

Asha Austin Meeting Minutes (January 3, 2010)

Attendees: Arvind V, Charanya, Ganesh, Itisha, Murali, Vishwas

1. Humana (Itisha)

- [Project page](#)
- Updates from Itisha's Trip in December 2009.
- New principal, 1 main teacher (certified), 2 assistant teachers (12th grade graduates), 1 trainee (currently being trained by Humana)
- Teachers tend to get changed quite often to offer assistance in other schools as needed -- a concern.
- Itisha showed pictures from her recent trip.
- Asha is the main and only funder of Humana. A lot of excitement surrounding Itisha's visit as a result. Parents of the children invited to visit that day as well to interact with her.
- ~60 students at present. Numbers fluctuate since their parents are migrant laborers. Difficult to track where they are going. Families do have the option to look for a different Humana school if they would like to.
- Other than education, good living practices including good hygiene also emphasized.
- Sports, arts and crafts cultural activities also encouraged.
- Intern from Denmark was also present at the school.
- Students taught English along with Hindi -- which is the main medium of education.
- School time is 2pm -- 5pm.
- Ages: 3 to 10, levels 1 to 3, 1 proper classroom with desks for level 3, and the rest are outdoors. After level 3, they are mainstreamed. 16 children have been mainstreamed thus far.
- Feedback from teachers: Generally like it and sometimes also get to travel overseas for Humana projects. Get paid regularly.
- Itisha showed monthly expenditure statements.
- Humana in general receives money from 3 chapters -- Asha Austin, Atlanta, plus a 3rd chapter. Initially some confusion on budgets, but this has been sorted out now.
- Asha funding completed in July. Waiting for the 2nd installment. Aug 09 â€“ Jul 10. Spending based on expectation that they will receive this funding.
- Humana does try to do some of its own fundraising. Clothing drives, farming initiatives. They do raise some resources on their own.
- Itisha presented budget for this year.
- New items: Rent of Education Center (property no longer free -- 2000 Rs/month, property owner hinted for some payment), Fee for health check-ups (no longer free -- doctor assisting them wants some money. 4 checkups per year, 1000 Rs. Each)
- [Is there a time commitment for the rental payments? Is the rental agreement documented on paper?](#)
- Useful to have reports from the Humana volunteers who visit the schools.
- [Does Humana get audit reports done? Can we get access to these reports? Can we also get the school's quarterly reports? Is there an electronic version of their annual report we can upload online?](#)
- Total funds requested: 204160 Rs. (for August 09 -- July 10)
- Approval voting -- For: 6 Against: 0
- Yes to the 1st 50% installment, 2nd installment conditional dependent on audit reports and other updates.

2. Jeevan Gnanodaya (Charanya)

- [Project page](#)
- Charanya made a presentation
- JG is a school for deaf children in Chengelpet
- Started by Devarajan in 1989
- Most other schools for deaf children in Chennai are private and expensive
- Children are deaf or having severe hearing impairment
- All children are given hearing aids
- Follows TN state board syllabus
- Has 147 kids, 16 teachers, classes I-X. Wanted to have classes XI and XII, but teachers are required to have a MA and are more expensive
- After X standard, children get industrial training in mechanical disciplines, and job placements have improved

- 107 children live in hostel
- Preference is given to children of economically poor families
- Hearing impairment level is defined at 90db
- Recently, a nursery and primary school has started for children, normal and hearing impaired.
- Teacher:student = 1:7 (government regulation is 1:7)
- Previously or currently funded by other Asha chapters (Seattle, Cornell, Urbana-Champaign, Atlanta, Boston, SV)
- Asha-UC facilitated learning from Gallaudet in the US.
- Charanya visited in July 2009
- 10th standard: 14/15 passed, ITI exam: 9/9 passed and got placed in a local zip factory.
- The ITI graduates this year will stay at JG for one more year as parents feel more comfortable that way. These graduates also help with some school activities.
- Hired 7 teachers trained in sign language but they are comfortable only with syllabus upto class V.
- Dr Madan Vasishth suggested more emphasis on sign language and less on speech therapy
- Using ISL (Indian Sign Language) to learn English
- TN govt requires separate teachers for Math, Science and Tamil
- Shankar Sadasivam from Asha-UC visited in Dec 2009
- **Get visit report from Shankar (Charanya)**
- Devarajan is using personal funds to construct a wedding hall that can raise money for the school after 2012; several individual donors disapproved and pulled out
- On Oct 10, they had a cultural show and invited 1000 deaf kids from all over TN, taught them dances etc.
- Vicki and Barry, deaf teachers sent by Dr Madan, visited JG and taught sign language techniques and extracurricular activities. The children enjoyed the sessions a lot.
- Deaf children sit in a circle in class, in small groups of 8 kids or so, so that they can all see each other when they are speaking
- 2 types of hearing aids: behind the ear, and in the pocket
- **Does JG network much with other groups?**
- **Have they looked at cochlear implants?**
- **Does the government have any benefits for deaf children/people with hearing disabilities? Does JG use them?**
- Devarajan follows up with all children and their families even after the children graduate.
- All children are economically poor, none of them pay fees
- Children are served vegetarian food, some students did not join because their parents wanted them to be served non-vegetarian food
- Charanya will visit again in a few weeks
- Asha Austin will send the second disbursal for the year