



The Vilvam Foundation™

Helping rural communities thrive



**HALF-YEARLY
REPORT
2025-2026**

www.thevilvamfoundation.org



The Vilvam Foundation™

Namaskaram!

Scale is a simple word. But to be effective at scale — now, that’s a whole different ball game.

This year, we took our vision of helping rural communities thrive to 25 villages. Filled with apprehension yet guided by great hope, we began the year knowing we had to learn new ways of taking a highly effective set of programs far and wide. We needed to build capacity, strengthen leadership, and form strong partnerships with the local government, along with developing robust operational and monitoring systems.

To make our programs even more effective, we conducted a detailed survey across all 25 villages to understand the specific needs and gaps. Our team went door to door, working on the ground and interacting closely with villagers to listen, learn, and design better interventions.

All our programs are implemented with the community and the local panchayat so that they remain deeply involved and the initiatives become truly sustainable. We see the effectiveness of this approach when villagers themselves come forward and request that we bring our programs to their villages.

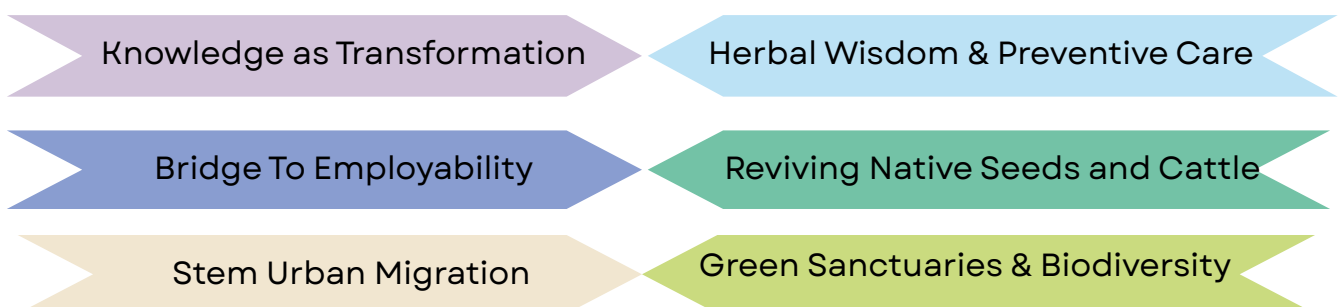
With great humility, we identified gaps, created a clear execution plan, built strong capacity to deliver effectively, and set in motion a highly replicable set of programs that thrives on community ownership, strong execution by our stellar Vilvam team, and meaningful partnerships across both private and government sectors.

We remain committed to implementing the vision we have set for rural communities. And finally, we are delighted to share that our newly launched website now brings together the vision behind all our programs and the work we do. Do take a look!

thevilvamfoundation.org

From all of us at Vilvam, thank you for being with us.

