

# Vaan Muhil Annual Report 2021-2022

Vaan Muhil is pleased to submit its Annual Report for the year 2021 – 2022. A number of activities were carried out at Panchayat, block, district, state, and national level, involving different stakeholders during the reporting period. The interventions include federation of community support groups, interface meetings, formation of workers support groups, providing legal support to the victims, organizing constitutional rights education program for children in schools and communities, bringing out the digital format of the CRE module, formation and strengthening of CRE clubs in communities, formation of workers' collectives and accessing social protection benefits. With the support of British Asian Trust, MISEREOR, NHRF, APPI, and DASRA, Vaan Muhil is able to carry out these concrete interventions both at the grassroots level and at the state level in the year.

## Rebuilding communities and strengthening child protection structures -BAT

### **1. Federation of Community Support Groups at the Organization Level**

Vaan Muhil Project team and facilitators selected two leaders from each community support group in all working villages and explained to them about the need for federating all Community Support Groups formed so far. The leaders also felt the need for a federation at block and district levels. Totally 70 leaders have been identified from the working villages and the project team organized cluster level orientation meetings for them and the role of the federation was explained to them and they showed interest in the formation.

### **2. Capacity building trainings for CSG and WSG Leaders**

The project team organized three separate one day capacity building training programs for CSG and WSG leaders. A total of 240 leaders took an active part in these two trainings held. The following topics dealt with during the capacity-building programs were the importance of girl child education, parenting, worker's rights, and human trafficking. There were also discussions about strategies to access social protection benefits for unorganized workers through the Welfare Boards.

### **3. Community Maturity Tool - CMT Findings and Reflections**

Several issues were discussed in the CMT meetings such as child labour, labour rights issues in the textile sector, the problems faced by vulnerable families during the pandemic, child marriages, and the current status of the community support groups in the working villages. Subsequently, the project team and the facilitators discussed these findings with all CSG members in the working villages. The members of the community support groups could learn new things when they came to know about the findings from other villages and it was a real learning experience for most of them and they could feel that there should be some collective action taken to improve the local conditions.

### **4. Interface meetings with Government officials**

Two Block level interface meetings were held at Vembakkottai and Srivilliputhur, wherein 160 members took part. These Interface Meetings with government officials were very effective in addressing village level issues relating to water facility, land patta, repair of roads, bus facility, repair of the water tank, OAP, widow pension, free house, and transport facilities. Petitions were submitted from the group members to the government officials, who were able to respond to the queries raised by the members.

## **5. Observance of Important days**

The observance of these important days was an education process through which the community members are sensitized during these days. The CRCs and the adolescent girls have taken efforts to meaningfully observe some of the important days and involved the community members in the process of creating awareness on the themes focused. They specially observed World Day against Trafficking in Persons, Teacher's Day, Pongal Day, Republic Day and the international women's Day were some of the meaningful events organized in the working villages.

## **6. Function of Community Resource Centres**

Due to the continuous closure of schools for more than 18 months throughout Tamil Nadu, there were learning gaps among school-going children, particularly in the rural areas and the digital divide among children was visible during the pandemic. And this severely affected the learning process of poor children and reflected in our working villages too. In this context the role of the Community Resource Centres was very significant and the facilitators were able to engage the children and regularly organized some sessions for them, keeping in mind physical distancing. Daily newspaper reading, handwriting exercise, recitation of Thirukkural and proverbs, drawing, handicrafts, storytelling, singing songs, and party games have been useful to the children in the CRCs.

## **7. Career Guidance Courses for Adolescent Girls and Boys**

A total of 208 interested adolescent girls and boys participated and benefitted and the training inputs on study patterns, career opportunities, and motivation for competitive exams were very useful. Out of these career guidance trainings that the project team organized, there were motivational inputs and practical tips to overcome the challenges faced during the competitive exams.

## **8. Health Camps for Adolescent Girls**

There were four health camps organized during the period wherein 800 benefited, out of them 355 were adolescent girls. Meenatchi Mission Hospital medical team supported the project team, in organizing the health camps in a meaningful way and there was also a follow-up with the Meenatchi Mission Hospital. Eleven of them were referred for further treatment.

