

Project Sangamam-Poondi
Improvements to Government Schools in Poondi Block, Thiruvallur Dist.
Asha Chennai Proposal – Year 2017-18
May 9th 2017

Background:

Asha Chennai has been working with fourteen government primary schools in the Thiruvallur district under Project Sangamam-Poondi.

Thiruvallur is one of the poorer districts of Tamilnadu. It has always been a water scarce region. Proximity to Chennai has its positives as well as negatives. While a lot of people find employment in Chennai and auxiliary industries for Chennai (like brick kilns and sand quarrying), the local resources are taken away from the region including water in the form of Poondi reservoir, river sand, human workforce etc. All this has left the mainstay of this region agriculture in a bad situation.

The scenario as regards education in this district is similar to the rest of Tamilnadu. Government schools exist but with serious deficiencies. Private (read English medium) schools are coming up and eating into the student force of the government schools. But the private schools are often worse in terms of the quality of the teaching. Asha Chennai believes the revival and strengthening of the government schooling system is essential to the implementation of any mass education initiative in India.

Government has been progressively giving more funds to the education sector. This has also had a beneficial effect on these schools in our project. All these schools follow a combination of Samacheer Kalvi and SABL (Simplified Activity Based Learning). Most of these schools have some computers. Training is not provided to the teachers to use the computers effectively at the schools. We are looking at plugging these holes.

Here is a brief timeline of the things that have been taking place at this project.

2004-05	Asha Chennai started the project with Panchayat Union Primary schools at Kuppammal Chathiram, Kanakavalli Puram and Pattarai Perambudur
2005-06	We also started supporting the school at Kunnavalam and the Balwadis at Kunnavalam and Kuppammal Chathiram.
2006-07	We extended our support to the schools at Placepalayam, Nemiliagaram and Pudhur and also the Balwadis at Nemiliagaram.
2007-08	We added support for the school at SSA-Korattur. We also added libraries in all these schools. These are still functioning well.
2009-10	We discontinued the support for Kanagavalli puram, Kunnavalam and Pudhur and in its place added support for T.B. Puram and Yelappanaidu Pettai. We stopped support at Kanagavalli puram, Kunnavalam and Pudhur because of several factors like lack of adequate support and since the number of government teacher were sufficient for the strength of the school. We provided computer labs at all the schools with computers that were donated for us by the company Inautix.
2011-12	We discontinued support for Nemiliagaram because the government started one more primary school in that area and each school was so small that one teacher could manage the number of students (less than 30 each). We also discontinued support at SSA Korattur since the government itself appointed a third teacher (for 80 students) and our teacher also stopped working because of marriage.

2012-13	We added support for the school at Allikuzhi and Thomur.
2013-14	We withdrew support for T.B. Puram and Yelappanaidu Pettai as both these schools have got additional teachers from the government and the teacher student ratio is good at these places. We added support for two more schools at Gandhigram and Kachur at the start of the year. Then we received a request from the middle school at Ramancheri as they were converting to an English medium school and they didn't have any teacher to teach English medium at the primary school. Since we wanted to participate in this experiment of the government we decided to support this school as well. During this year we also built toilets for the schools at Placepalayam and Allikuzhi with funds from Asha Frankfurt.
2014-15	We received funds for all the existing eight schools from Hyundai Glovis as part of their CSR initiative. This allowed us to take up 3 more schools. We added support for Nemiliagaram and Ammambakkam early in the year. We had earlier supported Nemiliagaram. We stopped the support since the school strength had fallen. However now about 20 children from nearby Brick Kilns come to this schools for 6 months a year. So we decided to take that back. We also added support for another school at Kannigaiper. Thanks to assistance from IIT-Madras students, we could establish a library at Ramanchery. We could also setup libraries at 5 of the schools supported by Hyundai Glovis.
2015-16	Hyundai Glovis continued to support 8 schools. We added support for one more school at Kottaikulam. We have been able to provide every teacher in these schools with a laptop, internet connection and contents relevant for their teaching. We have also been maintaining and upgrading the computer lab in all these schools. These were done as part of Sangamam Kanini. We have also started conducting regular assessments at all the supported schools.
2016-17	Hyundai Glovis continued to support 8 schools. We added support for two more schools in the Ellapuram block at Thandalam and Anna Nagar. The parallel effort of Sangamam Kanini has provided all our teachers with laptops and created contents for teaching the children using these laptops. The school computers are maintained and the teachers are also trained to use the computers. Further a new toilet was constructed at Thandalam with support from Hyundai Glovis.

