Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Program

PROGRESS REPORT
From 01.04.2009 to 31.03.2010

Submitted to ICCO & EED

Project Nos.
ICCO : 03-02-00-678
EED : 20090224 G

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Our Dharma

1. Concern for the poor
2. Work beyond duty
3. Pursuit of excellence in work
4. To reach as many needy people as possible

Our Mission

1. AFs mission is to organize and strengthen the organization of distressed farmers and farm labour for their empowerment, self-reliance, food and nutritional security.
2. AF is committed to work with small and marginal farmers and committed to promote Integrated Sustainable Farming Systems, with low external input and eco-friendly (as against high cost, high-tech, chemical based).
3. AF is committed to promote sustainable healthy environment and bio-diversity where people and nature live in harmony and support each other.
4. AF is committed to work with women and youth and promote Diversified Livelihoods including agri-processing, marketing and non-farm skill based employment.
5. AF is committed to work for gender, social equality, human dignity, and to create a responsible social environment with peace and democracy.
6. AF is committed to work with Government, like minded NGOs, Civil Society Organizations and individuals. In this process it is committed to strengthen and coordinate the role of different organizations, intellectuals, experts and individuals in the interest of social well being.
7. AF is committed to being a strong, dynamic, dedicated and sustainable organization. It builds itself into an organization, learning from experiences and always working for people’s well being. It strives to be positively influencing the society and changing itself to be relevant to the changing contexts.

Our Vision

1. Every farmer and farm labor lead a respectable life with social equity, gender equity and human dignity, in an atmosphere of democracy and peace.
2. People and nature live in harmony with each other showing due care for sustainable environment and bio-diversity.

Our Core Values

1. We believe in social equality of all people and are particularly committed to the treatment of women, the disadvantaged and the poor with respect and dignity.
2. We ensure that all our policies and programmes have due consideration for sustainable environment and ecological balance.
3. We are committed to being gender-sensitive both within AF and in all our programs and interactions with people.
4. We are committed to working with Government and like-minded NGOs & CSOs in order to produce the best synergies in our combined and coordinated efforts.
5. We are committed to influencing Government policies and programmes for maximizing impact in favour of the poor, disadvantaged and sustainable environment.
6. We are committed to the pursuit of highest quality in our work.
7. We are committed to being a relevant and learning organization through participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation; and open to change, new ideas and new concepts, which are likely to improve the lives of poor and disadvantaged.
8. We are committed to the ethos of Participation and Teamwork and these will be central in our approach to work within AF and with people.
9. We are committed to be transparent and accountable to all our stakeholders.
FATHER VINCENT FERRER

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

09.04.1920 to 19.06.2009

“We are here to relieve suffering, to fight poverty and injustice. This is our purpose. This is the meaning of our life. The answer to who we are, for what and why we are here”.

Father Ferrer

“We rededicate our lives to your values, ideals, aims and action”

Staff
Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre
Our Brief History

AF Ecology Centre was founded by Father Vincent Fer rer in 1982. Since then we have been involved in people’s empowerment through drought management, environmental development and policy advocacy. We have made a substantial contribution since 1986 in Anantapur district with our Participatory Watershed Development Programme. It was perhaps the largest participatory watershed programme by an NGO in India spread over about 300 villages, covering about 1.35 lakh ha of farm land and 60,000 farmers. We’re known for our participatory approach and very high quality in watershed development on a sizable scale. The major interventions under the watershed programme included Soil and Moisture Conservation, Rain Water Harvesting, Horticulture, Rainfed Agronomical Practices, Bio-gas and Peoples Institutional Development.

We have also made a significant contribution in creating a favourable and enabling policy condition for a people centred watershed development in the State of Andhra Pradesh. At the policy level we have been actively involved in various policy making bodies like Andhra Pradesh Water Conservation Mission (APWCM), Andhra Pradesh State Commission on Farmers Welfare, and Advisory Committee on Watershed Development Programme of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh Land Water Trees Authority (APWALTA) Further AF has been actively involved in various consultation by the ministry of Rural Development at National level. At present AF is focusing on promoting Sustainable Agriculture, Alternate Livelihoods, Accessing Basic services and promoting a favourable policy environment for rural poor. AF at present is working with about 60,000 rainfed farmers and farm labor in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.

Anantapur District – A Challenge and An Opportunity

Located in southern Andhra Pradesh in South India, Anantapur receives the least rainfall in the state of Andhra Pradesh and second lowest in India, averaging at 522 mm annually. One of the poorest districts in the country, Anantapur's farmers are largely dependent on drought-prone, rain-fed agriculture, and mostly a single crop of groundnut is sown under such harsh agro-climatic conditions. Of its geographical area of about 19,00,000 ha, about 10,00,000 ha are cultivated under rain-fed conditions. Only about 1,00,000 ha are irrigated, that too mostly through undependable tube wells and tanks.

With virtually no other industry, Anantapur's backwardness and poverty are well indicated in its severe rural indebtedness, high seasonal migration and highest number of farmer suicides in a District. About 20 per cent of the population comprises dalits and tribals, and 60 percent comprises of backward communities. Malnutrition, illiteracy, illness, deprivation, and caste and gender discrimination are rampant here. Add to this social discrimination, crime and discord between various factions and groups, and you find the answer to the question ‘Why Anantpur?’

We believe it is a big challenge to work and show results in such a harsh agroclimatic and socio-economic conditions. We see it as an opportunity to make a difference. We believe that success in Anantapur district is a definite recipe for success in any other area.
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<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Expansion</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>AF-EC</td>
<td>Accion Fraterna, Ecology Centre</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>AME</td>
<td>Agriculture, Man &amp; Ecology</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>APREGS</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>APUHHC</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh Upadi Hakkula Hami Committee</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Clean Development Mechanism</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Centre for Environment Concerns</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>CER</td>
<td>Certified Emission Reduction</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>CLDP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Land Development Programme</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Centre for Sustainable Agriculture</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>DWMA</td>
<td>District Water Management Agency</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Employment Potential Assessment</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>FCN</td>
<td>Fair Climate Network</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>FFS</td>
<td>Farmer Field School</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>Grama Sasyamithra Samakhyas</td>
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<td>ICDS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Development Scheme</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>ICRISAT</td>
<td>International Crop Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>ITES</td>
<td>Information Technology Enabled Services</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>LCF</td>
<td>Low Carbon Farming</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Field Coordinator</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>LEISA</td>
<td>Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>LMD</td>
<td>Local Market Development</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>MGNREGS</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>Mandal Sasyamitra Samakhyas</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>NABARD</td>
<td>National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<td>NPM</td>
<td>Non-pesticidal Management</td>
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<td>NPV</td>
<td>Non Poly hydrous Virus</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>PDS</td>
<td>Public Distribution System</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>PGS</td>
<td>Participatory Guarantee System</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>REDS</td>
<td>Rural Education Development Society</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>RTI</td>
<td>Right to Information</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>SERP</td>
<td>Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>SMGs</td>
<td>Sasya Mitra Groups</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>SRI</td>
<td>System of Rice Intensification</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>STC</td>
<td>Skills Training Centre</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>STO</td>
<td>Socio-Technical Organizer</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>VER</td>
<td>Verified Emission Reduction</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>WASSAN</td>
<td>Watershed Support Services and Network</td>
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### 1. General Information

1.1 Name of organization: ACCION FRATERNIA ECOLOGY CENTRE

1.2 Physical Address: Upparapalli road, Bangalore Highway Anantapur – 515 002 A.P. – India

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1.6 Fax: +91 8554 244990

1.7 Email: actionf@sancharnet.in; action_atp@dataone.in

1.8 Website: www.af-ecologycentre.org

1.9 Project Title: Sustainable Agriculture & Livelihood Program

1.10 Project Number: ICCO : IN040091 EED : 20060234

1.11 Project Period: 01.04.2009 to 31.03.2012

1.12 Reporting Period: 01.04.2009 to 31.03.2010

1.13 Date of the Report: 06.07.2010

1.14 Author of the Report: Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy
2. OUTCOME & IMPACT

2.1 Which is the agreed upon objective of the project and its indicators

**Project Objective:**

To enhance the quality of life of 60,000 resource poor farmer and farm labour families by promoting:

a) Sustainable Agriculture,

b) Additional off-farm and non-farm livelihoods,

c) Youth rehabilitation in non-farm sector,

d) Access to basic services and

e) Pro-poor policies,

through CBOs, in a participatory approach encompassing gender and equity.

**Indicators:**

Indicator-1 : Status of family - Economic and Food Security.

Indicator-2 : Diversity in skills and employment.

Indicator-3 : Occupational mobility among rural boys and girls towards non-farm sector.

Indicator-4 : Rate of distress migration.

Indicator-5 : Social and Gender equity in benefits.

2.2. In case your project has different components what were the agreed upon objectives of those components and their indicators?

**Objectives for Project Components (Specific Objectives):**

**Objective for Component-1 : Promoting Sustainable Agriculture**

Indicator-1: % of farmer families practicing at least 3 NPM / LEISA practices.

Indicator-2: % of farmer families practicing multiple cropping with at least 3 other crops.
Indicator-3:  % of farmer families accessing land developmental works under NREGP.

Objective for Component-2: Promoting the access of basic services and promoting diversified livelihoods.

Indicator-1:  % of job-seeking labor families accessing a minimum of 100 days of employment under NREGP in a year.

Indicator-2:  % of labor families accessing basic services like PDS, education, health.

Indicator-3:  % of labor families accessing credits for dairy/livestock development.

Indicator-4:  % of labor families with their youth (both boys & girls) either employed in non-farm sector or self-employed.


Indicator-1:  No. and type of other NGOs and CSOs, with whom alliances are made.

Indicator-2:  No. of CBOs involved in policy issues.

Indicator-3:  No. & type of issues identified and represented at various levels.

Indicator-4:  No. & type of issues taken up for lobbying with Govt.

Indicator-5:  Changes brought about in policies / implementation procedures.

Objective for Component-4: Organizational Development.

Indicator-1:  Improved gender policies within the organization.

Indicator-2:  Gender & social equity policies integrated in program activities.

Indicator-3:  PPME reports prepared.
2.3 To what extent the project objective could be achieved? Please report by using the agreed upon indicators. Please refer to indicators differentiated by sex or with a gender dimension, too. If you have several project components, please report along the objectives and the indicators of those components.

2.3.1 Achievement of Project Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IND No</th>
<th>Impact Indicator</th>
<th>Achievement during 2009-10 Present Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Status of family - Economic and Food Security.</td>
<td>Anantapur experienced the Worst drought in the past 50 years, during the reporting period. The delayed monsoons created havoc. Only 10% of the rain fed area could be sown with Groundnut in July. Late sowing was also not possible, as there were no rains until late August. People and cattle suffered badly due to scarcity of fodder and drinking water. AF used this crisis to promote short duration food crops like millets, pulses and vegetables. It alerted the Village Seed Banks and they organized farmers meetings, identified their crop preferences and procured &amp; supplied quality seed. As a result about 10,600 rain fed farmers sowed food crops like millets and pulses, which created some food security for these drought-hit families. AF also assisted poor farmer and farm labor families, who were not accessing the PDS. Now, about 88% of the farmer and farm labor families are accessing PDS, which has also ensured food security to an extent. The economic status of the drought-hit farmer and farm labor families would have been terrible. Even if we presume that Kharif 2010 gets normal rainfall, the next harvest, if at all would only be in Dec’ 2010. The last harvest they had been in Dec’ 2007, as 2008 was also a drought year. That means they had only one crop in 3 years. NREGP rescued most of them to an extent from the financial break-down. AF played a facilitative role in making the communities plan the works in time and monitored the implementation of the program. As a result about 43,500 farmer and farm labor families, worked in NREGP and each family could earn about Rs. 5,700 on an average, during the reporting period, which created some economic security for these drought-hit families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity in skills and employment.

Occupational mobility among rural boys & girls towards non-farm sector.

Anantapur is characterized by adverse agro-climatic conditions, recurring droughts, lack of industries, lack of marketing facilities, falling economy and ever increasing poverty. In these harsh conditions the diversity in employment and occupational mobility assume high significance.

- AF has been working on to bring diversity in employment of rural women particularly in off-farm and non-farm sector in its project area.
- During the last phase (2006-09), AF provided Alternate livelihoods for 2607 farmer and farm labor women. About 60% of them are continuing those off-farm & non-farm livelihoods and earning income @ Rs. 3,000-5,000 per family per year.
- About 2400 farmer and farm labor families have accessed loans from banks and purchased Dairy animals, Sheep & Goats.

AF is reviewing its youth programme strategy and exploring the future opportunities. By about October 2010, it would have reworked its future strategy in working with youth.

To develop Job-oriented Skills in rural youth, AF is running two skills trainings centers, wherein courses like IT Enabled Services, Hospitality, Sales and Marketing, Rural Electricians and Motor Mechanics, are offered. AF is assisting the rural youth in accessing the skills training courses offered by the Govt. It is also promoting village level tailoring centers. AF is also trying to link these girls/tailoring centers to Business promoters to get them piece work on contract basis.

Totally 711 rural youth, 144 boys and 567 girls have been trained during the reporting period. Of them 314 have been able to find employment. Of the 559 girls trained in AF’s tailoring centres, 122 girls have been linked to small business promoters, who give them piece work on contract basis. On an average they are earning about Rs.1500/- to Rs.2000/- per month. 46 girls are working in tailoring shops in adjacent villages and they are earning about Rs.1000/- to Rs.1200/- on an average per month. About 70 girls are working on their own at their homes in the villages and earning about Rs.500/- to Rs.600/- per month.

This has enhanced their self worth in the community. It is first time ever in their families that they are doing a job other than farm labour or farming. Their importance has grown in the family and
their opinions are being considered in family decisions. They have become confident and outgoing and want to work and earn more.

During the reporting period, the global recession - hit employment market affected AF’s job-oriented skills training programs.

The Occupational mobility among the rural youth was also very low because:

- There was a dearth of low-end jobs in the employment market.
- The salaries were also low in these Skill-based jobs.
- In NREGP works, there was a possibility to earn on par with these jobs, at home.
- The rural youth of Anantapur generally like to stay in their villages.

