

White Lotus Trust 2019

Annual report



Dear Friends, supporters & well wishers,

2019 has been a seriously hold on to your seats year for White Lotus Trust. Our loyal, long term supporters have continued to fund core programs as well as generously agreeing to additional funding for new projects and which all adds up to doing more good and helping create more well being in communities that need it most!

This year we also secured significant and very generous funding from a CSR donor, Max India Foundation and which has enabled us to double the number of girls getting free transport to schools in rural villages of Haryana and Rajasthan, as well as significant expansion of our evening education projects serving children of migrant labor living in Jhuggi- Jopri colonies of Delhi and rural villages in north India.

It is also gratifying that we've been able to not only continue but also increase the reach and impact of our village based women and children's health program in rural Rajasthan, ensuring delivery of more inclusive anganwadi based education and increased nutrition and hygiene for children, as well as improved health services for pre and post natal women and rural communities in general.

Expansion of programs is not only about higher numbers of recipients but even more importantly, changes in attitudes and aspirations. Increased demand for education of girls in rural high schools impacts positively on family and community attitudes toward girl's education, aspirations of siblings and female youth are enhanced, teachers are encouraged by high attendance rates and better scholastic performance and schools with full classes are getting better resources.

It is deeply gratifying that our after school education centres in north and South India are now ensuring more than one thousand children of poor families are getting much needed one on one help with their classwork on a daily basis. Monthly tests at our centres in Delhi confirm the majority of children are making tremendous academic progress and therefore marked improvement in their grade wise performance.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all our donors and supporters for their support and without which none of this would be possible.

With very best wishes from the entire team at White Lotus Trust.

WHITE LOTUS TRUST PROJECTS:

BLOSSOM BUS PROJECT ~ 1,201 girls served since 2010.

When a girl is educated, she becomes independent, confident, and an advocate of girls and women everywhere. She has a voice and control over her body and mind and so can transcend the bonds of suffocating traditions that exist around her.

When she is empowered, she can reach her full potential and will always lift up others up. An empowered woman will help her community to thrive for generations to come. –

The Girl's Blossom Bus program operates in High Schools of rural Haryana and Rajasthan where approximately 50% of girls leave school immediately after primary school due to a shortage of secondary schools in their home villages. The program provided transport to schools for rural girls from poor families that are either not enrolled in school or only attend irregularly and such that dropping out becomes inevitable.



The program is aimed at reducing drop-outs, improving lower to upper secondary-school transition rates, lowering of the incidence of child marriages, improvement of gender parity in Haryana's public schools and mobilising of parents and leaders of the village communities concerned toward being responsible for ensuring access to education for their girls. The program also aims for behavioural change in rural families from traditional and gender wise conservative communities to see that girls can reach the highest goals and allow their girls to be educated to increasingly higher levels and even on to College. Forty long-term Blossom Bus riders are studying in College, eight of them in Masters programs.

Project objectives in point form are to;

- a. Ensure access to education for rural girls from poor families living remotely from schools
- b. Reduce drop-out and increase attendance in girls education in the target area
- c. Improve lower secondary to high-school transition rates
- d. Lower the incidence of child marriages
- e. Improve gender parity in Haryana's public schools including grade twelve and college
- f. Transform schools into vibrant centres of quality education for teachers and students alike
- g. Mobilise parents and leaders of the village communities concerned toward being responsible for ensuring access to education for their girls.

During the 2019-2020 academic year White Lotus increased the number of girls served by 92%, adding 300 girls from 23 villages, to the 327 from 14 villages served in the previous year, for a total of 629 girls provided transport to 7 high schools on a daily basis for an entire school year.

The Block Education Officer and Principal of Girls Senior Secondary School at Hathin, (GSSSH) Yash Pal Garg, has remarked provision of transport for girls at his school has increased the number of girls enrolling in year nine this coming year as well as increases in those reaching year 10, 11 and completing the grade 12 exams. He confirmed that average attendance in those higher classes has increased from 60% to 90%. Principals and teachers at Solara secondary schools also confirmed the number of girls attending years 10,11 and 12 has doubled in their schools due to availability of transport.

