BLOSSOM TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

blossom

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Reader,

A new page is turned for Blossom! A year is ending and a new one is emerging. The year 2022 and the beginning of 2023 have been synonymous with hope for the entire Blossom team. We are working every day for a better integration of marginalised communities into society, to make health, education or the economic market more accessible to the most disadvantaged.

Since the COVID-19 crisis, the shadow of which is still present in India, we have worked hard to resume our activities and continue to help those who need it most. We are therefore delighted to report that 2022 and the start of 2023 have been achievements for the whole team and for the groups we support.

2022 has borne fruit, and 2023 gives us the opportunity to reap the rewards: two new projects are coming to life! We have been working hard to put in place two projects helping two communities. Our first project, IGNITE establishes the Rainbow Chasers Clan and marks the beginning of a new network for LGBTQI+ youth on the outskirts of Chennai. Our second new project, SEEAD meaning "Sustainable Education, Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Development '' for Women, promotes and encourages women's methods in Indian agriculture. Both projects put education at the heart of empowering marginalised communities and deconstructing stigma.

In the new year, we want to continue to develop our CSR-funded projects. The IDEAL project has been a success and we intend to build on this. We are aiming for CSRs in order to achieve more stability, not only for our organisation but more importantly for the people we help.

Thus, we are motivated at the beginning of 2023 to develop new projects, to create links and to strengthen communities. We continue to strive for a more equal world, and believe with equal fervour in the empowerment of marginalised and disadvantaged communities.

Sincerely,

T. Mercy Annapoorani,
Executive Director

About Blossom Trust

Founded in 1993, Blossom Trust is a grassroots NGO based in Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, India. With the initial focus on the social and economic empowerment of underprivileged women and a safe and nurturing space for vulnerable children, over time, we have committed to creating a solid foundation for sustainable community ownership. We believe that women have the capabilities to build resilient communities as the pillars of development; therefore, we strongly invest in the empowerment of these women through two main activities. Firstly, establishing community-based organisations and networks primarily women-led, allowing collective action and collaboration to be at the forefront of our interventions with higher success. Secondly, through advocacy and awareness-raising, we ensure everyone has the right to access information. Knowledge empowerment plays a profound role in community development and allows women to make well-informed decisions for themselves and their households. With our vision, mission and Theory of Change in mind, our commitment is to women's empowerment and community development.

Vision

We envision women at the heart of community development; establishing thriving, equitable and empowered communities across Tamil Nadu

Mission

Promoting women-led development and resilient communities through collective networks, collaboration and awareness-raising

Theory of Change

We are committed to changing the narrative, from women as disadvantaged and impoverished, to women as agents of change and pillars of development; creating the opportunity for them to take ownership and agency, and empowering them to empower their community

Blossom's Values

Inclusivity: We believe in gender equality, achieved through the empowerment of women as agents of change, and the inclusion of all.
Participation: We believe in listening to, acting on, and engaging with the voices and needs of the community, to bridge the gap between the grassroots and global stakeholders.
Equity: We believe in the fundamental rights of marginalised groups, through equitable access to healthcare, education, and secure livelihoods.
Resilience: We believe in sustainable practices, with impacts that are tangible, measurable and lasting.
Partnership: We believe in cross-sector collaboration and NGO partnerships, harnessing expertise to generate effective change at the community level.

Operating Context - PESTLE Analysis

In order to better understand the general situation and the context in which Blossom operates, we decided to conduct a PESTLE analysis. For each category (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal & Environmental), we will ask ourselves what the situation is in the state of Tamil Nadu and how these conditions impact the activity and projects carried out by Blossom.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND IN TAMIL NADU AND IMPACT ON BLOSSOM'S ACTIVITY

Political activity in Tamil Nadu is rather favourable to Blossom's work. Indeed, since the 1960s, the state has been characterised by socialist policies. The two main political parties are the AIADMK (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) and the DMK (Davida Munnetra Kazhagam). These two parties aim for economic and social development in the state, particularly in terms of access to technology, education and employment. Blossom's work draws a parallel: we aim for better access to health, education and a healthy environment in the long term. The economic resilience of women in the region is also part of Blossom's scope of work and policies. However, it is necessary to point out that political action is not ideal: there is still a major issue of corruption and clientelism. This is a consequence of the caste-based political party system. Blossom's action therefore aims to overcome the shortcomings of local government through the establishment of real access to health, education, employment, etc. for the most vulnerable populations.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND IN TAMIL NADU AND IMPACT ON BLOSSOMS ACTIVITY

Tamil Nadu is one of the most industrialised of the Indian states, and the manufacturing sector accounts for more than one-third of the state's gross product. Nevertheless, Tamil Nadu faces many development challenges such as high poverty incidence, and marked social, inter-district and rural/urban disparities. The state has among the highest unemployment rates in the country. High school drop-out and low completion rates reduce the effectiveness of Tamil Nadu's secondary education program. Agriculture is the source of income for about half the working population of Tamil Nadu. This leaves a high proportion of the population and economy vulnerable to the ever-growing water scarcity and land degradation issues. Thus, Blossom's activities aim to provide the most vulnerable and poor communities with sustainable sources of income, providing them with economic resilience.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IN TAMIL NADU AND IMPACT ON BLOSSOM'S ACTIVITY

From a social point of view, the state of Tamil Nadu is experiencing a positive development: its literacy rate is among the highest in India. A survey was conducted by the industrialist Assocham showing that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in primary and upper primary schools is 100%. The literacy rate in the state is 80.33%. In terms of the major employment sectors, the people of Tamil Nadu are mainly labourers and farmers.

