



CLARION

THE NEWSLETTER OF ASIAN COMPAS PARTNERS

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AWARD FOR FRLHT



The Award function

The Rosenthal Center of Columbia University, New York, College of Physicians and Surgeons, on the occasion of its 10th anniversary, on 20th November 2003 honoured five individuals for their outstanding contributions to complementary and alternative medicine. We are pleased to inform that Mr. Darshan Shankar from Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore, who is a Compas Partner for India is one among the award recipients. The Rosenthal Center, is a world leader in the development of research and training in alternative / complementary and traditional systems of medicine. This Award to

FRLHT, is for international cultural stewardship for its outstanding contributions to the revitalization of Traditional Systems of health care in India, towards the conservation of medicinal plants in India and the development of extensive databases on the *materia medica* of Indian medicinal plants. FRLHT is also commended for establishing a quality control and product development laboratory, which is attempting to interpret traditional knowledge with the aid of modern tools and for initiating the development of a national herbarium of medicinal plants used in traditional Indian systems of medicine.

COMPAS INDIAN PARTNERS MEETING

The meeting of the Indian partners of the Compas project was held at the Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems (CIKS) at Chennai between 10th and 12th December 2003. The participants at the meeting were Mr. Wim Heimstera, ETC, Netherlands, A.V. Balasubramanian, Asian Coordinator, representatives from FRLHT, Bangalore, Green Foundation, Bangalore, IDEA, Visakhapatnam, KPP, Shimoga, and CIKS, Chennai.

On 10th December, an overview was given by each Compas partner.

This was regarding their activities up to the current phase of Compas with emphasis on – scientific research, community diagnosis and exchanges with other groups. Mr. Wim Heimstera presented developments and activities in other non-Asian Compas regions like Africa, Latin America and Europe. Participants from FRLHT reported on their training and extension work – Documentation and Assessment and Rapid Assessment of Local Health Traditions and dissemination of information. As part of their Universities



Compas partners at the CIKS experimental farm

Consortium programme, studies on antimalarial, activities traditional bonesetters and ethnobotanical aspects were presented.

The major activities of KPP were presented by Mr. Aruna Kumara. These include works on the control of yellow leaf disease in Areca nut, a major problem in Thirthahalli region of Karnataka. Community diagnosis in terms of development of modules for geobio-social survey was discussed. Awareness programmes conducted on rain water harvesting, organic farming and sandalwood cultivation were also reported. The results of various Vrکشayurveda experiments were reported by A.V. Balasubramanian of CIKS. The use of various plant formulations like *Arkam* and *Kashayam* in the control of plant pests and diseases and possibilities for the use of other products like *Arishtam*, *Asavam*, *Thailam* and *Ksharam* in future were discussed.

The IDEA team presented their work on the Revival and Enhancement of Endogenous Development in tribal communities (REED) through Action and Network zone approach and community diagnosis. Representatives from Green Foundation reported their work in biodiversity conservation and

endogenous development of small and marginal farmers through dryland farming and food security systems. They also discussed their work in strengthening women for economic independence and promoting avenues for economic empowerment.

On 11th December, there was a field visit to the CIKS field area in Kanchipuram district. The delegates visited farmers fields and home gardens in Anoor village. The participants were also taken to the organic vegetable gardens and paddy fields in Elumichampatty village and the biopesticide unit at Venpakkam village. The representatives of the organic farmers sangams, who are in charge of the biopesticide unit explained in detail the functioning of the unit to the participants. Later, the team visited the CIKS experimental farm and Vrکشayurveda experimental plots at Sukkankollai village. In the CIKS farm, the participants had an opportunity to familiarise themselves the different traditional paddy varieties conserved *in situ*. They also visited the medicinal plants conservation plots, composting yards, agroforestry and fruit trees plot. In the evening, the participants visited the bird sanctuary at Vedanthangal. On 12th December, there was a

general discussion on the field visit during which the possibilities of technical guidance and experience sharing between the various Compas Indian partners were discussed. Following the discussion, the development and happenings in the Asian region were presented by the Asian coordinator, A.V. Balasubramanian.

Discussions on the review of CLARION for the forthcoming year and inputs for the Compas website from all the partners were taken up. Publication of Compas magazine in regional languages and producing synthesis articles on the activities of all the partners were also discussed. Communication within Compas, planning of exchange visits and the future of Universities Consortium programme were also topics for discussion. It was also decided to bring out an Asian volume of

Compas partners work in English by the end of June 2004.

