PROGRESS REPORT

For the period 01.04.2012 to 30.09.2012

Submitted to

EED : Project No. : 20120225 G (2012-15)
1. OUR VISION  □
All people in rural areas lead a respectable and decent life with economic security, social equity, gender equity and human dignity, in an atmosphere of democracy, peace, cooperation and community support.

People and Nature live in harmony with each other showing due care for sustainable ecology, environment and bio-diversity.

2. OUR MISSION :

1. AF’s mission is to organize and strengthen the organizations of distressed farmers and rural poor for their economic security, empowerment, self-reliance, food and nutritional security.
2. AF is committed to work with drought affected farmers in general and rainfed and small and marginal farmers in particular and committed to promote drought resistant Integrated and Sustainable Farming Systems, with low external input and eco-friendly. (as against high cost, high-tech, chemical based).
3. AF is committed to combat desertification and promote sustainable ecology, healthy environment and bio-diversity, where people and nature live in harmony and support each other.
4. AF is committed to work with poor and disadvantaged 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, democracy mutual cooperation and community support.
6. AF is committed to work with Government, like minded NGOs, CBOs 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 needs and contexts.

Our organization is an integral part of people of Anantapur District. We are not alone in this endeavour. There are several organizations, institutions and individuals working towards achieving the above aims and objectives - like Government, NGOs, CSOs, Media, Judiciary, Scientists, Intellectuals etc. Each one is playing its role individually and collectively. AF is committed to play a pro-active role in this endeavour.
3. OUR DHARMA:
AF adopts the Dharma of RDT, as its guiding principles and a code of conduct for itself and its staff.
• Concern for others
• Work beyond duty
• Pursuit of excellence in work
• Reaching as many needy people as possible

4. OUR CORE VALUES
1. Basic human values of compassion, concern, honesty, hard work, sincerity etc.
   We are committed to practice and promote the basic human values of love, compassion, concern, honesty, hard work, sincerity etc driven by the vision, Mission and values of AF.

2. Social Equality and gender sensitive
   We believe in social equality of all people and are particularly committed to the treatment of women, the disadvantaged and the poor with equality, respect and human dignity. We are committed to being socially equitable and gender-sensitive both within AF and in all our programs and interactions with people.

3. Concern for Sustainable environment
   We ensure that all our policies and programmes have due consideration for sustainable environment and ecological balance.

4. Work together with Govt., NGOs, CBOs and CSO.
   We are committed to working with Government and like-minded NGOs, CBOs & CSOs in order to produce the best synergies in our combined and co-ordinated efforts.

5. Influencing Govt., policies and programmes
   We are committed to influencing Government policies and programmes for maximizing impact in favour of the poor, disadvantaged and sustainable environment.

6. Pursuit of highest quality in work
   We are committed to the pursuit of excellence and highest quality in our work.

7. Relevant and learning
   We are committed to being a relevant and learning organisation 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. Participation and Team work
   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. Transparent and Accountable
   We are committed to be transparent and accountable to all our stakeholders.
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### General Information

**Name of organization** : ACCION FRATERNAL ECOLOGY CENTRE

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

**Postal Address** : Upparapalli road, Bangalore Highway  
Anantapur – 515 002  
A.P. – India

**Telephone** : +91 8554 244222 / 246884

**Contact Person** : Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy  
(with cell phone no.)  
(0)98490 56555

**Fax** : +91 8554 244990

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

**Website** : www.af-ecologycentre.org

**Project Title** : Sustainable Agriculture & Diversified Livelihoods in AP.

**Project Number** : EED : 20120225 G  
FMSF : 20120225 G

**Project Period** : 01.04.2012 to 31.03.2015

**Reporting Period** : 01.04.2012 to 30.09.2012


**Author of the Report** : Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy
1. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

1.1 Introduction.

AF-EC has focused during this reporting period on strengthening its internal control and monitoring systems to become a more efficient and effective organization. Recently we developed and introduced a Finance Manual for better finance management. Our performance in the field has improved with better monitoring and performance based incentive systems. We brought more seriousness among our field staff in implementing activities and ensuring quality work in the field. A more systematic involvement of CBOs and women participation is emphasized. Our PME has further improved and strengthened with better systems. Action-Reflection and Learning is being mainstreamed. Our knowledge resources are strengthened and we are striving towards becoming a knowledge based organization.

1.2 General Situation of Anantapur District

1.2.1 Rise in expectations of Wage labourers:

MGNREG Scheme is being implemented satisfactorily in the district. On an average each labour has utilized 60 man days of labour by the end of November 2012. The aspirations of labour are increasing. They are expecting increase of labour days from 100 to 150 per annum and increase of wage to atleast Rs 150 per day in MGNREGS. Though less in number, the migration of unsatisfied labourers to cities in search of better employment is still happening. The shift is observed from distress migration to betterment migration. The demand to extend MGNREGS to farming activities is increasing. If extended it will benefit both labour and farmers, as most of the labourers are part farmers themselves and also the cost of cultivation in farming will come down.

1.2.2 A shift in cropping patterns observed

A clear beginning towards a shift in cropping patterns is observed in the district from mono crop of Groundnut to a more intercropping with millets and pulses. The sowing area of Groundnut in rainfed lands has come down by about 25% due to redundancy of crop insurance, increasing costs of cultivation and continuous crop failure.

To make best use of this fast changing agrarian situation, which is seen as an opportunity, AF is advocating multiple cropping patterns with millets and pulses (mixed crops). AF has developed 10 cropping models of Sustainable Agriculture considering different soils and different crop combinations for rainfed lands. The crop management guidelines for these cropping models, farming systems to be adopted and different SA methods was prepared, printed and circulated widely among the target group members. All these models are based on the principles of LEISA & Diversified cropping systems. During kharif 2012, Demonstrations of these crop models were taken up on a big scale with 1892 farmers in 766 ha of land in 214 villages.
One important change introduced in this year 2012 is in the manner the bio-pesticide and bio-fertiliser promotion activities are demonstrated. These demonstrations are now being organized as an integrated package of practices. Earlier each practice was demonstrated separately. The integrated packages of practices are showing better results in pest control and crop yields.

The policy advocacy and lobby efforts of AF-EC had resulted in inclusion of Horticulture in MGNREGS. The extent of dry land Horticulture is increasing in the district because of favourable policies for Horticulture and support of MGNREGA. In near future, Ananatpur District will emerge as a Fruit Bowl of Andhra Pradesh.

1.3 Programmatic Changes in AF

**Changes in Staff:** During the reporting period i.e. 01.04.2012 to 30.09.2012, 6 staff members (3 men and 3 women) resigned for various reasons and 6 candidates have been newly recruited, of whom there are 3 Women. Presently, AF has 40% women staff (33 out of 82).

1.4 Update on other Programs of AF

1.4.1 Update on NABARD watersheds

AF–EC is implementing 6 NABARD watersheds in Mallipalli, Garudapuram, Papampalli, Battuvanipalli, Dasampalli and Gubanapalli villages of Kalyandurg Mandal of Anantapur Dist. All the watersheds are under Full Implementation Phase (FIP). A senior staff is recently appointed to coordinating these watersheds and their performance has improved a lot during this reporting period. During the reporting period, 6364 ha of land was treated with watershed activities with expenditure of Rs. 66 million benefitting 2385 families.

1.4.2 Update on IWMP watersheds

AF-EC is also implementing 3 IWMP mega watersheds with financial assistance of Government of Andhra Pradesh. They are Muttala watershed in Atmakur mandal, Bandameedapalli watershed in Rapthad mandal and Kuderu watershed in Kuderu mandal. AF has been rated by the Government as the best performer up till now in implementing these watersheds at state level. During the reporting period, 11,808 ha of land was treated with watershed activities with expenditure of Rs 147 million benefitting 4136 families.

1.4.3 Update on Low Carbon Farming (LCF) project

AF’s LCF pilot project is an experiment which is involving lot of trial and error and is highly scientific and technical. EDF is guiding and supervising the science part of the research on measuring the Emission Reductions. The experiments of measuring the emissions during the kharif season are continuing for Groundnut and Paddy crops. By December 2012, we will have a rough idea on the future prospects of potential emission reductions on these crops. The data available till date show that there are some prospects for Paddy in LCF. It is not yet certain for Groundnut crop. However, the carbon markets are also not very encouraging given the global recession and steep fall of carbon
rates. Depending on the research results and carbon markets we will decide how to proceed further.