As far as religion is concerned, the majority of the population of Tamil Nadu is Hindu. Christians form the largest religious minority in the state (about 6% of the population), as do Muslims (about 5.8% of the population). Tamil Nadu is also well known for its numerous temples. Temples are real institutions in this region of southern India, playing a religious but also social and economic role.
Nevertheless, the Tamil Nadu region is not immune to the traditional organisation of Indian society: it is shaped by a complex caste system. As a result, some populations face a high level of precariousness and vulnerability.

Blossom's activity is therefore part of this context of improving the living conditions of vulnerable target groups. Various projects are working in this direction: access to treatment for patients suffering from tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS, support for LGBT people with a particular focus on transgender individuals, but also projects to develop and encourage the economic resilience of vulnerable women, or to promote sustainable agricultural techniques. Through its work, Blossom aims to restore equality and equity in a society marked by structural differences.

TECHNOLOGICAL BACKGROUND IN TAMIL NADU AND IMPACT ON BLOSSOM'S ACTIVITY

As far as the technical and technological aspect of Tamil Nadu is concerned, the state is in a favourable situation with one of the highest industrialization rates in India. A wide network of trains, buses and aeroplanes is available. This makes Blossom's development favourable and has enabled the establishment of several branches in several cities: the main office is located in Virudhunagar, and the other Blossom branches are located in Chennai, Kancheepuram, Madurai and Tirunelveli. This geographical expansion has enabled and continues to enable Blossom to grow and expand its projects and target groups.

LEGAL BACKGROUND IN TAMIL NADU AND IMPACT ON BLOSSOM'S ACTIVITY

Tamil Nadu is the most progressive among all states of India in terms of transgenders' Rights. For instance, it is the first state to introduce a transgender welfare policy and to ban conversion therapy. Moreover, Transgender Persons (protection of Rights) Act, 2019 facilitates Blossom's action mostly in terms of HIV and AIDS stigma. The Act rules that the Government will have to set up a specific sero-surveillance centre for HIV+ transgender and will have to provide for medical care facilities for HIV+ transgender but also, they will be protected from discrimination including unfair treatment with regard to employment and education.
Regarding tuberculosis, a bill was proposed in 2017 (The Tuberculosis Bill, 2017) but has not yet been enacted. Thus, Blossom will still need to take several actions in terms of awareness and access to medication.

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Through Dayspring Home, Blossom Trust is also active in terms of equal access to education. Constitution of India, Article 21-A rules that State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between 6 and 14 years. As Tamil Nadu is one of the most literate states in India, children in Dayspring should have access to proper education whether they belong to a weaker section or disadvantaged group (Tamil Nadu RTE Rules, 2011). Therefore, children shall not be discriminated against regarding their social backgrounds.

In 2021, the Department of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment drafted a New Policy for Women in Tamil Nadu. The aim is to provide all women with access to all services and entitlements in an equitable manner, reduce discrimination and eliminate all forms of violence against women and provide them equal opportunities for realising their potential and aspirations. The Economic pillar of the policy recognises the important role played by women in secondary/tertiary and in agriculture but also that they are more marginalised in the agricultural field. Therefore, it provides a panel of measures to encourage women farmers and agricultural workers such as implementation of Creche, programmes for training women in soil and seed conservation, social forestry, dairy development, equal representation in the management of water bodies, policies to avoid losing their margins, reduction of segregation and gender pay gap.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND IN TAMIL NADU AND IMPACT ON BLOSSOM'S ACTIVITY

Blossom has many projects designed to improve the health outcomes of those most affected in the community. We recognise that health outcomes are directly impacted by the environment that surrounds us, making it an important area of concern for our organisation.

The needs of the population of Tamil Nadu increase with the increasing population. To meet these needs, the natural resources in this region are being used at rapid rates leading to long term adverse effects. These adverse effects become environmental issues, with the major ones being urbanisation, deforestation, environmental pollution and global warming. The increase in population, urbanisation and development and in Tamil Nadu results in high pollution levels. Air pollution results in climate change and health effects such as respiratory infection and lung cancer. Water pollution levels in Tamil Nadu are also extremely high, resulting in an increase in water borne diseases such as cholera, jaundice, dysentery and typhoid.

Tamil Nadu is vulnerable to climate change and its effects due to its high dependence on natural resources and low awareness among the vibrant youngsters. Being highly dependent on natural resources leaves the region vulnerable to the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather effects created by climate change, which in turn impacts the health of the population. The low community awareness of the impacts of climate change, especially on health, leads to a low adherence to activities and laws aimed at mitigating climate change.