We are currently supporting Kuppammal Chathiram, Pattarai Perambudur, Placepalayam, Thomur, Allikuzhi, Gandhigram, Kachur, Ramanchery, Nemiliagaram, Ammambakkam, Kannigaiper, Kottaikulam, Thandalam and Annanagar.

Locally the activities of the project have been coordinated by the project coordinator Srinivasan. We have further provided teachers to these schools. We have been continuing to improve the infrastructure at these schools. We also sponsored the annual day functions at all these schools.

In doing all these activities we have been happy to find a supportive and energetic set of teachers at these schools. The district, panchayat officials, the education department officials and the collector have all been very supportive.

Last year Hyundai Glovis supported 8 of our schools and we funded 6 schools through our own funds. We hope to add support for 2 more schools, one in the Poondi block at Anandheri and another at Ellapuram block. The budget shows the amounts for the 12 Poondi block schools and 3 Ellapuram block schools separately. The additional school that is not yet identified has not been mentioned in the budget.

Schools/Balwadis to be covered:

Kuppammal Chathiram School (from August 2004)

The primary school in Kuppammal Chathiram has 70 students and 3 government teachers. The school has adequate building space to comfortably seat the children. Asha is providing one teacher Deivanayagi to this school. The number of children at this school has been reducing over the years because of the presence of an English medium school right adjacent to this school. In the last two years the trend has started reversing.

Pattarai Perambuthur School (from Dec 2004)

This has 120 students and 4 teachers. This school has also seen a big drop in the number of children because of various factors including drop in the population of children in this area, joining convents in Thiruvallur and the closure of two brick kilns in the area which meant the children coming from there are no longer coming to the school. This trend has started reversing in the last two years.

Asha has been providing one teacher, Ezhilarasi, to this school.

Placepalayam School (from Dec 2006)

The Panchayat Union Middle School at Placepalayam has been in existence since 1948. In 2012-13 thanks to the improvements we have done to the school, this has been converted into a high school. The high school (classes 6 to 10) and the primary school (classes 1 to 5) function independently. The primary school is what we support and it has 57 children and two teachers of which one of the teachers is not effective because of health problems. Asha has constructed a toilet for the school in 2013. Asha is providing two teachers Sangeetha and Sheela for the primary school.

They are in the process of constructing a new building for the high school. When that is completed, the primary school will get the existing high school premises. That would improve the facilities at the school.

Thomur (from 2011)

When we started this was a middle school. This school has also been upgraded to become a high school couple of years back. The primary school and high school will function independently. The primary school is what we are involved with and it has 45 children and 2 teachers. They are in the process of constructing a new building for the high school. When that is completed, the primary school will get the existing high school premises. That would improve the facilities at the school.

Allikuzhi (from 2012)

This is also a remote school in the vicinity of Placepalayam. The school has 70 children and three government teachers. Asha has been providing one teacher for the school. We also constructed a toilet for the high school which is adjacent to the primary school that we support. This is also used by the primary school during lunch break.

Gandhigramam (from 2013)

The school is situated in a tribal area. The primary school there has 60 children and 2 government teachers. The area is a very poor area and is in need of our support. The Balwadi in the village attached to the school has not been functioning. We hope to add support for this school and Balwadi. Asha has been providing one teacher for this school.

Kachur (from 2013)

The school has 68 children and 3 teachers. The children coming to this school are mainly from the nearby tribal hamlet. The children in this school are very weak in terms of education. Asha has been providing one teacher for this school.

Ramancheri (from 2013)

The school is a middle school. There are about 90 children in the primary sections (class 1 to 5) and about 20 children each in classes 6, 7 and 8. The school has 6 teachers. All the primary classes have a English medium and a Tamil medium section. Asha has been providing one teacher at this school from about Sept 2013. Given the improvement in the strength at the school, we are planning to provide one more teacher to the school.

Nemiliagaram School (2006 to 2011 and from 2014)

This primary school was supported by Asha from 2006 to 2011. However with the opening of another primary school in another part of the village and because the brick kiln children stopped coming to the school the number of children coming to the school dropped significantly (to just about 35). The brick kiln children have once again started coming to the school. So in addition to the 30+ children the school has for 6 or 7 months they get an additional 10 to 15 children. They once again need our support. We have appointed one teacher, Tamilselvi to the school.

Amambakkam (from 2014)

This school is along the Katchur to Placepalayam road, close to Katchur. The school has about 50 children and 2 government teachers. The heartening thing in this school is that the government teachers are very stable. They have both been at the school for over 5 years and have no intention of moving out any time soon. We have appointed one additional teacher, Nishanthi to this school.

