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Punarchith

Annual Report  
2023-2024

# Annual Report 2023-2024



Past our twelfth year of work, we paused to take stock of the year that was and the future that lies ahead. Contingencies; Uncertainties—marked our work and we reckoned with the fact that these were key markers in a larger world. As a team, it was also a time to accept that our responsibilities lie in responding to these many contingencies of nature, economy, society, and social relationships.

How we negotiated these, while sustaining our ethics and values and bearing in mind the future of PUNARCHITH, has been a litmus test for us.



*School children visit Angarike Maala*



*School children visit Angarike Maala*

# Angarike Maala:

## Land restoration, Conservation and Cultivation

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A difficult year for the land. The much-delayed construction left debris, workers' waste, and a largely disrupted maidan area. The drought, with little or no rain from July 2023 onwards meant that not only were the two cultivation seasons poor but the trees manifested water stress. By late February 2024, we were forced to hand water some of the trees, especially the fruit saplings. The coconut trees bore the brunt of continued water stress and many withered by the end of March. We were surprised that the borewell held out until end February, despite the demands made on it for construction. In March, we requested our neighbour to give us some water as the bore well ran dry and we found that it was technically not possible to deepen the well.

**Construction:** The contractor who had promised to complete the work by Mid 2023, stopped work in mid July and restarted negotiations only in August. This despite the fact that we paid him Rs. 11 lakhs more than the amount agreed upon in the contract. A supervisor from the construction company stepped in and assured us that he would complete the work. Getting the specialized labour, the materials, and then supervising the work were all issues that hampered the work. At many points we were also forced to take our own decisions on design and construction material. Overall, it has been a trying time that has stretched the team's capacities, patience, and budget. Our decision to continue with all other programs and activities despite the on-going construction worked well for us and all the programs gained from this continuity.

**Cultivation:** We continued to focus on dry cultivation of local grains but the yields

were very low. The fact that we do not have a contingency irrigation plan or system is a major handicap. The soil is tested periodically and although most parameters show improvement, the organic matter levels are yet to reach cross the point 1 or that of fertility.

**Conservation:** Conservation activities continue on the land. Most of the older forest trees managed to sustain themselves but we noticed severe termite infestation in many. The parched land made it easy for a wild fire to spread out one night. Fortunately, it stopped short of the building but it left a trail of burnt grass across a vast stretch. The 'taragu benki' or 'litter fire' experiment continued over the past year and Vinay has documented details of the changes. Since the experimental plot was severely dry and bereft of much of the earlier grasses and shrubs, we decided to review this experiment. Discussions are on-going as to whether the experiment should continue or not.

**Programs at Angarike Maala:** Over the year, we had varied sessions and visitors. Farmers visited for a session to prepare organic manure and compost. The women from Nagavalli came by during the soil week and in-between. The adolescents from the children program made several visits and discussions on soil, land, modern agriculture and food cultures were held. Between September 19th-15th, 2023, we had our annual 'Soil Week'. We were pleased to have 230 school children, 15 teachers, and 38 farmers visit the site and participate in the demonstrations and discussions. The best compliment came from a school child who said that it was better to be on this land than go site-seeing!



*Photo documentation of Angarike Maala*



*Photo documentation of Angarike Maala*

We continue to work on details to realise Angarike Maala as an 'experiential learning site' in which integrated knowledges and ideas will be drawn on to promote social equity, economic stability and ecological sustainability.

