

# ANUAL REPORT 2021-2022



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## A. FROM DIRECTOR'S DESK

The reporting period 2021-22 has been a year mix with lots of challenges and opportunities in many fronts in the context of Climate Change and Covid-19 Pandemic. As an organization engaged in sustainable development with rural focus, we directly realized the impact of climate change and the pandemic. It was a tough time for all of with the Covid 19 Pandemic which was termed as new normal for almost 18-24 months since the beginning of 2020 and it took almost June/July 2022 to be back to normal. The first part of the year 2021 was full of hot and raised temperatures and the later part with unseasonal heavy rain and this climate variability affects all sections of society and also impacted agriculture production. The impact was partial and total loss of crop loss for the farmers. The persistence rain during harvesting time has damaged the crops totally. At the same time, the prolonged hot temperature affected the crops initial growth. In all ways, the farmers suffered a lot with their income loss. This has created an unusual situation that the farmers have to prioritize their daily wage labour works as their primary source of income and keep agriculture as a secondary option. Huge amount of work force in the rural areas have to survive with the support of 100 days MNREGA rural employment scheme. A considerable amount of work force has migrated to spinning mills in search of employment for the livelihood needs.

After the Pandemic, the livelihood of rural people, especially women and farmers income has come down drastically and it has become a big question mark on their survival and livelihood. Banks, NBFC (Non Banking Financial Companies) and other financial institution has drastically reduced their lending support to rural people and it has created a serious impact on the children's health and nutrition and also in youth life style. They skipped their breakfast, and spent more time on television and smart phone and other unproductive ways. Their education was badly affected and they completely avoided the habit of reading books and their studies. In spite of such challenging situation, AHIMSA tried to focus its activities towards building resilience among farming communities and keep on encouraging them in agriculture production, especially with millet cultivation, value addition, supporting them in establishing market linkages. AHIMSA also organized mass educational and awareness programs on the need for consuming nutritious food, taking more local herbs, vegetables and fruits to build their immunity through its seed festivals and food festivals. The projects such as food security through organic farming, rainfed agriculture, organic green cultivation and Farmers' Producer Organizations of AHIMSA have been very much relevant and appropriate. The quality food produces and the seed materials of farmers has helped the farmers to get a decent income.

In general, the year has been a challenging one in terms of the impact of climate change as well as the Covid Pandemic. However, we were able to overcome those challenges with the continuous support and encouragement of our donors. We express our sincere gratitude to our Beloved Bishop of Dindigul and Trichy Diocese who has been a source of inspiration to us and always supportive with his thought, ideas, guidance and above all his commitment to uplift the vulnerable section in the society.



Our sincere gratitude to our donors namely, VASTENACTIE, ACWW for the confidence and continuous support in transforming AHIMSA's project visualization into a reality. We thank our Board of Directors, Government officials, Bankers, Teachers for their continuous support in materializing AHIMSA's vision. We hope that with this handholding support of all the stakeholders, AHIMSA will explore newer projects and expand its work further in the coming year.

Victor . I  
Director,  
AHIMSA



## ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN INTEGRATED MASSIVE SOCIAL ACTION - AHIMSA

### B. 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 (AME) 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 two years.

## OUR 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.

## OUR 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.



2021-2022 has been a challenging as well as a productive year for AHIMSA. While we have continued to implement our impactful projects of the 2020-21 financial year in Vaiyampatti Block of Trichy District of Tamil Nadu, India, we have made efforts to take up a few new projects which are long-term needs of our target communities, especially the farming community. This year, we got a new partnership program with ACWW, United Kingdom in promoting organic greens. Some of our efforts in fund mobilization went unsuccessful. At the same time, it was good learning for us. Of course, the year was also a challenging one to cope with the prevailing pandemic situations. At the same time, it has helped us to gain new knowledge and learnings on how to handle and manage abnormal situations.

This year, the focus has been strengthening the Farmers Producer Company in terms of organizing several capacity building and exposures to both the Board of Directors as well as active FIG leaders. Apart from this, efforts have been made in strengthening the organization base by providing training for the staff in team building, project visualization and conducting field surveys to understand our target areas and the prevailing issues with much more information through stakeholder meetings in villages. Students' placements from several colleges and their village stay programs are very much beneficial to both the students to get exposure to village issues and also for the organization to engage them in survey and data collection required for the organization.

