



MAKING YOUNGSTERS LIFE READY



VANAVIL
ANNUAL
REPORT
2017-18

Vision

Work for the reconstruction of a society where all children will be treated as equals; as young human beings of intellect and talent. Every child should get the same opportunity to live, learn, develop and decide their life.

Mission

To educate and empower children of marginalized communities whose access to education is mired in their socio-cultural status and poverty.

Target group

Children / parents from:

- Marginalized communities like Adiyan / Narikuravar tribes, Dalits.
- Excluded groups like manual scavengers, homeless, transgender community.
- Families living in poverty.

Objectives

Education

- Educate marginalised children upto a degree or a vocation.
- Guide underprivileged children to proper education/vocation.
- Support children attending government schools through After School programs and school support programs.

Livelihood

- Work with parents to move them away from begging.
- Provide occupational development, access to skills training and vocational education.

Community Development

- Keep children away from begging, bonded/child labour, trafficking, caste designated menial jobs.
- Create community awareness about alcoholism, sanitation, domestic violence.
- Reduce infant mortality, child malnutrition.

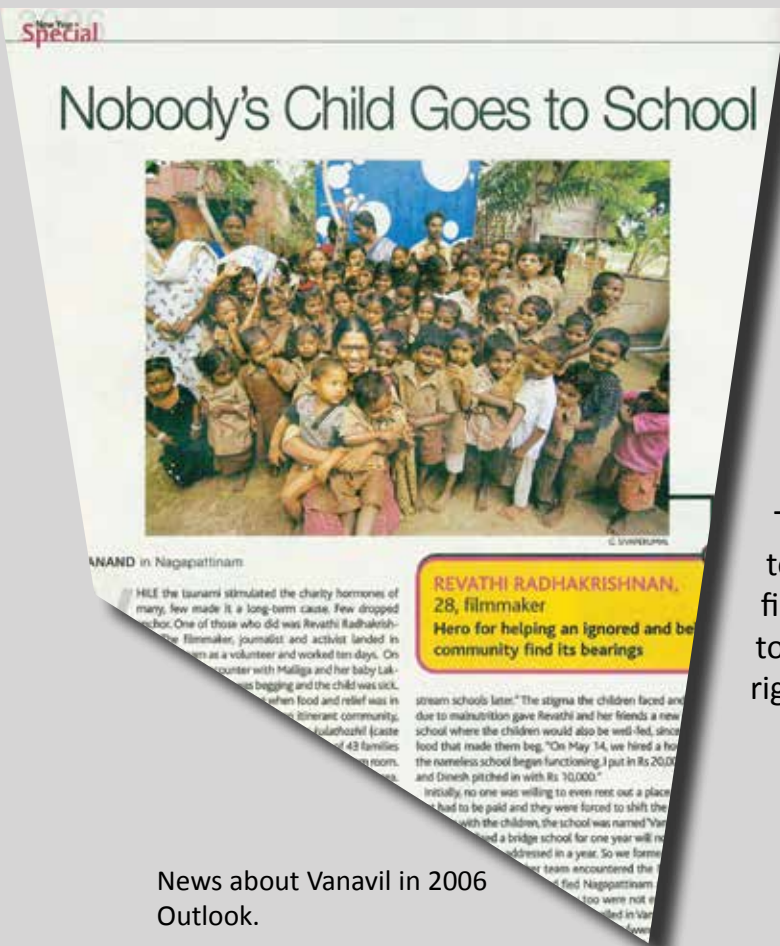
The Vanavil Story...

We thought we will tell you our story through the words of noted Journalist and Author, Dilip D'Souza.



"When I travelled in TN after the tsunami in 2004, I ran into a film-maker called Revathi doing relief and clean-up work. When I first met her, she was helping to pick up and burn bodies - awful and incredibly hard work. Later, she found several kids from the Adiyar tribe, a nomadic community viewed with suspicion by most people, begging at the Nagapattinam bus stand. Their homes had been destroyed by the waves.

Revathi tried to get them into the local school system. The other students and the teachers did not want these kids in school. They would hit and abuse them in derogatory language. Naturally, the Adiyar children did not want to stay in these schools where nobody wanted them anyway. In the end, Revathi realized that the only option was to set up a school for the kids herself. Dipping into her savings and tapping her network of friends, she established a Trust, rented a house in Nagapattinam and got going. She called it Vanavil, which means "rainbow" in Tamil.



