

# CAF India-Oracle supported Program Reporting Format

## 1. GENERAL PPROJECT/PROGRAM INFORMATION

Project/Program Name	Sangamam Kanini
Implementing Partner Name & contact details	Asha (Chennai chapter)
Location of Project/Program	Chennai, Thiruvallur Dist.
Total beneficiaries of Project/Program	1500
Total beneficiaries benefited in reporting period	1500
Sectoral Focus (e.g. Education, Community Development, Environment etc.) Schedule VII of CSR Act 2013	Education
Date Project/Program Commenced	Jan 2015
Expected date of Project/Program Completion	Ongoing. Initial phase complete by April 2016.
Total Project/Program Budget	Rs 1365030
Budget for the reporting period (year)	Approx 857000.
Reporting Period - Report covers activities implemented in the period:	April 2015 to Mar 2016.

## 2. PROJECT/ROGRAM BRIEF

### 2.1Project/program Background ( 100 words)

Asha Chennai has been supporting government schools for a number of years. We are currently supporting 20+ government schools spread across Tamilnadu. At these schools we have been providing teachers and some materials to the school/students to improve the quality of education at these schools.

Through this Sangamam Kanini project we intend to have a more direct impact on the education processes in the classrooms through the use of computers. The mechanisms used include,

1. Provide laptop and internet connections to the teachers. These would be used for the things mentioned in point 3 below.
2. Maintain the computer labs at the schools and provide these internet connections and enable these computers to also be used for things mentioned in point 3.
3. Provide contents for the teachers to use for teaching including - lesson plans and other teacher aids, passive contents they can show to a class, active contents like educational games that the students can play.
4. Conduct assessments to track the performance of the children.
5. Enable the tracking of assessment scores and do analytics on these.
6. Provide regular training to the teachers and align this training to the materials provided to the schools so that they can be done in the classes. (Note this is covered under the other projects that support our government school efforts.)

### 2.2Activity Reporting ( in brief) 250 words

#### 2.2.1 Project/Program Progress Activity Table

- Instructions & Examples -

<b>Planned Activities Per results</b>  (As per the proposal and based on thematic areas)	<b>Result</b>  Please include numbers of program participants reached per output. Please list men, women, children and people with disabilities separately.  If the indicator is quantifiable, use numeric measures.  <i>What did we deliver as a result of the activities?</i>	<b>Remarks</b> (if there is specific remark on on result or activity)
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<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Give laptop, Wifi hotspot and network access to teachers at about 4 per month. Total of 25 laptops (22 from this project funds).	We purchased all the 22 laptops as planned. The last seven were purchased in October and November. All the laptops have been distributed to the teachers in the schools as planned. All the teachers at places where there is network connectivity have been provided Wifi hotspots with network connection as well.	This work has been completed. The teachers have also been trained in how to use the laptops and the contents we have provided.
Give projector, speakers and other things as required to school to effectively show contents at the schools.	We have given projectors and screens to PUPS Ammambakkam, PUPS Gandhigram, PUPS Kuppammal Chathiram and PUPS Kannigaiper.	Many of the schools either have a projector already or do not have the computer and other infrastructure needed to host a projector in the school. Therefore we gave these only to 4 schools.
Maintain the computer labs	All the computers at the various schools that have computer labs were fixed by October timeframe. However with the rains many of the computers once again developed problems. At the end of December we were once again starting to fix these. These got completed in January.	Some of the older machines are also being condemned because it is not viable to repair these.
Provide computers to 5 schools without adequate computers and to Asha's system administrator and project coordinator at Thiruvallur.	Laptops were provided to the schools at Odaikuppam (Chennai), Nemiliagaram, Kottaikulam, Allikuzhi and Placepalayam. Laptops have been given to our system administrator and project coordinator at Thiruvallur as well.	This was extra work which we proposed later. This work has been completed as planned.
<b>Software</b>		
Develop software for delivering the contents to the teachers/classes	The first version of the software was developed in September and it has been enhanced through the rest of the year. All the teachers laptops and the school computers are running this software. They are being used on all the computers as well.	A new version of the software with improved interface is being developed. This should be available before the beginning of the next academic year.
Other Asha Software	Still only at the idea stage. We have plans for also developing an English read-along software. This effort has not started.	This was not intended as part of Phase-I of Sangamam Kanini which is this year of the project. We may however do this towards the later part of the year.
Other third party software	Laptops are installed with all the software required to view the contents provided to them including Windows 8.1 or Windows 10, Browsers, flash, Java Runtime Environment, Open Office, OOo4Kids, Tux Paint, MSW Logo etc.	As the contents are being enhanced we will also ensure the laptops have all the required third party software to view the contents. We typically will use popular free software. We got the licenses for Windows from Microsoft donation program (through Nasscom BigTech / Tech Soup).

