



Impact Report 2025-26

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



We follow the child

There is a moment in every child's treatment journey that our team knows well. The last session. The day a child goes home. For 13 years, we have poured everything into getting children to that moment. This year, we started asking a harder question: what happens after?

In 2025-26, we grew from 44 to 48 partner hospitals across 17 states, supporting 20,270+ children through over 2,85,700+ counselling sessions. Ninety percent of the children we support stay on track with their treatment. That number is not a statistic to us. It is a child who did not give up.

This year, we took meaningful steps toward something close to our hearts for a long time. We have been working on the structure of our Survivorship Programme, conducting needs assessments and laying the groundwork, so that this year we can begin rolling out its implementation. Because when a child beats cancer and goes home, the nutritional vulnerabilities do not always go with them. We know this. And we have decided we will not look away from it.

The world took notice too. We co-organised a nutrition workshop at the 10th Midterm PHO CME in Noida, hosted our biggest National Paediatric Nutrition Summit yet with 100+ participants including voices from across India and internationally, and in October, we stood at SIOP 2025 in Amsterdam and trained Childhood Cancer International members on building nutrition programmes of their own. BMJ Global Health cited our research this year too, proof that food helping medicine work better is no longer just something we believe.

In the year ahead, we plan to begin rolling out the Survivorship Programme, launch our Learning Management Portal to the wider sector, and develop an AI-powered nutrition co-pilot with Columbia University that can carry our 13 years of learning to children in the remotest corners of India and beyond.

We are glad, as always, to be doing all of this alongside you.



Purnota

With gratitude,

Purnota Dutta Bahl

Founder & CEO

Cuddles Foundation

Cuddles Foundation

Giving children with cancer a better chance at survival through 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*