I visited the school in 2005 and found it overrun with lively, friendly, inquisitive, and yes, sometimes unruly kids. But there were also several young women teaching them, and the kids were gradually learning, taking an interest in their education. Over the years, several children have graduated and gone on to college. Revathi gave up her film-making career to run the school full-time."

Dilip created the first endowment for Vanavil, The Beins Scholarship in memory of his father to help further the studies of the students finishing at Vanavil. We take this opportunity to thank Dilip D'Souza for standing with Vanavil right from the beginning till date.

News about Vanavil in 2006
Outlook.

THE PEOPLE

Board



Revathi R,
Managing Trustee
Educationist, Writer

Dinesh Sundaramurthy,
Principal Architect,
Cognizant Technology Solutions, Chennai

R. Solairaj,
Artist

Advisory Council



HK.Abhishek,
Principal Architect, SIEMENS.
Matthew Wennersten,
Education Technologist, STEP.
Devishree Radhakrishnan,
Software Consultant.
K Natarajan,
Artist.

- Krishnaveni,
• Activist.
• Senthil Babu,
• Historian IFP.
• Vardini Sukumar,
• School Transformation Trainer, Chrysalis.
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Design & Photography Support



Ajay Kumar,
Learning Solution Designer

Anthoni Guruz,
Art Educator

Palani Kumar,
Photographer

THE TEAM



Teachers : Mahalakshmi, Revathi, Jedirsha, Farzana Fathima, Valli Rajam (Phonics Trainer), Baby Shalini, Gayathri, Krishnaveni, Ragapriya, Sivakama Sundari, Dhanalakshmi, Vinothini, Ilakkiya, Govindammal.



Admin and Support Staff, Vanavil : Jeyabharathi, Kanthimathi, Jedirsha, Yogaparakash, Aruldoss, Manikandan, Nagarathinammal, Leelavathi, Vimala, Raja Manickam.



Team Vaasal : Udhaya Kumar, Swathika, Jaikumar, Natarajan.

Managing Trustee's report

Thirteen years back when we started, we only had an emotional response to the widespread devastation caused by a natural disaster and the death of a child due to malnutrition. We started in a small thatched roof shed in the Tsunami ravaged Maraimalai Nagar area of Nagapattinam with a bunch of kids. We have now grown into a beautiful green campus in Keezhakarayiruppu Village, presence in 4 tribal villages and a Centre helping young people from all over the district.



Starting Vanavil set us on a journey of understanding the issues of marginalized communities and the impediments they face in their journey towards education, dignity and inclusion. It took us almost a decade to stabilize Vanavil to become a School and Home. We then went to the other villages where this nomadic tribal community lives and started our After School centres.

Nagapattinam, as the tail end delta district with no industrial presence is a predominantly agricultural and fishing district. The local population is seeing a huge decline in agricultural revenues and fishing incomes. While trying to find educational and employment opportunities for our school graduates, we stumbled upon this huge issue that affects almost all poor and marginalized children in this district. We started Vaasal to address this gap and to give guidance and support for young people to pursue their journey post school education.

While all these years of growing up have been eventful, the past year saw a spurt of growth as we reached out to more children and young people from the extreme margins of the society. We are a part of the lives of over 500 children and an additional 150 adults who are taking their first step to employment.

In the coming year we will be expanding our work through more After School centres and Government school support programs.

Coming out of a busy year, we see more complex challenges in expanding our work this year! But with the support of all of you who have walked with us in this journey to create better opportunities for the children, we are confident that we will march towards that better world that we all believe in – one step at a time!

Be with us to make this journey possible!

