

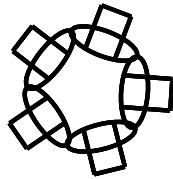
Strengthening Education in Rural Schools of Kancheepuram District

Supported by
Asha for education, Stanford Chapter



Project Report for 2011-12
(December 2011 to May 2012)

By



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Chennai – 600 041

I. Introduction

The future of development of rural communities depends on education of the more than 70% of children living in rural areas of our country. Education status is still a primary determinant for many other important outcomes, including health care, livelihoods, awareness and various other dimensions. A foremost challenge for development of rural communities is ensuring that we achieve some minimum education status in our rural communities. The need for strengthening education in rural schools is well established. Even in Tamil Nadu, which has made considerable strides and achieved nearly cent percent enrollment in primary schools, the learning outcomes among children are still considerably behind. The result of this is increased drop-out rates, starting in upper primary and peaking in high school. According to the All India School Education Survey (AISES), suggests that the nearly cent percent enrollment in primary grades starts dropping after sixth standard, to 85% in seventh, 76% in eight, 68% in ninth and 54% by 10th standard. Findings from ASER surveys in Tamil Nadu show that a majority of children in 5th standard are able to read a third standard text book. All these point to need for further strengthening elementary education and moving up to upper primary and high school, to address first learning and drop-outs.



Since 2007, Kalanjiyam has adopted rural schools in our Kancheepuram district with the aim of developing a community based model for improving education status and preventing school drop-outs. In 2011, new partnership was forged between Asha for Education, Stanford Chapter

forged and Kalanjiyam to support the rural school strengthening efforts in some select schools: Ariyanur primary school, Chinna Venmani primary school, Periya Venmani Middle school and Thiruvadhur Higher Secondary school, all in Kancheepuram district. The objectives of the

project are to work with these rural schools by strengthening quality of education, improve learning outcomes / pass percentages and reduce school drop-outs at all levels.

II. Approach and implementation activities

A multi-pronged project approach was adopted keeping in mind the key challenges faced among rural children and in rural schools. The following strategies were adopted towards project objectives:

- Ensuring enrollment and school regularity in primary and upper primary schools
- Provision of para-teacher support for supporting school teachers
- Strengthening learning by computer education
- Providing extra-curricular programs such as yoga and drawing
- Provision of educational aides
- Appointing regular teachers for instruction in higher secondary school, where there was a gap
- Providing for gap in children's nutritional status
- General attitudes, behaviors and discipline among school children

Provision of Para-Teachers in Schools

A challenge in most rural schools is the multi-grade class room with few teachers having to manage the children. Little support is available to school teachers who most often travel long distances to come and teach in rural schools, with poor or no access to transportation facilities. Rural teachers have various responsibilities which take them away from school on a regular basis, so their availability in the school varies significantly. To address this issue, Kalanjiyam has involved the concept of para-teacher and in this project as well a para teacher was placed in all project schools, to support the teacher, take care of the children and where required help with instruction, as guided by the teacher.

The first duty of the para-teacher was to ensure that children come to school regularly. The para-teacher was one of the first to come to school and in the absence of the school teacher, made sure school started on time. The para-teacher's daily task was to check the number of children attending school and follow up when children were missing school more than one day or those who were absent regularly. The para-teacher visited the homes of children who were irregularly to school and spoke to the mother / parents to find out problem the child was having and to encourage the parent to send their child to school daily.

The main duties of the para-teachers included:

- Helping to conduct the morning prayer in school
- Helping to keep order in the class room and engage with the children
- Ensuring that children maintained good personal hygiene and they are neatly dressed and wearing slippers
- Helping the children with their regular school lessons, reading, Math, English and other subjects as needed
- Helping children who have learning challenges and spending more time with them, to help them catch up
- Checking up with children to make sure that they are having breakfast before coming to school, that they are getting proper nutrition in general, ensuring their good health
- Taking up special programs, storytelling, play activities, improving general knowledge and helping the children to learn / practice on the computer
- Interacting with parents and families of children for specific problems, and / or encouraging them to pay more attention to their children's needs

The para teacher maintained a separate syllabus, which supplemented the regular school lessons and was aimed to strengthen the children's foundation and ensured that children were achieving some minimum levels of learning in reading and math. Here the para teachers helped

the children with the ABL curriculum, helped the children to read their books in Tamil and English and helped them with multiplication tables and to do basic arithmetic.

Student, Swetha, 4th standard

The aunty who comes to school teaches us well. I like to study computers in school; I work on word pad and paint. We have two computers at school. I want to become a doctor when I grow up.

Vimala – Mother of Swetha

'I have studied upto 10th standard. I am from Periya Venmani. I failed in 10th so I did not study further. My husband is a painter, and I stay at home.'