17

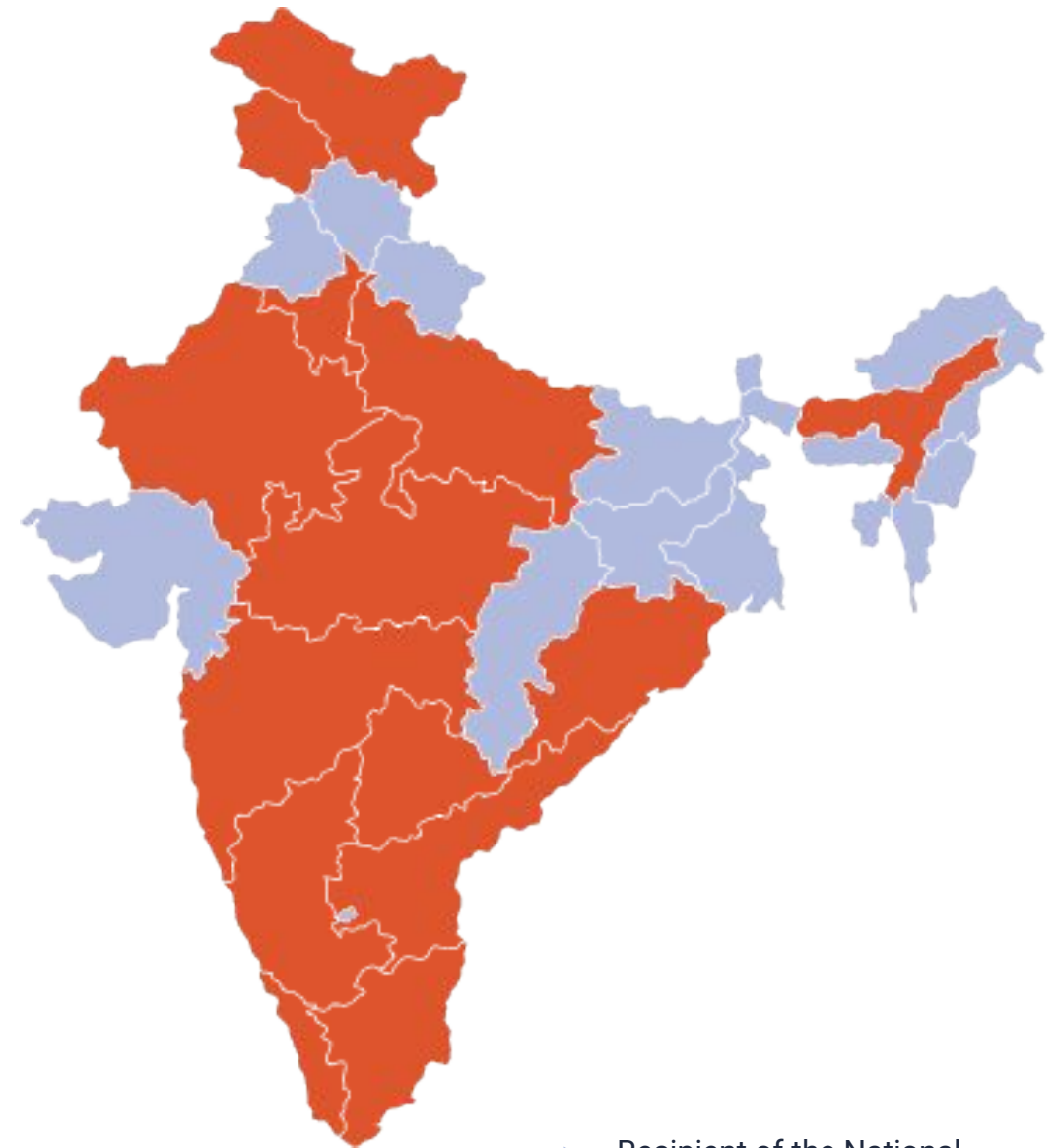
States

48

Hospitals

85+

Nutritionists +
Patient Support
Coordinators



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

Here's what happens from the day a child walks in.

Assess

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

1

Evaluate

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

2

Prescribe

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

3

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.

4



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

Support

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

6

Monitor

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

5

Last year, we showed up.

20,270+

Children supported in 2025-26

2,85,700+

Nutrition counselling sessions conducted



More children, every year. Without exception.

