

info@ahimsa.ngo
www.ahimsa.ngo



Annual Report 2022-2023

"ITS TIME TO COMPLETELY RETHINK HOW WE LIVE ON THIS PLANET
AND HOW WE VALUE IT'S RESOURCES"



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Table of Contents

1	From Director's Desk	2
2	About Us Vision & Mission	4
3	Where We Work	6
4	Farmer Producer Organization	7
5	Organic Greens cultivation	15
6	Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security through promotion of Conservation Agriculture.	20
7	Expanding production of Millet, Oil Seeds, Vegetables and Fruits for Value addition and Marketing for Food, Nutrition and Livelihood security	23
8	Other activities	25

From Director's Desk

The Covid 19 pandemic has provided an opportunity for the entire World to respond and come back strongly to face multiple challenges, especially in responding to the global food security during 2022-23. The ever fluctuating food and fuel prices, the unprecedented rain fall patters and climate change, conflicts between nations to prove who is super power have been the major obstacles in achieving the sustainable development goals.

To address the food security crisis, the civil society organizations through its various development activities took many coordinated efforts. To eradicate the growing World Poverty and Hunger and to take turn to the right pat in achieving the target fixed, the World has experimented in various interventions. To achieve this, the prosperity in agriculture sector is vital. Through the adoption of sustainable soil health practices, the use of local seeds to perform better in the ever changing climate situations, reducing the Co2 emissions in the atmosphere, many alternate thinking and actions are going to repair the damages caused to the earth and ensure the food security of the World.

At the same time, we can also offer a sustainable development, benefiting the poorest of the poor. For that, we have to take up and speed up much more collaborative efforts than ever before. Establishing sustainable and inclusive development, ensuring food and nutritional security for all, we need to plan our approaches and strategies with new dimensions and perspectives.

In the above context, AHIMSA has been engaged in creating sustainable development alternatives with great commitment than ever before. The declaration of UN to celebrate the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets has further motivated and strengthened our capacities to plan activities in the field and encourage our farmers to come together for collective actions. The establishment of Farmer Producer Company (FPO) for the collective procurement, value addition and marketing of their products with better capacities of bargaining power, organizing small farmers, especially the women farmers and engaging them in the revival of small and minor nutri-millets, cultivation and consumption of organic local greens to address the issue of micro nutrient deficiencies among women and children are some of the major interventions of AHIMSA during this reporting year.

Our interventions on the above areas have contributed in achieving significant, desirable, visible changes in terms of improved food and nutritional security of farm families and rural poor, the increased choice and intake of organic and local food by people in our target villages have developed health and disease resistant capacities and building immunity power to face the newly emerging health crisis including Covid-19 and above all, on the positive impact on people's livelihood. We have no doubt that these changes that we brought in at the field has been a viable model for wider adoption and replication by others.

This would have been not possible for AHIMSA without the solid support, encouragement, guidance, follow up monitoring field visits and concrete suggestions of our donors.



AHIMSA is fondly remembers VASTENACTIE, ACWWEV, CANAID, ROTEN BURG STUTGART, Women's World Day of Prayer for their support. On behalf of the Board and team members of AHIMSA, I express our sincere gratitude to all of them. The field visit and appraisal of Joana Keller, the Project Officer of Women World day of Prayer and Elska Van Gorkum, the Project Manager and Alejandra Slutzky, the Program Officer VASTENACTIE gave us new insights and strength to AHIMSA to continue our work. I also thank the General Body, Executive Committee and team members of AHIMSA, Dr. P. Thomas Paulsamy, the Bishop of Dindigul Dioceses, Government Officials of various departments, Bankers, Auditors and the development Consultants. I am extremely happy and delighted to present this report. I appeal all of you for your continuous support and kindness and to be part of AHIMSA's journey to continue in the years to come.

I. Victor,
Director,
AHIMSA

About AHIMSA

Association for Human Integrated Massive Social Action was instituted in 1989. It was registered under Section 10 of the Society Registration Act 27 of 1975, of Tamil Nadu and under FC(R)A, Govt. of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The primary focus of the organization is to identify & alleviate problems faced by marginalized farming communities & landless laborers.

Established by the Late Mr. P.A. Ignacy, the Founder Director of AHIMSA, on 21st February 1989, the organization has its office in Vaiyampatti, which is part of Tiruchirapalli district in Tamil Nadu, a southern state of India. AHIMSA has a team of committed men and women who are trained to design, implement and monitor projects that focus on key issues such as, conservation, biodiversity, women empowerment, skills enhancement, vocational education, employability etc. The underpinning focus is to work towards improving the quality of life in marginalized communities.

In 1991, the founder Late Mr.P.A.Ignacy and the current General Secretary Mr. Victor had the opportunity to participate in the training on Sustainable Ecological Agriculture organized by Agricultural Man Ecology foundation based at Puducherry. The training was done by Late Mr.Nammazhvar. This had a strong influence on them and changed their perspective of agriculture. Since then AHIMSA is concentrating on improving the lives of farmers through sustainable eco friendly approach. AHIMSA was also recognized as a lead NGO by Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) supporting 10 NGOs and 200 farmers.

