



BLESS

An Empowering Organization

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR -2023-2024

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF BLESS

I am very happy to present the Annual Report for BLESS, as we step into the 35th year continuing our service with the downtrodden, with the same inspiration and conviction. We thank all who stood with us to move forward with a Vision of Social Transformation.

During this financial year 2023-2024 BLESS has turned its focus to sustain the ongoing activities of FFVDP (Family Focused Village Development Programme) Shanmuga Nagar, Kolping Nagar, Irular colony and Pottakaraimeedu village, where the FFVDP programme exited. The five-year plan in this village is developed with the involvement of the local community. The Linsi Foundation has been kind enough in extending seed capital to these villages, which they can use for their children's education as well as for income generation, the interest generated can be used to continuously run the after-school study centres in the villages. New vulnerable communities will be added under FFVDP in the next financial year. Subsequently the AEM-France continued to support the children's activity centre in five villages which are in the Pondicherry union Territory, four hamlets comprising with Adivashi and one centre at villianur which is only for girls. The WARII-France has come up this year to support the Alcoholic Rehabilitation centre located at Cuddalore. This has helped 260 patients to overcome the effects of their illness beyond the outreach awareness activities. The cycle fish vendors support initiative has completed its third year, thanks to support from the Italian Bishops council; and a scientific study has been completed to take forward the next three consecutive years. This year Mr. Bob and his team from the US visited the projects and attended a meeting with the cycle fish vendors. Our friends in Europe have donated some funds to improve the centre. Another important visitor was Victoria Szenftner from Germany who visited after a longtime and donated funds for the children who are in the Home. Bless is keeping good relationships with past and present volunteers who always think about the progress of BLESS.

We thank Jones Rachel from UK, Muriel Nicole Gilberte from New Zealand, and Aranda Garcia form Canada for their continued support for activities. Under the Workaway and the World Packers platform the following overseas volunteers stayed with us 1. Rita Pandey -US,2. Florlane Sylvie Le Meyec -France 3. Frese Karal Henrik-Germany 4. Annna Ida Espanola-Spain 5. Jennifer Kathryn Brooks-UK ,6. Lolita Vilimaite-Lithuvania and 7. Auguste dukauskaite-Lithuvania were exposed to ongoing development activities. Mr. Clayto Paul Mosher from the US been very helpful in promoting the infrastructural activities at the after-school study centres.

At the State and National Level, with the support of Royal Enfield CSR, the Turtle protection project received support this year and commenced at Marakanam area along with collaboration from the Forest Department of Tindivanam range. Under the Responsible Travel Project, funded by Royal Enfield CSR has combined with the NMC Trust – from Coimbatore city to implement the activities at Pondicherry Union Territory. The basic activities are to establish a Sanitary Block at Bharathi Park near Pondicherry Beach. However, due to lack of transparency with the Royal Enfield CSR, finally the joint venture was dropped. It was a great lesson indeed.

The Children Adoption programme is continuing with experienced staff and has been successful in finding families for children during this financial year. The Micro credit programme, with the collaboration of NABFINS, has been supporting women to strengthen their enterprises.

BLESS has mobilised resources both nationally and internationally and achieved the above-mentioned programmes for the benefit of the people. The situation for the NGO development sector is not promising and to undergo many challenges. CSR and Government schemes do not reach beyond Chennai and staff retention is also a big challenge. With continued support from the Executive Committee members and Philanthropists we could overcome these challenges soon and perform better in the next financial year.





Family Focused Village Development Program

BLESS implements the Family Focused Village Development Program (FFVDP) through a participatory and family-centred approach. The organization begins by engaging with rural families to understand their needs and challenges, then forms and strengthens Village Development Committees (VDCs) to ensure local ownership and decision-making. BLESS facilitates awareness sessions, training, and capacity building for families on livelihood promotion, health and hygiene, education, women's empowerment, and youth involvement.

To ensure sustainability, BLESS links families with government welfare schemes, financial institutions, and local resources, while also supporting them with direct livelihood interventions such as cattle rearing, skill development, and income-generating activities. Regular monitoring, household visits, and community meetings help track progress and encourage collective participation. Through this integrated approach, BLESS ensures that development is inclusive, family-focused, and community-driven, leading to long-term social and economic transformation.

LEADERSHIP:

Focusing on the Sustainability of the Villages after being guided through the project, activities like Village Development Plan involving the Village members, Capacity building refresher training for the Community Based Organizations in our project villages. Cluster meetings were held every quarter to improve the participation and shared learning across the villages and the VDC members of all the villages.





Youth Program was conducted to encourage participation in Village Development Activities.

