

SURABI NEWSLETTER

A source of life giving Water...



“We must be the change we wish to see in the world” - Mahatma Gandhi

SCAD Rural Development Newsletter

JUNE 2012

Loving Greetings from SCAD....

We are delighted and honored to present SCAD Rural Development Newsletter to all our friends and supporters.

When we started SCAD in 1985 at Cheranmahadevi, we never thought SCAD would spread its helping hands to 500 villages. We have achieved more than we could have ever dreamt of. We work to reach the unreached, working with approximately 50,000 underprivileged rural individuals on a range of integrated rural development including: health, education, community organisation, farming, environmental protection and disaster management.

Our vision is to make society a better place where all people are treated with dignity and respect, affording everybody equal opportunities, rights and recognition.

We are sure that you will enjoy reading a glimpse of our most recent developments and the impact that our efforts have had on thousands. Thank you for your continued support and love,

Cletus Babu & Amali Cletus

SCAD Differently-Abled Summer Camp



CBR Coordinator dances with one of the children



Children display their creativity at Summer Camp

Summer camp was held by SCAD in May for differently abled children from surrounding villages. 60 children with varying physical and mental disabilities came to Anbu Illam for five days, all with one objective – to have fun!

‘Fun’ is not usually a word associated with children with disabilities from rural underprivileged villages in Tamil Nadu. A combination of cultural attitudes, ignorance and lack of resources condemns these children to a life of exclusion and great hardship. Parents are often not able or willing to give their disabled child the time, love and attention they need in order for them to live a happy life. Summer Camp provided an opportunity for children to be children and to come away from any difficulties they face in their home life and spent time with other children and caring staff.

SCAD objective was for these children not only to have fun but to

Build their self-esteem and confidence; to motivate and empower them to realise that they are equally as important in society and that they enjoy the same rights and abilities just like everyone else. By bringing these children together, SCAD shows them that they are not alone.

The five days were packed with creativity, learning, dance, sports, games and adventures - not to mention magic! Every evening was spent with children and staff on the stage dancing, singing and performing. Self confidence grew over the week and by the end most children had shed any inhibitions and were going for it! You have never heard so much laughing and screaming. Smiles were from ear to ear. This fantastic, colourful and eventful week not only gave children five days of fun but it gave a ray of hope in an otherwise challenging life.

HEALTH

SCAD intervention in health related activities is a direct response to the growing concern over emerging health challenges in the villages. Camps and trainings are extremely beneficial in providing immediate and localised care to village members who otherwise might not be able to access a doctor, hospital or knowledge on how to ensure the best health for themselves and their families.

Screening and Awareness Cancer Camps are a new SCAD initiative, delivered in partnership with the Cancer Institute (WIA), Chennai and Krishna Hospital, Tirunelveli. These community based camps aim to bring about an awareness of cancer and to screen for early detection.

Through the Women's Self Help Groups (WSHGs) SCAD are able to educate villagers about the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of cancer and to encourage regular screenings.

4 of these cancer camps have been held in the Tirunelveli block, 204 individuals were screened: 180 women and 24 men. SCAD Volunteers and Animators coordinate the camps and provide a friendly face to all individuals that attend. Specialist administration staff, female doctors and female nurses from Krishna Hospital, Tirunelveli take detailed medical histories and then deliver cervical and breast screening on site in a screened off, private and hygienic environment. There is also a separate area for men to receive oral screening.

Villagers are made aware of the camps through the WSHGs and through SCAD staff going from door to door prior to the camp day. Any abnormalities found during screenings will receive immediate further testing and diagnosis at the Krishna Hospital, Tirunelveli followed by referral to the Cancer Institute (WIA), Chennai. Any treatment costs will be nominal, based on individuals' ability to pay.

As a result of these screenings 30 individuals will be having follow up checks at the government hospital. SCAD will continue to deliver these camps across all five area blocks.