Overall, the reporting year has taught us several learnings, but most of all, it has taught us leadership, resilience, and adaptability and has enabled us to re-establish fruitful partnerships for continuing to create an impact in the lives of underprivileged and vulnerable communities. This report summarizes our different project interventions and the impacts and key learning during the year April 2021 to March 2022.

## C. INTRODUCTION



## D. NAME OF THE PROJECT:

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

**NAME OF THE DONOR:** VASTENACTIE, The Netherlands

**VASTENACTIE**

### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

The project is aimed at empowering farmers' capacities in facilitating collective action among themselves in crop production, value addition, processing and marketing and establishing them function as Farmers Producer Company. Floating this organization as a legal entity will reduce the interference of middlemen, enhance farmers' entrepreneurial skills which will ensure better bargaining power and get fair prices for their produce.

### TARGET GROUP:

450 Small and Marginal farmers who are small-scale landholders engaged in farming.

### NAME OF THE PRODUCER COMPANY:

The company is named as "AHIMSA Farmers Producer Company Limited" and it was incorporated in March 2021 and the Corporate Identification Number is U01111TN2021PTC142192. The followings are the key activities implemented during this financial year.



## KEY ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT:

### Strengthening Farmers Producer Groups:

The promotion of a well-functioning Farmers Producer Company needs capacity-building programs at different levels of the company. Farmers Producer Groups are the bottom level structure in the FPO which needs a better understanding of the concept and functions of FPO and how a collective structure contributes shared vision and benefits to all members. Keeping this in mind, the strengthening of Farmers Producer Groups was done during the months of January and February 2022 by organizing 2 training modules in all the 20 villages where the FPO has its members. In each village, around 30 farmers took part in the training facilitated by the community organizers of AHIMSA.



The members of the Farmers Producer Groups have been oriented in State welfare measures and schemes available for individual farmers, farmers groups, FPO and how to avail those schemes and what kind of preparedness and activities should be completed. During the training, the members have also been oriented on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the role of members in educating the general public on the activities which need to be done to enhance the livelihood resources of the villages. The farmer's producer groups are also oriented on the linkages and opportunities available in the private agro-based organizations along with refreshing their knowledge on organic farming-related technologies.

### Stakeholders planning and orientation meeting with farmers and staff:

This stakeholder planning meeting was organized on 20.12.2021 at AHIMSA to take stock of the situation in the Farmers Producer Company. About 40 members of the FPOs from 10 villages participated in the meeting and shared the activities initiated at their farmer's interest group level to implement the planned activities of the producer company. The staff who are responsible for the facilitation of FPO also participated in the meeting. The meeting was extremely useful to have one-to-one interaction, addressing issues in the implementation and evolving strategic plans and methods for execution and also helped in defining responsibilities among stakeholders and staff members. Mr. I. Victor, Director of AHIMSA and the Chief Program Coordinator has facilitated the discussions and compiled the decisions and follow-up action plans.

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### Community Seed Banks for Paddy, Millet and Pulses:

As a follow-up to the seed festival and a long-term strategy for the local takeover of the seed-related activity in ensuring the seed availability and accessibility to farmers in this region, AHIMSA planned to establish a formal system for seed conservation and sharing by the local community. Hence, the concept of community-managed seed banks has been introduced in this project. These community seed banks can store and manage seeds and provide the seeds to the members of the community when they need them. 10 such community seed banks have been established in 10 villages viz Karungulam, Anaikaraipatti, Kambalathupatti, Ammapatti, K Pudukkottai, Idayapatti, Purathakudi, N. Poolampatti, Aithampatti, Anukkanatham.



AHIMSA has provided financial assistance of Rs. 30000 per village for the purchase of earthen mud pots/containers to store the seeds of paddy, millets, pulses and oil seeds. The farmers collectively engaged in sourcing the seeds from their fellow farmers and established the seed banks in the month of January and February 2022. As of now, 15 types of paddy, 7 types of millets and 7 types of pulses and 3 types of oil seeds are conserved and maintained in the seed banks. In each seed bank, they formed a management committee to manage the seed banks and facilitate the seed transaction and keep records of the quantity and types of seeds distributed to farmers and the types and quantity of seeds returned by farmers. All the seed banks are trained in storage techniques using the natural way of using leaves to prevent pest and disease attacks.

