

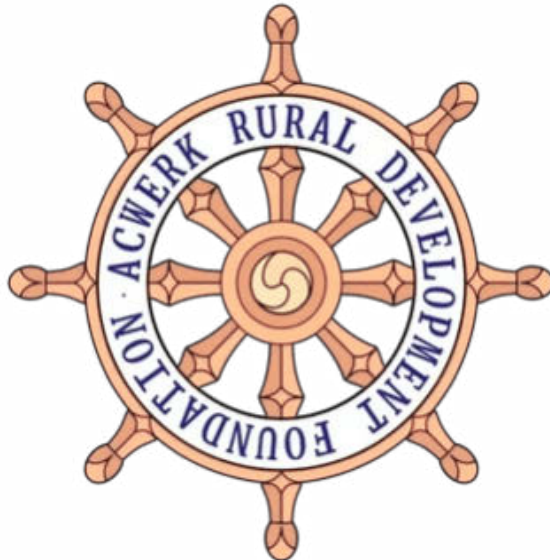
ACWERK RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2024–2025

Health Care • Education • Community Development • Sustainable Agriculture • Rural Development

Reporting Period: April 2024 – March 2025



1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2024–2025 marked an important phase in the continuing development of Acwerk Rural Development Foundation.

During the preceding year, the Foundation had undertaken rural and tribal healthcare outreach, yoga and therapy programmes, community engagement and field surveys in and around Tiruvannamalai and the Jawadhu Hills. These experiences provided valuable practical insight into the needs of rural and underserved communities.

During 2024–2025, Acwerk continued its healthcare and community outreach while beginning to develop a broader rural-development perspective. The year included field work at Mekkalur, community engagement in rural areas, outreach healthcare in the Jawadhu villages, educational and child-related activities, exposure to nursery and agricultural practices, and observation of the ecological and social environment.

These activities increasingly brought together five interconnected areas: Healthcare, Education, Agriculture, Livelihoods and Ecology.

The year can therefore be viewed as a period of transition from individual outreach activities towards a more integrated, community-centred rural-development vision.

2. THE FOUNDATION'S APPROACH

- Community-based healthcare
- Preventive health and wellness
- Education and awareness
- Community participation
- Sustainable agriculture
- Rural livelihoods
- Environmental responsibility
- Local resource utilisation
- Field-based learning
- Long-term rural development

Acwerk's work is guided by the understanding that sustainable rural development must begin with an understanding of the people, the land and the resources available within a community.

The Foundation's developing approach encompasses:

3. MEKKALUR – THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE

April 2024

One of the significant developments during the year was the beginning of Acwerk's work associated with Mekkalur in Tiruvannamalai district.

In April 2024, a field visit was undertaken in connection with the land purchase. The area was examined and mapped in consultation with the Village Administrative Officer (VAO).

The visit provided an opportunity to understand the physical and agricultural character of the land, the surrounding environment, access and the relationship between the site and the neighbouring community.

The field visit was an important first step in considering how the land might eventually support a broader rural-development initiative.

Acwerk's approach was to understand the location and its environment before undertaking detailed development planning.

4. LEARNING FROM AUROVILLE – NURSERY AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

June 2024

In June 2024, Acwerk visited a nursery at Auroville, Puducherry, as part of its continuing interest in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

The visit provided an opportunity to observe nursery practices and methods of plant production and cultivation.

The experience was relevant to Acwerk's emerging interest in nursery development, plant propagation, tree planting, agricultural diversification, sustainable land use, food-producing landscapes and ecological restoration.

The purpose of such exposure was to learn from existing practices and consider how suitable ideas might be adapted to local conditions at Mekkalur.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Direct interaction with communities remained a central feature of Acwerk's work during the year.

The Foundation's field activities included interaction with rural residents, children, community workers and local personnel.

These interactions provided opportunities to understand communities in their own environment and to appreciate the relationship between health, education, livelihoods and living conditions.

The Foundation's experience reinforced the importance of listening to local communities, building relationships and trust, working with local participants, understanding existing resources, recognising local knowledge, identifying practical needs and encouraging community participation.

6. COMMUNITY INTERACTION AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION

During the June 2024 field experience, Acwerk undertook community interaction accompanied by food distribution.

