

Basic information

Date of the site visit: Monday February 29, 2016

Name of the Project: Navjagriti Collective

Name of the Organization Running the Project (if different): PEACE

Was your site visit announced? Yes, it was planned

	Project Contact's Information	Site Visitor's (Your) Information (Volunteer conducting the visit)
Name	Ms. Dalia Kar	Prerana Thakurdesai
Address	14, Jangpura B, Mathura Road New Delhi, DELHI 110014 India	Forest Hills, New York
Phone(s)	Tel: M-9810997490, 9211160905	
Fax		
E-mail	daliakar@gmail.com	prerana.asha@yahoo.com
Affiliation to project	Founder	None
Affiliation to Asha		Volunteer

PART A: Particulars about the organization and its environment (cross-validation of information presented in proposal)

1. What is the main ideology of the organization behind the project?

The organization aims to create a safe space for underserved children of Delhi's Sarai Kale Khan area to learn, get educated and create pathways for these children to move out of the circle of poverty.

2. How old is the organization?

The organization was found in 2005.

3. How and why was it founded?

Navjagriti was founded on the streets of Nizamuddin area of New Delhi where Dalia Kar and her husband Tapan Kar would work with street kids by getting them involved in painting, theatre and a reading and writing. Dalia Kar, who is a dancer by training, found teaching street kids more satisfying a job than teaching in Public Schools, which she was involved in previously. A grant from Asha For Education helped the couple to rent the premises they operate in currently and begin formally enrolling kids in their organization. Today, Navjagriti enrolls the kids in schools, pays for tuition, uniforms, textbooks, excursion trips, clothes, food and shelter for kids from morning to evening. The only meal that these kids have in their homes is dinner.

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

- Community development: %
- Education: %
- Health % -
- Other % (please specify)

**** While it would be correct to say that all of Navjagriti's efforts and programs are aimed towards educating the children, it's not completely removed from community building, healthcare or any other development goals for a community. Since the kids spend 80% of their day at Navjagriti (or in schools), the organization is responsible for the children's healthcare. Three doctors who live in the same community conduct regular check up for the kids and attend to them when the need arises. The organization also

tries to negotiate with the community on issues like child marriage, girls' education etc. It also provides hostel facilities for 3-4 children who have nowhere else to go.

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

Navjagriti is a grassroots organization and is funded through a larger organization – Popular Education and Action Center. Dalia Kar also works for PEACE in order to keep the affiliation.

6. 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(s)	Objectives of the organization(s)
1. Save The Children 2. Mohabbat 3. Project Concern International (PCI)	It provides vocational training for underprivileged children. This organization provides Bible reading classes PCI used to have an education project for kids, but has closed down.

7. When was the project of interest started?

The current project started in 2007 with a grant from Asha For Education.

8. What is their vision about the future of the project?

Navjagriti hopes to become a non-profit with FCRA and tax-exemptions in place so that they can buy a place of their own instead of renting the current premises. They also hope to start small vocational training projects like mobile repair etc. that can help kids who aren't school toppers to start small repair shops.

9. What were the initial challenges faced by the organization and by the founder when starting the project? How did he/she overcome them? Who helped them through the initial stages?

The organization was essentially just two people – Dalia Kar and her husband who sat on streets of Nizamuddin. Their intention was to channel street kids who were also drug addicts into creative work. They didn't have a larger plan in mind until someone referred them to Asha for Education. They began to see possibilities once Asha decided to fund their efforts. They set up an organization and sheltered children during the day. However, some of the challenges that the organization still faces are that they are not independently cleared under FCRA or tax-exemption rules. This forces them to rely on another organization to route funds from donors. Navjagriti doesn't have a dedicated CA who can help them with the necessary process. Daliaji herself is not very well versed with the bureaucratic needs. This makes fundraising a huge challenge. However, Navjagriti has, over the years, been able to recruit international volunteers who donate their time and efforts in helping the organization grow. They have also been able to build a rapport with the community, who initially was apprehensive about sending their children to Navjagriti. Today, children spend a majority of their day at Navjagriti, which, to them, seems like a better place than their own homes.

