



World Water Day
March 22

Emmaus groups in Asia had been working on various projects related with water in the last 15 years, and 'Right to Water' has been one of the priority issue. Water crisis has led to water conflicts in the region, taking away the lives of many innocent people, especially from the marginalized section of the society. The extreme weather conditions, climate change causing floods & droughts have severely affected the region. Man-made calamities have made the situation more worse, leading to destruction of crops. For earning maximum profits, farmers are left with no other choice but to take loans which they are later unable to pay back due to crop failure. This forces farmers to sell their lands & even commit suicides. It has also resulted in the migration of poor population from rural to urban areas causing other big challenges for survival.



In 2016, key focus of Emmaus groups in Asia had been in construction of rainwater harvesting structures, raising awareness among children & adults on water conservation, raising voice for access to clean drinking water facilities, helping those in need to install hand pumps, water tanks and repairing / deepening the community water bodies. On 22nd March 2017 to celebrate 'World Water Day', Emmaus groups in India organised groups discussions, rally & awareness sessions on Environmental degradation, neglect of community forest, Community water bodies, depletion of water bodies, depletion of water table resulting in consecutive drought and crop failure, decline in involvement of young farmers in agriculture.



Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Village Community Development Society (VCDS) celebrated the day in its 18 Non-Formal schools with the students and Teachers. On this occasion, the students conducted rally & awareness speeches on the need to protect community water bodies. Also participants were informed regarding the different water harvesting techniques & water conservation methods, and were explained the current drought situation in Tamil Nadu, its negative impact and how to prevent it in future. Students highlighted the need for removing & destroying 'Seemai Karuvelan' and to plant indigenous tree saplings like Pungan, Vembu, Vagai, Panai, Poovarasam, Konnai, Arasan & Punnai to preserve the biodiversity, and to increase the ground water level, since these trees suck more water and strengthens the soil.

Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Florance Home Foundation (FHF) celebrated the day in its centre at Pudukpalayam, in which more than 65 women from nearby slums participated. After the welcome sessions, a group discussion had been organized. Participants shared about the problems they face in their daily access to drinking water. They do not get sufficient & safe drinking water for their family, have access to only salty water to wash their clothes, and to clean their cooking utensils. They have to walk long distance in search of clean drinking water. Participants also informed that they do not have any waste water treatment plant or water recharging unit

in their slum, and requested FHF to install one such unit, which would be of great help to them. FHF assured that they will try to install a recharging unit by end of this year.

Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: From 16 to 22nd March, KUDUMBAM organised an 'Environmental awareness programme' for school children from three government schools in Kundrarakovil, in which around 170 children participated. A similar awareness session was organized for 150 university students from four colleges in Trichy. This programme was organized together with 'Moral foundation - Trichy' on 19th March. Another training was organized for 80 rural women on water harvesting and water management techniques such as Trenches and bunds, basins, farm ponds, Mulching. This programme was supported by Emmaus with technical support from the 'Department of biotechnology, Sastra University, Thanjavur'.



MHO

MUTUAL HEALTH ORGANISATION

Delhi, N.INDIA: *Tara Projects Association* organized a training programme for the MHO Local Steering Committee members at its premises in the month of *January 2017*. The training session began with a welcome session by *Ms.Moon Sharma..*

Emphasizing the importance of training, she mentioned that it is very important for the members to have sufficient knowledge – both conceptual and technical, about the MHO concept. The training started with a presentation about the beginning of MHO, its relevance and the milestones achieved since 2011. It was interesting for the participants as some of them joined after the start of the MHO project and some participants were there since the beginning. The participants were also informed about the problems faced by MHO during the initial phase and the work done to overcome these problems.



Moving ahead, the participants were asked to identify the various stakeholders involved in the MHO project. This activity helped them understand the expectations of all the stakeholders and how the common thread of solidarity links them all to the concept of MHO. The trainers also shared the examples of conflict of interest, which sometimes becomes obstacle in the relationship with the stakeholders. Successful examples of diagnostic centers were also shared with the participants. During this session, the participants were introduced to the policy document and its rationale. They were explained how all the details were worked out and included in the policy document



which continues to be the Guidance document in the operational matters of MHO. This was followed by explanation of basic concepts like Membership definition, criteria for identification of members, Membership procedure. The participants were also informed about the importance of focus group discussion and its role in promoting membership of MHO.

Participants were also provided explanation of some more basic concepts like contribution, how it is fixed and its role in deciding about the benefits/coverage provided by the MHO. They were explained that it is very important to set the expectations of the beneficiaries realistically at the outset and make people understand that everyone has to contribute in the project in order to make it a success. This followed

by an explanation about the benefits provided to the members how it is decided. Finally the participants were told about the exclusions in the benefits and the related rules. The importance of policy document was reinforced at this stage with the participants. This was a very interesting session for the participants as it brought out clarity about the conceptual knowledge related to MHO's operations and most commonly asked question by the community.



