



CONSERVING OUR HILLS
SINCE 2014

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



“Doing What We Can, With What We Have, and Where We Stand”

Managing Trustee's Foreword

I am so pleased to share the Annual Report of 2020-21 which focuses on our resilience as an organisation and how we have seized opportunities to grow.

'Waste Management' as the core area of focus and *'Zero-Waste to Landfill,'* as the ultimate goal are by themselves huge challenges. The challenge is multiple several fold when it comes to a hill town, plagued with its usual hurdles such as topography, lack of adequate workforce, high transportation costs, and near absence of suitable markets for disposal of recyclables. Despite these we prevailed. At the core of being a Public Charitable Trust lies the value to reach out into areas wherever the government machinery needs support, and we implemented that value.



I am very proud that beyond our work on the waste management front, we jumped in to help with other associated and interlinked environmental issues, such as ecological restoration, waterbody protection, soil conservation by encouraging organic farming practices, and many more.

In a world which is fighting what apparently seems to be a losing battle against plastics, I reiterate that the war isn't over yet, and look forward to another year of innovation, learning and growth, and charting a trajectory that will be best for our mission.

I want to thank all of our Advisors and Donors, who have stood with us through these tough times, been hands on and so supportive, and given us the opportunity to continue to work together for the well-being of our Planet.

I feel extremely proud to lead a team that is so passionate and so perseverant, and who have worked very hard against all odds.

Kudos to the Team.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Samantha Iyanna'.

Samantha Iyanna
Managing Trustee
Clean Coonoor

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Waste Management

Introduction



Following the signing of a MoU wherein the Coonoor Municipality would be responsible for the collection and transport of the waste generated within Coonoor, and Clean Coonoor for its disposal, both the organisation and the local body faced an uphill task.

The reasons, peculiarities of a hill town, lack of standardised operating procedures, inappropriate equipment and methodologies, and last of all. The tourist influx.

Through trial and error the efforts succeeded, and after a period of 4 years, a comprehensive waste management programme is now in place.

Our Dry Waste Centre inceptioned in Oct 2019, deals on a daily basis, nearly 5 tonnes of the dry component collected by the local body, and re-sorts it into recyclables and non recyclables.

Designated Recyclables are either despatched to aggregators or recyclers, or to waste to energy plants, whereas non-recyclables are

dealt within the premises as per Pollution Control Board Norms.

The Wet Waste Composting Unit, a later addition which was made fully functional in 2022, deals with Butcher Residue, Fibrous Waste and Kitchen Leftovers, which are mixed in a ratio of 1:1:5-6 and then pulverised prior being heaped in windrows for composting.

Once mature the composted material is sieved, bagged and sold chiefly to floriculturists and horticulturists at a nominal price.

As on date both the units have prevented around 12,000 metric tons of waste of all descriptions, from either being openly dumped or interred into landfills, an estimated savings of over 116 Lac Kgs of CO₂ emissions.

We are ever innovating on SOPs, methodologies, and such, to make our units more productive and ever more eco-friendly in a bid to reduce our own carbon footprint.