Our Team

1. Organisational Structure
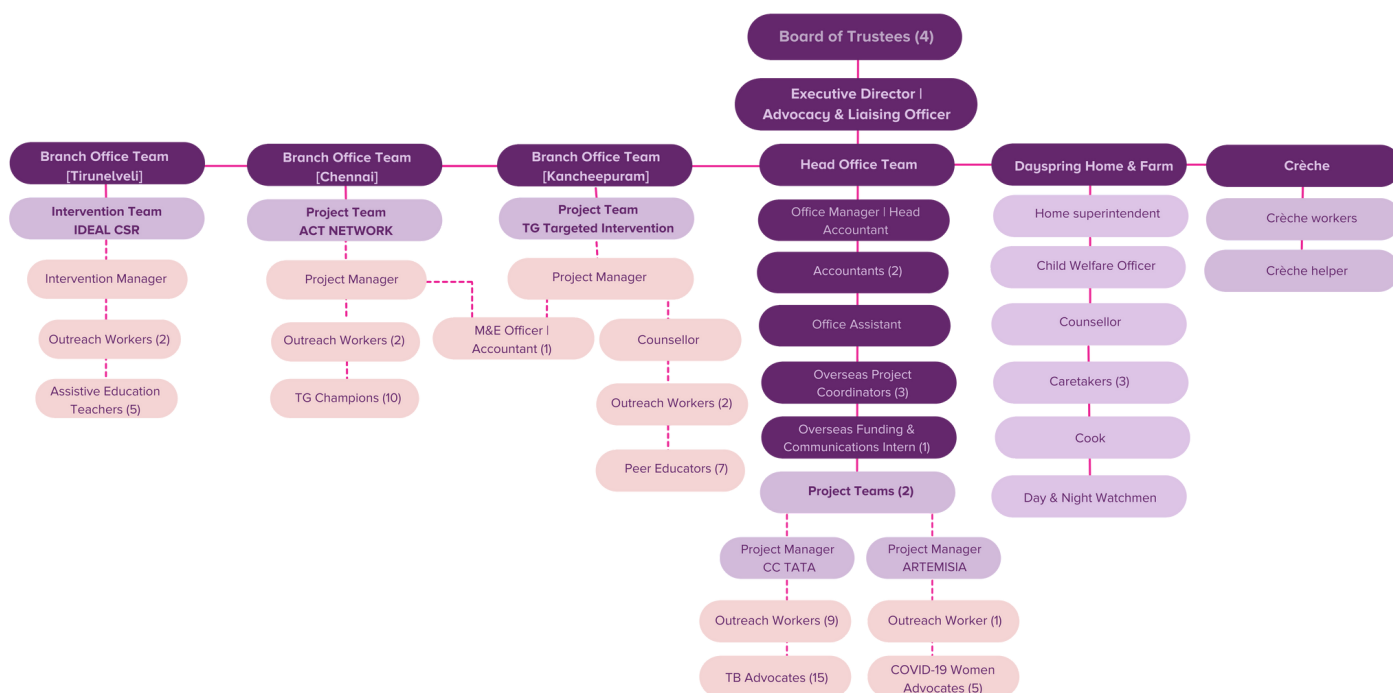
2. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is currently composed of four members, who reunite once every three months to strategise and suggest future directions and review ongoing progress and decisions implemented at the executive level.

Name of Member	Gender	Age	Qualification	Designation
Mrs. Mercy T. Annapoorani	Female	59	M.Com, M.A, M.W.S.	Executive Director/Managing Trustee
Mrs. G. Vatsala	Female	44	Diploma in C.D.D.M.	Treasurer
Mrs. B. Mareeswari	Female	47	Diploma in C.D.D.M.	Trustee
Mr. C. John Jasper	Male	37	B.E., M.B.A.	Trustee

Programs Overview

New projects for 2023

1. IGNITE Project

The IGNITE Project works to establish the "Rainbow Chasers Clan" to expand and strengthen Blossom Trust's existing LGBTQI+ network.

In 2008, the Southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu established a Transgender Welfare Board to mainstream sexual minorities. Yet, in Chennai District, where around 3000-4000 members of the LGBTQI+ community live, stigma and discrimination are still widespread hindering LGBTQI+ people's livelihoods.

Young LGBTQI+ people notably experience harassment and violence from police officers, teachers, peers and family members. Most of the time, adults from their family units are ill equipped to support them and, in many cases, they become the perpetrators of violence, harassment and even murders. While there are many support groups and networks all over Tamil Nadu, only few are accessible to minors and young people, thus leaving them at the mercy of the challenges and risks.

Through the creation of the "Rainbow Chasers Clan", we provide young members of the LGBTQI+ community with a safe, collaborative and supportive network of peers and educators to ensure their mental and physical well-being as well as protection and safety. This network is a sub-network of the larger and already well-established TG Act Network, providing further support, security and mentorship to beneficiaries.

Strategy of Rainbow Chasers Clan Network:

To fight against social discrimination and exclusion among the most vulnerable, affected LGBTQI+ young individuals in Chennai, through advocacy and peer-to-peer support within a strong inclusive LGBTQI+/youth -led community network. Thus, cultivating a resilient and self-supportive community and promoting equal rights among and towards LGBTQI+ young people.

Programs Overview

Key results:

a) The identification and training of new young LGBTQI+ peer-to-peer educators.

Over the past couple of months Blossom Trust and the Project Manager have identified 5 newLGBTQI+ peer-to-peer educators. Blossom has organised a series of training sessions for the peer-to-peer educators, aimed at giving them a better understanding of the socio-economic conditions of the young LGBTQI+ community in Chennai, along with increasing their ability to lead the community that they serve. These peer-to-peer educators are now working to identify new young LGBTQI+ community members to the Rainbow Chasers Clan, along with conducting Peer-to-peer educator meetings.

b) Conduction of the first peer-to-peer education meeting.

With the guidance and support of Blossom the Rainbow Chasers Clan peer-to-peer educators conducted their first meeting on the 11th of February. This session was attended by 25 young LGBTQI+ members, who were highly engaged with the session held. This showed a promising start to the series of peer-to-peer education meetings to be held on a monthly basis.

c) Conduction of the first Advocacy and liaison Programme meeting.

On the 10th of February the first Advocacy and liaison Programme meeting with key stakeholders was held. This session was facilitated by Blossom's Director, Mercy Annapoorani, with an attendance of 28. This session showed a promising start to our series of monthly advocacy meetings planned, with high engagement levels. Topics included in the meeting were the socio-economic conditions of the LGBTQI+ community and their rights.

The activities mentioned above have initiated the creation of a young LGBTQI+ network in Chennai that will empower them and build on their ability to advocate for themselves as a collective.

Programs Overview

2. SEEAD - For Women

"Sustainable Education, Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Development" for Women.

