

Oru Paanai: Newsletter 2023

First quarter



Dear Oru Paanai (OP) supporters and well-wishers

Welcome to the digital version of the Oru Paanai Newsletter.

Over the last few years, when we have been beset with numerous challenges, we have come to realise that a newsletter which is published on an annual basis does not meet the expectations of our supporters.

It was decided that a digital Newsletter be published quarterly, but in a revised format, with short, snappy items, accompanied by a few pictures.

We hope you enjoy reading the first of these quarterly Newsletters.

www.orupaanai.org.uk

Current activities of OP

1. Feeding the hungry

The main focus of OP'S activities remains feeding the hungry.

In 2018, we initiated a program of providing dry rations every 4 weeks to destitute elderly people, a group that has little means of support beyond a measly pittance issued by the GoSL, being infirm and bereft of family support.

We provided bags of dry rations, consisting of rice, wheat flour, dhal and sugar every 4 weeks to around 500 carefully chosen elders in villages in the Vanni and parts of Jaffna. The chosen villages included Udayarkattu, Mallavi, Vadakampirai, Kilinochchi and Tellipalai. This program proved to be a huge success and OP expanded the program to cover the eastern province in Kiran and Vavunathivu.

OP has since then also spread out to extend a helping hand to upcountry areas in Nanu Oya and Belihul Oya.



Above: Monthly dry rations to over 1300 elderly destitute or disabled

Right: Monthly dry rations to destitute



In 2022, OP has increased the number of elderly people helped by it from 700 in 2021 to over 1300, incorporating new areas like Mannar and Vavuniya North in the north, 2 centres in Vaakarai in the east and 2 new centres in Haldumulla.

In the prevailing economic situation in Sri Lanka, OP's assistance has been a great help to the elderly.

2. Food supplements to underweight children



Sathu maa distribution to malnourished children

OP continues to support malnourished children by funding the provision of **saththu maa**, a nutritious food supplement to the neediest children.

Initially OP was involved in helping preschool children in the Kayts MOH area. However, we received many more requests for help from other areas, like Chankanai, Chavakachcheri, Karavetti, and the number of preschool children supported by OP has increased from around 500 to 1000 over the course of this year.

3. Construction of wells in Vanni

OP has been involved in the provision of safe water for domestic use and home cultivation by constructing wells, conventional dug wells as well as tube wells, in the Vanni area from 2015.

Latterly, OP has worked alongside Well Being, another charity working in the north. So far, 187 wells have been constructed (169 open wells and 18 tube wells). In 2022, 28 open wells were constructed.



A well constructed by Oru Paanai

The cost of construction of these wells has gone up threefold this year because of the high prices of cement and sand.

The recipients of these wells have made good use of the water from the wells not only for domestic use, but also for home gardening – *veettu thottam*.



*Mr. Somasuntharam Skandakumar
Chairman of Oru Paanai Sri Lanka
inspecting*

4. Education

OP has helped in several ways with improving educational opportunities in SL. We have continued to work with E Kalvi, the Melbourne based charity, in the provision of pendrives and Smart classrooms.

**HIGHFOREST NO-03,
KANDAPOLA
e-kalvi CENTER**

e-Kalvi SMART CLASS ROOM
@
CP/W/ HIGHFOREST NO-03 TAMIL VIDYALAYAM

Sponsored by
Oru paanai Education
Managed by
e-kalvi charity fund inc. victoria -Australia

Web : WWW.eKalvi.org
Email : info@ekalvi.org



Smart Class room

OP has also helped Winrose Academy in Haputale to meet diverse needs.

OP Education is headed by Mr. Skandakumar, the Chair of OP Sri Lanka, and supported by Prof. Swaminathan and Dr. Ambihapathy, who are trustees of OP UK.

OP's response to times of crisis in Sri Lanka

Hospitals and medicines

OP has clear objectives to which it adheres in undertaking projects. However, we have been responsive to appeals in times of crisis.

In 2021, OP helped hospitals in Jaffna, Batticaloa and Haputale, to cope with the Covid19 outbreak by providing medical equipment like Oxygen concentrators and pulse oximeters at short notice.

In 2022, a major shortage of medical drugs occurred due to a serious lack of foreign exchange for importing medicines. Responding to an urgent appeal from the Director of the Jaffna Hospital and The Provincial Director, OP donated £10,000 which was utilised to purchase medicines and equipment and send them to Jaffna, and later to Batticaloa.

Two other fund raising appeals, led by Sir Prof Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, as well as Dr.Subodhini Balasingham of Sacramento Tamil Mandram, raised similar sums of money, both of which were channeled through OP to purchase drugs and equipment, which were then delivered to hospitals in Jaffna and Batticaloa.

