

# ANNUAL Report



# 2015-16



## REAL

### Rural Education and Action for Liberation



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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At the outset, I'd like to thank our donors, partners and volunteers for their continuing support. Your confidence in REAL enables us to pursue our mission to create an enabling environment for impoverished rural communities in Tamil Nadu, especially marginalized women and vulnerable children. Our objective is always to help these communities strengthen themselves for the future.

The year 2015-16 has been one of growth coupled with consolidation and enabling us to reach out to over 25,250 beneficiaries. I am happy to share the key highlights during the year which we believe has made a significant difference for our beneficiaries and the Society at large.

Through our efforts, a total of 900 dropouts and eligible children were enrolled in formal schooling during the year. REAL established 35 village level community clubs to protect the children against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Women in the Income Generation Program gained, on average, Rs. 3,000 in increased monthly income. We established two prefabricated toilet construction units in Marakanam and Kattumannarkoil. A total of 1312 individual household toilets were constructed and put into use through our WASH initiative. REAL supported the long-awaited construction of two classrooms, kitchen and prayer hall at R.C. Primary School at Anilady village.

In addition to these regular programs, REAL was the first NGO in the field to support the flood victims of 'Tamil Nadu Flood 2015'. With the funding assistance of several leading international organizations, we distributed food and non-food relief materials, educational kits, water, sanitation and health support to around 3,500 families in the worst flood affected Districts in the State.

We also had a significant support to work with children and women with the support of corporates like CIPLA Foundation and Hyundai Steel.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Government officials, PRI leaders and community people for their support and cooperation. I acknowledge our Board of Directors for their continuing guidance and encouragement as we venture into new geographic areas and interventions, and scale up our work.

Last but not the least, I would like to personally thank all the REAL staff members and volunteers who have worked selflessly and tirelessly to serve the target communities and protect the rights of women and children.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Lawrence".

A. Lawrence  
President cum Director

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## ABOUT REAL (WHO WE ARE)

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Rural Education and Action for Liberation (REAL) was initiated in 1989 by a handful of enthusiastic and committed youth volunteers who were students at the time, led by A. Lawrence. REAL was registered in 1989 as a voluntary organization, under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act 27 of 1975. We have endured, growing and evolving in our capacity to offer services for the neglected, marginalized, exploited and illiterate rural poor people. The aim, then as now, was to help free them from the clutches of poverty, ignorance, ill health and social suppression.

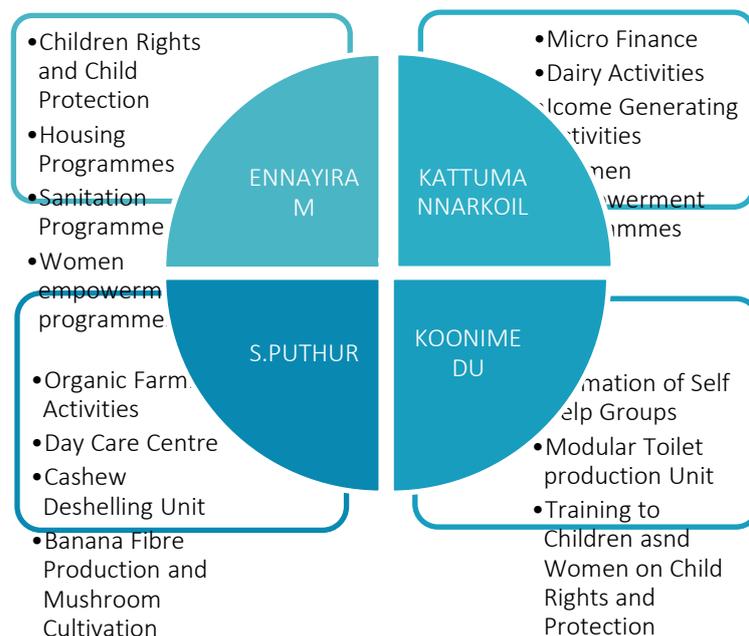
### REAL's Working Approach:

REAL is a non-political, non-religious and non-profit social service society committed to encouraging active participation of the communities in the development process, involving them in decision making, planning and implementation of activities. It follows a child-centred and rights-based development approach to foster sustainable in the communities. REAL also believes in partnership and networking by influencing different stakeholders from government and other civil society organizations.

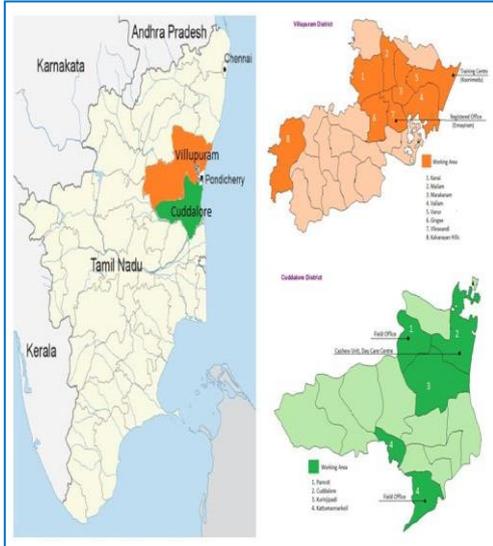
### Priority Areas of Interventions:

- Promoting and protecting the rights of children and young people – education, water and sanitation, health, opportunities to form their own associations;
- Women's empowerment by building institutions and federations;
- Economic empowerment of families through microfinance, agriculture and Income Generation activities;
- Skill development among youth through vocational training and life skills;
- Financial literacy among children and women.

