

2017-18 Conference Call and Budget Discussion

The conference call with Mr. R. Ramakrishna Murthy, the newly appointed Director of Manasa School for special children was attended by 5 attendees from Asha Purdue: Praveen Abbaraju, Prasoon Diwakar, Neha Chaudhary, Gaurav Nanda, Rohil Jain and Kushagra Singh on 26th of November 2017, Sunday.

The salient points of the discussion are as follows:

1. Total current strength as of 26th of November was 83 including only 2 children from financially stable backgrounds and across ages.
2. Current staff on role supported by Asha is 6 teachers and 2 therapists- 1 physio-therapist and 1 speech-therapist. The new director emphasized the need to hire a psychotherapist and an occupational therapist. He said that these therapists are needed not only for the children but also for the parents who not be explained very specifically the kind of environment that should be provided to the kids.
3. Mr. Murthy also affirmed his commitment to make use of the sanitary napkins machines that were bought with Asha Purdue funds 2 years ago.
4. In response to the questions about current sources of funding, Mr. Murthy said that they were currently funded by the Manasa board members through small monthly commitments and a corporate sponsor <http://www.sgipl.com/> who is providing support for the director's salary and has also shown commitment towards setting up a degree program in mental health at manasa.
5. Mr. Murthy also talked about his efforts towards making Manasa sustainable in the next couple of years but finding more committed source of funding, personal and corporate both and also building up sustainability within the institution by doing things like setting up the degree program.
6. The new budget included mainly salaries that were supported last year (6 teachers + 2 therapists) along with 2 new therapists (1 psycho therapist and 1 occupational therapist), 10% increment over the last year, funds for supporting driver salary, fuel and maintenance costs for 2 buses for kids with severe disability, marketing cost of the sanitary napkins project, funds for teaching and learning material, food for the kids and cost of conducting workshop for the parents which was also discussed during the call.

Discussion between the volunteers:

1. Most of the volunteers were of the opinion to support the teachers' salaries depending on the availability of funds.
2. Support for some of the smaller budget items such as marketing cost for sanitary napkins project and teaching and learning material depending on the availability of funds.
3. Rest of the budget items be funded by local support as has been the trend in the past.
4. New volunteers found the call very thorough and informative and expressed their happiness with supporting the project.