In future, AF has to work on negotiations with the skill-based employment market for better salaries.

| 4 | **Rate of distress migration.** | Distress migration has totally stopped in all the 230 villages in AF’s project area, thanks to NREGP. Only seasonal opportunistic migration is there to an extent. |
### 2.3.2 Achievement of Project Component Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCO No</th>
<th>IND No</th>
<th>Desired End Result (By 2012)</th>
<th>Achievement during 2009-10</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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</table>
| 1      | 1      | Of the total 48,000 small and marginal farmer families, 80% practice at least 3 of the following NPM & LEISA practices:  
  - Grow border crops.  
  - Grow inter crops.  
  - Use pest traps.  
  - Introduce bio-pesticides.  
  - Introduce bio-fertilizers. | Totally, 43,155 small and marginal farmer families have been enrolled into AF’s Sustainable Agriculture program during 2009-10. Of them;  
  - 26,468 families (61%) have grown Border crops.  
  - 34,296 families (79 %) have grown Inter crops.  
  - 7,258 families (17%) have used Pest traps in their fields.  
  - 8,736 families (20%) have applied Bio-pesticides to their crops.  
  - 13,889 families (32%) have used Bio-fertilizers like Farm compost, Vermi compost, Jeevamritam etc to their fields.  
  
  Totally, 16,937 families (39%) have adopted at least 3 of the above practices.  
  
  Farmer women have played a vital role in the above achievement in (a) making cropping choices, (b) preparing bio-pesticide decoctions at home, (c) preparing various bio-fertilizers etc. | There are about 46,000 small and marginal farmer families in AF’s 230 project villages.  
  
  AF could enroll 43,155 families (94%) during 2009-10.  
  
  AF has planned to drop the indicators on (a) Border crops and (b) Inter crops as they have become by now a general practice among farmers. |
| 2      |        | Of the total 48,000 small and marginal farmer families, 60% practice multiple cropping with at least 3 of the following crops: | Of the 43,155 small and marginal farmer families enrolled during 2009-10;  
  - 1,551 families (4%) have grown Fruit tree crops.  
  - 9,122 families (21 %) have raised Farm forestry in their farm lands.  
  - 10,603 families (25%) have | The no. of farmers who have grown fruit tree crops this year is less, because AF itself is not providing the fruit plants & has to mobilize it from Govt. & other agencies. |
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<th>3</th>
<th>Of the total 48,000 small and marginal farmer families, 20% improve the carrying capacity of their lands by accessing land developmental works under MGNREGP.</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Of the 43,155 small and marginal farmer families enrolled. 3,952 families (9%) have accessed land developmental works like Soil Bunds, Farm Ponds etc. under MGNREGP and improved the carrying capacity of their degraded lands during this year. In the 6 NABARD watersheds, during the reporting period:</td>
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| 3 | • 192 farmers have accessed land development works like Soil, pebble and stone bunds, Water absorption trenches, etc.  
• 18 farmers have excavated farm ponds in their lands.  
• 48 farmers have raised mango plantations and 192 farmers have grown useful bio-mass plants in their farm lands. |
| 3 | There was a severe drought in Anantapur during this year. The monsoons did not arrive for the entire month of July and even until late August. So farmers were forced to go for food crops, as the groundnut sowing time was over by then. This explains the reason for such a high crop diversity during the reporting period. In spite of some bottlenecks, the implementation of NREGS is reasonably satisfactory in the district. |

- Fruit tree crops.  
- Farm forestry with timber, fodder and bio-mass plantations.  
- Food crops like millets, pulses etc.  
- Vegetables  
- Fodder.  

- grown Food crops like Millets & Pulses in their fields.  
• 4,718 families (11%) have grown Vegetables in their farm lands.  
• 6,472 families (15%) have grown perennial fodder in their farm lands.  

Totally, 8,732 families (20%) have adopted multiple cropping with at least 3 other crops.

Response from farmer women has been better to grow multiple crops. They have responded with interest in growing millets, pulses & vegetables.
Of the total 36,000 farm labor families (including small and marginal farmers), every job-seeking family gets employment under NREGP, whenever and for as many days as it wants during a year.

Totally, 57,158 persons from 43,448 families have worked in NREGS during the year. Out of them there are 39,466 men laborers (69%) and 17,692 women laborers (31%).

Totally 2,526,895 person days of work was provided @ 58 person days/ family during the year.

Total payment made under NREGS in our project area during this year is Rs. 246,119,580. Each family could earn Rs. 5,665 at an average wage rate of Rs. 97.40 per day.

The men and women formed combined labor groups and shared the work. The cultural gender division of labor is seen breaking in some instances.

Women got equal wages, on par with men.

For more details please refer to Annexure – III, campaigns on MGNREGS.

Of the total 36,000 farm labor families, 90% access basic services like PDS, education, health etc.

Of the 3,700 farmer and labor families (poorest) group surveyed;

- 3,263 families (88%) are accessing PDS.
- 1182 families (32%) have 2,033 children of primary school age. Of them 1958 children (96%) have been enrolled. But 342 children (17%) have dropped out. Presently, 1,616 children (79%) are continuing in primary schools. (It indicated enhanced enrolment and retention upto primary school)

The divide between the rainfed farmers & farm laborers has become very thin. So, both farmers and farm labor families were surveyed.
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<th>Table Content</th>
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| 3    | Of the total 36,000 farm labor families, about 2000 families (5.5%) access credit support from Banks for dairy animals or small ruminants. Of the 3,700 farmer and labor families surveyed;  
- 54 families (1.5 %) have accessed loan from Banks & other agencies for dairy animals during the year.  
- 152 families (4 %) have accessed loan from Banks for the purchase of Sheep and Goats during the year. | -- |
| 4    | Of the total 36,000 farm labor families, 3,600 families (10%) diversify the occupational base of their youth (boys & girls) from farming to non-farm sector thro’ job-oriented skills & entrepreneurship development. Of the 36,000 farm labor families, 711 families (2%) have diversified their occupational base from farming to non-farm sector, during the year.  
- 567 Girls have been trained in skills like Tailoring (559) and ITES (7). One girl has also been trained in Driving.  
- 144 Boys have been trained in skills like Driving (132) and ITES (12). | - |
| 3    | Building issue based alliances with concerned NGOs & CSOs:  
a) To focus on policy & implementation issues related to agriculture, off-farm and non-farm livelihoods, accessing employment, accessing basic services etc. | AF has taken the following measures to focus on issues related to policies & implementation, mobilizing public opinion and lobbying with Govt.:  
- Actively participated in Issue based alliances like (a) Food security coalition (b) All India Coordinated Millets Improvement Program (AICSMIP), (c) Empowerment & Entitlements coalition for Social equity (d) Under MGNREGP we have been lobbying for taking up dry land horticulture (e) Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). | - |
b) To mobilize public opinion on the above issues and represent them in relevant forums

c) To lobby with Govt. for appropriate action.

| 2 | Bringing on desired changes in policies and / or in the implementation procedures. | The process of Lobby & Advocacy with Govt. is in progress. |
|   |                                                                                      | • Now on experimental basis freshly cooked food is introduced in Anganwadi centres. |
|   |                                                                                      | • Rainfed horticulture is taken up under MGNREGP in some select districts including Anantapur. |

<p>| 4 | By 2012 AF Ecology Centre has: Improved gender sensitivity among staff. | AF has initiated the following measures to achieve the planned desired results by 2012: |
|   |                                                                                      | • Gender policy is framed in a participatory process involving AF staff at all levels. Ms. Swati patel of Seva Mandir, Rajasthan has facilitated the process. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An operational PPME in place.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved expertise in; (a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Alternate livelihoods development and (c) Training rural youth in job-oriented skills and Rehabilitating them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts &amp; Finance shifted from RDT and Self - managed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Ensuring equal representation of women in all CBOs at all levels.
- Ensuring equal representation of women in leadership positions and giving preference to them for convener’s post.
- Making payments to women in the family in program activities.
- Women Team is playing a more proactive role in improving the capacities of women staff and in addressing the problems faced by women both at personal level and at work.
- Ensuring positive discrimination towards SC/ST and Women in selecting beneficiaries in program activities.
- To make PPME operational, AF has requested Context International, The Netherlands to provide consultancy and hand-holding support to its PME Cell.
- For building the capacity of staff and improve their expertise, AF has arranged trainings on Sustainable Agriculture, Seed Banks, Training of trainers on participatory trainings and Alternate livelihoods development.
- AF is also planning a orientation on Climate Change and Sustainable Agriculture.
- From June 2010, accounts and finance will be shifted from RDT office and will be self - managed by AF Ecology Center.
2.4 What other observations did you make? Please mention any thing that may be enlightening for the progress of the project. Provide case stories if any in the annexure.

Some important observations:

- Generally, the delay and increased unpredictability of monsoons have enhanced the farmers’ openness to grow more short duration food crops like millets and pulses, because they can be sown late. (Please refer to Case Story - I)

- There is an increasing trend of purchasing dairy animals.

- People are showing interest in getting bio-gas units for their households.

- The AF promoted, liquid & solid bio-fertilizer, Jeevanritam is producing excellent results and gaining a lot of preference among the farmers. (please refer to case story-2)

- Farmers’ preference for the usage of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides (Decoctions of locally available herbs) is increasing because of the saving in investment. (please refer to case story - 3)

All these observations can considerably contribute to the achievement of AF’s development goal.

2.5 In case that you observed any negative outcome, please. describe.

AF’s job-oriented skills training programs for rural youth got adversely affected by the recession - hit employment market during this year. There was a dearth of lower end jobs in computers, hospitality, retail sales, electrical works etc. in which AF has been training the rural youth. This had a direct impact on AF’s Skills training program, as it could not go ahead and train the rural youth in these job-oriented skills, without a job-guarantee.

2.6 Could any impact (Positive or negative) be observed in the wider context of the project that might be related to the project interventions? Do those observed facts contribute to achieving the development goal?

1. Anantapur experienced the worst drought ever in the past 50 years during the reporting period. The rains created havoc by not appearing during the groundnut sowing month of July. Even the little hope of late sowings was also put-off, as the rains did not appear until late August. People and cattle suffered due to scarcity of fodder and drinking water. However, these adverse conditions are seen as an opportunity by AF to propagate the
irrelevance of the conventional Green Revolution model of agriculture and make a strong case of its Sustainable Agriculture. Even the farmers practicing chemical farming, did not invest on chemicals as they considered it wastage of money, when there were no timely rains. As the monsoons were delayed beyond the sowing time of groundnut, many farmers were mobilized to go for other food and shorter duration crops like Jowar, Bajra, Red gram, Horse gram, Sun flower, Castor, Korra. They were sown in 92,048 Acs (About 26% of the total rain fed cultivable area in the 230 project villages), belonging to 14,495 farmers. Such crop diversity presents a healthy cropping pattern that provides a safety net against droughts.

The delayed monsoons also provided a good opportunity for the GSSs and the Seed Banks to work together for the procurement and distribution of required seed for contingency crops and thus strengthening them in the process.

*If the trend of delayed monsoons continues, the above trend will have more relevance and can contribute further to the achievement of AF’s Development goal in the long run.*

2. The wage rates in NREGP are good and the farm labor families are getting benefited by that. This is a very positive development that has come about in recent times, thanks to NREGA. However it has its own share of negative effects - The cost of labor for agriculture has gone up heavily, because the laborers are demanding high wages on par with NREGP rates or even more! Though it is very good for laborers, yet small and marginal rainfed farmers and even medium rainfed farmers are unable to afford the high cultivation costs when there is no guarantee of yields due to failure of rains. Consequently a major chunk of rainfed farmers have turned into laborers themselves. It is disgraceful for many farmers as it is a downward occupational mobility for them.

*This could lead to the disappearance of small and marginal farmers from agriculture and the emergence of corporate farming, which is highly undesirable and disastrous.*

3. The farm laborers and the rainfed farmers are depending very heavily on NREGA. This over-dependence on casual wage employment can have many adverse socio-economic conditions in the long term.

The above two issues can prove counter-productive, in the long run to the small and marginal farmers. So, AF is strongly advocating to make productive use of NREGP, by improving carrying capacity of natural resource base, and the livelihoods of farmers and farm laborers as follows:
• To see NREGP as a long term investment in upgrading the natural resources like CPRs, forestry, soil, rain water, horticulture, tree plantation etc.

• To create sustained agri-productive assets like horticultural crops for rainfed farmers under the program.

• To subsidise the crop investments particularly on rainfed agriculture through inclusion of agricultural labor work in the program, atleast partially.

• To take up non-farm livelihoods for rural laborers under the program

2.7 Which methods did you use for assessing outcome and impact?

2.7.1 Impact Assessment:
• Impact Assessment was done in a participatory manner involving the target population through out the process.

• Impact assessment was done in 37 villages (16 % of the 230 project villages)

• 50 families were selected for impact assessment from each village (19 % of the average 260 families per village).

• Totally, 1850 families were selected for impact assessment (3 % of the 60,000 families in the project area).

• Household survey was done for these 1850 families to collect information for assessing the impact.

• Ration cards were verified.

• Data was collected from various sources like (a) School attendance registers, (b) Govt. mandal level Offices, (c) Fair price shop records etc. (d) NREGP website

2.7.2 Outcome Assessment:
• Outcome Assessment was done in a participatory manner by having Focused Group Discussions (FGD) involving the farmers and farm laborers through out the process.

• Outcome assessment was done in all the 230 project villages.

• For Outcome assessment, the data of all the participating families was considered.
• The main source of this data is the Village Activity Registers being maintained in each of the 230 villages by the STOs - Our village level staff.

• Information on Outcomes was also collected from various means like (a) Random Physical Verification, (b) Interviews with farmer & farm labor families, (c) GSS records etc (GSS is a federation of primary farmers’ groups @ village level).

