

Tribal Empowerment Project (TEP) School, Manipur, Budget 2017-18

Minutes of teleconference meeting on June 14, 2017

Attendees: Bhargavi Ramamurthy, Sanjay Mellacheruvu, Vatsala Vadapalli

BACKGROUND:

The call was to discuss the 2017-18 budget proposal received from TEP. The Budget was discussed in comparison with that for the previous year, 2016-17. The same is presented below.

TEP Budget Comparison (Amounts in Rupees)			
	2016-17	2017-18	% change
Staff Salary	456,000	524,400	15
Midday Meals	358,904	315,744	-12
Travelling	25,000	16,000	-36
Games and Sports Materials	30,000	35,000	17
Refreshments for all activities	25,000	41,000	64
Computer maintenance	35,000	63,000	80
Stationery	50,000	45,000	-10
Asha Rewards	20,000	20,000	0
Miscellaneous (telephone bill etc)	15,000	15,000	0
Uniforms	170,000	0	-100
Salary for midday meal cooks	8,000	0	-100
Total	1,192,904	1,075,144	-10
Approximate amount In USD	18,251	16,119	

Upon email circulation of this information among project team members, a list of questions for TH Joy, our TEP point of contact was compiled and submitted to Joy for clarification. The questions and clarifications are as follows:

1. *Why did mid-day meal go down from 4 to 3 months?* Clarification: There has been increase in the cost of midday meal due to inflation, also our teaching staff have been asking for their salary hike for long, so in order to accommodate these two requirements the duration of midday meal have been cut down from 4 to 3 months.
2. *Why is travel expenditure down?* Clarification: we again in order to accommodate salary hike of teachers we plan to cut expenses in travelling by reducing number of trips to Assam by sending documents by post etc.
3. *How do the TEP salaries compare with rest of the state?* Clarification: it's very less, average salary of government school teachers will be 40,000/- p m approx. whereas TEP school teachers average salary is just 4000, i.e. ten times lesser.
4. *Does TEP have new computers?* Clarification: no new computer.
5. *Why did the repair budget go up suddenly?* This year we plan to carry out major repair of benches, tables, roads etc as they are getting older and weaker.
6. *The Asha Rewards (Awards) do not mention Student Awards Are there plans to give those awards?* Clarification: Major Awards are for teachers of course but the school also organise programs to rewards to best students in the form of pencils, exercise books, pen etc with the view to encourage them though small in price term.
7. *Why is there no paid cook for midday meals, as we had funded last year?* Clarification: we decided to ask volunteers for the job along with our school chowkidar.
8. *Just confirming - there is no plan to give out uniforms this year?* Clarification: as stated earlier in order to control steep hike in budget as compare to last year due to salary hike we decided not to include uniform this year's.

DISCUSSION:

- It was unanimously felt that the teachers' salary hike was justified. Based on Bhargavi's 2014 visit discussions at the school, a proven way to attract better quality teachers from the Imphal area, was by financially incentivizing their move to TEP. From Joy's clarification, even with the hike this year, TEP teacher salaries are much lower compared to their counterparts in government schools. Hence it was decided to approve the hike requested in the interest of better quality of education at TEP.
- The issue of mid-day meals being reduced from 4 months last year to 3 months was discussed. Mid-day meals are very essential for the healthy growth of children, physically and intellectually. During the lean months when the meals are provided, for many kids this meal is the only hearty meal of the day. Given this background, although the cost of meal per child increased from Rs.7 to Rs.8, it was felt that we should keep the 4 months of meals for the children and the group approved an additional Rs. 1,05,248 to the line item mid-day meals bringing the line total to Rs. 4,20,992 for 4 months of mid-day meals.
- The other line items with increases this year – sports and games supplies, refreshments, and computer maintenance were found to be reasonable given the growing needs of the school, and were approved.
- Since we had funded uniforms last year, that line item had been excluded from this year's budget proposal. We will be willing to consider it for next year.
- The group was OK with reductions in Travel costs and Stationery line items.
- Overall, the budget request was approved with an additional outlay of one month of midday meals, bringing the total funds approved to Rs. 1,180,392. The approved budget is as follows for 2017-18:

APPROVED TEP BUDGET 2017-18

Budget Item	2017-18
Staff Salary	524,400
Midday Meals for 4 months	420,992
Travelling	16,000
Games and Sports Materials	35,000
Refreshments for all activities	41,000
Computer maintenance	63,000
Stationery	45,000
Asha Rewards	20,000
Miscellaneous (telephone bill etc)	15,000
Total	1,180,392
Approximate amount In USD	16,119

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- It was decided to circulate minutes of this meeting over email to the rest of the project group for approval.

UPDATE (on 6/19/17): The minutes of this meeting was circulated over email and was approved by the following additional volunteers in the period June 15, 2017 – June 19, 2017: Anita Shah, Vatsala Vadapalli, Bhuma Subramaniam, Anand Ranganathan.

*Minutes prepared by Bhargavi Ramamurthy
June 15, 2017*