

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 5th March, 2023

Minutes of the meeting held via GoogleMeet and in person on Sunday 5 March 2023 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

- Kasturi online
- Komalavalli
- Paripooranam online
- Rajaraman
- Shiva
- Sriram Online
- Sujatha
- Sundaram online
- Usha Bhaskar online
- Usha Rao online
- Venkat
- Venkataraman online
- Vidhya Arun (New Volunteer)

0. Ratification of the minutes

The record of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2023 was ratified unanimously with the amendment that the loan granted to Rajatalab Teacher was for marriage.

1. Staff Matters

a) Loans

Rajaraman's proposal for the grant of loans of Rs 50,000 each to 3 (three) teachers all from Sangamam for the purchase of vehicles was unanimously approved.

It was reported that one of the teachers who had to leave suddenly had an outstanding loan. Suitable steps are being contemplated to recover. Steps to avoid such instances in the future were also discussed. We are con

b) Changes

Sandeep who had recently joined as Admin Officer, not being a suitable fit, has left. Rajaraman stated that it was necessary to be on the lookout for a person for this critical role in the establishment.

2. a) Asha Trust Annual Conference Debriefing

Rajaraman and Komalavalli attended the conference on behalf of the Chennai chapter. It was well attended, particularly from the UP and Northeast. Komalavalli observed, compared to the activities of the other chapters, the activities of Asha Chennai are in a distinct class of their own since the latter encompass a lot many aspects of education delivered at the grassroots level.

2. b) Updates from Sangamam Rajatalab

Komalavalli described their visit to nine schools that are supported by Asha Chennai. They were particularly impressive as far as infrastructure went. Even in language learning and other skills the children in these schools were notably doing well. Of course, schools slightly away and in the interior weren't so impressive.

3. Presentation Made at the Asha Trust Conference

Rajaraman made a slide presentation of what he had presented at the conference. He stated that the presentation this time was not a mere laundry list of what we do at Asha Chennai but threw up the ideas that are and should drive Asha. It was very well received and appreciated by Sandeep Pandey, the founder of Asha and Magsaysay Award winner, and others present at the conference and set in motion a vigorous discussion. Komalavalli spoke of the large participation from the North East. Coming to know that Asha Chennai is also supporting schools in UP particularly in devising and teaching computer science curriculum, other projects/chapters from Maharashtra (Beed District), Mumbai chapter, Manipur, and Mirzapur (UP) expressed keenness to be supported/guided by Asha Chennai.

4. Updates on Financials.

Rajaraman presented the details of funding by [Source and Balances](#) by Location covering [April'22 to March'23](#). Figures are tentative as the FY 22-23 had not ended Projectwise figures showing Balances carried forward, inflow, outflow, allocations, and closing balances, including the figures of the Buffer Funds were detailed. He stated that Asha Chennai would have a comfortable balance at the end of FY23/24 but also considerable funds due from US Asha Trust would be credited

5. Project Proposals for Amazon

Rajaraman shared the [proposals](#) being submitted to Amazon for FY23-24 which set out in elaborate details Fund Requirements of Rs 2.07 crores not only under LEARN and EXPLORE of Amazon but also Teacher Training for Government teachers.

- LEARN has been formulated to cover 100 Schools covering 7500 children at an outlay of Rs 12,320,000.
- EXPLORE would cover CS Trainers at 10 blocks with 30 schools per trainer and 100 students in 6th to 9th Standards per school at an outlay of Rs 3,660,000.
- Additionally, Asha Chennai based on the interest shown by the Education Dept of the TN has proposed a scheme for CS training of Government Teachers at an outlay of Rs 4,750,000.

Interest has been expressed to develop and publish CS Training Curriculum and manual for Government teachers

All the above proposals were unanimously approved.

6. Updates on RTC

Venkat stated RTCs at Kanakammal Chathiram, Seethanjeri, Poondi and Kayathar were running well in general but attendance of students in some are lower than expected. Venkat recalled the excellent presentations made by the outgoing RTC 2nd Semester batch students at IIT Research Centre on February 8th. A new RTC centre was opened in Kazhugumalai in Pearl Project. Rajaraman drew the attention of the volunteers present to the report on RTC he had circulated. The possibility of having an RTC at Kovilpatti was being explored.

It was generally observed that the pace of opening new RTCs is constrained by difficulty in finding suitable accommodation and also distances from schools as the coaching in these centres are after school hours. Therefore the opening of new RTCs may be limited to four or five in a year.

7. Project Proposal Sugadharam Toilet Construction.

A proposal to construct badly needed toilets and also undertake repairs of toilets in the following schools at a cost of Rs 23.5 lakhs was unanimously approved.

New toilets

PUMs Manjakuppam

PUMs Athipattu

PUMS Karadikulam

PUMS Kayathar South

PUMs Gangavaram

Repairs

PUPs Kalakoladai

PUPs Palaiyanur

PUPs Thomur

PUPs Allikurichi

PUMs Panikkarkulam

PUPs Salaiputhur

PUPs Karadikulam colony

8. Project Proposal Arogyam

Currently Arugyam is functioning at 6 villages (3 in Thiruvallur and 3 in Thoothukudi/Thirunelveli). The new proposal is to continue it in these villages and to expand it to 6 more villages in Thiruvallur and 3 more in Thoothukudi. The proposal to provide nutrition to children throughout the year in these schools/villages at a cost of Rs 16,54,000 was accepted unanimously.

9. a) Proposal For Extension to Sangamam Office

Rajaraman recalled earlier discussions in our monthly meeting proposals to augment office/meeting space at the Tiruvallur office functioning at our field coordinator Srinivasan's residence at a total estimated cost of Rs 10.5 lakhs , out of which Rs 6.5 lakhs will be for creating extra room space and the rest for additional toilets. Approval in principle was unanimously given.

9. b) Provision of a set of Uniforms in FY 2023-24

Rajaraman recalled that the last time we provided a set of uniforms to children was more than four years ago. It is heart-rending to see some children preserving and wearing the same uniform although they have outgrown the sizes they wore then. Rajaraman said that he would put forward a proposal for approval of expenditure for the same.

10 .Written Assessments

Rajaraman said that written assessments were scheduled from February 21st and hope to be completed in a few days. Correction and grading of the same would be done by the teachers from Sangamam and Pearl projects from the middle of March and are expected to be completed by the first week of April. It was decided to grant extra salary of Rs 500 per day for those teachers who do the correction work on holidays. This will be necessary for completing the work in time.

11. Right Start 2023

Right Start is scheduled from May 8th to 12th at IIT M campus. Meena Suresh, Purva Bhattar, and Karadipath have confirmed their participation in holding training/presentation sessions. Time permitting a session on English Training may also be on the anvil. Project stewards should ensure all arrangements are made for the transport/accommodation and attendance of Asha Teachers. They should coordinate with Rajaraman and whomsoever he designates as the volunteer/field coordinator in charge for any specific task in organising this annual event. They should be alert to the instructions/guidelines issued through the WhatsApp Group.