ANNUAL REPORT
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Kovel Foundation

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Executive Summary

This is a special year for the founders as well as the employees of Kovel Foundation to talk about the achievements during its journey towards sustainable livelihoods of tribal members of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and few other States of India as the organization celebrates its 25th Foundation day this year.

Kovel was founded in 1994 when the tribal Gum Pickers earned Rs 22/kg of Gum Karaya which, they used to spend a few days to collect for and was in a crisis because of its very inferior quality due to lack of technical know-how that left the government’s marketing agency i.e Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) with not much options but reducing the price unless working out a strategy to address the same.

And that’s when Kovel as an innovative intervention has come up as an Apex organization of the Village level CBOs promoted with tribal forest dependent families with special efforts of Sri T. Vijay Kumar, IAS the then Vice Chairman & Managing Director of GCC to address the issues in the Gum Karaya value chain. In spite of the challenges faced its journey, the developmental work on Kovel Gum thereafter has been done intensively with requited technical know-how with support services which led to success story not only in Andhra Pradesh but also at National and International level.

Twenty-five years, a quarter of a century – that’s a long time for an organization to endure and be as relevant today as it was at its founding that is quite a challenging. Enthused by this success, Kovel expanded its work to other species of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) keeping the “tribal livelihoods” in the center-stage. The organization could draw financial and technical support from various national and international institutions to support its programs.

During later years, the horizons are expanded further, to touch upon “Sustainable Agriculture”. Through a host of models, Kovel introduced multi-functional Agro-Forestry Systems in tribal villages. Annaporna, Giri Lakshmi and Maathota models integrated forest, horticultural and agricultural crops and plantations into a single piece of land. These models helped the communities to access healthy and nutritional foods and also marketable produce besides multiple biodiversity benefits.

Not satisfied here, Kovel moved to brace the Natural Farming Systems propounded by Padma Shri Subhash Palekar and strategically promoted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Today, Kovel has been designated as a Geographic Resource Organisation by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS) to extend technical and social capital development in tribal areas. Pilots such as Coffee and Cashew in ZBNF which resulted in adding greater strength to the concept has enabled the teams to show case the success as part of replicating in a larger area. Nannari experiment also ended with huge cash income that triggered the interest among farmers.

Last but not least, the financial support extended by donor organizations constituted the cornerstone of our programs and we thank each one of them who continue to make it possible for us to fulfill our mission.
Institution Development

FPOs

Kovel has been supporting a total of 5 FPOs viz D. Gonduru Rythu Utpattidarula Sangham, D. Gonduru, Adavithalli Girijana Mahila MACS, Chinthapaka, Adavithalli Mutually Aided Cooperative Thrift Society, Bangarammapeta, Hukum peta Girijana Mahila Rythu Seva Mariyu Utpattidarula Mutually Aided Cooperative Society Ltd., Kunturla & M. Nittaputtu Girijan Rythu Seva Mariyu Uthapathidarula Mutually Aided Cooperative Society Ltd., M. Nittaputtu in Visakhapatnam District. During the year, vision plans of 3 FPOs and business plan for 1 FPO are completed and rest are underway with support of experts.

Based on the capacity building need assessment conducted during the vision plan, Kovel has approached expert consultant/s who has agreed to extend support to the FPOs. In this regard, completed a one-day program for each FPO on Business plan development covering both leaders and members from 3 FPOs.

The total business turnover so far in 3 FPOs is Rs 762000/-. The team has been able to mobilise a total of 1520 members in the 3 FPOs out of which 720 were mobilized in last year. An amount of around Rs 960000/- has been mobilized towards share capital and membership fee out of which, 720000/- is in last year. A processing centre is established in Adavithalli GM MACS, Chinthapaka wherein, Tamarind cake making has been taken up by the group. As part of strengthening the processing center at Chinthapaka of Pinakota Resource village, infrastructure has been set up such as Tamarind cake machine, pulveriser, pulper, vegetable cutter, commercial mixer, hand sealer, accessories, stove, etc so as to take up more value addition activities based on the seasonal availability of various produce that has potential.