Women play a major role in agricultural production in Tamil Nadu and more generally in India. Indeed, they account for more than a third of the agricultural labour force. However, they are not fully recognised as farmers. Indeed, the recognition of farmers very often depends on the possession of land but only around 12% of women farmers actually own land. As a result, they do not have access to the rights, income and resources associated with status recognition. In addition, climate change affects women farmers proportionally more. The vulnerability of their condition therefore calls for solutions that lead to more resilient living conditions based on the knowledge they possess.

What are we aiming for with this new project?

Our ambition is to tackle climate change through an agricultural women-centred model and the dissemination of cutting-edge solutions, technical expertise and sustainable practices.

Programs Overview

Key results:

a) Identifying female farmers.

The first step in this project is to identify women farmers in the villages of Tamil Nadu in Virudhunagar district. This is done through outreach workers who visit the villages and meet women working in the agricultural sector. At present, the identification is still in progress but is promising.
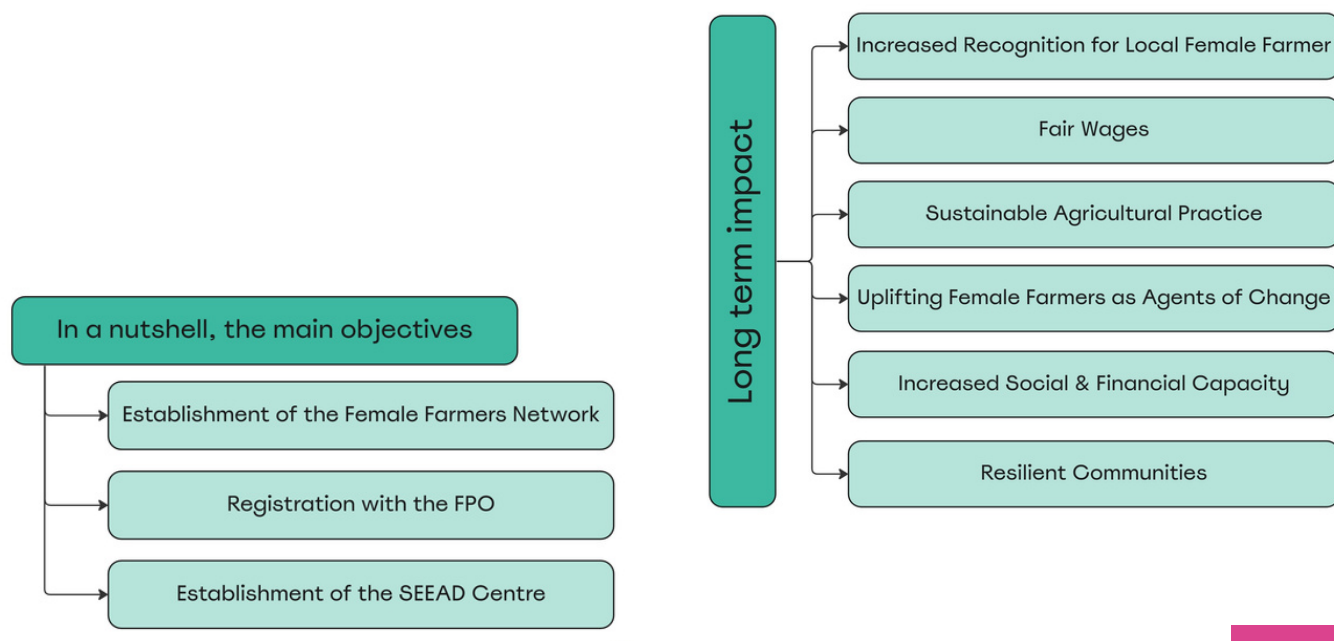
b) FPO registration.

The second step of the project, once the women farmers have been identified, is their registration with the FPO. This registration will give them the official status of farmer. The creation of a community-based FPO and a digital marketplace showcasing the work of women farmers is a very important step towards improving women's economic and social rights and towards the goal of climate-resilient agriculture.

c) Next steps : the SEEAD Centre.

The project embodies the creation of a research hub (the SEEAD centre) where a cultivation area is available to learn and improve agricultural techniques in the face of climate change. Training courses will also be offered (including soil management, environmental preservation, different cultivation and harvesting methods, etc.). Women farmers will also benefit from periodic courses on entrepreneurship, budgetary issues, investment techniques, market access, etc.

Finally, education and advocacy is very important. We will organise advocacy meetings and awareness sessions, open to both men farmers and women farmers.

In a nutshell, the main objectives
- Establishment of the Female Farmers Network
- Registration with the FPO
- Establishment of the SEEAD Centre

Long term impact
- Increased Recognition for Local Female Farmer
- Fair Wages
- Sustainable Agricultural Practice
- Uplifting Female Farmers as Agents of Change
- Increased Social & Financial Capacity
- Resilient Communities

Programs Overview

Ongoing projects for 2022-2023

3. ACT Network

Advocacy and Capacity Building Network for Transgender (TG) Communities.

Across India, transgender (TG) women continue to face gender-based discrimination, particularly in the fields of health care, employment and education. They often experience difficulties with holding public or private office, as well as with accessing and using public services and benefits. According to a recent report by the National Human Rights Commission (2018), 92% of TG women are denied mainstream employment and hence, are restricted to working in the unorganised sector, such as in street entertainment, informal collections, or the sex industry.

To address these issues the ACT Network was established in 2021 with the support of the Dutch Embassy, aiming to empower transgender women by providing legal, educational and economic security for upward social mobility. Within this project, an important role is played by our TG Champions, who help advocate for TG women's rights as community representatives. Implemented across Chennai and neighbouring districts, the project builds on and expand on Blossom's current efforts to drive substantial, positive change in the social, economic and legal marginalisation of TG communities in Indian society.

Key results:

a) The formation of SHGs.