20,277

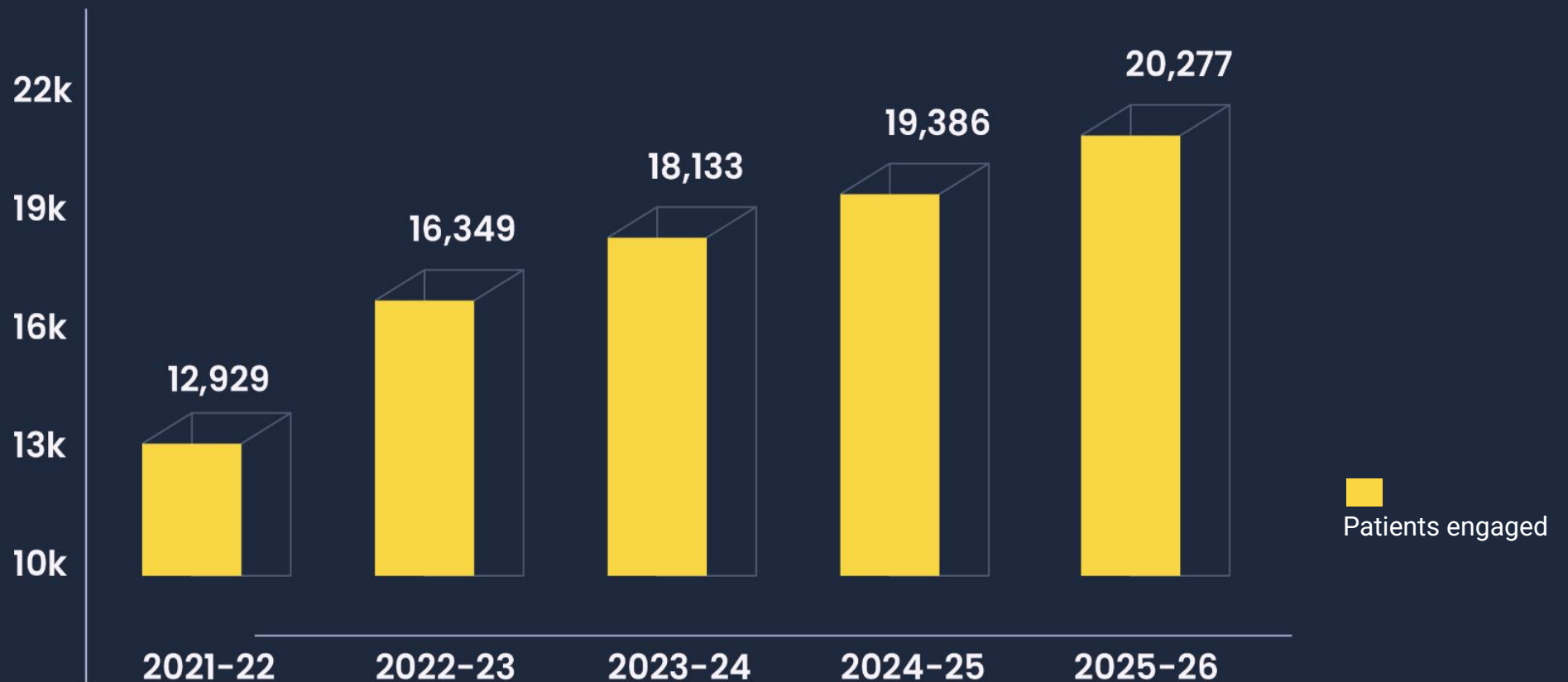
Children reached
2025-26

+56%

Growth since
2021-22

~12%

Avg. yearly
growth



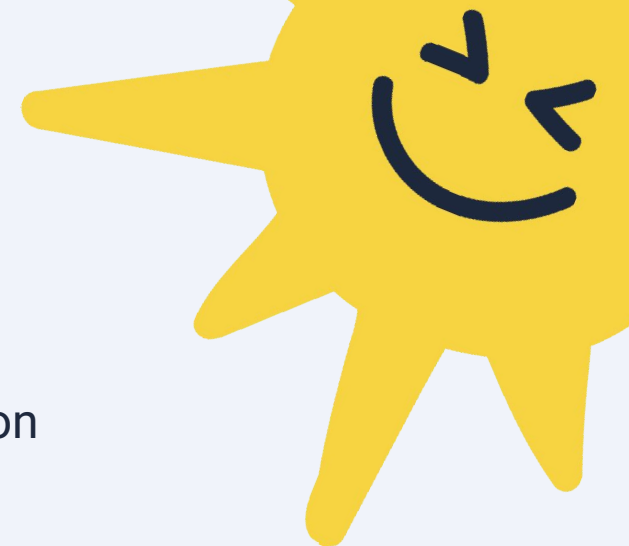
Right now, as you read this, approximately