1.4.4 Update on CDM-Bio-gas project
The AF’s Biogas project is registered with UNFCC in March 2012. A.F is exploring to rise “slow capital” from social Investors instead of looking for forward funding to help farmers get quicker and better incomes. The crash of carbon markets has dampened our enthusiasm. Global economic recovery and CoP negotiations at Doha will have impact on the global carbon markets and prospects for our CDM project.

1.4.5 Update on E&E coalition and Food & Water Security Coalition
During the reporting period, AF had participated in one E&E coalition meeting conducted during July 11th to 13th 2012. The discussion during the meeting was on Electoral reforms, Programmatic approach and review of programs. The plan for the year 2012-13 was discussed in detail. The issue of land right and democracy was also discussed.
AF also participated in FSW coalition meetings and followed up the field activities.

1.5. Important Events / Trainings
During the reporting period, AF had organized 3 important trainings to build capacities of its staff. The trainings are:

a) Leading For Change & Social Business
b) Community Organization and Strengthening of CBOs for Field Staff
c) Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

These trainings were given by experienced resource persons and were very useful in improving the skills and capacities our staff.

1.6 The challenges ahead
The challenges at present are to stabilize the processes of PME in the field and to strengthen the CBOs. The rainfed crops are heading towards another drought year. The Rabi crop prospects under irrigation also are not very optimistic as the groundwater situation is worsening due to inadequate rains. So there is need to adapt implementation processes of our activities in the field. There are challenges and opportunities in it. Further our grass root staff now are mostly young and inexperienced women. So, we need to orient, train and mould them as capable staff at cutting edge.

We also have to look at any emerging opportunities in Biogas CDM project and Low Carbon Farming Projects.
2. OUTCOME & IMPACT

PROJECT GOAL:
To enhance the quality of life of 62,000 resource poor farmer and farm labor families with dignity, gender equality and social equity.

2.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVE:
To increase and stabilise the income levels of the target families and improve their access to basic needs like employment and Food & Nutritional Security by promoting; (a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Natural Resource Management, (c) Alternate Livelihoods for Rural Women & youth d) Public opinion building and Lobbying with Government for Pro- LEISA policies.

2.2 Objectives of Project components (specific objectives) and their indicators:

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<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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<td>1) To reduce the cost of cultivation and mitigate drought (by diversified cropping) in 11200 ha of land belonging to 5600 farmer families through SA practices by 2015.</td>
<td>1.1 35% of 16000 farmer families practicing atleast 3 of 5 main sustainable agriculture practices. 1.2 856 SMGs of 21400 farmers and farm workers and their federations work in a collective manner in order to adopt sustainable agriculture.</td>
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<td>2) 15000 famers introduce Low Carbon Farming in their 12000 ha of land in order to gain access to the Indian CO2 market by 2015.</td>
<td>2.1 The method of low Carbon Farming is introduced in 12000 ha of land and is validated and certified for the Indian Co2 market. 2.2 The certificates are offered at the Indian carbon market.</td>
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<td>3) The livelihood of approx. 3200 women and youth from the target families is diversified through alternate off farm/ nonfarm livelihoods by 2015.</td>
<td>3.1 Approx. 3200 women and youth are trained to contribute additional livelihood to the family with skill based employment.</td>
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2.3 Achievement of Project Component Objectives:

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<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Indicator (or) Desired End Result by 2015</th>
<th>Achieved during April-September 2012</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<td>1) To reduce the cost of cultivation and mitigate</td>
<td>1.1) 35% of 16000 farmer families practicing atleast 3 of 5</td>
<td>Of the 16000 small and marginal farmer families enrolled into AF’s SA program: <strong>During the reporting period</strong></td>
<td>The lower achievement in SA practices was due to lack</td>
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drought (by diversified cropping) in 11200 ha of land belonging to 5600 farmer families through SA practices by 2015. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(April 2012 to September 2012)</th>
<th>main sustainable agriculture practices.</th>
<th>of timely rains during the sowing season which resulted in low sowing area.</th>
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<td>- 1892 (12%) Farmers have adopted crop rotation and diversified cropping covering 766 ha.</td>
<td>(April 2012 to September 2012)</td>
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<td>- 2047 families (13%) have used Pest traps in their crops covering 829 ha.</td>
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<td>- 1880 families (11%) have applied Bio-pesticides to their crops covering 761 ha.</td>
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<td>- 2215 families (14%) have used Bio-fertilizers like Jeevamritam to their crops covering 897 ha.</td>
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<td>- 166 families (1%) have practiced SRI in paddy covering 67 ha.</td>
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Totally, during the reporting period April 2012 to September 2012, 1620 families (10% of the enrolled farmer families) have adopted in 656 ha of land (6% of 11200 ha) at least 3 of the above LEISA practices saving cost of cultivation by about Rs 1500 per ha.

1.2) 856 SMGs of 21,400 farmers and farm workers and their federations work in a collective manner in order to adopt sustainable agriculture.

During the reporting period (April 2012 to September 2012):

- Out of 856 SMGs formed 739 (86%) groups were reorganized.
- The membership fee was collected from all the new SMG members and deposited in respective GSS Bank Accounts.
- Out of 856 SMGs about 80 SMGs (10%) began to practice in small ways the mutual cooperation between SMG members. (eg: exchange of labour, implements etc)

Reorganizing the SMGs was an opportunity to invite interested farmers into the groups in place of farmers who left the groups. It also strengthened the leadership in SMGs.
2) **15000 farmers introduce Low Carbon Farming in their 12000 ha of land in order to gain access to the Indian CO2 market by 2015.**

2.1) The method of low Carbon Farming is introduced in 12000 ha of land and is validated and certified for the Indian Co2 market.

**During the reporting period (April 2012 to September 2012)**

- LCF was attempted by 3200 farmers (75% of the planned 4280 farmers) in 1296 ha (75% of the planned 1733 ha).
- Of this, all the LCF protocols were followed by 2483 farmers (58% of the planned 4280 farmers) in 1012 ha (58% of the planned 1733 ha) and were successfully committed.

-Lower achievement in LCF was due to lack of timely rains during the sowing season.

- The remaining target is planned to achieve during the second cropping season i.e. Oct’12 to Jan’13.

2.2) The certificates are offered at the Indian carbon market.

This activity has not yet started.

3) **The livelihood of approx. 3200 women and youth from the target families is diversified through alternate off farm/nonfarm livelihoods by 2015.**

3.1) Approx. 3200 women and youth are trained to contribute additional livelihood to the family with skill based employment.

**During the reporting period (April 2012 to September 2012)**

Youth (Girls & Boys) from 274 families (55% of the planned 500) have acquired skills to diversify their occupation. Of them 124 Girls have been trained in garment making and 127 Boys trained in LMV Driving and 23 boys trained in HMV driving.

AF is planning to train more youth and link them with industry in coming years.
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:

- The tree based farming systems propagated by AF are proving effective with farmers to overcome drought and come out of poverty. *(See the case study 1 enclosed of young farmer Mr. Krishnamurthy)*

- The farmers have understood the importance and benefits of diversified cropping particularly with food crops (pulses and millets) through annual demonstration plots programme. This is contributing towards a more favourable agro-ecology, food and nutritional security at farm household and community level. *(See case study 2 enclosed)*

- Integrated Kitchen Gardens (IKGs) are ensuring Nutritional Security and in some cases even an additional income to the farmer family.

- More and more farmers are showing interest in Sustainable Agriculture; and resorting to tree crops, bio fertilizers, bio-pest management, dairying and livestock rearing.

- Campaign events on ecology, environment, climate change, gender, sustainable agriculture, watershed development etc are generating public consciousness and creating public opinion. The people’s voice for more favorable agri policies is rising gradually.

All these observations indicate a positive movement towards the achievement of AF’s development goal considerably.

2.5 In case that you observed any Negative Outcome please describe.

No Negative outcome is observed.

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?

The sowing area of Groundnut crop in rainfed lands has come down by about 25% due to redundancy of crop insurance, increasing costs of cultivation and continuous crop failure. Groundnut Crop is replaced largely by Castor, Redgram and to some extent by millets and other pulses. The dry land horticulture has also picked up in the district, with support of MGNREGA. Thus mono cropping of groundnut is changing (for better) towards a more diversified cropping; which AF Ecology Centre has been propagating and advocating vigorously.

