



# ANNUAL REPORT OF VIVEKANANDA TECHNICAL CENTRE [VTC]

2023

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# INTRODUCTION

It is our pleasure to present the 2023 Annual Report of Vivekananda Technical Centre [VTC]. VTC is managed by Ramakrishna Mission, Fiji. It is registered under the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

VTC specializes in providing training programmes in Agriculture which are registered under the Fiji Qualifications Framework. This report provides the management of VTC and other stakeholders with an overview of the operational and financial activities and performance for the year 2022.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF VIVEKANANDA TECHNICAL CENTRE

Vivekananda Technical Centre [VTC] is run by the Board of Management of Ramakrishna Mission, Fiji which is a branch of the worldwide Ramakrishna Mission with its Headquarters at Belur Math, West Bengal, India.

The VTC started in 1981 at the Nawaicoba campus offering courses in Carpentry and Joinery, Agriculture and Automotive Engineering. Apart from the Ministry of Education's two-year vocational courses, VTC also offered Fiji National University [FNU] franchised courses in the early nineties. In 2013, VTC piloted and offered Certificate level IV Fiji National Qualification [FNQs] courses in Commercial Cookery, Automotive Mechanics, Automotive Electrical, and Cabinet Making & Joinery.

Since 2016, Ramakrishna Mission made the decision to discontinue other courses and move to the much-needed Agriculture sector, focusing on training our local farmers.

Therefore, currently, we at VTC are fully focused in developing and delivering training programmes in Agriculture to farmers on their farms.

## OUR INSPIRATION

*“Let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good.*

*Let us proclaim to every soul: Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, awake! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. None is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him! De-hypnotize yourselves. The way to do that is found in your own sacred books.*

*Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakens. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.” – Swami Vivekananda*

### **Our Vision**

Quality technical education in agriculture for better utilization of our resources.

### **Our Mission**

Providing accessible training for a skilled, competent, productive agriculture workforce which will contribute to the development of the nation.

### **Our Goals**

1. To continue running a quality technical education centre with a sound management, administration, proper training resources and relevant and up-to-date curriculum.
2. To provide quality technical education in agriculture to meet the needs of the nation in collaboration and partnership with the industries and Government.
3. To enhance the productivity of farmers engaged in farming.
4. To introduce new farming techniques, crops and technologies to the farmers and support them by connecting them to financing institutions, buyers, equipment suppliers etc.
5. To introduce agriculture training into high schools to attract students to take up farming as a career.

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT



I am pleased to present VTC's Annual Report for the year 2023. Agriculture plays a very important role in Fiji's economy. It not only offers employment and opportunities for sustaining livelihoods, but it also establishes a strong link between the agriculture sector and our national economy. Over the years, horticulture has come to be one of the most profitable agricultural enterprises in the nation's economic growth.

VTC is managed by the Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) based in Malolo, Fiji. Besides VTC, RKM also manages two other institutions namely Swami Vivekananda College (SVC) and Sarada Medical Centre (SMC) along with an outreach mobile medical Services to the remote village in Nadi under SMC.

VTC provides courses in horticulture, food processing and spice production as it is dedicated to developing the growth of the country's economy with the full support and guidance of FHEC.

VTC is committed to empower farmers registered under it with technical knowledge and skills in agriculture and has done a lot of work during 2023.

Swami Vivekananda's message, "*Service to man is worship to God*" is the source of our inspiration. And VTC has focused all its energy on Production in Horticulture.

With a humble beginning in 2016 with 68 registered student farmers, we have progressed to our present student farmer's strength of 136.

Our teaching method is hands-on-learning and competency-based, at the same time we ensure that we are all inclusive and do not deprive any farmer interested in developing his or her skills. Farmers are instructed on their own farms, thereby making the farm a practical class-room cum laboratory. Instructors visit farmers at different locations in a radius of 30km around VTC.

## **Currently VTC is running the following FHEC accredited programmes:**

Production in Horticulture for Certificate level 2

Production in Horticulture for Certificate level 3

Production in Horticulture for Certificate level 4

Certificate in Agriculture (Spice Production) level 2

Certificate in Food Processing level 2

VTC has started using the digital platform for the interested farmers where our instructors are unable to reach (beyond 30km from VTC's location). We have uploaded study materials of Production in Horticulture of Cert.2, 3 and 4.

VTC has planted perennial spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, and black pepper. VTC has developed a small spice-nursery with the help of an ITEC expert from India where vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, black pepper, cardamom, mango-ginger, turmeric, have been planted. Black-Pepper is a spice which can grow well in Fiji and VTC is trying to encourage farmers to take up its cultivation.

