



Arobanam Children Fund Newsletter – April 2025

Dear Sponsors, Supporters, Friends and Readers

Welcome to Arobanam Children Fund's April Newsletter. We are pleased to share updates from our ongoing projects and urge you to save-the-date for this year's annual charity dinner that will be held on Saturday, 20 September 2025 in Tolworth, Surrey ... further details will be shared in due course.

ACF Chairperson's Project Visits in Sri Lanka February/March 2025

Yet again, during January and February 2025, I had the pleasure of visiting, all but one, of ACF's projects in Sri Lanka. Several were jointly visited with our SL based Operations Manager, Dinesh Selvan.

Starting in the Hill Countries, we travelled to the East of the island before journeying further to the North. It was also encouraging to have some of our project partners from the Hill Countries, and Mannar join us on the home visits, and interview sessions, where we had to evaluate existing and prospective beneficiaries.

Through these discussions we were able to learn, at a deeper level, about the operating activities of the children's residential homes, foster care and university projects. On further discussion they related how they managed, amid Sri Lanka's economic and social issues crises, where the issues include family separation and child abuse. These issues, in turn have encouraged local villagers to approach us with ad-hoc requests that have, as in previous visits, resulted in increased pressure for ACF.

We were able to return some alignment through correcting some of the deficiencies that were identified in the projects, in the past. Additionally, through making operational changes within ACF processes and satisfactory observations, we were, subsequently, able to start two new projects.

We also received further financial requests to assist with staffing issues, new equipment, medical treatments and opportunities to open new projects, to name but a few. Similarly, we observed operational deficiencies within a minority of the projects and are currently in the process of addressing those.

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

At the end of 2024, we were assisting 394 children and 10 elders and these figures have now increased to providing a total assistance of 431, with a forecasted assistance of 450 towards the end of the year.

The ACF committee endeavors 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"

Thai Pongal

Several ACF project partners celebrated Thai Pongal festival 14 January 2025. Below are photos from St Joseph's Special Needs School where the children and staff celebrate Pongal Vila and enjoy special meals on 16th January.



ACF Visits in January 2025

Hill Countries

ACF support in the Hill countries consists of foster care, university assistance, tuition assistance, and elderly assistance.

The team met with existing and prospective beneficiaries, and gained deeper level understanding of current ACF assistance; and the difficulties from prospective beneficiaries.

It was also a delight to have offered a special meal, and to have distributed the monthly rations, and school starter kits according to the needs.

Assessing existing foster care, university & elderly care assistance



Meeting with head teacher of St Bosco College (Hatton) & interviews with potential foster care families

Meeting a teacher from a nearby Tamil Maha Vidyalayam, a remote village school and learning about the school's current issues



Special Meals & Dry Rations Distribution for Foster Care Families



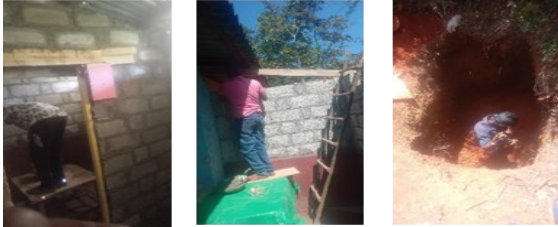
Foster Care & University Assistance Reviews



Construction of the Coombwood Nursery Toilet Building

This preschool is situated in the Coombewood Estates in Talawakela, in the Nuwara Eliya district, where approximately 25 children from the estate attend. During our visits in early 2024, it was found that the toilet was at an incomplete stage due to funding issues; and the children were without a toilet at the school and were having to use one in privately owned grounds.

Although there were delays in getting it done, we are pleased to see that ACF is now able to have provide this on-site toilet for those young children.



During Construction of the Toilet Building



The Completed Toilet Building

Visits in February 2025

St Joseph's Special Needs School – Batticaloa



St Joseph's, with a total student population of 52 children provides a curriculum that consists of two sections ... skills training and Montessori education for special needs children. It is encouraging to see that the children are able to make quality items through their training, and sell them to the general public



Review meeting with the teachers of St Joseph's Special Needs School.



