

White Lotus Trust Annual report 2017-18



Letter to our supporters

Dear friends,

Our Annual Reports are a chance for us to share the incredible impacts of our programs for the at-risk communities we work with. White Lotus Trust responds to the profound inequality and poverty that women and children suffer. Our programs therefore continue to focus on women and children to reinforce capabilities in education, access to education, skill training, professional development, and primary health care — all working as threads to weave a bright and resilient fabric of well-being.

I am delighted to point out that we have initiated important new programs in the course of this year. Lotus Pedals India opened with provision of 150 bikes following in the 'tire tracks' of Lotus Pedals Cambodia, where we've so far provided access to education for more than 2500 girls from the poorest families.

Responding to a steep acceleration of unemployed youth across South Asia, with 60% jobless in the 15-24 years age group, in 2017 we initiated our ground breaking Skills Training & Employment Program (STEP). We provide skills training to young women and men living in rural and peri-urban poverty, who lack the skills needed to break the cycles of poverty. Also in 2017, recognizing that 30% of the world's malnourished people are in India and that 650 thousand Indian children die annually from malnutrition, we established a village based community health program — ASHA.

In this, the first year of the program, ASHA has directly served 1,300 people in a five village area with 10,680 indirect beneficiaries across 1,500 households. The program reach is growing exponentially and by March 2018 we had expanded the project and working with 30 Anganwadi across 25 villages. We thank you for your support and interest in White Lotus Charitable Trust and hope you enjoy the below, detailed activity report.

ASHA project

White Lotus started working with ASHA workers in March 2017 and started visiting villages in April 2017. We collected data of all villagers so that we can identify the beneficiaries of government schemes relating to nutrition for children, hygiene for adolescent and pregnant women. The program also includes vaccination of pre and post natal care of pregnant women, lactating mothers and children in the age group of zero to six years of age.

Survey of five villages in Kaman block in Bharatpur district at Rajasthan

Name of village	House Hold	Total Pop'	0-5		6-18		Pregnant women	Lactating mothers	Attending Anganwadi	No of H'Hold with toilets
			Male	Female	M	F				
Kherli Nanu	270	1818	185	170	275	265	30	40	40	105
Ghoshinga 1	207	1400	112	107	237	200	22	28		15
Ghoshinga 2	198	1349	105	100	260	210	15	19		40
Ghoshinga 3	150	1100	150	200	150	250	15	18		25
Bahadurpur	90	616	70	45	116	115	15	17		15
Kakan Khori	147	1133	117	123	150	250	17	13		115
Jeera Hera	410	2060	180	200			25	30		150
	1472	9476	919	945	1188	1290	139	165	40	465

Entitlements of pregnant women and children the program aims to secure:

1. All children in the age group 0-3 should get weekly nutrition but only 40 are enrolled in each Anganwadi.
2. All children in age group 3 to 5 should attend Anganwadi.
3. All adolescents should be given nutrition or iron tablets and awareness about reproductive issues but only two in each anganwadi enrolled.
4. All pregnant women should be registered and helped for institutional deliveries but only 15 are registered irrespective of number present.

5. One Asha Worker caters to 250 houses or 2000 people. One house with joint family is counted as one-unit which may have more than 10 members also. One village can have more than one Asha worker depending on the population of the village.
6. Asha is responsible for registration of pregnant women with the local health centers and ensure delivery of the child at the health center. They are also responsible for ANC/PNC care and Vaccination of pregnant women.
7. They are responsible for vaccination of new-born baby till age of 5 years.
8. The other jobs they do include family planning measures, temporary or permanent.
9. They also monitor nutrition status of the child till 5 years of age and malnourished children are referred to health center for treatment.

Baseline information on facilities available in the villages:

1. There are 1450 families with a total population of 9476 in five villages.
2. There should be one Anganwadi for 40 children. There are only seven Anganwadis for 1864 children with enrolment of 280 children only and only half of them attend the Anganwadi on daily basis.
3. None of the Anganwadi gets sufficient nutrition to be given to the children and only 10-15 children attend daily and given nutrition rarely.
4. Only one bag of grains with 50 one kg packets is given to every Anganwadi in a month and Rs. 900 to purchase oil, sugar etc. to prepare nutrition which is 10% of the required material.
5. There should be five ASHA workers for five villages but only two are appointed. We were told by ANM that qualified women are not available in the villages but it was contradicted by the Anganwadi workers. It seems that the local government has not taken any initiative for appointment of ASHA in other villages.
6. The two Asha's we met are not facing many problems because they have a functional health center at Jurhera which is a Town but they informed that Asha's in remote villages are facing problems like non availability of Doctor's or ANM's, non availability of vaccination and required Iron pills, Calcium tab, folic acid, contraceptives pills and permanent measures for family planning.