## Contents

English Lesson Recordings	These were recorded by a volunteer Mrs. Rekha Balakrishnan. Recordings lessons of all the three terms are available. These have been mapped to the lessons and made available to the teachers. The teachers are beginning to use them.	
Maths Instructions	We couldn't get these ready for term 1 in time. They were made available for term 2 only by the middle of the term. The instructions for term 3 was available in time.	Tamil translations of these instructions is still required.
Third party contents mapped and made available to the teachers -- StarFall, Khan Academy Tamil, TN textbooks, Simply English, E-Speak, OneStopEnglish games, Azim Premji Foundation, Hello English, Toon Masti, ECTAL, PhET simulations etc.	These have been provided to the teachers and they are using them.	The teachers have also identified and brought to our attention contents on their own. These are also being provided on the computers.
Contents that are still planned: Word Search Puzzles, Math Bingo Games, NLVM, MathIsFun, MangaHign, MathGames, MathPickle. PhET and other growing list of free educational websites and software.	These are yet to be downloaded, mapped and made available to our teachers. But several of these are directly being used by the teachers from the Internet especially MathGames and MathIsFun.	We are hoping to include many of these by the coming academic year and also train the teachers on how to use them.

## Assessments

Assessments in April 2015.	There was massive assistance given during the assessments to the students by the teachers in many of the schools. We have got realiable data from the assessments only for 6 schools.	
Grading and Analysis of the April 2015 Assessments	We used our own teachers to do the grading and entering of the marks into Excel sheets which were then uploaded to our database. This finally got completed in early August. We completed a minimal analysis of this data and provided it to the teachers and teacher trainers.	Entering the marks into the Excel sheet was very time consuming and also error prone. Though we put in error checks into the Excel sheet to prevent wrong data, it was not sufficient. Some more analysis can be done in the server for viewing live by teachers/others. We will be taking this up as we go along.

Assessments in Feb 2016	We were planning to conduct the assessments in the middle of Term 2 (i.e. by mid November). However because of the rains and floods this got pushed out and we conducted them in Feb 2016 in English and Maths. We were able to conduct this without any problems in the 14 government schools we support.	While the children did well in Maths, we could identify several holes in how they have been taught. We have given the feedback for this to the schools. However in English the levels of the children is far below the required level and we have to approach the assessment differently.
Grading and Analysis of the Feb 2016 Assessments	Because of the preparations, these also happened a lot more smoothly this time. Analysis was completed and a report was given to all the school Head Mistresses.	

### **Usage of the teacher laptops, school computers and contents provided**

Usage of computers and contents	All the teachers that we have provided the laptops to are effectively using the contents provided to them. At Olcott memorial school the teachers are also using the computers for the online English course they are taking from British council. The contents have been installed in all the government computers (where they could be installed). These are also being used along with our own teachers' laptops. In particular the laptops Asha has given to the schools are being effectively used.	<p>The details provided on usage is from the teachers own reporting and observation by the project coordinator and volunteers. The usage data monitoring in our software has some problems that need to be addressed.</p> <p>It was a very pleasant observation when the teachers started finding several useful websites by themselves and started using them in preference to the websites we have told them about. This ultimately is the most important goal of the project. i.e. Empower the teachers to improve their teaching by providing them the right aids. It was a joy to see that this was beginning to happen.</p>
Mailing list / Forum for teacher interactions and interaction with trainers.	A mailing list has been formed but is not being used actively yet.	
Teach Computer Science to the students.	The two computer teachers are teaching basic computer science to the children at 4 schools. They have been doing this for several years now and not just as part of this project. We trained all the teacher on Logo. The computer teachers have also been training some of the older class children (esp. the 6 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> Std students at PUMS Ramanjeri) in programming with Logo.	We are trying to evolve a syllabus for the same and also get the children to do something like a multi-media presentation with open office software. We are also hoping to introduce more tools for teaching programming etc. like Logo, Snap, Scratch etc. in our schools.
Other Usage	The assessments were graded by the teachers and entered into an Excel sheet using their laptops and the computers already in the Thiruvallur office. The two computer teachers have been assisting us in mapping the	All this is part of the overall goal of training and empowering the teachers as well.

