



Kalanjiyam

Pathivugal-3

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Volume - 3

i m p r i n t s

Kalanjiyam's vision is to bring about a society where future generations are healthy, have attained educational success and are able to make informed decisions in their lives. Each of the areas of focus is intertwined and geared towards the achievement of our vision.

Milestones

Project Bioscope

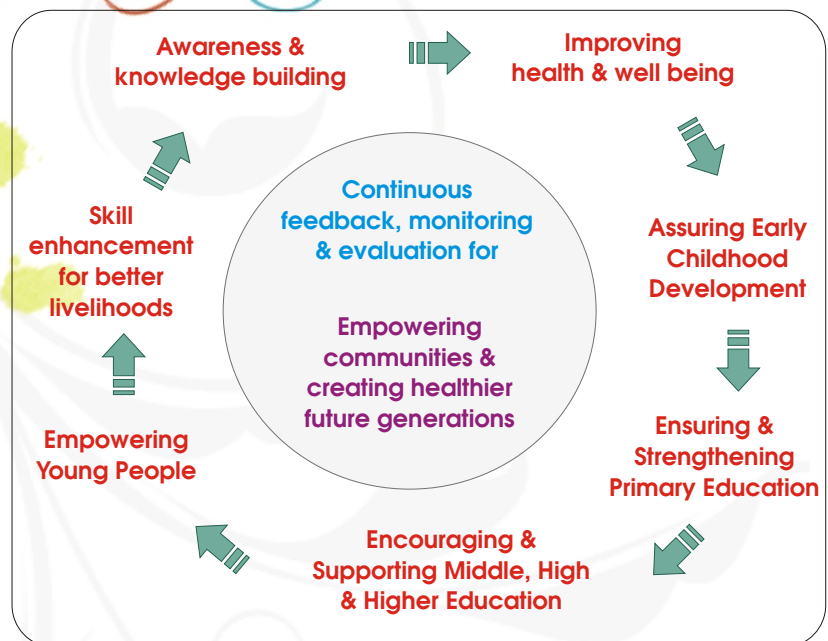
The program was launched in May 2009 and is a unique effort to bring essential and accurate information on health, education and other developmental necessities to the rural communities at their door step. Currently Bioscope's focus is on maternal and child care, to promote healthier prenatal care practices to reduce disabilities among infants as well as provide prospective mothers information on nutrition needs for themselves and their babies. Using our very own IEC materials in Tamil, the Bioscope programs travel from village to village empowering women, men and gatekeepers to facilitate better engagement, collect feedback and provide referrals. Since the program came into being, we have reached and influenced nearly 2000 community members through Bioscope programs.

Community lending library

Creating a forum for community learning provided the impetus for initiating a lending library. A needs assessment that was conducted by us revealed that, only five percent of the community members had access to any sources of books but eighty five percent had the need for such a library. The Kalanjiyam lending library was started to fulfill this need to provide books on various subjects to cater to all age groups directly in their villages. Since we started, 100 community members have enrolled and have been provided with library cards. This effort has motivated and encouraged our children and youth to develop a reading habit beyond what is required for school as well provided them with materials to supplement their school work. It has encouraged parents and elders in the community to be more involved in the educational needs for their children.

Bringing forth hygiene and sanitation to a primary school

Kalanjiyam works with six primary schools as part of their TNF project schools. Early assessments in the 30 year old Zamin Endathur Primary School, with an active enrollment of 116 students, revealed that there had been no toilet in the premises. This presented a good opportunity to teach good hygiene habits to students first and to eventually extend the influence to parents. With support from Emmeskay Systems Inc, we constructed a toilet and opened it for use in January 2010. We have also made provisions for a sustainable water source for its use and maintenance. To ensure proper sanitary conditions, Kalanjiyam has appointed a local woman for daily maintenance of the toilet. This effort will facilitate awareness and behavior change among all the present and future students in this school.





Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF) with Kalanjiyam



'Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity'. With this objective as its beacon, Kalanjiyam, over the last 3 years, has been working with Panchayat Union schools and rural communities with the goal to strengthen the quality of education. In lieu of Kalanjiyam's aphorism to support communities in their own development, our model for strengthening rural education dynamically engages key community stakeholders such as Panchayat elected leaders, school officials, teachers, local administrative officers and parents.