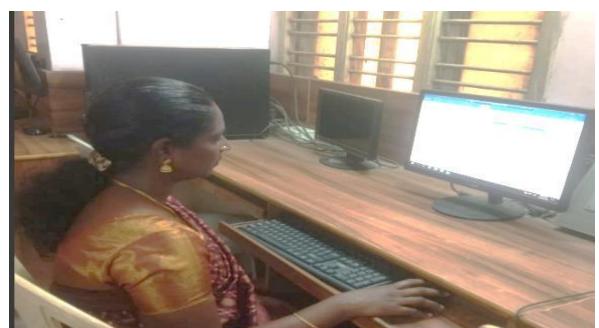
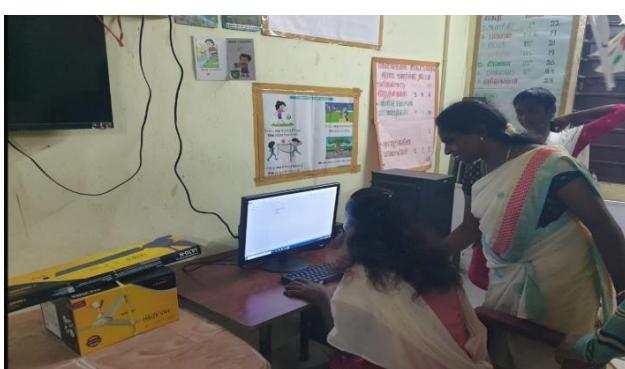


EDUCATION:

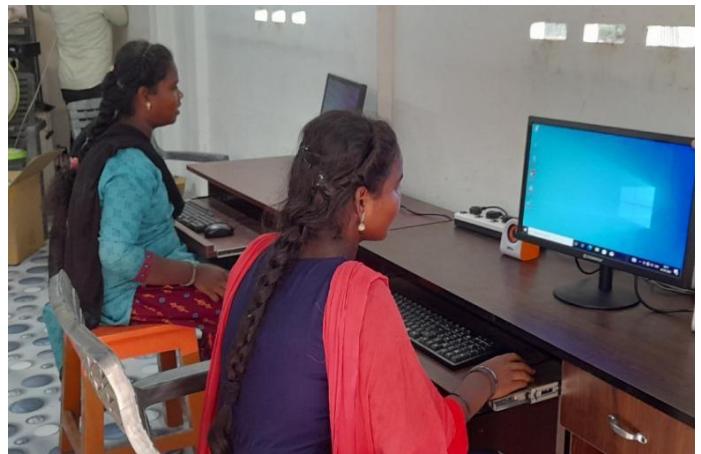
The After School Study Center construction at Palakkai and Kolping Nagar was started and materials like Computers, Steel rack, Cupboards, Computer table, Board etc were provided for the After School Study Centers.

- The Community Educators were enrolled into Computer classes and Typewriting classes to acquire skill for Documentation and personal enhancement.
- Student Exposure Visits were conducted to other villages, Mahabalipuram, Thanjavur for educational purposes.
- Role Model Program was conducted for the children with the support from the students who has erstwhile been the part of After School Study Centers in their respective villages. This program paved to be a motivation for the students at present being educated at the ASSC.

- Computer classes have been held for the students in each village by the trained Community Educators.
- The CEs were provided with Cycles for better Transportation
- Stationery kits were distributed for students to motivate regular schooling.
- Library was set up at Irular Colony to encourage the students to access books for knowledge.







**A New Horizon of space for the students to engage in the activities at
After School Study Center
PALAKKARAI**



KOLPING NAGAR



EARNING & FINANCE:

The **Earning & Finance Mission** in the *Family Focused Village Development Program (FFVDP)* aims to strengthen the economic stability of rural families. Its purpose is to help families move from subsistence living to sustainable income generation by promoting diversified livelihood opportunities, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

Through this mission, families are supported in **earning** by creating access to income-generating activities such as agriculture, livestock, small businesses, and skill-based employment. At the same time, the **finance** component equips them with knowledge of savings, credit, and effective money management. By linking families to banks, self-help groups, and welfare schemes, the mission ensures financial inclusion and reduces dependence on moneylenders.

- Animal Health Management Training at Irular Colony for 11 beneficiaries and cows have been procured for them and Common cattle shed was constructed for the livestock for a safe space
- Milk Value Addition program was held for the beneficiaries in order to understand about the ideas in livelihood that goes beyond milk from livestock alone
- An EDP training for 5 days was conducted at Kolping Nagar and Palakkai to encourage Self employment
- Fishnets were provided to beneficiaries at Shanmuga Nagar





HEALTH CARE:

The Healthcare Mission in the *Family Focused Village Development Program (FFVDP)* aims to improve the overall health and well-being of rural families by ensuring access to preventive, promotive, and basic healthcare services. Its purpose is to reduce illness, enhance awareness on hygiene and nutrition, and build healthier communities that can actively participate in development.