- Revathi



Financials

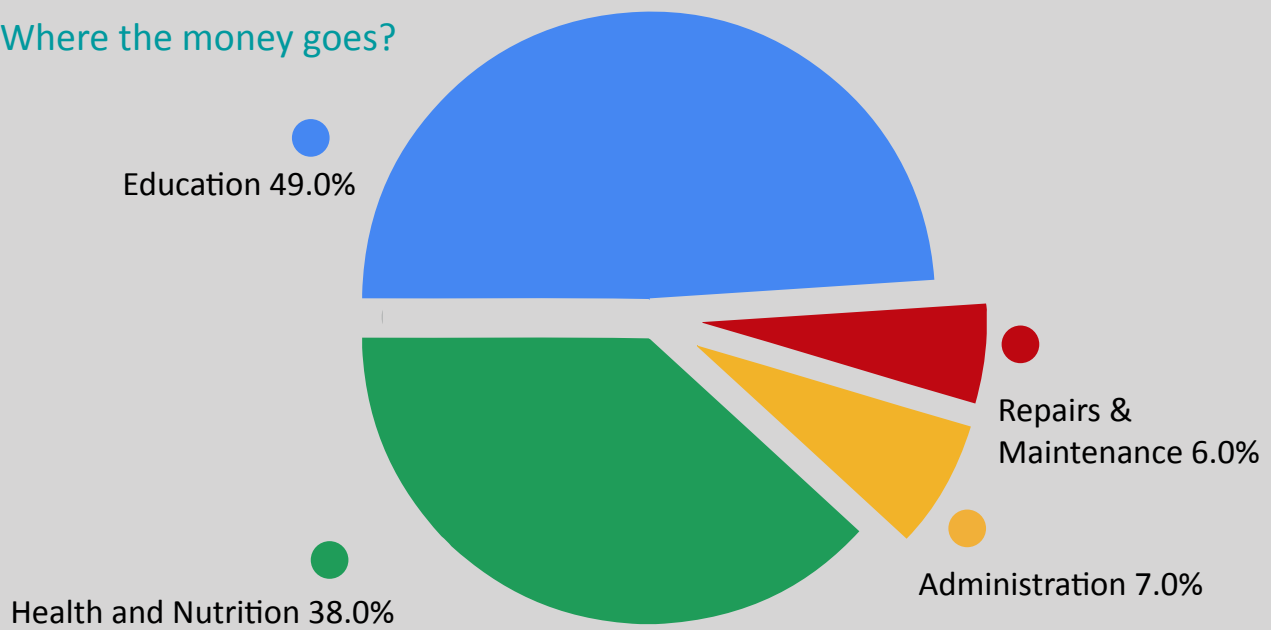
| Vanavil Actual Financials FY17-18 1-Apr-2017 to 31-Mar-2018 | | Vanavil Budget Projection FY18-19 1-Apr-2018 to 31-Mar-2019 | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Fund Raising | | Fund Raising | |
| Funds for Programme | ₹43,17,159 | Funds for Programme | ₹67,98,000 |
| Grants for Infrastructure | ₹15,69,889 | Grants for Infrastructure | ₹10,00,000 |
| SSA Contributions | ₹9,97,248 | Farm | ₹4,00,000 |
| | | | |
| Total Inflow | ₹68,84,296 | Total Inflow | ₹81,98,000 |
| | | | |
| Endowment | ₹10,00,000 | | |
| | | | |
| Expenses | | Expenses | |
| Education | ₹23,81,321 | Education | ₹29,00,000 |
| Health and Nutrition | ₹18,56,057 | Health and Nutrition | ₹19,80,000 |
| Vaasal* | ₹1,20,719 | Vaasal | ₹7,00,000 |
| Outreach Centres | ₹86,615 | Outreach Centres | ₹5,58,000 |
| Administration | ₹3,51,320 | Administration | ₹3,70,000 |
| Repairs and Maintenance | ₹2,74,183 | Repairs and Maintenance | ₹2,90,000 |
| New Infrastructure | ₹15,69,889 | New Infrastructure | ₹10,00,000 |
| | | Farm | ₹4,00,000 |
| Total Outflow | ₹66,40,104 | Total Outflow | ₹81,98,000 |

