



26 years of Serving
the Underprevilged of India

Annual Report 2021-2022



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PRESIDENT MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

The past year has been a fulfilling and successful 12 months for VOC Rural Development Centre (VOCRDC). This non-profit organisation was established in 1996 as an independent non-profit, before that, VOCRDC has met its vitalized mission to provide meaningful and sustainable employment for women, educating on their rights for women and children (especially girl children), academic education, environment restoration, low cost housing, safe water, health and hygiene, etc.

The challenges recently presented as a result of uncertain and often alarming economic conditions were felt worldwide, and VOCRDC was not spared, but we confronted the economic downturn head-on. During the past year VOCRDC has achieved milestones parallel in magnitude with any achieved during its 25-year history. As a mission-driven NGO, VOCRDC must measure our success by metrics beyond financial indicators; at VOCRDC it is also critical to measure success in achieving the mission. It is with great pride and excitement VOCRDC can proclaim a significant expansion of its mission.

In many ways, 2021 was an extension of the ongoing challenges our community faced in 2020. The pandemic and its new variants refused to go away. Fatigue and weariness set in as we continued to confront challenges often out of our control. Financial pressures, increased service demands, staffing instability, and virtual vs. in-person dilemmas were as persistent as the virus itself.

As we walked alongside our partners throughout the year, we discussed these many challenges. They also marvelled at our ability to somehow keep going despite never-ending pressure. We have been asked what fuel our ability to persevere in such difficult circumstances. Not surprisingly, the answer we often given was, "It's a calling to serve". This calling, we learned, is far greater than the most relentless obstacles. It brings us joy and fulfilment, and a sense of purpose.

We are grateful to all donors and supporters of VOCRDC and every one of our very special employees. We are also grateful to our volunteers and board of directors who devote their valuable time each year to help us fulfil our mission. We look to the future with hope and inspiration.

Most Sincerely,
Mrs. S. Latha
President,
VOC Rural Development Centre

Foreword

This year VOCRDC completes its twenty-six years of journey. In these twenty-six years, our effort has been to bring to life VOCRDC's core values – Faith in the people and

collective effort; as we work at the grassroots with our partner organisations and voluntary groups to together strive towards a more Equitable and Just world. Over the past twenty-six years our faith in the people has grown stronger. It is this belief that is at the centre of all our efforts, efforts that have earned us respect in Madurai district.

On reaching this important milestone in our journey, we commend the hard work of VOCRDC team – fellow workers – both old and new, and appreciate the support of friends and well-wishers, who have enabled VOCRDC in standing by its' core values, while moving forward in the work of strengthening organisation of women, children and other disadvantaged groups.

We have done important work in consciousness raising, strengthening local democratic functioning, encouraging participatory governance, creating awareness and increasing the reach of the disadvantaged to resources. All this work has added quality to many programmes by making them more accessible to the last woman and man in our society, as well as by raising the concerns of the said man and woman in policy making; the work has also strengthened social change processes towards enjoyment off basic human rights by all in the community - women, children, tribal people, older persons. But today VOCRDC dedicated to work in the broad field of social development face many challenges. The space for civic engagement on issues of public concern is shrinking.

In these challenging times, we in VOCRDC are striving hard to take forward our rights-based work with strategies involving people's participation in empowering processes. In the fact of difficulties our resolve grows stronger, as we look for new opportunities that can help us take our work forward.

The partners that we have worked with all these past years have taught us to embrace a positive outlook in the face of adversity, they have taught us the value of tenacity and perseverance. It is their energy and enduring spirit that motivates us to keep going forward, to keep negativity at bay by constantly looking for things that We CAN Do; and not at those that we cannot.

I take this opportunity to thank profusely all our partners, supporters, volunteers, well-wishers Profusely and looking forward to work with you all for a prolonged period.

Gratefully,
R. S. Ramasamy,
Executive Secretary,
VOC Rural Development Centre.

Activities for the Period 2021-22

I. Introduction:

India is a country with more than one billion people, just one third of them can read. Rapidly growing size of population, shortages of teachers, books and basic facilities and insufficient public funds to cover education, employment, shelter, healthand hygiene

costs are some of the nation's toughest challenges. This is where people in India are facing the basic challenges.

VOC RDC is catering towards the above-mentioned basic challenges of rural population especially women and children in India for the past twenty-six years in various area. Let us see elaborately in the following pages about the projects we have implemented and the activities we have carried out as well as the lives we have touched. We are very proud to present you this "Annual Activities Report" for the year 2021-2022.