In 3 villages of Chinthapaka FPO, 3 Medicinal & Aromatic Plants (MAPs) distillation units were established worth of 9 lakhs in collaboration with Central Institute of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Hyderabad. During the reporting period, one of the FPOs’ registration process (D. Gonduru) has been completed. Apart from the above during the reporting period, focus was on converting FPOs’ members to natural farming which, awareness meetings are conducted along with regular Board of Directors (BoD) meetings. Kovel has successfully made market linkage with Botanical Resource India Pvt Ltd. who has in principle agreed to support for certification process for 2 FPOs and also to buy Kalmegh.
FSHGs

Kovel strategically has put efforts for building Farmers institutions for strengthening the livelihood development program as well as other developmental needs. In this context, a total of 31 Farmer Self Help Groups have been organised with 336 members. They are organising meetings and savings regularly. Sensitization on the importance ZBNF and its promotion has been on their top agenda during the regular meetings and efforts are on bringing all the members in each FSHG into ZBNF fold for showcasing the same to others to replicate.

Capacity Building

ICRPs Training

Kovel has been participated intensively in preparation of Guidelines for Seed to Seed verification and selection process and also participated and trained the District verification teams of 13 Districts at RySS for 2 days. The District verification teams have strategically been formed with a mix of CAs, CRPs, MPEO, Resource NGO representative, NFF, IB-SRPs, PRPs, etc and also team allotment has been done to other than their native Districts so as to avoid any favoritism in the verification process.

During both Kharif and Rabi seasons, Kovel took active role in Seed to Seed verification and selection process by contributing to preparation of Guidelines besides training the District verification teams of 13 Districts at RySS for 2 days. A team of 36 resource persons from Kovel has participated in verification of a total of 3032 Seed to Seed farmers so far from 59 clusters in 9 Districts besides placing representatives from Kovel to be part of the Monitoring team besides the District teams of Kovel taking significant role in their Districts concerned.

In addition, the Districts Coordinators of Kovel operational Districts have taken care of the same in concerned Districts. Subsequently, Kovel team participated in the Post-verification process sharing at State level workshop organized by RySS at Guntur. During this process, experience sharing, cross verification of data and future strategy for Seed to Seed verification have been discussed.

Based on the RySS requests from time to time, 3-day ToT content and schedule have been discussed and finalized for the Trainers who were going to train the CAs, CRPs and ICRPs. Similar to Farm plan template, Kovel has designed an NTFP Plan template exclusively for tribal clusters so as to collect data for developing strategic interventions. A team of 19 Trainers at various levels from Kovel have participated in the ToT. The CEO of Kovel Foundation has taken key role in facilitating the ToT along with the other State Resource team members. Total ToT batches are 9 which have been conducted @ 3 days/batch.
Simultaneously, training program schedule along with the Resource material has been provided to all the Trainers and the ICRPs’ training has been organized for 5 days each. Kovel Foundation team has trained a total of 1533 ICRPs from 7 Districts namely Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, Kurnool, Chittoor, Nellore, Kadapa and Srikakulam. And also trained CAs (152) & CRPs (229) for a period of 3 days before the ICRPs’ trainings. The trained ICRPs have been placed in the clusters and Kovel has been started supporting as part of handholding the ICRPs in Kharif campaign, & action plan, Models, etc. Planning cum orientation meetings with all ICRPs, CAs, CRPs, NFFs, etc have been conducted.

An ICRP is placed for every 80 to 100 farmers and the cluster team’s hands are vigorously strengthened with this strategy during the current Kharif season and definitely boosting up the program with its positive effect. Though the season is the half-way through, the effectiveness can be seen in terms of reaching out to maximum no. of farmers, establishing models by ICRPs/farmers, readily available services/technical inputs for the farmers within their village, etc.

**Support to Clusters**

During the reporting period, Kovel has focused on building the capacities of cluster teams towards achieving the goal of converting more number of farmers into ZBNF with special focus on promoting Seed to Seed farmers. Every month, the project team/resource persons including Capacity Building Coordinators and District Coordinators have been deputed to each cluster i.e. minimum 2 days per cluster for a total of 49 clusters for supporting in review, plan, trainings, campaigns, models development, etc.

The key support extended during the cluster support is building capacities on working with ICRPs, extending support to ICRPs so as to add more value and strength to ZBNF program besides sensitizing the ICRPs, technical inputs, demonstrations, experience sharing, etc. the key crops/interventions being dealt right now are SRI Paddy, Cashew, Coffee, Guli Ragi, vegetable cultivation, Sampangi, etc in ZBNF methods besides promotion of Green Leaf Manure, plantation of ZBNF species and medicinal plants, inputs supply, Kharif campaigns, PICO dissemination, etc.

