

Meeting Minutes for Asha Chennai on 27th, Apr 2025

Asha Chennai Meeting held in person Sunday 27, April, 2025 at 9.30 AM

Following were present

Akshay

Bhaskar (on phone)

Kalyan

Kasturi

Komalavalli

Paripoornam

Rajaraman

Shiva

Sriram

Sundaram

Venkat

0. Ratification of minutes of the meeting held on 30th March 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Sunday, the 30th March 2025 were ratified unanimously.

.

1. Staff Matters: Loans

Unanimously approved the following

Pearl : Grant of loans for 3 teachers ranging Rs 60000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 for bonafide purposes such as personal transport and building repair as prescribed. A special grant of a loan of Rs 1,00,000 to a staff member for personal loan.

Sangamam: Grant of loan to one teacher of Rs 60,000 for building repair

Thulasi Grant of a personal loan of Rs 60,000 to a teacher.

Terms and conditions apply

2. Funding Updates: Amazon, Pravartak and other sources

Rajaraman, after his recent talks with Amazon, projected the possible constriction of flow of funds from them, and in that context he made some observations regarding the uncertainty of funds from Pravartak and other sources too. He stated that Asha Chennai depends nearly 31 per cent for its activities on donations from Amazon. It is implementing Amazon's LEARN under which CS Education like Digital Literacy in primary classes and its EXPLORE under which CS Training is imparted to classes 6 to 9 classes. Amazon also supported our ACE program to scale up computer education by training Govt Teachers who in turn train govt school children. It appeared that Amazon, under its Future Engineers Program is shifting its focus from computer science education for school students to career guidance for school students and young adults. The funding is not expected to be cut for this year (2025-26) but will be almost entirely cut off from the next year 2026-27. While our credibility is good and we can expect good reference from Amazon, we have to significantly ramp up our efforts towards fundraising. It was expected that volunteers who can do something in this direction would exert a lot more. We would also need to pare a few activities here and there. For example, in view of the successful implementation of the breakfast scheme by the government Asha Chennai could suspend its Arogyam project. This suggestion received general approval.

3. Financials Update

Further to what was observed during the previous meetings, as far as FY 25-26 was concerned, Rajaraman reckoned that Asha Chennai would have in its coffers Rs 9,00,00,000 adequate to implement programs already rolled out..

4 Approval of Proposal for Amazon and [Code.org](#)

Rajaram presented Amazon budget for 25-26. The details of proposed expenditure and approval granted are given below.

AMAZON

Fy 2025-26	Description	Budget Proposed
LEARN	Same scope as last year – 100 schools with about 7000 students.	Rs 1,45,15,000
EXPL ORE	Increase from 10 to 12 trainers. Same 2 lead trainers, 1 system admin.	Rs50, 58,000
ACE	Same 6 trainers now handling an expanded 140 to 150 schools with a new cohort of ACE v3 schools. No new laptops for govt teachers and reduced prize money for ACE Impressions.	Rs 34,33,000
TOTAL		Rs 2,30,06,000

- Taking into account Rs 26,00,000 already available, we will require about 2.05 Crores from Amazon.

CODE.ORG

The ACE v2 schools and some of the v1 schools that have completed Digital Literacy will be taking programming classes for their students. We intend to teach about half of these schools programming using the CSF-Express course from [Code.org](https://code.org). [Code.org](https://code.org) is interested in piloting this and is willing to fund the same. Rajaram also presented Budget proposals to [Code.org](https://code.org) for this with 3 additional trainers covering 40 schools totalling Rs 17,46,000 or USD 20,790 which was duly approved.

5. NSNOP Proposal. Status of discussions with the government.

NSNOP proposals had been submitted by Murali. We are expecting the approval for this any time. Rajaraman stated that what the Tamilnadu government proposed to do to scale up CS Education in Middle/High/Higher Secondary Schools was not clear. SCERT may be working on its own. There is also talk of working with Microsoft TEALS to create the curriculum. They have also been engaging with organizations like Asha to create a program. We are trying to find the details so that we can plan accordingly.

