

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 7th, Jan 2024

Minutes of the meeting held in person & via GoogleMeet on Sunday 7th January 2024 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

- Kalyan
- Kasturi
- Komalavalli
- Paripoornam
- Rajaraman
- Shiva
- Sriram
- Sundaram
- Venkat
- Venkataraman
- Vidya Arun
- Usha Bhaskar

0.0 Ratification of the minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 26th November 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November were ratified unanimously..

1.0 Staff Matters and Loans

Amar Jyothi has joined as Software Engineer and Ajeeth as Systems Engineer. The Grant of loans to staff as below was unanimously approved, ,

Sponsoring Steward	Project	Amount	Purpose
Komalavalli	Cauvery	20000	Vehicle Repair
Paripoornam	Thulasi	50000	Vehicle Purchase
Bhaskar	Pearl	50000	House Repair
Bhaskar	Pearl	50000	Vehicle Purchase

2.0 Update on Year-End Donations and Fund Position

Rajaraman explained the present status of fundraising giving ballpark figures which reveal that against an outflow of Rs 5.15 Crores in 23-24 we are raising only a little less than Rs 4.5 Crore. We may need to raise Rs 1 Crore more to be in a comfortable position. Volunteers were once again requested to redouble their efforts to massage their contacts and raise funds.

3.0 Thulasi Decision on Gangavaram

Paripoornam gave the details of the deployment of teachers in the Thulasi project and how the continuance of support to the school at Gangavaram was becoming increasingly difficult because of the problems with the Head Mistress. She suggested that we pull out of this school and take up another school at Devadanapatti where the HM was keen on support from Asha. Part of the problem was because Gangavaram was far away from all our other schools. After some discussion, it seemed that this too may not solve the problem of deployment and "commuting distance". Paripoornam was requested to suggest some other alternative.

4.0 Rajatalab Visit by Volunteers, Stewardship and brining in Abhishek

Komalavalli and Sujatha gave an account of their visit to schools in Rajatalab Varanasi. They were impressed by the impact of our support to these schools. Our volunteer, Vidya Arun also took the opportunity to visit these schools along with Komalavalli and Sujatha, as she happened to be on a private visit to Varanasi during that period.

Rajaraman gave the background of how Asha Chennai came to take up Rajatalab in 2018-19, as one may wonder about being so far away from Chennai and that too in a place speaking a different language. After Ramakrishnan left Asha, the stewardship of Rajatalab Project was handled jointly by Hindi-knowing stewards Komalavalli and Sujatha. However, it was felt that for improved coordination that there should be a single steward. Both Komalavalli and Sujatha expressed their readiness to take on the project single-handedly. Since no consensus could be arrived at in the selection of the steward a vote was taken. Nine out of twelve volunteers present voted for Sujatha to be the new steward of Rajatalab project. Three voted against. Vidhya Arun also offered to assist Sujatha in managing responsibilities.

Rajaraman gave a thumbnail sketch of Abhishek's bio, a Asha for Education worker from Kanpur who had recently visited Asha Chennai. He suggested that we should associate with him more, perhaps in the capacity of a volunteer. He will be working from Puducherry for the next few months which is an advantage. Abhishek, an ex IIT-ian, appeared to be a dedicated field worker among social groups in UP and MP.. His induction to assist with our UP projects will be to our advantage.

5.0 Flood Relief Updates and Make-a wish distribution

Rajaraman enumerated the tasks undertaken for flood relief after the torrential rains in early January. He recounted the work undertaken at Old Tiruppachur where the distress was acute. Fortunately, the schools under the Pearl project were not seriously affected although Tirunelveli Toothukudi encountered a natural calamity in the form of heavy downpours, flooding, and waterlogging for days without end.

6.0 Updates From Recent Events

a. CS Training on December 22-24

It went off well with the active participation of Asha teachers from various projects. We must place on record our appreciation of our lead teacher Kumari for her indefatigable efforts to make it a success.

b. Teachers Excursions

Venkat gave an account of Asha teachers' wonderful trip to Kochi and enjoyable boat rides in Kerala backwaters. Paripoornam described Thulasi project teachers' excursion to Mysore. Rajatalab teachers enjoyed their excursion to Kolkata Eco Park. Teachers from the Pearl project visited a highly informative and educational tour to Madurai to visit Keezhadi archeological excavation site, and Gandhi Museum,

c. Assessments

Oral Assessments were completed as scheduled in Nov. We will be taking up the written assessments in Feb/Mar.

7.0 Upcoming events

a. Asha India conference Feb 24 & 25th

Rajaraman said he would be attending along with our volunteers Komalavalli and Shiva.

b. Amazon training/symposium Feb 12 to 14 Pune

Rajaraman stated that Venkat, Himself, Kumari, and Nathiya would attend.

c. RTC Impressions Feb 7

RTC Impressions competitions will be held in digital literacy, web programming, designing games using scratch, and physical computing for RTC batches who completed the last semester July'23 to Jan'24. Children from RTCs in Sangamam and Pearl will be brought to the venue at IIT Research Park. We have to arrange for the judges and make other arrangements. These works are progressing.

8.0 Other Project Updates

a. ACE Computer Education program to teach CS to Tamilnadu Teachers under the MOU with TN govt launched in October last year is proceeding apace.

b. Sugadharam

Toilet repair and new toilet construction work undertaken for 23-24 are complete in Pearl and Thulasi. Thiruvallur repair work is getting complete. We will undertake the new construction work only if specific funding for this project is received..

c. Arogyam

Nutrition program to cater to poor children from the Irular community in Sangamam and in some schools in Pearl is being continued.