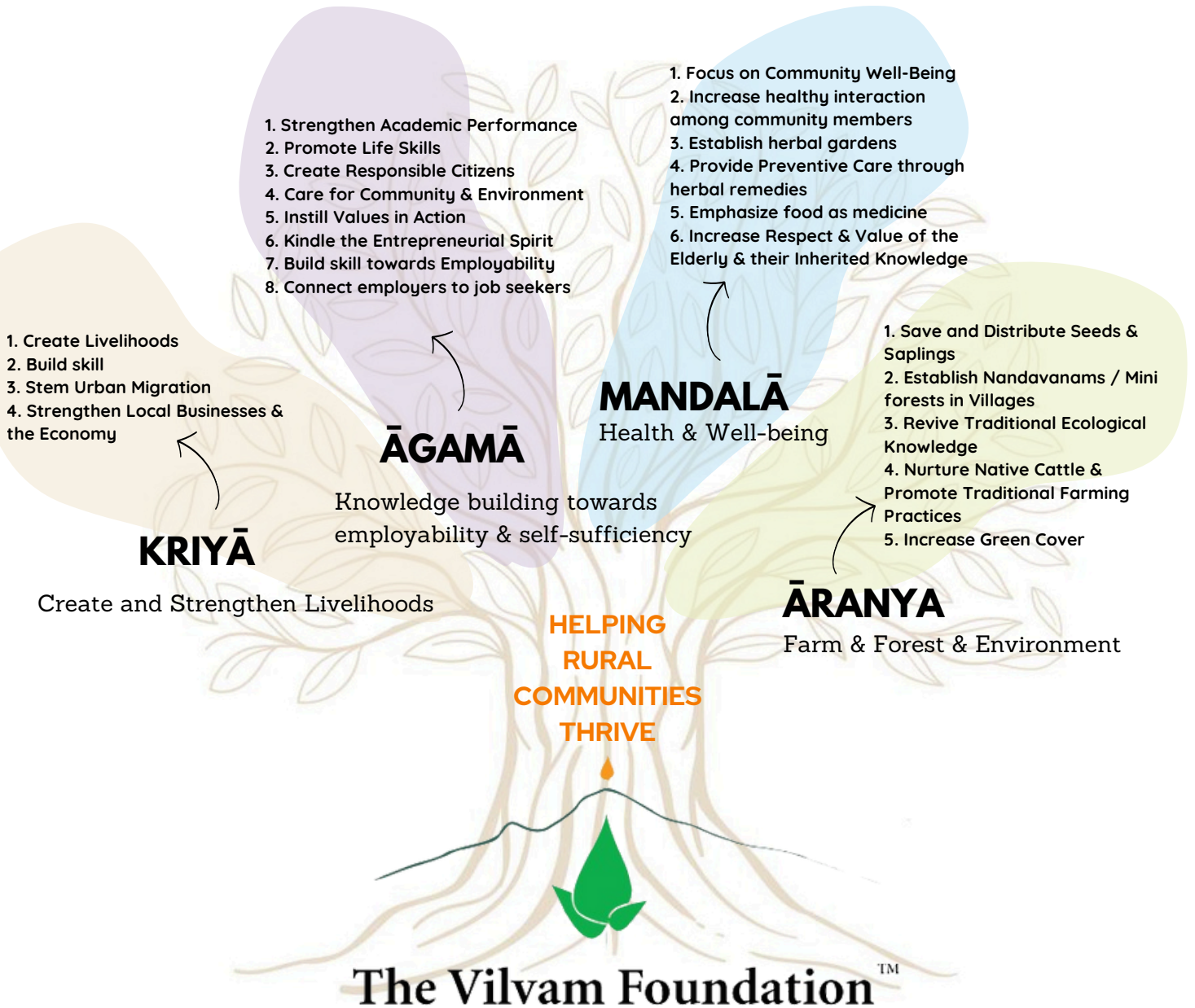
Maithreyi



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VILVAM | VISION

Helping rural communities thrive



Growth and subsequent change do not have to be disruptive. Rural communities can learn new skills, find new livelihoods, stay healthy and debt-free, restore harmony in their households, ensure their children get a modern education while retaining their connection to their deep cultural values, each other and the Earth.

VILVAM | RICH PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

- Local community and Government partners
- Resource and execution partners.



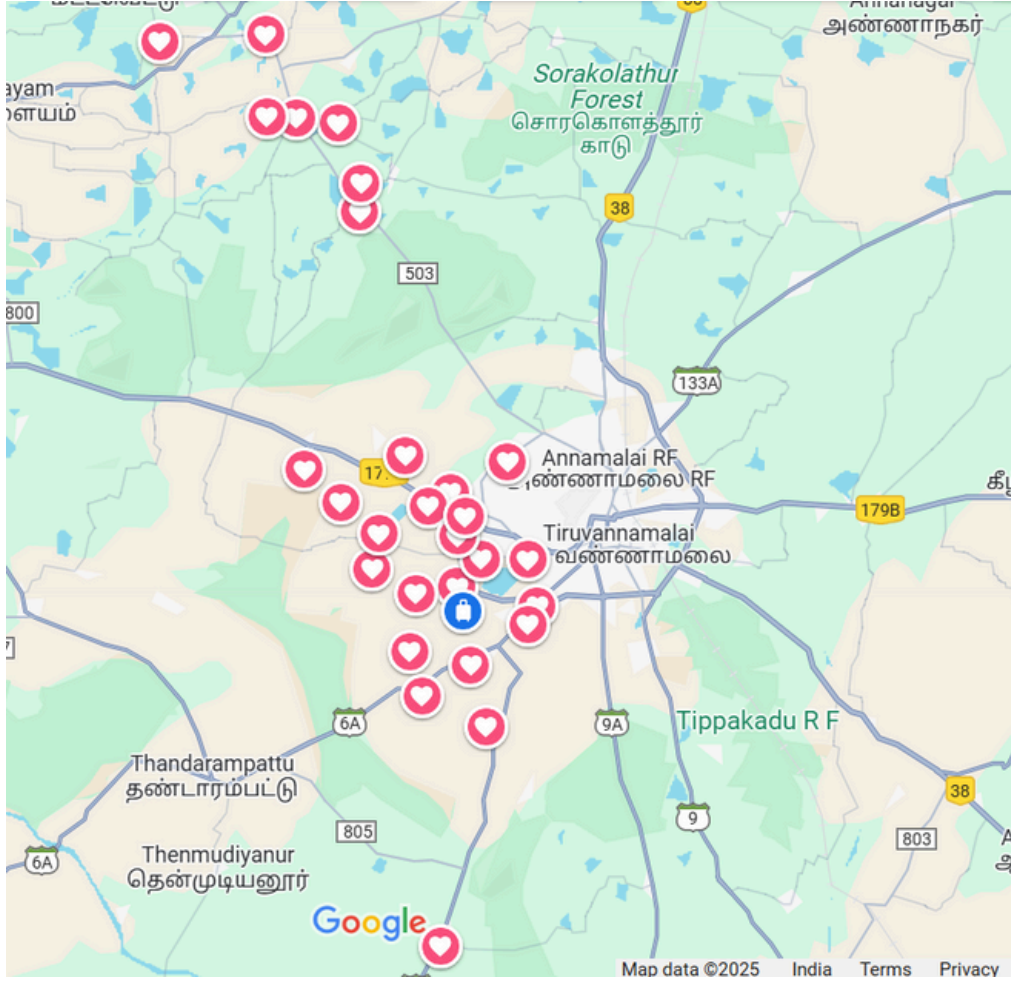
HELPING
RURAL
COMMUNITIES
THRIVE



The Vilvam Foundation™



VILVAM | Villages We Serve



1	<u>Adiannamalai</u>
2	<u>Athiyandal</u>
3	<u>Kaveriampoondi</u>
4	<u>Ayampaalaiyam</u>
5	<u>Nalavanpalaiyam</u>
6	<u>Kanantampoon di</u>
7	<u>Pandithapattu</u>
8	<u>Aanaipirandhan</u>