In collaboration with like-minded organizations and with the support of generous funding agencies, AHIMSA is continuing its developmental works for the past thirty three years.

VISION

Transformation of subsistence farming to thriving agribusiness to improve the lives of small and marginalized rainfed farmers to create a poverty free, ecologically sensitive and inclusive society.

MISSION

Impacting the lives of subsistence farmers and marginalized community by creating access to knowledge, technology, infrastructure and markets to enhance agricultural, production and productivity through sustainable and ecofriendly farming approach.

THE BROAD PURPOSE FOR WHICH AHIMSA STANDS FOR ARE:

Fostering rainfed agriculture: AHIMSA intends to rejuvenate rainfed agriculture by nurturing eco-friendly and sustainable agriculture building on the existing traditional knowledge and adopting new ideas and strategies for the same.

Promoting Farmers collectives: AHIMSA will focus on promoting people institutions owned and managed by the community, like farmer's producer organization for creating a self-reliant and resilient society.

Creating an Inclusive society: AHIMSA dreams of an inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunity for growth irrespective of their caste, religion and gender.

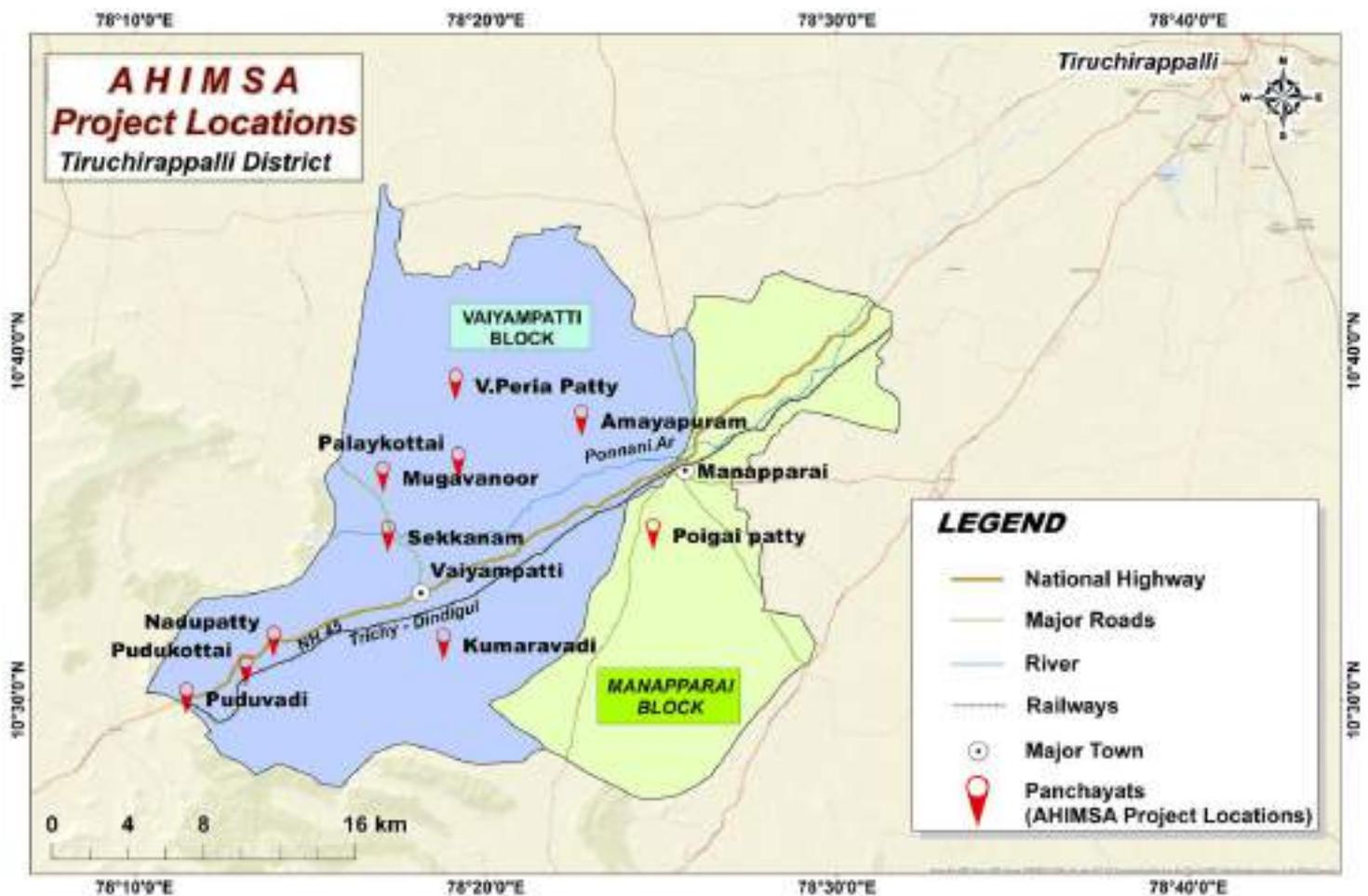


Where We Work

AHIMSA is predominantly working with small and marginal holders in the dry land belt of Vaiyampatti and Manapparai Blocks of Trichy District in the State of Tamil Nadu, India.