The skewed rainfall patterns in the district are further worsening the productivity of rainfed crops. The cost of cultivation in agriculture is increasing every year. More and more rainfed lands are being left fallow due to increasing costs and continuous crop failures. This is leading to deepened crisis in agriculture and severe distress to farmers. Consequently many rainfed farmers, particularly small and marginal farmers are abandoning the agriculture. About 15% of the rainfed farmers did not even bother to sow the crops in rainfed lands during this cropping season due to lack of resources and fear of crop failures. While some
farmers are abandoning rainfed farming, some are resorting not to sow crops thus leaving the large tracts of land fallow in the district.

So AF’s program to strengthen the rainfed farming and small farmers with LEISA practices and through mutual cooperation is becoming more and more relevant.

2.7. Which methods did you use for assessing Outcome and Impact?

The outcome was measured using the Indicators set against objectives and Impact Chain in a participatory process involving the participants and their groups (SMGs). With support of external consultant, Ms. Satyasree, the tools required for assessment of outputs, use of output and outcomes were designed. The outcome of the project indicators was measured every 3 months or at the end of every crop season as the case may be. These outcomes were assessed at regular intervals to understand the intended and unintended effects of project intervention. Project objectives were kept in mind, and compared with the Impact Chain in assessing/monitoring. The Action learning cycle was used to reflect, learn and put the learning’s back into the Action plan.

**Outcome and Impact Assessment** was done using participatory methods like focused group discussions, group interviews and individual interviews with target groups. The Information was also collected from village level records maintained in each of the 214 villages by KKs like Village Activity Registers, Minutes of Meetings, Monthly progress reports etc. Information on Outcomes was also collected from other means like Random Physical Verification, Interviews with some specific farmer & farm labor families etc.
3. ACTIVITIES:
Following are the main activities implemented by AF during April 2012 to September 2012:

3.1 AWARENESS ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FACILITATION OF CBOS:
Promoting Sustainable Agriculture is AF’s core program. AF is promoting LEISA practices and also developing farming systems suitable for the agro climatic and socio-economic conditions of Anantapur District. AF is spreading awareness and building public opinion on these issues through Campaigns, Trainings, CBO meetings and Exposure visits. AF is also spreading awareness on the issues of Climate Change, its consequences on the agriculture and livelihoods; and the ways for mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change.

3.1.1 Campaigns on; (a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Gender and (c) Adaptation to Climate Change
These Campaigns are organized at different levels like village level, area level and project level. The farmers, the scientists, the activists, NGOs, Government agencies, media and elected representatives will be coming together and participating in these campaigns. The Farmer groups (GSS, SMGs) and Federations (MSSs) will play active role in organizing these campaigns. In these campaigns awareness is created on; (a) various SA practices including Crop Diversification with millets, pulses, and multiple tree crops, (b) Integrating cattle and livestock into the farming system and (c) Adaptation measures to cope with effects of climate change like changing rainfall patterns etc. The practicing farmers share their experiences in SA with other farmers. Good cropping practices, Bio-fertilizers, Bio-pesticides are demonstrated to the farmers in these campaigns. More women farmers are motivated to participate in these campaigns.

During the reporting period April 2012 to September 2012,
- 191 Village level Campaigns (89% of the planned 214) were conducted. 11,352 women farmers (106% of the planned 10,700) had participated in the campaigns, of whom 3,400 (30%) were from SC & ST families. 11590 men farmers (108% of the planned 10,700) had participated of whom 3,840 (33%) were from SC & ST families.
- One project level campaign ‘World day to combat Drought and Desertification’ was organized in Anantapur. (Please find the detailed report of the campaign in the Annexure 1.)

3.1.2 Trainings on (a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Gender and (c) Group dynamics & leadership development
The trainings for Farmer and Labour SMG members are organised at cluster level, wherein gender issues like division of work & sharing of work load by men, prevention of domestic violence, girl child education, economic freedom to women, participation for women in decision making in family matters, cropping choices,
livelihoods, women and child health etc are being dealt with. Also Group dynamics in SMGs, participation, cooperation and leadership skills are imparted in these trainings.

At village level, **Farmer Field Schools (FFS)** are conducted during the cropping season. FFS is an experiential based learning where farmers “learn by doing.” The main objective of FFS is to empower the farmers to manage their crops effectively without agro chemicals by adopting Integrated Crop Management practices. FFS is conducted from sowing to harvest of the crop, so that the farmers can observe and analyze the dynamics of crop ecology across the season. STOs and KKs facilitate the FFS sessions. The topics dealt in FFS sessions are seed treatment, sowing methods, Jeevanmritham preparation and application, bio-pest and disease management, benefits of FYM, multiple crop cultivation & crop rotation.

**During the reporting period April 2012 to September 2012,**

- 19 cluster level trainings (64% out of planned 30 trainings) were organized. 1307 GSS leaders and SMG members had attended these trainings. Out of them 599 (46%) were women. Of the total participants 420 members (32%) were from SC/ST communities.
- 1125 Farmer Field Schools (66% of the planned 1712) were conducted in 214 villages. 4180 farmers (78% of the planned 5350) had attended these FFS sessions, out of them 2742 (65%) were women participants and 1820 (43%) farmers were from SC/ST communities.

### 3.1.3 CBO Meetings (SMG, GSS, MSS)

There are 4 SMGs and 1 GSS functioning in each of 214 project villages. Each SMG meets once a month and every GSS meet twice a month. The field staff facilitates the regular meetings of SMGs and GSSs. The topics discussed in the meetings are Sustainable Agriculture, implementation of various planned activities, importance of mutual cooperation and other related issues. Selection of deserving and eligible beneficiaries for incentive based activities is a key responsibility of the SMGs and GSS. The AF staff and KKs facilitate SMGs and GSS in the beneficiary selection process considering Gender & Social equity. The resource poor, small and marginal farmers, willing to practice LEISA/NPM practices would be given preference.

There are 8 MSSs functioning in 8 mandals in the project area. The MSS meetings are facilitated at Mandal level by Area Team Leaders (ATLs) and Agriculture Extension Officers (AEOs). The MSS members are playing an important role particularly in organizing mandal level awareness campaigns, International women days, ecology days and in mobilizing public opinion on issues concerning agriculture, environment, gender etc.
During the reporting period April 2012 to September 2012,

- 3766 SMG meetings (55% of the planned 6848) were conducted for 856 SMGS in 214 villages.
- 1888 GSS meetings (71% of planned 2568) were conducted in 214 villages.
- 43 MSS meetings (90% of the planned 48) were conducted for 8 MSS in 8 mandals.
- 18 KK (Karyakarta) review meetings (81% of the planned 22) were conducted.

3.2 CROP DEMONSTRATIONS ON SA PRACTICES IN ANNUAL AND TREE CROPS:

AF is educating and advocating Sustainable Agriculture practices to all the farmers in the project area in order to stabilize farm returns, create food and livelihood security and to improve soil health. As part of this effort, AF has developed 10 rainfed seasonal cropping models considering different soils and different crop combinations for rainfed lands. The crop management guidelines regarding the management of cropping models, farming systems and different SA methods was prepared, printed and circulated widely among the target group members. The models are ‘multiple & diversified cropping systems’ to replace groundnut mono cropping. The crops advocated are pulses and millets like red gram, pearl millet, sorghum, foxtail millet, field beans, cow pea, castor, etc, which can be grown as mixed crop or intercrop with groundnut. Women are encouraged to actively participate and play an important role in deciding the selection of crop models as they tend to prefer food crops compared to men who tend to prefer cash crops.

**Seed Banks**: Seed Banks are managed in 127 villages by the respective GSSs. These Seed Banks played an important role in procuring quality seed and distribution to farmers to extensively promote food crops.

During the reporting period (kharif 2012),

- Annual Demonstration plots were taken up on a big scale with enrolled farmers. Inputs *(12 varieties of seed & 30 kgs of Neem cake)* were supplied to 2560 farmers (60% of the planned 4280) who came forward to demonstrate the crop models.
- Finally 1892 plots (each plot is 1 acre) were demonstrated as per the norms (44% of planned 4280 plots). Of these 309 demonstration plots (13%) were in Irrigated lands and remaining 1583 plots (83%) were in rainfed lands. Of these, 527 plots (28%) belong to SC/ST communities. Crop rotation and multiple cropping were followed in all the demo plots. Lower achievement was due to lack of timely rains during the sowing season.
3.2.1 Non-Pesticide Management (NPM)

The purpose of Non Pesticide Management (NPM) is to dispense with agrochemicals which are expensive and hazardous and promote cost effective and eco-friendly measures of Pest management. NPM is a set of activities to control pests using locally available resources which include both mechanical pest control and bio-pest control. AF is intensively promoting NPM methods to reduce the cost of pest management and to grow healthy crops.