• Data was also collected from various sources like (a) School attendance registers, (b) Govt. mandal level Offices, (c) Records of AF Skill Training Centers & Driving Schools, (d) Minutes of Network / coalition meetings etc.
3. Activities:

3.1 Awareness generation and facilitation of SMGs & GSS
Promoting Sustainable Agriculture is the core programme of AF – Ecology Centre. Generating awareness on Sustainable Agriculture and facilitating SMGs & GSS is an important part of AF’s work. Various awareness generation activities are being implemented keeping both short term and long term in view. The short term activities include various LEISA practices and long term activities include developing farming systems that are suitable to the agro-climatic conditions of Anantapur as well as socio-economic conditions of the rainfed farmers. Among all the activities, the cross-cutting themes are (1) Ill effects of Green Revolution model of agriculture and the need for a drastic change to more eco friendly local resource based poor farmer and rainfed focused agriculture. (2) Focus on gender and social equity.

A brief summary of activities taken up to promote Sustainable Agriculture is explained hereunder:

3.1.1 Individual meetings.
To promote and upscale Sustainable Agriculture (SA) AF staff particularly STOs visit the allotted villages regularly, have meetings and discussions with SMGs and GSS. They have informal meeting to create awareness on specific SA practices suitable for them. After such informal meetings the message about SA practices is spread across the village by SMG, GSS and farmers in the village. The staff assisted by SMG and GSS identifies the farmers who are having inclination to adopt SA practices and educate and train them in detail to take up specific SA practices like vermi compost, NADEP compost, diversified cropping, liquid fertilizers etc.

3.1.2 Facilitating SMGs and GSS.
The STOs organize regular meetings with Sasya Mithra Groups (SMGs) and Grama Sasyamithra Samakhyas (GSS), discuss various LEISA practices and create awareness on the benefits of these practices. Simultaneously writing of catchy slogans and paintings on walls is taken up in the villages to draw the attention of farmers. The SMGs and GSS select the suitable farmers for various activities and monitor the implementation of activities by them. The incentives are also paid to the farmers through GSS. The women in the family are considered as beneficiaries and incentives payments are made to them directly.
3.1.3 Village Level Awareness Campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture.
Two village Level Campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture are organized every year. The campaigns include important demonstrations and exhibitions of various practices. The campaigns are organized by the GSS and SMGs. In these campaigns preparation of liquid bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides with locally available materials is demonstrated to the farmers. The practicing farmers share their experiences of the benefits and interact and discuss with other farmers. The farmers of the whole village, particularly more women are mobilized to participate in these campaigns. For more details please refer to Annexure-I “Village level campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture”.

3.1.4 Mandal level ecology campaigns.
Each Area consist of two mandals with each mandal having 30 to 35 villages. The mandal level ecology campaigns are organized at a central location. From each village 12 to 15 farmers are mobilized to participate in the ecology campaigns with equal emphasis on women participation. The mandal level governmental officials like agriculture officer, horticulture officers, MRO, MPDO also participate and educate farmers about the schemes available with their respective departments. This provides an opportunity to farmers to understand and access various Govt. schemes particularly the antipoverty programes. The campaigns include exhibitions of different varieties of seeds and plants suitable to Anantapur agro-climate, medicinal plants, fodder plants, fruit plants, bio-diversity of various species, indigenous materials which are useful in preparation of bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers. Photo exhibition of successful practices in villages isput up to attract farmers attention. Various issues such as ecology, agriculture, climate change, rural handicrafts are discussed in the campaigns. Local art-forms are performed to entertain people and also in appreciation of local culture being integral to agriculture and environment. For more details please refer to Annexure-II, “Ecology Days – 2009-10”.

3.1.5 Project level ecology campaigns.
Project level ecology campaigns are being organized at the instance of Environment Day on June 5th at district headquarters once in a year. About 1500 farmers from project villages, other NGOs, CSOs social and environmental activists participate in these campaigns. The important district officials like district Collector, project directors of DWMA & DRDA and officials from Horticulture and Agriculture departments etc., are invited to the campaigns. The campaigns focus on the issues of ecology, environment, agriculture and rural livelihoods. To keep the farmers entertained folk dances and traditional dances with environmental messages are organized. Exhibitions are organized on traditional food bio-diversity, suitable varieties of crops and tree species, types of animals, traditional weapons, indigenous materials which are used for making bio-pesticides and bio- fertilizers, traditional seeds etc. The farmers following SA practices share their experiences with the participants and clarify their queries. The specialists in
sustainable agriculture, social and environmental activists give their messages and remind the responsibility of nurturing and sustaining the environment for the very survival of people at present and for future.

3.1.6 Selection of beneficiaries.
Selection of beneficiaries for program incentive based activities is a vital responsibility of the SMGs and GSS. The AF staff facilitates SMGs and GSS in the selection process of beneficiaries. The selected beneficiaries will be resource poor, small and marginal land holders, with high preference for farmers having inclination towards LEISA/NPM practices, farmers who are vexed with chemical fertilizers and pesticides as the cost of cultivation is high and the hazards are also very high.

3.1.7 Imparting specific trainings on specific practices for selected farmers.
Suitable farmers are selected for certain activities, which involve special techniques and skills, for example the farmers selected for SRI method of paddy. Similarly farmers selected for Integrated Farming System (IFS) under rainfed conditions have to be trained on some special practices. Depending on the activities, trainings are arranged to train the farmers of that particular practice.

3.1.8 Staff trainings.
Periodical trainings to the staff also arranged to brush up their knowledge on the relevant practices and topics. Further training needs of staff at various levels are assessed periodically, particularly when some new practices are introduced. Based on the assessment, need based trainings are organized by involving resource persons from outside if needed. The services of other organization with expertise in particular are field also utilized. Organizing trainings to the staff and farmers is a continuous process. Magazines are subscribed for all field staff and senior program staff particularly the ones in local language. These magazines are on sustainable agriculture, organic farming, agricultural policy issues, farmers voice etc. Staff are also sent to other organizations for such trainings as it is necessary for AFs programme.

3.2 Promoting Sustainable Agriculture practices

3.2.1 Pest traps
(pheromone traps & color boards).
Demonstrations on installation pheromone traps and color boards have been taken up to monitor the incidence of pests and to trap them before they are multiplied. 1920 farmers (76% of the planned 2530 farmers) have been mobilized to install pheromone traps, in their 4020 ha of farm lands (76% of the planned 5290 ha). Of them 328 farmers (17%) belong to SC/ST communities. The total cost of pheromone traps per ha is Rs. 250/-.
Beneficiary contribution is Rs. 50/- and remaining Rs200/- is paid as an incentive by the organization. 1890 farmers (86% of the planned 2300 farmers) have been mobilized to install white and yellow boards in their 3772 ha of farm land (82% of the planned 4600 ha) Of them 394 farmers (21%) belongs to SC/ST communities. The total cost of color boards is Rs.75/- ha. The beneficiary contribution is Rs.15/- the balance amount of Rs.60/- is paid by AF as an incentive.

3.2.2 Bio-pesticides.

Decoctions of local wild plants and hot spices.

Education and awareness is created on the ill effects of chemical pesticides and the high cost in using agro-chemicals. Effective local resource based and low cost alternatives are explained to farmers. The focus is on prevention of incidence and when necessary use bio-pesticides like neem solution, green chilies solution etc. 4100 farmers (89% to the planned 4600) applied bio-pesticides to their 8900 ha of farm lands (96% to the planned 9200 ha).Of them 779 farmers (19%) belong to SC/ST communities. The above activity does not have any financial cost to the farmers as the local materials are available in all villages and technical advise is provided by AF staff.

3.2.3 Bio-Fertilizers.

Education and awareness is created on the high costs and the ill-effects of chemical fertilizers on the soil, water, food and on people. And some incentives are provided to go in for vermi compost and NADEP composting. The other bio-fertilizers like Jeevamruth, Amruthpani are promoted widely as they do not involve any additional cost.

2008 farmers (109% of the planned 1840) have established vermi compost units. Of them 481(24%) belong to SC/ST communities. The cost of vermi compost unit is Rs.1270/-.. The beneficiary contribution is Rs.470/- in addition to labor in filling the pit with bio-waste and regular maintenance. The balance amount of Rs.800/- is paid as an incentive. 9010 farmers (97% of the planned9200) have established vermi compost units. Besides this 12190 farm compost pits mobilized under NREGS. Of them 1932 farmers (16%) belong to SC/ST communities.

1108 NADEP units (241% of the planned 460 units) have been established. The total cost of the unit is Rs.3,000/- the beneficiary contribution is Rs.600/- the balance amount Rs. 2400/- is paid as an incentive by AF.
10430 farmers (91% of the planned 11,500), had applied Jeevamruth (liquid bio-fertilizer) to their 13861 ha of farm land (121% to the planned 11,500 ha). Of them, 1,258 farmers (12%) belongs to SC/ST communities.

3.3 Promoting crop diversity and crop rotation

3.3.1 Food Crops like Millets & Pulses etc.
AF is educating and advocating Multiple cropping in the place of groundnut mono crop and crop rotation. The crops advocated are redgram, caster, pearl millet, sorghum, foxtail millet, field beans, cow pea etc. All can be grown as mixed crop or intercrop with groundnut. AF field staff organized special meetings and campaigns before the kharif sowing season. The focus is to go in for food crops with a view to improve food and nutritional security at each household. More and more women are mobilized to these meeting and campaigns. During the reporting period, 10,603 rainfed farmers (461% of the planned 2,300) have grown food crops like millets & Pulses. This abnormally high no. of farmers is because of the delayed monsoons. Women have played a key role in cultivation of food crops, besides this the seed banks were actively involved in promoting alternate crops. The cost of cultivation of food crops comes to Rs.740/per ha. The contribution from beneficiaries is Rs.500/ in the form of kind.

3.3.2 Vegetable cultivation.
AF Ecology Centre is promoting vegetable cultivation in two ways. One is in the farm lands and another is promoting kitchen gardens. AF is advocating household food and nutritional security through kitchen gardens. 4,718 farmer families cultivated vegetables in their farm lands (103% of the planned 4,600 families). Of them 576 families (12%) belongs to SC/ST communities. 10,413 families raised kitchen gardens (113% to the planned 9,200 families). Of them 2802 families (27%) belongs to SC/ST communities. The cost vegetable seed is Rs.35/ the beneficiary contribution is Rs.5/ the balance amount Rs.30/ is paid as an incentive by AF.

3.3.3 Fodder cultivation.
Annual fodder seeds are being supplied to farmers by animal husbandry department on subsidy. AF is organizing and facilitating the farmers to access the seeds from department. For raising perennial fodder plots AF is supplying fodder slips. 6,472 perennial fodder plots were organized (70% to the planned 9,200 plots) by 5,594 farmers. Of them 522 families (9%) belong SC/ST communities. As an incentive AF is providing Rs.30/- ha, and farmer contribution in the form of kind @ Rs.180/- ha.
3.4 Tree Crops under rainfed conditions.

3.4.1 Rainfed horticulture

AF is very strongly popularizing the concept of Tree Crops (rainfed horticulture) particularly with rainfed farmers, as the tree crops are less prone to drought. However tree crops have a long gestation period of about 5 to 7 years and need some initial watering. AF advocated that every rainfed farmer should have at least 30% of each farmer’s land under various rainfed tree crops. The idea is when annual crops failed the tree crops will provide some assured income to the farmers. Farmers after seeing the dry land horticulture demonstration plots organized by AF, got motivated. Farmers have accessed fruit plants supplied on subsidy by RDT and from horticulture department. Farmers preferred hardy fruit plants like mango, sapota and amla (goose berry) under fruit tree crops. 772 farmers (107% of the planned 720), have grown fruit tree crops in 309 ha of dry land (107% of the planned 288 ha). Of them 218 farmers (28%) belongs to SC/ST communities.

AF- Ecology Centre itself does not provide any incentives for tree crops. It educates and enables farmers and SMGs to access the horticulture programs being implemented by RDT and Government.

3.4.2 Farm Forestry.

AF Ecology Centre is promoting Farm Forestry on the field borders and field bunds in order to produce (a) bio-mass for farm composting (b) fodder trees to produce green fodder in summer months and also (c) fruit trees like custard apple. The farm forestry is promoted by direct seed dibbling in the months of June and July when the rainy season sets in. Generally when the rains are normal the survival of plants is very good. The survival is monitored by field staff, and gap filling is done during the rainy season. Last year the survival is found to be ranging from 40% to 80%. The varieties of plants chosen are pongamea, glyricidia, neem, custard apple etc. This method of seed dibbling is the most inexpensive and best suited to Anantapur agro-climatic conditions. 5958 farmers (103% of the planned 5750) planted saplings in their 12086 ha of farm land (129% of the planned 11,500) Farmers contribution in the form of kind Rs.180/ and the remaining Rs.200/ borne by organization. 7633 farmers (129% of the planned 5,900) have dibbled seed in their 16,317 ha of farm land (118% of the planned 3,800 ha) The cost of seed dibbling comes to Rs.20/ ha the total amount is paid by AF.

3.4.3 Long term models of Integrated Farming System.

AF Ecology Centre is developing three model demonstrations of Farming Systems that are appropriate to Anantapur agro-climatic conditions, particularly under rainfed conditions. These three farming systems are aimed at creating sustainable agriproduction on rainfed lands integrating annual crops, tree crops and animals, with low cost, low external input. Generally all inputs are from within the farm itself. Briefly the three methods are:
3.4.3.1 Integrated Farming System:
In this model annual crops, tree crops for fruit and fodder and small unit of dairy animals are all integrated in one ha., of rainfed land with equal emphasis.

43 plots were organized in 8 mandals spread across 230 villages. 7604 fruit (4 types) were plants planted (102% to the planed 7425). 47865 seeds were dibbled with forest species for fodder and biomass. 7252 fruit plants survived (95% to the planned 7604). Gap filling was done where fruit plants dried up. Gap filling has been taken up for bio-mass plants also as rainy season has set in

3.4.3.2 Bio-intensive Farming System in Rain fed Areas (BIFSRA).
This particular model has been based on Dr. Rupela’s experiment at ICRISAT. It aims at producing adequate bio-mass on farm and mulching the land particularly during summer months, to avoid exposure to sun, rain and wind. This concept is that when the soil mulched properly the biotic life in the soil is conserved and nurtured. Consequently, it does not need any more manure and it can hold the moisture for longer periods and crop is assured under rainfed conditions.