'Before this project started, the school children had so much difficulties and many thought twice to send their children to this government school; but now since the project has placed a para-teacher to help it is making a lot of difference and changes are being observed. Before there was only one teacher and he used to come and teach, but when he had other work, he would not be there. Now the children have another teacher who is there with them always. Now when I visit the school, I ask the teacher how my daughter is studying and how others are doing as well. So we are very happy.'

I have another girl who is now in pre-school and I will have her come to Ariyanur Primary school. We are happy that our children are studying drawing and yoga in school. We cannot afford to send our children outside for such programs, but now having in school is good. All these programs make our children eager to go to school.'

'I wish to have my daughter study as much as she wishes to. My husband is also ready to continue my daughter study as much as she wishes to. I want her to go a private school that is free and located some distance from here. This private school has a hostel, so she can stay there and study and they will take care of her. If she stays here and has to go to Thiruvadhur school which she wants to, it will be difficult due to the distance to school and especially in rainy days, it will be difficult to get to school and we don't have any vehicle or any source for this.'

Appointment of trained regular teachers in higher secondary school

Three qualified teachers were placed based on the need for additional teachers in the school. So far the pass percentage among 10th standard students in this has been only about 50% or less. Therefore based on consultation of school Headmaster (HM) and teachers, the focus of these



project appointed teachers was to teach the 300 plus 10th standard students in the school specific subjects. The HM and assistant HM screened the applications received for Teacher

position and panel was constituted and for interviewing the applications, after a written test. So the best/ most qualified applicants were selected and placed. Teachers were placed for Science, Social Studies and Tamil, but they also ended up helping the students with other subjects (including English and Math). These teachers faced considerable challenge in the school, given the large number of students in the class, many students were very weak on the fundamentals, and presence of special children with considerable learning challenges (7% to 10%). Besides teaching during the school day, these appointed teachers conducted various special classes after school for helping the students who needed to catch-up or who needed special attention, to just ensure that all students would pass. The HM and assistant HM have commented that this year, any increase in pass percentages will be only due to the project efforts.

Thiruvadhur Higher Secondary School appointed teachers

'We are expecting good results from 10th standard exams, between 80% to 90%. The project appointed teachers, Tamil Arasi, Anandhan and Mohan were interviewed. They said that they have been teaching Biology, English, Social Science and Tamil for the 10th class students and when possible for 9th class as well.'

We asked them how useful it is for the children that you were there in this school

'It was very useful and helpful for us to have been here for the children. We were able to collect the dull students and helped them to study well; we gave them additional materials, helped them to practice, tested them and not only for the subjects we were focusing but also for the other subjects. We identified the students who had real challenges, brought them out and helped them.'

'We conducted special classes for the children after school as well. There were many students who did not even know alphabets, A B C D, and we identified these students, and helped them with the very basic / foundation; we think we have helped them and brought them to a point when they can pass the exams.'

Mr. Mohan remarked 'I taught biology; I picked up the students who had the most challenges, gave them additional materials and support and focused on helping them. The time we had was very short, only the last three months. So all we had time was to bring up the students who were very poor and performing badly. The focus was to have high pass percentage this year in 10th. Had we more time, like the whole year to work with these students, then we would have been able to do much more and help increase percentages even further by helping all levels of students.'

Next year, we need to have daily special classes for children after school. Some children were not able to stay back as they came from some distance to school, about 5% of children. We can motivate these children some other way and also talk to their parents and encourage them.'

‘Special classes were conducted after school and then during leave days as well. Math and English were the most difficult for the students. This is because the basic fundamentals are not good and the exam was also difficult. So when they come across difficult questions and are not able to do it well, they lose their confidence and not able to score. So if they lose marks, then most likely it will be in these subjects.’

What can be done to make 100% pass...

‘The students need considerable help in English and need a lot more extra classes as many do not know basics starting from alphabets. About 5% do not even recognize letters; 10% are physically challenged...so that’s 15% right off who are very difficult to bring up!

Programs for increasing children’s interest to come to school

A number of activities were taken up for increasing children’s interest to come to school.

Computer education – Computer teachers were appointed to visit the project schools and teach the children how to operate on computers and on the use of different software applications. In the primary and middle schools a minimum of two computers were available for the children to practice/ operate. While efforts were made to get the children to operate on computers daily, the power situation created a challenge, with the schools not having power supply for nearly five hours in the day.

In Thiruvadhur Higher Secondary school, a computer lab with 10 systems was available; through support from another sponsor, we were able to make the computer lab usable by providing tables and chairs (which were not available earlier). Since this school had up to 12th standard, a regular school computer teacher was available.



The project supported computer teacher worked with this teacher to have computer classes for the 6th – 9th students. However this did prove to be a challenge given the power situation, regular school curriculum, and the large number of students in the school. However due to the

interest of children and project efforts, all children were well exposed to computer operations and may be considered more digitally literate than before.