A presentation was made by Mr. Darshan Shankar for a course on the Indian Theoretical framework for understanding nature. It is likely to be held in April 2004. A presentation was made by Mr. Wim Hiemstra on policy dialogue, identification of pilot regions, planning for capacity building workshops at the end of 2004 and synergy with other activities.

The Compas network has started to explore the options for 'Institutionalisation' beyond the current project period. Mr. M. Kandasamy who is an expert in Financial Management and Institution development delivered a talk outlining the possible options. This was followed by a discussion among partners on the future of Compas, beyond 2006.

MoU WITH RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

A Memorandum of Understanding between FRLHT, Bangalore and Rajiv Gandhi University for Health Sciences, Bangalore has been signed to implement research and curriculum development in the areas of Traditional Knowledge systems.

The Project on traditional health practices will cover three areas. They are Research initiatives on traditional antimalarials, preparation of a cross-cultural research methodology for undertaking joint studies involving Ayurveda and Western biomedicine and development of a model curriculum on "Indian medical heritage" to students of modern medicine.

EXCHANGE VISIT TO IDEA

Representatives from CIKS visited the field office of IDEA at Arakku valley, Andhra Pradesh between 15th and 17th October 2003, under the exchange visit programme of the Compas project.

IDEA has been working with the tribal communities of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh and Koraput district in Orissa. They have been working towards revival of cultural practices of the tribals, which is closely related to their cosmopolitanism. The cultural practices of these tribals are closely relevant to the conservation of biodiversity in the mountainous regions where they live.

They also visited Chaptamita village in Koraput district of Orissa where they had an interaction with tribals of Kondh community regarding

their agricultural practices. This was followed by a visit to Sariyaput village in Orissa where the leaders of the tribal communities, known as Guniya's and Desari's demonstrated their indigenous health practices. They also visited Bondamguda village in Arakku valley where the tribals demonstrated their weed management practices.

Some of the practices of the tribals relating to agriculture which were observed during the visit are :

- They celebrate a one month long festival called Chaitra Parob during April, to mark the onset of the agricultural season. During this celebration, there is a practice of testing the soil fertility by a practice called "Itukula Panduga". In this practice different varieties of crop

seeds are sown in various soil types in bamboo containers. The growth of a particular crop in different soils is assessed and this acts as an indicator for choosing the soil in which it should be cultivated.

- Several traditional scented paddy varieties are cultivated by the tribals. During the course of this visit, two indigenous paddy varieties namely Kalya Dhan and Donghor Dhan were obtained for CIKS conservation work.

- Tribals prepare two types of biopesticides namely, Chittamarose and Dungiarose. Chittamarose is prepared using leaves of three different plants having bio-pesticidal property namely *Toddalia aculeata*, *Caryota urens* and another plant which is locally called as Chittadal. Dungiarose is prepared using the

leaves of four different plants namely tobacco, mark-ing nut, *Toddalia aculeata*, Chittadal and rhizomes of Kasthuri.

- There is a custom of using different types of symbols called "Gondas" to ward off pest and disease attack. Different designs are drawn using ragi powder in the fields for this purpose. There is also a practice of using Gondas to prevent diseases in animals and humans.

- The Kondh tribal community has indigenous methods of weed management. When the crops are harvested, women also harvest the weeds, which are then classified as edible food, fodder, medicine for human and cattle health, green manure etc. The tribals sing a song, which spells out the name of the weed and the purpose for which it is used, thereby classifying them.

SRI LANKAN VISITORS IN CIKS

CIKS had two groups of visitors from Sri Lanka on 11th November and 29th December. Each group consisted of 17 members from different environmental NGOs along with two representatives from the Government Department. Their visit was to study the functioning of environmental NGO's in Tamil Nadu, India. The groups were appraised of the activities of CIKS and were shown the video "The Seed Keepers". They also visited the CIKS experimental farm at Sukkankollai and had discussions with the staff.



