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## Compas Asian Partners Meeting

A meeting of the Compas Asian partners was held between 20<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> September, 2004 in Bangalore. The meeting was hosted by one of the Compas partners, Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) based in Bangalore. This meeting was attended by all the ten Compas partners from India and Srilanka which includes representatives from CIKS, FRLHT, Krishi Prayoga Pariwara, IDEA, Green Foundation, Future In Our Hands, Ecological Conservation Organisation, Friends Of Lanka, Biodiversity Research Information and Training and Naula Rural Development Foundation. The meeting included a three-day session on Compas Institutional Development, which was facilitated by the Asian Regional consultants and the International consultant who joined them on the third day. A two-day training programme on research methodology pertaining to traditional sciences was also organised during this meeting. There was also a field trip to the Biodiversity Conservation area of Green Foundation at Thali. The last three days of the meeting were devoted to discussions on the University Consortium programme, community diagnosis work undertaken by the participants, project proposals and finalisation for the future phase of Compas.



*Compas partners on a field visit*

## New Projects at CIKS

- ◆ CIKS has launched a new project for “Enhancing Livelihood and Food Security through Capacity Building for Organic Farming and Natural Resource Management” with support from the Ford Foundation, New Delhi. This project is being implemented in three districts of Tamil Nadu namely Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur and Thiruvannamalai from July, 2004. This project is for a period of two years.
- ◆ CIKS has been sanctioned a new project from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to test and propagate methods based on Vrکشayurveda for cultivation of selected vegetables. This project is for a period of three years.

## **PROJECT WATCH**

*A round-up of our activities this quarter*

### **Enhancing livelihood security of small and marginal farmers**

CIKS has been implementing a two year project to enhance livelihood security of small and marginal farmers in three villages of Thirukazhukundram block with support from CAPART. Under this project, organic farmers sangams have been formed in the villages of Anoor, Alavai and Venpakkam. A training programme on indigenous health was conducted at our Anjur farm to the members of these organic farmers sangams on 7th, 10th and 20th of July respectively. Dr. Gowthaman, an Ayurvedic Vaidya trained the farmers on simple ayurvedic preparations for curing common ailments.

### **Meeting of the office bearers of organic farmers sangams**

A meeting of the office bearers of the above mentioned organic farmers sangams was held on 4th of July at Singaperumal Koil. The functioning of the sangams was discussed and suggestions were also received from the members to strengthen the sangams in future.

### **Compas Srilankan Partner's Meeting**

A.V. Balasubramanian was at Srilanka between 16th and 20th of August. He visited the field areas of the Compas partners namely Biodiversity Research Information and Training (BRIT) and Future In Our Hands (FIOH). He also attended the meeting at Badulla on 18th and had a one day interaction with the Faculty of Applied Sciences at Sabarugamawa University on the theme of traditional agriculture.

### **Compas Project Evaluation**

CIKS had committed to get the Compas project evaluated by external evaluators. In connection with this, Mr. Darshan Shankar, Executive Director of FRLHT and Dr. Muralidharan, Principal of Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Ayurveda College visited CIKS on 28th of August. The evaluators visited our biopesticide unit in Sukkankollai and were also taken around the field and appraised of the various activities in the field. A.V. Balasubramanian made a detailed presentation of various activities of CIKS in Vrکشayurveda.

### **Work at the Insect Rearing Laboratory**

Under the Compas programme, an insect rearing laboratory has been set up in the field station at Sirkazhi. In connection with this, Subhashini Sridhar and Maheshwari from our Sirkazhi unit visited the project directorate for biological control at Bangalore on 22nd of September. They gathered information regarding the techniques for rearing certain selected pests such as aphids.

Various experiments have been planned for conducting bioassays of biopesticides in the insect rearing laboratory.

### **Total conversion to organic farming**

Under the Compas project, CIKS continues its work for the 2nd year towards support and help for total conversion to organic farming by three selected farmers in the Narapakkam village.

### **Training programme for organic farming**

CIKS has been providing consultancy to the organic farm of Mr. Ranvir Shah. On 21st September, a training programme was conducted for his staff in the CIKS experimental farm at Sukkankollai. They were trained on the preparation methods of various biopesticides and compost.

### **Seed Conservation Work Extended**

Under the newly launched project for "Enhancing Livelihood and Food Security through Capacity Building for Organic Farming and Natural Resource Management" twenty four villages have been selected and organic farmers sangams have been formed in the villages of Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur and Thiruvannamalai districts. The beneficiaries of this project have been supplied with the required seeds and organic inputs for this crop season. A series of training programmes have also been conducted to the members of the organic farmers sangams in the month of September. Thirty farmers participated in each of these training programmes.

### **DST organic cotton programme**

Our centre has been implementing a DST supported project on "Organic cotton cultivation in three different agroclimatic zones of Tamilnadu". In connection with this, cotton seeds, intercrop seeds and other organic inputs have been distributed to the selected farmers for this crop season. A demonstration field has also been set up in Dindigul district to demonstrate various pest management techniques.

### **Follow up workshop on organic home gardening**

CIKS has been implementing a project for “Establishing kitchen gardens to improve the nutritional security of households” with support from Hivos. Under this project, CIKS has set up organic farmers sangams in 10 villages in the Madurantakam taluk and has been helping farmers from these villages to set up organic home gardens. A series of training programmes had already been conducted for these farmers in the months of May and June on organic vegetable and herb cultivation, importance and methods to develop home gardens, use of herbs, natural methods of pest control and crop protection. As a follow up, an experience sharing workshop was organised for these farmers on 28th September.