The mission focuses on preventive care through health awareness sessions, hygiene practices, maternal and child health education, and nutrition improvement. It also works on early detection and treatment by facilitating health camps, medical checkups, and linkages with government health services. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups such as children, women, and the elderly.

- Menstrual Health Management is promoted among the families in villages and to promote the healthy practices, Incinerator has been provided to Pottakaraimeedu and Shanmuga Nagar villages.
- Health education and handwashing for improved hygiene have been held in Kolping Nagar
- Regular follow up of meetings with Village Health Nurse is conducted at all villages
- Medical camp at Shanmuga Nagar was held in this program year
- To promote safe handling of Drinking water, UV plant has been installed at Palakkarai



Shanmuga Nagar



Pottakaraimeedu

HEALTH CARE INITIATIVES



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY COHESION:

The **Family & Community Cohesion Mission** in the *Family Focused Village Development Program (FFVDP)* seeks to strengthen relationships within families and foster unity in the wider community. Its purpose is to build harmony, trust, and collective responsibility so that families and communities can work together for their shared development.

This mission emphasizes **healthy family relationships**, conflict resolution, respect for gender equality, and mutual support among family members. At the community level, it promotes **solidarity, cooperation, and participatory decision-making** through Village Development Committees and collective activities. By nurturing social bonds, the mission reduces isolation, addresses social issues, and creates an environment where every family feels included and valued.

Deaddiction Awareness Program



CONCLUSION:

The implementation of the Family Focused Village Development Program (FFVDP) continues to make meaningful progress in strengthening rural families and communities. However, challenges such as staff retention and the need to phase out from certain program areas have required strategic adjustments. As part of this transition, the program has concluded its interventions in Shanmuga Nagar, Irular Colony, and Pottakaraimeedu, ensuring that families there are equipped with linkages and resources for continuity.

Following the monitoring visit by the DI team, valuable insights were gained that have guided the way forward. With renewed focus and strengthened strategies, the program is now moving ahead in Kolping Nagar and Palakkai, where greater potential for impact and sustainability has been identified. The continued partnership with Linsi Foundation provides a strong foundation to deepen our engagement and deliver lasting outcomes for families.

While challenges remain, these experiences reinforce the program's resilience and adaptability, ensuring that FFVDP remains a dynamic model for community transformation.



ELDERLY CARE SUPPORT - MEAL A DAY

Introduction

The Annual Report for the Elderly Care Support - Meal A Day Project provides a comprehensive overview of the project's activities, achievements, challenges, and future prospects during the period from July 2023 to April 2024.

The project, initiated by BLESS, aimed to address the critical issue of elderly hunger and neglect in Ottampattu village, Tamil Nadu, India. With an aging population and economic challenges, many elderly individuals in the area were left without sufficient means to sustain themselves, leading to hunger and deteriorating health conditions.

This report presents a detailed analysis of the project's objectives, including the successful accomplishment of goals such as decreasing hunger among senior citizens and improving their health status through monthly health check-ups and vitamin supplements. The report also highlights the various activities undertaken by the project, such as the daily supply of nutritious meals, health management initiatives, recreational sessions, and the provision of basic necessities.

Objectives Accomplished:

Decreased hunger among senior citizens: The project successfully provided nutritious meals to senior citizens in Ottampattu village and surrounding areas. This initiative significantly alleviated hunger among the elderly population, ensuring they had access to at least one nutritious meal per day.

Improved health status of senior citizens: Through monthly health check-ups and the provision of vitamin supplements, the project contributed to enhancing the overall health and well-being of the elderly beneficiaries. Regular medical assessments helped identify health issues early, allowing for timely intervention and support.

Activities of the Project:

Daily supply of Noon Meal:

- Deserving senior citizens were invited to the day-care center to receive nutritious meals, along with tea and snacks
- A kitchen was established with the necessary utensils and facilities to prepare meals.
- Groceries and vegetables were procured to ensure a balanced and nutritious diet
- A cook was appointed to prepare meals according to dietary requirements.



Health Management:

- Medical doctors were engaged to conduct monthly health check-ups for the beneficiaries, providing essential medical care and support.
- Vitamin supplements were supplied to address nutritional deficiencies and improve overall health.
- A health assistant was appointed to address daily health needs and provide ongoing support to the elderly beneficiaries.



