



2024 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

India: Foster a Child Programme (FCP)

The Namakkal districts of Tamil Nadu, India is known for its high migrant workers in the fields of automobile body building, agriculture, tanneries and animal husbandry. The district have been plagued with high HIV/AIDS infections/patients which has led to poverty and hunger among families. The trickling down effect of this has been the high rates of child school dropouts, child labour, alcoholism, high debts, poor nutrition and single parent households. Through various interventions, we sort to help 300 children and their families infected or affected by HIV to improve their access to education, knowledge and health.

Net4kids supported Society for Serving Humanity India over the last 12 months to carry out various activities geared towards solving the challenges highlighted above under the Foster a child Programme (FCP).

Impact & Achievements



6 health workshops for children and 4 for caregivers boosted knowledge on health, hygiene, and adolescent care.



255 families received hygiene and nutrition packs to improve basic well-being and prevent malnutrition.



465 children were equipped with school supplies, reducing dropouts and improving education access.



132 students received STEM coaching, with high pass rates and university placements.



203 youth received career guidance to shape their educational and professional futures.



105 children from vulnerable households received scholarships to continue their studies.



97 girls took part in an educational tour, expanding their worldview and aspirations.



30 clubs held sports events to promote inclusion, confidence, and social bonding.



55 families and 40 women received business and revolving fund support to grow sustainable incomes.



285 caregivers were trained in business and financial skills, strengthening family independence.

Health education and health care services utilization training and workshops

Based on the needs identified together with the affected beneficiaries and families, six trainings were organizations for children. The trainings were on Sex and Sexuality awareness education, personality development, Health issues related to junk & fatty food, Awareness on drug addiction, Leadership Quality and the formation of Kitchen and fruit Gardens. These were one day trainings each with an average of 75 children in each meeting. The trainings were facilitated by resource persons from various institutions like universities, police division officers, medical officers among others.

To ensure a holistic approach, trainings were also given to the care givers/ parents of the children. These trainings were on Cervical and breast Cancer, Anaemia reduction, Insurance and handling adolescent health issues. They were attended by 70 care givers and parents on average for each training. The trainings were also facilitated by resource persons from the Cancer centre, child counsellor, insurance advisers and health advisors.

Family hygiene and nutrition product support

To facilitate and aid basic health and hygiene needs of the children and families, hygiene pack consisting of washing soap, bathing soap, tooth paste, brush, shampoo, hair oil, talcum powder and washing powder were distributed to 255 families four times in the year.

Protein supplement products were also distributed four times in the year to 225 families and the package comprised of chickpeas, green gram, dates, wheat, Raggi, flattened rice, Horse gram, red cow peas groundnuts, soya beans and black eye gram. These product go a long way to help protein deficiency cases in the affected families.

Education support

Absenteeism and drop out from schools are attributed to many things in this community. One of which is the unavailability of education materials for the children and also parents inability to afford them. To this effects, 300 School bags, one set of new uniforms and educational materials like note books, pen, pencil box, scale, eraser, geometry box were distributed. This benefitted 465 children (including the indirect beneficiaries). This alleviates pressure from the parents, improves the quality of education and motivates the children to study.

Educational tour for females

Most girls do not get the opportunity to travel outside their communities. The purpose of this educational tour is to

1. Give them the opportunity to visit historical sites they have studied about,
2. An opportunity to see outside of their village and
3. To meet other project beneficiaries from different villages and clubs. This year 97 children visited three sites: the Madurai Meenakshi Amman (Hindu) Temple; the Keeladi Museum an archaeological site with discoveries depicting ancient Tamil population's civilization in Tamil Nadu during 200 BC. And finally the Thirumalai Nayakkar mahal, which was the palace of King Thirumalai Nayakkar.

Educational scholarships for single mothers

Families with single parents tend to drop out of school because of the economic insecurity of the parents which affects the child's education. 105 children were provided with scholarships ranging from Rs. 2300-3750 per child. Some of the parents are persons with disabilities, labourers, unemployed among others.



