Virtual Site Visit Report  
Gramin Vigyan Vikas Samiti (GRAVIS)

**Date:** July 19, 2021; July 20, 2021  
**Medium:** Zoom call (Baba Ramdev Village near Gagdi Center, School at Minoo Ki Dhani, GRAVIS hospital)  
**Attended by:**  
Asha Seattle Volunteers: Sandeep Nain, Jasmine Sandhu, Ashish Rawat (only on 7/19)  
Project members: Rahul Mishra (Project Coordinator), Khem Singh (Field Supervisor), Ramesh Parihar (Field Supervisor), Ms. Manju (teacher), Muni Devi (teacher), Dr. Chaturvedi, Dr. Jagdish Meghwal, women who are VDC members, women who are taanka beneficiaries, young girls who participated in adolescent girls camps and school children.

**Synopsis:**  
We had a virtual site visits over two days. Since the site visits were on location and GRAVIS is spread out over several villages, breaking it up in two days worked well in seeing a lot of the Asha related work at a reasonable hour given our time zone differences. Our sincere thanks to Rahul Mishra for a well organized site visit on short notice. Despite some connectivity issues, we were able to talk to a lot of people and see the impact of GRAVIS’ efforts in this region. We also had a conversation with Dr. Prakash Tyagi (GRAVIS Director) on a separate day regarding the impact of Covid and how best we can support the Covid relief efforts. Highlights of this conversation are also captured here.

[GRAVIS virtual site visit Part 1, 7/19](#)  
[GRAVIS virtual site visit Part 2, 7/20](#)

Asha Seattle supported GRAVIS’ Covid relief efforts in May, 2021. As with the rest of India, Rajasthan was hard hit by Covid and the ensuing lockdown. The villages and communities in this region are very poor and most people are labourers who go to surrounding towns for part of the year to earn and send funds back home. Typically the elderly, women and children stay back. The lockdown meant that these workers were home for this duration so not only were they not able to earn an income and send it home; there were also more members at home that needed to be fed. The taankas offer water security for the families, and frees up a lot of time for women and girls. This enables young girls to go to school and it enables older women to work on agriculture during the rainy season which is just starting now. Since income generation was limited or nonexistent due to the lockdown, being able to put their human resources towards agriculture became even more important this year.

Also including a link to some of the photos of the Covid relief work that was carried out by GRAVIS. Asha Seattle funded PPE for staff and frontline workers and food kits for families as part of our ongoing efforts to support our project partners in their Covid relief work.

[GRAVIS Covid relief work](#)
Update on GRAVIS Covid relief efforts

In addition, Asha funds supported 128 families with food kits during this time. The cash grant of INR 2,500 per family was given in part as food aid (INR 1,400) and a small stipend of INR 1,100. [Link to the Covid relief budget](#). The 100 PPE for medical staff and front line workers have also been used.

Since the original proposal, other supporters of GRAVIS have helped them acquire O2 concentrators and O2 cylinders. They are well equipped on that front for the expected 3rd wave of Covid. They will likely need more PPE kits at some point, but the best Covid relief aid we can provide at present is with the relief kits to families. The govt has offered food aid to families through Nov; however, this hasn’t reached the remote regions where GRAVIS works and there is still a need for food aid due to the effects of lockdown.

Day 1 (7/19)

On day 1, Rahul Ji had organized a cohort of women who were taanka beneficiaries. Along with them were a group of young girls who had participated in the Adolescent girls camps. Some women were also VDC members. Rahul Ji had also gathered the women in a group distinct from the men so they would feel more comfortable speaking, though many still stayed in purdah but they spoke directly and conveyed their message as the benefits of taankas or the role of the VDC in choosing taanka beneficiaries really well.

We also met the field coordinators on both days. We toured a taanka and spoke with several women who have benefited from the taankas. The taankas are always in the name of the women of the household. This has the added benefit of giving them more importance in the family and the social structure. The taankas also have the most impact on women and girls. Several beneficiaries we spoke with spoke about the Covid relief they have received from GRAVIS. They also mentioned they still have water in their taankas from the rains. They were all looking forward to the planting season that is coming up; with their potable water needs met, they will be focusing on agriculture in the next few months. We also spoke with some of the young girls who have taken the adolescent girls camps. In addition to general women’s health issues, the camps also talk about nutrition and hygiene. They provide them with materials like sanitary napkins.

Day 2 (7/20)

On day 2, we visited the school in Minoo Ki Dhani. This is the original school supported by Asha. It has 2 classrooms and two female teachers. We also learned that having female teachers during the lockdown made it possible for them to continue teaching kids at their hamlets in small groups. Muni Devi Ji has been teaching here for 5+ years and is from the local area and has finished her +2 and is still studying further I believe. Manju Ji has also been with the school for 2 years and I believe she is also from the local area. Being from the local area and living nearby makes it possible for them to remain committed during lockdown in traveling to the hamlets and continuing to teach the kids. Villagers are much more comfortable with having female teachers in their homes to educate their young ones. Since the lockdown, the two teachers have been traveling to the hamlets to teach small groups of children as they rotate...
through the kids. There are roughly 60 children from grades 1 through 4 and students come from 1 to 3 km distance to attend the school. After 4th grade, the kids will go to a govt school which is some distance away. GRAVIS also encourages the local women to become teachers which has several benefits: they continue their education, they are already invested in the community and the kids, and it brings income and resources back to their community.

We got a tour of the hospital which was a little challenging with zoom but it was still good to hear about their challenges and the work being done at GRAVIS hospital. We have at times done one time funds for GRAVIS hospital but this is not typically part of our annual funding. Currently we have 19 eye surgeries which will take place at GRAVIS hospital. Eye surgeries do not take place during lockdown; however, the need is still great so when things open up, they get a large influx of people needing routine procedures like cataract surgery. This is handled at GRAVIS hospital and part of their public health outreach is also to make people aware of these types of services that can greatly increase their quality of life. Many people start to suffer from eye issues while still in their 50s and a simple procedure like cataract surgery can have a significant impact on their quality of life. We are supporting 19 eye surgeries this year and they expect to do these despite the periodic lockdown due to Covid. During lockdown, these are suspended but once the situation improves, there is a great need since the folks whose surgeries were postponed are now in the same line.