Beneficiaries' Medical History taken at the camp by specialists from Krishna Hospital



Children are the first to suffer from a lack of sanitation

Individual Toilets

An article in the Times of India, Chennai reveals grim figures from the 2011 Indian census. Approximately 45% of the state's population resorts to open defecation due to the lack of sanitation facilities. 2% of rural areas are covered by the pipeline sewerage system. As a result, over 73% of rural population defecate in the open.

As we know, most rural homes do not have toilet facilities and people resort to open defecation which contaminates the drinking water supply and has huge implications on the health of the entire village. Sanitation in village schools is also extremely poor and it is particularly problematic for young girls.

The simple act of building individual home and school toilets can save lives and allows many to get an education in a safe environment. SCAD have put in hundreds of individual toilets. We are aiming to build another 150 this year across the 500 villages we work in.

Loving and respecting our elders.....

The Elders Programme has been going from strength to strength in the last few years. Each year more is done to enhance the lives of the 750 rural abandoned elders that are currently being supported by SCAD.

Abandoned and destitute elders supported by SCAD come together once a month in their relevant area block to play games, share their grievances, receive support and counseling, see the Siddha doctor, have a nutritional lunch and receive their monthly SCAD pension. Support extends much further than these days and elders receive continued care throughout the month.

Recent developments of the Elders Programme have included the formation of Elder's Associations which have come directly out of requests from the Elders. These village based groups function in a similar way to the WSHGs by providing a local support network, a platform for village improvement and a local representative for all elders in the village.

The Elders also have an exposure day which is a huge highlight in the annual calendar. This year on Sunday 22nd April, 60 elders from the Tirunelveli area block went to Kanyakumari for a day out. They set off at 8am in a coach with SCAD volunteers, animator, development officer, siddha doctor and a nurse. On the way to Kanyakumari, they visited Thiruparappu Falls and all the elders enjoyed bathing in the waterfalls after breakfast.

Shamsudheen, a disabled elder, happily said:

"Being physically challenged, I have never had the chance of visiting any tourist spot or places of interest. This is the first time that I am taking bath in a waterfall and I am thankful to SCAD for having given me this wonderful opportunity."

Following this they went to Maathur to see the Hanging Bridge and the natural scenery beneath it, after which was



Elders excitedly depart for their annual exposure day

lunch and a visit to the temple. Finally, on reaching Kanyakumari, the elders visited places of historical importance such as the Gandhi Memorial, and most of all enjoyed seeing the sun-set. For many this is the only opportunity they get to leave their village due to health, transport difficulties, finances and for many the lack of a carer - it is a rare treat. The elders look forward to this day immensely.

70 elders have received support to set up Income Generating Projects such as bead work, goat rearing, milch animals, poultry, petty shops, basket making and pod collection. Income Generating activities not only subsidise pensions but give independence and pride to those who otherwise depend solely on hand-outs. SCAD also has a saving scheme which many of the elders take advantage of saving Rs. 100 a month which after 5 years gives Rs. 3000 in interest on top of Rs. 5000 saved.

SCAD's Elders Programme is focused on an inclusive and sustainable approach rather than just short term financial hand outs. The integration of the Elders Programme with the Women's Self Help Groups is therefore essential for the future. SCAD is striving to bring about a social change, encouraging villages to take responsibility for their elders. SCAD aim to do away with social and religious prejudice on widows & widowers and to inspire communities to love, care and respect their elders.



*Mr Meenatchi Sundaram,
an abandoned elder
supported
by SCAD since 2006*



Women await the rally at Vilathikulam

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN International Women's Day—8th March 2012

International Women's Day started with a conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1910. It was here where the need for a women's day was first felt. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly also came to the conclusion that a day be devoted to honour women all across the world. Thus Women's Day was established and since then it celebrates the achievements of women and guarantees continuance of efforts towards reforms for betterment of the feminist class. International Women's Day is celebrated on the 8th of March every year... a day to celebrate what women have achieved, can achieve and are pursuing.