II. Project – 1: "Housing for COVID-19 Affected Migrant Families"

Project Goal:

"Housing for COVID-19 Affected Migrant Families"

Context:

It is a common thing in Madurai and the neighbouring district for more than three decades that the people migrate to the industrial areas and industrial areas of other states. Such more than five hundred families who have migrated to Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have lost their livelihood during the pandemic lockdown. These people have migrated to the above-mentioned states two decades ago. There they engaged as labourers in small businesses like street side eateries, snacks making etc. The pandemic lockdown has forced these people to return back to their native villages. Somehow these people managed to reach their native villages after twenty years. There their dilapidated houses only welcomed them. None of their relatives extended their hands for their shelter or food. Government and many NGOs arranged temporary camps in the community halls, marriage halls and food facilities to shelter these migrant people.

Need Assessment:

These migrant families were sheltered under trees, cow shed, temporary camps, marriage halls and community halls. There were no protection and safety for women and adolescent girl children of these migrant families where they had sheltered. VOCRDC have witnessed personally the miserable situation of these migrant people as well as received plea from the community leaders and panchayat administration. Thus, VOCRDC decided to build low-cost houses for 45 migrant families. As well as these people doesn't have any protection from venomous insects and reptiles. In each family approximately, there are 6 to 8 members. All the members of the family are struggling to live in such a small space, especially women and adolescent girls.

The people living in these slums comes under the category of poorest of poor. The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the main reasons for these people to live in such poorest of poor condition. The pandemic led these people to avail loan from the money lenders for high interest rate. Yet these high interest rates consume a certain percentage of these people's income. The people as well facing other COVID-19 related problems such as

jobless, meagre wage, etc. These people are struggling very much to earn for two meals per day which is nutritiously unbalanced.

SELAVIP International has gracefully sanctioned ₹ 27,05,000 for this noble project.

Objectives:

- 1) To identify and select 50 deserving poor families who lack adequate housing facilities;
- 2) To ensure 50 poor families have access to safe, affordable housing and get necessary support to maintain housing;
- 3) To improve the productivity of human resources through safe and inexpensive housing facilities;
- 4) To impart employable skills to adults in the families to seek alternative employment opportunities;
- 5) To improve the standard of living of poor people with acceptable housing amenities;
- 6) To work towards obtaining basic amenities from the local authorities;
- 7) To provide protection to children, specifically girl children, from misuse, abuse, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking;
- 8) To enhance the self-esteem and dignity of poor people with the provision of decent houses; to protect from sun, rain, heat and cold and,
- 9) To ensure the participation of beneficiary-families in the planning, designing, and construction of houses.
- 10) To open a gateway for these poorest of poor slum people to avail road, water, electricity facilities through panchayat administration.

Action Executed:

The project had started with the selection of beneficiaries through the women's Self-Help Groups. The staff members and volunteers of VOCRDC assisted SHGs in selecting the beneficiaries on the basis of certain criteria. The criteria are: women-headed poorest of poor families, Poorest of poor families, number of children in families, people with different abilities and land ownership. Among the 150 COVID-19 migrant families, we have identified the 45 most vulnerable families as beneficiaries.

The staff members and volunteers of VOCRDC verified the ownership of the title deed of the lands where houses were built. We have ensured that no lands fall within the category of government or private lands. Moreover, we have identified the exact location of the house sites with the help of the local Village Administrative Officers.

We formed a Project Management Coordination Committee (PMCC) to monitor the activities and the funds at once. The PMCC consisted of the Project Director of VOC RDC, Project implementation Staff, local Panchayat Administration Representative, Women Self-Help Group Representative and Beneficiaries Representative so as to ensure

transparency and accountability in each level. This arrangement ensured the project guarantee.

VOCRDC motivated and encouraged the adults in the beneficiary-families to contribute their labour as part of their contribution towards the construction. **Before the construction of houses, we have provided 15 days intense masonry training to the 15 interested beneficiary women.** We have constructed forty-five houses in the given-on year project period and Handed over the houses to the intended beneficiaries in a ceremony with the representation of local authorities. It worked to get the new houses taxed as per the rules and regulations of the local bodies which mandated the respective local bodies to provide basic amenities like, approach roads, streetlights, electricity connections, drinking water facilities, etc.

Project Impact:

- The problem of inaccessibility to shelters came to an end for the beneficiaries. They could no longer be pushed from pillar to post to find financial resources for the construction of houses. They need not worry anymore about paying rent on a monthly or yearly basis.
- Children had a home that will meet a variety of special requirements. They will be protected from a variety of other harmful consequences.
- There is improvement in the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional health, and physical health of children, and they will score good marks in their schools;
- Girls and women have toilets to protect their privacy and they need not to go for open defecation anymore. Thus, they are protected from abuse, sexual exploitation, and be susceptible to bites from poisonous creatures.
- The entire family have protection from rainfall, flooding, and extreme weather during summer and winter.
- They have homes with access to medical facilities, and proper identity documents to avail themselves of government sponsored medical health insurance;
- They have basic amenities like streetlights, link roads, drinking water, and transport facilities that will help them to improve their living standards.