9	<u>Agaram</u>
10	<u>Santhamedu/Samudira m</u>
11	<u>Kil Sirupakkam</u>
12	<u>Aswanagasuranai</u>
13	<u>Perumpakam</u>
14	<u>Sirupakkam/Pudhur</u>
15	<u>Kil Chettipattu</u>
16	<u>Periyakolapaadi</u>

17	<u>Meyyur</u>
18	<u>Viswanthangal</u>
19	<u>Kanji</u>
20	<u>Karapattu</u>
21	<u>Alathur</u>
22	<u>Oranantavaadi</u>
23	<u>Gengampattu</u>
24	<u>Japthikariyendal</u>
25	<u>Melchettipattu</u>

ĀGAMĀ



VILVAM VAASAL | ĀGAMĀ

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

ĀGAMĀ is a bridge that aims to transform rural children and youth into responsible, self-aware adults who participate in the economic and cultural life of their communities.

Our intervention focuses on **strengthening education, building knowledge, instilling values, reviving culture and setting a strong foundation for entrepreneurship & employment readiness.**

PROGRAM	AGE GROUP	INTENDED OUTCOME
Education Sponsorship	LKG to College	Addresses affordability. Designed to provide financial support to deserving students.
Vilvam Knowledge Center	Class 1-8	Strengthens academic skills in addition to focusing on culture, value-based education and life skills through an after school program.
Udhyogam Certification courses	Class 9 to College	Equips students with essential skills to make them ready to enter the work force.
Udhyogam	College Students	Cultivates an entrepreneurial and employment mindset in young adults. Connects local employers with job seekers.

2025 - 2026 Vision

Expand our centers to 10 more villages.

Ensuring that children in our three-year centres are well-strengthened in the foundations of language and math

Empower children to conduct cultural programs in temples, promoting community involvement.

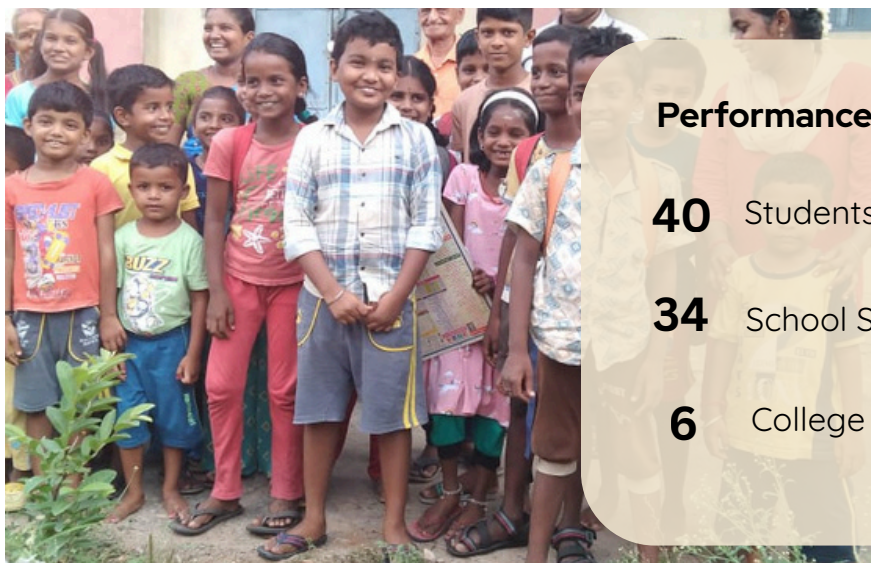
Actively involve parents in their children's education & cultural events.

Offer career guidance from Class 9 to graduates, helping students choose the right stream and plan their careers.

Organise community service activities for children, building responsibility, empathy, and social awareness.

ĀGAMĀ | EDUCATION SPONSORSHIP

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency



Performance-based sponsorship

40 Students Sponsored

34 School Students

6 College Students



2024 - 2025 Highlights

8

Higher Secondary students secured First Class

7

Seven college graduates are now pursuing higher studies.

5

Five graduates have secured jobs



Kalaivani lost her husband to illness many years ago, and since then she has been raising her three children, on her own. For over 10 years, Vilvam has been supporting the family by sponsoring the education of all her children.

Manikandan, Kalaivani's second child is a hardworking and dedicated student. Now in the 12th standard, he scored an impressive 72% in his 11th exams. Along with his academics, he also shines in sports and has proudly represented the district in volleyball matches.