6. Formalisation of staff. Update on PF/ESIC.

Rajaraman outlined the discussions held with a PF consultant regarding the formalities, paperwork and procedures to be followed in Registering under PF /ESIC etc. Some of the salaries being paid by Asha Trust and some by Asha South India trust poses a problem. As we are planning to apply for FCRA and will likely transition all operation to Asha South India trust by next year, it would make sense to wait till things are all handled through Asha South India trust. The costs for PF and ESIC will be about 10% of the salary. This would be pursued seriously for implementation during the year FY 26-27.

7. Estimation of growth/shrinkage of coverage of schools/ RTCs in 25-26 Projectwise

Rajaraman presented the data of schools covered under various programs project wise as below..

Functional Area	Planned Item	Total	Sangamam	Pearl	Thulasi	P Vidhya	Cauvery	Rajatalab	Mirzapur	Manigal	Mylapore
SPRINT	No of Schools	193	93	28	25	10	18	11	6	2	
	Computer Teachers (Amazon)	39	18	10	6	3	2				
	Computer Teachers (Project)	35	10	3	3	4	4	8	3		
	KaradiPath Schools	58	37	12	9						
	KaradiPath Teachers	17	12	3	3						
	Regular Teachers	39	19	6	6	4	1			3	
	KG/Balwadi Teachers	4		4							
Explore	Trainers	17 (+6)	13 (+3)	3 (+1)	2 (+2)						
ACE	Schools	105 (+40)	76 (+15)	13 (+15)	16 (+10)						
RTC	Centres	12 (+1)	8	3	1		(+1)				
	Teachers	20 (+3)	12 (+1)	6	2		(+2)				
Arogyam	Centres	6	3	3							
Other Staff	SW Engg	5 (+1)									5 (+1)
	System Engg	3 (+1)	2	1	(+1)						
	Coords/Accounts etc.	12	2	1	1	1	1	1	1		4
	Librarian / Tutition Teacher	11	2	4	5						

The main numbers indicate the current count and the (+x) in the brackets indicate the addition planned in the year 2025-26. While the funding situation for 2025-26 is alright, we should not be planning for any further expansion this year without lining up additional funding. These were unanimously approved.

In respect of RTCs the go ahead was given to the one envisaged in the Cauvery Project as discussed in the previous meeting. Sriram urged that his request to open an RTC in Poorna Vidhya should be seriously considered. After some discussion it was decided to have an RTC in Poorna Vidhya project once reasonable evidence of Funds flow from Pravartak for the existing 12 RTCs appears in the horizon.

Sriram pointed out the practical difficulties in planning and hiring fresh teachers. There was a need to satisfactorily balance the workload of the new teacher with the coverage of schools factoring in logistics of travelling from one school to another like in the case of Computer and Karadi Path teachers. He said addition of fresh teachers was always being done with circumspection.

Rajaraman stated that the licence fee for Karadi Path was for three years after which the kits and material became the property of Asha Chennai. Three years would be over in respect of some kits and advantage should be taken for introducing karadi path without buying more licences. He wanted the stewards to examine if some regular teachers can be converted to Karadi path teachers by increasing the schools covered marginally.

8. Determination of salary parameters for 2025-26

Rajaraman presented the proposed salary increases during academic year 25-26 for each position in the category of support staff. In cases where it was not possible to decide during the meeting, due to shortage of time, stewards were requested to indicate their views to Rajaraman to enable him to finalise the same.

As far as teaching staff was concerned it was decided to work on the same formula as last year, that is, Rs 1000 annual increment plus a performance based increment up to 8 percent of basic salary. It was also decided that the aggregate performance based increase should not exceed 4 percent. Note that the base salary given to new teachers will also go up by the same Rs 1000 per month. RTC teachers and trainers will get an additional base increase of RS 500. And lead teachers will be brought in line with RTC teachers and Trainers and therefore will get an additional base increment of Rs 1000.