Two instructors have completed International Skills Training (IST) which qualifies them to assess students in various subjects.

### **Work with Australian Volunteer**

VTC continues to work in partnership with the Australian Volunteer Program (AVP) to take agriculture to a newer height. We used the AVP impact fund to empower women to develop fruit grafting skills. We have submitted another request for an AVP assignment to develop Digitalizing of our programs.

### **Farmer's workshop**

A farmer's day workshop was organized on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 and the theme of the workshop was 'Plant Propagation Techniques.' Participants were mainly women who were imparted training in different methods of plant multiplication.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We thankfully acknowledge FHEC for their financial and administrative support to run and sustain our programs efficiently.

We also thank all the student farmers who have enrolled themselves in VTC's Certificate Level Courses and also extend our thanks to 'Tech World, Fiji' for their continued support to VTC in IT matters.

# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



## Introduction

It is my pleasure to present the 2023 Annual Report of Vivekananda Technical Centre [VTC], a unique tertiary training institution that provides technical and vocational education [TVET] training courses registered under the Fiji Qualifications Framework approved by the Fiji Higher Education Commission. This report provides the management and other stakeholders with information about the institution's activities and performance for the year 2023.

## Staffing

VTC staff members in 2023.

- Director
- Administration officer
- Principal
- Senior Agriculture Instructor
- 2 Agriculture instructors
- Finance officer
- Handyman/Nursery hand

## Courses

The following VTC Provider Qualifications, registered on the Fiji Qualifications framework were offered in 2023:

1. Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level2)
2. Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level3)
3. Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level4)
4. Certificate in Agriculture (Spice Production) (Level 2)
5. Certificate in Food Processing (Level 2)

## Activities & Achievements of the Agriculture Programs 2023

Vivekananda Technical Centre (VTC) experienced a dynamic and successful year in 2023, marked by significant achievements, strategic initiatives, and collaborations that further strengthened our commitment to providing quality education and vocational training. The following comprehensive overview encapsulates the key highlights and accomplishments for the year, contributing to our 2023 Annual Report.

### 1. Enrolment and Course Offerings:

- A total of 125 farmers enthusiastically joined our courses in 2023, enrolling in programs such as Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 2, 3, 4), Certificate in Agriculture (Spice Production) (Level 2), and Certificate in Food Processing (Level 2).
- Monthly meetings of VTC Administration were conducted to monitor the overall progress of the institution.

### 2. Gender Equality in Staffing:

- Two positions for Agriculture Assistant were filled, emphasizing gender equality. A female staff member was chosen to support and empower women farmers.

### 3. Accreditation and Program Development:

- A draft of Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 2) was sent to the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) for review as a requirement for reaccreditation.
- A significant step was taken to address land preparation issues faced by trainees. The Ramakrishna Mission Fiji supported VTC by providing a 50HP Tractor for trainee use.
- A Farmers' Day workshop on Farm Mechanisation was organized, with 25 participants actively engaging in the event.

### 4. International Skills Training and Collaboration:

- The Principal and one Agriculture instructor completed the International Skills Training (IST) Course offered by APTC in partnership with FHEC.
- VTC hosted the IST Course, with participation from partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) such as USP, Pivot point, CTI, Pacific tafe, SPSCM, AFL, and AIVT.
- Collaboration talks with APTC were held, exploring potential courses and submitting a proposal for an in-country volunteer.

### 5. Educational Tours and Workshops:

- VTC hosted four intern students from FNU for industrial attachment in the Trade Diploma in Agriculture Programme.
- Educational tours were conducted to NATI and Solis Tractors to explore potential collaborations and identify suitable models for tractors.
- The Director of the Fiji Higher Education Commission visited VTC.



## **6. Capacity Building and Workshops:**

- Certificates for International Skills Training were distributed to participants.
- VTC Administration participated in an online workshop on organizational capacity strengthening by the Australian Volunteers Program.
- Attendance at workshops organized by Tertiary Scholarship and Loan Service and Australian Volunteers Program showcased VTC's commitment to continuous learning and development.

## **7. Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Stakeholder Engagement:**

- The AGM for Ramakrishna Mission Fiji and VTC was successfully held in March 2023.
- VTC participated virtually in the stakeholder consultation workshop organized by FHEC for the review of Higher Education Legislation.

## **8. Stakeholder Meetings and Qualification Reviews:**

- A stakeholder meeting was organized to review qualifications such as Certificate in Horticulture (Level 2) and Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3).
- VTC hosted the Advanced International Skills Training by APTC, with two trainers from VTC participating.