	contents to lessons. In all these they have been using Microsoft office software in a few computers and using email and Whatsapp to send things to us.	
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### 2.3 Challenges and difficulties ( 100 words)

There have been several challenges we have encountered during the execution of the projects.

1. The April 2015 Assessments proved to be a challenge in multiple ways.
  - It was a challenge to administer tests for about 1200 children - Photocopying the papers distributing it to the schools etc.
  - Setting papers which truly test the achievement levels of children that is aligned to a curriculum is a specialized exercise. I would say we achieved that for Maths but only partially met it for English and Tamil.
  - In most of the schools we realized that the teachers had actively coached the children before the exam. We realized the mistakes of distributing the papers to the schools couple of days before the assessment. In many of the schools the government teachers engaged in helping the students even during the test even after we requested them to stop it. In the second round of tests we prevented this by having a large enough number of volunteers to conduct the tests ourselves.
  - Students were finding it difficult to write three tests on the same day. We also realized it is almost meaningless to conduct these kinds of written assessments for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> standard children. They were rarely able to hold their concentration for that long and their reading and writing skills were not that developed.
  - Correcting the assessments and entering the marks into a database was also a lot more time consuming than anticipated. This took really long and then when the files were being transferred from the Excel files to the database, our script found a lot of errors.
2. The assessments conducted in Feb 2016 went much better. We had a combination of written and oral tests. Here also we encountered a few problems.
  - The English tests were well beyond the capabilities of the children to answer. We need to set it such a level as they are able to answer.
  - For the oral tests, we used the tests from the ASER survey. However in Maths these tests have huge jump in levels. We can design an oral assessment that is better suited for our needs.
3. Engaging volunteers for content development, developing software, mapping content to lessons etc. has proved to be challenge. Many of the people who come to volunteer for software development, do not have the necessary skills and do not have access to the necessary environment for the development. So it often ended up being a non-starter. Further giving tight deadlines to people who are doing things voluntarily without pay was not possible.
4. Even for some pay, we found it difficult to get people with necessary skills to maintain computers (repair hardware problems, setup Wifi network, install software etc.) in remote rural areas. We have had to take people from either Chennai or Thiruvallur to address the issues.

## **2.4 Lessons Learned ( 100 words)**

We are yet to come to some understanding on the broader goals of this project. i.e. Does empowering the teacher with a laptop, Internet connection, right kind of contents, training etc. improve the quality of education? However we have learnt several intermediate lessons.

1. We learnt a lot regarding how to conduct or more particularly how not to conduct assessments. We will further refine our assessments over the next year.
2. We have become proficient at handling the logistics of distributing laptops to the teachers, maintaining the computer lab at the schools, etc. We know what hardware and what internet service provider works for establishing network connectivity at the schools.
3. We have learnt that it is better to pay someone for developing software and contents. Voluntary mode of development can only take us so far. For this phase of the project, we are still mostly dependent on volunteer based effort. However for developing maths assessments, training and instructions for teachers we are paying Ramanujan Museum and Centre for Math Resources (though the amount they are charging us is a lot less than their usual rate). We are also getting the contents mapped to Samacheer Kalvi lessons using our own two computer teachers (who are paid).

## **3. Project Visibility**

There hasn't been any media coverage of our project. The project has a page in the Asha website. See the link: <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=1228>.

## **4. Volunteer engagement**

There are broadly two kinds of opportunities for Oracle volunteers:

1. Software development using node (Javascript), node webkit and MySQL.
2. Training our teachers on standard software (office products, internet). It would also be useful to train them on software specific for teaching children like Logo, Snap, Scratch etc.

Neither of these have fixed dates associated to them. The software development would be done by the volunteers on their own with occasional merges with our effort.. The training sessions can be held on any Saturday or other non-school day for the teacher. We can schedule these as per the convenience of the Oracle volunteers. So far this has not happened.