Report narrative and final

(Standards A and A-flexible)

**Financial support**

A narrative report must be prepared every 12 months for all projects and programmes supported by the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development for Bread for the World (hereafter referred to as Financing Partner).It must be sent to the Financing Partner within three months after the end of the reporting period.

Any additional information should be attached as an appendix. This also applies to material gathered during data collection, photographs and similar information.

Please include in the report aspects relating to gender equality, inclusion (of people with disabilities) and any environmental impact relating to the project.

In the case of the reporting of a construction project, the "narrative report construction project" must also be prepared and sent to the Financing Partner.

**Brief notes on filling in the report form**

Please use this form for all your narrative and final reports. The questions for the following reports should be answered in sequence in the sections marked in different colors:

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| **Report1** |

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| **Report 2** |

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| **Report 3 = final report** |

This means all reports will be carried forward in **one** document. Each report should not exceed 10 pages (i.e. the basic form + max. 10 pages per reporting period). In case you have nothing to report on a specific question then a short note explaining this is sufficient.

# General information

If necessary, please update the table below for each report.

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| Name of the organisation | | Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre |
| Address | | Upparapalli Road, Anantapur -515002, Andhra Pradesh, India. |
| P.O Box | | Click or type here to insert text. |
| Contact person(s) for the project | | Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy |
| Email address(es) | | mallareddy@accionfraterna.org |
| Telephone number(s) | | +91 9849056555 |
|  | | |
| Project title | | Promotion of sustainable Agriculture & diversifiedlivelihoods in Anantapur District |
| Project number | | N-IND-2017-0397 |
| Project duration | | From01.04.2018to31.03.2021 |
| **Report1** | | |
| Reporting period | From toInsert date. | |
| Date of report | Click or type here to insert text. | |
| Written by |  | |

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| **Report2** | |
| Reporting period | fromInsert date.toInsert date. |
| Date of report | Click or type here to insert text. |
| Written by | Click or type here to insert text. |

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| **Report3 = final report** | |
| Reporting period | From 01.04.2020 to 31.03.2021 |
| Date of report | 15.07.2021 |
| Written by | Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy |

# Changes relating to the initial situation and the problem that the project is addressing

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| Context changes and implications on the project and/or the target group(s) Have there been any significant changes to the context (e.g. social, political, economic, ecological) since the project started which affect it? To what extent do these changes have implications for the target group(s)? |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

No, there are no significant changes in the context.

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| Project concept Did the changes during the reporting period described above require any modification of the project concept (e.g. strategies, activities)? If so, please explain. |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

No modifications were required.

# Project progress

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| Effects (outcomes/use of output) Please report here **cumulatively** (for the **whole** period of the project so far, not just for the reporting period) |

