

Vaan Muhil Annual Report 2016 -2017

Vaan Muhil is pleased to present its annual report for the year 2016 -2017. With the view of preventing vulnerable rural young adolescent girls entering into high risk situations and towards the wellbeing of survivors, Vaan Muhil carried out a number of activities in 20 communities in Srivilliputhur block in Virdhu Nagar district in 2016 -2017, with the support from Geneva Global.

1. Livelihood Support

1.1. Skill development courses / vocational training

As part of providing Livelihood support to the adolescent girls working in the mills, Vaan Muhil project team made arrangements for Vocational Training for 23 girls in 2016-2017. Out of



these 30 mill workers, who joined the skill development courses, four have completed their beautician courses. Out of the total, 11 took tailoring, 11 computer courses and the remaining 14 opted for beautician course. Efforts are being taken to avail loans for them from the Banks and Govt. departments under various schemes so that they can stand on their own feet, leading to sustainable freedom and well

being of these survivors.

1.2 Linkages with Govt Departments and Bank loans

A total of 86 beneficiaries from the working villages have been linked with Govt departments under various schemes. Out of those who benefitted out of govt schemes, many got individual household latrines, unorganized workers welfare card, Aadhar card and New Ration card. In addition, 6 individuals from Kothankulam, R.K.Pudur and Padikasuvaithanpatty received THADCO loan, while 32 from Noorshahipuram, Rasapatty, Sundankulam and Sankaramoorthypatty received Bank loans in 2016 - 2017 to the tune Rs.487000/-.

1.3 EDP Training for young women

Ten days special EDP training program was organized at Srivilliputhur for interested young women from the working villages in two blocks, with the support of IOB, Virdhu Nagar. The trainer took personal interest in the ten days training and the 30 women participants from 13 villages in both the blocks could learn preparations of domestic products. Vaan Muhil supported some of them to start micro enterprises and they have started their small trades in their villages. After attending the ten days EDP training in Preparation of Domestic Products in Srivilliputhur, many of them were linked with IOB for further step up loans.



1.4. Exposure Visits to adolescent girls

Vaan Muhil organized a one day exposure visit for 22 mill workers from Korukkampatty, Sellampatty, Nainapuram, Rasapatty and A.Lakshmiyapuram on 23.02.2017 at Vikas Garments, Vanniyampatty Vilakku and this visit was an eye opener for them and a learning place for them as to take up alternate employment opportunity in future. The mill workers were actively taking part in the one day exposure and this type of visits to establishments and other livelihood structure has been very useful to the participating mill workers and they get an idea about possible alternate livelihood support and this would facilitate to relieve them from the bondage.

1.5. Micro-Enterprises

33 survivors/mill workers from twenty villages in Srivilliputhur block were supported with micro-enterprises during 2016 – 2017, while 22 mill workers from 15 villages were supported with micro-enterprises. The beneficiaries, after attending EDP training organized by Vaan Muhil, started doing their micro-enterprises in their villages. They chose different types of micro enterprises such as Preparation of Masala powder, Surf Powder, Oma Water, Rin Powder, Cattle rearing(sheep and poultry), Making of artificial jewels and petty shops some of the beneficiaries who started their businesses are able to pick up well, while others do it on their own speed. Representatives AGs, CSGs were involved in the identification of the beneficiaries and community organizers facilitate the process.

2. Empowerment of Adolescent Girls

2.1. Educational Support

A total of 62 girls from the working villages have been supported with educational assistance during the reporting period. Among them, 50 were supported to continue High and Higher secondary schooling, while 5 for Diploma in Nursing, one for DECE and one each for B.Sc and BBA. AGs have a greater role to play in the identification and the preliminary selection as well as finalization of the deserving girls. The project team, along with CSGs play a supportive role in finalizing the list. Thanks to Vaan Muhil's efforts, seven boys (2 mill workers and five drop outs) are back to school this year. Similarly 13 dropout girls below 18 (Mill workers) have been supported to pursue their schooling and they are now back to school.