1,235

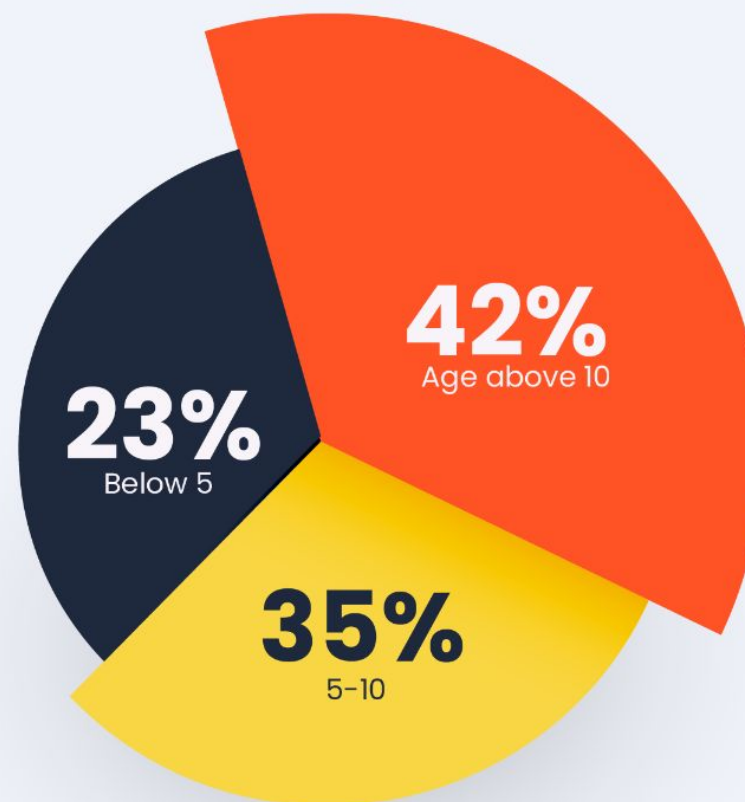
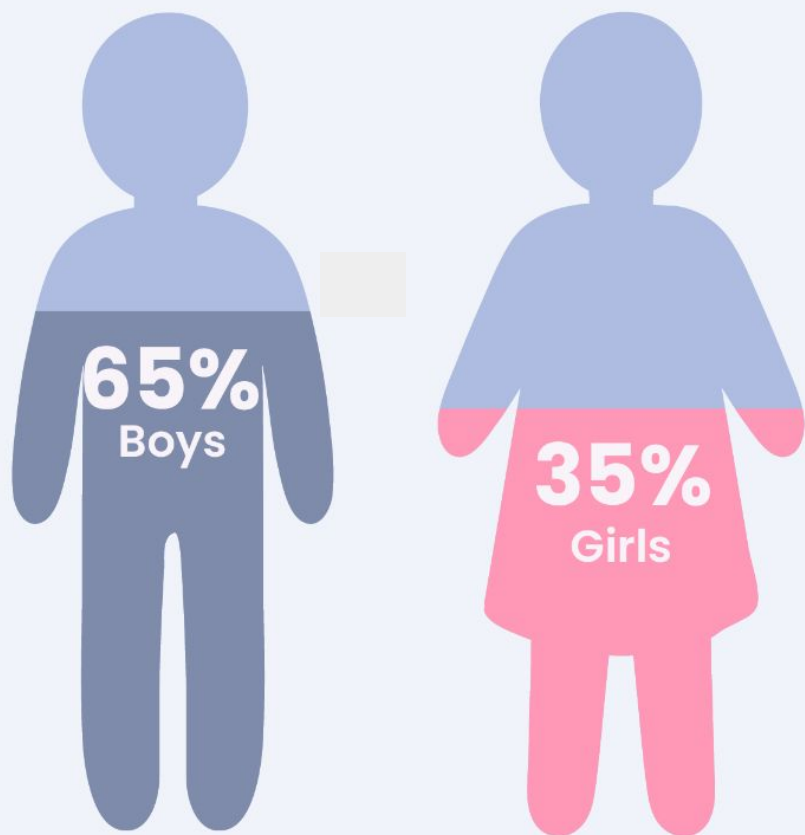
children are in our care, *at any given day*