8 demo plots were organized in 8 mandals. 1460 fruit plants (4 types) were planted. 35 fruit plants were used for gap filling. 27810 bio-mass plants were planted.

3.4.3.3 Intensive Bio-mass Development (IBM)
Intensive Bio-mass development on rainfed lands is demonstrated in order to produce biomass on the farm and produce farm compost on the same farm to replace chemical fertilizers.

489 farmers were covered. 466 ha has been covered (106% to the planned 440 ha) with dibbling of biomass plants. 392850 seed dibbles (85% to the planned 460000 dibbles). 263744 plants survived (67% to the planned 460000 plants)

3.5 Skill development and youth rehabilitation program
The main Objective of the program is to develop non-farm job-oriented skills among rural youth and rehabilitate them by facilitating their access to Skill-based employment, thereby improving their occupational mobility.
3.5.1. Skill training centres

3.5.1.1 Progress during 2009-10

As part of Youth Skill Development Program, AF started youth skills development centers at Kalyanadurg and Anantapur during the year 2008-09, with the collaboration of Skill Pro-Foundation. As the MOU with Skill Pro came to an end by end March 2009, AF took the responsibility of running the centers on its own from April 2009.

However, the skill trainings at Kalyandurg and Anantapur centers could not be started from April 2009, due to the global recession and job losses. The global recession forced AF to re-think. The potential employment sectors like ITES, Hospitality and Sales & Services came crashing down. So, AF dropped the idea and planned to start the courses after some recovery on the economic front. It has been keenly observing the developments in the employment industry particularly on the private employment sector, as the program is mainly linked to the rehabilitation of rural youth. As there appeared some signs of improvement in the economy and the employment industry, AF started, one batch of ITES (suited to BPO industry) with a capacity of 19 youth at Kalyandurg Skills Training Center during Dec’2009. The Anantapur skill training centre was closed by March 2009 because of the completion of its rental agreement period. Since then no batch has been started at Anantapur. Hence only 19 rural youth could be trained during the reporting period because of global recession.

AF had been running the skills training centers, in rented buildings, both in Anantapur and Kalyandurg, which were inadequate and did not provide a good learning environment.

3.5.1.2 The Construction of Youth Resource Centre (YRC):

The Construction of Youth Resource Centre (YRC) was started in April 2009 and was completed by Feb’ 2010. The YRC complex has a Youth Center Block and two Dormitories. The Youth Center Block is a 2-storeyed building. The Driving School (DS) is in the ground floor. It has a spacious hall, which accommodates a class room, display of Sectional models of various systems of a vehicle and a workshop with a demo car for practical training. The Principal’s cabin is located in a corner of the hall. The Skill Training Centre (STC) is in the first floor. It has four classrooms with a capacity of 35 in each classroom. Courses in various market driven trades like IT Enabled Services (ITES), Customer Relations and
Sales, Electrical Wiring and Automobile Mechanism etc. will be conducted in these class rooms.

The YRC also has two separate Dormitories for boys and girls, with a total capacity of 55 inmates. The boys’ dorm has two halls, with a capacity of 35 inmates and the girls’ dorm has one hall, with a capacity of 20 inmates.

The Youth Centre block was inaugurated by Mr. Moncho Ferrer, Chairman, Accion Fraterna. The Dormitory blocks were inaugurated by Ms. A. Kalamani, Program Officer, ICCO South Asia in presence of Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director and AF senior staff at AF Ecology Center, Anantapur.

3.5.1.3 Future Plans:
YRC has plans to provide multiple services to rural youth as a Resource Center in career counseling, skills and entrepreneurship development, placement assistance, networking with other institutions for various youth related activities. AF also has plans to start training of rural youth for selection in military services.

3.5.2 Mobilising, youth to Govt. Skills training agencies:
AF has also been successful in assisting 76 rural youth in accessing the Government skills training courses like advanced tailoring & embroidery, Electrician, and computers etc during the reporting period. AF has been collaborating with RUDSETI, JSS etc. in mobilizing candidates from our target communities for the training.

3.5.3 Tailoring Centres:
AF has already established 15 tailoring centers for girls in its project area. It has provided sewing machines @ 5 machines per centre, for these centers which are spread across the 8 mandals of its project area. About 25 – 30 girls are trained in every batch. The course duration is 4 months. During the reporting period 559 girls/women have been trained in Tailoring and Embroidery. AF is providing an incentive of Rs.1000 per center per month, during the training period, as part of the contribution for the tailoring instructor’s salary. The remaining salary of the instructor and the cost on consumables is met by the girls themselves. They also arrange room for training at their own cost.

Of the trained 559 girls/ women, 122 girls have already been linked to small business promoters who give them piece work on contract basis. On an average they are earning about Rs. 1,500 – 2,000 per month. 46 girls are working in Tailoring shops and earning about Rs. 1,000 – 1,200 per month. 70 girls are working on their own, at their homes and earning about Rs.500 – 600
per month. The remaining 321 girls are waiting for work. Most of them will be linked to the business promoters soon.

3.5.4 Driving schools at Anantapur and Kalyandurg
During the reporting period, enrolment was not done for 2 months during April - May 2009 for driving school due to non availability of the candidates because of SSC and Intermediate exams. From June 2010 onwards, village level mobilization meetings were conducted to motivate and counsel rural unemployed youth, including girls/women to join the Driving course. Caste composition was also maintained for (a) Social equity and (b) accommodating all eligible candidates.

The course curriculum of AF Driving Course has been prepared as recommended by the Transport Department. Well equipped infrastructure with latest Sectional models, Audio Visual Aids, wall charts etc, have been arranged to educate the Trainees in Automobile Mechanism/Driving. Theory and Practical subjects are being taught on various working systems of automobile vehicles. Soft skills like spoken English, Personality Development etc. are also provided as part of the curriculum, as AF is committed to provide comprehensive training to the candidates to become not only good professional Drivers but also good human beings. They are also provided with awareness on First Aid and AIDS.

127 trainees including one girl have undergone training during the reporting period. Out of them 54 have been either employed with private owners or self employed.

Achievements against planned target for the year 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>No. of candidates enrolled</th>
<th>No. of candidates Passed out</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>BC</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>09</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Af Driving School, Kalyandurg.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>08</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>127</strong></td>
<td><strong>127</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
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</table>
3.6 Policy advocacy at different levels

The Objectives of promoting Policy advocacy at different levels are:

- To facilitate the farmers’ CBOs and the farmers, to identify their livelihood issues related to; (a) Government Agriculture policies, (b) Implementation of basic services like PDS, NREGP, (c) Alternate non-farm livelihoods etc.

- To mobilise collective voice of people on issues for effective representation at various relevant echelons of Government machinery for effective Lobby & Advocacy.

- To do advocacy with State/Central Governments for pro-poor policies, by forming networks / grids of CBOs, NGOs & CSOs.

During the last 2 years, AF conducted policy campaigns on two major themes, i.e. Sustainable Agriculture & NREGP.

3.6.1 Campaigning on Sustainable Agriculture policies:

3.6.1.1 Mandal level Sustainable Agriculture campaign conducted:

8 mandal level campaigns have been organized on Sustainable Agriculture, in all the 8 mandals of AF’s program area. Totally about 3,000 farmers (About 1,400 men and 1,600 women) have participated in these campaigns. In these campaigns the advantages of Sustainable Agriculture, the ill-effects of Green Revolution model of agriculture and issues in practicing of Sustainable Agriculture were discussed extensively. The emerging issues from these campaigns were discussed in the district level Farmers Conference, organized by AF during March 2009, in collaboration with a group of likeminded NGOs, involved in promoting Sustainable Agriculture, like CSA (Hyderabad), APPS, TIMBAKTU Collective and FES. The purpose of the Conference was to formulate favorable policy recommendations on Sustainable Agriculture in a participatory process with farmers. The Conference was well attended by about 1400 farmers having inclination to Sustainable Agriculture across the District. Special efforts were made to involve more women farmers. Consequently 60% of the participants were women. Besides a no. of Activists, Scientists, and officials from agriculture department, and agriculture research bodies also participated.

3.6.1.2 Recommendations from the campaigns:

- Appointing a “Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Farmers Welfare” to recommend appropriate policies for Sustainable Agriculture in
Anantapur District, with due emphasis on rain fed agriculture and rain fed farmers.

- Implementing integrated, bio-mass intensive, micro-watershed development in the District with emphasis on Sustainable Agriculture and natural resources.

- Providing incentives to farmers for practicing SA practices like preparation & application of bio-manures and bio-pest control practices @ Rs.3000 per acre.

- Providing long-term and mid-term based additional incentives, particularly for perennial tree crops like Mango, Tamarind, Sweet Lime, Pomegranate etc.

- Ensuring remunerative prices and marketing facilities for all crops grown using Sustainable Agriculture practices.

- Providing critical (protective) irrigation for all rain fed crops in case of long dry spells. Provide 100% coverage of micro irrigation facilities for efficient water use.

- Replacing crop insurance with income insurance for all crops and farmers. The sum assured must cover crop investment plus an additional 50%, to compensate the value of the yield lost and thus provide income insurance to the farmer.

- Organizing seed production in every panchayat and facilitate seed banks, managed by farmers, with local, non-hybrid and non-genetically modified seed.

- Introducing the locally grown millets and pulses like Jowar, Ragi, Red gram etc., in the subsidized Public Distribution System (PDS).

- Organizing Sustainable Agriculture Farmers’ Groups on the lines of women SHGs and federate them at Mandal, District and State level, to play a vital role in transforming the conventional agriculture into Sustainable Integrated Farming.

- Establishing a region-specific and farmer-centric extension service system including farmer’s extension institutions for propagating Sustainable Agriculture.

3.6.2 Campaigning on NREGP on issues, procedures and policies:

16 mandal level campaigns have been organised on NREGP, in all the 8 mandals of AF’s program area. Totally about 13,000 farm labor (About 7,000 men and 6,000 women) attended these campaigns. In these
campaigns, the required policy changes in NREGP and issues related to procedural bottlenecks in implementation were discussed extensively. AF also conducted a district level labor campaign on the rights and entitlements under NREGS. About 1400 farm labor (About 700 men and 700 women) participated.

**AF has lobbied for and succeeded in including the following Sustainable Agriculture related interventions Under MGNREGS, which will benefit both the labor, small and marginal rain fed farmers:**

- Taking up pebble bunding, Rain water harvesting structures like farm ponds, check dams, Rainfed Horticulture and farm forestry/afforestation to create productive assets for the rain fed farmers. They all have been accepted and become a policy now.

- Provision for compost making with green matter and tank silt. As of now compost pitting is accepted but compost making is not yet accepted.

- To take up MGNREGS works even in forest lands. It is a policy now

- Providing tools to laborers and customization of tools to reduce drudgery. It is a policy now.

- Provision of work-site facilities like water, shade, crèche, medical facilities etc. They have been there in the policy but not adequately implemented. So, the demand is to implement the policy by overcoming the hurdles.

- Sanction of Rs.100 wage payment to water suppliers on par with wage laborers. It is a policy now.

- Laborer’s medical bills in case of any work-site accidents, can be certified by local Doctors now, thereby reducing the delay in medical bill payments. Earlier certification by government doctors was mandatory.

- A concurrent system of Social Audit is being advocated at the State level. Now there is an Annual Social Audit involving the educated rural youth. However, the District Collector of Anantapur has introduced a weekly Social Audit System of randomly selected villages on every Saturday involving the Govt. functionaries of various other departments, not involved in the direct implementation of MGNREGP. It is working well and creating a scare among the erring MGNREGP staff.

The above efforts achieved the important objectives of (a) Creating wide spread awareness on Sustainable Agriculture & related Government policies and Rights, entitlements, opportunities for the labor under NREGA, and (b) Facilitating an interface between the farmers, labor and the district level Government functionaries at mandal level, and (c) Bringing out problems faced by the farmers in practicing Sustainable Agriculture and the problems faced by labor in the implementation of NREGP.
3.7 Interventions in NABARD funded watersheds.

3.7.1 Progress during 2009-10

AF Ecology Center is working in 6 Watersheds funded by NABARD. Of them 3 watersheds were sanctioned in Nov’2007 under batch-I, and the other 3 watersheds were sanctioned in Aug’2008 under batch-II. AF collaborated with NABARD because the objectives of the NABARD program were matching with AF’s long-term objectives of; (a) Upgrading and conserving natural resources like trees, soil, water, bio-diversity (b) Enhancing the productivity of farmers’ degraded lands, (c) Recharging the depleted ground water reserves, (d) Promoting tree-based farming systems, (e) Promoting Crop diversification and vegetation development in rainfed lands and (f) Promoting Sustainable Agriculture practices like NPM and LEISA. It is complementary to AF’s Sustainable Agriculture program and can contribute substantially to the achievement of AF’s goal. The watershed programme is being implemented in a participatory approach involving the people. At each watershed village a Watershed Development Committee is organized with a full consensus of the whole village. In organizing the Watershed Development Committees adequate representation is given to women, landless and other occupational groups. All the decisions regarding planning and implementation of watershed activities are taken by Watershed Committee and implemented under its supervision. Each watershed programs under NABARD is implemented in 2 phases. The first Phase is called the Capacity Building Phase (CBP) and the second phase is the Full Implementation Phase (FIP). The Batch-I watersheds have completed the CBP and entered into FIP, whereas the Batch-II watersheds are implementing the CBP and they are likely to enter into FIP by Oct’2010. Following are the type of activities implemented under NABARD watershed program, during the reporting period:

1. Soil & Moisture Conservation (SMC) works like (a) Farm Bunds with Soil, Pebbles & Field Stones and (b) Water Absorption Trenches. During the reporting period SMC works have been implemented in 1375 Acs of rain fed lands, in the 6 watershed villages. It covered common lands as well as cultivated lands.