### **Paddy Conservation at the CIKS experimental farm**

Fifty two varieties of indigenous paddy have been raised in the experimental farm at Sukkankollai for seed conservation. A model vegetable garden for this season has also been set up and medicinal plants have also been raised in the nursery.

## **CIKS TALK**

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

### **Workshop on alternative crop for paddy**

Farmers in various districts are facing problems with paddy cultivation this season due to poor and insufficient rainfall. “Erumunai” an NGO based in Poraiyar conducted a workshop on alternative crop cultivation for paddy on 21st of July. Our field staff S. Ashok Kumar from Sirkazhi attended this workshop. Several alternatives such as herbal cultivation, vanilla cultivation were discussed in the workshop.

### **At Tirupathi**

On 21st of July, K. Vijayalakshmi was at ROSE, an NGO based in Tirupathi to conduct a prefunding evaluation of a project to construct vermicompost tanks in 12 villages.

On the same day, A.V. Balasubramanian undertook a mid-term evaluation of the project implemented by ROPE, an NGO based in Tirupathi. This project was towards construction of fuel efficient crematorium.

On 14th September, A.V. Balasubramanian visited the same organisation to com-

plete the evaluation. He also visited the Rastriya Sanskrit Vidyapith. He met Dr. Muralidhara Sharma and other scholars who are involved in the project “Sanskrit and Science”.

### **Visit to Coimbatore**

A.V. Balasubramanian visited Coimbatore on 24th July to attend the meeting of the executive committee and the General body of LSPSS.

### **Organic Certification**

A.V. Balasubramanian visited ICRA, Bangalore on 2nd August and had a detailed discussion with them regarding the progress of ECONET, an alternative certification scheme for small and marginal farmers.

### **Course on SwaRaj at Samanvaya**

A.V. Balasubramanian made a presentation on the “Nature of traditional Indian Knowledge Systems - with particular reference to science and technologies and their current relevance and applications” on 21st and 22nd of August in the course conducted by Samanvaya on SwaRaj for students and activists in and around Chennai.

### **Team Day**

On the occasion of our team day on 12th August, Pulavar Kanagasubburathinam, an expert in the art of *Shodasa Avadhanam* (art of attending to 16 tasks simultaneously) conducted a training programme on “Traditional Indian approaches to increase concentration and mental capacity” to the CIKS team.

### **Brain storming session on farmers distress**

On 2nd September the Ford Foundation, Delhi convened a brain storming session to discuss the issue of the distress faced by farmers in various parts of the country. In this meeting, A.V. Balasubramanian made a presentation regarding the views of CIKS on the situation with suggestions for possible actions that can be initiated by Ford Foundation.

### **DST Expert Committee Meeting**

A.V. Balasubramanian has been invited to be a member of the expert committee of Department of Science and Technology for the programmes on “Science and Technology for Women”. In this connection, A.V. Balasubramanian visited Delhi on 10th September to attend a meeting of the Expert Committee.



## BOOKS, VIDEOS & EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

### NALAVAZHVUKKANA MOOLIGAIGAL

(A poster booklet in Tamil)



Our country harbours a rich source of medicinal plants which are used in the treatment of a wide range of diseases. More than 8000 species of plants found in our country are used in medicine. There are plenty of ancient literatures available on the medicinal properties of these plants. This booklet "Nalavazhvukkana Mooligaigal" (in Tamil) meaning "herbs

for healthy life" which has been produced with support from HIVOS provides details of 20 most commonly used medicinal plants. This booklet provides the cultivation details and simple recipes for usage of the medicinal plants in treatment of common ailments. The colour picture of each medicinal plant helps in easy identification.

**For Copies, Contact :** Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems, 30, Gandhi Mandapam Road, Kotturpuram, Chennai-85

## VISITORS BOOK

A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS

On 9th July, Ms. Sangeetha from Samanvaya visited us to discuss regarding the development of the resource centre that has been set up by Samanvaya.

On 13th July, Mr. T.V. Ananthanarayanan visited us to discuss regarding the Compas institutional development process.

On 13th July, Dr. A.S. Ramanathan, Retd. Dy. Dir. General of Meteorological Survey of India visited us.

On 16th July, Mr. S. Ramesh from IDBI Bank limited visited us to discuss regarding the inclusion of CIKS profile in their website for NGOs.

On 29th July, Ms. Indu Capoor, Director of CHETNA, Hyderabad visited us.

On 4th August, Dr. Millei Nihila, Dept. of Economics, Stella Maris College visited us

to seek our participation in a training programme on traditional medicine.

On 5th August, Mr. Rajat Choudhury of Southern Initiatives, Kolkatta visited us regarding a study on legislative initiatives regarding environment.

On 9th August, Mr. Michel Danino of IFIH visited us in connection with making a series of educational modules on Indian heritage.

On 25th August, Mr. Tony Singh from New Delhi and Ms. Sheela Pampre from UNESCO headquarters, France visited us regarding their initiative for starting a community for traditional learning.

On 27th August, Mr. Satheesh from Nutrition India visited us to seek our participation in an organic food festival to be held in Chennai.

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