



# Asha for Education™

UFlorida Chapter

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

www.ashanet.org/uflorida

July 30, 2017

## Approval minutes for Reward 2017-18- Asha UF

Evote- 7/23/17, budget discussion held on June 16, 2017.

Attendees- Apoorva Mohan (steward), Devesh Chugh, Gayathri Sindhu Srinivasan, Ravi Venkatraman, Deepak, Seema

**Asha UF will disburse INR 740400 (~\$11535 USD) in two disbursements, one in August 2017 and other in February 2018.**

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June 4, 2017

### Conference call between the chapters funding Reward & Melli- Asha Boston

#### Call minutes:

Participants- Apoorva Mohan (Asha UF), Subashree Rajagopal (SV), Lalitha (Asha Danbury), Mouna (Asha Arizona), Anuradha Bulusu (Asha Atlanta), Guru (Asha Dallas)

The hangout call was organized by Subashree, the person coordinating the funding efforts between the different Asha chapters and the primary goal of the call was to discuss the site visit done by Melli of Asha Boston in 2017.

#### Site visit overview

Melli has been working with Asha for 17 years and has immense experience working with government schools mainly in the state of Karnataka. She stressed the importance of govt schools and how most govt teachers are apathetic and lack motivation to perform in their job. She also noted the India is steering towards the private education system, contrary to the developed countries which have a strong public education school system.

Melli had great things to say about the commitment of the Reward trustees- Sridhar, Kalavathy and Anandhi and how they have built the project to this level. In the 12 years of



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its operation, Reward trust has worked in 45 schools and 150 teachers have been part of Reward. Currently, there are 65 teachers working for Reward. She also commented on the scientific background of the trustees and how they utilize their strengths for the overall functioning of the project.

She had three main comments regarding the project/students. One of them was the English reading abilities of the students. She cited this being a general trend in many government schools. Anu Bulusu of Asha Atlanta commented that Sikshana training program has been successful in improving the English communication abilities of a project in Gujarat (Gujarat gram vikas?) and suggested that this could be recommended of Reward.

Secondly, she was interested in understanding how early Reward intervenes with the students. Its always better to start at the primary level and provide training and then track the progress of the students at the higher levels to achieve a greater impact. But based on Reward's operation, this is really dependent on the local schools needing teachers.

Finally, Melli was concerned about the funding timelines of Reward. She stressed since Reward is not supported by one chapter, it is important that all the chapters coordinate among themselves and present a unified front. Also, maintain a funding timeline, so that the trustees are aware if their budget will be funded or not before the start of the school year. The uncertainty of funding amounts from chapters puts a great deal of stress on the trustees and it can be avoided if the chapters plan ahead. **She asked if the chapters can decide how much it will be funding for the calendar year by June 1**, so the trustees can have a contingency plan for the unsupported funds. That's sounds like a reasonable idea. The only issue is the chapter stewards should make efforts to submit their proposal to the chapters early so this timeline is maintained.

Finally, Subashree raised the issue of amount unfunded by Asha for Reward (~\$10kUSD) and asked if it could be equally distributed among the chapters. I conveyed it to the group that the financial scenario in Asha UF is not great and would be difficult to obtain additional funding. Anuradha Bulusu interjected that there was surplus of general funds being distributed by Asha central to the chapters complying with the ARC guidelines and it was unused. So if the chapters make an effort to contact other chapters who have funds unused or the central, it is possible to cover the deficit amount not funded by Asha. But this again requires coordination from the steward's side.



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**June 11, 2017**

## **Conference call with Reward trustees**

Participants- Apoorva Mohan (Asha UF), Subashree Rajagopal (SV), Lalitha (Asha Danbury), Mouna (Asha Arizona), Melli (Asha Boston) and Reward trustees (Sridhar, Kalavathi, Ananthi)

The hangout call was organized by Subashree, the person coordinating the funding efforts between the different Asha chapters and the goal was to discuss the updates from Reward for this year.

### **Call minutes**

Brief intro by trustees about the Reward program and how they started the teacher supplementation efforts in 2005 to improve the teacher: student ratio. Their efforts have led to an increase in performance from 15% to greater than 70% in pass % in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> state board exams in the schools they are operating.

