



ENDING HUNGER BY ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Urban Farming Practices &
Farm Sector Initiatives



ABOUT ESAF

Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF) was formed as a response to the widening partiality of prosperity in society. We partner with government agencies, community bodies, NGOs and corporates to deliver lasting change to the poor and the marginalised, especially women and children. One of the pioneers in India to form women Self-Help Groups, ESAF has more than 3.3 million SHG members who are agents of social transformation in their communities.

Motivated by the faith in the teachings of Jesus Christ, ESAF was formed by a small group of like-minded individuals committed to love their neighbours - the poor and the vulnerable - as themselves. Through our integrated approach to development, we have impacted more than 3.3 million families across 16 states in India and we will continue to serve all people regardless of religion, race, or gender till we witness a just and fair society.

VISION

Sustainable and holistic transformation of the poor and marginalised for creating a just and fair society

MISSION

To empower the poor and the marginalised, especially women and children, by providing them access to education, finance, health services, natural resources, marketing and technology, and to create opportunities for their sustainable development and holistic transformation



AREAS OF WORK

Education and child development, Skill development and livelihood intervention, Urban initiatives, Farm sector initiatives, Environment, Water and sanitation, Leadership development and networking, Healthcare, Disaster management and preparedness

EARTH MATTERS

Earth matters because it is the only planet that sustains life. However, we live in times when the environment is in total disarray. Climate crisis, drought and famine, natural disasters, are the extreme realities communities across the globe are facing. Nature is everyone's home and we are its custodians. As guardians of nature, ESAF is committed to making every effort towards protecting the environment and ensuring that nature provides and protects everyone's needs

URBAN FARMING PRACTICES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Our solution to the deepening food and climate crisis, and better health and well-being begins with little children. Our initiative of introducing urban agriculture practices in educational institutions across three states of India have made an impact at the policy level.

When trained student volunteers, teachers and urban local body members work together, the impact resonates beyond the boundaries of the school. Sustainable agriculture practices in schools support small and medium-sized farmers, improve the livelihood of the local community, reduce hunger and give access to safe and healthy food.



The sustainable agriculture practice in schools can help achieve multiple SDGs. The project is linked to at least nine of the SDGs. Besides ending hunger and promoting health and well-being, it responds to climate action, ending poverty, making cities liveable, etc. Urban farming in schools supports the local food system by producing high-quality organic vegetables and linking it with the local markets.

Objectives

- Include urban agriculture program in the school curriculum.
- Locally grown organic vegetables to be served in the school mid-day meal program.
- Improve the health and well-being of students and villagers.
- Reduce non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among school students by promoting physical activity through urban agriculture practices.
- Support small and medium-sized farmers
- Inculcate a sense of responsibility among students towards natural biodiversity and its conservation
- Achieve SDG targets linked to urban farming

How it works

We provide technical support to the Department of Education in implementing urban farming in schools. An 'Urban Farming Club' is constituted in the selected schools, consisting of teachers and volunteer students. The club monitors the farming activities. The schools are provided with vegetable seeds, manures, bio-fertilizers, and other equipment required for farming. Only local varieties of vegetables are used, also considering the nutritional requirement of children. Schools with space constraints have taken up terrace farming.



Stakeholders and Partners

To ensure the sustainability of the initiative, the project is implemented with the help of various government agencies and community groups. Local Self Government Department, Urban Local Bodies, Department of Education, and the selected schools in three states are the major stakeholders.

Kerala Forest Research Institute and Kerala Agriculture University are the technical partners.

Donors and other partners include HealthBridge, Canada, Biological Research Innovation Centre and Solutions, My Dream Garden, etc.

Impact

The initiative has resulted in changes at the policy level. It has resulted in allocating funds through the Local Development Fund of the Member of Legislative Assembly and Member of Parliament, Local Self Government Department, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Government of India), to replicate the organic farming practices in other schools in the respective states.

At the policy level, the project is now included in the General Education Protection Mission of Government of Kerala and is being implemented in 49 schools.

We have been approached by the Municipality of Malappuram, Kerala, to do an assessment of schools and kindergartens in the district to initiate urban agriculture programme. ESAF is empanelled as the implementation and monitoring agency and the budget will be allocated by the municipality to run the programme.

