Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 5th July, 2020

Minutes of the meeting held via Google Meet on Sunday the 5th July 2020 at 9.30 AM

(Note: Revision Refers to addition to para 5.1 English Training)

The following were logged in and participated

- Bhaskar
- Kasturi Easwaran
- Paripoornam K'
- Rajaraman Krishnan (Co-ordinator)
- Sriram VS
- Saraswathi P
- Sundaram R
- Venkat Nataraj Ramaswamy
- Venkataraman Muthukrishnan
- Usha Bhaskar

Note: Decisions are highlighted in blue.

0. Ratification of Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd May 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2020 were ratified by a unanimous vote.

1. Budget For Pearl Project

Bhaskar presented the budget and actuals for 2019 -20 and also the fresh budget for 2020-21 . It was noted that the unspent amount in 2019-20 was Rs 3.24 lakhs. It was noted that three new schools would be taken up and also the complement of computer teachers would be strengthened during 2020-21. The Budget estimates of Rs 31,48,165 for 2020-21 was unanimously approved.

2. Correction to Approved Budget Estimate for Thulasi Project.

There appeared to be some differences in figures already approved due to extraction of the relevant information from Google Docs at different times which can be updated online. In order to be precise and consistent in dealing with figures of Budget stewards were requested to send budget proposals only in. pdf or Excel sheets. After scrutinizing the previous submissions the corrected budget estimate of Rs 24,41,200 was voted for unanimously.

3. Loan for Aruna Bhaskar

 The request for an interest free loan of Rs 50,000 to partially construct a house allotted by the state government was considered and unanimously approved subject to terms and conditions as per Asha Chennai policy and guidelines.

 It was noted that so far Rs 7,30,000 is the outstanding loan amount for all staff. Since salary of teachers is not being withheld due to covid situation usual efforts of the administration to collect the instalments by suitably reminding the lonees should continue.

4 . Summer Activities

Sustained efforts were made to keep the teachers engaged despite the covid situation by entrusting tasks to them directly related to Education for Children. Obviously Asha Chennai could not hold the usual summer training for teachers by getting them all in one place and also the annually conducted Right Start

Rajaraman gave a detailed account of how teachers are being deployed in various activities. 17 Mini schools (12 in Sangamam, 4 in Pearl and and 1 in Thulasi) were functioning observing precautions. The strength is limited to 10 in each and is located to suit the convenience of the teachers who reside in the villages. Couple of mini schools had to be closed down due to suspected case of Clovid in the village.

In addition to these Mapping for Kanini App was undertaken actively, 20 new additional websites were selected to enrich the base of   teaching material like for drawing up lesson plans.

5. Training

5.1 English Training

To enhance the spoken and written skills of teachers in English Mrs Lavanya Srinivas has started a eight week intense course since 6th of June for two batches of about 25 each, two sessions per week. Mr Ramakrishnan our volunteer had kindly come forward to handle the third batch of another 23. Mrs Lavnaya Srinivas teaches English by a unique story telling method where students are encouraged to visualise the scenes and verbalise them. Funding this English Training course at Rs 50,000 to be paid to Mrs Lavanya Srinivas was unanimously approved.

It was also decided to apportion this expenditure to the various projects such as Sangamam, Pearl Thulasi, Manigal and Poorna Vidhya based on the strength of the teachers of the respective projects.

5.2 Maths Training

Ms Meena Suresh, our trainer for the last 5 years, is interacting regularly with our Teachers grouped by class. The focus is now on what the children should be taught when the schools reopen. It was also proposed to invite a teacher in Vedic Mathematics to impart the skills of rapid arithmetic.

5.3 Computer Training

Asha Teacher Kumari is actively engaged not only in drawing up plans for what Computer teachers should teach, but she is giving them exercises in code.org She has also paired regular teachers with computer teachers so that regular teachers could acquire digital skills. The primary objective this yearis to take computer teaching to the level of Class III pupils.

5.4 Training in Awareness of Issues like Gender Equality

Paripooranam proposed to introduce our teachers, most of them being female, to issues of gender equality and child protection. She had the Video course of Kamala Bhasin in mind for gender equality. She promised to circulate the necessary material for improving awareness.

7 Presentation Competition

Venkat explained about our annual children's competition Asha Impressions. As we couldnt not conduct that this year, and in order in enhance the contents in Asha Kanini, we had asked the computer teachers to each submit two presentations (or programming projects). There was a very good response from the teachers. 91 entries were there - 55 presentations and 36 programming projects (35 in Scratch and 1 Geogebra). The standard of submission was uniformly high and the difference between the top ones was so minor judging them became hard. Nevertheless it was decided to award the Eight winners Rs 1000 each 5 in presentations category and 3 in programming.

Due to covid the customary celebratory ritual of presenting the Awards and Citations for the best entry for Impressions could not be held. A Virtual meeting of all teachers and volunteers will be held.

8. Checklist and engaging with Asha US

Bhaskar stated that Asha worldwide had raised some issues one relating to funding the school for CP/MR children at Avalurpet which were satisfactorily replied. Both the checklists that we filed have been processed. He mentioned that the next call for Asha India checklists is likely to come around mid August'20 to clear the proposed allocation. He requested that the next meeting of Asha Chennai to be held either late July or early August to ratify the allocations.

9. Teachers' Meeting

It was proposed to call all teachers for a virtual meeting in which not only the winners in the presentation/programming competition will be feted but also they will be informed of the salient points regarding salary, annual rise and leave accounting. It would also be an opportunity to get a feedback from them generally regarding training and tasks assigned to them during these covid times..