



# CESCI

CENTRE FOR EXPERIENCING  
SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTION

# ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026

*Building Peace Through  
Community Action*

Centre for Experiencing  
Socio-Cultural Interaction (CESCI)

Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
FOREWORD	01
Message from the Chairperson	02
General Body of CESCO	03
A New Bapu Statue at CESCO	04
Experiencing Gandhi Programme	05
Gandhi Darshan meeting held in CESCO	06
Maja Koene Memorial Prayer Service	07
COSIL – Confluence of Social Impact Leaders	08
Campus Occupancy, Local Resource Mobilization, and Learning Exchanges	09
Administration and Coordination	10
Infrastructure and Institutional Strengthening	10
Guests and Visitors	11
Nonviolent Economy (NVE) Network Initiative	12
Two Days workshop at Beejom, Uttar Pradesh	13
Participant Visions for a Nonviolent Economy (NVE)	14
Engaging a Consultant to Promote the Nonviolent Economy Network	15
Key Focus Areas	16
Expected Impact	16
Strengthening Local Economy Initiatives/Support to Rural women	17

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
Youth training for Peace promotion and Peacebuilders forum India	21
Nepal team Visit to CESC	22
25 <sup>th</sup> Maja Koene Award Program	23
CALL Network (Control and Access of Land and Livelihood-Resources)	24
Village Programs (Women & Children)	25
Children Theatre Activities and Performances	27
Empowering Women, Sustaining Communities	28
CESC PR Puram, Nagapattinam	29
Bonded labour Rehabilitation	29
Closing Summary	30

## ABOUT CESC

The *Centre for Experiencing socio cultural interaction (CESC)* is a non-profit organization based in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, dedicated to promoting sustainable, inclusive, and people-centred development. Guided by Gandhian values of justice, nonviolence, and self-reliance, CESC works with rural communities, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and grassroots movements to strengthen livelihoods, local governance, peace, and environmental sustainability.

CESC facilitates training, research, leadership development, and knowledge exchange on sustainable agriculture, women's empowerment, youth engagement, climate resilience, and community development. As a learning and resource centre, it hosts national and international programmes, workshops, and dialogues that foster collaboration, leadership, and social transformation.

# FOREWORD

A reflection on CESCİ's journey of collective learning, grassroots engagement, and nonviolent community development during 2025–2026.

It is with great sense of responsibility and hope that we present the Annual Report of Centre for Experiencing Socio-Cultural Interaction (CESCI) for the year 2025 – 2026. This year has been marked by meaningful engagement, collective learning, and a deepened commitment to nurturing nonviolence as a way of life within communities.

The journey of CESCİ continues to be guided by the *principles of truth, nonviolence, and participatory development* inspired by Gandhian principles. Throughout the year, our initiatives have focused on strengthening grassroots communities particularly women, children, and youth through education, livelihood support, networking and peacebuilding efforts. The integration of Nonviolent Economy practices, village-level engagement, and collaborative networks has created spaces where communities can reflect, act, and grow together.

We are encouraged by the expanding networks and partnerships, both within India and beyond that have enriched our work. Exposure visits, training programs, and collaborative forums have not only strengthened capacities but also built solidarity among like-minded individuals and organizations committed to social transformation. The active participation of women and youth in these processes stands as a testament to the emerging leadership within communities. Our village programs have continued to evolve as vibrant centers of learning and creativity. From children's parliaments and summer camps to women's economic initiatives and volunteer training, these efforts reflect our belief that sustainable change begins at the grassroots. The emphasis on culture, arts, and dialogue has further strengthened community bonds and encouraged inclusive participation.



At the same time, we acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. Building sustainable models, expanding outreach, and deepening impact require continued dedication, innovation, and collective effort. We remain committed to strengthening our institutional capacity and enhancing collaboration with partners and supporters.

“Nonviolence is not only a principle, but a way of building self-reliant and peaceful communities.”

We express our sincere gratitude to all our well-wishers, partners, donors, and community members whose trust and support make this journey possible. Together, we look forward to continuing our shared mission of building peaceful, just, and self-reliant communities.

(Biju Kallidumbil  
- Executive Director)

# Message from the Chairperson

It gives me immense pleasure to present the **Annual Report of the Centre for Experiencing Socio-Cultural Interaction (CESCI) for the year 2025–2026**. This report reflects not only the activities undertaken during the year but also our shared commitment to building peaceful, just, and self-reliant communities through the practice of nonviolence.

Over the past year, CESCI has strengthened its role as a centre for learning, dialogue, and grassroots action. Inspired by the vision of Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, J.C. Kumarappa, and our founder Maja Koene, we have worked with women, children, youth, farmers, community leaders, educational institutions, and civil society organisations to promote peace, sustainable livelihoods, and participatory development.

A significant achievement this year has been the growing recognition of CESCI as a learning and networking space. The campus hosted several national and international programmes, bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas, learn from communities, and explore practical approaches to nonviolence. Strengthened institutional systems, improved campus utilisation, and expanding partnerships reflect the growing confidence people place in CESCI.

I am particularly encouraged by the progress in empowering rural women and young people through livelihood initiatives, skill development programmes, children's learning centres, and peacebuilding activities. The advancement of the Nonviolent Economy Network further reflects our commitment to promoting ethical, sustainable, and community-centred economic alternatives.

While challenges such as inequality, violence, and environmental degradation continue to affect society, CESCI remains committed to creating spaces for dialogue, leadership, and constructive social change. I sincerely thank our Executive Director, Board Members, staff, volunteers, partner organisations, donors, well-wishers, and the many communities whose dedication has made these achievements possible.

As we move forward, we will continue to strengthen our institutional capacity, deepen grassroots engagement, and expand partnerships with organisations, CSR institutions, academic bodies, and international friends. Together, let us uphold the values of truth, nonviolence, justice, and service, ensuring that CESCI continues to be a vibrant centre for peace, learning, and social transformation.