Kannigaiper (from 2014)

Our choice of supporting this school was partly driven by the fact one of our good long time teacher Janova was finding it difficult to commute to the school she was teaching (Katchur) and hence we decided to add support to this school that is close to her place. Kannigaiper is in the Ellapuram block of Thiruvallur dist. The school has 90 children and 4 teachers (incl HM). The HM is further the Cluster Resource Coordinator (CRC). He manages the training etc. for 20 schools and is rarely present at the school. Further the school has English medium in the 1st to 4th standards. Asha has been providing an additional teacher, Janova, the last 3 years. Kannigaiper also benefits from strong community support and is enjoying a growth in student population.

Kottaikulam (from 2015)

This is a remote Irular (tribal) village near Goonipalayam. It is about 3 Kms from the nearest bus route. When we started it was a single teacher school with 34 children. The only teacher there was also physically handicapped and could not get up or move without assistance. If any school needed a second teacher, this was it. We appointed our first teacher there in July 2015. Since then the government has also appointed a second teacher. We are still continuing our teacher since teachers often move out of this school because of the lack of convenient travel options. Further the children are well below their grade level and need our assistance.

Thandalam (from 2016)

This school is also in the Ellapuram block and is the Cluster Resource Centre. The school has 105 children and 4 teachers. The HM being the CRC coordinator is rarely able to attend to teaching work. Thus there was a desparate need for an additional teacher. We have appointed one teacher at the school. If the strength of the school increases, we are thinking of providing an additional teacher.

Annanagar (from 2016)

This is a remote Irular (tribal) village near Kannigaiper. It is about 4 Kms from the nearest bus route. All the children come from the Irular hamlet. It has about 100 children and 3 teachers. All the teachers are male as women would find it difficult to come to a place such as this. We have appointed one teacher, Geetha for this school who manages to come to the school by scooter. The children at this school are also very weak. We are considering appointing one more teacher to this school.

Further the parents are mostly illiterate and there is a lack of value for education. We feel it would be good to have an evening tuition centre / library in the village. This would be a resource for the children to study or do their homework in the evening and also over time help in building value for education in the community.

Anandheri (new)

Asha Chennai has been sending a computer teacher to the school as part of Sangamam Kanini in 2016-17. The school is a middle school with 79 children in primary sections and 47 children in the middle school sections. The school has good facilities and has a total of 7 teachers. The primary sections has just 3 teachers and it would be useful to have one more teacher. The reception to our work has been very good at the school.

Excursions for 4th and 5th Std Children

Hyundai Glovis has been sponsoring excursions for children in the 4th and 5th std at all their supported schools. We intend to do the same this year as well. We will be taking to a suitable educational site. In 2016 we took the children to Birla Science museum / planetarium and Guindy children’s and snake park. In 2017 we took the children to Dakshina Chitra and Mahabalipuram.

We provide buses for transport, snacks during the travel, lunch, tickets for the attractions, etc. In addition we also give gifts to the children and the teachers assisting with the excursion. The expenses are detailed here.

	Poondi Block	Ellapuram Block
No of Children	350	110
No of Teachers	35	14
No of Glovis/Asha Volunteers	30	15

	Poondi Block			Ellapuram Block	
	No of units	Unit Cost	Cost	No of Units	Cost
Buses	6	15000	90000	2	30000
Tickets	415	75	31125	139	10425
Food	415	140	58100	139	19460
Gifts for children	350	200	70000	110	22000
Snacks during travel	415	50	20750	139	6950
Gifts for teachers	35	1500	52500	14	21000
T-shirts and caps.	415	250	103750	139	34750
Misc Expenses			13775		5415
TOTAL COST			440000		150000

Libraries for the Schools

Asha Chennai has always been keen to setup libraries at all the supported schools. Back in 2007 another NGO organized to bring a container load of books from the US to India. Asha also received some 300 boxes full of books. These were given to all the supported schools at that time. These were good children’s book but all in English. We

also donated a bureau each for all the schools. Three of the currently supported schools in Kuppammal Chatriram, Pattarai Perumbudur, and Nemiliagaram still have these books. However the bureau given at that time is not in very good shape. It would be good if we give another bureau to these schools.

Later in 2015 from the excess funds left from Hyundai Glovis (2014-15 funding) we setup libraries at 5 schools: Allukuzhi, Gandhigram, Katchur, Thomur, and Placepalayam. We also gave each school a bureau. Here we explicitly chose bilingual books, audio books etc. that would be suitable for these schools. The schools still have them.

