

ASHA FOR EDUCATION – CHENNAI

CURRENT PROGRAMS AND THIRUVALLUR SCHOOL VISIT (25.2.22)

ASHA'S APPROACH

Asha Chennai implements at community level mainly through holistic education and development strategies. Due to its commitment to bottom-up community-based programming through dialogue with the local school and Government authorities, it has evolved to a full-scale force in education working within public schools to ensure long-term change.

Asha supports targeted schools selected based on socio-economic standards with most communities living around the poverty line with poor access to quality education. The NGO has been operational in some communities like Thiruvallur since 2004 with presence in over 65 schools with approx. 5,000 students.

Asha believes in providing equal access to meaningful education for all which is evident in most schools maintaining equal distribution among boys and girls. Asha is currently expanding into digital literacy teaching computer science to grades 1-8. The NGO is also looking at piloting programming for grades 9-12 in newly launched Rural Technology Centers in partnership with IIT Madras in select districts in Tamil Nadu.

The services provided by Asha Chennai are:

- 1) Conduct teacher training for primary grade classes 1-5 in English, Math, Science and Tamil
- 2) Distribution of study materials and stationary kits
- 3) Carry out Arogyam nutrition programs including distribution of high-protein meals
- 4) Run school assessments for student and teacher performance improvement
- 5) Facilitate regular teacher mentoring sessions run by volunteers in written and spoken English
- 6) Launch Rural Technology Center for technology supported education programs
- 7) Collate data, analyze, document and share information and lessons on Kannini digital platform for delivery of curriculum in partnership with Diksha, a government program
- 8) Conduct school monitoring visits by on-site coordinator and main office
- 9) Support infrastructure development and maintenance including water and sanitation and classroom facilities refurbishment

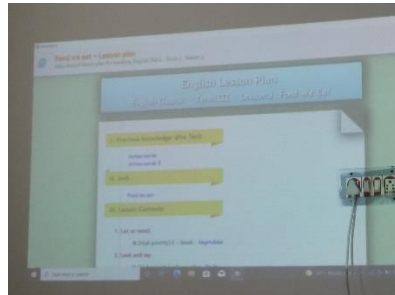
ASHA KANNINI

Kannini is a digital platform designed by Asha Chennai for use on both mobile and desktop. The platform has been running for over 5 years and delivers interactive curriculum for grades 1-8 in English, Math, Science and Tamil. Registration and training are free for school teachers. Software is linked with Diksha platform run by the Government which allows teachers to scan QR code from a textbook to download digital content.

The training program for Kannini was rolled out in November 2021 in Thiruvallur for all 1,500 schools and the team is currently running teacher training to expand the penetration outreach and adoption of the platform. Some operational issues faced by the team include lack of network connectivity in schools, incompatibility with Linux operating system and mobile app accessibility.



Demo by Kannini trainers on software functionality



Sample lesson plan for Grade 3 English



Interactive game module

ATHIVAKKAM SCHOOL VISIT

Highlights: Children in the village had participated in the mini school program during the COVID lockdown which included creative teaching methods such as games and interactive group lessons run in houses and local community halls.



Grades 4 and 5 learning English as co-ordinator Mr. Srinivasan watches



Mr. Rajaram testing place-value and maths application using stories



Headmistress teaching Grades 2 and 3 in English pronoun usage

NEYVELI SCHOOL VISIT

Highlights: This school had water and sanitation facilities for girls and boys funded by Hyundai. Computer Science was also taught for all classes.



Grades 4 and 5 being taught English and refresher lessons due to school lockdown



Computer science for Grades 6 and 7 to use keyboard and tools like colouring and fonts



School toilets and washbasins funded by Hyundai Glovis

ANNANAGAR LIBRARY VISIT

Highlights: This community conducted evening classes for the tribal community called Irular that has marginalized infrastructure like roads and electricity. A library with computer and on-site reading facilities was also made available for these students. Arogyam project provides nutrition like peanuts and moongdal during school hours to students to supplement protein in their meals.



Irular community students being taught Tamil



Library for after school use including computers



Books and library materials funded by Hyundai Glovis

SUMMARY

Overall enthusiasm of students was encouraging despite their initial struggle to answer the math conceptual and placement exercises posed by Mr. Rajaram. Teachers participated in answering any curriculum questions and challenges they face in classrooms especially post pandemic lockdown such as reteaching basic concepts, better student engagement and digital learning.

Possible areas for exploration include training of trainers format to expand Kannini platform outreach and peer-to-peer group reviews to share best practices among Asha and Government trained teachers.