The activity provided an opportunity for direct contact with residents and for the Foundation to better understand the local community.

Such activities also helped strengthen relationships and familiarity between Acwerk's representatives and the communities with whom the Foundation seeks to work.

The Foundation recognises that community development begins with human relationships, participation and trust.

7. OUTREACH HEALTHCARE IN THE JAWADHU VILLAGES

Healthcare continued to be one of Acwerk's principal areas of community service during 2024–2025.

Building upon the outreach clinics undertaken during the previous year, the Foundation continued its engagement with rural communities in the Jawadhu villages.

The outreach clinic involved Athiya Chinnaiyan, Dr. Ashwin and Nila, Community Welfare Worker.

The participation of a community welfare worker was valuable in supporting communication and interaction with the community.

The outreach work reflected Acwerk's continuing objective of making basic healthcare more accessible to rural and underserved populations.

8. COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTHCARE

Acwerk's healthcare approach has developed around the principle of taking services closer to communities.

The Foundation's outreach model includes identification of health needs, medical consultation, health assessment, prescription and medication where appropriate, referral services, follow-up and health education.

The Foundation's experience has reinforced the importance of combining medical treatment with community participation and follow-up.

9. COMMUNITY AND HEALTH-RELATED INTERACTIONS

Healthcare outreach also provided opportunities for direct consultation and examination of community members.

These activities demonstrate the field-based nature of Acwerk's healthcare work.

Rather than relying exclusively on institutional settings, the outreach approach enables healthcare professionals to interact directly with residents in their communities.

Such engagement also helps identify health concerns and understand the wider social circumstances affecting community wellbeing.

10. EDUCATIONAL AND CHILD-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Education remained an important dimension of Acwerk's community engagement.

Children and young people represent an important part of the long-term development of rural communities.

Engagement with children provides an opportunity to understand their educational environment and broader developmental needs.

Acwerk's field experience reinforced the importance of considering education alongside healthcare and livelihoods when developing a long-term rural-development approach.

The Foundation therefore regards education not simply as an independent activity, but as an essential component of community wellbeing and future opportunity.

11. YOGA, WELLNESS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Acwerk's healthcare philosophy also includes physical and mental wellbeing.

The Foundation's earlier yoga and therapy programme introduced participants to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the eight limbs of Yoga, preparation of physical and mental faculties, Pranayama, Asanas and Meditation.

The therapeutic approach addressed holistic healing, stress reduction, pain management, flexibility and strength, mental clarity and emotional balance.

The programme provided an additional dimension to Acwerk's healthcare work by encouraging preventive and wellness-oriented approaches.

12. LOCAL PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Acwerk's field engagement also included observation of local production and natural/agricultural products.

This experience contributed to the Foundation's developing interest in the relationship between local resources and rural livelihoods.

Local production can potentially contribute to household income, rural employment, value addition, sustainable livelihoods, preservation of local knowledge and community resilience.

The Foundation's interest in agriculture therefore extends beyond cultivation alone to include the potential for responsible use of local resources and rural enterprise.

13. HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY VISITS

Acwerk also undertook household and community-level engagement during the year.

Direct household visits provide an opportunity to observe circumstances that may not be apparent during activities conducted at a central venue.

Such visits can provide insight into household conditions, local infrastructure, agricultural practices, community relationships, available resources and practical challenges faced by residents.

This field-level understanding is valuable when planning interventions that are appropriate to the actual circumstances of rural communities.

14. DOCUMENTATION AND COORDINATION

Field-level documentation and coordination with local personnel formed an important part of the Foundation's work.

Systematic documentation enables Acwerk to record field observations, maintain continuity between visits, identify emerging needs, follow up on community interactions, review activities, coordinate with local participants and inform future programme planning.

The Foundation considers documentation an important component of responsible programme development and institutional learning.

15. AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Agriculture occupies an important place in the emerging rural-development vision of Acwerk.

The field experiences during 2024–2025 demonstrated the close relationship between agriculture, food, livelihoods and the environment.

The Foundation's developing areas of interest include sustainable agriculture, nursery development, plant propagation, food production, local agricultural products, soil health, water management, rural employment and sustainable livelihoods.

The objective is to explore approaches through which agriculture can support both community livelihoods and ecological sustainability.

