



Rural Education & Action Development (READ)

Andimadam, Tamil Nadu, India

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Fiscal year April 2007- March 2008

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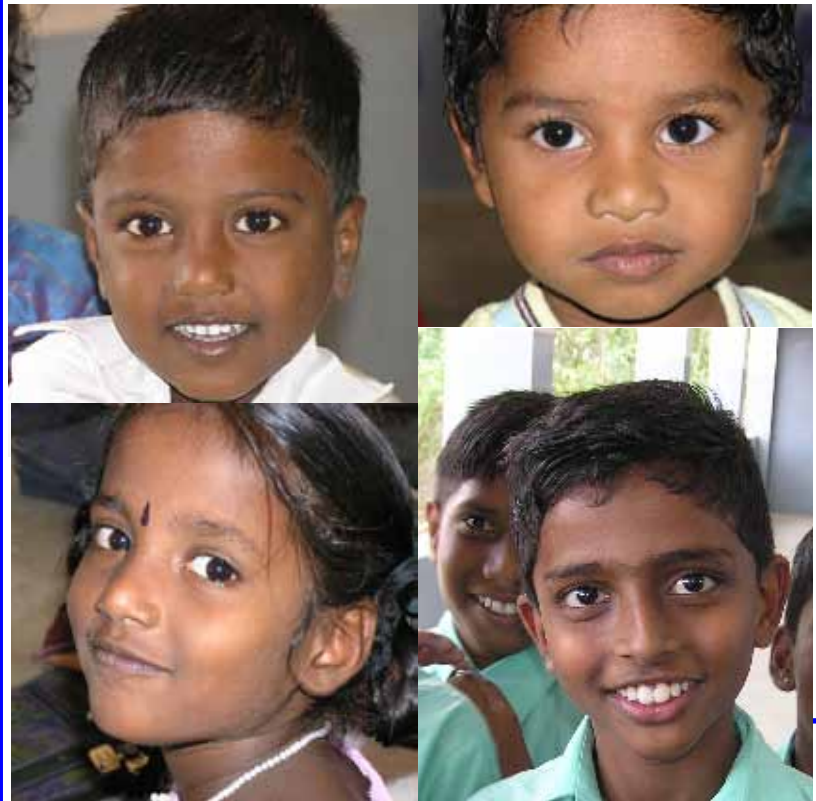
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(READ is registered under the Societies Registration Act 27 of 1975 and registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act of 1976).



Honourable President and Members of the General Body, READ, has successfully completed its 13th year in its long service mission. While successfully continuing some of its previous programs, READ was able to further develop infrastructure to provide better sustainability to its development activities. It could also expand its services to several new NGO partners in other areas, by contributing its expertise and by channeling funds from its partner organizations. Sahaya International Inc., and its networks of volunteers and contributors in the USA and Belgium continue to be the major funding partners who support our welfare activities and contribute much of the infrastructure development of READ.

Our thanks go out to Sahaya International, (USA, Belgium), the Alliance for Youth Achievements Inc. (USA), SAWES/Inba Seva Sangam and other friends, partners and well-wishers for their generous support. While thanking them all, I take much pleasure in presenting this annual report of our activities for the year 2007-2008 before this honorable general body of READ for its approval and further guidance.

D. SELVAM



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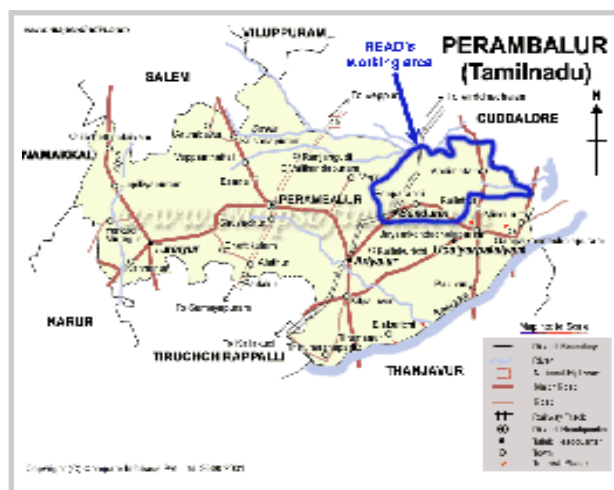
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1. Education

READ is undertaking both formal education to normal children and special education to differently abled children.