Currently, the efforts are on developing ICRP training material designing, annual training calendar for ICRPs training & apprenticeship as well, support in cluster level trainings & handholding support on field, monitoring & evaluation of ICRPs.

**Supporting to DPMUs**

During the months of April to June, Kovel teams have extensively taken part in intensive training of ICRPs for 5 days conducted at Dt level in addition to supporting each District Project Management Unit (DPMU) in review, planning and trouble-shooting, etc. Briefing and De-briefing meetings being conducted by the DPMUs have been the right platform for Kovel to...
address the entire team at once so the inputs go even to all by Kovel representatives based the
observations from the field, identified capacity building needs of field functionaries, issues
prevailing in the field, etc.

**Training to tribal farmers on Medicinal Plants**

A training program on “Sustainable Management, cultivation and marketing of Medicinal Plants”
for the tribal farmers has been conducted at Kothapalli Village of Bhadradri Kothagudem District
in Telangana on 30th Nov 18 wherein, a total of 55 farmers have actively participated. During this
training program, emphasis was given to integrating Natural farming into Medicinal plants
cultivation and the participants were provided with various Demonstrations in this regard.

**FPOs’ Brain-storming workshop**

As it was planned during the need assessment of FPOs in terms of capacity building, a 2-day
workshop has been conducted to brainstorm on “Goals Setting and Strategic Planning” wherein
the Board of Directors of all the 3 FPOs along with the other active members participated. Long
term plan for a period of 3 years has been discussed among and the FPO representatives through
groups followed by presentations and were given a task to split the plan further so as to take it
forward.

**Training to tribal farmers on Medicinal Plants**

A training program on “Medicinal Plants’ cultivation & Agro-forestry models through ZBNF” for
the tribal farmers has been conducted at Kothapalli Village of Bhadradri Kothagudem District in
Telangana during the month of January wherein, a total of 118 farmers have actively participated.
During this training program, emphasis was given to integrating Natural farming into Medicinal
plants cultivation and the uniqueness of Agro-forestry models which are being customized as per
the locan situation, need and farmers’ interests. During the said training program, demonstration
on preparation and application of Drava, Ghana Jeevamrutham, Panchagavya, etc have also been
conducted.

Apart from the above, in the months of June, July and October, various awareness cum training
programs viz ‘Sustainable Resource Management on Medicinal Plants Cultivation’, ‘Giri Lakshmi
Thota Models & Medicinal Plant Cultivation’ and ‘Awareness on Sustainable Collection &
Cultivation of Medicinal Plants’ have been conducted for the tribal farmers

**Exposure**

In the month of April 18, an exposure to ICRISAT, Hyderabad and Bengaluru has been conducted
for the farmers and the staff as well to learn models on Horticulture, Floriculture and Intercrops.

An exposure visit to Sodhana, an NGO being run by Dr P.D.K.Rao, a veteran development
professional in Cheepurupalli of Vizianagaram District has been organized for the entire Kovel
team. The team has visited the villages where they work with farmers and their issues besides
child education. The team also has the opportunity to have the inspirational speech by the head of the organization.

**Livelihood Development**

**Resource Villages**

The resource villages are meant for demonstrating various models and effectiveness of convergence with Government schemes / others to show case for replication. The following are the initiatives being taken up in the Resource Villages

**Integrated Farming System Units**

A total of 102 Integrated Farming System Units have been established out of which, 59 are added in the reporting year and strengthening of the existing 43 models wherein, integration of 5-Layer model, Nutrition gardens, Medicinal plantation (Syonaka, Agnimatha, Bilwa, Pippali, etc), Turmeric, Deshi poultry, Rajmah, floriculture, vegetables, etc has been happening based on the season in various districts. Kitchen garden seeds have been distributed to all the families in all the 5 resource villages.

A total of 50 tribal families in both Kurnool and East Godavari Districts have been supported with Deshi Poultry initiative and each family has been provided with 10 chicks to undertake the model. These models are being integrated into Integrated Farming System units also.

A total 150 families across the 5 Resource villages in 4 Districts have taken up Medicinal & Aromatic Plants cultivation such as Nannari, Dakki, Maredu, Premna, Lemon grass, etc. and wherever the farmers have the Integrated Farming System unit/s, the MAPs cultivation has been integrated with the same.

A total of 12 families with Sheep rearing and a total of 78 families with 36*36 models, 19 Nutrition Gardens, 2262 Kitchen Gardens, etc have been supported with and all these are being integrated into the Integrated Farming System units wherever the beneficiaries owned them.