### REAL – Presence and Programs



## Our Areas of Operation and Locations



<b>Project Locations</b>			
Villupuram	Block	# of Panchayats	# of Villages
	Kanai	2	2
	Mailam	18	18
	Marakanam	14	38
	Vallam	12	12
	Vanur	8	24
	Vikravandi	18	19
Cuddalore	Kattumannarkoil	57	126
	Kurinchipadi	6	10
	Panruti Block	2	12
	Cuddalore	10	27
Chennai	Saidapet & Velacherry	2	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>	<b>295</b>

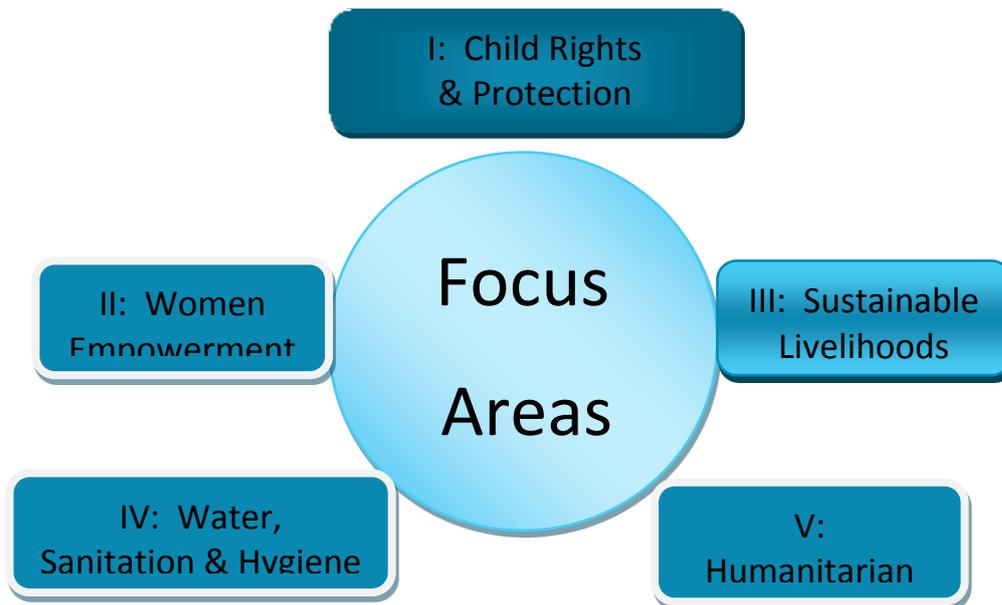
## Our Team



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## REAL – FOCUS AREAS

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### CHILD RIGHTS AND PROTECTION

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As the most vulnerable segment of society, and the most important in terms of future strength of the community, children are at the centre of REAL’s program objectives and activities. We work to ensure that children know their own rights and how to protect themselves, and this knowledge must be shared with parents, teachers and others in the community so that all can support children’s well-being. Our programs provide opportunities for children to learn protection behaviours, develop leadership skills, and also to have fun.

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### FOCUS AREA II: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Women are frequently isolated, poorly educated and lacking opportunities to utilize their talents and leadership potential. REAL facilitates them to form Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Federations which enable them to come together, learn new skills, gain confidence and further support the health and well-being of their families and the community as a whole. Engaging in Income Generation Projects (IGP) through training, entrepreneurship and micro-credit programs enables the women to earn more income and substantially improve their family’s standard of living.

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### **FOCUS AREA III: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**

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Marginalized communities dependent on local agriculture, fishing, salt pans and daily labour often suffer insufficient incomes and are highly vulnerable to forces beyond their control including climate, markets and the business decisions of others. Both youth and adults are often poorly paid and underemployed. Projects like agricultural sustainability, processing of dairy and cashew products, and household-based business ventures (women's IGP) aim to reduce the poverty suffered in these communities. Skill training is important, as is disaster preparedness so that livelihoods are not as vulnerable in times of drought, floods, etc.

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### **FOCUS AREA IV: WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE (WASH)**

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Access to clean water is critically important to health of both children and adults. Access to water for income generating activities is essential to livelihoods. Sanitation improvement, primarily through toilets at household and village level, brings better health conditions and security, especially for women and girls. Hygiene habits result in reduced risk of disease and improved living conditions. REAL programs address all these goals directly through education, motivation and infrastructure systems.

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### **FOCUS AREA V: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

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In addition to the social and economic disadvantages, REAL's target areas include many communities affected by – and even devastated by – disasters like floods, cyclones, drought and tsunamis. Our strong community connections, knowledge and relationships enable us to move quickly at these times, to partner with aid agencies in the delivery of badly needed relief including food, shelter, clothing, educational and recreational resources. In this way we bring emergency assistance in combination with longer term strategies like house building, agricultural regeneration, livelihoods and disaster preparedness training.

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## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

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**Project Title: Enabling Environment for children to realize their rights and full potentials**

**Location: 15 villages of Villupuram District**

**Focus Areas: Child Rights, Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment**

**Donor: Manos Unidas Period: January 2015 to December 2017**



The goal of the project is to create an enabling environment for poor communities and marginalized children. The project links children's rights and their parents' livelihood promotion to support a better standard of living.

The key intervention of the project includes community mobilization to ensure children go to school, supplementary coaching classes, and have democratic space for children to form their associations. Simultaneously the project engages parents to improve their livelihood and incomes through agriculture and organic farming, in order to bring sustainable

support to their children to realize their rights. Key interventions include farmers' associations, vocational skill education for adolescents, promotion of kitchen gardens, organic farming and linkage with mainstream education system and agriculture department.

The project made significant progress in achieving 98% of targets planned for the first year and falling short just 2% of target due to unexpected, catastrophic floods which hampered the work for about a month.