We also received some books in Jan 2015 and Jan 2016 from the students of IIT Madras. As a part of the Shastra programme, they organized a book collection drive. Of the books collected, they donated books that will be suitable for children to Asha. Unfortunately most of these books were books collected from schools and publishers of unsold textbook inventories. We donated these to Ramanjeri in 2015 and to Ammambakkam and Kannigaiper in 2016. We did not donate any bureaus at this time to the schools.

Government has also given a collection of Tamil books to the schools.

Note wear and tear have taken their toll over the years.

We intend to setup new libraries (books and one bureau) at all the schools that do not have a proper library and top up books at schools which already have a library.

School Category	Number of schools	Our plan	Cost
Old schools with books from the US donation (in 2007)	3	Give them a new bureau (Rs 10000) as the old one is in bad shape and top up books for Rs 10000 per school.	Rs. 60,000
Schools where Glovis library was setup in 2015.	5	Just top up some more books for Rs 10000 per school.	Rs 50,000
Schools where IIT books were donated.	3	Purchase a bureau for these schools and buy new books for Rs 25,000 like for fresh libraries as the books from Shastra are mostly not well suited for these children.	Rs 105,000
Schools that do not currently have a library – Thandalam, Kottaikulam, and Anandheri.	3	Purchase a bureau for these schools and buy new books for Rs 25,000.	Rs 105,000
TOTAL			Rs 320,000.

Library for Annanagar

Annanagar is a tribal hamlet some 4 Kms from the highway at Kannigaiper. There are some 100 children in the primary school there and the villagers have pretty much no option other than this school. The value for education in this village / community is still quite weak. Many of the children absent themselves from the school for many days. The parents do not take responsibility for the regular attendance of the children, their hygiene etc. Children often do not bring their notebooks or books to school. Teachers are unable to give homework to the children. All these reflect on very poor performance of the children from this school in Asha's assessments. These call for stronger action on our side.

One of the things we have done in other projects to very good effect is to run an evening tuition center / library for children right in the village. This provides a safe, well-lit, clean space with a responsible educated adult for the children to gather in the evenings. We have found that children do come in good numbers to places like these. We will have good books, children's magazines and also some educational games like chess.

The building here is close to the school. So we will also give a key to the Headmaster and allow them to use the same library. So we will not need a separate library in the school.

The place we were shown had a circular building a number of years back. It is now just a circular wall some 4 feet high and some 15 feet in diameter. We hope to put up a roof over this wall and make it into a proper building. We will also need a good whitewash, electricity etc. There will be a table and a few chairs but the children will mostly sit on mats on the floor. We may also find an alternate space in the village for rent.

Note that other villages like Katchur have a very similar need. We will take those up after we gain some experience running the library here.

SNo	Work Item	Cost
1	Library building fixing and/or rent.	Rs 50,000
2	Purchase of books, magazines, games etc.	Rs 30,000
3	Operational expenses -- cleaning charges, minor repairs etc. Rs 500 per month.	Rs 6,000
4	Miscellaneous (1 table, 5 chairs, water dispenser, register, stationeries, mats, lock etc.)	Rs 10,000
5	One Bureau	Rs 10,000
6	Librarian salary (Rs 1500 * 12 + Rs 1500 Deepavali bonus)	Rs 19,500
	TOTAL	Rs 125,500

Other General Inputs From Asha

Asha Chennai has undertaken several projects with government schools. As part of these projects Asha Chennai provides several standard inputs including,

1. Materials for the children including uniforms, bags, slippers etc. as needed.
2. Other education material as appropriate for the class. This would range from crayons to atlases and geometry boxes.
3. Computers and a library of books along with the required furniture for all the schools.
4. Bring the teachers from these projects to Chennai for training. Trips by educationists from Chennai to these projects to monitor, provide onsite training and other inputs for the teachers in these schools.

Further this project being in a remote area would require a local coordinator and cannot be executed directly by the volunteers in Chennai. Srinivasan would continue performing the role of coordinator for the project.

Project Details and Estimates for Year June 2016 to May 2017

Note the items for Balwadi are in RED. These may not be taken up. It depends on whether we get the proper permission to work with the Balwadis.