**Models establishment**

The following are the details of models established by Kovel across the 4 Districts so far for demonstration and replication and these numbers are including the numbers mentioned in the Resource Villages
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the Model</th>
<th>No. of Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Giri Lakshmi Thotalu</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36 X 36</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deshi Poultry</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kitchen Gardens</td>
<td>2262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nutrition Gardens</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MAPs cultivation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sheep Rearing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SRI Paddy</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Guli Ragi</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5-Layer Models</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Honey Bee keeping</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Back Yard Poultry Breed Farm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nannari Cultivation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Strip Model</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Live Fencing Model</td>
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**Pilot on Coffee in ZBNF**

Kovel is pioneering to promote Coffee in natural farming method in Visakhapatnam agency area. In this regard, a pilot was implemented in 2 villages the earlier year wherein, the productivity has been increased about 33% and based on the learning & experience, the intervention is being replicated in a considerably larger area during the reporting year. In this connection, Kovel has taken an initiative to ensure all the relevant stakeholders take active part through a workshop.
with a working group wherein, representatives from Coffee Board, ITDA-Coffee Project, Rythu Sadhhikara Samstha, etc are members. The said workshop happened at Paderu in July with a specific schedule to work on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in Coffee, developing ZBNF Package Of Practices in Coffee in the form of an annual calendar of activities, convergence plan with ITDA, Coffee board, DPMU & Kovel Foundation, designing Crop card for Coffee to monitor the activities, training plan to the field staff & farmers along with the budget and timeline, plan for inter crops in existing Coffee plantations & New plantations with special reference to ZBNF activities. Currently, the Coffee Field School (CFS) is intensively happening in the clusters involving the various stakeholders.

**Cashew workshop**

Similar to Coffee, Kovel is also focusing to promote Cashew in natural farming method in both East Godavari & Visakhapatnam agency areas. This was also piloted in few villages last year and based on the learning & experience, the intervention is going to be replicated in a larger area during the current year. In this connection, a workshop has been conducted with various partner agencies viz Krushi Vignan Kendra, ITDA-Horticulture Project, Rythu Sadhhikara Samstha, etc. The said workshop happened at Rampachodavaram, East Godavari District in July to discuss and plan for next 3 years. Based on this, the teams have been promoting Cashew Field School sessions at Village level with an aim to take this forward for increasing productivity thereby secured incomes.

**Nurseries & Plantation**

There are total 7 NTFP/ZBNF/MAPs nurseries set up in Kovel’ operationssl area including the Resource villages. Economically & environmentally important NTFP species, Medicinal plants and ZBNF species have been raised. Total species being dealt by the nurseries are 18 and the total number of saplings raised in the nurseries was around 152200. However, planting of most of the raised saplings during the earlier year in these nurseries has been carried out in the 4 Districts. Herbal Gardens established in 2 villages are being maintained by the Healers concerned.
**MAPs plantation**

As mentioned earlier, Medicinal Plants’ cultivation / plantation is being promoted in the Agro-forestry / GLT models as intercrop. Selection of medicinal plant species has been done as per the suggestions by the experts from Dabur in each District besides considering farmers’ interest within the allowed species. A total of 75000 medicinal plants have been planted during the year.

As part of efforts towards promotion of Medicinal plants’ cultivation, along with the other important MAP species, Kovel has promoted Bark Tree species viz Arjun and Kutaj. A total of 4338 plants of these species have been planted covering 133 farmers with about 45 acres in Visakhapatnam & East Godavari Districts.

**Strengthening of Traditional Health System**

As part of reviving traditional healing practices for primary health care, the healers who have been trained and supplied with required tools are serving the patients with regard to primary health care and 2 of the healers are raising herbal gardens wherein, the key medicinal plants which are rarely available and frequently used are planted and maintained. A tribal healer named Mathysya Lingachari from Baram village of M. Nittaputtu cluster in Visakhapatnam District has been able to establish such herbal garden with about 22 important medicinal species in his own land where he can take care of them. Similarly in East Godavari, another such Herbal garden has been established and maintained by a healer with a total of 49 Medicinal species which are important for the healers. Efforts are on promoting similar herbal gardens in the other resource villages/clusters.

