



ASHWINI NEWSLETTER-2023

As we enter the new year, let's take a moment to reflect on the journey of the past year- a period marked by significant events, major achievements, and the building of new connections.

Training update

In the latest academic year, two promising young boys, Madhan joined Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology (DMLT) at Dr. Jayashekar Memorial Trust, Nagercoil and Manikandan joined Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.Sc.) course at Arun college of Nursing, Vellore. Fifteen tribal and four non-tribal girls enrolled in the new batch of auxiliary nursing and midwifery-2023 (ANM).

Interns from the length and breadth of the country had visited and stayed at ASHWINI. Public Health students from TISS Mumbai, IIPH Gandhinagar, Social Work Students from Martin Luther Christian University-Shillong, TISS, Avinashalingam University-Coimbatore had spent between 20 to 60 days at Gudalur learning from community health programs and work at the Adivasi Hospital.

New recruits

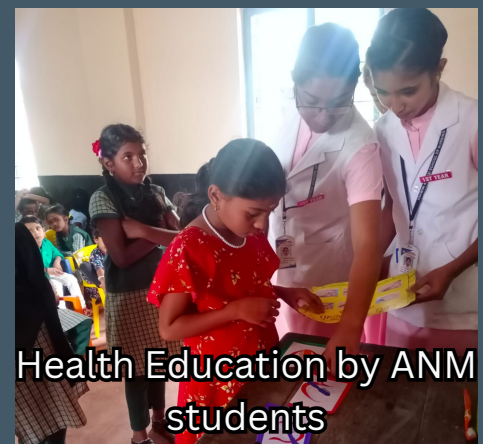
Young professionals from the communities, Vinitha and Minisha, who had completed General Nursing, and Harikrishnan, Kumaresan, and Vaishna, who had completed their B.sc nursing courses, have joined us as staff nurses.

Dr. Sandra from St. John's Medical College, Bangalore, will be with us as part of her two-year commitment to service. Additionally, we are delighted to welcome Dr. Johan, who is with us as part of the Travel fellowship program. Mrs Shyji Biju has recently joined our team as a data entry operator.

<https://ruralhospitalnetwork.org/>



Health Education by ANM students



Health Education by ANM students



Interaction with medical student



Rural Sensitisation Program

Rural Sensitisation Program at Gudalur was organized from 12-14 May 2023. The program saw the participation of around 22 medical graduates and students from various Medical Colleges in North Kerala and Tamil Nadu. One heralding feature of the RSP at Gudalur was the active leadership by the tribal team, in everything from planning to execution and discussions. This was reinforced by the presence of stalwarts like Nandakumar and Stan.

New research

Implementation of “One All” to get it RYT (Resilient Young Tribal adults): A Multi centric, participatory, feasibility and effectiveness study

This is a sports-based intervention that uses Ultimate Frisbee, to improve mental health resilience among adolescents and young adults. The objective of the study is to assess the feasibility and acceptability of the intervention and its effectiveness in improving mental health. Implementation is done in the tribal communities at Gudalur and at B.R. Hills. At Gudalur, the implementation has started with our auxiliary nursing and midwifery (ANM) school girls, who are having a great time playing the sport. It will also be initiated with the children at Ambalamoola and the Kargudi schools.

Community Health

Anaha Trust through SATTVA had been supporting our nutritional efforts since 2019, and ASHWINI was able to follow-up with around 1350 under-5 children and provide those with severe undernutrition, a steady nutrition-rich supplementation.

This year there has been a need to initiate a long-standing comprehensive nutrition strategy with an increased focus on village-level ownership and behavioural change around nutrition. A philanthropist based out of the USA, Mr Rom Reddy, through SATTVA has agreed to fund this initiative for the next three years. The baseline study and initial groundwork have started since June 2023.



Rural sensitisation program (RSP)



Session by Mr Stan Thekaekara



Nutrition Program



Village screening by Dr. Ajith



Koomamoola, a village with a high burden of undernutrition, has been prioritized for an independently funded pilot project. Thanks to financial support from Dr. Madhu in the USA, the team engaged with mothers in Koomamoola to establish a community-owned solution. Two mothers have undertaken the task of preparing proteinaceous meals for under-5 children, a crucial intervention given the poor utilization of the nearest ICDS center. The team collaborates with ICDS centers to extend their reach into the village. Ten high-burden villages are receiving increased attention, emphasizing the role of health volunteers in nutrition-related actions. Efforts are ongoing to operationalize the Balwadi at Kozhikolly village through collaboration between the Vidyodaya and health team.

The Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Alcohol Deaddiction Program funded by Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative (Now Azim Premji Foundation (APF)), completed its three-year run in October 2023. In May 2023, an independent external evaluation by a UK-based psychiatrist Dr. Sudhir Kumar, of the objectives and outcomes of the program, observed most of the outcomes achieved. A renewal proposal for continuing and deepening efforts in this domain was submitted, and it's heartening to share that APF will support the Mental Health and Suicide Program for the coming five years. This time, the focus would be to screen all unreached villages and build village-level resilience towards mental illnesses and suicidal ideation.