With warm regards,  
Ms. Anuradha Shankar, IPS  
Chairperson, CESCI

# General Body of CESCO

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1	Ms. Anuradha Shankar IPS	Chairperson
2	Ms. Cynthia Tiphagne	Vice Chairperson
3	Mr. N. Muthuvelayutham	Secretary
4	Dr. T. Ravichandran	Joint secretary
5	Mr. K. Panchaksharam	Treasurer
6	Mr. Aneesh Kumar KK	Executive Member
7	Dr. Sathya Jeganathan	Executive Member
8	Mr. Pramod P.K	Member
9	Ms. Uma. P	Member
10	Ms. Jill Carr Harris	Member
11	Mr. Krishnan Subramanian	Member
12	Mr. A Vedarathianm	Member
13	Ms. Sudha Srinivasa Reddy	Member

# Patrons

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1	Mr. Rajagopal.P.V
2	Mr. S C Behar

***“Guided by collective leadership and shared responsibility.”***

# A New Bapu Statue at CESC

The statue of Bapu, generously gifted by Ms. Anuradha Shankar, IPS, Chairperson of CESC, has been installed in the library building on the CESC campus. This remarkable sculpture is both a precious work of art and a powerful symbol of the values that guide the institution. Beyond its aesthetic beauty, the statue reflects the enduring relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of truth, nonviolence, simplicity, and service to humanity, inspiring reflection, dialogue, and mindful living within the campus community.



*The statue of Bapu installed at the CESC library building, gifted by Ms. Anuradha Shankar IPS.*

The sculpture was created by Sri Devendra Singh Baoni, an accomplished artist and alumnus of Shanti Niketan, Kolkata, who belongs to a distinguished lineage of court artistes from Rewa, Madhya Pradesh,

His works have been displayed in several prominent public spaces, including Mumbai Airport, as well as in various countries around the world, highlighting the artistic and cultural significance of this sculpture.

At present, the statue has been temporarily placed in the library hall, where it has already brought a noticeable transformation to the space. Visitors entering the library often experience a sense of calm, reflection, and inspiration, demonstrating the profound emotional and spiritual impact of the statue even in its temporary setting. The presence of Bapu within the campus environment has created a meaningful atmosphere that encourages dialogue, contemplation, and a deeper engagement with Gandhian philosophy.

*"More than a sculpture, the statue stands as a reminder of truth, simplicity, and nonviolence."*

This valuable addition to the CESC campus is expected to attract many more visitors, students, activists, and peace practitioners in the years to come. With proper care and thoughtful placement, the statue of Bapu will continue to remain an inspiring and enduring presence at CESC, encouraging future generations to uphold the ideals of harmony, dignity, and service.

# Experiencing Gandhi Programme

November 9–15, 2025 | CESCO, Madurai

CESCO, Madurai, hosted the Experiencing Gandhi programme from 9th to 15th November 2025, offering an experiential learning platform focused on Gandhian philosophy and nonviolence. Facilitated by Dr. Reva Joshee and Dr. Jill Carr-Harris from Canada, the programme was *conducted in collaboration with the Gandhian Department of Gandhigram University as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)*, creating meaningful spaces for dialogue, reflection, and collective learning.



The programme introduced participants to *Gandhian principles such as Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, and Swaraj*, encouraging them to connect these ideas with contemporary social realities. Through lectures, discussions, creative activities, and field visits, the programme offered a holistic and immersive learning experience rooted in participation and reflection. A *diverse group of 18 participants*, including students, researchers, educators, and *international participants from Germany and Canada*, took part in the programme. This diversity enriched the learning environment through cross-cultural dialogue and shared reflections on nonviolence, peacebuilding, and social transformation.

## Learning Through Experience

The week-long programme included:

- Interactive sessions and panel discussions on Gandhian leadership and ethics
- Creative activities such as theatre, music, and poetry
- Field visits to CESCO's village learning centres
- Discussions on nonviolent economy and social movements, including exposure to grassroots initiatives
- Academic interaction at Gandhigram Rural Institute, focusing on Gandhian education and Nai Talim



*"Learning became meaningful through dialogue, reflection, and lived community experience."*

The programme concluded with reflective discussions and participant-led presentations, encouraging critical engagement with contemporary social realities through the lens of Gandhian thought. Overall, the programme strengthened CESCO's commitment to promoting peace education, nonviolence, and community engagement while nurturing socially conscious and responsible individuals.

# Gandhi Darshan Meeting

May 15, 2025 | CESCO, Madurai

A Gandhi Darshan meeting was held at CESCO on 15th May 2025 to reflect on the relevance of Gandhian thought in addressing contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges. The discussions emphasized Madurai's historical and cultural significance as an ideal space to experiment with and promote the ideas of *Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, and J.C. Kumarappa*.

Participants envisioned Gandhi Darshan as a dynamic knowledge hub where Gandhian workers, social thinkers, youth, and community leaders from across the world could come together to exchange experiences and ideas. The meeting highlighted that the focus should not merely be on infrastructure, but on creating transformative spaces that inspire people to build peaceful, self-reliant, and socially responsible communities.

## Key Ideas and Reflections:

- "India lives in villages" : the project should help young people understand and strengthen village economies
- Education and action should remain the twin pillars of the Gandhi Darshan initiative
- The experiences of Gandhian workers and grassroots communities should inspire youth leadership and social innovation
- Gandhian principles, including the ideas of Gandhi, Vinoba, and Kumarappa, can be brought together under one platform
- Greater focus is needed on transformative leadership, peacebuilding, and sustainable lifestyles
- Young people should actively participate in planning and implementation processes
- Gandhian organizations should continue developing new and creative approaches to peacemaking and social transformation
- Strengthening local economies and reducing exploitative systems remain essential for building self-reliant communities

*"The strength of a nation lies in the strength of its villages and communities."*

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to further develop Gandhi Darshan as a living and participatory space for dialogue, learning, leadership development, and social transformation rooted in Gandhian values.

# Maja Koene Memorial Prayer Service

14 October, 2025 | CESCO, Madurai



The Maja Koene Memorial Prayer Service was held on 14th October 2025 at the CESCO campus, Madurai, to honour the founder's enduring legacy of peace, compassion, and social transformation. The gathering brought together CESCO staff, women's groups, children from nearby villages, and community members in a spirit of reflection, remembrance, and unity. The programme began with floral tributes and a welcome address reflecting on Maja Koene's lasting influence on CESCO's vision and values. Participants shared memories of her compassion, simplicity, and commitment to service, while devotional songs and collective prayers created an atmosphere of peace and inspiration.

A collective song reinforced themes of *perseverance, unity, and nonviolence*. The Executive Director shared personal reflections on Maja Koene's contribution to community development and her deep commitment to *Gandhian ideals of Ahimsa and social responsibility*. The gathering emphasized the importance of individual participation in building compassionate and self-reliant communities.