7. Only 465 out of 1450 have toilets at home and rest go for open defecation. The government is providing funds for construction of toilets but it is not reaching people due to non awareness and corruption.

Ways Forward

1. We were told by the ANM and Anganwadi workers about great need for community awareness about the immunization and vaccination for children as well as family planning measures of mother as these practices are generally not accepted in the conservative Muslim families. They have suggested that 25% people allow these practices which means they are not completely against these practices and if educated by the authorized people, may adopt the measures.
2. We have provided weighing machines to all seven Anganwadi workers and have trained them on how they can monitor the growth of a child through monitoring weight and height every month. Government have provided them the monitoring charts for every child but not given proper equipment and training required for monitoring growth.
3. The villagers need to know about the welfare schemes of the government and they should also be made aware about how to realize their rights by demanding the delivery of benefits allocated for every child, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women.
4. It seems that huge corruption prevails preventing the right holders as the cash and materials allocated by the government is not reaching the beneficiaries. We were informed by one Anganwadi worker that some months ago, they were getting eight bags of grains (50 kg each) and now they get only one in a month.
5. Husband of Hazra, an Anganwadi worker who was also present during discussions suggested that we should also educate villagers about cleanliness in the village which can prevent so many diseases. He gave an example about outbreak of Malaria in the village last year that was due to water logging causing many deaths in the village and which was avoidable.
6. Our meetings with villagers, school teachers, Anganwadi workers and school students provided us positive information about the eagerness of stakeholders for

awareness about their rights and our experience of intervention with villagers in Mewat of Haryana proves that once made aware, the villagers can fight for their rights and can get them realized.

7. We conducted 24 meetings in five villages with the villagers and school students, one with the Sarpanch of the Panchayat and have found that they are not aware about how can they demand their rights without any confrontation as they feel that confrontation may lead to more problems.
8. Our experience is that awareness building of stakeholders can force the authorities to deliver the entitlements to beneficiaries and reduce corrupt practices. We have started making people aware about their rights through regular meetings and promoting cleanliness and hygiene through distributing soap and asking them to wash hands with soap before cooking meals, eating food and after using toilet. Most of the villagers are not used to wash hands with soap as we were informed.
9. We have also trained six students of Jeera Hera school upper primary school for awareness building about cleanliness and Hygiene through street plays. This team visits the villages and conduct street plays on regular basis. After some hesitation and shyness, the team is now quite comfortable and use local language and style of communication. The villagers also like it more as they see them as their own children and listen to them.
10. The teachers in schools and Anganwadi workers appreciated our approach of providing soaps which will promote the use of soap. The teachers also asked the Mid Day Meal cooks to wash their hands with soap before cooking and were also given cake of soap.

Impact So far:

1. This year we conducted 24 meetings in the five villages and five in the schools with community and students. The attendance in the meetings was encouraging, people are talking about their problems and listening to our suggestions and following the practices of cleanliness and hygiene on our advice.

2. We found that the government has provided a booklet with 160 growth monitoring charts one each for boys and girls separately which means the growth of 320 children is to be monitored in every village but no Anganwadi worker was doing that. They had not even entered the names of all children in the village in that book.
3. We asked them to enter names of all 0-5 children in the book and start recording the growth of children on the basis of weight and height. They asked for training about it as they were not given any training by the government on how to fill up the growth monitoring charts.
4. We provided them with intensive training on measuring the growth of the child on the basis of weight and height and record it in the chart. These charts can show the children malnourished or need medical care and can be referred to the health centre for care.
5. Villagers are open to adopting ways and means for cleanliness and hygiene suggested by us and have started using soap provided by us to wash hands before cooking meals, before eating meals and after using toilet.
6. We are quite hopeful that using soap for cleanliness and hygiene will become a habit soon and that will help in prevention of many prevalent diseases.
7. After helping the Anganwadi workers on filling up the names of all children in the registers and starting the measuring of growth of children once in every month, the Anganwadi workers worked hard on these books and have filled all the names and have started recording the growth of children on the basis of weight and height.
8. Following data is recorded after the training of anganwadi workers from all villages and now they are catering to 1314 children in the age group of zero to five.

