

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

BLOSSOM
TRUST



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Letter from the Director



We here at Blossom Trust are thrilled to bring you this year's annual report. We've made some major project developments in 2018-2019 and have continued to optimize our efforts to further support and benefit the most marginalized sections of our society. It is always a pleasure to share with our supporting community our continued successes as well as our goals for the future.

Blossom Trust is committed to ensure good public health. Due to our continuous presence in the communities, we are always informed about issues affecting communities we operate in. Blossom Trust continues to contribute positively in the society by designing and implementing cost effective sustainable solutions to solve societal challenges associated with HIV and TB. Our CEPT-II (Campaign for Education, Prevention and Treatment of TB) project officially ended in 2018 and has been without a doubt extraordinarily successful. The CEPT-II project is a major breakthrough in bridging the information gap about TB and HIV. Since the launch of the project, we have managed to increase patient contact with the Revised National TB Control Program (RNTCP) by 20 percent. The development of Rainbow TB as a network of TB affected communities is now completed: Rainbow TB Forum has become an independent network, successfully advocating for the rights of TB affected people at local, national and international level.

We continued to strengthen our ongoing children's projects at Dayspring Home & Organic Farm, Crèche daycare Centre and the Bal Gurukul education centres. Children are our future, and it is one of Blossom's priorities to ensure that they grow up in an adequate environment.

Finally, Blossom Trust has started a new project in Kanchipuram, as partner of the Tamil State AIDS Control Society. In this report you can read how this new project aims to fight HIV/AIDS amongst the transgender community, who forms a high risk group.

I would also like to extend a warm and personal thank you to the members of our Board and to all our Partners for their contributions and assistance in moving our organization forward, along with our staff and volunteers whose dedication and skill we could simply not do without.

T. Mercy Annapoorani

Director

About Blossom Trust

About us

Since 1993, Blossom Trust has focused on the social, economic and cultural empowerment of underprivileged women and children. Over time, this vision has become focused on providing treatment and support for those living with HIV/AIDS and TB, and capacity building programmes and advocacy networks for the most disadvantaged members of our community. We operate in all 11 blocks of Virudhunagar District, three blocks of Kanchipuram District and one block in Madurai District.

Vision

Blossoming of power in every Individual to reinforce community development.

Mission

Facilitate a process where marginalized groups become self-sufficient in improving their health, environmental, economic and social needs.