10. Has the organization ever approached the government for funding? If so, what was the outcome? If not, why not?

No. The organization hasn't attempted for Government funding due to lack of knowledge and lack of resources to work on the grant.

11. How many centers/schools does the project run? How many of those were you able to visit?

Navjagriti runs just one project with over 65 kids, which I visited. All the kids who come to Navjagriti attend regular schools (Missionary and Govt schools) and return to Navjagriti for their afternoon meals, rest and homework.

12. Were you able to choose the project centers to visit? Or were all centers visited suggested by the project partner?

N/A

PART B: The beneficiaries and the community

(Information to be gathered from parents and children)

1. Approximately how many families live in the area?

There are approximately 100,000 people that live in Sarai Kale Khan.

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

Majority of parents are domestic workers.

3. What is the religious/economic/educational background of the parents/community? (Are the parents able to pay any fees? Are the parents literate? etc.)

98% of the parents belong to the Muslim community. As mentioned, most parents are domestic workers and single parents. They are unable to pay the fees of a local private school. Almost all kids who come to Navjagriti are first generation learners. Another reason why Navjagriti is important is because a majority of the children don't have their birth certificates – an important document for school admission. Navjagriti makes affidavits that are valid in govt aided Missionary schools. Once admitted in these schools, the children can switch over to Govt schools or private schools after grade five.

4. Does the project/school target specific families (e.g. agricultural workers, families with specific backgrounds, illiterate parents, first generation learners, orphans, sex workers, etc.)

Yes, the project targets children in Sarai Kale Khan – an impoverished community in Delhi. As mentioned, they are all first generation learners from single parent homes. A few children are orphans who live in Navjagriti.

5. How often do the teachers meet the parents?

There is limited interaction between parents and Navjagriti. The reason being that most parents are busy in their work, some have health issues and as single parents largely they're too preoccupied to dedicate more time to Navjagriti.

6. How do the parents/the community view the efforts taken by the organization that runs the project?

Parents have been sending their kids to Navjagriti for eight years now without any issues. Barring a couple of students who left because their parents migrated, Navjagriti has been able to retain all its kids. Navjagriti also has to be careful with its bargaining power in the community. They can't go all out and oppose child marriage or other injustices because the community can boycott them, or make false cases of kidnapping etc. So while they do work against the injustices, they do this in a way that doesn't rattle the community in a wrong way. Having said that, the fact that Navjagriti has existed in the community peacefully for over 8 years is proof of the fact that its work is appreciated.

7. What is the motivation for the parents to send their children to school?

The parents prefer to send their children to Navjagriti because they're taken care of for the entire day while they go out to work. The children are less of a financial burden on the parents because their school tuition, uniforms, other clothes, meals (except dinner), teaching etc is all paid for.

8. 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.)

Parents don't really participate too much. Navjagriti, however, does successfully mediate between the kids and parents in case required.

9. Has the community supported the project (e.g. financially, donating land, volunteering, etc.)?

Since it is largely a poor community, there aren't any financial donations that come from there. The people who have money, according to Navjagriti, belong to communities (I'll refrain from using the names of the communities) that are money-minded. Unfortunately, Navjagriti reports that it doesn't get any volunteers from the community either.

10. Are there any Government Schools in the area? (Circle one)

Yes, there are 4 government schools in the area. However, Navjagriti feels that the quality of education in those schools is deplorable and that's the reason the children are sent to schools that aren't in the area.

11. If yes, how far are the Government Schools from the community?

Within the community.

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

Navjagriti is not a substitute for school. It aids schools. All the kids attend regular schools.