Across Vaiyampatti Block, we support efforts in the following panchayats:

- ☒ Pudukottai ☒ Pudevadi ☒ Nadupatty ☒ Kumaravadi ☒ Sekkanam
- ☒ Mohavanur ☒ Palaykottai ☒ V. Periya Patty ☒ Amayapuram
- ☒ Poigai Patty



We provide support and services for empowering the farmers through collective actions in the agriculture and the allied sectors in sustainable food production, processing, value addition and marketing.

We also facilitate a participatory process for availing schemes and appropriate support to farmers groups to establish forward and backward linkage support to improve their farm income and livelihood opportunities

Promoting Farmers Producers Organizations for Sustaining Agriculture and Economy of Marginal Farmers of Vaiyampatty Block, Tiruchirappalli District in Tamil Nadu

VASTENACTIE

Project Number 001835

The project supported by VASTENACTIE (Dutch Lenten Campaign) for a period of one year starting from December 2021 to November 2022. This project is collectivization of farmers into an organic Farmers Producer Company (FPO) and empowering their skills and knowledge to promote organic agriculture practices, establishment of community managed seed banks with the focus on reviving drought tolerant and climate resilient varieties of seeds. Around 1000 farmers from 45 villages of Vaiyampatti Block in Trichy District of Tamil Nadu is mobilized for this FPO and the farmers are predominantly engaged in cultivating millets, vegetables and flowers.

The key objectives of the project is for tapping the wealth of traditional knowledge system and the farm biodiversity and revitalizing and promoting Farmers Producers Organizations and registering it legally and engaging in marketing and value addition while sustaining ecology and environment and the production system.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Capacity Building Training in Marketing and Value Addition

Farmers were given inputs on marketing strategies and concepts in 2 modules in the month of April and May 2022. In the first module, the focus has been on customer relationship management, customer service skills, retail management, sales and marketing skills, efficient use of social media for marketing etc., In the second module, the focus has been on agriculture value chain, value chain diagnosis, mapping of value chain, value coalitions, value added products and production, value chain stakeholders, quality controls. A total of 52 members including farmers and staff were participated in the trainings.



Community Seed Bank for Paddy, Millet and Pulses

Community Seed Banks have been established in all 10 villages, viz, Karungulam, Anaikaraipatti, Kambalathupatti, Ammapatti, K.Pudukottai, Idayapatti, Purathakudi, N.Poolampatti, Aithampatti, Anukkanatham. Community Seed Banks were established mainly to enable the farmers access indigenous seed varieties in paddy, millet and pulses. Self-sufficiency in seeds requirement of the farmers was the ultimate objective. Each village was supported to procure mud-pots of various sizes to store the seeds. Working capital was provided @ INR. 30000 per village. The money was spent for procuring pots/containers, seeds of paddy, millet, pulses and oil seeds. Natural conservation practices were taught to them to prevent pest attacks. 15 varieties of paddy, 7 types of millets and 7 types of pulses were conserved in the seed banks.

10 Village level seed banks are in function

29 local crop varieties seeds have been conserved for community needs and exchange.

Seed Festival:

Seed Festivals were organized primarily to generate awareness to farmers on conservation and multiplication of indigenous seed varieties and to reduce the dependence on multinational companies which largely control seeds and other inputs. Seed Festivals were conducted in 5 villages in which a total number of 490 farmers from 21 neighbouring villages participated and benefited. The farmers had displayed different varieties of seeds of paddy, millets, vegetables and pulses. All the farmers participated in the festival received five kilograms of seeds of different millet, pulses such as black-gram, moong dal and green gram etc.

Traditional Food Festival:

Traditional food festival was organized in 5 Villages from August to October 2022 where members of farmers groups, youth clubs, school children and adults participated in large numbers. Delicious food items such as Vegetable Biryani, Sambar rice, Curd rice, Sweets and spicy snacks, beverages etc made of millet and indigenous rice varieties were served. A total 880 participants including men, women and school children were participated.

Community Nursery and Tree planting

The main objective of the nursery is to grow plants in an open environment, maintain a good quality of plants and protect the plants from pests and disease. During the period 1300 additional saplings were added at Karungulam village in June 2022. With a generous heart, a Farmer has set apart the necessary land and water resources for the start of a Nursery. The necessities like soil, covers, seeds, saplings, bio-manure, vermi-compost etc were procured and supplied to the farmers and volunteers who extended their hard labour in the creation of the Nursery. 16 varieties of tree seeds / saplings namely Vengai, Neem, Red Sanders, Teak, Poovarasu, Jack fruit, Rose Wood, Mancha Kadamba, Kumil, Malai Vembu, Mahogany and Venkadambu were collected and used for creating the nursery. 1300 plants were raised in the nursery and later another 1300 tree saplings were raised. Totally, 2600 tree saplings were raised and distributed to farmers. The distribution was done in two phases on August and November 2022.