The child in the printed shirt grew up with St Joseph's special needs school where his IQ was tremendously improved. On 2 February 2025; the day we visited Batticaloa, he opened a little shop.

A great success story!

The Chairman's family sponsored 38 coconut plants. Approximately 25 were planted in the grounds of a Hindu temple, by St Joseph's children, and villagers on 2 February in Batticaloa



Thiyaku Mukilan



Thiyaku Mukilan, a university student from Nilaveli in Trincomalee district gained 2A, 1B was awarded admission to the Eastern university and is currently, specialising in the Tamil language.

A student excelling and demonstrating his talents in the written Tamil word, delivering speeches, debating and winning awards at national level; has recently submitted two articles: Thirumanthirathil Mahapperu (திருமந்திரத்தில் மகப்பேறு) and Attamaa Sithigal (அடமா சித்திகள்) to the Thiruvannamalai Thirumanthira Aatheenam (திருவண்ணாமலை திருமந்திர ஆதினம்) in India.

In March, Mukilan, invited to the Thirumanthira conference in Thiruvannamalai in India, presented his article on Attamaa Sithigal and the Aatheenam produced, and published his other article, Thirumanthirathil Mahapperu, as a book.

ACF is delighted about this news, and his achievements; and having been able to assist in his education, and travel arrangements to India to attend this conference.

Well done, Mukilan

வாழ்த்துகள் முகிலன்

Good Shepherd Children Home - Valaichenai

Subsequent to a visit last year, a request was made by the home for assistance by ACF. A new project was started in February. The Chairman and Operations manager visit the project and meet the children and the administrators.



Mutur

ACF assists, primarily in the very remote villages of Kadatkarachenai, and Senaiyoor in the Mutur area. Our support consists of foster care, university assistance, and tuition assistance.



Distribution of school starter kits to foster care families



A former Foster Care child, who has been receiving online counselling through one of our overseas partners has greatly improved in health and spirit.

She is now awaiting admission to Jaffna University



Families in Mutur are assessed for foster care assistance

Mankulam GSCH

The Chairman visits Good Shepherd Children's Hostel and meets with the children and the administrators of the home.



Kilinochchi



The chairman visits ASSETS – special needs residential home and meets with the children and the administrators



The Chairman visits Arobanam Boys Home and meets with the children and the Fr who runs the home



Meeting with the head of Sivapoomi Trust, Mr Aru Thirumurugan.

ACF is working with the Sivapoomi Special Needs School in Kilinochchi. Discussions were carried out about requirements, and assistance in the running of the school.

Sivapoomi Trust currently operates two special needs school, one in Kondavil and the other in Kilinochchi. They have identified needs for similar schools in Mullivakkal, and in Thenmaradchi, possibly in the Chavakacheri area.

ACF also feels that such schools are needed and may partner with Sivapoomi Trust, if funds become available.

Anaikoddai



Meeting with the administrators of Welcome House.

Kaithady



Meeting with the Director of Social Services where ACF has partnered with the Department of Social Services to assist with the production of medical records books for over 18,000 special needs people in the Northern district.

The department has now partnered with the Jaffna Medical College to provide individual evaluations for such individuals

Mullaitivu

Visiting the Staff and Children in the Workshops at Iniya Valvu Illam (IVI)



ACF sponsored a skills training project for resident special needs children. Due to operational reasons, this project suffered difficulties and came to a halt. Subsequent to our Chairman's visit in 2024, ACF worked tirelessly with IVI, and now the project is back on track. ACF is pleased to have bought school bags from IVI and distributed to foster care children at the beginning of this year.



Visiting Fr James Re sculpted Statue in Mullaitivu Town

Mannar

ACF works with Destitute Welfare Fund (DWF) as it's one of the partners in Mannar. Through DWF, we run foster care, university assistance, Arobanam Girls' Hostel; and work very closely with Annai Illam, a residence home for girls. In addition to financial assistance, and special meals; with the help of our Paris based partner Raji, we have run on line and face to face workshops with Annai Illam children.

