

## Primary Stewardship

### Introduction

So you want to be a project steward?

Project stewards are at the very heart of the projects process at Asha. Within the Asha group, they are the ones who are the most knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, the specific projects that Asha partners with. This is a brief note on the spirit of project stewardship.

Being a liaison between a project and Asha, the steward is responsible for communicating relevant happenings and decisions from each group to the other. This requires that the steward know enough about the workings of the organization at either end of the partnership, viz. the NGO running the project, and Asha. For the typical new project that Asha takes on, the steward will have much more access and familiarity with Asha than with the project NGO. Stewards are urged to explore the NGO as much as they can - at the least, through reading relevant web and other written material; but beyond, also by visiting the project site and interacting (in person, by phone, and by email) with individuals and groups related to that organization. It is recommended that stewards have particular familiarity with two or three individuals within the NGO, with whom interaction can be frequent and long-term.

In the process of interaction with the NGO, stewards should involve in sharing information about their own backgrounds and interests (especially what makes them curious about / interested in development), and the way Asha functions. This is imperative, as otherwise the interaction will become lop-sided (viz., a series of questions from the steward and answers from the NGO) and an implicit power-relation can build up, which is inimical to healthy relations between Asha and the NGO concerned. To be sure, it is difficult to sustain such interaction - due to communications difficulties, and the widely varying realities (and possibly world-views) within which the steward and the NGO personnel function. But good stewards will be sensitive to such issues, and try particularly hard to bridge all such gaps. If questions need to be asked, the steward should at all times remember the tremendous odds that NGOs face, and that usually their decisions are taken on the back of much field experience and factoring in local conditions and problems.

Once the steward is on her/his way to building the relationship, she/he should actively strive to share projects information with the rest of the Asha group. Besides the formal Projects Meeting, such sharing of information can occur through informal chats, through contributions to the Newsletter, through sharing of written / audio-visual material from the project, and through organizing Discussion Forums / Talks relevant to the project and the issues that it works with. A good steward will find innovative methods for sharing, and will also go beyond the Asha group and get others (family, friends, colleagues) interested in the project. Stewards could also go beyond Asha's own funding commitments, and seek to organize Asha-Stars groups, or approach other funders, for help in supporting the project.

Clearly, then, the steward has responsibilities towards both Asha and the NGO running the project. The steward should view herself/himself as representing each group to the other, and not just that, but actively promoting the interests of each of the two organizations concerned. Of course, in practice this may lead to possible conflicts of interest. If these should occur, the steward should be in touch with other Asha volunteers and also NGO personnel, to resolve such problems keeping in mind the spirit of the enterprise.

## Roles

### Phase I - Initiation & Presentations

**Be Appointed Primary Steward** by projects coordinator I. The primary steward will be responsible and accountable for all projects-related documentation and fund disbursement. The secondary steward serves in an advisory role and should be cc'ed on all emails and communication to and from the project.

**Familiarize Yourself with Project Details** and flesh out the project with available resources.

**Initiate Contact** with the project organization in India making certain to cc the secondary steward on all documentation. Express that you will henceforth be the sole liaison between the chapter and the project. Gather additional project information as necessary directly from the organization to flesh out the proposal with specific reference to the project template. Note the existence of a small fund for phoning projects. Make certain the project is familiarized with the timeline and process of achieving funding. Always be aware of the power relationship you create with the project and its directors keeping in mind that Asha Stanford strives to be a partner, not a patron.

Arrange a Site Visit - Note that a site visit is now required for any funding. Begin searching locally within the chapter, across other chapters on Ashawide or, ideally, with local chapters in India for someone to do an initial site visit. Additional resources may be found in the site visits document under the projects page of the Asha Stanford website. Note a small fund is available for reimbursing certain travel costs.

**Add Project to the Members List** to allow the NGO to become familiar Asha Stanford.

**Generate a Project Presentation** with use of powerpoint template.

**Arrange & Present Project Presentation** by emailing projects coordinator to coordinate date of next projects meeting. In the event unanswered questions remain, contact project officials in India and report back at the next projects meeting.

### Phase II - Funding & Project Websites

**Convey Funding Decision** to organization.

**Disapproval:**

**Help Realize Alternative Resources** by contacting other Asha chapters or like-minded organizations when relevant. In conjunction with the organization, determine and aid in approaching local funding agencies in India where applicable.

**Approval:**

**Arrange Fund Disbursement** through projects coordinator I and treasurer. Note that funds are released in two parts at a 6-month interval contingent on the 5-month follow-up presentation.

**Acknowledge Receipt of Funds** with project officials.

**Develop Project Website** by posting relevant budgets and other documentation by contacting webmaster.

**Develop Project Summary for Newsletter** by emailing newsletter coordinator.

### Phase III - Monitoring & 5-Month Follow-Up

**Maintain Regular Contact** with project ensuring that funds are disbursed appropriately.

**Arrange & Present 5-Month Follow-up Presentation** at projects meeting with projects coordinator II. Note the second half of funding is contingent on this presentation being made with reference to the initial site visit.

**Update Master Projects List** by emailing date and summary of site visit to projects coordinator.

**Continually Update Website** with relevant documentation.

### Phase IV - Long-Term Planning & Renewal

**Maintain Regular Contact** with project ensuring that funds are disbursed appropriately.

**Encourage Long-Term Planning** by discussing self-sufficiency and government recognition where applicable with project officials. Aid project in finding local funding sources.

**Arrange a Second Site Visit** with particular attention to how Asha funds were used and the general state of the project one year later.

**Generate Revised Project Presentation** and revert to phase I in the event of renewed funding request.