16. THE ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Acwerk increasingly recognises that the wellbeing of rural communities is closely connected with the condition of their surrounding environment.

Soil, water, vegetation, biodiversity, agriculture and human settlement form part of one interconnected system.

The rural and ecological setting encountered during the field experience contributed to the developing Aumshaala/Mekkalur vision.

Before developing buildings, agricultural systems or community facilities, it is important to understand the existing landscape, natural resources, water availability, agricultural conditions, biodiversity, existing vegetation, community settlement, access and infrastructure.

This perspective contributed to the Foundation's developing vision for the Aumshaala/Mekkalur initiative.

17. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The activities of 2024–2025 can be viewed as a progression in Acwerk's work.

The earlier phase established experience in healthcare, community outreach, field surveys and wellness.

During 2024–2025, this experience increasingly expanded into healthcare, education, agriculture, local production, ecology and community participation.

The Foundation began to see these areas as interconnected rather than as separate programmes.

A healthy community requires access to healthcare. A resilient community also requires education and livelihoods. Sustainable livelihoods depend partly upon productive and responsible use of land and natural resources. Agriculture depends upon healthy soil, water and biodiversity. And sustainable development requires participation by the community itself.

This understanding provided the conceptual foundation for the more integrated rural-development work that followed.

18. LEARNING THROUGH FIELD EXPERIENCE

One of the important features of Acwerk's work during 2024–2025 was learning through direct observation.

The Foundation's approach included visiting communities, observing local conditions, speaking with residents, working with healthcare professionals, engaging community workers, visiting agricultural and nursery settings, studying the Mekkalur land, observing local production and documenting field experiences.

This approach enabled the Foundation to develop its plans progressively rather than assuming that a single model would be appropriate for every rural setting.

19. KEY LEARNINGS

Community participation is essential to understanding local needs and developing trust.

Healthcare and rural development are interconnected with education, livelihoods, food and the environment.

Agriculture can support both livelihoods and ecology.

Field observation is essential before designing long-term interventions.

Learning from existing nursery and agricultural models can inform locally appropriate approaches.

Development should be phased, with research, field observation, planning and community engagement preceding major implementation.

20. THE WAY FORWARD

The experience gained during 2024–2025 provided a foundation for Acwerk's continuing rural-development work.

The emerging direction brings together community healthcare, education and wellness, sustainable and regenerative agriculture, local livelihoods, ecological responsibility and community participation.

The Mekkalur/Aumshaala initiative represents an important setting in which these different elements can eventually be brought together.

21. CONCLUSION

The financial year 2024–2025 was an important period in the evolution of Acwerk Rural Development Foundation.

The year began with the Mekkalur field visit and mapping exercise in April 2024, undertaken in connection with the land purchase and in consultation with the Village Administrative Officer.

The Foundation subsequently continued its engagement with rural communities through healthcare outreach, community interaction, food distribution, educational activities, household visits and field-level coordination.

The June 2024 visit to an Auroville nursery provided exposure to agricultural and nursery practices, while observations of local production and the rural environment contributed to Acwerk's developing understanding of sustainable livelihoods and ecological responsibility.

The outreach clinics in the Jawadhu villages, involving Athiya Chinnaiyan, Dr. Ashwin and community welfare worker Nila, continued the Foundation's commitment to bringing healthcare closer to underserved communities.

Taken together, these activities demonstrated an important progression in Acwerk's work.

The Foundation's understanding of rural development increasingly moved beyond individual interventions towards a broader approach in which healthcare, education, agriculture, livelihoods, ecology and community participation are interconnected.

The year therefore laid important groundwork for the continuing development of the Mekkalur/Aumshaala vision and for Acwerk's longer-term objective of contributing to healthier communities, sustainable livelihoods and responsible rural development.

22. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acwerk Rural Development Foundation expresses its sincere gratitude to all those who supported and participated in its work during 2024–2025.

The Foundation acknowledges with appreciation rural and tribal community members, village-level representatives, Village Administrative Officers and local personnel, doctors and healthcare professionals, community welfare workers, volunteers, educators and wellness practitioners, agricultural practitioners and organisations, donors and supporters, trustees and advisors, and all friends and well-wishers of the Foundation.

Their cooperation, participation and encouragement have helped Acwerk continue its work and deepen its understanding of the communities and environments it seeks to serve.