

Minutes from 2/1/12 at the end of this email.

Chapter meeting on Wednesday, February 8th 2012.

Location:

1895 Landings Drive.
Mountain View, California 94043

You have to call Protima to get in.

Number - [909-633-3489](tel:909-633-3489)

Meeting Starts at 7:30 p.m.

Note: Sorry that I rush the meetings and sometimes cut people off. We should attempt to be efficient and effective in the given time! See a wonderful exchange of email between volunteer and steward at the end of the minutes from last week-we can always have more discussions but it helps to keep matters moving! Thanks for all your co-operation and help!!!

AGENDA:

7:30 P.M. -8:15 P.M.-Seva Mandir (Udaipur) annual update/collaborative site visit review and renewal proposal discussion

8:15 P.M.-8:25 P.M.-FR/PR UPDATE- Jigish/Manisha (THIS WILL BE A RECURRING SLOT EACH WEEK)

8:25 P.M.-9:35 P.M.-MCF Renewal-Vinod/Aditi

Thanks all!

Protima

Directions (more accurate than Google Maps):

US101: Take exit #400A. Follow signs for Amphitheatre Parkway and merge onto Rengstorff Ave (towards the bay). Right onto Charleston Rd. Cross Landings Drive (don't turn). 0.1mi later, turn right into a driveway with the sign: "The Landmark at shoreline, 1801-2199 Landings Drive". Building 1895 is the first one on your right. Thanks to Pinkesh for the directions update.

Conference Call Bridge:

Conference Dial-in Number: [\(712\) 432-0600](tel:712-432-0600)

Participant Access Code: 119488#

Remote Desktop Sharing (Will update if the details change):

<http://go.teamviewer.com>

Use the following data to log in:

ID: 680 542 194

Password: 1234

Chapter meeting minutes: [02/02/12]

Also see the exchange of emails at the end to highlight how we can continue to have deeper discussions on projects with the steward and how stewards can continue to elaborate on their projects long after the meeting is over.

Attendees: Jigish, Minali, Minal, Vinod, venki, Madhu, Ruksana, Ritika, Ayushi, Alifya, Anshu, Amit, Yoga, Manisha, Chaitnya, Vijay, Vivek, Protima, Sarath

New volunteer info session:

1. What does it mean to say Asha has over 1000 volunteers?

2. How do the 73 chapters coordinate among each other?

a. Align to the same core values

b. Function autonomously wrt fundraising, project disbursements etc

c. Collaborate on some initiatives like WAH program

d. Integrated finances

3. Fundraising programs

a. Spring run

b. Biking

c. Running

d. Other events

Look for contact details of people who are managing each of these events because these are human resource rich events

e. Support a Child

f. Support a Teacher

g. Projects

h. Project highlight- Rescue Junction in Bihar to take care of small children who are kidnapped or run away from home due to abuse.

4. Volunteering with Asha

a. Small way and big ways-stewards, coordinators, operations team

b. Even though there are already core teams selected, feel free to join and help in any team.

Pratirodh Sansthan, Bhadesar, Chittorgarh

a. Residential school for girls

- b. Gujjar and Rajput dominated area
- c. Working with this project for the last three years and was started by silicon valley chapter
- d. This project is an offshoot of Prayas which has been working with farmers and tribal communities on social justice issues.
- e. Girls education and women's right issues is what this project essentially focuses on.

Amit's presentation:

- Objectives & Goals
 - o Bridge divide between first generation learners & govt. programs
 - o Problem of children leaving villages to look for jobs
 - o Discussion on self-sustenance of tribal farmers.
 - o Started in 2008 with SV support.
 - o Alternate education, self-paced/self-motivated learning methods for first generation learners
 - o Train girls for Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas
 - o Make students socially and ecologically aware and build strong long-term partnership with their communities/families also address rampant social issues like child marriage, illiteracy etc.
 - o Why residential school: if these are day schools, girl children have to take care of younger siblings or take care of household chores
 - o KGBV: central govt scheme under MHRD-HED to establish 750 residential higher secondary level schools in predominantly SC/ST/OBC or minorities area.
 - o Scheme for EBB (economic backward background) as per 2001 census where the female literacy is below national average and gender gap in literacy is more than national average
 - o KGBV establishment and management is under SSA at district level and coordinated between MHRD, MTA and MSJE departments
 - o Residential schools are setup in eligible areas where at least 50 girls predominantly from SC/ST and minority communities are available to study at elementary level or middle school level with education for these girls guaranteed upto 10+ level
 - o NGO and other NPOs to be involved with running the KGBVs and corporate bodies to adopt the schools (none have been adopted so far)
- Background:
 - o Residential school in Amarpura, Bhadesar distt. Chittorgarh
 - o Close vicinity of the village and tribal hamlet
 - o Seating capacity for 200 students, 35 cot capacity for children to sleep
 - o 2 full time residential female teachers, one cook, one mess staff, one coordinator

Discussion:

Self-paced learning model based on tools and methods from Degantar
 Mix of scheduled classes and self-paced group activities
 See attached slides for more information..

Trying to get teachers trained in Degantar methods through Seva Mandir r other NGOs in closed vicinity
 Lost one teacher last year, but got a replacement.. finding teachers is not too hard since they are not too far from Chittorgarh
 Exposure tour: KGBV Nahargarh, Udaipur etc.
 Parents and local shop-owners contribute through donations
 Proposed budget 2011-12: Rs.7,69,600/- (13% lower compared to 2010-11).. cuts in books and aids (reuse from last year), watchman salary (PS can get someone from Prayas, but we need to check that they get someone to watchover)
 Project poll is going to be set-up. Project update on project site.

FR/PR

- There will be a ten minute slot each meeting for feedback, help, etc.
- Come up with a plan for the year
- Feedback from last year was that it helps to start early and plan early.
- Currently we are trying to come up with a list of specific goals for the year
- For now 3-4 different things in parallel- take stock of our PR kits that we use for our events and update them.
- We need to leverage social media. There are QR codes that can be scanned by smart phones for people to follow up and look at more in-depth information.
- Trying to reach out more to people by using social media and also by revisiting our blog so that we can get more detailed content for people who are interested in more information from us.
- Videos and clips; revive the newsletter; monthly updates; we have to reach out to people to write articles. Talk to Pankaj and he had a good timeline to develop at least half-yearly newsletter
- Focus on items that need to be showcased by video clips etc. to generate more interactive content and spread awareness to get more people to follow us.
- General plans have to be done in connection with all the other events that we have to monitor and conduct.
- Figure out how we can use all these materials to publicize ourselves. If we put in the effort we can fundraise more and have less pressure.
- Social media has to be constantly updated. Need new content regularly. If we don't have new stuff all the time, there not be a constant following.
- If people have ideas, there will be helpful.
- They will publish a list of all the action items that have to be taken care and it will be circulated.

On Thu, Feb 2, 2012 at 12:13 AM, Amit Sharma <aarohi.amit@gmail.com> wrote:

Folks,

Here is the project update and proposal that I presented in the chapter meeting today http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/970/project_proposal_2012.pptx
 2012renewal proposal is posted here http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/970/proposal_2012.doc
 The 2011-2012 annual/progress report is posted here http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/970/annual_report_2011_and_proposal.pdf (its in hindi and I'll translate and upload in a while)

If there are any questions or comments, please send them my way. And unless there are concerns around either the objectives of the project and/or requested budget, I'd like to put this proposal for a poll as well.

Cheers,
 -amit

On Thu, Feb 2, 2012 at 12:06 PM, Yoga Saripalli <yoganand@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello Amit,

I was reading the proposal and noticed something that is extremely important by very likely overlooked.

1. There are no toilets for this school. Is this true and not a typo? Most of the time female illiteracy in poverty stricken areas is simply related to this before any other seemingly lofty issues like caste/gender/race discrimination, relevance of what is being taught even come out.

2. There was a study done in Andhra sometime ago (read it in Hindu) where an NGO lead by a woman realized that the girl drop out from schools was simply because of the lack of a decent girl's toilet. Once that was fixed, drop out rates decreased, and girls were enthusiastic to come to school as well. Some of these endemic problems have a simple solution such as building a decent toilet.

