

Meeting minutes for Asha Chennai on 9th May, 2021

Minutes of the meeting held via google Meet on Sunday the 9, May 2021 at 9.30 AM

Following were logged in and participated

Anitha

Aruna Sankaranarayanan

Bhaskar

Kasturi Easwaran

Madan Sudarman

Paripoornam

Rajaraman Krishnan

Ramakrishnan

Sriram VS

Sujatha Raman

Sundaram R

Venkataraman

Venkat Nataraj

Usha Bhaskar

0. Ratification

The minutes of the Meeting held on 11th April 2021 on Google Meet were ratified unanimously

1, Updates on Account Status

Ramakrishnan updated about the status of various new registrations required.

- a. Authorisation under Sec 80G (Donations) needs to be renewed for all organisations due to recent government orders. He stated that necessary applications had been made to the authorities and it was expected that renewal would be available soon enabling domestic donors to claim exemption.
- b. There is new requirement for registration with the from ministry of Corporate Affairs to receive CSR funds. We have to apply for this and it is hoped that this would also be available soon.
- c. As for opening FCRA Account the same has been done by Varanasi at SBI New Delhi as required under new regulations. However the approval from Ministry of Home Affairs is still pending that will permit us to receive funds into this account.

2. Updates on Poorna Vidhya and ACSYS Funding.

Sriram informed that under Project Poorna Vidya Rs 6.8 Lakhs has been the actual expenditure against the budgeted figure of Rs 9.7 Lakhs during FY 20-21. Support from ACSYS of Rs 5. Lakhs has been received on 1st March '21 with the stipulation that it should be utilised by December'21. Sriram stated that ACSYS wanted a third party audit to be carried out by AuxoHub which had been agreed to. Incidentally it was felt that being in touch with agencies like AuxoHub, Ishwar Foundation and Chrysalis which act as intermediaries between Donor Company and Donee NGOs would be useful to reach out to potential corporate donors.

3. Updates on Asha Kanini and Pravartak funding.

Rajaraman mentioned that Asha Kanini project with Pravartak has been launched on 1st April 2021 and the salaries of software staff, lead teachers, field Coordinator etc are now being paid by Pravartak. Since Pravartak treats all who they employ as human resources as Consultants there is an issue regarding Income tax deduction at source (TDS). While TDS for April is being compensated as one time measure by Asha Chennai Funds, it is proposed to cover the TDS in the salary hike proposed. However it was left to the individual recipient of the consultation fee (salary) to file IT returns and claim refund as the case may be.

4. Project Financials

The overall picture of project wise financials for 2020-21 was presented by Venkatraman and Rajaraman. The original budget approved in September'20, eligibility for funds under the formula (budget approved in Sep,20 plus 50% of project specific donations received) were compared with actual expenses of April 2020 to March 2021. It was gratifying to observe that the tighter norms were indeed adhered to by all project stewards. This has resulted in a favourable starting balance at the start of the year 21-22. Against the original budget of Rs 2.623 Crores the actual expenditure is estimated to be only Rs 1.362 Crores (Expenditure figures are unaudited). This was achieved without disturbing the staff strength and their current salaries while maintaining the focus on delivery of Education by running mini schools.

5. Key Salaries

After considerable discussion It was unanimously approved to grant increased salaries (per mensem) commencing from 1 June 2021 as below. Additional amounts shown with Pravartak in parentheses relate to increases that will hold good only during the execution of the Pravartak Project. For the Pravartak employees the increased salary will commence on May 1st.

- Sangamam/Asha Kanini Co-ordinator -- Rs 28000 + 3000 (Pravartak)
- Asha Kanini System Engineer -- Rs 26000+ 3000 (Pravartak)
- Asha Kanini Software Engineer 1 -- Rs 24000 + 2000 (Pravartak)
- Asha Kanini Software Engineer 2 -- Rs 25000 + 2000 (Pravartak)
- 2 Asha Kanini Lead Teachers (Content Developers) -- Lead Teacher Salary + 1500 (Pravartak)
- (Yet to be named) Asha Kanini Trainers -- Senior Computer Teacher Salary + 1500 (Pravartak) + Extra Conveyance.
- Accountant Admin & Sangamam -- Rs 18000
- Coordinator Scholarship & Poorna Vidhya & Sangamam -- Rs 9000
- Coordinator Pearl -- Rs 16000
- Coordinator Thulasi -- Rs 8000

6. Asha Kanini

Rajaram presented an addendum to the proposal already approved for Asha Kanini that is funded through Pravartak during the meeting held on 11th April '21. The addendum covers expenditure remaining items of work in Asha after transferring those that can be covered under Pravartak like Rent, payment for Mapping work by teachers, computer data related expenses including those at Olcott Memorial school. Actuals last year was Rs 7.02 lakhs. A total budget expenditure of Rs 4,30,000 was approved unanimously.

