**URGENT** Do you approve Asha Darshan’s budget of Rs.2,736,140 for 2014?

Yes 100% (11) No 0% (0)

- Voters
  - 11 people voted for
  - Yes
    - tomadhu
    - santhoshsriram
    - gargritika04
    - sekar.raghavan
    - helloyashhello
    - ruksana2007
    - vijitvmaire
    - reshu_rajiv
    - iyengar73
    - pratik_mehta_99
    - amitsharma04

**Meeting Minutes: 3/12/2014**
Attendees: Pooja Sarraf, Amit, Ritika, Sekar

**Asha Darshan Project Renewal Presentation: Ritika**

- Bodoland territorial council
- Borders Bhutan
- High insurgency in this area
That is why asha darshan trust was started
- from self help groups in which women were involved
- they started schools
Three different groups
- Self Help Groups
- Mahila shanti sena
- Schools
- Asha SV is supporting this project since 2001

- Asha Darshan currently runs 11 schools with 37 teachers
- Around 1400 students are enrolled this year
- Schools range from Balwadis (pre-primary) to Middle schools (up to 10th grade)
- Students' age ranges from 4 to 15 years old
- Mid-day meals are provided to students
- Educational tours are organized and students are involved in different social awareness programs
- Art & craft and tailoring classes are organized in summer vacations for girls

Recently self defense classes were organized for girls safety
Vallabhi organized those classes for 4 days
Biju, project coordinator wants to have more such classes

Details of schools: refer slide

Self Help Groups:
- 10 to 20 women join hands in each Self Help Group
- Each saves Rs.5/week in nationalized banks
- Together the SHG takes loans from the bank
- Currently 473 groups in 2 districts
- Asha Darshan effectively and efficiently monitors the functioning of these groups
- Women are trained in bookkeeping, responsible saving, and micro-credit schemes

Recently they (SHG women) visited Calcutta where they sold their products, where there was reasonable response
Have a shop in Tamulpur to sell their products. Planning to change the shop’s name; going to give a fancier name (Maithri was mentioned).

They were invited for International Womens Day. Other organizations provide information about exhibition happening in the area. SHG women sold products such as silk sarees at the IWD; hard to sell within villages. But not very profitable right now. Shop needs rent.

Mahila Shanti Sena:
- Discuss problems and come to solutions, such as drinking problems
- Organizes walks, holds workshops and urges population to participate in gainful employment
- Currently 250 groups in 2 districts
- Each group has 5 or 10 women
- Frequent meetings are organized by the groups/villagers to discuss the latest community problems
Other Villagers are also involved in it.

Budget:

- Since 2012, budget amount is Rs. 1,885,360 after 20% cut.
- Project partner is requesting to increase salary of teachers and staff.
- Mid-day meals are irregular due to lack of funds, almost 100% attendance and inflation.

Asha Darshan Trust has one school in Manipur, that is funded by Asha Stamford.
- Since 2012, budget amount is Rs. 1,885,360 after 20% cut.
- Project partner is requesting to increase salary of teachers and staff.
- Mid-day meals are irregular due to lack of funds, almost 100% attendance and inflation.

Asha Stamford contribution is contingent upon SV's continued support to Asha Darshan

Questions
Now there are some primary schools opened under RTE. Is Asha Darshan doing anything to take advantage of these?
- It is a lot of struggle to get books from the Govt. It comes from Bodoland
- 3-4 schools were taken over by the Govt. in the last few years.
Govt is supposed to provide the meals as well. But that is not happening Biju is still trying to get some traction.

Are the current schools registered/recognized by RTE?
- No
Are there any steps we can take to help the schools take advantage of RTE?
- Discussion about RTE Compliant vs RTE eligible schools.

**Are the schools compliant with RTE? Ritika will check**
If there are primary schools what can be done to transition students to that school?
- The schools teach in a different language so they are not comfortable going to those schools. So the students continue with Asha Darshan school.

**Amit: Assamese vs Bodo language, Asha Darshan can provide teachers to the Govt schools to**
teach Bodo language, local dialect. Govt schools might have strict qualification requirements for teachers. Have we explored that option? Ritika will check

Need to get the following:
- Qualification of Headmasters
- What was their previous salaries of the staff/teachers
- Need to have a description of various staff and teacher roles, what do they exactly do
- Staff Honorarium breakdown with comparison
- Include a slide or two on success story, Impact of Asha Darshan etc.: 16 students are writing board exams
- Something to emphasize what has been achieved in 14 years by Asha Darshan.