2600 Tree saplings of

16 different varieties of tree species of distributed, planted and cared

Strengthening Farmers Producer Groups

3 training modules has been organized in May, July and October 2022 for the Farmers Producer Groups in each of the 20 villages and in each village, around 30 farmers took part in the training facilitated by the community organizers of AHIMSA. The farmers groups were training on Government welfare measures to the Farmers, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the role of Farmers Groups, Alliance / Linkage with private agro-based organizations / company and Organic farming and Technologies, value addition, marketing and farmers' producer company functions. Farmers participated with greater interest as the FPOs have become a legal entity. At present, there are 820 members in the farmers groups. 251 farmers have legally enrolled in the company as shareholders.

820 Members mobilized for FPO

251 farmers enrolled as shareholders

Working Capital Assistance:

In order help the poor farmers resume cultivation using the organic agricultural methods of farming. Financial assistance for cultivation of vegetables, millet and indigenous paddy varieties. Assistance was also provided for land preparation and application of bio-manure, plant stimulants and herbal pest repellents. 150 Farmers have been extended financial assistance to the tune of INR. 5000 each and a total of INR. 750,000 was issued to them in phases and based on the cropping seasons from September to November 2022.

Training to Young women in Food Processing

The identified young girls and women from 10 villages were trained in 5 days from July to November 2023 in food processing technics. Millet and Indigenous rice were cleaned and packed with organic label after destoning and de-husking. Further the millet were made in to flour and millet snacks were made out of it. Sweet lattu, Sweet pies, Mixtures, Murukku, Ribbon Pakkoda (spicy items) were prepared during the training sessions. Preparing variety rice, beverages and health mixes were also part of the trainings held for a period of 5 days and 40 young women participated and benefited. Four young women aged 18 to 35 years were selected from 10 villages and a total of 40 women underwent the training in food processing.

40 women equipped their knowledge in food processing

Exposure to Members of Farmers Producer Groups

3 different Exposure visits have been organized from April to September 2022 and this has helped the women farmers to gain confidence and courage to venture in to new initiatives and practices they had witnessed in other villages. In the first exposure visit, the women farmers were taken to NABARD INCUBATION CENTRE at Madurai and KVK Agricultural University at Madurai in which 40 farmers participated in the exposure visit which provided an opportunity to farmers on livestock development, integrated farming and irrigation management. For the second exposure visit around 27 farmers visited TULYA FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTREY Perambalur (Millet processing and Milk based products) and the third exposure visit was organized at Trichy Agri-business Incubation Forum(TABIF).



Staff Monthly Review, Planning and Training

The Staffs of AHIMSA used to meet on the last working day of every month to review their activities of the month and identify the gaps. Based on the gaps and needs, resources both human and materials are discussed and identified. A brief orientation and information on the subjects are disseminated to the staffs. During the period under review, 12 meetings were held on the last working day of every month. All staffs including the project staffs took part in the meeting actively and ensured their contribution. The staffs also submitted written report to the Director of AHIMSA.

OUTCOME & IMPACT:

- ☒ Farmer's capacity enhanced due to reduced inputs, value addition to farm products, improved marketing and healthier profits.
- ☒ Linkages established through collective marketing helped gain better price for farm produce.
- ☒ In the process, the FPO managed to purchase a tractor through government linkages.
- ☒ 20 Farmers Groups with a membership of 820 farmers enrolled.
- ☒ 595 of them are women farmers while the remaining 225 farmers are men.
- ☒ 50 Frontline Farmers have emerged. They play a key-role in guiding the other farmers, sharing their resources and inputs.
- ☒ 251 Farmers have been enrolled as the members of the company. Of them, 175 are women and 76 of them are men
- ☒ Small and Marginal farmers of 10 villages make use of the tractor. So far, 221 farmers have availed this facility.
- ☒ Four villages had Seed Banks and 15 villages have benefited from the seed banks.
- ☒ Now Seed Banks have been extended to all targeted 10 villages and farmers have availed seeds from 15 villages. 500 Farmers have utilized the seed bank during the past one year.
- ☒ Of the 820 farmers trained, 246 farmers (166 women and 80 men) have taken effort to execute the learning they gained from the training.
- ☒ 330 farmers (220 women farmers and 110 men farmers) were distributed 5 to 10 saplings each depending upon their requirement and capacity to raise.
- ☒ 500 Farmers accessed the seeds from the Seed Banks. Of them, 230 women farmers and 105 men farmers have availed millet seeds

Expanding production of Millet, Oil Seeds, Vegetables and Fruits for Value addition and Marketing for Food, Nutrition and Livelihood security

This project supported by VASTENACTIE as a follow up project to take forward the AHIMSA Farmer Production Company to expand its functions to next levels. The key objectives of the project are reviving farming through regenerating the cultivation potential of dry land farming, promotion of employment and livelihood opportunities of women farmers and strengthening value addition and marketing skills of farmers and enabling them to get a fair price for their products.

