

> 1. *Is this not a kind of project for which we should be able to secure grants much more easily? So have we been working with the Asha-Grants committee to get some form of grants?*

I am not really sure what kind of projects are more amenable to receive grants. Its probably a mix of grantee and documenting/wording of the project. This is something we would definitely like to attempt.

> 2. *Community participation*

> *There does not seem to be much community involvement, in raising funds or acceptance of this illness. This should be a goal for the project to remove the stigma associated with this type of illness.*

There is a very large community involvement. 20% of their entire budget comes out of local sales and donations -- that is way higher local fundraising than I've seen in any Asha projects.

Regarding acceptance of these types of illness, this is a harder process. Attempting to remove the stigma is one of the primary organizational goals. There have been various strategies towards that over the years, including awareness camps, street plays, A more recent initiative in this has been having some social workers and animators spending a couple days per village around the rural Channenhalli campus, spreading awareness and at the same time identifying kids with issues.

> 3. *Parent involvement*

> *There does not seem to be much parent involvement. Would it not be good idea to charge some fees from parents so that they feel accountable? Or did I miss some document which shows parent involvement.*

There is heavy parental involvement. I am not sure if we have any one document talking about it, but its spread over multiple ones. Particularly because Shristi is not a residential facility. The kids when they go home, the parent(s) needs to interact with them in a very similar fashion to what goes on in the school. So Shristi ensures that parents actually come to school and learn some of the methods. In a good number of cases, given economic situation of the parents, a lot of them become care-givers and in some cases special educators themselves.

The govt. also encourages this. To become a special educator one needs to have a basic degree or a diploma. However if you are the parent of a special kid, then you are exempt from that degree/diploma requirement.

Regarding fees, there is some amount of fees collected. This is subjective and dependent on economic ability, and is judged by the Shristi team during enrollment.

> 4. *Vocational...Use of Asha*

> *Preeti had mentioned on working with some schools to be used for regular Asha calendars. Can this idea be used somewhere?*

As an experiment, we've been selling merchandise made by the kids at various events over the past 3 months. Meenakshi and Roopa have been taking care of that. Once all that is done, we can get feedback from them on what exactly works to take it to the next level. One other idea being pursued this year is to see if the marathon runners would buy some of the merchandise to give them as gifts to their donors. Esther is helping out in arranging/figuring this out.

> 5. *Vocation support*

> *Anything more we can do from Asha? Are the kids able to fare on their own using this vocation as a livelihood?*

This question is best answered in this document:

http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/602/Shristi_vocational_discussionthread.doc