



## WORKSHOP ON SEEDS

On 19th and 20th June, our Centre hosted an inception workshop for the project partners of the Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture (RRA) network who have commenced work on comprehensive pilot programmes from the month of May 2012 onwards. These programmes are for comprehensive development of rainfed areas in nine identified blocks in eight states of India. The objective of the meeting was to have an overview and discussion of the work plan in each area particularly with respect to seed systems and also to provide technical introduction and overview of the work of the seed node. The meeting was attended by seven of the nine CP partners, representatives of the research, water and communications node and also Dr. Vasant Saberwal of the RRA core group member.



*Participants of the workshop during interaction session*

## NEW PROJECT

### COMPREHENSIVE PILOT PROGRAMME FOR REVITALISING RAINFED AGRICULTURE IN JAWADHU HILLS BLOCK OF THIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture (RRA) network of India has sanctioned a project to CIKS to commence a comprehensive programme for strengthening rainfed agriculture. The project is initially for a period of one year from June 2012 to May 2013. The project is located in the Jawadhu hills block of Thiruvannamalai district. Under this project we are planning to strengthen and upscale activities relating to - millet production and processing, soil fertility enhancement, seed production and administration and setting up of home gardens. We are also planning to commence activities relating to poultry, livestock and SRI. The programme will be undertaken in collaboration with and active participation of the local gram panchayat and the Department of Agriculture, Horticulture and programmes of the Agriculture department in the area.



## PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

### **Sustainable Livelihoods through Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu**

This project supported by Jamsetji Tata Trust, Mumbai is in progress in Kancheepuram, Ramanathapuram, Dindigul and Nagapattinam districts. Organic seed production of paddy, oil seeds, pulses, vegetables etc., is in progress. Under the input support and crop loan schemes, 645.58 acres are being supported and crops like pulses, oil seeds, cotton, sugarcane, banana, vegetables, flower crops etc., have been cultivated. Demonstration fields are in place in 17.2 acres. Vermicompost production is in full swing in 38 demonstration vermicompost units and in four community units. Twenty nine microenterprises established under this project are progressing well and necessary records are being maintained. A total of 10 short term training programmes and an exposure visit were organized for the beneficiaries. We participated in a festival of traditional paddy varieties held in Adhirangam, Thiruvarur on 25th May. Under the component on capacity building of NGOs, a two day veterinary camp and four training programmes on organic paddy cultivation - seed to harvest were organized for the Pasumai NGO in Nagapattinam district. Regular production and sale are in progress in the biopesticide production unit in Ramanathapuram district.

### **Strengthening Sustainable Agriculture for Improving Rural Livelihoods: A Project with Focus on Dryland Agriculture**

This project supported by Ford Foundation and HIVOS is in progress in Thiruvannamalai and Dindigul districts. Sangam meetings were conducted. A total of four farmers of Kalathupatty village

and members of womens' group in Kalathupatty and Mallanayakkanpatty villages in Dindigul district are involved in the production of vermicompost. A Trainers' Training Programme on leadership qualities was conducted for the beneficiaries of Dindigul district. On 24th April, a discussion meeting on "Traditional seeds and soil fertility" was held in Thiruvannamalai district. Newly constructed millet processing unit in Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district was inaugurated on 10th April. On 16th May, a brainstorming meeting of sellers and buyers of medicinal herbs was organized by the Tamil Nadu Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drug Manufacturers Association (TASUDMA) in Chennai. A total of 11 beneficiaries from both the districts participated in this meeting. A farmers' club - "Mambalam Organic Farmers' Club" was inaugurated on 22nd June 2012 in Seramarathur village of Thiruvannamalai district.

### **Introduction of Organic Farming in Alangadu Village**

Our centre is involved in the promotion of organic farming in Alangadu village of Nagapattinam district from January 2009. Under this fourth phase of the project, monthly meetings were conducted. Pulses cultivated in previous season in 22.94 acres was harvested. Kitchen gardens are being maintained by the beneficiaries. In the community vermicompost unit, 1.5 tonnes of vermicompost has been produced. In *Pooncholai* nursery, 1763 saplings of 10 tree species are being maintained. On 29th April, a general medical camp was organized for the beneficiaries. Two training programmes on 'Schemes under the Department of Agriculture' and 'Tree planting' were conducted for the beneficiaries. Four women beneficiaries

from the village participated in the exhibition "*Chitthirai mela*" held in Chennai. A two day awareness training programme on "Alternative to plastic bags and importance of paper bags" was conducted for the students of the Government Higher Secondary School, Pudupattinam in May.

