

### **Approval Poll for 2011 budget (Jan'11 – Dec'11)**

Do you approve Rs 23,56,700 to be used towards the annual budget of Jan'11-Dec'11 for Asha Darshan. The specific budget proposal is available at: [http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/284/AshaDarshan\\_2011budget.pdf](http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/284/AshaDarshan_2011budget.pdf). All other details are on the project page at: <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=284>.

Responses

Yes (11 votes) 100%

No (0 votes) 0%

Link to poll: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ashasv-vol/surveys?id=3013183>

### **From Asha SV meeting minutes of Dec 01, 2010**

**Asha Darshan (Vinod):** Renewal

- Intro to Asha-Darshan
- In Northern Assam, bordering Bhutan, Buxa distt. In BODO territorial council (BTC)
- Very green..
- Notorious for terrorist factions
- Asha-Darshan started working with women to empower them
- Women were not really participating in self-help groups because they were taking care of children, Asha-Darshan started schools
- Biju was working with Anchlik Gram-dan Sangh movement in Tamilpur area. They had an army called peace-corps, to bring down violence in the region.
- Biju started 'Mahila Shanti Sena' and self help groups.
- Biju started schools with help from Asha-Assam.. Biju started Asha-Assam, almost all the funds to north-east region are sent through Asha-Assam
- For last two years Asha-Darshan has its own FCRA
- We reconciled budget and stewards in Summer and funds were send covering until Dec 2010.
- 11 schools, 2 shutdown, 2 taken over by Govt., new schools started accordingly and mid-day meal plan added so that children come to school.
- About 1300 students enrolled, about 50-55% attendance on an average day.
- mid-day meal was budgeted for 1300 students, but since attendance is only half, budget was not completely used.
- There is a govt. school (balwadi) but no teacher, Asha-Darshan teacher teaching there as well.
- RTI doesn't really helpful, since some of the govt. servants are actually helping, but complain when RTIs are filed.
- Managed to get land for two centers, one for a workshop- books, sewing machines, handloom; other one s the office for Asha-Darshan
- Budget (on project web page) total: 2, 356, 700 INR (Jan 2011-Dec 2011)
- Madhu to start online poll. Please vote

### **From Asha SV meeting minutes of Oct 06, 2010**

Asha Darshan [Vinod]

- Based in Baksa district, borders Bhutan, under Bodo rule
- We have been working with them since 2001 - SHG, peace movement, schools
- Main person here is Biju
- She started with self help groups for the women (1999)
- Problem was women didn't know what to do with children since there were no schools
- Hence the schools were started
- Schools are just bamboo structures with mud walls, and are often lost and rebuilt every year
- We supported mid-day meal scheme to start with (to incentivize children to come to school)
- Not enough educated folks to teach in the school. Educated ones move out.
- Nothing beyond class 7
- There are a couple of high schools within 8-10 kms of these villages

- Parents don't want to send children that far, especially in Bodo territory, and young children at that.
- There is occasional shooting in the area etc., so it is somewhat dangerous.
- SHGs are functioning very well - best part of the program
- We support salaries of 6 people only now, and they support 415 SHGs, each group has about 15-20 women

< some discussion about how SHGs work >

- you form a group, get a loan from the bank, and distribute the money among members based on what they need, and it is responsibility of group to pay it back
- some people buy lands, others, set up shops etc.
- sometimes used for emergencies etc. without income like medical, wedding etc.
- teachers' salaries, midday meal scheme, facilitators salaries etc. for 11 centres.

#### Sample schools

- Nagapur is the newest center/school started in 2005.
- This one is not completely run by AD, now associated with the Bodo govt. as well
- Teachers in both Assamese and Bodo
- 215 children enrolled, classes from nursery till class 9
- 13 teachers (6 from Asha Darshan), all educated till class 8
- Older boys are already engaged in growing and earning about Rs.50/day

- Satyanarayanpur is the largest school
- 427 children, 8 teachers, pre-primary to class 7
- 20% of children who start pre-primary finish
- some centers have numbers as high as 70%
- toilets are very rudimentary structures, mostly just a pit with a bamboo wall

- Debinagar has only assamese medium
- 95 students, only till class 4, only 10% finish
- 2 teachers, 2 classrooms
- They have benches but no real building
- With the s/w boom, lots of youth end up going to Bangalore to become guards!