## **9. Intense campaigns against child marriages in the working villages**

The facilitators along with the Field Coordinators were actively involved in a series of campaigns in all working villages. Stickers containing slogans against child marriages were pasted in most of the houses in all the working villages and the facilitators reached out to the people and explained to them the need for stopping of child marriages and its legal implications. The facilitators stopped three child marriages (between the age of 14 to 16) at Kothankulam and Padikasuvaithanpatti.

## **10. Linkages with government schemes and services**

The project team had efforts to make linkages with government services and 1752 applied for various benefits from the departments and 148 benefitted through different schemes and services. People sought help from Vaan Muhil staff for PMSBY, Free Land patta, registration of E-Shram card, Welfare Board card and for MNREGA card loans for goat rearing and applied for marriage assistance, community certificate, smart card and Legal Heir certificates.

### **11.Strengthening of women SHGs**

Efforts were taken by the project team and the facilitators to strengthen the women's self-help groups in the working villages. Though regular meetings could not be organized for these women's self-help groups during the pandemic period, the facilitators were able to regularly connect them and contact them by phone at regular intervals. Out of the total women SHGs, 23 groups received 56,00,000 as bank loans period and a total of 276 SHG members benefitted.

### **12. Worker Support Groups in the villages**

17 workers' support groups were formed in working villages and several meetings were conducted for these workers' support groups and orientations were there on basic workers' rights and women's rights. There were also discussions about ESI and PF issues for the workers of the Workers Support Groups. The follow-up meetings could not be held for these workers' support groups, due to Covid's situation and restrictions of mobility. Regular meetings were conducted and orientations were given on basic workers' rights and women's rights. There were also discussions about ESI and PF issues for the workers of the Workers Support Groups.

### **13. Legal Support to survivors**

The project team helped 16 workers to get their PF dues settlements and 3 workers received compensation to the tune of 2 lakhs and 35 thousand. The FCOs helped the survivors in drafting the petitions, seeking compensation and PF settlement, and assisted them in going to the labour department in filling the complaints. Eight members from the communities were supported with legal assistance and all were related to PF cases.

### **14.Role of the CSGs in Health Care service**

The members of Community Support groups in all working villages extended their full cooperation in the screening of Covid affected persons in their respective villages, together with the village facilitators and volunteers, which has been very helpful to the project team. The active participation of CSG members in these health care services in the villages was exemplary of other villages in the two blocks. They played a key role in creating awareness among the members on covid-19 and made arrangements to supply Kabasurakurdineer to the entire community.

### **15.Training for the leaders of Panchayat Raj Institutions**

The Panchayat leaders, who participated in the three day district level training organized by HRF in August 2021, learned the basic idea of local governance and the powers of PRIs, Roles, and Responsibility of the PRI members, preparing Village Budget, financial management, finance records, and documentation. They prepared a model Village Development Plan, which would be useful for the participating Panchayat Leaders in future. Discussions on the practical challenges and the success stories all over Tamil Nadu were very useful.

### **16.Meaningful participation in the Grama Sabha Meetings**

More participation from CSG members and adolescent girl's groups in the working villages in the two Grama Sabha meetings held on 15<sup>th</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021. Various demands including the basic need of the villages such as repair and maintenance of village roads, water facilities, common toilets, transportation, etc were addressed during the Grama Sabha meeting by CSG members. Child labour, and child protection issues were also discussed.

### **17. Micro grant to Agriculture Workers Group**

20 Agriculture Workers from Kongankulam benefitted from a micro-grant of Rs. 2,00,000 (Rs.10,000 each) from the Co-Operative bank to improve their cultivation. This is the first of its kind in the block and due to continuous interventions of the project team and the perseverance of the agriculture workers from the village, they were able to get the grant.

