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COMPAS MEETING AT GHANA

A meeting of the International Management Group of the COMPAS Project was held at Ghana between 11th and 21st of December, hosted by Dr. David Millar, Coordinator of the West African region of the COMPAS project. The meeting was attended by the Regional Coordinators from South Africa, Latin America and Asia (A.V. Balasubramanian of CIKS) and the International Coordinators.

The objective of the meeting was to review the progress of the COMPAS project and draw detailed plans for execution and coordination of the project during the period January 2003 to December, 2006. The delegates met at Accra and had a meeting with one of the Supreme Chiefs of the Tribal Council of Ghana, Mr. Nana at Sekondi. The delegates then proceeded to Bolgatanga where the meeting was held. Apart from the review sessions there were field trips organised to the University of Development Studies Campus, Irrigation projects being executed by the Government of Ghana and visits to the field activities of the host organisation, CECIK (Centre for Cosmvision and Indigenous Knowledge) and the Eco tourism centre at Sirugu. Towards the end of the meeting, the delegates returned to Accra and the last day was spent at the University of Accra and the Arts Centre.



A. V. Balasubramanian of CIKS with the Queen Mother and a member of the Council during the meeting with one of the Chiefs of the Supreme Tribal Council of Ghana – Mr. Nana of Sekondi.

New Projects at CIKS

- ✎ We have launched a project on “Increasing livelihood security of small and marginal farmers” with support from CAPART, Hyderabad. This project would be implemented in 3 villages namely, Anur, Alavai and Venpakkam at Tirukazhukundram block. 120 farmers will be involved in intensive organic farming under this project. This project was launched in December 2002.
- ✎ The Cottonwood Foundation based in Minneosata, USA has provided funds to our Centre for construction of a Green House in our Sukkankollai farm for conservation of indigenous seed varieties.

Biodiversity – The Gift of Life

Gift a poster calendar
to your friends and support
Biodiversity conservation
(Details on Page – 4)

PROJECT WATCH

A round-up of our activities this quarter

Capacity building for sustainable agriculture

As a part of the capacity building programme under the GTZ project a workshop was conducted on the 22nd of October. This was held at the Government horticulture farm at Athur. The resource persons for this workshop were Mr. Paramanandam, Horticulture Officer and Mr. M. Anbarasu, a Technician. The participants were taught various propagation methods for horticulture crops. Various techniques such as preparation of a nursery, grafting, budding etc. were taught during this workshop.

On the 21st of November our trainees visited the CIKS experimental farm at Sukkankollai. The trainee farmers went around the farm and saw the conservation of more than 100 paddy varieties. They had detailed discussion with each other and with the resource persons regarding the varieties conserved. They also had an opportunity to take a look at the vegetable conservation work, medicinal plant nursery and model farm and also the different composting techniques. This programme was coordinated by Subramaniam, Shankar, Dharmaraj and Thambidurai.

On 14th December the valedictory function of this workshop was held at our field office in S P Kovil. The

participants of the workshop discussed in detail their experiences and also suggested ways of promoting organic agriculture in their fields. All the trainees felt that they should meet at least once in three months. Prizes were distributed to the best performing group and also to the winners of the different competitions. Some of the trainees would be used as resource persons for our forthcoming farmers workshops.

Follow up training workshops

More than 30 training programmes on organic farming have been conducted under the UNDP GEF/CCF small grant programme covering more than 1000 farmers between July 2001 to August 2002. Currently, we are holding follow up workshops to these 30 training programmes involving the same trainees. 19 such workshops were conducted in the months of November and December.

Follow up workshops on organic farming

Three follow up workshops to the earlier workshops on organic farming conducted under the CAPART project were held on 14th November and 20th December in our field office at S P Kovil. On 26th November it was conducted at the Grammiya Munnettra Sangam in

Tiruporur. Detailed discussions were held with farmers about their experiences while implementing the organic farming technologies. Their problems were also discussed and it was heartening for us to know that several farmers had practiced what they have learnt in the workshop and also made innovations on their own.