2. Gully control works like (a) Rock Fill Dams and (b) Stone Gully Plugs: During the reporting period, 63 Rock Fill Dams and 92 Stone Gully Plugs have been constructed in the 6 watershed villages.
3. Rain Water Harvesting works like (a) Farm Ponds and (b) Mini Percolation Tank: During the reporting period, 17 Farm Ponds and 1 Mini Percolation Tank have been constructed in the 6 watershed villages.

4. Crop Diversification activities like (a) Dry Land Horticulture, (b) Bio-mass Plantations on farm bunds and field borders and (c) Grass fodder: During the reporting period, 126 Acs of Mango Plantations, 1375 Acs of Bio-mass Plantations were established and Grass fodder was grown in all the 6 watershed villages by broadcasting the seed.

5. Sustainable Agriculture activities like (a) NPM plots, (b) Vermi Compost Units and (c) SRI method of Paddy cultivation: During the reporting period, 4 NPM Plots and 8 Vermi Compost units were established in 3 watershed villages.

All the activities are implemented in a transparent manner and the details of works and payments are displayed prominently by painting on the walls in the central place of the village.

Farmers’ Clubs have been formed in 6 watershed villages. Each club has a membership of 10-12 farmers. The Objective of these clubs is “To access technical knowledge and awareness on the latest developments in the field of agriculture from various sources, disseminate the knowledge among all the other farmers in the village, motivate them to use this knowledge for enhancing agricultural productivity and work for the holistic development of the village”.

3.7.2 A Special Initiative

NABARD has sanctioned a comprehensive and holistic Village Development Program for Kothur village of AF’s Kalyandurg area. This Village Development Program envisages facilitation of the effective utilization of all Govt resources/schemes for the comprehensive and holistic development of the village. For the effective utilization of the Govt resources / schemes AF is planning to; (a) Create awareness in the village on the existing Govt. schemes and available Govt and Non-Govt resources, and (b) Train the villagers in accessing these resources/schemes, under the NABARD Village Development Program.

Besides this, women groups will be formed and trainings will be conducted for them on alternate livelihoods. Gyenic camps, Eye camps and Blood donation camps will also be arranged in the village. An animal health camp is also planned in the village under this program.
4. Changes in the organization:

4.1 Related to management structure:

a) From NPM Sub-committees to GSSs:
AF started its Sustainable Agriculture Program during Kharif 2007. AF also by coincidence collaborated with NPM Programme of SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty). The Governments’ NPM programme was an awareness generation programme on Non-pesial management in agriculture, which complimented our Sustainable Agriculture Programme. The SERP-NPM program was implemented in all the 230 villages of AF’s project area, through our STOs and village activists, NPM sub-committees, village organizations and Mandal Mahila Samakhyas (MMS). Simultaneously AF had started organising its own CBO structure to implement the program. Accordingly village level CBOs i.e. Sasya mitra groups (SMGs - primary farmers’ groups with 25–30 farmer families) and Grama Sasyamitra Samakhyas (with 9–11 conveners and co conveners of SMGs in each village) have been formed with the enrolled farmers. During this period SERP had provided small facilitation charges to AF’s gross root level staff. AF implemented the SERP-NPM program until December, 2009. Then, because of the changes taken place in the state level government policy “SERP” decided to implement its NPM program directly through MMS and VO’s (Village Organisations) and withdrew from the collaboration with AF. The NPM work done by 5 to 6 Village Activists is taken over by AF’s STOs (Socio-technical organizers). The NPM sub-committee’s and VO’s work is taken over by GSSs. The MMS’s (Mandal Mahila Samakhya) work is being managed by the MSS (Mandal Sasyamitra Samakhya)

b) Driving School & Skills Centers:
AF has now constructed building infrastructure facilities for conducting trainings in Driving and skills Development at AF Ecology Centre. Earlier the trainings were conducted in rented buildings outside.

4.2 Related to Job-oriented Skills Training for rural youth:

- Up to 2008-09, AF Skills training centers at Kalyandurg & Anantapur were implemented jointly in collaboration with Skill Pro.

- From 2009-10 onwards AF started managing the Skills Training Centers on its own. Meanwhile, the global economic melt-down forced AF to re-think its strategy. The employment market for startup jobs crashed as the higher qualified began to seek lower end jobs in view of recession. So, AF organized only one course of ITES in Kalyandurg this year. AF is now studying the feasibility to revise its youth programme strategy. It is studying with SAMUAD and Ants Consultancy Services (both are youth based organizations) for framing its new youth policy.

- Coming year AF is also planning to train rural youth for army recruitment.
4.3 Related to staff composition:

- As the administrative costs became high, in order to reduce costs on staff and purchase of new vehicles 5 STOs and 12 Drivers have been transferred to RDT on their request. And vehicles used by AF are reduced from 14 to 9. All the vehicles are rented except for one.

- 4 STOs, 2 FCs and 2 ATLs have left or retired from the organization for different reasons

- 2 STOs are transferred as FCs. And one FC is promoted as ATL.

- As a result the grass root level staff, especially STOs are allotted more villages i.e. from 5 villages per STO to about 7 villages now. The total number of villages remains the same (i.e.) 230.

- One new Accountant was taken in to the accounts department.

- The total number of staff was reduced from 109 to 84.

4.4. Related to other issues:  Yes ☑  No ❌

Some new initiatives have been initiated during the year 2009-10 as follows:

4.4.1 Biogas project under CDM (Clean Development Mechanism):

During the year, AF Ecology Centre initiated a process of preparation for taking up a Biogas project under CDM. AF proposed to take up this project as it contributes to mitigation of climate change and brings additional financial benefits to the participating farmers with carbon revenues for 21 years. The biogas project supplements and adds value to the ongoing Sustainable Agriculture Programme of Ecology Centre. It also helps in creating wide-spread awareness on the burning issue of climate change and how it is connected to ecology.

AF Ecology Centre has proposed to work with about 12000 farmers under this project. FCN (Fair Carbon Network) particularly Mr. Ram Esteves of ADATS has been assisting us in the process of preparation.

By now we have identified about 14000 potential farmers through a household survey and the Project Design Document (PDD) is being prepared by the Technical Team of FCN. This initiative is a long drawn process involving multi-institutions both Government and private; and active participation of participating farmers. The preparatory process will take another one year or so (March 2011) to come to a stage when we can look for a carbon investor to finance this project.
4.4.2 **Low Carbon Farming (LCF) under Voluntary Emission Reduction (VER):**

AF Ecology Centre has initiated another process of preparation for taking up a LCF project under VER. It is taken up jointly by a group of 5 likeminded NGOs, who are also partners of FCN. The 5 NGOs are AF Ecology Centre, PWDS, BEST, SACRED and SEDS. Environment Defense Fund (EDF) of USA has agreed to provide technical support to LCF. This LCF project brings in additional benefits of carbon revenues to the participating farmers, who practice eco-friendly agriculture practices like low tillage, bio-composting, diversified cropping, tree cropping etc. AF is preparing to take up this project first as a pilot project during the year 2011-12 with about 2000 farmers in about 4000 ha. of land. It is very technical, very new, a path breaking and a long drawn preparatory process even before we take up this pilot project. And also it has some preparatory costs. So, LCF network has made a joint proposal to EED and ICCO for funding the preparatory and pilot phase for which the approval is awaited.

Such an LCF project when taken up on a scale, supplements and adds additional incentive for farmers to take up eco-friendly agricultural practices like Sustainable Agriculture.

4.4.3 **Assignment undertaken for DPRs preparation under IWMP (Integrated Watershed Management Programme) for Government of A.P.:**

AF Ecology Centre has been given an assignment by Government of Andhra Pradesh for preparing four Detailed Project Reports (DPR) for implementation of Integrated Watershed Management Programme(IWMP). We are given this assignment as Government of A.P recognized and valued our expertise and valuable contribution to the watershed development in actual implementation and as well our role in making Government watershed policies more people and environment friendly. The process of DPR preparation involved a detailed planning of all watersheds (NRM) and livelihood development activities with a participatory approach. This assignment has 4 mega watersheds, covering 21 villages and a population of 28174 and a watershed area of 15718.81 ha. We have setup 4 field teams and began the planning work in the month of December 2009, and will be completed by about June 2010. The important reason for us to take up this assignment is that 3 of the mega watersheds fall within our project area and will benefit directly our target groups in several ways.
5. Changes in Development Context and Problem Analysis

5.1 Are there important changes in the direct political environment since the inception of the project

Yes. There were general elections for state Assembly and Parliament during May / June 2009 and the ruling party Congress lead UPA at Centre and Congress at A.P State came into power, and they continued the pro-poor and pro farmer policies like free electricity, Rs. 2/- Kg rice, Indiramma housing, 108 & 104 health services, reimbursement of education fees, Arogya Sree, support prices for Agriculture produce, supply of seed, crop insurance, NREGS, Right To Information (RTI), old age pensions, pensions for physically and mentally challenged etc. All these schemes directly or indirectly contribute to the achievement of our project objective. Elections were held for water users associations in villages, where the irrigation tanks are situated and the target farmers played key role in the process of elections. There was panic in political environment during September 2009 when the chief minister of the State got deceased in a Helicopter accident. Later there were political agitations throughout the state, from December, 2009 till March 2010 for separate “Telangana State” and “United Andhra Pradesh” state which also created a temporary disturbance even in 8 mandals of AF’s project area. But it did not affect AFs work or the routine life of target people since it was limited to Mandal headquarters only. Now this problem is kept in cold storage since the central Government has appointed a special committee to look into the matter.

5.2 Are there important changes in the Direct Social environment since the inception of the project.

Yes. The implementation of NREGS, Indiramma housing programme and other pro-poor programmes by Government has created lot of positive impact on socio-economic conditions of the people in the project area. AF has been playing important role in enabling people to access the pro-poor programmes. AF along with other NGOs lobbied for and succeeded in bringing required changes in some implementation procedures of NREGS by involving the farmers and labour groups. As a result the wage rate raised from Rs. 80 to 100 and work site facilities like supply of drinking water shade etc., have improved. More families could avail more number of person days i.e., 40 – 60 days / family and earned substantial income. The distress migration has been stopped. Because of the increased income, families were able to send their children to schools and availed better health, besides using the money for crop investments. About 15% - 20% families have availed housing from Government. The Government has been trying to streamline the PDS by removing the ineligible ration cards. The old-age pensions were also streamlined. But still there are few families to get ration cards and old age pensions for which AF staff has been assisting the eligible families in accessing these basic needs. The prices of all kinds of food commodities have gone up
and people find it hard to cope with. During the last year, there was failure of crops in almost all the villages. Farmers were able to get about 80% of crop investment as crop insurance from the Government, which gave some relief to the families. The women members of the families got lot of opportunities to take decisions related to social and financial matters at family level since they got lot of opportunities from Govt. through SHGs and VOs. The global recession continued and it adversely affected Job market for rural youth, because lower end jobs in computers, hospitality, retail sales, electrical works etc., were not available in the recession-hit employment market.

5.3 Are there important changes in the direct natural environment since the inception of the project.

The mainstream agriculture, which is also known as Green Revolution model is highly vulnerable, particularly under rainfed conditions.

During the year 2009-10 people could not raise crops specially groundnut crop in about 60% of the land due to delayed rains. Government and AF implemented the contingency crop plan in all the project villages which was not so successful as there were no late rains also during Nov – Dec 2009. The crop cover on the land was hardly for 3 months and the soil was exposed to sun, resulting in loss of soil nutrients.

The vegetative cover on field bunds, waste lands and CPRs has been improved under farm forestry programme of AF and NREGS. There were a couple of heavy rains during September and October months which helped in improving ground water, better survival of plants, increased vegetation and increased extent of Rabi crops.

5.4 Do those changes have implications for the relevance of the project.

Yes. The above mentioned changes have caused near total loss of rainfed crop which was valued at about Rs. 3500 crores and a lot of suffering to people. However, such a calamity also offered a congenial environment for educating on AF’s objectives and activities of Sustainable Agriculture. The delayed rains forced the farmers to go for multiple cropping with food crops which ensures food and fodder security. The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has been reduced as there was no groundnut crop, in Khariff during 2009-10. The farmers could save money which otherwise they would have spent on the expensive groundnut seed, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. In view of the vagaries of monsoon AF has been creating awareness and motivation to farmers to practice sustainable agriculture. Many farmers have begun to think that it is low cost and sustainable and showed more interest in sustainable agriculture practices in orchards and rabi crops. Because of the political awareness, people were in a better position to access Government resources like, crop insurance, subsidies on seeds, bank loans for low interest, education loans and agriculture equipments (Sprayers, Sprinklers, Drip) etc.
5.5. Do those changes have implications for the project goal?

Yes. The changes mentioned above are largely contributing to the project goal i.e., to create family assets, reduction in rate of distress migration, increased enrollment of children, increased access to health services and maximum mobilization of Government resources. The SERP, NREGS and other Government schemes being implemented are contributing to project goals besides AF’s programme activities. Under NREGS Natural resources like soil, water, vegetation are being developed and consolidated apart from employment generation. And the sustainable agriculture practices are being promoted under SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty) Programme. The DRDA, under IKP (Indira Kranthi Pathakam) has been promoting sustainable rural livelihoods (Dairy and Non farm IGAs). NREGS has been playing a vital role in improving immediate livelihoods. AF has been playing key role in increasing awareness and motivation to the target people to utilize NREGS, IKP, SERP and other Government schemes. Village level institutions like SMGs, GSS, besides MSS and ZSS are being promoted and strengthened to voice for pro-poor policies at different levels, apart from active involvement in implementation of programme activities.

