



The Vilvam Foundation™

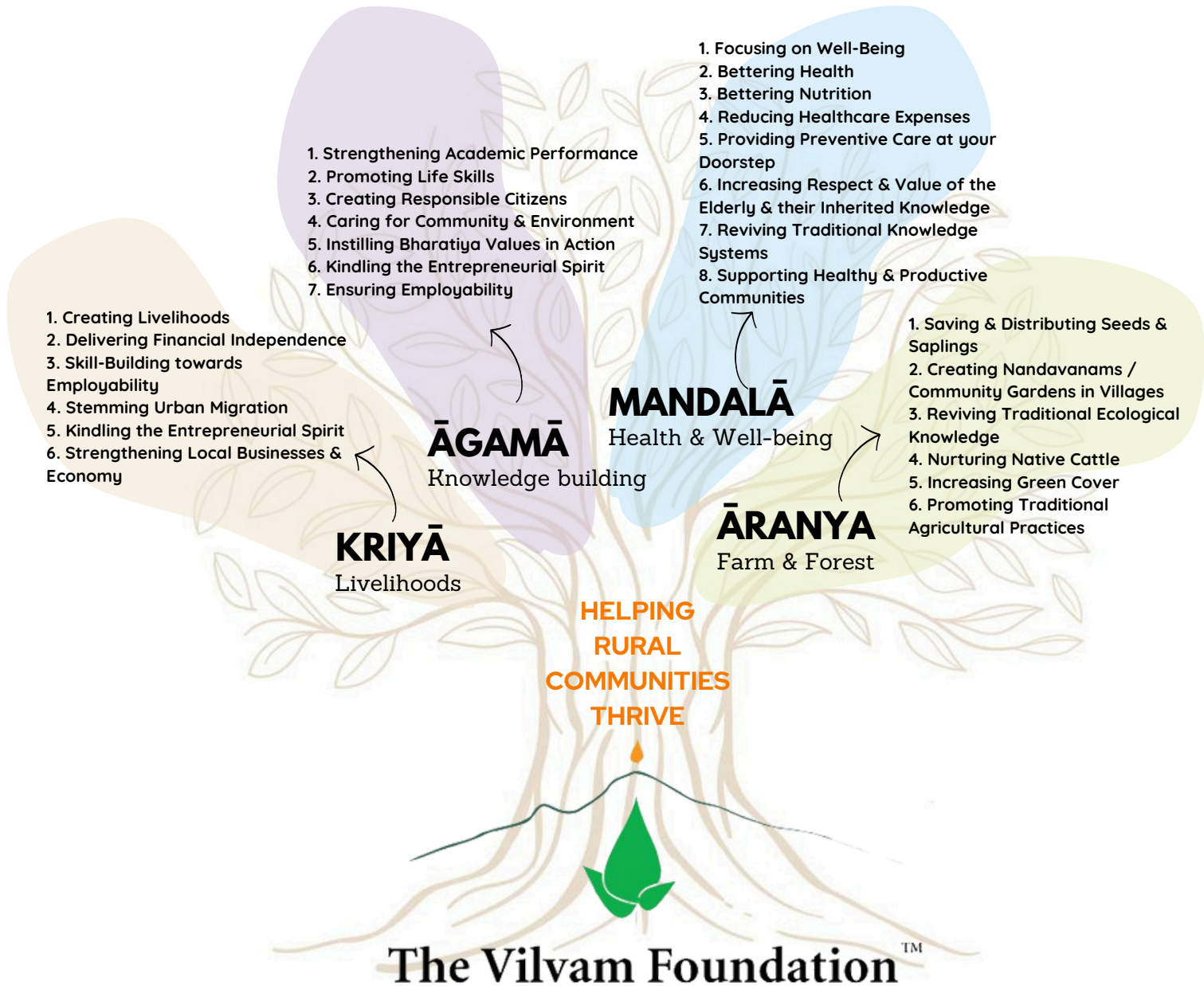
# HALF YEARLY UPDATE

December 2024



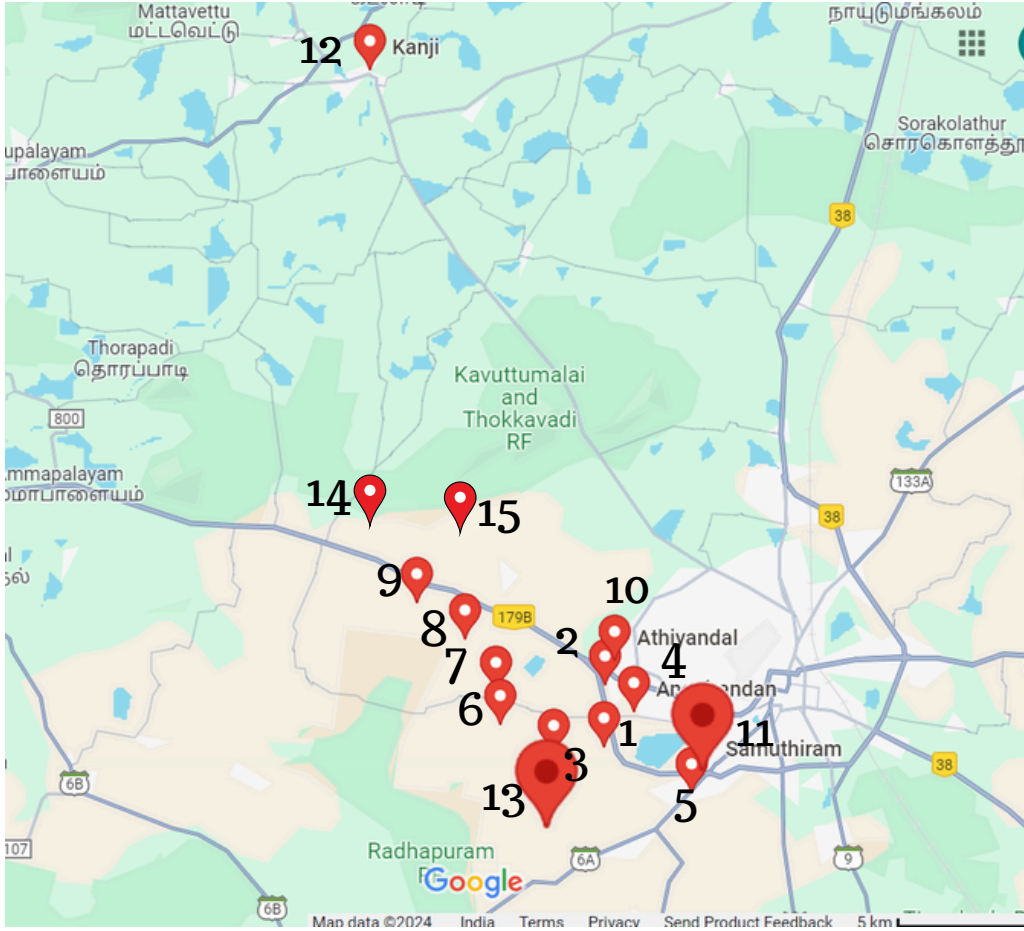
# VILVAM | VISION

Helping rural communities thrive



*Change does 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 | Villages We Serve



1	<u>KANANTHAMPOONDI</u>
2	<u>KAVERIYAMPOONDI</u>
3	<u>PANDITHAPATTU</u>
4	<u>ANAIPIRANTHAN</u>
5	<u>NALLAVANPALAYAM</u>
6	<u>PERUMPAKKAM</u>
7	<u>SE-AGARAM</u>
8	<u>ASWANAGASWRANAI</u>

9	<u>PERIYAKOLAPADI</u>
10	<u>ATHIYANDAL</u>
11	<u>SANTHAMEDU</u>
12	<u>KANJI</u>
13	<u>SIRUPAKKAM - PUDUR</u>
14	<u>Chinnakolapadi*</u>
15	<u>Paliapattu*</u>

