

Abayam Sri Lanka visits September 2022

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Northern Province visits (JS, UM, MR, Anoma)

DATE	INSTITUTION VISITED	SUMMARY OF VISIT	REQUESTS
06-09-2022	Chundukuli Girls' School	Met principal, Mrs D. Thuseetharan, and discussed Abayam Women schools' mental health project	JS to send by WhatsApp Abayam Mental Health Call Centre flyer
06-09-2022		Met with Abayam psychologist, Sri, and Vinod, psychology graduate and film producer, to discuss making of Abayam Women schools' mental health training video – script and approximate costs.	N/A
07-09-2022	Vinayagapuram primary school near Mallavi	Met principal, teachers, Lavanya Perampalam (interim English teacher funded by Abayam Women) and pupils. Visited Science lab (ceiling and 5 desktop computers funded by Abayam Women), SMART classroom (flooring and curtains by Abayam Women) and male teachers' quarters (funded by Mr Tavi's family for Abayam).	Urgent need to complete fencing around teachers' quarters, to separate it from the pupils and grazing animals. They also asked for an art room.
07-09-2022	Palinagar secondary school near Mallavi	Met principal, Mr Sri Kamalanathan, who moved to the school 6 months ago from an Abayam supported school, and the psychology graduate teacher who is the school counsellor (Mrs Vijayosala Nanthaseelan). Watched a regular performance in English by the pupils. The school is well organised and the pupils are successful, both academically and in sports.	Help with teaching all teachers English, to support the planned weekly 'English only 1 day' An A Level physics teacher.
07-09-2022	Abayam Uduthurai medical clinic	Being held in a community hall, on Tuesdays or Thursdays weekly. Met with the hall owners, who said they would repair the leaking ceiling. Dr Ganesh has already ordered a doctor's chair, table and couch. CSeeing approx 35 patients for consultations and dressings (no suturing).	Urgent need for tube well (approx. SLR 30,000), since there is no water supply. Consider need for pulse oximeter (they have a nebuliser).

		Running cost SLR 100,000/ month.	Consider running the clinic for a second day each week.
07-09-2022	Abayam Iyakachchi clinic	Running Mon, Wed and Sat. Janna (pharmacy) and Diana (dressings) 3-5pm, doctor 5-7pm. Same staff go to Uduthurai clinic on Tues or Thur. Deprived area, approx 30-40 pts /d. Running cost SLR 180,000/ month.	Nil
07-09-2022	Kaithady Nunavil Government Elders' Home	Abayam Women had provided post-COVID support (dried milk powder and disposable gloves)	They are short of staff, but said they did not need anything else.
07-09-2022	Telipallai Amman temple	The family of an Abayam member had contributed to the construction costs. The temple is now fully developed and functioning, and a festival was running. Met with Mr Aru Thirumurugan and thanked him for his contribution to many Abayam projects, particularly the clinics. Asked him to identify impoverished schools in hill country area in need of support.	Nil
08-09-2022	Abayam Myliddy Clinic	Met Dr Ganesh, nurse Selvarajah and assistant Sarojini. He has limited to 30 pts/d, who are seen by doctor 4-6pm, but they come 2-4pm to get a ticket. Mainly displaced people and labourers. Thanked Dr Ganesh for all his work for Abayam across all 4 clinics. Running cost SLR 150,000/ month.	Nil
08-09-2022	Abayam Ponndithiruppu primary schoolchildren tuition house visit	Visited house of Kasina, former pupil of Ponndithiruppu primary school, whom Abayam is funding, along with a music graduate, Jean, to run after- school classes 4-6pm for G1-G5 pupils. The pupils look small-for-age but keen and happy.	- Food for the children, eg kadalai snack (1kg dry weight kadalai will be needed daily for the 60 children at cost of approx. 600 SLR). - Construction of shed on side of house, so the G5 children can be taught separately. ? temporary shed from palmyrah leaf will be more cost effective.
08-09-2022	Ponndithiruppu pre-school	Parents, pupils and teachers had been asked to gather.	Priority requests:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - food for pupils (govt SLR 30/d insufficient with current costs). (May have increased to SLR 60/d since Aug 2022.) - exercise books for pupils. <p>Their other requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - outdoor flooring (gets muddy when raining) - painting of walls - fencing of play area so bigger children don't enter - materials for art class - CD player/ pen drive, but there is no functioning computer.
08-09-2022	Sankanai sewing teacher's house	She is conducting a 6 month sewing course (course fee = SLR 20,000, 3-5pm 6 days a week) and Abayam has agreed to provide certificates. Discussed the costs related to her sewing the maternal and baby clothes for the pregnancy packs.	Nil
09-09-2022	Nurses' Training School, Teaching Hospital Jaffna	Meeting with Mr Jeyakumar, Senior Nursing Training Officer. Jaffna NTS continues to do well in the national exams (conducted in English), ranking 2nd or 3rd. Last batch only 2 failed.	<p>His requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abayam to support the prizes for their students again (last year he paid himself) - Abayam to continue the counselling training for their students (the students who did the 3 month Abayam counselling training have now graduated and left).
09-09-2022	NP Provincial Education Dept	<p>Went with Dr Sathiyamoorthy to the Provincial Department of Education NP, to meet the Provincial Director of Education, Mr Uthayakumar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussed proposed Abayam Women training mental health video for schools. - He gave us the WhatsApp number of Mrs Uthayakalar, the Provincial Coordinator for Counsellors for schools (of which there are approx 	N/A