Recreation:

- Interactive sessions, storytelling sessions, and indoor games were organized to provide recreational activities and promote social interaction among the elderly.
- Indigenous traditional indoor games were introduced to engage the beneficiaries and enhance their overall well-being.
- A television with a dish antenna and sound system was planned to be purchased to provide audio-visual entertainment and educational content.



Basic Needs:

- Basic necessities such as clothing, sanitary materials, soap, oil, and footwear were provided to the beneficiaries to ensure their comfort and dignity.
- Despite encountering challenges such as budgetary constraints and difficulties in raising funds for certain items, the project remained committed to its objectives and made significant progress in addressing the needs of the elderly population in Ottampattu village. Through the implementation of these activities, the project aimed to create a supportive and nurturing environment for the elderly, enhancing their quality of life and promoting their overall well-being.



Supply of Food:

Setting up of kitchen: The projected cost for setting up the kitchen was Rs. 25,000, but it exceeded to Rs. 75,000. This expense was necessary to establish a functional kitchen to prepare meals for the elderly beneficiaries.

Lunch, Tea & snacks: The total cost for providing lunch, tea, and snacks for 50 people twice a day for 365 days amounted to Rs. 16,42,500. However, due to budget constraints, the project managed to cover expenses for only 10 months, resulting in a total expenditure of Rs. 13,68,750.

Health Management:

Monthly medical check-up: The cost for monthly medical check-ups for 50 people, including medicine support, was estimated at Rs. 1,80,000. This expense was tied up with the Primary Health Centre, thus ensuring essential medical care for the beneficiaries.

Recreation:

Television with dish antenna & sound system: The projected cost for purchasing a television with a dish antenna and sound system was Rs. 50,000. However, the project could not raise sufficient funds to acquire this asset.

Assets:

Furniture: The estimated cost for purchasing furniture, including chairs, tables, shelves, and folding cots, was Rs. 70,000. Unfortunately, the project faced challenges in raising funds to procure these assets.

Basic Needs:

Dress for the elderly: The projected cost for providing clothing to the elderly beneficiaries twice a year was Rs. 1,00,000. However, the project could not raise sufficient funds to fulfill this requirement.

Toilet articles: The projected cost for providing toilet articles such as soap, oil, and footwear for 12 months amounted to Rs. 3,600. This amount was fully utilized to meet the basic needs of the beneficiaries.

Administrative Cost:

A 3% administrative cost was included in the budget, amounting to Rs. 62,283. This expense covered administrative overheads associated with project implementation and management.

Amount Received:

The project received a donation from WARLI in Euros 12,965, equivalent to INR 11,59,590. This donation contributed significantly to the project's funding, enabling the implementation of various activities.

Despite facing challenges in meeting the projected budget and acquiring essential assets, the project managed to accomplish its primary objective of providing nutritious meals and essential healthcare services to the elderly beneficiaries.

Conclusion:

The Elderly Care Support - Meal A Day Project undertaken by BLESS from July 2023 to April 2024 stands as a testament to our commitment to addressing the critical issue of elderly hunger and neglect in Ottampattu village, Tamil Nadu, India. Despite encountering various challenges, the project made significant strides in improving the quality of life for the elderly population in the area.

BLESS remains committed to continuing our efforts to support the elderly population in Ottampattu village and surrounding areas. By leveraging our learnings and experiences from this project, we will seek to further strengthen our interventions and expand our reach to ensure that every elderly individual receives the care and support they deserve.

In conclusion, the Elderly Care Support - Meal A Day Project represents a beacon of hope and compassion for the elderly population, reflecting our unwavering commitment to social development and community empowerment. To build a more inclusive and compassionate society where every individual, regardless of age, receives the care and support they need to live a dignified and fulfilling life.

Amis des Enfants du Monde (AEM) - BLESS

Children Activity Centre Report 2024

In 2023, we established five Children Activity Centres in partnership with Les Amis des Enfants du Monde (AEM), France, in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The primary goal of these centres is to provide after-school care to children from marginalized Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities within our project area. Our focus on the tribal community is particularly significant, as these children are the first generation in their community to attend school.

To support their holistic development, we offer educational assistance, art and culture lessons, counselling sessions, and yoga classes, along with engaging recreational activities. Additionally, we address their nutritional needs by providing nutritious snacks.

We have appointed young, talented individuals with a strong sense of social responsibility as teachers in our Activity Centres, ensuring that the children receive quality guidance and support.

Daily Activity Schedule of the Centre

Our daily activities at the Children Activity Centres are structured as follows:

First Hour: Educational Support

- Assisting children in completing their daily homework and assignments.
- Providing support in clearing doubts across various subjects to enhance understanding.

