

# Asha for Education™

## Site Visit Questionnaire

P.O. Box 322 • New York • NY 10040-0322

www.ashanet.org

Dear Volunteer

Thanks for conducting this site visit.

The following set of questions is only a suggested guideline. Some of the following questions may not be relevant or applicable to the particular project you are visiting, but please do try to answer as many of them as possible. Please note that Part sB & C necessitate that the information be gathered through conversations with the children and their parents, and not simply the group's teachers and staff.

Please feel free to attach any documents/photos you feel are pertinent to the project.

Thanks.

- Asha for Education

**Date: Dec. 29, 07**

**Name of the Project: Anandadhara**

**Name of the Organisation Running the Project (if different): SPAN**

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned

No, it was a surprise visit

	<b>Project Contact</b>	<b>You Name (Asha volunteer conducting the visit)</b>
Name	Mr. Prabir Basu	Abhyuday Mandal, Jogia Bandyopadhyay
Address	(SPAN) Society for Peoples' Awareness 66/2, Sarat Chandra Dhar Road Kolkata – 700 090	135 Sussex Drive, Apt 17 Athens, GA 30606 USA
Phone(s)	091-033-2531-9856/6484/2577-3709	404 862 5818
Fax	091-033-2531-6484	
E-mail	span@cal.vsnl.net.in, prabir55@gmail.com	abhyuday_mandal@yahoo.com

**PART A: Particulars about the organization and its environment**

**1. What are the different focus areas of the organization? (give a rough estimate of the % of their total effort/funding)**

Community development \_\_\_%      Education 100%      Health \_\_\_%  
 Other \_\_\_% (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What is the administrative structure of the group (e.g. Board of Directors/Grassroots-based)?**

There is a governing committee comprising the teachers and members of SPAN, decisions about teaching methods etc. are taken after holding meetings with the parents.

**3. Are there any other organizations working in the area providing any one or all of the services provided by the visited organization? (Briefly mention their names and their objectives)**

Organization	Objectives of the organization
Not Exactly.	

**PART B: The organization and the community it serves**

*(Information to be gathered from parents and children)*

**1. Approximately how many families live in the area?** about 600

**2. What do the parents do for a living? (Agricultural worker, Daily wage laborer etc.)**

daily wage workers in unorganized sectors

**3. At the time of enrolment, does the school ask for the names of both parents?**

Yes       No, just the father's name       No, just the mother's name

**4. How often do the teachers meet the parents?**

once a month

**5. How do the parents participate in the organization's activities? (e.g. by contributing their time, money or labor in the school's activities etc.)**

by contributing their time and labor, e.g., they participate actively in the annual picnic and sports event; They are also involved in the daily running of the school, giving feedback about various things such as whether they think the school premises are clean enough

**6. Are there any Government Schools in the area?** Yes  No

**7. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community?** within one kilometer

**8. Why did the parents choose this school over the Government School?**

because they feel the quality of education is superior at Anandadhara, also they feel that the children get a lot more personal care and individual attention at Anandadhara

**9. When you visited, how many children were present in the class?** barring one/two students everybody was present, in the classes that I visited

**What is the regular class strength?** total student strength is 300

**Comments:**

**10. Do the children seem to enjoy coming to school?**

yes, very much

### **PART C: Project particulars**

*(Information to be gathered from students and staff)*

**1. What is the mode of teaching in the school? (Check the appropriate choices)**

- A. Formal (State Board, Central Board etc.)  **till what class?**  
 B. Non-Formal Education (NFE)  do the students also attend formal school?  
 C. Vocational   
 D. Other . Please specify drop-out students from other schools are given academic training for secondary and higher secondary exams

**2. If A (Formal), up to what grade(LKG, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> etc.) does the school conduct classes?**  
 4<sup>th</sup>

3. If B (Non-Formal Education) how many of the children also attend formal schools in the area?

            
If none do, does the project plan this for the future?

4. If Non-Formal Education, does the organization create its own study material (books, games)?

5. If C (Vocational), what do the children do after they finish training?

they work as repair technicians for television sets, radios, cell-phones etc., girls earn by doing embroidery

6. How many staff or volunteers are recruited from the community? all of the non-teaching staff  
How many of the staff are women? all of them

7. How many teachers have left the school in the past one year, and why?

none

8. How many new teachers have joined in the past year? one

9. Does the organization train the teachers? Yes  No

If yes, how do they provide the training? via organizing workshops by people working on the subject of pedagogy and teaching methodology, some of whom are teachers as well, in other schools

10. How much is the staff paid? Rs. 2000 a month

Is it on par with the salary paid to the staff in the Government schools? Yes  No

#### **PART D: Financial resources of the organization**

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit)

1. Do you think the proposed amounts in the budget are reasonable? Yes  No  Maybe

2. Are all items covered in the budget? Yes  No  Maybe

Comments:

3. *Is there anything you think should be added or removed from the budget?*

Yes  No

*If you recommend any changes to the budget, please explain your reasons for this.*

4. *Did you discuss the proposed changes with the project? If so, please describe their response.*

**PART E: Comments**

*(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)*

See the next few pages.