13. When you visited, how many children were present in the class?

When I visited, there were over 75 kids present. 65 kids were from Navjagriti and 10 more were from the community who had come to sit and study. Since the kids had their exams, all kids were studying with the teachers.

14. What is the regular class strength? What is the boy-girl ratio in the school?

There are about 65 kids. There are far more girls than boys.

15. Do the children seem to enjoy coming to school? (Site visit volunteers observation)

The children absolutely love coming to Navjagriti and in their own words, they would have it “no other way.” Most children come from troubled families and find solace under Navjagriti’s roof. They live like a huge family – it’s a voluntary family that they have chosen.

16. What activities do the children do after school hours?

Once they return from school, the children are served lunch. First the younger kids eat and then the older kids. Their helper, Laxmi, prepares lunch. Some older kids also help cook. After lunch, the little kids have a short nap so they can wake up refreshed. Older kids begin doing their homework. The two teachers (who are themselves graduate students) make all kids do their homework. Navjagriti is one big room where all the kids sit with the teachers. While the space is constrained, the teachers are able to give individual attention to the students. During my visit, the teachers were helping the students prepare for their exams by giving them tests. While kids from one grade were completing their answers, kids from another grade were being helped understanding the answers to the test. Some children who are interested in sports are sent to Indira Gandhi Sports Stadium for training.

17. What is the main motivation for the students to attend school?

The kids love Navjagriti. Not only do they get a sense of family at Navjagriti, they also love the extra curricular activities like plays, dance, music, painting and out of town excursions.

18. What is the drop-out rate among students? Why do they leave the school? (If high, what is the organization doing regarding this?)

Almost all students who have been enrolled through Navjagriti have remained in school.

19. What do the children feel about the school? Do they feel happy to come to school every day? (Question posed to the children to gauge their replies)

The children seem to like their school. They realize the opportunity that schooling gives them.

PART C: Details about the project and its staff

(Information to be gathered from students and staff)

- 1. How far is the project site from the main town/village? How do the children commute? (foot, bus, etc.)**

The project is inside the community.

- 2. Are the children charged fees for attending school? (Either school or bus, etc.)**

No fees

- 3. What infrastructure and facilities are available at the project site you visited? (eg. Furniture, buildings, toilets, library, sports, hostels, mid-day meals etc)**

Navjagriti has a total of three rooms, kitchen and bathroom. There is very limited furniture - just a bed and a few chairs. All the kids sit on a mat on the floor so that they can all be accommodated. The food is cooked in the same kitchen. There is a small library with a few books, a lot of folders with the children's work. The wall is adorned with pictures of the kids over the years and paintings made by the kids.

- 4. Is the building permanent or temporary construction? Is it owned or rented? What is its physical condition? How are they being maintained at the condition?**

The building is a modern and permanent construction and is in a good shape. Navjagriti has been renting this space since the beginning. Everything seemed well maintained. Navjagriti budget caters for general maintenance.

- 5. How big are the classrooms? How many children per room? How many classes (1st to 3rd etc) per room?**

There are 3 rooms – one large and two small. The younger kids spend more time in the smaller rooms, while older kids spend more time in the bigger room.

- 6. What is the medium of instruction? Is this the student's mother tongue?**

The medium of instruction is Hindi. This is the students' mother tongue. Several students also attempted to speak to me in English.

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

Community awareness

- 8. What are the daily school hours?**

The daily center hours are 8am-7pm

9. **How many staff or volunteers are involved in the project? (Full-time/Part-time/Volunteers) What are their roles? Give breakdown by roll (eg. 2 full-time teachers, 1 full-time volunteer teacher, 1 cook, 1 administrator, etc.)**

There are 2 full time staff (Daliaji and Tapanji), one full time caretaker and cook (Laxmi) and two-three part time teachers.

10. **Where do they live, and how much they travel to work here?**

There is not too much travel involved.

