

Meeting minutes for Asha Chennai on 5 th Dec, 2021

Minutes of the meeting held via google Meet on Sunday 5 th December 2021 at 9.30 AM

Following were logged in and participated as indicated:

1. Anitha (very Briefly)
2. Bhaskar
3. Kasturi
4. Paripoornam
5. Rajaraman Krishnan
6. Ramakrishnan
7. Sundaram R
8. Venkataraman
9. Venkat Nataraj
10. Usha Bhaskar

0. Ratifications

- 0.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th October , 2021 via Google meet were ratified. and
- 0.2 Also ratified was the result of ARC Poll held on 13th November'21 for amendment of voting pattern and
- 0.3 the result of poll dated 26th November'21 to grant special loan, (emergency healthcare) to a Sangamam teacher of Rs 95000

1. Update on Audit, 80 G. FCRA

Ramakrishnan stated that Audit FY20-21 is completed and queries raised have been satisfactorily answered. Certain observations call for implementation of some minor procedural changes on our systems. On Sec 80 G there has been no progress , however it is learnt that our current authorisation would be valid till 21-22. Opening of Account in SBI New Delhi branch has been done by Varanasi to comply with FCRA.

Our application to delete and add names as authorised signatory in our HDFC Bank Accounts has been accepted.

2. The Way Forward: Internal Systems and Procedures

The steps taken to streamline and align the processes of accounts with administrative actions/decisions as outlined by Ramakrishnan were noted. As a part of this process It was decided to post in the core group the relevant information of administrative actions/events like appointments, resignations of staff impinging on the Payroll accounting. Regarding Donations all volunteers were requested to insist on their friends and contacts who donate to give details of PAN numbers , Name, mobile number, Address, the name of Asha Project. Volunteers were requested to coordinate with Rajaraman and Venkataraman for issuance of receipts. Ramakrishnan promised to circulate a check list of items that, if followed, would reduce or eliminate audit queries.

3. Updates on Visit to Varanasi and Rajatalab

Rajaraman and Ramakrishnan gave an account of their trip and interaction with Suresh Rathore and their visits to Schools with which Asha Chennai is involved. The schools were impressive, clean , hygienic and well furnished and the children well turned out. The children displayed good familiarity with the use of computers. It appeared that schools in UP functioned during the shutdown with the knowledge of authorities in some places. They also visited Nandalal's Asha Samajik Vidyalaya. They met Vallabh, the Executive of AFE India and discussed matters of mutual interest. .

4. Staff Matters

- a. Salary of T. Dinakaran Coordinator Thulasi Tiruvannamalai

It was decided to fix his salary at Rs 8000 Per Month. In addition he will be allowed reimbursement of Petrol expenses. He would be using the scooter available at Thulasi project. All present voted unanimously for fixing the emoluments as above,

- b) Loans Two Teachers in Sangamam and One Teacher in Pearl had applied for Loans of Rs 50,000 each for house repairs under the usual terms and conditions. All present voted unanimously in favour of this proposal. One Teacher from Pearl applied for an education loan of Rs 50,000. 7 members voted in favour and two abstained.

5. Funding for Hariksha Trust

Bhaskar explained the dire straits in which Hariksha Trust finds itself for the last three years when their FCRA donations were frozen due to new regulations. The disabled children are without care now. Ravi and Sujatha who are managing this activity sincerely for several years need help. In the past Asha Chennai had lent a helping hand as a temporary measure. The annual budget would be around Rs 3.5 Lakhs. The situation in which Hariksha Trust finds itself evokes sympathy. However, it was felt on assessment that it would be a long term commitment and it would be difficult for Asha Chennai to spread its resources thin across projects which are not aligned to its core activities.

