

# Status Report - Apr 08 to Oct 08

## Eureka Child Project in Krishnagiri



### Introduction:

Krishnagiri is one of the most backward districts in Tamil Nadu. AID India has been able to carry out programs such as reading, science and library in Krishnagiri district with the support of ASHA Seattle. Krishnagiri has been one of our focus districts over the past year and this report will put together the updates on each our program over the last 6 months. This report will contain three sections. Section 1 will report the results of last academic year's program. Section 2 will be a detailed report on the summer camp program conducted in Krishnagiri during May- June. Section 3 will contain this year's plan and update.

### Section 1:

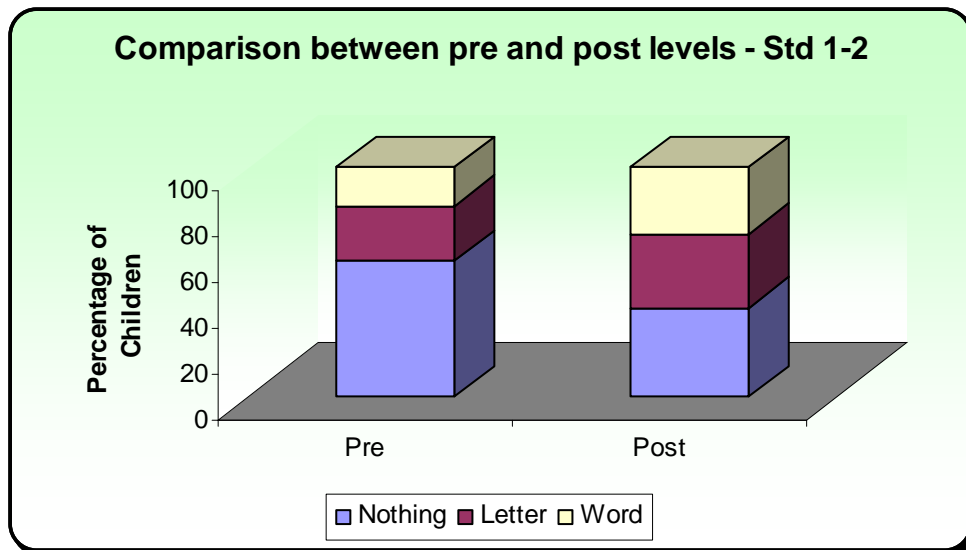
#### Evaluation of last year's program:

Last academic year, we started the Padippum Inikkum intensive reading program in 295 schools. We also started with a low intensive reading program in 1060 schools throughout Krishnagiri. From these 1060 schools, we identified schools where teachers showed a lot of interest for our program and added 315 more schools in January and February taking the total intensive program schools to 610. We had mentioned the process of carrying out the program in the earlier reports. Here, we would like to share some of the results of the teacher evaluation that was carried out. The table below contains pre and post teacher evaluation results from 148 schools out of the 295 schools where the intensive program was carried out through the year.

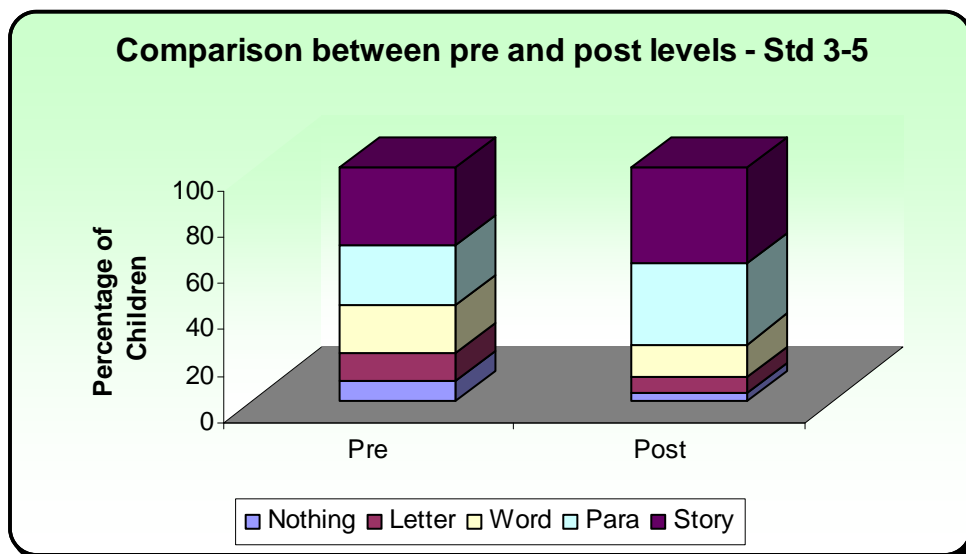
Percentage of children by class and skill level

Std 1 - 2	Nothing	Letter	Word	Para	Story
Pre	59.4	23.6	17		
Post	38.6	32.4	29		
Std 3 - 5	Nothing	Letter	Word	Para	Story
Pre	8.5	11.9	20.3	26.4	32.9
Post	3.3	6.4	14.5	35.1	40.7

The evaluation showed a good improvement in the skill levels of children. The chart below shows how the percentages of children have moved between levels from pre to post.



