



# Oru Paanai- *One pot*

## Oru Paanai

The Secretary's report to Management Committee February 14th 2010.

## Current Commitment

Oru Paanai currently helps 14 schools in the Jaffna peninsula to provide wholesome mid day school lunches, supplementing the work of the World Food Programme.

The schools we are currently assisting are

- 1) J/Periyapulam Maha Vidyalayam Jaffna
- 2) J/Kokuvil Sri Gnanapanditha Vidyasalai
- 3) J/Columbuthurai Thuraiyappa Vidyalayam
- 4) J/Araly North A.M.T.M School
- 5) J/Thirunelvely HTM School
- 6) J/Nallur Hindu Tamil Girls (Mankayarkarasi) Vidyalayam
- 7) J/Valvai Sivaguru Vidyasalai VVT
- 8) J/Nalur St Benedict's RCTMV
- 9) J/Kandarmadam Saivapragasa Vidyalayam
- 10) J/Pandatharippu Hindu College
- 11) J/Senguntha Hindu College
- 12) J/Nallur Ananda Vidyalayam
- 13) J/Muthuthamby Maha Vidyalayam Thirunelvely
- 14) J/Chettitheru Methodist Mission Tamil Mixed School.

Since January this year we have also included two schools in the Vavuniya District.

- 1) V/Puthukulam MV
- 2) V/ Poovarasankulam MV

Our current cost is Rs 102,850/- per month to service the above [ £565/-]

*[The World Food Programme provides rice, dhal, and oil for each child from Grade 1 to Grade 9. Rupees 2 per child is also provided via the Kachcheri for the ancillary expenses in providing the mid day meal. This sum is barely sufficient and the schools were expected to raise funds locally from the students via the School's Development Society. Schools that attracted poor students can not raise the money and as a result the quality of the mid day meals suffered. Children were known to come to school without breakfast. The students were hungry and were so weak that some would faint and school assemblies were cut short to save children from standing too long. The schools we have reached out to help are the schools that attract children from the poorer homes and the Heads have claimed that the majority of the children fell below the poverty line.]*

## **Report from Jaffna - November 2009**

Leela and I visited Jaffna in November. We were there for three weeks.

### **Visits to Schools**

We visited seven of the fourteen schools that were receiving help from Oru Paanai. The schools we visited were

- 1) Ananda Vidyalayam Asirvatham Veedi Nallur
- 2) Sri Gnanapandithar Vidyalasalai Kokuvil
- 3) Periyapulam Maha Vidyalayam Jaffna
- 4) Kandarmadam Saivapragasa MV Jaffna
- 5) Pandatharippu Hindu College
- 6) Valvai Sivaguru MV in Valvettithurai
- 7) Araly North AMTM

In each of the schools that we visited we were able to speak with the students and teachers. In a few we tasted the food that was being served. We found it tasty. There was much enthusiasm and appreciation of the help that we were giving.

We were able to encourage the schools to continue their good efforts.

In one school in particular there was lack of interest and supervision from the Principal and teachers. We engaged the Principal and teachers and encouraged them to monitor carefully the purchase of vegetables, cooking and serving of the food.

### **New Schools**

We also had nine schools that were requesting to be a part of the Oru Paanai project. Two of these schools were in the Vavuniya district. I visited these two schools and felt very strongly that these two schools should be included and since

January 2010 these two schools have received assistance with the mid day meal from Oru Paanai.

These two schools are

- 1) V/Poovarasankulam Maha Vidyalayam and
- 2) V/ Puthukulam Maha Vidyalayam

We visited 3 of the 7 new schools in Jaffna district that were requesting help.

We await a decision by the Management Committee re including these schools.

The decision to include these schools will depend on our financial position ie assessment of regular receipts from donors.

The nine new schools and the daily costs are as follows-

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1) J/NeeveliSouthHindu Tamil Mixed School | Rs 150/- per day |
| 2) J/Vatharawathai Vigneswara Vidyalayam  | Rs 400/- per day |
| 3) J/Kopay South RCTM School              | Rs 150/- per day |
| 4) J/Naranthanai RCM Vidyalayam, Kayts    | Rs 400/- per day |
| 5) J/Thirunelveli RCTM School             | Rs 150/- per day |
| 6) J/Uduvil AMTM, Chunnakam               | Rs 225/- per day |
| 7) J/Thikkam Sithivinayagar Vidyalayam    | Rs 150/- per day |

The additional total cost by including the above seven schools will be on average about Rs 32,500 per month (20 school days) ie £180.

### Meeting with Heads

We also had a meeting of all the heads of all the schools we are linked with. Together with the some teachers we had 25 people at the meeting.

A brief summary of the minutes of the meeting -

1)

Principals and Teachers who were present at the meeting took turns to make speeches. They firstly thanked the well wishers and donors of Oru Paanai for the important and valuable work.

They also claimed that the significant improvement in the quality of the food served during the mid morning break was appreciated by every one and expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the donors of Oru Paanai.

We were also told that children were eagerly consuming the food and that there was less truancy and absenteeism from the schools. We were told that fainting during assembly was not seen any more.

2)

It was emphasised that the Oru Paanai work is primarily a work supported by the personal funds of Tamil Expatriates and their English friends with a view to helping the next generation of young Tamil children to take their place in society. It was also pointed out that we were interested in investing in and building up the next generation in a society that has been traumatised by the civil war of 30 years.

A new lay out for monthly accounting was presented to the schools.

3)

The School Heads were also keen to bring to our attention the needs of the recent influx of Vanni refugee students. It was reported that some students did not wear shoes and others did not have school bags. Some schools requested help with plates and spoons..

The following is a list of needs that was given to us.

- a) Araly North AM School - 80 pairs of shoes and 80 school bags
- b) Pandatharippu Hindu - 16 pairs shoes
- c) Anantha Vid - 16 pairs of shoes
- d) Muthuthamby MV - 26 pairs of shoes
- e) Senguntha Hindu - 07 pairs of shoes
- f) Kokuvil Gnanapandithar - 200 plates and spoons and 12 buckets and spoons
- g) Valvai Sivaguru V - 305 plates and spoons

4)

We were asked whether we could help fatherless refugee children financially to help them continue their education. One parent children - 18 children without fathers 2 children without mothers. (stats of Jaffna schools only).

5)

We were asked whether Oru Paanai will grant financial scholarships similar to the government scholarships to capable students from poor homes to encourage and enable them to continue in education.

Scholarship to needy children provided by Oru Paanai ?

30 children gained marks above 100 but less than the cut off mark of 140. in the all Island Grade 5 Government Scholarship examination. (stats from Jaffna schools only)

( eg.of costs- Scholarship of Rs 500/- per term per child for 30 children. Cost per year Rs.45000/- =£250)

**Lastly**, the work in Jaffna is supervised by Anushadevi Muralitharan who has been doing a good job by maintaining good accounting and reporting processes. She is paid Rs 5000/- per month. She also has with the help of a school master Mr Senthuran monitoring the work in each school. Each school needs to be visited once or twice per month to maintain the impetus and interest. Mr. Senthuran is presently not paid and does it voluntarily but now has asked for fuel cash.

*The Secretary's report to Management Committee February 14th 2010.*