1.1. Formal education to normal children:

- The Mother Theresa standard English schools at Periyakrishnapuram and Thirukalapur villages, and the Jawahar Matriculation school at Andimadam are three schools offering primary education (1-5 Standards) to poor rural children. During this year, 91 children in Mother Theresa school and 56 children in Jawahar Matriculation school received quality education in English medium. The number of teachers was 7 for the Mother Theresa School and 6 Teachers for the Jawahar Matriculation school. The Mother Theresa school in Thirukalapur school has 22 children.
- In this reporting year, a permanent new school building was constructed for the Mother Theresa School at Periyakrishnapuram with funding from of Sahaya International Inc., USA.
- To construct a new school building for Jawahar Matriculation school, a piece of land was bought in this reporting year with funds provided by



READ's main areas of activity are Andimadam and Senthurai blocks of Perambalur district.

Sahaya International Inc., USA. Volunteers in Belgium also started to raise funds for the construction of this school via the organization SAWES (Belgium) which provided this financial support through Inba Seva Sangam (Sevapur, Karur district).

1.2. Special Education Schools:

READ runs two Special schools named ANBAGAM - one at Andimadam and the other at Perambalur - for mentally challenged children. These schools offer training on daily living activities and some basic education. A total of 36 children with different levels of disability are placed in these schools, which are run by 5 Special educators and 4 care takers.

In this reporting year, a grant was received from the State Commissioner for Disability (Chennai and Kuwait Front) and from the Diamond House (Antwerp, Belgium).

1.3. Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) Mysore:

Each year, CIIL a central government organization, provides a small grant to READ to undertake a Tamil literacy program to illiterate villagers. In this reporting year, 125 people were given reading and writing practices in Tamil language.



*The **Mother Teresa Standard English School** (Periyakrishnapuram village), of which construction was completed in 2008, provides basic education to many children, most of them from low-literacy and poor farming families.*





On February 9, 2008, when supporters from Belgium were visiting READ, we took many of the sponsored children to Silver Beach in Cuddalore.

2. Orphan and Vulnerable Children sponsorship program

Under this ongoing program, poor orphaned or semi-orphaned children and HIV-infected children received sponsorship for their educational and health. During this past year, 22 children identified by READ received educational sponsorship from the Alliance for Youth Achievement Inc.(AYA; USA), and 102 children from the supporting networks of Sahaya International and SAWES in the USA and Belgium.

The sponsorship and additional donations meet the cost of food, educational materials, school fees, summer camp and tours.

In addition, sponsors have been supporting the studies of Vasanthi, who is studying 2nd year of Bachelor of Science in Nursing in Chennai.

3. HIV/AIDS awareness, care & support program

3.1. Sahaya International Inc., USA and Hope Walks Program:

This is our major ongoing health program for HIV, which was supported by Sahaya International and includes grant support from Gilead Sciences and funds raised by Sahaya through the October 2007 Hope Walks Davis event. The grant support of Gilead Sciences was used particularly to help HIV-affected adults, while the funds from Hope Walks was used to support HIV-infected/affected orphans and vulnerable children.

- The positive network had an average attendance of 85 people at their monthly meetings. These meetings were used for counseling, strengthening and advocacy.
- 79 people (including 14 children) travel to the Government Hospital for Thoracic Medicine (Tambaram) and the Perambalur Government Hospital to receive antiretroviral drugs and medications to treat opportunistic infections.
- Support was given to 45 PLHIV (people living with HIV/AIDS) to cover some of their treatment expenses for opportunistic infections.
- The Hope Walks program also provided the



The Jawahar Matriculation School provides basic education to 60 children. During previous years, it has been operating in a rented building that is scheduled to be torn down soon. Construction of a new school was started in 2008 thanks to the fundraising efforts of volunteers in Belgium (particularly the Koninklijk Atheneum School of Ekeren) and the USA.

14 infected children with monthly supplies of nutritious food and covered their additional medical needs; it also provided general support to children of HIV-affected families.

- Micro-loans to 20 people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) to start micro-enterprises (such as goats, milk cow, sewing machine). This loan program would be managed as a revolving fund.

