

Educational Development Projects by Assist RR

Progress Update - November 2013

1. After School Tuition Courses in Mullaithivu

Assist RR made visits to some schools in Mullaithivu district on 6th Nov 2013 to inspect "after school tuition" classes supported by Assist RR and Serendip Children's Home. This included visits to Oddusuddan MV, Puthukudiyiruppu Central college, Mulliyawalai Vidyananda College and Iyankulam GTM school. Assist RR spoke to the students and teachers about this initiative and discussed the need for this initiative (Photos 1&2). Majority of the students confirmed that they do not attend any other private lessons and that they depend on these tuition classes to improve their chances of enhancing their lives. The teachers were also glad that they were participating in this initiative and helping the students.



Photos 1&2: "After School Tuition" classes at PTK Central College & Oddusuddan MV

2. Update on Veenavil GTM School

Veenavil GTM school is in Puthikudiyiruppu (PTK). The population of this village mainly consists of people displaced from the Central Province after the 1977 & 1983 racial disturbances against Tamils of the Island. There are nearly 200 children in this school at present. However, this number is expected to increase if improvements to the school infrastructure can be undertaken. All school buildings were badly damaged during the war and had become uninhabitable, as can be seen in Photos 3&4.



Photos 3&4: Damaged buildings of Veenavil School

Temporary buildings, shown in Photos 5&6, have been built since the end of the war. These buildings have been used for some of the classes. One of the temporary buildings (Photo 6), which is in a damaged status, is currently being used to provide for four classes (Photos 7&8). The roof of this structure is covered by tarpaulin, which is unlikely to withstand strong wind and rain. However, some classes are still being conducted under trees, as evidenced by Photos 9&10.



Photos 5&6: Temporary buildings available in the school seen in June 2013



Photos 7&8: The damaged temporary shelter in Photo 6 is used as classrooms - Nov 2013



Photos 9&10: Classrooms under trees

The Zonal Director of Education of Mullaithivu, Mr Rajkumar, made a request to Assist RR to help support the repair and renovation of at least one of the two buildings, which currently have no roofs, and damaged. The two buildings that can be repaired are shown in Photos

3&4. This need was discussed with Mullaithivu GA, who was exploring possibilities of getting funding from International NGOs. Since he was unable to succeed, it has been agreed that we will sponsor the renovation of at least one building. As it is evident from the attached photos, the children are learning under difficult conditions. I am sure you will all agree that we should help the school to have a permanent building.

Solihull Junior School, UK, recently raised nearly £6400 towards this project and another good hearted donor from Malaysia is donating from his early retirement fund to the value of around £3500, specifically for this purpose. Repair/renovation work of one of the damaged buildings has already commenced. This project would be equally funded by Solihull Junior School and by the donor from Malaysia. The remaining funds from Solihull Junior School contribution would be utilised to repair a building at Iranaippalai GTM school (see below).

Primary Schools in Need of Assistance in Mullaithivu District

1. Iranaippalai Government Tamil Mixed (GTM) School

Iranaippalai GTM school is in Puthikudiyiruppu (PTK), located between junctions of PTK and Puthumathalan. All the buildings of the school were damaged during the war and therefore have become uninhabitable. Two temporary buildings have been built since the end of the war, though these temporary buildings are unstable and have started to leak during heavy rains. The administrative building has many scars and wounds that constantly remind the children of the war on a daily basis (see Photos 11 - 14).



Photos 11&12: Entrance of Iranaippalai GTM School with scars of war



Photos 13&14: An office by the entrance of Iranaippalai GTM School with scars of war

We have learnt that this school was used as a temporary hospital after PTK hospital was damaged by shelling during the war, hence the constant reminder of the war to these children. We believe this is seriously affecting their learning capability and may even cause long term mental scars. Assist RR therefore believes that it should repair/renovate this building at our earliest and give the children a fresh start to help them forget the war.

Currently, children are being taught in temporary classrooms as shown in Photos 15&16. As can be seen, these shelters are not suitable for educating young children. Many classrooms are cramped in to a small space, the building is not stable, and have to be vacated during the rainy season. All of these results in constant disruption to learning. The school desperately needs permanent buildings so that the children can start learning in an acceptable environment.