VASTENACTIE

Project no: 002146

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Stakeholders Planning and Orientation Meeting with Farmers and Staffs

A stakeholders' planning meeting was held on 30.01.23 in which 64 farmers, 4 staff and 20 volunteers participated. Mr. I. Victor, the Director, AHIMSA facilitated the meeting. It provided a platform for all relevant stakeholders, including the local farmers, staffs and volunteers to come together and align their goals and objectives. The planning and orientation also helped for the dialogue and discussion among stakeholders, allocation of resources and evolve timeline for the project.

Workshop on Advanced Marketing Strategies

A workshop on advanced agricultural marketing strategies was organized by AHIMSA in two phases of two days. During this reporting period, the first phase of the workshop was organized on 23rd and 24th February 2023. The workshop provide participants with valuable insights and skills to enhance their marketing efforts in the agricultural sector. The major components dealt with during the workshop are introduction to agriculture marketing, overview of the importance of marketing in agriculture, understanding the role of agricultural marketing in the supply chain and market analysis. Resource persons from Pudukkottai Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited (POFPCL) and Officials from the agriculture marketing department were facilitated the workshop.



Working Capital Assistance to Seed Banks for procuring Seeds

Community seed banks play a crucial role in conserving traditional and locally adapted crop varieties. By providing them with working capital, these banks can continue to collect, store, and maintain a diverse range of seeds. This helps preserve agricultural biodiversity, ensuring that farmers have access to a variety of crops that are resilient to local conditions. Community seed banks often involve local farmers in seed collection, storage, and distribution activities. During the month of March 2023, the farmers with the support of special committees have started to procure the seeds for the distribution in the following months. About 800 Kgs of millets, traditional paddy and oil seeds have been procured.

Procurement and supply of Oil Seeds:

Oil seeds hold significant importance among farmers in Tamil Nadu, and their cultivation plays a crucial role in the state's economy. During the month of March 2023, 2500 Kilograms of Oil seeds like ground nut and sesame seeds have been procured for the distribution for the farmers during the upcoming season.

Strengthening Farmers Producer Groups:

Strengthening a Farmers Producer Company (FPC) and its members capacities in various aspects are essential to ensure its long-term sustainability and success in achieving its goals of benefiting farmers and promoting agricultural development. Keeping that in mind, the Board of Directors and Frontline farmers were oriented and trained in organic standards, certification procedures, roles and responsibilities of group members and other basic requirements in the month of March 2023.



Exposure to Best practices in Farmer Producer Company:

The farmers of AHIMSA took part in an Exposure Visit to SEEDS Farmers Producer Company, a reputed and well functional FPO at Virudhunagar District in March 2023. The farmers of that FPO are engaged in producing quality seeds which are fully organic and they are certified by the government agency as organic products. The farmers of AHIMSA interacted with the members and board of directors of SEEDS FPO which helped them the collective efforts in producing quality seeds to supply locally and generate income for the FPO. Similarly, the Board of Directors were also taken to YERAN Training Centre in March 2023. This centre is exclusively providing training in promoting FPOs. In order to facilitate the procurement of seeds, grains and marketing of FPO products, AHIMSA Farmers Producer Company purchased a vehicle - TATA ACE, a Four-wheeler transport.

Outcomes and Impacts:

A four-wheeler was purchased to facilitate the procurement of products from farmers and marketing of agriculture products. The Directors of AHIMSA FPC has established linkages with other resource organizations including FPOS, Government line departments and training centres. This has helped in expanding the operational areas of the FPO.



Sustainable food and Nutritional security of marginal women farmers in 3 villages through organic greens cultivation.

This project supported by EUCAN AID. The project is aimed at addressing the prevailing drought situation, especially in the drylands of Trichy District of Tamil Nadu. This project is implemented in 3 villages, namely, Amma Patti, Kambalathupatti and Anukkanatham. Efficient use of available water for crop cultivation, selection of short-term crops, addressing the issues of small farmers, especially women farmers and the nutritional issues are the major focus of the project. Working with 60 women farmers in 3 villages with appropriate organic practices, inputs and capacity-building programs are the major components of this project. Organic Greens Cultivation is taken up as a model for short-term crops which could be an ideal model for small farmers to replicate in other regions and thereby improve their livelihood options.



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Project No 2021-124 -India

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Training for women farmers on organic greens cultivation

The training was organized in 2 sets. The first set in June and August 2022 and the second set in January and February 2023. The first set of training was focused on pesticides' impact on human health and the environment and how chemical farming is increasing the cost of cultivation and dependency on external inputs, an introduction to organic farming, the concepts and practices and sharing of success stories of organic farmers, techniques for building soil health, enhancing soil moisture, and understanding the pest and predators in the agro-ecosystem, designing organic green cultivation plots, the selection of greens for cultivation, their nutritional aspects for farm family health and their marketing potential in reaching out to consumers.