Extracurricular programs

Yoga and Drawing masters were appointed to come to all the schools to take these classes for the children. Weekly two classes were conducted for each drawing and yoga. In drawing class the children learned about the basic principles of drawing and coloring and got the opportunity to express themselves and be creative. The children in the project schools have repeatedly expressed that this has been a very good extracurricular class to have and something that the children look forward to. The students in Thiruvadhur higher secondary school, in 6th – 8th classes greatly benefited from the drawing class. They reported that it made coming to school more interesting and also helped them in their science classes.



The yoga classes are definitely a new opportunity for these rural children. The yoga master taught the children the basic asanas/ postures, key principles of keeping the mind calm, about relaxation, breathing exercises, discipline and listening to one's body. Given the effectiveness of the Yoga

master's instruction the project decided to develop a book of reference that the children could always have and also take home to show their parents.

Competitions were conducted for drawing, yoga and for Thirukkural recitation in January and February, across all Kalanjiyam project schools (12) including the Asha Stanford schools. Judges were selected from the local community, including the teachers for selecting best

students. For drawing two best students were selected for each school; for yoga the best performing students from each school were selected and on April 28th students were asked to perform yoga postures in front of the local community and the three best students were given prizes. For Thirukkural, the top three students from all schools who could recite up to 100 Kurals were selected for cash prizes. Teachers and Headmaster from all project schools were present on the occasion and encouraged the students handed the prizes. All the children who participated will be given a certificate of participation to recognize their efforts.

Balaji, 5th standard, Ariyanur Village

Balaji has an older brother who studied at Thiruvadhur school till 10th. His father is a farmer and works in field and his mother also helps with agricultural work in the field. Balaji says 'I like to come to school and study; I want to study well and become a doctor.' But he did not know what one had to study to become a doctor. 'I am studying English, Tamil, social studies, math etc. We have an aunty who comes to our school through the project. The project has given many things for our school, like tables, benches, fixing the windows, provided us with drawing note books, color pencils, slipper stand, we also get yoga master and drawing master, computers and a teacher to teach us on the computer.'

'I like to study on the computer; I have learned to work on notepad, paint, MS WORD and Excel; we have two computers and they are working well and we get to operate on the computer daily, when there is power. I like drawing class the most as I am doing well in drawing. I participated in the drawing competition and think that I will win a prize'

'We also got sathu mavu through the project and my mother makes this for me in the morning; we also received extra vegetables from the project that were added in our noon meal in school. All the children enjoyed the noon meal with the additional vegetables. I usually don't take leave, only for special occasions to go for marriage or something.'

Balaji's mother

'I got married to my maternal uncle and moved to Ariyanur village. Our main occupation is agriculture. Things are different in our village now. When my older son was going to school, he was not much interested in studies and the teachers were not very involved. He hardly went to school and did not study; he did not learn English in school. This have changed now, and my son Balaji is going to school regularly and is doing well; he likes to go to school and is also learning English.'

'I come to the school and take part in activities. Having a para-teacher provided by project is very good and it is helping our children to do well. Now that the teacher comes to school our children are coming to school regularly. Even if he is not well, he wants to go to school. When he misses school, they send someone home to check why my son has not come to school.'

‘There were no such programs for helping our children before. If the school had a teacher like now, my older son would also have done well, and would have passed in 10th; however he failed in English in 10th last year and there was no help for him. But he was already dejected and refused to retake the exam. I tried but there was no help, so I sent him to Chennai to work.’

‘Balaji is doing well; he is now doing computers, doing yoga at home, he is singing and also telling Thirukkural; all of this makes us happy. The project has given sathu mavu and my son really liked this; even when I forget to make it he asks me to make it every morning.’

Other curricular programs / support

- All the children in fifth standard and above in the three schools were given Tamil English Tamil dictionaries, to aid them in learning / improving English vocabulary
- Special classes were conducted by the teachers appointed and placed in Thiruvadhur higher secondary school by the project. They assessed and identified the students who had most difficulties / challenges and conducted after school classes, intensively in February and March to help the students for the annual / board exams.



Strengthening nutrition of children in project schools

A number of approaches were used for strengthening and promoting good nutrition. While the short period of the project does not ensure that all children will have adequate nutrition status, the efforts made sure that children and parents understand the importance of nutrition and make efforts to have balanced diet, comprising of nutritious food sources. The project provided, sathu mavu, ‘nutritious mixture’ (250gms packets) to the children; the parents were asked to come to school to collect these, and project staff instructed parents on how to use the sathu mavu. Various vegetables, such as eggplant, ladyfinger, spinach, radish or others, raised at

Kalanjiyam field premises were provided to the school and included in the noon meal in the primary and middle schools.

Additional efforts were taken in one school, Chinna Venmani Primary School to set up a kitchen garden for growing vegetables in the school premises. Since the school has no compound wall and is an open environment fencing was provided and seeds were provided for setting up a kitchen garden. Once the fencing was done, the children in the school worked on this garden, planting the seeds, watering daily and doing the needful.

