

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 12th, Oct 2025

ASHA CHENNAI CHAPTER MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING HELD ON Sunday 12th October 2025

Following were present

Akshay Menon

Kalyan

Komalavalli

Paripoornam

Rajaraman

Sriram

Sundaram

Usha Bhaskar

0. Ratification of the minutes of the meeting held on 7/9/25

Minutes of the meeting held on 7/09/2025 were ratified unanimously.

1. Routine Staff Matters Loans. Key staff exit/hiring.

Three loan applications were approved for Sangamam Project staff for the grant of a loan of Rs 60,000 each (2 for vehicles and 1 for personal reasons terms and conditions apply). Three more loans were approved for the Pearl project as well (1 for vehicle and 2 for personal reasons).

Since one senior software engineer has left and another is about to leave, two interns trained in Fullstack development have been appointed.

Sriram presented his case for reviewing and revising the pay of Ajay Kumar in Rajatalab project in view of his seniority and activities and the responsibilities shouldered by him. The proposal was unanimously agreed to and it was decided to revise Ajay Kumar's pay upwards by Rs 1000 from 1st Oct 2025.

2. Asha India Conference. December 26 (Friday) to 28 (Sunday)

- Venue.

Pros and cons of having the conference in Chennai city or in Tiruvallur were discussed. The consensus that emerged was in favour of holding it in Tiruvallur.

Further enquiry about a new Hall with a higher seating capacity which reportedly had come up would be made. Komalavalli stated that provision of clean hygienic toilet facility should be a factor in deciding the hall to be rented. .

- Assistance with planning and organising

Rajaraman stated that volunteers and coordinators should pitch in substantially in organising and holding this conference and make it a great success. He said he would try to get Abishek from Pondicherry to help us since we might need Hindi knowing field organisers/foot soldiers during the conference. Komalavalli was specially requested to make herself available right through the event.

- Attendance.

Volunteers in the meeting expressed their willingness to attend even if it was held in Tiruvallur. Paripoornam stated that she would not be able to attend as she was already committed to attend a program of ecotourism. Efforts would also be made to bring teachers from different projects to attend the conference, although the dates coincide with Christmas vacation.

- Invited speakers

Several suggestions were made by Rajaraman and Sundaram. Rajaraman requested volunteers to suggest some more names so that they could be approached well ahead of the conference to finalise the detailed programme.

- Visit to RTCs.

Since schools may be closed conference attendees will be taken to our RTCs.

- Budget.

A separate budget proposal will be submitted for approval in due course.

3. Audit and other Accounting Updates.

- Asha SI and Asha Trust audit.

Audits had been completed for Asha South India Trust and was in its last leg for Asha Trust and will be wrapped up soon.

- Various FUCs.

Asha for Education is making it mandatory to issue Fund Utilisation certificates for the funds received from US. Project stewards should render the same to satisfy these requirements.

- FIA update.

This was discussed in the previous meeting. Amazon had sent money to Asha South India for providing funding support to Rajasthan based FIA (Foundation for Innovation and Action) and this money is being provided to them.

- Reimbursement of expenses

Rajaraman explained the difficulties in vouchering and accounting expenses incurred at project level in the manner in which expense reimbursements are being handled. He would soon call a meeting of the project stewards and coordinators in which Jhonsi and he would explain clearly what was expected to be done in preparing vouchers.

- Other observations from the Auditor.

Auditor as always expressed displeasure with the way in which we give loans (from Asha South India trust) to staff who are paid by Asha Trust and Pravartak. This will be resolved only when we get our own FCRA and funnel all salaries through a single entity (Asha South India Trust).

- 12A and 80G status

Approval for 12A extension has been received. Extension of 80G has been applied for. We are awaiting the approval.

- FCRA, EPF etc.

FCRA application is pending from our side. Bhaskar was not able to push this forward and Rajaram hopes to take this up in the next month. EPF application can also be effective only after FCRA is obtained and all salaries are paid from a single account.

4. Fund Raising Updates

- Amazon Updates.

Rajaraman informed that Amazon wanted to expand the number of trainers by 12 more to reach AI activities to more students. They had already sent the funds for expenditure to be incurred in 26-27.

- October (giving month at tech giants). Preparation for December.

Rajaraman appealed to all volunteers to massage their contacts in the US and other places as that was the donation season when companies had the habit of giving matching donations.

- Quarterly donor updates.