3.2.1.1 Installation of Pest traps (Pheromone traps & Color boards).

Pheromone Traps and Color Boards are used to monitor/control the incidence of pests and to trap them mechanically before they are multiplied.

- **During April 2012 to September 2012**, 2047 farmers (48% of the planned 4280) installed pheromone traps, white & yellow boards, in their 829 ha of farm lands (48% of planned 1733). Of them 423 farmers (21% of the farmers covered) were from SC & ST families with a coverage of 171 ha (21% of the area covered). Lower achievement was due to lack of timely rains during the sowing season which resulted in lower sowing.

3.2.1.2 Application of Bio-pesticides:

Preparation of Bio-pesticides and pest repellants with locally available herbs, spices and cow urine were demonstrated to the farmers. The prevention of pest & disease incidence through usage of bio-pesticides like decoctions was demonstrated.

- **During the reporting period April 2012 to September 2012**, 1880 farmers (44% of the planned 4,280) applied various decoctions as bio-pesticides in their 761 ha of farm lands (44% of the planned 1,733). Of them 620 farmers (33% of the farmers covered) are from SC & ST families with a coverage of 251 ha (33% of the area covered). Lower achievement was due to lack of timely rains during the sowing season.

3.2.1.3 NPM Shops:

AF has helped GSSs in setting up 26 NPM shops in 26 project villages to provide low cost NPM inputs to farmers. These shops are managed by identified entrepreneurial rural youth trained in Sustainable Agriculture and in preparation of bio-manures and bio-pesticides with locally available resources. Concerned GSSs had extended financial assistance to these youth to set up the shops. The Pest traps, Herbal pest repellents and Jeevamritham are available in NPM shops for sale. AF has also supplied 9 sprayer sets to 9 NPM shops to enable farmers to use them and spray Bio-pesticides at nominal rent. Sprinkler sets were supplied to some NPM shops so that farmers can borrow water for rainfed crops wherever possible and protect them in critical stage. During the reporting period all the NPM shops were functional and provided necessary inputs to the farmers.

3.2.2 Promotion of Bio-fertilizers

AF is promoting the farmers to use FYM and Bio-fertilizers (mainly Jeevamritham) instead of chemical fertilizers. Jeevamritham is an indigenous, economical, environment-friendly and highly effective concentrate bio-fertilizer. Demonstrations
of preparation and use of Jeevamritham are conducted in SA campaigns and FFS sessions. AF is providing incentives to demo plot farmers to prepare and apply Jeevamrutham to their demo plots. AF is encouraging other farmers in village to prepare and apply Jeevamrutham to their farm lands at their own cost.

- During the reporting period, 2,215 farmers (52% of the planned 4280) applied Jeevamritam and FYM to their 897 ha of farm lands (52% of the planned 1733). Of them 620 farmers (28% of the farmers covered) were from SC & ST families with a coverage of 251 ha (28% of the area covered). The Low level of achievement was due to lower sowings due to lack of timely rains during the sowing season.

3.2.3 Promotion of Rainfed Farmer Cooperatives

AF – EC is planning to establish Rainfed Farmer Cooperatives in 4 villages. It is exploring various models of sustainable cooperatives with inputs from experienced people like Dr. O.P. Rupela, retired scientist of ICRISAT, Hyderabad. During the reporting period the process of selection of villages has began. Initial meetings were conducted by field staff in 8 villages.

3.2.4 Tree Cropping Models in wastelands under Rainfed conditions

AF firmly believes that tree crops offer a better option for combating droughts and a better livelihood security to rain fed farmers of Anantapur. So it is campaigning for Tree Crops extensively and advocating that every rainfed farmer should have at least 30% of their land under various fruit tree crops as safety net against the annual crop failure (droughts). AF has established some tree-based farming models suitable for Anantapur agro climate and socio economic conditions, that are drought resistant, eco-friendly and remunerative. They are; (a) Integrated Farming System (IFS), (b) Bio-Intensive Farming System in Rain fed Agriculture (BIFSRA), and (c) Multiple Fruit Tree Cropping (MFTC).

a) **Integrated Farming System (IFS) for Rainfed Lands** is a tree crop model in which annual crops, Fruit trees, Biomass trees, Fodder trees and small unit of dairy animals or small ruminants will be integrated in one ha. of rainfed land.

b) **Bio-intensive Farming System in Rain fed Areas (BIFSRA)** is a model which aims at producing adequate bio-mass on farm for mulching the land particularly during summer months, to avoid exposure of soil to sun, rain and wind. This improves the soil organic matter (SOM) and soil biotic life and minimizes the need of any additional manure. It can hold the moisture for longer periods and crop is less stressed for moisture under rain fed conditions.

c) **Multiple Fruit Tree Cropping (MFTC) plot** has multiple rainfed Fruit Tree Crops, like Mango, Sapota, Amla, Custard Apple etc. and a lot of bio-mass yielding trees in plots of a size of one acre to one and half acre. This model is expected to provide continuous income all through the year, perennially, and add tree diversity to the agro-ecology.
Due to strong lobby from AF - EC, the Government is now supporting Fruit tree crops extensively through MGNREGS. But the waste lands of the farmers are still neglected. So AF has developed a new tree cropping model suitable for wastelands with a mixture of fruit bearing, fodder, fiber and biomass yielding trees which will grow well in rainfed conditions and yield seasonally. This turns wastelands into productive lands and enhances farmer incomes and livelihood security.

AF is now following a 3 pronged approach to promote tree crops in Rainfed lands.

a) Extending support for pot-watering and gap filling for existing and eligible IFS, BIFSRA and MFTC plots to ensure their survival. (The pot watering support is needed for the first 3 to 4 years)

b) Setting up new IFS and BIFSRA plots.

c) Establishing Multi Tree Crop model plots in waste lands.

**During this reporting period, (April 2012 to September 2012)**

a) Pot-watering support was extended for 6 IFS plots, 4 BIFSRA plots and 35 MFTC plots.

b) Process of setting up new IFS & BIFSRA plots (30 IFS and 30 BIFSRA plots) is in progress.

c) Multi Tree crop plots in 18 ha of waste lands belonging to 10 SC community farmers were taken up in Malayanur village of Kundurpi area.

3.2.5 Home based activities (Kitchen Gardens and Backyard Horticulture)

AF is promoting home based activities such as Kitchen Gardens and Backyard Horticulture to add to household food and nutritional security.

- **During the reporting period**, 7425 vegetable seed kits were supplied to as many farmers and labourers for raising kitchen gardens.

3.3 ADAPTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

AF has been piloting the LCF project to help Anantapur farmers especially rainfed farmers to generate income through carbon credits in agriculture. This project is an experiment which involves lot of trial and error and is highly scientific and technical. EDF is guiding and supervising the science part of the research on measuring the Emission Reductions. Last year AF pursued the LCF experiment without the gas chromatograph apparatus being calibrated. It was a mistake that the EDF found out after one year. The apparatus was later calibrated. The experiments of measuring the emissions are continuing for Groundnut and Paddy crops. The data available till date show that there are some prospects for Paddy in LCF. It is not yet certain for Groundnut crop. We have to see whether the crop rotation and crop diversity too can earn carbon credits. Inspite of uncertainty AF is still encouraging farmers to follow all protocols of LCF.

**During the reporting period (April 2012 to September 2012)**

- LCF was attempted in Groundnut and Paddy crops by 3200 farmers (75% of the planned 4280 farmers) in 1296 ha (75% of the planned 1733 ha). Of this, all the LCF protocols were followed by 2483 farmers (58% of the planned 4280
farmers) in 1012 ha (58% of the planned 1733 ha) and were successfully committed.

- Lower achievement in LCF was due to lack of timely rains during the sowing season which resulted in lower sowing area. The remaining target is planned to achieve during the second cropping season i.e. Oct’12 to Jan’13.