During this visit, the ACF team joined the partners and visited beneficiaries and developed deeper understanding of their situations. In addition, we had the delight to participate in a special evening tea and dinner at Annai Illam. The children engaged well with the team.

In addition to our partnership with DWF, we also run a foster care project in Nanattan area that is managed by a former ACF beneficiary.

Visiting Annai Illam Children and the Administrators



Meeting Destitute Welfare Fund (DWF) Chairman, Mr Ramakrishnan



Visiting the children and the managers of Arobanam Girls' Hostel

The Chairman meets with the children and the foster care families that are currently assisted by ACF



Visits to the Beneficiaries



Nanattan

Met with our Nanattan partner who was a former beneficiary of ACF and is a leading Human Rights Lawyer, Vinothan. The ACF team discussed about the project and in addition, discussed about the GDPR requirements in Sri Lanka.



CHILD CARE AND PRIVACY

Our partners received instructions from the Probation & Child Care Services office in Mannar, prohibiting photographing children from residential homes, and publishing such photos on social media.

In view of this notification and in the interest of the children's privacy, ACF will no longer publish identifiable photos of any ACF assisted children, on newsletters or provide photos of the children to special meal sponsors.

We hope our supporters understand this important message and cooperate with us.

Madurai, South India - SPACE

The ACF Chairman was unable to visit SPACE projects in Anaiyoor and Muniyandipuram this year. His last visit was in 2023.

SPACE project consists of foster care and an afternoon study centre. We are in receipt of monthly reports from these projects and we are satisfied that both projects are going well. Recently we provided funding for refurbishment of the afternoon study centre and there are currently 65 children attending the centre. A further 25 children receive foster care assistance. SPACE recently ran a free medical camp in partnership with a local hospital where several locals benefited from it.

Free Medical Clinic Visits Anaiyoor Camp & Provides Free Medical Care



Free Medical Clinic Visits Muniyandipuram Camp & Provides Free Medical Care





A child from Anaiyoor Camp wins a trophy & Certificate for her performance in a Yoga Competition

Batticaloa – St Joseph’s Sporting Activities in February

5 Children from the St Joseph’s Special Needs School in Batticaloa were selected to take part in an island-wide sports meet and took part at the sports held in Colombo. Congratulations children.



The Distribution of Dry Rations to foster care families in Muttur



Gardening Initiative

The home garden initiative is proved to be a success as several foster care beneficiaries, and residence homes are benefited from it. With the help of our Muttur partner, ACF is encouraging foster care beneficiaries from Muttur to engage in organic farming in a modern way utilizing minimum space.

Thriving Progression of Home Gardening at Mankulam Good Shepherd Hostel



Overseas Clothes Donations

Recently, an ACF supporter from Sydney, sent clothing which were received at Mankulam, and distributed to Mankulam foster care beneficiaries. We are in the process of receiving further shipments from UK and Sydney.

The Sorting and Bundling of Clothes in Preparation for Distribution



Voluntary Assistance from Visiting Overseas Therapists in March-April 2025

Special Needs Children from Sivapoomi & ASSETS are receiving specialist support from a physiotherapist and Speech Therapist, who will be working with the children and staff for 3 weeks.



Saieesan, physiotherapist, and Mithula, a speech therapist, are at work at Sivapoomi special needs school in Kilinochchi, where ASSETS children also attend schooling.

We have received requests from both ASSETS as well as Sivapoomi school for staff / teachers to be trained. Depending upon time availability they will also take this on board.

According to Dinesh, the children also engaged well with the visiting guests.



On the 14th of April, Arobanam Children Fund welcomed the Tamil New Year and wishes all its supporters a peaceful and enjoyable 2025

நல்லதே நடக்க
நானிலம் சிறக்க
மகிழ்ச்சி பெருக
வரவேற்றோம்
புத்தாண்டு
வாழ்வோம்
பல்லாண்டு

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/>