Special Care and Play Therapy

- Offering personalized attention and support to slow learners and children with learning difficulties.

Second Hour: Enrichment Activities

- Conducting activities such as art and culture, yoga, and other recreational exercises.
- Creating a joyful and engaging learning experience for all participating children.
- Providing multi-grain snacks to ensure their nutritional well-being.

Educational Resources

- Supplying students with textbooks, notes, and other essential stationery items.
- Ensuring that students have all the necessary tools for a successful educational journey.
- Distributing school bags and other educational materials to support their learning.

Student Orientation

- Every four months, all students gather at the BLESS Campus for orientation, counselling, and career guidance sessions.

Staff Capacity Building

- We conduct capacity-building training for our teachers to keep them updated on curriculum changes and new teaching methods.
- Teachers from the activity centres meet with school teachers once a week to stay informed about the students' progress and address any concerns.

Immediate Communication

- A WhatsApp group has been established to keep everyone informed about the centres' activities and developments. This proactive approach aims to create a supportive educational environment that benefits the children and ensures their success.

Outcomes of the Program

- **Reduction in School Dropouts:** Increased retention rates among students.
- **Increase in Academic Performance:** Improved academic achievements among participating children.
- **Reduction in Child Labour:** Significant decrease in child labor within the communities we serve.
- **Eradication of Child Beggary:** Child begging has been entirely eliminated in the areas we operate.
- **Improvement in Nutrition:** Children are healthier due to the nutritious snacks provided.
- **Increased Child Participation and Creativity:** Enhanced engagement and creativity among children through various enrichment activities.

Sl.No	Name of the Village	Community of the Students	Total Children	Boys	Girls
1.	Karikalambakkam	Scheduled Caste	36	21	15
2.	Mangalam	Scheduled Tribe	26	14	12
3.	Othiyampattu	Scheduled Tribes	12	05	07
4.	Villianur	Mixed Community (Girls only)	42	0	42
5.	Urvaiyar	Scheduled Caste	43	24	19
	Total		159	64	95

Background of the Villages:

1. Karikalampakkam:

Location: Karikalampakkam is situated in Bahour Taluk, Puducherry district, about 8 km from Bahour (the sub-district headquarter) and 16 km from Puducherry city.

Geography & Population: The village covers 327.06 hectares and has a population of 6,558 people, with 3,250 males and 3,308 females. There are 1,633 households, and the village functions as a gram panchayat. The postal code is 605110.

Activity Centre Students: The children attending the activity centre belong to Scheduled Caste families living below the poverty line, and most are first-generation school-goers. Remarkably, seven children have completed their SSLC (10th Grade) with good marks.

2. Mangalam:

Location: Mangalam village is located in Villianur Taluk, Puducherry district, about 3 km from Villianur and 14 km from Puducherry.

Geography & Population: The village spans 328.64 hectares, with a population of 4,320 (2,125 males and 2,195 females) and 973 houses. It is a gram panchayat, and the postal code is 605110.

Activity Centre Students: The students belong to the Kuchikuli Irulas, a sub-tribe of the Irulas who have migrated from Karnataka. They speak Kannada, and their main livelihood includes begging with decorated cows, selling amulets, and children engaging in street performances. Notably, five children have completed their SSLC, marking a significant achievement for the first generation of school-goers in this community.

3. Odiyampattu:

Location: Odiyampattu is a locality within the city of Puducherry, with a high concentration of low-income groups. Its postal code is 605110, and the head post office is located in Villianur.

Activity Centre Students: The students are from Scheduled Tribe communities, mainly migrants from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Their families primarily earn a living through rag picking, collecting plastic scraps, and selling them to recycling companies. This centre boasts the remarkable achievement of 11 girls entering college for their graduation, a significant accomplishment for first-generation school-goers.

4. Villianur:

Location: Villianur Taluk is both a town and a subdivision in Puducherry. Spanning a total area of 130 square kilometers, it includes 38 villages and has a population of 213,278, of which 67,254 are urban residents and 146,024 are rural.

Activity Centre Students: The centre here focuses solely on Girls from Scheduled Tribe and Dalit communities. The initiative is run by the President of BLESS and provides a space for these girls to study and engage in activities that help improve their future prospects.

5. Urvaiyar:

Location: Urvaiyar village is located in Villianur Taluk, 3 km from Villianur and 13 km from Puducherry. It covers an area of 181.58 hectares and has a population of 4,568 (2,271 males and 2,297 females) with 1,090 households. The postal code is 605110.

