

VGLUG FOUNDATION

News Letter

Bridging Digital Divides!

(A Note from Advocate Mr. U. Karkee, Founder, VGLUG Foundation)

The **VGLUG Foundation** has made significant contributions to **rural development** through the **Free and Open Source Software (FOSS)** movement.

VGLUG's core mission is to bring **FOSS awareness from towns to villages**, ensuring **digital inclusion** for all. Recognizing that rural students often lack access to proprietary software, training, and internet facilities, the Foundation introduced **free software alternatives** that run efficiently on low-end systems, thereby **bridging the digital divide**.

By promoting **GNU/Linux and open-source tools**, VGLUG has enabled many **colleges, schools, and individuals** to adopt technology without licensing costs, allowing rural institutions to computerize at minimal expense.

In the area of **technical education and skill development**, VGLUG regularly organizes **workshops and training camps** on GNU/Linux, Python, Web Development, and other open-source technologies in **government schools and rural colleges across Villupuram District**. Through the **"100 Villages – 100 GLUGs" initiative**, local Linux user groups are being established in rural areas to train students in FOSS and nurture local digital ecosystems.



Many of the participants, often **first-generation learners from farming families**, have gained **job-ready digital skills** through 100% free software tools.

VGLUG also promotes **Education Freedom** by celebrating **Education Freedom Day** and **Software Freedom Day** every year in rural schools and colleges, introducing tools such as **LibreOffice, GIMP, Blender, and Linux distributions**. These programs reinforce the philosophy that *education should be free as in freedom*—not dependent on expensive proprietary licenses.

In advancing **local language empowerment**, VGLUG has contributed to **Tamil localization** efforts in open-source platforms such as Mozilla, Wikipedia, and GNU/Linux applications. The group has also developed community-based Tamil applications like **"VizhiTamil"** for visually impaired users and **"Sangailakkiyam"** for Tamil literature, thereby improving accessibility and promoting cultural preservation through FOSS.

Through **community empowerment and open knowledge initiatives**, VGLUG trains volunteers from rural backgrounds to become trainers themselves, creating a **self-sustaining ecosystem**. The Foundation also

encourages youth to contribute to Wikipedia, open data platforms, and open-source development projects.

Advocate U.Karkee further highlighted that VGLUG's initiatives are aligned with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, specifically:

- No Poverty
- Zero Hunger
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Reduced Inequalities
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Life on Land
- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

He also recalled VGLUG's consistent role in celebrating **Software Freedom Day (SFD)**—a global event held annually on the third Saturday of September since 2004, organized by the **Digital Freedom Foundation** and supported by FSF, OSI, and GLUGs worldwide. Since its inception in 2013, VGLUG has celebrated SFD **every year** through programs conducted in villages, government schools, and rural colleges across Villupuram District.

Typical SFD activities include:

- **FOSS awareness sessions** featuring talks and demos on GNU/Linux, LibreOffice, GIMP, Blender, Python, and Git.
- **Install fests**, where volunteers help students install Linux distributions such as Ubuntu, Fedora, and Debian.
- **Student workshops** focused on coding and software freedom.
- **Poster and quiz competitions** to engage learners.

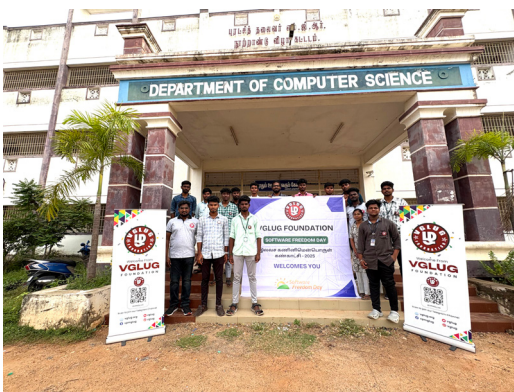


- **Guest lectures** by representatives from FSFTN, FOSS UNITED, Debian and Wikipedia communities.

The impact of these celebrations has been substantial—bringing **FOSS awareness to hundreds of students annually**, inspiring rural youth and tech enthusiasts to become **open-source contributors and community leaders**.

