



# *Asha for Education*<sup>TM</sup>

*UFlorida Chapter*

Gators for Asha, 300-9 J W Reitz Union, P.O Box 118505, Gainesville, FL 32601

www.ashanet.org/uflorida

## **FORWORD Conference Call Minutes**

**February 6<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **Attendees:**

#### **From Asha UFlorida:**

1. Shiva Halan (Project Steward)
2. Ravi Venkatraman
3. Tanvi Ajantiwalay
4. Vishal Vignesh
5. Yogesh Deshmukh

#### **From FORWARD:**

Ms.Mathuram Shiamala Baby

**Goal:** To get updates about the project and to discuss questions from the budget.

**Budget:** [https://ashadocserver.s3.amazonaws.com/263\\_Budgetfortheyear2018-2019.pdf](https://ashadocserver.s3.amazonaws.com/263_Budgetfortheyear2018-2019.pdf)

#### **Project Updates:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bBbzhI9qobI2oIK8J9ePOh4eFYzmBdkwUP6O9d1XRPo/edit>

### **Minutes:**

Since we had two volunteers who were completely new to the project, the conference call started with the typical introductions to the volunteers and the contact from the project, Ms.Shiamala Baby. Ms. Shiamala Baby started off the call by giving an introduction to project FORWARD. Ms.Shiamala Baby briefly touched upon how she founded FORWARD after being a victim of domestic violence and what the goals of the organization are. Then she talked about the education centers in specific and the impact they have had on the overall holistic improvement in the community.

**General introduction to educational centers:** FORWARD runs 13 evening learning centers in thirteen different areas in and around Tambaram in Kanchipuram district of Tamilnadu. The goal of the educational centers is to:

- help the students with their academics,
- reduce school dropouts,
- motivate achievement in academics and continued learning,



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- help control the social evils of child labor and child marriage
- create awareness among the parents and the community about the importance of education *and*
- create leaders for the society through educating the children at an early age about their social responsibilities and duties and thereby facilitating the control of social evils plaguing the area like alcoholism and corruption.

A detailed list of each learning center, the location, and student strength and teacher information is presented in the budget proposal document linked above.

**Qn: Who are the employees at FORWARD who are paid from this budget and do they get funded fully by Asha UFlorida or are there other sources of income?**

There are three main administrative personnel who coordinate all the educational activity at FORWARD in addition to the 13 teachers who coordinate each one of the 13 learning centers. These three administrative personnel are:

- **Mr. Edwin – Educational Program Coordinator** (Rs. 12,000 per month): The program coordinator is responsible for visiting the centers at least once every two weeks and making sure the centers and the teachers have everything they need for successful functioning of the centers. He reviews all the logistics and facilities at each center, the attendance sheets to make sure students are regularly attending and pays the salary of the teachers from FORWARD. The program coordinator is critical to the success of the learning centers. He is supported only by the Asha UFlorida grant and does not draw funds from any other source.
- **Ms. Velankanni – Community Organizer** (Rs. 8000 per month): The community organizer is in-charge of liaison with the community and predominantly works with the women folk to identify and train them on alternate livelihood opportunities. This liaison with the community is critical for helping the centers operate within the village premises and generating support for FORWARD's activities. Her salary is partially paid by Asha UFlorida grant and remaining is covered by funds from local contributions.
- **Ms. Shiamala Baby – Director**: Ms. Shiamala Baby is the founder director of FORWARD and although she does visit the centers often and supervises the work of the program coordinator and community organizer, she does not draw a salary from the Asha UFlorida grant or other grants. Her travel is occasionally covered by the travel portion of the budget being approved.

**Qn: What kind of training are the teachers provided with? Especially during the Saturday get-together of teachers?**

The main goal of the teacher training is to teach them new methods to teach the students and increase the awareness of tools that will help them teach the students. Some of the commonly discussed items are:



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- No partiality for students. How to treat all the students similarly.
- Evaluate their progress of children. What are indicators of students performing well or performing poorly?
- Plan for upcoming month. What topics to cover and how to cover them
- Plan event for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month
- Get feedback and guidance from experienced teachers in the community like Mr. Franklin from Jothi Nagar.

**Qn: With smartphones being used everywhere, even in the rural areas these days, can we get some audio or video narratives directly from the alumni of the FORWARD centers about what they are upto and how being at the learning centers has helped them?**

Yes, definitely. Ms. Shiamala Baby will initiate to gather these success stories and share with the Asha UFlorida team at the earliest.