

Meeting minutes for Asha Chennai on 26th Sep, 2021

Minutes of the meeting held via google Meet on Sunday 26 th September 2021 at 9.30 AM

Following were logged in and participated as indicated..

- Bhaskar
- Kasturi
- Rajaraman Krishnan
- Ramakrishnan
- Sriram VS
- Sujata Raman
- Sundaram R
- Venkataraman
- Venkat Nataraj
- Usha Bhaskar

0. Ratifications

0.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd August , 2021 were ratified unanimously.

0.2 However in the above.minutes under Item 2 Staff Loans the following correction be made

“Project Thulasi No of Staff 2 Rs 50,000 each” may be replaced by

“Project Thulasi No of Staff 2; one for Rs 50,000 and the second for Rs 20,000”

1. Updates on Accounts Status

Ramakrishnan stated that the accounts for FY 20-21 have been passed on to the auditor.

He said on the issue of IT exemption under Sec 80 G the government order had not come yet, however, it should not hold back Asha Chennai from receiving donations in India.

He informed that changing names of Authorised Signatories in HDFC bank was still pending.

2. Updates on Scholarship.

Venkataraman informed that 24 students, 20 girls and 4 boys had been selected and of them 9 are from rural areas thanks to Murugan, our coordinator in Pearl..Thus the target of distributing 97 scholarships within the budget was achieved. [His request for accommodating 3 more students within the budget was approved unanimously.](#)

Venkataraman stated that we have to seriously address the issue of providing inputs to scholarship students to improve their communication skills. Rajaraman added that some ways of mentoring and monitoring progress of Asha Chennai Scholars should be found and put in practice.

3. Loan for Staff

I) Loan for a staff from Sangamam for Rs 50,000 for house construction being under the existing guidelines was approved unanimously.

II) Loan for a staff from Poorna Vidhya for Rs 30,000 for restoring means of livelihood of the family was approved with eight voting in favour and two abstaining.

4. Proposal To Construct a Toilet in Thulasi

This item was deferred since Paripoornam could not be present.

5. Proposal to utilise funds from Asha Boston to support Libraries

Rajaraman stated that Melli of Asha Boston had contacted him regarding the funding for the libraries. Asha Boston may be able to fund the libraries this year. There are 7 libraries, 1 in sangamam, 2 in Thulasi and 4 in Pearl. It was decided to cull out the items already provisioned for in the budgets of the respective projects and put it up as a proposal to Asha Boston. For the continuing libraries, a total requirement will be Rs 4 to 4.5 Lakhs for this year. There are also proposals for some new libraries. Approval in principle was given Bhaskar was requested to send the proposal to Asha Boston and get Asha Chennai approval later.

6. Update on Project Pearl

Bhaskar stated that he had visited the project a couple of months ago and he would furnish a site visit report shortly.

7. Update for Asha Kanini

Rajaraman stated the latest Desktop version 3.4.8 had been released and the Android Version was getting ready. He also mentioned that Pravartak would get the necessary authorisation from the TN government shortly to train government teachers in the whole of Tiruvallur district. He outlined the steps being taken to recruit additional hands and flagged some concerns regarding attrition in software support personnel.

8. Updates on Establishment of Rural Technology centres.

Three locations in Tiruvallur, viz., Seethanjeri, Kannigaiper and Kanagamma Chathiram have been selected for the first phase taking into account various factors such as presence of schools, building availability and most importantly availability of suitable teachers. Factors like safe keeping and handling of gadgets like 3D Printers, Robots etc and training of personnel to teach code.org are also being kept in mind. Action to induct additional computer teachers has been initiated vigorously. Rajaraman and Venkat would be making trips often to Tiruvallur.

9. Update on PR Work and Fund Raising

Ms Amrita, daughter of Ms Aruna, our Asha Chennai volunteer, has agreed to help in giving a polish to our PR material. She works as a Brand Positioning Strategy Consultant. Once again Rajaraman exhorted the volunteers both stewards and others, to start canvassing for donation among their friends and relatives apart from identifying potential CSR donors.

10. Update on Corporate Funding.

Venkat stated that he had not heard from HCL where we qualified for the second round. For the Microsoft Programme of matching contribution Venkat would be sending a four minute video presentation as required by them. We will be able to give a presentation to Microsoft Employees between 19th and 21st of this month to answer any questions they may have.

11. Plans for Teachers' Training

During the non Covid years it was customary to organise in-person training by getting Asha teachers from all projects assembled in Chennai during mid term break for a three day session. Rajaraman solicited opinions of those present in the meeting regarding online training versus in person training. Hybrid sessions could also be held with teachers assembling in their respective project centres and tutorials conducted from a single centre. Meena Suresh, our Maths trainer, is willing to have an in-person training on Oct 23rd. She can do it here in Chennai or in Thiruvallur.

Venkat said that training for three days, one day each for Maths, Computer and English would be good. He also said he would find resources for the training in English

12. English Training

Venkat explained the current status of English Training of Asha Teachers both by once weekly Spoken English Sessions and carrying out assignments. However he mentioned finding a mutually convenient time between mentors in the US and our teachers presents problems. There is some churning of mentors and he would soon take a review of the same.