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| **Project objective 1:With the promotion of sustainable agriculture, drought mitigation and alternate livelihoods, food and livelihood security have improved in 230 villages of Anantapur Disrict** | |
| **1. Indicator:**Atleast 30% of the target population has increased their income by 20% from which 50% are women. | **Baseline/starting point:** 3795 target households (33% of targeted population) are adopting sustainable agriculture and drought mitigation practices of whom 35% are women. |
| Current status of/figures for the indicator (accumulated)   |  | | --- | | **Report1** |  |  | | --- | | **Report2** |  |  | | --- | | **Report3 = final report** |   During the project period from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2021, 6872families (36% of 19,085 families from 956 SMGs in 218 villages) have adopted more than 2 sustainable agriculture and drought mitigation practices and increased their relative incomes ranging from Rs 4000 to Rs 8000 per annum. Among the farmers who have adopted the sustainable agriculture and drought mitigation technologies, 4810 (70%) are women farmers. | |
| **2. Indicator:**Atleast 50% skilled youth (girls and boys) have increased their income to average 60 Euro per month. | **Baseline/starting point:** 26% of young women and men provided with vocation skills (572 out of 2196 trained youth) earn a monthly income ranging from Rs 1500 to Rs 6000. |
| Current status of/figures for the indicator (accumulated)   |  | | --- | | **Report1** |  |  | | --- | | **Report2** |  |  | | --- | | **Report3 = final report** |   During the project period from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2021, 1364 rural youth (613 women and 751 men) were provided skill trainings in different vocational trades. Out of them 757 rural youth (55%) were either employed or self employed with income ranging from Rs 6000 to Rs 12000 per month. | |
| **3. Indicator:**Insert indicator. | **Baseline/starting point:**Insert starting point. |
| Current status of/figures for the indicator (accumulated)   |  | | --- | | **Report1** |   Please insert your answer here   |  | | --- | | **Report2** |   Please insert your answer here   |  | | --- | | **Report3 = final report** |   Please insert your answer here | |
| Please give your **assessment** of the status of achievement of **this project** objective (including going beyond the indicators).   |  | | --- | | **Report1** |  |  | | --- | | **Report2** |  |  | | --- | | **Report3 = final report** |   The project objective has been successfully achieved, inspite of severe drought conditions during first two years of the project 2018-19 and 2019-20 and COVID pandemic lockdown in the third year 2020-21.  As part of COVID rehabilitation activity, 1200 migrant returnees were supported to access MGNREGS job cards and wage employment. During COVID lockdown, the farmers were unable to sell their produce as there was no transportation. At that time, the FPOs with support of APSSDCL had procured the Groundnut crop at Minimum Support Price (MSP), Rs.6100 per quintal which was Rs.1000 per higher than the market price, benefitting 2100 small farmers. Rainfed Natural and Nutritional farming model and Kitchen Gardens have benefitted more than 13,000 migrant returnees and other small farmer households as they consumed diversified and nutritious food during COVID pandemic. A population of about 80,000 had benefitted from COVID rehabilitation activities of AF Ecology Centre. | |
| Were there any contributing or hindering factors/developments/stakeholders, which affected the achievement of the objective? If so, how did you deal with them and how do you intend to deal with them in the future?   |  | | --- | | **Report1** |  |  | | --- | | **Report2** |  |  | | --- | | **Report3 = final report** |   The decentralised village local self-governance system called “Village Secretariats” introduced by the Government of Andhra Pradesh is functioning successfully since about one year. This setup is enabling the communities to easily access the Government programmes and entitlements. It is contributing to the development goal of empowering the communities as the Government functionaries are now deployed closer to the rural communities and are more accountable now.  The Sarpanchs (Village President) were elected for all Gramapanchayats in this year. But the powers and functions of these elected representatives is yet to be clarified vis-à-vis Village Secretariats. There is need to empower the Grama Panchayats through participatory governance system in order to provide better services through Village Secretariats. AFEC is trying to enable more transparency and accountability at the village level by bridging the gap between Government agencies, elected Gramapanchayat bodies and community based organisations (CBOs) through facilitation and capacity building. | |
| **Results (outputs)[[1]](#footnote-1)**  *For the activity report, please see the enclosure to the half-yearly financial report.*  Please report here only on the **reporting period** (not for the entire project):  What outputs were planned for this phase of the project? What outputs were achieved in this phase of the project? Please explain any discrepancies. How did you deal with this, and/or how do you intend to deal with it in the future? (If required, you can also insert a table for the outputs or add an annex)   |  | | --- | | **Report1** |  |  | | --- | | **Report2** |  |  | | --- | | **Report3 = final report** |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Achieved Project Outcome** | **Outputs achieved during reporting period 01.04.2020 to 31.03.2021 which contributed to the Project Outcome** | | During the project period from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2021, 6872families (36% of 19,085 families from 956 SMGs in 218 villages) have adopted more than 2 sustainable Agriculture and drought mitigation practices and increased their relative incomes by atleast Rs 4000 to Rs 8000 per annum. Among the farmers who have adopted the sustainable Agriculture and Drought mitigation technologies, 4810 (70%) are women farmers. | 1. 200 women Karyakathas acquired knowledge on facilitating CBOs and Natural Farming Methods. 2. 956 SMGS and 230 GSMS comprising of 19085 households are conducting monthly savings and credit regularly. 3. 500 CBO and FPO leaders (including 80% women members) participated in project planning, implementation and monitoring. 4. Eight FPOs are providing services to farmers through Farmer shops, Custom Hiring Centers and Procurement of Agri produce at Minimum Support Price. 5. 6200 farmers including 5400 women farmers acquired technical and practical knowledge on Natural Farming and mixed cropping through trainings, exposure visits and Farmer Field Schools. 6. 8079 farmers including 7060 women farmers adopted Rainfed Natural Farming with diversified crops combining millets, pulses and vegetables in 8169 acres. 7. 1693 farmers including 1220 women farmers adopted natural farming methods in irrigated lands. 8. 109 farmers including 98 women farmers have given protective irrigation to save the crops from moisture stress in 246 acres. 9. 7282 farmers (80% women) sow contingency/ relay crops in 16447 acres. 10. 385 farmers (70% women) had taken up improved fodder production in 828 acres. 11. 9266 households have raised homestead Kitchen Gardens. | | During the project period from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2021, 1364 rural youth (613 women and 751 men) acquired skill trainings in different vocational trades. Out of them 757 rural youth (55%) were either employed or self employed with income ranging from Rs 6000 to Rs 12000 per month. | 1. 152 rural youth acquired employable skills in Motor vehicle Driving, Cell phone mechanism and Two wheeler mechanism and linked to employment/self employment. 2. 350 rural women acquired skills in Garment making and Millet foods and linked to employment/self employment. 3. 81 women get financial and technical support to improve their off-farm & non-farm livelihood activities. | | |

