
Blossom Trust

Annual Report

2017-2018



Building healthy communities through networks and sustainable positive changes

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Letter from the Director



Dear Reader,

Almost ten years ago the Rainbow TB Forum was born from the desire to create sustainable resilient communities where the health and rights of future generations would be at the interests of future generations are central.

Since our inception, the Rainbow TB Forum pursued its mission through the development of community-based TB prevention strategies to reduce the plight of vulnerable populations affected directly and indirectly by TB, HIV/AIDS and Diabetes.

By promoting inclusion and community networks, by strengthening the position of women and by enabling resilience for the most vulnerable, the Rainbow TB Forum has diversified its response to TB beyond prevention and cure.

We believe that by working with vulnerable populations, we can have an impact on the global issues affecting us all. Enabling each of our beneficiaries to secure their future, through realizing their health and fulfilling their potential, contributes to building a better world for future generations.

We continued to strengthen our ongoing children's projects at Dayspring Home and Crèche daycare Centre while incorporating the organic farm into CEPT project with the goat rearing project where we empower the rural community financially.

I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere gratitude to our dedicated donors and volunteers. We have come this far because of your continued support and faith in our vision. This year we saw the end of one of our biggest projects yet. The CEPT II project was a great success and I look forward to more success in our quest to fight TB, HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases bedeviling our communities.

Yours sincerely

T. Mercy Annapoorani



Rainbow TB Forum Annual Report: 2017 – 2018

Building healthy communities through networks and sustainable positive changes



The Rainbow TB Forum (RTBF) is specialist organization aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of people and communities severely affected by tuberculosis (TB). The RTBF is unique in its strong focus on TB prevention, cure and education campaigns to fight stigma associated with TB. The RTBF was formed in 2009 by a group of college students who were subjected to stigmatization while receiving TB treatment in public hospitals in Virudhunagar Tamil Nadu, South India. They decided to stand for their rights and become a voice to the voiceless. Since its formation the RTBF has grown its wings to other towns around Tamil Nadu. The RTBF operates on the conviction that TB is not only a medical condition in this region but a magnet for social discrimination. For that reason, we are committed to fight tooth and nail against stigma and discrimination associated with TB. Our mission aligns with United Nations and the government of India's national strategy to end TB by 2025. Over the years we have made meaningful progress and we continue to fight TB from grassroots level in a sustainable way by creating support networks within local communities. Our membership numbers have grown significantly; in 2017 alone, we welcomed more than 800 new members. Our campaign continues to receive positive responses and more and more people are reached in every

campaign. Our flagship project CEPT II reached full throttle in 2017 and concluded on the 31st of May 2018. Other projects such as Goat4Gain are still in full swing.

Mission, vision and strategy

Our overall mission is to enhance communities affected by TB to better maintain their health and wellbeing. We do this by using ‘health’ as both a goal and a means. The goal is to making health care accessible to everyone without discrimination. By working with local communities, we also use ‘health’ as a means of uniting people and rebuilding community trust. We are ‘knowledge-driven’, which means we develop, implement and improve (new) TB intervention models, based on grassroots research and other available knowledge. From our experience we have learned that many factors determine the concept of ‘health’: a population’s well-being is more than the sum of its parts, and people cannot heal in an ‘unhealthy’ society. We therefore use a participatory approach when implementing our activities. Our approach is aimed at the total community. We identify the most competent and daring agents of change – usually young women – and work with them on change. We believe that Health is the driver, but integration makes it happen. By working together on fighting TB, we re-connect individuals and groups. Old relationships are rediscovered, new ones are forged – and communities are mobilized against TB and exclusion. Together, we connect by building new trust and empathy. Every day we prove that stronger relationships have a tangible, measurable positive impact on the health and well-being of everyone, everywhere. And no one is excluded, no one stays disconnected. We therefore use community networks to link past and current TB patients as a support mechanism to fight TB as a disease and as a recipe for social exclusion. The RTBF envisions a World in which every person affected by TB can be treated equally without stigma. We strongly believe that society is better when everyone is health and can fully participate and reach their full potential. Our strategy is to link the most endangered members of our communities particularly women and children with resources to address health challenges on a local level and create sustainable solution.

The TB Burden in India

In every poverty-stricken community, the stakes are high for the poorest families particularly women and girls. It is always the most vulnerable among us who has the most to lose. Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the deadliest chronic diseases in the world. The burden of TB is still at all-time high in India. In 2017 alone, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that almost over 2 million cases of TB were recorded. Out of which over 500 000 people lost their lives among them are people living with HIV/AIDS and young children. Given the seriousness of TB burden in India, we remain steadfast in our quest to build better and healthier TB free prosperous communities.



