

# Nourishing Justice Project

<b>Project title</b>	Nourishing Justice Project
<b>Donor Organisation</b>	Venture tea
<b>Background</b>	<p>According to statistics shared by the National Child Protection Authority, a total of 1,050 new cases of child abuse were reported in the Western Province between 01 January 2024 and 30 June 2024. This region, which includes the districts of Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara, continues to record a significant number of reported incidents, underscoring the scale and urgency of child protection concerns in these areas.</p> <p>In parallel, the Children’s Courts in Battaramulla handle a substantial caseload, with approximately 550 cases being heard each month. This high volume reflects not only the prevalence of reported abuse but also the ongoing demand for judicial intervention and child-focused legal processes.</p> <p>A considerable number of children required to attend these court proceedings travel from distant locations across the province. These journeys often begin early in the morning, requiring children and their caregivers to leave home at dawn or even earlier in order to reach the court on time. Due to financial hardship, many caregivers are unable to provide meals for the children before departure or to purchase food during the day. As a result, it is common for children to arrive at court without having eaten.</p> <p>This lack of access to basic nutrition places an additional burden on children who are already in highly vulnerable and stressful situations. Court proceedings can be lengthy and emotionally demanding, and attending them on an empty stomach can lead to fatigue, discomfort, irritability, and difficulty in concentrating. These factors may further affect the child’s ability to engage with the legal process, communicate effectively, and cope with the psychological strain of recounting or confronting traumatic experiences.</p> <p>The financial constraints faced by caregivers highlight a broader socio-economic challenge, where limited household resources restrict the ability to meet even the</p>

	<p>most basic needs of children during critical moments such as court attendance. This situation reinforces the importance of providing targeted support mechanisms within the court system to ensure that children's fundamental needs, particularly nutrition, are met.</p> <p>Addressing this gap is essential not only for safeguarding the immediate well-being of the child but also for promoting a more humane, supportive, and child-sensitive justice process.</p>
<b>Programme Update</b>	<p>The <b>Nourishing Justice Project</b> was initiated in response to the significant challenges faced by children from Child Development Centres in the Western Province who are required to attend proceedings at the Juvenile Magistrate Court (JMC) in Colombo. This initiative highlights a critical and ongoing need for targeted support for a particularly vulnerable group of children.</p> <p>Many of these children come from highly disadvantaged family backgrounds, often marked by economic hardship, instability, and limited access to basic necessities. As a result, it is not uncommon for them to arrive at court without having had breakfast. In addition to this, they are required to remain within the court premises for extended periods, sometimes for several hours, while awaiting their cases to be heard. These prolonged waiting times take place in an environment that is often unfamiliar, formal, and inherently stressful for children.</p> <p>The absence of even basic nutritional support during these long hours exacerbates their difficulties. Hunger and fatigue can lead to physical discomfort, reduced concentration, and increased emotional distress, making it even more challenging for children to cope with the demands of court proceedings. For children already experiencing vulnerability, exposure to such conditions can negatively impact both their immediate well-being and their ability to engage meaningfully in the judicial process.</p> <p>Recognising the seriousness of this situation and its implications for child welfare, the Juvenile Magistrate Court identified the urgent need to provide immediate and consistent nutritional assistance. Addressing this need was</p>

	<p>seen as an essential step towards creating a more child-friendly and supportive court environment.</p> <p>In response, LEADS has been implementing a dedicated support programme over the past two years to assist children attending the Juvenile Magistrate Court. Through this initiative, each child is provided with a nutritious snack designed to meet their immediate dietary needs and help sustain their energy levels during their time at court. Importantly, meals are distributed to all children attending court across all five working days of the week, ensuring that support is both consistent and reliable.</p> <p>By addressing a fundamental need such as nutrition, the programme plays a crucial role in improving the overall court experience for these children. It helps to reduce hunger-related discomfort, supports emotional stability, and allows children to remain more calm, attentive, and resilient in what can otherwise be an overwhelming setting. In doing so, the initiative contributes to fostering a more compassionate and child-sensitive judicial environment.</p> <p>Between October and December 2025, the programme successfully served 55,110 breakfasts to 1,002 children over 55 court hearing days. Each child received a milk packet accompanied by one of four types of buns- egg bun, fish bun, savory bun, or Vienna bun-offering both nutritional value and variety.</p> <p>This sustained effort has enabled LEADS to continue and strengthen the implementation of the Nourishing Justice Project. The programme not only ensures the consistent provision of essential nutritional support but also reinforces a broader commitment to safeguarding the dignity, well-being, and rights of vulnerable children navigating the justice system.</p>	
<b>Project and Report Dates</b>	<b>Project Period</b>	<b>Period of Report</b>
	01 <sup>st</sup> October – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2026	31 <sup>st</sup> of December 2025
<b>The date of submission of the report</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026	



55 Court  
working dates



1002 Children  
Benefited

## October to December 2025



Bun with a milk packet  
from Week 1 to Week 4



55110 Breakfast  
Served