With the United Nations International Women's Day theme for 2012 being "Empower Rural Women – End Hunger and Poverty", SCAD did justice to this important day with celebrations held over three days in March. Programmes were conducted in Tuticorin, Vilathikulam and Ottapidaram. These three days were an opportunity for the 50,000 women organised into 3,500 Self Help Groups, with whom we work, to celebrate all they have achieved as members of SCAD Women's Self Help Groups (WSHGs). The days have also been an opportunity to raise awareness about WSHGs and to vocalise SCAD's united strong view on the empowerment and education of women.

SCAD recognise women capable of leadership, train them to be self supporting, independent and as a Result the standard of living of the whole family improves. The empowerment of women ultimately

leads to social, economical and political change.

Let's stop and think... How do we treat our women? Do we reciprocate their love and care? Do we respect and motivate them? Isn't it ironic that the beings that bring forth life are looked down upon, ill-treated, battered, beaten up and even killed by their very own, such as family members, spouse and in-laws? Unlike in the past, women today contribute to the family income as well as take care of the home and children. Yet they are often tormented by the insults liberally showered upon them by society. This may not be prevalent in cities but is quite widespread in villages and small slums where women lead a miserable existence, cursed and despised. It is these women that SCAD makes every effort to reach out to and bring a smile back on their faces. Women today should be given equal opportunities with men to showcase their talents and abilities, receive justice and develop their inherent capabilities.

Women need a day to enjoy and feel respected, encouraged and their cultural talents appreciated. The problems of women as individuals, and as a community, need to be addressed. The Women's Day celebration affirmed women empowerment, their awareness of global development and their solidarity for their rights.

All in all, the Women's Day celebrations were a fulfilling experience, with every year SCAD get one step closer to equality.

Care for the Differently-Abled

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) focuses on enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families; meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation.

We were extremely fortunate to have had a volunteer team of Belgian specialists who came for 1 week in January to perform multiple and complex surgeries on 10 cerebral palsy sufferers (9 Anbu Illam students and 1 CBR student). They worked relentlessly and with such professionalism.

The 10 children have been receiving post-operative care in the form of intensive physiotherapy. The children are doing very well - 3 children are back home with their families, they have developed good independent walking abilities (one boy with artificial limb) and the other 7 children are at the moment staying in Anbu Illam to continue their treatment. Physiotherapy is focusing on strengthening muscle power, increasing balance, stride lengthening and gate training. These are life-changing operations that their families would never have been able to afford. It took enormous effort to convince parents about the benefits of the surgeries but they are all so pleased they took the opportunity given to them by SCAD. We hope to do many more of these surgeries in the future with the help of GID(t)s, Belgium.

The Makaton Foundation Course has been delivered to 14 SCAD staff by our volunteer UK Makaton trainer. Makaton hopes to dramatically aid communication and expression to benefit the children and adults with severe communication disabilities. A pilot project has begun at Anbu Illam to carefully document the progress that the children with communication difficulties make when a

Makaton programme is introduced. Makaton signs and symbols are always used with normal spoken language to encourage speech. If the pilot is successful, Makaton will be used throughout appropriate SCAD initiatives and hopes to make a huge difference to the lives of many children.

SCAD gave differently-abled children a fantastic opportunity to compete in state level sports competitions in March. 20 disabled students participated in the district level sports with 5 going on to participate in Chennai State Level Competitions. SCAD staff and Sports Coordinator took 5 children to Chennai by train for the competitions. For most of these differently-abled children who come from low income families, this was the first time they had been to Chennai. They won 6 prizes: 4 x Gold medal & 2 x Bronze medal—We are SO proud of them!