3.2. TNVHA:

The Tamilnadu Voluntary Health Association (TNVHA), Chennai also sponsored several small programs. In this reporting year, we conducted in our service area a youth leaders and community leaders training program, a reproduction & child health program (Rs. 11,000; funded by the Irish Embassy), TB control program (Rs. 5,000), and a HIV Mainstream disaster management program (Rs. 5,000) and street theatre training to NGO staff and volunteers.

3.3. MSM (men-having-sex-with men)

intervention- Tamilnadu State AIDS control Society (TNSACS):

In this reporting year we were a sanctioned a three-months project from TNSACS to undertake an HIV/AIDS intervention among MSM people in Cuddalore area. To prevent the spread of HIV among MSM, we organized mapping of MSM meeting points, MSM group identification, peer education, training on HIV control, condom promotion and focus group discussions. This project was successfully completed within time period of three months.

3.4. HIV Rallies:

During this reporting year, a total of 10 HIV awareness rallies were organized in Senthurai and Andimadam Blocks involving students, SHG members and youth.

3.5. HIV/AIDS education at Schools:

HIV/AIDS awareness was given to school children in 7 Government Higher Secondary

The READ Community Resource Center



The READ Community Resource Center is used for many rehabilitation programs for disabled people and also provides vocational skill-training programs; it also accommodates Anbagam, a school for mentally challenged children.

schools in this reporting year. The education included the basic facts about HIV, its transmission and preventive measures.

4. Disability programs

4.1. READ Community Resource Center

READ received previously a grant from the Japanese Embassy (Chennai) to construct a facilitation and capacity building center for the rural disabled people in our service area. The construction of this center was completed in this reporting year. Further training materials like a paper-cutting machine and support materials like physiotherapy equipments, a power generator, Mahindra van, computers and printer were purchased and installed to serve the people with disability with skill training, counseling and career guidance. In addition to the funds from the Japanese Embassy, SAHAYA contributed some fund to help with infrastructure in the main building. This building is now named as READ's Community resource Centre (RCRC) and offers service to the persons with various types of disability.

4.2. Community-based training

In addition to the institutional education

program for mentally challenged children (see above), we also implemented community-based training programs to self-help groups (SHG's) of disabled adults in the villages, to the Federation of the disabled, to the parents of the disabled and to the rehabilitation workers in this community based activities. In this program, all types of disabled adults and their parents were included to empower them through self-help principles, micro-credit, leadership training, rallies and street plays. In addition, network meetings for NGO's and disability awareness programs in schools were undertaken. This program supported by the ABILIS Foundation (Finland), was an ongoing program from the previous financial year, that was completed in this reporting year.

5. Vocational Skill-Training:

From the inception of READ, skill-training programs have been an important component of our development activities.

5.1. Cashew nut processing and One day awareness training program:

This is a rural women entrepreneurship

VASANTHI - nursing student



Vasanthi grew up in Vilandai, Andimadam, in a poor family. She was a very good student in high school, and dreamt of becoming a nurse. Because her family was not able to support higher studies, Sahaya International organized two "Tea for Vasanthi" fundraisers in 2007 and 2008. Vasanthi continues her studies at the Chidambaram College of Nursing in Chennai, is passing all her examinations, and recently wrote this letter:

Dear friends,

How are you and how are your friends? I am doing well, and at present I am posted in the institute of the Mental Hospital for one month. I learn a lot here, like giving wholistic care to mental retardation.

Now I am doing my third year of Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Thanks to your support, via READ I received everything I need for my studies. Convey my regards to your friends and relatives.

*With love,
Vasanthi*

development program funded by NABARD, Chennai. Since cashew nuts are an available resource in our area, this training will augment the skills of the trained women to start cashew nut processing units as their livelihood option. A total of 25 women had undergone training.

5.2. Embroidered greeting card production:

This year Sahaya continued supporting training on the production of embroidered greeting cards. This past year, 15 girls received the training. Some of the trainees were afterwards given a job to produce greeting cards that are sold abroad as fundraising activity.

5.3. Tailoring and fashion design:

This is an ongoing program. In this reporting year 25 girls underwent this training to be professionals in dress making.

5.4. Typewriting:

This program is government-recognized, and every year students trained in our centre are sent for government examination. This year 4 students attended and passed the government examination in both English and Tamil typewriting (both higher and lower courses).