On 24th September 2025, Software Freedom Day @ Arignar Anna Government Arts College, Villupuram

The Software Freedom Day celebrations at **Arignar Anna Govt. Arts College, Villupuram** marked an inspiring day of learning, collaboration, and exploration of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). The event was presided by **Advocate Mr. U. Karkee, Founder of VGLUG**, formally inaugurated by **Dr. R. Sivakumar, Principal**, who expressed his excitement and encouragement for initiatives that promote digital literacy and technological awareness among students. Joining him were **Mrs. T. Bharathi, Head of the Department of Computer Science**, who highlighted the importance of engaging with open-source technologies to foster creativity,



critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among students. The VGLUG executive team, comprising **Mr. K. Sathish Kumar, Mr. R. Deepak, Mr. H. Dilip, and Miss V. Kowsalya**, also graced the inauguration and interacted with the students to share their insights on FOSS and its global impact.

A special note of appreciation goes to **Mr. GK. Arun, Professor**, for his pivotal role in planning the event and coordinating the students. His guidance ensured the smooth execution of all activities, making it a memorable experience for both the participants and organizers.

The exhibition featured a variety of engaging and interactive stalls, each designed to introduce students to different facets of FOSS and technology. These stalls were thoughtfully curated and managed by dedicated volunteers and students:

- **About VGLUG** – **Mr. R. Deepak & Ms. V. Kowsalya** provided an overview of



VGLUG's mission, highlighting its ongoing initiatives, community engagement, and the ways students can contribute to the open-source ecosystem.

- **FOSS Philosophy** – **Miss. K. Ambika & Miss. A. Abinaya** explored the principles of free software, emphasizing collaboration, freedom of use, and the ethical and social significance of open-source communities.
- **Open Hardware** – **Mr. M. Sathya Seelan & Mr. M. Ranjith** demonstrated practical hardware projects and devices built using open-source principles, inspiring students to innovate and experiment.
- **Stellarium** – **Mr. G. Praveen Kanth, Mr. V. Manikandan & Miss. M. Keerthana** guided students through the Stellarium software, enabling them to explore astronomy and celestial navigation through interactive simulations.
- **GIMP** – **Mr. R. Rajarajan, Mr. E. Veerapandiyan & Mr. R. Ranjith** provided hands-on sessions with GIMP, demonstrating image editing techniques, creative design, and digital artwork creation.
- **Wikipedia** – **Mr. J. Sakthi Murugan, Mr. V. Vinoth, Mr. M. Krishnan & Mr.**



R. Hemanathan educated participants about contributing to Wikipedia, highlighting the importance of open knowledge and accurate information dissemination.

- **Cyber Crime Awareness – Mr. M. Numan Khan & Mr. V. Lokeshwaran** raised awareness about online safety, digital privacy, and the prevention of cyber threats, equipping students with practical knowledge to navigate the digital world securely.

The enthusiasm, curiosity, and active participation of the students were truly commendable. The combination of informative talks, interactive stalls, and hands-on demonstrations made the exhibition both educational and inspiring. Students not only learned about different FOSS tools but also gained insights into how technology can be leveraged for social good, problem-solving, and community development. More than 1000 students have participated and gathered knowledge on FOSS.

The success of the event would not have been possible without the dedication of the organizing team, the faculty, and the student volunteers. Their collective efforts ensured that every aspect of the exhibition ran seamlessly, leaving a lasting impact on everyone involved.

Overall, the Software Freedom Day at **Arignar Anna Government Arts College, Villupuram** successfully promoted digital literacy, innovation, and the spirit of collaboration, reinforcing the importance of Free and Open Source Software in today's world. It was a day of learning, inspiration, and empowerment that will encourage students to actively participate in FOSS initiatives and embrace technology for creative and social progress.

On 25th September 2025,

Software Freedom Day @ VRS College of Engineering and Technology

The Software Freedom Day celebrations at **VRS College of Engineering and Technology** were a vibrant showcase of learning, innovation, and engagement with Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). The event was inaugurated by **Dr. N. Anbalagan, Principal**, and **Dr. J. K. Jothi Kalpana, Head of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering**, who both emphasized the importance of digital literacy and technological exploration for students. From the VGLUG team, **Mr. K. Sathish Kumar** and **Mr. R. Deepak, Executive Members**, participated in the inauguration and guided the students throughout the exhibition.

Special thanks are due to **Dr. J. K. Jothi Kalpana**, HOD of CSE, for her active coordination and support in organizing the event. Her efforts, along with the enthusiasm of the student volunteers, ensured that every aspect of the exhibition ran smoothly, providing a rich learning environment for all attendees.

The exhibition featured a wide array of interactive stalls, each highlighting different facets of FOSS and digital creativity:

- **About VGLUG – Mr. R. Deepak** introduced the mission and initiatives of VGLUG, inspiring students to contribute to the open-source community and explore the vast opportunities available in the FOSS ecosystem.