***If there is more than one project objective, please copy and paste the above table for each of the additional project objectives.***

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| Monitoring methods Has there been any change in the monitoring methods for the indicators (compared with the original plan)? Did you have difficulty collecting and/or analysing the data?  If so, please explain: |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

No, there has been no change.

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| Unintended effects Did the project have any unintended positive and/or negative effects?  If so, please describe them and how you dealt with them. |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

AFEC conducted a field monitoring study in the month of November 2020, to assess the situation of SMGs and to understand the effect of COVID on functioning of SMGs. It was noticed that mostly the SMGs of SC& ST communities were disturbed as many members were not able to pay the monthly thrift and loan installment. The lockdown had badly affected the livelihoods of these households whose major income source was non-farm wage employment. Large number of their family members who had migrated had returned from cities like Bangalore due to lockdown. They could neither leave the village nor can find work in the village. They just survived with food provisions provided by the Government through Public Distribution System and wage employment from MGNREGS.

The COVID lockdown, for about 6 months from March 2020 to August 2020, has adversely affected the functioning of Sasyamitra Groups. 60 SMGs did not conduct thrift and loan activity. 52 groups were disintegrated. About 1000 members had left the SMGs during Covid lockdown period due to various reasons. By the end of September 2020, the number of SMGs fell to 759 with 15774 members.

AFEC decided to revive the SMGs and conducted a drive to bring back more women and more SC& ST communities into SMG fold. In the months of December 2020 and January 2021, AFEC focused on reviving the SMG groups and forming new SC, ST groups. Because of these efforts, 197 SMGs have been reorganized and made functional. 3302 members, who were inactive, have started paying the thrift again. All the SMGs are made functional with monthly meetings and thrift. As on March 31st, 2021,there are 956 SMGs with 19,085 families which comprise 40.4% of SC & ST families (6,391 SC Families, 1,335 ST families). 653 SMGs (70%) out of 956SMGs are 100% women groups. The women members are 16934 (88%) and men members are 2151 (12%). The women percent in SMGs has increased from 68% to 88%. Thus COVID pandemic has presented an opportunity to enhance the representation of women and SC, ST communities in SMGs.

