

India | January 2016



A very Happy New Year from the entire ACF family!

As we have enthusiastically stepped in the new year of 2016, it is heartening to remember that 2015 had been a good year and gave us several memories to cherish. Two of our students from Ambuja Manovikas Kendra received accolades at the Summer Special Olympics. We have reached out to over 85,000 farmers through agro-based livelihoods and our SEDIs have trained more than 26,000 youth till date. Synchronizing our efforts with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, ACF school sanitation programme was well received by the community, having covered 172 schools during the year. Community sanitation, driven by women force, directs efforts to bring change in communities' mindset. Women's Federations with approximately 5000 members, have set an example of women emancipation, financial independence and driving social change. This New Year, we present to you two success stories from ACF—the first one on women farmers in Nalagarh and the second story on rehabilitation of an AMK student.

Top: Training Session with Women Farmers

Below: Women working in the field



Women Farmers in Nalagarh

A survey conducted by ACF revealed that in most of the households, male members have been working as truck drivers and are generally away from home. Agriculture, thus became a secondary source of income and was largely dependent on hired labour. Less time invested in agriculture led to poor farm yield and a high cost of production. Ironically, in spite of working hard on fields, women exercised negligible authority in the entire process. All the major decisions related to farming were taken by either men in the households or the contract labour.

ACF challenged the trend and started mobilizing women in the communities. It took a while to convince women and also their families to allow them to take up active roles

in agriculture. With regular meetings, focused discussions and one-on-one sessions, more than 100 women farmers from 6 villages agreed to be part of ACF's agro-based livelihood programme. Due to regular capacity building programmes, today these women farmers in Nalagarh are a lot more confident in using integrated agricultural practices. Merely after eight months of ACF's association with these women, there is an encouraging progress in the package of practices. For example, by using pheromone trap (an insect trap) for vegetable farming, these farmers have managed to save more than Rs 1800/acre of pesticide cost. Women's active participation in agriculture is a welcome step and is set to make a significant source of livelihood for the community.

Rehabilitation in AMK

Fifteen-year old Jasbir Singh had been diagnosed with a moderate mental disorder and was enrolled in AMK in the year 2009. Jasbir came from a disturbed family. His father, the only earning member of the family suffered a kidney failure and was put on dialysis. His mother, also intellectually challenged, was not in a position to take care of them. With no prior schooling or informal education, Jasbir, at the time of joining AMK, could not even manage the day-to-day tasks. He was academically poor and had negligible social skills. The AMK staff, adopted a holistic approach that included counselling session and reinforcement activities for Jasbir as well as his parents. While Jasbir was exposed to a systematic process of development activities and therapies; his family was also given regular counselling so that they understood Jasbir's progress and challenges well and provided the necessary support at home. In approximately three years, Jasbir

showed tremendous improvement and attained significant independence in handling daily chores. Introducing vocational training for Jasbir was a time-consuming process. Considering his abilities, AMK advised Jasbir to open a fruit juice shop. However, his family was not convinced with the idea. They considered the profession deterrent to their social image. It took several intensive one-on-one talks after which they finally gave their consent to begin Jasbir's training. After the initial training at AMK, Jasbir was placed in a local juice shop for on-the-job training where he got the practical exposure of dealing with customers and keep a track of the sale. It is all due to his understanding family and AMK's endeavour that after five years of consistent support, Jasbir has recently opened a juice stall near his house and earning an average income of Rs 4000 per month. AMK continues rendering support to Jasbir and his family, as it does with all other 45 children rehabilitated till date.



Top: Jasbir in a training session at AMK

Below: At the Juice Stall