3.4 DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOODS

The objective of the program is to develop job-oriented skills among under-educated rural youth and rehabilitate them by facilitating their access to skill-based employment for occupational diversity and occupational mobility.

3.4.1 Promoting 42 Rural Youth as Entrepreneurs

This activity is not yet taken up. AF-EC is in the process of finalizing its policy and systems to take up this programme. Meanwhile the economic slowdown has created an unfavorable condition for new enterprises. So AF will consider all the aspects and come up with a policy by next year i.e. 2013-14.

3.4.2 Job - Oriented Skills Trainings for Rural youth in Garment making and driving

During the reporting period (April 2012 to September 2012)

- 124 Girls were trained in garment making in 4 tailoring centers. Of them 58 girls (47%) are from SC/ST communities.
- 127 Boys trained in LMV Driving in 2 Driving schools at Anantapur and Kalyanadurg. Of them 86 boys (68%) are from SC & ST communities
- 23 boys trained in HMV driving at HMV driving school at Anantapur. Of them 13 boys (56%) are from SC & ST communities.

AF is exploring opportunities for linking the girls trained in garment making to the garment manufacturing companies so that they will have skill based employment and regular income.

3.5 POLICY ADVOCACY ON SA

AF has been playing a key role in sensitizing communities and government authorities on policy issues. AF is helping its target groups to have better access to information of Government schemes and capacitating to have better bargaining. It is facilitating CBOs to identify and debate on issues related to Government policies and represent to concerned authorities. By organizing campaigns and events AF is mobilizing public opinion on issues concerning agriculture, rural livelihoods, gender
and ecology. Also AF is working with Government and influencing it to make pro-poor policies and take up pro-poor projects.

3.5.1 Research on Sustainable Agriculture Policies

On 17th June 2012, AF had organized a big campaign on the occasion of “World Day to combat drought and Desertification.” (The report of the campaign is enclosed as Annexure 1.) This campaign has sensitized the farmers, govt officials and policy makers on situation of drought in Anantapur and discussed solutions. A “10 point programme” to overcome drought and combat desertification in Anantapur District was presented by Dr. Y.V.Malla Reddy. The presentation was very thought provoking and was termed as the suitable solution for Anantapur by almost all the speakers. This research was appreciated by many eminent people. (The ‘10 point programme” paper is enclosed as Annexure 2).

PROJECT ANANTA:

A committee of experts led by Deputy Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Dr.A.K.Singh had toured Anantapur district during February & March 2012. The committee had gone round about 30 mandals in the district, studied the pattern of rainfall and depletion of groundwater levels over the years and interacted with over 2,000 farmers. The ICAR Expert committee suggested that a holistic model project for development of this drought-prone district in the name of PROJECT ANANTA may be prepared and submitted for special funding to the Government of India. The committee has suggested optimizing groundnut yields and also cultivation of alternative crops to groundnut in order to change mono cropping in the drought-prone Anantapur district for making agriculture sustainable. AF had given a presentation to the committee on steps to be taken to overcome drought in Anantapur District. This has very much influenced the committee and most of suggestions of AF were included in the committee recommendations. The Director of AF, Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy was invited as member of the team to develop the 5 year proposal, PROJECT ANANTA, along with state and district government authorities. Mr. Reddy closely worked with concerned Government authorities and played a key role in developing PROJECT ANANTA. It is now in the final stage of preparation.
4. CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION:

4.1.1 Related to Management structure:
There is no change in management structure.

4.2 Related to Planning system
There is no change in planning system.

4.3 Related to Staff Composition:
There was some staff turnover during the Reporting period. The Present total number of staff is 82. Following is the brief summary:

- Totally, 6 staff members (1 AEOs + 3 STOs + 1 Driving instructor + 1 lab technician) resigned for their posts, for personal reasons.
- Totally, 6 staff members (3 Agri specialists + 1 PME Assistant + 2 LCF Lab Assistants) have newly joined the organization.
- Of the newly recruited 6 members, 3 are Women. The strength of women staff has increased from 23 to 33. Presently, AF has 40% women staff (33 out of 82)
5. Change in Development Context and Problem Analysis.

5.1 Are there important changes in the direct Political Environment since the inception of the project?
The political situation in Anantapur district is quite the same. The tenure of village panchayats has expired by end Sept’ 2011 and now the special officers of Revenue department are fulfilling the responsibilities of the village presidents (Sarpanches) in 996 village panchayats in the District. The implementation of Govt Schemes and village developmental activities are continuing with the special officers.

5.2 Are there important changes in the Direct Social Environment since the inception of the project?
There is no change in Social Environment.

5.3 Are there important changes in the Direct Natural Environment since the inception of the project?
There is no change in Natural Environment.

5.4 Do those changes have implications for the relevance of the project?
The relevance of project is still intact.

5.5 Do those changes have implications for the project goal?
There are no implications for the project goal.

5.6 Do those changes have implications for the project objective?
There are no implications for the project objective.

5.7 Is the underlying problem analysis of the project still valid?
Yes. The underlying problem analysis of the project is still valid.

6. CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FUTURE WORK
6.1 Do you see a need for changing the planned activities in order to achieve the project objective?
There is no need for changing planned activities right now but there is a possibility of revising the activities and budgets in future if ICCO could not contribute its share of funds fully.

The research on potential of Low Carbon Farming is in progress and the feasibility of carbon revenues is not yet clear. The need may arise to upscale and streamline the planned activities under LCF when results of research are favorable for VERs.

6.2 Any need of updating the project planning?
NO

6.3 In case of need for consultancy: In what area?
Yes, there is need for consultancy support in operationalising the PME design of EED, gender mainstreaming and in documentation.
6.4 What are the lessons learned? Please refer to gender equality issues also.

- Identified a strong need to train and develop barefoot agricultural professionals.

- AF has to grow and position itself as knowledge based organization.

- Lessons are learnt in evolving MIS and participatory PME systems for better project management. These are crucial for improving organizational efficiency, effectiveness and also for achieving project objectives.

- More attention on CBO strengthening is required. The women participation and leadership in the GSS and SMGs is increasing gradually.

- The gender aspect in the organization and in the programmes (People & Activities) requires consistent reinforcement.
Case Study -1

Impact of AF’s Programmes: A Case study

K.Krishna Murthy, S/o Kapu Hanumantappa is a young farmer from Nizavalli village of Kundurpi mandal in Anantapur District. He is 29 years old; he is living on his farm with his wife and 2 children. He has been doing agriculture since 9 years in his 16 acres of land with the support of his younger brother. He was forced to quit education after 10+2 (intermediate) as his family was not able to support him due to poverty. His father gave the existing rainfed land on lease but the lease amount was too low. So Krishnamurthy decided to do Agriculture to support his family.

In early years, Mr. Krishna Murthy used to raise Groundnut and Red gram in his rainfed land applying lot of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Though he has taken all the care of his crops he was making loss each year. Because of inappropriate farming methods, the soil fertility was reduced and he ended up in huge debts.

Incidentally at that time, AF Ecology centre was implementing Watershed programme (supported by EED & ICCO) in Nizavalli village. The organization focused on improving productivity in rainfed lands by taking up Soil & Moisture Conservation works, Water Harvesting structures and Dry land Horticulture in the village. Mr. Krishna Murthy actively participated in the watershed activity and had availed all the benefits of the programme. He has taken up Horticulture in 12 acres of land with 650 mango plants in 2003. All the support required for survival of Horticulture plants like watering, gap filling, fencing etc were provided by AF Ecology centre. When the mango crop was in bearing stage, he sold the crop to a mango businessman for 2 years. To harvest bumper crop, the mango businessman used excess chemical fertilizers and pesticides which damaged the orchard. Then Mr.Krishna Murthy cancelled the contract and started nursing the plants himself by adopting sustainable Agriculture methods. He also planted 100 sapota plants as gap filling in the orchard plot.

The groundwater table in village had improved in the village because of water harvesting activities taken up by the project. Like many other farmers, Krishnamurthy also dug 2 bore wells and got enough water to irrigate his remaining land.