In Std 1 to 2, the percentage of children who cannot identify letters came down from 59% to 38%.



In Std 3 to 5, the percentage of children in para and story increased from 59.3 % to 75.8 %. The evaluation was also significant given that we have scaled up our reading program in the district.

The program ended with a positive result for us and also was an indication to carry out the programs with more intensity and scale in the future. The support from the teachers, AEEOs and DEEO of Krishnagiri for our programs was also a huge positive note with which the year ended.

## Section2:

### Summer Camp – Report:

As part of Summer Campaign on basic learning outcomes, the ‘*Ennum Ezhuthum*’ (Letters and Numbers) summer campaign was run in 15 districts in Tamilnadu from May 1 2008 to June 1 2008. A total of around 22,500 villages in 15 districts was the targeted reach of the summer campaign. In Krishnagiri, summer campaign was done in a total of 1127 villages.

#### Goal of the Summer Camp

According to ASER 06 and ASER 07 data, Tamilnadu has been one of the lowest performing states in Reading and basic Arithmetic skills. Hence we decided that in the summer camp the primary focus would be to ensure that all children in a village know to read and count. The specific class-wise expected outcomes were defined as:

Class	Expected Outcomes	
	Reading	Math
Std. 1 & 2	Identifying letters	Identifying nos. up to 100
Std. 3 – 5	All Children identifying letters Children who can read only words move to reading small stories fluently	All children identifying 3-digit numbers

#### Activity Report

##### Scale and Reach

The summer camp was run as a campaign from May 1 2008 to June 1 2008 in a total of 1127 villages. A total of 1973 volunteers were mobilized in the district for taking classes in the village for 1 month. Of them, 494 were older volunteers who have worked with us in library, reading and other programs in the past. 1479 new volunteers were identified and trained.

##### Spreading the News

The summer camp awareness campaign started off with an SMS being sent to more than 4500 people in the district about the learning outcomes problem and calling for volunteers to take classes in their villages. A poster with the message “Did you know – more than 50% children in our villages don’t know to read a simple story in Tamil. You can change this – take a 1 hour class everyday for children of your village – Get them to learn letters and numbers in a month” was printed and distributed to nearly 1445 villages.



## The Launch

Cycle rallies were organized through out the district to kick off the summer campaign. Many local leaders, Panchayat leaders, AEEOs and teachers participated in the cycle rally. Most importantly it drew a lot of young women to participate in it. Govt. Arivoli (Literacy Campaign) District Coordinators also participated in the rally.

## Material Distribution and Training

For reading, word cards, letter cards, the alphabet poster, paragraph and story cards were given for every village. An activity newspaper was also provided for children so that they could colour pictures, solve puzzles and read small stories. For mathematics, a number chart, number cards, currency notes and math puzzle cards were designed, printed and distributed. Stickers of “Children in this house can identify letters and numbers” were given to villages so that they can be stuck on the doors of houses. Some simple materials like a straw, string and a how-to-do manual were also provided to get children to do small experiments in Science. The materials were given during the training sessions to the coordinators at every block.

Sample of Reading materials



Sample of Math materials



Each block had 2 activists (Block Resource Person – BRP) with the responsibility of mobilizing volunteers in 50 villages each. In most villages 1 adult volunteer and 2 child volunteers (Std. 7 upwards) were mobilized. When the BRPs visited the villages, they distributed the material and also demonstrated the activities with children as part of the training to the volunteer. In some

blocks where volunteers already existed as part of the village library program, cluster level trainings were organized.

### **Summer Camp Implementation in villages:**

In most villages, the summer camp was run everyday for around 2 – 3 hours. It began with a games session, followed by a reading and maths class. On Saturdays, melas on story writing, Science experiments, reading sentences and solving math puzzles were conducted. Volunteers also came up with their own activities and involved children in drawing, narrating stories and performing role plays from story cards.