*Started in Feb 2018

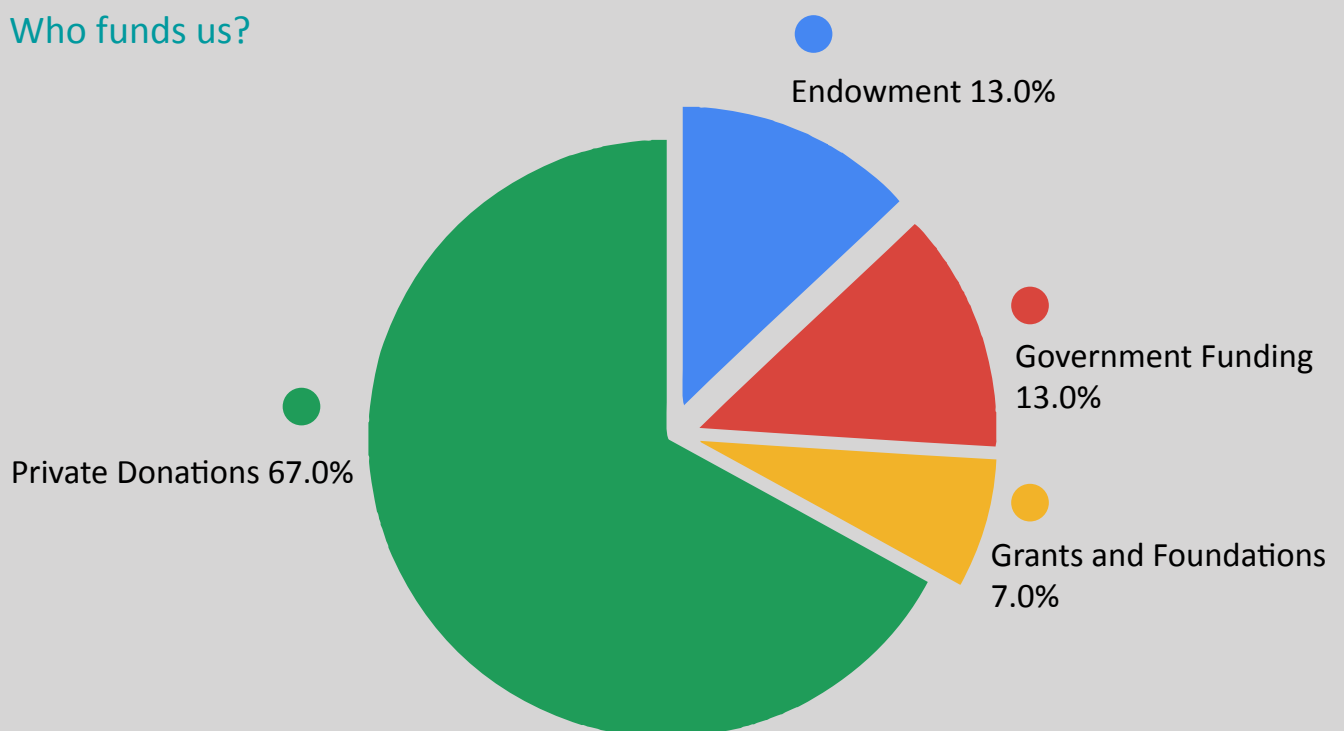
BENEFICIARIES

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Vanavil Primary School | 90 |
| Vanavil Children's Home | 64 |
| Outreach Centres | 164 |
| Vaasal | 350 |
| Total | 668 |

Where the money goes?



Who funds us?



Vanavil School

We are a Nursery and Primary school. Our students are mainly from the Boom Boom Maaturkar and Narikuravar Community. We also have children of single parent and children in conflict with law. The younger children come to school as day scholars and a portion of our students stay at the Vanavil Children's Home on campus.

We have been using activity based learning modules all along. This year, we are moving to the Montessori based Thematic learning. We use Arts and Performances equally alongside reading / writing activities.

Vanavil is a child centred educational environment. We keep the child at the centre and work through a guided pedagogy that stresses upon freedom, equality and fraternity. We have zero tolerance for corporal punishment. We believe that non-violence is critically important to encourage teachers and children to develop into fuller human beings.

We endeavour to make our children self-sufficient and life-ready in multiple ways. So we teach English, Maths with the same fervour that we teach Arts and Performance. We train kids for higher education or vocational skills according to their inclinations and interest.



Vanavil Childrens Home

When we started Vanavil, we had to make it residential given the semi nomadic nature of the community. The community still travels most of the time but comes home to their Tsunami dwellings on the first of every Tamil calendar month.

Over hundred children stay at the Home in separate Girls and Boys Hostel. We provide three healthy and nutritive meals to them and take care of their health and hygiene requirements.

After finishing their primary education, the children attend the Puducherry Government High School near Vanavil to continue their education. Evening tuition classes are conducted for the children to help them with their school syllabus.

We are also building a sports program to cultivate the amazing sporting talents of these children.





After School centres

To reach out to children from nomadic communities in other rural areas, we started After School centres in 2015. The first two centres started functioning in Neelapadi and Porakudi, where the Adiyar community dwells.

In 2017, we started another centre in Vanjore where the Fishermen and Narikuravar communities live.