Group photo of FCP girls and families



FCP girl with her sibling



Women in training session

STEM classes

For a period of four months, 132 children in grades 10-12 received private lessons and coaching from teachers on Science / Social studies, Tamil, English, Environment studies and Mathematics to prepare them adequately for their public exams. 94% of them (124) passed their exams which will allow them to further their education. 29 students in grade 12 have gained admission to various universities and programmes. Amongst these are BSc. Nursing, Biotechnology, education, BA. Commence, diploma in Mechanical engineering etc.

Career guidance

203 children in grades 10-12 received career guidance from District Child Protection officers and Skill development and Employment officers of Namakkal district. The sessions helped the young people to forge their thoughts about career paths and goals, skills training for employment and making informed choices about job oriented subjects and programmes to choose for their higher education.

Sportsmanship and social inclusion

Activities for children are mostly run in clubs. SSH currently has 30 clubs with an average of 25-30 children per club. To encourage social inclusion and integration, sport activities are organized among the children in all 30 clubs. The sport activities include as chess, cricket, table tennis, rope jumping etc. These activities encouraged social inclusion and integration. It also built the children's self-confidence, team spirit and community harmony.

Water, sanitation and waste disposal training

Improving the health and raising awareness about water, waste and sanitation issues of the care givers improves their health status through prevention, health care services utilization, disease management and referral services. Four trainings by resource personnels from the Municipality Health office, a Sanitary officer and a social welfare officer was conducted. 377 care givers in total attended these gatherings.

Supporting parents

Especially women to increase their independence through economic activities is an objective of this project. When women have increased income and stable jobs, the family unit tends to enjoy a good quality of life especially the children. To promote this, 55 families received Rs.10,000 to start or grow their businesses. They are engaged in activities like tailoring and embroidery, coconut oil preparation and sale, gourd plate and bowl making, flower sales, cow and goat rearing among others.

Community revolving fund

This fund has supported 40 women with various amounts depending on their needs. Amounts range between Rs.10,000 to 20,000 have been given out to assist with growing current business, emergency health needs, provide for child's higher education but importantly saved them from debt traps of village lenders. These amounts are paid back by the women within a year and is given to other women who are also in need or require support.

Capacity development

The women who received income accelerator and revolving funds were trained on business sustainability. The trainings included Saving/credit management, effective management of their income generation businesses, Community concern and problem solving, utilisation of (government) resources for their health and development and supporting local initiatives. 285 women in 11 clusters benefitted from this trainings.



Group of boys in FCP uniforms



Training for mothers



Young mother with her child

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Challenges

Due to the political unrest from the India general parliamentary elections held within a span of 2 months several activities especially trainings were not carried out as planned because organizations/people could not meet without prior approval. After the elections and result declaration, training were planned and completed within the project period.

Also some school authorities have restrictions to meet the FCP children at school by the project staff. They were requesting letters from the authorities in the education department. Where possible, these letter have been obtained and work is being done on the others.

There is a high demand for assistance and support from various families but due to the limited resources available, only 300 children were able to fully benefit from the project. We hope to scale up through various income generation activities and funding from foundations

There is a slow rate of repayment of the revolving funds but the women have been sensitised on the importance of repayment. This allows them to be able to receive again from the funds in future but also for other people in need to also benefit.

Next steps and lessons learned

The buy-in of the community plays a big role in the success of the project. Their willingness to allow the children to participant in activities, trainings, sport events etc is leading to change in the life of the children and the parents ultimately.

The incorporation of economic empowerment component and training to uplift and support the care givers boost the sustainability of the impact of the project. With more independent and economically secure households, more children will have stable lives, education, growth and nutrition.

The trainings, workshops, STEM coaching and career guidance is building the confidence of the children to make informed choices, pursue higher education, skills and become independent people to support themselves and families subsequently alleviating poverty.

The education, hygiene and nutrition packs went a long way to provide families with much needed resources to keep children in schools, ensure the health needs of children are met as much as possible and basic health and hygiene promoted.

For the future, we aim to continue to scale up the trainings, workshops and career guidance for the children and provide continuous means to higher education. We also aim to continue supporting the caregivers and women to promote their economic strength and indirectly the freedom of their children and family.



Street scene with rickshaw and scooters



Happy with the results