Appointed Teacher's Views on challenge for students who come to Thiruvadhur higher secondary School

'Family backgrounds of the children are very difficult including household difficulties, health problems and others are not interested in school; when they have not learned much in school before and they don't understand the classes, they lose interest in studies; but when we motivate them, and they start learning, we are able to bring them back to school and bring their attention on studies.'

'There is no awareness among parents / families and both students and parents have no idea why 10th standard is needed. Some awareness is needed for their families as well.'

'There are many challenges for these students. One student tells me, that he has no memory though he studies and is trying hard he is unable to remember what he learnt. It is difficult to know who to really help such children.'

'Our focus this year was helping the students in 10th standard, as only if students pass in 10th standard will their future have some possibility. Next year we can also focus on other classes for both 9th and 10th. Next year, we will be able to do even better than this year! We will be able to further emphasize in the subjects for all students; additional support for Math is definitely required.'



III. Outcomes and Achievements

Number of children reached by project

A total of 167 children were covered in the two primary schools and one middle school and a total of 1425 students in the higher secondary school.

Improvements in children's milestones

A child monitoring card was put in place for every child in each project schools. The para-teachers recorded information on set of 10 indicators at the end of every month to track the children's status on behaviors and developmental milestones that are indicative of progress or needs among the children. The details of these indicators are included in the table below.

| Indicator | Description |
|---------------------------|---|
| Regularity | Number of times missed school in last month |
| Cooperation | Cooperates with teachers, students and parents and maintains cleanliness and does homework |
| Understanding | Able to understand instructions from teachers and follow them correctly |
| Communication | Responds to teachers and other students and able to express oneself in class |
| Mental ability | Able to read, write (Tamil and English alphabets), numbers and does basic math - appropriate for each class |
| Activity | Active participation and involvement in classroom |
| Friendliness | Interactions with other students and teachers in school; helpfulness and sharing behaviors |
| Handwriting | Able to write letters, words sentences, (age appropriate) with legibility, spacing, neatness, speed etc. |
| Pronunciation | Reading and speaking clearly, letters, words and sentences, fluency in reading |
| Care of Belongings | Takes care of personal belongings, without losing, responsibility and does not take other's belongings |

Each of the above are scored on a scale of 1 to 5 according to the following criteria:

1 = Needs to improve; Absent at least once a week or never fulfills minimum criteria

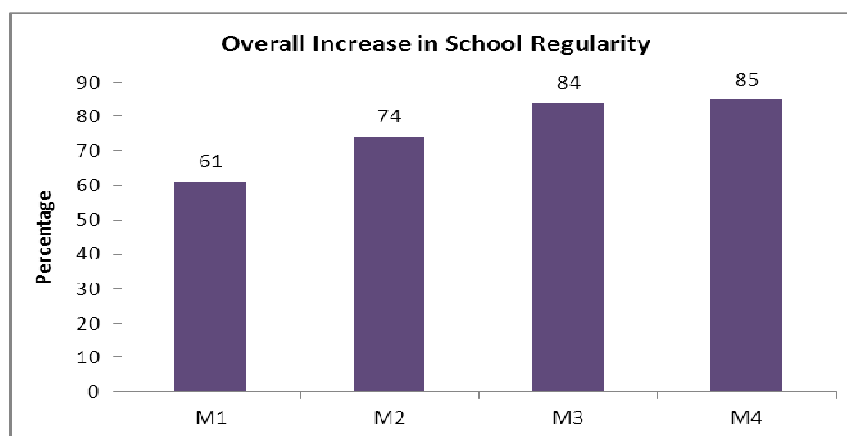
2 = Average; Absent 3 times a month or occasionally fulfills minimum requirement

3 = Good; Absent 2 times a month or fulfills minimum requirements

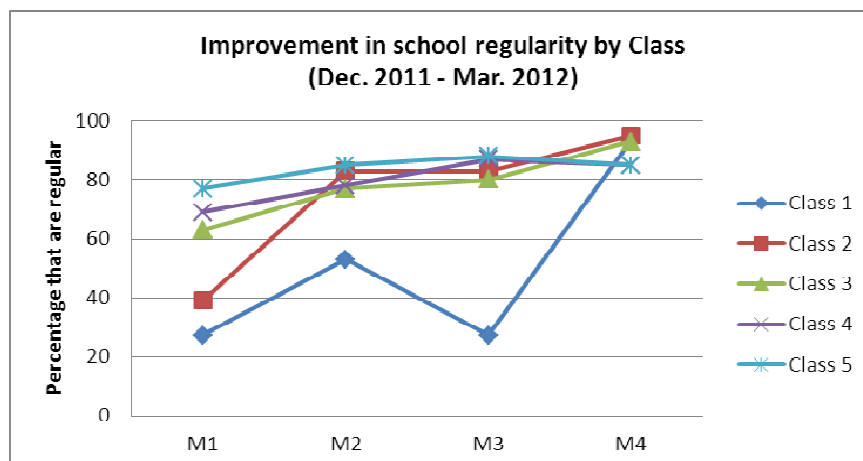
4 = Very Good; Absent 1 time in a month or fulfills more than minimum requirements