The report of this project is encapsulated in the letter of thanks written to the donors by Mr.Skandakumar, which is given below:

Dear generous donor,

We have concluded our drugs/medicines program for Hospitals (Teaching and General) in Jaffna and Batticaloa in four phases as detailed below -

*ORU PAANAI TRUST
MEDICINES PROGRAMME*

<u>PHASE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Phase No 1	Rs 2,509, 347
Phase No 2	Rs 4,358, 899
Phase No 3	Rs 807,603
Phase No 4	Rs 606,683
TOTAL	Rs 10,282, 712

They have all been delivered and acknowledged with gratitude by the respective authorities.

I must mention the role of the Health Division of George Steuart, who willingly sourced our requirements, coordinated collections, and ensured delivery of medicines, in very challenging times, to bring our project to a rewarding close.

Thank you all. Blessings.

Skanda.

www.orupaandai.org.uk

Community Kitchens - Feeding the Hungry

SL was in dire economic straits in 2022, with diminishing foreign exchange reserves, fuel shortages and rampant inflation, all of which affected the country in multiple ways. Large numbers of people were made redundant, and poverty levels at their worst in recent history.

In June 2022, OP initiated Community kitchens in four villages in Jaffna – Sooriyawathai, Kalvilan, Kaddupulam, and Atchelu.

These Community Kitchens were organized in temple premises, and all were welcome irrespective of their religion and over 1300 people attended these annathanams (rice meals) which were held every Tuesday and Friday until December 2022.

The residents of these 4 villages were highly appreciative of these annathanams which proved to be a lifeline in their difficult situation.



Community Kitchen in Kovil Hall - providing rice meal



Fundraising for OP

OP had not conducted any fund-raising functions since the onset of Covid 19.

After a gap of 30 months, a lunch / dance event was held at the Watford Hilton, which proved to be a great success.

The 300 plus supporters who attended the event were very appreciative, as they welcomed the opportunity to socialise and mingle.

Supporting Oru Paanai

- **Around 120 well-wishers contribute to OP regularly** on a monthly or annual basis. We would welcome more regular donors. **Please use the attached form to join their ranks.**
- **OP is fortunate in receiving considerable help from Serendib Foundation**, a US based charity who have been helping us in the past 12 months. We have been able to reach more people in food poverty this last year because of their funding. We are deeply indebted to them for their invaluable help.
- OP has been arranging thanksgiving Annathanams for 50 or so at 3 different sites. The cost of providing a vegetarian meal for 50 people is £50. Prayers/ blessings are said in memory of loved ones or thevaram sung before the meals. These annathanams have proved popular and many of OP supporters have availed of this facility to mark birthdays, death anniversaries, wedding anniversaries etc. **Please contact Dr. Devendra (07703 854866), or Dr. Thambyrajah (07745 537432) to arrange annathanams.**



An annathanam in memory or thanksgiving

Donate with **JustGiving**

You can donate to Oru Paanai easily and securely online, including using GiftAid

Just visit:

www.justgiving.com/orupaanai

- **If your children would like to do sponsored bicycle rides, walks etc to fund raise for OP**, please encourage them to do so through JustGiving, which has a page for Oru Paanai.

Oru Paanai

58 Hungerford Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 3AB
Registered Charity No. 1136376

www.orupaanai.org.uk

Email: secretary@orupaanai.org.uk Charity number: 1136376

Oru Paanai Sri Lanka

17 Yahalabedda Road,
Haputale, Sri Lanka



Oru Paanai - a charity feeding the hungry in Sri Lanka

Charity no: 1136376



Standing Order Mandate

Your name

AddressPost code

Your Bank details

To the ManagerBank, plc

Branch address.....

Sort code..... Your Account Number.....

Please pay **monthly** / **yearly** [delete as appropriate], until further notice

The sum of £..... Amount in words, **Pounds**.....

Starting on [date of first payment].....

Beneficiary's Name **Oru Paanai**

Beneficiary's Bank **Barclay's Bank, plc**, Stourbridge Branch
81 High Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands
Bank Sort code **20-82-70** Account Number **53279685**

Reference.....[your name]

Please cancel any previous standing order in favour of the beneficiary

Your Signature[s] Date

.....

Cut here

Please send this portion to your bank

Please return this portion to Oru Paanai

Treasurer – Oru Paanai
c/o 58 Hungerford Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 3AB

Either

I have instructed my Bank to pay my donations by **S/O** [amount £..... monthly/yearly].

Or

I do not wish to pay by **S/O** and enclose a cheque [amount £.....] made payable to 'Oru Paanai - Feeding The Hungry in Sri Lanka'

Your Name and Signature

Tel Number E mail:

Gift Aid: I would like to GiftAid my giving and confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and community amateur sports clubs that I donate to will reclaim from my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax for every £1 that I have given.

Please inform us if you have any changes in your address details, want to cancel this declaration or no longer pay sufficient tax.