### **18. Mental Health Care Services**

Totally 91 adolescents and young girls benefitted through mental Health care services by the staff team and facilitators (17 girls above 18 years, 43 girls below 18 years, and 31 boys), and the facilitators helped the adolescents to overcome the issues through regular counseling and sharing. Most adolescent girls have faced family problems, infatuation, love affairs, suspicion and punishment by the parents, abuses, no interest in studies, addiction to mobile and social media, alcoholism among male members of the families, and mental stress during the pandemic. Mental health counselling for 71 children helped them to cope with the mental trauma of the loss of learning in COVID.

### **19. Vocational and Skill development courses**

A total of 11 adolescent girls and boys were supported with assistance for vocational and skill development courses in Hari Foundation, Rajapalayam through Union Office. Out of these 11, seven were supported for three-month tailoring course, one for Beautician from Puthusennelkulam, Korukkampatty, Kurichiyarpatty, and Thombakulam and three adolescent boys from Keelapottalpatty are in training of Fast Food preparation.

## **Constitutional rights education in Schools and Communities in India - MISEREOR**

### **1. Preparation of Modules for CRE Programme in Schools and Communities**

The Curriculum Development Committee prepared Module 1 for the school Programme and Community engagement. The lessons prepared are aimed at ensuring child participation in the classrooms and developing rights perspectives among the young minds. The pre-final drafts were sent to a couple of experts for their comments and feedback and after incorporating their feedback and comments on the lessons. A lot of case studies, real stories, group exercises, quotes, legal provisions, and facts relevant to the lessons are incorporated into the Modules. Some exercises for children in the Modules are aimed at highlighting relevant SDGs and the corresponding targets.

### **2. Digitalization of Module-1 for Schools and Communities**

The Project Team had discussions with three digital experts on digitalization process of modules for CRE children's clubs. The content has been given to an expert team for digitalization of the school module, after the training Programme for teachers. The process also involved the members of the curriculum development committee and their inputs have been incorporated into the design of the digital format of Module-1.

### **3. Official Launching of CRE Programme for Children in Communities:**

The inauguration of our CRE Programme for children in communities was held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021. The Minister for Information Technology, Mr. Mano Thangaraj appreciated very much the initiative for children in communities and he made a public commitment that he would take this

message to the Chief Minister and the School Education Minister and would make all possible efforts to introduce this Programme in Government schools.

#### **4. Meeting with State Human Rights Institutions**

Vaan Muhil approached the Tamil Nadu State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on 01.09.2021 for its support of the CRE Programme in schools and the initial discussions with the Commission was extremely positive. The project team met the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) and the Chairperson of the State Commission for Minorities (SCM) and made an appeal to them, requesting to recommend the CRE Programme to the Government of Tamil Nadu to introduce the same in all Government and Government Aided Schools in the next academic year. ***The Chairperson of SCM recommended the CRE Programme to the school education department (Principal Secretary) to introduce CRE Programme in all Government Schools.***

#### **5. Meeting with Commissioner for School Education Department**

The project team met the Commissioner for School Education Department, Mr.Nandakumar I.A.S., on 31.08.2021 and subsequently on 25.09.2021 at Chennai to explain to him about the components, Contents and design of the CRE Programme and requested him to consider introducing the same in all Government and Government Aided Schools in the next academic year. The team also handed over the two draft CRE Modules and some of the visibility materials that were prepared earlier.

#### **6. Intensive Residential Trainings for CRE Facilitators at Trichy**

A three days residential orientation Programme for CRE Facilitators was organized from 21st – 23rd Sep, 2021, followed by two-day training, 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021, and a follow-up on 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022 in Trichy. Totally 70 facilitators across Tamil Nadu and Puducherry actively participated in the three days training. Inputs were given to them on basic concepts relating to Human Rights and Constitutional Principles such as Rights to Equality, Non-Discrimination, Pluralism, Diversity, Secularism, Democratic Polity, and basic knowledge of Child Protection Issues and Gender Equality. The Facilitators were also equipped with skills required for handling sessions on Child Rights and Human Rights, besides techniques and tips to organize CRE Club meetings at the Village level, involving different stakeholders at Panchayat and block levels.