6. Funding for Project Library From Asha Boston

Recalling our proposal made to Asha Boston for funding of 11 Libraries 7 old and 4 new for a budget of Rs 6 Lakhs Bhaskar announced that Asha Boston had since granted only Rs 4.5 Lakhs for the 7 Existing libraries (2 in Thulasi, 4 in Pearl and 1 in Sangamam Projects)

It was generally agreed , over time we should grow these Libraries into Activity Centres combining some features of mini schools particularly like carrying out science experiments , craft and art work , dance and music.

7. Updates on Nutrition Project Arogyam

As decided in the earlier meeting, the Nutrition project will be continued in places taking into account factors like the logistics, feasibility, the local conditions of sustenance and of course the availability of funds for this project. As of now Old Thirupachur, Anna Nagar and Thozhudhavakkam in Sangamam, Nagalapuram, Athikinaru, , Koovachpetti in Pearl have been chosen to continue the scheme.

8. Updates on Amazon , PayTm and Mahindra

Rajaraman informed that Amazon had already granted Rs 10.25 Lakhs for purchase of Laptops. He also added that we would submit a formal proposal to Amazon for FY 22 by this month's end as the prospects of receiving a grant are bright. The PayTM opportunity did not materialize. We are still trying to reach Mahindra CSR.

We are also in touch with Muthoot Finance and expect funds for materials for schools from them. Recently Rotary Thiruvallur did some flood relief work in remote areas with funding from Muthoot and Rajaram was honoured as representative of Asha and we met Muthoot finance people as well.

9.Updating on Fundraising Campaign in December '21

Rajaraman drew attention to the launching of a new look website, updated youtube videos and updated Event turbo pages . Venkat stated that Asha Chennai has received Rs 30,000 from Microsoft Giving Program. Work is on to improve Facebook and Instagram presence. Unfortunately Amrita, a Brand Manager by profession who had promised to help out has not been able to do so due to some unavoidable reasons. We are still hoping to launch a year-end facebook campaign.

10. Updates for Asha Kanini

Rajaraman announced the launch of the Android version of Asha Kanini. There are a few glitches which will be overcome shortly and if done, Asha Kanini will be made available in Google Play Store thereafter.

Meanwhile active steps have been taken to form a core team of Asha Kanini Trainers who will be in the vanguard to spread the use of Asha Kanini Application in all the Schools of Tiruvallur. They are already visiting the Schools establishing connections on their own using the help of teachers who already know about Asha. Efforts to get government approval for the use of Asha Kanini as a part of the pedagogy in all the government schools is continuing. Hiring of new recruits to replace the Computer teachers who have been deployed for spearheading the Asha Kanni implementation drive is also proceeding apace.

11 . Updates on Establishment of RTCs (Rural Technology Centres)

Recalling earlier discussion on the establishment of Rural Technology Centres, Rajaraman admitted that there has been slow progress from the side of Pravartak.. However, that will not deter Asha Chennai from launching the RTCs in 2 places as prototype centres in Seethanjeri and Kanakammal Sathiram in Tiruvallur District using our own resources., human, hardware, software and finance from 1st January. Venkat stated that curriculum has been worked out which apart from teaching use of general applications like OpenOffice etc will also include programming using material from code.org and Scratch.

12. An appreciation of Development of Regular Schools Opening .

Government Schools reopened on 1st November. Minischool teachers of Asha Chennai had worked with great dedication in running small neighbourhood schools, most often in their own residences for an average of about 30 to 40 students. As our teachers go back to the schools, it becomes very clear that the children who attended our mini-schools fare a lot better than those who did not. Many of the Asha teachers of minischools have expressed their willingness to conduct the same after the regular school hours. While encouraging such initiatives, project stewards should keep a close and continuous watch on their performance.

13. Training of Asha Teachers on Computer, English and Maths.

Rajaraman announced the scheduling of Computer training for three days at the end of the month on 27, 28 and 29th December where existing computer teachers and wannabe computer teachers, and also new recruits from all projects should participate. He requested Project Stewards to arrange to take necessary action.

Venkat stated that he would undertake a review of Teaching English shortly.