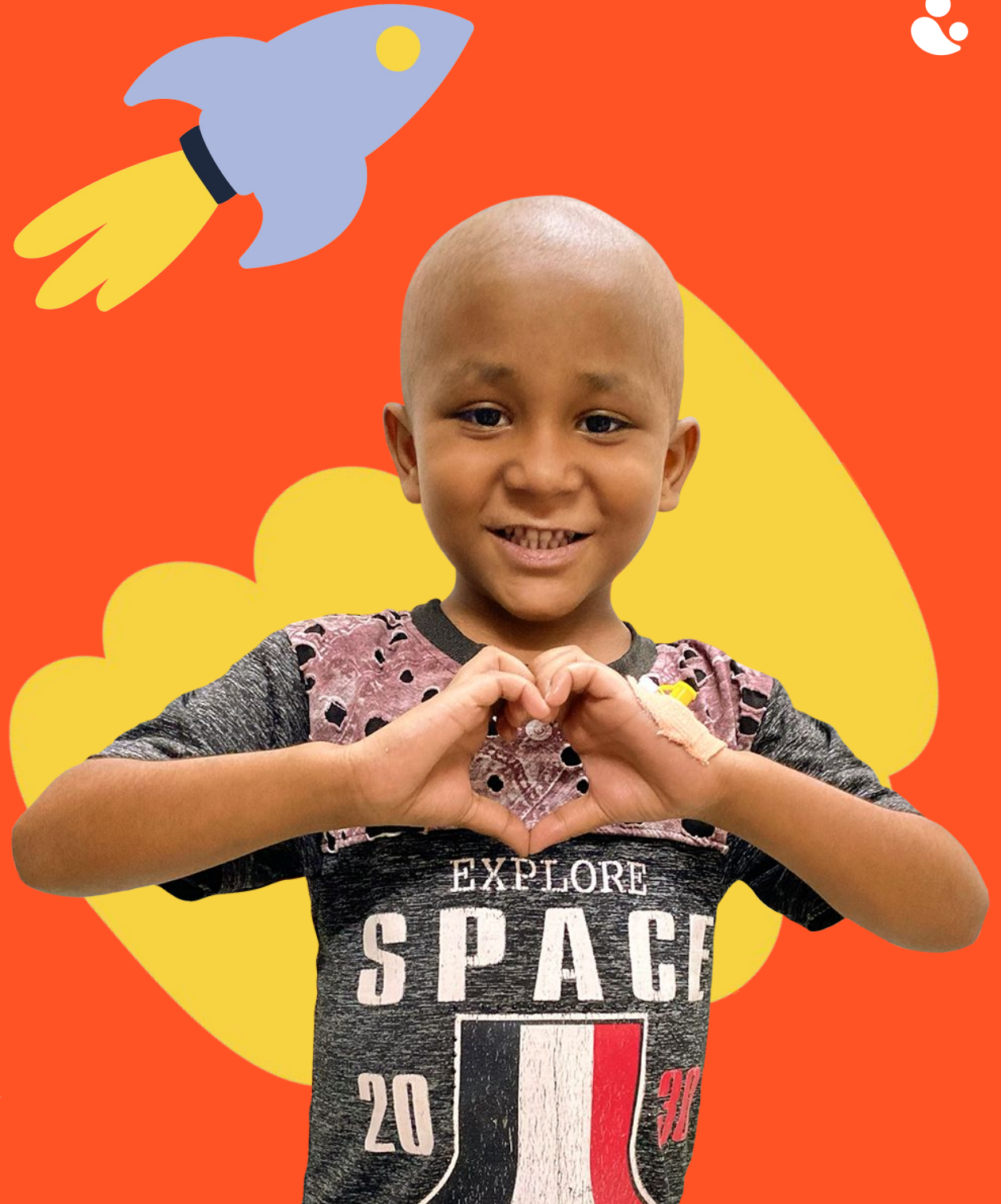




Cuddles Foundation

# Impact Report 2022-23

Analysing the impact of nutrition  
on children with cancer in India.