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| Overall assessment, highlights, challenges, lessons learned, “good fit practices”, etc. Please give a short assessment of the progress of the project so far. |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

The project has achieved its objectives and it is an important milestone in achieving the long term goals of Livelihood security and Social and Gender equity among rural poor. It has immensly contributed to addressing the challenge of mitigating drought impact, reviving the rainfed agriculture and make it viable and sustainable in the chronically drought prone region like Anantapur District. The project directly benefitted 20,000 families and indirectly over 100,000 families of small and marginal farmers and farm labour. It has thrown up several innovations and initiatives which proved to be effective solutions fordrought mitigation, especially for small farmers. Some of the interventions developed by the project were adopted by Government of Andhra Pradesh through various programs and schemes. The project has certainly contributed to sustainable development and poverty reduction in Anantapur district.

**Good fit practices:**

The project had developed, tested and propagated various practices and technologies which are user friendly and well suited for small and marginal rainfed farmers. These practices were helpful for adapting to drought and sustaining rainfed agriculture and were accepted and adopted by the farmers and farmer organizations. Some of the technologies & practices were up-scaled by the Government through various schemes. They good fit practices are:

* Protective Irrigation
* On-farm rainwater harvesting
* Breaking the mono cropping of Groundnut through crop diversification with millets and pulses
* Natural Farming practices to reduce usage of hazardous agro-chemicals
* Multi-tree cropping models suitable for rainfed conditions.
* Different annual rainfed inter-crop models with food crops of millets & pulses
* Contingency and relay crops
* Cycle seeder cum weeder for reducing the drudgery
* Community Managed Seed System (CMSS)

**Some of the highlights of the project are:**

* **Rainfed Natural Nutritional Farming (RNNF) - Mixed cropping system with millets, pulses, vegetables with Natural Farming practices**: AF designed and promoted a mixed cropping model with pulses and vegetables for rainfed lands so that marginal rainfed farmers and farm labourers (including seasonal migrant returnees) can produce and consume balanced food like millets, pulses and vegetables for food and nutrition security at household level. The RNNF seed kit consisted of 18 varieties of seed consisting of pulses, millets, oil seeds and vegetables suitable for rainfed agriculture and agro climate of Anantapur. 8079 small and marginal farmers had adopted RNNF model in 8169 acres with natural farming practices. Almost all these farmers had harvested food grains worth Rs 6000 to Rs 8000/- per acre, excluding the vegetables consumed. The food grains obtained were sufficient for a family of 5 persons for one year (approx 40,000 population).
* **Kitchen Gardens ensured that the rural communities consumed nutritious and fresh vegetables and greens:** AF had promoted kitchen gardens by providing seed kits and technical knowhow to raise Nutri-Kitchen Gardens in backyards. Accordingly 9266 families have raised the Kitchen Gardens adopting natural farming practices. Almost all these households have produced enough vegetables for home consumption and also shared with neighbours (Approx 50,000 population benefitted). Each family had saved about Rs 600 per month for 3 to 4 months on vegetables during COVID pandemic.
* **Contingency Crops provided fodder to livestock and improved soil fertility:** During June 2020, many farmers had sown the first rainfed crop little early due to good rains. Thus they could harvest the Groundnut crop early in the month of September. Making use of this opportunity, AFEC had promoted Horse gram and Jowar as a second crop to be sown in the months of September and October. Totally 7282 farmers had sown the second crop in 16,447 acres. Fortunately the later rains in November were favourable this year and the second crop was harvested successfully. Sufficient quantity of nutritious fodder and some grain were harvested because of this initiative. There is an additional earning ranging from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 per acre from grain and fodder. Thanks to favorable monsoon conditions this year.
* **FPO Services:** During Covid lockdown, the price of Groundnut plummeted to Rs 4500 to 5000 per quintal and the farmers were desperate to sell off the crop. At this time, the FPOs tied up with Andhra Pradesh State Seed Development Corporation Ltd (APSSDCL) and procured 23,445 quintals of Groundnut seed @ Minimum Support Price (MSP) Rs. 6100/- per quintal from 2100 farmers. It was a great relief to the farmers as they were not only able to sell the produce at their door step but also at a fair price. The farmers had benefitted atleast Rs. 1000 per each quintal sold, when compared to market price. The farmers have benefitted to a tune of Rs. Rs.15 million and 8 FPOs have got profit of Rs 2.4 million from procurement activity. This activity also created much needed employment to 500 wage seekers for 60 days each during Covid period. FPOs are providing timely services and inputs through Custom Hiring Centers (CHC) and Farmer Shops which had increased community participation and sense of collective ownership. Also all the FPOs are actively serving farmers through programs like Community Managed Seed System (CMSS).
* **Policy Advocacy:** AFEC’s played a key role in bringing out a law for constituting “AP state Millets Board” for encouraging millet crops. AFEC was a member in AP Agriculture Mission and influenced policies like MSP for millets and support for FPOs to take up agri-processing.
* **Local community based ‘organisers’** called Karyakarthas are introduced in each village to gradually replace the present grass root staff (STOs) gradually. All the karyakartas are women only and selected by respective village GSMG members with facilitation support from AFEC. During COVID lockdown these karyakartas facilitated the groups in their villages. These local community based cadres enhance the quality of outreach and also the sustainability of SMGs in the long run.