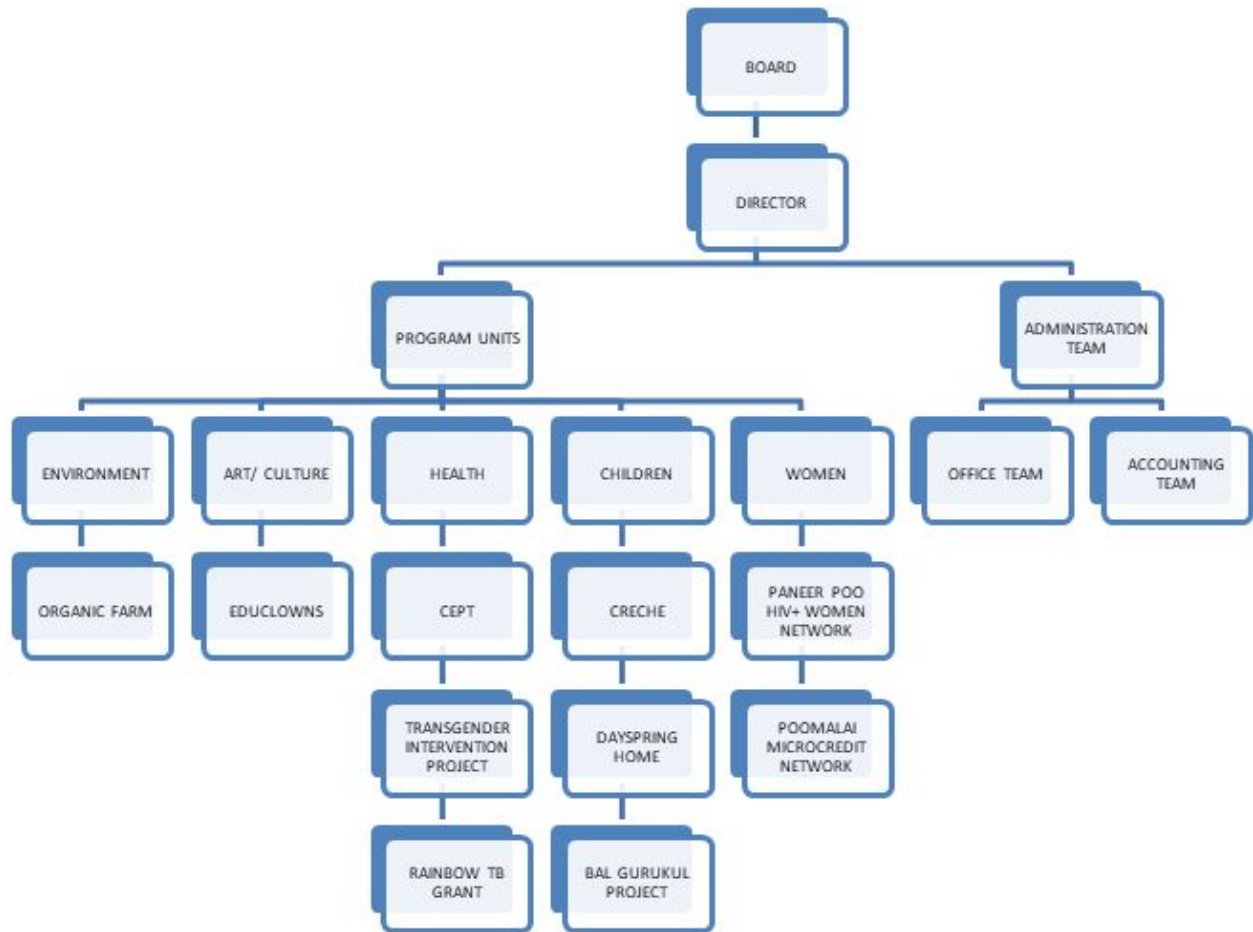
Core value

Ensuring flexibility to evolve our programs to provide the greatest benefit possible to the marginalized populations within the community.

Objectives

- Developing adequate community frameworks to ensure women and children's issues are properly addressed.
- Ensuring communities have greater access and control to proper resources within their community.
- Facilitating a mutual exchange process using community knowledge and preserved resources.
- Giving a voice to the voiceless.

Organizational structure



MONITORING AND EVALUATION / EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Board Members

Mrs. T. Mercy Annapoorani	M. Com, M.A., M.W.S.	Managing trustee	Social worker
Mrs. G. Vatsala	Diploma in CDDM	Treasurer	Self employed
Mr. C. John Jasper	B.E., M.B.A.	Trustee	Engineer
Dr. M. J. I. Raj	M.S.W., M.A. (psychology), M.Ed., M. Phil., Ph.D.	Trustee	Principal
B. Mareeswari	Diploma in costume designing and dress making	Trustee	Teacher

Projects

In the year 2018 - 2019, Blossom Trust managed six projects, of which one (CEPT) finished in 2018, and another one (Transgender Intervention Project) has started in 2018. Three projects are primarily focused on children (Dayspring Home, Creche, Bal Gurukul), one is primarily focused on health (Transgender Intervention Project) and one project (Dayspring Farm) is focused on the environment. In every project we strive to strengthen community development and empower marginalized individuals.



CEPT

What

In 2009 Blossom Trust started the Campaign for Education, Prevention and Treatment of TB (CEPT). In 2018 CEPT has come to an end. The initiative has provided outreach to marginalized groups overlooked by current national policies. In the course of years Blossom has partnered with Target TB, UK and TB Alert India to educate people about TB and health, and to improve access to TB diagnosis and treatment for women, children and people with HIV/TB. During the implementation of CEPT, Blossom collected data on the gender and age specific obstacles faced by women and children in South Indian communities.

Achieved

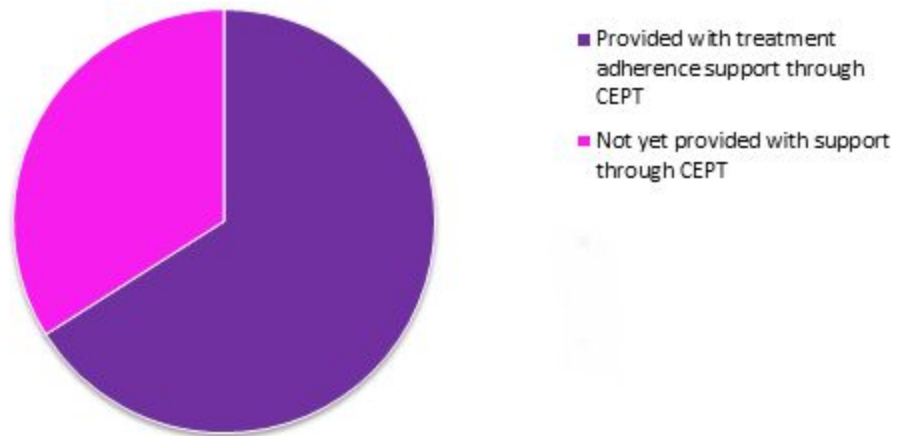
- 1,980** TB education meetings are held which included in attendance local council leaders, village health nurses and youth-groups
- 45** Educlowns TB Awareness performances are held
- 24** Live cable- TV phone-in programmes aired
- 18, 360** People have been educated through intensive health awareness programmes.
- 7** Large-scale events held to mark World TB Day and World AIDS Day in 2012