III-Project-2: “National Environment Awareness Campaign”

Project Goal:

“To create awareness on conservation and management of natural resources”

Context:

As the population of the world is increasing at an alarming rate, the consumption of natural resources is also increasing. Hence, these resources should be conserved to maintain ecological balance and save them for future generations. The proper management of a resource to prevent its destruction or exploitation is called conservation.

Nature provides us with all the essentials for our daily needs. Due to overpopulation and human negligence we started to over-exploit our resources. If this continues, there will be no resources left for our future generation.

Need Assessment:

This project's need was assessed 6 years back and VOCRDC has proposed it to several environment conservation organisations. The Agricultural Development Bank of Sholavandan has come forward to partnership with VOCRDC for this noble cause. For the financial year 2021-22 Rs.25000/- has been granted for the execution of the program.

Action Executed:

i) Sensitization Workshop for Students and Teachers:

On 10 July 2021, a one-day awareness program was conducted for the students and teachers of the Girls Higher Secondary School of Vadipatti. Totally 40 Students and 10 staff have participated in the program. The awareness program covered the wide topics of ecological balance, preserving the biodiversity, survival of human race, water energy sources, liquid and solid waste management, rainwater harvesting systems etc.

ii) Awareness Programs for WSHGs and Farmers:

On 12 December 2021, a one-day awareness program was conducted for the WSHGs and small and marginal farmers of Vadipatti block. Totally 50 people participated in the awareness program. The awareness program covered the vast area of conservation and management of natural resources, liquid and solid waste management, rainwater harvesting systems, organic farming and sustainable agricultural practices.

Impacts:

The participants were created awareness on the wide subject of conservation and management of natural resources, waste management, rainwater harvesting, organic farming and sustainable agricultural practices. Considerable amount of change in the practices of the beneficiaries have observed after the awareness program. The school students and teachers have engaged in planting the native plants in their school campus. The school administration has looking forward to establish a rain water harvesting facility in their school in the following year. In the same manner the beneficiary farmers also looking forward to practice sustainable agricultural practices.

IV. Project-3: "Plantation of Native Tree Species"

Project Goal:

"To Prevent Water Runoff and Improve Air Quality"

Context:

As we develop our cities and towns, we replace forests and meadows with buildings and pavement. And now when it rains, the water (often called runoff or stormwater) runs off roofs and driveways into the street. Runoff picks up fertilizer, oil, pesticides, dirt, bacteria and other pollutants as it makes its way through storm drains and ditches – untreated – to our streams, rivers, lakes and the ocean. Polluted runoff is one of the greatest threats to clean water. Improving air quality can deliver substantial health benefits.

Need Assessment:

This project's need was assessed and VOCRDC has proposed it to several environment conservation organisation. The Lions Club of Vadipatti has come forward to partnership with VOCRDC for this noble cause. For the financial year 2021-22 Rs.23000/- has been granted for the execution for the project implementation.

Action Executed:

To conserve the native tree species and restoring the degraded areas we have subsequently planted selective 500 tree species around the neighbouring 23 villages of Vadipatti block with the help of **Lions Club, Vadipatti**.

Impacts:

The saplings are growing well and we can see a significant change in the runoff and air pollution in the following years.

V. Project-4: "Academic Excellence of Deprived Children"

Project Goal:

"To mainstream the dropout children through intense campaigning and bridge course".

Context:

Help in domestic work, economic condition, and lack of interest were found to be the topmost cause of discontinuing education. About 30.2% of the girls gave domestic work as the reason for discontinuing education and about 36.90% of boys left studies because they had to support their families. It becomes especially difficult for girls to continue studying because of concerns about their safety. They face sanitary problems due to poor school facilities ultimately forcing them to stay back at home. Considered to be a liability, many girls are imposed to stay back at home, or are forced to get married at an early age (13.2%).

Many children believe that there is no point in studying if they have to do the same job as their parents, thus they leave school at primary level itself. More than 30% of children involved in the survey showed a lack of interest in studies, they preferred to drop out because whatever was being taught in schools barely intrigued them. Vadipatti and Alanganallur block is also dealing with the problems of inclusion and equality, children from the marginalized sections of the population, or with physical disability/ health issues have to leave schools when they face hostile behaviour from their peers.

Need Assessment:

After the decision of implementing the project, VOCRDC's executive committee assessed the needs and action plan for the successful execution of this project in their executive committee meeting. The objectives were derived and the budget was estimated in the same meeting. The project idea was proposed to ESA Humanitarian Relief Fund, France and requested their kind consideration for the grant support for this project. ESA Humanitarian Relief Fund, France gracefully came forward to support this project and sanctioned ₹ 5,00,000 to VOCRDC.