Demonstration Training on preparation and application of bio inputs:

Apart from orientation, the farmers also trained in practical demonstration which further enhanced the knowledge and understanding of the farmers on different bio inputs like Compost, Vermi-compost, Farm waste, plant growth promoters like Panchakaviya, Dasakaviya, Amirtha karaisal, Fish Amino Acid, Herbal Pest Repellent mixtures in managing pest and diseases and also the efficient use of neem leaf and kernel based mixture with cow urine, efficient water use techniques summer ploughing, mulching, farm yard manure, tank silt and motivated them to prepare their own manures.

Revolving Fund support:

The idea of including the revolving fund component is to ease the accessibility of quality seeds and fertilizer for the beneficiaries to experiment with their own field based on the inputs they gained from the intensive and demonstration training. Thus, this seed money was actually an investment for the farmers to buy green seeds, compost manure, vermi-compost, and for the purchase of other essential raw materials required bio inputs and herbal pest-repellent mixtures.

Here, the concept of a revolving fund has been introduced by valuing the package of inputs to each farmer. By this agreement, each of the project farmers received the seeds and bio inputs in kind which is equal to Rs. 6275 in monetary value. This money is being recovered from the farmer in a 10-month installment with nominal interest. All the collected money goes to the women's group account and is redistributed to the members based on their requirement of bio input needs.



Outcome and Impacts:

All 60 women participated fully in the training and gained new knowledge in organic green cultivation and also the different eco-friendly methods of building soil health, (Compost, Vermicompost, Farm waste), plant growth promoters like Panchakaviya, Dasakaviya, Amirtha karaisal, Fish Amino Acid, Herbal Pest Repellent mixtures in managing pest and diseases and also the efficient use of neem leaf and kernel based mixture with cow urine), efficient water use techniques (summer ploughing, mulching, farm yard manure, tank silt).

All the women farmers allotted a space of 10-20 cents for greens cultivation. Some of them went up to 30 cents for greens cultivation and around 45 women farmers are also practicing at least 2-3 new knowledge and techniques that they learned from the training.

A group of women farmers took collective efforts in seed production to generate income and pool it into the funds of women's collective. Thus, the women's collective took the responsibility of follow up on this and successfully established the seed bank at Vaiyampatti in a space provided by AHIMSA.

The women farmers have internalized the concept of health and nutrition and its directly link by more intake of greens and other local vegetables on their daily diet thereby, jointly decided to include the combination of seeds of greens, local vegetable and local climbers as they are the cheap and best source of micro nutrients. As a result, the seed bank is established with the diversity of seeds of greens, local vegetables and local climbers.

The organic greens cultivation has become a new method in the project villages by the involvement of 20 women. In each village, there are 3-4 key lead women farmers have emerged both as a trainer in designing organic green cultivation and also for the preparation and application of organic bio inputs.

The women farmers are now equipped with the knowledge and use of conversion of wastes into valuable bio manure. Their capacities in understand the resource recycling have increased to the level of educating to their family members, especially the male members and it received lots of appreciation and recognition for them.

Organic Greens cultivation in small land holding by 30 marginal women farmers.

This project supported by ACWW. The project is a similar project of the earlier one but implemented in 3 other different villages. This project is implemented in 3 villages, namely, Purathakudy, Karungulam and Anikarai Patty. Organic Greens Cultivation is taken up as a model for short-term crops which could be an ideal model for small farmers to replicate in other regions and thereby improve their livelihood options. As this project was already started in the financial year 2021-22, only the following few activities have been implemented.



MAIN ACTIVITIES

Formation of women farmers' federation and establishment of seed bank for greens:

The seeds of greens have been distributed to all 30 women in the first set of farmers during the month of June 2022 as per the plan of 1/2kgs of 5-7 types of greens. They types of greens are: 1. Pulichakeerai, 2. Sirukeerai, 3. Mulaikkeerai, 4. Manathakkaali, 5. Arakkerai, 6. Thandukeerai, Palakkeerai. For the second set of 30 women farmers, the seeds of greens have been distributed in the month of January 2023. In addition to that, the farmers were provided with 100 grams of Agathi seeds which will grow like perennial tree and the leaves can be used both for human consumption and also fodder for livestock.



Outcome and Impacts:

All 30 women participated fully in the training and gained new knowledge in organic green cultivation and also the different eco-friendly methods of building soil health, (Compost, Vermicompost, Farm waste), plant growth promoters like Panchakaviya, Dasakaviya, Amirtha karaisal, Fish Amino Acid, Herbal Pest Repellent mixtures in managing pest and diseases and also the efficient use of neem leaf and kernel based mixture with cow urine), efficient water use techniques (summer ploughing, mulching, farm yard manure, tank silt).