5 = Excellent; Never absent in the month and always fulfills beyond minimum requirements

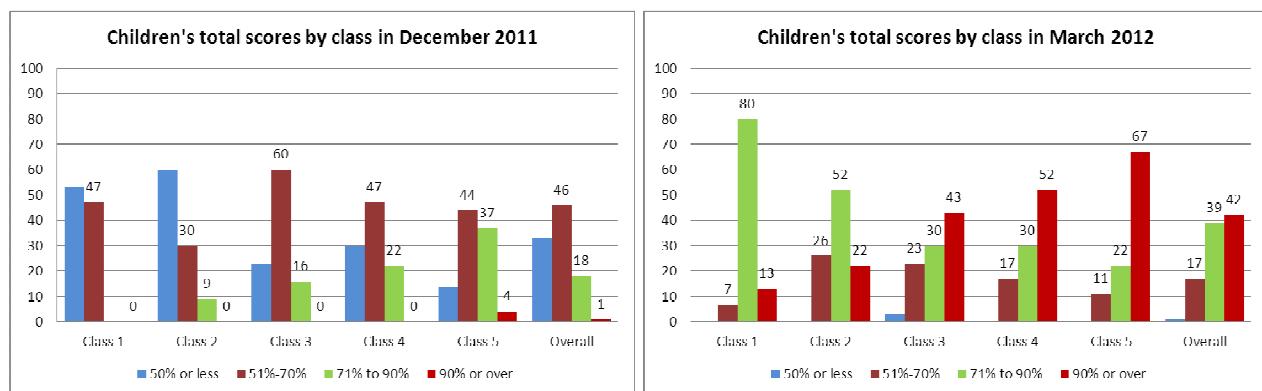
School regularity improved significantly in each class in the project schools between beginning and end. Children across the project schools were grouped by class and regularity (those who missed school as once in a month or never missed school) was examined by each class. 85% of children in project schools were coming to school regularly by end of school year.



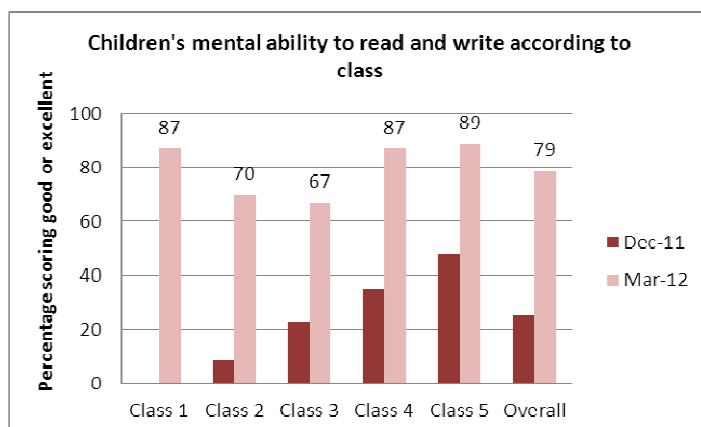
The graph below shows the improving trend in school regularity between December 2011 and March 2012 among children in all classes. Except for class 1 students the regularity for all other classes consistently improved and remained high after project interventions.



The scores for all indicators measured were combined for December 2011 and March 2012, to examine changes in total scores among children over time. This analysis shows significant improvement in total scores across all classes. The percentage of children scoring 90% or more increased across all classes; and overall it increased from 1% in December 2011 to 42% in March 2012. The shift in percentages can be seen the graphs below, with majority of children scoring below 70% in December whereas by March 2012 most children were scoring over 70% or 90%. It was promising to see that children in the higher classes (4th and 5th) were benefiting from the program efforts.

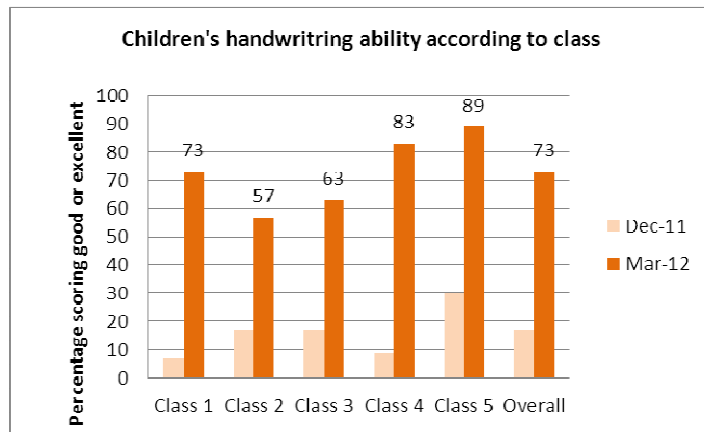


On all indicators / milestones measured, the improvements seen were highly significant between November 2011 and March 2012. Here is an illustration of two other milestones, i.e. children's mental ability and handwriting skills.