Despite rain delays, children from neighboring villages participated with enthusiasm, adding warmth and vibrancy to the event through *interfaith prayers* and shared moments of reflection. The programme concluded with expressions of gratitude and a shared community meal, *reaffirming CESCO's continued commitment to peacebuilding, service, and social change*.

# COSIL - Confluence of Social Impact Leaders

*The COSIL – Confluence of Social Impact Leaders was held at CESCO, Madurai, from 21st to 23rd January 2026, bringing together leaders from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), civil society organisations, NGOs, foundations, and development sectors from across India. The gathering created a vibrant platform for dialogue, shared learning, and collaboration among individuals and institutions committed to advancing meaningful social impact. More than 50 leaders and practitioners participated in the programme, contributing their experiences, perspectives, and ideas.*

*The event focused on cross-sector engagement and experiential learning, with interactive sessions on sustainability, ESG practices, Social Return on Investment (SROI), and the use of Artificial Intelligence for social impact. Participants explored emerging challenges in the development sector while engaging in creative modules such as pottery, folk arts, simulations, and exposure visits, encouraging reflection, teamwork, collaborative dialogue, and deeper engagement with community-based approaches to sustainable development.*



*“Collective learning and collaboration remain essential for building inclusive and sustainable social transformation.”*

A key feature of COSIL was the space it created for CSR–NGO collaboration and long-term partnership building. The final day focused on strengthening the organisational capacity of CSOs and NGOs through practical discussions, shared learning, and networking opportunities. Overall, COSIL emerged as an inspiring gathering that reinforced the importance of collective learning, collaboration, and sustainable social transformation.

# Campus Occupancy, Local Resource Mobilization, and Learning Exchanges

## AT A GLANCE

**₹42,27,452**

Income generated through campus occupancy  
(Target: ₹30 Lakhs)

**85+**

Programmes Conducted

**188**

Programme Days

**2,500+**

Participants Engaged

**8 Countries**

Represented by  
International Visitors

**1,100**

Coconuts Produced by  
Campus Garden  
(Approx. Value: ₹22,000)

During **April 2025 to March 2026**, CЕСCI strengthened its financial sustainability while expanding its role as a vibrant centre for learning and dialogue. Income generated through campus occupancy reached **₹42,27,452**, exceeding the annual target of ₹30 lakhs, through residential programmes, training workshops, yoga camps, educational institution visits, and partner programmes. The campus garden also contributed by producing around **1,100 coconuts, valued at approximately ₹22,000**. To strengthen long-term financial stability, local and foreign contributions were invested in fixed deposits.

CЕСCI hosted **85+ programmes across 188 programme days, engaging over 2,500 participants** from community organisations, universities, women's groups, NGOs, government institutions, and international delegations. The campus served as an inclusive space for learning, dialogue, leadership development, and collaborative engagement on nonviolence, sustainable development, human rights, and community empowerment.

Major programmes included the **Experiencing Gandhi Workshop, Value Education Camps, RTI Training, Dalit Human Rights Documentation Training, Business Group Engagement Programmes, and the CSR Conclave**, organized with CCD, NMCT, SIPA, and other partners. These initiatives strengthened participants' understanding of Gandhian values, democratic participation, and social responsibility.

CЕСCI welcomed visitors from **Switzerland, France, Canada, the Czech Republic, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Belgium, and Madagascar**, who participated in village immersions, yoga retreats, peace dialogues, cultural exchanges, and experiential learning. Theatre workshops, photography sessions, children's painting activities, and community performances further enriched the learning environment.

The **CSR Conclave** was a major highlight, bringing together corporate leaders, development practitioners, and civil society organisations to promote partnerships for sustainable development and community empowerment. Overall, the year strengthened CЕСCI's reputation as a centre for learning, collaboration, and innovation while combining financial sustainability with impactful educational programmes and strong national and international partnerships.



# Administration & Coordination

During the reporting period, CESC I undertook significant administrative efforts to strengthen institutional systems, ensure legal compliance, and improve operational efficiency. Major focus was placed on completing statutory requirements, streamlining governance processes, and upgrading infrastructure to support programme implementation and long-term sustainability.

Post-General Body Meeting processes, including submission of *Form 7* for board member changes, required persistent follow-up due to multiple rejections but were eventually completed successfully. The process of updating authorized signatories across bank accounts, including *SBI Delhi*, also involved extensive compliance procedures and was finalized after several months. Key regulatory compliances such as *FC-6E filing*, *Darpan portal updating*, and *FCRA annual returns* were undertaken in coordination with the auditor office. CESC I also made progress in securing essential certifications including *CSR-1 registration*, *FSSAI certification*, and *building insurance coverage*. *Renewal processes for 80G and 12A registrations* were initiated and remain under active follow-up.

Administrative coordination was strengthened through *regular Executive Committee meetings*, *General Body meetings*, and *monthly online review meetings with the core leadership team*. Internal governance was further supported through staff meetings and documentation practices.

# Infrastructure & Institutional Strengthening

Key infrastructure improvements included installation of an *LCD projector in the meeting hall*, *power inverter systems for office and kitchen backup*, *B-2 building tile roof repairs*, *CCTV installation*, and *enhanced housekeeping systems*. Additional fire safety equipment was installed according to fire department guidelines, while building insurance coverage for fire and theft was renewed. Staff health insurance was also secured under the *FLIP programme*.

The *CESC I website* was revamped and re-launched on *2nd October 2025*, improving institutional visibility and outreach. Social media campaigns are estimated to have reached *20,000–30,000 people*, contributing to increased programme inquiries and participation. The *CESC I India Newsletter* was also initiated and will now be published on a *quarterly basis*.

# Guests and Visitors

During the reporting period, CЕСCI had the privilege of hosting a diverse group of guests and visitors from across India and abroad. These visits created valuable opportunities for dialogue, learning, and strengthening relationships with individuals and organizations committed to social development, peacebuilding, and community engagement.

Among the notable visitors were Mr. Kude Meier from CЕСCI Switzerland, Ms. Ishani and her friends from Germany, Mr. Ajay Rastogi, and Mr. Chitesh from North India.

CЕСCI also welcomed Ms. Sonia from Mexico, Dr. Rewa Joshi, and Ms. Priya from Canada, reflecting the organization's growing international engagement and collaborative outreach.

