

Project Arogyam - Nutrition Support for Children

Proposal for 2026

Jan 9th 2026

Background:

We started the project Arogyam to deal with the nutrition of the children during the Covid mini-school days. When the schools reopened in Oct 2021, we continued the project in just a few hamlets which are backward and continue needing the support. In 2023, the government itself started the breakfast scheme which further reduced the need for the Arogyam project. We would down the project by April 2025. However in a few Irular hamlets there has been persistent request for it and we are reconsidering our decision and restarting it in a few of these hamlets.

Schools/Villages covered

Asha prefers to work with schools and villages on a long term basis. All the villages identified here are places that we have a long history with. We have typically worked with the schools in the village and also run mini-schools in the area. This gives us the ability to identify the children who really need this support and also for the relations with the vendors and the village leaders to execute such a project..

Here is some background on these villages.

Vasantham Nagar, Thiruvallur Dist (from 2015) – 40 students

We have been supporting the primary school at Old Thirupatchur with a computer teacher since 2015. We started providing a regular teacher for the school in 2018-19 which we later stopped in 2024-25 as the school's strength also declined. A group of adi-dravidars come from a hamlet, Vasantham Nagar, about 1.5 Kms to the school. There is also a brick kiln next to this place. Most of the people in this hamlet work in the brick kiln and there are also some migrant labourers (and their children) who are living inside the brick kiln itself. Together these children account for some 60% of the children at this school. We were running a mini-school there. Nutrition support was provided at this mini-school.

Our teacher who used to teach at this school, Tamilselvi, goes to the Vasantham Nagar hamlet in the evening after school. She brings the cooked items from home and gives it to the children and also teaches them various thing for about an hour.

Annanagar – Thiruvallur Dist (from 2017) – 60+ students

Even among the poor villages that we work with, this is probably the poorest. A couple of 100 families of Irulars live here in the banks of Kosasthalayar. It is part of the Thirukandalam Panchayat but it some 1.5 Kms from Thirukandalam with just a mud road leading to their hamlet. Asha has constructed a library in the school premises which we have access to operate. We were running a mini-school here. There is huge absenteeism among children even before Corona and this is where we first started noticing how the children start getting very restless around lunch time as they have mostly not had lunch. We started providing nutrition to the primary school age children through our mini-school. We are now continuing the same in the library. The nutrition is provided to the children in the evening in the library. This also encourages more attendance at the library. Out librarian handles this.

Vazhavandhan Kottai – Thiruvallur Dist (from 2014) – 40 students

This is a hamlet of Katchur panchayat. Even calling it a hamlet is too charitable. This is a place where some Irular families have been resettled by the government and given “group houses”. There are some 100 families living here in abysmal conditions. We have done flood relief here and also ran a mini-school here. One of our teachers who now

lives in Seethanjeri, Vanitha, runs a mini-school here as well as the Arogyam project. The nutrition assistance will be provided in the evening for about 40 children.

Budget

The nutrition program aims to provide an additional nutritious snack or addition to their food and is not intended to provide them a whole meal. Towards this end we allotted only Rs 14 per child per day towards this and we were doing this for about 20 days a month on an average.

The Rs 12 also includes the cost of transportation of the material as well as the salary for a cook. We are providing cooked food at all the locations.

Here are the number of children and the cost of food for the full year.

SNo	Village	Number of children	Approx. Cost (no of children * 12 * 20 * 14)
Thiruvallur			
1	Old Thriupachur	40	1,34,400
3	Annanagar	50	1,68,000
4	Vazhavandhan Kottai (Katchur)	30	1,00,800
Other Costs			6,800
TOTAL			Rs 4,10,000 /-

Total Funds required for a year of nutrition supplements at these 3 villages: Rs 4.1 Lakhs.