In Karnataka, the programme was piloted in two schools. The success of the programme prompted the Department of Education, Bangalore City, to sign an MoU with ESAF to identify potential schools in the city to scale up the programme.

In Assam, the local farmers gave 1.5 acres of land to school students in Majuli district to cultivate vegetables. Out of which, half an acre is cultivated by teachers and students, and the rest by their parents. The entire resources including seeds and fertilizers were mobilized within the community.



Recognitions

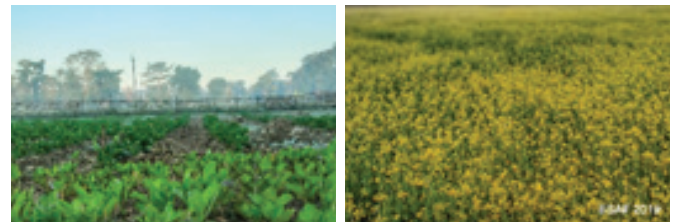
ESAF received the Smart Cities India Award, 2018, instituted by India Trade Promotion Organization (A Government of India Enterprise, Department of Commerce), Centre of Excellence - IoT (A joint initiative of MeitY, ERNET, NASSCOM supported by Government of Karnataka) and Exhibitions India Group. The award recognises pioneering projects that aim to make cities liveable, sustainable and economically friendly. ESAF bagged the award in the Academic Programme Award category for its excellence in implementing urban agriculture project at various educational institutions.



The urban agriculture initiative got featured in the *United Nation's Global Registry* of best practices towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

FARM SECTOR INITIATIVES

The agriculture sector employs more than 50% of the workforce in India. However, the sector is ailing due to diverse reasons and many farmers across the country are finding alternative ways for livelihood. ESAF is working towards the revival of the farm sector with the introduction of sustainable farming technologies, environment-friendly farming methods, promotion of farmer collectives, providing financial access, and creating value chain, etc. Recognising the challenges of small and medium farmers, ESAF is involved in capacity building of farmers across India.



Focus Areas

- Promotion of farmer collectives
- Capacity building of farmers and farmer collectives

- Organic agriculture practices
- Access to finance
- Creation of value chain

Promotion and Capacity Building of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO)

The project is initiated to address the pressing issue of farmers quitting the sector, as farming is no longer an economically viable option for them. Implemented in the rural areas of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand, the project helps mobilise farmers to form their own collectives and address various challenges. ESAF works closely with the community and helps farmers form a local Farmer Interest Group (FIG)- a constituent of Farmer Producer Company (FPC). The FIGs are given training on procurement, technological interventions to scale up productivity, improve soil fertility, effective utilisation of natural resources, and diversification of crops. The training helps FPCs to scale up their business ventures.



In 2014, ESAF was recognised as an Empanelled Institution for promoting FPCs in six states of India. In the same year, five FPCs in two districts of Chhattisgarh were promoted under VUCI (Vegetable Urban Cluster Initiative). In 2014-15, NABARD-Tamil Nadu appointed ESAF as POPI (Producer Organisation Promoting Institute) to promote 20 FPCs in eight districts of Tamil Nadu. ESAF was also awarded promotion of 20 FPCs in Karnataka and 15 FPCs in Kerala.

Partners

International Financial Corporation, NABARD, SFAC are our partnering agencies in various farm sector initiatives

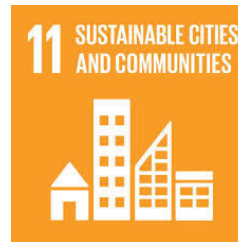


Vallalar FPC, supported by ESAF, won the second prize for its excellent performance among FPCs

ESAF's farm sector initiatives help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal targets



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that helps maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning



Member organization



Resource Institution



Accredited Agency



Project Partners



ESAF is registered under Travancore Cochin Literal and Scientific Charitable Societies Act of 1955 vide Reg. No 109/1992. ESAF is also registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 1976 vide Reg. No. 052900328. All donations made to ESAF are exempted from income tax under section 80G (5) of the Income Tax act, 1961.



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