

Asha Stamford Tribal Empowerment Project (TEP) School Budget 2018-19 Discussion

Teleconference Call on May 28, 2018, 9:30 pm – 10:45 pm

Attendees: Sanjay Mellacheruvu, Jigar Shah, Bhargavi Ramamurthy (Asha Stamford), Joy Tel (TEP)

Background: We received the TEP 2018-19 Budget in April and a teleconference was scheduled for Asha Stamford project volunteers to review and discuss the budget. The following Table was circulated by Bhargavi Ramamurthy, comparing the proposed budget with the previous year's. We invited Joy Tel, our TEP Point of Contact, to join the call so that we could get an update on the school as well as answers to our questions on the budget and the happenings at school, goals etc.

TEP Budget Comparison (Amounts in Rupees)			
	2017-18	2018-19	% change
Staff Salary	524,400	673,992	29
Midday Meals	315,744	417,664	32
School repairs		55,000	
Travelling	16,000	16,000	0
Games and Sports Materials	35,000	35,000	0
Celebrations		16,000	
Refreshments for all activities	41,000	25,000	-39
Computer maintenance	63,000	8,000	-87
Stationery	45,000	45,000	0
Asha Rewards	20,000	20,000	0
Miscellaneous (telephone bill etc.)	15,000	15,000	0
Uniforms	0	0	0
Total	1,075,144	1,326,656	23
In USD	16,119	19,801	

DISCUSSION:

The proposed budget 2018-19 is a 23% increase over the previous year (see Table). The following were noted:

- The 23% increase in total budget outlays come from staff salary increases (~Rs. 1.5L increase) and increase in mid-day meals expenditure (about Rs. 1 lakh increase, as the number of months of provision increased from 3 to 4)
- Computer maintenance outlays show significant reduction
- All other outlays remain the same – refreshment outlays from last year are split between celebrations and refreshments for this year.
- No plan for distributing uniforms this year

Questions for Joy:

1. What is the source of the salary increase? How much does each staff member earn?
2. Why was there a decision to increase provision of mid-day meals from 3 to 4 months?
3. Why have computer maintenance outlays decreased?
4. The budget mentions water pipeline in school repairs; what is the status of water supply to the school?
5. We would need more regular photo and text updates from the school related to celebrations and any other happenings, including regular school day updates, to stay in touch with school progress, as well as to share information with our community. Is this possible?
6. What's the process for tracking these budgeted expenses?

Joy joined the call after our discussion and offered the following updates and clarifications:

Updates:

- School is running fine; teacher salaries delayed due to non-receipt of funds from Asha Stamford
- There has been a steady improvement in teacher retention and quality. Now the majority of teachers are graduates; Math and Science teachers are from Imphal (B.Sc).
- Presently there are 502 students, with 400 attending regularly on any given day. The rest are mostly absentees who assist families in their farms many days.
- There are classes upto 7th grade only; no plan to add grades as the focus is on providing good quality basic education to these children closer to their homes. After 7th they have options to go to Navodaya school (via merit entry) or other government or private schools nearby
- There are now 2 Navodaya schools in Ukhrul and about 7 students from TEP make it every year to these schools, which are fully paid education upto 12th standard
- The political situation in Manipur has improved since BJP Government took office and there is less instability and fewer safety issues in commuting from TEP to Imphal
- The medium term plan for TEP is to continue as they are presently, focusing on improving quality of education and training more kids to get into Navodaya

Clarifications/Answers to Questions:

1. Teacher salaries: Around mid-year last academic year, the teachers asked for higher salaries. With the prospect of losing them to other higher-paying schools, particularly the Math and Science teachers, their salaries were increased to match those in other private schools in the region. Joy covered the increases through his personal funds. The highest paid TEP teachers earn Rs. 7K and Rs. 6k (Math and Science), they are from Imphal. The rest of the teachers are local. Joy to provide detailed breakdown of salaries paid to the 12 school staff (10 teachers, 1 chowkidaar, 1 steward). With this increase, TEP is on par with other private schools and can expect more from the teachers in terms of quality of instruction. They also hope that retention will improve along with quality of instruction.