SHGs have been established in Chennai through the identification and training of 20 TG Champions who have been trained as community mentors and advocates. These Champions then went on to identify 360 TG women to become part of the ACT Network. These activities have helped create a TG network that helps to strengthen the community's ability to advocate for themselves as a collective and provide insights into the social and economic condition of TG women.

b) Identification of areas for development.

During outreach visits, it became clear that economic support is currently the most urgent priority for TG women. To address this, the ACT-NETWORK team has been working to create funding opportunities that can support TG women in starting up small businesses. The team has also started a partnership with the Madras School of Social Work to provide free workshops on security and protection, mental health, and first aid.

Programs Overview

4. Transgender Targeted Intervention Programme

Working in the unorganised sector poses constant threat and insecurity to the TG community. These women are vulnerable to physical abuse, harassment and sexual violence. Crucially, without protection, the sex industry exposes TG women to high risk of contracting STIs or HIV/AIDs. Coupled with pervasive stigma around a positive HIV status and discrimination faced in some medical facilities, HIV+ TG individuals avoid testing and cannot access the necessary preventative measures or medication. Accordingly, a 'targeted intervention' for the transgender community was implemented to work toward the overarching goal: ensuring that every person living with HIV has access to quality care and is treated with dignity.

The TG Targeted Intervention Program, implemented in 2018 in Kanchipuram, aims to reduce STI/HIV infection in TG populations through advocacy and awareness initiatives and support in accessing health care services. This intervention also aims to eradicate stigma and discrimination of this marginalised community, to improve their socioeconomic status and empower TG individuals to become self-reliant and advocates for their rights.

Programs Overview

Key results:

a) Advocacy and awareness initiatives, supporting TG Communities and their rights.

Through a team of TG Peer Educators, Blossom has initiated several community-based activities to promote the health rights of the TG community. The Peer Educators act as the representatives of the community, as well-respected leaders, and aim to sensitise a diverse group of actors: such as healthcare providers, Government departments and religious leaders. Furthermore, community events and hot-spot meetings are set up to spread awareness about gender, sex and sexuality, and LGBTQ+ rights. Additionally, Blossom Trust aims to increase sex and health awareness through behavioural change communication and condom distribution - up to 70,000 condoms are being distributed yearly. A toll-free helpline has been successfully set-up for High-Risk Groups to register complaints on stigma and discrimination, where the respective District AIDS Prevention and Control Units (DAPCUs) takes the primary action. In addition, to support the TG Communities and their rights being addressed, about 200 new Transgender ID cards are being registered yearly - 60% of new IDS over the past year, exceeding TANSACS target of 20%.

b) Identification of high-risk groups.

For this intervention to have maximum impact on the TG community over 500 high-risk groups were successfully identified and reached. Through this we enabled the services provided to reach those who need them the most.

c) Conduction of Health Camps

Annual health camps are organised for the TG community to gain access to free medical testing and treatment. Through this service over 700 syphilis and about 800 HIV cases have been identified and 670 HIV patients receive case-based surveillance (CBS).

Programs Overview

5. CC-TATA

Civil Coalition for TB Advocacy and Treatment Adherence - STOP TB Partnership

CC-TATA supported by UNOPS and STOP TB Partnership combats social stigma and discrimination against TB patients through community engagement, awareness raising and community support in accessing TB treatment.

Since January 2022, Blossom has been implementing the CC-TATA Project to combat social stigma and discrimination and to support women and other vulnerable communities in accessing TB treatment. Together with Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a data & research institute located in Bangalore, Blossom has been promoting inclusive, gender-transformative, stigma-free access to TB health services.

By strengthening our pre-existing Rainbow TB Forum (RTBF), a Blossom Trust-initiated TB patient network, this project supports communities in their fight against TB through peer-to-peer treatment adherence support and the appointment of community advocates (TB Advocates). PAC thereby makes an invaluable contribution to the project by capturing data on human rights and gender disaggregated treatment seeking behaviour, which are used to better understand and overcome barriers to treatment and organise multi-stakeholder TB awareness events to inform public debates and community-centred policy responses.

Programs Overview

Key results:

a) Expansion of the Rainbow TB forum.

The CC TATA project team undertakes continuous outreach activities for the expansion of Rainbow TB forum. The expansion of the forum over 2022-2023 has been highly successful with this year making the enrolment of over 1700 cured TB patients as new members of the forum.

b) Treatment support services.

Our trained TB advocates support TB patients through medication distribution, family counselling, sputum collection and transport for diagnosis, and ensuring that defaulted patients get back on track with their treatment regimes. These peer-led activities in 2022-2023 have been shown to be effective and successful with adherence support provided to over 700 patients, more than 500 patients adhering to TB treatment, and over 200 patients adhering and returning for follow up treatment. Additionally, through these support services provided, over 400 dry nutritional packs have been provided to TB patients in 3 districts of Tamil Nadu.

c) Advocacy and Liaison initiatives.

The CC TATA Staff Team organises multi-stakeholder TB awareness events to strengthen joint strategic approaches and to inform public debates and community-centred policy responses. Throughout 2022-2023 over 1000 stakeholders have been reached through 20 advocacy initiative programs.

Programs Overview

6. Dayspring Home

Established by Blossom Trust in 2004, Dayspring Home is a children's home, currently caring for 20 vulnerable children living with HIV, between the ages of 6 and 18. Other children come from poverty, with families unable to support them. Blossom makes sure that the children receive shelter, food, education and medical care for the children's physical and mental well-being.

Fundraising and donations are the major sort of the revenue of the Day Spring at Blossom Trust. In past year, we have set up fundraisers to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and needs of children in different platforms, such as Global Giving and Impact Guru.