		<p>150), who is based in Colombo. We spoke to her straight after the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JS will send her the latest version of the video film script so she can give her input before filming starts. - She was supportive and has agreed to a Zoom meeting in a couple of weeks with Abayam Women members, and she will invite some of the school counsellors. 	
09-09-2022	Abayam Call Centre team meeting, THJ	<p>Attended by UM, JS, Dr Sathiyamoorthy, Dr Sivathas, Dishanthan, registrars (Dr Sriraman and Dr Gohilan), Sri (Abayam psychologist) and Barnorathy (field worker, 'Psychology special' student).</p> <p>Total cost of running helpline is SLR 150,000 per month (staff salaries + phone rental charges). Dishanthan is keeping meticulous accounts. Still receiving only approx 10 new calls per month; this increases after each publicity campaign, eg distributing leaflets. There are 9 other similar hotlines operating (info from Dr Sivathas). Registrars are doing 12-hr shifts. If they don't answer, the call automatically goes to Sri, 24/7. If the registrars take a call out of hours they will handover to Sri the next day so she can do follow-up calls.</p>	<p>Agreed action points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dr Sivathas to finish making the mental health advice/ good parenting booklet he is preparing, with Abayam call centre flyer on back cover and Abayam logo, for publication. Abayam has already agreed to fund this. 2) Dishanthan to modify the Abayam helpline flyer as discussed, email to Dr Parthipan for corrections, and then get the flyer printed. 3) Dishanthan to work with Dr Sathiyamoorthy to finalise the billboard advert for the Abayam Call Centre they were preparing for Jaffna Town centre (there was a delay waiting for the phone companies to provide free numbers). 4) When Dr Sivathas goes to local schools on his mental health outreach visits, Sri to accompany him and distribute Abayam Call Centre flyers. 5) As agreed by Dr Sathiyamoorthy, from October 2022, Dr Sivathas to run a monthly half-day training session in THJ for each of the following 4 groups: registrars, nurses, the nursing students who did the previous Abayam 3 month counselling training, and school counsellors. Abayam will fund the tea and short-eats for these courses.

			<p>6) Abayam Women to continue with making of schools' mental health training video and its subsequent dissemination to schools.</p> <p>Other requests by Dr Sivathas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental Health drop-in centre - Vehicle to do outreach visits to schools etc - Monthly Mental Health newsletter for schools etc.
10-09-2022	Abayam Annaicodai Medical Clinic and Education Centre	<p>Met Dr Ganesh again. Ajitha was covering for Selvarajah on nursing duties, and Sarojini was on pharmacy duties. Clinic is looking neat, clean, with computerised booking-in system (Clinic Pro V1.0 software) and television showing short public health films in Tamil selected by Dr Ganesh in the waiting room.</p> <p>Dr Ganesh showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - their logs of short and long expiry drugs and the drug stock list - the record books where the finances of each of the 4 clinics is logged. <p>Dr Ganesh said that, in addition to patients from Manipay and Annaicodai, the Annaicodai Clinic also serves poor fishermen's families from Chavakatu and Karatheevu, and he thinks it is useful to continue the clinic service.</p> <p>In addition to the waiting room videos, health prevention checks (weight, BP and random blood sugar) are carried out.</p>	Nil