Of the 629 girls served by the program in 2019-20, 286 are studying in grades 10,11 and 12 and 40 in college!! These outcomes represent an individual victory for every girl that has managed to stay in school a year longer and also as part of a community and a society in which girls have to fight harder than boys for a seat at school and to be taken seriously as potential breadwinners. This is no mean feat when we consider in 2010 when this program began, there was only one minority community girl in this area able to reach grade nine! Increases in girls/students means that schools attract more funding and better quality of education. In March 2020 we visited the new science laboratories being established at GSSSH. The Principal was delighted to tell us their school will be offering science practicum as part of the curriculum for the first time ever. This will of course have knock on impacts on the quality of scholastic outcomes and make scholars more competitive with students from better off families living in the metros.

Number of girls served in this academic year by grade:

By Grade	By number of Girls
Six	50
Seven	49
Eight	54
Nine	150
Ten	164
Twelve	64
College Year 1	20
College Year 2	20
TOTAL	629

Kamini's story - thank you Blossom Bus!!!

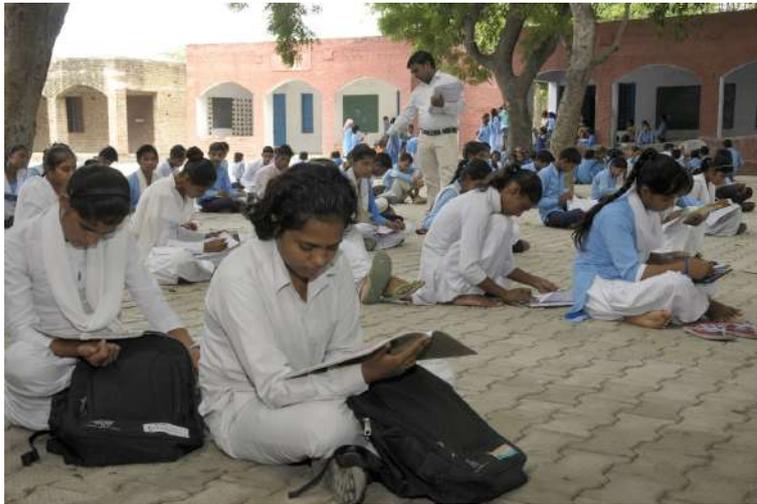
There are many obstacles girls from poor rural villages in India face many obstacles and challenges simply getting to school let alone remaining there. Paul Hawken in his 2017



book, 'Drawdown', eloquently tells us how, "economic barriers to girl's education include lack of family funds for school fees and uniforms, as well as prioritizing the more immediate benefits of having girls fetch water or firewood, or work a market stall or plot of land. Cultural barriers encompass traditional beliefs that girls should tend the home rather than learn to read and write, should be

married off at a young age, and, when resources are slim, should be skipped over so boys can be sent to school instead.

Barriers are also safety related. Schools that are farther afield put girls at risk of gender-based violence on their way to and from, not to mention dangers and discomforts at



school itself.' Kamini is a recent addition to the Blossom Bus program. Her story perfectly illustrates Hawken's views. Kamini is from village Rajpur, daughter of a farmer Mohan Lal, with a small land holding, but determined to educate his daughter. Kamini has a brother who is studying in the village school in grade eight. Mohan Lal says that none among five brothers in his family

could study beyond grade eight as there is no high school in their village. He felt he could not say no to Kamini when she expressed her desire to study further as he also wanted that his only daughter should become an educated person, get a good job and earn a name for the family. Though he is earning a meager amount selling the farming produce, he was ready to sacrifice on many things. The biggest problem facing them was reaching school walking four kilometers to Solara.

Kamini tried walking to school for some months but was facing problems on the way. Then her father then tried to drop her to school while borrowing motor-bike from his brother but could not do it regularly as sometimes the bike was not available and on some occasions he was busy with farming. The arrangements being unsatisfactory, Kamini ended up staying home for 2-3 days in a week and for long durations during rainy season while the fields were water logged. It was simply not possible to walk on the muddy roads.