Action Executed:

The project was launched on 7 October 2021 with a ceremony presided by the Panchayat Leader of Vadipatti.

i) Orientation Training to Volunteers:

On 25 October 2021, we have conducted the orientation training to twenty potential volunteers. The volunteers were selected by the staff of VOCRDC. The one-day training program conducted by our project director, covered the project's purpose, objectives, activities, time schedule, the required skills, knowledge and attitude for successful implementation, and roles and responsibilities of the members of Mainstreaming and Life Skill Development Committee (MSDC) to be formed shortly to take care of toddlers, children, and the dropout children.

ii) Formation of Mainstreaming and Life Skill Development Committee (MSDC):

Ten interested and skilled volunteers have been selected among the 20 volunteers who have been given orientation training and we have enrolled them in the Mainstreaming and Life Skill Development Committee (MSDC). The MSDC was formed on 1 November 2021 with the selected volunteers as its members. The Project Director and the staff members of VOC RDC felicitated their entry as members of MSDC.

iii) Intensive Workshop for Members of MSDC:

A two days intensive workshop have been conducted on 5th and 6th of November 2021 to the members of the MSDC. The members of the MSDC have been sensitised and trained in their specific roles and responsibilities, specific areas of interventions, methods of functioning, reporting procedures etc. Participatory approach has been adopted in the training sessions. The two-day training process consisted of group discussions, one to one interaction and motivational speeches. The training program conducted with the goal of the enhancement of the knowledge, skills, motivation, and commitment of the members of the MSDC. Meanwhile it enabled the members to fix specific indicators for achievements and the expected results of the project.

iv) Identification of Space for the 10 MSDCs:

After the successful training of members of MSDC, they are involved in identifying the suitable locations for establishing the 10 MSDCs in their respective villages. The members approached the concerned members of PRIs (local bodies) and community leaders to identify locations for MSDCs which were within or very close to their villages. The locations for the 10 MSDCs were finalised on 15 December 2021.

v) Orientation Program for Selective Parents:

On 10 November 2021 and 27 March 2022 VOCRDC has conducted one-day orientation programs for 20 selective parents of 10 villages. The orientation programme focused on the salient features of the project, key provisions of Right to Education Act, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, basic civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children as per UNCRC, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act. This program helped

parents voice their opinions. They shared what they feel about the program, the day care centre, the system, teachers, etc. This orientation program helped the parents to know their child's interests which will improve the academic growth, a better understanding of the grading system. The Project Director and the two Field Staff of VOC RDC resourced the orientation training process. The orientation training facilitated as an interactive training process between the participants and the Resource Persons.

vi) Formation of Project Management Committee:

VOCRDC formed a Project Management Committee (PMC) consisting of 11 members representing the communities from 10 target villages and 2 from VOCRDC. The Committee had its review meetings every month and appraised the developments. It presented its monthly report with recommendations to VOCRDC every month.

vii) Back to School Campaign:

In December 2021, we have conducted the back to school campaign in the 10 targeted villages with the assistance of parents who have participated in the orientation training programme for identifying toddlers of 1 to 5 years of age and also the children of 14 to 17 years of age. The group completed the data collection for period of 1 December to 31 December 2021. The trained volunteers with the support of trained parents, leaders of local women SHGs and community leaders identified 186 toddlers of age 1 to 14 and 92 children of 14 to 17 years. It included 39 boys and 53 girls. They enrolled the toddlers in the Day Care Centres and the children as learners in the newly formed 10 MSDCs.

viii) Functioning of 10 MSDCs:

On 3 January 2022, the 10 MSDCs started functioning with the active participation of members of PRIs and community leaders. The working mothers from the target villages placed their toddlers in the Day-Care Centres in the weekdays morning and taken them back to their homes in the evening. VOCRDC provided the toddlers with nutritious food and involved them in games and rest during the daytime. The trained volunteers taught them lessons through joyful play way methods preparing them for getting enrolled into the Primary Schools when they complete six years of age. The Day-Care Centres addressed the twin criteria of health (malnutrition) and creating interest in education.

The dropout children from the same target villages attended the respective MSDCs from morning to evening in the weekdays. The trained volunteers taught them cope up skills like building self-confidence, decision-making, stress alleviation, adjustment in diversity, self-awareness, positive behaviour, critical thinking, inter-personal, health consciousness, goal setting and problem solving, communication, etc. The volunteers also equipped the dropout children with self-sustainable business and entrepreneurial skills.

ix) Special Day Celebration:

During the project period, VOCRDC organised five Special Day Celebrations

involving the children, their parents and community leaders at the MSDC level in ten target villages.

a)Pongal Day Celebration:

The first celebration took place on 14 January 2022 which is the Harvest Festival of Tamils. Pongal Celebrations was an exceptional event in the lives of Tamil children and the people of target villages. The event started with an anthem to Mother Tamil. The children sang the song in chorus. One of the students of MSDC started off with a speech in Tamil on Pongal. Few village women from SHGs came together and sung a Villupaatu explaining the various aspects of Pongal.