### **Key milestones of the project during the year 2015 - 16**

- Successful roll out of the project, completed 'baseline survey'
- Induction and orientation training for staff and community
- Project outreach to 2,497 persons (957 children and 1,540 women & community)
- Total of 158 drop outs and eligible children were enrolled in formal school
- 150 children were trained in media skills
- 833 community members received basic health care through three health camps
- 300 women farmers were oriented and got involved in organic cultivation
- Formation of village level clubs such as Child Rights Club, Child Parliament, Eco Club, Child Rights Protection Committee, School Monitoring Committee etc.

**Project Title: To contribute to the realization of the rights of vulnerable children in India.**

**Location: 20 villages of Villupuram District**

**Focus Areas: Child Rights, Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment**

**Donor: Karl Kubel Stiftung (KKS)**

**Period: January 2014 to December 2017**



The KKS supported 'Children's Rights & Child Protection' has successfully completed two years of implementation and entered into its third year. The objective of the project is 'Marginalized and disadvantaged children in 20 villages of Villupuram District enjoy their right to survival, development, participation and protection'. Main project activities include: capacity building of women and SHG federations, income generation programs, establishment of village children activity centres, sensitization of target communities.

impact on the lives of the children and villages. Beyond micro finance aware of children's rights. They are protect the rights of their children and skills in health, sanitation and waste Directors (SHG Federation) has taken Income Generation Program and 100% insured. Another important impact of increased their monthly income by an month. The school drop outs in the working villages have been reduced from 22% to 10%.



During the year 2015-2016, there was considerable women in the 20 target activities, women are more better able to promote and have improved their basic life-management. The Board of over responsibility of the of the milch animals are now the project is that 140 women average of Rs.3, 000 per

#### **Key milestones of the project during the year 2015 - 16**

- More than 1,500 SHG members were trained on topics such as micro insurance, children's rights and protection and WASH. The members were taking decisions to address children's rights violations and women's issues at community level.
- The project facilitated the construction of 304 individual household toilets in the project villages and received subsidy from the government.
- 1,161 members received financial assistance from NABFINS, in total amount of Rs. 2.5 crore.
- Established 'milk collection centres' in 20 villages with resulting increase in the income of milk producers.
- 'Milk byproduct' unit was established and functioning in one of the project villages.
- 600 members were trained in dairy development and allied activities.
- A total of 160 women farmers in the villages established cattle feed shop, Azolla cultivation, fodder and fodder backyard during the year.
- Village level clubs such as CAC, CRC, CP, Eco Club, CRPC, SDMC etc were formed in the previous year and continue to function toward ensuring the children's rights.
- 210 children participated in the summer camp and learned paintings, drawing, songs, dance and essay writing. 214 children improved their skill in photography, folk arts, print media and comics through 5 days media skill training.
- More than 100 child right violation issues were identified, reviewed and resolved through various forums like CRC, CRPC and SDMC and also with the support of local village heads.

**Project Title: Construction of Primary School Building**

**Location: Anilady village, Villupuram District**

**Focus Area: Child Rights and Protection**

**Donor: Combined Services Third World Fund (CSTWF)**

**Period: Dec. 2015 to Dec. 2016**

It is globally recognized that the school is an important institution for the growth and well-being of all children, especially the primary school. Every school should have proper classrooms, infrastructure, furniture, reading materials and qualified teachers. In contrast, the RC primary school in Anilady lacks even minimum requirements. It is a government aided school built around 95 years ago, with a total of 277 students (144 boys and 133 girls) from class 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. The government provides funds for only 5 teachers for the school, and further, failed to provide funding for the building and maintenance.



The roof, wall and floor was dilapidated, furniture needed to be replaced or at least repaired. The children were cramped into one classroom. In fact, the condition of the school posed a threat to the life of the children due to the age of the building. Hence the children were forced to sit under the trees and in open space in order to avoid risks in the building itself.

A year ago, REAL came forward and constructed two permanent classrooms, each measuring 500 square feet in size. Each classroom has three windows and a door so as to provide sufficient light and ventilation. Along with that, we constructed a 50-foot length corridor and 15x15 feet area for prayer and renovated the store room.

Community involvement has been REAL's primary strategy. The construction of the school building was implemented with the active participation from the Anilady village people, teachers and students. The villagers were involved as labourers in cleaning the construction site, shifting construction materials, providing water and electricity at the time of construction work. The teachers of the school monitored day-to-day construction work progress. The PRI leaders of Anilady village were supportive and obtained the necessary

“The newly completed classrooms replaced dilapidated, overcrowded and makeshift learning facilities of the school” – Ambrose, President, Village Welfare Committee, Anilady.

“Now we do not have to worry about the rain or different climatic conditions as we have got new pakka (solid and permanent) and safe class rooms for students” – Sahaya Selvi, Head Mistress, R.C. Primary School.

## Project Title: Promotion of Modular Toilets among SHG Federations and Networking Septic Tank Emptier

**Location: 20 villages of Cuddalore and Villupuram District**

**Focus Area: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene**

**Donor: Water For People**

**Period: April 2015 to March 2016**

According to the 2011 census, 53.1% of households in India do not have a toilet, with the percentage being as high as 69.3% in rural areas and 18.6% in urban areas. Furthermore, field studies indicate that even the use of existing toilets in both rural and urban areas is very low. With a vision to ensure that the villages are



sanitized, healthy and liveable and to sustain public health for the citizens, REAL, with the support of Water for People (WFP), is promoting prefabricated toilets and septic tank systems in 20 villages of Cuddalore and Villupuram Districts. It is Phase II of the project.

During the first phase (2014), REAL established an operational precast latrine production cum sales unit at Koonimedu village. The project designed and promoted 12 prototype precast latrines and

Visit by Foreigners

7 locations in Villupuram and Cuddalore Districts. With the experience gained in phase I, REAL submitted a proposal to the second phase was to “complete package” of even floor slab and base unit as prefabricated latrine can be installed in a short time. This not only saves time and money, but also reduces the need for skilled labour.