### **Program Impact:**

We did not do an evaluation of the program in Krishnagiri as it was more an awareness campaign to enlight the problems in basic reading and mathematics. It brought in enormous awareness in the communities on the problems and helped in also mobilizing a huge number of volunteers who helped us running the summer camp in more than 1000 villages. Inorder to measure the summer campaign's program impact apart from the awareness it created, an external evaluation was carried out by Dr. Sumathi Rajesh, HoD, Dept. of Anthropology, Madras University, Chennai.

External evaluation in Trichy was done in 50 random villages out of the 1430 summer camp villages. The villages were selected through PPS (probability proportional to size) sampling. In each village the Madras University team surveyed 40 households. Pre-test was done between May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup> and post-test was done from June 4<sup>th</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>. Apart from this, Dr. Sumathi personally visited 4 villages in Trichy to observe, document and evaluate the summer camp qualitatively. The data has been consolidated and a report has been prepared by Dr Sumathi on the program. The results from the external evaluation has been given below

<b>READING</b>						
<b>Pre test Total Children</b>	1409					
<b>Post test Total children</b>	1317					
	<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Nothing</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Para</b>	<b>Story</b>
<b>Pre</b>	<b>Std 1+2</b>	22	44	26	6	2
<b>Post</b>		11	43	35	8	3
<b>Pre</b>	<b>Std 3+4+5</b>	3	9	31	33	24
<b>Post</b>		1	8	26	31	34

In 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> std, the children who did not know letters came down drastically from 22 % to 11 %. Thus more than half the children who did not know any letters have improved one level atleast. For children in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> standard, children who knew para and stories have increased from 57 % to 65%.

<b>MATHS</b>							
<b>Pre test Total Children</b>	1398						
<b>Post test Total children</b>	1323						
	<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Nothing</b>	<b>1dig</b>	<b>2dig</b>	<b>3dig</b>	<b>Sub</b>	<b>Div</b>
<b>Pre</b>	<b>Std 1+2</b>	14	48	33	2	3	0
<b>Post</b>		9	37	41	6	5	2
<b>Pre</b>	<b>Std 3+4+5</b>	2	7	38	17	31	5
<b>Post</b>		1	5	37	14	33	10

In Mathematics, the percentage of children who can identify 2 digit numbers and above increased from 38% to 54 % in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> standard. In std 3 to 5, the percentage of children who can identify three digit numbers and above did not show any significant improvement. The percentage only marginally increased from 53% to 57 %.

Overall the summer campaign succeeded in improving basic skills of children, mobilizing a huge volunteer base and enormous awareness among communities on the status of children's reading and math levels.

### **Section 3:**

#### **Eureka Child – Jul to Oct 08**

Based on our previous success, we decided to significantly scale up our programs in 10 districts of Tamil Nadu. We were also backed by support from CIFF and ASHA and we are extremely grateful to ASHA for their support last year and this year. Without your support, it wouldn't have been possible for us to continue our programs on a large scale. It is exactly that which also helped us demonstrate our programs to other potential donors for expansion. We were able to get support from CIFF for 7 districts. We also decided that three other districts including Krishnagiri will be co-funded districts and the total of ten districts including CIFF and cofunded districts will be our focus districts for this year. The scale up was not only in number of schools but also in terms of programs. This year we started Math program, Pre-primary and Community learning centers along with already existing Reading, Science and library programs.

#### **Scale of the program:**

<b>S No</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Schools/ Balwadis/ Villages</b>
1	Padippum Inikkum – Reading program	590
2	Kanakkum Pidikkum – Math program	105
3	Pre-primary program	150
4	Science program	508
5	Community Learning Centers	150
6	Eureka Libraries	50



**Reading Program – Padippum Inikkum:**

This is same as our last year's program. Last year we did our intensive program through the year in only 295 schools. We had added 315 more schools in Jan and Feb. This year we decided to run the intensive program in a large number of schools atleast for major part of the academic year to have bigger impact. Hence we started in two phases – the first phase started in 305 schools in July and the second phase included 285 schools in September. Right now, this program is currently running in all 590 schools in 9 blocks of Krishnagiri. Materials and training has been completed in all the schools and the program is in full swing. The district CEO, DEEOs and AEEO have assured support for the program. This year, we have also got a written permission from the state education department for executing the programs in the district.

**Math Program – Kanakkum Pidikkum:**

The concentration of our math program is on basic arithmetic skills. ASER report states that more than 50 % of the children in 5<sup>th</sup> standard cannot subtract and more than 80 % of the



children cannot do division. AID India has developed a set of materials focused on basic arithmetic skills. The overall goal of the program is to make all children to recognize two and three digit numbers and do addition, subtraction, multiplication and division by the time they finish 5<sup>th</sup> standard. We have decided to concentrate on number recognition, addition and subtraction skills for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> std for this year. For 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> standard, the concentration will be on number recognition and addition. We started the math program in July covering 4 blocks and 105 schools.