Key results:

At Dayspring Home, between 2020-2022, we have hosted and taken care of 18 young girls from highly disadvantaged backgrounds, ranging from extreme poverty to chronic or infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, which they have experienced either through their families or direct infection. In the current year, the number has increased to 20. With easing of COVID-19 restrictions, our children are back to school and resumed their education in-person and some girls who are now eligible to receive vaccinations have been vaccinated. Children's health and well being are under strict supervision from Dayspring staff: some girls who experienced health issues were taken to the hospital and treated in a timely manner. A scheduled eye check-up was well concluded with no issues being identified.

In the month of February the volunteers helped the children to develop in a creative way. Having to communicate in English has also greatly improved language skills, almost all of the kids can have a basic conversation in English with some able to read and write.

We initiated a 'Clean Earth Project', teaching the children about the importance of a plastic free environment as we cleaned all the plastic out of the farm areas. Good practices have been shown in the classroom and now children are more aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy environment. To develop a sense of responsibility and care for nature, children have been involved in gardening activities. They gave a significant contribution in the maintenance of or rooftop herb garden. The kids have loved planting and looking after the herbs and vegetables and being able to watch their efforts grow into a beautiful garden.

Your support through the past few months has helped us continue to support the children at dayspring. Without your generous contributions many of the activities listed above would not have been possible. Thus, Blossom and the dayspring children want to conclude this report by conveying our heartfelt gratitude.

7. Dayspring Farm

Blossom Trust established Dayspring Organic Farm in 2002 thanks to the precious support of our partner Caritas Sweden. The aim of the farm is to use Dayspring ground to generate sustainable income for the local community together with providing a healthy diet and lifestyle to the children living at Dayspring.

Key results:

This year, activities at Dayspring Farm have proceeded successfully thanks to the efforts made in the past year (2022-2023).
Indeed, the reconstruction of two poultry sheds as well as the availability of a new tractor suitable for small-scale farming strongly helped in boosting activities at Dayspring Farm.
Since the beginning of 2023, our farm has welcomed new livestock, two adult dogs and six puppies.

Programs Overview

8. IDEAL

Integrated Development through Empowerment, Advocacy and Livelihoods

The year 2023 was a special year for Blossom, as it marked the beginning of the organisation's first project funded through a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) grant. Starting from the 1st of June 2022, the IDEAL intervention focuses on the social and economic upliftment of vulnerable women and children living in two villages in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu.

Through this intervention, Blossom, together with an India-based company, aims to create two Model Villages, Kalakudi and Kurichikulam, that will become hallmarks for women and children's empowerment by providing women and children with the tools, skills and knowledge to bring about positive change in their personal lives as well as in their communities. This objective is achieved through the implementation of a broad range of activities that together contribute to the holistic and integrated development of women and children.

Among several key strategies, the intervention boasts a unique and holistic educational approach by providing literacy trainings for women and after school Assistive Education classes for children, along with rights-based and vocational skills trainings. Moreover, as part of the intervention, a Children's Parliament is constituted that serves as a tool for children to voice their demands to their Constitutional Authorities, so that these are heard and fulfilled. In this way, Blossom supports women and children in effectively claiming their rights and entitlements and equips them with the skills and confidence to play a more prominent role in family and community-level decision-making.

Furthermore, Blossom promotes livelihood opportunities and access to markets through income generating activities for women Self Help Groups, encouraging internal saving habits and supporting women in acquiring loans to establish micro-businesses.

Lastly, Blossom plays an important role in advocating for the rights of women, children, and people living with disabilities through liaising with government stakeholders to build new partnerships for positive and sustainable change.

Programs Overview

Key results:

a. Vocational training for the women of both villages.
Since the beginning of the implementation of this project in June 2022, 3 tailoring classes a day have been carried out in each village to provide the women of the village with important vocational skills, enabling them to become financially independent. The attendance to these training sessions has been consistent over the implementation period, with 18 women from each village participating. Additionally, since the 31st December, mushroom cultivation training activities have taken place in both the villages. Through this the women are taught how to cultivate mushrooms, with the necessary tools and equipment being provided for them. Mushroom cultivation can be very profitable, therefore, we are working with the women to educate them on the best sales practices, to enable economic independence. Weekend vocational training sessions are also available for the Adolescents (13-18 years) from both villages. These sessions include tailoring, handy-crafts, bag-making, jewellery making and allied skills. The women of both villages have also been receiving financial guidance with 4 women opening new bank accounts, 2 women receiving a widow pension, and 2 women receiving a widow certificate.

b. Advocacy, awareness and sensitisation initiatives.
Weekly advocacy, awareness and sensitisation sessions have successfully been carried out in both villages. We have implemented a wide range of different sessions, which are conducted by various external skill developers and children rights professionals. The women and children of both villages receive workshops that focus on their rights and safety, emotional management, and welfare entitlements. The residents of the villages have shown a good level of engagement in these activities, with an average of 30 women attending each session in Kalakudi and 60 in Kurichikulam Additionally, we have successfully carried out monthly policy advocacy meetings - organising 10 in the period between August 2022 and March 2023 - with relevant government departments/ officers and other stakeholders in relation to women's and children's rights and entitlements and also for updating about the progress of IDEAL.

c. Educational initiatives for the women and children of both villages.
Our educational initiatives for both of the villages have been successfully carried out since the implementation of the project. Communicative English and Tamil classes are carried out daily for both women and children. Continuously high attendance levels of the children have been recorded every month with an average attendance of 80 in Kurichikilam, and 90 in Kalakudi. Additionally, we have successfully implemented Assistive Educational Classes, for classes 1-8, where all children enrolled are benefitting from the extra support, and subsequently are scoring well in their school exams. Furthermore, all identified children aged 6-18 years were successfully enrolled into local schools at the beginning of the IDEAL implementation period.

d. The set-up of a functional Bal Panchayat.