Ready Made Toilet View by Collectorate

septic tanks which were installed in Villupuram and Cuddalore Districts. The intention of provide an improved version or prefabricated latrine by adding an ready-made. This type of easily installed on site in a short time and money, but also reduces the

### **Key milestones of the project during the year 2015 - 16**

- Finalised the design and development of base unit mould for circular, square and arch toilet models.
- Pilot testing of product was done at three sites.
- Designed and purchased two lifting devices for production centre.
- A total of 1,312 modular toilets were constructed in the project villages.
- 525 women SHG federation members participated in the orientation program. They were educated about various risks associated with open defecation, importance of toilet use, health care and government subsidy for toilet construction.
- 73 government officials attended one-day orientation meetings on modular toilets.
- Distributed 5,000 IEC materials in order to educate the community and motivate them for toilet use.
- A second production unit was established and functioning at Kattumannarkoil in Cuddalore District to meet the toilet requirements of the local area.

<b>Project Title: Enhancing household income through “Dairy value chain” approach</b>	
<b>Location: 20 villages in Kattumannarkoil block in Cuddalore District</b>	
<b>Focus Areas: Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment</b>	
<b>Donor: State Planning Commission Tamil Nadu</b>	<b>Period: April 2015 to March 2017</b>

The department of Animal Husbandry/ District Planning Office in Cuddalore District has joined with REAL to implement the project titled “**Enhancing Household Income through Dairy Value Chain Approach**” in Kattumannarkoil block through funding assistance of State Planning Commission, Tamil Nadu.



The project aims to substantially increase the number of milch animals in Kattumannarkoil block, with opportunities for the project participants to realize increased incomes through improved animal husbandry practices, enhanced access to services, and greater market access.

The project facilitated linkages between the beneficiaries and banking/financial institutions, thus helping the women to access credit to purchase milch animals. This resulted in an increased number of women engaged in dairying, along with increase in animal stock.

The project also enhanced the capacities of members in terms of knowledge and skills for adoption of best practices in animal rearing.

### **Key milestones of the project during the year 2015 - 16**

- A total of 351 women accessed credit support for purchase of milch animals.
- Around 400 women advanced their knowledge in animal husbandry including care of cattle, feed and disease management, calf rearing, milk value addition etc.
- The women in the 108 target villages set up feed shops, fodder plots, Milk Collection Centres and milk sale points, thus creating rural micro entrepreneurship.
- 15 Para veterinarians were trained through the project and are helping the Animal Husbandry Department to prevent the spread of diseases through vaccination programs.
- Two community organic fodder plots were created in the target villages.
- The project activity created awareness and assistance to promote animal insurance as a means of income protection.
- At the beginning of the project period, a base line survey was completed and the results were analysed and compiled. The project’s progress will be tracked to assess the impact at the end of the project period.

**Project Title: Banking on Change - Sustaining Self Help Group (SHG) Federation – Phase : II**

**Location: Kattumannarkoil block in Cuddalore District**

**Focus Areas: Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment**

**Donor: CARE India Solutions for Sustainable Development**

**Period: November 2014 to November 2015**

REAL has been partnering with CARE to implement the Banking on Change (BoC) Phase I project since January 2011, to take forward the 'Financial Inclusion' agenda. The project seeks to benefit 32,500 poor households with improved access to financial services by strengthening the governance and sustainability of the SHGs of which they are members, and by linking the groups to formal financial services. It has promoted two federations of SHGs in Cuddalore region. As community-based institutions, these federations are well positioned to address the development issues faced by their SHG members. A vast majority of their member households depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.



This project aims to enable the federation to move from the conventional approach of micro finance to a value chain financing model. The Value Chain Financing approach adopted is strengthening livelihoods of the poor and the landless, while also boosting rural women entrepreneurship and strengthening the entire Dairy Value Chain in the block.

In this project, REAL also initiated safety net programs like micro pension and strengthened micro insurance. The groups' internal saving mobilization was particularly good. This enhanced opportunities for the group members to avail more credit to meet their consumption and livelihood requirements.

The key objectives of BoC Phase II were: strengthen SHGs/federations with better and judicial financial management; promote viable micro enterprises; build up social security programs in the target community through micro insurance and micro pension plans; and foster livelihoods sustainability.

#### **Key milestones of the project during the year 2015 - 16**

- A total of 759 SHGs were linked with NABFINS, an alternative financial institution and accessed loans in total amount of Rs.29,92,810,000
- More than 1,000 members were enrolled under 'Micro Pension and Insurance Scheme' and were educated in financial literacy and introduced voluntary savings.
- Formation of youth groups is one of the important strategies of BoC program and 14 such groups were formed and functional during this financial year.
- Around 11161 SHG women were trained in financial literacy, employability skills and enterprise training.
- All the SHGs underwent grading and auditing by the external agency in order to identify the gaps and improve their functioning.

**Project Title: Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement through additional sources of income**

**Location: 15 villages in Cuddalore District**

**Focus Areas: Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment**

**Donor: Karl Kubel Stiftung (KKS)      Period: April 2015 To December 2018**



With funding support from KKS, Germany, REAL is implementing the project, ‘Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement through Additional Sources of Income to Women and Small Farmers in 15 villages of Cuddalore District’. This is the first year in a three-year project. The overall objective is to enhance the agricultural production of 375 small & marginal farmers and strengthen the livelihood opportunities of 400 women in the 15 target villages. The project has made significant contributions to the lives of the project beneficiaries during the first year of the project.