SNo	Work Description	Cost and Modification Details	Cost for Poondi Block 12 schools + libraries at all schools.	Cost for 3 Ellapuram block schools.
1	<p>Teachers – Poondi Block Kuppammal Chathiram – 1 Pattarai Perambudur – 1 Placepalayam -- 2 Thomur - 1 Allikuzhi – 1 Gandhigramam – 1 Kachur – 1. Ramancheri – 2 Nemiliagaram – 1. Ammambakkam – 1. Kottaikulam – 1. Anandheri – 1. Computer Teachers – 3.</p> <p>Ellapuram Block Kanniagaiper – 1. Thandalam – 2. Annanagam – 2. Computer Teacher – 1.</p>	<p>Currently 12 schools 15 teachers (extra at Placepalayam and two computer teachers). Intend to increase this to 24. Increasing average salary incl travel from 6200 to 7000. Computer teachers will receive a little higher salary. That is adjusted in the overall average salary.</p> <p>$16*7000*12 + 16*3000$ $6*7000*12 + 6*3000$</p>	Rs 14,79,000	Rs 5,22,000
2	Coordinator Salary Rs 21000 * 12 + 3000. This is split as Rs 18000 on account of Glovis Sangamam and Rs 3000 on account of the rest of the schools. Note this will also cover his work towards Sangamam Kanini.	Given the increase in the number of schools, increase in the responsibilities and given general increase in salaries, we are raising this to Rs 21,000.	Rs 219,000	Rs 36,000
3	Coordinator Vehicle Maintenance	Rs 10,000	Rs 5,000	Rs 5,000
4	<p>Educational materials</p> <p>Geom. Instruments Slates Teachers kits Trays Colours Atlases Kits as required from training</p>	This does not include computers and accessories.	Rs 130,000	Rs 40,000

5	Sports Materials Plastic balls for younger children, Footballs for older children, Tennicoit rings, Skipping ropes, Snakes & Ladders, Ludo etc. board games		Rs 40,000	Rs 15,000
6	Replacement Mats at all schools	300 * Rs 150 for the 12 schools and 100 * Rs 150 for the others.	Rs 45,000	Rs 15,000
7	Tables, chair and Bureaus (one each) for the recently started schools: Anandheri and Thandalam.	Table – Rs 3500. Chair – Rs 1500. Bureau – Rs 9000.	Rs 14,000	Rs 14,000
8	Materials for the children. This would be bags or uniform as we decide during the year. We are also adding Rs 100 for products related to health and hygiene (soap, tooth brush/paste etc.) to inculcate good habits.	We are allocating Rs 400 per student for the materials. Pondi block 12 schools – 880 students. Ellapuram block 4 schools – 400 children.	Rs 352,000	Rs 120,000
9	Infrastructure/Civil works. Kitchen sheds for Kottaikulam, and Nemiliagaram.	Rs 25,000 per kitchen shed.	Rs 50,000	
10	Black board and scribble area repainting	Twice a year for all schools.	Rs 50,000	Rs 20,000
11	School day and other school functions		Rs 80,000	Rs 30,000
12	Laptop and hotspot for new teachers (3 new teachers – 1 computer and 2 regular teachers for Poondi Block and 2 for Ellapuram block).	Rs 30,000 per package for the teacher consisting of laptop, hotspot and speaker.	Rs 90,000	Rs 60,000
13	Data plan for all teachers. Note this used to be paid as part of Sangamam Kanini. We are moving these to the respective projects.	Rs 500 per month for each teacher.	Rs 102,000	Rs 36,000
14	Teachers training expenses We bring the teachers to Chennai once a term for interaction with volunteers, potentially have follow up training etc. We also have teacher meetings and training meetings at Thiruvallur. There are food and tea expenses during these meetings and also conveyance for teachers who do not get that.	12 months at Rs 7000 per month (all shown in the 8 schools section). Trainer fees and materials for the training sessions are covered by Asha from other projects.	Rs 84,000	
15	Two uniform sarees and bag for teachers.	Rs 2000 per teacher.	Rs 34,000.	Rs 12,000.
16	Miscellaneous (emergencies, services, etc.)	This will be claimed only if there is a health of weather related emergency at the school.	Rs 10,000	Rs 5,000
17	Other Admin expenses (conveyance, documentation etc.)		Rs 15,000	Rs 5,000

18	Rent + Electricity for Thiruvallur Office	Rs 4000 per month rent which will also include electricity. Rs 500 of this is being borne by Hyundai Steel.	Rs 42,000	
19	Excursions for the children to Chennai and vicinity for one day. Note that we will only be able to take the 4 th and 5 th children. Taking younger children on such a long trip will be difficult.	The 12 Poondi block schools have about 350 4/5 Std children + 35 accompanying adults. The details of this are provided separately.	Rs 440,000	Rs 150,000
20	Library for Annanagar	Details provided separately.	Rs 125,500	
21	School library setup and upgrade.	Details provided separately.	Rs 320,000	
22	Trainers from Asha Chennai would need to make one or two trips a term to the villages to monitor the work, evaluate the teachers and plan their training accordingly. Car rental, lunch etc. would be required.	Rs 2000 per trip for 5 trips.		Rs 10,000
	TOTAL		Rs 37,26,500	Rs 10,95,000