They placed an earthen pot on fire in the middle of the venue with rice and water as per the traditional rituals. Girls came together and danced for a Kummiadi song (folk dance) around the Pongal pot. The people participating in the event chanted Pongalo! Pongal! repeatedly and enthusing the children of the MSDC. The volunteers distributed pieces of sugarcane to celebrate the day with many warm memories. The children of MSDCs sang our national anthem in chorus.

b)The International Women's Day:

On 08 March 2022 We have celebrated the International Women Day in all our day care centre. One student from each day care centre gave speech on the significance of celebrating 'The International Women's Day'. Children are encouraged to read about influential women, short essay writing, handmade card and make popsicle stick puppets creating.

c)The World Environment Day:

On 5 June 2022 VOCRDC have celebrated 'The Environment Day' in all our day care centres. The significance of the Environment Day which is this day has created a platform to raise an awareness that the world is facing the problem such as air pollution, plastic pollution, global warming and sea level increasing day by day has been sensitised to all our beneficiary children. The World Environment Day was observed, highlighting the need to live sustainably in harmony with nature. The theme of The World Environment Day 2022 which is ***"#OnlyOneEarth"*** focuses on our role as the citizens of the Earth, to protect the environment and to encourage sustainable living everywhere and everyday" has been explained to all the beneficiary children. Children are asked to brainstorm that how they can help protect the environment at home, at school and in the community, to learn about the earth through music and read books about the earth.

d)The Independence Day:

The Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and respect at all our MSDCs on August 15th 2022. All our MSDCs were decorated with tricolour saffron, white and green balloons and flags welcomed the eyes of all to the function. The staff, students and parents have participated in the ceremony. To commemorate the sovereignty of our nation, the tricolour national flag was unfurled and all in unison

sang the national anthem and expressed the joy of freedom. One student of each MSDC took everyone down the memory lane when spoke on the freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose etc who played an important role in Indian Independence. The students in their melodious voices sang the Patriotic song-that awakened everyone's feelings towards the mother land. Prize distribution took place to acknowledge those students who bought laurels for themselves and the school in both scholastic and non-scholastic areas. Students in their speech enlightened everyone with importance of being united. The teachers exhorted the students to follow the ideals of the great people. They advised the students to become ideal citizens of the country. Taking the slogan of 'Unity in Diversity' forward, the students presented the patriotic song. The program culminated with Vote of Thanks. At the end sweets were distributed to the students. Indeed, it was a day of joy, a day to love and respect our country and make it a better place for Indians to live and experience the freedom, peace and Unity in Diversity.

e) World Literacy Day:

International Literacy Day was celebrated at all our MSDCs to mark the importance of literacy. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared September 8 as International Literacy Day in 1966. The function began by speech presented by senior students and followed by a debate competition for middle class students. The primary students participated in poster making competition and tiny tots enjoyed various games planned for them. Teachers motivated students towards reading and donating of books. Our project director Mrs. S. Latha congratulated the teachers for their hard work. After that the kids spent a lot of time in reading different books and got synonymous benefits of reading as a whole. Some of them include brain exercises, vocabulary improvement, empathy and imagination and morale improvement.

X) Children Mass Get Together:

On 27 September 2022, we have gathered all our MSDC children for the mass get together celebration. The celebration was an opportunity for the children to socialize with our different MSDC children. They have utilized the occasion very well and enjoyed it very much. Party games and other cultural programs such as dance programs were organized for the children and they enjoyed it very much. All the children were treated with cakes and special meals. The purposes of this celebration were gathering, socializing, conversation and recreation. Being together with all our MSDC children in one place was truly a festival and we celebrated it very much.

Impacts:

- Quality Education Ensured
- Emancipation of child labor and perpetual debt bonded slavery
- Nullified school children dropouts
- Children emerge as change making agents
- Ensured Childhood and fundamental basic education rights and child rights protection

- Enhanced levels of self-esteem with life skill accomplishment
- Enhanced creative potentials
- Improved understandings of Dalit rights and entitlement of other communities

VI. Project – 5: “Scaling up of Campaigns for Prevention of Hansen’s Disease (Leprosy) and Initiatives through Awareness Campaign, Screening and Stigma reduction in Vadipatty Block of Madurai District, Tamil Nadu – India”

Project Goal:

“To break the chain of transmission and reach zero disease status in Vadipatti Block of Madurai District in Tamil Nadu (India) within three years.”