Every year nine million people
develop TB





Three million do not receive the care they need.

Our Activities

CEPT-II

Campaign for Education

The Campaign for education, prevention and treatment of TB phase II is a brainchild of Blossom Trust, a parent organization of RBTF. The CEPT project was first implemented in 2009 to provide WHO-recommended community-based prevention and care of TB in Virudhunagar and Kachipuram districts in Tamil Nadu. In 2013 the project graduated into phase II and partnered with Target TB, UK.

CEPT aimed to: (1) increase the knowledge level on TB among the general public and build capacity for community support, and (2) actively identify, treat and cure TB, especially among the vulnerable population groups. Every year nine million people get sick with TB. Three million don't get the care they need. CEPT team actively identifies TB suspects in the community and refers them for free testing and treatment. The team also has a dedicated HIV-TB co-screening coordinator at the local ART center to ensure every HIV patient is tested for TB. The team works tirelessly to ensure patients do not miss testing and treatment schedule, and provides support for patients who are at risk of developing drug-resistant tuberculosis



**CEPT II member
Training session
in Virudhunagar
District facilitated
by the RTBF
coordinator Mr.
Tamil Selven.**

CEPT-II endeavored for three key outcomes. Firstly, to educate the community through intensive health education programs. Secondly, to improve access to TB diagnosis and treatment at government health

facilities, particularly for women, children and people living with HIV/AIDS. Lastly, to improve community capacity for sustainable community participation in TB management in the community treatment at government health facilities for 28,620 women, children and PLHA (People Living with HIV/AIDS).

Virudhunagar District			
Name of Block	New Members	Total Members (Cumulative)	
Aruppukottai	7	56	
Kariyapatti	23	107	
Narikudi	5	79	
Rajapalayam	5	71	
Sattur	4	79	
Sivakasi	5	81	
Srivilliputhur	6	79	
Thiruchuzhi	5	52	
Vembakottai	4	51	
Virudhunagar	7	127	
Watrap	7	110	
Total	78	892	

In Virudhunagar district the CEPT project was implemented in 11 blocks. The project improved capacity of TB associations and contributes to greater and more sustainable community participation in TB management in Virudhunagar district. There was a significant number of new members joining the forum and participated in various RTBF activities. In March 2018 the RTBF team welcomed 78 new members.



(Dr. Murugavel, medical officer at Kariyapatti government hospital, welcoming new RTBF members - Kariyapatti, 05.04.2018)

The CEPT II project was linked to various programs such as EduClowns, Goats for Gains,

Educlowns is a theatre group connected to the Rainbow TB For. Their efforts include campaigns for child health, sexual education and raising awareness of TB.

Also known as the “red-nosed” for the actors’ painted noses, Educlowns offer an alternative method in educating the public about pertinent but sensitive health related issues.

Educlowns



Their noses symbolize their fury upon unacceptable injustices and ignorance in the community.

Educlowns is often employed in association with CEPT II as a localized approach to de-stigmatizing socially taboo subjects.

*“Humor can be one of our best survival tools.” --
Allen Klein*



GOAT FOR GAINS



Goats for Gains aims to empower TB patients economically by giving them a means to generate livelihood, as well as enabling the forum itself to become financially independent enough to conduct programmes of their own.



Training

In order to create awareness about TB, CEPT II staff has trained new RTBF leaders. The trainings encompass a variety of topics: determine the symptoms of TB and how to refer individuals who displays symptoms, support individuals who test positive, tackling stigmatization of the disease. Trainings focus on people living with TB, community volunteers, AWW/VHN and self-help groups.



Screening Camps

The amount of people reached through TB screening camps in 2017 and 2018 has increased compared to 2016/2015. Thanks to five screening camps in total 776 people have been tested on tuberculosis. 160 sputum samples were collected and fifteen tested positive. The TB positive patients are put in touch with a community organizer who ensures treatments are followed. The patient will be tested again once treatment is completed.

World TB Day



Each year we commemorate World TB Day on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the TB epidemic at grassroots level.