Supporting Bright Minds

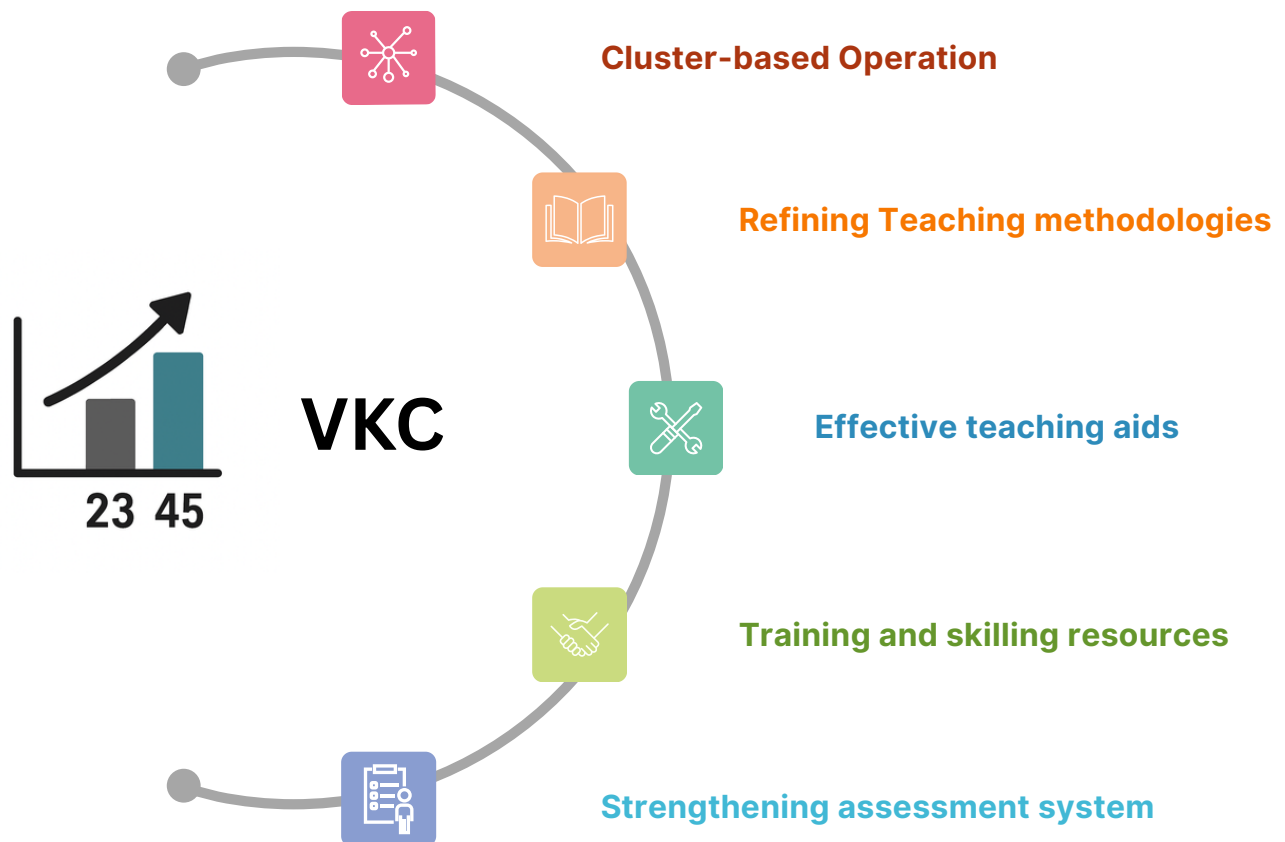
One of our coordinators noticed three children — Akila, Karmugil, and Devasri — standing outside their classroom, tears in their eyes. They had been sent out because their school fees were unpaid.

All three are bright students, consistently scoring above 80% in their exams. Yet their families struggle: one is the daughter of a truck driver, another of a hotel cleaner, and the third is raised by a single mother.

For the past two years, Vilvam has been sponsoring their education, ensuring that financial hardship never comes in the way of their learning or their dreams.

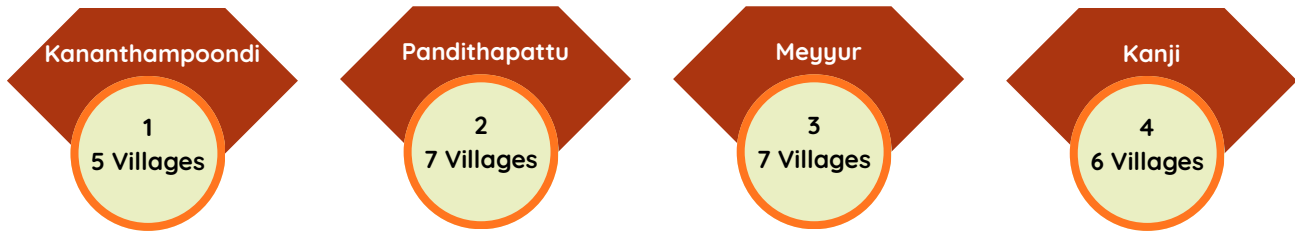


Enabling Execution at Scale



Our survey revealed a strong need for support in additional villages. As we expand, our systems, processes, and teams must evolve to operate with greater clarity and efficiency. Scaling is not just about reaching more people — it is about strengthening our capabilities so that quality remains consistent across every center.

Cluster-Based Operations



As we expanded our reach to **25 villages and 45 centers within a 25 km radius**, we recognized the need to organize our work into clusters to ensure smooth operations and greater convenience for our teachers. Managing many centers from a single point was challenging; clustering nearby villages allows for better coordination, faster communication, and reduced travel time.