Context:

Leprosy, which was declared eradicated in India one-and-a-half decades ago, has re-emerged in different states with high intensity. Every year, over 200,000 such cases are detected globally and India accounts for more than half of these, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). As per the recent report by the National Leprosy Elimination Program (NLEP), of the total new cases detected in India, Children accounted for about 8.7% of total Leprosy cases.

In the past two-and-a-half years, India accounted for 60 per cent of the global total of new leprosy cases. The major cause of hidden cases is low voluntary reporting in the community due to a lack of awareness as well as stigma and discrimination. The extent of stigma and discrimination is evident by the fact that 200,000 people are residing in about 750 leprosy colonies.

The proportion of child cases was more than 10% of new cases detected in eleven states/UTs of India, with 6 of them (Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Dadra & Nagar haveli, Bihar, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh) showing very high rates ranging from 14% to 23%. In a few of these states, the high multibacillary proportion, and in others a difficult to reach terrain could contribute to continued transmission.

Need Assessment:

Not all patients have access to appropriate therapy and not all countries have the infrastructure to support leprosy control efforts. Worldwide, the number of dedicated leprosy programs is declining. Prevention of contact with droplets from nasal and other secretions from patients with untreated M. leprae infection is currently the most effective way to avoid the disease.

Treatment of patients with appropriate antibiotics stops the person from spreading the disease. Leprosy is curable with multidrug therapy (MDT). Leprosy is likely transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases. Untreated, leprosy can cause progressive and permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs, and eyes.

Action Executed:

i) Orientation and Training to Staffs and Volunteers

On 10/10/21, two-day orientation program for 5 staff and 40 volunteers conducted. The program dealt with what is and what is not leprosy, its causes, impact, clinical features, lepromin test, case definition of WHO, classifications, reactions, transmission route, Multi Drug Therapy and its side effect, probable complications, treatment of disability, control, elimination strategy, overcoming stigma, etc. We invited qualified and experienced doctors and nurses from the local Primary Health Centres to resource the orientation program.

ii) The Screening Camps:

From 01/11/21 to 10/11/21, we have conducted screening to the SHG members of 10 targeted villages. In these meetings we have vastly covered about the infection, spread and treatment about the Hansen's disease. We have screened the 122 women of 39 SHGs for Hansen's disease as well as we have enquired them that any of the villagers have such symptoms of the disease. We have received responses that none of the villagers have symptoms of Hansen's disease.

In the same manner we have conducted screening camps for the schools Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Vadipatti on 20-02-2022, Madura Sugar Higher Secondary School, Pandiarajapuram on 12-03-2022, Government Higher Secondary School, T. Mettupatti on 25-06-2022, Government Higher Secondary School, Kondayanpatti on 09-07-2022 and Government Higher Secondary School, Ayyankottai on 06-08-2022. The school students are educated about the symptoms, spread and treatment of the Hansen's disease. Screening for the disease was conducted and none of the students have symptoms of Hansen's disease.

iii) Awareness Campaign Through Cycle Rally:

On 16/12/2021, we organised the cycle rally with 136 students carrying placards, handbills and banner and travelled along the main road and reached Viralipatti, one of the target villages. The people were gathered in a public place and the students explained the impact of leprosy.

iv) Poster Campaign:

In the month of January 2022, we have executed the activity of poster campaigning. We have fixed twenty posters in the ten target villages T. Andipatti, Viralipatti, Kattukulam, Thiruvudagam, T. Vadipatti, Sholavandan, Kachaikatti, Mettupatti, Ayyankottai and Kondaiyanpatti. Two posters for each village has been fixed. The contents of the posters were about the awareness of Hansen's disease such as infection, spread, prevention and treatment of the disease. 63000 people of ten villages have been benefitted through this campaign.

v) Awareness Through Wall Writing:

In the month of January 2022, we have created awareness through the wall Writing in the 10 targeted villages. We wrote one wall for each village. The wall was of government schools, offices and individual homes. We have obtained proper permission from the

concerned party for writing. The contents of the wall writing were about the awareness of Hansen's disease such as infection, spread, prevention and treatment of the disease. 63000 people of ten villages have been benefitted through this activity.

vi) Awareness Through Video Screening:

We have created awareness on Hansen's disease through short awareness video film screening in the three villages T. Vadipatti, Sholavandan and T. Andipatti on 21-02-2022, 11-04-2022 and 09-05-2022 respectively. In the same manner we have conducted two awareness video screening in two schools Government Girls Higher Secondary School of Vadipatti on 23-01-2022 and Government Higher Secondary School of Kondaiyanpatti on 13-03-2022. The video film covered the area of Hansen's disease infection, spread, prevention and treatment. 952 village people and 562 school students have benefited through this program.