These centres do school syllabus support, motivational and skill building activities. We conduct art, craft and performance workshops to strengthen the self-worth of these children. We teach basic maths and computer skills and are planning to add a English teaching component to our After School curriculum.

We are all set to start two more centres in Aaparakudi village and Velankanni.



Kaarnilam - The Vanavil Farm

We are located in ten acres of farmlands and we harvested 230 bags of paddy in January 2018. The entire rice and urad dal grown by us are used in our own hostel kitchen to provide healthy food to our children.

Our cow farm has five cows and 2 calves. We also grow fish in the three ponds located in our farm.

We are seeking donor support to install a borewell pump and set up an organic vegetable garden in the farm.

Our endeavour is to become self-sufficient in meeting the food needs of our children.



Highlights of the year

Meena and Selvarani who were tiny toddlers when we started Vanavil in 2005, have passed their +2 exams with more than 80% marks. Meena has secured admission in Loyola College, Chennai in their much sought after Visual Communication programme. Meena dreams of becoming a Journalist and write about the downtrodden! Selvarani will be pursuing Textile Design Course at the Government College of Fine Arts in Chennai and prepare herself for a textile designer career that she covets.



After their exams in Class 10, four boys are pursuing their +2 in CSI Corley Higher Sec School in Chennai and four girls have joined St. Theresa's Girls Higher Sec School in Tharangambadi.

Our friend and experienced Phonics trainer, Valli Rajam trained our teachers in Phonics based English. The children attended the Phonics based learning for three months and did an English Expo. Parents in the audience were enthralled by their wards' English prowess.



Reading opens up worlds and what can be more fascinating for our young voyagers than getting initiated on the reading habit. We held the World Children's Book Day at our campus and the children read books and shared stories.

Our children held an illuminating science exhibition and explained basic science concepts to themselves and the visitors.



Arthi, Karthi and Durgeshwari excelled in athletics and participated in the district level Athletics meet and won medals and certificates.

Our fantastic theatre troupe under the guidance of the acclaimed theatre performer/teacher Vijayakumar staged the play 'River of the Butterflies'. The theme was about the need to conserve water and protect water resources. The stunning performance also brings out the intuitive relationship children have with their environment. We performed it at the School Day, later at Thanjavur and then at the South Indian children's theatre festival in Cochin!



In order to streamline and improve our academics, we are turning into a Montessori school in the coming year. We did extensive training for the same. Our team visited Sevalaya for a day long Montessori immersion and later followed up with a three day training at the Centre for Montessori Training - Chennai.



Vennila's brave fight against Cancer!

Our tiny little Vennila in Class2 of Vanavil primary school was diagnosed with the dreaded Hodgkin's Lymphoma. We intervened very early and took her to proper doctors for diagnosis as the community is used to treating most ailments with home remedies. Tiruvarur Medical College hospital doctors confirmed Hodgkin's and referred us to the Government Children's Hospital in Egmore, Chennai. A long period of travelling back and forth to Chennai and a slew of scans, PET CTs and Chemotherapy sessions later Valiant Vennila is back at School now. She is slowly regaining the strength and vitality which was severely depleted during the chemo process. She is now being brought to Chennai every month for monitoring checkups. Devishree, Solairaj and Natarajan took their time to take Vennila for all her treatments and tests.



Vaasal Training Centre

Vaasal is the extension of Vanavil started this year thanks to a grant from the CIOSA “Battle of Buffet” and “Seva Mela” events.

Vaasal is a platform which works with young people to equip them with life skills and guide them to opportunities in education and employment. *Vaasal* will provide the crucial missing link between education and employability.



Why Vaasal?

Nagapattinam is one of the most backward districts in the country. Traditionally, it has been agrarian; the decline in agriculture over the last decade combined with lack of industrial growth has left few employment options for the youth. Most youngsters are ill equipped to secure gainful employment in the modern economy. Many of them as first-generation learners lack the necessary guidance and awareness to choose and pursue potential courses or jobs. Students dropping out of school is also a major concern amongst marginalized communities in this district.

Vaasal aims to provide constructive solutions to address the issues faced by the following groups:

- College graduates who are ready to join the workforce and need assistance with finding employment opportunities and in preparing for competitive exams.
- 12th standard graduates who are looking for guidance on desired courses, institutions, preparing for college entrance exams, filling out college applications.
- Youngsters who have finished / dropped out of school and need skill training to lead them to employment.



