

Asha Austin Chapter

Project:	Prasanna Jyothi
Purpose:	Monthly update call.
Time/Date/Location:	9.30pm (CST)/12/2/09/ Conference Call
Attendees:	Sundari Maami, Sharanya Rao & Shriya Ravikumar

Meeting Minutes:

General Updates on Children:

- 1) Children did not perform as well as expected in the 1st semester exams. Sundari Mami's guess is that it is because of the new school, which has a more accelerated curriculum, and a higher standard of English and the children are finding it a little harder to keep up.
- 2) Grades are all above average, except for 1 child who failed, but not As as the children used to receive in the previous school.
- 3) Sundari Mami is giving the children additional tuition lessons as a result and thinks it will take at least 6 months for the children to adjust and get their grades up again.
- 4) Currently, Sundari Mami, Ratna Mami, and Sanju's mother provide free tuition for the children. There is also a paid tuition teacher.
- 5) There is an individual who has expressed interest in helping out at PJ and Sha and Shriya will get in touch with her to see if she can tutor. Sundari Mami mentioned that this would be a good area to help out during Shriya's site visit in October.
- 6) The children are otherwise preparing to write their monthly tests. Final exams will be in next March.
- 7) The children are doing very well otherwise, and one of the younger girls won a fancy dress competition at school.
- 8) The music teacher comes every Wednesday and Thursday and teaches carnatic music, bhajans and the harmonium to kids from 1st standard onwards. Children younger than that have not been very attentive during these classes and hence do not participate as much. The teacher's monthly fees have been around 1600 rupees. This might change and Mami will let us know the updated rate when she finds out.
- 9) The art teacher does not come anymore as she is on maternity leave.
- 10) Mami is looking for a dance teacher but no one has been willing to come to the orphanage. Mami fears sending the children to an outside school to learn dance. She is going to look into whether the school van can take the older children to an external dance class. The younger children seem to be picking up some of these skills from the older children at PJ itself.
- 11) One child is particularly good at art. Mami is going to see if she can send her to an art class next summer.

- 12) One of the older girls, who is currently in Nursing school, is doing well and has been getting good exposure at her current position. She will be finishing up next year, after which she will apply to internship/residency programs. Mami thinks that she will stay with PJ until she is able to earn a steady income. Mami will talk to her about her future plans shortly.
- 13) The next oldest child is in 9th standard and will join pre-university upon completing 10th standard next year. All other children are significantly younger than that.

Construction of PJ School –

- 14) Since Sundari Mami just returned from the US and has been busy tutoring the children, she has not been able to follow-up on the status of the school planning and construction. She will be contacting the Trust soon to find out more details.
- 15) Below are her responses to specific questions asked by the Austin chapter:

Q. Does the new school comply with the requirements of the Right to Education (RTE)?

There have been delays in the planning and construction of this new school for which the reasons are not known yet. Mami will enquire with the Trust to find out more detail on this front. Nonetheless, when the time comes around to it, the school plans will have to be approved by the Bangalore Corporation (state government body). We do not know yet if the school will comply with the requirement of RTE.

Q. How many kids will be enrolled in the new school?

The plans for the school have not yet been finalized and as a result the capacity of the school is not known at this point in time. Again, Mami will enquire with the Trust and find out more details.

Q. What happens to the playing space for the PJ kids?

Once the school is built, the children will play in the road area right outside PJ. It is a relatively safe space with minimal traffic as the orphanage is located at a dead end. Additionally, Mami mentioned that even now, with the exception of few children and in the summer, most of the kids play indoor games like carom etc.

Q. Will the PJ kids attend that school?

The school is intended to start with LKG, UKG, and 1st standard and use english-medium. New PJ kids who fall in the age range to attend these grades will attend the new school. Currently, there are only 3 kids in that age group

and all of them would have graduated to higher levels by the time the school is constructed.

Q. Any concerns with the impact of the school on the safety, privacy, etc of PJ once the new school is operational?

There will be an iron gate separating the school and the orphanage, which will be locked during non-operating hours. Additionally, the children attending the PJ school would have left by the time the PJ children return from their schools. There is also a warden and watchman who will be in-charge security and making sure the children do not leave unnecessarily.

Q. Does the music teacher also teach dance? Are the plans for dance lessons in addition to music lessons?

No, the music teach does not also teach dance. Mami is looking for someone to teach dance lessons but currently no one is willing to come to the orphanage to teach. Mami fears sending the children to an outside school to learn dance because of safety and transportation.

Other Updates:

- 16) All 23 children except for 1 child who joined earlier this year have sponsorship. Sha and Shriya have heard from individuals who are interested in sponsoring a child at PJ and will contact them to confirm before assigning an official sponsor to this child.
- 17) The unsponsored child joined PJ in June and was admitted to the new school in July. If a donor comes forward, we will start sponsorship immediately instead of waiting till the next annual donation cycle.
- 18) Mami will send additional background details about this child soon
- 19)

Action Items:

No.	Action Item	Assignee	Status
1	Send background on new girl.	Sundari Mami	
2	Find out details on progress of new school construction.	Sundari Mami	
3	Contact volunteer in Bangalore to tutor PJ children.	Sha/Shriya	
4	Contact interested donors in sponsoring new girl at PJ.	Sha/Shriya	