vii) Door to Door Awareness Campaign:

In March 2022, we have conducted door to door campaign and distribution of IEC materials in all the 10 targeted villages. The awareness on Hansen's disease such as infection, spread, prevention and treatment of the disease has been created among 13471 families and 67353 individuals.

vii) Commemoration of World Leprosy Day:

The world leprosy day was commemorated on 30 January 2022 in VOCRDC office. Special guests in the medical field and the beneficiary people were invited for the commemoration. Over 60 people gathered for the event. The special guests gave a speech about the nature of Hansen's disease, its spread, prevention and treatment. The special guest speech eliminated the stigma and myth about Hansen's disease. Snacks and refreshment drinks were provided to the participants.

viii) Interface Meeting with Health and NLEP Staff:

Two days interface meeting with 30 health and NLEP staff was conducted on 08/01/22 and 9/01/2022. In this meeting discussions and ideas have been analysed to increase awareness of the Hansen's disease, its mode of transmission, prevention initiatives, treatment services and follow-up among high risk groups in Vadipatty Block.

ix) Vaccination Camps:

We have conducted vaccination camps on 30/01/22, 06/02/22, 27/02/22, 13/03/22, 17/04/22, 22/05/22, 05/06/22, 10/07/22, 14/08/22 and 04/09/22 in the targeted 10 villages. 9 persons were diagnosed with the symptoms of Hansen's disease and are referred to Madurai Rajaji Hospital.

x) Rehabilitation:

Among the 9 leprosy infected persons, 7 persons were cured and are enrolled in CBOs / SHGs in February 2022 for their livelihood. They were undergone skill development program and started to live a self-sustained life. Rest of the 2 persons are under treatment. After the completion of their treatment, they will also undergo for skill development program.

Impacts:

- Home based selfcare
- Early detection and treatment
- Stigma reduction
- Voluntary reporting for tests
- Increased social acceptance
- Identification of hidden cases
- Strengthened government coordination and participation
- Patients received psycho-social support
- Community advocates for the rights of positive cases

VII. Project – 6: “Ensuring Labour and Human rights to women workers employed in Textile and Readymade Garment Making Industries”

Project Goal:

“Women workers employed in Textile and Readymade Garments making industries at Vadipatti Textile Park are ensured with labour and human rights and their lives and dignity are protected at work places and that they are able to see changes in their standard of lives through a clear labour policy.”

Context:

The vast majority of garment workers – approximately 80% – is women. This is not by chance, but the result of discriminatory practices from start to finish. Women are desirable in the garment industry because employers take advantage of cultural stereotypes – to which women are often obliged to adhere – that portrays women as passive and flexible. Productive, reproductive and domestic responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking and childcare constrain women’s ability to seek other types of employments. They just do not have the time or opportunity to improve their working conditions, or even speak out about the abuses they face on a daily basis, making them the ideal employees in management’s eyes.

The Integrated Textile Park of Madurai is exactly located in Vadipatti town of Madurai district, Tamilnadu, India. There are more than 25 garment factories are located in this 100-acre integrated campus. Over 8000 women and girls of surrounding villages of Madurai district and women and girls from other neighbouring towns and states are working in the garment factories of this Integrated Textile Park. Despite the improved safety of the ready-made garment industry, other workplace health and safety issues in the ready-made garment industry continue, especially violence towards female workers.

Need Assessment:

- i) The women working in the garment factories of Integrated Textile Park face sexual violence, verbal violence and physical violence in their workplace.
- ii) These women are suffering of behavioural restrictions such as insufficient breaks and isolated from outside, constant pressure such as production targets and threat of job loss, accusation of stealing in their workplace.
- iii) These garment factories women workers are suffering of severe physical and psychological complications due to their workplace violence.
- iv) The employers, production managers, supervisors and the male co-workers take advantage of cultural stereotypes on these women workers.
- v) The government officials are not taking any action though they are aware of the violence against these women workers.

Action Executed:

1. Survey, Data collection on women workers:

First of all, we have gathered complete statistics on women workers working in the Textile and Readymade Garments Industries at the Integrated Textile park, Vadipatti.

2. Organising Women Workers:

After the data collection, we have decided to organise all the women workers into associations and to federate them into an Integrated Forum. In order to do that, first we have federated 7000 women workers into 150 village panchayat vice associations. Then we have federated the village panchayat vice associations to block level associations namely Vadipatti, Alanganallur, Thiruparankundram, Thirumangalam, Madurai, and Nilakottai. Then we have federated these block vice women workers associations into an Integrated Forum as Vadipatti Textile Park Women Workers' Association.