Seeing these problems, Mohan Lal was disheartened and thought his daughter would drop out for sure, not able to complete her education. Then something happened. Kamini came home from school one day with an exciting announcement. "Pappa!" she exclaimed, "You'll never guess! It's a dream come true... there's a free bus taking only girls to the Solara School!" That was a very big day for Mohan Lal. "I am now certain my daughter will complete her education, will go to college and be able to live her dreams!"

ASHA – Village based women and children's health project:

As we all know, ASHA project works directly with village women and front line health workers to educate and enabling them to raise their voices and ensure the health of young mothers and children are being attended to.

In the past three years the ASHA program has directly served more than 15,000 villagers while many thousands more have benefited indirectly improved health campaigns and services as a result of ensuring higher level health coordinators are better trained and passing on that training to health workers in every village.

In many villages and for the first time ever, pre school children living in areas with very high rates of malnutrition and stunting are receiving highly nutritious, home cooked foods and health workers are learning about and delivering quality women and children's development campaigns. School children in large numbers are washing their hands with soap and almost all of the population in these areas now understand the dangers of open defecation and choose to have and use toilets and improve health for themselves and their children.

ASHA ~THEORY OF CHANGE

Change is expected to occur in three areas; community, community health workers and government health departments:

Village communities will ~

- a) learn about sanitation and hygiene and begin to use toilets and wash hands with soap.
- b) learn about proper nutrition and add greens and variety of foods grown at home for added vitamins and minerals.
- c) learn about government health services and materials and what is due to them
- d) enable articulation of their demands with respect to health services and agitate for them
- e) needs of children, women and adolescents are identified and included in health services delivery

Village health workers

- a) learn how to perform their basic roles and responsibilities better.
- b) improve quality of village health campaigns related to nutrition, hygiene, inoculation, birth spacing and etc
- c) increase the number of beneficiaries in their target areas

Health departments and governance

- a) become aware of gaps in delivery of services and gaps in training and follow-up of health workers to better manage and improve performance and delivery of health services.
- b) benefit from better data from health monitoring journals and improve responses to red flag health issues.

ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT NUMBERS FOR 2019-20

In 2019-20 the ASHA program directly impacted on 6250 individuals while implementing the following health and hygiene campaigns and activities at 35 village health centres in Kaman block of Mewat, Rajasthan.

1. Conducted **Community Meetings** with village women, pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls once a month at every Anganwadi. The objective of these meetings was to make community aware about the importance of immunization, vaccination, polio drops, iron tablets and nutrition for health of mothers and children. These meetings yielded results and there was a great deal of difference happened in terms of acceptance of immunization, vaccination, polio drops, iron tablets and nutrition for health.
2. **Growth monitoring** – though there is no report of mass deaths due to mal nutrition but the children seemed mal nourished and there is no report available, as the growth monitoring was not being done because there were no weighing machines available at Anganwadi. We provided the weighing machines to more than 80 Anganwadi and provided training on how to use the machine to record the growth of the child in the growth monitoring chart provided by the government but were never used. There is growth measuring happening in all 80 Anganwadi now and being recorded.
3. **Nutrition for children** – We provided training to Anganwadi Workers to prepare nutritious food with the items available at home in village. The nutritious food was prepared under guidance and was served to children in presence of their mothers so that they learn the process and prepare nutritious food at home regularly. There is a big change in the delivery of take home food being given to children and pregnant women because of awareness and demand for it by community after awareness building.
4. **Hand Wash and Hygiene** – Many vector borne diseases can be prevented using a simple, low cost method of using soap while washing hands before cooking and eating food and after using the toilet. We conducted Hand Wash Days at Anganwadi and at schools to make people aware about this simple method of preventing diseases. The awareness drive was successful and we are told during community meetings that 80% people now use soap for washing hands. This was practiced in less than 20% houses before awareness.
5. **Open Defecation** – There were about 20% households with toilets at home when we started working in this area two years ago. After the intervention, awareness about the incentives offered by government and hazards of open defecation, people started building toilets at home. We motivated the villagers to build toilets at home not because government is offering incentives but this is important to avoid diseases to prevent visits to the doctors and save money on

healthcare and medicines. The people understood the importance and now 90% households have toilets at home in 35 villages we work.