**Healers’ Workshop**

During the months of December, a multi-stakeholder workshop on Traditional healing system has been conducted involving the Healers not only from Kovel operational area but from across the State including Ayurvedic Doctors, academicians, highly successful and famous healers with specializations from places like Puttur, etc. The main discussions during the workshop were on strategies about the need for promoting traditional healing services for especially primary health care and taking the same into next generations through interested youth. Apart from this, there was another workshop with the Healers from Kovel operational area of Visakhapatnam and East
Godavari has been conducted wherein, the need for coming together as a network has been discussed besides traditional knowledge documentation.

**Knowledge Desk**

**News Letter**

A total of 2 News letters have been published out of which, one with the 25 success stories documented as a special News Letter edition in Telugu language and they are being circulated in the forms of both printed and e-copy across the development communities.

**MAPs Documentation**

Kovel has carried out a documentation on medicinal plants in its 5 Resource villages basically to understand what are the species available, which are falling under the potential category, which are under becoming rare, species that have cultural importance as far as the local tribal communities are concerned, species are being marketed, etc besides interviewing the traditional healers. The final report is yet to come out.

**Video films**

A total of 14 Video films’ shooting i.e on Collection & Value addition of - Kalmegh, Amla & Rajma Sampangi cultivation, Giri Laxmi Thotalu, SRI Paddy, Vegetables, Medicinal plants, Nursery Management, Inter crops in GLT, etc has been completed in 4 Districts with support of Digital green Video team/s and the final films are yet to come for using in the field.

**Advisory Group**

Kovel has put efforts to form an Advisory Group who can provide relevant inputs and guide the organization from time to time so as to strengthen its core agenda. As part of this, 4 Advisory group members have been identified namely Ms Snehlatha Nath, Founder & Director of Keystone Foundation, Dr Brundavanam, Advisor, Dabur India Ltd., New Delhi, Dr Ravi Sankar, Independent Consultant and Ms Vijayanthimala, Nutrition & Women health expert. Kovel has been taking their support as and when required based on their diversified expertise is concerned from time to time so as to strengthen the programs.

**Organization website**

Identifying the need for being part of social media for its public visibility, Kovel has launched its official website in the month of February. Separate pages on Twitter, Facebook, etc are being managed with updates from time to time.

**Publication on PPP & ZBNF**

A booklet on the People’s Plantation Program, details of the support to community as part of PPP, ZBNF Methods to be followed in the same, etc has been designed in Telugu and printed which have been distributed among the community.
Manual on Nurseries & Plantation with special reference to ZBNF

Considering the seasonal importance with reference to nursery raising and plantations, Kovel has designed / developed a Manual on “Nurseries and Plantation in ZBNF methods” with an aim to let the community members learn and do the activities. The same has been demonstrated for the participant community and the Manuals have been distributed among them.

Collaborations

People’s Plantation Program (PPP)

Kovel in collaboration with CDR, Hyderabad is implementing People’s Plantation Program with tribal farmers with various types of models viz Mixed plantation, Block plantation including fruit, NTFP plantations and Medicinal plants as inter-crop. A total of 106 food and income security models have already been developed under the said program in tribal own lands and going to be scaled up with 1000 models this year. In this regard, background work for grounding the said models while simultaneously lobbying with Government/NREGS for obtaining support for the same.

Convergence

- Collaboration with Coffee Board and ITDA besides DoA for implementing ZBNF in Coffee which is being initiated with Coffee field Schools to start with covering 14 clusters in Visakhapatnam District has set to show huge results in terms of increasing the yields in the near future.
- Similarly, for Cashew in East Godavari & Visakhapatnam, convergence with ITDA/Horticulture, Krushi Vignan Kendra (KVK), etc
- A successful convergence has been made with JWCT (Jeewanti Welfare Charitable Trust) for support to Nursery establishment & management and Giri Laxmi Thotalu grounding besides capacity building programs in Resource Village areas
- Convergence efforts with the Department of Agriculture for seeds, tools, implements, sprayers, weeders, markers have been accessed and the farmers got benefited across the Resource villages
- Kovel has implemented another small grants program with support of Keystone
Foundation, Tamilandu under its People and Nature Fund (PNF) with an aim to strengthen the traditional healing system for primary health care so as to reduce the expenditure on the same. The said initiative has been integrated with 2 of the ZBNF clusters in Visakhapatnam & East Godavari one in each.