Asha Darshan teachers are not trained on English/Hindi, teachers that speak English charge 10,000 or more per month; cannot afford.

Local dialect vs higher education needs to be balanced. Need to suggest them to have regular teacher training programs

After 14 years we are discussing the same problems. Needs to be addressed with Asha Darshan and see what needs to change.

There are schools that provide higher education that teach in local dialects as well.

Highest level of education that Asha Darshan provides is 10th standard

Question: What is the average age of students going to grade 8 or grade 10. What happened to children who have passed out of grade 8 or grade 10.

Teacher training: When was the last time teacher training happened?
2 years or 3 years back there was teacher training, why it is not happening again?

Need to suggest some teacher training programs to Ritika: Ritika to send an email to asha-vol asking about teacher training programs that could be used by Asha Darshan.

Lot of violence in that area: shutdown/police etc., Biju is facing the problem of not being able to send the teachers to those areas.

Last site visit in Sept 2013 by Dr. Vallabh 4 schools (It is in hindi, needs to be translated)

DeenDayal Ji visited rest 7 schools in April.
Conclusion to get the above questions answered, get the missing info, and have another presentation.
We want to have some answers showing some plan/roadmap/evidence showing willingness from NGO to try and work towards resolving the above issues.

**Meeting Minutes: 4/16/2014**
Attendees: Ritika, Yash Sharman, Sekar, Amit Sharma*, Subashree*
(* On the phone)

Asha Darshan Urgent Funding situation and Renewal discussion combined: Ritika

Please go through the [March 12th meeting minutes, corrected version](#) for the original presentation. This meeting is a follow up to that.
Also please refer to the answers to follow up questions from previous meeting as well.
In addition, here is the slide deck used for the original presentation.

At Asha Darshan (AD) has not received funding due to logistical delays from Asha-SV and they have been facing severe financial hardship in the past 3 months. This funding hardship is exacerbated by the fact that Assam is celebrating Bohag Bihu (Assamese New Year) and its teachers/staff hasn't been paid properly for last few months. A couple of very experienced teachers have left as they are getting better salary elsewhere.

Till last year mid day meals 351600. This was sufficient only for 2 months. This year they have increased the budget to Rs. 786,060. However Asha Stamford will contribute $300,000. So Asha-SV is being asked to provide Rs. 486,060

Total budget: 2,736,140 or $45600.
Amit's opinion: The urgency for funding is real. We need to immediately address it. However, the funding asked seems to be slightly high. But we don't have the complete picture. So we should leave it up to the steward's judgment.

Steward's judgment: Ritika is confident that they really need the funding that they are asking for. Considering that good teachers are leaving, it is time to get their salaries corrected to address the attrition as well as the midday meals problem.

RTE is not applicable in AD's region (insurgency area): Baksa district
Ritika has agreed to:
1) Follow up to get more schools Govt recognized
2) Follow up on teacher training efforts

Amit raised a good point: It has been 14 years since AD was started; we are still facing the same problems. It looks like what AD is doing is not the answer. How do we solve the problem, how do we address this situation? These bigger questions need to be asked. Are we providing the right guidance to AD? What should we do differently going forward to start seeing a positive change.

One suggestion from Amit:
File an RTI application. Government had issued North East Special Development package: Schools, Hydel power etc. (3000 crore and then 6000 crore?)
Where was this money spent?

Conclusion: Asha-SV's role should be more than sending money, we need to enable them to bring about long standing changes (unlike what has happened in last 14 years)

Filing an RTI can be a big political burden on Biju/AD
So Amit suggests that we find the one most important question govt can answer us that is not too political and file RTI on that question. Take baby steps and inch towards change.

Two students were sent from TISS on internship to AD. But we have not received any project report.
Ritika to follow up on getting the report.

Amit to contact his contact in TISS and see how Asha-SV can help to understand what is the underlying problem. Maybe TISS and Asha-SV could play a more active role in helping them file an RTI

March 2014, next Audit report is due. Ritika to follow up on the audit report.