**The challenges are:**

* The Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have laid a strong foundation; however, it is a long way to go for them to become viable social business organizations. FPOs have to be further strengthened with proper business management systems and organization culture to enable them for functioning as professional social business organisations.It is a challenge to inculcate organisational systems and culture in FPOs, especially among Board of Directors. They tend to behave as individuals and conduct business informally as opposing to functioning as formal organisation.
* More efforts have to be put in diversifying the livelihood opportunities and creating livelihood security for rural youth and women. There is need to focus on building entrepreneurial abilities among rural youth and women to enable them to access various non-farm income opportunities and benefit from them. New trades are to be introduced which have more market demand and better employability or self employability.
* The line management monitoring and the role of PME team needs to be defined more clearly. The six monthly reviews need to be focused on evaluating the achievements in terms of outputs and outcomes. The computerized MIS to be streamlined to create proper evidence and reduce the burden of manual maintenance of registers and records at various levels. The data collected have to be disaggregated and have stratification of information on gender, social equity and economic categories. There is need to improve usage of communication technology and digital platforms for data collection, reporting, providing virtual trainings to staff and target groups.

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| Effects with regards to cross-cutting issues Have there been any changes as result of the project regarding gender relationships and/or the inclusion of people with disabilities? |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

The women ratio in SMGs has increased after reorganisation of SMGs which was necessitated by COVID lockdown. The COVID crisis has created an opportunity to maximize representation and role for women in SMGs, especially from SC, ST communities. The women representation has increased from 68% to 88%. And the SC & ST families representation in SMGs has increased from 26% 40.4%. More women are now taking leadership roles in SMGs and FPOs.

To further strengthen the SMGs and women leaders, AFEC has introduced village volunteer system. A young woman from the same village is selected and given training required for facilitating SMGs. As on date, 210 women karyakarthas were selected for facilitating SMGs in their respective villages. They were given basic training on the objectives, activities, role of karyakartas and Natural Farming methods

# Evaluations

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| If an evaluation took place during the reporting period, please give a short report on the key findings and recommendations, and the measures you introduced to implement the recommendations. Please attach the implementation plan/management response (if available) as an appendix. |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

External Evaluation could not be taken up due to COVID during 2020-21. However an internal evaluation facilitated by an external consultant was conducted. This process involved a review and reflection on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Based on the findings of the internal evaluation the next phase proposal (2021-24) was prepared and submitted to BfdW.