Evaluation of the UNDP GEF/CCF Small grant programme

CIKS is implementing a project on "Conservation of Indigenous Genetic Resources" since July 2001 which is funded under the UNDP GEF/CCF Small grant programme. This project comes to an end in December 2002. An evaluation of this programme was conducted by Mr. Ishwar Poojar and Mr. Anilkumar of Centre for Environmental Education (CEE), Bangalore on the 25th and 26th of November. CEE is the National host agency for executing the funds. On 25th a Power point presentation regarding the project achievements was made by K. Vijayalakshmi which was followed by a discussion. In the afternoon, the evaluators met the beneficiary farmers at our training centre in S P Kovil and had detailed discussion with them. On 26th they visited our in-situ conservation centre at Sukkankollai and an in-situ conservation centre maintained by a farmer at Anoor. They also visited several vegetable gardens maintained by women

farmers. They also looked through the various records maintained by us with respect to the project. The evaluators expressed appreciation for our work and also made suggestion about future development of the work.

Distribution of Grain storage bins

On 20th December the regional director of the "Save Grain Campaign" Mr. Chellappa participated in a function to distribute improved storage structures to some of our farmers. Mr. Chellappa and his colleagues described in detail the activities of the "Save Grain Campaign". These storage structures were distributed under the UNDP GEF/CCF Small grant programme.

COMPAS Asian Partners' Meeting

The Asian partners meeting of the COMPAS project was held between 28th to 30th December at our Sukkankollai farm. Delegates from GREEN, FRLHT (Bangalore), KPP (Thirthahalli), IDEA (Visakapatnam) and CIKS (Chennai) participated in this meeting. Besides this we had three delegates from Srilanka (ECOS, Srilanka and FIOH, Srilanka). On the first day the participants shared their work experiences. The 2nd day was devoted to discussing and planning the future phase of the COMPAS programme starting from January 2003 to December 2006. On the 3rd day the delegates visited some of the farmers of the CIKS network.

CIKS TALK

Seminars, Discussions, Presentations, Workshops, Fairs...

Visit to OSAI, Andimadam

K. Vijayalakshmi was requested to undertake a pre-evaluation of a sustainable agriculture promotion project proposed by an NGO, OSAI based at Andimadam in Perambalur District. She visited their organisation on the 17th of October. She had interactions with the self help women's groups and also the farmers groups.

Training Programme on Medicinal Plant Cultivation

Our research assistant M. Jayashankar attended a two week training programme on medicinal plant cultivation and their uses at Kanyakumari. The workshop was held between 16th October – 31st October. This workshop was sponsored by CAPART at the technology resource centre based at Vivekananda Kendra in Kanyakumari. The participants were exposed to various aspects of medicinal plant cultivation.

Meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the Ministry of Rural and Urban development.

On 13th November, the Parliamentary Committee attached to the Ministry of Urban and Rural Develop-

ment of the government of India visited Tamilnadu for a review regarding the implementation of Centrally sponsored schemes in Tamilnadu state. The delegation of fourteen members of Parliament from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha met with officials of the Tamilnadu Government as well as agencies such as HUDCO and certain leading banks who are involved in implementing and financing these programmes. CIKS was one of the four NGOs from Tamilnadu invited to attend the meeting and A.V. Balasubramanian participated in the meeting.

DST Group Monitoring Workshop

The Department of Science and Technology conducted a Group Monitoring Workshop for various projects funded under the "Science and Technology for Women" program of the department. The workshop was held in Bhopal between 19th and 21st November and A.V. Bala subramanian attended it to present the progress under the project for enhancing biomass in the Kattankulathur block of the Kancheepuram district.

Visit to Gandhigram Trust

K. Vijayalakshmi was requested to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the

technology resource centre of Gandhigram Trust supported by CAPART alongwith Mr. P.N. Srinivasan, Member Convenor, CAPART Hyderabad. She visited Gandhigram on 15th and 16th of November. On 15th she had an interaction with brassware artisans, trainees in terracotta making and trainees from the rural workshop. She also visited the neem oil extraction unit and the medicinal plant nursery. On 16th a detailed discussion took place with the coordinators of different programmes and based on this a report was sent to CAPART.