#### **PHOTO DOCUMENTATION OF ANGARIKE**

**MAALA:** It has been several years since we had a professional photo documentation of Angarike Maalaa. Since the drought had devastated the land and the construction has also disrupted the area, we thought this phase of great disruption should also be documented. Dr. M. Vivek of Bengaluru kindly consented to undertaking this documentation at non-commercial rates. He came with an assistant, Akash, and photographed the land during various times of the day. Some key photographs from Dr. Vivek:



*Activity on leadership*



*ILP session in progress*



# Integrated Learning Program

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This year, we decided to have the ILP in a modular format so that different segments of the program could cater to different groups. Between July 2023 and February 2024, we conducted four key modules: Ecology and Agriculture (21 days); Climate Change (6 days); Democracy and Leadership (6 days); and on Land Restoration and Conservation (6 days). A special one-day module on democracy was held for Soliga youth from the Hanur area. In total, between all these programs, we had 130 youth participate. The sessions on democracy and leadership conducted in Mysuru (at the KSOU premises with Mallige as key organizing anchor) and the one at Mangaluru (at St.Fatima's Retreat House) were special in that youth with very diverse backgrounds were able to participate in these sessions. We were also supported by key resource persons from these regions. On December (2nd and 3rd) 2023, the module on climate change was held at the Sumana Sangama farm in Dharwad and Dr. Sanjeev Kulkarni and Gopal Dabade were special resource persons. Some of the youth participants in the Climate Change and Democracy and Leadership courses were engaged and interested youth who were keen to receive more training from Punarchith. So, based on our review of their interests and capabilities, we identified 12 of them who we hope will join us in a 'training of trainers' course that we plan for the period 2024-25.



*Adolescent group visits Tumkur*



*Open class in progress*

# ‘Graam Sethu’ or Village Bridge Program

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‘Graam Sethu’ was an off-shoot from the ILP and was meant to provide continued support and mentoring to the ILP alumni. For this year, we had a total of eight youth and three middle-aged ladies who worked in their villages. Geeta and Yathish, with guidance from Chitra and Prashan continued to work on a range of issues in Yellachihalli and Kodihatti villages of Gubbi taluk, Tumkur. They not only continued to hold classes on environment in the local government schools but also deepened their activities with a group of children. Lending support to the children’s learning with evening support classes, working with them to conserve the tree saplings that they had planted, and introducing them to issues such as making organic compost, developing seed nurseries, and learning issues related to climate change were some of the additional activities. The children also upload short videos (in which they enact out various themes from their work) to a Youtube channel. Their interest and commitment to conserving local ecology was evident when they challenged the local electricity department’s decision to fell some of the trees that they had nurtured and had the department re-route the electricity lines and saved the trees. The team developed an anti-plastic drive and shared the information with several villages and the watermen also joined them. They also developed and enacted a street play on climate change and the need for resource conservation. Geeta and Yathish also supported the women from the two villages to get their job cards and to apply for MNREGA work during the 2023 drought.

In Kullur, Mahendra continued to work with the local youth by conducting evening classes for them and working with them in conserving

local trees. In addition, he has been active in supporting the residents to claim benefits from the local panchayat. As a participant in the Assembly and Parliament election campaigns, he worked to get voter ids for many people and also engaged in discussions, campaigns and training. Mahendra received training in Bengaluru to develop social media messages and he contributed significantly to developing and disseminating social media messages during the election campaigns.

Three women, Rajeswari, Puttamma, and Sakamma, joined the Graam Sethu as catalysts for village-level democracy work. They not only mobilized people for discussions but also enabled women to get their job cards for MNREGA work and initiated home gardens. The five democracy catalysts from various parts of Karnataka continued their work on gathering data, engaging with discussions, and supporting people to get their voter ids and to go to the polling stations during the elections. They all also provided key information that helped a larger state-level network to develop an assessment of the Members of Parliament (17th Lok Sabha) from Karnataka.



