

## Chairman's Visit to Vanni between 28 May & 16 June 2013

### Pre-School Projects

Dr V Sarveswaran made a visit to Vanni and met Mr Vethanayagan, the GA of Mullaithivu, and his team to discuss the progress of the projects that Assist RR have been carrying out with their support. He also visited the pre-schools that Assist RR were repairing/re-building in Mullaithivu.



*Mullivaikal East - Chandran Pre-School during reconstruction*

When he visited the pre-school in Mullivaikal East, he met some of the locals and also witnessed their desperate living conditions. The houses have no roofs and they have no toilets. They told Chairman that they, including all ages of women, have to go to nearby bushes for their toilet needs during early morning dark time. There are nearly 50 families who live around this school. Chairman agreed to build two toilets within the school compound that can be used by the local villagers and made arrangements for its completion by 10 June 2013.

During the meeting with the GA, discussions were focused on "after school tuition", technical college and livelihood assistance. Thunukkai division have already started after school tuition. Mullaithivu division would hopefully start within two weeks. It was also decided to bring teachers from Jaffna to do some crash courses. Dr V Sarveswaran also met the provincial director of education and asked for his support. Trisha Selvaratnam from Serendip Children homes was also at the meeting with the GA and agreed to partly fund this initiative.

Dr Sarveswaran visited Mannar for the Cataract surgery camp on 02 June 2013, which was partly funded by Gods Own Children Foundation Australian Chapter organised through Assist RR friends in Sydney. Ninety three patients were operated by a surgeon from the south, who works at the Batticaloa hospital. Dr sarveswaran met him inside the theatre and thanked him for his services. During the meeting with the surgeon, they asked whether Assist RR could sponsor a camp in Batticaloa. He agreed to sponsor the camp in Batticaloa. The patients in Mannar were really pleased that Assist RR organised and sponsored this and were very thankful.





***Cataract Surgery Camp in Mannar***

Although cataract surgeries were originally planned for nearly 115 patients, the surgeon managed to perform only 93 surgeries on 02 June 2013. The health ministry therefore rearranged the remaining surgeries to be carried out at Jaffna hospital. Ten patients were taken to Jaffna on 7 June for the surgeries and we paid for their travelling to and from Jaffna. Although arrangements were made for the remainder of cases, only 10 patients turned up on 7 June. However, arrangements will be made for the outstanding surgeries, if they wanted to go to Jaffna hospital.

Assist RR were informed that there are more patients waiting for this surgery in Mannar. Dr sarveswaran indicated that Assist RR could sponsor another camp if there are more than 100 patients. Local doctor and volunteers are spreading the news and are confident that they will have the list in the near future.

He then visited an orphanage in Mannar, which is run by Sister Teresa. There are nearly 35 girls between the ages of 5 & 17 live here. Sister Teresa asked whether Assist RR could provide financial assistance towards providing food to these girls. She said she is currently struggling to feed these children. Dr Sarveswaran donated £100 and asked her to email a request with full details so that it can be discussed for further action.



***An Orphanage in Mannar***

As planned, Assist RR friends, Engineers Henry Amalraj and Sriskandarajah from Sri Lanka, managed to complete Chandran pre-school in Mullivaikal East on time and made it possible to open it on 10 June. This school building was used as a hospital (and the last hospital) at the end of the war. The local villagers got together and celebrated this as one of their function. The school is not just a pre-school but a multipurpose building. They would use it as a community centre. They would use it to take shelter during rainy days as their houses have no roofs. All agreed that we chose the right place to build our first school. They are also happy that we provided two toilets for the benefit of the villagers.



***Chandran Pre-School in Mullivaikal East - Opening Ceremony on 10 June 2013***

Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) Swamiji was planning to attend the opening ceremony at Mullivaikal East but couldn't make it. However, RKM gave solar powered lamps and school bags for the locals. The solar powered lamp was very useful as this would save them money on kerosene. The gifts were gladly received by the local villagers.



*School bags donated by Ramakrishna Mission to school children*

Assist RR then handed over livelihood assistances to 5 families in Mathalan and Ambalavan Pokkanai villages and another 3 families, recommended by Dr Namachivayam (Sivanarulllam), in Visvadamu. Items such as cows, goat, chicken, fishing nets were handed over to the families. These families believe that our assistance would certainly help them. albeit, in a small way. Another two families recommended by Dr Namachivayam were given Rs 60,000 cash towards livelihood support.



*Livelihood assistance to a family (Mrs Parameswary) in Ambalavan Pokkanai (Parameswary Amma was taken to Mannar from Mullaithivu by ARR for a cataract surgery on 02 June 2013)*



*Livelihood assistance to a family in Mathalan*



*Livelihood assistance to a family in Visvadamu*

People in Ambalavan Pokkanai are still trying to recover from the war effects and to rebuild their lives. They are very poor and are struggling to start a life. The principal of the local school Pokkanai MV invited Dr sarveswaran to his school and showed him around. It is sad that this school has no toilets or a well. He asked for a well from us. I did say



yes and then spoke to the GA, who has now arranged for the toilets and a well through an INGO. However, following request from the principal, I bought and donated nearly Rs30, 000 worth of books to the school library. The families in the area have no means to buy text books and I thought it was essential.



*Books donation to Ambalavan Pokkanai MV School Library*

AssistRR also donated bicycles to two more deserving families in Mullivaikal and Mathalan. Construction of two more pre-schools, in Alambil and Kaiveli in Mullaithivu, are underway. We plan to complete them by end of July. One of them is a new build.

When he met the Director of Education, Mullaithivu, he made a request to repair/renovate a primary school building, which has no roof. The school is Veenavil Govt Tamil Mixed School. In this school, there is only one temporary building and in my opinion, it desperately needs someone's assistance. Chairman agreed in principle and asked for an estimate of the cost. We will decide based on the costs estimate. However, we recommend that we help this school.



*Veenavil Govt Tamil Mixed School*

Just before his return to the UK, board members of a Lion Club in Colombo met him to discuss ways to help the needy in Vanni. At the end of the meeting, they have agreed to conduct screening patients for cataract and other deceases by visiting remote villages in Vanni. Chairman agreed to raise funds to conduct cataract camps if there were sufficient numbers for a camp. They also agreed to work with us on livelihood assistance projects.

Overall, it was a very useful trip to Vanni and has identified new issues and needs that would require our assistance. Sometimes, we do not say "no" to certain requests even if we do not have funds in place. We believe in "if there is a will, there is a way". We are sure we can find money if we really work hard with determination.

We would like to thank all for your support to our efforts. Without your support, we couldn't have achieved what we have already achieved. We are sure you will continue your support and work hard.