Approximately, 1 in 4 children we support is under 5

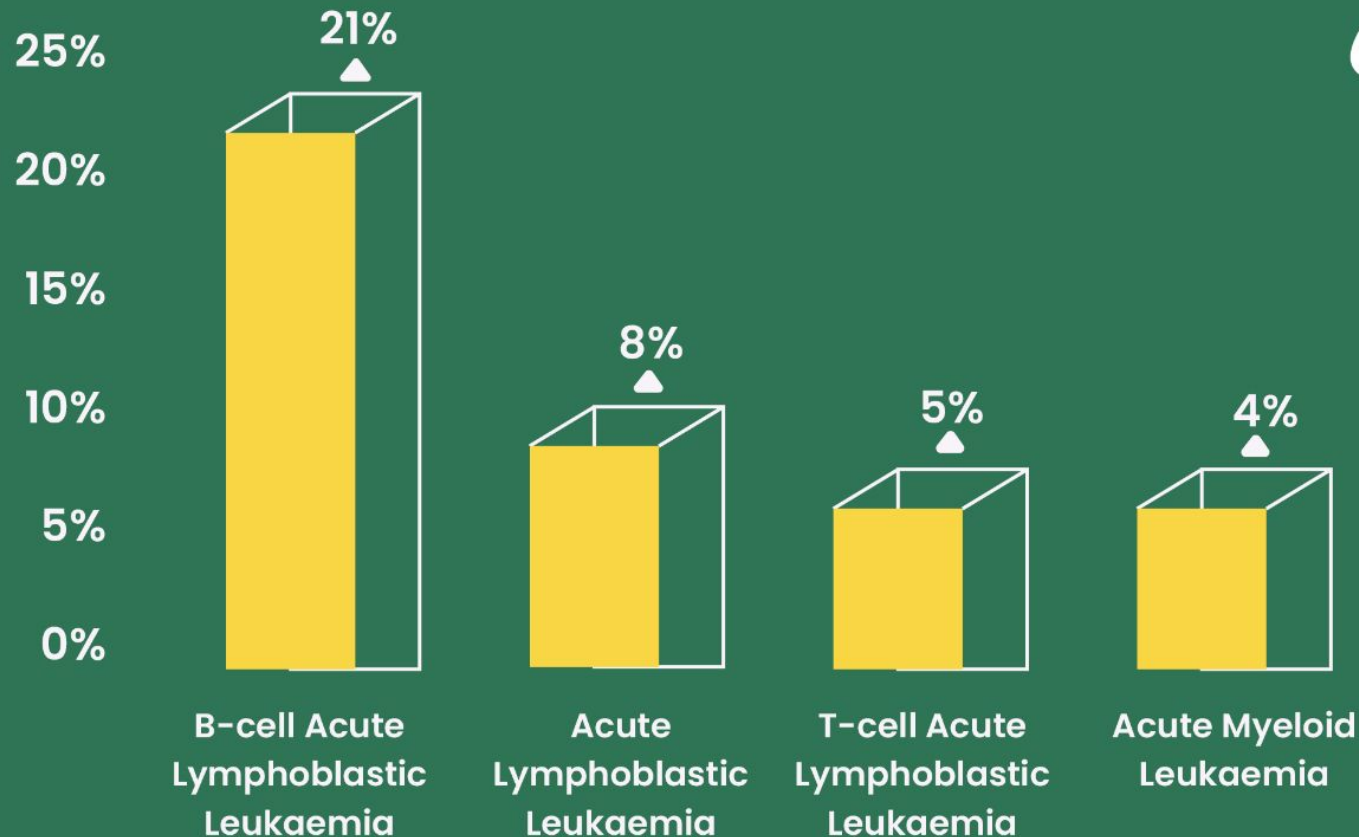


Age Distribution



Most of these children are fighting blood cancers.

B-cell leukaemia alone accounts for 21% of all cases and with the right nutrition, it is one of the most treatable.



Children who get nutrition support don't give up on treatment.

And they get physically stronger through it.

96%

of children followed up on their treatment plan when nutrition was part of it.