# Changes in the organisation

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| During the reporting period, have there been any **significant events** or **major changes** in your organisation, (e.g. regarding the management structure, the individual(s) bearing legal responsibility, the PME (planning, monitoring and evaluation) system, the composition of the (project-relevant) team)? If so, please briefly describe them. |

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| **Report3 = final report** |

The Covid 19 had affected the pace of our work due to lockdown and severity of infections. More than half of our staffs were infected. Our working style has changed. We are now preferring online/virtual meetings and avoiding the physical meetings. The COVID precautionary measures have become part of our work. AFEC is actively involved in Covid relief and rehabilitation operations in the project area with financial support from Bread for the World, Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives and AEIN. We are working closely with Government and other NGOs in COVID relief measures.

The Andhra Pradesh Drought Mitigation Project (APDMP) implemented by AF and other NGOs in 5 drought prone districts of Andhra Pradesh state with support from IFAD and Government of AP was suddenly withdrawn by the Government. This project now is being implemented through the Village Secretariats (Village Local Self Government Body). These were setup by the Government to decentralise the administration to Village level. Consequently, AF had to withdraw all the APDMP staff (11 members) from the project. Some staff members who were trained and experienced were retained and allocated to other projects and inexperienced staffs were retrenched. However, the retrenched staff got the employment in the Village Secretariats.

Except above, there has been not much change in organisation regarding management, PME and project team.

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| **Please answer the following questions ONLY, if this is the final report, i.e. the project is completed:** |

# Outcome, relevance and sustainability

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| Extent to which the objectives for the whole project were achieved Please describe the level of achievement for the whole project (based on the project objective(s) and the related indicators)  *(If there was only one project objective, this question will have already been answered in previous sections of the report.)* |

The objective of the project “**Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Diversified Livelihoods in Anantapur District**” is to reduce vulnerability of livelihoods caused by frequent and consecutive droughts and achieve food and livelihood security for small and marginal rainfed farmers and farm labour in Anantapur district through promotion of sustainable agriculture, drought mitigation and alternate livelihoods.

The objectives achieved against the planned indicators for the current phase from April 2018 to March 2021 are as below:

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| **Planned indicator** | **Achievement as on March 31, 2021** | **Remarks** |
| 1.1 Atleast 30% of the target population has increased their income by 20% from which 50% are women. | * 6872families (36% of 19,085 families from 956 SMGs in 218 villages) have adopted more than 2 sustainable Agriculture and drought mitigation practices and increased their relative incomes by atleast Rs 4000 to Rs 8000 per annum. * Among the farmers who have adopted the sustainable Agriculture and Drought mitigation technologies, 4810 (70%) are women farmers. | This outcome has been achieved, inspite of severe drought conditions during first two years of the project 2018-19 and 2019-20 and COVID pandemic lockdown in the third year 2020-21. |
| 1.2 Atleast 50% skilled youth (girls and boys) have increased their income to average 60 Euro per month. | * 1364 rural youth (613 women and 751 men) were given skill trainings in different vocational trades * Out of them 757 rural youth (55%) were either employed or self employed with income ranging from Rs 6000 to Rs 12000 per month. | The planned outcome (employed youth) has been achieved inspite of COVID lockdown for about 6 months from March 2020 to August 2020. |

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| Project approach Please assess shortly, why or why not your project approach was successful in achieving the project objective(s). |

## The SADL Project adopted a participatory approach by; a) involving institutions of women farmers’ in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project as well as engagement with Government agencies, b) development and on-field demonstration of various locally relevant technologies and practices related to climate smart sustainable agriculture and drought mitigation, c) knowledge dissemination and building public opinion for policy influence and d) promoting non-farm livelihoods through skill building and providing backward and forward linkages for rural women and youth.

## The project focused on community organisation, knowledge development, field testing with community participation and lobby for up-scaling of successful interventions. It neither involves high investments on individual families nor repetition of same activities year after year.

The key strategy of AFEC has been to develop appropriate technologies & practices that are suitable for local agro-climatic and socioeconomic conditions, demonstrate at a sizable scale in the project area and lobby with Government for their scaling up across the state of Andhra Pradesh. So far this strategy has been very effective.