There have been positive and significant improvements among children in all classes, after para-teachers were placed in the schools. Majority of children were able to read and write according to their class.

Handwriting was also focused on by para-teachers and this was assessed based on their ability to write neatly, with proper space and age appropriately for each class. The results suggest that there were deficits that were addressed and improved with the support of the para-teachers in the school.



Assessment of Reading and Arithmetic

We conducted an assessment among 49 children in 4th and 5th in Asha Stanford Project Schools (Ariyanur, Chinna venmani and Periya Venmani) in end of March 2012. The objective of the assessment was to evaluate the learning levels achieved among a sample of children in project schools, on reading and doing basic arithmetic. We compared the scores to other children assessed using similar tool across Tamil Nadu by Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2011, conducted by Pratham.

We developed a tool in Tamil, English and Math, using the standard level text book. In Tamil and English children we assessed on their ability to recognize and read letters, words, a small paragraph and a story. They were scored on a scale of 1 to 10 based on their ability to read at each level, with increasing scores given for reading at higher levels. In Math, the tool included numbers 1 to 10, then 11 to 99, subtraction and division, which were scored similar to above.

A project supported para-teachers was assigned to go to each school, different from the one who normally goes to that school, to avoid any bias in conducting the test. The para-teacher

conducted the test among the students and scored the students in 4th and 5th standard. The data was entered into excel and analyzed to compile the results.

Results

The majority of the children in the project schools have positive learning outcomes as determined by this assessment. About 65% of 4th standard students and 75% of 5th standard students had combined score of over 70%, suggesting that a majority were able to read at the basic level and able to do basic arithmetic. Analysis of percentage of students who score 90% or more showed 96% so in Tamil reading, 31% in Math/ arithmetic and 59% in English reading. The analysis also shows gaps in students learning, specifically in Math and English. The following tables below illustrate this gap.

In comparison with children in Tamil Nadu, the children in the project schools show higher levels of learning and able to read better in Tamil, English and in basic arithmetic. Significant gap in arithmetic has been noted among both 4th and 5th standard students, indicating that more efforts are needed to strengthen children in this regard.

We also conducted the assessments in a school where no Kalanjiyam interventions have been implemented, as control group and the results were the following: in Tamil reading, 46% of 4th and 96% of 5th standard students were able to read at the highest level up to stories; in math, none of the students in either 4th or 5th were able to do division and 26% of 4th and 36% of 5th standard students were able to do subtraction; in English reading, 33% of children in 4th could not even recognize letters, about 50% of 5th standard students were able to recognize words but not read a paragraph and 13% could read up to stories.

| % of Children in Asha Stanford supported project school who are able to read a Illrd Standard level text book (Tamil) | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | 4Th | ASER 4th | 5th | ASER 5th |
| None | 0 | 5.3 | 0 | 3.5 |
| Able read only letters | 4.3 | 11.9 | 0 | 7.7 |
| Able to read letters and words, but not a paragraph | 0 | 32.2 | 0 | 20.8 |
| Can only read up to paragraph, but not story | 4.3 | 31.5 | 0 | 35.7 |
| Can read stories | 91.3 | 19 | 100 | 32.3 |
| % of Children in Asha Stanford Project School by Arithmetic Level | | | | |
| | 4th | ASER 4th | 5th | ASER 5th |
| None | 0 | 4.9 | 0 | 3.7 |
| Recognize numbers 1 to 10, but not above | 0 | 9.6 | 0 | 5.5 |
| Recognize numbers 11 to 99, but cannot do subtraction | 34.8 | 45 | 21.4 | 31.6 |
| Able to do subtraction but not division | 43.5 | 34.2 | 32.1 | 44.9 |
| Able to do division | 21.7 | 6.4 | 46.4 | 14.2 |
| % of Children in Asha Stanford supported project school who are able to read a Illrd Standard level text book (English) | | | | |
| | 4th | ASER 4th | 5th | ASER 5th |
| None | 0 | 5.3 | 0 | 3.5 |
| Able read only letters | 4.3 | 11.9 | 3.6 | 7.7 |
| Able to read letters and words, but not a paragraph | 8.7 | 32.2 | 10.7 | 20.8 |
| Can only read up to paragraph, but not story | 21.7 | 31.5 | 7.1 | 35.7 |
| Can read stories | 65.2 | 19 | 78.6 | 32.3 |

These above results suggest that the project based interventions are indeed making a difference in the project schools for improving children's learning outcomes. Given the short period of the project, we would like to point out that the project's achievements are significant and which can be further strengthened in the next school year. It is important to highlight here that the rural school class room is a complex environment with children of varying learning abilities and learning challenges that require different and sustained attention. It is hoped that in the upcoming years we would be able to more effectively address / and help the children to learn better, with special focus on children with learning challenges.