SRI LANKAN PARTNERS MEETING



Wim Hiemstra and A.V. Balasubramanian with the Sri Lankan Partners

A.V. Balasubramanian, Asian Coordinator and Wim Hiemstra from the International Coordination team travelled from India to Sri Lanka on a four day trip from December 17th to 20th to meet the Sri Lankan partners of Compas. Participants were from FIOH, ECO, BRIT, NRDF and FOL.

The main objectives of the meeting were : (1) To know the individual groups, their field activities, progress, reflections and problems. (2) Discuss common activities of partners and website sharing. (3) Briefly inform the activities of other partners and planning exchange visits. (4) Discussions on community diagnosis and linkage with university scientists.

On 18th December they visited the field office of the Compas partner "Friends of Lanka". A meeting was arranged in the village of Moranthotta near Kegalle with fifteen experts in traditional medicine specializing in the treatment for snake bites.

The traditional snake bite physicians were a neglected group and had no official recognition. They provide traditional treatment for victims not for financial gains. One major criticism against indigenous knowledge practitioners is that they are not willing to share their knowledge with others. But through this programme this problem has been solved. The snake

bite physicians forum is now meeting every month to discuss their problems and share their knowledge. There was a discussion and review about the network and efforts are being made to strengthen the tradition.

The same evening there was a meeting between the Sri Lankan partners represented by K. A. J. Kahandawa and G. K. Upawansa with the regional and international coordinators along with Professor Sarat Bhandara and Prof. Ananda Jayakodi of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Peradeniya at Kandy. There was a discussion about the plan for the Compas University Consortium programme. Under the new phase, arrangements are made for the field groups to identify the areas of work for which they need university assistance.

On 19th December, there was a meeting of all the Sri Lankan partners of Compas that was held at the experimental farm of ECO at Nawalapitiya. There were presentations and exchange of experiences bet-

ween various Sri Lankan partners. They include, a short video by ECO on bio-pesticides and liquid manure preparation. BRIT is involved in revitalising indigenous knowledge and practices on architecture and home garden designing. Their presentation was on the above lines. A presentation on experimentation in fencing with indigenous knowledge and practices for crop protection from elephant damage by NRDF.

Presentation on their activities by FIOH was on working with traditional health practitioners, traditional veterinary practitioners, collection and identification of different species of indigenous medicinal plants, collection of home remedies and popularising methods of food preparation at village level. Research work with the University of Moratuwa is being planned.

There was also an overview of the Compas activities of the partners in terms of the website, the regional and international publication as well as the exchange programmes.

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VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA

Mr. Bertus Haverkort, International Coordination Unit, Compas, visited Latin America between 22nd November and 7th December 2003. The objectives of the trip were (1) to establish working relations with new Compas partners in Chile and Peru and University Consortium member in Bolivia, (2) to interact with the regional coordinator regarding the progress of Compas and (3) to explore possibilities for policy dialogues in Latin America. Two new partners are Fundecam, Chile and Chuymaaru, Peru. There was a visit to the local office to meet the staff and present the Compas programme, a field visit to meet the rural people and leaders and a University visit to

present Compas from the International perspective (Bertus) and from the regional perspective (Freddy). The visits were very useful and a letter of intent was signed with the University and local partner by the International Coordination unit.

University Consortium

The member of the University Consortium in Bolivia is the Universidad Mayor de San Simon in Cochabamba. The department of Agronomia (Agruco) and Animal and Veterinary science will participate in the programme. A detailed workplan with specific activities and output indicators have been formulated and agreed

upon. It was decided to have a specific planning work shop for curriculum building in February, 2004.

Compas Programme In Latin America

The other partners in this region are from Columbia, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Recently, Mr. Wim Hiemstra, from the International Coordination Unit visited two of the above except the partner in Columbia. It has been agreed that the field workers of the partners are to be given additional training to use the participatory methods. Hence, the regional coordination intends to organize training in early 2004 for the field workers. The Agruco experience is an asset to provide

leadership and methodological support.

Policy Dialogues

Visit to the Prefect of the Cochabamba region as well as to the Deputy Minister for higher education in La Paz revealed the interests of the Bolivian regional and national governments in endogenous development. It provided a good environment to explore institutional development options for Compas. It also underlined the importance of a concentrated effort of the partners, to produce manuals on operational methods for endogenous development. This would help in training of field staff of NGOs and curriculum development for students.

Editorial Team : A.V. Balasubramanian & R. Sridevi

Typesetting : S. Ramesh

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