The field staff of AF centre has helped Mr. Krishnamurthy in adopting Sustainable Agriculture methods in his land and he practiced the methods with enthusiasm. He regularly followed the ‘in house news letter’ of AF Ecology center to update himself on Sustainable
Agriculture methods. His conviction on organic farming has increased as he saw the difference in crops. He completely shifted to organic farming methods from 2009. He never purchased any chemical pesticide or fertilizer from 2009. Instead, he followed the technical advice given by AF Ecology centre extension staff and has been applying tank silt to the land every year to improve the moisture holding capacity and soil fertility. He regularly applies Farm Yard Manure and Jeevamritam to get good yields. To control pests he sprays herbal pest repellents which are prepared by using cow urine and different herbs. Also he uses neem cake, neem oil and sour buttermilk spray to control diseases. He controlled effectively the weeds like Thunga and Garika by incorporating paddy husk and GN shell husk into the soil. To save the moisture loss and suppress weed growth he followed mulching practices such as covering the soil with crop waste which improved the soil texture and fertility. He is also following innovative soil fertility methods like compartmental bunding, green manuring etc.

Mr. Krishna Murthy is following eco friendly diversified cropping systems to avoid crops loses and ensure sustainable incomes. He is growing Areca nut in beetal wine in 1.25 acre, Vegetables in 1.5 acres, Mulberry in 1.25 acre and paddy in 0.5 acre. He grows groundnut, jowar and maize as intercrop in orchards. Along with this he also has 50 coconut trees and 55 tamarind trees along the border of his land. His land is filled with lot of biomass tress like Neem, Pongamia and Subabul. He is also doing sericulture as income generating activity. So the farmer has continuous income round the year at regular intervals. He is providing wage employment to 10 people every day. His income from orchards and other crops are increasing steadily year after year. Most of his family needs are met from his own land. His family is not buying vegetables since many years. He has 5 buffalos and 1 cow and 2 bullocks which help in his farming. He also purchased a tractor. According to The farmer his incomes from each crop in the year 2012 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>crops</th>
<th>Average Net income per annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mango orchard</td>
<td>75000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Betel vine</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Areca nut</td>
<td>40000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sericulture</td>
<td>180000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tamarind</td>
<td>50000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Annual Rainfed crops</td>
<td>15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Coconut trees</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3,90,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Krishna murthy said, “When I started farming, I was given 16 acre unfertile land and Rs 5 lakh debt. I have invested on my land to make fertile and productive, I repaid all my loans, dug bore wells, purchased tractor, constructed house and met family expenses. I have regular assured income every year. This has enabled me to overcome the droughts. All this was possible because of support from AF programmes. I suggest all the farmers to follow this system to beat the drought in Anantapur District.”
Krishna Murthy made best use of AF’s programmes and ideas and has transformed his low fertile land into a fertile one. He shifted from mono cropping to diversified and mixed cropping patterns. Through his hard work he has proved that agriculture is profitable. The important thing is that he is not the only one who has benefitted from the programme; there are thousands of other farmers who have benefitted and are able to live with assured income, self esteem and human dignity, in spite of frequent droughts. The farming system propagated by AF Ecology centre is helping the farmers to overcome the drought. This has been proved by farmers like Mr. Krishnamurthy.

Case Study -2

Impact of Multiple & Diversified Cropping Models:
Ms. Lakshmidevi is a small farmer from Madigubba village in Anantapur District. She is living with her husband Mr. Sankaranarayana. Her family own six acres of dry land and half acre of Irrigated Land. The agriculture is their only source of living. They were sowing mono crop of Groundnut in all the 6 acres of rainfed land like most of the farmers in the village. They were making loses as the Groundnut crop is failing year after year.

AF has educated Ms. Lakshmi Devi to go for multiple cropping in the place of groundnut mono-crop and supported her with Inputs and technical information. In this Kharif 2012, she had sown foxtail millet and red gram in 1.60 acres and went for mixed cropping model of Groundnut crop developed by AF in which she had sown multiple crops like Redgram, Green gram, Cowpea, Castor and field beans along with Groundnut. The vegetable seeds like Bendi, Cluster bean and leafy vegetables are grown on bunds and in between rows in the crop. She has followed all the protocols of Sustainable Agriculture recommended by AF. She has purchased some inputs from nearby NPM shop. She used Bio fertilizers in place of chemical fertilizers and used Bio pesticides to control pests. This has reduced her cost of cultivation by around Rs 1500 per acre.

Unlike last year, this year Ms. Laxmi Devi has got multiple yields from multiple crops. As on December 10th 2012, She got yield of 600 kg’s foxtail millets, 25 kg’s green gram, 15 kg’s cowpea, 7 kg’s green leaf, 12 kg’s Bendi, 12kg’s Cluster beans, 38 kg’s Castor and she is expecting Red gram yield up to 200 kg and additional yields from above mentioned crops. Because of dry spell in pod stage she got only 300 kg yield from Groundnut crop.

She has now understood the benefit of practicing Sustainable Agriculture and multiple cropping. She said that she has saved about Rs 8000 by using NPM methods in place of chemical pest control methods. Her Net income this year is expected to be atleast Rs18000 more than normal years.
I. Introduction:

The World Day to combat Drought and Desertification was organised by Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre (AF Ecology Centre) on 17-06-2012 at the R.K. Function Hall, Anantapur. AF Ecology Centre took initiative to celebrate this day and sensitize people and the Government on the issues of drought and desertification.

II. participants and Invitees:

About 1020 farmers from 214 AF project villages participated the meeting. The meeting started at 10.30 AM with lighting of lamp by the Director of AF-EC Dr. Y.V. Malla Redd; the District Collector Mr. V. Durgadas; the Project Director, DWMA (District Water Management Agency) Mr. Murali; Well-known Writer, Mr.Singamaneni Narayana; HR Activist Mr.Basha; and Progressive Farmer, Sanjeeva Raddy; and some eminent people.

III. Exhibitions and stalls for awareness creation:

Before entering into the meeting hall, the participants (Guests, Farmers and Farm labours) visited the stalls and exhibitions. A model demo plot of Sustainable Agriculture with all components was demonstrated in one of the stalls, which impressed the participants very much. The other stalls exhibited various kinds of traditional and indigenous seeds, food grains, fruits, forest species plants, traditional agriculture implements, bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides (decoctions). A photo exhibition on plantations by the Groundwater team, Anantapur, was put up in one of the stalls. A cultural program was organized with awareness songs on drought, desertification and environment. Food stall with millet products was organized by Dharani Farmers society from C.K.Palli.
IV. Keynote Address:

Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy presided over the meeting and in his inaugural address remarked that Anantapur district has become a home for droughts and desertification. He has highlighted the agri crisis and migration due to the continuous droughts and desertification process in the district.

He proposed a “10 point program” to address the alarming problem of increasing droughts and desertification. This 10-point program includes the following:

1. Develop Ananta water Grid connecting the tanks and providing river water to tanks for improved water availability across the district.
2. Provide Protective Irrigation to rain fed crops during the dry spells using the modern technology for drought proofing.
3. Promote rainfed horticulture in the cultivated lands and agro-forestry in wastelands.
4. Increase fodder availability through afforestation and common land development.
5. Promote Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) at each rainfed farmer’s household level and diversify the income sources.
6. Promote mixed cropping and inter cropping systems of farming over mono cropping. Promote a base-shift from chemical-based agriculture to Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA).
7. Develop facilities for (a) storage and preservation of agri produce, (b) agri food processing units that provide competitive prices to farmers, and (c) price-stabilization system for agri food products.
8. Ensure health security to all the rural poor through extension of Arogya Sri.
9. Facilitate free and quality higher education to all the rural poor.
10. Develop a time bound comprehensive 5 year action plan for rural development.

The speech has received a great attention from the audience especially farmers and labourers. Most of the speakers including District officials and local politicians praised the “10 point agenda” proposed by Dr.Y.V.Malla Reddy and termed it as the comprehensive approach and need of the hour.

Consolidation of messages by guest speakers:

- The human’s undue interference with nature and over-exploitation of natural resources is causing droughts and desertification. The single most important remedy is improving vegetation in the Anantapur district. There is about 10% forest land in the district, which is devoid of vegetation. So all people, especially farmers are advised to protect the existing vegetation and take up massive and widespread plantations where ever possible, with suitable species of food, fodder, fruit, fibre etc. The plantations should be both eco-friendly and economy friendly to the farmers on a sustainable basis.