11. **How much is the staff paid? Are they happy with their salaries?**

The salaries are obviously not what is required to live in New Delhi, but the part time teachers are graduate students who spend a few hours at the center, so they manage with the salaries of Rs 4000/month. Daliaji and Tapanji's salaries are Rs 7,000 and Rs 9,000 respectively. Daliaji is also a PEACE employee and obtains a salary from there as well, which makes is just about affordable for them.

12. **How often do the main founders/organizers/volunteers visit the center? Do they do only administrative duties or spend time at the grassroots as well?**

The founders spend the whole day at the center.

13. **What does the organization say about education of the child after they leave its school?**

This is the first time that the organization has kids who are in class 10th, so one will have to wait and see what happens to them after class 12th. One of the students is in college and is doing his Bachelors in Commerce from the Open University along with working at KFC.

14. **Were you able to look at actual work of the students? Homework/classwork/tests, etc? Comment.**

The students were preparing for their exams so I couldn't see their homework. I was shown some spectacular artwork by the kids.

PART D: Financial resources of the organization

(Feedback from the person conducting the site visit)

1. What are the different sources of funding for this project? (different agencies/Govt)

Asha for Education

Smart Cube

Gigraj Kishory Lal Trust

2. What is the annual budget?

Rs. 15.38 Lakh

3. Are detailed records of past funding and spending available? If possible, please request a copy (of annual financial statements, for example).

Yes

4. What is the largest portion of their expenses (salaries/infrastructure/etc.)?

There are three large portions of their expenses – School fees, teachers’ salaries and rent.

5. Do the expenses in the proposal reflect the quality/quantity of material found at the site? (ex. Do the students have uniforms if they have been itemized? Do they have the number of computers they claim to have? Does the food seem nutritious? Are there enough books? etc.)

Yes.

PART E: Comments

Please use this portion of the document to attach pictures and make additional comments. Remember, we need you to be our eyes and ears on the ground. Please assess the situation carefully. If it seems weird, do let us know. Some examples of red flags- The school claims to be providing students with uniforms and school has been in session for 6 months, but the uniforms look brand new, The school claims high test results for the children, but when you talk to them they are unable to answer basic questions, etc. If you sense something is wrong or the project partner is being less than honest with us, do let us know.

(Feel free to attach documents if necessary)

Pictures and videos of the site visit have been uploaded on the nycnj.projects@ashanet.org account. Here is the link:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/108906700140108018169/NavjagritiSiteVisit2016Prerana?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCOy-tPLO8IernQE&feat=directlink>

Navjagriti is one of the most 'expensive' projects that Asha NYC/NJ supports. As a project coordinator of NYV/NJ, I was cognizant of the high costs involved in supporting this project. This site visit was done in order to understand the impact, reach and effectiveness of this project given the costs. To be honest, my visit was just three hours long and it would be unfair to claim that I could have accurately judged the project within that time frame. Having said that, my observation is that Navjagriti's work, in its limited scope, has proved to be beneficial for the 65 children that it works with. While it's not possible to assess how would Navjagriti's absence impact the children being served, it's safe to say that they necessarily require a space like Navjagriti to continue their education. Majority of children belong to really poor families, most of them have single parents and are first generation learners. The stress on education in their families isn't much and many parents would much rather their children work and earn money than spend money on their schooling. The fact that Navjagriti takes care of almost all kinds of expenses for these kids is the reason most parents agree to send their children to Navjagriti.

Schooling and bringing up a child involves a lot of costs. Even if the government mandates free elementary education for all kids, there are various other costs involved, for example, transportation or stationary among others. Navjagriti pays for the kids' tuition, books, stationary, shoes, uniform, other clothes, meals, transportation and absolutely any other cost needed to keep them in schools. It's also very easy to figure out that Daliaji and Tapanji are both foster parents for all these kids and they genuinely care for each child at Navjagriti. Having stated Navjagriti's importance, following are some of my main observations from the visit:

