

Site Visit – KHUSHBOO WELFARE SOCIETY (Gurugram, Haryana)

Volunteers: Akansha Lamba and Hemant Vaidyanathan

The site visit for Khusboo Welfare Society (KWS) for 2022 was conducted on 25th May 2022. We had arrived at the school premises at 11:30 hrs., and the visit concluded at 13:30 hrs.

We were once again greeted by one of their key security personnel, Sahdev, who greeted us and guided us towards the administration block. We then met with Mr. Vijay Pal (Director – Administration), who just came towards his room after inspection of the premises. He then took us inside the main cabin, where we had the chance to meet Mr. Rakesh Jinsi (President & CEO). We introduced ourselves, and sat with Mr. Rakesh Jinsi and Mr. Vijay Pal to discuss in brief about the updates within the school, how the pandemic brought changes in the overall operations and how has KWS been able to steer itself from this dynamic situation. Mr. Rakesh Jinsi explained that the initial phases of lockdown introduced during the outbreak of COVID-19 did have an overall impact to the school, both in 2020 and half of 2021. However, towards the end of 2021 and post the winter break in January 2022, the school has been functioning at its maximum capacity. Mr. Rakesh then asked us if we would like a tour of the premises, and as always Mr. Vijay Pal was more than happy to give us a walkthrough of all the changes that were implemented since our last visit in September 2019.

We then exited the administration block and proceeded towards the different classes in the following phases to understand the different changes, as compared to our previous visit:

Class Name	Class Strength	Staff Strength
Out-patient Department	Nil (Weekly holiday)	1
Care Buds	3	1 Special Educator, 2 Assistant Staff
Marigold	7	1 Special Educator, 1 Assistant Staff, 1 University Intern
Little Lilly	7	1 Special Educator
Blooming Rose	7	1 Special Educator
Occupational Therapy	Nil (Recess time)	1 Occupational Therapist
Computer Lab	4 - 6	1 Computer Instructor
Multipurpose Hall	8	1 Special Educator, 1 Music Instructor

OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT

Description

- Segment caters to children below the age of 6 years
- Teaching methodology similar to mother-toddler programme in pre-schools

Duration of the class

- Conducted four days a week - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 12:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- Being a weekly holiday, no activity was observed

Additions

- Tables and reading materials specific for pre-schoolers, which were donated by Ms. Akansha
- Mr. Vijay Pal showed us training kits sent by the National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, Secunderabad
- The four different kits for ages 3-16 years would be utilised by the staff and students for better development. Mr, Vijay Pal underwent a formal online training to ensure correct and optimal utilization of these kits

Key interactions

- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



CARE BUDS

Description

- Segment caters to children between the age of 6 - 14 years
- Care programme for children with severe disabilities

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- Three students were being cared for and trained under the supervision of special educator Ms. Reena and two assistant staff

Additions

- No additions were observed in the class

Key interactions

- Ms. Reena (Special Educator)
- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



MARIGOLD

Description

- Segment caters to children between the age of 11 - 14 years
- Students are trained to independently perform routine task

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- Activity of buttoning, unbuttoning as well as folding sample shirts was given to students. This helps them to gain more independence in managing routine tasks

Additions

- Collaboration with Amity University, wherein postgraduate students undertake their internship on social projects as part of their university curriculum. We observed and spoke to a student, who was guiding a young boy in folding the shirt given to him as the core activity
- The internship started in the month of April 2022, and it was their last day on the day of our visit to the school

Key interactions

- Ms. Rekha (Special Educator)
- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



LITTLE LILLY

Description

- Segment caters to children between the age of 6 - 14 years

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- Students were engaged in multiple activities - a set of students were involved in arranging number flash cards in sequential order. Two students were engaged in colouring activities. Another set of students were involved in stacking rings in a orderly manner.
- Ms. Monika then instructed the students to go for handwash time, before the recess began

Additions

- No additions observed compared to previous visit in September 2019

Key interactions

- Ms. Monika (Special Educator)
- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



BLOOMING ROSE

Description

- Segment caters to children between the age of 11 - 14 years
- Students in this group are more independent, and have higher abilities in terms of learning and comprehension