- Each cluster is headed by a coordinator who oversees the regular functioning of the centers.
- The coordinators provide timely support to teachers, and ensures quality and accountability.
- Monthly review meetings are conducted within each cluster, making it easier for teachers to participate, discuss challenges, and share learning.



Coordinators monitoring the centers



Review meetings conducted across all clusters

Refining Teaching Methodologies

Montessori training

Learning through the Montessori method boosts confidence, independence, and overall development, especially in mixed-age classrooms. Hence, we decided to implement it this year. Our teachers have undergone training in Montessori techniques, and we believe this will greatly benefit the children.



Our teachers undergoing training at Disha Montessori



Selvi Akka, one of the principals of a Montessori school in Chennai, training our teachers



Children working with Montessorie maerials

All our Montessori materials were handcrafted using locally available resources. A special thanks to the women of Wild Ideas for helping us prepare these materials for all the centers.

Effective teaching aids

- Designed a comprehensive curriculum that integrates academic learning with rich cultural values.
- Developed subject-wise workbooks for all levels to strengthen core academic foundations.
- Provided structured and effective teaching aids to enhance classroom teaching and student understanding.

Training and skilling resources

- Teachers received training at various levels, focusing on curriculum delivery and effective use of workbooks.
- Tamil grammar and pronunciation training by Lally Akka, an experienced Tamil educator, was organised for the teachers. They also learned the proper sequence in which topics should be taught, ensuring that children grasp concepts more quickly and effectively.
- Teachers' performance is being reviewed regularly, gaps are being identified, and retraining sessions are being arranged wherever needed.



Our teachers at the Tamil training session



Teachers undergoing training sessions

ĀGAMĀ | VILVAM KNOWLEDGE CENTER

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

DAY 1 ENGLISH

DAY 2 TAMIL

DAY 3 MATH

DAY 4 WINGS

DAY 5 ROOTS

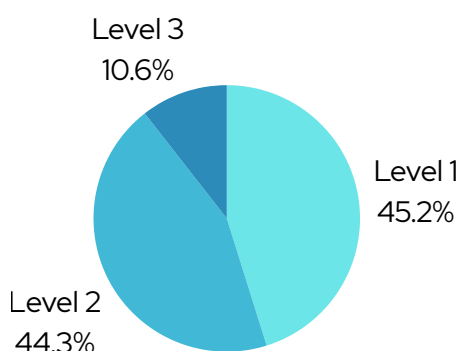
DAY 6 LIBRARY/READING

- **Theme-based learning** is introduced to help students learn more words and build a strong vocabulary.
- More focus on grammar so that children develop strong language fundamentals and improved writing skills.
- Apart from play-based tools, **worksheet-based** activities are being introduced so that children can strengthen their understanding of key concepts.
- **Weekly reading sessions** are conducted to enhance speaking skills and build confidence.
- **70** students from our first batch, who faced major learning gaps during the pandemic, continue to attend our centers; we have curated a syllabus that aligns with their current academic level and progression.

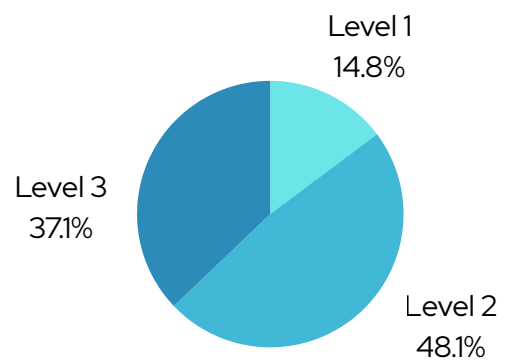


The charts below show the students' English reading proficiency levels based on our initial assessment.

Class 2-5



Class 6 - 9



Letter recognition

Reading words

Reading sentences

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

WINGS - Life skills Learning

This year's life skills topics range from the solar system to local history, great saints, the lingams and temples of Tiruvannamalai. Students will also learn about trees and herbs around them, as well as responsible phone usage and personal hygiene.

Various activities are conducted to build social responsibility among the children. Recently, they were given the responsibility of announcing the eye-checkup camp we organized. The children went door to door, creating awareness among the community. This initiative helps them understand responsibility, communication, and the importance of community service.



Children actively working with globe and map



APJ Abdul Kalam's birthday celebration at all centers—children learned, remembered, and felt inspired.

Door to door campaign for eye camp

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

ROOTS- Culture & History

Appreciating culture and heritage helps us understand who we are and stay connected to our roots. It also builds respect for others and keeps our traditions alive for future generations.

We have collaborated with **Chinmaya Mission** and are running the **Bala Vihar** program in all our centers.

1. Involving Parents

We encourage parents to take part in the weekly Bala Vihar sessions, and they participate enthusiastically, even helping distribute prasadam after the class.

2. Community Inclusion

To promote community bonding, we conduct bhajans at the local temple on special festive or pooja days and invite the entire community to join.

3. Celebrating Festivals Together

All festivals are celebrated at each center, and children are taught the significance and values behind every festival.



 HIDDEN VOICES

Thanks to Hidden Voices for converting Ramayana stories into audio. This helps our teachers save time, listen on the go, learn the correct pronunciation, and deliver it accurately to the students.