# Thank you!

This year, our mission turns 10. And it fills us with immense gratitude for the role you've played in helping our impact grow, day by day, year on year. From a handful of children in our first ever hospital to the 16,300+ children across 37 hospitals in 13 states across India today, the number of lives and families we have together touched, nourished and preserved grows consistently.

In ten years, we've groomed and expanded our team to 50+ nutritionists. We've wielded the power of technology to increase the efficiency of our nutrition planning through our FoodHeals™ App. We've worked side by side with the best doctors to sharpen our approach. We've grown an army of Young Heroes in schools across the country. And shared our story with thousands of donors and partners, like you.

Why does this matter? Childhood cancer is mostly curable when treatment is supported with adequate and targeted nutrition. Our beneficiaries come from backgrounds where malnourishment is common, significantly reducing their survival rate to a mere 40% if not attended to. It's an unfair inequality to the West where 80% of children can get cured. It's our life's mission to bridge the gap.

This year, we plan to reach 8 more hospitals and 19,000+ children and families - a step towards our 5-year goal of nourishing 80% of children with cancer in India.

Let's always remember why we do what we do. It isn't just to cure cancer, but it's to give thousands of little children the chance to realise the full potential of the life that lies ahead of them.

*Purnota*

With gratitude,

**Purnota Dutta Bahl**

Founder & CEO

Cuddles Foundation

# Cuddles Foundation

Changing how childhood cancer is fought in India by bridging the gap between medicine and nutrition.

Since 2013, we have been working with government and charity cancer hospitals, enabling them with trained paediatric oncology nutritionists and food aid so that more children may win the battle against cancer. With the FoodHeals™ App, a first-of-its-kind tech platform that automates clinical nutritional functions, we are able to create an ecosystem that enables medical and nutrition teams to collaborate more effectively and make specialised nutritional care more accessible to children. We also freely share our breakthroughs and experience with healthcare practitioners so that they may use this knowledge to save thousands of more children.

## Our Reach\*

13

States

37

Hospitals

50+

Nutritionists



▶ Recipient of the National Award for Child Welfare, 2015–16.

# The FoodHeals™ Program

Our program is customised to every child's medical condition to provide the right nutrition needed to complete treatment successfully. Here's how:

## Assess

We first assess and screen the nutritional status of every child seeking cancer treatment in our partner hospitals.

## Evaluate

We evaluate side effects that may negatively impact the child's nutritional status.

## Prescribe

We finalise the right nutrition therapy and prescribe a customised diet plan for the child.

## Provide

We aid and support the child and family by providing nutritional supplements, hot meals, in-meals, eggs, bananas and monthly ration bundles for a family of four.

## Support

We also support patient families with the knowledge to make healthier food choices by organising parent support group meetings, videos and educational talks.

## Monitor

We continuously monitor the child's nutritional status and reassess plans, if required.





In the year 2022–23, we engaged with 16,300+ children across our 37 partner hospitals. Here's what we found:

**16,300+**

Patients engaged

## Top 4 Prevalent Cancers

B-cell Acute  
Lymphoblastic  
Leukaemia

15%

Acute  
Lymphoblastic  
Leukaemia

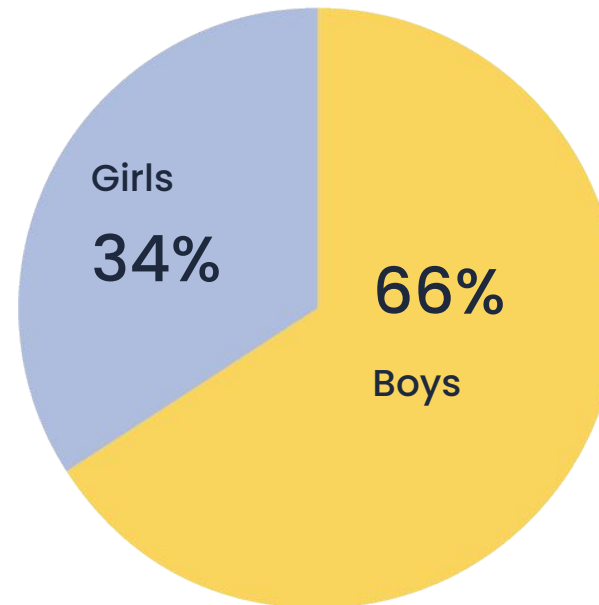
11%

Precursor  
B-Lymphoblastic  
Leukaemia

5%

Acute Myeloid  
Leukaemia

4%



**1,85,000+**

Counselling sessions conducted

### ► Gender Ratio undergoing cancer treatment

The trend we see in our work seems to resonate with the ratio of cancer diagnosis amongst boys and girls in India which is 1.58.<sup>3</sup> This means that for approximately every 5 boys diagnosed with cancer only 3 girls are diagnosed. This gender imbalance is largely seen in poorer countries where girls are less likely than boys to be referred to a doctor when they fall ill.

- Impact on treatment follow-up

**97% of children followed up on their treatment plan when nutrition was a part of it.\***



Raju, Srikar's father, who works as an insurance agent, reflects pride on his little son's strength.

“

“We were devastated when we found out about Srikar's diagnosis. We were worried that our child would never be cured. But Srikar has been stronger than I expected. He encouraged us and assured us that everything would be ok with time.”

[Read more](#)

*\*Patients who returned for a second visit or continued treatment.*

*\*Patient name & photograph has been included with their guardian's consent.*

► Impact on Nutritional Status

82% of patients improved or maintained their nutritional status, despite cancer therapy like chemotherapy or radiation.

“



"Because of these active interventions, we have observed a remarkable positive effect on response and tolerability to chemotherapy and outcome. We are fortunate enough and grateful for the continuous support from Cuddles Foundation and looking forward to further assistance from them."

**Dr Munlima Hazarika**

Professor at Dept. of Paediatric Oncology, Dr B Borooah Cancer Institute, Guwahati, Assam.



# Nutrition aid is as crucial as counselling.

Considering that a large majority of Cuddles' beneficiaries earn less than ₹10,000 per month, distribution of nutrition aid is essential.\*

## ► Aid distributed in the year 2022-23

17k

Ration bundles distributed

4,400

Average kilocalories given per day with the ration program

₹4,800

Savings added on average to caregiver incomes per month\*\*

686k

In-meals

53k

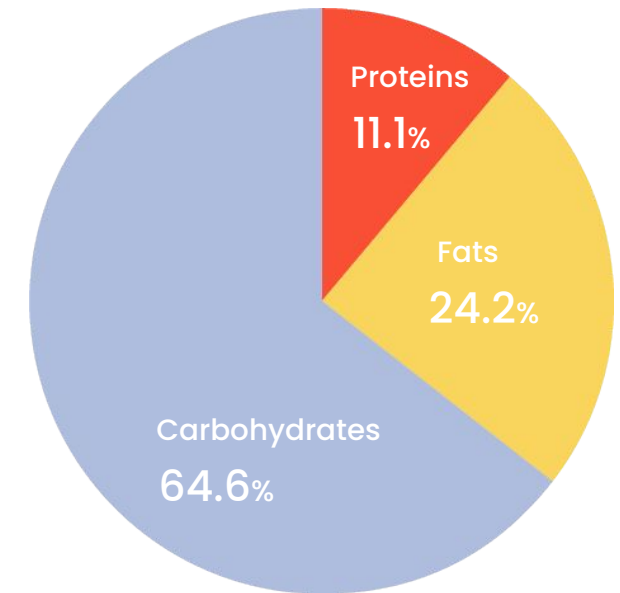
Hot meals

49k

Nutritional supplements

\*Responses were collected from 1,015 beneficiaries at over 30+ partner hospitals in June 2021.