Some donation was expected from Trimble. Usha Bhaskar kindly volunteered to look after this task of corresponding with the donors and mailing them regularly to keep them in the circuit. This was earlier done by our volunteer Venkataraman.

- Presentation to IIT M Alumni in US

Rajaraman stated that he had scheduled a presentation in October to be made to the Alumni IIT M in the US

- Review of Spreadsheet to report progress on Donor Contacts

There was nothing special to report.

5. Status of Activities Related to the government.

- * Spark Program.

This programme by TN Government (details of which had been discussed in the previous meetings) was being launched vigorously. They had also brought out text books for CS class 6 and 7 so far. So far, the impact on ACE (where maximum impact was expected) has been minimal. Most of the schools are continuing with the ACE program.

- * ADW hostels bid

Rajaraman informed that Asha Chennai bid had cleared the next hurdle of program proposal approval in the sequential process adopted by the TN government. Next step will be the selection of L1 vendor based on the financials.

6. Some process improvements across projects.

- Teachers as software developers

Rajaraman outlined his intent and steps to introduce some of the teachers to software development and take their help. This will help improve the skills of the teachers, reduce the software development cost as well as improve the organization as a whole.

- Creating courses for RTCs and percolating those down to other programs.

The software development team has been involved in developing the courses for the RTCs. They work with a team of teachers to roll out the RTC courses which then percolate down to our other programs as well. Gomathy and Kumari are deeply engaged in this endeavour with help from Pushpaleela, a volunteer.

- Output Trackers and expectation from teachers.

We have already rolled out trackers for Explore, ACE and the computer teachers (in Sprint). We have developed similar trackers for the RTCs and the KaradiPath programs. These will also be rolled out shortly.

- Baseline and Endline assessments

In CS teaching the process of baseline/endline assessment had been launched using the Northstar toolkit for the RTC and the ACE programs.

7. Asset Management

- Laptops received from Donors.

There were about 2000 donated laptops and 300 purchased laptops. Among the donated laptops about 200 were unserviceable but by cannibalising parts more than a hundred laptops have been refurbished.

- Purchase of High End Laptops for Software development and RTC Leads

Rather than buy a Rs 40K laptop for every teacher/staff, we are these days buying fewer higher end laptops at around Rs 60K for key employees while the rest can use either their old laptops or the donated ones. Unanimous approval was given for this approach.

- Purchase of experimental hardware like 3D printers, Drones etc. for the RTCs

Rajaraman wanted a fund allocation for the purpose. A total expenditure of Rs 5 lakhs was approved which may cover purchase of accessories also for SPRINT machines. In the case of the latter it would be examined if such expenditure could be met from Amazon funds.

- Purchase of Accessories.

Covered under the previous sub item.

8. Review of Events

- Distribution of RTC certificates

Impressive functions were held in different projects to complete the distribution of RTC Certificates. RTCs close to each other were brought together and children were given the opportunity to present their work and for the parents also to see this. Good publicity was also organised by the coordinators.

- Mid-year training in Science and Maths.

Midyear training by Meena Suresh and Purva Bhattar were being conducted on schedule as discussed in the previous meeting.

- Teacher Excursions.

Teacher excursion to Coorg by Sangamam, Poorna Vidhya and Manigal projects and Thulasi and Asha Kanini staff excursion to Kodaikanal were conducted successfully.

9. Progress on Common items across projects

- Uniform distribution

More than 11000 children have been provided uniforms across all TN projects so far.

- Blackboard Painting

This was an ongoing process and project stewards were requested to monitor completion

- Mats Purchase

This too was an ongoing process and project stewards were requested to ensure completion to avoid fund allocated for this purpose remained unutilised.

- Stationery distribution

This has been completed in all projects.

10. Forthcoming Events

- Quarterly call with Asha India and Asha US.

This was scheduled for 18th October at 8.30 PM IST Rajaraman requested Chennai volunteers to attend the same.

- Oral Assessments

Rajaraman stated that he would hold meetings shortly to brief the lead teachers and assessors in various projects and assessments would start immediately thereafter.

- December Training in CS

There are two major training programs for teachers every year. One is Right Start in May every year and the other in December , the latter being devoted to CS Training. This is scheduled to take place in Tiruvallur from December 17 (Wednesday) to 19th (Friday). Volunteers were requested to attend at least one of the days. .

- Mexico [Code.org](#) conference

Our volunteer Venkat would be attending this conference in Mexico city taking place from 26 to 28 October on invitation.

- Asha India Conference in Chennai

This has been covered under item 2 of the agenda