



VIDIYAL Centre for Social Interaction

Strengthening the Rural Economy since 1986

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VIDIYAL is a Voluntary organization working since 1986 to promote Agriculture and Women development in the Bodinayakannur, Chinnamanur, and Uthamapalayam blocks of Theni District, Tamil Nadu, India. The word "VIDIYAL" means "DAWN" in Tamil; thus, VIDIYAL strives to enable poor and marginalized rural communities to socially, politically, and economically empower themselves. VIDIYAL is organizing the people for collective action through sustainable, community-based Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Joint Liability Groups (JLGs), Farmers Producers Companies (FPC) facilitate access to development programs and skill workshops, lobby and advocate for the rights of rural communities, and coordinate with local NGOs, Banks, Institutions, and Governments. VIDIYAL has been working in five overlapping focus areas: women's development, health, environmental sustainability, education, and legal aid. In all of its initiatives, VIDIYAL leverages the potential of technology to provide life-long learning opportunities for rural community members.

VIDIVELLI, the Federation of Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

In 1996 VIDIYAL women's SHGs. VIDIYAL encourages rural women to organize themselves around savings and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to improve their decision-making power and enable them to create their own development strategies for addressing their socio-economic challenges. The SHGs were organized as Village Level Federations (VLFs) in 1997 and Panchayat Level Federations (PLFs) in 1998. In 2000 the promoted 250 SHGs came together with the encouragement of VIDIYAL to form a federation called VIDIVELLI.

VIDIVELLI provides guidance and counseling to ensure the success of the SHGs, strengthening them by continuing to



Vidivelli Federation Meeting

liaison with banks, government departments, community-based organizations, NGOs, and other institutions. VIDIVELLI conducts many activities to promote women's development. They encourage education among female children, campaign against the negligence of female children, encourage social security schemes, disseminate information to conserve natural resources, facilitate the growth of women's Social-enterprises, manage fair price shops, offer community water purification services, and provide guidance and counseling to address women's issues.

VIDIYAL's Ongoing Projects

1. Life-Long Learning for Farmers (L3F)

Since 2007 Vidiyal is working with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) an intergovernmental body of Commonwealth countries that encourages the development and sharing of information through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for the promotion of Agriculture and its allied activities.

India is an Agriculture Country. Agriculture is the mainstay of Indian Economy and about 65% of Indian population depends directly on agriculture. Livestock sector contributes about 27% of the G.D.P. from agriculture and allied activities. Livestock plays an important role in the socio-economic life of India. With a large human population and more than 250 million economically strong potential consumers, the domestic demand for these food products are increasing rapidly, the demand often exceeding the supply. India possesses the second largest livestock population in the world.

Animal husbandry is an integral component of agriculture supporting livelihood of more than two-thirds of the rural population. It is one of the rapidly expanding sectors in the State, playing a significant role in the rural economy by providing gainful employment to a large number of small, marginal farmers and landless agricultural laborers and raising their economic status. Livestock form an important resource next to family labor for the landless agricultural laborers and is the only major asset for them.

Human resource development (HRD) is a major challenge in the rural and agricultural sector due to declining extension system. With one extension officer for more than 5000 farmers, the didactic mode of training adopted by government and development agencies will be inadequate to reach millions of farm and rural families. The transaction cost of training and the opportunity costs of the families in attending the training are very high. These limitations in HRD poses challenge to the rural economy.

With the support of Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada, VIDIYAL has been promoting the Credit based Mobile learning among the Farmers. VIDIYAL is also up scaling the experience and learning of L3F with 15 NGO partners. With Different Stakeholders adopting the “WIN – WIN” framework to make learning for sustainable development and focus its efforts on building models. It developed some innovative models using a range of approaches and technologies to bring the sustainable development through L3F which will enhance livelihoods and lead to the empowerment of the farmers. Learning can empower citizens to take greater responsibility for their own well-being and that of their societies and the environment

Open Distance learning (ODL) system has the potential to bring education to anyone anywhere at any time in a stress free learning environment. Because of its learner friendly features and flexibilities, its relevance in the present circumstances has been recognized by a large section of society. ODL is a strategic move to open the doors of education and skill improvement to **anyone** who wants to improve him/herself to a better quality of life. There are no restrictions. The proposed project is directly relevant to India's development priorities.