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

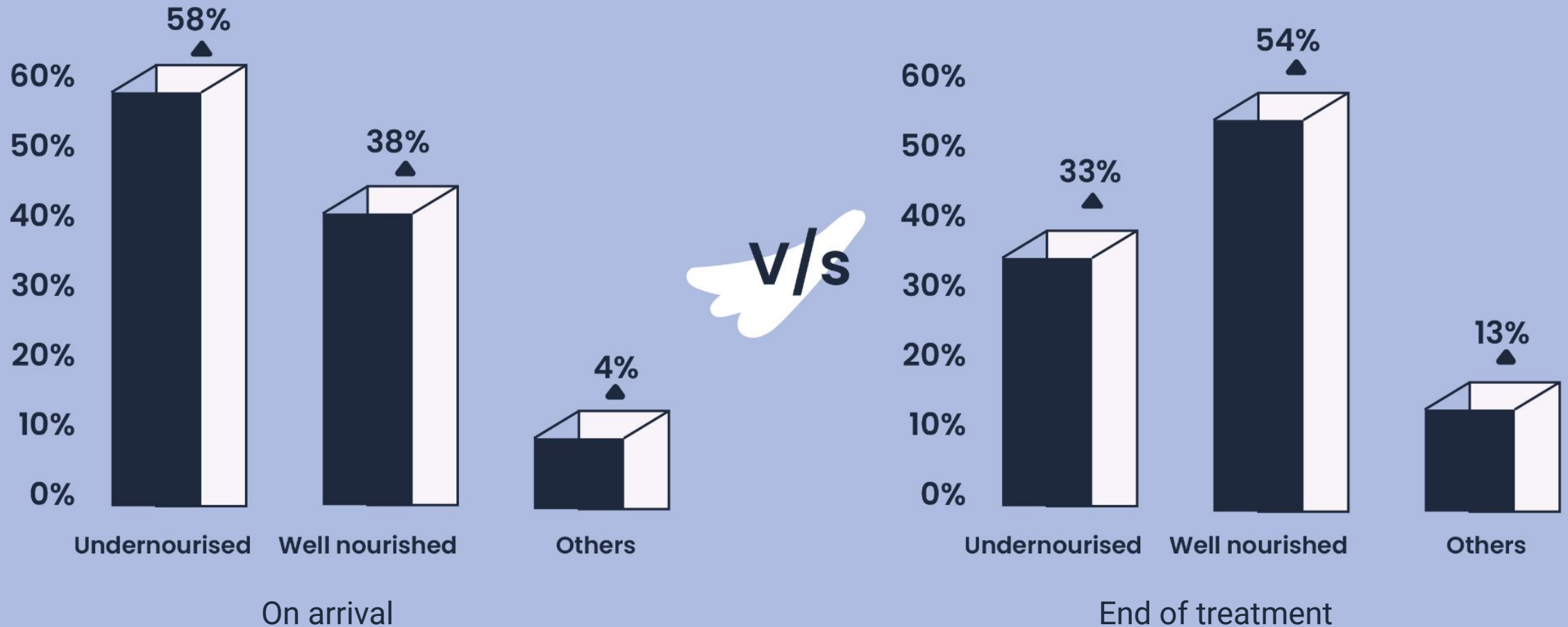
81%

of patients improved or maintained their nutritional status, despite chemotherapy or radiation.



They come in malnourished. They leave stronger.

Undernourishment dropped 25% by the end of treatment. Children are getting healthier as they heal.



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 2025-26**



*Responses were collected from 3,044 beneficiaries at over 35+ partner hospitals in August 2023.
**Calculated basis an IPD child availing of all 4 programs and counselling for 8 days.

She didn't know where to turn. Then a doctor mentioned us

Jyoti, Shaurya's mother, finds support in every small step forward.

When Shaurya first fell ill, we didn't know where to turn. We went from one hospital to another, and it was only when he was admitted to a hospital that the doctor there guided us to **Cuddles Foundation**. They told us what to feed him, what was good for his body, and provided him with protein supplements, monthly rations, and the right support to help him grow stronger. For the first time, I felt like someone was truly guiding us. Knowing my son is getting the right nutrition every day gives me the strength to keep going.



Food helps medicines work better.

Nutrition is a critical component of paediatric cancer care. Many children who come to us are already nutritionally vulnerable, and chemotherapy, infections, and treatment make their needs even greater. For us, ensuring access to good quality, adequate food is as important as providing chemotherapy, antibiotics, and other life-saving therapies.

This becomes even more crucial for children undergoing bone marrow transplants. The intensity of treatment, mouth sores, infections, and long hospital stays can make eating very difficult. That is why regular nutritional monitoring and early support are not optional. They are essential parts of care.



DR. NITA RADHAKRISHNAN
Additional Professor & HOD,
PGICH Hospital, Noida

The better we train our nutritionists,
the better a child's survival chances.