- **FOSS Philosophy** – **Mr. K. Sathish Kumar, Miss. S. Swetha & Miss. S. Priyanka** explained the principles of free software, emphasizing collaboration, freedom, and the ethical importance of open-source communities.
- **Open Hardware** – **Mr. R. Dhashvandhan** showcased hands-on hardware projects built using open-source tools, motivating students to experiment and innovate.
- **Stellarium** – **Miss. J. Cathrine Rejina Mary & Miss. A. Solaiyammal** demonstrated the astronomy software, allowing students to explore stars, constellations, and celestial navigation in an interactive way.
- **Wikipedia** – **Mr. Badrinath K & Mr. Gokul R** highlighted the significance of contributing to the world's largest open knowledge platform.
- **LibreOffice** – **Miss. P. Priyadharshini** showcased open-source office productivity tools, empowering students to create documents, spreadsheets, and presentations.
- **Fake News & Cyber Crime Awareness** – **Mr. Yogeswaran S & Miss. N. Thendral** educated participants on safe online practices, digital hygiene, and identifying misinformation in the digital space.

The energy, curiosity, and enthusiastic participation of the students made the event a resounding

success. **Students actively engaging**, the event transformed into a vibrant space of learning and exploration.

Through the collective efforts of the faculty, student volunteers, and VGLUG members, the exhibition reinforced the value of collaboration, digital literacy, and technological empowerment. It left a lasting impression on students, motivating them to engage with open-source software and contribute positively to the digital world.

On 26th September 2025,

Software Freedom Day @ Government Arts and Science College, Thiruvannainallur, Villupuram

The Software Freedom Day celebrations at **Government Arts and Science College, Thiruvannainallur** were a remarkable initiative to introduce students to Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and its practical applications. The event was Presided by **Advocate Mr. U. Karkee, Founder, VGLUG Foundation** and inaugurated by **Dr. R. Indira, Principal, Government Arts and Science College, Thiruvannainallur** and **Dr. C. Bhuvaneshwari, Head of the Department of Computer Science**, who welcomed students and emphasized the importance of digital literacy, innovation, and ethical technology use. From the VGLUG team, **Mr. R. Deepak** and **Mr. H. Dilip, Executive Members**, and **Miss. V. Kanimozhi, Volunteer and Trainer**, participated and guided the students, sharing insights on open-source tools and community engagement.

In his address, **Advocate Mr. U. Karkee, Founder, VGLUG Foundation** Mentioned how VGLUG contributions are impacted in the development of rural digital literacy and uplifting rural student's community. **Dr. R. Indira, Principal**, expressed her happiness and pride in hosting such an impactful FOSS event at the college. **Dr. C. Bhuvaneshwari, HOD of Computer Science**, highlighted the positive influence of VGLUG in the institution, noting that student involvement and enthusiasm have grown significantly through participation in its initiatives. She also shared the inspiring journey of **Mr. K. Vasanthavel, an alumnus of the college**, who has evolved into a core volunteer, trainer, and developer at VGLUG, demonstrating how student engagement in FOSS can lead to personal and professional growth.

The exhibition featured a wide range of interactive stalls managed by dedicated student teams, each providing hands-on experiences and insights into different areas of open-source software:

- **FOSS Philosophy** – **Miss. Aishwarya B, Miss. Bharathy G & Miss. Gomathy M** explained the fundamental principles of free software, the values of open-source communities, and how FOSS empowers collaboration and innovation.





- **Open Hardware** – Mr. Haridass B, Mr. Kirubakaran A & Mr. Hariharan A demonstrated projects that integrate open-source hardware concepts, motivating students to explore creative solutions and build innovative devices.
- **Stellarium** – Mr. Ayyanar A, Miss. Anushya K & Miss. Gunavathy G guided students through astronomy simulations using Stellarium, offering an interactive experience in observing and understanding celestial objects.
- **Inkscape** – Mr. Vigneshwaran M, Mr. Chandru A & Mr. Assarf Ali A introduced vector graphics and digital

design, allowing students to experiment with illustrations and creative visuals.

- **GIMP** – Miss. Poovizhi B, Mr. Pasubathi J & demonstrated image editing, graphic creation, and photo manipulation, encouraging students to explore digital artistry.
- **Wikipedia** – Miss. Kasiyammal E, Miss. Chithra P & Miss. Anupriya K highlighted the importance of contributing to open knowledge platforms, emphasizing accuracy, reliability, and community-driven learning.
- **Fake News & Cyber Crime Awareness** – Miss. Priyaadharshini V, Miss.