SCAD Sports Coordinator with Jeberson and Muthumariappan at Chennai State Sport Competition

SCAD Gypsy School Silver Jubilee

Gypsy families are traditional wanderers and a colourful stream of gypsies began to camp in and around Pettai, around 25 years ago. SCAD went out to support them and educate them. Many gypsies have chosen to settle for the majority of their time in the Pettai village, around the Gypsy School built by SCAD.

Today 25 years later, SCAD Gypsy School is an institution of repute. The school celebrated the momentous occasion of its Silver Jubilee with colourful programmes and cultural extravaganza on the 27th April, 2012.

The grand finale of the celebrations left the audience spellbound: A dance was performed by a few boys and the daughter of the head of the gypsy village, who had won the first prize in the state level dance competition in November 2011. State competitions were held in Chennai and it was the first time these children had travelled to the state capital.

The Silver Jubilee was a moment to rejoice and cherish the achievements of the last 25 years.

A day for the families of Life Convicts

The years of excruciating agony and trauma of the family members due to the life imprisonment of their beloveds is terrible. SCAD supports 40 family members of life convicts in terms of education, finance, income generation and emotional support.

With the good intention of giving the family members of the life convicts a day of fun and recreation, SCAD held a day for them at the SCAD Campus, Cheranmahadevi on 19th May. Motivational talks, games for the young and the old alike and counseling were held.

The counseling session gave vent to their locked up feelings. Pushpalatha came for the counseling along with her son, Adarsh Franklin aged 19 and her daughter, Ahaya Phiona aged 17, all the way from Marthandam, travelling for nearly 120 kms, having had to change three buses. Phiona was in tears while entering the counseling hall. After sharing their feelings Phiona said: "I'm happy that SCAD has given us this wonderful opportunity to spend a day happily, forgetting all of our worries and problems."

In sum, the families of the life convicts had a great time with fun and frolic the whole day, a great escape from their routine, traumatic life; thanks to the efforts of SCAD.

Protecting our environment



With pressing global climate change issues, SCAD is doing more than ever to reduce emissions, provide green cover, promote organic farming and educate villagers on environmental protection.

Kitchen gardens are a nutritious, income generating and environmentally friendly initiative which we are promoting across all our five area blocks. We helped 4250 women implement kitchen garden in their backyard or waste land last year.

Tree plantation is also a big priority with 31,496 trees having been planted by SCAD in January—March this year!

SCAD KVK has been implementing a number of new technologies to reduce emissions. SCAD has been working closely with farmers and individuals on bio char usage, bio fertilisers, vermin-compost, energy efficient stoves and zero energy preservers.

On 23rd May the National Children's Rally on Environmental Protection and Climate Change came to Vilathikulam

The rally organised by 3 NGOs invited SCAD to join as a result of the local initiatives SCAD has taken on children and environmental issues.

Two groups were spreading awareness about climate change in South India, one travelling from Orissa and one from Kanyakumari on 22nd May, both will culminate in Chennai on 27th May with an international conference. This is the first of its kind affiliated by a consortium of NGOs including SCAD. The objective is to get the climate change message to ordinary rural, often illiterate, villagers.

Around 1000 children participated on 23rd May in this powerful awareness campaign. The children were carrying banners with slogans related to environmental protection. The rally preceded a conference which was given by the children in dialogue with eminent figures, scientists and the general public. The children proved they could achieve wonders; they had a real impact on the community. The various NGO heads gave a brief talk on how they could join together to protect the environment on various measures. SCAD have insisted that each and every one plant a minimum of 10 trees, conserve water and avoid using plastic. SCAD are willing to supply any amount of tree saplings to the children.

The rally encouraged children, their parents and the wider community to take responsibility for their actions and for their environment. We must live in harmony with nature instead of exploiting it, if not for ourselves then for the next generation.