The Action Village India (AVI) London team also visited the campus, contributing to ongoing collaborations and knowledge-sharing initiatives. A significant visit was made by Mr. Ziahul Haq, DIG of Tanjore, whose presence further strengthened CЕСCI's institutional outreach and recognition. These interactions enriched CЕСCI's work by fostering partnerships, encouraging cross-cultural exchange, and enhancing the visibility of its initiatives.



# Nonviolent Economy (NVE) Network Initiative

During 2025–2026, CESCO continued to support initiatives that promote sustainable livelihoods, social justice, and ecological responsibility. One such initiative is the *Nonviolent Economy (NVE) Network, coordinated by Mr. Rabbi Jayakaran* with the support of CESCO. Inspired by the Gandhian–Kumarappa principles of nonviolence, decentralisation, dignity of labour, ecological sustainability, and local self-reliance, the initiative seeks to build an alternative economic framework that empowers communities while protecting the environment.

Over the year, the NVE Network expanded as a collaborative platform connecting ethical producers, civil society organisations, social entrepreneurs, conscious consumers, and institutions committed to building a just and sustainable economy. The initiative places particular emphasis on strengthening small-scale producers, women’s collectives, artisans, farmers, and community enterprises by improving market access, institutional partnerships, certification processes, and sustainable financial opportunities.

Extensive field visits and research were carried out to better understand the challenges faced by ethical producers, particularly in the textile and handloom sectors. Interactions with producer groups, artisan collectives, regenerative farmers, and community enterprises highlighted barriers such as fragmented markets, limited branding opportunities, certification complexities, and restricted access to finance. At the same time, the growing demand for environmentally responsible and ethically produced goods presents significant opportunities for strengthening sustainable livelihoods.

The Network explored innovative approaches including collective marketing models, producer aggregation systems, certification support mechanisms, and the development of an online marketplace for ethical products. Efforts were also made to engage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and philanthropic organisations to strengthen producer ecosystems through collaborative partnerships.

A key milestone during the year was the conceptualisation of the *“Ahimsa Brand,”* envisioned as a common identity for products created through socially just, environmentally sustainable, and nonviolent production processes. Marketing and branding professionals joined the initiative to enhance the visibility of ethical products and expand market opportunities for small producers.

The NVE Network also contributed to national and regional dialogues on sustainable development through conferences, presentations, and sectoral forums, promoting the Nonviolent Economy as a practical framework for addressing livelihood insecurity, climate challenges, and economic inequality.

# Two-Day Workshop at Beejom, Uttar Pradesh

17–18 April, 2025 | Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh

A two-day workshop was held at the *Beejom Farm in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh, on 17th and 18th April 2025*, bringing together more than a dozen participants to explore *models of agroecology, nonviolent economy, and sustainable community practices*. Beejom, led by *Ms. Aparna Rajagopal* and her team, is recognised for coordinating agroecological businesses while promoting people’s health, animal health, plant health, and ecosystem well-being.

This workshop marked the *first programme conducted at Beejom’s new premises*. The discussions focused on exploring the steps required to strengthen and consolidate a *Nonviolent Economy (NVE) network* and to reflect on the possibility of launching an *Ahimsa brand as part of the larger movement*. Participants engaged in dialogue on sustainable production systems, ethical livelihoods, and collaborative economic models rooted in Gandhian values.



A significant aspect of the workshop was the active participation of women, who were recognised as the backbone of many small producer groups. Special emphasis was placed on listening to each participant’s personal journeys and experiences as a way of strengthening the NVE network through mutual understanding and collective reflection.

One of the key sessions, facilitated by *Ms. Lakshmi Menon Bhatia*, encouraged participants to share their dreams and aspirations for a *Nonviolent Economy*. These reflections contributed towards shaping a collective vision and mission for the network while inspiring deeper conversations around sustainable and compassionate economic alternatives.

# Participant Visions for a Nonviolent Economy

- Create an NVE network as a beacon of best practices both in India and globally
- Identify diverse artisan groups and onboard them as small producer groups
- Create awareness of NV products so that there would be more conscious consumers
- Replace the money narrative with the well-being narrative
- Establish spinning centres based on charkhas and handlooms in clusters where women have come together as producers
- Give visibility to women wearing khadi handloom products with natural dye and promote its link to community-level peace
- Encourage lifestyle changes rooted in nonviolence and sustainability
- Create transformative change among children to help them adopt a nonviolent lifestyle
- Emphasize the role of pregnant women in bringing back balance, harmony, and peace within communities
- Create leaders who can carry forward the NVE vision
- Establish community farms that can share products and NVE models
- Address poverty and inequality through redistribution of wealth and community-based economic models
- Promote equity and profit sharing as pillars of nonviolent economic systems
- Develop stronger NVE communities through collaboration and participation
- Encourage youth participation as innovators and leaders in NVE initiatives
- Develop a transitional framework so change can happen gradually and collectively
- Address the fear and uncertainty that social change can bring
- Develop livelihood centres based on Gandhian principles
- Learn from successful African models to strengthen NVE initiatives in India
- Promote a collective message of hope, harmony, and peaceful social transformation

The two-day discussions concluded with participants suggesting several follow-up initiatives and collaborative actions for strengthening the vision and practice of a Nonviolent Economy.

# Engaging a Consultant to Promote the Nonviolent Economy Network

Recognizing the importance of collective strength and improved market access for small-scale producers, CESCO initiated efforts to establish and expand producer networks. To strengthen this initiative, CESCO engaged a professional consultant with expertise in grassroots economic development and value chain systems under the guidance of Dr. Jill Carr Harris, member of CESCO.

Mr. Rabbi Jayakaran was engaged for five months as a consultant to support the Nonviolent Economy Network from November, 2025 to March, 2026. The Nonviolent Economy Network, promoted by CESCO, seeks to translate its principles into practice by creating sustainable pathways for the development and advancement of producers and farmers.

During this period, the consultant worked closely with Ms. Jill Carr Harris, Member CESCO and other community stakeholders and undertook the following **Key Responsibilities**:

1. Engaged with small producers across South India to address challenges related to marketing their products.
2. Explored opportunities with small textile producers to enhance value addition within the supply chain.
3. Consulted with successful entrepreneurs and Fair Trade representatives in India and internationally on certification and procurement systems.
4. Developed proposals in collaboration with CSR representatives to mobilize funding support for producer organizations.
5. Promoted the concept of the Nonviolent Economy Network among CSR stakeholders while upholding the economic philosophies of Gandhi and J.C. Kumarappa.
6. Explored potential stakeholders and shareholders for strengthening the NVE Network.
7. Piloted an e-commerce platform to help producer groups understand and access online markets.

