

Meeting minutes for Asha Chennai on 8th Nov, 2020

Decisions are highlighted in blue.

Following were logged in and participated

Bhaskar

Gomathi

Kasturi Easwaran

Madan Sudarman

Rajaraman Krishnan (Co-ordinator)

Sriram VS

Sundaram R

Venkat Nataraj

Venkataraman Muthukrishnan

0. Ratification

The minutes of the Meeting held on 4th October 2020 on Google Meet were ratified unanimously

1. ARC Poll

The document circulated by Bhaskar on Code of Conduct ARC poll was discussed at length. It was felt that the concerns we had raised the first time around were not addressed sufficiently and that a Code of Conduct without simultaneously promulgating guidelines on Conflict Resolution would not serve the purpose. ARC proposal to say **YES** or **NO** to [the Implementing Code of Conduct ARC poll](#) was put to vote. [Among the seven members present at that time, five members voted in favour of saying **NO** while two abstained.](#)

2. Mini-schools

Rajaraman gave an update on the current status of running mini-schools. More than 50 schools were functioning and some had added one more shift increasing the number of pupils covered. Sriram gave a brief account of the status in Poorna Vidya. Rajaram said mini schools were functioning across all projects and he along with Bhaskar were planning a site visit after Deepavali.

It appeared from press reports that schools particularly lower classes would not recommence in the immediate future. It was needless to state it was a body blow to entry level education and Asha Chennai was doing its bit. However, in order to increase the student coverage and regularity in attendance the issue of providing nutritious snacks was discussed. It was felt considering the budgetary constraints it would not be a feasible idea just now.

Annually Asha Chennai conducts assessments starting with oral assessments in November across all Asha Chennai supported schools. Written assessments would follow early next year. This year is unusual since regular schools are shut. Year to year comparison of the same students and classes could not be done. However carrying out oral assessments across all functioning mini-school students would yield valuable data in terms of impact of Covid t as also a bench mark for the year 2020-21 academic year. Incidentally, the proposal to study Covid Impact by IIT B under the aegis of Aziz Premji foundation, mentioned in the last meeting had been abandoned. It was decided to commence Oral Assessment from next week deploying computer teachers covering more than a school every day. An expenditure of Rs 10,000 was approved for Oral Assessment 2020 to defray the expenses to be incurred for commuting of teachers between schools

3. Training

Venkat gave an update of training in English skills. He asserted that the teachers by and large had gained from the recent intensive coaching. However the present skills of the existing teachers varied widely. Those who were not able to gain confidence would lapse into indifference and resignation that English was not for them. There were also a few for whom the training which was carried out was not challenging enough. The question of tailoring the training to suit the present skills of the individual or groups of teachers was discussed. It was felt that motivation of the entire group would be in jeopardy if any student group was divided on the basis of their merit and ability to learn. Venkat said he would resume weekly assignments as before in a fortnight. It was decided that weekly spoken english classes would continue. However to bring some uniformity Venkat promised to come out soon with guidelines for the mentors to follow.

He also said the proposal to utilise the services of those who had recently volunteered to teach spoken English to improve the communication skills of Asha scholarship students was under finalisation. The guidelines for mentors would also address issues arising out of this scheme too.

4. Asha Kanini Updates

Rajaraman gave an account of developments in the growth and cleaning up of Asha Kanini App. It may be recalled that consequent to shut down of schools many teachers were allotted mapping work and now there were 60 packages catering to Tamilnadu and 12 to UP education needs.

Gomathi, who had just joined as a volunteer, was helping in refining and working out further mapping plans.

Computer Studies curriculum had been incorporated in Asha Kanini App and was nearing completion.

Sujatha Raman who had recently joined as a volunteer was helping in the process of cleaning up and fine tuning the CS curriculum for classes 1 to V.

Preetha Kannan who had recently moved to Chennai from Democratic Republic of Congo was likewise assisting in cleaning up the CS curriculum in respect of classes VI to VIII..

Aruna Shankarnarayanan, another newcomer to Asha Chennai, was assisting in creating Digital Lesson Plans for Maths, English and Science.

5. Content for Science in Kanini App

Purva Bhattar of Kirividya.com was currently helping students above primary level by bringing concepts of science and experiments to demonstrate them . It was proposed to explore possibility of Asha Chennai's involvement in improving teaching of science in Asha supported schools. It was also decided to take advantage of her expertise in improving content of science subjects in Asha Kanini App.

6. Computer Donation From Core Solutions

It may be recalled that 15 used PCs were on offer and it was decided to give them to deserving Asha Chennai Scholarship students. Venkataraman stated that he had identified the potential recipients among students of classes 11 and 12. .The actual number of computers received from Core Solutions was only 12. They needed accessories like UPS, Wifi dongle, Webcam, head-phone etc which would involve expenditure, **It was unanimously decided to spend upto Rs 55,000 to cater to this requirement.**

7. Career Path Avenues for Promotion for Asha Teachers

Asha Chennai has two streams of teachers. One is termed Regular Teachers who attend only one school and teach all subjects from classes 1 to V. The second is Computer Teachers who cover multiple schools and teach computer science as well as impart lessons in regular subjects using their computers. In managing a cadre of such teachers there arises a need .for creating higher positions to which some of them can be elevated where they can assume guidance and supervisory functions over colleague teachers and exercise administrative leadership. This measure also helps in creating avenues for promotion for loyal teachers. To be equitable opportunities for promotion should be made available both to regular teachers and computer teachers subject to their suitability. While such a senior teacher position with Rs 500 higher salary was available for computer teachers, such an option was not available for regular teachers. It was decided to create such higher position for regular teachers too. These senior teachers will be promoted by project stewards taking into account local exigencies and work requirements. The senior teachers will assist with the broader program implementation by being content experts, working in higher level work like content development or provide mentorship to junior staff.

8. Fundraising

Venkat gave an update on applications for CSR funding to SBI, KRP Ltd and Microsoft and for grants to Adobe and HCL. Sundaram stated that Mr Ashok Kumar Director of KRP had given him a new contact which he would pass on to Venkat to follow up. Project stewards were requested to make new videos and actively participate in preparing material for publicity to help in fundraising. Asha is also pursuing a GoFundMe Campaign to raise funds for all the mini-school.

9. Accounting

Rajaraman stated that our volunteer Ramkrishnan had completed the Financials of the 2019-20 and were now under audit.

10. Miscellaneous Items

Rajaraman stated that the proposal for Fundraising through Chrysalis was not viable and therefore was dropped.

11. Welcome to new Volunteers

Asha Chennai chapter welcomed the entry of Mr Madan Sudarman (Tech Mahindra) and Gomathy who were present as volunteers. Both have rich and vast experience in Computing Technology Asha Chennai looked forward to their association and valuable inputs in Asha Chennai's efforts to further quality education for the deprived.

12. Vote of Thanks

Meeting ended with a vote of thanks to all present.