

“A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child”.



June 2024

Dear Supporters, Friends and Readers, Arobanam Children Fund wishes to keep you updated with our continued work – our Chairman is delighted to share updates first-hand from his visit to Sri Lanka.

ACF Chairperson's Project Visits in Sri Lanka

February/March 2024

Yet again, during February and March 2024, I had the pleasure of visiting all ACF projects in Sri Lanka, together with our SL based Operations Manager, Dinesh Selvan.

We started in the North, travelled to the Hill Countries, and from there journeyed to the East of the island. It was also encouraging to have two representatives, Sujeewa and Shalini, from our Hill Countries project, join us on the visit to the East, as they felt it gave them a better understanding of ACF's activities, and were motivated to assist with ACF activities in their spare time.

The team were able to learn, at a deeper level, about the operational activities of the children's residential homes, foster care projects, and university projects and how they are managed amid Sri Lanka's economic and social issues (that include family separation and child abuse, which, in turn, during this visit, has resulted in increased pressure for ACF, through ad hoc requests from the people in the locality. In addition, we also performed home visits, and conducted interviews where appropriate.

We received further financial requests to assist with purchasing new equipment, building repairs, medical treatment and opportunities to open new projects, to name a few. Similarly, we observed operational deficiencies within some of the projects and are currently in the process of addressing them.

Overall and personally, it was a very interesting & rewarding trip and an eye opening & worthwhile trip from ACF's standpoint.

The ACF committee endeavours to visit the projects as frequently as possible and continues to assist deserving children now and in the future.

Varathan Thiagarasa – Chairperson ACF

“We rise by lifting others”.

Differently Abled Welfare Books Handover – Kaithady - Jaffna District – 22 February 2024

On 22 February 2024, ACF sponsored the production of Differently Abled Welfare Books (500 of the 15,000) and these were handed to the Director of Social services, at her Office in Kaithady in Jaffna. In addition, it was later agreed that ACF would assist in a programme that would help 300, primarily, war affected individuals with the installation of prosthetic limbs.



Sivapoomi Visit – Jaffna District - 22 February 2024

ACF works with Sivapoomi's special needs school, in Kilinochchi, where 52 children benefit from the provision of their services. Sivapoomi, in the past, had produced 2 Olympic medallists and recently, Alexander Nirusanraj won first prize in the national dance competition. ACF is pleased to be working with Sivapoomi, which excels in diverse activities in the country that include homes for girls, the elderly, special needs children and stray animals and supports needs in the medical fields and nature, to name but a few.



இலங்கை தேசிய இளைஞர் சேவைகள் யன்றக்கினரால் நடைபெற்ற தேசிய சீழியிலான இளைஞர்சங்குகளான மாற்றுலகுவலகை யோருக்கான (MD) தடனப்போட்டியில் எமது பாடசாலையை சேர்ந்த செல்வன் அலெக்ஸாண்டர் நிசுசுனராஜ் முதலாவம் இடத்தை பெற்றுக்கொண்டார். வாழ்த்துக்கள்

See translation



Welcome Home Visit – Anaikoddai – Jaffna District - 22February 2024

Last Summer, ACF observed operational difficulties, beyond its control, with the management of Welcome Home and consequently had to take a step back in its support. The home has been operating at a slow pace since the departure of its previous managing Sister, who was transferred at the end of January 2024. The ACF team held meetings with the new management team, in the presence of their HQ representative, and agreed upon a process and a plan to assist the home regularly. ACF is already in receipt of the most urgent requirements, and has started assistance in April, on an emergency basis.



Mr Vinothan (Lawyer) - Foster Care Partner – Nanaattan/Mannar – 23 February 2024

At his practice office, we met with Mr Vinothan, who is ACF's first ever university student, a practicing leading human rights lawyer and acting Judge at the Mannar courts. In addition to discussions about the ongoing Nanaattan foster care project, ACF discussed future requirements and the GDPR requirements.



Annai Illam Visit – Mannar - 23 February 2024

Destitute Welfare Fund (DWF), which manages Annai Illam, is also the channel through which ACF runs its Mannar foster care project and Arobanam Girls Hostel. ACF ran several motivational workshops with Annai Illam, and through the learnt skills that the children appear to be practising, they remain more contented.

During the short stay at the home, the team had the delight of enjoying lunch with the children, experiencing the benefits of ACF's games initiative, participating in their daily prayers and their study time.

Overall, it was a good experience as we also witnessed requests for ad hoc assistance from the public.



Arobanam Girls Hostel Visit – Mannar - 23 February 2024

The hostel building was built by ACF, around 10 years ago, and the girls hostel is now run by our partners DWF/ Annai Illam. The hostel currently has 10 students GCE O/L and A/L age range. The children attend, the nearby, Mannar Central College and were in good spirits. The ACF team identified some urgent repair work, that needed to be done to the building, and are in the process of working with the operators to rectify those issues.



