**The SIRAGU Montessori School Report**

**November 2013**

Site visit was conducted by a friend of project steward. Following are her own words. Text in red is comments from Cleveland chapter.

1. ***Things that impressed me…***

* The parents and teachers meeting headed by Mr. Muthuram (The Founder). Muthuram was happily sharing that 3 of his students has been to Russia to do medicine, he said that they need more money to look after their studies, and they too hope that those people will come back and serve the school.
* They have both day scholars and hostellers in their school from all the community (Community in their terms means, students from begging community, students without parents, students from other low income group parents like sweepers, labors, etc.,) – The effort required to teach these students extends beyond just education. The school is also teaching them life skills and how to grow up as successful adults to function well in society. Example. Students much older in age are taught how to go to toilet since they come from poor communities and don’t learn these at home.
* Mr. Muthuram mentioned that 5 students from his school, who are now doing their higher secondary in another school, are the toppers.
* There are dedicated school busses.
* In this school they are following ICSC syllabus (advantage of having this is they can design their own curriculum till 8th standard)
* The teachers explained three major points in their education system,
  + Roof concept
  + Window concept and
  + Icono writing
* The students speak average English and they did understand the English we speak. The kids are happy with the way they learn, (they say it’s a Montessori school which means a “Suya Kalvi”),
* The students learn everything practically which is unique. Especially for mathematics they have practical classes and that is quite interesting.
* Some of the parents are really happy on the below,
  + Their children are getting knowledge, education for free which is actually not possible for them without siragu.
  + They are happy that their children are getting food also for free in the school.
  + They are happy with the system of education.
* I tasted the food and the food was good.

1. ***Things I was not happy about…***

***Hygiene:***

* Water Logging and children are playing with the logged water.
* Few children are infected by some disease as they keep playing with logged water.
* These kids were not given any medical attention and due to which the infection may spread to other kids around.
* Hostel kids were neither asked nor helped to keep themselves clean. It looked like they did not have a shower for weeks together.
* The School is not maintained clean and hygienic and this gets the kids prone to various diseases.
* No proper, clean and purified drinking water available for the children.

These concerns were taken very seriously and after several conversations with Muthuram and Uma, we were convinced the reasons was poor hygiene was mainly due to the kids resisting hygiene and due to lack of funds. However, as of April 2014, these issues have been resolved. The school has secured more funds and as a result cleaned up entire school compound. Pictures are on their FB page as well as the “project steward presentation” on this page.

***Accessibility:***

* Roads were badly undulated.

***Faculties:***

* There should be 33 teaching staff members but could see only 15 of them. The teachers were more concerned about their salary.

The teachers were not getting paid due to lack of funds. As of April 2014, this has been resolved.

***Facilities:***

* The class rooms didn’t have tables and chairs and some of the rooms’ don’t have fan and light.
* Computer lab looked like a store room and the systems are not properly assembled
* One book is being shared among 5 kids and it is very difficult for the day scholars to share and read.
* One side of the building does not have a compound wall.
* No separate hostel facility. Class rooms are used as the hostel for the rest of the day.
* There are two toilets for the entire school of which one is meant for Staff and the other is for students and they are not maintained clean.
* No sufficient taps in the toilets.
* Kitchen is maintained untidy, shabby and unhygienic.
* There are two school busses for the local transportation, out of which one is under repair

The school needs much more funds than it is getting.

1. ***Things that can be improved or needs attention…***

* Same as above (refer ***Things I was not happy about…***) &

I managed to spend some time alone with the children to know if they were really happy with whatever they get from the school and their concerns on the same. They were afraid to talk but gave me piece of paper in which the followings points were written,

* Separate hostel for girls
* Clothes washing area
* Panties, shimmies and vests
* White ribbon
* Toilet brush, harpic, odonil, brooms, dustbins
* Shelf for plates
* Playing materials
* Toilet for hostel students
* Separate motor for toilets
* School bell
* Speakers and microphone
* Cupboard & disposing machine for napkins

I feel that they need the basic stuffs for their day to day life which they don’t even get is the worst part.

The students of 10th are having computer science in their syllabus, but there is only one computer in their lab.

Students badly need computer practical knowledge and they also said they need internet connection.

1. ***Things those are inconsistent from what Muthuram said…***

* Salary given to Ms. Uma wherein she doesn’t seem to come to the school regularly

Her role is directress. Her duties are beyond normal teacher’s. Please see “Steward presentation” for her details.

* Motor not yet provided to the toilet for water
* Water purifier installed at the cost of Rs. 1,50,000, but still the drinking water is not drinkable.
* Unable to provide the basic amenities to the students like, tables, chairs, ceiling fans, etc.

Lack of funds.