3. It may increase the cost or we may have to re-distribute the cost structure and make sure that this is made a priority - even before toys, chairs, tables, playground, etc come into picture.

I was also thinking about this watchman issue last night (assuming it's as serious an issue as we think it is) and I have an idea that could be easily implemented. Assuming that all 50 girls come from say 30 families (sometimes it may be two girls attending from one family) or lets say even 50 families. One of the family members (preferably the father) could be encouraged to volunteer to watch over the school every night. This way the incentives are also optimized - they are in effect caring for their own children. It can be rotated. So, effectively, one has to watch over only once every 30-50 days. I am pretty sure the villagers would not have an issue with this. This way costs are optimized as well. We can perhaps propose and encourage this (if this is not already implemented). The villagers should also be encouraged to take part actively in their development.

Thanks
Yoga

PS:- I did not include the entire list as I wasn't sure if it was appropriate and also the risk of starting a chain of comments/discussions, etc.... And just included a few email ids, I have...

Hi Yoga,

Thanks for your questions, three bullet points below are gravitating around apparent unavailability of toilets in the school, cited from http://www.ashanet.org/projects-new/documents/970/proposal_2012.doc section#14, so I'll try and address that specifically and the issue of lack of toilets more generally.

1. The facility this school is operating in is rented, and as I noted in the discussion they had to move into this new location in 2011. It is quite difficult to find a building that can house 50+ girls with sufficient space for sleeping as well running classes, besides open area for cooking etc. while maintaining proximity to the village as well as the [NGO] Pratirodh Sansthan's office.

2. The school building has no toilets, it has a tin-shade and mud re-enforced floor [that the villagers helped with]. All classes etc. are conducted here.

3. There's a separate brick and concrete building with a 30x40 ft hall with 30 cot capacity with additional room for teachers etc. This essentially is the hostel where the girls and teachers live. These two are separate physical buildings are very close to each other. This hostel building has two toilets/bathrooms that are used by the girls and teachers. So technically the school has no toilets but the hostel does.

4. I did speak with Suman ji, and she did say that during school/classes hours girls either walk to the hostel or use the open space behind the building.

Hopefully that answers your question.

- Now more generally on this subject, there have been reports and some regional studies on why girls leave schools. One of the factors is this lack of toilets and amenities but more severely - punishment and sexual abuse. Lack of toilets is quite commonly cited in recent times as a basic necessity with a belief that it will directly affect attrition (which has proven not to be the case). There's no dispute about making toilets available in schools especially for girls in upper primary/middle school age group. And I think there's strong evidence that physical abuse has been the most basic problem for the most part, and that has caused a natural resistance amongst parents to send their daughters to school etc.

- As an example, A sample survey conducted in Rajsamand/Udaipur of 78 government primary and middle schools, 63 had separate toilets for girls and boys or at least one toilet (if the school was not co-education, there are girls only middle schools as well). And availability of toilets didn't reflect any change in enrollment or attendance of girls. What is common though is that there were 12 reported cases of abuse in these sample schools with lowest student attendance in the areas where cases were reported.

- I'm not suggesting that toilets are not a necessary amenity in the schools, but, merely that the co-relation isn't that strong as its generally believed to be. Note that through Rajasthan state government notification of 1998, all government schools are required to have brick/concrete structures and separate toilets. But this work has been on-going since then and hasn't been implemented completely.

- In my discussion with Suman ji, she did mention that almost all of these children do not have toilets in their homes either, and its no different from how they live with their families. we do have toilets in the hostel, but, we don't have a toilet in the school and feel no need for one.

- Absence of a toilet in the school in this case has not resulted in any significant attrition or performance of the students. And I'd somewhat trust the judgement of the NGO on the needs of students. I'd also note that the building that the school/hostel was running till last year didn't had a toilet either but were using the toilets/bathrooms at the Pratirodh Sansthan's office which was next door to the school.

Thanks,
-amit