2.2. Career guidance course for students

A total of 452 school students from the working villages benefitted out of the career guidance courses in four batches during the reporting period. The resource persons were able to guide the students as to possible courses available in various disciplines in nearby educational institutions, apart from motivating them to pursue their higher education with a purpose and motive. Confidence building and goal setting were part of the sessions. Many students felt that these sessions were useful particularly in knowing different available courses and setting their direction.

2.3. Orientation to Adolescent group members

Totally 351 AG members from our working villages have been given orientation on Child Rights and Workers rights in 2016 -2017, while 411 girls were trained in the roles and responsibilities of Adolescent group members during 2016 - 2017. Basic details were provided to the AG members on Child Rights and workers rights, apart from explaining to them on the project purpose, the components of the project and the role of AGs in project implementation. Their understanding on the issue the components in the project is slowly developed and this would help the project team for effective implementation. .



2.4. Strengthening of Adolescent Girls groups

Efforts are taken by the community mobilizers and CRC facilitators to strengthen the AG groups in the project villages in both blocks. With the special programs like life skill education, medical camps and observance of important days, more AG group members get involved in the development of CRCs in villages and relationship between them and the Vaan Muhil staff is



slowly developing. The link between AG groups and CRCs and CSGs is being gradually developed.

Some of AG group members are involved in teaching Yoga, Spoken English for CRC girls every Saturday and many benefit out of the trainings. They are also interested in learning Silambam for self defense. Some take efforts in sharing the information in AG meeting on health, food habits, personal

hygiene provided in the study materials that were distributed to the CRC facilitators and many of them found these information in materials very useful and relevant. Many AG members come forward to share with others about work related problems and even health issues they have. After attending a couple of programs, the mill workers start discussing about their daily wages and even some workers bring their pay slips given to them by the mill managements. When there are discussions on minimum wage and OT wages, they start comparing the wage they receive in the mill and the statutory wage as per Govt. norms.

2.5. Formation of Adolescent Boys Groups

Vaan Muhil Team has made efforts to form Adolescent Boys Groups in all villages during the reporting period and a total of 499 members have been members of the Adolescent Boys groups. AB groups, are involved in constructive activities in the villages, after formation as a group, such as cleaning of common places and removing Seemai Karuvelam trees, planting of trees in common places involved in campaigns against the use of plastics in the villages and environmental protection (conservation of water bodies and stopping of felling trees). In a couple of



villages, AB group members are organizing folk dances training for interested youth.

2.6. Life Skill Education to AG members / mill workers

A total of 177 AG members from 18 villages were trained in life skill education in two batches during the reporting period, out of them, 105 were trained in 2016 - 2017. After attending the life skill training, a few of them were able to decide to stop working in the mills. Quite a few, after taking part in the two day



program, learnt about personal hygiene and details about menstruation. Some of them went for checking their HB count after the training. The impact is so much among the participants that some of the parents admit that their girls now openly speak and discuss with them about menstrual problems, which they hesitated to do earlier. There has been a demand from the Adolescent Boys groups for the life skill education.

2.7. Medical Camps in villages and follow up



Vaan Muhil organized two medical camps and a total of 579 people benefitted out of these two medical camps, organized with the help of Velammal Hospital (outreach program unit). Out of the total beneficiaries, considerable number was from the Adolescent girls groups from the villages in both blocks. The community organizers did a follow up with the outreach program unit of Velammal Hospital in Madurai in Quarter 2. As a

result of the health camps organized in the villages, many adolescent girls went to labs to check their HB counts on their own. A few of the patients with chronic illness have been taken to Velammal Hospital where they receive free treatment.

