This was a virtual Zoom meeting between project coordinators Uttam Dey and Chandrayee Das, and Asha volunteers Sushil Verma, Agniva Roy, and Padmanava Sen, to discuss Hijli’s current work, their plan to taper down the program by 2024. We also discussed possible avenues for them to keep the program going.

Meeting on 06/13/2022:

Introduction:

- The current plan is to stop the funding in 2024. If we decide to stop the funding in 2024, then the focus is on graduating the current students and tapering down to a halt.
- Currently 60-70 students are supported all through till Class X. Other students not officially supported but come by for guidance. The phase out plan will end with current students’ boards.
- If we decide to continue funding, then the plan is to either increase the intake of students or start a vocational training program to make the students more employable. The proposed budget is equal to the last year’s budget plus 1.5L (one-time cost for the laptops) and 15K/month (trainer). More details are below.

Vocational Training:

- **Proposal**: Computer training program: Training for Word, Excel, and spoken English. The goal is to have basic computer literacy so that the 10th pass-outs are employable in this digital world, e.g. Zomato or Uber driver. More broadly, any sales-related position. The class strength is expected to be 60-70.
- **Budget**: There will be a one-time cost of 1.5L INR for 3 laptops and a recurring cost of 15K INR for the trainer. A suggestion was to procure laptops as donations from somewhere.
- **Comments**: Earlier used to be funded by Smile Foundation. With smile foundation, they used to get a Microsoft certification. They stopped funding during COVID. A suggestion was made to reconnect with the smile foundation.

Questions about the vocational training:

1. **Question**: Will students come to the center?
   - **Answer**: Yes
2. Question: How to do impact assessment? Will there be a placement wing to create opportunities? Many employability training programs fail because of a lack of connections.
   ● Answer: Not looking at employment. Smile Foundation had 60-70% placement and got a Smile Microsoft certificate. The proposed program is a “learning enhancement” program so that they have more skills to be employable.

3. Question: Are you planning to keep it going if Asha doesn’t provide the funding?
   ● Answer: Depends if we can get some other funding

4. Comment: Students will forget if they don’t keep practicing. Training that does not end in something, certificate or job, there is not much retention.
   ● Response: Just for them to learn. With the hope that even if 2 people get a job, it’s worth it. It is a backup program to provide them with digital literacy. “Digital-aided backup coaching”. They become more comfortable with digital.

5. Question: Do you have connections with the companies so that external funding can be procured?
   ● We had connections with the smile foundation. We can try to build them again.

Suggestions about the vocational training:

● Free online courses to give certifications e.g. https://www.coursera.org/learn/introduction-to-computers-and-office-productivity-software

● Suggested to charge fees to the students. Free things are often not regarded as important.

● The current budget is for 5 centers. Possible to start/continue with 1 or 2 centers.

Action Item:

● Decide about the funding situation of Hijli.

● Look into online courses and helping them procure computers.