*“Sustainable livelihoods are strengthened when producers are connected, supported, and empowered through ethical economic networks.”*

Based on his field visits, stakeholder consultations, and detailed analysis, the consultant prepared a comprehensive proposal to expand the Nonviolent Economy initiative.

**The proposal broadly outlined:**

- Strategies for linking producer groups to broader markets
- Mechanisms to improve product quality and consistency
- Plans for branding, packaging, and ethical marketing
- Approaches to strengthening group governance and financial management

# Key Focus Areas

The proposed expansion of the Nonviolent Economy (NVE) Network focuses on strengthening producer groups, improving market access, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities rooted in Gandhian values. The initiative aims to build economic systems that are community-centered, environmentally responsible, and beneficial to small-scale producers.

## Key focus areas include:

- Decentralized production systems that empower local communities and encourage self-reliance
- Fair and ethical trade practices that ensure better returns and market opportunities for producers
- Sustainable and eco-friendly production methods that protect natural resources and promote responsible consumption
- Capacity building, training, and continuous mentoring to strengthen producer groups and improve long-term sustainability

# Expected Impact

*The establishment and expansion of producer networks are expected to create meaningful economic and social benefits for rural communities. By strengthening producer collectives and improving access to markets, the initiative seeks to create more stable and equitable livelihood opportunities.*

## Expected outcomes include:

- *Enhanced income opportunities for rural producers and farmer groups*
- *Reduced dependency on middlemen and exploitative market systems*
- *Stronger community ownership, participation, and collective bargaining power*
- *Improved product quality, value addition, and market competitiveness*
- *Promotion of a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local economy*

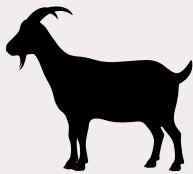
*Overall, this initiative lays a strong foundation for scaling up Nonviolent Economy practices across regions. By combining ethical production, fair trade, community participation, and sustainable development, the programme seeks to create lasting benefits for producers while advancing the economic vision of Gandhi and J.C. Kumarappa.*

# Strengthening Local Economy Initiatives / Support to Rural Women

A key component of CESC's work is *supporting grassroots economic activities* that are small-scale, sustainable, and rooted in local resources.

**Support to Rural Women** : Under this initiative, 62 rural women who are part of CESC's women collective called "Jayam Pengal Kootamaipu" were provided with financial assistance to start or strengthen their small economic activities at three different phases.

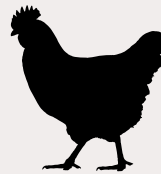
These activities included:



Goat rearing



Vegetable and fruits vending



Backyard poultry (chicken rearing)



Other home-based livelihood activities, etc.



*"Small livelihood initiatives can create lasting economic independence and confidence among women."*

## WOMEN'S GROUP LOAN 1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE SUPPORT

S.No	Name	Village	Activity	Amount
01	S. Kiruthika	Kalampatti	Flower vendor	₹ 10,000
02	M.Vaishnavi		Poultry	₹ 10,000
03	N.Bhavani		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
04	Thavamani Malaiyapuliyar		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
05	S.Selvi		Ironing	₹ 10,000
06	Anbuchelvi Balakrishnan		Poultry	₹ 10,000
07	Murugeswari Manikandan		Poultry	₹ 10,000
08	R. Renuka	Chatrapatti	Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
09	R.Viji		Bag making	₹ 10,000
10	A.Maruthayee		Bakery	₹ 10,000
11	G.Prema		Bag making	₹ 10,000
12	M.Maruthayi		Idly mavu	₹ 10,000
13	R.Pandeeswari	Manjampatti	Cow rearing	₹ 10,000
14	S.Chinna Ponnu		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
15	P. Latha		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
16	G.Valarmathi		Idly mavu	₹ 10,000
17	K. Jothi		Saree business	₹ 10,000
18	P. Malathi		Cow rearing	₹ 10,000
19	P. Prabha		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
20	B. Megala		Ironing	₹ 10,000
21	O. Meenatchi		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
22	A Panjavarnam		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000

## WOMEN'S GROUP LOAN 2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE SUPPORT

S.No	Name	Village	Activity	Amount
01	C. Chinnalagi	Kadavur	Poultry	₹ 10,000
02	Malaikathi		Gardening	₹ 10,000
03	V. Ulaganatchi		Vegetable sales	₹ 10,000
04	Katthi Vellai		Vegetable sales	₹ 10,000
05	R. Divya	Kallampatti	Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
06	A Kaviya		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
07	V. Vijaya		Fruits vendor	₹ 10,000
08	A Veerammal Devi	Manjampatti	Tailoring	₹ 10,000
09	S.Kanaga		Tailoring	₹ 10,000
10	R.Menaka		Poultry	₹ 10,000
11	R.Annakamu		Agriculture	₹ 10,000
12	V.Iruvi		Tailoring	₹ 10,000
13	A.Latha		Poultry	₹ 10,000
14	R.Veni		Tailoring	₹ 10,000
15	P.Ramuthai		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
16	V.Panju		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
17	D.Bala Saraswathi	M.Chatrapatti	Aari work	₹ 10,000
18	G. Prema		Bag making	₹ 10,000
19	C. Sudha		Idly mavu grinding	₹ 10,000
20	A Maruthayee		Bakery	₹ 10,000

## PHASE 3 : FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (20 BENEFICIARIES)

S.No	Name	Village	Activity	Amount
01	Ms. Chinnalaki	Kadavoor	Poultry	₹ 10,000
02	Ms. Malakathi		Nursery garden	₹ 10,000
03	Ms. Ulakanachi		Vegetable sales	₹ 10,000
04	Ms. Kaathi		Vegetable sales	₹ 10,000
05	Ms. Maruthayi	Chathirapatti	Bakery items sales	₹ 10,000
06	Ms. Sudha		Mavu grinding	₹ 10,000
07	Ms. Prema		Plastic Bag making	₹ 10,000
08	Ms. Bala Saraswathi		Aari work training	₹ 10,000
09	Ms. Divya	Kallampatti	Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
10	Ms. Kaavya		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
11	Ms. Vijaya		Fruits sales	₹ 10,000
12	Ms. Veerammal Devi	Manjampatti	Tailoring	₹ 10,000
13	Ms. Kanaka		Tailoring	₹ 10,000
14	Ms. Menaka		Poultry	₹ 10,000
15	Ms. Annakamu		Vegetable farming	₹ 10,000
16	Ms. Iruvi		Tailoring	₹ 10,000
17	Ms. Latha		Poultry	₹ 10,000
18	Ms. Veni		Tailoring	₹ 10,000
19	Ms. Ramuthai		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
20	Ms. Panchu		Goat rearing	₹ 10,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>₹ 2,00,000</b>

### Holistic Support Beyond Financial Assistance

The support provided under this initiative was not limited to financial assistance alone. CESC I adopted a holistic approach to ensure that women were equipped with the confidence, knowledge, and support needed to sustain their livelihood activities.

