



# *Asha for Education*<sup>TM</sup>

*UFlorida Chapter*

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

[www.ashanet.org/uflorida](http://www.ashanet.org/uflorida)

**Date :** 07/02/2010

**Attendees :**

**Payir :** Senthil, Ram

**Asha UFlorida :** Akshay, Ajoy, Loki, Palani, Sanketh

In addition to the minutes, please refer to the Progress Report for updates on the project  
[http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/956/Progress\\_report\\_April\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/956/Progress_report_April_2009.pdf)

**Minutes:**

## **Payir Innovations**

- It is a social entrepreneurial venture of Payir with objective to create jobs in rural India
- It recently got registered as an organization
- Ram gave an overview of the initiative. Many organizations now realize potential, of such an initiative. He has moved back to Bangalore to better manage the functioning of this venture. It is a for-profit company and idea is to create various different small rural enterprises.
- Objective is to promote business opportunities, provide rural population with technical know-how, contacts, search for new markets, stimulate them with new ideas, designs etc.
- Have been working on software development for a US company since the past one year. Experts from Trichi and some other graduates trained rural youth in computer skills. Project is delivering good results.
- Also have started or will be starting new IT/web development projects, handicraft designing, cattle rearing, honey cultivation, micro-finance schemes, poultry farming etc.
- Well wishers and donors have appreciated the idea and this experimental set-up seems to be well received.
- Planning to work with interns in the local communities
- Also want to get into medical/ healthcare management system – this is more for Payir’s own purpose to keep data and records similar to medical history of people in the community for health workers and doctors. This will help them focus on core issues and on preventive measures. They are also working with another Asha project, HUT in the same district in this regard. They also can share this knowledge with other NGO’s.



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- Procedure in place for company registering, once projects are running, then will go ahead and take care of markets, insurance, micro insurance and group insurance etc.

## **Friends of Payir**

- Payir has also started group called 'Friends of Payir' to consolidate all the well wishers and donors.
- Chennai and Bangalore chapters are have been started
- Now that Payir has got its FCRA clearance, they are looking to open up donation channels wherein donors throughout the globe can contribute towards Payirs projects

## **Education Initiatives:**

### **Non Formal Education (NFE) Center :**

- Resumed in June 1st week
- Amongst the last years students 1 dropped out, 9 students are continuing and 2 new kids joined
- Kanchana who is associated with an organization called 'Prayatna' in Mysore has agreed to mentor and train staff for the NFE. She is experienced in Montessori methods of teaching. She came down twice and stayed for 5 days and has already started training learning center staff, helping improve the curriculum, keeping track of documents etc.
- Senthil to send scanned documents
- This year Payir is using another experimental method of evaluation. Instead of evaluating the child's progress, they are looking at evaluating the teacher, and try to gauge the child's progress through that. They will have separate method of evaluating the kid's progress also. Teachers need to submit reports from time to time and based on those reports they are looking at the kid's progress. They are still in the process of understanding and implementing this process.
- In addition to the normal curriculum, three locals from the community have agreed to visit Payir once a month to share their trade experiences with the kid to help build local knowledge among the kids and to stimulate them about the opportunities available.
- one is a local shop keeper, one is a gold smith and the other is a proficient in drumming
- Another volunteer has developed his own way of teaching math to children which seems to be a combination of Vedic maths and montessori methods. He has trained the teachers of the NFE. The teachers are teaching it to the set of students who have been with us for the last 3 years, and they seem to be interested in this. Still need to introduce it to the new kids and then slowly to after school program children.



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## **Intervention Program**

- This program has come a long way and the support staff which is being paid by Payir have been considered as a part of the school now.
- Infact, support staff in 3 schools are actually a part of the PTA which is a positive development
- But in some schools lot of additional responsibility is coming on the support staff
- In the Tottiyapatti School, the only teacher has gone on a maternity leave for a long time and the HM has to travel a lot, so support staffs have lot of burden on them.
- In Nattakadu - 2 teachers left and they haven't found a replacement.
- In ABW there is close to 100% attendance now
- The state of Tamil Nadu has introduced new textbooks for 1st grade which seem to be excellent, but how it is taught and implemented needs to be seen
- 2nd-4th syllabus is a little different and seems to be better
- Schools are slowly opening to the new methods being taught by Payir's support staff
- Thennur school strength increased from 42 to 49
- Payir was part of the campaign held by the school to encourage parents to send their children to school and not to take them when they migrate to the cities temporarily
- The school authorities requested Payir to fund the meals for the new kids. They did not want to go through the process of applying with the government. Payir rejected it since it doesn't want to do governments work, but has helped the school in infrastructure related projects. The repercussions of rejecting the application need to be seen.
- Nattakadu HM asked Payir to support some 8-9-10<sup>th</sup> children in their studies so that the school can show good results which will enable the school to get additional funds. The HM has agreed to put in the additional funds to the Payirs education program.
- In Tottiyapatti, RTE act is being effectively applied. Parents and children between ages 0-6 are being convinced to go to the government hostel and to attend regular school,
- Kids who have missed out on education because of migration need to be given extra coaching to make sure they are able to cope up with the syllabus, but how it is implemented needs to be seen. Government plans to use the help of NGOs to set up something like bridge school set-up for the extra coaching. Payir had applied to one such NGO in Perambalur but the funds for this year is also used up.
- One of our staff, Ranjit who was handling the Tottiyapatti school has left Payir because of personal reasons and another is on maternity leave.

## **After School Program/ E-learning**

*Please see the progress report for more details on the background of this program.*

- Two volunteers, Satish and Venkat from Microsoft have got in a lot of lot of structure for the e-learning program of Payir for children in the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade. - Payir plans to continuing to experiment for the next 6 months with the syllabus etc.



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- Lot more children are coming and they are really interested in this program- in May around 30-35 kids attending this program
- They are introduced new concepts on magnetism, solar system, geometry, etc.
- Volunteers are dialing in from Bangalore, Hyderabad, San Francisco, Chennai, and the list of volunteers is increasing.
- An IIT professor who is helping prepare the content getting more volunteers
- Venkat and Satish plan to start their own social entrepreneurial organization and take this e-learning experience to other organizations. Payir was a starting point as it has students, the infrastructure like broadband, big screen TV etc.

## Challenges in Payir

Senthil mentioned these in the call

- Documentation of the events, happening, best practices, updates etc
- Manage large participatory change
- Raise funds through institutional and foreign source
- Execution of ideas

## Interns program

There was a discussion if Asha could send interns to help with the documentation aspect. But the problem in Payir is that they don't have good guest house facilities yet. Payir is hosting one intern right now and few MBA students from Tufts University, Medford, MA will be visiting Payir to see if they can pursue a project in Payir. Based on these experiences, Payir can consider hosting interns by next Summer.

## Action Items

- Senthil to scan and send across some documents regarding teacher evaluation process
- Sanketh to talk to Padmaja and Hari regarding the women teacher training collaboration and Unesco
- Ram to work on sending across a document with information regarding volunteering in e-learning to see if any volunteer in Asha would be interested in helping out. Sanketh to take it up with Asha projects. It takes one hour /week commitment and all you need is a web-cam. **Please see the E-learning FAQ sent by Ram in the below link**

[http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/956/E\\_learning\\_FAQ.pdf](http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/956/E_learning_FAQ.pdf)