- Apart from the wind erosion, erratic rainfall of high intensity is causing soil erosion. The soils are becoming unproductive due to erosion of fertile top soil. Protection of soil from drying under the sun’s heat and direct impact of rain on top soil (which is generally due to lack of adequate amount of organic matter in soil) should be taken care of by developing green cover on the soil.
and mulching. It was suggested that trees be grown across in the district on large scale, so that top soil as well as moisture can be conserved.

- Harvesting of the scarce rain water by construction of water bodies like check dams, Farm ponds, repair of old tanks, rejuvenation of natural springs etc is required to improve surface and ground water. The speakers appreciated and put on record the efforts of AF Ecology Centre in rain water harvesting, soil & moisture conservation and vegetation development though their watershed programme, horticulture, demonstration plots and tree cropping programmes.

- Development of tree crops in the Anantapur District (for sustainable income and healthy environment) helps a lot in combating drought and desertification. The Government and AF Ecology Centre have been promoting rainfed horticulture and other tree cropping programmes on large scale which is really helpful to the district.

- Mr. L. Murali, Project Director, DWMA, expressed that earlier, there were not enough funds to combat drought in Anantapur district. But now MGNREGS has come as boon to mitigate drought and poverty. Variety of activities related to trees, horticulture, water bodies, rain water management, land development, fodder development etc are being implemented under MGNREGS with the objective of combating drought & desertification. The Project Director appealed the participants to effectively utilize the MGNREGS programme, which is helping to mitigate drought and desertification.

- The District Collector Mr. V. Durgadas, IAS, expressed that the purpose of this day is to promote awareness about the implications of desertification and land degradation, the problems of drought and the need for international cooperation to address these problems. He appealed to the people of Anantapur District to protect the soil and use scarce rain water efficiently. With appropriate land and water management measures we can increase the ground water and soil productivity substantially. Plantation on large scale and cloud seeding are to be taken up to improve rainfall, apart from protecting the soil from exposure to erosion. It was well understood by the people how vegetation helps the land to absorb rain water. The Collector emphasized that protecting soil from drying up and effective utilization of rain water are the most important measures in combating drought and desertification. He suggested organizing a “think tank” with some experts and social activists in order to advise the government on the priorities of the district and to ensure continued and consistent efforts for combating drought and desertification for the next five years.

- The MSS conveners also expressed their views and appealed the farmers to practice the measures suggested by the guest speakers.

Conclusion:
The meeting was successful and ended by 02.00 pm with vote of thanks to the participants and invitees. The initiative of conducting this meeting by AF Ecology Centre was appreciated by the public, and every person participating from the Government Administration and NGO sector. Extensive coverage of this meeting was given by all popular news papers.
ANNEXURE - 2

Combating Drought & Desertification and Mitigating Agricultural Crisis and Farmers Distress in Anantapur District

A 10 point programme

1. Introduction:
Earlier the experience of farmers in this district was that they used to get a good crop once in every 2-3 years. But now they get only one or two good crops in 10 years. This worsening situation is probably due to the impact of climate change(?). The rainfall which is always low in this district is getting more and more dispersed and unpredictable. It is no more following the pattern which it used to. The climate change is negatively affecting the health of crops, animals and human beings.

It has deepened the farmers distress and rainfed farmers saw no hope of making a livelihood in agriculture. So, they are abandoning agriculture and migrating to cities desperately to work as casual labor in construction on industry and other unorganized industries. The sudden outmigration from rainfed farming is alarming in last 2 or 3 yeas. If it continues, 50% of farmers may give up farming in next 5 years and might live in city slums under untold suffering. This may ever be a biggest displacement of farmers and largest disgraceful downward occupation mobility from farmers to casual labor.

1.1 Salient features of Anantapur agro-climate
2) Cultivated Area of 11 lakh ha, 85% shallow red-gravelly soils, 15% Black soils
3) Almost 10 lakh (90%) ha. is rainfed, only 10% is under irrigation that too mostly under tube wells, (fluctuations / drying)
4) 7 lakh farming families, 90% of them are small and marginal from SC, ST & BC Communities.
5) Small holdings, mostly slopy /rolling / undulating
6) 2 lakh ha. of forest area almost without tree cover
7) 2 lakh ha. of Revenue hillocks, wastelands, streams, tank beds etc. without tree or grass cover

1.2 Given this situation of Anantapur District of severe agriculture crisis and severe distress of farmers, I propose a 10 point programme to address the problem. If this 10 point programme is implemented systematically with a sense of urgency
in next 10 years we can by and large overcome the agricultural crisis and alleviate rural poverty on sustainable basis.

2.1 Provide Protective Irrigation to rainfed crops during dry spells through Anantapur Water Grid for Drought mitigation

In this district, under rainfed conditions, mainly groundnut and some other crops are grown in 10 lakh ha. Generally droughts occur because of long dry spells in the months of July & August (which is a peg penetration time for Groundnut crop) resulting in huge crop failure. If we can provide 1 or 2 protective irrigations during these dry spells we can protect rainfed crops and prevent droughts to a great extent. This protective irrigation could be made possible through “Anantapur Water Grid”. Anantapur District is endowed with thousands of traditional small and medium irrigation tanks spread across the district. We have to build “Anantapur Water Grid” by interlinking these water bodies and synergizing different water sources viz., rain water, ground water, local surface water and river waters in a “conjunctive use of water”. The water from the Water Grid could be used for protective irrigation to rainfed crops. We have to do the following in order to build “Anantapur Water Grid” for conjunctive use of water; and be able to provide protective irrigation to rainfed crops.

1) Restore traditional irrigation tanks to their full capacity.
2) Convert all irrigation tanks into percolation tanks and storage reservoirs.
3) Bring at least 20 TMC River water and supplement the local surface water in order to fill all the traditional irrigation tanks.
4) Build a distribution network system to rainfed lands through piped or tanker system and mobile sprinkler units.
5) Use this distribution system for giving protective irrigation (15mm?) to rainfed crops during long dry spells by mobile sprinkler units.
6) It will also improve the ground water recharge across the District. Through mobile sprinkler system use augmented ground water also for protective irrigation.

With this system of protective irrigation, droughts could be mitigated and relief provided to lakhs of rainfed poor farmers. The proposed Anantapur Water Grid will also create a more spatially equitable distribution of water across all regions of the district. And will achieve a greater social equity by benefitting large number of small and marginal rainfed farmers, belonging to SC, ST, BC and other poor farmers.

2.2. Promotion of rainfed horticulture and agro forestry in 33% of cultivated area: Tree crops are more drought tolerant and improve environment.

The soil and climate in this district are favorable for certain crops of rainfed horticulture. There is an urgent need to develop rainfed fruit trees and other tree crops in 33% of cultivable land in the district i.e., 4 lakh ha. It will also enhance tree cover in the district and compensate for lack of adequate forest cover in the district. AF-Ecology Centre has successfully established since 20 years that fruit trees like
Mango, Sopota, Amla, Custard Apple, Jamun, Ber etc can be grown in rainfed lands provided initial irrigation for establishment. The Government is now scaling up this successful programme under DWMA. There is further a plenty of scope for establishing rainfed trees for fodder, manure, biomass, medicinal, timber etc. The tree crops not only improve green cover in the district but also add livelihood support to poor farmers. To ensure survival of tree crops, there is need to undertake in-situ soil and rain water harvesting measures; and to “hand hold” farmers from planting to yielding for 3-5 years. Tree crops begin yielding only after 3 to 5 years of planting, so the hand holding has to be attractive to motivate all rainfed farmers to go for tree crops.

2.3. Increase fodder availability through afforestation and common lands development: Vegetation improves environmental endowment and combats desertification:

In Anantapur District there is 2 lakh ha. forest land without forest cover. In addition to this, there is another 2 lakh ha. Revenue waste land with hillocks, streams, ponds etc and also without tree or grass cover. These 4 lakh ha. is a common property resource (common land) useful for support of livelihoods of poor farmers and landless as well as combating desertification by improving environment. In Anantapur District the main occupation after agriculture is sheep/goat rearing and dairy. The shepherds in the district are migrating for months to distant places as there is not enough fodder available for sheep. Also the farmers are selling away cattle for a throw away price as there is no sufficient fodder. Grasses and trees that give fodder, fruit, biomass, timber etc have to be grown in this 2 lakh ha. forest land plus 2 lakh ha. Revenue common lands to augment fodder (and biomass) for sheep and cattle. Several traditional ponds and tanks in forest land need be renovated. And appropriate soil conservation and rain water harvesting measures have to be taken up. Seetaphal, Jamun, tamirnd and other native forest fruit trees (with market value) along with fodder trees like neem, peepal, banyan etc have to be grown in these lands. Once they are grown, restrictive sheep and cattle grazing or cut and carry fodder could be allowed. Developing tree cover and soil conservation & rain water conservation in 4 lakh ha. of forest lands and common lands would also add greatly to the ground water recharge, biomass enhancement, increase soil organic matter and help combating desertification.