The present interim report provides the details as per the points indicated in the current agreement.

ODL and Voice mail and other ICT based learning

The ICT based delivery systems has huge potential to promote self directed learning, technology mediated lifelong learning of farmers, such as Voice mails, Web based, Video conferencing, VCD, and print based learning methods. ODL for rural farmers creates an opportunity to provide increased and equitable access to update knowledge and necessary skill building. Mobile technology based learning have better capability in terms of technology support and human capacity, showed greater availability, consistency in the provision of learner support. In terms of cost it is obvious mobile phones are relatively cheap compared with other ICT based devices used for open and distance learning, the low cost involved in the method provided more scope for sustainability and scalability.

The Details of ODLs given are:

Voice Messages		ODLs in Multimedia DVD
Subject	Numbers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration of Producer company 2. Formation of producers company and produces 3. Functioning of Farmers Producer Company. 4. Roles and Responsibilities of Shareholders 5. Roles and Responsibility of Directors 6. Roles and Responsibility of CEO. 7. Running Meat Shop. 8. Conservation of Water 9. Preserving Soil Health 10. Infrastructures for a Village Meat Shop . 11. Meat preparation and processing 12. Produces and Formation of FPC
Goat	133	
Milch Animal	121	
Health	63	
General	86	
Agriculture	32	
Environment	9	
FPC	200	
Total	644	

Activities of L3F :

1.Strengthen the capacity of 15 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) operating at district level for the replication of L3F activities - and reaching an additional 4,000 farmers.

2.Build the capacity of 5 Farmers Producers Company (FPC) in L3F and enterprise management with Partner NGOs and NABARD.

3.Influence the policies and programmes of financial institutions through review meetings with banks vis-à-vis Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) and NABARD.

4.Upscale L3F with the RSETI and District Level Bankers Committee (DLBC) of Theni District as well as the State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC).

5.Build the capacity of the leaders from the Women Goat Rearer's Company (WGRC) in hygienic meat production and marketing through open and distance learning (ODL).

6.Enable WGRC access equity grant fund from Small Farmer’s Agri-business Consortium (SFAC). For the Mobile based Credit learning totally 4179 Farmers including 234 men farmers and 3945 women farmers are linked for Credit during the reporting period . Bank loan Rs.701.66 Lakhs were given through various Banks.

L3F Experience sharing;

	
<p>VANI consultation meeting on 9,10-9.15 at New Delhi</p>	<p>Heifer International workshop on 14,15-3-2016 at Bhopal</p>
	
<p>NABARD's workshop in Hand in Hand at Kancheepuram</p>	<p>Block Level Bankers Meeting in Theni District</p>

2. THENI DISTRICT FARMERS GOAT PRODUCER COMPANY LIMITED

The movement of Producer Company was initiated with an objective of providing livelihood support and economic benefits to small and marginal, and to encourage their participation in emerging high-value markets with prime focus on exports and the unfolding modern retail sector in India. A Farmers' producer company can be seen as a hybrid between private companies and cooperative societies. The producer-company concept is aimed to combine the efficiency of a company with the 'spirit' of traditional cooperatives. Producer companies aim to integrate smallholders into modern supply networks minimizing transaction and coordination costs, while benefiting from economies of scale. They are run and owned by farmers, financially facilitated by the government or donor agencies, and managed by professionals. The concept of producer companies is still in its infancy in the agricultural sector and slowly capturing attention of farmers in India.



Managing Director Mr.K.Kasiraj receives the Share Certificate from the District Collector.