This year the health volunteer camp at the hospital took place on December 10th and 11th with an overwhelming participation of 120 Health volunteers from all the 8 areas. The camp emphasized Mother and Child care and nutrition, featuring activities such as a skit by ANM students. Dr. Mrudula covered Antenatal care, and Suresh, our Community Mental Health Worker, discussed government certifications and their accessibility.

Capacity Building and Training

Capacity building and training is the cornerstone of ASHWINI and its work, there were numerous exercises on this front this year. The nursing team had separate modules on Basic Life Support and Emergency Trauma Care by experts in the field.



Community Health Visit



Doctor visit to village



Psychiatrist visit to village



Health volunteer camp



The Mental Health team underwent an Online Community Mental Health Course by Banyan and had exposure visits to The Home Again program by Banyan and Mental Health Action Trust in Kerala.

Experts from abroad who had volunteered for the PLENTI program also provided training on topics like Data Protection, Trauma Care, Mental Health, and Spoken English.

To improve service delivery, our clinical department staff went in two batches to the Christian fellowship hospital, Ottamchathram, in Sep 2023 to observe and learn their best practices. They shadowed various departments, including lab, pharmacy, nursing, etc., and took notes on what contextually relevant changes they could incorporate into practices at Gudalur Adivasi Hospital.

The journey of capacity building on HR, Governance, and management with the guidance of Mustafa and Harish continues. This has been strengthening the team to take up various leadership roles and plan for the future.

Novel and Time-Honored Connections

2023 saw visits from various funding agencies, like SATTVA, APF and Microland Foundation, and various academic forums like the faculty of MPH program from Azim Premji University and Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Newer initiatives have materialized from some of these engagements, like the understanding with Microland Foundation on a new initiative of reducing delay in diagnosis of fatal fevers and complications of NCD by having an outreach program using various inexpensive Point-Of-Care diagnostics.

ASHWINI had taken part in a consultative workshop for developing field modules for MPH curriculum at Azim Premji University, Bhopal and contributed valuable input into community engagement for Public Health Students.

A Panel discussion themed “Changemakers leveraging data to support the communities they serve” was held on Sep 14th at Bangalore by **OASIS (Open-source Alliance for Social Innovation & Sustainability)**.



Primary Trauma Care Training



Visit to Christian Fellowship Hospital



Village visit by Dr. Sudhir



Mrs Malathi and Mrs Bindhu as Panelist



Our team members, Mrs Malathi and Mrs Bindu represented ASHWINI as Panelists sharing the use of open source data platforms, and how it has benefited indigenous communities and the challenges during our journey.

Awards

Dr. Nandakumar Menon and Dr. P.Shylaja Devi received Dr Rangarajan Memorial Award for community service.

We received a certificate of appreciation from the CMCHIS-ABPMJAY for exemplary performance in implementing this scheme in the last five years.

Retirement Reflections

In this edition, we celebrate the exceptional contributions of our esteemed retirees: Janu, Sreedharan, and Manikandan. With years of dedicated service, their hard work, commitment, and expertise have left an indelible mark, shaping the foundation of our success. Join us in expressing gratitude for their unwavering commitment. Their impact on our organization will be remembered and cherished for years to come.

Thanks to all our well wishers and friends

Poristes Stiftung continues to support all aspects of the training program; six students were partly supported for higher studies by TAGUE TEC. Government funding for the Sickle Cell program continues under NHM-TN. As per the new Government order, GAH is reimbursed Rs.3000/patient for each tribal inpatient care. This, unfortunately, will not cover the total expenses incurred. We have also received funding from various other donors like the JSK Foundation UK, TIHF USA, From Here to There UK, Vidyalay.org, USA, Nilgiri Adivasi Trust UK, Friends of Hope- UK, GIVE foundation, many individually and or through Benevity platforms.



Adivasi Tee Projekt (ATP)
visit to Gudalur



Mrs. Janu



Mr. Manikandan



Mr. Sreedharan



Way forward

In 2024, ASHWINI aims to enhance village-level participation and youth leadership, particularly focusing on developing a resilient youth force in tribal communities. We strive to strengthen the village healthcare delivery model, addressing access challenges through empowered volunteers. ASHWINI also seeks specialists in OBGyn, Anaesthesia, Paediatrics, and Psychiatry to improve hospital care quality at the Adivasi Hospital. Future initiatives involve organizing workshops on governance and management for the tribal team, aligning with our vision of achieving tribal ownership of the health system.

Donations

To join our efforts or make a contribution, Kindly contact us at ashwinigudalur@gmail.com

In India, we are exempt from income tax under section 80G of the income tax act. Money can be transferred directly to our account in SBI, Gudalur as ASHWINI DONATIONS, Current account No: 35765454150 IFSC Code: SBIN 001016

In the USA -Tax deductible donations can be made by check to Vidyalay.org Foundation Inc and mailed to Ms. Asmita Shendye, 35 Meyer Drive, Clifton, NJ 07012

OR

Make an online donation through Tribal India Health Foundation (<http://www.tihf.org.in/>) and click the “donate” button on the page “How you can help.”

Kindly notify us of your contribution to facilitate seamless accounting procedures.

Donation web page: <https://ashwini.org/donate/>



CMCHIS-ABPMJAY award received from District collector by K.T.Subramanian, Secretary ASHWINI



Nursing student visit to village



Dental check-up done by nursing students

Thank You

CERTIFICATION & ACCREDITATION