Our programs

Our programs are taught by qualified full-time professionals and volunteers. We intend to provide classic academic training mixed with practical advice from seasoned professionals maximizing the chances of success.

For college graduates:

- Coaching for state government employment exams like TNPSC.
- Coaching for central government employment exams like Railways, Banking, etc.
- Finding employment opportunities commensurate with qualification.

For 12th standard graduates:

- Coaching for entrance exams like CUCET (for admission into Central University in nearby Tiruvarur and other central universities).
- Counseling on available higher education opportunities and assistance with the actual application.

For all:

- Personalized English language improvement program.
- Basic computer literacy to satisfy requirement of certifications like Microsoft.
- Skill training / Vocational courses.



What they say

M. Mahadevan,
Chairman and Managing Director, Oriental Cuisines.

Vanavil - true to its name has added colour to lot of families in the past. I along with my friends have donated little funds to enable them to help young people. I am happy to know that this small donation has helped around 350 young people. I wish Vanavil to continue their journey to help the needy people and bridge the gap between haves and have-nots.



Anupama Pai,
Ecologist and Educationist, Pondicherry.

Vanavil's impact on the lives of disadvantaged children and youth is inspiring. Their approach to education, support in preparing these youngsters for further education, and motivation to follow their dreams, cannot be lauded enough. We hope that this effort continues to grow and are grateful to be associated with this wonderful organisation.



N. Subramanian,
Donor, Singapore.

It was during one of my visits to Chennai that I came across an article about Vanavil in the newspapers. Finding it very inspiring, my family & I decided to visit them in Sikkal. That first visit to Vanavil in December 2014, is still etched in our memory – the happy & innocent faces, the enthusiastic team and the serene atmosphere of the school within a farmland! That visit was the beginning of our association and now, no visit to India is complete without visiting Vanavil.



Working on a conservative budget, Revathi and her team have managed to bring sizeable number of nomadic children into formal education. It is so heartening and fulfilling to see their aspiration levels and how some of these first generation learners have gone on to become graduates. In the last four years, Vanavil has been reaching out to more remote villages to support needy children in their education.

Like every other donor, I also used to worry whether the money that we sponsor gets spent wisely to get the best value. It is very satisfying to see that Revathi and her team have been so dedicated to the cause, completely transparent in reporting and making sure that every Rupee is spent for the stated purpose.

I look forward to Vanavil expanding and uplifting more children in this community.

Rajesh Haridas,
Principal @ Consltek Inc, USA.

It takes tremendous amount of hard work, patience and compassion to create an environment like Vanavil and sustain it for more than a decade. What started as an instinct to help in the aftermath of 2004 Tsunami has translated into something much bigger. Revathi and her team have changed the lives of hundreds of nomadic children. These children otherwise would have landed up in a very different and unfortunate situation. It gives me immense happiness when I look at the growth of Vanavil over the years. I wish Vanavil and its children the very best.



Karunakaran Manickam,
Vice President, BCC USA, IT Consulting.

My whole day at Vanavil was a great unique experience which I personally never felt in my life. It is not that easy to run a school of Vanavil's nature for over a decade now - so to Revathi and team at Vanavil who are dedicated to the noble cause of uplifting the young underprivileged children life and future a BIG THANK YOU from all the supporters of Vanavil. Without the support of Vanavil and its donors not sure what these children would be doing and where would they be at.



Prof. Upinder Singh Bhalla, an eminent scholar was awarded the Infosys Prize for Life Sciences in 2017. He has generously donated a part of the prize money as a financial endowment to Vanavil. Thank you, Professor.



Theatre Director Mangai on her retirement from Professorship at the Stella Maris College created two food endowments at Vanavil. The endowments would sponsor food for all the children on her birthday and her husband Prof. Arasu's birthday! Thank you Mangai & Arasu.

Kavitha Jayaraman of Florida USA teaches music to children. She decided that the proceeds from her teachings should provide better opportunities for children of Vanavil. She created a LetzChange page and has run a very successful campaign.



Book and Media reports

Nao Saito, an architect from Tokyo, Japan has made a beautiful book on South Indian kitchens. The book features Vanavil's story and a writeup on Vanavil's Community kitchen! ▶



◀ An article in Tamil magazine "Aval Vikatan" titled "Happiness costs just ten rupees!"



