

Timbaktu Site Visit

Visited by (Asha Bangalore Volunteers): Ankush Dixit, Aanchal Singh

Contact Email: ankush.dixit@gmail.com, aanchalsin@gmail.com

Dates of Visit: July 04 and 05, 2015

Websites for reference:

<http://timbaktu.org/> (Timbaktu Collective)

<http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=204> (Asha Timbaktu SAC project)

<https://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=1109> (Asha Timbaktu CRC project)

Site Visit Summary:

- **July 04 2015**

1. Meet Timbaktu Board Members
2. Visit CRC and detailed discussion with Timbaktu members and faculty
3. Visit one of 47 centers (Mandal) in surrounding villages in CRC outreach program

- **July 05 2015**

4. Visit Dalit Boys' Hostel - Mobile CRC outreach
5. Visit Kasturba Gandhi Girls' Hostel - Mobile CRC outreach
6. Meeting and discussion with a student under Timbaktu Fellowship program
7. To-Do list discussion with Timbaktu Board Members
8. Visit one of the 48 centers (Mandal) in surrounding villages in CRC outreach program
9. Visit Prakruti Badi
10. Departure

Overall Experience:

Both the volunteers had a wonderful weekend with children and members from Timbaktu's Nature School (residential), CRC, and Mandals. The meals were prepared from vegetables produced in Timbaktu's organic farms. Detailed reports from Timbaktu board members to be sent to Asha.

Site Visit Details:

The Asha volunteers arrived at Timbaktu Collective Office at 03:00 PM IST, and met Mary along with other Timbaktu members - Bablu, Walter, Zahida, Radha, Raju. The volunteers were served lunch, and briefed about different projects Timbaktu runs including those supported by Asha (Militha, Prakruti Badi, CRC, and Fellowship) before heading out to CRC.

CRC:

The CRC runs during morning and evenings on all weekdays, and for full days on the weekend. The volunteers arrived at CRC at 04:00 PM IST accompanied by Walter, Radha, and Raju. There they met with 10 students who were studying in the library, another 10 students, from std. 10 to 12, conduction experiment on Sound waves in the Physics lab, and few faculty members. Timbaktu members explained different aspects of the CRC project, and presented a slide show (.ppt) about the same. They explained in detail about CRC as a resource center, Mobile CRC, and village centers (Mandals) which encompasses about 48 villages.

The ppt outlined about the Library, Science lab, Computer lab, Arts and Craft, Games (10 types in indoor and outdoor), New initiatives taken this year, Trainings, Mobile CRC, and many Events organized at CRC. The library comprises of about 10,000 books (majority of the study material was in Telugu language for reading, essay writing, novels, competitive exams), 6 monthly magazines, 4 newspapers and facilitates issuing of books., and so was mode of communication among student and the faculty. There they also met with 3 students from Junior college who told about their interest in joining Military, and Teaching. The lab facilities are also used by neighboring schools such as Model School in C.K.Palli. At CRC, Science workshops were conducted for std. 6 onwards, and Computer lab trainings in MsOffice, Paint, Telugu Typing, Youth classes for 3 months in MsOffice, 1 training per week via movies for recreation purposes. CRC also facilitates 15 types of Arts and Crafts practices such as Natural painting (use of mud, coal, flowers, leaves, etc.), Drawing competition, Spray painting, Organic Farming, Finger painting, and Games such as Chess, Puzzles, Carrom, other board games, playing cards made by students, Top, etc., all of which is also provisioned in Mobile CRC. New initiatives such as Cloth painting - displayed in Art Gallery; Paper craft for small children in January during holidays; by Youth group named 'Jungle Crows' conducted Games trainings, Fitness training, Tag Rugby; Child rights training for 1 day to 48 children; were conducted this year at CRC. They told about other trainings in Spoken English provided to children from std. 6 to 12 for 1 month, in Tailoring to 12 girls including advanced training (Master trainer) to 6 girls, in Information Technology to children and teachers for 3 months. Mobile CRC incorporates almost all activities and caters to 26 villages comprising of about 550 children, offices in ST colonies twice each month, and Hostels.

The Timbaktu members/faculties also told about different events organized this year at CRC such as Ambedkar Jayanti, Environment Day, Independence Day, Teachers Day, Sports Day, Gadhi Jayanti, Children's Day, Library Day, Child Rights Day, Science Day, and Rangoli Competition. They shared a magazine called 'Nava Yuvata' which is a write-up on the Environment Day celebrations on June 05 2015. About 2046 children, and 500 youth members from 48 villages participated in the event. Several

ideas in these events were presented by students and members from children societies called 'Mugga'.

The volunteers were then driven to a village called Naranragapalle, which is 50 kms (50 minutes) from CRC, by Walter and company. They reached the Zila Parisad School (one of the centers catered to by Mobile CRC) at 06:30 PM IST, and met with 50 students from std. 6 to 10. The volunteers had a wonderful chat with the children about Child Rights such as Child Marriage, Plastic disposal, Dropouts. The children also told about their extensive use of Mobile CRC especially for Science practicals, drawing, natural painting, art and craft using waste material, etc. during its twice per week visit. The school comprises of 11 teachers, and provides greenery, open space for playing, better food, and clean water for drinking. Children told about their ambitions which included Teacher, Veterinarian, Banker, Army, and Engineering. The school caters to 3 villages within 3-5 Km area. We met Narasimha who manages CRC Mugga in this Mandal. The meeting ended with some group songs presented by the students and later joined in by Asha volunteers and Timbaktu members.