Career Guidance Program for Rural Students

In rural areas, students lack awareness about the diverse career opportunities available to them after completing their schooling. Due to limited exposure and guidance, they often choose academic streams that do not align with their interests, abilities, or career aspirations. As a result, many students lose motivation, perform poorly in their higher secondary exams, and eventually pursue courses or jobs that do not suit their potential.

To address this challenge, in association with ILP(India Literacy Project), we are organizing **Career Guidance/awareness Program** across **the villages we work** to help students make informed choices and envision meaningful career paths.

Through this program, we aim to create awareness among rural students about various career opportunities in arts, science, and commerce streams and to introduce students to entrepreneurial opportunities and government sector jobs and the preparation required.

Target Group: Students of Classes 9 to 12



KRIYĀ



VILVAM VAASAL | KRIYĀ

Create and Strengthen livelihoods

Kriyā was started to address the fundamental issue of creating local livelihoods and stemming urban migration.

Through Kriyā, Vilvam actively works on the following:

- Incubate and establish self sustaining rural Enterprises
- Strengthen local business
- Build skill to help get livelihoods
- Encourage replication by documenting process and learnings involved in setting up a rural MSME in a playbook.

2025 - 2026 Vision

Expand the Organic Greens/keerai livelihood program to meet the growing demand in both local and urban markets.

Athai's Kathais

Good health in every bunch

Distributed Ownership Model

Building on last year's initiative, this women's cooperative has continued to expand its work in growing and distributing native organic greens. This year, rural women cultivated 27 varieties of traditional keerai and supplied them to both rural and urban communities. While urban markets receive these greens through established sales channels, village communities are offered the same organic produce at the price of chemically grown greens, encouraging healthier eating habits. This initiative not only promotes sustainable farming but also strengthens livelihoods for rural women.

Weekly "Greens Mela": Weekly Greens Melas are conducted in VKC centers to create awareness about the benefits of eating native greens.

Seasonal greens: New seasonal greens were added, giving consumers greater choice and introducing forgotten traditional varieties.

Collaboration With Urban Partners: Partnerships with urban organic stores and communities helped increase visibility and demand for native greens.

VILVAM VAASAL | KRIYĀ

Create and Strengthen livelihoods



4000 bundles of greens sold to date



VILVAM VAASAL | MANDALĀ

MAKING HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND LOCAL

Through MANDALĀ, Vilvam is taking a deeper, preventive approach to health and wellness. Our long-term goals remain to:

- Establish and run a wellness center
- Build a world-class herbal nursery and knowledge bank
- Create a medicinal herbal garden in every village
- Provide preventive care focused on diet, nutrition & herbal remedies
- Restore respect for the elderly and their traditional knowledge

This year, our health work moved strongly toward practical, everyday **preventive care** in the villages. The focus was on daily habits, nutrition, and rediscovering simple herbal practices that reduce the need for frequent hospital visits.

2025 - 2026 Vision

Focus on early detection and basic health screening

Promote health awareness in the community through active outreach programs

Build awareness on using food as medicine



VILVAM VAASAL | MANDALĀ

MAKING HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND LOCAL

Early detection and basic health screening



EYE

DENTAL

WOMEN'S
HEALTH

ORTHOPEDIC

Vilvam continues to conduct health camps in the villages we work in, with the aim of identifying and addressing health issues early and making health services accessible to all. With the collaboration of the Tamil Nadu Government, we plan to organise health camps in all the cluster villages we work in.



Eye camp held on 16th November at Kaveriyampoondi Government School with support from Government Hospital staff.

VILVAM VAASAL | MANDALĀ

MAKING HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND LOCAL

Health Awareness through Active Village Outreach

SURVEYS

DEMONSTRATION

DISCUSSION

DISTRIBUTION

To encourage the community to use food as medicine, we regularly conduct awareness sessions in the villages. These sessions are held during Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), where we are able to reach many families at once.

To make the learning more meaningful, we distribute seasonal herbal decoctions—such as kashayam for cold and hibiscus tea—during the sessions. These are prepared using traditional recipes shared by village elders and our wellness team. Families have begun asking for more such sessions, showing growing interest in natural and preventive health practices.

Alongside these on-ground activities, we also share simple, practical health tips through **social media outreach**, helping the message reach a wider community.

Through these efforts, we are slowly rebuilding a culture of everyday wellness rooted in simple foods, herbs, and traditional knowledge.

Seasonal herbal remedies were distributed in a regular rhythm across 25 villages.



Kashayam preparation



Distribution at our VKC

Food as medicine

We encourage families to include greens in their regular diet, as many are unaware of how strongly they help build immunity. The children are being taught the benefits of consuming greens in our centers and are now encouraging their parents to include them at home. To support this habit, we help them access organic greens sourced from a women-run livelihood project, and we conduct a weekly **Greens Mela** to promote regular consumption.



A program called **Unave Marundhu** was launched to share weekly wellness and preventive herbal care videos through social media. Since people are very comfortable using their phones, WhatsApp has become an effective way for us to reach families directly in their homes. Through this, we are now able to connect with over 2,000 people.