#### **7. Launching of District Level CRE Programme and formation of CRE Clubs**

The launching of district level inauguration of the CRE Programme was organized by the local partner NGOs in all districts in November - December 2021 and the partners roped in a number of stakeholders at the district level, particularly those who are working on child protection and women empowerment. The departments of Education, Police, Social Welfare, and Health were approached and their participation was ensured in the district-level inauguration of CRE Programme. In many districts, the judicial officers from the district courts and DLSAs were invited to inaugurate the Programme so that sufficient visibility for our Programme was given to the officials concerned.

#### **8. Celebration of Children's Day, Constitutional Day, and Human Rights Day 2021**

Meaningful celebration of International Children's Day and vibrant observance of National Children's Day for all CRE Children throughout Tamil Nadu and Puducherry went on for a week from 14<sup>th</sup> November to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Conscious efforts were taken by all facilitators and NGO directors during the week, creatively involving the children in the week-long celebrations. A State



Level Webinar on the UN Theme for this year, **“EQUALITY - Reducing inequalities, advancing Human Rights”** was organized by the project team to meaningfully observe International Human Rights Day. The project team also organized, under the banner of CRE Programme, a special webinar on 26th November to meaningfully observe the National Constitutional Day and nearly 180 participants attended this webinar.

### **9. Organizing Drawing Festival for Children**

Children in our CRE Clubs were involved in the drawing festival on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on 10<sup>th</sup> December and they have given a specific topic for drawing, namely “My Rights - My World”. More than 500 children from all districts actively participated in the drawing festival and one best performance in each of the CRE Clubs to recognize their talents and duly acknowledge the same.

### **10. Releasing of Promo Videos and Dissemination of Visibility Materials on CRE**

Four short promo videos in Tamil were prepared by the team and widely circulated among different CSOs and other groups to highlight the importance of our CRE Programme. The project team is also widely circulating handouts/visibility materials on CRE Programme and E-Posters on our events.

### **11. Translation of CRE Tamil Module into English and into Odisha and Kannada**

The CRE Module 1 (We, the people of India) has been translated from Tamil to English. This was given to other State Partners in Odisha and Karnataka, who are engaged in the translation in their own regional languages. The design of the English copy is going on and the same might be used for Matriculation and other English medium schools, where CRE Programme will be taken up. Some modifications according to their regions and languages are needed for their modules.

### **12. Demand Raised in Tamil Nadu State Assembly**

The demand for introducing CRE Programme in all Government schools in Tamil Nadu has been raised by one of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Abdul Samad, MNMK, to whom the project team had earlier explained about the CRE Programme and the need for taking this important Programme to all Govt schools in Tamil Nadu. An appeal letter to 8 MLAs from different parties in Tamil Nadu, with details about our CRE Programme and the need for taking this Programme in all schools in Tamil Nadu, and requesting them to include this demand in their speeches in the session.

### **13. Compilation of Children Profiles of the CRE Clubs in the Communities**

Vaan Muhil involved all the Ten Partner NGOs in preparing the details of all the children in their CRE Clubs in communities and these details were compiled by the project team before the start of the Programme. A total of 2662 children’s profiles in 125 communities in 17 districts was collated by the project team. A Google Sheet was prepared by the project team and sent to all the facilitators to collect the details of all children in all CRE clubs. This exercise has been helpful to understand the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of the children from Adivasis, Arunthathiyars, Dalits, Muslim and Religious Minorities, Fisher Folks, and De-Notified and Backward Sections, besides the Urban Poor. Their experiences are definitely rich and the cross-learning among the children will be great.

#### **14. Village Profiles and Socio-Economic Conditions of the Communities**

Village Profiles for all 125 communities have been prepared by the community-based trainers (facilitators) by way of preparing the CRE project in an effective way in their communities. A structured format was given to the community-based trainers (facilitators) to collect basic details about the villages and the socio-economic conditions of the people so that the project team better understands the ground realities in the villages where CRE project is being carried out. As the children and communities are diverse, these background details were of great help for the project team in designing the Module and some of the specific Programme for the CRE clubs, depending upon the composition of the people and their socio-economic conditions.