3. Capacity Building Workshops for Leaders:

We have conducted leadership training to three level forums leaders. Totally 850 leaders have benefited through these workshops. We have conducted series of intense workshops for four months. The workshops were conducted to capacitate the participants in clear communication, strong ethics and standards, organisation, expressing expectations, nurturing growth, flexible to change and creating feeling of togetherness.

4. Legal Camp:

Legal camps were organised in the VOCRDC office for the benefit of the women workers. The camps were resourced by advocates. 80 Women workers were benefited through these legal camps.

5. Meeting with Textile Owner's Association:

The trained women forum was encouraged to come up with a policy for women workers. Later a meeting was arranged between the Working Women Forum and the Textile Owner's Association. In the meeting the women workers forums negotiated with textile

units' owner's association on creation of labour and human rights policy. The owner's association as well accepted to consider the request.

Impacts:

i)75% - 80% of the sexual violence against women workers of Integrated Textile Park have been decreased.

ii)65% - 75% of physical and verbal abuse against women workers have been decreased.

iii)Certain protocols are set by the employers on treating the women in working areas and women are treated with respect and dignity in the working areas.

iv)The government officials and elected leaders frequently inspect the garment factories in the Integrated Textile Park and inquire with the women workers regarding the violence of all forms against women.

v)The women are well utilising the Legal cell.

VIII. Project – 7: “HIV/AIDS POSITIVE CHILDREN OUTREACH PROGRAM”

Context:

HIV is somewhat different in children than in adults. Children have higher viral loads in their blood. There are some extra steps to take to make sure that they get the right care such as medical care, nutrition, education, behavioural screening, life skills building and empowerment mobilization.

VOC Rural Development Trust engages with **twenty-five children** living with HIV/AIDS to address medical needs, nutritional needs, educational needs and psychosocial needs pertaining to this population. These twenty-five children are living in the villages of Vadipatty taluk located in the Madurai-Dindigul highway. The purpose is to identify and cater towards the unique situations and concerns they experience in dealing with the disease and ongoing treatment process.

Need Assessment:

The National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) data, a recently published study identifies a significant positive impact on recipient children's health, nutrition and education as a result of receiving the grant.

Action Executed:

Periodical Medical Check-up:

We are taking these 25 HIV/AIDS infected children regularly three months once for the Regular Medical Check-up. We ensure the regular availability of ART medicines through government hospitals for our beneficiary children. Six months once we are taking the CD4 tests to make sure that the children are in the sufficient cell count.

Special Day Celebration:

Deepavali:

Deepavali is one of the joyful celebrations for children. Hence VOC RDC has decided to treat its special children in a special way. VOC RDC has organized a suppose Deepavali celebration program for this child on **03-11-2021**, which is the previous day of Deepavali.

VOC RDC has invited **Honourable Vadipatty Town Lion's Club President Mr. S. Balaji, Honourable Medical Officer of Primary Health Centre of Vadipatty Mr. Manoj Pandian M.B.B.S**, as chief guests for the celebration. **VOC RDC President Mrs. S. Latha, Secretary Mr. R. S. Ramasamy** have presided the celebration. All the staffs of VOC RDC as well as local volunteers have participated in this joyful celebration. The chief guests gave their blessings and lectures to these special children. The president and secretary of VOC RDC as well gave their blessings and guidance speech about these children's upcoming life.

In the celebration, all the children are provided with **sumptuous meal. new dresses worth, pair of footwear and sweets and savouries** were distributed to all the **twenty-five children**. All the children very much enjoyed the celebration.

World AIDS Day:

On 1 December 2021, we have celebrated the commemoration of World AIDS Day. The event was taken place in VOCRDC office. All the children gathered in our office. VOCRDC President Mrs. S. Latha presided the meeting. She gave an encouraging speech to the children. At the end of the meeting sweets, snacks and educational materials such as notebook, pencils, etc are provided children.

Sapling Plantation:

As a part of the celebration we have planted 50 saplings around the places of VOCRDC. Some children have expressed their desire of raising trees and plants in their homes. Hence, we have provided some of the saplings to some children. They joyfully received and planted in their gardens. The saplings are blooming.

VII. Conclusion:

As an organisation that delivers impact largely through a volunteer network, key aspects of our ability to make a difference to children in shelters would not be possible without the help and support of the wonderful people and organisations who stay involved with us.

First and foremost, we must recognise all our amazing dedicated volunteers, Fellows, Interns, Strategists for the unwavering commitment that drives the change we want to see in world. Your names all in the same print.

A big thank you must also go to all our givers, from Foundations to the Individual Donors who contributed so generously to help vulnerable children.

Much gratitude also goes to our NGO partners who have shared their knowledge with us and to our strategic advisors for the time and effort they have put in to ensure that our impact keeps growing.