Activity Centre Students: The children at this centre belong to Scheduled Tribes, with most families relying on palmistry, astrology, and hunting for sustenance. Males typically hunt at night, while females often work as daily wage labourers. The centre celebrates its first girl to complete her SSLC, a ground-breaking achievement for this community of first-generation school-goers.

Conclusion: The Children Activity Centres established by BLESS in partnership with Les Amis des Enfants du Monde (AEM) have become a beacon of hope and transformation for the marginalized communities in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. These centres are not merely educational hubs but serve as a lifeline for the children from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, who are often the first in their families to attend school. Through these initiatives, BLESS has taken significant strides in addressing the deep-rooted challenges faced by these communities, especially in terms of education, nutrition, and social integration.

Looking Ahead: As we move forward, there is a continued need to expand and strengthen these initiatives, ensuring that more children from underserved communities have access to quality education and holistic development opportunities. BLESS remains committed to its mission of social transformation, striving to create self-reliant villages where every child, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society.

BLESS-SPECIALIZED ADOPTION AGENCY

Adoption is a legal process where one or more prospective parents take a child into their family and raise them as their own, permanently assuming all parental rights and responsibilities from the child's biological parents. This creates a permanent legal relationship, making the adopted child the legitimate child of the adoptive parents, with the same rights and privileges as a biological child.

BLESS Specialized Adoption Agency is approved by Central and State Governments and supported by the government since 2018.

We receive abandoned, orphaned, and surrendered babies from 0 to 6 years of age from nine districts of Tamil Nadu

List of children who were received by BLESS and adopted, restored to biological parents, and transferred to other agencies during the financial year 2023-24 are listed below

Type of children	Abandoned	Surrendered	CNCP	Total	Adopted	Restored to biological parents	Transferred
Male	2	10	1	13	10	1	1
Female	0	11	0	11	6	0	5
Total	2	21	1	24	16	1	6

We had a male and a female child who are twins from a child welfare committee. Their parents surrendered them jointly. The parents had already five girl children. The children are happily adopted to United States of America. The twins who were adopted were special need children.



“TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF ALCOHOLICS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSERS AND SUPPORT TO THEIR FAMILIES”

Introduction to the Program

The report on "Treatment and Rehabilitation of Alcoholics and Substance Abusers and Support to Their Families" for the period of 2022-2023 encapsulates a comprehensive initiative aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by marginalized communities in the Keerapalayam Block and The Union Territory of Pondicherry. Recognizing the pervasive social and economic repercussions of alcohol and substance use disorders (SUD), the project was meticulously designed to not only provide treatment and rehabilitation services but also extend support to families and promote community awareness.

Addressing Alcohol and Substance Use Disorder (SUD):

Treatment and Counselling: The project focused on providing treatment and counselling services to address alcohol and substance use disorders among 144 individuals. This involved therapeutic interventions aimed at overcoming emotional and psychological disturbances associated with addiction.

Overcoming Stigma/Embarrassment: Embarrassment attached to alcohol and substance use disorders can prevent individuals from seeking help. By offering counselling and support, the project aimed to reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek treatment without fear of judgment.

Networking with Hospitals: Collaboration with Hospitals was crucial for facilitating access to comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation services. By establishing networks with healthcare providers, the project ensured that 144 individuals received the necessary medical care and support for their recovery journey.

We have collaborated with Arupadai Veedu Medical College with Dr. John Dinesh visiting our facility and conducting tests on Sugar level, Liver Function, and Jaundice. A total number of 144 cases were treated during the year 2022-2023

Livelihood Support and Economic Empowerment:

Livestock Distribution: Providing 5 pairs of goats to 3 needy families and 2 milch cows to 2 needy families aimed to improve their economic situation through livestock rearing. Livestock can provide a sustainable source of income through milk production and breeding.

Fishing Nets and Cashew Nut Cutting Machines: Distributing fishing nets to 10 needy families and cashew nut cutting machines to 10 needy families further diversified livelihood opportunities.

These initiatives were aimed at empowering families economically, enabling them to improve their standard of living and become self-reliant.

Awareness Programs and Preventive Education:

Targeting Irular Tribes Villages: Conducting monthly awareness programs and preventive education sessions in Irular Tribes Villages aimed to raise awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol and substance abuse within these communities. Irular tribes are often marginalized and face unique challenges related to substance abuse, making targeted interventions crucial.

Preventive Education: These programs included educational sessions on the risks associated with alcohol and substance abuse, strategies for prevention, and resources available for individuals seeking help. By providing education and raising awareness, the project aimed to empower community members to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Overall, the project adopted a holistic approach to address social, economic, and health-related challenges within marginalized communities, with a focus on empowerment, education, and access to support services.