\*Awaiting funds to initiate our programs

# VILVAM VAASAL | ĀGAMĀ

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

## Program Overview

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

The focus is on **Knowledge, Education, Culture, Vocation & Entrepreneurship**

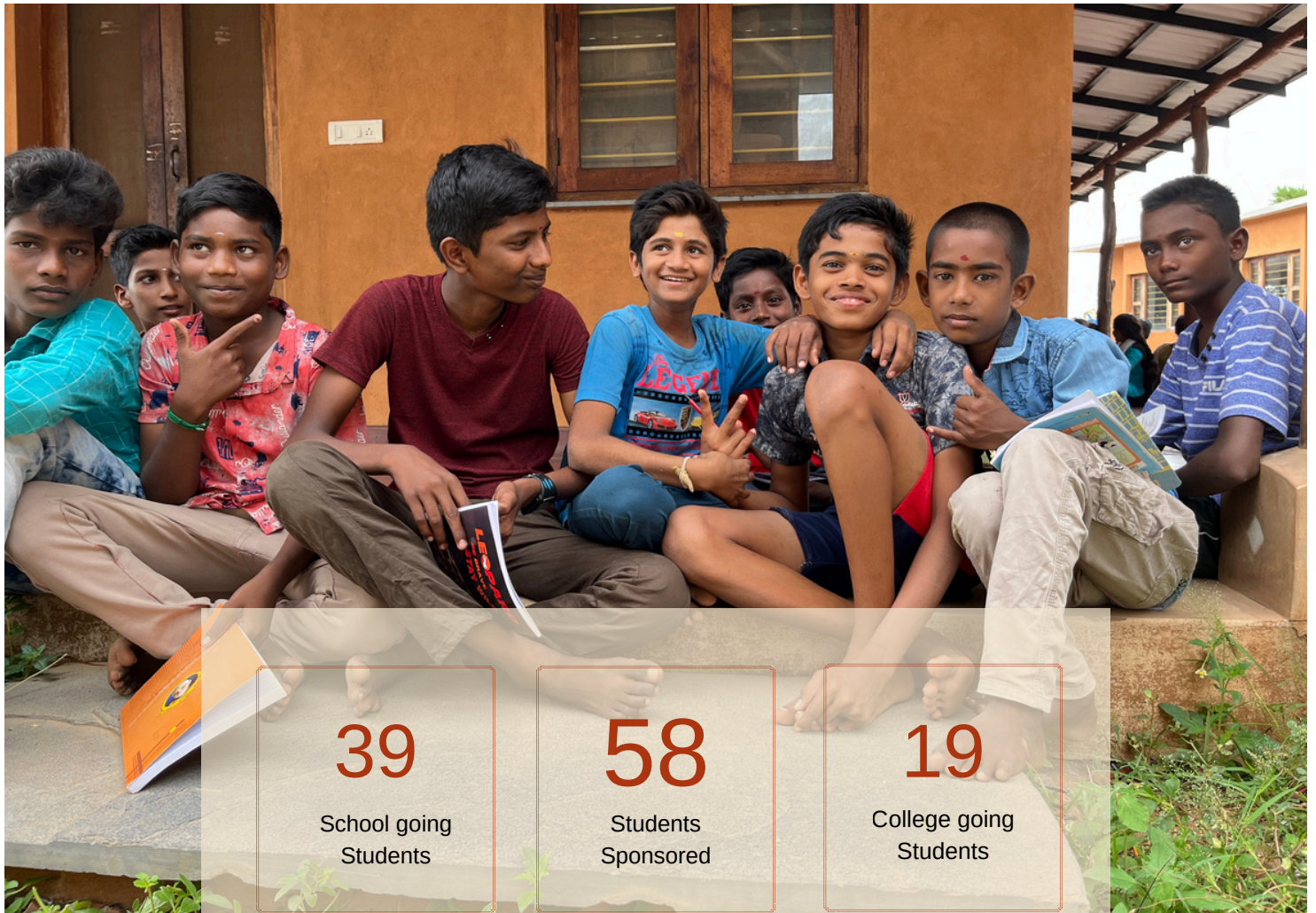
## Program Design

PROGRAM NAME	AGE GROUP	DESCRIPTION
Education Sponsorship	Class 1 to College	Designed to provide financial support to deserving students.
School+ (VKC)	Class 1-8	Strengthening foundational skills along with culture and value-based education, and life skills learning.
Udhyogam	Class 9 to College	Designed to cultivate an entrepreneurial and employment mindset in young adults.
Digital Literacy	Class 9 to College	Equips students with essential digital skills



# ĀGAMĀ | EDUCATION SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency



The **performance-based sponsorship model** motivates children to excel in their studies and reach their full potential. This approach encourages consistent academic effort, instills a sense of responsibility and pride in their achievements, and also brings joy to the sponsors.