S. No.	Village	0-5 Boys	0-5 Girls	Enrolled in Anganwadi	3 to 5 Boys for nutrition	3 to 5 Girls for nutrition
1	Ghosinga 1	69	60	80	17	23
2	Ghosinga 2	74	67	80	18	22
3	Ghosinga 3	65	70	80	21	19
4	Jeera Hera	160	160	80	22	18
5	Kherli Nanu	160	135	80	24	16
6	Bahadurpur	70	50	55	30	25
7	Kakan Khori	91	83	80	23	17
	Total	689	625	535	155	140

Expectations in near future

1. Anganwadi centres will be able to record the growth of children and malnourished children could be identified and given needed care.
2. Families will be using measures to prevent water borne diseases by washing hands with soap before cooking and eating food and after using toilet.
3. Our Hand Wash Day campaign is being conducted in every school of our work area and we will repeat that once a month in each school. The teachers, parents and students appreciated the promotion of hand wash with soap and have promised that they will make it a habit.
4. Anganwadi workers have started raising their concern of insufficient grains supplied to Anganwadi workers during their monthly training programs saying that people from White Lotus are monitoring and ask questions about the quantity of grains not supplied as per government norms. We hope that government could be pressurized to provide mandatory grains soon.
5. Anganwadi workers and other government staff at villages are now interacting with us with ease and are open to implement the ideas given by White Lotus. Schools are now inviting us to organize Hand Was Day and also for awareness building on cleanliness and hygiene.
6. Schools participating in our campaign has given confidence to the Anganwadi workers as they feel that the partnership of government schools validates our work.



Former Asha worker Pooja and now White Lotus Program Officer conducting Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) classes with village school children



Mr. Suraj Kumar training village health workers to fill out children's health register.



Pooja conducting a village health awareness meeting



Village school children being educated about using soap, washing hands and how bacterial infections occur

Blossom Bus and Blossom to College update report:

During this year, 271 girls¹ from about 15 villages are attending three schools in Haryana and Rajasthan traveling on Blossom Bus studying in grade eight to 12. Another 40 girls from seven villages are attending college in Palwal due to Blossom Bus. Twenty girls enrolled in college three years ago will become college graduates this year and eight of them have applied for admission in Masters Degree courses in college. Those who have completed their Graduation will be replaced by another 12 joining college this year.

Blossom Bus girl's outstanding performance in Board exams of grade 10 and 12.

Results came out in June showing that at Aharwan High School, 65 girls appeared in Board exams of grade 10 and 59 passed clearly, **three securing more than 80% marks graded as distinction and 25 secured more than 60% which is graded as First Division.** This is in comparison to 52% students passed in grade 10 all over the state. Girls pass percentage at Aharwan is 90%. Still there four girls who got compartment, will reappear in the exams for a subject or two and may be declared passed. Only two girls have clearly failed out of 65. 28 girls in Aharwan and 30 in Rajasthan appeared in grade 12 exams and 15 and 30 girls passed respectively. The percentage is above 50 in Haryana and 100% in Rajasthan where 33 girls out of 35 passed board exams of grade 10. This is clearly outstanding performance in comparison to the state-wide results. There is a great demand for transport to schools as it is now very clearly evident that the girls are passionate about their studies and are performing par excellence in the board examinations.

Harvard University South Asia Institute and Tata Trust recognized the initiative of Blossom Bus and our work was showcased during their program in New Delhi this year. There were another seven organizations from all over the country featured in the publication released during the function highlighting their work. One of the seven organizations 'Ibtida' recognized for their work has also initiated the similar program in Alwar district of Rajasthan and has requested people on Facebook to donate for providing transport to the girls who are not able to complete their school education due to distance between their school and village.