Visitors to Sukkankollai

On 30th November we had taken a group of 8 visitors to our Sukkankollai experimental farm. These visitors consisted of well wishers of CIKS. They had a darshan of Lord Narasimha at Singaperumal kovil and then visited our field office at S P Kovil. At the field office they were given an overview of our work. After lunch we proceeded to Sukkankollai where they got to see our conservation work and experimental work on organic farming in detail.

VISITORS BOOK

A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS

□ Ms. Carly Bishop of the Wageningen Agricultural University, Netherlands visited us on 31st October in connection with her research on Traditional Agriculture.

□ Dr. Noble Morrison, Scientist from Central Sericulture Research and Training Institute based in Mysore visited us on 29th November. He wanted to familiarize himself with our work and explore collaborative possibilities.

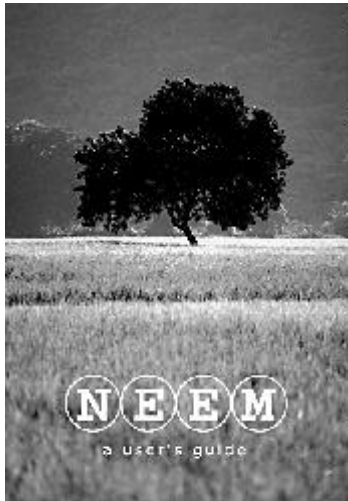
□ On 4th December, Mr. G. Raju, Executive Director / GMCL (Gram Mooligai Company Limited) Bangalore visited CIKS in connection with the GMCL plans for taking up the production of shortlisted Ayurvedic remedies on a pilot plant scale.

□ On 27th December Mr. A.K. Angurana, Deputy Director General, of CAPART, New Delhi and Mr. P.N. Srinivasan, Member Convenor of CAPART, Hyderabad visited our office. The basic purpose of the visit was to get to know the activities of our centre. A detailed slide presentation about the work of CIKS was made followed by a discussion. Mr. Angurana invited CIKS to help CAPART in building the capacity of farmers and NGOs in organic farming.

Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems

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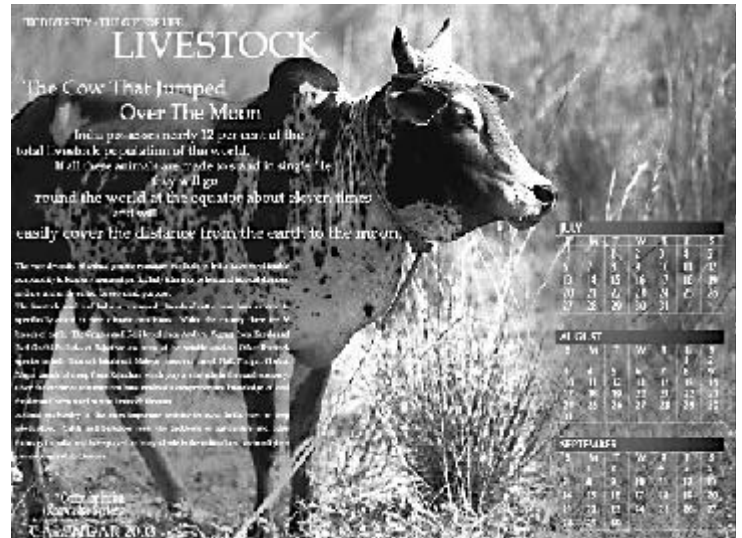
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Biodiversity - The Gift of Life

(Poster Calendar - 2003) -



We have produced a four colour poster calendar on "Biodiversity - The gift of life". The introductory page provides information on the need for conservation of biodiversity. The other four pages (one page for every three months) has information on rice biodiversity, vegetable biodiversity, livestock biodiversity and medicinal plant biodiversity with beautiful illustrations. Suggested contribution for this calendar is Rs. 50/- which would go towards biodiversity conservation efforts of our centre. For receiving it by post please add Rs. 20/- for postage.

Please send the payment by money order or a demand draft favouring "Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems" payable at Chennai.

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