## Indumathi - Breaking Barriers!!

Indumathi is an intelligent & ambitious girl with a passion for learning. However, after completing her 12th grade, her dreams of joining college were put on hold due to her family's financial situation. Her parents faced immense pressure from relatives who advised them to marry Indumathi off instead of spending money on her education.

Despite these obstacles, Indumathi's mother remained supportive of her daughter's aspirations. Recognizing Indumathi's academic brilliance and determination, the Vilvam Foundation offered her the sponsorship and encouragement she needed to pursue higher education. This strengthened her resolve to study for a degree.

With the sponsorship, Indumathi enrolled in the first year of a B.Com degree, becoming the first person in her family to attend college. She travels to college by the college bus, a journey made possible by the support she received.

# ĀGAMĀ | VILVAM KNOWLEDGE CENTER (VKC)

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency



15  
Villages

23  
Teachers

435  
Children

23  
Centers

3  
Cordinators

## SCHOOL+

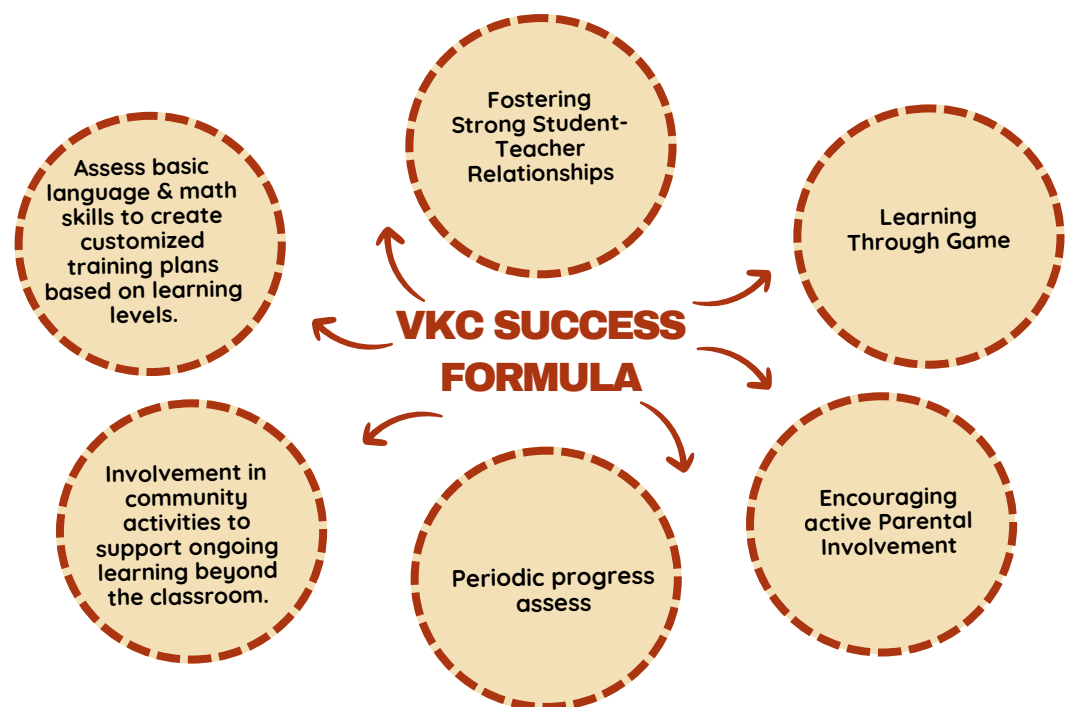
Strengthening Foundational Skills in Tamil, English & Math