Construction of Cashew Processing Unit

### **Key milestones of the project during the year 2015 - 16**

- A total of 10 farmers’ clubs were formed with small and marginal farmers as members.
- 21 women’s SHGs were also formed in the target villages.
- 9 farmers’ club members were oriented toward the vision, mission, goal and objectives of the project.
- The project has initiated linkages with various stakeholders especially with the Government Agriculture and Horticulture department, organic production units, certification departments, research institutes & colleges, banks / financial institutions, KVKs and marketing avenues, for the benefit of the target communities.
- Around 90 Panchayat Raj Leaders were also sensitized about present government schemes, including subsidies available for agri products and other guidance.
- 150 landless women were supported for income generating activities.
- In order to support the farmers of nearby villages, a Village Resource Centre (VRC) has been established and serves as a centre for information, meetings and distribution of organic farming products and aids. An Agriculture Specialist is based in the centre to provide guidance and support for the interested farmers.
- A total of 25 organic production units have been established in the target villages and in to processing of vermi compost, nature compost, pancha kavva.
- 4 visits have been anchored which is a remarkable moment in this project.



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## MICRO CREDIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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### **Focus Areas: Sustainable Livelihoods, Women Empowerment**

#### **1. Rang De**

Rang De is a non-profit lending initiative that facilitates social investments across India. The loans are given to borrowers from low income households for small business purposes, at a nominal rate of interest. Since June 2015, REAL has been partnering with Rang De and leveraged this financial support for establishment of small businesses for SHG women in 20 villages of Cuddalore District. The women have received total credit of Rs. 8000/- (per woman) in order to improve their trade and business activities such as goat rearing, agricultural activity, small business, cow purchase, etc. Through REAL, the loan has to be repaid in 12 monthly instalments to Rang De. As of March 2016, 270 members from 9 groups have been supported with total loan amount of Rs.21, 60,000/-.

#### **2. Agriculture Development Finance – Tamil Nadu (ADFT)**

During this financial year, a total of 200 members were given loan support through ADFT for purchase of milch animals in Kattumannarkoil and Ennayiram region. Each beneficiary received a sum of Rs.25,000/- as loan and they matched with Rs. 5,000 contributed by the beneficiary to buy milch animals. The loan has to be repaid in 24 monthly instalments. In total Rs.5 million was distributed during the year 2015-2016. Around 400 cows were purchased and insured. Consequently, the income of the families improved by selling the milk and milk products to private companies and to surrounding households. The projects also created an asset for the beneficiaries. As of March 2016, Rs. 15.5 Lakhs had been repaid to ADFT.

#### **3. NABFINS**

NABARD Financial Services Limited (NABFINS) is a subsidiary of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Their main objectives are to provide financial services in two broad areas of agriculture and microfinance. NABFINS provides credit and other facilities for promotion, expansion, commercialization and modernization of agriculture and allied activities. NABFINS engages in the business of providing micro finance services and other facilities to needy and disadvantaged sections of society for securing their prosperity. In partnership with NABFINS, REAL facilitated loans in total amount of Rs. 8.19 crore during this financial year. As of March 2016, a total of 183 SHG women in four regions of Cuddalore and Villupuram Districts took out credit for various purposes such as small business establishment, purchase of milch animals, dairy unit, goat rearing, agricultural cultivation, education, marriage, etc.

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## FOCUS AREA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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### *Flood Relief and Response Program– “Tamil Nadu Flood 2015”*

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#### **Background**



During Nov-Dec, 2015, the Coromandel Coast of South India, spanning much of coastal Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, as well as Pondicherry, received incessant heavy rainfall during the annual northeast monsoon. Tamil Nadu experienced the worst floods in a century, with 60% of its capital city Chennai submerged. An estimated 20 million people were affected, 2,500 villages waterlogged and more than 300 lives lost. The worst affected districts were; Chennai city, Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur, Cuddalore and Villupuram. The flood caused hardship and devastation for all population groups, however the people in the lower socio-economic rung were the worst

affected.

#### **Rapid Assessment**

REAL conducted the ‘Rapid Needs Assessment’ in the worst affected villages of Cuddalore, Villupuram district and Chennai urban area. The assessment findings were as follows:

- The continuous water logging for more than 17 days reduced the mobility of people, interrupting patterns of work, family, culture and economy.
- As most of the houses do not have proper infrastructure, the rains washed away the belongings like clothes, sleeping materials, books, documents and kitchen items.
- With no safe drinking water nor sanitation facilities, people were forced to drink contaminated water, and structures were saturated with toxic runoff.
- People had to travel a long distance for medical assistance, and in many instances, it was not possible to reach the assistance.
- Children contracted viral infections, skin rashes, diarrhea and other diseases.
- Schools remain closed for more than 25 days and children were denied education.
- Many people starved, especially children, women and aged people.
- Children lost their educational materials like text books, note books, geometry boxes, school bags, etc.
- Children were stranded under captivity and had no opportunities for recreation.
- The farm crops, especially paddy and vegetables, were submerged under water for more than 20 days and became rotten.
- Most of the farm lands with standing crops were lost and all the families with agriculture as their main occupation lost their livelihood.

#### **Relief Efforts**

REAL in partnership with several leading national and international humanitarian agencies (PLAN, Save the Children, Habitat for Humanity India, Manos Unidas, DESWOS, Rang De, Bahar Info cons, Tamil Nadu Foundation, Eco Tech and CESVI) distributed immediate relief materials of both food and non-food items to the worst flood-affected families.