Democracy workshop at Mysuru



Discussion on democracy in Mangalore



Discussion on democracy in Mysuru



Whither our Republic Public Lecture by Advocate B.T Venkatesh

# Democracy:

## Outreach and Public Engagement

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Given that we consider the sharp democratic deficits in our nation and society to be one of the forms of ‘emergencies’ (in addition to that of inequalities, and climate change), we decided to engage with the larger civil society networks in Karnataka in order to support awareness and better options for the 2023 Assembly elections in Karnataka and for the 2024 Parliamentary elections in the nation. We participated in intense and in-depth discussions and activities in both Bangalore and at the district level, especially in Chamarajanagar. At the district level, Veerbhadranaika and the team members took considerable time and effort to conduct assessment polls, awareness at various community levels, and helped conduct several public meetings across the district. In this work, we were very ably supported by Smt Puttamma, Rajeswari, and Shri Venkatraju, Abraham DeSilva, Muthaiah and other seniors in the district. Some of our ILP alumni also joined us in this effort. Team members Chandrakant and Mahendra participated in a social media training camp and helped put out several local content social media messages. Vasavi participated in several discussions and workshops in Bengaluru and elsewhere and also engaged with meeting political representatives, retired civil servants, and several scholars and civil society members to discuss election campaign strategies and to develop indicators and reports to assess the performance of elected representatives and the government. On January 27th, 2024, we organized a public lecture on ‘Whither the Republic?’ which was delivered by advocate B.T. Venkatesh at a hall in Chamarajanagar. Distribution of handouts, online discussions with other groups in the nation, conduct of

periodic review meetings etc were all met with appreciation by several people including political party members. These activities enabled us to meet a large section and range of people, especially in Chamarajanagar district. We hope this work will also enable some of our youth to internalize some critical and genuine ideas and practices about democracy and that they will in the future become both community and large elected leaders themselves.



*Women's day at Nagavalli*



*ALF Team at Punarchith*

# Anti-social Boycott:

## Action Research and Out-reach

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Based on many years of observations and discussions with several aggrieved families we decided to engage with some public intervention to address the issue of social boycott of persons and couples who were in inter-caste marriages. The practice entailed not only ostracism of couples when one of them was from a 'scheduled caste' but also the imposition of hefty fines on the families, performance of purificatory rituals, and a ban on family relations etc. The issue is particularly vexatious among the Uppara, a 'Backward Class' community in Chamarajanagar district. We met with the district legal cell, the local MLA (also an Uppara leader), the Superintendent of Police, and with several caste leaders. When all of these seemed to lead nowhere, we contacted the Alternative Law Forum (ALF) team from Bengaluru and they put together a team that visited Chamarajanagar and conducted a 'fact-finding' review on the issue of social boycott among the Uppara. On March 15th and 16th 2024, Poorna led a team of four women which included both lawyers and community specialists. The five of them broke into two groups and conducted interviews and discussions with aggrieved families, couples, yajamanas, and also met the Superintendent of Police and the Judge of the District Legal Cell. On the 15th, Muthu organised a meet with some of the key Uppara Yajamanas at Chamarajanagar and the team met them also. They are now working on a report which they will share with us. They also joined us on the 15th to prepare for the women's day celebration.



*Hakki Pakka Balaga team performs street play on Climate Change*



*Session in classroom*



# Climate change:

## Advocacy and out-reach

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We continued the work that was started in 2018 and which had been stalled during the Covid years of 2020-22. We made presentations about trends and impact of Climate Change to the District Administrators and to the State Institute of Rural Development in Mysuru. The D.C, Ms. Shilpa Nag, was both interested and supportive and in August 2023 came to our Nagavalli Learning Centre for a presentation and discussion. Members of the panchayat joined this discussion and assured us that they would engage with us. However, after this they did not engage much with us including in developing a plan to restore the local big lake. As a way to get Nagavalli's residents interested in the issue, we organised a 'Lake Festival' or 'kere habba' on June 3rd. Two processions of youth, including our ILP participants, went around the village and requested people to gather at the lake. At 6 pm, we all met at the lake and using a sound system some of the people spoke about their memories of the lake and Punarchith members called for people to take care of the lake. Some of the children sang a song and later the whole group lit candles and placed them near the lake bed. In addition to this, Badri developed a play called, 'Chinnada Kere' or 'Golden Lake' and the children from the Saturday program practiced it. It was performed on Children's Day and several parents were appreciative of the way their children engaged with the issues. In June 2023, Sindhuja who had undertaken a documentation of the Nagavalli watershed, presented her final report and a large hand drawn map of the watershed to us.