- Santipur - assamese medium
- 159 students, 60/40 boy/girl ratio
- till class 4, 50% of kids finish
- 3 teachers, 2 classrooms
- Need brick building, proper toilets, office room, 2 more teachers, tape-recorder/CD player
- lot of silk / handloom industry in the area
- have expertise on this and train women on this

- Peace movement: Mahila Shanti Sena
- Part of the education thing: they want youth to try to be doing something or the other or be in school.
- Want them to not be idle so they cannot join any terrorist (??) outfit etc. So they are actually not unhappy about them going to BIR to work

Q: Project is well established. Did we look at extending this where we don't have till class 7?

A: Usually problem is not having enough teachers. Hiring teacher needs funds, which is very hard to raise locally, and we are already providing a large budget to them, so might be hard for us to add that to our budget (we = Asha SV). Local population will help build schools, will donate food/labour etc. but not money.

Q: Are there govt. schools nearby?

A: There are, but kids don't go more than 2-3 kms distance. Older kids (high school types) might but not younger ones.

Q: There are schools in Guwahati (Kasturba Gandhi residential schools) for girls. So we can ask them to see if they can send them for middle school?

**AI: Vinod will ask.**

C: We should look at continuity for these kids. No point in going till class 4 and stopping

Q: Any teacher training?

A: Yes, we arranged it for them last year through another of our projects - Right Start. We got 3 folks to go to Assam and spend 5 days there. Report from Right Start said teachers are very good at some things, but need lot of help in Math and English. They followed up with more material 6 months later which is where it stands

Q: Did we send their teachers anywhere to other projects etc.?

A: Yes, we have done that too - send to Varanasi once. Every year there is some form of training. But it is not possible to retain teachers consistently, so sometimes cannot estimate how much the training has helped in the teaching methods/school

Other schools' details shown.

- Ankata Hajong Basti - Bengali and Assamese medium
- Singr[d]amari .....
- Danswring .....
- Simliguri .....
- Garughatu .....

**AI: Vinod will upload details of all the schools**

- Once when they didn't have money, they had to stop mid-day meals for about 6 weeks

Q: Have we done some analysis to see why some schools do well and others don't?

A: Differences come from how good the teachers are, how charged the local area is by militancy, and how involved the community is in the school

- They have an enrollment of about 1300 kids in these 11 centres.

- There is a local TV channel in the area, and they want to make a program about Asha Darshan. Apparently they want to include Asha SV also in this since we have been funding them for 9 years.

- They have a piece of land from the govt. where they have been building something with our funds that we sent (not approved by SV for the building). Once we found out, they have stopped, but need funds now to at least complete the lower level, so they can move out of the rented facility to this one.

- Vinod is asking Stanford for funds for this.

- The building is the office for Asha Darshan and is the place where monthly meetings for coordination happen, and teacher training etc.

Q: What is the exit strategy? Who is Biju training to take over if needed for her?

A: Meena is being trained. Has a group of about 5 women who work directly with her and have been with the SHG coordination since 1999. Meena is being trained specifically in accounts etc. We tried to see if Vallabh can help them out. He suggested that Govind, who does budgeting for Asha India, go and train them. He went and taught them over many weeks, but it is not in a stage yet for Meena to take over. Also training Nirmala for teacher coordination.

A2: We are not really in a position to stop funding them. They will be able to continue the SHG - well equipped for that. They cannot continue on the schools if we stop funding them. Once when funding was delayed, the teachers salaries stopped and midday meal stopped too. The way to do this is to find another source to support along with us. Either other Asha chapters or completely outside sources too. And they can try too. Vinod has suggested they should try to raise the 10 lakhs for the building by themselves for a start.

< discussion about self-sustenance of projects etc. >

- lots of govt. schemes did not make it to this area since it is Bodo area

< discussion around has it been useful for kids to be educated to just 4th std, say, and we don't know what they are doing now etc. >

- important change: education also leads to the kids not joining the militants and that is a huge goal for them.

C: We should also be looking at what is the vision for the project? Maybe steward looks at this with project. Sort of a plan for the kids' progress further.

C: This is the idea of the eval doc. That over 5 years maybe, we can figure out where the project is going.