5.5. Computer course:

This year, 5 girls received a training course on computer operation and office automation.

6. Women development:

This is one of our core development projects. The women were and are being organized into SHGs to decide their economic and social life. 'Mahalir Thittam' Project of State Government through the Perambalur District office contributed for the development of this program. Through these organized women groups READ could take into the community many of its other welfare programs including HIV/AIDS prevention and control, children sponsorship and so on. There are 869 functional SHGs in this reporting year. The savings and internal credit activities that were

initiated in these groups grew into a big financial program among the people. In addition, periodical capacity building programs are organized so the groups can be at the forefront of all community and social events.

7. Micro-credit program:

READ started a micro-credit program to promote the development of livelihood activities by women SHG members so they can meet their economic needs. Initially AYA Inc., contributed a small grant program to provide loans to the needy women. Later HDFC, NDFS (Nanayasurbhi Development Financial Services) came forward to provide loans to the women in our SHGs through READ. This program picked up well and in this reporting year the total credit transaction was Rs.25959500, which was benefiting 6340 women belonging to 317 SHGs by helping them to find a sustainable livelihood. To add to this service the insurance company ICICI Prudential has come forward with their life and accident insurance products to our beneficiaries, and the women are paying a small premium to the Company and benefit from it in case of unforeseen circumstances. So far READ has arranged 43 death claims to our beneficiaries from this Insurance company.

	Block	Number of claims	Claim amount (in rupees)
1	Andimadam	29	280,000
2	Sendurai	10	110,000
3	Variyankaval	4	40,000
	Total	43	430,000

8. Vazhndhukaatuvom project:

Similar to 'Mahalir Thittam' ("women development project"), the Tamil Nadu State government has started another program by name 'Vazhndhukaatuvom' ("let us decide to live") with funding from the World Bank. This is an empowerment and poverty reduction project, in which the people in the selected blocks and villages are organized for livelihood development, health need fulfillment, educational pursuit, disability service and other poverty reduction activities.

READ selected Nallur Block in Cuddalore District for this project. We organized a camp for National Disability Identity Card distribution to disabled people, a cultural program to disseminate information on development, and slide shows on disability awareness.

9. National Environmental awareness program:

This is an environmental protection program conducted every year with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India. The theme for this year was “waste management”. We undertook a public awareness program and waste management demonstration program in 3 villages.

10. Third party projects:

READ was a third party partner and fiscal intermediary for the several programs:

- “Integrating traditional Birth attendants in PMTCT” at Mysore, undertaken by Public Health Research Institute of India (PHRII); funded by the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, USA.
- Prerana clinic of PHRII, supported by Sahaya International Inc.
- Embracing Hands Children’s Home, Madurai; supported by Sahaya International
- Sponsorship of 2 orphans at the Hope Foundation, Chennai.
- Sponsorship of 2 children in Salaam Baalak Trust, 02 children in CHES, 3 in SAATHI, 2 in Jayaprakash Narayanan Memorial Trust; supported by AYA Inc.
- Student support program in SHAMA Well G.V. Naidu School in a village near Chittur with the support of SHAMA Inc., USA.

11. Conclusion:

Year by year, READ has been growing not only to develop and empower people and communities in its service area but also to expand its collaboration to other NGO programs that were supported by its partner organizations. In this reporting year we were able to improve our

building infrastructure that is needed to improve and sustain the development activities that we initiated in the past years. Many have helped in achieving this status.

We like to thank in particular Sahaya International in the USA and Belgium, and the Japanese Embassy that have helped READ with our construction work. READ is also immensely grateful to all the individual sponsors who, through Sahaya and AYA, help orphans to meet their basic needs and pursue education. READ also thanks its many other donors and supporters, including TNVHA, CIIL, TNSACS, Ministry of Environment and Forest (GOI), State Government for Mahalir Thittam and Vazhnthukattuvom projects, NDFS and HDFC for micro-credit support. READ thanks its entire staff and board members for their efforts and guidance. On behalf of READ, I request everyone to continue their support in the forthcoming years and join hands with us, so that READ can continue to walk the path and carry out its mission.



We thank all of our contributors and donors for their generous support and our staff for their dedicated efforts in helping us achieve our mission. As we have to continue this work, we request your support and valuable guidance also in the coming year. Thank you once again for making a difference.