*This included:*

- Identifying motivated and needy women through community engagement
- Providing guidance on selecting appropriate livelihood activities
- Offering basic training and mentoring support
- Encouraging peer learning and mutual support among beneficiaries

The focus was on *enabling women to initiate income-generating activities* that are manageable, locally viable, and sustainable, while *strengthening their capacity to contribute to household and community well-being*.

## Impact on Women and Communities

The initiative has *led to several positive changes*:

- Women gained financial independence and confidence
- Household incomes were supplemented, improving overall well-being
- Women's participation in decision-making within families increased
- Local economies benefited from small but consistent economic activities

Moreover, these initiatives *reinforced the principles of nonviolence by promoting dignified livelihoods, reducing economic vulnerability, and fostering self-reliance within communities.*

## Sustainability and Future Directions

The activities supported under this initiative have strong potential for sustainability due to:

- Low investment requirements
- Use of local resources
- Direct linkage to local markets

CESCI plans to further strengthen these initiatives through continued mentoring, networking, and integration with broader producer networks, enabling beneficiaries to expand their livelihood opportunities and strengthen local economic resilience.



*(A group photo of a training program conducted in CESCI Centre with the women group members)*

# Youth Training for Peace Promotion and Peacebuilders Forum India



*Participants of the Fifth Edition of Peacebuilders Forum India (PBFi) at Gandhi Research Foundation, Jalgaon.*

As part of CESC's commitment to nurturing leadership and strengthening peacebuilding efforts, members participated in the *Fifth Edition of the Peacebuilders Forum India (PBFi)* held from 8–11 March 2026 at the *Gandhi Research Foundation (GRF), Jalgaon, Maharashtra*. The national gathering brought together 46 participants from 13 states of India, including youth, women, peace activists, researchers, trainers, and community leaders under the leadership of *Shri Rajagopal P.V. and Dr. Jill Carr Harris*.

The meeting was designed as an interactive and participatory learning space. Participants began each day with spinning on charkhas in remembrance of Mahatma Gandhi and engaged in daily all-faith prayers. Through nine thematic sessions, participants explored contemporary peacebuilding challenges, leadership development, and opportunities for collective action rooted in nonviolence.

## Key Areas of Discussion

- Strengthening women as peacebuilders
- Developing peace education curriculum and training tools
- Increasing youth engagement in peace initiatives
- Assessing peacebuilding efforts in conflict areas, particularly Manipur
- Linking peacebuilding with climate action through Nonviolent Economy practices
- Enhancing national and international solidarity for peace

## Outcomes and Impact

The forum produced a follow-up action plan for the coming year, including a women's campaign against violence, the formation of a Youth Platform for Peace, a network of peace educators, support for peace efforts in Manipur, and *steps toward institutionalizing Peacebuilders Forum India as a nationwide peacebuilding network*.

# Nepal Team Visit to CESC



*Delegation from the Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC), Nepal, during their exposure visit to CESC, Madurai.*

Under the Peacebuilders Forum (PBF) initiative, CESC welcomed an 11-member delegation from Nepal's Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC) from 25–30 June 2025. The exposure visit provided opportunities for dialogue, learning, and exchange on nonviolent approaches to development and community-led social transformation.

The delegation explored a range of initiatives that promote rural livelihoods, sustainable development, and community self-reliance. Through interactions with CESC staff and network partners, participants gained insights into grassroots approaches that strengthen local economies while reducing dependence on exploitative systems.

## Key Areas of Learning

- Nonviolent approaches to development
- Rural economy and livelihood initiatives
- Community-led development models
- Sustainable and cooperative practices
- Grassroots leadership and social justice
- Peace-oriented development strategies

The visit fostered *mutual learning and strengthened cross-border solidarity* between organizations committed to peace, justice, and sustainable development. It also created *valuable opportunities for sharing experiences, building relationships, and exploring future collaboration between CESC and partner organizations in Nepal.*

# 25<sup>th</sup> Maja Koene Award Program

2 March, 2025 | CESC Campus, Majagram Chatrapati, Madurai

The Maja Koene Award is a prestigious recognition jointly instituted by CESC India and CESC Switzerland in the year 2000 to honour social activists, journalists, and peacebuilders whose work advances justice, equality, peace, and nonviolence. The award commemorates the legacy of Ms. Maja Koene, founder of CESC, whose lifelong commitment to social transformation continues to inspire communities across the world.



Award recipients being honoured during the 25th Maja Koene Award Ceremony at CESC.



Recognition of grassroots leaders whose work promotes peace, justice, and community empowerment.

The 25th Maja Koene Award Ceremony was held on 2 March 2025 at the CESC Campus in Madurai. The event brought together social activists, community leaders, peacebuilders, and well-wishers for a day of celebration, reflection, and solidarity.

Ms. Aaradhana Kohli, filmmaker from New Delhi, attended as the Chief Guest and presented the awards to this year's recipients. The programme was also attended by Ms. Anuradha Shankar IPS, President of CESC, Shri Rajagopal P.V., Co-Founder of CESC, and other distinguished guests.