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Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security through promotion of Conservation Agriculture

This project was supported Diozese of Rotenburg-Stuttgart- Germany.

Aims of the project creation of Food Forests which promote self-sufficiency in food needs, mitigates the impact of climate change, reduces the cost of cultivation and inputs, ensures

biodiversity and opens opportunity for additional employment and economic stability. They also play a major role in stabilizing the eco-system.



MAIN ACTIVITIES

Baseline Survey

Baseline Survey was conducted in the target villages during the month of June and July 2023. Focused Group Meetings with Village Panchayats, Farmers Groups, Women Groups have been conducted to collect primary data about the social and economic situations of the target villages. Based on the baseline survey results, the key problems of the villages have been shortlisted for project intervention through appropriate strategies, approaches and activities. Around 300 project beneficiaries have been identified in this process.



Project Orientation meeting with key stakeholders

The project orientation and planning meeting with the key stakeholders including the farmers and staffs of AHIMSA was held on 18th and 19th July 2022. About forty one participants attended the meeting and evolved the detailed activities implementation plan with logistics and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

Village level workshop on community based Food Forest and Food Security

The village level workshop on community based Food Forest and Food Security was organized in 10 target villages and in each village, around 50 farmers participated and they showed interest in this concept and agreed to implement the project activities at their places.

Exposure visit to understand Food Forest

In each village, selected farmers were taken for an Exposure visit to witness the best practices in establishing Food Forest and Miyawaki forest in Auroville, Pondicherry. Around 53 farmers including women farmers and 6 staff participated in the learning visit. The visit gave them a clear understanding on the concept and confidence and courage to design a food forest in their farm land. As an output of the exposure visit, the farmers were enabled to experiment their learning through establishing Model Food Forest in a portion of their farmlands.

Follow up - hand-holding training and financial assistance

During the months of September, October and November 2022, the farmers were given follow up training to clarify their doubts on the principles and practices of Food Forests. In addition to that, the farmers were extended assistance for land preparation, collection of seeds and saplings of food crops and bio-manure before planting the food crops seeds and fruit tree saplings. Saplings of mango, guava, sapota, lime, papaya, moringa, pomegranate, amla etc., were distributed to the farmers. Around 50 farmers were involved in creating the model food forest and the cultivation was done in 50 acres of land.

Integration of Animal Husbandry and other allied activities

To integrate the food forest with livestock, the farmers were supported with the distribution of a set of Goat and Poultry to the 50 farmers. Community based food forest was also created in two of the government middle schools at Pampattipatti and Ompampatti in Manaparai Taluk. In order to support the food forest and tree planting, AHIMSA established Community Nursery in 10 villages where a lead farmers was given the responsibility of maintenance of the nursery.

Printing and distribution of IEC materials

In all the trainings and meetings, AHIMSA distributed the necessary Information Education and Communication materials on food forest, organic farming and integrated farming practices to the participants.

Outcome / Impact

The project sensitized the communities on organic and natural farming, appropriate eco-friendly farming practices such as food forest that consume less ground water, inputs and cost of cultivation. The farmers have reported that the survival rate of the plants is above 90%. The involvement of the youth and students generated awareness among them on environment and the food security and above all their responsibility of nurturing the nature with diverse trees. The staff were also trained on food forest concepts and they met every month to review the project interventions and evolving strategies to address the challenges in the implementation.



Improving Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Livelihoods of 100 Women-led families in Tiruchirappalli (India)



Project .No 6487

The project is supported by Women's World Day of Prayer and it got sanctioned in December 2023 and the activities from January to March 2023 are given below. The key objective of the project is to address the issue of poverty and hunger among the rural poor in the context of the present industrialized food system which is highly mechanized, capital intensive, detrimental to eco-system and consumption model beyond territories. The project tries to address the consequences including hunger, obesity, malnutrition, low crop yields, inadequate food storage and unequal distribution systems exist today. The project was planned for a period of one year reaching out to 100 women farmers in 10 villages of Vaiyampatty Block of Tiruchirappalli District.

Training to Women Farmers: Analysis of gender-gaps and inequalities in the agriculture and food production system

The Two-Day workshop on analysis of gender gaps in agriculture and production system has taken up the issues like Access to Resources, Labour Division, Education and Training, Income and Decision-Making Power, Time Constraints and Double Burden, Market Access and Value Chains, Climate Change Impact, Gender-Responsive Policies and Programs, Women's Leadership and Representation, Social Norms and Empowerment. A total of 98 women farmers from 5 villages were participated and the training was organized in Purathakudi village of Trichy District.



Training on Territorialized Food Systems and their Impacts on Human Health, Food Security, and the Environment.