Eastern Province Visits (UM, MR and local helpers arranged by Dr Thavanesan, inc. Mr Nagendran, Vakara region co-ordinator)

12/09/2022	Zonal Education Office, Thirukkivil	Met with Zonal Education Director, Mr Jeyachandran. Discussed the 2 Abayam projects:	He is asking Abayam to support the batch who will be starting in 2023 and finishing in 2025. After that he is expecting the former students to fund the classes.
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13/09/2022	Muthalakudu Pre-school	<p>Met retired principal, the 3 teachers funded by Abayam (Mrs Nageswary, who is in charge, Mrs Malthirathayangee and Mrs Vantratheeyree), parents' committee representatives and pupils. 56 pupils aged 3-5 yrs. The two mothers from the parents' committee said their husbands were in business or overseas, and the children look well nourished and clothed. Abayam is paying SLR 7000/ month per teacher plus SLR 9000/ month for other educational materials = 30,000/ month. The Provincial Council in addition pays SLR 4000/month/ teacher. Supervised by one of the teachers, the parents use the SLR 60/child/day provided by the government to take it in turn to buy the ingredients and cook lunch for the children (rice, veg/pulse curry, fruit and milk, approx SLR 2500 per day).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Books in Tamil and English. We asked them to use part of the SLR 9000/ month for this, rather than saving it all for the school sports day, but said we would pass the request to the Abayam committee. - Repair climbing toys in front play area. We asked if the parents could provide the labour free, and Abayam would consider. Dr Thavanesan says that he has asked them previously to get a quote for the materials. - Extension of water supply pipe approx. 30 metres from adjacent public health building, because well water is salty sea water. Dr Thavanesan says he asked them more than 6 months ago to apply to the water board to get this done, and then Abayam would pay the water board directly (approx SLR 30,000).

			- They asked for uniforms for the children, and we all felt that this is not a priority, particularly because they will grow out of them in a few months.
13/09/2022	39 th Colony School, Amparai/ Batticalao border	<p>Met the principal, Mr Thiruveruselvam, and the young science teacher, Mr J. Jeyarajah. 165 pupils, 86 boys, 79 girls, from G6 up to less than 20 he has managed to start O-Level classes. Some single or no-parent families, mainly farmers, but no malnutrition because they grow their own food. For G1-5 the govt SLR 60/d is used by the parents in turn to cook food for the children, eg karunkai porridge, noodles with egg. Elephants present a danger to the area, including the school. Several of the teachers are not qualified teachers, but government Development Officers.</p> <p>1) The photocopier/printer/ scanner and computer Abayam previously donated are being well used, and they are buying the paper.</p> <p>2) The Abayam Digital Learning Centre - there is one laptop and a projection screen, and the children are sitting on the tiled floor. Dr Thavanesan says that Abayam bought a SMART TV which they kept on the floor and is now being repaired. He says that a SMART board has been ordered from Cargills and is awaited, and that furniture has also been ordered. We handed over the speakers they had requested.</p> <p>3) Abayam science lab - is just 2 small rooms with a cupboard and table in one room where the science teacher is keeping some class materials. They opened the small monocular daylight microscope donated by Abayam. We suggested they knock down the wall between the 2 rooms to make 1 decent sized room, where lab benches can be installed, but Dr Thavanesan later said that to obtain permission would be a long process.</p> <p>4) Abayam scholarship classes in maths and science. Abayam is paying two local Development Officers (live approx 2km away) who are not teachers at the school to take 8 classes each per month, on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays, and is paying them each SLR 1,500 per</p>	<p>Mr Thiruveruselvam had only 2 requests:</p> <p>1) Larger (A-type) school desks and chairs for the G10 and G11 pupils, because they are using ones that are too small for them. Dr Thavanesan later said that the principal paid a deposit but then the costs went up, and the carpenter asked for more money, so Dr Thavanesan is trying to mediate.</p> <p>2) To at that stage support financially the pupils preparing for O-Levels who manage to do well enough to enter A-Levels (he is expecting approx. 5?,). Dr Thavanesan later said this has already been agreed.</p>

