

Conference Call Date and Time: 11:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time, Sunday, August 13, 2017

Agenda: To discuss Gautam's Asha Fellowship application

Participants: Gautam, Prason, Neha, Rohil, Praveen, Sandhya, Srivathsan, Gaurav

Minutes

1. Introduction to Asha Fellowship program - general expectations, roles and responsibilities:
 - a. Asha has not awarded fellowship in last 3-4 years
 - b. Idea to support high impact work, new ideas, implementations on large scale
 - c. Support individual with proven work record to explore and test new ideas
 - d. Fellows can help mentor, review other Asha projects in the area
 - e. Fellows can help in RTE implementation in their areas
 - f. Fellows expected to attend Asha-India conference
 - g. Fellowship support for 3-4 years
 - h. Fellowship application first approved by chapter then by Asha Central team
 - i. On approval, fellowship amount for 1 year will be remitted to Diksha's account from which Gautam can withdraw fellowship salary
2. Among various innovative ideas listed in the fellowship application and Q&A document, what are some of the things that are tested and things that you would focus on implementing in Diksha in next 3 years?

Gautam's Response:

- a. Open House/ Town Hall - monthly review, children get a chance to speak, voice their concerns about peers, teachers, syllabus, other things
- b. Bal Sansad - Idea is to teach children about the idea of democracy. Children become prime minister, other ministers, and volunteers. Democracy involves rights and responsibilities. Current role of children in society gives them rights but not responsibilities. Idea is to test their behavior when they are given responsibilities. It has been implemented at Patna center. Earlier focus was inwards -how they manage themselves and the center. Future focus will be outwards - have opinion on things that matter to them- kind of politics, socio-economic conditions, involves more reflection.
- c. Based on model by Prof. Tony Booth - manual reflection circle among teachers to discuss issues such as - does every child get equal opportunities at the center, issues in teaching, issues in dealing with students. This has not been implemented in other centers.
- d. Fifth Space (not sure if the name is correct) concept implemented by Pravah (which had mentored Diksha in 2011-2013): Designed for youth, it provides a platform for reflection and discussion in a non-judgemental manner. It is relevant for Diksha as some of its students will start going to college soon and their expectations and needs would be different from rest of the children.
- e. Computer training program for women
- f. Another project with Pravah - Jagrik - Based on constitutional rights of individual and involves learning through gamification. Diksha's vision is not just to make people literate but to make them responsible and aware citizens who can help the society.
- g. New technology initiatives using Tablet and Computers. One of the softwares they are experimenting with is called Magogini - it has been implemented successfully in schools in China. Aimed towards Maths for grades 3-6. One of the challenges is that the app is in English and many children study in Hindi. Diksha also wants to implement a school learning management system for which they are exploring options with Salesforce. They have started using Slack - a messaging app with data organization features.

- h. Gautam is interacting with UNICEF to implement UNICEF's 'Child Friendly Schools' concept in its center and Bal Sansad covers some aspects of it.
 - i. Conducted some workshops in schools on different topics such as RTE , Responsible use of social media.
3. Question: Involvement with implementing RTE in private schools?
 - a. Gautam involved at idea and discussion level with some organizations that work towards implementing RTE in private schools.
 - b. Currently, Diksha is not actively working towards getting RTE implemented in private schools. When Diksha started, it started as a non-formal educational institution but with time it aligned itself to RTE and started enrolling kids coming to its center to government and low-cost private schools. Now all the children are enrolled in schools and the center timings are in evening to provide supplemental education.
 - c. If Asha is interested, Gautam can work towards getting RTE implemented in private schools by collaborating with some organizations that are already working on it in that region.
 - d. One of the ideas is to conduct RTE information camps and sessions for parents and collaborate with schools to get the 'low income 25% RTE' students into private schools.
 4. Question: What is the total number of students that Diksha reaches through its centers and IGNITE program?
 - a. About 100 children come to Diksha's Patna center that Asha Purdue supports. Including other centers Nalanda and other places, total 400 children come to center.
 - b. In the IGNITE program, they reach out to several schools in their area and connected with about 10,000 children from different schools.
 5. Gautam is willing to do site visits, review, mentor other Asha projects in the areas of Bihar, UP, Delhi.
 6. Regarding teacher training, Diksha has been working with CreateNet - a Delhi based organization working in the area of teacher training and has been successful in Delhi area by first conducting camps for school principals and then working with them on teacher training. They also plan to collaborate with other organizations such as Avishkar in the area of teacher training and send their trained teachers to schools nearby to share the knowledge and best practices.
 7. Asha Purdue volunteers asked to document his initiatives and ideas so that they are recorded and can be shared with other projects. There is also potential for academic publishing since new ideas are being tested with children. We suggested Gautam to collect data so that it can be shared for academic purposes. Gautam is also interested in academic publishing and research.
 8. Question - Will Diksha be able to manage if Gautam started working as Asha Fellow? Any challenges?

Gautam's response - Diksha's daily operations are being managed by Shyamlika. When Gautam took a study-break of two years, they have been able to manage the center well and the roles and responsibilities of center coordinator are also well-defined now. Gautam has also learned with time what things to let go off to be managed by other people and where he needs to intervene . The center staff is stable for next 3-4 years. There may be personal events such as marriage which might affect center operations but things are well-defined if a new person needs to join or take additional responsibilities. So, Diksha's work will not get hampered with Gautam working as an Asha fellow.

Post- Call Comments: All the participants were in favor of Asha fellowship for Gautam. He seems to be a good candidate for Asha fellowship. There was discussion about reporting requirements for fellowship- if Gautam should provide a quarterly or annual report. Some suggestion was to let him self-report the things he is

working on. The budget of fellowship would be \$4700 per year (Rs 25,000 per month) for next 3-4 years. Since Gaurav would be leaving Purdue, we need to identify project stewards for Diksha and Fellowship.