6. **Adolescent Meetings** – Adolescent girls were the most neglected by the Anganwadis though they are supposed to get benefits such as iron pills, sanitary pads and awareness on health and hygiene through meetings by Workers. The Anganwadis enroll only two adolescent girls from the village out of 50 to 150 present in the different villages for the benefits. They were not given any material or awareness building till we started conducting their meetings on regular basis in all 35 villages. We built awareness on health and hygiene at this age of transformations happening in the body of an adolescent and what they need to know about it. We also made them aware about the alternatives to the iron pills if they are not being provided to them by the Anganwadi. The iron deficiency can be avoided by using simple supplements like cooking food in an iron vessel and some other methods also. The adolescents are now attending our meetings regularly and are even willing to help the Anganwadi Workers who are not educated and feel the need of help to measure and record the growth of children.
7. **Visits of ANM** – We motivated the ANM’s who visit every village once a month to provide vaccination and immunization to women and children by helping them in improving their capacity through providing Blood Pressure measuring device and requested them to conduct meetings with adolescent girls for their awareness building on health and hygiene. The ANM’s were happy to join our campaign which is only adding to their performance and helps in improvement in avoiding the diseases caused due to non acceptance of vaccination and polio drops in some people due to lack of awareness and myths connected to their religion.
8. **Capacity building of Anganwadi Workers and Supervisors** – We conducted numerous training programs at village level, Panchayat level, cluster level and Block level with Anganwadi Workers, ASHA and Supervisors in collaboration with CDPO Kaman. The CDPO herself conducted six training programs for the Workers and Supervisors which were very productive for their capacity building on measuring and recording the growth of children, preparing nutritious food and improvement in their performance, We could not continue with these training programs due to transfer of CDPO to another block.

Outcomes by the numbers ~ Direct beneficiaries, meetings and attendance outcomes:

• Health Worker Activists Trained:	750
• Health Worker Activists in Attendance at Group Meetings:	60-80
• Health Worker Activist Meetings Held:	30
• Community Meetings Held: 30 with 20-30 participants	30
• Total Attendees at Community Meetings (approx.):	650
• Weighing Scales Contributed to Village Health Centers:	80
• School Hand Wash Days Held: 12 in 2019 and 37 since 2017	12
• No. of students benefitted through Hand Wash Days in 2019 (approx)	2400
• Nutrition Days Held in 2019:	30
• Children Age 0-6 Directly Served through 35 Anganwadi:	1400
• Directly Served: Adolescent girls 2 at each Anganwadi	70
• Pre and Post-Natal Mothers Directly Served: in 50 villages (18 at each village)	900
Total Individuals served	6,250

Advocacy Outcomes

- Total Vaccinations Completed: 2200
- Children Registered at Health Centers: 1850
- Toilets Constructed Approx: 1800
- Total Individuals Indirectly Served (Approx.): 8000
- Total Families Indirectly Served: 5000
- Total Pre and Post Natal Mothers Indirectly Served through ANM Visits : 1000
- Total Children 0-6 Indirectly Served: Awareness of Mothers on nutrition: 12000
- Total Children 6+ Indirectly Served through awareness of Mothers: 1200
- Total Villages indirectly served in impact area through capacity building of Anganwadi Workers 150
- Total Health Workers receiving monthly training 750
- Total Community Members informed and mobilized in 35 villages 1800

Marium's Anganwadi worker story:

In a traditional and male dominated society like Mewat, the voice and capabilities of young adolescent girls are considered unimportant. We see this group, especially once they are educated, as the social and economic engine of the society. During 2019 we began asking the elder women to bring along the youth to our community meetings so we could listen to them and which gave them value. In Marium's story below we can see how powerful and social transforming an educated young girl like Nazma can be, when she's given a chance to contribute.

The Anganwadi Worker Marium told us that how being a village health worker has changed her life. She was only educated to grade five, I lost my husband some years ago and was left alone to look after my three children with no land or any income. "The situation has improved a great deal since Lotus Outreach began working in our village. We now have proper scales to weigh the children to monitor their progress and report to the ASHA and ANM in case children are not doing well. We are also receiving the proper amount of grain for the children. LO has also encouraged us to call the adolescent girls so they can learn from us and also share their hopes and concerns and which is important as their own parents will tell their daughters to keep their heads down and don't cause trouble."