7. Thulasi Budget Proposal Review and Vote

Paripoornam presented Thulasi Project Budget proposal involving an outlay of Rs 24,68,200 Apart from salaries there were items of expenditure on Educational Materials (item 6 Rs1,30,000), Sports Materials (item 7 Rs 35000), other materials for schools like Mats, drinking water facility (Item 8 Rs 20,000), Blackboard refurbishing (item 11 Rs 40,000), and school day Celebrations (Item 16 Rs 80,000) included in the proposal . Venkat pointed out that these were common across projects and therefore per unit estimated costs could be uniform which can be the basis at arriving at the budget depending upon the number of schools covered and or number of children proposed to be catered for/ The proposal did not include any provision for excursion. Although it is not possible to imagine going on an excursion now or for many months in the foreseeable future a token provision could be made in all the projects as this activity helped to strengthen the esprit de corps of Asha Teachers.

The budget proposal of Project Thulasi with the exception of items 6,7,8,11,16 and 25 were passed unanimously.

8. Sangamam Project Budget proposal and vote

Venkat presented the Budget proposals for Sangamam Project . Observations mentioned regarding Education materials etc were made in this case too as was done in Item 7 (of the agenda).

The proposal was unanimously approved barring Items 7 (Rs 4,00,000 for stationery materials) Item 8 (Rs 1,72,500 for Education Materials), Item 9 (Rs 1,72,500 for Sports Materials), Item 12 (Rs 60,000 for Replacement Mats) Item 13 (Rs 60,000 for Blackboard Repair and Repainting) Item 14 (Rs 2,10,000 for school Day Celebrations) and Item 15 (Rs 96,000 for Teachers' Uniforms).

9. Asha Scholarship Budget Proposal and Vote

Due to paucity of time this item was deferred to the next meeting to be considered along with Project Pearl and Project Manigal

10. Training For May'2021

Supplanting the usually held Training under the title Right Start in IIT Madras during summer holidays, this year online training is being organised for Maths, Science and English. Meena Suresh has kindly consented to hold maths sessions of two hours each for three days and Poorva Bhattar for science (May 12-14) similarly. Venkat stated that English Training is being organised with Mentors as tutors for an intense revision for a duration of two hours each on two days. Since some of our Mentors are in the US timings and schedule are being worked out to be held in the last week of May stretching in some cases to the First week of June.

11. ARC Polls

Re WCR Bhaskar recalled that during the Meeting held in March'21 this year the ARC Proposal to amend the formula of Roll Back of funds based on Working Capital Ratio was discussed in detail. Now the voting phase of this poll has begun. As this had been discussed threadbare in an earlier meeting consistent with the earlier view It was unanimously decided to vote YES .

Re WHO IS A VOLUNTEER Bhaskar referred to the earlier discussions and stated how Asha Chennai took the view the definitions proposed had not taken into account Chapter level considerations. Bhaskar stated that what ARC now proposed is a vote on whether Asha for Education should at all work out a definition. After discussion it was unanimously resolved NO to the proposal to work out a Ashawide definition "who is a volunteer".

12. Covid Relief Work

Bhaskar introduced the topic by posing the question if Asha Chennai should take some initiative since the impact of the second wave of Covid seems to be far more devastating. At present there werent any specific Covid related initiatives in consideration. Ramakrishnan presented the work being planned at Rajatalab which may be receiving funding from AfE. However because of the delay in FCRA approval, there may not be immediate funds to execute this now. After discussion it was resolved to grant in-principle approval to release up to Rs.5 lakhs temporarily to Rajatalab. This will be conditional on a promise of funds from Asha Austin or AfE central funds.