		<p>class. We suggested that we could ask if this could be increased to account for the increase in fuel prices, but Dr Thavanesan later said that this had been increased from SLR 1000 only 3 months ago, and since these people have government jobs and are part of that community, he thought SLR 1,500 was reasonable.</p>	
14-09-2022	Abayam Puthur Pre-school, Vakarai	<p>DS office is maintaining the school. The concrete building built by Abayam is solid and cool, despite no shade, with part-mesh walls and reflective roof. 12 children 3-5yrs from farming and labourer communities; look poor and undisciplined. School times 8-11 am, but teacher is there 07.30-12. Without this nursery the parents would be taking the children to sell farm produce on the road.</p> <p>Current teacher, Rukmani (SLR 7000/ month) and on the same day Dr Thavanesan appointed a second (unqualified) teacher, to also do an evening class 4-5pm, Mathusalini. Rukmani cooks the food (SLR 7000 - 1000/ month) for the children at home and brings it.</p>	<p>Their requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electricity. Dr Thavanesan said he will communicate with DS office. - Tube well. Need electricity first, for pump. - Toilets. They are using the toilet of an adjoining house. - Roll-down plastic sheets to cover mesh walls, to prevent rainwater coming in. - A gate. Dr Thavanesan will discuss with Mr Nagendran? - Books in Tamil and English. Dr Thavanesan will arrange? - Exercise books for the children. Dr Thavanesan will arrange? - Paints, so Rukmani's husband, who is good at art, can paint pictures for the children on the walls (currently bare white) free of charge. Dr Thavanesan said he will arrange. - Speakers/ boomer so that they can connect to mobile phone and play music for the children. - Excursions to other areas. We said this is not a priority, and the teachers could give the children a project of planting jam trees around the nursery, so that they learn about the environment, and this will also help with the rainwater ingress. Dr Thavanesan also agrees that excursions are too risky.

14-09-2022	Palchenai Pre-school, Vakaraï region	<p>The school was built by World Vision 4yrs ago, and is being managed by Mr Thavaneethan, Child Development Officer.</p> <p>44 pupils (M=F), from farming and fishing families, but the children and mothers look well nourished and clothed (a few in simple uniform). Electricity, tube well and toilets. World Vision installed reflective roof Nov 2021.</p> <p>Outside cooking area and parents take it in turn to cook for the children (rice, parupoo, nethily, noodles with egg, etc). World Vision is paying SLR 60/d/ pupil for food, for 3 month trial.</p> <p>2 female teachers, Sureshkumariraddy and Sasikar Thayalini, Mon- Fri 07.30-11.30am, funded by Abayam Women. (Forgot to ask about third teacher.)</p>	<p>Requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If World Vision stops paying for food after 3 months, Abayam to take over. - Abayam to continue to pay electricity bill. - The tube well pump motor has been stolen and will cost SLR 38000 to replace. Dr Thavanesan said he will look into how to replace it without it being stolen again. - Chairs for children and teachers. Dr Thavanesan says currently expensive, but he will look into this. - Wire mesh for open parts of walls. Dr Thavanesan said wait for costs to come down (currently 1 million SLR). - Books in Tamil and English. Dr Priya Thayaparan sent a list to Dr Thavanesan later that day, and he said he will purchase.
14-09-2022	Arunthathy Primary school, Vakaraï region	<p>120 pupils (M=F), from poor fishing and farming families, but few single parent families. Met principal, Mr Sanmugha Kananarajah, the scholarship class DO teacher (who was a volunteer at the school for 10 years) funded by Abayam, Mr Vanurakasingas Vethakaran, and the young English teacher (A Level Commerce), Mr Krishnamoorthy Dilshanth. 30 pupils attend the Abayam scholarship classes, all day Saturdays. 80% of students passed scholarship exams.</p> <p>The parents in turn cook the food for the pupils - rice and veg curry, parupoo, eggs, ilakanji soup.</p> <p>The previously ordered multimedia projector has arrived. The previously donated photocopier/ printer/ scanner is being well used.</p> <p>The English class children are reading what the teacher has written on the board, but do not appear to understand what they are reading.</p>	<p>Their requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A3 and A4 paper for printer. Dr Thavanesan says out of stock nationally. - SMART board. Dr Thavanesan says not appropriate for this school.