### **Creating Livelihoods through Organic Farming - A Model**

This project is in progress in Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district with the support of NABARD. The project activities are in progress in Aadhamangalam, Pagasalai and Ilayamadhukoodam villages. A total of 36 beneficiaries are involved in the cultivation of paddy, black gram, sesame and cotton in 14.01 acres. Six farmers from Pagasalai and Ilayamadhukoodam villages are involved in the production of vermicompost. Sri Krishna Women SHG in the Uluthukuppai village is involved in the production and sale of value added products. Vermicompost production and sale are in progress in the community vermicompost unit. The Project Monitoring Committee meeting was held on 20th April in Allivilagam village.

### **Technology Transfer, Credit Counseling and Market Advocacy through Farmers' Clubs in Nagapattinam District**

This pilot project is being implemented in Nagapattinam district with the support of NABARD. Under this project, 36 farmer trainees and 400 farmer sub trainees have been selected and being trained as farmer trainers. A total of 20 training programmes were conducted for the sub-trainees on topics related to organic farming technologies, credit and marketing. Three refresher

# NEWSROOM

*Happenings and more*

programmes were organized for the master trainers under this project. This training programme was conducted by the technical staff of CIKS following participatory method. During this programme, certificates were distributed to all the master trainers. A total of four master trainers served as resource persons in the *Uzhavar Peruvizha* – an awareness programme on available schemes related to agriculture organized by the Department of Agriculture, Nagapattinam.

## **Programme for Supporting Sustainable Organic Farming in Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu – Phase II**

The second phase of this project supported by NABARD is in progress in the Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district from March 2012 onwards. Project staff participated in the organic farmers cum consumers meet organized by Kaani Nilam farms in Pondicherry on 22nd April. We have participated in the exhibition "*Chitthirai Mela*" organized by the Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation between 19th and 29th April in Chennai. An interim evaluation of the project was conducted on 28th June. Under this project, we have participated and displayed our organic products and value added products in "*Safe Food Mela*" organized by Safe Food Alliance in Chennai on 24th June.

## **A Project on Developing Integrated Sustainable Community Farm**

This project on developing integrated sustainable community farm near Thirukadaiyur in Nagapattinam District is in progress with the financial support from the Church Council for Child and Youth Care (CCCYC), Bengaluru. Microenterprises like poultry farming, fisheries, rearing of rabbit and pigeon are progressing well. Cattle in the farm are being maintained with regularized checkup and feeding methods. Production and use of vermicompost and biopesticides are also in progress. Fodder grass has been cultivated in 10 cents. Work in progress is being evaluated in monthly basis by Programme Director of CIKS.

## **Staff Capacity Building Trainings**

A two day staff capacity building training programme was conducted for the technical and administrative staff of CIKS on 17th and 18th April at the CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai. The staff members were trained on wide range of topics like accounting procedures, impact of organic farming in the current scenario and definition, causal diagram – a method of participatory farm management, basics of computer operation, good practices of CIKS etc. A total 20 staff members from various field offices participated in this training programme. Resource persons of this training programme were Director, Research Director, Programme Directors, Accounts officer and Office manager of CIKS.

## **Strategic Planning Meeting**

CIKS has undertaken an exercise to make a strategic plan for the next five years. As a first part of this process a series of documents were prepared analyzing the progress of CIKS activities over the last fifteen years and series of meetings were held in Chennai on 2nd - 3rd and 18th and 19th May and 16th June. The meeting was facilitated by the senior team members of Catalyst Management Services (CMS) Bengaluru consisting of Mr. Raghunathan, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Balakrishnan. The notes and drafts for the programme focus areas were reviewed and there was a discussion about the supporting areas that are required for implementation such as – resource mobilization, human resources, accounts and administration etc.

