

Asha for Education™

Site Visit Questionnaire

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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: Jan. 6, 10

Name of the Project: Kalyania Centre for Special Education and Vocational Training

Name of the Organisation Running the Project (if different): Kalyania Charitable Society

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned

No, it was a surprise visit

	Project Contact	You Name (Asha volunteer conducting the visit)
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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 5% Education 40% Health 40%
Other 15% (please specify) servicing gerontologically advanced

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

Governing Body comprising of 15 members including President, Vice President, Secretaries, Treasurer and members elected every three years by the General Body of the Society during AGM

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
Samatat	To provide primary education to the poor
Andha Alok Samity	To provide care and education to the uncared, blind vagrants mostly picked up from the Streets
Sarba Shiksha Abhijan	A Govt. sponsored school for children for the poor with emphasis on mid-day meals

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? Although the families living in the area are over 1000, approximately 250 families come under their scanner as highly underprivileged ones

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

Mostly brick kiln workers, day labourers, vendors and flotsam

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?

Approximately once a week

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.)

Mostly as labours as and when required. Young adults from them are mostly picked up for vocational training

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

7. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community? Slightly over one km

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

Free education, kits, outdoor medical care and personal attention and back-up vocational training programme. Even free Govt. sponsored Schools have to be paid significantly by their standards in the form of overhead charges. The mid day meals are too substandard to attract attention

9. When you visited, how many children were present in the class? May be about 90%

What is the regular class strength? About ten per Class.

Comments: Although visit was not repeated, it appears the attendance is sound for reasons more than just for free education. The Organisation apparently provides something that other similar Organisations don't. Children appear to be keen to go to Schools rather than go elsewhere. The attached photos will show how happy the childrens are.

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

Definitely yes. They appeared to be well dressed for the background from which they come, happy and have apparently cordial relations with their teachers. They are mostly a joyous lot.

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?** Upto class 4
 B. Non-Formal Education (NFE) do the students also attend formal school?
 C. Vocational
 D. Other . Please specify Art, music and dance classes. Computer training, nursing training, work education etc. for those who do not get latched onto some kind of earning mechanism.
Thus the School has a combi approach of imparting education designed to give holistic and comprehensive package for total education.

2. If A (Formal), up to what grade(LKG, 5th, 7th etc.) does the school conduct classes?

Upto class 4 following the syllabi prescribed by W.B. Primary Education Board

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

The children of this School are given both formal and non-formal education designed for holistic growth of body and mind. The School has major plans for improving upon this model.

If none do, does the project plan this for the future? For non-formal education most of the study materials are designed by the course leaders through purchase of basic materials. Where kits are available, they are procured in a ready-to-use format.

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

For Non formal education, mostly in the drawing, painting, music, recitation etc., any kits required are provided from the School

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

Only the first batch has finished class IV last year and all have gone for admission to class V in other Govt. Schools successfully. The parent School is apparently keeping track of these boys and girls, giving them support where needed in the form of coaching, providing facilities for computer education and practice or they continue for additional lessons in the non-formal components like dance, painting, music etc. There is hardly any overlap between primary education and vocational training. The girls opting for ayahs are all fruitfully employed. Children are not involved in vocational training.

6. How many staff or volunteers are recruited from the community? Mostly volunteers from town - few from the community.

How many of the staff are women? Total staff members (T & NT): 13; M=4; F=9

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

One teacher only has left having been offered better prospects as teacher in a Higher Secondary English medium College.

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

9. Does the organization train the teachers? Yes No

If yes, how do they provide the training? Once in a year teachers from the elite english medium Springdale School come and guide the teachers in a hands on training in teaching children. Besides, retired Principals of Schools and Colleges (Members of the Society) always monitor and guide the young teachers regularly.

10. How much is the staff paid? A nominal honorarium of Rs.700/- pm for teachers and 300/- for rest of the staff. This is one area where help is sought

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: Items where additional funding is required, are largely covered both in fixed, non-recurring and recurring costs

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.

The School budget is quite comprehensive. However, there are certain areas where support will be most meaningful in improving the quality of teaching and communication skill development. These include : (1) Improved meal/tiffin for students; (2) Class room support for materials, audio-visuals etc. in both the formal and non-formal components of the School; (3) Expansion of the small computer Centre; (4) Non-technical support; (5) Provision of books, kits, dress and tools and audio-visuals for both format of education.

The salary of the teachers and other staff is too meagre when compared to other Government or fee-oriented Schools and most certainly needs an upward orientation.

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

Yes, They largely agreed with my proposals but felt that support given in the year 2009-10 in the area of remuneration to teachers, support staff and Office staff be continued upto atleast that level. A discontinuation may put a crimp in what can largely be described as a 'happy family'.

Besides, they focussed on the need for some 'one-time' development grant for : (1) A covered area to conduct the various non-formal components

(2) Development of the adjoining park which is used by the School for all its outdoor activities and most of the non-formal education activities. I explained to them that for these two developmental agenda, they will do well to approach other agencies.

PART E: Comments

(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)

Next two pages are taken from their annual report. After that I have attached my comments and photographs.



C. SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION

'The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet' – Aristotle

a. Suhasini Shishu Niketan

The education module revolves around the Suhasini Shishu Niketan (SSN) for primary education. We have now in roll a total of 60 students (25 male and 35 female). Those passing out Class IV will have to seek admission elsewhere for which the SSN is committed to provide all possible assistance for admission in Class V of a recognized School, preferably Government sponsored where the cost of schooling is less for whatever it is worth.

Efforts at strengthening the School are likely to bear fruits shortly. Overall mental growth is being promoted through incentives to those who are adjudged best taking discipline, attendance and performance together.