We believe that people and organizations have now realized the fact that girls can complete their education in case provided a safe transport to schools. Though we believe that this is the duty of the government to provide safe mode of transport to every child who does not have a school at a walk able distance, so that all children in the country can complete their education, and have already conveyed this message to them the initiative by Ibtida will also help in communication to the government that there are solutions available for girls to complete their education. We believe that initiative of Ibtida is inspired by Blossom Bus. Millions of girls drop out in our country after grade eight and initiatives like Blossom Bus can look after only a few due to limitation of resources. There is a great need for scaling of this initiative.

¹ See full list added as Appendix 1 bottom of the report

² What is the source of the data – please state that so we can use it in the article

Blossom Bus stories:

God gave us back our hands!!

We met two girls from village Durgapur today who have joined college this year. The two girls named Rakhee and Raveena are in the first year Medical Science graduation course and are daughters of Braham Dutt and Bimla. Both the parents do not have one hand each and are handicapped. Mr. Braham Dutt informed us that he lost his arm in an accident long ago and due to that he was married to a woman who also had one hand. They both never used this



handicap as an excuse and worked as farm labors as they do not have land to cultivate. They have two daughters and one son. Both daughters are in college now and the son is in grade nine. They did everything to

get their daughters educated. The daughters also are very sincere and intelligent. Rakhi secured 97% marks in grade 10 and 92% in grade 12. Raveena also secured 92% marks in grade 10 and 90% in grade 12.

On the basis of their performance they got admission in Bachelor of Science stream in college and are expecting to become doctors. Raveena told us that after grade 12, she was worried about further studies as they are surviving on a small pension their parents get from government as being handicapped and have no regular income or a bread earner in the family. She says my father did everything to arrange money for the college but travelling to college was a big worry. We met some girls from the village who were travelling on Blossom Bus to college and were apprehensive about getting a seat on the bus as the buses are already full. My parents met the Blossom Bus people through some

girls already on the bus and told them about their situation. We were accommodated on the Blossom Bus without asking a single question on the basis of our performance and appetite for further studies. Braham Dutt told us that he feels very satisfying when he sees his daughters attending college as it was a distant dream for parents both handicapped and cannot work like a normal people. He is very hopeful that one day his daughters will become respected persons in the society and will bring glory to the family. "Our children will get back our lost hands and we all will live with respect in the society and not in poverty."

Starting this year we have six Muslim girls in grade nine from one village:

In 2009 there was one lone Muslim girl in all the village schools of Mewat! It therefore extremely encouraging that six Muslim girls have joined Blossom Bus this year from village Sapanki after passing grade eight from their village school. An approach to Blossom Bus was initiated by the Head teacher of Aharwan School contacted Blossom Bus on behalf of the girls after being approached by their parents. We are delighted at the normative change evident where teachers of schools in our work area are now being approached by parents and also that the teachers are then initiating efforts to ensure access to education for girls from families that earlier would never thought of sending their daughters to schools eight kilometers away from their village. One of the girls looked so young to be in grade nine as she looked like 10 years old and even claimed to be 12 years old. It is surprising that a girl of 12 years of age is in grade nine. It is inspiring that Blossom Bus is becoming very popular in the villages day by day and we are getting requests from the teachers not the students for more seats on buses. The parents who never thought of sending their teenage daughters out of village even for a valid reason are now approaching teachers of schools to enroll girls from distant villages. Last year also we were asked by the Head Teacher of the school to extend the bus service to a new village and this year also we have added another village.

The girls were very excited to be able to continue their studies and are expecting to complete at least grade 12 with the help of Blossom Bus which is entrusted by their parents to deliver them safely to and from School.

SO BEGINS THE LOTUS PEDALS INDIA PROJECT:

Mobility is a crucial factor for development of any Country as Education is a crucial factor for Development. As such, mobility is very important for access to education. Education in India is a fundamental right up to elementary level so the government is duty bound to provide access to education till grade eight only and which is the time when most of students drop out of school.

Toyota Mobility Foundation recently approached White Lotus with a list of questions concerning "How mobility is important for Education". Devex organization is doing this research for Toyota Mobility Foundation in six middle-income countries. They have identified 40 people from these nations to get the information from people working in the field directly and which shows there is a sense of importance with respect to distance being a challenge to girl's access to education. According to a recent UNESCO report as many as 124 million children and adolescents world-wide are out of school and 17.7 million – or 14%, are Indian.

