Proposal for Mahesh Pandey 2015

Note: This project was taken over by Stanford Chapter in 2014 and a formal proposal was never submitted. This document is in lieu of a formal proposal but describes the nature of work expected to be completed in 2015.

**[Background:](http://wiki.ashanet.org/display/Chapters/Mahesh+Pandey+Fellowship+-+2015+-+2016+funding+vote)**

* Asha Stanford took up the Mahesh Pandey Fellowship from the DC Chapter in May 2014.
* Last year (2014 - 2015) we funded his fellowship stipend and also some operational costs (phone bills, fuel, etc. for RTI/RTE work). The amount funded was Rs 4,07,000.
* The fellowship budget for 2015 - 2016 was discussed during the 11/09/2015 meeting
  + Maheshji put in more efforts towards Apan Ghar (hostel for migrant worker children) this year. The hostel currently has 36 students and they want to increase the number to 50 students since that is the capacity of the hostel. They will admit 4-5 girl children this time to see how it is received by the parents and also to figure out how feasible it will be to build a hostel for girl children later on.
  + There is team of 5-6 people who he manages to run this place.
  + He takes 5-8 calls/day to answer RTI related questions that come from all over UP as well as surrounding states.
  + They have done a little bit of campaigning for RTI in the past two years but not a lot like in previous years.
  + They have also done from RTE awareness work but again, not a lot.
  + They are looking to hire a new warden to reduce the work load from Apna Ghar side to free up his time to look more into RTI/RTE awareness work in the coming year.

**Steward Recommendation for 2015 – 2016 funding:**

* Talking to Mahesh ji , it seemed like he was doing fine with the current amount and didn't ask for much of an increase as such. As for personal expenses, he said that he cannot ask about it from his side and it is up to us to decide.
* Approximating the breakdown between stipend and project expenses based on the last year's funding amount, we have:
  + Amount per month = Rs 407000/12 => Rs. 33,917/month approximately
  + Project expenses => Rs 8000/month approximately
  + Stipend comes out to be Rs 25,917/month
* Based on the approximate calculations, the stipend amount is slightly greater than the [2011 cap](http://wiki.ashanet.org/display/COORD/Asha+Fellowship+Program+Proposal) and the project expenses seem way lower then the cap.
* Thus, I recommend that we do not increase the fellowship amount for this year since the stipend is slightly over the cap (let's not decrease it since the cap was based on 2011 and there has be continuous increase in inflation over the years) . The operational expenses don't seem to need additional funds than what was being given based on last year's activities.

**Need for additional Funds**

* + It is unclear at this moment if Mala India Foundation (the one funding Apna Ghar currently) will be able to fund the warden salary. They have had a funding shortfall and will be reducing the funding for Apna Ghar by 25% in 2016 - 2017. Maheshji will contact Asha if they are in need of more funds for the warden salary once they have identified a person.
  + The steward (Snetu) also suggested getting a van to go around villages to spread awareness about RTI and RTE. Maheshji said that might be a good idea because currently 80% of the RTI applications that are filed are by city dwellers. He said they can go to the weekly melas/bazaars with the van and talk to people/ help them by answering question on filing, etc.
  + Maheshji will work no a proposal and send Asha Stanford a budget for the same in a few months.
  + Also, another question was raised about the sustainability of the campaigning work in the long run. Maheshji said they for things to work well long run the State level agency needs to have people who will enforce it. The campaining work can only help pressure on the local officers to at-least answer people's application on daily needs.
  + He also said that it only works to campaign for small/non-controversial issues and get the work done at that level. Going into larger/controversial issues is quite dangerous since many people (~ 35 in the country) have lost their lives while fighting for this.