When I started as an AWW I was not able to understand how to record health data into the ledgers and asked the community for help. Thankfully they sent Nazma who is an educated girl from the village and she now works as my assistant. Nazma helped me a lot and now I can maintain all records and do my best to serve the community."

Nazma told us, "I now visit Anganwadi centre regularly to help the staff in their daily work and I also learn about health issues from my peers. Marium encouraged me to bring adolescent girls from the village to Lotus training sessions provided for ASHA and Anganwadi workers and at which we all learn a great deal. I was personally very excited to participate in the training. We learned about anemia and which is a serious problem amongst women of this community. We are also now getting a regular supply of iron pills from the Anganwadi.

“Everyday I cook and serve fresh and nutritious food to the 40 children in my care. I also conduct meetings with adolescent girls and community women with the help of ASHA. She says that this work has not only given me my livelihood but also some opportunity to serve the children of the whole village and which is a blessing for myself and the family.”



Mariam is a first line village health worker and community partner in the ASHA program at Mewat



Mariam (2nd from left) and Nazma (centre) with a group of adolescent girls

Skills Training 4 Employment Project (STEP)

One year completed for Tailoring classes for 80 students

On February 1, we completed one year of training in tailoring at Rithora and Kot villages in Mewat of Haryana. Two batches of six months each with 40 students finished training during February to July 2019 and August 2019 to January 2020. Total 80 girls learned the skills in one year and are now ready to utilize their skill as empowerment claiming their contribution in the family by making dresses for the family and the villagers.

These 80 girls will not only make dresses for their family and save significant expenditure, they will also earn a regular income by making dresses for the village women, children and families in general. "This is empowerment" said mother of Asifa who has trained 40 girls in village Rithora. Asifa became an earning member of the family for a year earning Rs. 6000 a month as her salary, has a saving which will be used for her marriage. The Mother says with pride that her daughter has shared some responsibility of the family and so earned respect in the family and the community.



20 girls delighted to be graduating from STEP tailoring project at Rithora, Mewat, Haryana

Report of Education Quality Addition (EQU+) program at Delhi



The expansion this year of our after school centres project from four to twenty four centres means we are now serving some 600 children in north India added to the 550 we are serving across 15 centres in south India. It is gratifying to reflect that we are now providing much needed personalized attention to some 1150 children that are otherwise totally dependent on a government school system unable to ensure these children from poor families get enough assistance to keep up with well to do children with access to every resource imaginable.

In July 2019 we added three EQU+ centres to our single pilot centre that we'd successfully ran at Shakapur, Delhi since April 2018. Of the four centres, two are supported by Douglas A Campbell Foundation and two more by Douglas Polunin, are also situated in the Shakapur/Bawana area. Right on the heels of expanding from 1 to 4 centres and with support from Max India Foundation, we then added ten more centres in July followed by another ten in October. Seventeen of the MIF supported centres were located at Rohini and Sangam Vihar and three at village Rithora in Mewat where we'd been running a tailoring project.

EQU+ centres are situated in Juggi-Jopri, amongst large numbers of migrant labor and have become an essential feature of the communities in which they are located as they provide not only education and a safe and uplifting environment for the children, they also serve as a platform to address social issues for poor, working parents. Parents have regularly attended monthly meetings to discuss their children's education as well as to share and discuss solutions to problems they face in their communities. We held a special event with the children and their families on March 8 for International Women's Day and Holi. Children from our centres enacted plays about the daily issues faced in their communities such as safety of children, domestic violence, public hygiene and access to clean water.

All twenty teachers at our centres have received ongoing training in delivery of the CBSE syllabus and how to manage students studying at so many levels in one classroom and we have measured an excellent level of academic progress through regular monthly tests. EQU+ centres are now contributing significantly to the holistic education of the children and quality of life for the families they are serving.

Our baseline sample in October averaged for twenty centres showed only 47 students in the range of 40% to 80% knowledge and by March 2020 there were 260 students in this range!! Almost fifty out-of-school children have been prepared for enrollment in the April session and their families have been assisted with getting the necessary documents in order to ensure successful enrolment.