### Community Nursery and Tree planting:

The objective of this activity is to increase the tree cover on farmers' land so that the farmers can get additional long-term income from trees. The space for the nursery was given by Mr. Charles Sagayaraj, a farmer with a generous heart Karungkulam village who also helped in utilizing the water resources required for irrigating the saplings. The support from AHIMSA to the community nursery was in the form of providing necessary nursery bags, seeds of trees, compost and vermicompost mixture for adding in the nursery base mixture. Farmers and youth volunteers have contributed their time and hard labour in establishing the nursery. With regards to the type of tree saplings, the farmers decided 16 types of tree seedlings. Majority of them on fulfilling the timber needs which is an investment for their long-term needs. Apart from that, farmers also preferred trees that provided can provide short-term needs like green leaves to fulfill the biomass needs and also for the cattle. A total of 3250 tree saplings have been grown in the nursery in 2 batches and it was distributed to more than 120 farmers @ 10 tree saplings per farmer.



### Seed Festivals:

Seed is fundamental to agriculture and the connection between seeds and farmers is always related to their culture and tradition. However, modern agriculture practices disconnected the farmers from their right to save, share and exchange of seeds. To reverse the trend, AHIMSA has been engaged in seed conservation activities for more than 2 decades. This year, AHIMSA continued its legacy of seed conservation by organizing seed festivals in a decentralized manner in villages like Idayapatti, Vadakku Ammapatti, Anukkaanatham, Kampalathupatti and Karunkulam at the beginning of August 2021.

Seed Festivals includes seed exhibition with the display of diverse varieties in major crops like paddy, small and minor millets, pulses and vegetables to showcase the diversity. The event also included with the inspiring speech of farmers involved in seed conservation who narrated the importance of seed conservation, the right of farmers to seeds and access and control over their seeds. For the Traditional Seed Festival, AHIMSA joined hands with the local Agricultural and Technical College (SRS). The staff of SRS oriented the farmers on the process of selection of seeds, conservation of seeds and multiplication of the seeds. A total of 320 farmers from 16 villages participated in the seed festival and benefited by getting the seeds before the season.



## INDIGENOUS FOOD FESTIVAL:

In the last 10-15 years, people by and large affected with non-communicable diseases like diabetes, blood pressure, anemia, stunted growth, low body weight and also a deficiency in micronutrients and vitamins. Women and children are the most vulnerable in this. This is largely due to changes in food consumption patterns, neglecting the local and indigenous food. With the objective of generating interest and awareness of local, indigenous and seasonal foods stuff, AHIMSA organized Food Festival with a focus on indigenous foods in 2 places during this year. One event was organized at Karungkulam and the other event was organized at Ammapptti village in which more than 300 people participated. During the festival, we engaged Mr. Muthu Manikandan, a Freelance trainer in Food Processing Technology and demonstrated the preparation of local millets-based recipes and snacks. The participants tasted the foodstuff and benefited from vital information on the nutritional and medicinal values available in our local food system.



## Exposure to members of Farmers Producer Groups:

Apart from training, seeing things and interacting with people always have advantages in the process of learning new things. Hence, study exposures are absolutely necessary to bring a positive change in the minds of people. Considering the benefits, AHIMSA organized exposure visits to women farmers of the producer groups during this year. One batch of women farmers was taken to NABARD Incubation training centre at Madurai and KVK Agriculture University on 24.03.2022 at Madurai. Around 40 farmers participated in the exposure visit. The exposure provided an opportunity for farmers to witness the possibilities of value addition, and processing units available at the Institute for processing all kinds of farm produce including the indigenous paddy varieties, millets, pulses.

The farmers also witnessed the solar drying units, fruit juice making machines, ice cream and confectionary units. They also witnessed the value-added products from traditional rice varieties, millets, pulses, and different forms of value addition from flours, biscuits, vermicelli, pasta and other food stuff. The farmers have immensely benefited and shared how this exposure was a true education process and understand the value and importance of selling their food products with value addition and how each level of value addition gives them more economic gain and also the ever-increasing demand from consumers for organic produces on its health and nutritional benefits.



## E. NAME OF THE PROJECT:

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

**NAME OF THE DONOR:** Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), United Kingdom.



## OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT:

To enhance farm income of 30 women and there by enjoy their life with self-reliance and self-esteem.

## TARGET GROUP:

Small and Marginal Women Farmers. This project has been implemented in 3 villages namely Purathakudi, Chekkaam and Anaikaraipatti in Vaiyampatti block of Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu, India.