Given worsening trends including the onset of a severe drought from June 2023 onwards, we continued to document ways in which climate change makes life more adverse. Loss of crops, including the staple grain, ragi, and increase

in periodic illness posed challenges to basic living. Observing such trends, we have been working on proposing a 'decentralised climate change action plan' (DeCCaP) which will enable all habitats to receive eco-specific restoration and climate resilience support. P.K Sajan, as our consultant helped develop the outline for this and he highlighted the differences between the national, state and district level strategies. We hope to work on this over the coming years and to have this deployed as a major advocacy and policy perspective.

As a way to broaden such concerns with local people, especially youth, we met with the Dept of Education administrators and received permission to conduct sessions on climate change in various high schools and colleges. Over the year, we conducted these sessions in five high schools and two colleges in the district. The sessions included a broad overview of the reasons for climate change, details of trends in the district and an activity-based exercise in which the youth assessed the ecological conditions in their own villages and settlements. This exercise has now been made into a 'tool kit' to assess climate change and can be used in various pedagogic transactions.

In addition to these activities, we also had Nagraj Adve's small booklet on climate change translated into Kannada (by K.P.Suresh) and it was published as a Punarchith publication. We have distributed copies of this booklet during our varied training programs and some of it has been sold by the publisher.



*Video documentation at Baanwadi*



*Youth and elders from Kanneri colony, practicing for the event at IME*

# AADHI:

## Intergenerational knowledge transfer among the Solega

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This program was initiated by Dr. Samira Agnihotri in response to concerns by community members to address the serious loss of knowledge and identity among Soliga youth. Its various outputs and work indicate high potential for co-creating a repository of Soliga knowledge and for at least some of the youth to regain their own identities and knowledge systems. Lakshmi M joining as field co-ordinator and Priyam Vadaliya as the design consultant for the program has been integral to its development. Vasavi, Veerabhadra Naika, Sundramma and Vinay have been key advisors, and Dr C Madegowda and Dr Aung Si have provided invaluable support as advisors.

**Documentation and dissemination of traditional knowledge:** Documentation of songs, stories, recipes, and festivals continues, as does the quarterly review of the taragu benki and comparison plots at Angarike Maala by youth and elders. Interactions on the WhatsApp group has also increased, with youth posting queries on Solega names of plants and insects to each other. The youth team has been engaging with school children on Sundays, to conduct games and activities about their traditional knowledge using the alphabet chart. So far, they have conducted 7 sessions in 3 podus, and 12-16 children between the ages of 4 to 14 have joined each session. The team is grateful to P. Vasu and WELL Labs for the reportage of their work in the Hindu ([link](#)).

The youth also collected 180 traditional Solega names, which are closely linked to the community's identity, and are rapidly being

replaced by mainstream names.

Three new videos were uploaded on the YouTube channel, which has 549 subscribers as of May 2024.

The team collected phrases describing symptoms of diseases and ill health according to the Solega, and a list of human body part names in their language. This list will not only aid in bridging a communication gap between doctors and public health workers/researchers who work in the BR Hills, but will also be useful for taking patients' medical histories, and can be used to highlight how the indigenous view/lived experience of illness can differ from the medical point of view, and why it is important to be aware of this. A chart of the names of human body parts along with the list of disease names and various expressions for ill health were shared with doctors, interns, nurses and public health researchers (35 in all) at a meeting facilitated by Dr NS Prashanth, Director, and Dr Tanya Seshadri, Assistant Director-Education, of the Institute of Public Health, at BR Hills on 28th October. The doctors expressed their interest in facilitating such interactions across teams every few months, and would like to collaborate to publish this and place it in the larger context of cultural sensitivity frameworks which are now mandatory for those working with indigenous communities in any field.

Dr C Madegowda met with the District Tribal Welfare Officer and requested that the chart representing the sounds of the Solega alphabet be sent to all 23 ashram shaalas in



*Solega elders and youth from the Aadhi programme and adivasi youth from Gudalur at Angarike Maala during the August event organised by Punarchith*



*The Aadhi youth conducting interactive sessions during the Sunday children's programme*

Chamarajanagar district.