Dry Waste Handling

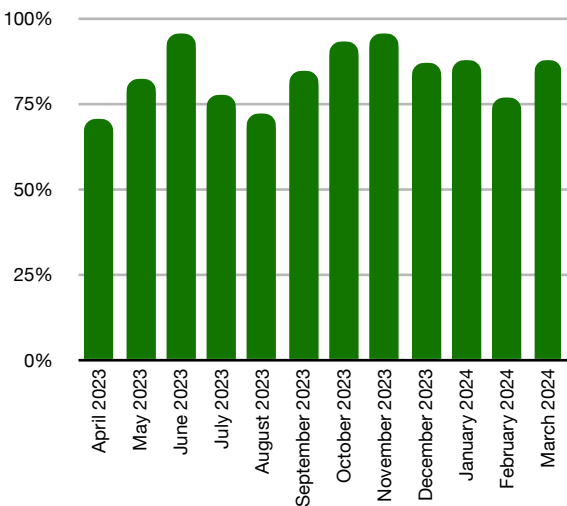
Summary of Activities

Dry Waste Collected & transported for processing by the Local Body	1,389 MT
Dry Waste Collected & transported for processing by the NGO	133 MT
Total Dry Waste Collected & transported for processing	1,522 MT
% of Dry Waste Collected & transported for processing by all sources as against handling capacity	83%
Quantity Processed	1,442 MT (95%)
Quantity despatched for Recycling	506 MT (35%)
Quantity despatched to cement kilns for use as Segregated Combustible Fraction (SCF)	90 MT (06%)
Quantity disposed by composting (soiled & wet paper, organic impurities)	532 MT (37%)
Quantity Disposed by Onsite High Temperature Closed Burning (Sanitary & Textile Waste)	253 MT (18%)
Quantity Disposed by Sanitary Landfill (soil, rubble & non recyclable glass)	70 MT (04%)

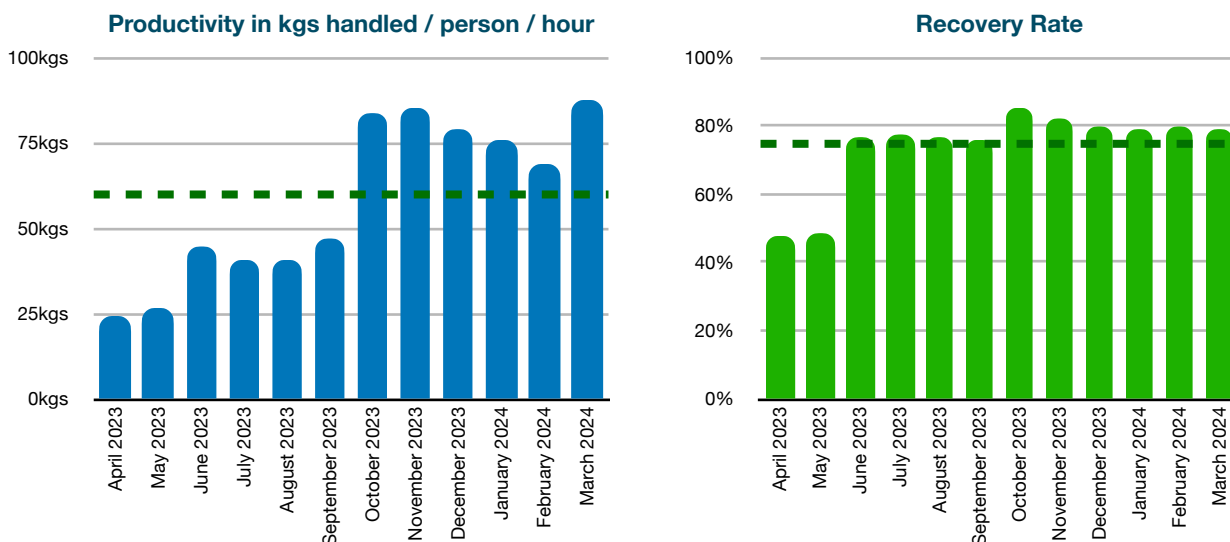
Trends & Outcomes

The Collection Gap

- One among our self made goals is the closure of the collection gap - 4 TPD as against the projected dry waste generation of 5.6 TPD
- The Collection Gap for the entire year presently stands at 16% as against the half year average of 20% and the previous years average of 37%
- The gap is expected to even close a little bit as the local body has procured 4 more vehicles and has increased collection circuits to cover underserved areas



Productivity & Recovery Rates



- Another of our goals for the year was to increase worker productivity and recyclables recovery.
- Productivity has now doubled and stands at 80 as compared with the previous half year tally of 37 per person per hour, largely due to change in methodology and a redefinition of recyclables.
- Recovery Rate presently stands at 81% as against the 67% of the previous half year.
- A further improvement in productivity to perhaps 120 kg / person / hour is possible through a revamp of the existing machinery and processing line. Recovery has almost reached saturation and any further increase can be made only if textile waste can be combined with zero-value plastics and processed and transported as Alternate Fuel & Raw Material (AFR). Possibilities though slim are being explored.

Other Achievements

- Through funding by Dr Reddy's Labs, old burners replaced with the latest state of art burner with enhanced emission control features which further reduces the carbon footprint.
- Change in methodology of re-sorting process using ABC Gatekeeper technique which reduces the need for manpower and hence operational costs.
- Redefinition of designated recyclables and more value addition
- Closure of a deal with Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd. and Marico Ltd., to safely dispose 75 MT of Segregated Combustible Fraction through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). This deal is likely to be extended for the forthcoming years with enhanced EPR Credits.