#### **15. Preparation and Finalization of PRE-Test Questionnaire for CRE Children**

The Project team prepared a pre-test questionnaire on the CRE Programme to get to know about the knowledge level, skill sets, and attitude level of the participating children before starting CRE Modules in their clubs. A structured questionnaire with 35 questions on the contents of the modules and 14 on personal information was designed in the month of November. 15% samples have been planned to take for the pre-test and a pilot was done to ensure clarity in the content of the questions and proper methodology.

#### **16. Meaningful Engagement with Education Department**

Vaan Muhil continues to strengthen its relationship with the School Education Department at the state level and two of the project team attend state-level advisory committee meetings (mostly online), organized by the Commissioner and the Director for School Education to take up to the special Programme “Illam Thedi Kalvi” (Education at doorsteps) and actively participated in the three-day state-level physical meeting on strengthening School Management Committees and School Development Plans from 18th to 20th November at Musiri, wherein 80 Master Trainers were trained for district level training Programme.

#### **17. Inclusion of our demand in the State Policy for Children**

The Government of Tamil Nadu released the State Children Policy – 2021 on 20th November, after eight years of National Children’s Policy. Though there are some gaps in the policy, on the whole, it is good and the demand to introduce CRE syllabus in all government and government-aided schools in Tamil Nadu has been incorporated into the Policy, for which Vaan Muhil is thankful to the Social Welfare Department. This will help the team to push our agenda with the Education Department to introduce CRE syllabus in all schools for the next academic year.

#### **18. Participation of DLSA Officials and Judicial Officers**

The partner NGOs took efforts to invite District Legal Service Authorities and Judicial Officers for the inauguration of the District Level CRE Programme and their participation in the CRE Programme added weightage and created visibility at the district level. Reading Materials and copies of the modules were provided to the judicial officers invited for the inauguration so that they come to know about the contents and design of the CRE Programme. Their involvement in the inauguration would be helpful to the local partners to effectively carry out CRE Programme in their respective districts and the partners could seek their support whenever they need it.

## **19. Integrating SDG Goals in CRE Module for Children in Communities**

Conscious efforts have been taken to include and integrate some of the SDG Goals in CRE Modules so that the children in CRE Clubs will be involved in the monitoring of specific targets related to the SDG Goals that have been taken up in the Modules. A number of exercises have been included in the module and the children can be involved in these exercises as part of their work. Most of the targets that are identified in the modules are related to No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequality, and Climate Action.

**Empowering unorganized workers / migrant labour through workers' collectives and legal education in Tamil Nadu - APPI**

### **1. Validation of baseline**

The project staff completed a total of 3662 individual data sheets from unorganized workers in five sectors (958 individual data sheets in 10 villages in Cheranmahadevi block, 884 in 10 villages in Manur block, 980 in 10 villages in Pappakudi block and 840 in 15 locations in Tirunelveli City Corporation limits).

### **2. Formation of workers' collectives**

Out of 45 locations, 42 pre-formation meetings were held, after collecting the details from the unorganized workers and completing the validation of data. (The program staff distributed IEC materials during the village level awareness programs and registration camps, creating awareness on the Unorganized Welfare Boards and the social protection benefits for the workers, besides the registration process, the eligibility criteria to access the social protection benefits and the contact details of the welfare boards. With the inputs and the IEC materials, the workers are interested in registering themselves into the welfare boards and getting themselves organized as workers collectives, and coming to know more about labour rights, statutory minimum wages, workplace safety, and dignity of the worker.)

### **3. Monthly meetings for Workers' Collectives and village resource mapping**

Regular monthly meetings for Workers' Collectives were organized by facilitators in their working villages. Profiles of these 30 villages in three blocks and 15 locations in Tirunelveli City Corporation have been prepared and Resource Mapping has been done in these villages. A four-page data sheet was prepared to collect the basic details of the villages and the same was collated to bring the socio-economic conditions of the people living there. The infrastructural facilities the villages have, the caste compositions and power dynamics in the villages and primary occupations of the villagers, the working conditions of the unorganized workers there and the status of working women and children in the villages.