A participant in the rally ready to plant her sapling

Here's a glimpse of some of the things we have achieved this year

January—March 2012



Post Natal Training

HEALTH

- 1776 beneficiaries received health training
- 155 beneficiaries attended our general medical camps
- 689 beneficiaries attended our eye camps
- 179 beneficiaries received cataract operations
- 26 nutritional trainings were held
- 130 mothers received anti natal/ post natal training

EDUCATION

- 1668 slow learners received supplementary tuition
- 250 children benefitted from new school sports equipment
- 127 village school teachers received future teacher training
- 300 children from 6 villages attended SCAD sport summer camps



Elders Programme

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

- 51 new Women's Self Help Groups were established
- 1772 women received Women's Self Help Group training
- 153 women received skill training

ECONOMIC PROGRAMMES/ LIVELIHOOD

- 986 individuals received financial assistance through SCAD

GOVERNMENT BASED WELFARE SCHEMES

- 467 government welfare schemes were received through SCAD

ECOLOGY

- 31,496 trees have been planted
- 11 school gardens were established
- 141 kitchen gardens were established
- 2 ooranies were deepened
- 2 rainwater harvesting tanks were installed

CARE FOR THE DIFFERENTLY-ABLED

- 308 differently-abled children received therapy at CBR mobile camps
- 11 aids and appliances were received
- 43 parental trainings were delivered

KVK

- 1215 animals were treated at veterinary camps
- 250 bio char demos were given to farmers
- 250 farmers received bio char
- 100 farmers attended farmers training at KVK
- 200 farmers received subsidised bio fertilisers
- 240 farmers received subsidised vermin compost
- 27 farmers received fish culture training



Income Generation Training

Dengue Fever

With further outbreaks of dengue fever in Tirunelveli SCAD is doing everything possible to support initiatives taken by the local government. SCAD are holding dengue camps in Tirunelveli in order to educate village members on dengue fever, the symptoms, prevention and to administer the insecticides which kill the mosquito larvae that cause dengue fever. As there is currently no effective vaccine against dengue, prevention is critical. SCAD staff and government officials have asked residents to flush out unused water and clean containers every time they store water.



*Murray & Janet Frankland with
Project officer - Nagarajan*



Belgium OT students give therapy at CBR camp

Overseas Visitors

We have received many foreign visitors so far this year:

Long-time supporters and friends of SCAD, Murray & Janet Frankland from the UK, came with their friends and trustees.

Kiki Pauwels and her team from Women 2 Women, Belgium, came with their friends and trustees.

We were fortunate enough to have Dr Philip, Dr Luc, Marjolijn and their fantastic team from Dominic Savio, GID(t)S, Belgium, who came to deliver 10 complex surgeries and trainings. 22 specialists from different disciplines returned again in March to share their knowledge and expertise.

Mr. David Friese Green, Director, soil Fertility-Bristol, UK visited and encouraged the soil fertility project.

Maxine-Senior Artist from UK visited with her group.

Three Occupational Therapist students from Belgium, Lise, Pheadra & Marieke, were here working with us for three months.

Mrs. Anthea Pritchard came to deliver the Makaton programme to Anbu Illam and CBR staff.

Wendy Stephenson came on behalf of The Converging World.

Sue & Jeff Alan came to deliver Psychology of Vision workshops to SCAD staff.

Kate Hartley was volunteering with us for over 4 months, working closely with the rural development team.

Many other volunteers and visitors have graced us with their presence. We thank them all.

We are always looking out for support, visits and information— get in touch if you would like to visit our work.

The rest of 2012...

Project Director, Mr G Nagarajan, has been extremely pleased with the success of a number of new initiatives this quarter. We are confident that these achievements will continue throughout the year.

The rest of 2012 brings a number of exciting new initiatives with a focus on environmental protection and empowering the marginalised. We will be continuing our dedicated work in education, health, community organisation, farming and disaster management.

We are always striving to enhance and add value to our team. We are thankful for all the visitors who have shared their skills, suggestions and observations with us.

We would also like to thank our Chairman, Vice Chairman and all our rural development staff who work tirelessly to enhance the lives of thousands.

Social Change And Development (SCAD)

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