In June 2022 a Bal Panchayat with a Constitutional Body was successfully elected by the children in each village, who showed great enthusiasm and engagement in the process. Fortnightly meetings in each village are carried out by the Bal Panchayat in the presence of the intervention manager to discuss the situation of children's rights. This activity has been a great success in enabling the children to have a voice and mobilising their ability to take control of improving their livelihoods.

e. Endorsing days of international and national importance.

The celebration of days of national importance has taken place throughout the implementation period. An example of some of the days endorsed include National human trafficking day, World Cancer Day, Pongal, and World education day. These days are important in bringing the communities together and sensitising them on important issues.

Community Networks and Events

1. Self Help Group (SHGs)

As part of Blossom commitment towards gender equality and women's empowerment, in the past years, the organisation has set up hundreds of women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across Virudhunagar district to enhance mutual help and collaboration and raise awareness on fundamental challenges shared by the group members. From these efforts, we have initiated and given impetus to successful initiatives such as microfinance groups, our Poomalai Women's Collective and independent community-based patient networks including Survive Sugar, Rainbow TB Forum and Paneer Poo HIV Positive Women Network.

This year, due to the restrictions and consequent impacts of the Covid pandemic, many SHGs, such as Paneer Poo HIV Positive Women Network, have experienced several challenges in pursuing their goals. Therefore, Blossom is now committed to reviving and re-empowering them in order to pursue the ambitious goals of the initiative.

Key results:
Despite the negative impact that the Covid pandemic had on Blossom's SHGs, we are excited to announce that we will be closely working with GivingWomen with the final goal of strengthening and empowering our SHGs again. GivingWomen will support Blossom strategy and provide us with key guidance on how to strengthen existing SHGs.

2. World TB Day Observance Programme

For Blossom and Rainbow TB Forum, March 2023 revolved strongly around the organisation and implementation of Blossom's World TB Day Observance Programme, which took place between 24th and 30th March. The goal of these events was to promote awareness and advocacy about TB while engaging prominent stakeholders in the events, such as celebrities, journalists and parliamentarians. The events took place in the 3 districts where the CC TATA project is currently being implemented.

Awareness meetings & rally

On March 24th, during the occasion of the World TB Day, three different interventions took place in Sivakasi, Dindigul and Virudhunagar where Blossom Team organised several activities and speeches to raise awareness on TB cure and prevention. In Sivakasi, the Organization attended the Mayor's & Deputy Mayor's speeches and actively participated in the Cycle rally initiative. Meanwhile, the Blossom team based in Virudhunagar welcomed the Revenue Inspector and the District TB Officer. Thereafter, the Blossom Team and Rainbow TB Forum members, together with other district-level TB advocates, marched 3 kilometres across Virudhunagar to raise awareness about the disease, handing out refreshments and flyers to people. Meanwhile, part of the Blossom team reached Tirunelveli village, where the TB message was spread among the village community. Awareness activities were also held in Dindigul, where the community has been involved in a signature campaign and in the Road Show Inauguration.

Nursing College, Prize awardings and EduClowns

In Virudhunagar, the team then headed to V.V.V Nursing College to deliver the key messages of TB prevention. During this conference a prize giving was held for the college student victors of various different competitions related to TB. On the same day, Blossom Organization released the video on "TB-Free Tamilnadu: A Journey through Folk Arts on World TB Day 2023" and engaged in EduClown street theatre programs. Both activities took place in Virudhunagar and were supervised by Director and Project Manager.

Community Networks and Events

World TB Conference - Yes we can end TB!

World TB Day campaign continued until the 31st of March 2023. In light of World TB Day 2023 Blossom Trust held an international conference, aiming to bolster discussion on TB and its impact on local communities, especially women, and to come out with a list of policy recommendations which we will be communicated to the government in the context of India's G20 presidency. During the World TB Conference, key-stakeholders, including TB advocates, scientific research representatives and health care system members took part in discussions to summarise a set of guidelines and recommendations to achieve the goal of eradicating TB by 2025.

Key Results:

In this way, March 2023 has been a crucial month for Blossom, as the organisation has taken a further step towards enhancing the visibility of TB responses and increasing public support for the cause.
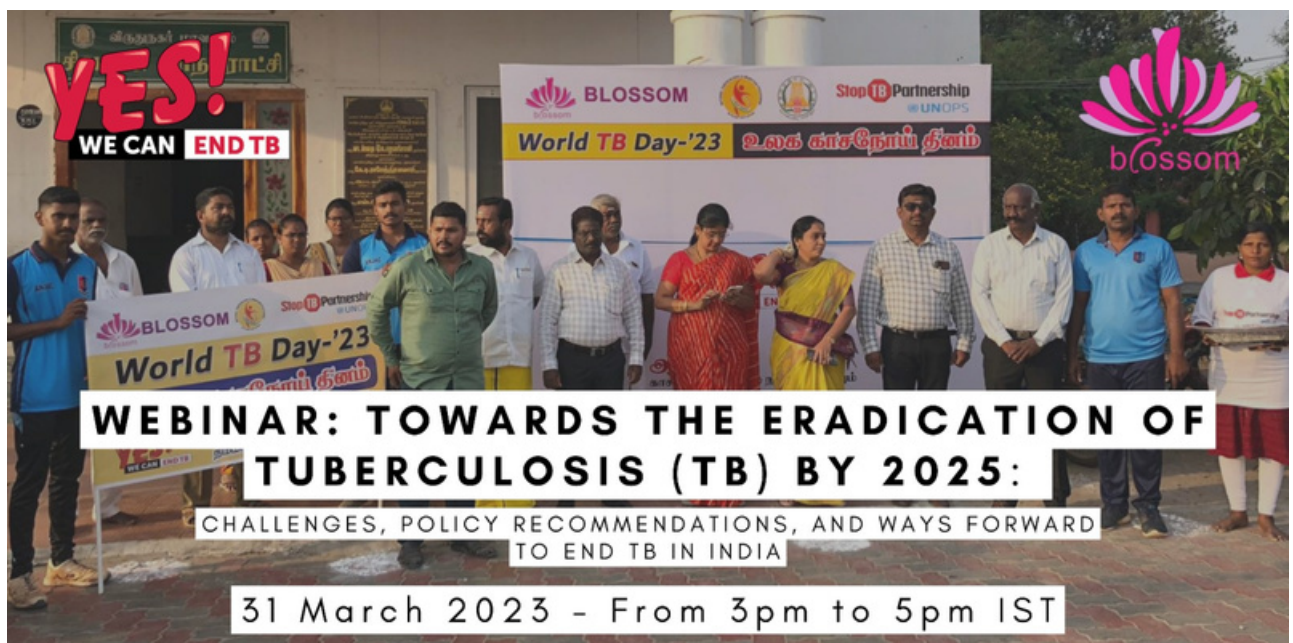
Continuity and strenghtening of the 2020-2024 strategy