## Relief Material Distribution

S.No	Name of the Donor	Description of Relief Material	Location	# of families benefitted
1	CESVI	Food and non-food items	Cuddalore	200
2	Bahar Infocons, Mumbai	Sleeping mats and bed sheets	Cuddalore	60
3	Habitat for Humanity	Kitchen wares, hygiene kits and sleeping mats	Cuddalore, Villupuram	908
4	NABARD	Dry rations and shelter kits	Cuddalore	200
5	T.N. Foundation, Chennai	Dry rations and hygiene kits	Cuddalore	600
6	Rang De	Dry rations and shelter kits	Cuddalore	200
7	Eco Tech	Hygiene kits and health camps	Cuddalore	200
8	PLAN India	Shelter and hygiene kits	Cuddalore	600
9	Save the Children	Dry ration and shelter kits	Cuddalore	2,755
10	DESWOS	Dry rations and sleeping materials	Cuddalore, Villupuram	3,050
11	Manos Unidas	Food and non-food items	Villupuram	1,392
12	Manos Unidas	Educational materials	Villupuram	656
<b>Total</b>				<b>10,813</b>

REAL's long experience in working with impoverished communities in the state, and our strong community connections, knowledge and relationships enabled us to move quickly at the time of urgent need caused by the floods. By partnering with aid agencies to deliver badly needed relief, we are able to bring emergency assistance in combination with longer term strategies like house building, agricultural regeneration, livelihoods and disaster preparedness training.

A total of 10,813 families in Cuddalore and Villupuram Districts and Chennai urban area were supported through REAL's Flood Relief & Response program. The relief efforts greatly helped the communities to recover from the urgent, distressing situation and to take steps to return to normal functioning. In addition, the projects have enhanced REAL's emergency response and recovery experience to promote the well-being of affected people and especially children. REAL would like to thank all the staff, volunteers who have done tremendous work during the emergency response.

## Long-Term Assistance

### Establishment of Child Friendly Space (CFS)



With the funding assistance of Save the Children and PLAN India, we established village level 'Child Friendly Space' (CFS) in 25 locations of Cuddalore and 7 locations of Chennai slums. The purpose of the CFS is to create a protective environment for the children, including psycho-social support, to bring back some normalcy in their lives. At CFSs, children have the opportunity to learn academic subjects, participate in creativity activities and engage in sports and recreation. This gives them some relief from the stress and confinement of their flooded home areas. Each

CFS has two facilitators, educational and play materials. The CFSs provide safe drinking water, medical kits and an enabling environment for children with disabilities. In order to deal with protection issues, the REAL team established Child Protection Committees who were trained on Child Rights and Child Protection.

### Importance of Child Friendly Centres

Children spend their time in a safe space within their community.	Children are happy and have opportunity to engage in play and leisure.
Children rebuild their confidence while interacting with other children and are better behaved.	Children participate in education, and are able to learn to write, draw, paint and sing.
Mothers are able to devote their full attention to rebuilding their life and livelihoods since the children are being taken care of in the community.	Improved hygiene and safe drinking water for the children help to avoid sickness among the children and families.
Children receive nutritious food at the CFS, during a period when the likelihood of their nutrition being neglected is very high.	The CFS supports bonding within the families and the community while the residents are planning and taking action to rebuild their dwellings and livelihoods.
Government agencies and NGOs working for child welfare could deliver assistance to children through a single window, thus saving time and reaching more children.	Local women from the affected community, especially single and aged women, receive employment as facilitators of the CFS.

## Additional activities of CFS

**Supplementary coaching** class for those children who were appearing for 10<sup>th</sup> grade board examination. The coaching helped the children face the examination with confidence and score high marks. A teacher assessed student needs, taught subject matter, and facilitated special attention on difficult subjects. The children studied in groups, participated in mock tests and gained better understanding on how to prepare for the exam, manage their time and the importance of answering all the questions.

Child Friendly Space also provided ***lactating mothers and pregnant women*** with space for interaction and relaxation. They were educated on prenatal and postnatal check-ups and nutritious food practices.

In collaboration with Save the Children, REAL organized training in **hygiene promotion** at the community and school level. Topics included proper handwashing; safe drinking water; avoiding water borne diseases; water treatment using chlorination; oral rehydration solution; control over faeces-related diseases; menstrual hygiene; and malarial disease – symptoms, causes and prevention.

**Organized awareness program on WASH at CFS:** the participants learned how to practice good hygienic habits in their day-to-day life and also during a disaster situation. Community members, especially children, youth, pregnant women and lactating mothers learned the importance of usage of household toilets, and various hygienic habits were emphasised.

**Children Rights and Protection (CRP),** The awareness training covered definition of child and basic child rights. It also covered existing child protection mechanisms at district and state level, the importance of child education, and gender discrimination, child abuse, etc. The training developed a common understanding among participants that the absence of child protection prevents other rights of the children. Toll free number 1098 to report child abuses was informed to the children.



**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** The purpose was to orient the community on disaster management and enable the communities to be resilient and to capably manage future disasters. The topics covered were basics and types of disaster, do's and do not's during the disaster, mitigation measures, early warning, search and rescue, first aid etc. The participants participated in mock drills and gained practical insights. The trainer explained the impact of flooding, and practical skills for dealing with flood waters, safety issues and how to safeguard the lives of family members, old people and children.

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## HOUSING CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT PROGRAM

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### **Focus Area: Humanitarian Assistance**

#### **1. Habitat for Humanity**

Habitat is an international development organization which promotes the building of ‘partnership housing’ for people in need. The aim is to provide decent housing to the needy at no profit and with no interest charge. Since 2008, REAL has been working with Habitat and has built more than 1,500 houses in Cuddalore and Villupuram Districts. The prospective home owners are selected based on their level of need, their ability to repay the loan and their willingness to work in partnership with Habitat. Through this program, REAL initiated the disbursement of “supporting credit facilities” to beneficiaries in need of a safe shelter house measuring at least 350 sq. Feet, with latrine facility. Around 510 volunteers of Habitat from USA, Japan and Canada were involved in the shelter construction process by digging basements, doing brick work, moving sand and other construction tasks along with the house owners.