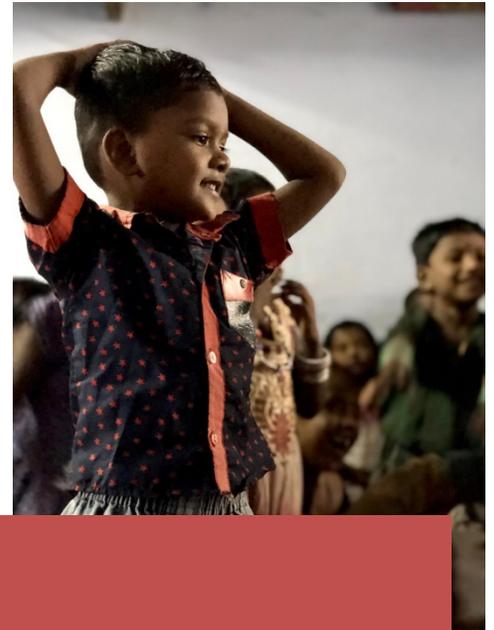
This year our awareness Campaign for World TB Day started at Virudhunagar Railway Station. Banners were displayed in front of the station. A group of volunteers handed out notices in front of the station as well as on the platforms and passing trains. Fliers were distributed both to passengers alighting at this station and to passengers on trains stopping at the station. Next, the exhibition was moved to Virudhunagar city center. Banners had been fixed on our car, so that while travelling between the railway station and the town center, they were visible to passers-by. The car also traveled slowly and stopped frequently to enable volunteers to distribute notices to passers-by and have a chat with them.

The fliers and the banners were designed to give key information about TB and the message was simplified so that people could easily remember. The fliers answered question such as: what the symptoms of TB are, how to get diagnosed and treated, and how Rainbow Tb Forum can help patients cope with TB. Overall, people responded very well to the campaign. People were keen to take away fliers, and the banners



As women’s economic and cultural power increases, so do their opportunities to find work. One obstacle that still prevents women from working, however, is childcare.

Crèche is a childcare centre opened by Blossom in 2003 as a service to mother laborers. Located in Pandian Nagar, a suburb of Virudhunagar, Crèche is operated by a trained teacher and an assistant.



Crèche

“Daycare options can help women escape the poverty trap by reducing the demands of domestic work.”

International Development Research Centre, Canada

Children are fed lunch and provided with monthly medical check-ups. Parent-teacher meetings provide feedback on the wellbeing of the children.

On average 30 children between the age of 2 and 5 are under the care of Crèche.

Crèche has been funded by the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board in Chennai.





According to the Indian Department of AIDS control, estimated number of **children** living with **HIV** in Tamil Nadu region alone will exceed **6,000** this year.

Dayspring Home

India is facing an accelerating threat from HIV and an unprecedented number of orphans with little or no protection and care will ensue.

Blossom opened Dayspring Home in 2003 for children orphaned due to an AIDS related death or infected and rejected by their families due to the illness.

Dayspring is currently home to 28 children between the ages of 2 and 15. Dayspring aims to reintegrate children back into their communities by providing ongoing social and medical support through parent counselling, education and Self-Help Groups.

Blossom provides all day-to-day running of the Home, which includes: medical expenses, educational needs, three meals a day, clothes and social support.

Volunteers and their contribution through donations and caretaking the children have been an indispensable part of the programme.



Located next to Dayspring Home, Dayspring Farm was established by the aid organization Caritas Sweden in 2002. Blossom Farm team tends to the livestock and crops with the help of volunteers, whom the farm is always looking for.

The 6-acre farm is a way to provide sustainable food income for the children at Dayspring Home. It aims to produce adequate vegetables, fruit, milk and eggs for the children to have three balanced meals a day. Any excess production is sold to the local community for revenue.

Types of crops cultivated include Brinjal, Drum Stick, Beans, Spinach, Ladyfinger, Chilly and Tomato. Livestock reared include goats, cows, chicken, ducks, turkeys and kinewbowl.



Dayspring Farm

The farm is taking steps to be as eco-friendly and healthy as possible. Examples include the disposal of manure and water conservation.

The manure from the cows is made into an organic fertilizer called Panchagavya. Panchagavya is a mixture of the manure with ghee, curd and milk left to ferment for around 15 days. Waste from other livestock is turned into gas to cook with, which is cost effective in addition to being environmentally friendly.

For conservation of water, the farm uses drip irrigation system, which collects rain and releases the water across the farm through a pipe system. During the monsoon season, conservatory on the farm collects the rain to use during the dry season.



“The farm is taking steps to be as ecofriendly and healthy as possible.”