Photos 15&16: Two temporary functioning shelters at Iranaippalai GTM School



Photos 17&18: A damaged building that can be repaired at Iranaippalai GTM School

There is another building, shown in Photos 17&18, which can be repaired and used as classrooms. This however requires funding. The school has been trying to get funding from various sources, but unsuccessful so far. They therefore approached Assist RR with a funding request to repair/renovate at least one building.

Assist RR agrees that there is a desperate need at this school and we believe that Assist RR should repair at least one of the damaged buildings. We therefore kindly request our supporters to consider this need and support it.

2. Mullivaikal West GTM School

This school is located in Mullivaikal, in a strip of land between the sea and the lagoon, Nanthikadal, where the war ended in May 2009. Houses and School buildings were badly damaged during the war in this coastal areas. Many thousands of people were stranded in these areas at the end of the war and many were killed and wounded by shelling.

School buildings were damaged during the war and therefore had become uninhabitable. Many people are still living in houses with no roofs. School buildings were temporarily repaired and the roofs were covered with asbestos sheets. These buildings, shown in Photos 19-22, would need permanent repairs to provide a safe environment for learning. The asbestos sheets have already been damaged and are not withstanding strong winds.



Photos 19-22: Temporary shelters at Mullivaikal West GTM School

3. Iyankulam GTM School in Thunukkai

Iyankulam GTM school is in Thunukkai, 16 km away from Mallavi, and is located in the middle of a jungle, west of the A9 highway and around 20km from Kokkavil. We understand that wild elephants roam around in these areas and people regularly suffer from snake bites. There is no electricity or public transport, and the roads are in a very poor state. People do not venture out after dark unless it is a real emergency due to fear of attack by wild animals and snakes. We have been informed by the GA's office that this is one of the most deprived areas of the Northern Province today, but it was already in an under-privileged state even before the war.

This school serves children from nearly 1200 families from this area and the surrounding villages, and conduct classes from Year 1 to 13 (A/L). The buildings of the school were damaged during the war and had become uninhabitable. The lessons are currently taking place in temporary shelters. The primary school (Years 1 - 5) is functioning in a semi-permanent building and appears to be in a better state than to that of the secondary school building, in which there are eight classrooms in a very crowded environment (Photos 21-24).

During one of Assist RR's recent visit to the country, the principal of this school, Mr Tharmapoopathy, requested Assist RR to consider supporting the building of a structure that could house at least three classrooms in order to relieve the pressure caused by the crowded and very uncomfortable environment that exists today. The principal confirmed that this school is benefitting from the "after school tuition" programme which is taking place today under the joint sponsorship of Assist RR and Serendip Children's Home.



Photos 21-24: Eight classes are being conducted in this building at IyankulamGTM School

Assist RR considers that this as another desperate situation that requires our assistance, and that the Diaspora should help this school to have a permanent building which would help the students to learn more effectively. We are sure that there are Diaspora people who can support this and help these needy people.

4. Sri Subramaniam Vidyalayam, Puthukuditiruppu

This primary school is in Puthikudiyiruppu (PTK) and a feeder school to PTK Central College. All buildings of this school were completely destroyed during the war (see Photos

25&26). Currently, the classes are being conducted in 2 temporary shelters (Photos 27&28), which leak when there is heavy rain. Noise is also a serious issue as many classrooms are cramped into these two shelters. There are currently 600 pupils and the school expects this number to reach 800 in Jan 2014. The school supported up to 1000 pupils immediately prior to the war and the school principal expects to reach this number soon. He believes that the school would need around 24 classrooms for this number of students.

An INGO called "Child Fund" is constructing a building to house 13 classrooms and a library. The principal of this school, Mr Selvanayagam, made a request to Assist RR to construct another two storey building to house at least six classrooms on the basis of the above student numbers and required classrooms. The principal indicated that they may be able to use another semi-permanent building which has been built as a temporary shelter but currently used as a storage facility for the remaining shortage of classrooms.



Photos 25&26: Damaged buildings of Sri Subramaniam Vidyalayam



Photos 27&28: Temporary shelters at Sri Subramaniam Vidyalayam

The conditions in which these children are learning is very poor and Assist RR believes that there is a need to support this school. We hope you will appreciate the need and provide financial support for the school's request to construct a building to have six classrooms.