During this financial year, REAL organized and facilitated the building of 50 houses in 3 villages.

#### **2. Swarna Pragati Housing Microfinance Private Limited**

During this financial year, REAL was successful in securing financing of Rs. 1.69 crore from Swarna Pragathi for supporting the construction of 93 houses in Ennyiram and Kattumannarkoil regions.

Swarna Pragati uses a modular build concept in the design of housing microfinance products. The concept is both practical and effective. Loan amounts average Rs 40,000 – Rs 80,000 with average loan terms of 36–48 months, slightly larger and longer term than typical microenterprise business loans. Borrowers complete the construction of their homes through a series of loans. REAL has repaid Rs.25 lakhs during this year and the outstanding amount will be repaid in the coming months.

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## REAL TRAINING CENTRE

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REAL established a residential training centre at Koonimedu in 2006 The training centre is well equipped with all training facilities including conference hall, LCD, audio-video devices, OHP, Television with a capacity of 40 people at a time and can accommodate larger groups. The centre also has the facility of boarding/lodging. In addition to REAL itself, various NGOs and government departments (especially T. N. Women Development Corporation) utilize the facility at reasonable cost. REAL organizes several skill development programs at the training centre, for women and children as part of its various projects.

During this reporting year, the following training programs were held in the centre:

<b>Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation</b>				
<b>S.No</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Name of the program</b>	<b># of participants</b>	<b># of days</b>
1	August 2015	Social Audit	32	3
2	October 2015	Orientation Training Women Federation-Refresher Course	27	5
3	November 2015	Food Processing Training	28	2
4	November 2015	Follow up training	29	4
<b>Tamil Nadu State Non-Governmental Organisations and Volunteers Resource Centre (TNVRC)</b>				
5	December 2015	Food Processing Training	28	6
<b>Block Development Office (BDO)</b>				
6	February 2016	Sanitation Training	30	1
7	February 2016	Sanitation Training	24	1
<b>Private Institutions / NGOS</b>				

8	August 2015	NGO Training program, Agri College	6	1
9	August 2015	Observation visit – St. Joseph College	21	1
10	March 2016	Children Exposure visit-Arunodhaya	25	2
<b>REAL Training Programs</b>				
11	March 2016	Food Processing Training	30	1
12	April 2016	Mason Training	43	1
13	April 2016	BOD Meeting	11	1
<b>Total</b>			334	29

REAL is able to provide the training facility to many groups at reasonable cost, thus also raising some revenue to support the operating costs of the centre itself.

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## PROJECT VISITS

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### Visit by German Consulate

In June, 2015 a team of 15 members from the German Consulate in German, under the leadership of Mr.Wolf Gangklein, visited along with Indian Ambassador to Germany, Mr.Raja IAS. After a traditional welcome by the villagers, the team observed the various IGP activities of REAL in V.Kattupalayam village such as vermi compost units, kitchen garden, rose garden, cashew de-shelling unit, and had interactions with the beneficiaries. Then the team was briefed on REAL-KKS activities by the federation leaders at S. Pudur office and entertained by the children in the day care centre with rhymes, songs and dances. They also visited the demo plot which is a model organic vegetable garden.

### Visit by a NGO – Prajana Counselling Centre

Prajana Counselling Centre is a Mangalore-based NGO working for the development of urban poor to improve their livelihoods. 20 members visited our project location at S. Pudur in June, 2015 where they learned about the SHG – Federation organization, its management and operation. They visited the S. Pudur day care centre, organic vegetable demo plot and Santhankuppam village rose garden and kitchen garden, and were considering these initiatives for their region. They were particularly inspired by their visit to the SHG women working on banana fibre extraction unit.

### Visit by Mr.Ralf Tepel

In July, 2015, Mr. Tepel from KKS visited the project location. He monitored the activities of day care centre at S.Pudur, and students from Ennayiram were also brought to the location. He visited V. Kattupalayam village for familiarization with the federation activities including cashew de-shelling, vermi compost, mushroom unit, goat rearing and floriculture activities. He has participated in the federation meeting at S.Pudur for both farmers and women to discuss the current activities and future prospects. As part of his visit, he reviewed the progress of various project activities in S.Pudur region and he reviewed the presentation on the project “Children Rights and Child Protection in Villupuram District” and interacted with the staff members of this project.

### Visit by Ms.Helga Wilkendorf

Ms. Helga Wilkendorf from KKS Germany Benshium also visited the project in November 2015 for the purpose of assessing project performance. She visited organic farming and income generation activities at Merku Ramapuram village as well as the vegetable garden and vermi compost at demo plot in S.Pudur. She had discussions with SHG leaders, women farmers and federation leaders. She reviewed project documents

and finance at the Administrative Office, Pondicherry. She also interacted with the project team about project progress and challenges faced if any while implementation of project activities.

#### **Visit by Dr. Sigrid:**

Dr. Sigrid, Coordinator Development Cooperation, KKS – Germany and Mr. Suhas Nair, Monitoring Officer, KKF – Coimbatore visited the project villages and interacted with the beneficiaries in October, 2015.

On the first day of the visit, a meeting was organised in Pondicherry for an overview of the project and the progress made in the villages. The second day, the visitors witnessed the various project activities such as Children Parliament, CAC, Eco club, CRCP etc. The CRPC members discussed the issues facing children in their daily life, and how they had raised awareness on various child issues at the village level. The final day of the visit, the team visited various IGP activities including azolla cultivation, fodder plots, feed shop etc. and interacted with the beneficiaries about the impact in their individual lives. At the end of the visit, there was debriefing session with the Project Director and Staff Team.

#### **Visit by Water for People**

In May, 2015, the Country Director of WFP, Mr. Arumugam, accompanied by Sampath and Samrat Gupta, visited the 'Precast Toilet ' production unit and discussed the operation with the technical and staff team. They also witnessed toilet construction in one of the project villages and interacted with the beneficiaries.

