

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 22nd, Sep 2024

ASHA CHENNAI CHAPTER MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING HELD ON Sunday 22 nd September 2024

Following were present

- Akshay Menon
- Kasturi
- Komalavalli
- Paripoornam
- Rajaraman
- Shiva
- Sriram
- Sundaram
- Venkat

Rajaraman welcomed the new volunteer Akshay Menon on behalf of Asha Chennai and introduced him to those present. Akshay who had been working in Dubai has relocated recently to Chennai. Akshay thanked all present for the warm welcome and hoped for productive association with Asha Chennai

0. Ratification of the revised Minutes of the meeting held on 18/8/24 .

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th August were ratified unanimously.

1. Staff Changes and Loans

a)Sanction of loan amounts of Rs 60,000 for scooter purchase in the case of one teacher and Rs 20,000 for spouse's surgery in the case of the other both from Pearl Project were approved

b) Sanction of loan of Rs 60,000 each to two teachers from Sangamam Project were approved, in one case being in the nature of topping up to the prescribed limit of Rs 60.000

* Manoharan's Appointment and role

As decided in the previous meeting Mr Manoharan has been appointed as Admin Coordinator in Asha Chennai office. In this role he is tasked to look after purchases, asset management, and coordinate event management activities including logistics related for example, to the holding of Right Start, Impressions etc.

2. Impact of TN Govt reaction to Mahavishnu Episode

Although there were apprehensions regarding restrictions being imposed on NGOs coming into government schools as a result of the episode as reported in the newspapers, it was gratifying to note that Asha Chennai had not experienced any major disruption.

3. Updates on Govt Discussions

* ADW MOU

Rajaraman stated that this was still a work in progress and added that he would report progress in due course. Some clarity was still required. Asha Chennai could handle schools in Tiruvannamalai and Villupuram to start with . Part time teachers would have to be recruited.

* Schools of Excellence -- plan for working together.

Rajaraman stated that talks with the concerned authorities are under progress, Regarding preparation of computer syllabus for class 6 to 9 and related pedagogical tools for imparting skills to government teachers action is underway. He pointed out that there were many challenges in this endeavour which include teacher training, infrastructure, and the need for additional high-tech labs.

* Namma School permission.

Mr Murali, our volunteer, is continuing his efforts to cover all districts where Asha Chennai has its footprint. But with the Mahavishnu episode, this is also right now paused.

* MOU extension.

Rajaraman said that this was not impeding our programme of CS Training of Govt teachers which was launched the previous year. This paperwork might be finalised, perhaps, along with Asha Chennai's proposed coverage of Schools Of Excellence

4. Upcoming Events

* Teacher's Excursion

It was noted that everything had been sewn up for this eagerly looked forward excursion to Hyderabad. As Asha Chennai is expanding so did the number of participants teachers and their kids which filled two Sleeper coaches.

* Maths/Science training

Maths training by Meena Suresh was scheduled for 29th and 30th September for Pearl Teachers and 3rd to 5th October for Sangamam,

* Stationery and other materials distribution.

Satisfactory progress has been made in all projects. Status is being shared in WhatsApp group Asha For Everyone by field coordinators through snapshots and newspaper reports.

5. Couple of clarifications on policies - maternity leave, medical assistance and loans.

Rajaraman clarified the extant policy being followed in respect of the above for the benefit of project stewards. Maternity leave is applicable for teachers who have completed one year of service and return to work within 1 year. We insist that they take a minimum of 3 months. Once they return (after 3 months and before one year), we will credit half a month salary for 6 months (in addition to their normal salary) as maternity benefit.

Medical leave is also eligible for teachers who have completed 1 year. Through this they can get 3 half months of paid leave for medical conditions. Emergency medical assistance is another provision through which their medical expenses can be reimbursed. But this is possible only for injuries sustained in the line of work.

6. Other updates.

* Event calendar and annual report 23-24.

Event calendar is displayed in Asha Chennai website and Annual Report of 23-24 is now getting ready and will be published soon.

* Bringing money from the US.

Checklist process is over and money has been transferred to the Asha India FCRA account held in Delhi..

* Audit of 2023-24 accounts.

Audit of 23-24 Accounts of South India Trust has been completed. Audit of the Chennai chapter of Asha India has also been complete and given to Asha India accounts team in Varanasi. They are in the process of completing the audit which will usually have some impact on the Asha Chennai finalisation of the audit report.

* Participation in IITM Alumni event, Sangam, panel on Societal Impact.

Rajaraman stated that he participated in a panel discussion from Hyderabad held by IIT Alumni Madras Association on "Societal Impact". The main topic of the panel was on how the alumni can create societal impact through engagement with the society and government.

Rajaraman also mentioned that he interacted with Mr Balaji Sampath of AID India and Dr Ravishankar of Chudar who are both IIT Alumni who both are working in the field of education, during the above meeting. Rajaraman hoped to draw upon their experience to improve our offerings to Government Schools, particularly our foray into taking computer education to Schools Of Excellence. .