## WINGS

Essential life skill classes

## ROOTS

- Knowledge about local history, country & people
- Individual & community responsibility
- Culture & Heritage appreciation



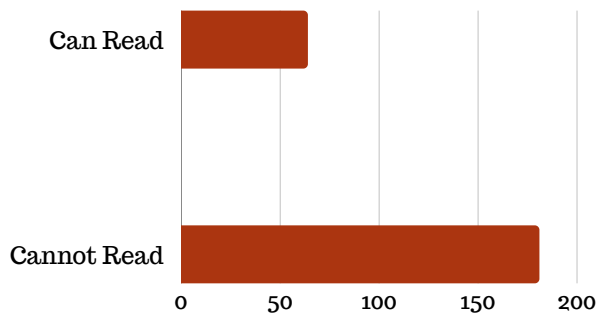
# ĀGAMĀ | VILVAM KNOWLEDGE CENTER (VKC)

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

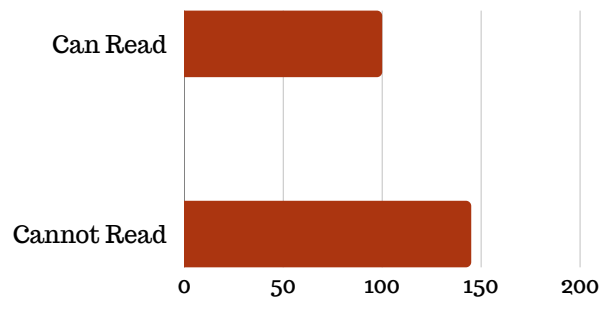
## Initial Student Evaluation and Customized Training Plans

An initial student evaluation is conducted based on the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**. Customized training plans are then developed for each level based on the test results.

The charts below indicate the reading proficiency levels for students in class 5 and above when reading a simple sentence in languages.

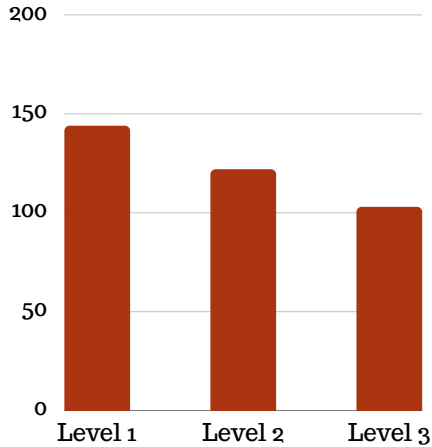


English

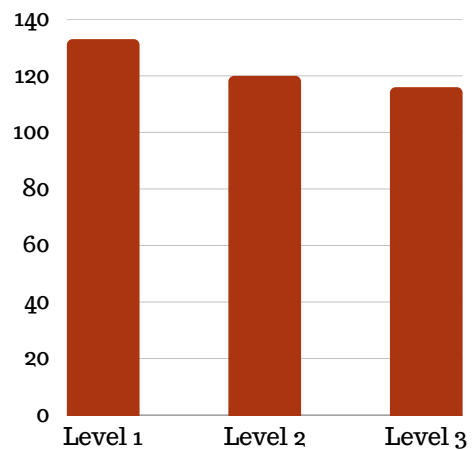


Tamil

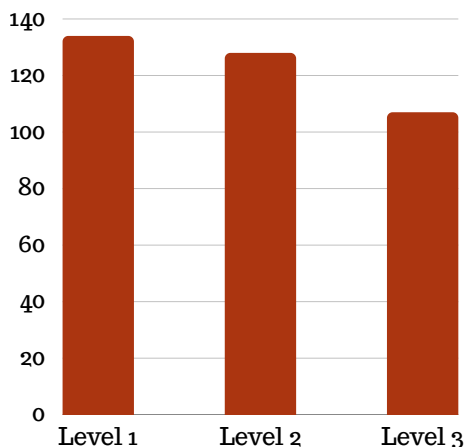
The charts below indicate the Number of children in each level based on test results



English



Tamil



Math

# ĀGAMĀ | VILVAM KNOWLEDGE CENTER (VKC)

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

## HIGHLIGHTS

### NEW CENTERS

- **13** New centers opened on June 12th 2024. At each new center, a tree was planted to symbolize growth and sustainability. Students care for these trees to foster a sense of ownership.

### EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

- An initial student evaluation was conducted in June based on the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**. Customized training plans were developed for each level based on the test results.
- Lesson plans and evaluations based on **Bloom's Taxonomy** are created to promote higher-order thinking (Analyze and Create), and their effectiveness in enhancing critical thinking and creativity among students is already evident.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- The first parent-teacher meeting was successfully conducted in October to update about the students' progress and upcoming activities.