5.6 Do those changes have implication for the project objective?

Yes. The changes in natural environment causing a severe drought during the year have created favourable conditions for highlighting the adverse effects of Green Revolution model of agriculture and educating the people on AF’s objective of sustainable agriculture and promotion of diversified livelihoods (Non-farm livelihoods for women, skills development to rural youth). The crisis in mainstream agriculture is used as an opportunity to promote sustainable agriculture. The members of SMGs and labour groups actively involved in the general elections as the awareness created before the elections by AF had a good impact on them. The awareness regarding Politics, Govt. policies and various schemes has increased among the people because of AF’s awareness campaigns, monthly newsletters, electronic and print media. Now the political environment in the project area, district and state is stable. AF has very good relationship with all political parties and Government functionaries. AF has been conducting motivational campaigns to the Government housing beneficiaries to construct sanitary latrines attached to their houses. Apart from motivation AF has developed low cost models and also constructing 100 model latrines for SC / ST and poor families in 10 villages. AF has taken initiative to bring in the ‘Millet’ in to PDS (Public Distribution System) through the women groups and the District Administration has positively responded to include ‘Millet’ like Ragi, Pearl Millet, Fox Millet and Jowar in PDS in order to ensure nutritional security at family level. The Government in principle has agreed to implement this in selected villages of AF’s project area, which ultimately helps AF to promote more food crops in multiple cropping systems. The Vagaries of monsoons have increased the relevance of AF’s programme and the
achievements so far indicate that our present work is relevant and in congruence with the project objectives.

5.7 Is the underlying problem analysis of the project still valid.

Yes. AF after conserving and consolidating the natural resources like land, water, vegetation and livestock through watershed development programmes from 1987-2007 in the project villages, now shifted the focus from watershed programme to Sustainable Agriculture and Diversified Livelihoods after thorough study and analysis of the situation in project villages. AF spent sufficient time and human resources in analyzing the situation with target people and experts. AF realized the need to put its efforts to increase the agriculture productivity in the long term on sustainable basis and improvement of non-farm livelihoods through various measures, particularly with women and youth. The present programme has been designed based on the systematic problem analysis and it is very much valid. And AF is open to adapt to the changing needs and to incorporate necessary programmatic changes if necessary.

6. Conclusions for the future work

6.1 Based on your experience do you see a need for changing the planned activities to achieve project objective: Yes ☑ No ☐

6.2 If necessary please update the project planning :Not necessary

6.3 In case of need for consultancy; In what area?

6.3.1 There is need for consultancy in improving our PME. We propose to involve at different levels the target families and the CBOs in Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and establish a system of Participatory Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME). At present the target people and the Sasyamithra Groups are involved at the village level only.

6.4 What are the lessons learned

6.4.1 Some important learnings have come regarding targeting the whole village and composition of the CBOs. Working with whole village with all families including rainfed and irrigation farmers, small and marginal farmers and landless has not been a workable idea in view of it’s a) the number of families are too large in each village to work with and b) high heterogeneity in the interests of various types of farmers. Consequently, our attention and resources were getting thin and wide to make an impact on the whole village. And the heterogeneity in interests of various types of farmers was not binding the families in Sasyamithra Groups. So, it was decided to work...
at two levels in a village. One level is at the whole village level for awareness generation and need based technical services on sustainable agriculture. Only about 10% of time would be invested in this awareness creation and need based technical advice. Another level is to work with focused attention with about 100 select families, comprising 25 poorest landless labor families, 50 poor labour cum rainfed farmers (among them 25 would be necessarily SC or ST families) and another 25 farmers with irrigation facilities. These 4 categories would be organised into 4 respective Sasyamithra Groups in each village.
CASE STORY - I

ALTERNATE (COW PEA) CROP SAVES A FAMILY FROM FINANCIAL BREAK-DOWN

- Case Story of a rain fed farmer going for an alternate crop than groundnut

Mr. Kondappa, is a farmer from Avulenna village of Kalyandurg area. His 4-member family has 6 acres of rain fed land in which they used to cultivate groundnut. The groundnut crop was not remunerative at all, as there had been crop failures year after year. During good crop years he used to get a yield of about 2 tons from his 6 acres of land. He used to earn about Rs.60,000 by selling his produce. He used to invest about Rs. 26,000/- on preparatory cultivation, purchase of seed, purchase of chemical fertilizers & pesticides, Labor cost etc. During a good crop year he used to get a net income of Rs. 34,000. But in the years when the crop failed he used to incur heavy losses. Since the crop failures are on increase and since he had to pay accumulated exorbitant interest for the loans he had barrowed, he was totally shattered financially. To add to his woes, the monsoons did not arrive until late August during 2009 and he could not even sow groundnut. His poor family was on the verge of a financial break-down.

But there was an opportunity even in such distress. AF staff suggested him to; (a) Sow cow pea which can be sown even in August, with very less crop investment (b) Shift to cost-effective and eco-friendly bio-fertilizers & bio-pesticides, instead of spending a lot of money on harmful chemical fertilizers & pesticides. Incidentally he was assisted to get a farm pond sanctioned in his land under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS).
He purchased 50 Kg. of cow pea at the rate of Rs. 40 per Kg. from the village seed bank. That costed him Rs. 2,000/- which he could pay after the crop harvest either in cash or in the form of seed. He purchased 10 carts of organic manure for Rs. 2,500/-. Further he spent Rs. 1,500 on jeevamrutham and other bio-pesticides. He also spent Rs. 12,000 on labor costs. Totally, he invested Rs.18,000 on his 6 acres of land. The yields were average this year. Even then, he got a yield of 18 quintals of cow pea and the produce was sold @ Rs. 3,600 per quintal. He also sold the dry cowpea fodder for Rs.1,200. The total income was Rs. 66,000/-. After deducting his investment, the net income from his 6 acres of land is Rs. 48,000. This was better than what he used to get during a good crop of groundnut (Rs. 34,000), using chemical fertilizers & pesticides. Also his land has become enriched with nitrogen because (a) the cow pea is a legume fixing nitrogen in the soil, (b) crop-rotation.

The family is delighted and wants to continue with alternate crops like cow pea and practice Sustainable Agriculture in future.

“My friends and relatives have praised me for taking a good decision by choosing to sow cow pea. My wife and daughters are happy to add one more food grain to our food stock. Above all it gave me good profits that helped me to recover, thanks to AF.

- Kondappa, Rain fed farmer Avulenna village.
NEW LIFE WITH “JEEVAMRITAM” – AN ELIXIR OF LIFE

- A case story from Tumukunta Village.

Mr. Golla Era Nagappa belongs to Tumukunta village of Kundurpi Mandal. His five-member family depends mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. They have 5 acres of dry land and 2 acres of irrigated land with an undependable water source. Because of insufficient water availability for other cash crops, they took up floriculture in their 2 acres of irrigated land and planted 500 jasmine plants. They used to spend about Rs. 12,000 per year towards the cost of chemical fertilizers and pesticides alone. Rs. 4,000 was spent on providing irrigation and other expenses, which means a total investment of Rs.16,000 on their 2 acres of land. Initially they harvested good yield of about 480 Kgs of flowers per year and a decent return of Rs. 24,000 per year @ Rs.50/Kg. After deducting all expenditure, the family used to get a net income of Rs. 8,000 per year from their 2 acres of land.

But after 2 years i.e., in 2008 the growth of the plants was affected and the leaves started turning pale and yellow. Nagappa, tried many chemical fertilizers and pesticides, but all in vain. The annual flower yield came down from 480 Kgs to 96 Kgs causing heavy reduction in the returns from a handsome Rs. 24,000/- to a meager Rs. 4,800/- per annum, from their 2 acres of land. This was less than even their investment on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The family incurred a heavy loss of Rs. 11,200 on their...
investment during the year. They got panic-stricken and approached the Agriculture Officer of Settur area for some guidance.

After visiting the plot, our Agriculture Officer advised the family to apply “Jeevamritam” @ one litre/plant once in 20 days, and convinced them of its benefits. The family prepared “Jeevamritam” by using 10 Kgs of cow dung, 10 litres of cow urine, 2 Kgs of Jaggery, 2 Kgs of Bengal gram flour and 1 Kg of soil. All the ingredients were put in a drum, 200 litres of water was added and stored for 4-5 days with required stirring at regular intervals.

Jeevamritam was applied to the Jasmine plants and the family was surprised to see normal growth of the plants. When they applied it for the second and third time, the plants started yielding flowers like never before. During 2009-10 the family harvested a bumper yield of 720 Kgs, fetching a very good return of Rs. 36,000 @ Rs.50/Kg. The investment on Jeevamritam was a paltry Rs. 1200/- for the 3 applications. After deducting all expenditure, the family earned a net income of Rs. 30,800 during the year from their 2 acres of land.

Mr. Era Nagappa and his family are extremely happy to get such a huge income with minimum investment and expressed their gratitude to AF staff for extending their support, in their hour of distress.
VERMI COMPOST REAPS RICH HARVESTS

- Case story of a labor-turned-farmer.

Parvatamma and her husband work as agricultural laborers in Mallapuram village of Kalyandurg area. They have 2 Sons and a Daughter. Their only concern, now a days is to provide higher education to their children. But with high inflation and astronomical expenses on education on one hand and their hand-to-mouth income on the other, they lost hope and thought that their desire will remain a day-dream. However the family decided to take some land on lease and do cultivation. They also learnt about the potent of sustainable agriculture practices which are low cost and eco-friendly like Vermi compost as a fertilizer, in an awareness campaign organized by AF on Sustainable Agriculture, in their village. Though for many years they have been thinking of taking some land on lease, yet they could not implement the idea, because of the un-affordably high investment costs of cultivation. They came to know about Vermi compost and some decoctions of locally available herbs their investment costs will come down drastically to their affordable limits.

“We believe that Vermi compost is the best alternative to chemical fertilizers. We will continue producing and using Vermi compost in future. As the expenditure for producing vermi compost is less we were able to save some amount. This helped us to send our three children to Kalyandurg for higher studies. We are happy to become farmers from laborers. Whenever AF staff brings some visitors to our field we feel happy and proud.”

- Parvathamma & Family
Mallapuram village
They took 2 acres of dry land on lease from a land owner and sowed groundnut during Kharif 2009. They practiced SA practices especially the application of vermi compost and bio-pesticides. AF provided them some incentive, to construct 3 Vermi compost units in their farm land and provided them technical guidance on how to produce Vermi compost. Totally, they produced 3.6 tons of Vermi compost during the year from the 3 pits. Of the compost produced, they applied 0.5 ton to the groundnut crop.

They have spent Rs. 1,000 on the Vermi compost units, Rs. 600 for the decoctions (Bio-pesticides), Rs. 3,000 for groundnut seed and Rs. 6300 towards labor and other costs. Totally, they spent Rs. 10,900 on their 2 acres of groundnut crop. They got 12.8 quintals (32 bags) of groundnut yield, which was sold @ 2,750 per quintal. The total income from groundnut crop was Rs.35,200. After deducting the investment, their net income from groundnut crop is Rs.24,300.

They sold the remaining 3.1 tons of Vermi compost @ Rs. 4 per Kg. to farmers from their own village and the surrounding villages and earned an amount of Rs.12,400. Totally, the family has earned Rs.36,700 during the year. Now more farmers from the village are coming forward to practice the preparation and application of vermi compost. Parvathamamma has been selected as a Community Resource Person (CRP) by IKP.
ANNEXURES
VILLAGE LEVEL CAMPAIGNS ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Village level campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture are organized in all the 230 project villages of AF, under its awareness generation and capacity development program. The purpose is “To sensitizing farming community in particular and the public in general about; (a) the benefits of practicing Sustainable Agriculture, (b) the hazardous effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on human beings, flora and fauna, (c) the ill effects of mono cropping and the need to practice crop diversity with food grains, fruits, fodder & bio-mass and (d) the need to maintain bio-diversity etc”.

These campaigns, which are conducted twice in a year in each of the 230 project villages, are well attended by about 200 participants (About 100 men & 100 women on an average in each village. The Grama Sasyamitra Samakhyas (GSSs) are responsible for organizing these campaigns, supported by all the Sasyamitra groups (SMGs) in the village. AF staff are providing guidance and playing a supportive role in the process. During the reporting period the village level CBOs (SMGs & GSS) have mobilized their own financial and material resources for organizing one of the two campaigns in each of the 230 project villages, all by themselves!

Of the two campaigns conducted every year in each village, only one campaign is funded from the project budget. The second campaign doesn’t have budget at all and is solely sponsored by the village CBOs (SMGs & GSS), with contributions from farmer families. The women is SMG and GSS have been playing an important role in mobilizing the resources as well as the people for the campaigns. Awareness is being created among the farming community on how best they can
utilize the cheap, locally available material and prepare bio-pesticides and fertilizers at their homes/farm lands, as substitutes to the costly chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Emphasis is also laid on crop diversity, tree crops, crop rotation, importance of food crops, dairy, livestock, introduction of new improved varieties of groundnut and other crops, increase in productivity and reduction in cost of cultivation. Local art forms by village level artists are also performed to combine entertainment with awareness on Sustainable Agriculture.

**Process of organizing campaigns:**

- Planning of campaigns is done by the GSS, SMGs and AF staff jointly.
- The responsibilities are shared between the GSS, SMG members and staff.
- Education material like visual aids and literature are used to educate the farmers on the preparation of bio-fertilizers & bio-pesticides.
- Exhibition of locally available bio-ingredients like Neem products, local wild plants used for making decoctions etc. is arranged at the venue.
- Rallies are organized in the villages involving women and men holding banners and placards with slogans.
- The area teams and sometimes Agriculture department officials create awareness on Sustainable Agriculture and other ecological aspects.
- The farmers, who have followed NPM practices and adopted non-negotiable practices will share their experiences and motivate other farmers.
- Role plays are organized and thematic songs are rendered on Sustainable Agriculture, the hazards caused by Chemical farming, the value of local seed and the need to protect bio-diversity.
- Awareness on Government schemes related to agriculture is also created in these campaigns.