2. Mid-day meals: Since July through October are the lean months before the November harvest, and a majority of TEP families have scant supplies after June, TEP decided to resume the mid-day meals coverage to 4 months as it had been before last year. This improves student health and school outcomes. The increased outlay reflects this; menu is still the same as before.
3. Computer maintenance: Two computers have broken down and presently only 1 is operational. Student time on computers has been stopped as a result, and the one computer is only used for printing question papers and teacher demonstrations to the class. When asked about new computers, Joy mentioned there is a need, and it will cost approximately Rs. 20,000 for a new machine. They felt the budget had been already increased significantly so had not included this line item.
4. Water pipeline: The only source of water to the school is a pipeline from the nearby Army facility; and needs to be replaced this year due to wear and tear. There is no new source of water.
5. Regular updates: Joy said he would provide regular photo and text updates from schools regarding celebrations and other goings on.
6. Monitoring expenses: Due to FCRA requirements, the receipts and expenses are being tracked regularly, and Biju has been dealing with the Government in providing detailed use of funds received from Asha Stamford, and that will continue.

Action Items:

- Bhargavi to obtain the salary breakdown from Joy over email
- Vote on the budget by Asha Stamford volunteers by email. Also discuss the possibility of providing one desktop computer – through donation or via funds Rs. 20,000 – to TEP so that the children can resume hands-on instruction instead of mere teacher demos.

Minutes prepared by Bhargavi Ramamurthy on 5/29/18

UPDATE 5/31/18

Received breakdown of teachers/staff monthly salaries from Joy by email, as follows:

1. Thangboi, BA, Principal and Grammar Teacher – Rs. 7,000
 2. Onkhongam, BSc, Science Teacher – Rs. 6,000
 3. Priyo, BSc, Math Teacher – Rs. 6,000
 4. Jamiwon, BA, English Teacher – Rs. 5,000
 5. Lunkhochon, 12th Std, Moral Science Teacher – Rs. 4,500
 6. Jacqueline, MA, Hindi Teacher – Rs. 5,000
 7. Ringreiwon, BA, Social Studies Teacher – Rs. 4,500
- These 7 teach Classes I to VII; three teachers below teach nursery and UKG
8. Martha, 12th Std, - Rs. 4,500
 9. Phungyaola, 12th Std, - Rs. 4,500
 10. Elizabeth, 12th Std, - Rs. 4,000
 11. Rachel – Chowkidaar – Rs. 3,000
 12. Thanmila – Steward – Rs. 2,160
- TOTAL – Rs. 56,160

Note from Joy – Salary not directly proportional to qualification but depends on capabilities and length of stay in school.

UPDATE June 4, 2018

An email for voting was circulated on May 30, 2018 among Asha Stamford volunteers to vote on the TEP Budget for the following options:

- (1) Yes, to the requested budget of Rs. 13,26,656
- (2) Yes, to the requested budget of Rs. 13,26,656 PLUS funds for one computer Rs. 20,000 for a total budget of Rs. 13,46,656
- (3) Yes, to the requested budget of Rs. 13,26,656 PLUS physical donation of a working desktop(s) to TEP
- (4) No, need more answers (you must specify concerns or questions about the budget)

Six votes were received, three volunteers did not respond, as of June 4, 2018

The votes were as follows:

Option (1) – Zero

Option (2) – 6

Option (3) – Zero

Option (4) – Zero

One of the volunteers made the comment that while we approve additional Rs. 20,000 for purchasing a computer, we could also simultaneously look for donations of other machines.

As a result of this vote, the following REVISED budget is APPROVED by Asha Stamford for disbursement ASAP.

TEP Budget APPROVED on 6/4/18 (Amounts in Rupees)	
	2018-19
Staff Salary	673,992
Midday Meals	417,664
School repairs	55,000
Travelling	16,000
Games and Sports Materials	35,000
Celebrations	16,000
Refreshments for all activities	25,000
Computer maintenance	8,000
Purchase of new computer	20,000
Stationery	45,000
Asha Rewards	20,000
Miscellaneous (telephone bill etc)	15,000
Uniforms	0
Total	1,346,656
In USD (approx, at Rs. 67 per USD)	20,099