White Lotus Trust partner projects

Buddha Smiles program at Vellore District of Thiruvannamalai and the Amirthi forests

White Lotus has been supporting and building capacity in this partnership program with Professor Manivannan and his Spirit in Life movement since the early 2000's. The program continues to serve very poor, illiterate and economically marginalized families to ensure their children remain in school and on top of their schoolwork as long as possible with a view to assisting them to break cycles of poverty while providing them with an ethical and moral education filled with joy of learning.

Background

Buddha Smiles-White Lotus Project on Non-Formal Education for the children from stone quarry, landless laborers, small farmers, daily wage workers and weaver's families in Vellore and Thiruvannamalai Districts of Tamil Nadu have been operational for more than twelve years now. This programme is being implemented in 15 villages in Vellore and Thiruvannamalai Districts of Tamil Nadu to reduce dropouts, cultivate interest in education and build values in them. In the year 2019, there were total of 547 student beneficiaries of which, 58% were female and 42% male children. Student strength in each center ranges from minimum 25 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 laborers, mainly from tribal and weavers' families. The majority of them come from socially and economically backward communities.

There are totally fifteen functional centers under this programme in two districts of Tamil Nadu, which includes five functional centers in the tribal areas covering the forest and hill areas of the Amirthi forests and Javvadhu Hills.

Objective of the Program

The major objective of formulating this program by White lotus and Buddha smiles Project is to:

1. Reduce the dropout children in Vellore and Thiruvannamalai region
2. Empower children by providing due rights in terms of education and equal participation
3. Encourage girl children to study
4. Support migrating families and socially and economically backward families
5. Support first generation children and motivate them to pursue school education

Project activities:

Along with adherence to the mainstream curriculum at the non-formal educational centers, we continue to incorporate several non-formal techniques of teaching/learning in addition to the traditional classroom methodology. Classes continued to provide



activity based learning for the children to ensure their interest and which ultimately addresses the challenge of retention. Class teachers adopt, develop and implement non-formal methods such as play and learn, activity based educational systems as well as the integration of visual teaching/learning methods. The evening class education methodology and curriculum are not just framed to improve the education skills of the students, but also intended to create positive values in their lives through active participative learning methods and that include building social awareness about the judicious use of

plastic bags, tree plantation and being responsible citizens. Languages like Tamil and English are also taught through Activities Based Learning (ABL) methodology.

Evening classes start at 4:30 pm, with a silent meditation and children also join songs. Thereafter 45 minutes of reading exercise is carried out followed by supporting work towards completing their homework.

The importance of this program is underscored by the fact that majority of children in rural schools and Government schools do not receive any support or attention from their parents due to social and economic circumstances.

Parents of children in the centres continue to deeply appreciate the progress their children make and also that the children are kept safe during the critical couple of hours as parents make their way home from work.

Garden of Peace, Nutrition for education program:

Garden of Peace Nursery and Primary School is located in a rural village at Vellore District for educating children belonging to socially and economically backward section. The parents of the children are daily laborers at construction sites, brick making factories or farming. We have long been committed to right to education for all. At the same time we do believe that right to education cannot be pursued without basic access to food and health.

As a continuing initiative, we provide children with morning porridge, mid-day meals, and evening snack understanding....

1. That most of the parents of students go for work in early morning 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.
2. As a part of providing good balanced diet at school, Rice or Ragi Porridge is given between 10:45 am to 11:00 am in alternative days. The porridge is healthy, easily digestible and contains carbohydrates, iron and proteins and also hydrates the body with energy from starch water. Most of the children do not have proper breakfast at home.
3. The Midday meal to children is provided at school, all the children have this food. The lunch is between 12:30pm to 1:00 pm. Good quality rice is given with vegetable 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 simple, healthy and edible for small children.
4. We also believe in the balance between mind and body and therefore encourage children to play in the school as well as after school hours in the evening near their homes. We have introduced a practice of serving nutritious snack to children at 3.30 pm as they are ready to leave for their homes. We want them to be active and energetic as they reach home and ready for play or other activities near home.
5. All children get to eat same food at the same time in sufficient quantity. Children bring their own plates and glass and are taught to wash them, taught how to wash and keep clean of their belongings.