Children in each class will be grouped in to four based on their skill levels Number recognition, Addition, Subtraction and others. Then each group will be given activities that they can do. This is similar to the reading program in the sense the teacher needs to spend some time initially in explaining to the kids on the procedure and then the kids start doing themselves as a game. The teacher just needs to go around each group to ensure that all the kids are using it the right way. Our block resource person goes to each school to make sure that the materials are being used and monitor the progress of each school. The feedback after the first quarter has been very positive and lots of teachers have shown enormous interest in using our math materials.

**Pre-primary Program:**

Most adults learn 60% life skills from their childhood itself like speaking, walking, relating to others, eating, emotions etc. The maximum learning and acquisition of social skills takes place between 0 and 6 years. Children studying in Government balwadis come from economically poor backgrounds. These children have lesser access to materials and inputs when compared to children going to private nurseries & crèches. For a child to succeed and do well in primary school, nurturing and building her 'active learning capacity' in early childhood is very important. Apart from her nutrition status, her chances of succeeding in primary school depends on

- language development,
- ability to understand symbols,
- capacity to process, structure and classify information,
- ability to ask questions,
- level of attention and concentration, and
- Confidence and eagerness to learn.

Studies indicate that early childhood education programs show positive impact on enrolment, retention, language and mathematics achievement in children in primary school. For children from poor families, early childhood education centers should compensate for the environmental deprivations on the home front by providing an appropriately stimulating environment to the child.

**The overall goal of the early childhood education program is to develop language, pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-number skills in children, that will make them ready, eager and confident to enter primary school.**



A cost-effective Balwadi kit has been designed in order to provide exposure to motor, language, math, science, social and sensory skills. The kit consists of different types of materials that are safe to handle, child friendly and age appropriate. It provides children an opportunity to make use of all their senses. Children have the freedom to choose an activity of their choice. The teacher acts only as a guide and an initiator to understand the thought pattern of the child and help him/ her in the process. Using this kit, children can do several activities, which will help them acquire the 6 basic skills. Currently, we are running the pre-primary program in 150 schools across 5 blocks of Krishnagiri district. Each quarter, the balwadis will be given a set of materials covering some of the skills and the teachers will be trained by our block resource



persons on all the activities to be covered for the quarter. Our block resource persons will also be visiting the balwadis regularly to extend support in terms of materials and training for the teachers and monitor the progress made.

### **Science Program:**

This program is same as the last year. This year though we decided to extend it to all middle, high and higher secondary schools and hence have increased it to 508 schools from last year's number 453. This was also due to the request of the district CEO who has been a great supporter of our Ariviyal Anandam program. The training on particular topics has been given to all block resource trainers (BRTs) of the district and the BRPs visits each school in the district atleast twice a month to retrain the teachers and monitor the program.



### **Community Learning Centers (CLC):**

Community learning centers is our latest program that was started in September. Community learning centers are resource centers in villages that will have the following

- Have access to learning resources for children at villages.
- Children's Clubs that meet weekly to do activities that foster creativity, encourage talent and enrich learning.
- Learning Festivals to create an exciting learning environment.
- Community participation through increased awareness on quality of education.

CLCs are not buildings but activity centers that provide opportunities for them to learn in their own communities. Community learning centers will focus both on activities for improving the skills of children and also on creating awareness in the community about educational needs and activities. The CLCs will be run by volunteers and there will be one block resource person for every 15 CLC to closely train the volunteers, ensure regular classes, conduct melas and clubs etc. In Krishnagiri, we have started 120 CLCs covering 4 blocks so far. Volunteer identification, village identification and BRP training has been completed by September and the CLCs have started working in full swing from October. 30 more CLCs will be started shortly in Krishnagiri block.

**Conclusion:**

Overall, this year we have scaled up functionally and a big thanks to ASHA Seattle for making this possible with your funds over the past year. This year we have introduced math, balwadi and CLC on a large scale and we hope that ASHA Seattle will continue your support for our older programs and also extend support for our new programs in Krishnagiri for the current year. The district officials have also been supportive of our programs in general. The dedicated team of field staffs we have built in Krishnagiri over the years have made us more stronger than ever. This year we have also intensified the monitoring of all the programs by decreasing the number of schools / block resource person and hope to continue bringing change in quality of education in Krishnagiri and other districts.