Also in May, 2015, East Meets West Foundation, Vietnam made a learning visit to the site and explored the possibilities of replicating the precast toilet production unit.

Mr. Sampath and Samrat made a site visit to Water for People project locations in February, 2016. The purpose of the visit was to explore how to improve, scale up and increase the fabrication and sale of concrete toilet units by collaborating with local vendors and also to check the feasibility of establishing similar production units at village level so as to save money, time and resources.

#### **Visit by CIPLA Foundation**

During March, 2016, Mr. Janardan Pakhare, Manager – CSR of CIPLA Foundation visited all 7 project locations in Chennai. The purpose of the visit was to review and monitor the progress and provide technical guidance to the project team.

Mr. Pakhare interacted with the children, pregnant and lactating mothers and learned about usefulness of the program. The responses from was positive and overwhelming. He spent time and enjoyed presentations by children at the day care centres and Child Friendly Spaces. He also took part in the training programmes on WASH, Child Rights and Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Mullai Nagar and Thiruvalluvar Nagar. At the end he interacted with beneficiaries about their learnings.

#### **Federation Annual General Body Meeting**

Women SHG Federation members have conducted their annual general body meeting on March 16, 2016 at Vellakarai village. During the meeting, they reviewed the progress of the federation, income and expenditure details and future plans. The Project Staff gave a brief about outcomes of the federation in the last financial year. Mr. Daranidaran, Panchayat president from Ramapuram panchayat, Mr. Mahadevan from the Agricultural Department, REAL Mrs. Latha Head Mistress from Koddukanpalayam Panchayat Union Middle School participated and felicitated the annual general body meeting. About 150 farmers and 135 members took pledge which may bring 262 acres under organic agriculture.

#### **Visit by PLAN India**

As part of monitoring CFS project activities and to provide guidance to the project staff, a visit was made by Mr. Venkat and Rajan Vadivelu of PLAN India to the project locations in February, 2016. They visited the CFS at Sempon Nagar and Rangarajapuram slums along with the staff team of REAL. They interacted with the children and gathered feedback about their experience and benefits in attending the centres. A staff meeting was conducted in REAL office, and the visitors advised the staff about reporting requirements and the importance of documenting project accomplishments at regular intervals.

### Visitors from Pondicherry University

In order to learn about the prefabrication of latrines and septic tanks by REAL under Water for People support, a team of professors and lecturers from the Civil Engineering Division of Pondicherry Engineering College, affiliated to Pondicherry University, visited the production unit at Koonimedu in March, 2016. The visitors gained knowledge about the materials, specifications, process and methods of ferro cement precast latrine production.

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## VOLUNTEER SUPPORT DURING THE YEAR

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During the year, a highlight for REAL was hosting of volunteers from various countries and donor agencies. In addition to the financial assistance received from donors, REAL relished support from volunteers who made many valuable contributions to the successful implementation of the programs. The volunteers in their own field of expertise delivered more and better services to the people in the community.

### a. Volunteers from BBP, Germany

Two volunteers, Ms. Eva and Ms. Wibke, provided intensive volunteer service from August, 2015 to March, 2016. They taught English in village schools; engaged children in the day care centre; developed teaching aids for teacher; facilitated basic English classes for the project staff; assisted with reporting, video documentation and case studies; and provided practical support during the relief distribution to flood victims.

### b. Volunteers from Habitat for Humanity

The following volunteers from Habitat for Humanity helped directly in building safe shelter housing in the REAL intervention area. The team of volunteers were actively involved and supported the housing construction process along with the project beneficiaries. They did basement digging and filling, basement concreting, brick work, moving bricks and sand closer to construction site and painting of the shelters.

S.No	# of volunteers	Country	Period	Village where worked
1	12	USA	12 - 22 Aug 2015	Omiper
2	41	Japan	17 - 28 Aug 2015	Omiper
3	15	Japan	3 - 15 Sept 2015	Omiper
4	20	USA	25 Oct to 3 Nov 2015	Omiper
5	51	New Zealand	1 - 7 Nov 2015	Omiper
6	11	USA	15 - 23 Nov 2015	Omiper
7	10	USA	15 - 28 Nov 2015	Omiper
8	35	Abu Dhabi	26 Nov - 5 Dec 2015	Omiper
9	5	USA	29 Nov - 5 Dec 2015	Omiper
10	21	India	21 - 24 Sept 2015	Omiper
11	25	India	11 - 14 Oct 2015	Omiper
12	56	India	14 - 17 Oct 2015	Omiper
13	22	Japan	21 Feb - 2 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam
14	16	USA	27 Feb - 11 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam
15	13	Japan	21 Feb - 2 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam
16	21	Canada	11 - 25 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam

17	23	Canada	15- 23 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam
18	19	Canada	April 2016	Sathanur
19	22	Japan	22 - 29 Feb 2016	Sathanur
20	16	America	29 Feb - 9 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam
21	12	Japan	8 - 12 Mar 2016	Sathanur
22	21	Canada	14 -2 Mar 2016	Chettikuppam
23	23	Canada	16 -23 Mar 2016	

## Internships at REAL

Every year, the REAL organization hosts a group of students, especially those in Social Work specialization, to work as interns for a duration of 4 - 12 weeks. The internships provide an opportunity for students to put into practice and deepen their theoretical knowledge of various developmental programs including child rights, organic farming, water and sanitation, and income generation programs. Internships with REAL offer a chance to learn about developmental perspectives and approaches for strengthening child rights and women empowerment through in-depth orientations, hands on experience, research, training and advocacy. Assignments are customized considering an intern's interest and learning needs.

## OUR PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