9. Budget Preparation Guidelines for Checklist items other than Salaries.

Amazon Only		
Student Excursion	Rs 650 * 1800 students.	May be used for Amazon and non-Amazon students.
Asha Impressions	315000	Both Chennai and Thoothukudi
Common Items		
Stationery Items	Rs 200 / student	Each proposal to cover its students.
Staff Salaries		As per the project.
Teacher Laptop Purchase	Rs 40000 / set	Project teacher laptops to be covered in the projects. If something comes up from Amazon, this budget may remain unutilised. May choose to use donated laptops for teachers as well.
Computer Maintenance and accessories	Rs 1000 / computer	Should cover all school and teacher computers for the project schools.
Teacher Uniform Kits	Rs 2500 / teacher	Removed from budget. Moved it into teacher salaries. May aim for Rs 2500/teacher this year.
Teacher Training Expenses		Plan for monthly training and September training for each project staff. Rightstart handled elsewhere and Dec CS training mostly handled by Amazon.
Assessment expenses		Chocolates, paper xerox etc. for project schools.
Annual day and other functions	Rs 10000 per school for 40% of the schools.	As per the schools of the project.
Teacher excursion	Rs 6000 per teacher for 80% of the teachers.	As per the teachers of the project.
Projects Only		
Sports Materials	Rs 3000 per school.	Havent been utilising it for most part.
Educational Kits and other materials	As required	English/Maths kits. May need Rs 2000 per computer teacher if we are going to require them to do some standard activities which require specific materials.

Blackboard painting		At Sangamam Rs 1 Lakh covered 60+ schools which really needed this out of the 89 or so schools.
---------------------	--	---

The above scales were approved

10. Upcoming Events

- Asha Impressions on 28th April, 2025

Rajaraman announced that everything had been set for the Next day's event in CLT at IIT Madras. Manohar had tied up transport and messing arrangements and was issuing do's and don'ts in the WhatsApp Group

- Right Start May 22nd to May 26th

Originally it was to be organised starting from 19th but now it would be held in Vanavani Auditorium starting on 22nd May. There would be training sessions in Maths, Science and Spoken English and a session by a practicing psychologist who knows Tamil on stress management.

11. RightStart proposal/budget review and approval.

Rajaraman presented the budget for 2025 Right start amounting to Rs 8,70,000 which was approved unanimously. In this context Rajaraman wanted project stewards to note expenses for the annual training held in September every year has to be borne by the project themselves.

12. AfE new plans for checklists and project funding. (may please be filled by Rajarman)

AfE is planning to strengthen the process for transfer of funds to projects in India. Various requirements are,

- Site visit reports. Required annually. Missing for many of our projects.
- Identifying restrictions for partial funding. I.e. Identify what percentage of what line items are funded when the funding amount is less than the total project budget.
- Utilisation report at the end. This may be self-attested for smaller amounts. But for bigger amounts it will need to be audited.

13. Other Updates

- Written assessment grading and reports.

Grading was complete and analytical reports were under preparation

- CS assessments at SPRINT and ACE schools.

CS Assessments had been completed and results were being compiled

- Infrastructure data collection.

This is progressing satisfactorily.

- Mumbai training visit.

Our Teachers Kumari, Poonkodi and Rohit travelled to Mumbai to impart CS training according to our curriculum in some BMC Schools and other schools in Powai area where Asha Mumbai conducted evening classes.

- Pondy training plan.

We are also planning to start a CS program at the Gandhiji school in Pondicherry run by Asha. Their teachers will visit our Asha Impressions as well as the RightStart program. We will also be visiting them to organise training and start the program.

- 12A/80G

Approvals were expected to be received shortly

- FCRA

We are starting the application process only. Bhaskar is looking into it.

- Laptop distribution

We have almost completed Laptop distribution among our projects for the 500 laptops received in December. We have received 200 more in March. These have been allocated to Asha Chennai projects as required. We are now allotting to other Asha Chapters on the basis of their requests.

- AfE Zoom Meeting on 19th Instant

Zoom meeting was held as scheduled. Since it was recorded we would request AfE to share it. Rajaraman, Bhaskar, Sundaram and Komalavalli from Chennai Chapter attended. Mumbai and Varanasi chapter presented during this meeting. The next Zoom meeting would be on 19 July 2025