

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 13th Aug, 2022

Minutes of the Online meeting held via GoogleMeet on Saturday 13th August 2022 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

1. Bhaskar
2. Kasturi
3. Paripoornam (intermittent)
4. Rajaraman
5. Sujatha
6. Sundaram R
7. Venkat
8. Venkataraman

0.1 Ratification of the minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July,2022 and the Extended meeting held on 10th July 2022 were ratified unanimously.

0.2 Ratification of Online Poll for Project Pearl.

The results of Online poll held to vote on Budget Proposal amounting to Rs 22, 07 580 for Project Pearl with eight volunteers voting unanimously in favour was ratified..

1.0 Staff Matters

1.1 Appointment of an Office Assistant

Rajaraman's proposal to hire an Office Assistant to Ms Jhansi Rani to tackle the increased office workload was considered. In addition to maintenance of accounts, work relating to coordination and reporting to Donor agencies has increased manifold. Accordingly [the proposal to hire Ms Sevanthi on a salary of Rs 10,000 per month was approved unanimously.](#)

1.2 Accommodation at Sangamam office.

Rajaraman stated that there was acute shortage of space at Sangamam office in Thiruvallur as the strength of teachers had increased and a number of meetings and training sessions were being held. Space was also required to receive and store items for distribution. Toilet facility too was inadequate for a large gathering. .Either a toilet and a shed in the ground floor or extension of the first floor was essentially needed, He would come up soon with a proposal for approval after consulting a lawyer and our auditor. At this stage the expenditure is envisaged to be around Rs 5 or 10 Lakhs depending on how much of an extension we are talking about.

2.0 Status of Funding

Rajaraman Presented the Status of Asha Chennai Funding. In 2022-23 (April to July) we have received funding of Rs 149 Lakhs, a large portion of which is the Rs 1.1 Crore donation from Amazon. We have total balances of approx Rs 479 Lakhs. Allocations now had to be done and decisions on the quantum of funds to be bought for expenditure both from Asha India and AfE had to be taken. Venkataraman presented the fund balances a broad picture yearwise for a general appreciation of the growth of Asha Chennai.

All in Rs lakhs	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Funding	269	161	328	149 (till July)
Outflow	239	135	206	93 (till July)
Balance	237	259	410	479

3.0 Report of Expenditure and Balance to AfE for WCR Computation

Rajaraman explained the formula adopted by AfE taking into account the ratio of fund balance known as Working Capital Ratio (WCR). This is basically the balance remaining divided by the expenses for the previous year. When checklists are processed and USD funds are transferred to India, that is considered as a funding event and the amount will be added to the expenses and will come out of the balance. However for funds received in INR earlier only when actual expenses are incurred was that treated as a funding event. We are changing it so that just like USD checklists, we will also do an INR funding allocation during this meeting and that will be treated as the funding event and the amount will be added to the expenses and come out of the balance.

4.0 Allocations of Approved Budgets after prioritising items of expenditure

After considering the classification of expenditure items as Essential and Non essential presented by Bhaskar it was decided that in 2022-23 the projects could spend upto 75 per cent of their approved budgets and for any expenditure above the same they could spend upto a hundred percent of the funds raised by themselves for their projects.

While allocations were discussed Rajaraman mentioned that funds for Administration used to be below Rs 2,00,000 and largely funded by interest received from Bank Account and donations from volunteers. However, the amount of interest is likely to go up substantially since Amazon had donated the full amount upfront. Bringing in Sevanthi will add 1.2 Lakhs to the admin expenses but that should still be comfortable to manage. A suggestion was made to equip the Asha Chennai office with quality audio-visual equipment to facilitate presentations, smooth online meetings, webinars and, broadcasts. This will be considered.

We will make the following small allocations and close these projects in 2021-22. These were agreed unanimously.

- We had allocated Rs 1 Lakh towards Covid relief. This wasn't required fully and we are left with a small balance. We will change the allocation to Rs 83,526 and bring the balance to zero.
- We had spent Rs 64,670 more for the Amazon Computer Support programme over and about the 10.25 Lakhs provided by Amazon. We will make this allocation from our buffer and bring its balance to zero.