7

Training programmes
conducted

400+

Healthcare workers
trained

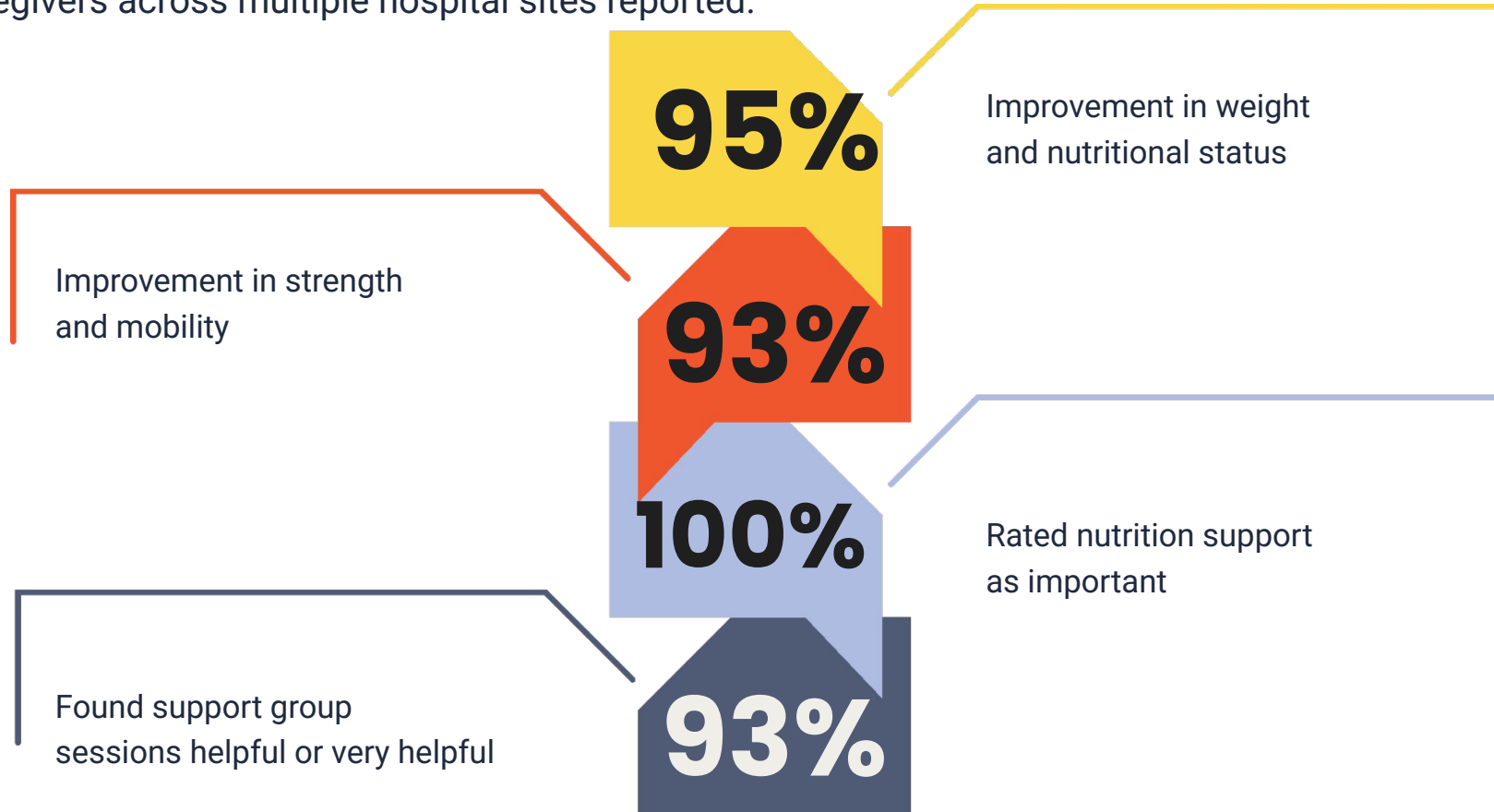
50hrs

Total training
hours delivered



What the parents told us.

1,327 caregivers across multiple hospital sites reported:



Without this program, my child would not have regained strength or weight so quickly.

The warm meals and constant follow-up made hospital visits easier for our whole family.

In every cancer hospital across India, there should be a foundation like Cuddles.

One rupee in.

Two rupees sixty-three paise worth of change out.



31%

Reduction in out-of-pocket
nutrition costs

Families saw a 31% decline in monthly nutrition-related expenses after joining the FoodHeals™ programme – critical relief for households earning under ₹20,000 a month.

Social Return on Investment



₹2.63

per ₹1 invested



For every rupee invested in the FoodHeals™ programme, ₹2.63 worth of social value is generated, verified by independent assessors Crisil Intelligence.

77% of the children we support go back to school.

They don't just survive. They go back to their lives.

77%

Children returned
to school

of children continued their education
after completing cancer treatment – a
sign of full recovery.

85%

Caregivers felt more
confident

of caregivers reported feeling better
equipped to manage their child's
nutritional needs during treatment.

83%

Sustained nutrition
practices

of caregivers continued the nutrition
practices introduced by the programme,
even after support ended.

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

- ▶ 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:

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 ratios (age)
- # 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

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 via the app.



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For more information, email:
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www.cuddlesfoundation.org

Feed a child. Starve cancer.

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