6. 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 up during Children's Parliament session. They also ensure food is not wasted by any child in order to teach them the concept of saving and not wasting food. Hygiene and good practices in eating and keeping the space clean are both individual and collective values learned by the children in this process.



Significance of the Nutrition Programme:

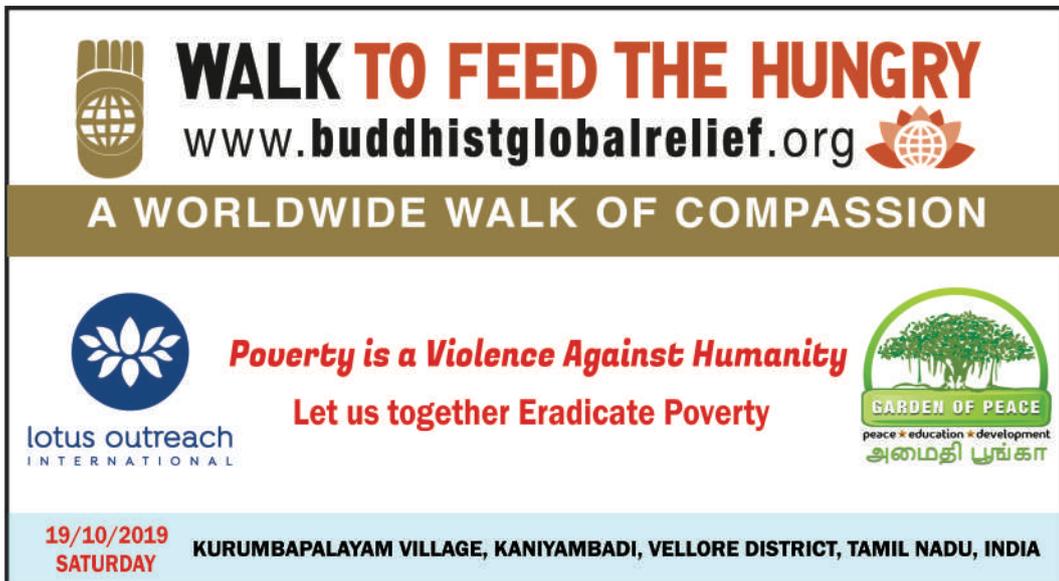
Garden of Peace is committed to fight against hunger, poverty and malnutrition as we run the rural school for poor. We are truly grateful for the support, encouragement and partnership with the White Lotus-Buddhist Global Relief in addressing these commitments. This programme makes a huge difference to the realization of our educational and social objectives of working among the poor. Parents and the village community appreciate the nutrition programme followed at the school. Children are healthy, eat food at regular intervals at the school and enjoy their stay in the school. We also ensure:

1. There is no wasting of food and children eat all vegetables, greens, rice and pulses required for good health ;
2. There is no nutrition related illness found amongst any child in the school;
3. Children come to school regularly and show good attendance;

Major Activities During the Period Between October 2019 and March 2020:

Walk to Feed the Hungry:

Garden of Peace School and the Buddha Smiles Movement has been founded with a vision addressing poverty, caste and social discrimination in India. Garden of Peace School is a small step and with education as means to attending these core concerns of the Indian society. It has been a revelation through these years of working in the field of education that without food and being hungry, no child can focus on studying or attending to a class. It is with great joy and collective spirit of White Lotus International and Buddhist Global Relief we undertook this walk to feed the hungry on 19th October, 2019. This walk has created more awareness among the students, teachers and parents including the rural community that poverty is not due to fate as people in India are made to believe and it can be overcome with determined efforts.



The banner features the following elements:

- Top Left:** A logo of a hand holding a globe.
- Top Center:** The text "WALK TO FEED THE HUNGRY" in large, bold, orange letters, followed by the website "www.buddhistglobalrelief.org" and a red lotus flower logo.
- Top Right:** A red lotus flower logo.
- Middle:** A dark brown horizontal bar with the text "A WORLDWIDE WALK OF COMPASSION" in white.
- Bottom Left:** The logo for "lotus outreach INTERNATIONAL" featuring a blue lotus flower.
- Bottom Center:** The text "Poverty is a Violence Against Humanity" in red, followed by "Let us together Eradicate Poverty" in red.
- Bottom Right:** The logo for "GARDEN OF PEACE" featuring a green tree and the text "peace * education * development" and "அமைதி பூங்கா" in green.
- Bottom:** A light blue horizontal bar with the text "19/10/2019 SATURDAY" in red and "KURUMBAPALAYAM VILLAGE, KANIYAMBADI, VELLORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU, INDIA" in black.