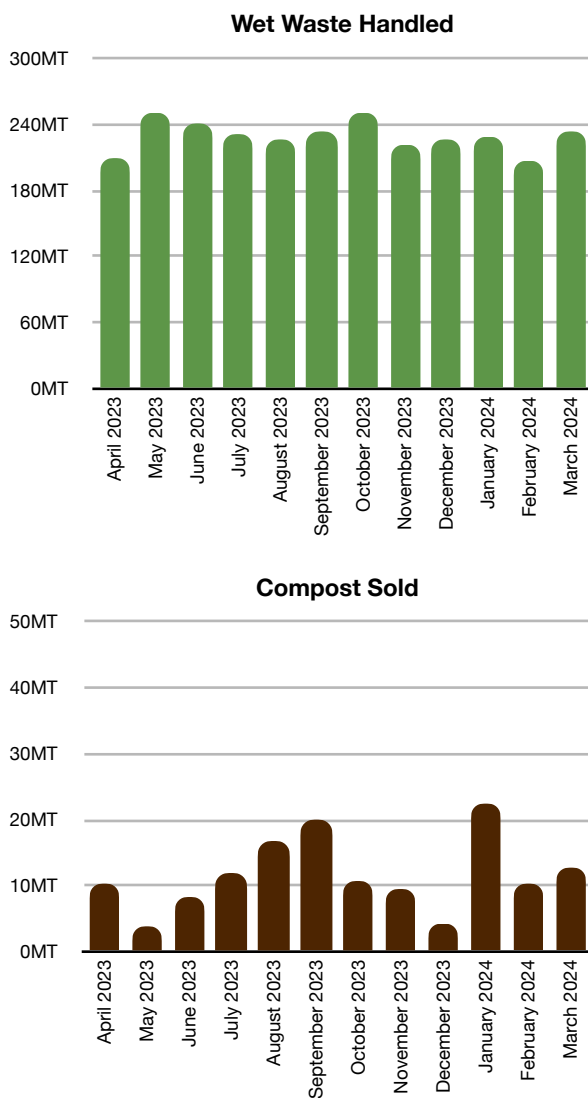
Wet Waste Handling

Summary of Activities

Wet Waste Collected & transported for processing by the Local Body	2,687 MT
Wet Waste Collected & transported for processing by the NGO	76 MT
Total Wet Waste Collected & transported for processing	2,833 MT
% of Wet Waste Collected & transported for processing by all sources as against handling capacity	97%
Quantity Butcher Residue Handled	293 MT (10%)
Quantity Market Waste Handled	462 MT (16%)
Quantity Household Waste Handled	2,078 MT (74%)
Number of batches subjected to composting	71 batches of around 40-50 MT each
Number of batches which have reached maturity	55 batches of 8-10 MT each
Number of batches sieved, bagged & subjected to Quality Testing as per Fertiliser Control Order (1985) Norms	18 batches
Number of Batches found complaint to FCO Norms	18 batches
Quantity of Matured Compost Bagged	142 MT
Quantity of Compost Sold	136 MT

THE RESULTS FOR OUR COMPOST





Trends & Outcomes

- **Though the turnover of finished compost is far from satisfactory, rectifications are underway by way of construction of a dedicated sieving unit and revamping the existing machinery.**
- All batches of compost produced have been tested at NABL accredited Labs and have consistently turned out to be of Grade-A Category complying with Fertiliser Control Order (1985) Norms.
- The existing pulveriser has been replaced with a new energy efficient one fitted with a Variable Frequency Drive, through funding by Dr Reddy's Labs and NAVA Bharat Projects Ltd.
- A deal has been closed with the Horticulture Department for a buy-in of 142 MT of compost assuring an income of INR 6,90,000/-



Visits & Facility Tours



Neither 'talked at,' nor 'talked down to,' but a true sharing of experiences between Clean Coonoor, NEPRA a Ahmedabad based Waste Management Concern, and Yara Fertilisers India Pvt. Ltd., facilitated by Marico Innovation Foundation.

