

Factsheet/Nov 2013



Project Update	November 2013
Project Name	Accessible healthcare for women & children in Palani Hills, Tamil Nadu
Project Objective	To run regular clinics with a doctor, health worker and a facility to purchase medicines in isolated communities
Project Funding	£16,500 to date
Project Length	January 2013 - January 2014

The Project

The Adventure Ashram donation of £6,500 will pay for a doctor and a health worker to conduct weekly medical check-ups and provide iron, calcium and vitamin supplements for 135 pre school children from socio-economically challenged families at 3 local crèches run by the Bethania Foundation. ASHRA, *Action for Social Health in Rural Areas*, is run by Dr Arun Kolhatkar.

The Why

Working mothers are given the option to leave their children (3–5 years) at 1 of 7 creches run by Bethania creches in Kodaikanal. The creches provide a safe environment where children are cared for by dedicated staff, provided with nutritious meals and snacks, and given basic education. Until ASHRA received Adventure Ashram funding the children were only examined by a doctor twice a year and those children failing to thrive would go undetected and miss out on the essential care during fundamental years of growth.

Many children in India never reach their true level of physical and mental growth as adults because of illness or malnutrition in childhood; a child cannot study and concentrate unless it is healthy.

The Solution

Through the regular health check-ups, Dr Kolhatkar can map the children's health over a number of years on a 'Road to Health' chart, which indicates when children are not growing at the rate they should and extra nutritional supplements can be given. By detecting congenital anomalies such as heart abnormalities, malnutrition, growth retardation and other common childhood illnesses, treatment can be given immediately and really sick children can be referred to specialists. This ensures the children attain a better level of health. ASHRA is presently liaising with a local hospital to arrange for corrective surgery, anaesthesia and admission at a highly reduced rate for a child with an umbilical hernia. The 135 children are part of a nutritional programme where they are given calcium with vitamin D and multivitamin syrups. These supplements will improve their general health, enhance their immunity to common infections, and improve their appetites, enabling them to get closer to their ideal weight and height.

The Outcome Improving the general health of a community is the one of the most effective ways to make a difference in the future. Healthy, fit, active women are more likely to give birth to healthy babies. When infant mortality decreases women feel more confident to have less children because their chance of survival is greater. Smaller families and the ultimate reduction in population rate is positive. If children are healthy from a young age they are more likely to do well at school, find employment and in the end support the elders in their communities.

The Reality Communities are slow to trust newcomers and the key to the success for projects like this is the development of positive relationships between health care professionals and the local people. Working through the creches Dr Kolhatkar and his team have been able to build trusted relationships with the mothers of the children who attend the creches. ASHRA now runs sessions for the mothers to learn how they can provide better care for their families, thus benefiting their entire community.

The Benefits Communities within the Palani Hills will experience:

- 1 improvement in general health
- 2 trusting relationships with health professionals
- 3 access to medicines and specialist health care at affordable prices
- 4 opportunities to explore different health practices to improve health
- 5 improved nutrition and diets of 3 – 5 year olds.

Thank You Thank you for the vital money you are raising, you are helping to ensure projects like this one succeed in improving the standard of living for some of India's poorest children.

For further information www.bethaniakids.org
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Adventure-Ashram>
www.adventureashram.org

Adventure Ashram
8 Park Chase, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1ES UK

Adventure Ashram Project Manager
Fritha Vincent / fritha@adventureashram.org +44 7824 999 675
www.adventureashram.org info@adventureashram.org

Registered Charity No.1122629