In late 2008, the President, Chairman and Secretary, and various Board Members of Tamil Nadu Foundation (TNF), an organization keen on strengthening educational initiatives in Tamil Nadu, visited us over a period of 3 months to examine and analyze our model and approach for strengthening rural education. After successive rounds of discussion, TNF expressed an interest in partnering with us. With their support, six more schools were adopted as part of our education program from April 2009.

At the onset, base line assessments were conducted in the 6 project villages to understand the context of the village and to enumerate the number of school going children. This was followed by meetings with local stake holders, eliciting their cooperation for the implementation of our program. In each of these six TNF project schools, we extended the Kalanjiyam model that was proven and produced great results in six other schools since 2007.

Our foremost aim was to make sure that all the school-going age children in the villages were enrolled and going to school at the beginning of the academic year. Our next step was to create a more conducive environment where we could be assured that learning could actually happen. Our goal and efforts were directed to make sure that the children were provided the basic facilities to be comfortable in the classroom. The infrastructure needs of each school were addressed; each primary school has been set up to have tables and mats for seating in the classroom and has been provided with adequate lighting, fans and other amenities.

A local community young woman appointed in each school provides support to the school Headmaster and teachers. Every school is equipped with comprehensive play materials and teachers ensure the children have daily play periods for physical activity. Separate class rooms have been setup in each school with TNF provided computers. Separate staff have been appointed to the teach children in all classes basic computer skills. To facilitate all rounded education we have introduced music and drawing classes to children in all schools to nurture their creative potential, and yoga for improved health and attentiveness.

Children's nutritional needs are addressed through supplementary nutrition program. Kalanjiyam strongly encourages parent involvement by insisting that they come to collect their children's supply of nutritious mixture from the school. By enforcing parent involvement we are able to better track the use of nutritious mixture as well as influence parents on the importance of their child's diet and healthy eating habits within the means available.





Strengthening Education

Following these interventions, we have observed significant changes in the children and the school environment within the past year. Regular attendance rates have vastly improved. Children are eager to come to school, their enthusiasm to learn, their timeliness, presentation and attentiveness are greatly improved. We are beginning to see a positive change in attitudes of the children.



In December 2009, TNF shot a documentary 'Kaveriyin Kathai' in our TNF project schools to showcase the model programs implemented to strengthen rural education. This documentary will be shown at a National Convention that TNF is planning to host in May 2010.

Bringing water to Zamin Endathur School

To augment the scarce sources of water at Zamin Endathur Primary school, we put in place a bore well with support from TNF. This water source has turned out to be a boon to the adjacent pre-school center and high school, where there has been no permanent water source for the last few years. This initiative will serve to benefit the current and future students of these schools for many years to come.



Other Kalanjiyam Education Initiatives

Kalanjiyam is implementing a number of programs to encourage and motivate children in our adopted villages to successfully complete higher secondary education. In addition to the above described programs, we are also taking the following initiatives:

- ★ Education aid to needy families, including tuition, school uniforms, notebooks and transportation
- ★ Free van service for children to travel to local middle schools
- ★ Organizing special classes and providing supplemental nutrition in local high schools during preparation for 10th board exams each year
- ★ Scholarships for students securing 80% marks in 10th board exams
- ★ Aid to students pursuing college or other professional courses
- ★ Special programs at Kalanjiyam training center to motivate and encourage students
- ★ Advocating with parents on the importance of continuing their children's education

Students from 25 to 30 villages going to ten Panchayat union primary schools, two Panchayat union middle schools (totaling to about 750 children), one government high school and an another government aided high school in Maduranthakam Taluk are benefiting from these initiatives. We express our gratitude to officials from school education department, teachers, community leaders and our village communities, whose cooperation has made possible the success of our efforts.