A kind gesture by the Students and the HOD of the Economics Department - Providence College for Women, Coonoor. A Diwali Gift of Sarees and Dhotis for our employees.



Students of The Aalam Montessori School, Coimbatore interacting with the staff of the Waste Management Facility. Their principal query was as to why people chose this sort of a job.

“Child is father of the man” is an idiom originating from a poem of Wordsworth. There are many different interpretations of the phrase, the most popular of which is that adults are the product of habits and behaviour developed when young.





Students of College of Journalism & Mass Communication - Dayananda Sagar University, Bangalore - on a Facility Tour.



The Regional Director of Municipal Administration on an official visit along with other municipal functionaries.



Exploring recent technologies - identifying new markets - innovating methodologies - with Team NEPRA from Ahmedabad.

Worker Welfare



No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it – a well motivated workforce is a must for the success of any community oriented programme.

It is true that professionals get paid, but it isn't pay that makes one often go far beyond the call of duty and frequently walk the extra mile. It is something more, perhaps, a matter of honour, an inborn urge to maintain the highest standards, pride in the organisation that they belong to, and the sense that excellence means doing more than the very best. It is largely a matter of spirit, or morale.

We at Clean Coonoor try our best to keep up this esprit de corps, by promoting work-life balance among employees – investing in trust building – going beyond “My door is always open” – employee-led initiatives – and recognising the power of small gestures.

In addition to the usual welfare measures, we at times help out in circumstances such as disability or death.

A special thanks to

Hinduja Foundation

for taking care of the educational needs of an orphaned girl of one of our employees, and of course our workers who chipped in with a day's wages.

125th Flower Show



Imagine a prize-winning garden inside a Waste Management Facility

Honouring our Gardeners

Tmt. Selvakumari and Tmt. Manjula

who were largely instrumental for this accomplishment.

“audere est facere.”

Ecosystem Restoration

Wetland are the ecosystems that have suffered the most at human hands, with some 85 per cent of them already lost.

Ecosystems are the basis of life on Earth, and their degradation through conversion, over-exploitation, pollution and other impacts poses an existential threat to humanity. More than 3.2 billion people are already affected by land degradation.



The uniforms that guard us while we sleep, have time and proved that they can rise to any occasion, not only when the guns begin to shoot, but also during other emergencies and disasters, both natural and man made.

Of late the armed forces have also started addressing environmental concerns that threaten the nation.

Having tied up earlier with this organisation in cleaning up the part of the Coonoor River which flows through the Cantonment of Wellington, the olive-greens resolved to restore a piece of wetland situated in the midst of its limits.

This wetland which was once a source of potable water to the barracks situated around 80 yards above goes by the name “Hanni Kaallu,” which translates from the local language as “Swampy Corridor.”

The work at the Hanni-kallu marsh was jointly taken up for rejuvenation by Army SHQ-Wellington and Clean Coonoor on World Wetlands Day and was completed as part of Mission Amrit Sarovar.

But, as a not so familiar quote of Melville’s goes, “small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity,” the Hinduja Foundation will be taking over the project for further improvement.

International Days

Other than its usual activities, Clean Coonoor also observes relevant International Days and Anniversaries in a fitting manner. We believe that these occasions are powerful advocacy tools to educate the general public on issues of concern, to mobilise political will and resources, to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity.

World Environment Day



Managing Trustee as the Guest of Honour at the tree planting activity conducted by Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana & Terapanth Mahila Mandal – Coonoor Chapter, at Shanthi Vijaya School.

International Women's Day



At the TOHFA Organic Weekly Market, Ooty, as a experience sharing activity vis-a-vis organic Farming on the occasion of Women's Day.

Gandhi Jayanthi

The International Day of Non-Violence

‘So long as you do not take the broom and the bucket in your hands, you cannot make your towns and cities clean!’

Mahatma Ghandhi

There’s more than what meets the eye in this statement made by the Mahatma whose birth anniversary happens to fall on this day.

Perhaps the Great Soul who practised what he preached and was the torchbearer of cleanliness and sanitation, also meant unless we lead by example, we are never going to create awareness in the minds of others.