We visited Anandadhara on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2007. I called up Prabir Basu about a couple of hours before visiting Anandadhara, so it was a surprise visit of sorts. We were there for about two hours and were impressed with what we saw.



Anu-di, Jogia and Mina-di (from Left to Right) in front of Anandadhara

At present Anandadhara is 300 students strong and has 14 teachers. The students come from low-income working families in nearby slums. In most families, the father works as a fruit and vegetable vendor, rickshaw-puller or construction laborer while the mother works as a household help. Anandadhara tries to impart basic education to its students while making it enjoyable. The school runs classes for children from nursery till standard IV, after which they join secondary schools. Some of these students have also been considered eligible for government-sponsored scholarships awarded at the level of standard V. Also, Anandadhara runs a vocational and academic training program for drop-out students from other schools. These students receive academic assistance which helps them clear the state-level secondary and higher secondary examinations. In addition, they are trained either as repair technicians for cell phones, television, radio etc., or in embroidery (for girls).

In the previous site visit report certain issues (marked in blue below) were raised about Anandadhara. In this report, I would like to give my own impression of Anandadhara as well as address these issues.

- > "The children wear uniforms (Pink shirts/blouses, Blue pants/skirts)-which they have to buy themselves. They also have to buy their own books and study materials. They pay Rs 40/month as tuition fees."

This is a mere "formality" and a necessary one at that. Since there are lots of private schools in that area., the parents (who are, in many cases, illiterate) would not even consider this as a "school" if this formality were not maintained. Also, it probably needs to be emphasized that, inability to pay this tuition fee does not, in any way, imply that the student cannot continue his/her education at Anandadhara. In fact, every month, there are, on an average, 60 students who are unable to pay their fees, so their fees are waived.

- > "They suffer from regular diarrhea, skin disorders and eye disorders. The school makes no attempt to help them with their health problems except to detect them and inform the guardian if possible."

I checked that the school holds two health camps every year. They get pediatricians, eye-specialists and general physicians to participate in these health camps and medical checkups are conducted. Some times medicines are distributed, but this is not always possible on account of lack of funds.

> "The teachers claim that they assess students continuously during classroom teaching."

Of course, in-class interaction with the students, help the teachers gauge their understanding. But Anandadhara employs more conventional methods of assessing the students, as well. Three examinations are held every year. If it is seen that the performance of a student is below the average in his/her class, his/her parents are contacted and the teachers interact with them and try to ascertain why the student is not performing well. It has been a policy at Anandadhara that no one is failed in any examination because if a student fails, his/her parents might be inclined to remove the student from school (because any expenditure on education would be seen as a wastage of hard-earned money) and put him/her to work. Incidentally, it has now become a government policy in West Bengal, that no one is failed in primary schools.

> "The school doesn't provide any sporting equipment, no nourishments and 2-3 outings per yr-and a couple of cultural programs."

The school does not have a proper playground. At the time of my visit, the open area in front of the school was being leveled by filling its numerous potholes with rubble. Organizing sports events in the playground before leveling it would be a dangerous proposition.



Truck carrying rubble to fill up the potholes

> " The authorities claim that they used to have a physical Ed teacher who was on leave for the last few days!!!! The teachers are Graduates at least and 2 of them are supposedly on leave to pursue higher education. The administrators claim that they have 13 teachers on payroll and 2 volunteer teachers. > The volunteer teachers take vocational classes for the 8th STD pass students during the afternoons (I > was there till 3:30 PM-saw no sign of anything of the sort)."

I was at Anandadhara from 10:30 in the morning till about 12:30 in the afternoon. As I was leaving the premises of Anandadhara, I saw a teenaged boy enter. I spoke with him and learnt that he had dropped out of school after standard VIII and he was receiving vocational and academic training at Anandadhara.

I also met the physical education teacher and saw her attendance record in December (it turned out that she had not been absent for a single day in December). There are 14 teachers, as mentioned before.



Physical Education teacher Anu-di

Also, I would like to mention here that for each drop-out student receiving vocational and academic training at Anandadhara, a file is maintained. These files contain information about the student, the social and economic background he/she comes from, his/her academic qualifications prior to joining Anandadhara, his/her interests as far as vocational training is concerned and copies of marksheets of the examinations (secondary and/or higher secondary, after the student clears these) for which he/she received academic training at Anandadhara.