**Events:** On 31st May, Lakshmi, Nagesh and Rajamma, joined by some of their Adivasi friends from Gudalur, travelled to Kotagiri to witness an Iruliga dance-drama known as “Doddu Aatam”. Doddu, which refers to the Gaur, is one of several words shared between the Solega and Iruliga languages, and Rajamma has recorded a similar aatam with Solega elders in Kullur and Baanwadi. It is called “Halsina hannina aata” in these areas.

In continuation with the Aadhi programme’s goal of facilitating an exchange of ideas and experiences of Adivasi youth from multiple communities, we invited our friends from Vidyodaya, Ashwini and The Real Elephant Collective in Gudalur, to spend a couple of days at Punarchith and BR Hills. 16 youth from the Betta Kurumba, Paniya, Kaatunayakan and Mullu Kurumba communities along with Suganya Sankaran, who is a facilitator at the Vidyodaya school, visited us from the 11-13 of August. The youth discussed several issues of navigating the mainstream and their own identities as Adivasi youth in current times, and sang and danced together. On the 12th, Punarchith organised a special event to felicitate around 30 elders and community leaders who have engaged with the programme since its inception. We introduced the idea of a digital repository of traditional knowledge and Priyam Vadaliya, our design consultant, shared a trial version that was shared with the community members, and was well-received. They also visited Angarike Maala and not only appreciated the mixed cropping, rain water harvesting and taragu benki demonstration plot, but also gave vital feedback on the appropriate protocols for conducting their traditional fire management practices. On the 13th, all the youth travelled to BR Hills and visited ATREE,

Adivasi’s honey processing unit, and VGKK’s school and hospital. They also had a very insightful discussion with Dr C Madegowda on the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in Chamarajanagar District, and on the role of community led organisations like the Zilla Budakattu Abhivrudhi Sangha here, and the Adivasi Munetra Sangam in Gudalur.

On 12th September, the Aadhi youth attended the Adivasi Adhikara Diwas celebrations in Chamarajanagara and introduced the programme to everyone present there. Some of the youth also joined the Birsa Munda Jayanti (Jan Jaatiya Gaurav Divas) celebration event at Chamarajanagar on the 15th of November.

In March 2024, a team from WWF-India’s Western Ghats Nilgiris Landscape (Wildlife and Habitats) programme visited the BR Hills to learn more about the Aadhi programme and the Sangha’s work on livelihoods and Community Forest Rights under the Forest Rights Act. Their Assistant Coordinator, Tiju C Thomas had met Samira and Dr C Madegowda at the National Workshop on Community Conserved Areas in Bangalore in October, and had expressed an interest in building collaborations as they faced similar challenges working with youth from the Kadar, Malayar and other Adivasi communities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The core Aadhi team participated in the discussions and Suganya Sankaran from Vidyodaya school also travelled from Gudalur to be part of the meeting. Dr Madegowda gave a presentation on sacred sites mapping, CFR and livelihoods. The conversations were engaged and powerful, and have given us much food for thought and directions for the way ahead.

Mahendra, Rajamma and Lakshmi along with 6 elders from Kanneri colony were in Bangalore from the 1 st to the 4 th of November to participate in the Forests of Life festival at the



*Festival at BR Hills*

Azim Premji University. It was their very first experience giving presentations to hundreds of school children, and though they were anxious the first time, they soon became comfortable at handling the crowd and answering questions. Lakshmi talked about sacred sites, Rajamma about traditional medicine, and Mahendra about the changing livelihoods of forest dwelling communities. There were also several sessions where the youth and elders shared their traditional songs and dances with the visiting school children. The event was also covered by several newspapers:

- [Azim Premji varsity event brings forests to life; documents biodiversity, Adivasi perspectives](#)
- [At Bengaluru's climate festival, children explored forests](#)
- [Celebrating forests, documenting hope](#)
- [Azim Premji University unveils second edition of its annual climate festival](#)

**Important Updates:** Vinay was selected for the Coexistence Fellowship Programme, and along with his Solega Fellowship partner, Mahesha J, attended two months of introductory coursework at the University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU) in Bangalore. They plan to work on the Role of the Community's Traditional Fire Knowledge in Ecological Nurturance for Wildlife and Humans.