1. A holistic approach to projects

Thanks to the multiple international and national working groups in which we work, exchange and share our thoughts, we have been able to enrich our strategy for 2023-2024. Indeed, the thematic approach to projects at Blossom is very rich and allows us to create projects in several areas. However, we are learning from our experiences and have identified that most of our projects actually cover several areas at once. For example, in SEEAD, by promoting the economic rights of rural women and promoting the traditional methods used by women farmers, we are developing an ecofeminist commitment, linking feminist commitment to women's empowerment with a strong ecological dimension. We now know that natural disasters, climate change, droughts, temperature hazards etc. affect women proportionally more and they are a particularly vulnerable group to climate change.

So, we are increasingly taking a holistic approach in our projects and trying to have a gender sensitive approach in all our projects, as a backdrop. We develop projects that are sensitive to the environment and sensitive to the people who are closest to it. At Blossom, we adapt to the needs of marginalised communities and consider the intersectionality of oppressions experienced by vulnerable groups.

2. CSR Strategy

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as "the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life" (World Bank Institute, 2003). CSR strategies are strongly shaping choices and activities of the private sector by emphasising a strong need of reestablishing global priorities. In this scenario NGOs play a key part since in the past decades they have become an integral part of CSR activities in growing awareness among the public. Presently, Indian businesses are now required to invest 2% of their net profit in such projects.

At Blossom Trust we acknowledge the importance of supporting the development of CSR strategies among the country. We therefore aim to boost our engagement in the field by establishing partnerships and implementing new CSR projects that benefit society and the environment. With our grassroots experience and expertise in community development, we form an important implementing partner for Indian businesses. As such, in the coming year, Blossom aims to focus more on CSR projects in order to bring the expected benefits of the corporate sector towards the society and the environment. Moreover, we support the idea that collaboration between companies, NGOs and governments is essential in making CSR a success.

We are proud to announce that this year 2022 has been the beginning of partnerships with CSRs. For example, on July 1, 2022, we launched the IDEAL (Integrated Development through Empowerment, Advocacy, and Livelihoods) project, which aims to support vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, in two villages in Tamil Nadu. This project marks the beginning of a turning point in Blossom's strategy. We want to continue to develop this source of funding, which has many advantages for Blossom in terms of stability and thus improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable people through the projects we implement. We are currently working on other projects linking health, sustainable agriculture, economic resilience... We hope that these projects will come to fruition through the sustainable partnerships we wish to establish.

3. Communication Strategy

In 2023 we keep our commitment towards the Communication Strategy aiming to raise the visibility of Blossom Trust across the local, national and international arenas. The main goal of the strategy is to make sure that our current and future projects are clearly communicated to our target audience, enabling the expansion of our women network and overall organisational development.

a) Branding; Consistency and Promotion

In the next years, we aim to further work on the development of a strong brand by focusing on enhancing our presence on different Social Media platforms (Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook), developing relevant organisational information materials (brochures, case studies, reports) and finally, creating advocacy and awareness materials (newsletters, blog, website, press releases).

b) External Communications

Blossom aims to continuously improve their external communications strategy in order to guarantee visibility and transparency to target groups, partners and international donors. In the coming year, we are planning on experimenting with new communicational material, such as videos, as well as combining Tamil and English-spoken content to better engage local people.

c) Internal Communications

We are also keen to strengthen our internal communications by encouraging regular dialogue between current and former Blossom Trust board members, staff, interns and volunteers to build a long-lasting community.

4. Fundraising strategy and financials

At Blossom Trust we rely on a fundraising strategy as a primary source of financial income. Thanks to fundraising we are able to strengthen our current funding streams while exploring new revenue opportunities.

At the moment, our major sources of fundraising come from two crowdfunding platforms, Global Giving and Impact Guru together with funds provided by foundations, government agencies and the private sector.

For the Fiscal year going from March 2022 to March 2023, Blossom Trust's annual income has been INR 94,27,619.83 RS.

giving women

Entwicklungshilfeklub

TAMILNADU STATE AIDS CONTROL SOCIETY
AIDS
BE AWARE TAKE CARE
CHENNAI - 600 008

MANY COLOURED SKY

Stop TB Partnership

Youth Voices Count

RAMBØLL FONDEN

Interested in partnering with us?
Contact us at blossom@blossomtrust.co.in

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Blossom would like to express its sincere appreciation to all its staff, volunteers, members, donors and partnerships with the local authorities whose dedication, contributions and ongoing support have ensured that Blossom has continued striving towards 'Blossoming power in every individual to reinforce community development!' Thank you very much for your support.