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| Contribution to the development goal Please explain to what extent the project contributed to the developmental goal (impact). |

The target communities particularly women (covering approx. 19000 households) are organized into informal and formal institutions and strengthened. The collective actions and collaborations among the target communities and their institutions horizontally and vertically enabled them to realize their entitlements and access Government programs effectively. The CBOs (over 1000 nos.) including their federations are now able to bargain and negotiate with the Government agencies on the issues that they are concerned about. The thrift and credit activity in SMGs has augmented financial resources at their disposal and augmented investments. The participatory process empowered the women and forged their leadership at different levels. It is evident from their increasing participation in Self-Governance of local bodies.

SADL project has definitely contributed to the development goal by creating a long-term and sustainable impact among the target groups and other the stakeholders such as the government, research institutions and other key players in promotion of climate resilient agriculture, drought mitigation and alternate livelihoods to the small holders & farm labour. The project has been effective in creating awareness, dissemination of knowledge among the target groups on sustainable agriculture, drought mitigation and diversified livelihoods resulting in adoption by farmers. The project developed and propagated low cost, simple, affordable, location-specific drought & climate resistant practices and technologies to tolerate drought and enhance productivity in Rainfed Agriculture. Consequently, the farmers’ ability to cope with droughts has increased including adoption of diversified food crops with millets, pulses and vegetables in Rainfed Agriculture improving the nutritional status of the families. It also contributed to increasing the food and nutritional self sufficiency and security among the farmers.

Some of the practices and technologies developed by the project like Farm Pond lining, Protective Irrigation, Rainfed mixed cropping models, Multiple Fruit tree models etc had been adapted and up scaled by Government of Andhra Pradesh through programs like Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Community Managed Seed System (CMSS), Andhra Pradesh Drought Mitigation Project (APDMP) and Andhra Pradesh Community Natural Farming (APCNF).

Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre is seen by the Government and research bodies as a resource organization with commitment, expertise and experience at the grass root level in working with rural poor women, small farmers and farm labour. It is often invited by the state government and the line departments to share experiences and provide advice and strategic guidance on drought mitigation, watershed development, water management, rainfed agriculture, gender, rural livelihoods etc., in policy formulation and implementation. It also acted as an informal hub for NGOs/CSOs in the region and always contributing to strengthen the peoples’ movements as well as voluntary sector& CSOs.

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| Relevance How do you assess the relevance (e.g. in relation to the target groups) of the project from today's perspective? |

The project operational area Ananthapur district falls under drought and desert-prone agro-climatic zone of Deccan plateau also known as “Rain Shadow Area”. Here a mere 15% of the cultivated area is under irrigation and the rest of 85% is under rainfed. More than 70% of the total 700,000 farmers depend on rainfed farming alone which is low (550 mm), highly uncertain and undependable. More than 90% of rainfed farmers are small and marginal farmers and farm labour with landholding less than 2 hectares. The climate change is aggravating the droughts and impacting adversely the rainfed farmers and the farm labour. Crop failures often in succession since decades landed the farmers in a vicious cycle of indebtedness and poverty. The district is in severe agrarian crisis and also deprived of alternate livelihood opportunities due to lack of industries. Hence promotion of drought resilient sustainable agriculture practices and diversified livelihoods for the target group i.e. vulnerable small farmers & farm labour is very relevant and appropriate in order to address drought & poverty and secure their livelihoods. In this context, the SADL project is highly relevant.

In rural India, society being patriarchal, women are culturally discriminated and looked down. The cultural division of labour, in agricultural operations, put more burdens on women in addition to their reproductive and domestic workload. Also they have no say in selecting crops and in household financial decisions. So, it is very relevant and appropriate to front-end rural women and secure livelihoods under their leadership. AF’s approach is not women’s development; it is development by women. It strives to create an enabling opportunity for women to lead development process.