Activities Undertaken:

The activities undertaken in connection with the successful implementation of the project were diverse and aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by the target communities.

Rapid Assessment Study:

A comprehensive rapid assessment study was conducted in the project areas to identify the primary beneficiaries and understand their specific needs and challenges.



Case studies were conducted to study deeper into the personal and family details of individuals affected by alcohol and substance abuse. This included information on occupation, addiction history, traumatic childhood experiences, and present complaints.

Preliminary Counselling:



Preliminary counselling sessions were provided to the primary beneficiaries and their families to educate them about the available treatment facilities and the importance of addressing alcoholism and substance abuse.

These counselling sessions were aimed at building trust and rapport with the beneficiaries, addressing any concerns or reservations they had about the treatment.

Networking with Hospitals and De-addiction Centres:



Partnerships were established with hospitals and de-addiction centres to facilitate the admission of identified primary beneficiaries for further treatment and counselling.

This networking ensured that 144 individuals received comprehensive care tailored to their needs, including medical treatment, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation services.

Livelihood Support Activities:

Awareness was given in three villages regarding income generation activities such as goat rearing and small businesses.

Livestock and equipment, including goats, milch cows, fishing nets, and cashew nut cutting machines, were distributed to needy families to support their livelihoods and provide sustainable sources of income.



Awareness Classes in Irular Tribal Villages:

Awareness classes were conducted in Irular tribal villages to raise awareness about the consequences of alcoholism and substance abuse within these communities.



These sessions included information on the health risks associated with addiction, strategies for prevention, and available resources for treatment and support.

Impact Assessment:

At the end of the project period, an impact assessment was conducted by the organization with the assistance of an external consultant.



This assessment aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives and to assess the overall impact on the target communities.

Findings: Findings from the impact assessment suggested methods of future interventions and strategies to address alcoholism and substance abuse effectively.

Overall, these activities reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing the complex issues of alcoholism and substance abuse, encompassing community engagement, counselling, treatment, livelihood support, and ongoing evaluation to ensure the project's success and sustainability.

Monitoring

Treatment Adherence:

Monitoring the adherence of primary beneficiaries to the treatment and counselling programs provided for alcohol and substance use disorder. This involves tracking attendance at therapy sessions, medication compliance, and participation in rehabilitation activities.

Counselling Sessions:

Monitoring the number and quality of counselling sessions provided to both primary beneficiaries and their families. This includes assessing the content of counselling sessions, the effectiveness of communication strategies, and the level of engagement from participants.

Hospital and De-addiction Centre Engagement:

Tracking the collaboration with hospitals and de-addiction centres to ensure smooth admission and treatment of identified primary beneficiaries. Monitoring the availability of necessary medical services, follow-up care, and coordination between project staff and healthcare providers.

Livelihood Support Initiatives:

Monitoring the distribution and utilization of livestock, equipment, and other resources provided to support livelihood activities. This includes tracking the establishment and progress of small businesses, the health and well-being of livestock, and the economic impact on beneficiary families.

Community Awareness Programs:

Assessing the reach and effectiveness of awareness programs conducted in villages and tribal communities. Monitoring attendance, participant feedback, and changes in knowledge and attitudes regarding alcohol and substance abuse.



Case Studies and Impact Assessment:

Reviewing the findings from rapid assessment studies, case studies, and impact assessments conducted throughout the project. Monitoring changes in key indicators such as addiction rates, economic stability, and community perceptions over time.

Committee Meetings and Mid-term Corrections:

Evaluating the progress of the project through quarterly committee meetings involving NGO representatives, healthcare professionals, and local government officials. Discussing challenges, identifying areas for improvement, and making mid-term corrections to project strategies and activities as needed.

Budget and Resource Management:

Monitoring the allocation and utilization of project funds, ensuring that resources are effectively managed and aligned with project objectives. Reviewing expenditure reports, procurement processes, and any financial challenges encountered during implementation.

Stakeholder Engagement:

Assessing the level of engagement and collaboration with stakeholders including beneficiary families, community leaders, healthcare providers, and other relevant organizations. Monitoring feedback and addressing concerns or grievances raised by stakeholders.

By monitoring these parameters regularly and involving key stakeholders in the review process, the project can identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement, ultimately enhancing its impact on the target communities.

Results:

The results of the project demonstrate its significant impact on individuals, families, and communities affected by alcoholism and substance abuse.

Recovery from Alcoholism and Substance Abuse:

The project successfully assisted 144 individuals in overcoming alcoholism and substance abuse. Through a combination of treatment, counselling, and support services, these individuals were able to break free from addiction and regain control of their lives.