Awareness building for strengthening



Pappara Mittai



Pappara Mittai-1 audio CD was a magnificent success of with over 5000 CD's distributed free of cost to children. Owing to its success and continual requests for more stories from fans, Kalanjiyam was inspired to come out with a second edition. The second edition was designed to be just as enjoyable and educative with five new stories. Pappara Mittai 2 was released in February 2009 by Cine personalities SJ Suryah, Ameer and Subramaniya Shiva of Yogi fame. State Bank of India generously supported Kalanjiyam in this current effort and sponsored free copies for distribution. Pappara Mittai-2 received widespread media coverage and copies continue to be distributed widely in India and abroad.

Advocating for legal action against child abuse

Child abuse is an important issue that Kalanjiyam wished to address and sponsored free copies of Kannadi, a short film that serves as an eye-opener on child abuse and campaigns for legal action to protect the interests of the child. This short film was produced and released by Archishaa, a Chennai based NGO.

Thanks to Media

The Media has been extremely encouraging of Kalanjiyam by presenting on our efforts on many occasions in 2009-10. THANKS to all the print media agencies, Television media and numerous web sites for the opportunities and helping us to reach more people in India and around the globe!

Addressing Stigma and Discrimination on HIV/ AIDS

Kalanjiyam took up the challenge to help alleviate the social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. In 2009, Kalanjiyam produced a video Ellorukkum Solvom, which was released by Dr. Suniti Solomon of YRG CARE. The video



poignantly conveys the need to eradicate discrimination through the words of a child. It consists of three thirty second videos and a 1 minute video and, was telecast on December 1st, World AIDS Day, in Sun, Kalaingar, Polimer and Makkal Television channels.

Thaimei sequel

After an informative rendezvous with Dr.Kamala Selvaraj on the Do's and Don'ts in the 3 trimesters of a woman's pregnancy in Thaimai-I, Kalanjiyam is back with its sequel that addresses child care practices. This 5 segment 45 minute video



was released in February 2010 by cine fame Mr. Shri and Mrs. Shamitha at Reserve Bank Quarters School in KK Nagar, Chennai. Thaimai- 2 is narrated by psychologist and Associate Professor, Mrs. Latha Mangeshwari who informs parents about children's milestones at each stage of child development, focusing on psychological and social development.



Glimpses from 2009

Local women leaders were honored on International Women's day and driving licences were given to 15 youth for improving livelihood options. The program was attended by more than 120 women from self help groups and young girls from local villages.



Special programs were conducted in April and May among pre-school children providing an unique opportunity for the children to get an early start to showcase their talents in their community.

Educational scholarships and aid were provided to 47 students in July 2009 with support from Maithri Educational and Charitable Trust.

Posters on findings from our study, Teachers' views, perception on HIV/ AIDS and life skill education, from four districts of Tamil Nadu were presented at the 9th ICAAP conference held in Indonesia in August 2009.

A special gathering of 40 teachers from local schools was organized in September for Teacher's Day to promote their professional development as well as find innovative ways to integrate nutrition education in the classroom.

Thanks to Teacher Plus:

This year, three of our articles were published by Teacher Plus: 'The Aspirations of Rural Students' in September 2009, 'Nutrition Education in the Classroom' in November 2009, and 'Do Teachers need to know about HIV/AIDS' in January 2010. Kalanjiyam would like to extend a special thanks to Teacher Plus magazine for their encouragement.

More than 40 students from Kalanjiyam adopted schools participated in Thirukkural recitation competition held in September. Primary school children recited 50 kural and upper primary and high school students recited 100 kural. Best prizes were given to both primary and higher classes and all students received a certificate of participation.

V.R.Devika of The Aseema Trust conducted a workshop for 40 teachers from our schools in October on strategies for engaging children and applying Gandhian principles in the classroom. Each teacher was provided a bag of 100 story cards 'Kathai Aruvi' and V.R.Devika expounded on story telling techniques that they could employ to engage children more actively while imparting lessons.



In November 300 boys and girls participated in an adolescent program where they were sensitized on gender and reproductive health by the Village Health Nurse and got the opportunity to clarify their doubts.

A special event was organized in December to provide an opportunity for students receiving education aid to interact with the Founder, R. Shreedhar of Maithri Educational and Charitable Trust who engaged in a dialogue with students on their social responsibilities.