Territorialized Food Systems refer to food production, distribution, and consumption systems that are closely linked to specific geographic regions or territories. In such systems, local communities are actively involved in the various stages of food production, processing, and marketing. The Two-day training on the above theme highlighted on the impacts of Territorialized Food Systems on human health, especially nutritional benefits, reduced use of chemicals, better food safety. Under food security, the focus of the training on Resilience food system, reduced external dependency and preservation of traditional knowledge. On environment, the merits on lower Carbon food prints, Biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture practices. Around 95 women farmers have participated in the training.

All the capacity building programs emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between governments, communities, and stakeholders to promote sustainable and inclusive food systems that prioritize human health, food security, and environmental well-being.

Role of Women in the Agricultural Value chain and Food security

Women play a crucial role in the agricultural value chain and significantly contribute to food security. Considering the importance, a two day training was organized for women in understanding their role in the production and post harvest processes. The training was held at Ayan Reddiyapatti, Manaparai Taluk. The women were trained in crop cultivation, livestock farming and seed preservation which are pertaining to Farming and Production. Similarly, they also learned about food processing, preservation and value addition aspects and how these knowledge increase their agriculture value chain.

The training also highlighted that despite their essential contributions, women in agriculture face challenges such as limited access to resources, gender biases, and lack of representation in decision-making processes. Empowering women in the agricultural value chain through access to education, financial resources, and land tenure rights can further strengthen their role and promote food security at the household and community levels. A total of 97 women farmers participated in the training in the month of March.

AHIMSA's Engagement with schools and colleges

Over the years, AHIMSA has been closely associated with the government schools in the neighbourhood of its target villages in Vaiyampatti. Being a teacher, the Founder of AHIMSA late Mr. Ignacy had high hope and belief on educating the young minds on environmental issues along with formal education. This year also, AHIMSA continued his legacy by organized many trainings and demonstrations for the students of schools in understanding the issues around agriculture and food production and its impact on environment and ecology.

Apart from the schools in the neighbourhood, the students of agriculture colleges at Trichy and Pudukkottai came to AHIMSA and they were exposed to the activities of AHIMSA on the field and interacted with the farming communities and learned the principles and practices of organic farming. The entire educational process was facilitated by the staff team of AHIMSA.

Date	Associated Schools/Colleges	Focus	Outreach
26.10.22	Pampattipatti Government Middle school	Traditional Food and Millet Festival to celebrate the diversity of food system and recipes. Students prepared the traditional food items with the help of their parents and brought it to the school for display.	125 school children 75 General Public including farmers and teachers
08.11.22	Enam Reddiyapatti Government School	Basics of Organic Farming and the how it could be done at their backyard space for their household needs	60 students
23.12.22	Enam Reddiyapatti Government School	Importance of trees, benefits of trees around the area and distribution of tree seedlings to students	150 school children
26.12.22	MIT Agriculture College and Technology, Musiri	AHIMSA's Project in promotion of sustainable agriculture, Farmer's Producer Organizations Activities in value addition and marketing through village visit and interactions	6 BSc Agriculture Final year students
13.02.23	Mother Theresa College of Agriculture and Technology, Pudukkottai	Understanding AHIMSA's work, exposure to organic farming practices, practical demonstration of organic inputs and interaction with team members	20 BSc Agriculture Final year students

Internal capacity building

To facilitate focused learning and to built up its capacity within the organization, several internal capacity building sessions were organized during the reporting period. Health and nutrition, training for the field coordinator and the staff on monitoring and review, functional aspects of Farmers Producer Organizations, skills on value addition, processing and marketing, training on organic standards for certification etc.,

Date	Place of visit	Knowledge acquired	Staff
13.05.22	Tamil Nadu Agriculture University	Value addition of agriculture products, branding, packing and marketing techniques	Mr. Victor, Mr. Nagappan, Mrs. Rani Mrs. Gnana Belcia Ms. Sudha
19.05.23	TABIF (Trichy Agri Based Incubation Forum in TNAU's Campus	Millet based value addition techniques and food products making, packaging and preservation techniques.	Mr. Victor, Mr. Nagappan.

Entrepreneurial skills for young rural women

Rural women are always very good at making food items and snacks and also in making useful household materials. But, they have very little exposure on the market potential and make money for their needs and economic independence. Keeping this in mind, AHIMSA organized the following trainings for young rural women to enhance their knowledge in skills as well as equip them as entrepreneurs. The participated rural young women have gained new knowledge and skills for their income generation from the products available in their village.

Date	Place	Training Content	Outreach
13.10.22	AHIMSA Office Training Hall	Food/Fodder processing techniques, especially dairy products like Panneer, Paalkova and Livestock feed	30 young women
14.10.22	AHIMSA Office Training Hall	Making products of Domestic Use like Phenayil, Soap Powder, Liquid Detergent, Hand wash solution, toilet cleaning liquid	40 young women

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Connect With Nature



Association for Human Integrated Massive Social Action

Old No 1/207C New No : 1/671,
Sona Complex, Vaiyampatty,
Manapparai,
Tamil Nadu 621305, INDIA

+91-96597 80114
+91-94430 38676

info@ahimsa.ngo
www.ahimsa.ngo