

## Suggested format for documentation of COVID intervention

### General Information

1. **Organisation Name** Tamil Nadu Science Forum
1. **Program Name** Chittukkal Maiyangal (Activity centres for children)
1. **Nature of the intervention (what areas did you work in ....eg.,)**
  - a. Nutrition support
  - b. Food rations for families
  - c. **Learning programs for children**
  - d. Medical support
  - e. Awareness and education for the community
  - f. Livelihood generation programs
  - g. Any other
1. **When did the intervention start –**

From July 2020 till November 2020  
Reinitiated from July 2021
1. **Location and demographics –**
  - a. Please describe the area (Geography) and the
  - b. communities served (Rural/ Urban/ Tribal/ Dalit/ Mixed Communities)
  - c. Number of villages/ number of people/ children

10 to 12 centres in each of Madurai, Theni, Vellore and Tiruvallur districts, each having 4 or 5 volunteers each individually working with 8 to 10 children. All were in rural areas, with children of agricultural labourers. The Tiruvallur programme was exclusively for Dalit children.
1. **Extent of pandemic in the area (if available)** N.A.
  - a. Number of infections
  - b. Number of deaths
  - c. Vaccination status - # vaccinated
  - d. Details of children left without caregivers (#)

### Nature of the education intervention

1. **Age of children**
  - a. <6 years
  - b. **6-10 years**
  - c. 10-16 years
  - d. >16 years
  - e. If working with young adults/ women please share those details as well
1. **Duration of intervention.**

(In these areas the first wave was not significant, but the second wave was severe)

## **1. Detailed narrative (suggested pointers)**

- a. Why did we take this up? What did we want to address?**
- b. Who did we work with?**
- c. What are the actual learning areas we worked on – numeracy, literacy, health, reading, etc..?**
- d. Who were the beneficiaries (intended and incidental)?**
- e. What methods/ strategies did we use? Were there any convergences with other programs/ relief measures in the area?**
- f. What are the kinds of logistic arrangements that you made? How did you manage the COVID precautions?**
- g. What kinds of resources were developed/ used by the program?**
- h. How did the community participate?**
- i. What was the program cost?**
- j. What were the outcomes? Were you able to address what you wanted to address?**
- k. What were the challenges?**
- l. And what would you do different now, if you had to do it again?**
- m. How can your intervention be adapted to the formal school system, if applicable?**
- n. Any other relevant information not sought above can be added as necessary**

Tamil Nadu Science Forum has been active in education for a long time, principally working on enrolment, bringing dropouts back to school and community support centres outside school for children declared to be “slow learners” by the school. With no projects and funding, all this is voluntary work and has been done off and on, based on volunteers’ availability. TNSF has a teachers’ network of nearly 1000 teachers (principally teachers in government schools, elementary stage), which is sustained through the bi-monthly magazine Vizhuthu, and the monthly children’s science magazine Thulir.

During the lockdown, in the month of June TNSF organised a “reach children” programme by which each teacher reached her/his students personally / telephonically. This was principally to make contact and not to teach. Those who could be reached telephonically were reached once every week. “10 phone calls a day” was the formula.

The noon meal programme had ground to a halt, and in June-July TNSF took up an extensive public outreach effort to raise the issue with the government and sensitising the public, including imploding in the PILs in Madras high court (Madurai bench). We were asking for schools to open every day at least to provide food to children. By August / September, the government implemented dry rations programme, and TNSF volunteers monitored it during the first two months in many districts. Similarly, TNSF monitored supply of textbooks and other educational material to all children.

When it became clear that despite these, classes would not start, TNSF started “chittukkal maiyams” literally meaning “sparrow centres” but street level centres where a volunteer would work with 5 or 6 children at a time. Nearly 600 such centres started all over the state in July 2020 but most petered out within a month, but 70 sustained for several months.

There was no set curriculum, but the broad curriculum was set by TNSF’s existing publications

in elementary education: “Arivathin arambam” (Scott Warren’s book), Arvind Gupta’s books, our own which use stories, songs and games oriented towards language learning, number sense, science activities. The choice was left to the volunteer. Origami, science in the kitchen, “paper”, were all popular. All of them use almost no-cost material found locally. The PDF of the books was sent on WhatsApp to the volunteers (many of whom already had the books with them). Activity sheets were sent periodically to them as well.

There was no funding for the programme, no support from anyone.