All rounded exposure for expanding horizons of children



With a view to enhance the school curriculum, Kalanjiyam has taken special efforts to bring a trained yoga, musician and drawing teacher to guide children in the 13 adopted schools. Notebooks and crayons are provided to all children. The special instructors travel by bus fortnightly to conduct classes. The Kalanjiyam coordinators are instrumental in taking them from school to school and coordinating the schedules with the school teachers so that these activities do not clash with the regular school curriculum. The participation and effort made by everyone involved but especially these special instructors who go this extra mile is truly praiseworthy.

Music:

Mr. Elanthiraiyan, the music master at Kalanjiyam is a self driven musician aspiring to be a music director. He has a degree in music from Annamalai University.

“Carnatic music stands as a legacy in our rich culture yet it is an unfortunate scenario that rural masses, that constitute 70% of our population, don't have the opportunity to learn classical music. Kalanjiyam has taken up the initiative to enhance student exposure to arts by providing music classes. It is heartening to see these children waiting with eager eye and willing ear to learn music. Music is a universal language that inspires and evokes these children's emotions in a healthy way. It enhances their learning and will boost brain functioning. It sparks their imagination and invokes mental imagery and inner scenery that opens their mind to amazing insight and spans the distance between the stars. I consider it a great privilege to pass on this bequest to these children.”



Student feedback: “My name is Manibalan. I am in 5th standard. I did not have any exposure to music before. Thanks to Kalanjiyam I am able to learn Carnatic music and I find it very interesting. I used to sing songs without any raga before, but now I have learnt to sing in different ragas. Now I have also learnt to better appreciate music.”

Yoga:

Mr. Shiva Rajendran and Mr. Santosh, the Yoga instructors, are from Ramakrishna Yogashramam, Kancheepuram. Mr. Shiva Rajendran has a MA in Psychology and Diploma in yoga therapy.

“One needs to be blessed to learn yoga and my village students are very fortunate to be exposed to yoga at such a young age. I take this opportunity to thank the Kalanjiyam family for their excellent initiative. The unanimous and enthusiastic chant of children when I enter class is heartwarming. It is an overwhelming experience to teach these children who are very energized and enthused by the idea of yoga classes. The benefits of Yoga are numerous. It increases one's attentiveness and fuels mental development. Emotionally, children gain confidence and become determined. In my 2 years of working with Kalanjiyam, I can see a remarkable change in the outlook of these children.”



Student feedback: “My name is Mahadevi. I really like yoga classes. All the asanas are beneficial to us and we are able to see the difference in ourselves. I practice these asanas at home. It helps decrease my lethargy and makes me active. It helps me concentrate on my lessons. I look forward to my day more enthusiastically after doing my Yoga. My memory power has increased and my health condition has also improved.”

Drawing:

G. Elumalai, Drawing master has a Diploma in Drawing from Government Technical Institute, Chengelpet.

“Every time I enter class, I am greeted by the collective chirp - “Vanakkam Uncle!” Their enthusiasm removes all the weariness of my journey whatsoever. After their enthusiastic greetings, they excitedly open their books to show me their new drawings. After four when the school bell rings, usually the children are restless to go home. But during my drawing classes, I observed they are willing to stay back and animatedly look forward to more. I believe these extra curricular activities create a new found enthusiasm in these children, makes them look forward to their other lessons keenly and promotes their active participation in class.”



Students' feedback: “My name is K.Sathya. I am in 5th standard. I eagerly wait for drawing class every week. I enjoy drawing but I did not know how to draw and the techniques involved. Our drawing master has taught us various techniques very patiently. He has given us a good opportunity to express ourselves. Thank you very much Sir.”



