

Nourishing the Future: Feeding children at school

Kerman Province

Overview

This project seeks to boost the health, educational involvement, and overall well-being of students in Kerman province's southern region. NiiKy Foundation plans to achieve this by providing nutritious meals to improve health and enhance educational success. By collaborating closely with local representatives and offering these meals, the aim is to motivate greater attendance and active participation in educational activities among these students.

Introduction

In 2021, a medical team was dispatched to assess the well-being of 220 children across four villages in Rameshk (رمشک) rural district in Qaleh Ganj County, southern region of Kerman province, Iran. Regrettably, during the implementation of the child health monitoring program, it was disheartening to discover that a significant percentage of these children were suffering from malnutrition. At the outset, medical professionals prescribed pharmaceutical supplements for the children, and supplements were subsequently distributed within schools by dedicated teachers. However, due to the severe and longstanding malnutrition, the consumption of these supplements proved impractical.



The acute shortage of resources and deficient infrastructure has placed many families in the challenging position of struggling to provide their children with essential necessities, particularly access to food. To address this pressing issue, we plan to provide meals, prepared and distributed within schools, ensuring that children receive proper nourishment.

In November 2022, we initiated the "*Food Basket for Children*" campaign (Figure 1), in close collaboration with local representatives and dedicated educators. This program entailed the preparation and distribution of one hot meal per week across four schools in Rameshk, extending through the end of May 2023. We observed an enthusiastic response among children, who eagerly attend school on food distribution days. Moreover, the communal experience of children together has brought joy and a sense of togetherness. Over time, we've observed an increase in children's appetites, indicating a positive shift in their overall well-being.



Figure 1: Food Basket for children campaign, Spring 2023, Rameshk rural district, south of Kerman.

School meal plan

Many children living in the villages in the southern region of Kerman face severe educational disparities. These inequalities are most evident in the educational opportunities available to them, with significant discrepancies within the Rameshk and between urban and rural areas. These disparities can breed disillusionment among students, who may feel that the educational system is inherently biased against them. Moreover, the challenges of long distances and limited accessibility to schools, particularly in rural areas, serve as additional barriers. These geographical obstacles can significantly deter students from maintaining regular attendance, ultimately resulting in lower participation rates and a subsequent surge in school dropouts.

Considering the escalating trend of students dropping out of schools in recent years, particularly in underprivileged areas of the southern region of Kerman and inspired by the results of our previous food campaign, the Niiky Foundation has embarked on another fundraising initiative. This program aims to provide essential meal support to five schools situated in the rural areas of the Rameshk, benefiting a total of 246 students, including both girls and boys.

Furthermore, as an integral part of our mission, we are committed to extending our reach beyond the classroom. In addition to our support for rural schools, our plan encompasses the provision of daily meals to a dormitory complex that serves as the residence for 158 students from diverse rural regions (سورددر, تنگک, کهورعباسی, کنگرو, هور, کهن, گونچان, کهن, سرمیدان, گیاهان, زیارت گیاهان, گابنان, دهندران, چاهان, اشکوتونیه, گابنان). Due to the distance and lack of public transportation, students have to stay in dormitories throughout the week. However, the dormitories have very limited facilities, causing many students, especially girls, to discontinue their education. This initiative directly aids these students in their pursuit of education by ensuring their nutritional needs are met, thus promoting better attendance and school success.

Schools

Trough the valuable support of our local partners and in collaboration with school officials, we have identified the following schools (refer to Table 1 and Figures 2-3) as being the most critically in need. These schools cater to a total of 404 students, and our efforts are geared towards addressing their specific needs.



Figure 2: Identified schools in rural regions of Rameshk rural district, south of Kerman.



Figure 3: Dormitories housing 158 youth in Rameshk, south of Kerman.

Table 1: Targeted schools and the dormitories in the Rameshk rural district, south of Kerman.

# School	Location	Number of students	Educational level	Note
1	Surgah village, Rameshk Rural District, Qaleh Ganj County	96	1 st -6 th grades	The school's village requires additional educational resources, particularly scientific laboratory equipment for subjects like science.
2	Konarjamal village, Rameshk Rural District, Qaleh Ganj County	21	1 st -6 th grades	The school lacks any educational aids, library, and educational tools. There is a need for classroom furniture, air conditioning system, sports equipment, library resources, and sanitary facilities.
3	Chahan village, Rameshk Rural District, Qaleh Ganj County	23	1 st -6 th grades	The school lacks any kind of educational aids. Last year, due to extensive wear and tear, the teachers personally repaired and repainted the school at their own expense.
4	About 18 kilometers away from Ramesh city	35	1 st -6 th grades	The school needs a fence.
5	About 14 kilometers away from Ramesh city	71	1 st -6 th grades	The schools have extremely limited facilities, no roads, no mobile network coverage, lack of educational materials, and sanitary services. Sometimes, due to the absence of pencils and notebooks, teachers have been unable to assign homework and exercises to the children.
6	Rameshk city	158	7 th -12 th grades	The dormitory houses students from multiple villages in Rameshk, as well as a few villages in Sistan and Baluchestan.

Fundraising Overview

The aim of this campaign is to provide sustained nutritional support for students. The current plan is to ensure that students have access to school meals for at least three months, covering a quarter of the year.

With local chefs and on-site cooking facilities available in every school and dormitory, all lunch meals are prepared fresh and served on location. The estimated budget accounts solely for the cost of meal ingredients and cooking materials.

The estimated budget for this initiative is about **\$16,600** per quarter, which includes the cost of school meals for **404 student (\$5120 per month)** as well as transportation expenses (about **\$400** per month). Table 2 shows the estimated weekly meal budget. The cost of providing breakfast and lunch per student, per day is approximately \$0.25 and \$1, respectively.

It should be noted that this budget is based on current food prices and an exchange rate of for converting Iranian Rial to US Dollar. In all calculations, the currency exchange rate was considered 50,000.

Table 2: Approximated budget for 404 students' meals per week.

Center	# Students	Meal	# per Week	Cost
Rural schools	246	Breakfast	5	\$330
		Lunch	3	\$792
Dormitories	158	Lunch	1	\$158
			Total	\$1280