In February, some of the youth from Aadhi participated in the first of a series of monthly training sessions on Digital Media Literacy, organised under the "Solega FreeDEM" programme by IdeoSync Media Combine. The trainings were held at ATREE, and they felt that the sessions were useful for them to learn how to navigate the internet and improve their photo and video making skills.

Dr Ankila Hiremath, fire and invasive species expert and Adjunct Faculty at ATREE, was invited to review the data and report of the three years of demonstration events of taragu benki at Angarika Maala. After sharing this with everyone at Punarchith, it was agreed to continue the demonstration of 'taragu benki' or litter fire for this year.

**Challenges:** Sustained engagement continued to be a challenge as youth seek financial stability, and many have said they would stay on if the programme provided a salary. In the meantime, the core team of 6-7 young people met with Dr C Madegowda to discuss these challenges, and finalised a protocol for accepting new recruits, which included putting together a list of guidelines. They decided to have a one-month probation period, after which the team will evaluate their motivations and commitment to the program before onboarding. March to May were extremely dry, and the youth decided to document near their homes until the pre-monsoon showers come, for fear of being implicated in any fires that might occur in the Tiger Reserve.



*Children perform a play on untouchability*



*Workshop on graphic art*



# Aniketana:

## Children's program

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We continued with the Saturday children's program which is also called 'Aniketana'. This year we were particularly pleased to see that some of the children completed high school and joined the local college. Vinay had initiated and nurtured a small group of them to be interested in ecological issues and they undertook Sunday morning bird watching walks in the area. Based on their interests he had encouraged them to apply for a fellowship at the Mysore zoo and two of the youth, Ambika and Vikas, spent Sundays over six months participating in an eco-awareness program conducted by the zoo administration. In April, seventeen of the youth, including the ones from Tumkur, Kullur, and Nagavalli went to the Adventure Sports Training Centre (IIFAA) at Honnemardu and participated in an intense life-skills training program. Between May 18-20th, Suma and Sucheetra conducted the annual Summer Camp for children at Nagavalli and approximately 40 children attended the program. This year, based on discussions, Suma and Sucheetra also initiated 'socio-emotional intelligence' sessions for the adolescents and these are conducted once every month. These sessions have helped all the adolescents to gain confidence, become responsible and accountable and to handle everyday varied transactions in everyday life. On August 2nd, 2023, Ita Mehrotra and Nishant, artists from Delhi, engaged the youth in a session on graphic arts and self-representation. As part of encouraging and fostering communal harmony in the community we initiated an activity that was initiated by ANHAD (New Delhi). Children from different religious communities were encouraged to visit each other's homes and to

sing a song and or share sweets and flowers. The response to this was overwhelming and many parents appreciated this. Since the conduct of this, we now have more children from the Muslim community attending the Saturday program. Continuing this, we had a local theatre person, Kiran, work with the children to write and enact a play related to social issues. The children focused on questioning the practice of untouchability and wrote and enacted this play on January 26th. Drawing from the Endowment Funds, we continue to provide scholarships to seven deserving students.



*Singing competition*



*Saraswathi performs*



*One lady in burkha speaks*

# Community out-reach

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As residents of Nagavalli village, we have felt compelled to engage in some community out-reach programs. While the garden program focuses on promoting home gardens and seed saving among women, we have gradually added new activities in responding to people's needs and requests. Extending the food and medical support given to some elders and children from the various Endowment Funds, we are now developing a more comprehensive approach for local women.