Kitchen Garden:

Students and the teachers together developed a 10X10 = 100 square feet kitchen garden behind the kitchen to grow tomato, greens, chilli and string beans as part of the programme to grow our own food. Garden of Peace has been promoting the concept of home kitchen among the villagers and the rural community to encourage healthy food habits by growing their own food. This small initiative has been functional over the years.

Tree Plantation:

Children, teachers and volunteers planted 150 flower and fruit trees in the school on 18th January, 2020.

Core Harvests for the year: Horsegram (130 kilos), peanuts (300 kilos) and finger millet(50 kilos)

Evening Snacks:

Children are also served evening snacks besides the morning porridge and lunch. Evening snacks include fruits, biscuits, multigrain nutritious balls mixed with jaggery. Evening snacks are served with a purpose of encouraging children to play in the evenings as the school believes in the balance of body and mind.

Ministry of Food:

Garden of Peace School has a student parliament and holds regular parliamentary sessions every fortnight. There is student food minister who supervises and coordinated food related activities in the school. This student food minister reports regularly to the school about the food, environment, agriculture, hygiene and other disciplinary concerns related to wastage and cleanliness.

Yoga and Meditation Classes:

Garden of Peace has been hosting a Yoga and meditation classes through professional Yoga teachers with a view of promoting healthy body and mind. When teachers complete this year long training in December 2020 and they will be training children regularly as part of their everyday teaching and physical activities in the school. Practice of yoga also induces healthy and more harmonious food habits among teachers and children.

Annual cost of providing nutrition + school contribution

S NO	Nutrition	Consumed from Market		Produced at School	
		Kgs	Cost	Kgs	Cost
1	Rice for Lunch	2500	130000		
2	Rice for Porridge	850	34000		
3	Ragi for Porridge	180	7920		
4	Gur for Porridge	150	9000		
5	Vegetables for Lunch	620	24800	225	8500
6	Cereals for Lunch	600	84000		
7	Oil and spices for lunch	160	51200		
8	Other Items	300	25000		
	Total		365920		8500

GOP students and their family in their own words:



Rekha, Jayashree and Yogeswaran

Rekha and her husband Raja has enrolled all their three children in Garden of Peace school. Their second daughter Jayashree and third child Yogeswaran study in grade V and UKG currently. Their eldest daughter Jayalakshmi completed her Vth grade at this school and is continuing to study in Kaniyambadi Government higher secondary school. They are very happy and feel relieved, as the school provides their children midday meal. Her husband Raja is a mason and leaves for work early in the morning. Rekha also goes for NREGA project. It is very difficult for her to prepare lunch for her children which is taken care by the GOP school. She says children eat rice in the morning and tiffin during nights. Her

son does not eat vegetables at home instead has it from school. Children do not wash their utensils at home which she says they do it at school. This good habit of taking care

of one's own responsibility is very much required for children to be guided well. She further states that their children eat all food at school without wasting and wash their plates, which is a great discipline developed by the teachers of the school. She feels children are happy and healthy at school.

Dharsan and Dhanshika's father works in a fabric mill at Coimbatore (another district of Tamil Nadu). Their mother Jayanthi lives along with her mother. Both children eat



Dharsan, Dhanshika and Jayanthi

breakfast and dinner at home, however according to Jayanthi, the food children have at school is very healthy. She believes this is primarily because the food is being served at right time with adequate vegetables which has vitamins apart from carbohydrates and proteins. She also says that children update her that "Aunty calls and asks if they require more food", which she also has witnessed during her time at school. She is convinced that this is a good practice. She is got complete trust in school and believes that the school will cater to her children's overall need, which primarily is good education and healthy food.