## **Visitor from Hivos**

On 8th June 2012, Mr. Naresh Bandaru, Programme Officer from HIVOS, Bengaluru visited CIKS field office in Sirkazhi, Nagapattinam district. During the morning session of the meeting, there were detailed

discussions and a presentation was made by Director and Research Director, about mainstreaming and up scaling of sustainable agriculture in Tamil Nadu. Following this, he visited the community vermicompost unit in Allivilagam, value addition unit in Pagasalai and organic demonstration farm in Ilayamadukoodam village. He also had interaction with the members of Sirkazhi Organic Farmers' Association.

## **RRA Comprehensive Pilot Inception Meeting**

CIKS has commenced a programme for revitalizing of rainfed agriculture in the Jawadhu hills from May 2012 onwards. This programme which is being supported by the RRA network is being implemented in collaboration with Vrutti Livelihood Services Centre (VLRC) Bengaluru. The inception meeting was held in Jamunamarathur taluk of Jawadhu hills block. It was attended by senior CIKS team members and all field staff as well as Mr. Raghunathan and Mr. Johnson of VLRC. During the course of the two day meeting there were also field sessions with presentations from farmers' groups, representatives and Mr. Sudarshan, NABARD AGM, Thiruvannamalai district and there were specific sessions where there were participation from the Director and team members of Kodello Institute of Donbosco Tribal Development Centre, officials of the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, representatives of Village Reconstruction and Development Project and Dhan Foundation in Jawadhu hills as well as scientists from the Centre for Traditional Medicine Research, Chennai. During the meeting there were presentations and reviews of the framework for activities, specific goals and targets for the one year work, detailed discussion on the methodologies, indicators etc.

## NUTRITIONAL FACTS OF MILLETS

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Millet varieties like ragi, bajra, sorghum, little millet (*samai*), kodo millet (*varagu*), foxtail millet (*thenai*) etc., are the rich source of carbohydrates, protein and fibre. They contain 30 to 300% more of minerals, fibre, macro and micronutrients when compared with rice. Millets are rich in vitamins. The millet bran contains B-complex vitamins like niacin, B6 and folic acid. Also rich in specific nutrients like Magnesium, Calcium, Maganese, Tryptophan, Phoshorus and Antioxidants

### HEALTH BENEFITS OF MILLET CONSUMPTION

- Millets lower the cholesterol level and reduces the risk of heart attacks.
- Phosphorous in millets improves fat metabolism and gives energy.
- Millets reduces the risk of diabetes especially the Type 2.
- Fibre content of whole grains of millet varieties protect against breast cancer and asthma in infants.
- Millet consumption improves stamina, meets all nutritional requirements of the body.

## VISITOR'S BOOK

### Who's been dropping in at CIKS

- On 11th April, Dr. N. K. Sanghi of WASSAN, Hyderabad visited us and had a discussion about various aspects of the work relating to Revitalizing Rainfed Agriculture (RRA), particularly with respect to work relating to seed systems.
- On 12th April, a group of students from the Shree Ram IGNOU Community College, Thiruneermalai, Chennai visited our experimental farm in Sukkankollai.
- On 26th April, Dr. Ravi Srinivas and Dr. Sachin Chaturvedi of Research and Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi visited us.
- On 5th May, Ms. Annie George of BEDROC, Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu visited us to discuss about collaboration in the area of sustainable agriculture.
- On 11th May, Mr. P. Sivakumar of Kiruba Foundation, Dindigul visited our organic research farm in Sukkankollai village.
- On 17th May, a group of 44 school students headed by Mr. S. Subash Kumar of DNA club, LIFE, Loyola College, visited our organic research farm as a part of their vacation training programme hosted by the Department of LIFE, Loyola College, Chennai.
- On 21st May, Mr. N. Arun from Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre visited our organic research farm along with 40 members to get to know about various organic farming technologies.
- On 29th May, Mr. Mathew of Keystone Foundation, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu visited us.
- On 28th June, a group of 12 organic farmers from Jawadhu hills project villages involved in establishing demonstration fields visited CIKS organic research farm.

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