Results:

- 23% increase in the number of people tested for TB at government health facilities
- 15% increase in the number of TB patients registered for treatment
- 66% of all TB patients registered with government for treatment in Virudhunagar district provided with treatment adherence support through CEPT project
- Improved access to TB diagnosis and treatment at government health facilities for 28,620 women, children and People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- 20% increase in patient contact with the Revised National TB Control Program (RNTCP)

Government registered TB patients in Virudhunagar district



What comes next?

CEPT had a unique focus on gender leading to an active case finding yielding a 5:1 ratio, which is significantly higher than the often found 2:1 male to female ratio¹. In our future projects we would therefore keep our focus on identifying and removing age- and gender specific barriers for women and girls to healthcare.

Forthcoming from CEPT, Rainbow TB Forum is started, a network comprised solely of past and present TB patients. The Rainbow TB Forum has been developed into a full independent network to advocate for better (access to) TB healthcare. See page 14 for more information.

¹ Rao, S. (2009). Tuberculosis and patient gender: An analysis and its implications in tuberculosis control. Lung India, 26(2), 46. doi:10.4103/0970-2113.48897

Transgender Intervention project



Hotspot meeting for raising awareness in the community

What

Since 2018 Blossom Trust is involved in a new government project in Tamil Nadu. The goal is to bring about behavior change among population groups whose risk/vulnerabilities of contracting STI/HIV infection are high. The program is a collaboration between the Tamil State Aids Control Society (TNSACS) and diverse NGOS and CSOs.

Blossom Trust focuses on the transgender population in Kanchipuram. Interventions include condom promotion (distribution + behavior change communication) and health camps and syphilis testing to identify persons with STIs/HIV so transgender individuals can receive the healthcare they need. Besides working on behavior change to prevent STIs/HIV, Blossom Trust also oughts to improve the socioeconomic status of the transgender communities and empower transgender individuals to become self-reliant advocates for their own rights.

Achieved

The transgender project is still in process of starting up. Blossom Trust has set up an office in Kanchipuram and hired staff members to work in the area. In the past year, peer educators have been trained to reach out to the transgender community. In total two hotspot meetings have taken place, in which peer educators went out on the streets to spread awareness about transgender rights and HIV healthcare.

What comes next?

The coming year will be used to actively start with the condom promotion and behavior change campaigns in the community.

Creche



What

Blossom Trust runs a daycare creche since 2003 to support working mothers. The Crèche is funded by the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board in Chennai.

Achieved

This year the daycare crèche has been continuing as usual. Our professional teachers oversee on average 30 children between the ages of two and five. We have provided on average 30 children with lunch, monthly medical check-ups. The parent-teacher meetings provide feedback on the wellbeing of the children.

What comes next?

The daycare creche will continue to support both young children and their mothers.

Bal Gurukul children centers

What

In 2010 ended the Buds Network, a project by Blossom Trust that established a care and support network for HIV+ children. They aimed to reduce stigma attached to HIV and operated in 11 centers in Virudhunagar. Three educational centres of the network continue to offer after school support to vulnerable children in Virudhunagar, Madurai district and Kanchipuram. These three centres are now supported by IDF in Mumbai and renamed as 'Bal Gurukul' centres.

Achieved

This year Blossom Trust successfully provided physical education, moral classes and academic training for 75 children, spread across the three districts. The "Re1 scheme" in which children are encouraged to save Rs. 1 a day, still needs some time to become a success. The teachers are looking for ways to encourage children to start saving money.

What comes next?

Next year the Bal Gurukul project will continue to provide after school support for vulnerable children. Blossom Trust is looking for ways to expand the number of centers, so more children can participate.