We took off from the school around 07:15 PM, and joined Raju for a coffee at his home before calling it a day at 07:40 PM IST.

Prakruti Badi, and SAC:

On July 05 2015, the day started with a wonderful organic breakfast at Timbaktu. Then the volunteers visited the Dalit Boys Hostel at 09:00 AM IST which is one of the Hostels catered to by Mobile CRC. 60 boys from about 45 villages were present at the time of the visit, and from std. 3 to 9. The children told how much they enjoyed the use of Science and Computer labs, Games, playing Cricket as part of CRC. They asked the volunteers about reason for their visit. Aanchal told them it was to meet with them, see what they were learning, and what more they felt the need for to enhance their learning experiences. The boys were enthusiastic and told about their likings in reading, watching TV, painting, and English reading. They shared with volunteers some of their sketches, sung a song, displayed acrobatics, quizzed about questions from GK and world history, told about 2 daily newspapers including business page. The children seemed highly satisfied with quality and variety of food, and clean drinking water.

The volunteers then headed to one of the girls hostels, Kasturba Gandhi Girls' Hostel, which comprises of 200 girls from std. 6 to 12. They reached the hostel at 09:45am IST, and met with Suvarna (head of the institute), and girls from std. 7 to 9. The facilities were very clean, and well maintained. The girls exuded confidence, leadership skills, and the want to do more. They told about keen interest in Science, and all wanted to complete their graduation. More than 10 girls wanted to study Biology and become a Doctor, while others told about their interest in Computer Engineering (4), Social Science (3), Physics & Chemistry (2), Music (12). Mobile CRC visits the hostel once in a month, and the girls told how they would want them to frequent the visits to 3-4 times per month so they could make better use of Science lab, and Games. The most striking aspect of the visit was their keen interest in Sports such as Kabaddi, Long and High jumps, Running, Chess, Kho Kho. They expressed the desire to have proper sports gear including shoes, and other sports goods (softball, throw ball, volley ball). The volunteers congratulated their Sports teacher who has been a national level badminton player.

Wrapped up the visit in 30 minutes and then the volunteers met Gayatri, fellowship student, at 10:30

am IST, Gayatri is pursuing her Final year in Bachelors in Computer Science from PenuKonda College (PHD) which is about 25 KM from her home. She uses a bus pass (Rs.225/- per month) to travel to (08:30 am IST) and from (04:00 PM IST) college everyday. She studies after college at home. The volunteers asked following questions from Gayatri and her responses are given inline -

Q. How can we improve the Fellowship program?

A. No difficulty in 1st year. Nothing else required. It is very helpful as it is.

Q. What to you plan to do after completing graduation?

A. Pursue M.Comp. or prepare for Banking exam.

O. Any feedback w.r.t. the Fellowship Program?

A. If the program could be extended for some more time, she would like to study more, and go back to Timbaktu to work with them.

The volunteers exchanged note of thanks with Gayatri wishing her best of luck for her future endeavours. After this Asha volunteers had a discussion with Timbaktu members (over a tea most kindly offered by Walter and Radha at their home) about the pending reports, and lists, and funding (from sources other than Asha) including way of disbursement from Asha to Timbaktu.

At 10:50 am IST, the volunteers reached Ramgiri village, and met one of the Mandals (Mugga Samaksha) which comprises of children representatives from 9 villages. The children have monthly meetings to discuss about Child Rights, discuss about activities in retrospect, plan for the future, and learn new things. We met with 16 children including 6 girls, Kalpana (female in-charge), and Chiranjivi (manages C.K.Palli Mandal). The youth group names 'Nava Youth' visited them on School Day and taught about theatrics, and drama which the children enjoyed a lot. They sang a song for us inspired from idea of Ecology, and told us about their ambitions such as Math Teacher, Police, English Teacher, Military, Mechanical Engineering, Scientist, Doctor, Writer, Government Collector. They also asked the volunteers some very smart questions, and expressed their requirement of Telugu to English Dictionaries, and books for Competitive exams.

At about 11:25 AM IST, the volunteers headed back to Prakruti Badi. They met with the children who were returning after 4 days of vacation over lunch, and joined by Timbaktu board members as well. Soon after lunch, everyone assembled in a beautiful open room where children from each std. from 3 to 8 showed dance pieces and sang along. The children were exuberant, happy, enthusiastic about the meeting, and told about their ambitions as they grew older. They told how much they loved the Nature School, the food, clean drinking water, teachers, and showed the volunteers around to their rooms, playground, classrooms, personal gardens, and wall paintings.

Two things stood out distinctly amongst all children which were 'Child Civil Rights', and 'Need for Ecology Practices'.

Finally, the volunteers exchanged their good byes with the Timbaktu members, and the children, and headed out by 03:00 PM IST.



Pictures of the trip

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BwOYjOwy-5eoVTdaOWR5LTh0dTQ&usp=sharing>

Additional Resources –

CRC Presentation 2014-2015



CRC prasantetion
04.07.2015.pdf