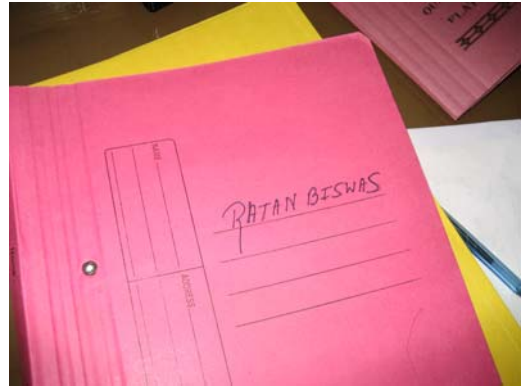
A school drop-out student (Bhola), who receives vocational training at Anandadhara



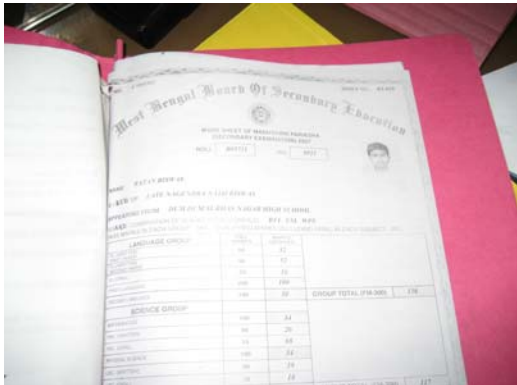
This is the room where female drop-out students are given vocational training on sewing machines



File cabinet where records of drop-out students are kept in files



The file for drop-out student Ratan Biswas



The marksheet that drop-out student Ratan Biswas obtained after passing the Secondary Examination, Madhyamik



These files contain information about the students' family background, educational qualifications, financial situations, interests etc.

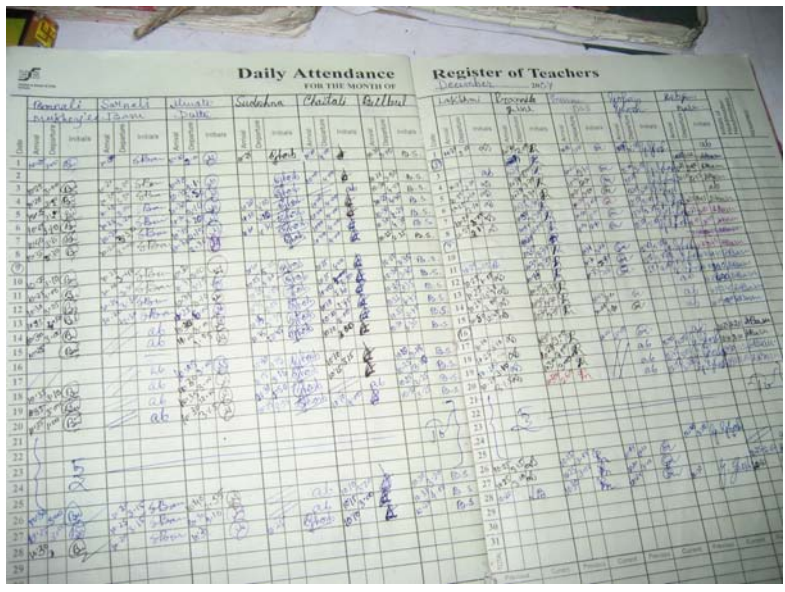
>" They are very well supported by big name sponsors like Hope Foundation, TDH, CRY, the Ford > Foundation and others."

Anandadhara does NOT get funded by any of the agencies. SPAN, which is the NGO that runs Anandadhara gets funds from some of these agencies for OTHER projects. Anandadhara gets about Rs.9,600 per month from its students (as school fees) and the remuneration for the teachers alone totals Rs.28,000 per month. When one adds to this, the maintenance costs, electricity bills, telephone bills etc the total deficit per year runs up to Rs.3,00,000. The break-up of the total monthly expenditure on various counts is as follows:

- Salary of teachers (14 of them): 28,000
- Salary of attendants (3 of them): 3,000
- Stationery ware: 1,000
- Telephone: 1,000
- Electricity: 1,000
- Office Maintenance: 500.

My own impression of Anandadhara is very good. The students in every class seemed remarkably happy (as the pictures below show) and participative. They seemed to share a very warm bond with their teachers, which made the atmosphere comfortable and homelike. Anandadhara evidently plays an essential role in the lives of its 300 students. It makes basic education accessible and, perhaps more importantly, enjoyable to children from nearby slums and also prepares school drop-outs for state-level examinations as well as occupations which would help them earn a living.

I would strongly recommend ASHA to provide financial assistance to this noble and much-needed effort.



Attendance register

# Happy Students in Classes