▶ An article in Indian Express about the two Vanavil students who continue to work for Vanavil!



◀ Ankit Arora, a former techie is cycling all over India to meet underprivileged, yet talented children and create a Guinness record. After his visit to our campus, he put up this social media post:

*"Day 282: India on my cycle (Alternate education part 6)
ANY CHILD CAN BE EDUCATED IRRESPECTIVE OF THE BACKGROUND*

My next project of India on my cycle happened in Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu. Boom- Boom Mattakaran is an age old nomadic tribe in Tamil Nadu villages near East Coast. They have been dependent on asking alms to earn their daily livelihood.

The nomads from this tribe keep one hallikar cow. They decorate the cow and roam around with it to ask for money on roads. This has been the only way of earning for most of them till date. In 2004, when Tsunami hit this region, many NGOs and volunteer came to work here.

But Prema Revathi Akka got to know the plight of these kids and tribe and she decided to stay back forever. She opened a school Vanavil mainly for these kids. I spent 5 days with these kids who are now learning everything with the help of innovative techniques and growing together. Many kids have passed secondary and senior class exams and are preparing for the professional services. Some students even have returned to the school to become a teacher and help others.

So, it's just an orthodoxical myth that it's tough to improve kids because of their background. It's just our laziness that we make such lame excuses; otherwise nothing can stop a kid from learning."

Why should you support Vanavil?

Most interventions happen in the cities but the acute crisis in education and employment is looming large in the rural side. Places like Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Villupuram, Ariyalur etc., need more support for the social sector to bring down child labour, begging, dropouts, increase in violence, juvenile delinquency... the list is long. The bulk of philanthropic / CSR spending gets distributed in cities and large towns. Volunteers though not averse to travel to rural sides are still scarce in places like Nagapattinam.

How can you help?

Come as Volunteers:

Vanavil is a happy campus thriving with energetic children who love to have akkas and annas visit them to teach English, play a game together or do some maths. We need your help to improve on the gaps that arise out of functioning in a marginal small town – lack of English speaking teachers, sports mentors, tech savvy volunteers. Volunteers are welcome on all days...

Vaasal is a platform, training young people in a gamut of courses. We look forward to volunteers who can teach life skills, run English conversations or even develop a science education youtube channel! You are welcome to come to Vaasal or help us from wherever you are!

Help us in these Project needs:

- We struggle to take the children to the nearby Public Health Centre (Vadugachery - 6 km), Government Hospital (Nagapattinam - 9 km) or to the Tiruvarur Medical College Hospital (20 km). We require a Van which can not only meet this requirement, but also for taking the children out for other occasions.
- Procure new computers for our computer lab on campus. This would be used for the school, After School and our proposed program in local Government schools.



Donate:

- Rs.5,000 to sponsor meals for all the children for a day - to celebrate the birthday of a dear one or in the memory of a dearly departed.
- Rs.50,000 as a food sponsor endowment fund – interest earned would be used to feed Vanavil on a designated day every year!
- Rs.28,400 to sponsor the education, health, nutrition and hostel expenses for a child for a full year.



Nagapattinam is a quaint town with an uber clean beach, a famous shrine at Velankanni, a Sufi Darga at Nagore and some temples with beautiful sculptures and architecture. Please come and spend your time helping children and young people!

Contact us at vanavil.school@gmail.com for starting an eventful volunteering stint that will make a critical difference in the lives of marginalised children.

To transfer funds from Banks in India, use the following details:

Account Name: Vanavil Trust
Account Number: 954121293
Bank Name: Indian Bank
Branch: Nagapattinam
IFSC: IDIB000N004

From foreign countries (FCRA):

Account Name: Vanavil Trust
Account Number: 510101006399272
Bank Name: Corporation Bank Branch: Nagapattinam
Bank Address: 73, Neela South St, Nagapattinam, India – 611001
SWIFT CODE: CORPINBB716

To make tax deductible donations from US, please mail a check to the address below, payable to AASAI and write “Vanavil” on the memo line.

American Association for Social Advancement of India
11136 Lake Breeze Drive, North Potomac, MD 20878, USA

You can also raise funds for us by running campaigns on Milaap, LetzChange and DonateKart.

Vanavil is a registered Public Charitable Trust (No: 81 / 2005). Vanavil’s tax exempt 80(G) registration No: 7162E (103) / 07-08. Your donations are tax deductible in India.