Conference Call Minutes

Date: Tuesday August 4th, 2009 (Austin) /Wednesday August 5th, 2009 (India)

Attendees: Vijaybhai (Project coordinator, Asha Samajik Vidyalaya, Reoti)

Rahul Rao, Ganesh Krishnamoorthy (Project stewards, Asha Austin)

1. Student updates

- Final list of students for this year will be compiled after August 15th
- Children who want to enroll in classes 6, 7 and 8 typically go to the government school nearby
- 4 students from ASV who passed out from 7th grade and students who passed 5th grade will now attend the government school for 8th grade and 6th grade respectively

2. Teachers' updates

- Expenses for two sessions have been requested in the budget for the forthcoming year
- Only one session could be held last year in July
- The ASV coordinators have contacted the Ekalavya trainers in Kanpur and have requested them to come to the school campus for the training. The training has been tentatively scheduled some time towards the end of August
- The second training session may be held in Varanasi
- The school has received applications from a couple of potential candidates to replace Ms. Rekha
- Preliminary interviews and an elementary test (written) will be conducted for these candidates before the end of this month

3. Photographs of the students

- Some donors have requested photographs of their sponsored child
- Vijaybhai has promised to look into this and said this can be arranged
- Vijaybhai will try to get pictures using a digital camera and send them soon

4. Other updates

- Doctors have been contacted for the homeopathic health check up camp
- This has been tentatively scheduled for August 23rd or 30th
- Independence Day celebrations to be held at the school on August 15th
- Plans for the celebration include performances from the children (reciting poems, performing plays), some sports activities followed by distribution of sweets at the end

5. Answers to questions raised during the chapter meeting

Q. What is the accessibility to schools nearby?

- The government school is less than half a kilometer away from the ASV school
- The government school has 4 teachers and has classes from 6th to 8th
- There is another intermediate high school, also ~0.5 km from the ASV school
- This school has classes from 6th to 12th
- Students typically attend the ASV school till class 5 or 6, followed by the government school till class 8 and the intermediate high school after that if they are interested in continuing with their education
- Vijaybhai mentioned that they were not in contact with kids who went on to intermediate school after 8th

- He offered to find out information if there is interest in keeping track of the progress of any particular child
- There was a discussion a long time ago regarding sponsoring students who are keen on continuing their studies to attend a school in Lucknow
- Vijaybhai said there were many difficulties with that and hence they chose not to pursue that option but rather focus on schools nearby
- There are plans for another government school, slated to begin sometime this year
- This school will have classes from 1 to 5
- When asked about whether their children would continue to attend the ASV school once the government school is functional, the response from the people in the community was that they want their children to continue with the ASV school only, or else the children wouldn't go to school at all
- There is also a convent school near the community, but the fees charged by the school make it unaffordable to most people in the community
- Kasturba Avasi Vidyalaya is another school in the vicinity. This school accepts a limited number of children who are chosen by the school, hence most children are unable to secure admission there

Q. What children generally attend the school? Which communities are served by the school?

- The communities served by the school include Rajbhar families (who belong to the OBC-Other Backward Caste category), Sahani families, and Pandey families
- As far as the economic background is concerned, most of the parents of the children who study in the school are majdoor (day laborers), small farmers (cultivating on rented land), own small shops, etc.

6. Budget for the next year

- Need to discuss with Vallabh as well
- A conference call will be arranged in a week or two when all are available