The videos include simple homemade herbal remedies for common ailments and easy recipes using traditional ingredients that help build immunity and bring forgotten foods back into regular use.

A few of the videos that were shared and received great responses are:

- Vethalai rasam for cold
- Mindful eating
- Jeera water for digestive issues
- Ponnangani keerai dosai



Snippet from Weekly Wellness Videos

ĀRANYA



ĀRANYA

FARM | FOREST | ENVIRONMENT

Preserve vital components of a self-sustaining life

Over the past year, we have taken significant steps to restore ecological balance at the village level. However, this year, we were able to expand our efforts in a substantial way across multiple villages.

As part of ARANYA, Vilvam has initiated a focused afforestation effort across **14 villages**, creating green spaces in **temple premises and in key public areas**. Planting in these **protected spaces** ensures that the trees are nurtured, safeguarded, and not cut down. These emerging nandavanams and community green zones are already beginning to transform the landscape by bringing shade, improving soil health, supporting biodiversity, and strengthening village ecosystems.

Through ARANYA, we continue to work towards our long-term goals to:

- Propagate, Save & Distribute Seeds & Saplings
- Nurture Native Cattle and Promote Traditional Agricultural Practices
- Create Nandavanams / community gardens and mini forests in villages. and Revive traditional Ecological Knowledge
- Increase Green Cover & Biodiversity

2025 - 2026 Vision

Plant the required number of trees to neutralise carbon emissions in villages.

Expand the afforestation program to more villages.

Involve the community in both planting and maintenance to ensure long-term sustainability

Provide free saplings to farmers and conduct regular monitoring to increase tree cover across the villages.

Increasing Green Cover for Carbon Neutral Villages – Why?

Across the villages where we work, motorbikes are the primary mode of transportation for livelihoods, education, and essential services. However, even modest levels of fuel use contribute significantly to annual CO₂ emissions.

A typical motorbike in these regions uses about 20 litres of petrol per month, resulting in:


- **240 litres of petrol per year**
- **545 kg of CO₂ emissions annually per motorbike** (based on India's petrol emission factor of 2.27 kg CO₂/litre)

With thousands of motorbikes across the operational villages, the collective carbon footprint is substantial. For example, a single village with 250 motorbikes emits over 136.25 tons of CO₂ every year.


In Indian climatic conditions, a young or medium-aged tree can absorb approximately **10 kg of CO₂ per year**, beginning 3–5 years after planting.

About **55 trees** are needed to offset the yearly emissions of one motorbike.

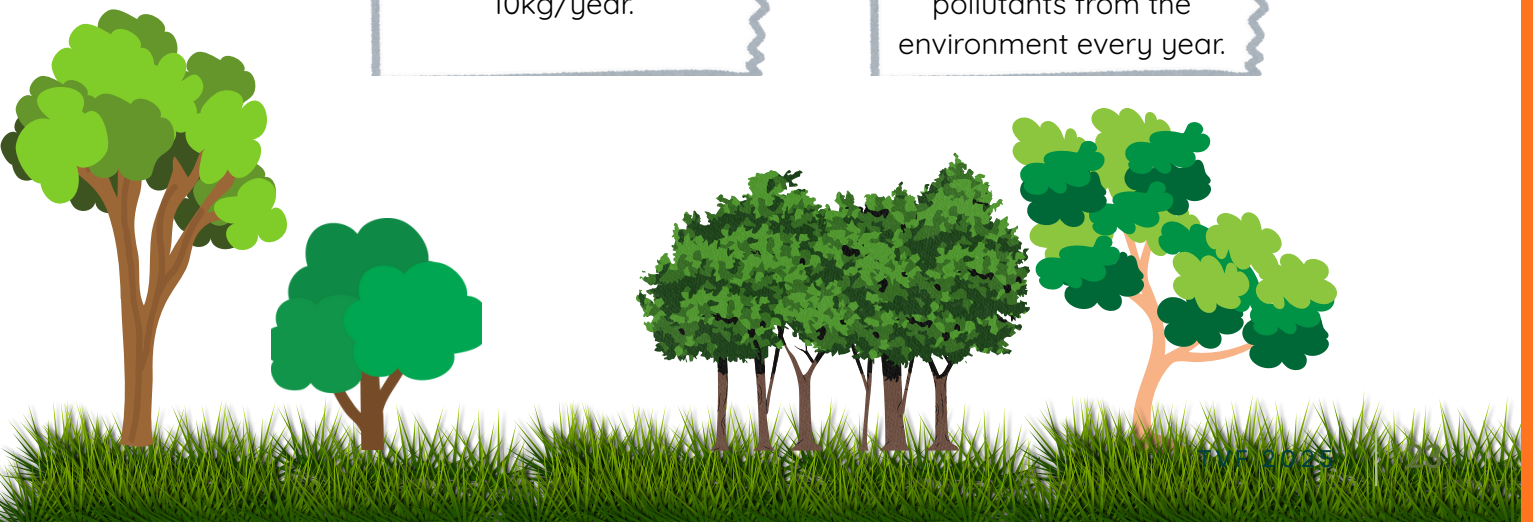
When scaled across all villages, this translates into the need for hundreds of thousands of trees, representing both a climate imperative and a powerful opportunity for high-impact, nature-based investment. Expanding green cover not only offsets emissions but also enhances biodiversity, improves groundwater recharge, and strengthens climate resilience for rural communities.