Called, "Panch Payana' (Five Journeys), we are trying to go beyond the excessive finance or micro-finance linked to economic empowerment. Observing that integration into the micro-finance circuits has only made women debtors, the 'five journey' approach will highlight (1) personal growth and capacity-building (2) social awareness (3) well-being that includes health and economic issues (4) democracy and leadership and (5) environment and sustainability responsibilities among women. Basic discussions and reflexive exercises among the women of Nagavalli indicate some significant positive changes and we hope to sustain this over the coming years.

This year as part of promoting communal harmony, we organized a series of song competitions in five government schools in the district. Young girls and boys selected songs related to harmony and shared living and sang these in front of judges which included well-known theatre and music personnel from the district. Five children received cash prizes for their performance and all the children received certificates.

As part of our out-reach with women, we conducted two key programs this year. On

October 19th, Du Saraswathi, a well-known theatre person performed her one-woman play, 'Sann Thimmi Ramayana', as part of the celebration of International Farm Women's day at Nagavalli. The women were very appreciative of the play and its women and humanism-centred messages. Many of the women also spoke about the changes that they had initiated in their own lives. On the 20th, Du Saraswathi also engaged with women from several villages in the Yelandur area and a small prize distribution was held for women who had developed good gardens.



*Harvesting at Angarike Mala*



*Seed sorting*



*Basket of seeds*

# Seed Program

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Fluctuating and unseasonal rains in 2021-22 and then the prolonged drought in 2023 meant that we were not able to produce much vegetable or grain seeds. The only produce which we harvested in abundance were tubers such as sweet potato, colacacia, and elephant foot yam. In addition, some amounts of turmeric and mango ginger were harvested from the kitchen garden in Nagavalli. Many of the women were also not able to grow or save seeds since the drought was severe. Sunita Rao and Santhosh Naik from Vanastree continued to provide key inputs for the seed saving and conserving activity. They also initiated the development of a 'seed catalog' and a copy of this was submitted in November 2023.



Honneru sales



Women at KVK

# Honneru:

## Producers' collective

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This program which was to be part of our attempts to have a 'circular economy' and for the ILP youth and Nagavalli's women to have additional income has faced several challenges. Since our marketing efforts have been limited, the production and sales of food items have also been limited. Only three key outlets are ordering some of the products regularly. In an effort to cater to women's interests, we had Brinda and Mamata come in from Mysuru as volunteers to train the women in tailoring and embroidery. However the quality of the work remained very poor and not many products were made. Special sales events were held at Prakrti, Mysuru and a one-day sale was also held at the district administrative office. In January 2024, the women from Nagavalli and some other villages in the vicinity went for a day's training in making millet products to the KVK in Haradanahalli. This year all the members of Honneru, including all those who had provided labour, received bonus from the profits that had accrued over the past two years.







## PC team

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The whole team—full time and part-time personnel, advisors, consultants and Trustees met in April 2023 and reviewed the year’s work and made plans for the future. A key issue was to facilitate the transition for Vasavi from everyday engagement to that of being a Trustee with only an advisory role. Balachandran anchored a discussion and also developed a word cloud for the key responsibilities, activities and challenges that Punarchith faced. In September 2023, Samira Agnihotri wrote to Vasavi and Sunita Rao requesting a grievance addressal process. On October 31st, a meeting was held with all the team members and the Trustees, and the issues that Samira had raised and Vinay’s resignation (without due notice) were discussed. Sunita Rao offered to anchor an ‘Organisational Development Review’ with an external reviewer. The selected reviewer conducted a detailed discussion with the full-time members in Nagavalli and also had telephone conversations with all the other members. However, he did not provide a report despite Sunita Rao’s frequent requests and was incommunicado for several months. In February 2024, Sunita Rao requested that she be discharged from this responsibility and Vasavi and Balachandran continued to pursue the completion of the report. Although the reviewer did respond and promised to complete and submit the report by end of March, he did not do so. So, we were compelled to terminate this review process. Based on further discussions with the team, new parameters for assessing performance and for continued individual growth are now being developed along with a new personnel policy.



# Acknowledgment

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# Acknowledgment

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