Theni District Farmers Goat Producer Company Limited, a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 with the support of NABARD, Covenant Centre for Development (CCD), Madurai is aimed at promotion of interests' of women Farmers. The shares of the Company are owned by Producers who work for the mutual-benefit and with the intention of sharing the profits and a holistic growth of the Company. The Company traces back its origin to 13th December 2013 in association with Aharam Traditional Crop Producer Company Limited (ATCPCL) facilitated by the Covenant Centre for Development (CCD), Madurai for creating a common platform for marketing its produce.

The THENI DISTRICT FARMERS GOAT PRODUCER COMPANY LIMITED was registered and Officially launched on 5th January by Mr.Venkatachalam, District Collector, Theni and Mr.Raveendran, General Manager, NABARD. Share Certificates are also given to the FPC Shareholders. All the Share holders are immensely happy on receiving their Share certificate from the District Collector and GM NABARD. The Function promoted esteem among the Government Officials. Now 1050 women farmers paid Rs.1000/- each as their share. They were also going to apply to get Rs.10 Lakhs as their Equity Grant from Small Farmers Agricultural Consortium (SFAC), The Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India.

3. Mobile for Good (M4G) :

VODAFONE FOUNDATION AND NASSCOM FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE VIDİYAL AS ONE OF THE FIVE WINNERS FOR ‘MOBILE FOR GOOD AWARDS 2015’.

Vodafone Foundation in partnership with NASSCOM Foundation (through NASSCOM Social Innovation Forum) announced the winners for this year’s edition of its flagship initiative ‘**Mobile for Good Awards**’ at a grand event in Delhi. Committed to mobilizing social change by leveraging the power and potential of the mobile technology, the **Mobile for Good awards** acknowledge and support ideas and concepts from NGO/NFPs that effectively and efficiently empower communities and change lives in their own unique way.

This year, 12 winning innovations were recognized across two categories – ‘**Leading Change Maker – NPO**’ and ‘**Leading Change Maker – For Profit**’. Innovative mobile driven solutions in four critical areas of **Health, Education, Agriculture & Environment and Women Empowerment & Inclusive Development** were selected from both the categories. This year, a special award was also given to the best **Government led innovative mobile solution**.

The five winning NPOs, were also **awarded INR 1.2 million each** and will be mentored by the best in the industry to expand and upscale their capacity, improve project monitoring and enhance impact evaluation of their projects.

Project: Enhancing Sustainable Livelihood of Rural Women through Mobile based Lifelong Learning: An initiative by VIDİYAL to cater to the needs of farmers and improve community health, besides women empowerment.

The project envisages promoting mobile services with the concept of lifelong learning for farmers. VIDİYAL will develop a network of around 2000 mobile learners to promote corporate literacy of the learners and shareholders of the producer company.

To meet the requirement of the learners the following list of learning materials will be developed

1. Develop 150 Need based Voice messages on Corporate Literacy.
2. Enrol 2000 FPC Learners through Mobile.
3. Conduct FPC focused group Discussions in 18 Villages.
4. Organize 9 Facilitation meetings with Stakeholders.
5. Develop 13 ODLs on FPC in Multimedia CDs.
6. Conduct 10 monthly review meetings with the FPC Partners.
7. Submit 5 Monthly reports.

4. Community Drinking Water Purification Plant

A self-sustaining community drinking water purification plant was began in 2008 at the VIDİYAL office campus. It is managed by the self-help group enterprises. It is successfully being run with the support of the members of VIDIVELLI and the general public in the surrounding villages. 5000 liters of water are supplied to members each day. The provision of clean drinking water has reduced health problems, relieved women of some of the burden of fetching clean water, and given women more time to devote to other activities.

5. National Environmental Awareness Campaign on Climate Change

Since 1996 VIDIYAL has been organizing the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC) with the support of The Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India through the CPR Foundation and the Chennai Peace Trust. This year we conducted the Awareness Campaign to the Farmers, Youth, School children. The activities of promoting Kitchen Gardening, Making compost from the Waste, tree plantation activities, etc. Nearly 200 Farmers and 500 School Children took participation in the program.