It is our contention that in India, distance and threat perception are primary causes of children, especially girls, dropping out of school much earlier than they would otherwise. To comply with the Right to Education Act, every village should have a primary school within one kilometer and an upper primary school within three kilometers but we still have to ask, "how will the students travel three kilometers in absence of a public transport in rural areas, especially where there are high levels of gender discrimination and which is the case across swathes of India. It is therefore not only more difficult for girls to attend schools due to distance, but also for safety reasons. In most Indian communities, girls above 12 or 13 years of age are not allowed to travel out of their own village and asked to leave school by their parents after grade five as many villages don't have year 6 to 8 schools and which are therefore some distance from those villages. Even when children have lower secondary schools in their villages, data shows us that more than 50% students drop out after grade eight and again, distance and safety are the main issues.² Value addition in terms of employment outcome is almost nothing for a grade-eight pass that will not make you eligible for a job above a peon and is not considered as 'educated'.

² What is the source of the data – please state that so we can use it in the article



Manisha D/O
Manoj Prajapati
Class X



Varsha
Class VII

Many States provide bicycles to girls above grade eight to help them in reaching school if they live more than three kilometers away from school. But these bicycles are given to only Scheduled Caste (SC) students though the reason for help from government is poverty. Access to Education based on caste or any welfare scheme based on caste is not justice. Some teachers in schools told us that this facility is not reaching the real students in need. Moreover, in some cases the delivery of the bicycles is delayed due to government procedures that the bicycle arrives at school only when some students have already left the school. One official working at District Education Officer's office at Mewat told us that his own daughter is enrolled in grade 11 and is not able to attend school as her school is five kilometers away from her home with no safe public transport available. This shows that even if the parents are educated, aware and sensitive towards education, they are not convinced that their daughters can travel to a school away from home.

We are delighted we have been able to replicate our Lotus Pedals Cambodia initiative in India starting with 60 girls from a High School in Mewat. We tried to initiate a Lotus Pedals India (LPI) Program some years ago but were discouraged by the views of the teachers and parents that girls cannot even commute on a bicycle in some areas of Mewat due to safety issues. More recently we discussed a bicycles program with some teachers in Tauru block of Mewat which is better developed than other four blocks due to being near industrial areas and a national highway. Social development through better job opportunities and connection to transport in this area has resulted in safer environment for girls such that they can safely ride a bike to school. This is an encouraging development for us and we are looking forward to providing more bikes to girls in this area and therefore longer-term access to education through the LPI program. The girls we have recently providing bikes were at high risk of dropping out. While they may have been enrolled in school, they were not attending classes regularly due to a variety of obstacles preventing them from travelling every day.

Skills Training for Employment Project (STEP)

We were very excited to implement a Skills Training for Employment Program (STEP) to assist boys and girls and alleviate the very high unemployment and lack of training in Mewat and nearby areas of Haryana.

We had initially thought to focus on skills such as tailoring for girls and tailoring and electricals for boys. After getting inputs from the community, it turned out boys were also eager to learn tailoring keeping in mind there were already some boys from this area employed in garment factories at Tauru and which is near Bisru village. They said that there is no place for boys to learn tailoring as the local tailors are not interested in this as they feel that they will become their competitors which is loss of business for them. Shekhawat (our long term local field coordinator) feels that this will be very successful and he himself seems also eager to learn some skill. Also there is a good scope for employment for electricians in the factories and in the villages itself also.

While there are not so many outside employment opportunities for girls were concerned they said that these days the girls who know tailoring can make dresses at home for family and neighbours and also for marriages which saves them a great deal and they can definitely earn by working at home. Self

employment is also a great outcome. Based on this initial assessment we then provided two six month training courses in tailoring with 20 girls and 20 boys in each batch. 80 young women and men were trained over the course of the year.



