very encouraging especially since the program and instructor focused on making children learn conversational English so that its helps them in real world (a lot of children end up migrating for cities for work and this is an useful skill)
17. Activity based learning tools for math, and most children seemed comfortable with double digit basic math
18. Playtime is spread through the day, environment is open and friendly, most classes are group based and children can walk up to get water or to go out to relieve themselves at-will
19. Learning material was a little sparse, and old, but, sufficient quantity of number and letter cards

***Undithal Activity Center & Pipad Activity Center***

We visited the two activity centers between 12:50 PM – 3:10 PM sand met with the instructors, school headmaster of Pipad, met with the students as well as teachers in the school. Overall the activity centers are very impressive in concept as well as their functioning in these two locations. The overall feedback from the school personnel as well as students is encouraging, and has shown reasonable progress and results in short term. It is our belief that is continued, and expanded, this program has a potential to improve the quality of government schools, and therefore attendance and reach of government educational institutions. The most remarkable achievement we believe is in improved attendance, as noted by more than a few students, stating they come to school to be able to attend the activity classes.

[observations]

1. Pipad Center has two instructors Mr Arun and Ms Kalavati
2. Trained by Seva Mandir in activity based learning and alternate education techniques and have graduate degrees
3. Conduct up-to 8 classed everyday for children of different classes
4. Primary focus is on classes 1-7
5. Classes last 45 min each and tuition classes last 2 ½ hour
6. This center has been running since July 2009, Arun has been trained for last two years and has worked with learning camps before joining activity center. While Kalavati is new and is learning rapidly with Arun
7. The school has one full-time teacher, one head master, and a single support teacher. School is significantly understaffed and this center has primarily helped by augmenting the teaching capacity while changing/improving pedagogy and engagement
8. 28 children from Chaali Bhiwara NFE center joined this school in 2010 and are regularly attending the school
9. 20-25 children attend tuition classes
10. Not all children attend Activity Center though, and the teachers in Activity Center are under some pressure to teach regular class syllabus
11. Sufficient learning material at the center, although they seemed a little space constrained
12. There are 181 children in Undithal school, out of which roughly 80 are from NFE centers which is a fairly significant number
13. Open learning environment in the activity center makes learning fun and children seemed happy in the moderately sized room
14. Lots of activity learning, including open playground learning using sticks and open recitals and group learning. Students entourage each other rather than competing
15. Pipad school on the other hand had 176 children and 6 teachers including headmaster.
16. Jitendra and Madan Singh are running activity center in this school since 2010
17. Its been a little hard to run this center due to resistance from the principal, and uptill last year no separate room was allotted for the activity center
18. Despite problems, the activity center has made some place in students minds and the attendance has been solid through the running of the center
19. Before this center started post-lunch attendance was almost zero and now it has increased to almost 80%
20. 25 children from NFE centers were admitted in this government school past year
21. The villagers associate this school with Seva Mandir at-par with NFE centers