The ills of littering, dumping of waste, and other unsanitary practices, have multiplied severalfold and have become more dangerous, since Gandhi’s time – and with this in mind that the Pasteur Institute of India, Coonoor, decided to celebrate Swachh Bharat Diwas by holding a massive cleanup of a 13 km stretch of the Coonoor Ghat and a section of the heritage NMR Rigi-Line. In keeping with the spirit of collective efforts, the enterprise involved more than 400 volunteers including individuals from other sectors, both government and non governmental.

The results of the one hour exercise are an eye-opener. More than 3000 kg of waste littered along the ghats was picked up and more than three quarters were just banned PETE Water Bottles.

Although bans sometimes felt as restrictive, are often instilled for the good of the people, they aren’t an end by themselves, and condemnation again doesn’t liberate, it oppresses.

Perhaps the need of the hour is behavioural change. Self Image is the key to human personality and human behaviour. Gandhiji’s principle of leading by example and setting an example, can change the self image and in-turn change personality and behaviour.



Consultative Activities

Sharing experiences is, for most of us, a very natural desire. Scientifically-speaking our brains are wired to form social connections and empathise with others and most of us have had that moment when someone else's passion makes us equally passionate.

Our experience & knowledge gained over the last decade, be it in waste management, or eco-restoration, or heritage, we freely offer to our counterparts elsewhere.



Planning Ahead
At the Resource Recovery Centre at Ooty



At the
Mettupalayam
Waste
Management
Unit.



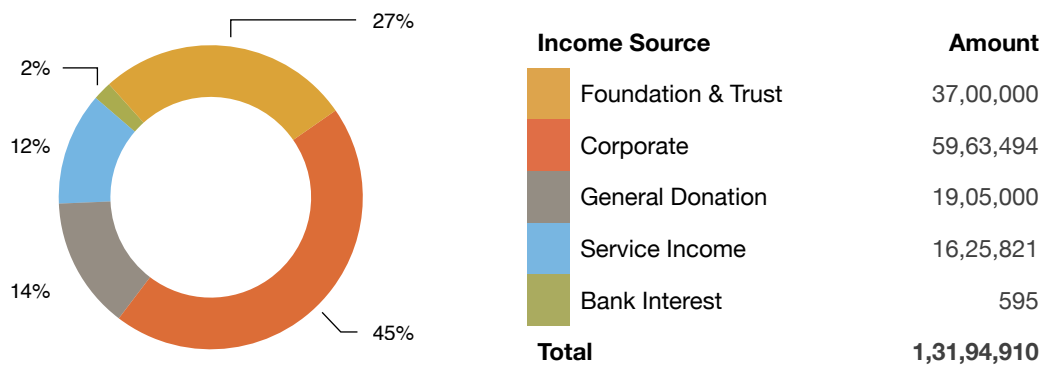
At the Organic Farmer's Market
at Ooty – exploring possibilities
of a similar one in Coonoor.



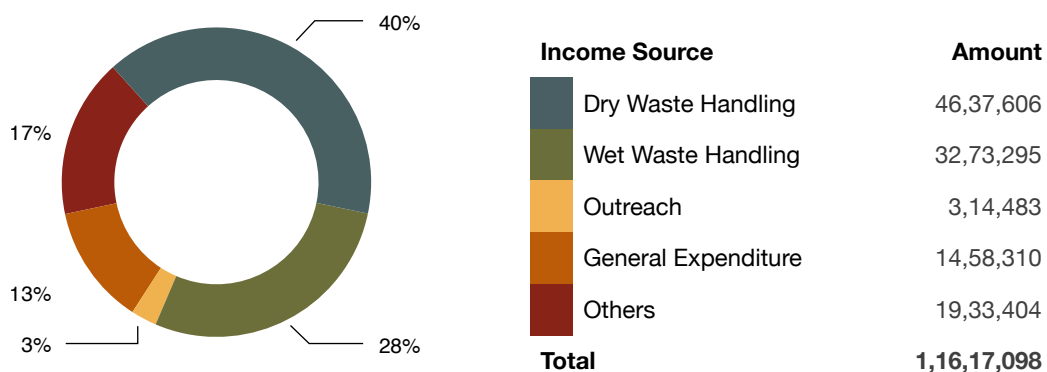
Involving the Armed Forces of the
Nation - The Waste Processing
Centre at Cantonment Wellington.

Financials

Clean Coonoor has received an income of INR 1,31,94,910 in the Financial Year 2023-24.