- A total of 60 Sampangi farmers have been supported with seed in convergence with ATMA on subsidy scheme in Melachuru of Chittoor District.
- 40 farmers were supported with Green Leaf Manure seed by Agriculture department.
- Facilitated individual toilets as part of open defecation free scheme to 45 families in convergence with MPDO office in Chittoor District.
- Benefitted a total of 16 farmers by facilitating provision of meters/transformer in convergence with electricity department.
- Implementing Back Yard Poultry (BYP) in collaboration with WASSAN through which, a Breed Farm establishment is underway benefitting 100 farmers.
- Implementing Comprehensive Revival of Millets Program (CRMP) covering 100 farmers with 100 Acres in Pinakota and 58 farmers with 58 acres in D. Gonduru in collaboration with WASSAN and Department of Agriculture.
- With technical support of besides supply of plant material, 16 farmers have undertaken MAPs cultivation covering 8 Acres in collaboration with CIMAP, Hyderabad.
- A total of three Distillation Units have been established in Pinakota Resource Cluster for extraction of aromatic oils besides establishment of Demo plots of Lemon and Citronella Grass.
- Converging with Forest Department, the team has succeeded in mobilizing a total of 2600 Terminalia arjuna saplings from the Social Forestry nursery which was raised under NREGS support which have been planted along the bunds of Cashew orchards and others.
- A total of 10 Gravity Fed Water Support Systems have been established in Pinakota Resource Cluster out of which, 7 are with support of Velugu Program), 2 are with support of an NGO called VJNNS and 1 by NABARD.
- As part of converging with Department of Agriculture, Power Tiller, Sprayer, etc have been provided to farmers in D. Gonduru.
- A total of 45 farmers were supported with cattle fodder in convergence with department of Animal Husbandry in Kottalacheruvu resource village.
- In convergence with Vijaya Dairy, a total of 30 farmers have been supported with cattle development support worth Rs 8 lakhs in Kottalacheruvu.
- A total of 8 Oil Engines have been provided to farmers in Kottalacheruvu out of which, 6 are by Watershed (IWMP) and 2 are by Department of Agriculture.

**Events & Workshops**

**Stakeholder Consultation**

Kovel has conducted an awareness workshop on the Acts viz Forest Rights Act, Panchayat Extension in Schedules Areas (PESA), Biodiversity Conservation Act, etc which related to tribals.
for the leaders of Community Based Organizations (CBOs), community members, field staff at cluster level, etc in the month of July wherein, the resource persons discussed about the rights of tribals as per these acts, implementation status and issues being faced by the tribals.

**Mass community meeting**

Kovel in collaboration with Center for Development & Research (CDR) which is an NGO that works with tribals in Maredumilli Mandal of East Godavari has conducted a mass meeting with about 250 tribal members from the surrounding villages of A.M.Kota Gram Panchayat at Bodlanka village in the Mandal. The main objective of the meeting was to create awareness on the People’s Plantation Program (PPP) that is being implemented jointly by both Kovel and CDR in collaboration with Government of Andhra Pradesh and MGNREGS. The program also aimed at sensitizing the community on the importance and processes of ZBNF methods in the models.

**Kovel’s 25th Foundation day**

On the occasion of completing 25 years in its journey, Kovel has organized a State level Seminar on “Tribal Livelihoods & Beyond” in Visakhaptanm on 28th February 2018. Tribal members from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Kovel’ Trust Board members, associating agencies’ representatives, well-wishers and Kovel staff have participated in the said Seminar. Taking opportunity of the same occasion, Kovel has celebrated a huge event on 1st March at Mother Teresa Auditorium, GITAM Deemed to be University wherein, more than 500 tribal members from across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Kovel’s entire staff along with old staff, well-wishers, etc have participated. The Advisor to Government of Andhra Pradesh, Co-Vice Chairman of Rythu Sadhikara Samstha Shri T. Vijay Kumar, IAS (Retd.) has attended as the Chief Guest for the event wherein, the Guests of Honor and Trust Board members have added more value by their inspirational speeches.

**Visitors**

**Visit by the Advisor & VC-RySS to Kovel**

On 28th and 29th June 18, the Advisor & VC-RySS, Government of Andhra Pradesh has visited Kovel operational area in Visakhapatnam accompanied with Mr Ricky Kej, 2015 Grammy Awardee to understand the concept of Climate Resilient Zero Budget Natural Farming with an aim to compose a private album to spread the concept across the world. The team has visited the ZBNF operational areas intensively for 2 days and interacted with community members besides visiting
fields. The video shooting by the same team in the field which has been continued after the visit has been facilitated by Kovel afterwards.