Testimonials about Kalanjiyam efforts

Funder: S.A.Sundaresan C.E.O - EMMESKAY Inc - India Operations



It's almost two years since Emmeskay decided to work with Kalanjiyam as one facet of its corporate social responsibility program. We have always wanted to proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development. After a diligent evaluation of various organizations working in this area, we finally elected to partner Kalanjiyam. At the end of a month-long evaluation exercise and field visits, we were very impressed by Kalanjiyam's philosophy and focus. Kalanjiyam's vision statement appealed to our hearts and was very much in tune with our own ideas. Clarity in thought, planning and execution, enthusiasm and zeal of all the people involved, and the transparency of the organization were some of the other factors that helped us decide in favor of Kalanjiyam. In the first phase of our partnership, we helped Kalanjiyam provide desks and other material to two schools. In the next phase, we are currently helping construction of a toilet block in a school. We are very pleased with the level of visibility given to us regarding the execution of the projects and their impact. Kalanjiyam's efforts in improving health and hygiene in general and maternal health in particular are also very laudable.

Partnering Kalanjiyam and actual visits to watch our contributions impacting rural children's lives have given us a sense of fulfillment and have motivated us to continue contributing to their efforts despite difficult business times. We hope to continue our association with Kalanjiyam and do our bit to help achieve Kalanjiyam's goals.



Community Leader:

Vellikkadu **V. Elumalai** - Ward Member - Lattur Block

Vellikkadu V. Elumalai, is a community leader from Periya Vellikkadu village; he has been bestowed the President's Award for his efforts to make his village into a model village. 'Our villages need to become our model communities; we need to stay in our villages and take part in their happiness and sadness and provide them with education and information to develop their knowledge and awareness, this was the wish of Mahatma Gandhi. There are many NGOs working; but our Kalanjiyam Trust stands apart from these. The reason that their work is unique is their approach is to do service to the village communities. The work that they have chosen is among most indispensable and most needed for our village communities to facilitate good quality education and good health; towards these the service they have been doing is beyond words.'

'I have seen the work of many NGOs and interacted with them; Kalanjiyam and its members have touched me, and our villages by their tireless service without expecting anything in return and continue to pursue the most challenging issues we face. Besides the services, Kalanjiyam village committee and staff also monitor to make sure that whatever they do in education and health is reaching the children and village communities. For the service I thank one and all at Kalanjiyam and wish them the very best for their continued service.'



Parents: Geetha - Kalpat Village

Geetha and Anand of Kalpat village are both wage laborers by occupation. Geeta says 'before Kalanjiyam started working in our villages, my children were not very interested in their studies; they often missed school and were hardly on time. Since the new efforts by Kalanjiyam our children want to go to school, they get up early and go to school on time everyday. Even when the school teacher is absent we don't worry anymore, as Kalanjiyam staff is present in school everyday and they help our children with their lessons. Most of all, I am happy to see that my children are now learning computers. We never dreamed that they would have this opportunity in our village schools. Not only this, my children are now learning yoga, music and drawing. I am proud to say that my daughter is now getting first rank in her class. We are so happy and proud that Kalanjiyam is located in Kalpat village.'



Paving the way for change

Community Involvement: Small efforts can lead to lasting changes



Our Gandhi Jayanthi celebration was graced by Mr. Nandagopal, an 81 year-old local community member retired from military service, who exemplified the Gandhian principles of service to the nation. After his brief interaction with us, Mr. Nandagopal decided to provide part of his meager monthly pension henceforth to Kalanjiyam towards our educational initiatives. He is one of many local community members who have come forward to join our efforts.

"We would like to acknowledge and thank Chandni Chellappa studying at National University of Singapore and Aruna Balasubramanian, USA, for their contribution to bringing out this year's Pathivugal 3"

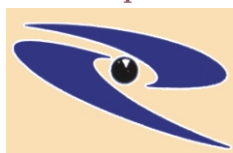
A force behind Kalanjiyam efforts are our field staff, young men and women from the local villages. Their learning and experiences at Kalanjiyam provide them the opportunity to develop themselves, become change agents and makes a lasting impact that stays with them well after they move on from Kalanjiyam. Devi, a staff member who blossomed into a vivacious and confident young person during her stay with us, moved to Chennai. This did not stop her from talking about Kalanjiyam or giving back to her village; she inspired some college students who belonged to our villages to sponsor uniforms for needy students.

Kalanjiyam wishes to say THANK YOU to each of our individual well-wishers who have encouraged and supported us through their generous contributions, which enables us to endeavor towards improving the lives of children and families we serve.

We thank our partners for their continued support:

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