### **4. Registration / Renewal**

The recent online registration proposed by the labour department was really cumbersome and a number of documents were demanded from workers in online registration, which they found difficult to provide and endlessly wait for a long time to complete the process. Many a time the workers struggle with poor net connectivity in the rural areas and they have to lose their jobs for



two or three days to complete the registration process. In addition, there is also confusion among the workers about whether to register themselves in the unorganized welfare boards under the mandate of the State Government or under the E-Shram portal that has been recently announced by the Union Government.

#### **5. Filing of applications for accessing social protection benefits from welfare boards**

80 workers have filed an application for accessing social protection benefits from the welfare boards during the reporting period and most of the workers who have applied for the welfare board cards are still waiting to receive their cards from the Labour Department, which takes a long time to process the application and send them the cards.

#### **6. Public campaigns**

A specific campaign on simplification of the online registration process into the unorganized welfare boards has been planned for the month of January 2022 and our demand will be sent to the Labour Minister. Meanwhile, the project staff has started the public campaign on the registration of unorganized workers and migrant workers into E-Shram portal with a wider circulation of handbills and notices among the workers in the villages.

#### **7. Engagement with Govt departments and PRIs**

Nearly 30 elected panchayat leaders have been invited to our village-level programs and block-level orientation programs and their support is ensured. In addition, rapport building with labour Department officials and District Legal Services Authority has been consciously developed. Their support will be helpful in the registration process for the unorganized workers into the welfare boards and to avail of social protection benefits.

#### **8. State-level online meeting**

One state-level online meeting on accessing social protection benefits for unorganized workers during the pandemic situation was organized on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and nearly 120 participants attended the online meeting. A two days state-level physical meeting was organized on issues related to the unorganized sector for state-level networks and labour rights activists in Karur on 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Three leaders from our Workers' Collectives could participate in the physical meeting.

### **Protecting the rights of the unorganized workers in 15 village panchayats in Tirunelveli - NHRF**

#### **1. Formation of Worker's Support Groups and registration of workers**

A total of 263 unorganized workers in 15 working villages in Valliyur and Nanguneri blocks have been registered under the Unorganized Workers Welfare Boards. Out of these 263 workers (141 from Valliyur and 122 from Nanguneri block), 120 are construction workers, 123 textile workers, and the remaining from other sectors and of these registered workers, 77 are Dalits, while 186 are from other backward communities. The addition, nearly 900 workers have been registered in the E-shram portal.

## **2. Monthly Meetings of Workers' Collectives**

The workers' collectives have been formed in all working villages and on average 10 workers are in each of the collectives. These collectives meet once a month and a total of 75 monthly meetings have been organized to discuss labour rights issues among themselves and efforts are on to strengthen the collectives at the village level.

## **3. District-level consultation**

District-level consultation with Trade Unions and CSOs has paved the way for creating synergy among different stakeholders working for workers' rights in the area. One capacity-building programs has been organized and 85 leaders from Workers' collectives took an active part in the one-day program. Awareness creation takes place among the workers through village level meetings, distribution of IEC materials on social protection benefits, and the need for strengthening of workers' collectives at the village level. The realization among the workers of worker's rights and existing social protection benefits is more, after the implementation of the project in the working villages.

## **4. Participation of Women Workers in Grama Sabha**

Active participation of Women Workers in Grama Sabha meetings in the villages was one of the results of the project implementation and they were able to raise some of the key demands for the development of the villages and the welfare of the workers.

## **5. In collaboration with DLSA**

Vaan Muhil has a good rapport with the DLSA, Tirunelveli and our staff team members are in regular touch with the DLSA officials. We are making use of the services of DLSA advocates for our village and cluster-level meetings. Lack of awareness of social protection benefits and workers' rights among the unorganized workers in the working villages pushes us to organize more village-level meetings and to reach out to them and support them in the registration process on Welfare Boards.



### **Vaan Muhil Trust**

**15, Kavitha Nagar, Maharaja Nagar Post, Tirunelveli – 627 011**

**Tamil Nadu. S. India**

**Phone: +91-462-2521771, Email: [vaanmuhil@gmail.com](mailto:vaanmuhil@gmail.com)**