The Challenge for Rural Students who want to Study

Kavita,, 9th standard, Thiruvadhur Higher Secondary School

'I am studying in 9th standard B section and go to Thiruvadhur Higher Secondary school. I did primary school in Kalpat school and middle school at Vellikkadu and then on to Thiruvadhoor.'

'We had a good time in primary school; many times the teacher did not teach us, but we were passed anyway. When the para-teachers from Kalanjiyam we started learning things, how to use the ABL cards and slowly we improved. I enjoyed school in Vellikkadu Middle school, the teachers were good and I learned well. Now in Thiruvadhur school my studies are going fine and just a bit hard because of the new lessons / curriculum.'

'My favorite subject is science and has been since I was in primary school. I enjoyed all my science teachers in Vellikkadu and now especially in Thiruvadhur school; Mohan Sir, teaches us Science; he teaches well and makes the class very interesting and we are all learning well. I not good in Math; our math teacher is helping us, but I don't have any help other than this.'

What is need for doing well in studies:

'We need some help at home and at school to study, we need encouragement and support. In school teachers and other friends encourage me to do well; at home also we need support. I really want to study well and have a good job. I want to study and earn first marks in 10th standard and do very well. This has been my dream since I was very small.'

'My motivation to do well and study comes from because of the difficult situation at home. Only if I do well can I help my family, as there is one else. My father passed away last year.'

'The project is helping me/ us in many ways, helping us by giving materials, giving us good teachers, encouraging us, giving us support in education and making sure that we do well; this is all we/ I continue to need from Kalanjiyam/ the project'

Vijaya, Kavita's mother,

'I have three children, two daughters and one son, one daughter is 18; who is married, Kavita is now in 9th; my first daughter Krithika failed in 10th and then lost interest in studying and so went for work and now has gotten married. My daughter Kavita is now studying in Thiruvadhur higher secondary school. I am a single parent and earn my living as a wage laborer. My dream for my children is that they would study well and do well in life, better than us; that is all we know, but exactly what they should study, how all this we don't know.'

'I asked my older daughter to study, but she could not study, she failed in two subjects. I told her to study and try further, but she was not interested so I could also not do much either, so I let it be. She could not study and I could not help her much.'

'Now Kavita is doing better; I have to earn a living and have no help. All I can do is work and earn a living and my children have to do well and do better for themselves. I have no help for either financial otherwise to help my children. Both my children are eager to study and I can see it in them, unlike Kirthika. When they come home they are studying. I don't know much about what they are studying, I never ask them about this or try to help them, for I am helpless in this.

'Other than in school there is no other help for them, except of course through Kalanjiyam Projects. They are helping our children to study, through the school and are taking care of our children through the school. I don't know much about what they do, but I do know that they are helping and taking care of our children. Kavita wants to become a nurse. I have told her that I would help her as much as possible to make sure that she is able to realize her dream.'

Feedback from Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster of Thiruvadhur higher secondary school

'Though the project started its support later in the school year, it is expected to have made a big difference. Now this we expect pass to be 80% to 85%, maybe about 5 to 10% less, but not any further less. IED, students who have very serious learning challenges, they are unlikely to have passed in 10th and they constitute 10% of the 10th standard students.

'If we did not get this support, then I am sure that we would not have more than 40% pass in 10th this year as well.'

'We need to start the project in beginning of June, in the next school year. Had we had one year to help, we can even help the children who did not know anything.'

Why it is important to pass in 10th

'Life is made is a student passes in 10th. For rural children if they pass 10th, they feel that there is some hope for a good life and they are further encouraged to do better. The first check for anything, from driver license, to any job or any post is passing in 10th standard, so when this is not there then it is very difficult for students to rise above this failure. They fall once they fail in 10th and they go off in the wrong direction. Once they fail their family also does not encourage or support them in any way. So passing in 10th is a very critical juncture!'

Why children are not able to reach up to 10th without being able to read and write

'This has to do with our education system; up to 8th standard it is all pass; and the elementary education need to be further strengthened. So children get up to 9th standard, even without being able to read and write.'

'The teachers have said that next year they can do even better, they need to focus from 9th standard next year, and we need to further create awareness among parents for ensuring that children will come to school and stay for after school classes.'

'If we get support earlier from beginning of year, we can work with all the students more effectively and have 100% pass and high scores as well, I am sure.'