Melli asked a question about intervening earlier with these children and Sridhar cited that they do work across all levels like pandur- both primary and higher secondary. But they usually operate with a subject deficiency, so in higher levels- they need a specific subject, so its not possible always. The issue of English communication being not to the par of other students came up and the trustees said that usually the students are late bloomers and there is gradual improvement with more than 50% score more than 250/500

The salary structure for the govt teacher and reward teachers were discussed and primary school earns INR 25000/month while Reward teacher earns INR 7500. So then what motivates the reward teachers- the primary thing survival and the Reward trustees are taskmasters while explaining the greater cause that they are serving the first generation rural students. And also certain helpful initiatives like three teachers were sent to some IIT program by Rajaram- many asha chapters had come. The experience of Reward teachers before joining Reward was discussed. They don't have any experience at entry level and are fresh from college. On paper- all teachers are equivalent to govt school. And the trustees look for attitude rather than knowledge- since many of them are below average.



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What happens to Reward children after school? They know only about the students who go into colleges. Most of them are going to degree based courses instead of diploma. Before many of them were dropping at 8th std. So that is a great improvement.

What is their 2-3 years goal? Improve learning outcomes in the smart tests. Then participate in other national entrance exams like IIT-JEE.

Some achievements by Reward students over the year. Sridhar sends an update of the student's achievements in a timely manner. Some examples came up during the call.

1. Dilip- spotted in 8th std in thenpattinam as exceptionally bright, moved to koovathur school. Reward provided special mentoring- now studying in Engg college- working in semester holidays in Bangalore
2. Sudha of Kolavanji school- completed BE in MIT, Chennai and now working in IBM, Bangalore

Suggestion was provided to record the achievements by students in an organized manner for future.

Also, the positive influence of Reward teachers on the govt teachers was discussed followed by the additional efforts put in by Reward teachers in teaching their subjects. And interestingly these teachers like Yogeswaran and Kannan were not-so-great teachers to begin with and now one of the best teachers.

Finally the issue of teachers leaving Reward after getting a govt school job offer came up and Sridhar said that is an issue, and 3 years back around 12 teachers left Reward for a new offer. But one good thing is many teachers- who left reward are contributing financially to the "ayirathil oruvan" and those teachers believe in Reward and the impact they are making in these children lives.



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## Budget details

### Requested budget after conf call

Florida	Nandhini M	Vadakku Vayalur High School	9300	300	9600	115200		
Florida	Vachala D	Vadakku Vayalur High School	7800	300	8100	97200		
Florida	Vadivelu V	Vadakku Vayalur High School	9300	300	9600	115200		
Florida	Kannan D	Kalkulam Middle School	9700	300	10000	120000		
Florida	Sathish R	Lathur Middle School	7000	300	7300	87600		
Florida	Barathi N	Neelamanagalam Primary School	8600	300	8900	106800		
Florida	Reena S	Neelamanagalam Primary School	7500	300	7800	93600		
Florida	Poongothai K (ptri)	Vengapakkam Primary School	8500	300	8800	105600		
Florida	Sarala R	Vadakku Vayalur Primary School	8200	300	8500	102000	943200	\$14,636

### Possible budget after UF confirmation

Florida	Nandhini M	Vadakku Vayalur High School	9300	300	9600	115200		
Florida	Vadivelu V	Vadakku Vayalur High School	9300	300	9600	115200		
Florida	Kannan D	Kalkulam Middle School	9700	300	10000	120000		
Florida	Sathish R	Lathur Middle School	7000	300	7300	87600		
Florida	Barathi N	Neelamanagalam Primary School	8600	300	8900	106800		
Florida	Reena S	Neelamanagalam Primary School	7500	300	7800	93600		
Florida	Sarala R	Vadakku Vayalur Primary School	8200	300	8500	102000	740400	

## Approval timeline

The budget was initially discussed on June 13 through a hangout call with the Asha UF volunteers. It was decided that we will first take stock of the financial situation at UF and then decide the course of action. The treasurer at Asha UF emailed us the financial details and it looked like funding additional teachers will be impossible at the present moment. So we decided to fund the original 7 teachers who were funded by Asha UF in 2016-17. Evote was scheduled and the following is the breakdown of the votes.

Yes-8 (Sindhu, Shiva, Revathi, Nalanda, Meera Sitharam, Yogi, Deepak, Ravi), No-0, Abstain-1 (Apoorva)

**So the 7 teachers mentioned in this budget will be funded by UF for 2017-18. Asha UF will disburse INR 740400 (~\$11535 USD) in two disbursements, one in August 2017 and other in February 2018.**