## KEY ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT:

### Orientation training for women farmers:

This orientation training was aimed at explaining the project objectives, activities, their responsibility in terms of production methods, AHIMSA's role in linking marketing opportunities and the expected outcome of the project interventions.

### Intensive training for women farmers and practical demonstration:

The focus of the training is to design their farm for organic greens cultivation and practically demonstrated the production of various organic inputs and its application methods to crops and their benefits, especially in enhancing soil health of the farmland, efficient water usage and eco-friendly approaches for pest and diseases. All 30 women farmers participated in the 5 days training program. They gained new knowledge in organic green cultivation and also various eco-friendly approaches for building soil health like compost, vermi-compost, farm wastes and plant growth promoters such as panchaaviaya, dasakaviya, amirtha karaisal, fish amino acids and managing pest and diseases like herbal pest repellent and neem leaf and kernel-based mixture with cow urine, and implementing efficient water use techniques (summer ploughing, mulching, farm yard manure, application of tank silt).

### Distribution of revolving fund:

The revolving loan support has been given to farmers in kind and the total worth of the materials is Rs. 6000/-. The materials included seeds of greens such as (i) Pulichakeerai (ii) Sirukeerai (iii) Mulaikkeerai (iv) Manathakkaali (v) Arakkerai and Organic Bio manures & pest repellent mixtures. In addition to that, the farmers were provided with 100 grams of Agathi seeds which will grow like perirenal tree and the leaves can be used both for human consumption and also fodder for livestock.

### Impact:

A total area of 6 acre is now under organic green cultivation through this project. 30 women farmers are emerged as inspiration and model farmers to other farmers in their neighbourhood. 25 farmers are practicing at least 2-3 new knowledge and techniques that they learnt from the training. The remaining 5 are only limited with compost and herbal pest-repellent mixtures.



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

We already started to discuss with the beneficiaries on some of the strategies of formation of collectives to take it forward. As a first step, some farmers have assured that they will get involved in seed production to generate income and pool it in to the funds of women's collective.

### Staff monthly review, planning and training:

The Staff team of AHIMSA is used to meet on a monthly basis to review and plan the organizational project activities. During the reporting period, 12 meetings have been conducted in which all the team members participated and made presentations on the activities implemented on the particular month. These review and planning meeting helped the team for internal learning, building team spirit, sharing of experiences and expertise, creating a discussion on field problems and taking joint action in resolving issues in the field. Once in 3 months, we invited a few representatives of target people from the project and requested them to give their feedback and impressions of the project.



### Training and exposure to staff and board members:

AHIMSA always believes in team work and developing second-line leaders for the organization's development and hence it gives much importance to investing in human resource development. During this year, the board members as well as staff members participated in many capacity-building programs and exposure.

Our Treasurer, Mrs. V. Rani participated in a 3-day training at VANAGAM (Heaven on the Earth), one of the leading resource centers in Tamil Nadu for learning sustainable agriculture which was founded by late Dr. G. Nammalvar in the month of June 2022. Similarly, she also participated in the State organized health training for community workers in the month of August 2022. She also took part in the awareness camp for women on their rights at Pudukkottai. Mr. S. Nagappan also exposed to various training programs related to sustainable agriculture and another agriculture-allied field like animal husbandry, value addition and marketing.



It helps them to understand the rural issues in depth and contributed to reshaping their vision and purpose of their education and how they could apply their educational learning to action-based research in addressing the issues in rural areas.

## Contribution of AHIMSA Board

The General Body of AHIMSA has a membership of 11 active members. It includes the President, Secretary and Treasurer. They met once a month both virtually during the lockdown due to Covid 19 and at the time of its high intensity of spread and sometimes physically. Besides, it has an Executive Committee consisting of 7 members. The Executive committee met 4 times during the reporting period. The General body met once during this year to review and to have a brainstorming exercise to discuss the future plans for AHIMSA. Their participation in process review activities, staff performance, and discussion on grass root level issues, has contributed to the qualitative improvement of our activities.



## Conclusion

The Indian NGO sector is currently in flux, coping with mandatory regulations and funding shortages. It has always been the goal of AHIMSA to think ahead and redefine its stance in order to effect visible and long-term change through its activities. There has been a lot of introspection, which has resulted in more result-oriented planning and resource management. With this as a backdrop, the AHIMSA Board of Directors and staff are considering developing a strategy to help them change with the times and develop a SMART plan to take the organisation to the next level.



**THANK YOU**



Association for Human Integrated Massive Social Action

  
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