**Average Parents attendance : 85%**

## TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF PANDI MEENA

Pandi Meena, a 7th standard student, comes from a challenging background with uneducated parents and a father struggling with alcoholism. She initially had no knowledge of Tamil letters or numbers, which led to a deep inferiority complex and made her hesitant to speak. However, with personalized attention and support from her dedicated VKC teachers, Pandi Meena's life began to change. She learned addition and subtraction and can now read in both Tamil and English. Her growing skills have boosted her confidence, although she has yet to fully overcome her complex.

We remain hopeful that with consistent effort and support from her teachers, Pandi Meena will emerge successful by the end of this academic year.

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



They say that education is not about filling a pot but lighting a fire. Truly, **Amsa**, a humble teacher from rural Tiruvannamalai, has been embodying this philosophy quietly. With an MSc in Mathematics and a BEd, her spark was evident from the start. She goes beyond treating teaching as merely a job, connecting deeply with her students through her patience and listening skills. Her students excel in various activities, from improving reading skills and gaining confidence in spoken English to celebrating festivals, creating vegetable patches (as part of Lifeskills), & performing folk songs. Amsa's inspiring approach has made her a standout educator, and she now serves as the training head for the ĀGAMĀ program.

# ĀGAMĀ | VILVAM KNOWLEDGE CENTER (VKC)

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency

## NEW CENTER INAUGURATION



## KRISHNA JAYANTI & GANESH CHATURTHI CELEBRATION



## LIFE SKILLS LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVITIES



# ĀGAMĀ | DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Knowledge building towards employability & self-sufficiency



13  
College  
Students

35  
School  
Students

2  
Dedicated  
Teachers

Project-  
based  
Learning

## A PROUD SUCCESS STORY!!

Vijayarangan, a 2nd-year B.Com student, attended our basic computer training course in the 2023-24 academic year. The classes were held five days a week throughout the year, covering basic computer skills, Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Coming from a farming family, with his father aging and unable to work as before, and his mother working as a construction laborer, Vijayarangan faced financial challenges. To support his family, he sought ways to earn extra income after his college hours. His opportunity came when a CA office in Tiruvannamalai offered him a part-time job. Thanks to his knowledge of computers, especially Excel, he secured a position earning Rs. 5000 per month. Now, he works 4-5 hours daily after college and is proud to be contributing to his family's financial needs.





## UDHYOGAM: CULTIVATING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IN RURAL YOUTH

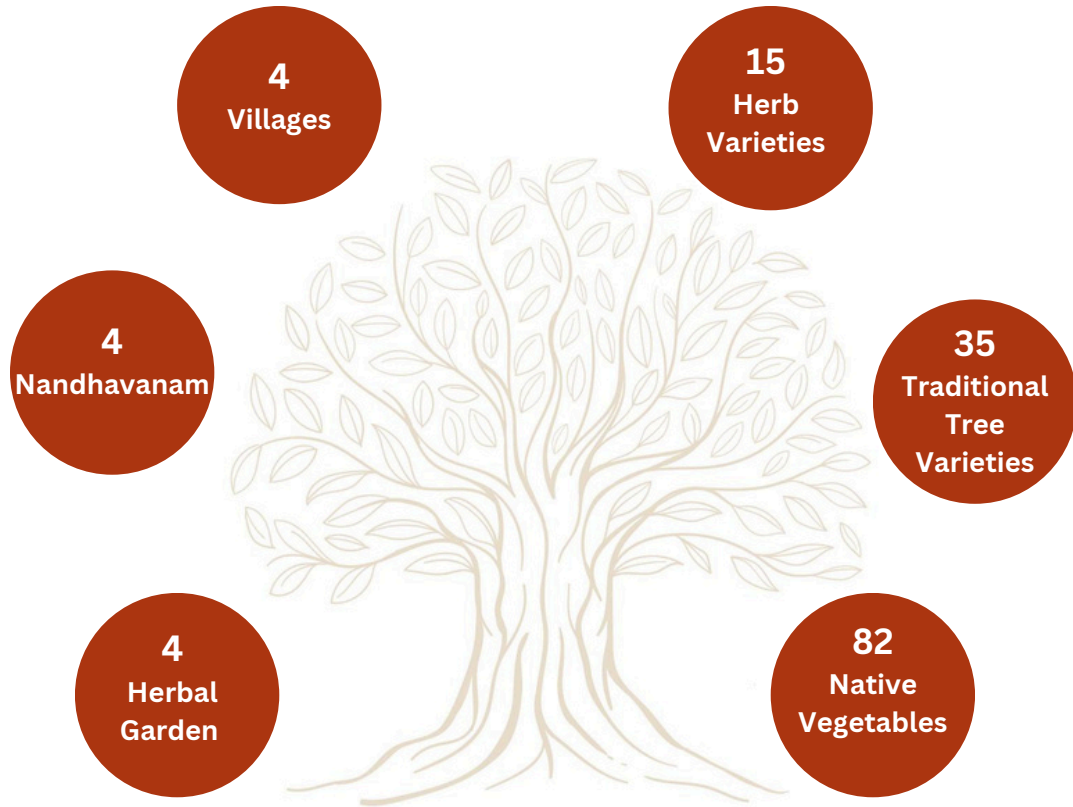
UDHYOGAM is a transformative program designed to cultivate an entrepreneurial and employment mindset among rural young adults. The program focuses on essential life skills, communication skills, and other critical competencies needed to become successful entrepreneurs. Targeting students from **9th grade up to college**, UDHYOGAM empowers participants with practical knowledge and hands-on experience. Through workshops, mentorship, and real-world projects, students learn to identify opportunities, develop business plans, and build the confidence to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

Our coordinators distributed pamphlets and held awareness sessions in neighboring villages to promote the program. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with 35 students enrolling. The program officially commenced on August 18th, with a local entrepreneur serving as the chief guest.



