

WAH Approval Minutes (Shishur Sevay) – WAH 2012

Amount: \$14880 (Budget: <http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/885/shishur%20sevay%20budget%202012-13%20-%20Asha%20WAH.pdf>)

First Call:

Attendees : Vinod/Nagender/Yatin/Chandru (from CNJ)

- (1) As per providing funds (2% or \$200), **AI: Chandru said he will discuss with his team and get back to us**
- (2) Vinod suggested providing website write-up / image / video and other material for publicity. **AI: Chandru said he will do it in 1 week.**
- (3) What is the Reason the project budget is not yet approved this year?
Chandru: What worried us is that there seems to be an issue of lack of vols in the chapter and Chandru mentioned that they wont be able to approve till September. But he stands by the project
- (4) Other Funding sources is not clear. **AI: Chandru is going to find out from Suresh**
- (5) They came to know about the project from Michelle, an ex CNJ volunteer. Another volunteer Purva Rudra also moved back to Kolkata and is actively involved
- (6) Funding cycle is one year and they send the lumpsum in one go.
- (7) Why are there 18 teachers and staff for 13 children? Usually projects have a student teacher ratio of 30:1. **AI: Chandru will check and get back.**

1. Does chapter have audit report for last year funding?

The fiscal year ended 31 March 2012. Our auditors will not be able to do the audit until some time end of June due to their own scheduling.

2. Are Annual Reports for duration of project-Asha relationship available?

We have not put out a fancy printed annual report but rather updated an older one with the inclusion of a review of the year. We can put this together. Let us know if that would work.

3. What other funding sources sponsor this project?

Last year we were funded by ASHA for Education, Children's Hope India, and Baal Dan Charities. Dr. Michelle Harrison continues to provide shortfall, which last year was about half the budget. As her funds are running low, we are working hard to develop other funding sources.

4. If WAH does not raise the expected funds for this project, what backup options has the project partner planned for this project?

We are obviously seeking other funds, and Dr. Harrison will have to provide what isn't covered.

5. Will the WAH funds be required before November 2012?

Typically Asha funds arrive during the later part of the year. We will use funds from resources allocated for other expenses to cover our education costs until the WAH funds arrive, with the intention of replacing those funds.

Sustainability:

1. What are the long term plans that the project has towards sustainability?

Seeking other funding sources: We are in the process of developing our long term funding plan. We are seeking funds from other sources to ensure that Shishur Sevay keeps running at its current standard of excellence. We have already researched and applied for new grants that cover all aspects of our budget. We are waiting to hear from them. This will be a continuing process.

Building Administrative Infrastructure: We each bring our personal network of contacts from which we can draw upon. From her years of experience in the medical, academic and corporate sectors in the US, Dr. Harrison has many contacts. Having established Friends of Shishur Sevay in the US (which has now received its tax exempt status), it will be easier to tap into her large and diverse network. Maggie Redden, our Communications Advisor for the year, has a background in communications, having worked at Penn State University in their athletic communications department. She also has knowledge and experience with adaptive learning, sports and technology which makes her a vital tool in helping publicize Shishur Sevay.

Shishur Sevay's Indian network: The plan for the future is to have more of the funding come from within India. Seema Gupta, our Joint Secretary, has offered to approach Indian Banks as a way to raise funds in India. We are beginning to tap into other possible Indian sources. Our academic advisor, Purba Rudra, is assisting in grant writing and looking at fundraising options in India.

2. Is the idea for sustainability mentioned above sustainable?

We are a relatively new organization, only being in existence for less than six years, and have been working on expanding our fundraising efforts. We have applied for several grants and are waiting to hear back from them. The aim is to diversify our funding and build a strong and dedicated donor base here and abroad. As for "sustainability" in terms of generating income within the program, we do not see that happening as we are providing services to children without resources.

3. Is the project partner trying to tap Govt/other sustainable sources for this specific proposal?

We do not plan to apply for funds from the government, because receiving funds from them interferes with our freedom to function according to our principles. During the early years of Shishur Sevay the government tried to force us into taking children who were not orphans.. We were not in a position financially or logistically to take more children. If we are funded by the government they would force us into these situations where refusal would not be an option. We have been working with another orphanage, which is government funded. They were forced to take more children than they could handle. This coupled with a delay in funding, by almost a year, led to deteriorating conditions there and hospitalization of the children.. We do plan to apply for other external funds both from India and other foreign sources. We are working with the Child Welfare Committee with regard to children in other homes. Dr. Harrison was appointed as counselor for a girl at Sukanya Home, the government institution. We try to work closely with the government but sometimes they become an obstacle rather than help.

As mentioned earlier, we would like to raise money from banks, corporations and other funding sources in India.

We are aware that our program has a very high cost/student. This is due partly to the needs of the children with severe disabilities. We are providing the highest level of care we can develop in Kolkata. The second reason is that our goal is to give the orphan girls some of the advantages they would have had if they had been adopted or raised in the US. The usual bar for funding orphans is at a minimalist level, which often produces minimalist achievements. If we are serious about fixing inequality, there is no reason for these children not to have good education except an unwillingness to pay for it. But often the assumption is that the children can not achieve, that their upward mobility is not within the realm of possibility

We are changemakers. Teachers have said, 'I never imagined an orphan could be like this (good, polite, studying). Our children with disabilities have defied expectations. We are a successful model of inclusive education.

The choices we have made regarding expenses has been to invest in education, and in health, nutrition, sanitation. The home is very small for what we are doing, so there is no room for a "dormitory." We sleep on mats on the floor. Our priority is education so we live with the limitations of space and comfort.

We also need some publicity videos etc. The following question also came up:

Will the project steward help out the WAH publicity team with materials such as photos, videos, and content for the website?

the girls performing:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kDt4TluSyQ>

performing play at the local govt. school:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZpBhKfx5NU>

We have a very active Facebook page, with recent updates and pictures:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Shishur-Sevay-Childlife-Preserve-Shishur-Sevay/140303275990089>

We also attached a picture folder

Why are there more teachers (18) than students (12) in the project? It is different from the normal case where there are more students than teachers?

There are 14 girls now and 12 teachers (these are the numbers in the WAH proposal as well). We had 12 girls, but now we have two more. Yes, the ratio of student to teacher is high. There are 12 teachers but this includes special educators, dance, drawing, singing etc. Some of these only occur for about an hour or two every week. There are some children with disabilities and they need more personal attention. The special educators work with them individually. One special educator accompanies the child with special needs attending grade three at Upasana academy. This was agreed upon by Shishur Sevay and the school because they do not have the human resource to cater to special needs children. The children in Class VI are taking English, Bengali, Hindi, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, GK (General Knowledge) Art, and Music. They are studying some of these subjects for the first time. Our girls are in three different grades. They were in a Bengali medium school until last year and have been switched to English this year, hence they need a lot of tutoring. Majority of the tutors are part time and therefore a number are needed to cover all subjects and grades.