During the reporting period 486 village level Sustainable Agriculture campaigns (106 % of the planned 460) were conducted in the 230 villages of AF’s project area. Of them only 230 campaigns were funded from AF’s budget. The remaining 256 campaigns were solely sponsored by the village CBOs themselves (SMGs & GSS), with contributions from farmer families in the village. These campaigns covered 40,894 farmer men & women (89% of the planned 46,000). Of them 18,923 (82 % of the planned 23,000) are women farmers and 21,971 (96 % of the planned 23,000) are men farmers.
ECOLOGY DAYS – 2009-10

1. Introduction:
AF’s Mandal Sasyamitra Samakhyas (MSS) organized Two Ecology Day celebrations during 2009- One in Settur area at Kundurpi on 6th June covering about 1020 farmers (About 600 women and 420 men) from 60 villages of Kundurpi and Settur mandals and the other at Dharmavaram on 13th June, covering about 1150 farmers (About 650 women and 500 men) from 55 villages of Dharmavaram and Rapthadu mandals. Samakhya members took lead in organizing the events meant for educating the people about the importance of the Ecology Day in the context of Sustainable Agriculture. They motivated the people to attend the campaign with their own travel expenditure. This is a new trend in both the areas which is a great achievement for the Sasya Mithra Groups (SMGs) and the MSS members. The participants include active farmers, conveners and co-conveners of SMGs, MSSs, NPM practitioners, Organic Farmers, Sustainable Agriculture practitioners belonging to rain fed and drought affected poor, small and marginal farming community. Project Directors of various Govt. agencies, Village Panchayath Sarpanches, MPTC members, VO leaders DWMA, DRDA and IKP staff also joined the celebrations. The MSS members of the above mandals, together with AF staff planned about the venue, awareness themes to be focused, items to be exhibited, cultural items to be presented, guests to be invited and food arrangements etc. The venues looked very colorful and lively like big festival fairs, with women and men pouring in happily, wearing eye-catching colorful attires.

2. The Objectives:

Following are the main objectives of organizing the Ecology Day:

- To create awareness and sensitise on the problems of ecological degradation due to over exploitation of Natural Resources, like water, forest, vegetation, use of chemicals in agriculture etc., and how to increase the role and responsibility of farming community in restoring ecological balance by using judiciously and conserving natural resources.

- To sensitise the rural community inorder to protect the local eco-system and bio-diversity including Human beings, Animals, Birds, Insects, Trees and Nature as a whole.

- To create awareness on (a) Pollution of Soil, Water and Air through the indiscriminate use of poisonous chemicals in agriculture and (b) The
hazardous effects of chemical pollution on total eco-system and human health.

- To motivate the farmers (a) to stop using chemical fertilizers and pesticides and (b) to demonstrate how to adopt the eco-friendly and cost effective Sustainable Agriculture practices.

- To motivate the farmers to regain control over Agriculture by using only the traditional, indigenous seed varieties produced locally.

- To motivate the farmers to avoid mono cropping and go in for crop-rotation, diversified varieties of food grains which have become rare today, and to motivate them to use those food grains regularly, which will add to their good health on one side and soil health on the other.

4. **Awareness building on Nature and Ecology**

4.1 **Awareness building through Exhibitions:**

A big exhibition was arranged with many attractive stalls showing (a) SA practices through Flexis, Photos and models, (b) Organically produced Vegetables & fruits, (c) Different varieties of food grains, (d) A variety of local medicinal herbs, (e) Animals and (f) Handicrafts by rural women, at the venue to catch the attention of the participants.

- There were stalls exhibiting charts on (a) Non-negotiable practices in Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Life cycles of harmful insects and friendly Insects, and (c) Preparation of various Bio-pesticides (Decoctions prepared from locally available herbs and material). Some stalls exhibited different types of Bio-fertilizers and liquid fertilizers. An eye-catching model on SA practices with different components like NPM practices, fodder, Food crops, Multiple crops, Horticulture, SRI and different types of compost units was also arranged at the venue. The idea was to generate awareness and interest on SA practices and to motivate and stop the farmers from using Chemicals and to pull them back to the eco-friendly Bio-pesticides and manures.

- Some stalls displayed a variety of vegetables, fruits, greens and some food grains produced organically. The idea was to create awareness among the farmers on the growing importance of the organic products.
Some stalls exhibited different kinds of food grains, oil seeds etc. The idea was to create awareness among young farmers on traditional and some extinct varieties of food grains, which have high health and nutritional value.

Various kinds of locally available home remedies and medicinal herbs were displayed. The idea was to remind people of the local medicinal herbs, used by our ancestors, which have no side effects and to revive their use in future.

A variety of animals like Snakes, lizards, Peacocks, Sparrows, Parrots and some other birds were exhibited. The idea was to create a thought among the participants that these animals and birds, which are becoming extinct, also have a positive role to play in the local ecology.

Some stalls sold handicrafts like baskets, bags, candles, scented sticks, toys and eatables prepared by women Income Generation (IG) groups. These stalls were arranged to create interest among women to take up skill-based non-farm IGAs.

People thronged all these stalls with great curiosity and interest as they were educative and informative. Farmers were seen discussing among themselves about the various interesting exhibits, which roused their curiosity. Some of the elder people were reminiscing and explaining about the extinct varieties of traditional food grains. Men farmers were totally immersed in seeing the traditional agricultural tools, used by their forefathers, weapons used for hunting in olden days. The women folk were attracted to the food grains, the handicrafts, the animals and birds and various bio-pesticides & bio-fertilizers. There were lively discussions all-round the stalls and the staff were quiet content and happy that the purpose of setting up the exhibition was fulfilled.

4.2 Awareness building through messages by eminent persons
The meetings were presided by the Woman Conveners of MSS. Many officials from different sectors like Agricultural University, Weather Research Center, Forest Dept, DRDA, IKP, Govt College, Horticulture Dept besides MPDO, MRO and RDT staff attended the campaign. They addressed the gatherings and gave some interesting messages on (a) the climate change, its causes and effects, (b) the over exploitation of natural resources, (c) the hazardous effects of poisonous pesticides on people, animals and environment, (d) the disadvantages in using hybrid seeds and (e) the diminishing bio-diversity, particularly cattle population.
Following are the excerpts from the speeches delivered during the Ecology Day:

- We ourselves have ruined the ecological balance for the last 50 years. Natural resources have been over exploited. The recommended percentage of forest cover in a district is 30% of its geographical area, but Anantapur has only 10%, that took a lot of it denuded. Human beings are responsible for the forest degradation. If we nurture and protect the forests, they will protect us and other ecological elements in the future. Each person has the responsibility of protecting the environment from various pollutions and has to grow as many trees as possible. The 8 principles to bring back the ecological balance are; (1) Plantation and tree crops on a large scale (2) Protection of soil (Increasing soil fertility) (3) Conservation of rain water in each farm land (4) Application of bio-fertilizers (5) Application of bio-pesticides (6) Multiple Cropping (7) Dairy, Livestock, Poultry and (8) Strengthening of CBOs at various levels. MSS conveners promised that they will try their best to promote awareness among the farmers and other people in the villages on the importance of ecological balance.

- “Green Revolution’’ has destroyed our age-old, eco-friendly agriculture and made it highly destructive with high mechanization, strong chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These Chemicals are not only destroying the productivity of the soils, but also causing many health problems to the farmer families. Agriculture has become a gamble with monsoons. The farmers are mostly depending on the high cost external inputs from MNCs/companies like seed, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and getting into debt traps because of crop failures. The need of the hour is to go back to traditional eco-friendly methods. Farmers have to shift from mono cropping of groundnut to diversified/multiple cropping and start practicing LEISA / NPM methods. They have to use Bio-fertilizers & Bio-pesticides prepared with locally available materials, stop chemical farming and save themselves and the environment. Sasyamitra Samakhyas have to give wide publicity and create awareness among the farmers on SA practices and avoiding atmospheric pollution. They must actively participate in planning, implementation and monitoring of SA program.

- We can protect ecology by following traditional cultivation methods only. To get healthy food we have to grow crops with organic manures. Each farmer has to organically produce all varieties of food grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits to have a healthy family and have food & nutritional security for his family.

4.3 Awareness building through Cultural Programs:

4.3.1 Role plays:

The two role plays “Save the Goddess of Forest” and “Eruvaka” performed by the farmers impressed the gathering. They helped in entertaining, education and sustaining the interest and liveliness among the spectators. ‘Save the
Godess of Forest’ gave the message that nature belongs to all living beings. Each one has its purpose and role on natural resources. If we practice any activity that causes harm to the nature, we may loose some living species (Trees, animals, birds etc.). So, it is every body’s responsibility to safeguard the Nature.

‘Eruvaka’ means group of farmers proceeding to the fields for sowing. It is a ritual celebrated by the farmers at the starting of sowings. After the initial rains, the farmers start preparations for sowing and celebrate the day collectively as Eruvaka. The play conveyed the message - “Practice Sustainable Agriculture and Save Environment.”

4.3.2 Folkarts - Goravayyalata, Tholubommalata, Kolatam & Uralu:

The ancient local traditional folk performances “Guravayyala Aata”, “Tholubommalata (Puppet show)”, “Kolatam” and “Uralu” which are disappearing these days were the special attraction of the program. Persons of about 40 years and ageless know only the names of these cultural activities. People were delighted to see the age old attires worn by the artists and the dances performed were very much appreciated by each and every member present. This was done to entertain the people and introduce the art to the youth.

4.3.3 Songs:

The situational songs sung by RDT’s and local village singers cultural team highlighted the program content in a lucid manner. The songs described the importance of Forests, Rains, Protection of Soil fertility, planting and Protection of Trees etc. These songs attracted people very much and it was observed that the participants were totally engrossed and enjoyed them.

5. Encouragement to practicing eco-friendly farmers:

10 Farmers, who have been practicing LEISA / NPM methods since 2 years and who have achieved good results were selected and awarded with a memento.

6. Lunch:

All the people relished the simple but delicious traditional lunch cooked with millets arranged at the venues. They were served Ragi java (a Nutrient beverage prepared with Ragi) instead of Coffee/Tea. Rotis prepared with Jowar, Bajra and Ragi with Dal & Brinjal curry, Cooked fox tail millet and Ragi balls were served for lunch. All these foods have high nutritional value and our forefathers used to eat them regularly. Now-a-Days the people in the villages have forgotten how to cook them. People returned back to their
villages by evening with heartfelt contentment, discussing about the events and feeling happy about the day.

7. Reflections:

7.1 Excerpts from People’s response:

- “I have learnt about different kinds and varieties of seeds available in the nature and understood that man is mainly responsible for their disappearance’. So, it is our responsibility to restore them.”

- “I have learnt that we should protect the 5 energy sources Land, Water, Fire, Air and Sun in order to protect the living beings on the earth.”

- “I have learnt that by not using chemicals in farming, I can safeguard nature.”

- “Different stalls established here helped us to know different methods of cultivating organic agriculture.”

- “I have learnt that cultivating Navadhanya (9 types of food grains) will provide food security.”

- “We enjoyed the campaign like a Thirunala / Parusa.”( fairs of deities)

7.2 News paper clippings:

Many local daily news papers covered elaborately the program on Ecology Days organized by AF. The media personnel praised AF for organizing such a innovative useful campaign and said that, they haven’t seen even of such seeds, fruits, tools and implements.

8. Conclusion:

The participating farmers had good awareness on ecological degradation and need for nature friendly agriculture in order to promote and protect the ecological balance. The participating farmers (women and men) expressed their happiness to see the various types of seeds, grain, plants, agriculture implements, etc. They also expressed their willingness to put the learnings, into practice. The Sustainable Agriculture models and practice impressed them very much, as they were very low cost, educative and practical. The success of the program goes to the collective role played and the efforts put in by the SMGs, GSSs, MSSs and AF staff.
CAMPAIGNS ON MGNREGS

Introduction:

AF has been playing a pro-active role in creating wide spread awareness to the labour on the rights and entitlements for the labour under MNREGA. During the year 2009-10 AF staff have organized village level campaign in all 230 villages to labour and farmers on MGNREGS. Awareness on both MGNREGS and sustainable agriculture was provided simultaneously because it was difficult to separate farmers and labour since 90% of the farmers were also working as labourers in MGNREGS. So, the village level awareness campaigns were organized jointly for labour and farmers.

Achievements in MGNREGS during 2009-2010:

During the year 2009-10 adequate employment opportunities were created in all 230 villages of the project area. Besides small and marginal farmers even medium and big rainfed farmers were also forced to seek employment under MGNREGS given the distress of farmers. In all 230 villages about 43,000 families availed 25,47,621 person days of employment during the reporting period. Majority of the families worked 2 shifts in a day and maximized their benefit under employment programme. On an average each family could avail about 60 days of employment at an average, wage Rate of Rs.90 - 102/- per day and earned Rs.5,332/- to 6043/- during the reporting period. The details are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the mandal</th>
<th>No. of job cards issued</th>
<th>Wage employment provided (in lakhs)</th>
<th>Expenditure (Rs.)</th>
<th>No. of person days</th>
<th>Average days of employmnt per household</th>
<th>Households completed 100 days</th>
<th>% of household completed 100 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Atmakur</td>
<td>9,302</td>
<td>3,885 6,005</td>
<td>258.122 220.380</td>
<td>216,029</td>
<td>55.61</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>17.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Kuder</td>
<td>8,342</td>
<td>4,878 8,815</td>
<td>275.253 231.262</td>
<td>247,559</td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>13.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Dharmavaram</td>
<td>9,184</td>
<td>4,272 6,806</td>
<td>280.560 235.886</td>
<td>236,044</td>
<td>55.25</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>19.23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Raphadu</td>
<td>8,528</td>
<td>3,675 6,204</td>
<td>226.654 179.834</td>
<td>167,446</td>
<td>45.56</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>12.43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Kalyandurg</td>
<td>13,006</td>
<td>10,597 20,286</td>
<td>730.877 688.723</td>
<td>759,523</td>
<td>71.67</td>
<td>2774</td>
<td>26.18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Beluguppa</td>
<td>9,863</td>
<td>5,054 9,407</td>
<td>261.226 232.538</td>
<td>252,542</td>
<td>49.97</td>
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<td>7 Kundurpi</td>
<td>10,397</td>
<td>5,017 8,623</td>
<td>350.412 306.737</td>
<td>316,097</td>
<td>63.01</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>23.44</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Settur</td>
<td>10,166</td>
<td>5,622 10,528</td>
<td>407.041 359.002</td>
<td>352,381</td>
<td>62.68</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>21.73</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>43,000 76,673</td>
<td>2,790.145 2,454.362</td>
<td>2,547,621</td>
<td>59.25</td>
<td>8602</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AF organized special trainings exclusively for literate young labour and trained them on their rights under MGNREGS and how to access those rights. The training content includes – control corruption, verify muster rolls, daily attendance of labour, measurement of volume of the work done, unit rates for various works etc. Now the literate youth have become critical mass in each village, and they are able to confront the local functionaries on any unjust practice. Since AF and Government of Andhra Pradesh have MoU for cooperation, AF staff have been involving in the coordination meetings at village, mandal, District and State level and bringing all kinds of problems related to policies and implementation of the programme. It has created more transparency and accountability among the govt. functionaries. Even though there are problems, things are gradually improving for labour. Sustained efforts are being put by AF and the labour to further improve the implementation of NREGS. Besides lobby work along with State level networks, AF has encouraged the labour to participate actively in social audit and use of right to information (RTI) to bring transparency and improvement in the implementation of MGNREGS.

