

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 2nd Oct, 2022

Minutes of the Inperson and Online meeting held via GoogleMeet on Sunday 2nd October 2022 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

1. Kalyan
2. Komalavalli (online)
3. Madan
4. Paripoornam
5. Rajaraman
6. Shiva
7. Sriram (online)
8. Sujatha
9. Sundaram R (online)
10. Usha Rao (online)
11. Venkat (online)
12. Stalin Anbazhagan (From Asha Friends)

0. Ratification

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2022 were ratified unanimously. Also ratified the inclusion of Komalavalli as present during the meeting.

1. Staff Matters

• Loans

Rajaraman stated that a senior teacher from Sangamam had applied for a loan for house repair of Rs 50,000. Although she had an outstanding of Rs 10,000 it was decided to grant a loan of Rs 50000 applying the usual terms and conditions.

• Resignations

It was intimated that Muthu our experienced and long serving Systems Administrator had resigned. The meeting recorded its appreciation for his long, diligent and loyal service and wished him success in his new job.

Regarding filling up his position, considering the functions Muthu carried out, it is felt that the work of keeping the computers in good repair can be handled by Anand in the case of Sangamam and by CS Trainers themselves and by outsourcing. However the maintenance of data relating to teachers, computers and laptops developing internal procedures related to such activities etc, it is felt can be handled by a suitably qualified MSW graduate or equivalent who can also handle all other work connected with report writing, interfacing with major donors, overall coordination of all back office administration. Rajaraman stated that he would pursue this further.

• Hiring and Appointments

Rajaraman reported that the pace of hiring of teachers is satisfactory and training and onboarding too are being arranged accordingly. One or two freshly appointed teachers have resigned and action is in hand to fill the vacancies.

2. Accounting and Audit Updates

Rajaraman reported that Audit for FY 2021-22 was completed by our Auditors Bhupathy and Co by 22nd September. Our accounting team from Varanasi around the 10th of the month suddenly told us that they have to submit the returns by the end of the month and that they needed our audit report by the 20th. We managed to rush things and get it done in time.

3. Scholarship Update

Venkataraman could not be present. However he had sent a note stating that 30 new students have been selected to scholarship program 2022-23, As at present there are 100 students in Scholarship Programme. 77 students have been paid first installment of scholarship.

4. Amazon Projects Update

The progress is more than satisfactory with 90 schools covered under Learn and under Explore CS Trainers are panning out and conducting computer classes. Rajaraman promised to circulate a [video](#) presentation produced by Amazon. Rajaraman and Venkat had a meeting with the Chennai Amazon folks. They are interested in finding volunteering opportunities for their staff. There may be an opportunity for us to use their abilities in our software development, content development and training areas.

5. RTC at Kayatar (Pearl Project) IIT M funding

Although there are some hitches it is hoped to inaugurate RTC Kayatar in about ten days. The advantage for this centre was the presence of a Govt, Higher Secondary School with a large student strength as well as several other high and higher secondary schools in the vicinity. Rajaraman stated that opening of fresh RTCs would be predicated on the commitments for funding under the aegis of IIT M

6. Training

English Training Sundaram stated that Spoken English Classes are being held by Mentors and fortnightly Assignments are sent out. Participation in both has shown improvement. In terms of acquiring English language skills the progress of an average Asha teacher appears slow. Nevertheless these inputs are having an impact.

Karadipath Method This as mentioned in the previous meeting is an Activity Based programme for Teaching English to those whose mother tongue was not English. This is targeted to teach Classes up to IV. Rajaraman Stated that Licence has been contracted to cover 5 schools for using its pedagogic methods to teach English at primary levels. They are permitting us to cover an additional 5 schools without extra licensing fees as well. Karadaipath Trainers trained Asha Teachers on Sept 26th. They have also supplied necessary content. Karadipath trainers would be conducting periodic reviews. A close watch would be kept to learn from this launch.

Maths Training Training of Asha Teachers by Mrs Meena Suresh has been scheduled for Sangamam, Pearl and Thulasi projects in October'22.

Science Training Training of Asha Teachers based on simple Science experiments by Purva Bhattar is scheduled to be held for teachers in Thulasi and Pearl Projects this month.

CS Training Venkat stated that the training in [Code.org](https://code.org) was being conducted by himself, Sujatha and Krishnan (USA) regularly. Rajaraman stated that Amazon was organising a two day training for master trainers by [Code.org](https://code.org) in Bangalore and it was proposed to depute five computer teachers to attend this programme. An intense 3 day CS Programme will also be held for Asha Teachers in Tiruvallur in late December'22.

7. Project Explore Semmancheri and Tiruvarur

Madan stated that he would welcome help to contact more local influencers to take forward the idea in respect of Semmancheri. Komalavali stated that she was in the process of identifying teachers to start activities in Tiruvarur.

8. Update on IIT Initiatives

Rajaraman stated that further funding for Asha Kanini was still uncertain. There had been no further progress in the proposal made by NSE for associating Asha Chennai in national Assessment project.

Rajaraman mentioned that Science Books in Tamil translated by Prof Srinivasa Chakravarthy at IIT M are available and project stewards could explore the possibility of buying them for the libraries .

9. Campaign for Deepavali and Year End Fund raising

Rajaraman stated that we should mount a concerted effort to get foreign individual donations during the last quarter since the tax year in the US UK etc is the calendar year. We should update our flyers, youtube videos and send messages to our friends circle. Venkataraman was sending reports and reminders to those who are in our donor list.

Rajaraman explained the advantages and disadvantages of donating from abroad through Eventurbo and GiveIndia. Eventurbo charges a fee while GiveIndia adds a bit of its own contribution while transferring the fund to Asha. However, GiveIndia appears to have been used by some for crowd funding.

He narrated the difficulties in operating the Asha South India Account since only Asha Chennai and Asha India had all the clearances for accepting foreign donations as well as Asha India .

10. Excursion to Tiruvananthapuram

Venkat stated that the excursion for Asha teachers and their minor children, volunteers and mentors is scheduled from 26th December leaving Chennai and return on 30th December morning. Train tickets for the travel and hotel/hostel accommodation have been tied up. He added that there had been an overwhelming response for this excursion.