

# IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Holistic Nutrition Support to Underprivileged Children Afflicted with Cancer

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### Project Details

<b>Project Number:</b>	10206
<b>Project title:</b>	Holistic Nutrition Support to Underprivileged Children Afflicted with Cancer
<b>Project duration:</b>	Sept 2018 to Nov 2021
<b>Approved Budget:</b>	Rs. 170 lakhs
<b>Major Stakeholders:</b>	Children Afflicted with Cancer and their Caregivers
<b>Location:</b>	Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra
<b>Implementation Agency:</b>	Cuddles Foundation
<b>Assessment Agency:</b>	CSRBOX

Cancer poses a significant global health challenge, with rising incidence and mortality rates attributed to factors such as population growth, increased life expectancy, and changing risk factor distributions. In India, a lack of specific programs addressing childhood cancer control compounds the burden of cancer, with childhood cancers accounting for a significant portion of all cancers with childhood cancers in the 0–14 age group accounted for 4.0% of all cancers<sup>1</sup>. Nutrition plays a critical role in paediatric cancer care, impacting short-term and long-term outcomes. Children undergoing cancer treatment face heightened nutritional risks, affecting clinical outcomes such as survival, treatment tolerance, and quality of life. Despite the high prevalence of nutritional deficits in paediatric cancer patients, the significance of nutrition is often underestimated.

Cuddles Foundation, funded by Bajaj Finance Ltd., supports children battling cancer by providing essential nutritional support. Recognizing the vital role that proper nutrition plays in a child's treatment journey, Cuddles employs qualified nutritionists who offer personalized dietary guidance and counselling. These dedicated professionals work alongside children undergoing cancer treatment, ensuring they receive the necessary tools and knowledge to make informed dietary choices. Beyond counselling, various forms of nutritional aid is offered including in-meal supplements, nutritional supplements, and monthly ration bundles.

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2772-3682%2823%2900095-1>

\* The numbers cited are from the M&E reports. They are cumulative over the 3 years of the programme and do not represent unique beneficiaries.

## 02 Key Activities\*

Capacity Building/Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educating parents and caregivers about the importance of nutrition through 62,185 counselling sessions.</li><li>• Creating 62,185 personalized diet plans for each child.</li><li>• Conducting recipe-sharing sessions to foster understanding of nutritional requirements for children undergoing cancer treatment.</li></ul>
Supplements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing essential 9,526 supplements to cancer-affected children, easing the financial burden on families and significantly enhancing the children's chances of surviving the disease.</li></ul>
In-Meal Supplements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering 66,324 in-meal supplements such as lassi, soy milk, or milkshake to all children, regardless of symptoms, to improve their overall nutritional intake.</li></ul>
Parent Support Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educating parents to integrate diverse food groups into their child's daily diet.</li><li>• Conducting 5 parent support group sessions to help parents resolve doubts and queries on nutrition, fostering a sense of community and shared experiences</li></ul>
Ration Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing families with 4,467 ration bundles, reducing the financial burden and enables the provision of wholesome meals at home.</li><li>• The bundle includes 29 different pulses and dry ingredients, allowing for a diverse range of food preparations.</li></ul>

### Note:

Data inavailability hindered a comprehensive programme evaluation.

## 03 Key Impact\*

The impact assessment is based on the IRECS framework, with a focus on **five key** components. The following are the key impact findings aligned as per the framework: -

### Inclusiveness

This parameter measures the inclusiveness of the beneficiary pool, whether every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, receives comprehensive care and support.

- Comprehensive care for every child at TMH, irrespective of socio-economic background.
- **62,185** sessions were conducted with innovative communication strategies, including pictorial representations and child-friendly language, facilitated effective engagement with children from migrant populations, ensuring inclusive access to nutritional support.

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## Relevance

This parameter measures the alignment of its interventions and services with the specific needs and circumstances of children undergoing cancer treatment.

- Vital nutritional assistance was offered to parents from distant communities, easing the financial strain of providing adequate nutrition for their children in treatment.
  - **4,467** ration bundles, essential in bridging the divide between nutritional advice and its practical implementation, were distributed to families to help adhere to dietary recommendations despite financial limitations.
  - **62,185** personalized diet plans were created for each child, with meal plans and supplement regimens being adjusted during hospital visits to effectively address evolving health needs.
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## Expectations

This parameter measures the outcomes and benefits that stakeholders, including parents, caregivers, and healthcare professionals have received from the program's interventions.

- **9,526** children showed significantly enhanced health outcomes for children undergoing cancer treatment through the nutrition program by promoting weight gain and overall health, bolstering their chances of recovery.
  - **66,324** in-meal supplements were distributed to ensure children maintained their nutritional intake despite eating difficulties or stomach problems.
  - Relieved parental stress by providing practical guidance through counselling sessions and ration kits. Involvement was encouraged through various channels, including counselling sessions, pictorial diet sheets, and Parent Support Groups.
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## Convergence

This parameter measures the alignment and integration of various stakeholders, resources, and efforts towards the common goal of improving nutritional outcomes.

- Collaborative approach between nutritionists and programme leadership was present, optimising strategies and resource allocation based on ground-level realities.
  - The partnership with BFL was limited, and there was insufficient clarity regarding the operations of the implementing team.
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## Service Delivery

This parameter measures the efficient and effective provision of essential nutritional support, counselling, and resources to children and families affected by cancer.

- The programme at TMH reflects a well-established framework, maintaining consistent operations for over a decade.
  - **5** parent support groups were held in order to incorporate suggestions or concerns from parents, fostering positive parent engagement along with boosting their awareness levels.
  - The doctor at TMH affirmed the programme's seamless integration and effectiveness within the hospital ecosystem, highlighting the satisfaction of both parent and child.
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Through comprehensive care, tailored interventions, and collaborative efforts, the program addresses diverse needs and enhances outcomes for children undergoing cancer treatment. The nutritionists and doctor both found the program both satisfactory and highly relevant. Despite the deep operational challenges, positive feedback underscores the program's impact within the healthcare ecosystem.