**Chairman, RYSS visit**

In the month of September, the Advisor & VC-RySS, Government of Andhra Pradesh, RYSS has visited Kovel Operational area along with state level officials’ team from Madhya Pradesh to see and understand the ZBNF initiative so they can replicate in their State. Kovel has facilitated the said visit along with the Agriculture department.

**RNBA Visit**

Rongmei Naga Baptist Association (RNBA) is a development organization. Development & Relief Department is the social wing of Rongmei Naga Baptist Association (RNBA) working with partners NGOs in capacity building, fund raising and mainstreaming development in North Eastern states of India. RNBA is working with 13 partner NGOs in thematic issues like sustainable natural resources management and livelihood, Food Security, Women Empowerment, Engagement with Youth, Renewable Energy and education.

A team of 9 members including staff and CBO leaders has visited Kovel from 12th to 14th Nov 18 to understand the ZBNF model implemented in the state of Andhra Pradesh and to discuss strategies for reduplicating the process in their area of operation.

**Advisor, Agriculture & Cooperation, GOAP visit**

On 10th November 18, Mr T. Vijay Kumar, Advisor, Agriculture & Cooperation, Co-Vice Chair Person, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha has visited Kovel operational area in Ananthagiri mandal of Visakhapatnam District during which, he along with the Assistant Collector, Visakhapatnam and other District level officials apart from the heads of the partner NGOs of RySS in AP has visited the ZBNF fields, NTFP/MAPs nursery, demonstration on value addition of various forest produce at the processing center, Aromatic plants distillation unit, Godown cum Drying platform, etc besides interacting with tribal farmers from around the neighborhood.

**APPI General Manager visit**

In the month of November 18, Ms Tasqeen, General Manager, Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative (APPI), Bengaluru has visited Kovel operational area to see the progress of ZBNF program during which, visit to Deshi Poultry Breeder Farm, processing center being run by the community collective, infrastructure developed in the area, NTFP/MAPs nursery, etc besides interacting with the tribal group members has been organized.
Team visit from Baitarani for Exposure

Baitarani is one of the NGOs of Odisha state working in collaboration with Dabur India Ltd., New Delhi. A 10 member team from this NGO has come to Kovel to see and understand the various approaches of the organization in developing the Agro-forestry models integrating with Medicinal Plants’ cultivation so they can incorporate some of it or improvise the models in their operational area.

CGM, NABARD visit to Kovel

In the month of January, the Chief General manager, NABARD, Hyderabad has visited the FPOs in Kovel operational area in Visakhapatnam District to see the status and understand the kind of support each FPO needed to become sustainable over a period of time.

Kovel’s contributions

Brainstorming Workshop on Achieving SDGs through ZBNF

On 10th April, there was a brainstorming workshop on achieving Sustainable Development Goals through Zero Budget Natural Farming conducted by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha wherein, delegates from Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), Sustainable India Finance Facility (SIFF), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), etc have participated and Kovel has taken part in the same.

Health & Nutrition Workshop

There was a brainstorming workshop conducted by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS) on 11th and 12th April facilitated by Ms Lakshmi Durga, an expert on the same. This intervention is going to be integrated with the ZBNF Program in the State of Andhra Pradesh and the main aim of the said workshop was to develop the strategies and various interventions to take into next level before implementation.

Meeting of Special Principle Secretary, Rural Development

Kovel has conducted a meeting with Mr Raja Sekhar, IAS, Special Principle Secretary, Rural Development at one of the villages called Bodlanka of East Godavari District wherein, the other District level officers have participated and interacted with the tribal community. The concept of People’s Plantation Program (PPP) which is being implemented in the area by both Kovel Foundation and Centre for Development and Research. Modalities for the said program have been discussed during the said meeting and responsibilities were given to all stakeholders so as to ensure successful implementation of the program.

Convergence Workshop by ITDAs and Tribal Welfare Department

There was a State level Joint Consultation workshop by Department of Agriculture and ITDAs held on 23rd May 18 at Visakhapatnam wherein, Mr Rawat, IAS, the Principle Secretary, Tribal Welfare Department, Mr Raja Sekhar, IAS, the Special Principle Secretary, Rural Development along with
the Project Officers of ITDAs of Andhra Pradesh were present and interacted with Agriculture Department and ITDAs’ staff of all levels and NGOs working in the tribal areas. The Program Manager from Kovel has appraised the issue of Transit Permits for NTFP/MAPs with the high level officers present during which, they suggested the POs of ITDAs to see the possibilities to sort it out as it is a policy level issue.