A single tree can absorb CO₂ at a rate of 10kg/year.



100 trees can remove nearly 450 kg of air pollutants from the environment every year.



Half-Yearly Highlights



3055
Trees Planted

















480
Herbal plants Planted



~3.48 Lakh sq. ft
Area Greened

Our Green Journey Across Villages

1	Aswanagasuranai		Nandhavanam at Amman Kovil
2	Pandithapattu		Nandhavanam at Perumal Kovil
3	Gegampattu		Nandhavanam at Draupadi Amman Kovil
4	Kanji		Nandhavanam at Murugan Temple & along roadside
5	Kottavur		Nandhavanam at Amman Temple
6	Quilom		Public space
7	Karapattu		Govt. School campus and along roadside
8	Alathur		Amman Kovil and Vedyappan Kovil
9	Kanathampoondi		Nakshataravanam at Vedyappan Kovil
10	Periyakolapadi		Public space
11	Adiannamalai		Temple-owned Government School campus.
12	Pudhur		Pond side
13	Kaveriyampoondi		Nakshataravanam at Vedyappan Kovil
14	Nallavanpalayam		Nandhavanam at Murugan Temple

Setting up Nandavanam/ Nakshatravanam

Nandavanam and Nakshatravanam gardens were established in the temples of following villages - **Aswanagasuranai, Pandithapattu, Gegampattu, Kanji, Kaveriyampoondi, Nallavanpalayam, Alathur, and Kanathampoondi**

Proper fencing and drip irrigation systems were installed to ensure protection and sustainable maintenance.

The initiative has generated strong community interest, with villagers actively participating in the greening of their temple spaces.

Over time, the flowering plants will meet the temple's daily requirements, while the native trees will provide shade and enrich the local ecosystem. These actions not only secure green cover for the next generation but also honour the cultural and ecological significance of village temples and commons, which historically served as natural hubs of biodiversity.

Greening Government Schools

In two villages - Karapattu, Adiannamalai, plantation drives were carried out within government school campuses. Native and shade-giving trees were planted to create a greener and more pleasant environment for students. The school staff and students have taken responsibility for maintaining the saplings, turning their campuses into spaces that inspire care for nature.



Partnerships and Collaborations

- **Green Shakthi Foundation** supported our initiative by providing 500 saplings.
- **The Forest Department** continues to extend its support by supplying native trees saplings for our plantation activities.



Monitoring & Maintenance

Regular monitoring and maintenance have been key to ensuring the survival and healthy growth of the planted trees. Our team visits the sites periodically to assess sapling survival rates, identify gaps, and replace any lost plants. Local community - students, temple care-taker have been encouraged to water and protect the saplings planted. This collective effort has helped strengthen local ownership and ensure long-term sustainability of the initiative.



ADIANNAMALAI



ALATHUR



ASWAGANASURANAI



KANJI



KARAPATTU



KAVERIYAMPOONDI



KANATHAMPOONDI



NALLAVANPALAYAM



PANDITHAPATTU



PUTHUR



QUILOM



GEGAMPATTU



BĀLĀMBIKA SANCTUARY for INDIGENOUS CATTLE & SEEDS
NEWSLETTER #02 | December 2025



Greetings from the Pennaar Valley!

Balambika Sanctuary and The Vilvam Foundation would like to thank you all for your generous contributions towards our efforts to protect and promote native seeds and cattle. This year the rains were spread more evenly over the South-West and North-East monsoons and our well remained reasonably full through the year unlike last year when we went totally dry in the summer and then had floods in the winter.

This year, we got the paddy cycle started in the month of Aipassi (late October).



The fields are flooded and the nitrogen fixing green manure plants, that were planted a couple of months earlier, are ploughed back into the soil.

Padmanabhan, our bull is refusing to plough, and you can see him standing on the side watching his harem doing all the hard work.

This year, we have sown eleven traditional varieties of rice - Pisini, Karuppu Kavuni, Sempalai, Salem Samba, Kichili Samba, MaappiLai Samba, Thooyamalli, Kappakaar, KuzhiaDichaan, Devaki and VaigunDa



Seedlings are transplanted from the nursery to the field plots.



Seedlings being sown a foot apart as per the SRI method allows for easy weeding and more space for each plant to grow to its natural shape.



Also in the month of Aipassi, a baby calf was born to Amudha, our resident matriarch. He was named Nandi Vishaala by Nochur Swami on a visit to the farm. Our first Kangeyam bull.

Like last year, once harvested, you can all expect to taste these rare varieties of rice sometime close to the middle of next year!

Vegetables at Vilvam

In addition to the 60 native varieties of vegetables we have been growing since last year, we are now specializing in local greens.

Over ten varieties of keerais (soppu) are being cultivated and harvested in multiple locations by rural women/teams. These greens not only bring much needed iron, calcium, micro-nutrients and fiber to their diets but are also now serving as a source of income. The Vilvam Foundations's program - 'Aththai's with Kaththais' is now shipping greens to communities in Bangalore and Chennai every week!



Hope to see you here this year...
Our community kitchen is up and running !!



The Vilvam FoundationTM

THANK YOU