Clean Coonoor's total expenses amounted to INR 1,16,17,098 in the Financial Year 2023-24.



THANK YOU!

We thank all our partners, allies, interns, volunteers, supporters and donors for being co-travellers in this journey. It is only with their support that we can continue on our path to create 'A World Free of Environmental Issues.'

Foundations / Trusts



Corporates



Other Donors

- 1 Vemulapalli Sunitha, Hyderabad
- 2 Rajashree Pinnamaneni, Hyderabad
- 3 Appusamy Hospital, Salem
- 4 P. Sundaram, Bengaluru
- 5 Mohan Kumar, Salem
- 6 Kranti Jaiswal, Coonoor
- 7 Jairam Iyer, Coonoor
- 8 Elk Hill Owners Association, Coonoor
- 9 Venkatesh Prasad, Salem
- 10 Deepa Jacob, Coonoor
- 11 Krishna Piniseti, Coonoor
- 12 Vikiram Singh, Jaipur
- 13 Gaia Pottery, Mumbai
- 14 S.A. Iyanna, Coonoor
- 15 Joseph Vellapally, Coonoor
- 16 Shivkumar Seerapu, Visakhapatnam
- 17 Benjamin Gnana Manickam, Coonoor
- 18 Helan Elizabeth Issar, Wellington
- 19 K. Rajiv HUF, Chennai
- 20 Akshaya Gaur, Aravenu
- 21 Srilatha Batliwala, Bengaluru
- 22 Saroja Henry, Coimbatore
- 23 Sophia Vinod, Coimbatore
- 24 Sunita Rao, Mysore
- 25 Wanaparthi Educational and Charitable Trust
- 26 The Ranee Shanakaramma Memorial Trust

Looking Forward

“We all have our time machines, don't we. Those that take us back are memories...And those that carry us forward, are dreams.”

– H.G. Wells

We look back at 2023-24 as a year which threw up huge challenges and uncertainty. But it left us with immense learning and renewed faith in upholding a collective vision. It reinstated our confidence in our ecosystem to be the enablers in continuing the work on environmental issues in general and waste management in particular. It also taught us that we need to be true to our strategic vision but at the same time agile and flexible to change.

The targets we set ourselves for FY 23-24 are largely achieved. However, we understand the current climate may mean we need to be agile in our approach and are prepared to face that like we did this year while staying aligned to our strategies and the vision. The challenges which lie ahead are outlined as below.

Vis-a-vis **Waste Management** it has been decided to emulate in other parts of the district, based on its success – the Coonoor Model!

The Reasons?

1. Mismanaged Waste is a Disaster on all Fronts and not confined to Coonoor alone.
2. The Nilgiris and the associated chain of mountains, The Western Ghats, are Biodiversity Hotspots – mismanaged Waste here and elsewhere in this mountain chain, is bound to have both short and long term deleterious consequences on this fragile ecosystem.
3. The health of the rivers which flow through the plains of Peninsular India, is entirely dependent on the health of this eco-sensitive mountain chain.

The expansion will be implemented in a phased manner taking into consideration all factors that are bound to come into play.

- As **Phase-1** we plan to strive for a financial breakeven in the existing Waste Management Facility with one-time viability gap funding.
- As **Phase-2** we aim to collaborate with contiguous local bodies and explore possibilities to transport and process the waste generated here, at the existing facility. This phase will need strong political and administrative commitment, for such a measure will need policy level decisions at state and district level. If successful, the move will help in preventing much more waste from being mismanaged, and the next logical step will be to double the processing capacity of the existing facility which currently stands at 13 MT per day.
- **Phase-3** will be dedicated in trying to identify and establish decentralised common waste management facilities throughout the district which are run along similar lines. In addition to political and administrative commitment, such an enterprise will need community mobilisation, partnerships with like-minded organisations, and, development of standardised but flexible operating procedures and monitoring indices. If this phase can be successfully implemented, it can be assumed that the major portion of the waste generated within this eco-sensitive district will be scientifically and safely disposed.

Our efforts in the sphere of **ecological restoration** have taught us the importance of community participation and community ownership, and this will be a lesson well learnt.

We also hope to revive all our other previous activities that have been put on the back burner, due to the taxing demands made by our chief area of focus.

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