White Lotus Partner projects

Buddha Smiles evening schools Report:

Buddha Smiles Project initiated its program for development of rural community through education. In the long walk, our partner who has shared, supported, motivated and guided us is White Lotus Trust. Having common commitment for development of children and society, believing that only equal opportunity and just education can only bring about peace and development in society, we have worked together for more than a decade now. In this eventful journey we have been able to cater to the educational needs of several children and their families. Close to 20 villages we have now worked and seen significant development. We have encouraged more than thousand girl children in pursuing their primary and upper primary education. We have now taken our step further and made our work more meaningful by supporting young girls and boys of tribal areas to pursue higher education. We value and treasure our collaboration with you. Your association has given us strength to take our work forward, your expertise has given us clearer directions. It has made huge difference in the lives of those children who were vulnerable to inequity and lack of opportunity to study. We on behalf of staff, volunteer teachers and all the children like to extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation for your efforts and contribution.

RamuManivannan
Founder-Hon. Chairperson

Background of the project, community demographic and target area:

Buddha Smiles-White Lotus Project on Non-Formal Education for the children from stone quarry, landless labourers, small farmers, daily wage workers and weaver's families in Vellore and Thiruvannamalai Districts of Tamil Nadu have been operational for more than fourteen years now. This programme is currently functional in 15 villages in Vellore and Thiruvannamalai Districts of Tamil Nadu to reduce dropouts, improve students' knowledge and build values in them. During the period 2017, there were total of 498 student beneficiaries of which 51% were female and remaining 49% were male children. Students in each center range from minimum 22 to maximum 40 students. These students study in the Government primary schools. The

parents of these students are daily wage earners, stone quarry workers, landless or from tribal or weavers' families. All the students in the program belong to both socially and economically backward communities. The ten centers are situated in plains and five in forest and hills of Tiruvannamalai district in Amarthi forest and Javad hills.

Objective of enhancing lives and well-being by:

- Reducing the school dropout of children in Vellore and Thiruvannamalai region
- Empowering children through education and equal opportunity
- Encouraging and support Girl children to pursue primary and higher education
- Supporting migrating families from socially and economically backward families under bonded labour system
- Supporting the first generation children and motivate them to pursue school education
- Advocating and supporting 'Right to Education' among the rural poor
- Work with tribal communities and forest people with focus on education and empowerment

Details of the evening centers where the project is functioning is listed below. The children of brick kiln workers have increased as opportunity and scope of earning has increased in this sector. The stone quarries are slowly shut down because of strict implementation of the regulations by the government authority. The tribal children enrolment in the region has increased marginally. More female children have enrolled in the tribal region.

S. No	Name of the Village	District/Area	Total Students	Total Male Students	Total Female Students
1	Athimalaipattu	Thiruvannamalai	32	16	16
2	Chinnaiyampalayam	Vellore	28	14	14
3	Reddypalayam	Vellore	35	21	14
4	Ayagasennai	Thiruvannamalai	39	19	20
5	Pattankullam	Thiruvannamalai	40	20	20

6	Mettukudusai	Vellore	41	17	24
7	Sevoor MD	Thiruvannamalai	44	20	24
8	Ngarampa	Vellore	27	14	13
9	Rangapuram	Vellore	31	17	14
10	Ooteri	Vellore	35	15	20
11	Saathambattu	Thiruvannamalai	25	13	12
12	Aavaramvalasai	Thiruvannamalai	26	16	10
13	Saranangkuppam	Thiruvannamalai	27	13	14
14	Thaadhangkuppam	Thiruvannamalai	36	14	22
15	Palalapiraampattu	Thiruvannamalai	32	15	17
	Total		498	244	254

The main areas of this initiative started with an aim to address the educational needs of the children from the stone quarry areas. This programme had diversified its operation to become inclusive of special circumstances of children from other communities such as weavers (e.g. Sevor Center), socially marginalized groups and areas with poor educational infrastructures and motivation for pursuing school education with high percentage of outflow of migrant labour from rural areas (e.g. Nelvoy Thoppu).

Though compelled to adhere to the mainstream curriculum, the non-formal centers share a bigger mission and vision of social change. Hence, the programme has become more inclusive of special needs and circumstances of the people in the region. The major objective of this initiative is to encourage children from the targeted communities to go to school as well as to ensure their retention/ attendance at the nearest schools.