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- Students were learning the Hindi alphabet with the special instructor using the projection board, and answering the question asked

Additions

- No additions observed compared to previous visit in September 2019

Key interactions

- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Description

- Segment caters to children for development of their physical, sensory as well as cognitive issues

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.
- Class batches are prepared, on the basis of requirement and severity of the condition of the student. Students who are in their advanced stages of OT are part of a bigger batch of 5-6 students, where they also act as monitors for junior students

Observations noted

- No activity was performed because of recess time

Additions

- Mr. Lalit, the occupational therapist, showed us support ropes installed in the therapy room for students to regain their arm strength and help in maintaining their posture
- On the day of our visit, a new electric horse riding machine was received by the school. The purpose of the machine is to assist students to maintain their posture and balance. The machine would be implemented as part of the therapy in due course
- The school also received a trampoline to be incorporated as part of the occupational therapy programme

Key interactions

- Mr. Lalit (Occupational Therapist)
- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



PHYSIOTHERAPY

Description

- Segment caters to all children who require therapy for development of their physical motion as well as gait

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- No activity was performed because of recess time

Additions

- Mr. Vijay showed us two additions in the physiotherapy room:
 - A new balance board has been acquired by the school to help students in maintaining their physical balance. It is akin to a surf board but smaller in dimension
 - A static exer-cycle (known as Air Bike) has also been acquired by the school. The cycle includes both pedalling as well as cross rowing motions to effectively increase the physical strength of students

Key interactions

- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



MULTIPURPOSE HALL

Description

- The multipurpose hall is primarily used to conduct sports and entertainment activities such as yoga, dance as well as music

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- The music class was being conducted during our visit. A batch of eight students were rehearsing a popular Hindi prayer song, "*Itni Shakti Humein Dena Daata*" (translated to *Give us so much strength, O lord*)

Additions

- A new sound system has been acquired by the school, which replaces the previous sound system observed during our previous visit. The new sound system is capable of wireless integration with the teachers' smartphones, so that they can seamlessly connect and start the audio for dance and music classes

Key interactions

- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



COMPUTER LAB

Description

- The computer lab is used to help students get acquainted with computer technology. Students primarily learn how to operate the desktop, use multiple applications pre-installed in the system, and some are even trained to work on graphic and content creation and design

Duration of the class

- Conducted five days a week - Monday to Friday, and first and fourth Saturdays of every month
- Timings - 9:30 hrs. to 14:30 hrs.

Observations noted

- The students were working on instructed to begin their work on MS-Paint, as part of their computer lab session

Additions

- The school has changed the existing wired hardware such as the keyboard and mouse, and replaced them with wireless equipment as part of their replenishment exercise
- During peak summer season, with constant electricity fluctuations, the backup usually takes a few minutes to start and reboot the system. In order to reduce the time lag, the school has installed an inverter system to provide constant power to the desktops

Key interactions

- Mr. Vijay Pal (Director - Administration)



With our tour of the complex over, we walked downstairs to the administration block. We sat with Mr. Rakesh and Mr. Vijay to discuss certain questions over tea. The gentlemen asked us if we observed any differences compared to our previous visit three years ago, and it is pertinent we mention that KWS has been able to manage and sustain itself in this unpredictable situation, which has impacted the entire globe. However, managing the operations of the school during this period was not without its own set of challenges and setbacks. We have tabulated the discussions held below:

Areas	Challenges faced	Steps taken to overcome challenges
Disbursement of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has faced difficulty in receiving support and donations because of the pandemic. Corporates have cited financial cutbacks, leading to reduced disbursement of funds to the school Certain public sector organizations such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) have committed to provide funds, however a last and final instalment was denied. Adobe India has a system of draw-of-lots, for which KWS had applied for in the past years, however they were not selected for the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is confident of receiving donations after the summer break is over. Mr. Rakesh Jinsi mentioned that they are interacting with organizations and are hopeful of receiving donations starting first week of July 2022. Certain organizations such as State Bank of India (SBI) Foundation have been supportive in providing a 30-seater bus, costing INR 25 lacs to the school. This has helped them in increasing their transport fleet, and for travelling to locations closer to the areas surrounding New Gurgaon
Staff requirement (Hiring/Retention/Attrition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current staff requirement is more or less adequate, however the school has new requirement for dance teachers, support and housekeeping, and a transport driver for their daily operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is doing their best to retain and develop the current staff. The staff undergoes periodic training and development programmes, which helps them in their overall assessment and teaching methodologies