**CM Program to address ZBNF Farmers**

As part of promoting CRZBNF Program, through Rythu Sadhikara Samstha, Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has addressed the farmers, who started Zero Budget Nature Farming (ZBNF) in the State in Guntur on 18th September during which, he has explained the steps taken by the government to encourage the natural farming.

It was a 2-day program for the participants (17th & 18th) during which, Kovel Foundation has taken important role in facilitating the event in terms of taking a session on the success of 5-Layer Model for food and economic security of the family besides arranging Volunteers for logistics support, mobilizing farmers from operational Districts, arranging cultural events and others

**Regional Samvad - Madurai**

Kovel Foundation has sent a team of tribal members from its operational Districts to participate in the Regional Samvad by TATA Steel conducted at Madurai in the month of September. Samvaad is A Tribal Conclave, is Tata Steel’s Tribal Cultural Society’s initiative that seeks to revive, preserve and promote tribal culture. The theme of Samvad 2018 is "Coming Together for Social Change" to bring together tribals who have grown and developed themselves as community leaders in parts of India.

**Sh. Palekarji’s ToT on ZBNF**

Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS) in collaboration with Resource NGOs like Kovel Foundation has conducted a 10-day Training of Trainers program in Guntur on Zero Budget Natural farming (ZBNF) in the month of December aiming to reach out to 8000 participants. Kovel Foundation has taken an active role in the above by arranging Volunteers to help organizing the program better besides mobilizing interested farmers from 6 Districts of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana along with its entire staff.

**CEO, Kovel participation on CYSD Consultation at Bhubaneswar**

In the month of December 18, a Regional consultation on Building Sustainable Communities (Forest based Livelihood, Food, Nutrition and Livelihood Resilience) has been conducted by Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) at CYSD, Bhubaneswar wherein, the Chief Executive Officer, Kovel has shared the experience on “Sustainable Tribal Livelihoods through NTFP Value Chain Management”
**CLUA Team visit**

The Climate and Land Use Alliance is a collaborative initiative of the Climate Works Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Ford Foundation and Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Each of the member foundations brings distinct organizational perspectives and priorities that inform the development of the Alliance’s strategies and their implementation. A team from CLUA accompanied by the Vice-Chairman-RySS & Advisor to GoAP Shri T. Vijay Kumar, IAS (Rtd.) has visited Rythu Sadhikara Samstha in the month of February wherein, the field visits and interaction with FNGOs was supported by Kovel.

**Conclusion**

Strategic convergence from within Kovel’s programs and outside agencies has taken care of filling the gaps in various activities. Ensuring placement of Cluster level team consisting CA & CRP at the beginning if the program irrespective of whether the MoUs are done with the FNGOs by RySS has been the key to the above significant changes which, would have not been possible otherwise.

Continuous and positive coordination regularly with the Department of Agriculture in all the Districts has sure contributed a lot in achieving the above changes. Kovel’s presence in 50% of the clusters across the 4 Districts also added value in terms of community cooperation, trust and acceptance to the effort being put under this program. Continuous involvement of RNGOs in each and every meeting/training by RySS was good strategy which strengthened all the hands in the process.

Pioneering in promoting ZBNF in Coffee in Visakhapatnam District has opened a large opportunity to serve about 1 Lakh Coffee growing tribal families over a period of time. The pilot undertaken by Kovel has been the key in this initiation as it has given a picture on how the actual low yield situation can be converted into significant increase so as to lift the spirits of coffee growers while expanding the program strategically involving all the potential stakeholders, which was backed up with the idea of strengthening all the partners to make the initiative sustainable. Kovel has also taken another step ahead with Cashew ZBNF initiative in both East Godavari & Visakhapatnam Districts and expanding the similar manner with the Coffee.
Messages from Well-wishers

25 years of Kovel Foundation is an extraordinary and most looked forward moment of celebration for all of us the founders – the tribal communities depending on natural farm produce and non-timber forest produce, and the professional associates who have committed to contributing to the pursuits of tribal communities.

G. Muralidhar, Founder Managing Trustee

Wishing Kovel Foundation all the best on their 25th Year of devoted service oriented work for adivasi livelihoods in AP and Telangana. Our best wishes to the whole organisation to have a vision for many years ahead. Hope your work will always be relevant and path breaking.

Snehlata Nath (on behalf of Keystone Foundation)