The five new centers in the tribal area is known for very low level of education and deforestation activities controlled by Sandalwood/Redwood mafia. The poor tribal people are exploited by the Redwood/Sandalwood smugglers for cutting the precious trees. Poverty, unemployment and illiteracy among the people are important factors for the poor conditions of life, criminal nexus and police atrocities in the region. Hence, we extended our centers to these areas where all the children come from tribal families of this hill region near Amirthi Forests/Javvadu Hills. As mentioned there is an increase in female enrollment ration in this region.

Due to lack of education and high school dropouts, men take to smuggling of sandalwood and redwood trees and women face neglect and social

marginalisation, we are making a conscious decision in choosing to work in these areas as part of genuine extension of Buddha Smiles-White Lotus work. We have been able to make our presence felt in the region.

Challenge and success of the effective interventions:

There are problems working in the stone quarry areas due to frequent closures, migrations, irregular and unregulated auctioning practices leading to forced shut downs and loss of livelihood for families engaged in stone quarry works. We have been exploring the shift with rural poor engaged in similar and agriculture related activities including unorganized labour in the rural areas. This shift has taken more time than we had imagined due to ground realities. The migrant population are trying to find permanent jobs in these regions. The construction business is able to attract sizeable quantum of labour.

The significant experiment of the evaluation programme to assess the reading, writing and comprehending abilities of the students is found to be improved. Firstly, students need to identify, later read and then explain. This method has been followed to encourage students to read and understand what they read. This experiment was restricted to languages (Tamil, English) and currently we have included Maths which evaluated the basic abilities to add, subtract, divide and multiply the numbers. For science and social science we are designing the assessment tool.

Teachers and Teaching Methods:

The teachers are the backbone of this project. About our teachers, several of them are undergraduate students in the nearby colleges and housewives with a High School pass certificate. It is also our goal and policy to encourage teachers to pursue higher education and remain connected in pursuit of education/knowledge. Bi-annual Teachers' Training programme helps to identify and address specific concerns of each teacher and support them both individually and collectively.

All teachers come together on at least three occasions during the year – twice for the bi-annual teachers' training and for the interaction with the formal school teachers at the Garden of Peace School. We have combined this training with the need for deep listening exercise for everyone including the

teachers, volunteers and the administrators (co-ordination team). Teachers expressed their joy and happiness in coming together as well as the opportunity of interacting with different ideas and experiences shared/narrated by each other including the trainers. Trainers have also expressed their satisfaction of having been engaged with the social mission of this nature and offered to do a further follow-up including future assessment/evaluation of the programme through interaction with the teachers and students as well. Teachers conduct summer and winter camps for the students.

Sharing and learning experience with international communities:



Our evening classes have turned out to be a model for study by the International community. The prestigious Edinburg University has visited our evening school as part of study India program. Their interaction with the children through games and talking with teachers were very interactive. Evening course students did ask the Edinburg University Student about the climate, food and sports in Scotland. The teachers and students were very happy that they were visited and recognized by an international community. This gives exposure learn culture and motivates to perform better in life. The teachers were making excellent effort in communicating with the visiting groups.

Photo gallery of some centres.



Evening class at Mettukudusai



Evening students at Attimelapettu



Evening classes at Pattankulam School



Reddipalayam Village School

Nutrition Program for Children at Garden of Peace School: 2017



About the School:

Garden of Peace Nursery and Primary School is being run in the rural village of Kurumbapalayam in Vellore District of Tamil Nadu for educating children belonging to socially and economically backward sections of our society. The parents of children are daily laborers at construction site, brick making factories or land less farming community members. At school, we follow the right to education, and health. As a continuing initiative, we provide children with morning porridge and mid-day meals based on assessment and understanding that:

1. Most of the parents of student go for work in the early morning(s) by 6:30 am, hence they are not able to ensure that their children have breakfast which is a very important meal of the day. The students either have biscuits

or left over of previous days before coming to school, leaving them hungry during most of the morning hours.

2. As part of providing balanced diet at school, Rice or Raggi Porridge is given between 10:45 am to 11:00 am in everyday. The porridge is healthy, easily digestible and contains carbohydrates and proteins and hydrates the body with energy from starch water. Iodine supply through salt is also provided ensuring that there is no Iodine Deficiency Diseases amongst the children.

