

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 03rd, Aug 2025

Minutes of The Meeting Held at 9.30 AM on 3rd August 2025 (Google Meet)

Following were present

Bhaskar

Kalyan

Kasturi

Komalavalli

Paripoornam

Rajaraman

Shiva

Sriram

Sundaram

Usha Bhaskar

0. Ratification of the Minutes of The Meeting held on 8th, 24th and 27th June 2025

The minutes of the meetings held on 8th, 24th and 27th June 2025 were ratified

1. Routine Staff Matters Loans. Key staff exit/hiring.

Grant of loans were approved on requests from a) two teachers from Sangamam, one personal and another for vehicle purchase b) one teacher from Rajatalab for personal purposes c) five teachers from Pearl - four requests for vehicles and one personal. Loan amounts would be Rs 60,000 in each case and conditions would apply.

It was informed that one of our software professionals had landed more paying jobs and therefore Asha Chennai was on the look out for replacements.

Sundaram after enquiring about the role of Ms Pushpa Leela suggested that she should be added to the core group in view of her pro bono contribution in CS education.

2. Financial Update.

Rajaraman presented the details year wise and it was noted the fund balance was at a level of Rs 9 Crore, being more than adequate for the current operations,

3. Update on Amazon status.

Rajaraman referred to earlier discussions in our meetings wherein he had mentioned that Amazon was planning to shift out of CS education altogether. Therefore Amazon would stop funding out programs after this year (2025-26). However he was glad to inform that Amazon have assured Asha Chennai that they will provide part funding to the tune of about Rs 1.2 Crores for the year 2026-27 for the CS education part of our program.

Rajaraman stated that we would also try and align our programs with the Amazon's long term plans.

- Career Tours. Rajaraman stated that talks were on with Amazon to explore the possibility of our implementing their Career Tours programme. This would essentially be an extension to our Explore program where our trainers also include a couple of Career Tours activities in what they do at the schools.

- Makerspace program.

Amazon has launched this program under their Future Engineers Programme to provide a collaborative Learning space for underserved students with hands-on training in Robotics, AI and 3D Printing. Asha Chennai had the opportunity to participate in this during July 2025

4. Funding Allocation for projects.

Rajraman explained the rationale behind clubbing projection for School uniforms under SPRINT. While budget proposals were prepared by the stewards who oversee operations in a geographical area, he pointed out that our programs are implemented across projects.

He proposed that the allocation of Asha Chennai funds for the projects follow the same pattern as last year. I.e. 80% of the funds required for the projects will be allocated from the chapter's general or buffer funds. If the project wishes to spend anything more, they have to raise project specific funds. The allocation plan as presented was approved unanimously.

He outlined the details of money to be brought from AfE taking into account the balances and funding from other sources. These will be covered in a separate online poll that will be conducted shortly.

5. Fund Raising Plan / strategy. Quick walk through the Google Sheet for fund raising.

Rajraman shared the spread sheet on the status of contact massaging of potential donors. We are actively following up leads with Trimble and Michelin. Kalyan offered to follow up with Zoho. The earlier opportunity we were pursuing with SBI General Insurance did not work out. He exhorted volunteers to identify contact persons in companies with big CSR Budgets and follow them up.

6. Status of Activities Related to the government.

- Spark Program.

Rajraman stated that he had received information that SPARK (School Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics) had been launched. Training sessions are being held in different districts.

Asha Chennai was watching keenly this development even. So far the schools being training under our ACE program have all decided to continue our program as they see the value in the support they receive from us.

- ADW hostels bids

Asha Chennai had submitted its bids and after due diligence TN Govt. would call the qualifying bidders for a detailed discussion.

7. Upcoming Events

- RTC Impressions on 18th Aug.

This was being held IIT- M research centre and Rajaraman requested all volunteers to drop in to see for themselves the performance of our RTC Students and as well as come forward to act as judges.

- Teacher Excursions.

Teachers Excursions for teachers and their kids less than Sangamam, Poorna Vidhya are scheduled for 3 days commencing on 26th September. Destination Coorg Madikeri.

8. Review of Events

- Asha Impressions at Pearl.

In accordance with the decision taken earlier Asha Impressions separately for Pearl Project schools were held on 14th June 2025 with enthusiastic participation from children and teachers alike.

- ACE Impressions v2.

This event took place successfully on 21st June at the Amazon Chennai office with enthusiastic participation of Govt. teachers.

- Pondy Training

Two Lead teachers from Asha Chennai conducted CS Training in Pondy at Gandhiji School run by Mala Foundation school. Our lead teacher Nirmala is leading this effort..

- TIS training in Bangalore

49 students and 10 teachers from Asha Chennai were invited by Amazon to Amazon TIS Makerspace in India, set up in Bengaluru. Partnering with The Innovation Story, this initiative provides under-served students in grades 5th to 12th with immersive, hands-on learning experiences, nurturing their curiosity and equipping them with innovative technological skills to become future change-makers.

- Teacher Assessment and pay review.

All the stewards have completed review of the salaries of all their staff and communicated the pay-raise to them.

8. Other Updates

- TVs for RTCs from Synamedia – Synamedia has donated 10 TVs for use at our RTCs.

- 500 laptops from Amazon through Sama – We have received the same and these laptops are being readied to be distributed to various schools and centres.

9. Staff policy updates.

This item was deferred for the next meeting.

10. Volunteers required for key roles.

- US treasury roles.

- Fund Raising.

- Review of course contents.

Rajaraman felt that some areas as listed above are not getting the attention required due to volunteers not finding time due to their other personal commitments. Bhaskar assured that US Treasury Role was concerned he was fully committed to look after that. Fund raising and related donor communications were being looked after by Venkataraman. In his absence it was necessary to see how this work should be attended to. Hopefully Venkataraman would resume his activities in full swing soon.

Rajaram wished that we could get a volunteer who can contribute by reviewing course contents of our programs on an ongoing basis.

11. Any Other Item as mooted by the participants.

No other item came up for discussion.