

Payir conference call minutes (noted by Palani and Sanketh)
March 15th 2009. (Eastern Time) 9.00pm-12.00 am

Attendees

Asha UFlorida : Meera, Palani, Sanketh, Sharan
Asha Madison : Kamal, Rahul
Payir : Ram(US), Senthil (India. Director, Payir)
Boston based volunteer: Hari (Asha/AID)

(Because of the day light savings confusion, Senthil was on the conference call an hour later than when it was scheduled. Kamal, Rahul and Sharan dropped out before Senthil could come)

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[Rather than a Q-A format, the conference call is documented as a discussion here]

From 9.00pm to 10.00 pm, there was a discussion among Hari, Kamal, Rahul, Ram, Sanketh and Sharan regarding Payir. The discussion included:

- Ram and his association with Payir
- How do we measure progress in NFE ?
- NFE curriculum - Arvind Gupta and Dr. Rama's teaching +ABL
- The ecosystem proposal has been given to 3 trusts. Sridharan from Canada is managing it. Hari to pursue on the possibility of AID Boston supporting it along with health care proposal of Payir.
- Desilting and water harvesting projects at Payir.
- Education through CD's/Multimedia.

10.00 pm-12.00 am

FCRA Status

The trustees of Payir are in different places. 6 trustees - Meenakshi Sundaram (Karaikudi), Rama (gudalore), Sridhar (Trichy), Lalitha, Sathish (Banglore) + 1 trustee. The investigating agency which has to submit a report for the FCRA approval has had problems inquiring Lalitha and Rama because of their geographical location. Also, in the case of Satish, the Karnataka folks had some problems.

A recommendation letter from the district collector was added to the FCRA application. The issue was followed up by the collector for 6 months but nothing seems to be happening. The case was taken to the Inspector General at Trichy (a well wisher of Payir) from where it was taken to the DIG of the investigating agency. Then, it was discovered that someone in the lower rank got confused with Lalitha and Rama running Payir. 10 days ago, the status in the home ministry website was 'under verification'.

An RTI can be filed to probe the status of the application. Hari's friend Pandyan, an IAS is with IRS and could be of help in this regard. Hari (along with Suresh Babu, Payir) will take up the issue with Pandyan.

Funds from Asha UF

Senthil met with Bhaskar (Asha chennai) and Rs 53K was given to Payir (since FCRA is delayed, the support money was rerouted to Asha Chennai) and has come in the right time. Payir has to send out the vouchers for about 23K. 1 time spending and teacher's salary is easy to account for

Asha Chennai. For the carpentry stuff, there is a hand written note which might not suffice.

Intervention Program

The intervention program has been a reasonable success. Once Senthil stepped out, the support staffs have taken complete care. Nathakadu HM provides good support. He also helps to propagate the same +ve energy to other school HMs. Thotiyapatti has a problematic teacher with a heavy attitude problem. However, lots of friction has reduced in the past.

Other Payir activities

Totiyapatti - additional infrastructure: water tank, anganvadi, in the last 6 months.

Thennur Adi Dravidar school - new building being built. Also, toilet is built.

Nathakadu - flooring has been re-done. Model toilet built through sanitation campaign.

Anganvaadi - flooring redone.

In thennur, classes happen in the savady because of the building construction.

Education

Tothiyapatti: 15 (38) children go from 0 level to 1 level (ABL level). Absenteeism has reduced. 5 students have been removed from rolls because they went to goat rearing and brick klin. Since starting a small hostel was not under our immediate budget, they'll end up being dropouts. We need to see is there a workaround.

Learning per se has improved. Behavioral changes, we don't have an answer. Anganvadi (play school for 0-3 yrs kids) has been doing well. Breakfast scheme is a new initiative (separate issue from our side). Support staff found that lots of kids come to school without breakfast. Therefore, payir decided to feed the kids breakfast. The expense is about 250 -300/- . Every month, one and off, we get support from well wishers. We are looking at 40-50K/- per annum.

Hari suggested contacting akshayapatra for help with food.

Mythili, a physiotherapist by profession will be joining us shortly. Acceptance rate increased among parents. Minimum level of learning is used as the performance metric to gauge the learning progress of kids in NFE.

Health Center

In the past we have had some problems with doctors coming to Thennur. We need to concentrate on preventive and curative health care but general health is primary. We need to find a doctor who can visit the village on a regular basis.

+++++++This is a potential proposal for AID ++++++

Senthil and Payir

In the recent past Senthil inevitably has been associated with the power circle more than the community. In this perspective, Payir has taken a beating in the on the fact that its part of the community. It appears that Payir is no more integral of the community

It might be a good idea to make someone from the community to be one of the trustee members of Payir. This will help in gaining the community's confidence and also to see their problems from their shoes.

A news letter kind of set up also might work to maintain transparency of our work.