Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 1st Sept, 2020

Minutes of the meeting held via Google Meet on Tuesday the 1st Sept 2020 at 4.30 pm.

The following were logged in and participated

- Bhaskar
- Bhuvaneswari Raman
- Kasturi Easwaran
- Paripoornam K
- Rajaraman Krishnan (Co-ordinator)
- Ramakrishnan
- Sriram VS
- Saraswathi P
- Sundaram R
- Venkataraman Muthukrishnan

Note: Decisions are highlighted in blue.

0. Ratification

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th August 2020 were ratified unanimously.

1. Teacher Salaries and Utilisation of Teachers during Covid

Rajaraman pointed out that Asha was retaining the full complement of Teachers paying their salaries despite a total school shut down in Tamilnadu. He stressed that it was necessary for project stewards to monitor the deployment of teachers in terms of engagement in productive work for at least six hours in a day. He outlined how teachers were being engaged in Sangamam by asking them to conduct Minischools, tasking them with mapping work for Kanini App and engaging them in preparing TLM and teaching materials. They were also being imparted intensive coaching in English, Maths and Computers. Even regular teachers were being trained in computer basics. Some of them were undergoing gender equity training.

In this context, it was observed that Project Manigal, for historical reasons, did not strictly adhere to the uniform codes evolved in the case of other projects both in terms of salary structure, leave accounting and deployment. After some discussion, it was decided that the salary structure of teachers both part time and full time in Manigal would be brought on par with others over a reasonable span of time. Saraswathi's recent report on how Manigal was striving to serve the recalcitrant Gypsy community children during the pandemic was appreciated. However if Manigal was to be an integral part of Asha Chennai, it was agreed that the codes of Asha Chennai relating to staff handling would have to be followed in all its important facets as early as possible.

The subject of monitoring utilisation of Teachers' time during the pandemic was discussed in detail. Bhaskar was requested to standardise report generation by teachers' themselves in Google Form to be implemented across projects. Bhaskar to coordinate with Muthu to implement this.

2. Minishools and WhatsApp Based Lessons

The relative merits of running MiniSchools and WhatsApp based lessons were broadly mentioned. .It was felt since Asha Chennai was mainly dealing with rural primary schools from poorer communities it was felt wherever feasible teachers should be encouraged to run Mini schools for the neighbourhood children.

3. Project Funding Consequent to Restricted Fund Flow

It was recalled that during the previous meeting it was decided to go with restrictions of 70 per cent of the (budget - expansionary and extravagant expenses) as the limit for the projects for the year 2020-21. Bhaskar worked on breaking up the "Extravagant/Expansion" related expenses and presented projectwise reworked statement comprising data on

- Current Teacher Salary with conveyance
- Current Other Salaries
- Essential Expenses (rent, data plan ,computer repair,training, assessments, scholarship etc)
- Non essential (extra salary, maats, edu/sports materials etc)
- Expansion/Extravagant (excursions, teacher excursion etc)

It was observed that the 70 percent limit as decided in the previous meeting was rather high and it was necessary to explore options of lowering the limit with two fold objectives of incentivising fundraising and ensuring continued operation of Asha Chennai beyond this project year.

After some discussions the following alternatives were proposed

A   Restrict the allocation to 60 percent provided half of any amount raised extra in the name of the project would be only utilised for the project itself (over and above the 60% already allocated) and the other half would go to meet the already allocated 60% and thus support the overall budgetary requirements of Asha Chennai.

B   Restrict the allocation to 70 per cent provided any extra amount raised in the name of the project will be adjusted within the 70 percent and ONLY if more funds are raised totalling over and above 70 percent they will increase the money that can be spent by the project.

4. Project Funding Allocation

Bhaskar presented the Project Funding Allocation for the year for 2019-20 which was updated on the spot based on the projectwise balances decided as per the previous agenda item. Based on these here are amounts decided for each project.

Project	July 31st Ending Balance	Project Budget Approved	Fund Raising Target	Allocations from & to Buffers	Ending Balance	Funds to be Transferred from US
Admin	88,746	2,00,000	2,00,000		88,746	
Asha Scholarships	7,98,270	13,08,360	10,00,000		4,89,910	13,08,360
Buffer Funds	1,61,78,543			(7637903)	85,40,640	
Manigal (Both locations)	4,37,404	7,70,100		3,32,696	0	332696
Poorna Vidya	67,420	9,21,300		8,53,880	0	8,53,880
Glovis Sangamam	-16,77,984	49,55,093	21,00,000	4533077	0	45,33,077
Project Sangamam	2,08,083	7,87,400		5,79,317	0	579317
Project Pearl	-2,12,701	14,29,674		16,42,374	-1	16,42,375
Sangamam Kanini	32,31,945	8,32,800			23,99,145	832800
Project Thulasi	17,65,899	13,87,320			3,78,579	
TOTAL	2,14,28,880	1,25,92,047		0	1,21,36,833	1,00,82,505

5. WCR Computation Discussion in ARC

This item of the agenda was deferred due to lack of time.

6. Review of Asset Register and needs for laptops.

The data presented was noted. It was essential to keep track of the laptops which were given to schools or HMs. Stewards were asked to plan for operating without purchasing any additional laptops this year. A few laptops may be available with one project that can be moved to another project.

7. Fundraising

Under the current circumstances , it was needless to emphasise the need for fund raising vigorously by all volunteers. Venkat , Ramakrishanan were examining making of applications for grants. For donations by Credit/Debit card Eventturbo portal has been commissioned where donations could be made to specific projects. Volunteers were requested to canvas with their families and friends for donations.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to all those present.