Further there are very few NGOs in India, like Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre, focusing on rainfed agriculture, climate change and food and nutritional security in chronically drought-prone areas and also working closely with government agencies to bring in appropriate policies.

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| Sustainability Please estimate to what extent the positive changes reached by the project will persist in the long term. To what extent were the measures to ensure sustainability (of the project) sufficient and practicable? Have you finished the cooperation with the target groups of this project or will it continue? If so, how do you ensure that no dependence will arise? |

## The outcome & impact orientation and sustainability are inbuilt in the project. The project has a)organised small and marginal women farmers and strengthened their institutions b) developed various technologies & practices of sustainable agriculture for coping with droughts and disseminated the knowledge to farmers, c) provided skill trainings and facilitated linkages for diversification of rural livelihoods and d) focussed on policy advocacy for up-scaling of technologies & practices as well as creating an enabling policy environment for livelihood security for small holder farmers, particularly women.

## The women based community institutions (both informal and formal) are promoted and strengthened at different levels enabling and ensuring participatory development processes. These institutions are gradually moving towards self-managed and self-governed entities. These CBOs are nurtured to be the voice of small farmers and to work closely with Government for a) accessing the development programs and entitlements effectively and b) lobbying scaling up of proven technologies & practices. The project emphasised community participation and ownership.

The climate-resilient drought mitigation and sustainable agriculture practices developed by the project are agro-climate specific cost effective, user friendly and easily adoptable by small farmers. The practices were disseminated by training, demonstration and exposure and are adopted by large number of farmers in the district and across similar agro-climate zones. Government intervention was sought for scaling up some interventions in order to create a larger eco-system favourable for small farmers, rainfed agriculture, gender sensitive social environment etc.

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| Lessons learned Please summarise the lessons learned from the entire project. Are these lessons learned applicable to other projects/target groups/organisations/regions? |

**Lessons learnt from the project**:

1. **Every crisis is also an opportunity.**The COVID crisis has created an opportunity to re-organise SMGs which give more representation to women in SMGs, especially from SC, ST communities. Thus the crisis has indirectly helped in bringing Gender and Social equity in SMGs, which was sought after since long.
2. **Nurturing Community Institutions is a gradual process**: The Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have laid a strong foundation, with women directors leading at the front, through increased community participation and sense of collective ownership. However, it is a long way to go for them to become viable social business organizations.The relevant capacity building measures are being planned to bring business sense and organizational culture among rural women directors and strengthen the FPOs as professional organisations.
3. **Rural poor, particularly women lack entrepreneurial ability**: There is need to build entrepreneurial abilities among rural youth, especially women through training and exposure to enable them to diversify income opportunities in off-farm and non-farm sectors. More focused and result oriented effort is being done to mobilize and motivate rural youth to utilize the existing Government schemes and opportunities of skill development and employment and diversify their livelihoods.
4. **The oral culture and digital divide in rural areas is affecting the digitization (MIS) and PME systems**: Most of the field staff, come from rural areas, do not have knowledge on Computers and English language. This is affecting the streamlining of computerizing the MIS which is very essential to reduce the burden of manual maintenance of registers and records at various levels. There is need to focus on collecting disaggregated data and have stratification of information on gender, social equity and economic categories for evidence building. There is need to improve usage of communication technology and digital platforms for data collection, reporting, providing virtual trainings to staff and target groups. The six monthly reviews are being planned for evaluating the project achievements in terms of outcomes.
5. **The staff coming from outside are less effective in working with rural women**: We have understood from experience that community based facilitators are more effective compared to staff coming from outside. So, local community based ‘organisers’ called Karyakarthas are recently introduced in all the project villages to gradually replace the present grass root staff (STOs). All the karyakartas are women and selected by respective village GSMG members with facilitation support from AFEC. During COVID lockdown these karyakartas facilitated the groups well. These local community based cadres enhance the quality of outreach and sustainability of SMGs in the long run.

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| General summary (optional) |

1. If an output contributes to several objectives, please mark respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)