By addressing both physical dependency and psychological issues associated with addiction, the project ensured holistic recovery and improved overall well-being for the beneficiaries.

Improved Economic Situation:

The livelihood support initiatives implemented by the project contributed to the economic empowerment of beneficiary families. By providing resources such as livestock, equipment, and entrepreneurial training, families were able to establish sustainable sources of income.

Prevention through Awareness Programs:

The awareness programs conducted by the project played a crucial role in preventing alcoholism and substance abuse within communities. By educating individuals about the risks associated with addiction and promoting healthy behaviours, the project empowered community members to make informed choices.

These awareness efforts contributed to a shift in community norms and attitudes towards alcohol and substance use, creating a supportive environment for individuals to resist peer pressure and avoid harmful behaviours.

Secured Future for Communities:

By addressing the root causes of addiction and providing support for recovery and economic empowerment, the project ensured a more secure future for the communities served.

Individuals who have overcome addiction are better positioned to contribute positively to their families and communities, leading to greater social cohesion and resilience.

Overall, the results of the project highlight its effectiveness in addressing the complex challenges of alcoholism and substance abuse from multiple angles. By combining treatment, counselling, livelihood support, and community awareness, the project not only helped individuals break free from addiction but also laid the foundation for long-term positive change within the communities it served.

Conclusion

The treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholics and substance abusers, along with the support provided to their families, have yielded transformative outcomes that extend far beyond individual recovery.

Through a comprehensive approach encompassing medical treatment, psychological counselling, livelihood support, and community awareness, our project has made significant strides in addressing the complex challenges associated with addiction.

The success of our efforts is evident in the stories of the 144 individuals who have emerged from the grip of alcoholism and substance abuse, reclaiming their health, dignity, and sense of purpose. By providing access to quality treatment and counselling services, we have not only helped these individuals overcome physical dependencies but also addressed underlying psychological issues, paving the way for lasting recovery.

The economic empowerment initiatives implemented as part of our project have brought many improvements to the lives of beneficiary families. Livelihood support in the form of livestock, equipment, and entrepreneurial training has not only alleviated financial hardships but has also created a sense of self-sufficiency and resilience within communities.

The preventive efforts undertaken through our awareness programs, have played a vital role in changing attitudes and behaviours surrounding alcohol and substance abuse. By educating community members about the risks associated with addiction and promoting healthier alternatives, we have contributed to the creation of a supportive environment conducive to recovery and well-being.

As we reflect on the impact of our endeavours, it is evident that the treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholics and substance abusers cannot be viewed in isolation but must be accompanied by comprehensive support for their families and communities. By addressing the multifaceted needs of individuals affected by addiction, we have not only facilitated individual recovery but have also created stronger, more resilient communities poised for a brighter future.

BOB & VICTORIA

Bob Tabor, a long-term companion, and visitor of BLESS since early 2000s along with Victoria had kindly donated 1000 USD towards the development activities of BLESS.

With USD 400, we purchased Four Tailoring Machines and organized a Six-Month Training Program for 15 young Tribal Girls, appointing a teacher exclusively for their Training. The Education Department of Parangipettai expressed its gratitude for our efforts to mobilize and empower these Tribal Girls. The Department of Youth Affairs (Nehru Yuva Kendra) awarded the Course Completion Certificates to all the 15 Girls.



In collaboration with the Arupadai Veedu Medical College and the Prison Ministry (a Catholic Mission unit permitted by the State Government to implement Educational and Skill Training Programs for Jail Inmates), an Eye Camp was organized at the Central Prison in Cuddalore. It was identified that 86 inmates were suffering from Eye problems and needed Spectacles, and the list of these inmates was shared with BLESS.

On the eve of India's 78th Independence Day celebrations on August 15th, and in the presence of the Superintendent of Police, Medical officers, Doctors from Arupadai Veedu Medical College, and Staff from the Prison Ministry, BLESS distributed Spectacles to 86 jail inmates, it was purchased from Aravind Eye Clinic Cuddalore with the remaining USD 600.

The inmates were extremely grateful, noting that the Spectacles would allow them to lead a normal day-to-day life and make more constructive use of their time in Prison by reading Newspapers, Magazines, and other Books available in the Prison Library. The inmates expressed their deep appreciation for this kind gesture, and we are happy to have been able to contribute to their well-being

Welcoming our Director in the Cuddalore Prison



Inmate Beneficiaries with Spectacles



BLESS FINANCIAL OVERVIEW (2023-2024)

RS. 1,81,89,506/-