\*\*Calculated basis a child availing of all 4 programs



## Nutritional composition of ration bundles disbursed

Our monthly ration bundles help feed a family of four. Each bundle contains cereals, pulses, millets, nuts and oilseeds, ghee, oil, spices, condiments and basic personal hygiene products.

At 4,400 kcal/day the ration bundle fulfills 100% of the total calorie requirement for the child per day and contributes to the nutritional requirements of the family members too.





# How your contribution to Cuddles helps achieve SDGs



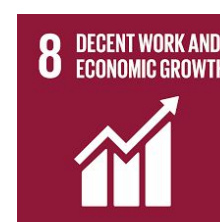
Financial protection from catastrophic illness like cancer reduces poverty



Promote access to care that is not discriminatory against girls and enables mothers and families.



Reducing hunger and malnutrition improves childhood cancer outcomes



Investing in diverse occupations such as nutritionists required for care stimulates local economic growth and employment.



Investing in childhood cancer supports attainment of multiple health related targets



Promote access to care for all communities to reduce catastrophic health expenditure and inequalities.

# Our Methodology:

## What We Measured

### Cases

Patients engaged at the partner hospital(s) are noted on a rolling basis, and the gathered data is analysed for the annual time period.

- # of patients engaged
- # of counselling sessions
- # of cases by ratios (male/female)\*
- # of cases by types of prevalent cancers\*

### Rate of Follow-up

This includes the percentage of patients who return for a second visit and/or continue treatment. This determinant is a reversal of the failure to start treatment, which is a subset of the standard measure of treatment abandonment.

- % of patients who did follow-up\*

### Nutrition Aid

We assess the nutritional support provided in two ways: in terms of value i.e., average kilocalories given per day; and average price of aid as savings to caregiver income; and in terms of physical quantities i.e., ration bundles, in-meals, nutritional supplements and hot meals disbursed and nutritional composition of the ration bundle.

- Average kilocalories per day
- Average savings added to caregiver incomes
- # of nutritional supplements distributed
- # of hot meals distributed
- # of in-meals distributed
- # of ration bundles distributed
- Nutritional composition per ration bundle

- ▶ In consultation with cancer and nutrition specialists and multidisciplinary experts, the following metrics were determined as appropriate to help us demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of the FoodHeals™ program:

### Impact on Nutritional Status

At every visit, nutritionists note patient MUAC or Body Mass Index (BMI), which is required to determine the patient's nutritional status. Impact on nutritional status covers change in patient's nutritional status from their first to last visit.

- % increased or no change\*

### Case Stories

This notes the qualitative impact of the FoodHeals™ program. Case stories highlight patients who have been engaged as part of the FoodHeals™ program, adhered to their treatment schedule and have benefited from the program.

*\*For these analyses, we've only included data from partner hospitals who've shared a minimum of six months of program data with us either via the app or registry.*

# References

1. Lam CG, Howard SC, Bouffet E, Pritchard-Jones K. Science and health for all children with cancer. *Science*. 2019 Mar 15;363(6432):1182-1186.
2. Ward ZJ, Yeh JM, Bhakta N, Frazier AL, Girardi F, Atun R. Global childhood cancer survival estimates and priority-setting: a simulation-based analysis. *Lancet Oncol*. 2019 Jul;20(7):972-983.
3. Bhopal SS, Mann KD, Pearce MS. Registration of cancer in girls remains lower than expected in countries with low/middle incomes and low female education rates. *Br J Cancer*. 2012;107(1):183-188.
4. Socioeconomic study of Cuddles Foundation beneficiaries June 2021, Cuddles Foundation internal document



Published in April 2023.

For more information, email:  
[programs@cuddlesfoundation.com](mailto:programs@cuddlesfoundation.com)  
[www.cuddlesfoundation.org](http://www.cuddlesfoundation.org)

## Feed a child. Starve cancer.

Disclaimer: All reasonable precautions have been taken by Cuddles Foundation to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall Cuddles Foundation be liable for damages arising from its use.

 @cuddlesfoundation

 @cuddlesfoundation

 @Cuddles4cancer