Dayspring Home

What

Dayspring Home is a children's home established in 2003. The children are either orphaned due to the death of family members caused by HIV/AIDS/TB, or infected and rejected from their families due to the stigma surrounding the disease. The orphanage is currently home to 23 children. Blossom provides all the day-to-day running of the project which includes; medical expenses, educational needs, 3 nutritious meals a day, clothes and social support. One goal of the home is to reintegrate the children that have been rejected back into their families by providing ongoing social and medical support through parent counseling, education and self-help groups. Dayspring Home needs \$7,500 per year to operate and relies on donations to support the children. Our platform GlobalGiving is our main source of income from donations.



Achieved

This year five children have graduated and will start in August with higher industry technical (IT) education. We are proud of these smart children and will continue to support them. We have also welcomed three new children within the Dayspring Family.

During the summer break in May, most children leave Dayspring Home to spend time with their families. However, this is not possible for all children. The children who stayed were treated on a short holiday at Kodaikanal, a place high in the mountains, to escape the summer heat and enjoy the beautiful nature. With an average of 25 degrees, the children experienced "the cold", and they were happy to return home after a few days.



One child said about the holiday: *I really liked playing games in the morning!*

Volunteers

Over the last year, 19 volunteers have contributed to the organization by helping on the farm, donating items such as groceries and stationary and helping the children with their studies.

In the light of increasing news about the harms of “voluntourism” for children we have chosen to restrict our volunteer policy. Every volunteer has to submit a background check before they arrive, to verify that they aren’t involved in any crime towards children. Furthermore, we encourage our volunteers to work at the farm and/or maintenance jobs in the home instead of working directly with the children.

What comes next?

Blossom Trust is in the process of welcoming 5 new children in 2019. We are also continuing to work on the reintegration of children within their families, whereas possible.

Dayspring Farm

What

The Blossom Farm was established with support from Caritas Sweden in 2002 with the idea of creating a sustainable food income for the children and the Dayspring Home and the Blossom organization. The farm is located next to the Dayspring Home on 6 acres of land and is maintained by the Blossom Farm team who tends to the livestock and crops. We manage the farm as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible. No pesticides are being used, and manure from livestock serves as fertilizer. Also, to keep sustaining a water reserve in the summer, a well stores safe water when the rains are scarce.



Solar panels at the farm



Achieved

The farm aims to produce adequate vegetables, fruit, milk and eggs for the children and sells any excess production to the local community for revenue. The harvest of the farm has been disappointing this year. Due to a lack of rainfall and very hot weather we couldn't do much farm work.

In addition, in April we had a fire accident: one staff member got some burns, and the roof of the volunteers' room and two sheds are damaged. Luckily, no children were harmed and the staff member has been treated well by the doctor.



Repaired fences

Luckily, we can also share some good news: the fence surrounding the farm and Dayspring Home has been repaired, thanks to a donation of Caritas Linköping. The fences protect the harvest against wild animals and thieves, and ensures that the children are safe at the compound.

What comes next?

Due to climate change, the weather becomes an increasingly unstable factor we have to consider in our farm work. Therefore we are looking for technical support from volunteers to adopt climate resilient farm strategies that will increase our harvest. We are also raising funds to completely repair the fire damage at the farm.

Sub organisations

Since her inception in 1993, Blossom Trust has been empowering women and TB patients, leading to diverse community based organisations (CBOs) who are now largely independently running, but still overseen by Blossom Trust.



Rainbow TB Forum advocacy meeting

Rainbow TB Forum

What

Rainbow TB Forum is an advocacy group for and by TB patients. This forum gathers patient voices to encourage community-mobilization in support of TB affected communities throughout Tamil Nadu.

Achieved

1. Rainbow TB Forum received funding from Cepheid for a two days TB awareness raising event in the weekend of World TB Day 2019. Rainbow TB Forum, together with Blossom Trust, shared the stories of TB survivors across Virudhunagar, raised awareness about TB symptoms by handing out fliers with a TB disease profile, and collected 1,629 signatures for a government petition to include TB rights on political candidates' platforms.



Handing out fliers with TB information on the street

2. The director is on behalf of Rainbow TB Forum is a member of the Oversight Committee of the India Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), of the Global Fund, to oversee programs in India that are financed by GFATM.

Paneer Poo

What

Paneer Poo is a support network for HIV positive women living in isolation and/or poverty. It stemmed from our previous HIV/AIDS Care and Support project. Paneer Poo is now an independent trust which addresses the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Achieved

At the moment we have an estimate of 460 members in the network. The network supports Dayspring Home with groceries and some women are actively referring people with TB symptoms to the hospitals (in cooperation with Rainbow TB Forum).