## 25th Maja Koene Award Recipients

### Social Activists

- Ms. Sabho Bai & Ms. Munni Bai – Chambal, Madhya Pradesh
- Ms. Meera Bai Singh – Umaria, Madhya Pradesh
- Ms. Indu Netam – Raipur, Chhattisgarh
- Mr. Shameer Bava – Karunyatheeram Health Care Foundation, Kerala
- Dr. Amit Kumar – Kumarappa Gram Swaraj Sansthan, Rajasthan

### Social Journalist

- Mr. Samas – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

### Peace Activists

- Mr. Sathesh Kumar – Peoples Movement for Peace, Kerala
- Mr. Subhash Chandra Kattel – Nepal

“

*“Congratulations for keeping alive the values which seem all but lost in today's world. It was incredible to be part of the 25th Maja Koene Award Ceremony. The programme was conducted with such grace and warmth.”*

— Aaradhana Kohli

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# CALL Network (Control and Access of Land and Livelihood- Resources)

CESCI continued its collaboration with the *CALL Network* and partner organizations across South India to support social justice initiatives and strengthen solidarity with vulnerable communities. A key area of engagement was the anti-brewery protest in *Palakkad, Kerala*, where local communities opposed the establishment of a proposed brewery. Leaders from Ekta Parishad, including *Shri Rajagopal P.V. and Dr. Jill Carr Harris*, extended their support through fasting, consultations, and solidarity visits, strengthening the local movement.

The network also participated in International Adivasi Day celebrations, supported the *Mariyanad land struggle*, and contributed to the *Aralam leaders' meeting*, reinforcing collective action for land rights, livelihood security, indigenous rights, and social justice. These engagements helped strengthen regional coordination and deepen grassroots partnerships across South India.

## Key Activities and Visits

- May 2025: Rajagopal P.V. and Dr. Jill Carr Harris visited Vedha Trust, Manamadurai.
- January 2026: Visit to Chellamuthu Trust, Madurai.
- Preparations were initiated for a Forest Rights Act (FRA) Consultation in Bangalore, Karnataka (postponed).
- 18–19 June 2025: Rajagopal P.V. participated in the Sivarama Bharati Memorial Old Age Home foundation ceremony and joined a fast against the proposed brewery project in Palakkad.
- 28 June 2025: National Conveners of Ekta Parishad and other activists visited Palakkad in support of the anti-brewery movement.



CESCI hosted the *Ekta Parishad National Committee Members Meeting* and successfully organized the *South Indian CALL Network Meeting from 1–3 March 2026*, bringing together partner organizations for collaboration, planning, and knowledge sharing. These efforts strengthened solidarity among grassroots movements and reinforced collective strategies for promoting justice, dignity, and sustainable livelihoods.

# Village Programs (Women & Children)



During *April 2025–March 2026*, CESCI conducted a wide range of village-based activities focusing on *children's development, youth empowerment, education, leadership, and community participation*. Through village learning centres, summer camps, volunteer training programmes, and community engagement initiatives, children and youth were provided opportunities for learning, creativity, and personal growth.

## Key Highlights :

- ✿ Village Learning Centres in target villages
- ✿ Week-long Summer Camp at PR Puram
- ✿ Volunteer Training for 13 village volunteers
- ✿ Community Immersion Programme reaching 80 children
- ✿ Educational support and sports initiatives

## Summer Camp

A major highlight was the week-long Summer Camp held in May 2025 at PR Puram, Nagapattinam, which brought together children for intensive learning and recreational activities.

To enhance grassroots capacity, a two-day training session was organized for 13 village volunteers during 28–29 of man. The sessions, led by resource persons Mr. Yogesh Kartik, Mr. Shankar (Aakkam), and Mr. Velayutham, focused on participatory education, basic facilitation techniques, and child-centered approaches. Volunteers gained practical tools and motivation to better support village children.



## Otrumai Uravu Community Immersion Programme

The six-day **Otrumai Uravu programme** was conducted in collaboration with **MSW students from National College, Trivandrum**. The initiative reached nearly **80 children** and included village visits, educational support, cultural programmes, sports activities, community clean-up drives, and the distribution of school bags and stationery kits. Participants engaged directly with village communities, creating meaningful spaces for learning, service, and social engagement.

The programme provided an opportunity for **24 MSW** students to interact closely with children, youth, and community members through structured activities. Village visits and interactive sessions offered valuable insights into local realities while encouraging mutual learning, empathy, teamwork, and leadership.



*(Participants of the Otrumai Uravu Community Immersion Programme along with village children and community members at the CESC campus.)*

### Programme Highlights

- 24 MSW students participated in the programme.
- Distribution of school bags and stationery kits.
- Reached approximately 80 children across villages.
- Shramdaan activities promoting community clean-up and participation.
- Sports kits provided to youth in Thondamanpatti village.
- Organization of a flash mob and Kabaddi competition to encourage teamwork and youth engagement.



*“Learning becomes meaningful when children, youth, and communities grow together through participation and service.”*

## Psychological Skills Training

Ms. Nalini from Sri Lanka conducted a one-day training programme on psychological skills for volunteers. The session focused on helping volunteers understand behavioural and emotional issues among children and explore effective ways of providing support. Through case studies and practical sessions, participants gained hands-on experience and deeper insights into child-centred approaches.

## Pongal Celebration

A vibrant Pongal celebration was organized on 14 January at the CESC campus, where children from different villages came together to celebrate through traditional cooking and festive decorations. The event reinforced cultural values, community bonding, and a sense of togetherness among participants.

### The Volunteers and the details of the villages and children

S.No	Village Name	Volunteer Name	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total	Savings
01	Kadavur 1	Ms.Sundarya	11	8	19	9,882
02	Kadavur 2	Ms.L Jeyapriya	7	8	15	1,207
03	Thethampatti 1	Ms.Rajalakshmi	10	8	18	12,502
04	Thethampatti 2	Ms.Chellamani	8	10	18	1,939
05	Alagapuri	Ms.Meena	10	9	19	6,851
06	Lingavadi	Ms.Anurudyamithra	12	12	24	20,781
07	Meenachipuram	Ms.Kavitha	9	7	16	1,795
08	Seegupatti 2	Ms.Pounfathima	11	7	18	16,806
09	Moonur	Ms.Pothumpon	12	10	22	25,688
10	Thondamanpatti	Ms.Poompozhil	6	8	14	4,610
<b>Total</b>			<b>96</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>1,02,061</b>

### Children Theatre Activities and Performances

During the year, five theatre performances were conducted when various local groups visited the campus and nearby villages. The plays addressed important social themes such as environmental protection and the reduction of plastic use. These performances were not only engaging and entertaining but also served as effective educational tools, encouraging dialogue and raising awareness among the community. In addition, art and cultural training was provided to children from different villages, helping to nurture their creativity, self-expression, and participation in cultural activities.



