

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 16 th February, 2020

Present: M/S Rajaram, Kasturi, Bhaskar, Venkat, Sriram, Saraswathi, Usha Bhaskar, Venkataraman, Arun, Paripoornam & Sukumar (who conducts Vedic maths classes)

Decisions are highlighted in blue.

Ms. Sujata Vijay & Mr. Venkat met the volunteers before the meeting. They currently run free spoken English classes for school children, college students and working professionals. They plan to develop an App for this purpose. They want to explore if they can work with Asha in this area. Few Asha Volunteers will visit their spoken English sessions to understand what they offer. We also invited them to visit some of Asha schools to get an idea of our project. Then we will decide if we can work together.

Srivani, a new volunteer, attended the meeting. She has agreed to start with English mentoring for our teachers and get involved in other projects later.

Minutes of Nov 2019 meeting was approved without any comment by all members

1. Loan applications – Following loans were unanimously approved - Rs 40,000 to Ramyaa and Rs 50,000 to Punitha. Loan of Rs 25,000 to Ezhilarasi was also unanimously approved with the condition that we will ask her to submit proof of fees for the course she is joining. If the fee is less than Rs 25,000, only amount equal to fee will be given as loan. Rs 6,000 will be given as loan to Srinivasan for purchase of a mobile phone. Loan application of Sangeetha was rejected as she has not completed one year of service.
2. Financials for 2019-20 – Financials as of date was presented. Rs 3.03 lacs is pending against the WAH project. Despite repeated follow up by Bhaskar, we don't have any response from Asha USA re this amount. We understand that all projects for which fund was raised through WAH, have been funded from USA. Hence it was agreed to move this amount to buffer.
3. Poorna Vidya – We have stopped support to N S Garden School because they don't cooperate with Asha at all. Instead we have started to support Thiruvanmiyur Kuppam School. We agreed to defer support to Anna School as it depends on our decision to support his school or not.
4. Thulasi - Prabhu, coordinator has resigned. Temporarily his work has been assigned to 2 teachers. We are finding it very difficult to recruit new teachers. At present Thulasi has about Rs 6 lacs surplus from donation given by Trimble. Venkat will guide Paripoornam on how to find avenues to use this surplus. If for some reason we are unable to use this surplus, we must inform Trimble as soon as possible, so that they don't default on their CSR obligations.
5. Manigal – Saraswathi wanted to replace the old laptop, which is not in good condition, with a new laptop. As this purchase will be made from funds allocated to Manigal there was no need for chapter approval.
6. Mr. Bala Batavia's proposal – Mr. Batavia, based in USA, reached out to Asha Chennai seeking our support (details have been shared with all members through various mails). Members were asked to vote on 3 options: (A) Agree to support his model as it is (B) Agree to support his model with some quid pro quo. (C) Decline to support his model. It was also pointed out that if we agree to support Mr. Batavia, one volunteer has to come forward to take complete charge of managing his project, including accounts as we can't leave the project to be managed by one paid employee. 7 volunteers voted to support his model with quid pro quo and 3 volunteers voted to decline support. Ms. Usha Bhaskar volunteered to Steward Mr. Batavia's project. Going with majority it was agreed to communicate to Mr. Batavia that we will support his model, provided he supports Asha through donation for say 20 computer teachers or support one project like Pearl or Poorna Vidya.
7. Computers donated by Glovis and Ford – Stewards were requested to review their request for computers using the following criterion: Select only schools in whom we have confidence that they will make good use of the computer. The schools must provide table, bench, power point, junction box etc. Schools must permit children to use the computers even when our computer teacher is not present. Stewards to review their list and send revised requisition to Rajaram & Ramakrishnan.
8. Written assessments – Written assessments will commence next week and Rajaram asked for volunteers for paper correction.
9. Asha Impressions – This event is planned at Thiruvallur on 25th April. Pearl & Thulasi projects were advised to organize this event at their project headquarters even if number of teams are less. End March is the deadline for submission. Right Start – To be planned by end May 2020. Suggestions are invited from volunteers to prepare agenda. Need to decide if we want to include Vedic Mathematics Proposals for 2020-21 – Stewards need to be ready with proposals for next year by April or May 2020.
10. Sangamam Rajatalab Updates – They are able to recruit good teachers. At present they have 3 teachers and 1 coordinator. They don't have any PCs, except laptops of teachers. We plan to send 30 PCs to them.
11. Pearl Updates – Umalakshmi is leaving as she is getting married. At present Murugan is being paid Rs 10,000 per month and his salary needs to be increased. Mr. Bhaskar proposed that his salary can be increased by Rs 3000 per month for the next 3 months. This proposal was unanimously approved.
12. Imprest account balances – Moorthy's imprest account balance is expected to be Rs 60,000 at the end of this financial year which will not be acceptable to the auditors. It was proposed to extend him a loan of Rs 60,000 with which he will reduce the imprest balance to zero. He will settle the loan within one year.

13. Rajaram presented a brief update on the trials with [Thinkster.com](https://www.thinkster.com) and ProGame. We are trialing the Maths education model of Thinkster at Manjakuppam. ProGame that provides a physical way to program using Scratch without a computer is being trialed at two schools in Thiruvallur: Vellathukottai and Kunnavalam. If these are successful we will possibly do these in a larger scale.

There was also a small discussion on what it would take for us to send our computer teachers to high or higher secondary schools. We agreed that we will certainly not be implementing the government curriculum. On a case by case basis we can look into sending our teachers to high /higher secondary school. We will not be following the government curriculum to coach them to take the board exams. We will only for now be able to implement a shortened version of our curriculum for classes 1 to 8.