

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 21st May, 2023

Minutes of the meeting held via GoogleMeet on Sunday 21 May 2023 at 9.30 AM

Kalyan

Kasturi

Komalavalli

Paripoornam

Rajaraman (co-ordinator)

Sriram (Part time)

Sundaram

Usha Bhaskar

Venkat

Venkataraman

Vidhya Arun

0. Ratification of the minutes of the meeting held on Sunday, 16th April 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2023 were ratified unanimously. Also ratified was the result of the online poll held to approve the expenditure of Rs 5,00,000 with nine volunteers voting in favour and none against.

1. Staff

1. Loans

Paripoornam proposed a grant of Scooter Loan of Rs 50,000 each to two teachers in the Thulasi project. Although these teachers had not completed a year of service yet, having a two-wheeler is imperative in their cases as they have to commute long distances in the course of their duties. unanimously approved subject to the usual terms and conditions.

b) Staff Salary

Rajaraman pointed out that the salaries of Gomathi (Software Engineer) and Malliga (Coordinator in scholarship and Poorna Vidya projects) were not considered. They were finalised unanimously. These will be notified for implementation. Two thirds of Malliga's salary will be borne by Scholarshi Project and the balance by Poorna Vidhya.

2. Funding Updates

1. Revised Fund Flow from Asha/USA.

Rajaraman referring to his forecast during the last month's meeting regarding Asha US funding this year, he stated that the revised figure was USD 38k as against USD 26k. This is mainly due to change of Accounting year by Asha USA to align with the flow of donations during the year end, apart from the favourable WCR number. .

2. RTC Pravartak and Asha Kanini

Although no problem is envisaged in maintaining the existing RTCs in good shape, the pace of launching new RTCs can pick up only if more funds are made available by IIT Prvartak. Asha Kanini, so to speak, has reached a dead end, since the training of Govt teachers and loading the software have been completed by and large in the schools supported by us. To sustain the remaining activities we received from City Union Bank through Pravartak Rs 20,00,000. The funding for this project may not continue once this fund runs out.

3. Amazon

Amazon, as we understand is committed to funding Asha Chennai under both Learn and Explore programmes

4. Broad Situation

Asha Chennai's expansion and operations are sustained by three donors, viz., Amazon, IIT Pravartak and Asha Austin in the case of Varanasi, Rajatalab. Asha Chennai estimates its fund balance to be around Rs.4.5 crores. If the projects funded by the above mentioned donors is kept out of reckoning , the remaining expenditure in the coming year is estimated to be around Rs 2.5 Crores and our fund position is comfortable. But if the support from the three donors above (esp Amazon) runs into problems, our fund position will not look good.

3. Update on Payment through Eventurbo and creating own payment gateway

For the last couple of years Asha has been using Eventurbo as the payment gateway. However Eventurbo has closed all operations. For now we have directed all Indian donations to come through Give India. We are planning to create UPI ID and QR Code based Payment Gateway which inter alia will be made scannable only after the prospective donor gave his PAN number and Address.

4. Update on Scaling Up

MOU with Samagra (TN)

Rajaraman referred to the draft MOU (circulated earlier) to be signed between Asha Chennai and Samagra TN Govt to train a certain number of TN Govt school teachers in Computer Science this year on the curriculum and Lesson plan developed by Asha Chennai. If the pilot is successful, the hope is for this to be taken up at a bigger scale in the subsequent years. A few meetings have been held with Mr Nanthkumar Commissioner of Education and we are close to getting the MOU signed.

2. Budget for the above.

In this context, Rajaraman presented the budget proposal for the above Scaling Up Project with elaborate working details for implementation from June 2023 through to May 2024. This is covered as part of the funding by Amazon under its Future Engineers programme discussed below.

5. Project Budget Proposal

a. Amazon

The Amazon proposal covered the following heads.

- LEARN programme – Covers 100 schools, 8000 children 40 teachers including 4 lead teachers for an outlay of Rs 1,14,88,000
- EXPLORE programme – Covers 10 trainers with about 25 schools and 2500 students per trainer for an expenditure of Rs 34,65,000
- Teacher training programme – Covers 50 government teachers teaching at their 50 schools= assisted by the 10 trainers under EXPLORE for an additional budget of Rs 7,07,500

These budgets for FY 23-24 were unanimously approved. It was mentioned that these have been accepted by Amazon in principle. It is to be noted that these budgets do not include money for purchase of computers and other devices. It is hoped that these will be covered separately under a "Delivering Smiles" programme of Amazon.

b. Cauvery

Deferred for consideration during the next meeting.

c. Manigal at Kotturpuram and Indiranagar

Usha Bhaskar presented the detailed project budget which was discussed and approved unanimously the expenditure of Rs 11,43,800 for FY 23-24.

d. Rajatalab

Komalavalli presented the details of expenditure forecast for FY 23-24 and a budget for Rs 20,59,300 was approved unanimously. It was noted that this amount will come directly from Asha/Austin USA.

e. Sangamam

Rajaraman presented the details of support to govt schools in Thiruvallur District and projected a budget expenditure of Rs 93,62,000 for the year 2023-24 which was unanimously approved.

f. Scholarship

Venkataraman proposed that the number of scholars during FY23-24 could be maintained at the same level as previous year. However since emphasis was being laid on supporting plus Two and college level students the projected expenditure was marginally higher. Provision of Rs 50,000 has also been made for career counseling and guidance A total expenditure budget of Rs 24,85,000 was approved unanimously.

g. Thulasi

Paripoornam presented a proposal for supporting 7 schools in Thiruvannamalai and Villupuram districts assigning 10 regular teachers and running of tuition centres entailing an expenditure of Rs 30,08,000 and a supplementary proposal for the upkeep of libraries involving an expenditure of Rs 2,54,000. Thus a total budget of Rs 31,57,000 for expenditure during FY 23-24 was unanimously approved.

6. Updates on Various Events/Projects

1. Uniform Distribution to schools:

We are arranging the supply of uniforms (through Shanmuga apparel) for all Asha supported schools of Thulasi, Sangamam and Pearl. Donors have been identified to support this activity. Paripoornam enquired if she could source locally for Thulasi Project. Paripoornam will coordinate with Bhaskar to close this.

2. Projects Arogyam, Sugadaram and office expansion at Tiruvallur.

Arogyam project: Provision of nutritious food is being done with the expanded set of schools. Sugadharam project is being implemented in Pearl project expeditiously. Work at Sangamam and Thulasi schools have been delayed. Asha office expansion is progressing on priority

7. Takeaways from recently completed activities

1. ASHA Assessments:

Oral and written assessments are completed and the progress report analysis has been circulated to all HMs of Asha supported school before end April 23.

2. ASHA Impressions:

Mrs. Komalavalli and Paripoornam shared their experience and feedback' It is learnt that Amazon execs were highly appreciative of our students' performance. Komalavalli expressed that Asha could consider giving a token prize for all participants to encourage them. Paripoornam mentioned that some teachers who did not win were in tears and she had to console them. Mr. Rajaram observed that even though teachers contributed to the presentations it was commendable that the students showed great alacrity and confidence. They were able to think on their feet and change the coding even while presenting. This showed remarkable understanding of the students in the basics of coding.

3. RightStart Training:

Mr. Shiva and Mrs. Malliga did all arrangements prior to the training, during and after the training with full dedication. Johnsirani rendered the background support. Vidya Arun, Usha Bhaskar, Komalavalli gave feedback on the training. Science Research experiments done by Poorva and Group Activity for teachers conducted by Rural Technology Action Group, IIT Madras were impressive. Of course these can be further improved in the coming year.