Dharshini T & Miss. Ashuvini A educated students on digital safety, privacy, and recognizing misinformation, fostering responsible online behavior.

The strong participation of students, combined with guidance from faculty and support from VGLUG, made the event both educational and inspirational. Attendees gained a deeper understanding of FOSS, digital creativity, and safe online practices. The exhibition successfully nurtured curiosity, innovation, and the collaborative spirit, encouraging students to actively explore open-source technologies and utilize them for learning, development, and social good.

On 27th September 2025, Software Freedom Day @ Surya Group of Institutions, Villupuram

The Software Freedom Day celebrations at **Surya Group of Institutions, Villupuram** were a remarkable showcase of learning, creativity, and engagement with Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). The event was Presided by **Advocate Mr. U. Karkee, Founder,**



VGLUG Foundation and inaugurated by **Dr. M. Sankar, Principal, Dr. A. Jagan, Vice Principal, and Mr. P. Ganesh, Head of the Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science**, who welcomed the students and emphasized the importance of technological literacy, innovation, and active participation in open-source initiatives. From the VGLUG team, **Mr. R. Deepak** and **Mr. H. Dilip, Executive Members**, are participated in the inauguration and guided students through the day's activities.

In his address, **Dr. A. Jagan, Vice Principal**, highlighted the positive impact of VGLUG's initiatives in empowering students, fostering creativity, and enhancing employability. Advocate **Mr. U. Karkee** shared the history and significance of **Software Freedom Day**, explaining how VGLUG's promotion of Free and Open Source Software contributes to bridging the digital divide, eradicating poverty, and creating opportunities for students to develop practical skills.

The Event featured a diverse range of interactive stalls, allowing students to explore different aspects of FOSS and digital innovation:

- **About VGLUG** – **Mr. H. Dilip** introduced the mission and ongoing initiatives of VGLUG, inspiring students to participate in open-source communities.
- **FOSS Philosophy** – **Mr. R. Deepak** explained the principles and social significance of free software, emphasizing collaboration, ethics, and community-driven development.
- **Open Hardware** – **Miss. Pooja N** showcased hardware projects that leverage open-source principles, motivating students to experiment with practical applications.
- **Stellarium** – **Miss. Madhubala I** guided students in exploring astronomy through interactive simulations using the Stellarium software.
- **Inkscape** – **Miss. Kavitha P** demonstrated vector graphics and digital illustration techniques.
- **Wikipedia** – **Miss. K. Jayavarthini & Miss. K. Nishanthini** educated participants about contributing to open knowledge platforms.
- **Fake News & Cyber Crime Awareness** – **Miss. Y. Dharshini** highlighted online safety, digital privacy, and methods to identify misinformation.

Special thanks to **Mr. P. Ganesh, Staff Coordinator**, whose guidance and support ensured smooth organization and coordination, making the exhibition an enriching and memorable experience for all students.



The enthusiasm of the students, combined with the dedication of faculty members and support from VGLUG volunteers, made the event highly impactful. The exhibition encouraged participants to engage with technology creatively, understand the value of open-source communities, and appreciate the importance of safe and responsible digital practices. Overall, the Software Freedom Day at **Surya Group of Institutions** successfully inspired students to explore FOSS, develop new skills, and recognize the potential of technology as a tool for social and professional growth.

On 29th September 2025, **Software Freedom Day @ Dr. M.G.R Govt. Arts and Science College for Women, Villupuram**

The Software Freedom Day celebrations at **Dr. M.G.R Govt. Arts and Science College for Women, Villupuram** provided an inspiring platform for students to explore Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and its practical applications. The event was inaugurated by **Dr. C. Selvarani, Vice Principal**, and **Dr. E. Manikandan, Head of the Department of Physics**, who welcomed the students and emphasized the importance of digital literacy, innovation, and active engagement with technology. From the VGLUG team, **Mr. R. Deepak, Miss. K. Vijayalakshmi, Mr. H. Dilip, and Miss. V. Kowsalya, Executive Members**, joined the event and guided the students through the various stalls and activities.

In her address, **Dr. C. Selvarani, Vice Principal**, thanked VGLUG for organizing such impactful initiatives and highlighted the dedication and enthusiasm of the youth in making these events successful. **Miss. K. Vijayalakshmi** elaborated on the transformative role of FOSS in promoting **women empowerment**, encouraging students to actively explore open-source technologies and participate in community-driven projects.



