Asha Chennai Relief and Rehabilitation Work – Chennai and Thiruvallur Rains and Floods 2015

**Background:**

Chennai and neighbouring districts were battered by rains that broke all previous records in the months of November and December 2015. This further trigger a huge surge in all the rivers that run through these districts. Huge areas were inundated by these floods. Asha Chennai is undertaking relief and rehabilitation work in the areas we have been working with. These projects are documented here.

In particular we have for several years been working in the Poondi block of Thiruvallur district. The Poondi reservoir is located here and the Kosasthalayar, Arani, Kooum and other rivers run through this block. Several villages in this block have been cut off from the rest of the world due to roads and bridges becoming flooded. Further some of the villages themselves have also been flooded. Severe rains that preceded have also left destruction in their wake.

**Gandhigram Relief Work**

Gandhigram is a small village in the Poondi block. Here is a Google maps coordinates for the place: 13.187550, 79.813682.

The village is an isolated tribal village. Most of the Irulars who live in the village depend on fishing in their Poondi reservoir for their livelihood. Given their general poverty they depend heavily on the daily wage from nearby land owners as well as the MGNREGA programmes of the government. Both of these have been cut off during the recent rains. Further their village has seen flooding and even going into and out of their village has become almost impossible for several days.

Given the remoteness of the village no relief work has been undertaken there by the government till now. Immediate relief work by us will be extremely useful.

The village has about 150 families. The Panchayat Union Primary School in the village (which has been supported by Asha Chennai) has 56 children. The total population of the village is about 700. We intend to supply relief items to all the 150 families. We have discussed our proposed relief work with the people in the village and they are very supportive of the effort and are desparately looking forward to the same.

Here are the photos from the flood affected village: <https://goo.gl/photos/RHZt3zKqX1BvG1MR6>

Budget:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SNo** | **Budget Item** | **Cost Details** | **Cost** |
| 1 | 10 Kgs of rice per family. | 150 \* 10 \* Rs 40 | Rs 60,000 |
| 2 | 2 Plastic mats per family | 150 \* 2 \* Rs 140 | Rs 42,000 |
| 3 | 2 Bedsheets per family (note cheaper bedsheets were not available in the time we need). | 150 \* 2 \* Rs 250 | Rs 75,000 |
| 4 | 2 Towels per family | 150 \* 2 \* Rs 90. | Rs 27,000 |
| 5 | 2 Loaves of bread per family. | 150 \* 2 \* Rs 35. | Rs 10,500 |
| 6 | ½ a dozen bananas per family (note this cost is approximate since we will be buying it in bulk and not as half dozen. | 150 \* 2 \* Rs 20. | Rs 6,000 |
| 7 | Thick plastic covers to hold all above materials. | 150 \* Rs 50. | Rs 7,500 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Transportation of materials  Given the situation this may prove to be costly. If it exceeds this allocation we will dip into the amount allocated for administration. |  | Rs 5000. |
| 9 | Administration and Miscellaneous  Since the staff for this project are already paid, we do not expect much here. We are just provisioning this to meet any contingency. |  | Rs 5000. |
|  | TOTAL |  | Rs 2,38,000. |

**Ongoing Relief and Rehab Work**

Given our involvement with the villages in Poondi block we plan to do more relief work at isolated and affected villages similar to Gandhigram. We are likely to do work at another village – Kottaikullam – which is also a small isolated tribal village. We are still preparing the details.

We are also talking to other NGOs like Pasumai trust (which works in the area leading to Thiruvallur from Chennai) and TEA trust (which works in area near Chengalpet).

The relief work will transition to rehabilitation work. This is where I see greater role for Asha. All the schools have suffered. Knowing how things work, government will certainly not address the needs of all these schools. We will need to step in there. Further the children may have also lost some of the belongings. We will access the situation as they become clear over the next few weeks and undertake more such rehab work.