## **9. Certification of Farmers and Institutional Audit:**

- VTC underwent a comprehensive audit for the National Qualification, Certificate in Aged Care and Community Care (Level 3).

## **10. Government Grant, Farmer Day Workshop, and Research Participation:**

- VTC received a government allocation of \$296,100 for the financial year 2023-2024, highlighting recognition of VTC's contributions to skills development.
- A successful farmer day workshop on Bacterium culture and Compost Making was organized in July 2023, with 20 participants.
- VTC participated in a three-year research project initiated by the Australian Volunteers Program to assess its impact and capacity strengthening.

## **11. Collaboration with National TVET Policy Working Group:**

- The Principal actively participated in the National TVET Policy working group, showcasing VTC's commitment to contributing to TVET policies in Fiji.

## **12. Expansion of Model Farm:**

- The model farm was expanded into an open field system, providing practical training in semi-commercial agricultural practices.

## **13. Participation in Higher Education Expo:**

- VTC actively participated in the 2023 Higher Education Expo, engaging with educational institutions and professionals.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Vivekananda Technical Centre's achievements in 2023 reflect a commitment to excellence, innovation, and collaboration. The institution continues to evolve and adapt, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education and vocational training to empower individuals and contribute to the sustainable development of Fiji. We express our gratitude to all stakeholders, partners, and the dedicated team at VTC for their unwavering support and contributions to our success in 2023. Looking forward, VTC remains dedicated to its mission of shaping futures through education and skill development.

## 2023 Enrollment Data

		Number
1	Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 2)	25
2	Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 3)	25
3	Certificate in production Horticulture (Level 4)	25
4	Certificate in Agriculture (Spice Production) (Level 2)	25
5	Certificate in Food Processing (Level 2)	25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>125</b>

## Farmer Cluster Breakdown

### Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 2)

SN	Cluster Name	Number
1	Uciwai Cluster	14
2	Malamala Cluster	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>25</b>

### Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 3)

SN	Cluster Name	Number
1	Nacovi Cluster	4
2	Qeleloa Cluster	1
3	Malamala Cluster	4
4	Nalovo Cluster	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>25</b>

### Certificate in Production Horticulture (Level 4)

SN	Cluster Name	Number
1	Mulomulo Cluster	9
2	Melevani Cluster	16
	TOTAL	25

### Certificate in Agriculture (Spice Production) (Level 2)

SN	Cluster Name	Number
1	Salovi Cluster	3
2	Dakadaka Cluster	1
3	Nacovi Cluster	6
4	Nalau Cluster	12
5	Malamala Cluster	2
6	Moala Cluster	1
	TOTAL	25

### Certificate in Food Processing (Level 2)

SN	Cluster Name	Number
1	Moala cluster	2
2	Uciwai cluster	3
3	Rada cluster	5
4	Wailoaloa cluster	5
5	Namata cluster	6
6	Nacovi cluster	4
	TOTAL	25

## **DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2023**

### **CERTIFICATE IN PRODUCTION HORTICULTURE (LEVEL 2)**

1. 25 farmers enrolled in the Certificate Level 2.
2. 6 training visits were made to train the farmers on 3 different modules which focused on Nursery Production, Husbandry Practices and Introduction to Farm Tools & Machinery Operation.
3. Apart from the above-mentioned visits 41 assessment visits were made for field observation and assessment of implementation of knowledge and skill sets that were passed on to the farmer.

### **CERTIFICATE in PRODUCTION HORTICULTURE (LEVEL 3)**

1. 25 farmers were enrolled in Certificate Level 3.
2. 10 training visits were made covering the module on Safe use of agro-chemicals, Nursery Production, Seed Production and Field Production.
3. Apart from the above-mentioned visits 39 assessment visits were made for field observation and assessment of implementation of knowledge and skill sets that were passed on to the farmer.

### **CERTIFICATE in PRODUCTION HORTICULTURE (LEVEL 4)**

1. 25 farmers were enrolled in Certificate Level 4
2. 13 training visits and 109 assessment visits were made for field observation and assessment of implementation of knowledge and skill sets.

### **CERTIFICATE in Agriculture (Spice Production) (LEVEL 2)**

1. 25 farmers were enrolled
2. 4 training visits and 25 assessment visits were made for field observation and assessment of implementation of knowledge and skill sets.

## **CERTIFICATE in Food Processing (LEVEL 2)**

1. 25 farmers were enrolled
2. 5 training visits and 50 assessment visits were made for field observation and assessment of implementation of knowledge and skill sets.