School related function included

- Rabindra Jayanti on 18th May, 08 celebrated by school children and teachers through song and dance sequences.
- Foundation day-cum-Dr. B. C. Roy Birthday anniversary was celebrated on 1st July, 08 through performances of school children under the tutelage of their teachers.
- Independence day-cum-Rishi Aurobindo's birthday anniversary was celebrated on 15.08.08 through hoisting of the National flag by Dr. Santanu Jha, Chairman of Kalyani Municipality and singing of National Anthem.
- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birthday anniversary was celebrated on 23rd January '09.
- Republic day was celebrated befittingly on 26.01.09.
- The Saraswati Puja was celebrated on 31.01.09 with great gaiety and enthusiasm by school students, teachers, staff and GB Members and a filling prasad was served. A cultural function was organized in the evening.

Other Functions include :

- Rotary Club Kalyani Unit organized a Health Check-up programme for children at N. S. Co-operative Training Institute, Kalyani. All the children of SSN were attended and their health check-up was conducted by Dr. S. K. Karan.
- Teacher's day (05.09.2008) - An occasion sponsored by the Guardians and students.
- Mother's Day-cum-Vidyasagar's birthday anniversary was celebrated on 26.09.08.
- Prize giving day – (on merit) celebrated on 01.07.08.

KALYANIA



- 12.12.2008 – Mr. Prasanta Sengupta provided additional set of warm clothing to all children of SSN, Kalyania.
- 24 – 26th Dec' 08 – Representative of Asha Foundation, Washington, USA, Ms. Uttara Sengupta visited Kalyania.
- Annual sports – Organised and conducted on 25.01.09.
- Annual General Function.

For overall development of students, several satellite projects have been undertaken mostly also open to non-students of the formal school.

(b) The school of Art or Kalyania Children's Kalaniketan is attended by a whopping 124 students on an average. The best pieces are selected for card making that may be used at various occasions and are available from the Office at production cost. They are beautiful! The school also organizes an Annual Sit & Draw Competition which was held on 28.12.08. The occasion was graced by the presence of SDO, Kalyani, Sri Joydeep Mukherjee and Chairman, Kalyani Municipality, Dr. Shantanu Jha who alongwith some Governing Body members, gave away the prizes. Consolation prizes were given to all participants. 232 tiny competitors participated. In the Sit & Draw competition. Three competitors in order of merit, selected 1st, 2nd and 3rd from each four groups were given prizes accordingly and all the participants were provided with Tiffin packets. The performance in general was rated excellent for which the credit goes to Mr. Panchanan Paul, a well known artist, who teaches them voluntarily, assisted by Smt. Mousumi Dey and evaluated by Smt. Laxmi Dasgupta. So far, it was not mandatory for the SSN students to participate in the Kalaniketan activities and many did not. This is being rectified so that it becomes mandatory for SSN students to participate in Kalaniketan activities. It is proposed that from coming session special initiative for children will be taken from Art school to ensure training for cultural (song, dance, recitation etc.) and handicraft skill.



(c) Pathagar Library Services continues to be closed due to non-availability of space. We have several thousands of accessions. We anxiously look forward to some benevolent member who can provide us enough space to restart this Pathagar.

(d) Computer Training Centre : Kamala Sengupta Memorial Computer Training Centre – It has four trainers and two batches of 10 and 14 students have undergone a 3 month's training on

The overall impression that I had was of a School that is akin to a large family where management people, administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students and their guardians are a composite happy lot who feel safe and comfortable at the School itself. The tiffin given to the students, though simple, was very wholesome, filling and nutritive. (I sampled some of it myself!) The School management and teachers all felt that there has been a significant qualitative change towards improvement in the functioning and the outcome can only be sustained through a continuous partnership between Asha for Education and the Kalyania Society.

The School has a budget of Rs.4,80,000/- for year 2009-10 of which nearly Rs. 1,65,000/- was received from us. They have apparently no major fund support from any agency other than individual, local donors. This increase in budget to the tune of over Rs. 1,50,000/- was made possible through Asha for Education's support. Therefore, there may be a major fund crunch if Asha for Education's support is suddenly withdrawn.

Kalyania plans for an expansion of computer Centre (from 3 to 5 computers) - (Rs 45000/-) and build a common Room for multipurpose activity (Rs.3,00,000/-). I have taken some photographs of this multipurpose activity room (under construction). Right now many of their activities (viz. dance classes) are held at someone's place which is understandably inconvenient for many different reasons. There is a park in front of the school and Kalyani Municipal Authority is willing to let Kalyania Childrens School "own" this park as long as they maintain the park. Hence fencing of park is on top of their priority list because then it will be lot safer for the students as well as maintenance can be done effectively. This will cost approximately 4 lack rupees.

Of the developmental projects that they have in mind, the covered space requirement appears to be urgent and immediate as without it many of the activities related to non-formal nature remain suspended for the major part of the prolonged rainy season (June -- October).

Finally, the seriousness and the devotion of the management shows a commitment par excellence that percolates down the line in the hierarchy of management.

I recommend a continuation of the Asha for Education Support to this School to the extent that may be possible given the logic that money given will most certainly be used for a good purpose and will largely help maintaining the unique quality of rapport that the various components of the School is now showing.

Attached are some photographs I took during my visit to the School.



The School and Computer Training Center



Teachers' room



Faculty and Staffs



From the walls of the classrooms



Students in Class



Students in Class



Shoes outside the classroom



Dad helps me



I can do it myself



Time to go home



Of course they like this most



One, two, three, four....

Please don't ask me to do those exercises...



Parents and teachers



Dr. Dhar teaching the mothers



The new classroom



Kitchen



Computer room – there are three computers