Arobanam Boys Home Visit – Kilinochchi – 24 February 2024

ABH which is close to our hearts – inaugurated by the late Reverend Father James - currently operates with 29 children. The home is directly impacted, primarily, by island-wide social issues. These issues adversely impact incumbent children and their desire towards progressing in education.

The team identified operational issues and is working with the operator to resolve them. Psychological counselling has been started for the majority of the children.



Good Shepherd's Hostel (GSH) Visit – Mankulam – 24 February 2024

Mankulam GSH currently house 31 children. The Management team is part of the organisation that is now responsible for Welcome Home. The ACF team spent an afternoon at the home and spent time with the operators and the children.

The children appear to be happy and engaged well with our visit. They are provided with tuition facilities on site and the home has a computer room with weekend IT classes, that is run by a computer student from the University of Kilinochchi and is facilitated by ACF.

The home also has a well-maintained front garden with floral beds and larger & sturdier plants and ACF initiated vegetable patches in the rear. The children have taken responsibility for maintaining these allocated areas.



ASSETS – Kilinochchi – 24 February 2024

ASSETS is a well-run organisation that currently looks after 50 special needs children; most of whom are on medication. The children are assessed monthly and on-site by a visiting psychiatric consultant. Through counselling and therapy, 4 of the children have come out of medication, and several children are showing positive changes in behaviour. In addition, 11 children were reintegrated back to society, and 40 were returned to their families after showing positive changes in their behaviour. This home sometimes receives referrals from authorities in the South of the country, as well.

Foster Care Interviews in Kilinochchi – 25 February 2024

The ACF team conducted interviews with foster care applicants in different areas of the country.

Two applicants, interviewed in Kilinochchi in March, are receiving assistance from April 2024.



Home Gardening Initiative – Progress

The home gardening initiative that was started in April 2021, in Mankulam, with 80 families within the Mankulam foster care scheme became a success, helped the families during the Covid pandemic and was rolled out to some of the ACF assisted homes. Here are some pictures of recent progress.



Hill Countries Visit – 2 March 2024

During the team's visit to the Hill countries, it met with its local partner team, with the foster care children and the parents, at ACF's partner's office in Wattawala. There it handed out monthly rations, and school starter pack to beneficiaries. In addition, ACF interviewed new applicants for university assistance, and foster care. We thank the partner team for their hospitality during our stay, their assistance, their company and their support for our onward journey to the East of the country.



Hill Countries Foster Care Visit – 2 March 2024



Giftng to the Youth Organisation – Nuwera Eliya District – Fordyce - 3 March 2024

As requested by the youth organisation, ACF gifted exercise books to 40 students.



Little Angel Preschool – Coombwood - Nuwera Eliya District – 3 March 2024

ACF identified a potential preschool and visited the site. It supports about 250 families in the Coombwood area. In addition, we visited the locals and campaigned amongst parents to send their children to the school. ACF committee has approved the build of toilet facilities, in partnership with Vishnu Arohanam – our Hill Countries partner, and provide monthly assistance to this preschool.



Valaichenai – Batticaloa District - Assessment

ACF received a request for assistance from an organisation in Valaichenai. We visited, met with the operators and assessed their request. Their request will be looked into further before any action is agreed upon.



St Joseph's Special Needs School Visit – Batticaloa – March 2024

St Joseph's, a part of the Brothers of Charity, is based within Batticaloa town, and currently operates with 54 registered special needs children – 47 grown up and 7 montessori students. The organisation runs 4 classes to accommodate the students' various levels of need.

Children exhibited their skills, and made a display of their finger literacy, exhibiting their products; and interacted well with the visiting team. Additionally, the visiting team had meetings with the Manager, the teachers, and the carers; and identified their requirements that include urgent medical attention with one student. ACF held late night meetings, revisited the centre the following morning, and agreed an action plan to address the prioritised needs.

The ACF team, along with members from the Hill Countries team, spent some time here and enjoyed a delightful lunch at the centre. ACF is currently monitoring the agreed action plan.



Visit to Mutur Foster Care – March 2024



The visiting team went to Kadalkaraichenai, an interior village, with ACF's referral partner for Mutur and met with the foster care children and the guardians; and discussed ACF's assistance in the area. It was rewarding to learn about the positive impact ACF's project has had on this community. We also handed school starter kits to students during this visit.



On request, the team visited and interviewed new applicants in their homes, and it was felt that there is huge need in this and other similar villages in the area. ACF is willing to assist where possible.



The team also visited a successful model organic farming initiative in Mutur area and has identified a plot that can be used as a pilot scheme.

University Students Conference – Hill Countries – 17 April 2024

The ACF and Vishnu Arohanam team ran an online conference to Hill Countries university students to promote a clear 3-way understanding of their expected reporting requirements and the handling of other needs, from all sides.

Similar conferences will be held with other university students and ACF partners, as part of ACF's communications process.



New Support Needed for Arobanam Children Fund

We need volunteers and supporters who can help us achieve our strategic growth plan.

If you or your friends can help us, please contact our chairperson, Mr Varathan, via his email address: vthiagarasa@aol.com or via the contact details on the Contact Page on our website

<https://arobanam.co.uk/>