Paneer Poo is also involved in a Spirulina treatment for 71 people. Each year a nurse from Femmes Network will come for two weeks to check the health of the people and give advice for their nutrition and vitamin use.

At the moment Paneer Poo is in the process of starting a project for safe public bathrooms as part of the existing transgender project. Safe public bathrooms will allow transgender individuals to access a public space with dignity and free from harassment. Paneer Poo is discussing the project with the government and other stakeholders to lay the groundwork of the project.

PHOTOS

Poomalai Women's Collective

What

in order to provide the community with financial education and access to funds, Blossom created Poomalai Women's Collective, an umbrella federation of women's Self-Help Groups (SHG). Poomalai's microcredit projects help impoverished rural and urban women gain access to small loans to invest in an income generating activity.

Achieved

Over the course of years Poomalai has established 1200 SHGs, leading to many women who are now running their own businesses and are economically self-reliant.

Partnerships

Blossom Trust is involved in multiple national and international partnerships. By participating in these platforms, Blossom Trust ensures that the voice of vulnerable people are also taken into account at the national and international level.



TB People

What

TB people is a network of Stop TB partnership, of people with experience of tuberculosis. People with TB experience and TB activists are coming together in this network to advocate for better healthcare and rights for people affected by TB.

Achieved

Blossom Trust has been involved in writing a consultancy report before the launch of the Declaration of the Rights of People Affected by Tuberculosis. Based on interviews with diverse TB activists/survivors in the Asia- Pacific region, the report has given recommendations to improve the Declaration and make it inclusive for all people affected by TB.

GCTA

What

The Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA) is a global platform of people affected by TB that amplifies community engagement and strengthens the capacity of TB activists at all levels. The GCTA envisions a world free of Tuberculosis and works towards making this a reality.

Achieved

Our director, as a board member of the GCTA, has participated in diverse advocacy strategies and meetings of the GCTA. One of the highlights of 2018 was attending the UN High Level Meeting on TB in September 2018. GCTA provided inputs for the speaking points for the opening session of the High Level Meeting and contributed immensely to the Asia Pacific TB-Affected Community and Civil Society Statement that was released at the meeting.

UNITAID

What

UNITAID is an international organisation with the mission to maximize the effectiveness and access to global health. Our director is part of the executive board representing the TB affected communities delegation.

Achieved

Our director has participated in Unitaid 32nd Executive Board Meeting and Communities Delegation pre-meetings, in June 2019. One of the activities of the communities delegation is to vote for how funding of large donors is divided between several health issues. As representative of the TB community in India, our director uses her position to push for TB funding for Asian countries.



32nd Executive board meeting in Seoul, South-Korea

Acknowledgments

Blossom would like to express its sincere appreciation all its staff, volunteers, members, donors and partnerships with the local authorities whose dedication, contributions and ongoing support have ensured that Blossom has continued striving towards 'Blossoming power in every individual to reinforce community development!' Thank you very much for your support.

Contact details

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Website: <https://www.blossomtrust.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/blossom.trust/>
<https://www.facebook.com/blossomdayspringhome/>

Registration details

Registration Number: 85/93

FCRA Approved & Indian Tax Exempt

Date of Registration: 7 June, 1993

Act: Indian Trust Act 1882



Donations

Blossom provides ongoing social and medical support for marginalized groups in rural communities.

With your support we can continue to provide support to vulnerable people and create a better future.

Demand draft or cash in favour of Blossom Trust payable at Virudhunagar to send to our address.

Local funds transfer to:

Blossom Trust
A/C 10921873022
IFSC SBIN 0000951
State Bank of India Main Branch, Virudhunagar
626001 Tamil Nadu, South India

International funds transfer to:

Blossom Trust
A/C 035801000010525
IOBA 0000358
Swift Code IOB AIN BB 001
Branch code 0358
Indian Overseas Bank Central
Branch, Virudhunagar
626001 Tamil Nadu, South India

It is also possible to give a one time donation or more regularly donations at our GlobalGiving fundraising platform for Dayspring Home:

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/blossomtrust-orphans-hiv-tb/>

Volunteer opportunities

Volunteers play a fundamental role in several of our projects, especially in fundraising for the children's home and the farm. This year we are mainly looking for volunteers who can help with the farm. If you are interested in volunteering with Blossom Trust please send an email to: blossom.projectcoordinator@gmail.com