# VILVAM VAASALI | ĀRANYĀ

FARM | FOREST | ENVIRONMENT



With support from the local community, Vilvam Foundation successfully established gardens at temples in four villages: Perumbakkam, Aswanagasuranai, Pandithapattu, and Kaveriyampoondi.

In Aswanagasuranai, a **Nakshatra Vanam** has been developed where trees associated with the 27 constellations or nakshatras have been planted while in the other villages, native trees and herbal plants were planted. This initiative will foster community involvement, as locals will care for the gardens, with our team overseeing the progress.

## Activities and Implementation

- Secured the local panchayat's approval to establish the herbal garden and the nandavanams.
- The local community supported us by identifying common land that we could use for our programs.
- Established a comprehensive herbal garden with over 90 species, organized into focus areas such as skin issues, gastric and digestive problems, and cold, cough, and respiratory ailments.
- Identified a Vilvam woman and a local elder to maintain the Nandavanam. Also established a clear and effective maintenance rhythm for the garden.

# VILVAM VAASALI | ĀRANYĀ

FARM | FOREST | ENVIRONMENT



Initial land/ site preparation underway to setup Nandavanam/ Garden at temples in 4 villages.



Women actively engaged in planting the Nandavanam



Sixty-four varieties of native vegetables were planted at the Vilvam premises.



Nandhavanam in the villages

# VILVAM VAASALI | ĀRANYĀ

FARM | FOREST | ENVIRONMENT

## BALAMBIKA SANCTUARY

We have established a key partnership with the BĀLĀMBIKA Sanctuary to save and promote native seeds and cattle.



Over the past three months, our vegetable seed-saving efforts have been in full swing. We are currently cultivating a diverse array of vegetable varieties, including:

- 24 varieties of Keerai (greens)
- 12 varieties of Ladies Finger
- 12 varieties of Brinjal
- 8 varieties of Bottle Gourd
- 2 varieties of Ridge Gourd
- 2 varieties of Snake Gourd
- 1 variety of Pumpkin
- 3 varieties of Chilli
- 12 varieties of Tomato
- 1 variety of Radish
- 2 varieties of Carrot
- 3 varieties of Beans

Also we have sown nine traditional varieties of rice:

- Karuppu Kavuni
- Mapillai Samba
- Kappakaar
- Devaki
- Kuzhiadichan
- Pisini
- Vaigunda
- Salem Samba
- Sempalai
- Pisini.

These efforts are essential in preserving the biodiversity of our region and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices.

# VILVAM VAASALI | ĀRANYĀ

FARM | FOREST | ENVIRONMENT

**BALAMBIKA SANCTUARY**



Women planting and caring for native vegetables



Paddy beds of nine traditional varieties of rice



Our first batch of seeds!



BĀLĀMBIKA

BĀLĀMBIKA SANCTUARY for INDIGENOUS CATTLE & SEEDS  
NEWSLETTER #01 | December 2024

Greetings from Balambika Sanctuary and The Vilvam Foundation!  
Thank you all for your generous contributions towards our efforts to save  
and promote native seeds and cattle.

### Month of Karthigai

This monsoon, we have sown nine traditional varieties of rice - Karuppu  
Kavuni, Mapillai Samba, Kappakaar, Devaki, Kuzhiadichan,  
Pisini, Vaigunda, Salem Samba, Sempalai and Pisini.



Day 01 : The 9 Paddy Nursery and the Puja Before Planting



Day 14 : The Nursery Babies are now old enough for Kindergarten



Day 14 : Preparation for Transplanting



Day 14 : Transplanting into 9 different Paddies arranged so that varieties that have similar life cycles are not adjacent (to prevent cross pollination)



Day 14 : Done!

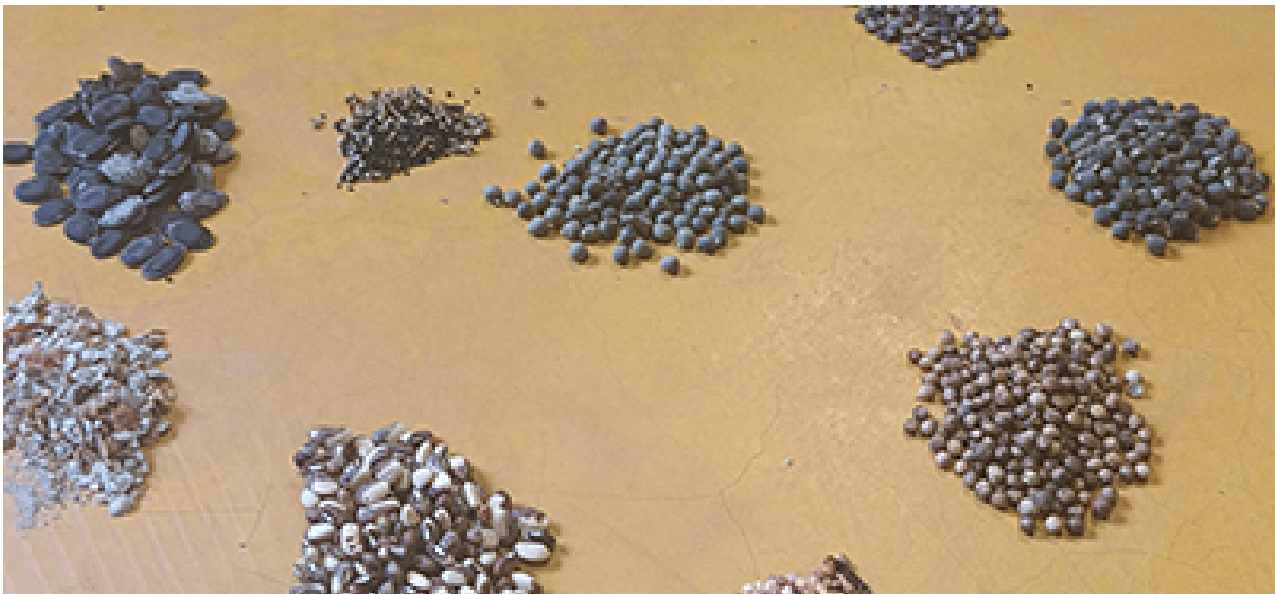
The paddy will now ripen over the next 115 to 150 days