2.4. Promote Integrated Farming System (IFS) at each rainfed household level: Each rainfed farmer to own atleast 100 fruit trees plus 2 or 3 cows/10 sheep in order to supplement annual crops:

There is a need to promote IFS for every rainfed farmer. The IFS should integrate annual crops, tree crops and cattle/sheep/goats. This system would diversify income sources, spread risk and provide income stability in case of droughts as farmers will get income from multiple sources like annual crops, tree crops, cattle and sheep. Even if one source fails, other will come to his/her rescue. Regarding tree crops was already discussed in the previous point. Regarding cattle, we have to follow a two pronged approach. a) promote local/native drought-tolerant breed cattle as they are best suited to this region. They will freely move on and graze on
hillocks, streams and can survive well even on dry fodder from annual crops like millets, pulses and groundnut. Different native cow varieties suitable to our area are punganur, thaparkar, hallikar, ongole and sindhi etc. These will survive on crop residues and give good manure. Also the productivity of common lands will increase when cattle move in these lands. The local breeds are best suited for rainfed farmers and they are important resource by way of cow dung and cow urine for Jeevamrutham for practicing Sustainable Agriculture. b) Promote conventional dairying with the exotic milch animals like Jersy, Heifer etc for farmers with irrigation facilities, who have green fodder; and better equipped to manage the sensitive animals.

2.5. Promote mixed /inter cropping with millets and pulses and ensure food and nutritional security: Provide locally grown food in ICDS, Mid-day Meals and PDS: Reduce Food Miles:

In Anantapur district the crop area of millets has reduced drastically because of extensive cultivation of groundnut. Due to this the villagers are completely dependent on only rice under PDS for food. Consequently the malnutrition is increasing and immunity of villagers is decreasing. So there is need to diversify the rainfed crops with millets and pulses and reduce Groundnut cultivation. Suitable millet and pulses for Anantapur District are Jowar, Bajra, Fox-tail millet, Redgram, Cow-pea, Lab-Lab, Gingilly, Green Gram etc. In order to bring back millets and pulses, Government should provide adequate incentives. Government should provide crop insurance, credit facility, support price, and procurement facility for millet and pulses. The procured millets & pulses should be consumed locally as much as possible by supplying in PDS programme and by providing millet & pulse based cooked food in mid-day meal scheme and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in order to create food and nutritional security for poor. Such a localized food production and distribution system would reduce food miles, save distribution costs and enhance food and nutritional security.

2.6 Shift Green Revolution model (HEIDA) to LEISA

The Green Revolution model which I called High External Input Destructive Agriculture (HEIDA), is not suitable for Anantapur agro-climate and particularly inimical to rainfed small and marginal farmers. High use of chemicals in agriculture is leading to increased cost of cultivation and polluting the environment. Farmers are caught in the debt trap and losing a lot due to HEIDA. The rainfed farmers and small farmers are being thrown out of agriculture as they cannot afford high crop investments and cannot take risks. This is also destroying the health of people, soil and ecology. The productivity of soils are decreasing because of high use of chemicals. So there is a need to replace HEIDA and campaign intensively the Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) practices. Government under HEIDA is giving direct and indirect subsidy of about Rs 10,000/- per ha. on chemical fertilizers mechanization, free electricity etc. So the Government should provide atleast Rs 7500/- incentive per ha. to all farmers who shift from HEIDA to LEISA, So that they grow diversified crops, prepare and use their own manures and practice bio-management of pests and diseases.
Further in order to mitigate climate change also we have to shift from HEIDA to LEISA. This LEISA is thus eco-friendly and very beneficial to small and marginal rainfed farmers.

2.7. Processing and value addition of Agri-produce and Remunerative prices:

The agri-produce grown in this district is known for its high quality. Anantapur farmers are growing vegetables and high value fruits like sweet lime, pomegranate, sapota, guava, citrus, water melon, grapes, mango etc., and other crops like groundnut, bengal gram, jowar and lentils. These is no proper processing and marketing facility for these crops. Cold storages and ware houses should be build adequately for storage. Atleast first stage processing units have to be established in places wherever feasible. Assured market or procurement facility and a price stabilization mechanism has to be provided for all agri products. The agro processing industries like fruit juice, pulp tomato ketchup can help in stabilizing prices and give remunerative price to farmers. A price stabilization fund should be setup to cushion the price fluctuations and avoid distress sale.

2.8. Industrialisation – An essential and urgent necessity for the district.

Anantapur is also the least industrialized and otherwise also most backward district in Andhra Pradesh. Given a population of over 40 lakhs, there are only about 20,000 industrial workers in Anantapur district. Anantapur district is rich with good educational institutions and human resources. Bangalore International airport is just about 75 Kms away from the borders of Anantapur district. A longest and most important National Highway from Kanyakumari to Delhi runs through the length of Anantapur. And the district strategically located between Bangalore and Hyderabad offering good scope for an industrial corridor between Bangalore and Hyderabad. The crop land is least productive given chronically drought-prone and desert like agro-climate. Perhaps this is the only District in the country where farmers themselves are inviting industry and prepared to sell their land at a lower rate compared to any other district! The farmers are keen to see their children employed in industry as they cannot see future in agriculture for their children.

However one constraint for industrialization is the scarcity of water in the district. So, there is an urgent and high priority need to allocate 5 TMC of water exclusively for industry in the district. The water availability will trigger a rapid industrialization in the district given other congenial factors. Given the climatic constraints for agriculture sector, it is fair logical and essential to incentivise and encourage large scale industrialization, small, medium and big.

2.9. Health security & Education Support

One of the main causes (apart from droughts) for poverty and increasing rural indebtedness is ever increasing health expenditure. So all the villagers have to be provided with health security to come out of poverty. Rajiv Arogya Sri has to be extended to all, augmented to include all diseases in it and implement effectively.
Another major cause for poverty and high rural indebtedness is increasing costs on their children’s education. Unable to see any future in agriculture farmers desperately want to provide higher education to all their children which is becoming costly day by day. So all the rural children who want to go for higher education should be supported fully by the government. Also there is a strong need to improve quality of education in both Government & private institutions in the rural areas.

3. A time bound comprehensive 5 year action plan for comprehensive development of Anantapur District.

Alleviating the crisis in agriculture is basic and a necessary condition, but not sufficient. A piece-meal approach to address the chronic problems of drought and poverty in Anantapur District will not solve the gigantic problem of being the most backward district in the state. Multi-sectoral programme/ interventions and convergence is necessary. A time bound comprehensive 5 year action plan has to be worked out including the above measures as well as other sectoral interventions such as the need for industrialization, (micro, small, medium & large) non-farm skilled employment for under educated youth, additional and alternate income generation programmes for women, landless etc. And further, adequate financial, human and institutional resources to implement the plan should be made available at the disposal of the District Administration. The elected people’s representatives, including Panchayath Raj Institutions, Political parties, the Government machinery and the civil society organizations have to work in cohesion and concerted manner.

4. Conclusion:

Lest we all may be late for ever! Farmers may disappear in desperation and disgrace to cities to work as casual labor! Farmers becoming casual labor will be disgraceful. In the absence of industrialization, the educated community also has to migrate in search of employment. Then who else will remain in Anantapur District!

A sense of urgency and political commitment is needed to address the problems of chronic drought, poverty and backwardness in Anantapur District.
Our Brief History

AF Ecology Centre was founded by Father Vincent Ferrer 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 Agromononical 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 comprise 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.
Accion Fraterna Ecology Centre

Upparapalli Road,
Bangalore Highway, Anantapur – 515002
Andhra Pradesh – India

Contact Person
Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy
Director

Phone : +91(0) 8554 – 244222 , 246 884
Fax : +91 (0) 8554 – 244990

Email : actionf@sancharnet.in
action_atp@dataone.in
yvmallareddy@yahoo.co.in

www.af-ecologycentre.org