3. Community based interventions / Networking and Linkages

3.1. Functioning of Community Resource Centres

CRC facilitators take special care to improve their CRCs in the villages and children usually gather in the evening after school hours and they revise their lessons, do their homework and practice better handwriting without mistakes. The parents and other community members in most of the villages could witness the little changes among the children who regularly come to CRCs, like scoring good marks in their exams, good handwriting and improved reading, keeping up good spirits and cleanliness in schools.

The children are motivated to study well and those who regularly come to CRCs and study, have scored good marks in 10th and +2 public exams. They openly declare that they were able to score such high marks in the public exam, because of the CRC and the motivation received from Vaan Muhil staff. The school HMs also appreciated the efforts, hard work and openly recognized the support extended by Vaan Muhil staff to the children studying in the CRC.

3.2. Strengthening of Community Support Groups

Though Vaan Muhil Team find it little difficult in organizing community support group meetings regularly, efforts were taken to strengthen the CSGs in all villages. A total of 383 CSG members were given orientation on workers' rights during the reporting period 2016 - 2017. Inputs were given to the members on worker's rights, minimum wage,



working hours and other statutory benefits to the mill workers in Textile and spinning mills and concept of modern forms of slavery and the project implementation were explained to them in simple language. Many of the CSG members understand the project purpose and various components of the project and they extend their cooperation to the project team and CRC facilitators for better implementation of the project. While some CSGs help the team and CRCs in whatever little ways they could contribute, a few remain non-committal to the project implementation.

3.3. Meaningful observance of important days

Vaan Muhil took efforts to organize a series of programs in villages during the reporting period, creating awareness among the people on issues related to our work, by way of meaningfully observe the important days such as Anti Child Labour Day, Asthma Awareness Day, International Day in support of Torture Victims, National Youth Day, World Girl Child Day,

International Women's Day, Anti – Cancer Day and World TB Day. Handbills about the importance of the day in simple language are prepared and distributed to the people on that day.

3.4 International Women's Day Program

Vaan Muhil meaningfully observed the International Women's Day in Srivilliputtur on 12th March 2017 and in Alangulam on 19th March 2017. These one day celebrations enthused the AG members in the working villages and their active participation in the celebrations brought many group members together. Elected local MLAs, and Block Level officials were invited for the events. Nearly 800 young women/ adolescent girls from both the blocks took active part in the two day celebrations. Various forms of violence against women at home and in the communities were highlighted by the speakers in the meetings. The strategies and collective efforts to combat the violence against women were also discussed at length. For many young women the meetings were an eye opener and they were emboldened after attending the meetings. The AG groups from different villages prepared a few folkdances and the cultural performs by the adolescent girls entertained the gathering in between.



3.5 Participation of CSG members in Grama Sabha meetings on 26th January

There has been considerable representation of AG and CSG members in the two Grama Sabha meetings in our project villages, held during the reporting period (26th January, Republic Day). At least, 15 grama panchayat witnessed interesting meetings, with active participation of AG and CSG members from the respective villages. AG members actively take part in the Grama Sabha meetings.



Eight draft resolutions, prepared by the AG members ahead of the Grama Sabha meeting, were discussed in the meetings. There were resolutions on importance girl child education, young mill workers conditions in the mills, closure of TASMAL outlets in nearby areas, and specific needs for the villages. This rapport building and linkages with BDO office will definitely be useful to CRCs and CSG members to bring more govt schemes to the villages.

3.6 Interface Meetings with Govt Officials

Two interface meetings with Govt officials were organized by Vaan Muhil during the reporting and a total of 176 persons participated in the meetings. The participation of other stakeholders in the meetings was excellent. Anganwadi Teachers, School HMs and Teachers were proactively involved in the discussion and they came forward to extend their fullest cooperation to the effort taken by Vaan Muhil. The demands raised by the community members in the meetings were positively responded by the concerned officials/members and the interactions were really meaningful. The participating members were very happy to attend the interface meetings and expect similar interactions and there are several issues need to be settled in due course. Most of the members felt that more Govt officials should take part in the interface meetings

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