If all goes well, once harvested, you can all expect to taste these rare varieties of rice come next April!

## Month of Aadi

Over the past three months, the vegetable seed-saving efforts have also been in full swing. We are now growing 24 varieties of Keerai (greens), 12 varieties of Ladies Finger, 12 varieties of Brinjal, 8 varieties of Bottle Gourd, 2 varieties of Ridge Gourd, 2 varieties of Snake Gourd, 1 variety of Pumpkin, 3 varieties of Chilli, 12 varieties of Tomato, 1 variety of Radish, 2 varieties of Carrot, and 3 varieties of Beans.





Our first batch of seeds!

These seeds will once again find their way into rural homes where they will be cherished like they used to be in times before the 'Agri Shop' became the master of our food universe. Do let us know if you have a terrace garden or a garden or a balcony where you grow veggies.



Month of Aipassi

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We were graced with the birth of a baby bull - Keshava. Keshava is the baby of Lakshmi and Padmanabhan (our resident Thaarpaarkar cows whose ancestry can be traced to the Thar Desert in Sindh)

# VILVAM VAASAL | MANDALĀ

MAKING HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND LOCAL



4  
VILLAGES

12  
SESSIONS

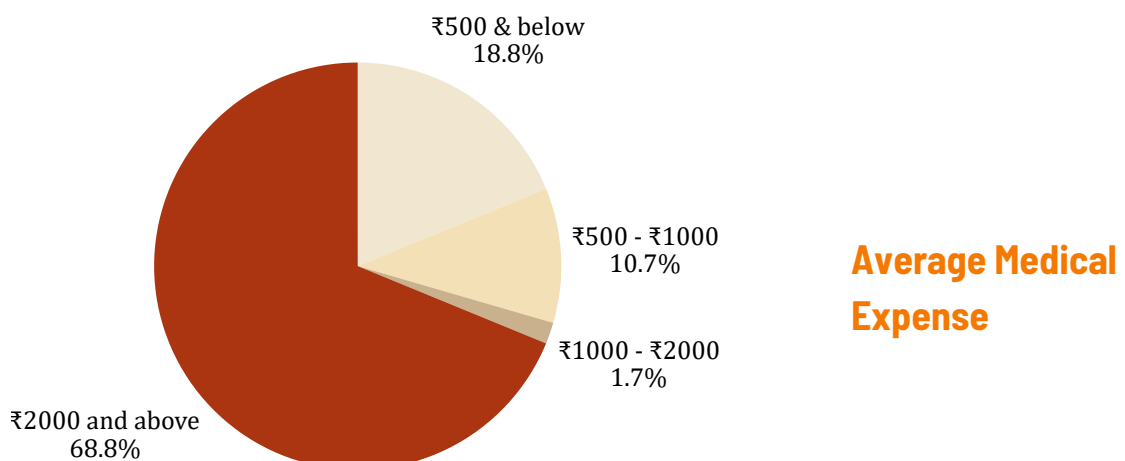
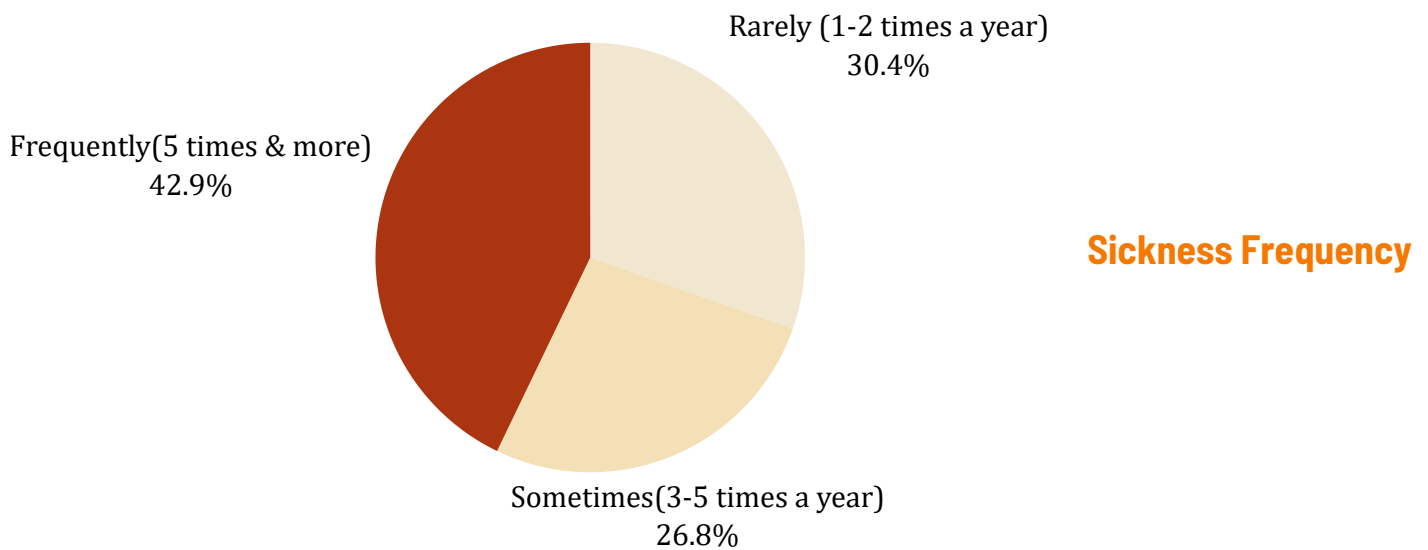
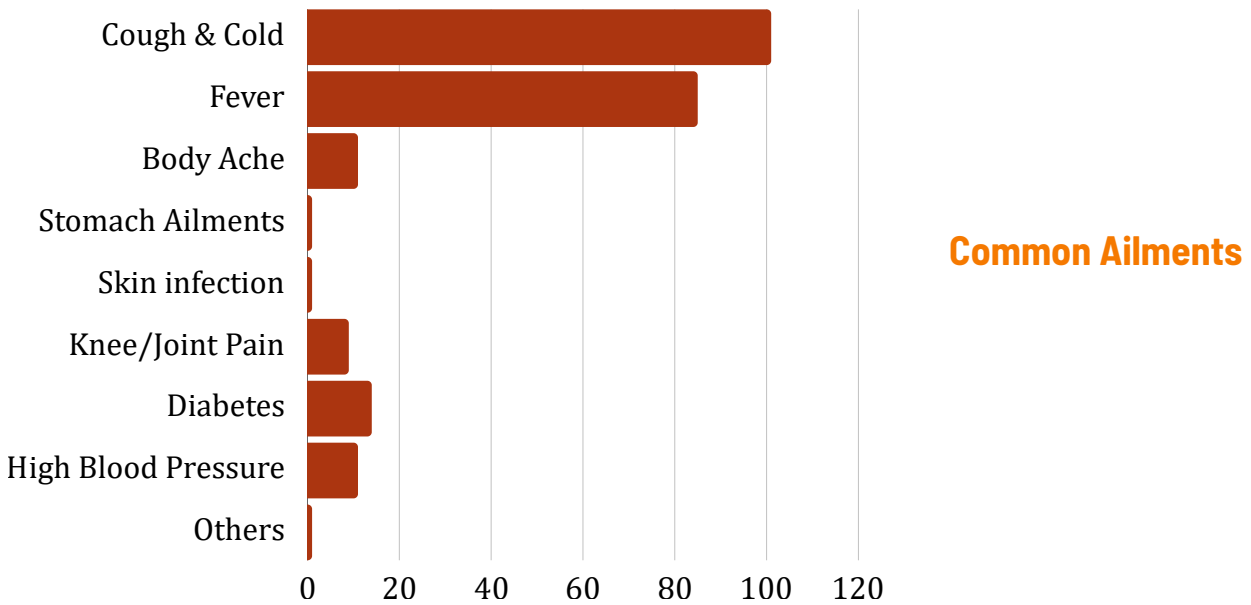
200  
ATTENDEES

- The outreach program was successfully launched in four villages under the mentorship of our consultant from Pinchadikulam, Auroville.
- **The primary focus of this initiative is to educate the community on using locally available herbs** to treat seasonal ailments, saving both significant money & time.
- An initial survey was conducted in these four villages to understand the common ailments among the local residents, allowing the program to focus on addressing these health issues.
- These sessions are typically conducted in public spaces within the village, such as temples, libraries, or the panchayat building.
- The response from the community has been fantastic, with active participation. They were taught various recipes using locally available herbs to boost immunity and treat seasonal colds and sore feet.
- A few of the recipes taught include : hibiscus/ blue pea flower tea, herbal mosquito repellent , oil for joint pain, and a decoction for cold and cough using Adathodai.

# VILVAM VAASAL | MANDALĀ

MAKING HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND LOCAL

## INSIGHTS FROM OUR SURVEY



# VILVAM VAASAL | MANDALĀ

MAKING HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND LOCAL

## OUTREACH PROGRAM IN ACTION



Participants proudly presenting their herbal preparations.



## Wellness Space

We are excited to announce the successful establishment of our wellness space, which will offer recipe tutorials, expert herb education, herbal remedy workshops, holistic health communication, and Sattvic healing classes.






**The Vilvam Foundation™**

**THANK YOU**

Kindly contact us at

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