Effects of AF’s role in MGNREGS in program villages:

1. Increase in average no. of days of employment per family from 30 during the same time last year to 59 during the reporting period.

2. Improvement in quality of works.

3. Increased participation of labour and farmers in identifying the works and generating work estimates.

4. More no. of families availed 100 days of employment (22%).

5. Improvement in timely and proper payments.

6. Improvement in work site facilities – supply of light weight crowbars, provision of additional person days for supplying drinking water, shade, medical kit, and creche arrangement in 80% villages.

7. Increase in Horticulture and bio-mass plantation.

8. Duel benefits of employment and land productivity development (Bunding, farm ponds, boulders removal, jungle clearance, silt application etc.)


10. Increase in skills and knowledge and labour families in technical aspects.

11. Confidence of labour increased as the details of payment displayed in the village on regular basis.
Impacts of AF’s role in MGNREGS in program villages:

1. Improved self confidence and capacity to assert their rights and entitlements.

2. Distress migration totally stopped in AF program villages.

3. Improved bargaining capacity of labour families.

4. The stable income from MGNREGS helped families to cope up with severe drought during the year 2009-10.

5. Considerable increase in family income and they could meet education and health needs of the family. And some families could acquire assets like sheep and goat, housing etc.

6. Improved economic freedom to women which enhanced their participation in family decision.

7. Reduced dependence on money lenders.

8. Increased capacity to cope with drought.
SOUTHERN REGION CONSULTATION ON “CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE”

Introduction
A 2 day workshop has been organized by the Food and Water Security Coalition, India at Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh on 25th and 26th September, 2009.

About 40 participants attended the consultation from 3 states i.e., Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. The participants included grass root organizations (NGOs & CSOs), farmers, research & academic organisations, Government administrators. The distinguished participants included Scientists and Sustainable Agriculture proponents like Dr. Dwarikinath, Dr. Nammalwar, Dr Narayana Reddy, Sri V. Sobanadeeswara Rao etc. Scientists from ANGRAU A.P. Agri University, NDRI (Bangalore) and ecol-friendly farmers from other states also participated.

Objectives of Southern Region consultation :

1. Understanding issues of food insecurity, agriculture crisis, farmers distress, climate change and rural livelihoods.

2. Impacts of Climate Change on food security, agriculture and livelihoods particularly rainfed agriculture in vulnerable regions.

3. To come up with strategies for addressing the above issues in a wholistic manner.

4. To suggest a policy framework to policy makers

5. Comment on India’s National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

Agriculture & Food Security- Problems

1. Green Revolution based Hi-tech agriculture is disempowering and displacing farmers as they cannot afford the expensive inputs

2. Globalization is promoting crops for global markets at the cost of local needs.

3. GR has added to destruction of land productivity, climate change and destroyed local crop patterns
4. Food production is limited to Rice and Wheat and concentrated in fewer pockets and food travels thousands of miles before it reaches consumers.

5. Farmers rely heavily on expensive & destructive agro-chemicals –wisdom of ancestors and experiences of alternate farmers is ignored.

6. People are falling into diseases with the polluted food they are eating.*1

7. Food production has reached its peak and even declining, leading of food insecurity.

**Adverse effects of Climate Change on Agriculture**

1. Increased variability in temperature adversely affecting the productivity of crops.

2. Increased variability in rainfall pattern i.e., High intensity rainfall or prolonged dry spells droughts. (uneven distribution of rainfall and shrinkage of rainy days) causing increased incidence of droughts and famines.

3. Rainfed agriculture which accounts for 70% of the area and 80% of farmers is severely affected. Affecting livelihoods of all small and marginal farmers in rainfed areas.

4. Increased incidence of pests & diseases.

5. The present seed varieties are performing poorly due to the variability in temperature and rainfall

6. Adversely affecting more the thermo sensitive crops.

7. Adversely affecting the cattle and livestock

**Green Revolution Agricultural practices Creating & deepening the problems**

1. Green Revolution Technologies are most ill-suited to Indian Agro-climate and socio-economic conditions.

2. GR Technologies are high-tech, high cost, high external input, most farmers cannot afford.

3. Dependent on agro-chemicals and polluting the environment i.e., soil, water, food, animals, people and causing climate change.

4. Focused on irrigation and neglected the rainfed agriculture.

5. The rainfed agriculture covers 70% of the land and 80% of all farmers.
6. Over 80% of all our farmers are small and marginal and their livelihoods are seriously threatened.

7. Promoting mono-cropping and destroying the traditional crop diversity.

8. Causing severe crisis in agriculture, farmers distress and farmers suicides.

9. Creating few zones of food production, mono-food crops and enhancing food miles and food insecurity.

10. 28% GHGs are from conventional agricultural practices.

**Recommendations / Suggestions**

1. A traditional Paradigm shift is needed from GR model of HEIDA to eco-friendly LEISA

2. Agriculture to be relocated based on local climate, eco-friendly and sustainable

3. Prioritizing rainfed agriculture, small and marginal farmers and their livelihoods, as against to irrigation and big farmers.

4. Improving pastures, community lands, regeneration of new plantations for enhancing bio-diversity and bio-mass

5. Reintroducing agro forestry in an intensive manner.

6. More tree cropping so as to produce bio-mass, fruits, fodder, fiber etc.

7. Integrating annual crops, tree crops and animals (Integrated Farming System)

8. Enhancing soil organic carbon through mixed cropping inter cropping & crop-rotation.

9. Promote decentralized food and nutritional security starting from household level to local and regional and drastically reducing food miles.

10. Freeing agriculture from Agro-chemicals and make it climate friendly.

11. Promoting local and on-farm production of all inputs like seed, manure.

12. Following Non-Pesticidical Management.

13. Enhancing in-situ rainwater harvesting and water use efficiency by increasing soil carbon and mulching.

14. Critical irrigation should be practiced to save rainfed crops and prevent droughts.
15. More equitable and judicious use of surface water and ground water.

16. Avoiding summer ploughings as the high intensity temperatures affects soil fauna & flora.

17. Reduction in number of tillages in agriculture operations (reducing use of energized machinery)

18. Creating awareness among the rural communities on the causes of climate change and about mitigation and adaptation.

19. Strengthening CBO and Community involvement and participation in order to achieve the goal of Sustainable Agriculture.

Policy Recommendations

1. Agriculture & environment policies to have a radical shift from GR model to eco-friendly, local specific and low external input.

2. Agriculture policies to shift its focus from irrigated agriculture to rainfed farming system.

3. Agriculture and environment policies to shift from production and use of agro-chemicals to local and on-farm production of bio-manures and NPM inputs.

4. Agriculture policies to promote Integrated Farming System instead of compartmentalizing into agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, dairy, livestock, poultry, fisheries etc.

5. Food policies to promote de-centralized, locally grown diversified food and nutritional security.

6. Agriculture policies to protect small and marginal farmers and diversify their livelihoods.

7. Agriculture policies to provide remunerative prices, local processing and marketing and create local employment.

8. Agriculture and Environment policies to focus on promoting crop diversity, bio-diversity in agriculture common lands, forest areas and diversified cropping, tree crops, local breeds of animals.

9. Reviving local breeds of animals like cows, buffaloes, sheep, goat, poultry etc.
Response to the document of National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture

1. The suggested action plan does not acknowledge the ill-effects of GR model on environment, agriculture, farmers distress and food insecurity.

2. It has shied away from acknowledging SA as the alternative

3. So, the much needed paradigm shift in agriculture is missing.

4. It promotes more dependency of farmers on expensive external inputs and external agencies

5. Its definition of SA here is not clear.

6. It does not bring up affirmative strategies for mitigation and adaptation except to make the entry of GE crops

7. No specific strategies on phasing out climate change inducing agro-chemicals and mechanization.

8. It ignores local knowledge and experiences of alternative farming which is eco-friendly and farmer-friendly particularly friendly small and marginal farmers and rainfed agriculture.

9. It does not address the growing food and nutritional insecurity.

10. Instead it advocates Genetic Engineering as a solution to the problem of climate change and food shortage.

11. It encourages profit organizations to do the research and development, with serious implications.

A detailed report is prepared and being printed on the discussions and recommendations by the CEC. It will be shared to ICCO & EED once it is printed

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Our Present Programme focus

1. Sustainable Agriculture & Rural livelihoods.
   AF at present focuses on transforming the conventional HEIDA (High External Input Destructive Agriculture), to sustainable that is low cost, local resource based, eco-regenerative and small rainfed farmer oriented. In pursuance of Sustainable Agriculture AF organizes farmers groups with rainfed and drought affected farmers into “Sasyamitra Groups” (SMGs). And through them promotes farming systems integrating diversified annual crops, tree crops and animals. AF intensively campaigns against use of chemicals in agriculture and promotes Non-Pesticidal Management (NPM) and various kinds of bio-fertilizers such as vermin composting, farm composting, liquid fertilizers, mulching etc. AF promotes crop diversity and crop rotation with the objective of household food and nutritional security on one side and soil health environment and bio-diversity on the other hand. Perennial tree crops for fruit, fodder and biomass as tree crops are more drought tolerant than annual crops and benefit rainfed farmers as an insurance against droughts. AF organizes campaigns on policy issues related to gender, environment, agriculture at village, mandal and district levels.

2. Accessing Basic Services:
   AF facilitates and enables the rural poor to access basic services like PDS, health care, education, social security and particularly the Rural Employment Guarantee Program. AF educates the labor on their rights under MGNREGP and also advocates that it should be used to create long term durable productive land based assets like rainfed tree crops for the very labour under the program.

3. Alternate Livelihoods for Rural Youth and Women
   AF runs two Driving Schools with a capacity to train about 250 rural youth per year. And two other Skills Training Centres are run with the capacity to train about 1000 rural youth per year (SkillPro Foundation). The rural under-educated youth, (girls & boys) are trained in job oriented skills Driving, ITES, Hospitality, Customer Care, Automobiles, Electrical Wiring, etc. AF is enabling access to rural youth for various other vocational training organised by Government Agencies like RUDSETI, JSS, DRDA etc.

   AF is now reviewing youth and its alternate livelihoods program in view of global recession and fall of job market.

4. Alliance Building and Policy Advocacy
   AF is actively campaigning and building Public Opinion on policy issues of Poverty, Environment, Agriculture, Gender etc. It is involved in alliance building & informal networking with other NGOs, CSOs and CBOs on issues of Gender, Poverty, Environment and Agriculture and lobbying with Government for pro-poor policies and removal of various bottlenecks in implementation of various anti poverty programme.


Our Project Area and Target Groups
The project area comprises of 230 habitations in 8 mandals (out of 63) in Anantapur district, which consists of Rapthadu, Dharmavaram, Atmakur, Kuderu, Kalyandurg, Beluguppa, Settur and Kundurpi. Totally there are about 60,000 families or a population of 3.0 lakhs in the above 230 habitations.
We primarily work with about 60,000 small farmers and landless labourers, whose livelihoods are threatened by frequent droughts, climate change and poverty. We are particularly focusing on working with women and youth within the primary target groups. However, we also work with medium and big farmers particularly in promoting bio-pest management and bio-fertilizers as they are the biggest consumers of agro-chemicals.

Our Human Resources
AF has acquired two most valuable assets through its work and history of many years. They are a) its personnel who are committed and competent and b) its credibility with people. AF – Ecology Centre has about 85 committed, trained and experienced personnel. The average working experience of personnel in AF is about 18 years!

Our Core Team
It has a Core Team of about 15 committed and competent persons. They are senior professionals, well trained and richly experienced. Their rich expertise includes Participatory Watershed Development, Sustainable Agriculture, Alternate Livelihoods, Gender, PME, Organisation Development, Personnel Management, Participatory Approaches, Leadership Development, CBO formation, Capacity Building. The Core Team also has rich experience in Policy Advocacy and networking with NGOs and CSOs.

Our Grassroot Organizers
It has about 55 Committed Socio Technical Organisers at grassroot level. They were originally rural under-educated youth, recruited, well trained and experienced for long in the field work. Their training and experience include CBO formation and capacity building, participatory planning and implementation, community organisation and consensus decision-making, conflict resolution in communities, promoting community leadership etc.
Their technical training and experience include a variety of watershed development skills like Soil and Moisture Conservation, Rain Water Harvesting, Horticulture, Rainfed Agronomical Practices, Bio-diversity, Crop-diversity, Bio-Pest Management (NPM) Bio-fertilizers like composting, liquid fertilizers, Bio-gas Alternate Livelihoods for Women and Youth etc.

Our core competencies
At present our core competence lies in a) Watershed development & Sustainable Agriculture b) Alternate Livelihoods for rural youth c) Participatory Planning Monitoring & Evaluation d) Strong work culture in working with people e) Pursuit of excellence in quality of work f) Rooted firmly with people in villages.
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