6. Women Legal Conciliation and Mediation Centre

VIDIYAL helped establish, and continues to maintain, a legal guidance and counseling centre. The Women Guidance and counseling Centre was initially established with the High Court of Chennai in 1997. The Munisiff-cum-Magistrate assigns an advocate to the centre. Every Saturday, a lawyer from the local court comes to VIDIYAL to help people with their legal problems, and to assist them in filing a case if necessary. VIDIYAL has also helped set up paralegal counseling centers through Tamil Nadu, where local women are trained by local courts as paralegals who can provide advice to their communities. VIDIYAL has also assisted in the establishment of Women Police Stations, to encourage women to report cases of domestic violence and sexual assault.

7. Community Health

VIDIYAL promotes community health initiatives through campaigns on HIV/AIDS awareness, anemia awareness, and maternal and child health awareness. They conduct workshops in schools to educate young boys and girls on proper nutrition, hygiene, health management, and disease prevention. Yoga and naturopathy workshops were conducted for youth and rural women to promote healthy living.

8. Youth Welfare: Vocational Skill Development

Since 1991, VIDIYAL has given vocational skill development training to adolescent girls and boys to improve their self-employment opportunities. These need-based skills training sessions are provided for a variety of trades.

9. Honors and Awards

- **The Manthan Award was given to VIDIYAL on December 3, 2011.**
- **VIDIYAL received third place for the year 2012 for the ICT based activities in WIN awards.**

- **VIDIVYAL** also received the **mBillionth Award** for its **Life-Long learning for Farmers (L3F)** initiatives.
- Received **Common Nexus Award** from **Commonwealth Country Head** in **June 2013**.
- **ICT Led Social Innovation** by a **Non Profit Organization VIDIYAL, Theni Dt.Tamilnadu** Won the **NSIF Award** for the year **2015**.
- **VODAFONE FOUNDATION AND NASSCOM FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE VIDIYAL AS ONE OF THE FIVE WINNERS FOR ‘MOBILE FOR GOOD AWARDS 2015’.**
- **Project :** **Enhancing Sustainable Livelihood of Rural Women through Mobile based Lifelong Learning: An initiative by VIDIYAL to cater to the needs of farmers and improve community health, besides women empowerment**



10. Supporters

VIDIYAL would like to express heartfelt gratitude for the contributions provided by the supporters. VIDIYAL looks forward to welcoming the same level of support in future years.

FUNDING SUPPORTERS	Networkers, CO-NGOs and CBOs	TECHNICAL SUPPORTERS
<p><u>GOVERNMENT</u> NABARD, Chennai ICTD, GOI, New Delhi NISG, Hyderabad TNAU, Coimbatore</p> <p><u>NGO</u> Anarde Foundation, Gujarat PEACE Trust, Dindigul TNVHA, Chennai DEEPS, Dharmapuri</p> <p><u>FOREIGN</u> Commonwealth of Learning, Canada Melania Foundation, The Netherlands UNDP, India Office, New Delhi. CIDA, Canada through Guelph University, Canada Mrs. Margaret Wyndorps of German Indian Society Ms. Jade Chong Smith, Canada.</p>	<p>VANI, New Delhi, CNRI, New Delhi, TNVHA, Chennai.</p> <p>VIDIVELLI women SHG Federation, Rasingapuram NASSCOM Foundation</p> <p>MISSOIN 2007. CANG Network CAG, Chennai. IFFCO, Madurai. TNAU, Coimbatore TANUVAS, Chennai RSETI, Theni. FLCC, Theni, IOB, Theni, ICICI, Madurai. CCD, Madurai</p>	<p>Arul Anandar College, Karumathur, Madurai district</p> <p>IIT, Chennai</p> <p>IFFCO – AIRTEL, Chennai.</p> <p>MSSRF, Chennai. IKSL, New Delhi NIBM, Pune. ICRISAT, Hyderabad. MVaayoo, Hyderabad.</p>