Areas	Challenges faced	Steps taken to overcome challenges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is in need of speech therapists this year. They hired a speech therapist last year on a contractual term; but the therapist chose to start his own independent practice. Mr. Vijay has been interviewing prospective candidates; however, the quality of candidature and the experience does not match with the requirements of the school Retention of the current staff is also one of the challenges faced by the school. Two of the occupational therapists and one special educator we interviewed during our previous visit, have resigned for better opportunities available to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has provided timely increments to the staff, as well as assisting them in getting their COVID vaccinations prescribed as per the defined government timelines Mr. Vijay also assured us of hiring the required speech therapists, and he is confident of onboarding them by the first week of July 2022. He also mentioned that they have selected dance teachers for training the students in dance and music activities
Student requirements (Current strength/ New admissions/ Retention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compared to our previous visit, we noticed a drop in overall student strength. The enrolled strength we observed in September 2019 was 115, whereas the current enrolled students are 97 as on the day of our visit The school has received multiple enquiries from New Gurgaon region, as well as bordering areas. The school has not serviced the aforementioned areas and has been trying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Rakesh and Mr. Vijay both acknowledged this issue as an aftermath of the pandemic. Some of the students are travelling on a break and are expected to re-join after the summer break With the introduction of the new bus in their transport fleet, the school has planned to extend its route to these new areas where they have received enquiries for new admissions

Areas	Challenges faced	Steps taken to overcome challenges
	<p>to optimise its transport routes for pickup and drop of students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents of many students have expressed their anxiety in sending their children to the school. Mr. Vijay mentioned that many families have relocated to their hometown, while certain parents expressed their insufficiency in payment of fees, due to ill-health or job losses. This has led to a slight drop in the overall strength of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of their action plan, the school has visited homes of certain students to give the parents assurance of their children. They are in constant touch with the students and their parents, and they have assured them of the best possible practices to ensure the development of the child is not hampered
Academics and Therapies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Rakesh mentioned that the students faced a lot of difficulty during the pandemic phase in 2021. He mentioned that the physical and medical condition of certain students aggravated during this period The school has been able to conduct virtual classes very efficiently. Mr. Vijay responded that they conducted online classes with a strength of 45-50 students every day. However, parents who did not have the requisite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school began its physical operations late-2021. Since then, no online classes have been conducted for any student. This has helped parents who faced difficulty in managing their children at home, since the process required the intervention of one parent For parents who did not have the requisite technology, Mr. Vijay told us that they created a WhatsApp group for the children. The study material as well as therapies were shared on a regular basis, so that parents could manage their children at home

Areas	Challenges faced	Steps taken to overcome challenges
	<p>technologies, expressed their concern as their children would miss out the studies or therapies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were behavioural changes also observed by the special educators, during the classes conducted virtually. Mr. Rakesh observed that their home skills have deteriorated, as compared to the time when they were attending the school physically The school received unanimous feedback from the parents, asking them to re-start physical operations. However, the school could only function physically after the state government permitted all educational institutions to work offline Teachers also had to face the task of acquainting themselves with virtual applications such as Zoom to conduct the online classes. Mr. Vijay mentioned that teachers did face difficulties in trying to connect and share the material needed for the virtual class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Rakesh informed is that the school would plan and incorporate a “<i>Refresher/Recap Module</i>” for all students. The purpose of this module is to re-assess their current needs, compare the needs with their previous performance and chart plan(s) for individual students to ensure all their developmental gaps are covered and they are back on the same settled stage as before Whilst the initial phase has certain roadblocks, Mr. Vijay said that the teachers quickly became accustomed to the online platform and were able to conduct the remote classes effectively. He also mentioned that he and Mr. Tilak were constantly interacting and learning the use of the application, so that they could impart the training to the teachers

THANK YOU