3. The Midday meal to all children are provided at school. The lunch break is between 12:30pm to 1:00 pm. Good quality rice is given with vegetable mixed sambar made from pulses. The rice is mixed with the sambar hence all children are provided with sufficient proteins, vitamins and carbohydrates. The food served is not very spicy and edible by small children too.

4. All children get to eat same food at same time in sufficient quantity. They bring their plates, glass and are taught to wash them, creating a sense of hygiene, and personal discipline in their respective lives.

5. The Student Food minister at Garden of Peace School ensures the quality and quantity of food given to children and any issues pertaining to food is taken during Children Parliament session held at least once in a month. They also ensure that food is not wasted by any children, thus understanding the concept of saving, value of food and not wasting food.

6. Children in school participate in agriculture activity within the school as part of education methodology. They grow and care trees and plants inside the school. The vegetables grown by the kids in applying organic ways are consumed by them and thus giving a complete satisfaction and happiness. They also appreciate, learn and show interest in growing food.

7. Additional Supplementary and special food are provided on few occasion.

Impact of the Nutrition Program ...

There is no malnourished child in the school. All students are healthy as they eat food at school regularly at a specified time. There is no wasting of food and children eat all vegetables, rice and pulses required for a sound body. There are only two underweight students as per BMI (Body Mass Index), however they are very active and healthy.

There are two overweight students and they are also healthy.
 The school shows good attendance and most of the absenteeism are due to the family commitments and festivals.
 Cultivation of organic rice and agro products like mushroom, panner etc., at school.

Use school feeding as a potential support to agricultural development:

The school functions on the philosophy of 'time donation (contribution of time)', parent of each student spend three hours of a day at the farm ones in a month. School provides quality education, uniforms, food, textbooks and stationaries to all students without any fee. Effort is to build a strong relationship with the community and culture at the same time support in sustainable development. In addition to its nutrition, education, and social protection objectives, school feeding is increasingly supporting agricultural development through homegrown school feeding programs. Adding a new objective, of course, increases the tradeoffs that must be considered. In the case of homegrown school feeding, decentralization makes fortification—one means by which school meals can effectively reduce micronutrient deficiencies—more challenging, but not impossible. It also increases the challenge of logistics in food-insecure areas in times of drought or seasonal shortages. Over time, however, homegrown school feeding may improve dietary diversity and increase food security among low-income producers, although there is no evidence yet to support this hope.

Food Economics of Garden of Peace School...

The annual cost for nutrition products purchased are as follows for 172 Children for the year 2017

S NO	Nutrition	Consumed from Market		Produced at School	
		Kgs	Cost	Kgs	Cost
1	Rice for Lunch	2600	135200		
2	Rice for Porridge	850	34000		
3	Ragi for Porridge	80	3520	100	4400
4	Gur for Porridge	150	9000		
5	Vegetables for Lunch	520	20800	211	8440
6	Cereals for Lunch	600	84000		
7	Oil and spices for lunch	160	51200		
8	Other Items	250	25000		
	Total				12840

The Details of Crops grown in the school

There are 12 varieties of crops were grown in the school during this academic year.

S NO.	Vegetables from the Farm	Kgs produced	Kgs Consumed	Days Consumed
1	Tomato	60	60	8
2	Okra	10	10	4
3	Radish	20	20	25
4	Pumpkin	10	10	4
5	Indian Gooseberries – Amla	14	14	3
6	Drumstick	10	10	3
7	Muriga Leaves	10	10	5
8	Greens - Like Spinaches	10	10	8
9	Beans	10	10	2
10	Brinjal	30	30	15
11	Mango	2	2	10
12	Ground Nut	300	25	10
		486	211	97

Challenges of Food Production

During the annual year the rainfall received in the region was below the normal. There was acute problems in receiving water. The ground water level had gone down, and water was purchased for two months, hence vegetable and pulses cultivation at the school has come down. The School, unlike previous year did not cultivate paddy.

The raise in diesel cost has lead to increase in the cost of vegetables and other grocery items. The cost of rice has also increased in the period.

The school teaches the students, good practices of hand-washing and cleanliness in consuming food.



Students using Hand-wash for clean hands



Students cleaning their plates after lunch



Students having their morning Porridge



Students having special lunch with sweets and Kheer



Parents, Teachers and Students participate in farming



Students participating in Environment Development Project