# Empowering Women, Sustaining Communities

*Jeyam Pengal Kootamaippu*, a federation of over 300 rural women from various Self-Help Groups (SHGs), continued to serve as a strong platform for collective action, leadership, and economic empowerment. CESC I supported the federation through initiatives focused on financial inclusion, livelihood development, and entrepreneurship.

A major focus area was women's economic empowerment. During the year, **62 women received livelihood loans of ₹10,000 each**, enabling them to initiate or strengthen small-scale income-generating activities. Women also engaged with banking institutions to explore greater access to credit and financial services.



## Key Initiatives

**62** Women Supported through Livelihood Loans

**₹6.2** Lakhs Mobilized for Micro-Enterprises

**40** Women Enrolled in Aari Work & Tailoring Training

Entrepreneurship & Micro-Enterprise Development Programmes Conducted

Efforts were initiated to establish a *women-led catering unit linked to the CESC I kitchen*, creating sustainable income opportunities for federation members. Skill development remained a major priority, with training programmes in *Aari work and tailoring* conducted with support from *Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)*, benefiting 40 women. To strengthen entrepreneurial capacity, a one-day entrepreneurship training was facilitated by Ms. *Roseline Antony* from *Lade Café*, Madurai. A separate micro-enterprise development programme for women leaders was conducted by Mr. *John Britto* from *CCD Madurai*.

Exposure and networking opportunities were also promoted. A visiting delegation from *CSRC Nepal* interacted with women's groups, encouraging cross-learning on community-led development and grassroots economic initiatives.



## Women's Federation Milestones :

- Federation formally established during the year
- Independent bank account operational
- *Savings reached ₹4,79,299*
- Continued expansion of livelihood and leadership initiatives
- Strengthened collective action among rural women

# CESCI PR Puram Centre, Nagapattinam

During the reporting year 2025–2026, the CESCI Centre at Prathaparamapuram (PR Puram), Nagapattinam, continued its dedicated efforts toward community development in coastal villages. Responding to local challenges such as educational gaps, livelihood limitations, and environmental concerns, the centre implemented integrated programmes focusing on children, women, youth, and the wider community.



## Children & Education

Education and child development remained central to the centre's activities. Regular tuition and remedial classes supported around 20 children, strengthening their academic performance and confidence. A summer camp conducted at the PR Puram Centre engaged 30–35 children through storytelling, drawing, group activities, and outdoor games, fostering creativity, teamwork, and self-confidence.

## Environment & Community Action

In collaboration with New Foundation, Chennai, a water conservation campaign was conducted through street plays, poster exhibitions, and community discussions. Awareness activities on environmental protection, campus cleaning, and land maintenance contributed to promoting responsible resource use and a healthier environment.

## Key Achievements :

- ✿ Educational support for village children
- ✿ Successful summer camp reaching 30–35 children
- ✿ Tailoring, Aari work, and computer training programmes
- ✿ Water conservation and environmental awareness campaigns
- ✿ Entrepreneurship and youth capacity-building initiatives
- ✿ Strengthened institutional partnerships

## Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment remained a major focus throughout the year. Tailoring, Aari work, and computer training programmes were conducted, enabling women to acquire practical skills and receive certificates upon completion. These initiatives enhanced livelihood opportunities, confidence, and active participation in community life.

## Youth & Partnerships

Youth engagement was encouraged through orientation programmes, entrepreneurship discussions, and awareness sessions on government welfare schemes. The centre also strengthened partnerships with organizations such as SEEDS and initiated collaboration with Reliance Foundation, including the submission of a proposal on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and nature-based solutions for coastal communities.

**Looking Ahead :** CESCI PR Puram plans to expand training programmes in collaboration with the Skill India Institute, strengthen educational outreach, promote disaster preparedness, and explore CSR funding opportunities to scale community interventions.

## Bonded Labour Rehabilitation :

Medical assistance was provided to Raju, a released bonded labourer from Perambalur, to support treatment for his wife.

# CLOSING SUMMARY

The year **2025–2026** was one of meaningful growth, learning, and collective action for CESCO. Through village learning centres, women’s livelihood initiatives, peacebuilding programmes, leadership development activities, and solidarity movements, CESCO continued to translate its vision of nonviolence and social justice into practical action. These efforts strengthened communities, encouraged participation, and created opportunities for sustainable development.

Throughout the year, CESCO brought together children, youth, women, community leaders, volunteers, activists, researchers, and international partners in a shared journey of learning and transformation. At the same time, the organization strengthened its institutional systems, expanded partnerships, and enhanced its capacity to respond to emerging community needs.

The achievements highlighted in this report reflect the collective efforts of communities, staff, volunteers, Board Members, donors, and partner organizations who continue to support CESCO’s mission. As we move forward, CESCO remains committed to strengthening grassroots initiatives, promoting peace and nonviolence, expanding opportunities for women and youth, and building stronger networks of solidarity and cooperation.

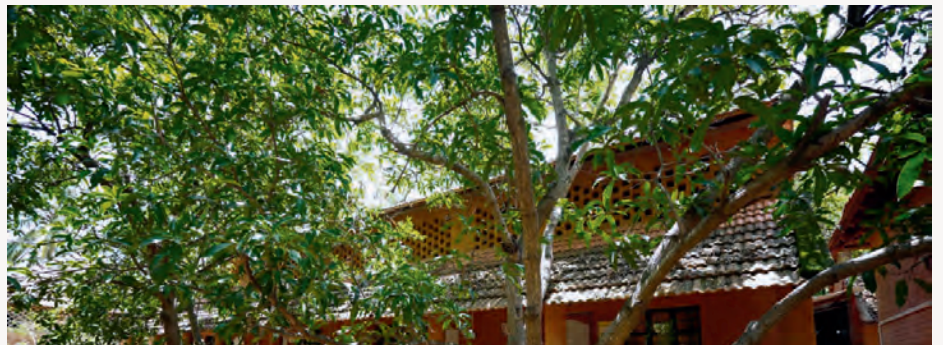
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*“Building peace is a journey of many hands, many voices, and a shared commitment to human dignity.”*

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## **Thank You**

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all community members, volunteers, staff, Board Members, donors, partners, and well-wishers whose support and encouragement made this work possible. Together, we continue to nurture hope, strengthen communities, and advance the journey towards peace, dignity, and social transformation.



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