14-09-2022	Palchenai school	<p>504 pupils (M=F), from fishermen and labourer families, approx 5% being brought up by grandparents. Met Mr Uthayakumar (vice principal) and the Tamil teacher.</p> <p>SMART classroom funded by Abayam Women continues to be well used, also by A-Level students from 11 neighbouring areas. The more recently donated photocopier/ printer/ scanner is also being well used. We handed over the speakers purchased by Mathuramany. Dr Thavanesan says cabinet has to be approved.</p> <p>The school has been running A-Levels only since 2011, but at the last sitting 100% of students achieved 3 passes, and the school is top out of 83 in the zone.</p> <p>They offer only arts stream A-Level, not science, because there is no science teacher. We called the A-Level students in and asked them how many would have done science if it had been an option, and approx 40% raised their hands. The students were impressive, saying that even if it is too late for them, it would be good if those following could do science A-Levels.</p> <p>Later spoke to Dr Thavanesan and he said that it is not just a matter of getting a science teacher - the school has to apply to the government to start science A-Level. Dr Thavanesan thinks that, because of the lack of science in the regional junior schools, it will not be approved for Palchenai school, and if any school in the region is given permission, it will be Kathiravelly secondary school. He says the application process will take years.</p> <p>Mr Uthayakumar said he will find out about the salary for a science teacher.</p> <p>The computer classroom has only 5 functioning computers for pupils.</p>	<p>See previous column:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A-Level science? - More computers for pupils? - Approval for cabinet for SMART classroom.
14-09-2022	Meeting with Muthur Public Health midwife, Mrs Praveena, at Palchenai school.	<p>She said that, although during the COVID peaks she was busy with immunisations, etc, things are better now, and she is happy doing the Abayam work because needy people in her community come to her as someone who will be able to help them.</p> <p>She has identified more needy pregnant women in a 35km area around her office in Muthur (in Partallipuram, Palikudiruppu,</p>	<p>UM to send list of NP Pregnancy Pack contents to Praveena to see if the EP pack contents need to be modified.</p> <p>UM to discuss with Dr Parthipan and Abayam Women about finding more funds for packs.</p>

		<p>Mahilatheevu and by MOs in Eechalampatrum), so can donate 20, rather than 15, packs per month. She buys the pack contents monthly, and 2.5 lakhs transferred by Abayam in August not enough. Current pack cost 15,000. I showed her photos of the NP SLR 7000 packs, and she said that her packs include a hot water flask, 10 metres of cloth and slippers.</p>	
14-09-2022	Abayam Kalarippu nursery	<p>The school is at the end of a long dirt track, and was accessible only by motorbike.</p> <p>The nursery is being managed by Mrs Amalee from the DS Office. There is another nursery opposite, which is open in the mornings only, which is causing some problems.</p> <p>The Abayam nursery is operating 2-5.30pm, with a dual function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pre-school nursery 10 children - 16 school children G5-G11 for evening classes. <p>Poor, labourer families.</p> <p>2 teachers (each SLR 10,000/ month), Sasika (educated to A-Level) and Ajinthamalar (educated to O-Level). They live close to each other, approx 4km away, and come by bus and then walk, carrying the food they have cooked for the children at home.</p>	<p>Requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Abayam nameboard has been removed by someone. - Water tank and pump. Dr Thavanesan said he will get a hand pump installed. - They said the toilets are not working and the children are using the bushes, but Dr Thavanesan says that they just have to clean the toilets. - Corrugated roof is broken in one corner and banging loudly for the wind. ? Mr Nagendran will get fixed. - Roll-down rain shield for mesh part of walls. Dr Thavanesan has asked Mrs Amalee to arrange. - Cups and plates for children because not all of them bring one. Dr Thavanesan has asked Mrs Amalee to arrange. - Cupboard to keep children's things. Dr Thavanesan says 2 already ordered. - G6-G10 revision books for Tamil, English, and Maths, and song/ story books for nursery children. Dr Thavanesan will order. - 1 bicycle for the 2 teachers to share (may get second bicycle later). Dr Thavanesan will arrange. - The older children asked for excursions to see surrounding areas, and we suggested an environmental project in the school grounds, and

			that wanting to see other places should be a motivation to study hard and get good jobs. Dr Thavanesan agrees that excursions would be too risky.
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