- **Learning:** I wasn't able to assess learning levels of the kids (one would require spending at least two days to do that), but at a general level the children (mostly girls) seemed very interested in their work. I could have short conversations with a lot of them in English. Daliaji told me that most children were average performers at school. On an average the kids score 50% marks in their exams. While this is much above the passing marks, given the competition, it's clearly not enough to get the children into reasonable colleges if the same result continues. However, since it has been less than 10 years since Navjagriti has been working with these children, it can take longer for grades to improve. There are also a few bright students who are doing better than the rest. I also met Bholu who was extremely fond of reading newspapers and absorbing all kinds of information. He had run away from home and now lives at Navjagriti. He was quick with all kinds of statistics like the population of the area, information about what was making news and some other tit bits that one doesn't always find kids to be interested in. The children are also reluctant to go to English medium schools as, understandably, they find them intimidating. Daliaji admits that the kids cannot be expected to be class toppers as

the environment that they exist in is not conducive to education itself. Navjagriti's goal is to help the kids complete their high school so that they can at least do some work other than what their parents do, and hope to create a better life for themselves.

- **Vocational training:** Currently, girls at Navjagriti cannot be sent for vocational training outside because Navjagriti cannot let them out unaccompanied and it doesn't have the resources to hire anyone. There is also no space in the office to conduct any separate classes. Daliaji believes that mobile repairing would be a good skill for the kids to have so that they can open their own small repair shops. She claims to be working towards building on that idea.

- **Economical:** The total budget of the organization is approx. Rs 15 lakh of which Asha funds Rs 11 lakh. I, personally, couldn't find any expense that was unaccounted for. The project seemed as economical as it can be in an expensive city like Delhi. They currently pay rent of Rs. 16000/month, which is reasonable for that kind of space in Delhi. If they were to buy a property of the same size, in the same area, it would cost them at least Rs. 50 lakh. It is completely understandable why they haven't been able to attempt to buy a place yet.

Navjagriti also provides for the uniforms (which gets sponsored by Girgraj Kishory Lal Trust) even though the govt gives Rs 11-1400/child for uniforms. Navjagriti has opened bank accounts in the name of all the kids and deposits this money in their bank accounts instead of buying uniforms.

Out of town excursions have often been questioned at Asha meetings. My personal evaluation was that these excursions are a great way for the kids to bond with each other and get a flavor of life that's beyond their community. It's makes them aspire for a life that's different than theirs. Listening to all their experiences and learnings on the trips was fascinating. One of them said that they never get an opportunity to travel with their parents. The time that they go out with their family in Navjagriti is the happiest time in the year. The amazing to see how the older kids look after the younger ones. It truly looks like a lovely family.

- **Concern areas:** Despite their great intentions and working in the area for 10 years Navjagriti has not been able to think of ways to sustain themselves. Asha forms 75% of Navjagriti's budget, yet they have not been able to diversify their sources of funding. The reason or this is that Daliaji is not well versed with the NGO funding mechanism. Most of her time is spent looking after the children at Navjagriti and doing small jobs at the parent organization - PEACE. Unfortunately, they have not been able to chart out a clear future for the organization. It's a bit of a chicken and egg situation because they don't have FCRA or 80C certification, so it makes it more difficult to raise funds. But not enough attempts have been made in the past 10 years to get the certification either. Daliaji mentioned that their 80C certification was almost complete and could take a couple of months for it to come. I found that lack of vision a little unsettling. Daliaji understands the task but seems burdened by it to the extent that it seems to paralyze

her problem-solving skills. It almost felt like there was an attempt to delay the task incumbent upon them. Again, I should be clear in stating that, to me, it seemed like the reason for this paralysis was the enormity of the task and not the intention to make it happen.

I will be connecting Daliaji to my cousin who is a chartered accountant and is willing to help them pro bono. It would be good for Asha to propose other ways that they could raise funds.

Getting funding for a bigger and permanent place will help ease the rent burden and also create more space for the kids to have separate classes.