The exhibition featured a vibrant array of stalls, each offering hands-on learning experiences and opportunities for students to engage with different tools and concepts:

- **About VGLUG** – **Miss. K. Vijayalakshmi & Miss. V. Kowsalya** introduced students to the mission, activities, and community engagement initiatives of VGLUG.
- **FOSS Philosophy & Open Source Communities** – **Mr. R. Deepak** highlighted the principles of free software, collaboration, and the ethical importance of open-source communities.
- **Open Hardware** – **Miss. R. Bharathi Rasiga** demonstrated hardware projects built with open-source principles, inspiring students to explore innovation and practical applications.

- **Stellarium** – **Miss. N. Suguna** guided students through astronomy simulations, offering an interactive experience in exploring the night sky.
- **Inkscape** – **Miss. Hemapriya P** showcased vector graphics and digital illustration techniques.
- **GIMP** – **Miss. Lavanya S** introduced students to image

editing, creative design, and digital artistry.

- **Wikipedia** – **Miss. Girija M** explained the importance of contributing to open knowledge platforms and ensuring information accuracy.
- **Fake News & Cyber Crime Awareness** – **Miss. Devika A** raised awareness about online safety, digital privacy, and identifying misinformation.

Special thanks were extended to **Dr. E. Manikandan, Staff Coordinator**, whose guidance and coordination ensured the smooth execution of the event, making it both educational and enjoyable for the students.

The enthusiasm of the students, combined with the support of faculty and VGLUG volunteers, made the exhibition a resounding success. The event not only strengthened the understanding of FOSS tools but also encouraged creativity, collaboration, and responsible digital practices. It created a strong learning platform for women students, empowering them to engage with technology, explore open-source solutions, and utilize digital resources for personal growth and community development.



On 30th September 2025, Software Freedom Day @ O.P.R. Memorial Arts and Science College for Women, Villupuram

The Software Freedom Day celebrations at **O.P.R. Memorial Arts and Science College for Women, Villupuram** were a vibrant showcase of learning, innovation, and engagement with Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). The event was presided by Advocate **Mr. U. Karkee, Founder, VGLUG Foundation** and inaugurated by **Mrs. J. Revathi, Vice Principal**, and **Mrs. R. Tamizharasi, Head of the Department of Computer Science**, who encouraged students to embrace technology, creativity, and collaboration. From VGLUG, **Miss. K. Vijayalakshmi, Mr. K. Vasanthavel, and Mr. K. Mathusoothanan, Volunteers and Trainers**, participated in the inauguration and guided students through interactive stalls and demonstrations.

In his address, **Mr. U. Karkee** highlighted the grassroots initiatives of VGLUG and emphasized the importance of women's participation in FOSS communities and also mentioned the latest report released by National law school of India university which highlighted how VGLUG works are shaping the FOSS movements in India. **Miss. K. Vijayalakshmi** elaborated on the contributions and growing involvement of women in VGLUG, demonstrating how such engagement can empower students both personally and professionally.

The exhibition featured a wide range of engaging stalls, managed by dedicated students and VGLUG volunteers, offering hands-on



experiences with various open-source tools and concepts:

- **About VGLUG and FOSS** – **Miss. K. Vijayalakshmi** introduced the mission and activities of VGLUG, inspiring students to actively participate in open-source communities.
- **Open Hardware** – **Miss. Kowsalya P** showcased practical hardware projects based on open-source principles, motivating students to innovate and experiment.
- **Stellarium** – **Miss. Priyanka M** guided students through astronomy simulations, providing an interactive way to explore the cosmos.
- **Inkscape** – **Miss. Deepika G** demonstrated vector graphics and digital design techniques, encouraging creativity in digital illustration.
- **GIMP** – **Miss. Pooja R** offered hands-on training in image editing, digital artwork, and photo manipulation.
- **Wikipedia** – **Miss. Durga P** explained how students can contribute to open knowledge platforms, highlighting the importance of accuracy and collaboration.
- **Fake News & Cyber Crime**

Awareness – **Miss. Karunya Lakshmi P** educated students on safe online practices, digital hygiene, and identifying misinformation.

Special thanks to **Mrs. R. Tamizharasi, Head of the Department of Computer Science** who encouraged students to embrace technology, creativity, and collaboration which ensured the smooth execution of the event and provided a memorable learning experience for the students.

The enthusiasm of the students, combined with the dedication of faculty and VGLUG volunteers, made the exhibition a resounding success. The event encouraged students to actively explore open-source technologies, develop digital skills, and apply technology creatively and responsibly. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and awareness, the Software Freedom Day at **O.P.R. Memorial Arts and Science College for Women** reinforced the transformative potential of FOSS for education, empowerment, and community development.

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