Regarding INR allocations and USD checklists, we made these broad decisions.

1. Funding for Amazon Learn and Explore will be exactly what was received from them in INR.
2. Funding for Admin will be Rs 3 Lakhs from INR.
3. Funding for Teacher Excursion (treated as part of Admin) which was conducted in May will be Rs 2 Lakhs from our INR funds. Note that donations in excess of this amount has already been received for this from various donors.
4. Funding for the rest of the projects will be from our USD balances at AfE US. We will bring funds for 90% of the proposal amount for each of the projects. This is likely to be a little higher than what is spent given that we are restricting the stewards to spend 75% plus donations received on the projects. The reason for this is that we are running close to zero balance at Varanasi. Given that every year we bring the funds in August, we did not want to come close to zero by this time in the upcoming years.
5. Funding of Project Explore (described below) for Rs 5 Lakhs and Project Arogyam to run at the current levels for the next year were approved in principle.

Bhaskar will put up an online poll specifying the exact amounts for all the projects especially those mentioned in points 4 and 5 above.

4.1 Project Explore

With our enhanced funding Asha Chennai will be able to expand into new geographies.

Komalavalli and Madan Sundarman, both volunteers of Asha, have proposed that Asha Chennai support village panchayat schools in Tiruvarur district and Semmanchery in OMR Chennai. There is also interest in Amazon for working with us in Semmanchery. Rajaraman stated that an initial allocation of Rs 5 lakhs may be necessary to test the waters in this area and see if we can really get a proper project moving in these new areas. A proposal giving details would be put up for online poll for approval shortly

4.2 Project Arogyam

Project Arogyam is supporting nutrition for disadvantaged children at 6 villages for now. It was considered essential to continue Project Arogyam, started during Covid. A project proposal seeking funds for this will be put up for approval through online poll.

5.0 Update on Amazon Explore and Class Chats

Rajaram explained the procedures followed by Amazon for their Explore and Class Chat initiatives. For explore 5 of our CS trainers have already started travelling to a broad set of schools to give a flavour of computer science to children. In Class chats Amazon Executives interact with school children (about 30 to 50 in one school as a time). We have already conducted more than 5 of these and we are conducting one a week.

A suggestion was made to consider if arrangements could be made for a group of interested volunteers to make a virtual site visit or hold similar class chat with our school children. The various project stewards will look into this.

6.0 RTC at Poondi and Kannigaiper

Rajaraman stated that RTCs at Poondi and Kannigaiper had been inaugurated formally and were now up and running. The next RTC would be Kayathar under the Pearl Project.

7.0 Debriefing on visit to Bengaluru

Rajaraman as the representative of Asha was invited to Bengaluru to interact with the officials from Amazon worldwide in charge of their Amazon In The Community programs (under which we are also receiving funding). Rajaram got to meet most of the people from Amazon India who deal with their CSR initiatives. He also narrated details of his interactions with other NGOs and some Edu companies who had been invited for this event as well. There was a potential for using Asha Kanini software by other NGOs as well.

Postscript

With reference to items discussed as mentioned in the above minutes section 4, online polls for Project Arogyam, Project Explore, US Transfers and INR Allocations were emailed on 15th August and approved unanimously by 13 volunteers. Details are as follows.

Description	Project / Expense Item	Amount
Project Arogyam (new proposal)		Rs 7.54 Lakhs
Project Explore (new proposal)		Rs 5.00 Lakhs

Funds from US Buffer	Asha Scholarship	Rs 2,154,600
	Manigal (both Locations)	Rs 1,125,900
	Poorna Vidya	Rs 12,59,820
	Project Explore	Rs 5,00,000
	Project Right Start	Rs 2,50,000
	Project Sangamam	Rs 73,98,450
	Project Pearl	Rs 19,86,822
	Asha Kanini	Rs 18,18,004
	Project Thulasi	Rs 25, 96 590
Project Arogyam	Rs 6,78,600	
Funds From Rupee Account	Admin	Rs 3,00,000
	Teacher Excursion	Rs 2,00,000
	Amazon Learn & Explore	Rs 11,120,250

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