## **Graduation**

A total of 125 farmers completed their training in Levels 2,3,4 of Production Horticulture and Spice production.

## **Innovation and Assistance**

1. **Beekeeping** – honey production is another area where VTC is working to make more hives and can be used as a training area for farmers who wish to take beekeeping as their profession. This is an area where VTC will be looking in the near future.
2. **Farming as a Business** - to be designed and introduced with stakeholder consultations.

## **Acknowledgement**

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Ramakrishna Mission Fiji management, staff, the representatives of the local industries and our stakeholders who have all contributed towards VTC's success. With the continued support from all the stakeholders there is no doubt that VTC will continue to deliver the outstanding quality of training and its services to the people of this nation.

**Head of Campus (Principal)**

**Divikash Anal Nair**

# Agriculture Training



VTC Administration had met with FHEC to discuss the delivery of National Qualification - Certificate in Aged care (Level 3) at its campus. (31/01/2023)



VTC team at the 2023 Higher education careers event.



VTC grant agreement being signed by HEC Chair, VTC Director and Administration Officer. (17/08/23)



VTC Administration visited a solis tractor dealer to identify students in land preparation. (18/01/23)



*Attaches practicing single seed sowing. (16/01/23)*



*Practising bagging in guava (04/08/23)*



*VTC hosting IST Training at its campus. (22/11/22)*



*FNU attaches discuss with farmer about citrus farming (25/01/2023)*





*Procuring planting material for VTC nursery. (18/01/23)*



*Courtesy visit to NATI. (18/01/23)*



*RKM tractor used by VTC Trainees (13/02/23)*



*International Skills Training Certificate handout (0*



*Australian Volunteers Program workshop. (28/02/23)*



*VTC Aquaculture project.. (23/03/23)*



*Assisting Trainees with Watermelon Seedlings. (06/07/2023)*



*Monitoring visit and assessment visit, also supporting irrigation equipment (Water Pump and Hose) for the project. (29/06/2023)*



*RKM tractor Service used by VTC Trainees (04/05/23)*



*Demostration by MOA Staffs to participants at day workshop on Bacterium culture and control (20/07/23)*



*Trainees being awarded certificate and token for attending the workshop. (20/07/23)*



*Participants for the capacity building workshop on (28/07/23)*



VTC tractor Service used by VTC Trainees . (16/08/2023)



Agriculture Assistant inspecting trainees corn field. (18/08/2023)



VTC Director observing the different types of root crops at the 2023 Agriculture Show. (26/10/23)



Trainees farm Inspection (03/10/23)

## APPENDIX 1: VTC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Entity	Members	Responsibilities	
Ramakrishna Mission Board of Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Swami Bhadreshananda</li> <li>2. Swami Guruvarananda</li> <li>3. Dilip Khatri</li> <li>4. Umakant Patel</li> <li>5. Vinod Patel</li> <li>6. Harish Ratanji</li> <li>7. Arvind Raniga.</li> <li>8. Sat Narain</li> <li>9. Anil Pillay</li> <li>10. Nitin Hiralal</li> <li>11. Dharmesh Motiram</li> <li>12. Jitesh Pala</li> <li>13. Prakash Pala</li> <li>14. Hitesh Shivilal</li> <li>15. Ajay Raniga</li> </ol>	<p>Management of all the institutions of Ramakrishna Mission</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Swami Vivekananda College</li> <li>2. Vivekananda Technical Centre</li> <li>3. Sarada Medical Centre</li> <li>4. Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama</li> <li>5. Ramakrishna Mission Relief Services</li> </ol> <p>Responsible for overall management, funding, development, and coordination with the Government and Donor Agencies.</p>	
Vivekananda Technical Centre Committee	<p>Swami Bhadreshananda</p> <p>Mukesh Chand</p> <p>Farnaz</p> <p>Divikash Nair</p>	<p>Director</p> <p>Admin Officer</p> <p>Finance Officer</p> <p>Principal</p>	<p>Committee works with the VTC admin and stakeholders to ensure that all aspects of VTC run smoothly, maintenance of infrastructure and accountably as per the policies established.</p> <p>Looks after accounts and payroll.</p> <p>Monitors the activities of the VTC and reports to the Board of Management.</p>
VTC Administration	Director, Principal and HOD, Admin Officer	Day to day administration of the Centre in coordination with the VTC Committee	
VTC Academic Committee	VTC Admin and other teaching staff	Conducting admissions, classes, examinations, implementing policies, collection of fees, student matters, promotion of courses, etc.	

## **APPENDIX 2: 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

*This has been submitted separately.*