V. Project Expenditure for Year 1: September 2011- April 2012

| Project Expenditure | Total |
|---|-------------------|
| Extra-curricular programs | |
| Yoga master 1 (for 5 months) | 25,000.00 |
| Yoga master 2 (for 5 months) | 25,000.00 |
| Yoga reference book | 6,000.00 |
| Drawing master 1 (for 3 months) | 15,000.00 |
| Staff salary and welfare (4 para-teachers and 2 computer teachers) through May 2012 (for 6 months) | |
| Para-Teacher | 24,000.00 |
| Para-Teacher | 24,000.00 |
| Para-Teacher | 24,000.00 |
| Para-Teacher | 24,000.00 |
| Computer Teacher | 24,000.00 |
| Computer Teacher | 24,000.00 |
| Nutrition supplementation | 20,409.00 |
| Notebooks for primary / middle school children | 8,843.00 |
| Dictionaries for students from 6th - 10th | 55,675.00 |
| Thiruvadhur higher secondary school appointed teachers | |
| Teacher 1 (Dec 2011-April 2012) | 32,500.00 |
| Teacher 2 (Jan - April 2012) | 26,000.00 |
| Teacher 3 (Jan - April 2012) | 26,000.00 |
| Total Expenditure as of May 2012 | 384,427.00 |
| Total | |
| Balance in hand | 52,764.00 |

***Audited financial report for project will be submitted after completion of auditing**

VI. Next Steps and plans for Year 2: June 2012- April 2013

Given the achievements and key findings above the following programs are proposed for the upcoming year. The main components will be continued, including

- Provision of para-teachers for four project schools for supporting the school teachers
- Providing 1 computer teacher / and computer education; the para-teachers themselves have been trained some on computers and further, there is no need for a computer teacher in Thiruvadhur school, so one computer teachers would suffice for the next year. In addition we are also requesting for support to provide speakers for the existing computers which would allow students more effective use of the Digital Literacy software or other educational learning tools, since a group of students have to work on one computer. The request is for two computers in each of the primary and middle schools and 10 sets for Thiruvadhur school computer lab
- Providing extra-curricular programs for Yoga and Drawing classes; this year we are adding an additional request for mats to provide for each child for the yoga class. While existing mats were used, these are not adequate in number for all children and further are in very poor condition requiring replacement.
- Provision of notebooks and stationary for drawing, yoga and curricular needs, for new incoming students and others who don't have notebooks.
- We also request continued support for the nutrition program, for continuing the kitchen garden, primarily in two schools in the upcoming year.
- Given the additional need for support to students and based on the experience of the project it is felt that some extra after school tuition classes are required. This has been added as a new component for the next year. As also seen based on the assessments, the children in the schools need some further support and this may be effectively addressed through an after school program, especially focusing on the children who have learning challenges.

Therefore we are requesting for support to pay a very nominal stipend to conduct these programs after school.

- As can be seen from the feedback from Thiruvadhur Higher Secondary School, continuing the support for the appointed teachers would be very important. IN the last year, these teachers had very less time to help the students, but coming year, if we can give them more time, they will be able to raise the level of many more students and not only increase pass percentages but also increased marks. The results for the 10th standard board exams are expected in the end of May 2012, sometime; so as soon as these are out, they will be shared as the key outcome in this school.

Project Proposed Budget

| Budget for 2012-13 | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| | Per month | For Year |
| Yoga master 1 for 11 months | 5000 | 55,000.00 |
| Yoga master 2 for 11 months | 5000 | 55,000.00 |
| Yoga mats (estimated number of students 167+300) | 50 | 23,350.00 |
| Drawing master 1 for 11 months | 5000 | 55,000.00 |
| Staff salary and welfare (4 para-teachers) and computer teachers for 12 months | | |
| Thiruvadhoor | 4000 | 48,000.00 |
| Ariyanur | 4000 | 48,000.00 |
| Chinna Venmani | 4000 | 48,000.00 |
| Periya Venmani | 4000 | 48,000.00 |
| Computer Teacher (1) | 4000 | 48,000.00 |
| Speakers for computers (2 per primary and middle school and 10 for Thiruvadhur higher secondary school) - 16 sets in total | Rs. 850/ set | 13,600.00 |
| Nutrition Program (Kitchen garden for two schools) | | |
| Periya Venmani School | 30000 | 30,000.00 |
| Chinna Venmani School | 10000 | 10,000.00 |
| Notebooks for primary / middle school children (Rs. 70 / student), for about 200 students | 14000 | 14,000.00 |
| Dictionaries for students from new incoming 6th students (300) | Rs. 55/ child | 16,500.00 |
| After school Tuition program for two primary and one middle school | 1000/ school | 36,000.00 |
| School Teachers for Thiruvadhur School (3) continued from last year | 19500 | 214,500.00 |
| | | |
| Proposed budget for Year 2012-13 | | 762,950.00 |
| Balance in hand from 2011-12 | | 52,764.00 |
| Total fund requested for 2012-13 (Need – balance in hand) | | 710,186.00 |