Rajshahi, BANGLADESH: Since September 2016, PUP has been implementing a project on “Reducing harmful traditional practices such as Child Marriage, Dowry and Family Violence’ in *Bogra district*. With the support of *Actionaid Bangladesh-BFI*, PUP formed local youth group namely ‘Watch Committee’ to combat harmful traditional practices from the society.

From January to March 2017, the ‘Watch committee’ members were able to prevent 6 Child marriages in their working areas in *Ashkepur union*. By the advocacy and lobbying of the committee members, one of the victim from the six, namely ‘*Srimati Chandana Rani*’ obtained full free studentship opportunity in her school to continue her studies. Her father wanted to give her in marriage because it was not possible for him to educate her. Also the local panchayat has assured to provide 30 kilograms of rice per month for next 2 years under a Government program.



On 3 March 2017, the ‘Watch committee’ also protested by a human chain on a recent act of ‘Child marriage protection’ which has been amended as follows: “*In special cases, parents can give child marriage with the permission of court, chairman of local government and mutual understanding of both families*”.



Jebara, INDONESIA: Journalist *Suprpto Ismudjito* aged 87 passed on January 4, 2017 in Indonesia after a short acute illness. In the 1970's, late *Mr. Suprpto* was active in a local church in *West Java*. He founded a Christian newspaper and published it for two decades. His greatest life accomplishment was the ‘*Yayasan Penghibur*’ - Comforter Foundation. He established the foundation in the early 1980's with one co-worker and his wife *Anna-Liisa Jaanu-Ismudjito*. *Yayasan Penghibur* work promotes children's opportunities, healthcare, social work and development of environmental protection locally and with partners widely in *Central Java*.

In 1985, Yayasan Penghibur's children's home opened the doors to children who had been abandoned because of leprosy. Together with his wife, he educated the local community about leprosy so that children were not abandoned anymore because of the disease. Then the couple started also to accept children who suffered from extreme poverty or were war refugees or for some other reason needed a home. The children attended school and later either continued their studies or went to work. They also have developed mentally disabled children, several of who have stayed in the sheltered workshop in Penghibur. Altogether about 200 children have lived in Yayasan Penghibur children's home. Presently there are about 30 children. Finnish sponsors have supported the children's home from the beginning. Penghibur became a member of Emmaus International in early 2000.



Mr. Suprpto was able to stay at home almost until the very last. During the preceding week, many young ones who had already moved out of the children's home came to visit him. He will be sorely missed by Anna-Liisa, the children, relatives, friends and the children's home sponsors. Emmaus Asia and Emmaus International had the opportunity to share with him many good moments during several meetings over the years. He always had a welcome and constructive word of opinion during such meetings, and his valuable contributions to strengthen the Emmaus principles & values has always been acknowledged.

UN-REDD PROGRAMME



Galaha, SRILANKA: A meeting of 'Sri Lanka Climate Forest Action network' in collaboration with UN-REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) was organised at 'Devon's Rest Auditorium in Kandy' on the 20th January 2017. The convener of the meeting was Mr. Liyanarachi from "Green Life" - a Civil Society Organization based in Kandy. Mr. Wijeratne - Co-coordinator of the REDD program based in Anuradhapura was the resource person.

The UN collaborative program on 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation' (REDD) in developing countries was launched in the year 2008. This program supports & promotes the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders including indigenous peoples and other forest dependent communities in National and International implementation in over 64 countries including Sri Lanka.

During the meeting, issues related to climate change, green gas emissions, environmental pollution, loss of biodiversity, rise in sea level & melting of glaciers & many more related topics has been discussed in depth. Forest committees has been re-established, & a district working committee of 12 organisations one among them was 'Gami Seva Sevana' has also been established.



Delhi, N.INDIA: At Tara premises, the program was attended by staff members, producer groups and the volunteers. A presentation depicting the life of late *Tara Rani Sharma*, one of the founders of Tara Projects, a living example of gender equality and close to everyone was shown to the participants. The artisans shared their memories of her life journey as an empowered woman, strengthening fair trade and promoting gender equality. Moon Sharma spoke about her relationship as a daughter and a co-worker informing the participants about her dedication towards women empowerment and motivating the women beneficiaries to become self dependent. All acknowledged her contribution for working towards sustainable development.

The men were also motivated to educate their fellow men in the communities to work towards respecting and accepting women as equal. Since the women are playing a significant role in livelihood generation for their families and this needs to be recognized.

Presenting the statistics, the participants were informed that only 14% of the businesses are led by women. Another important fact informed was that women are earning less than men at all the levels. The

participants were urged to be more aware about the situation and work hard to change the typical mindset prevailing in our society where women are not considered equal to men and the situation needs to be changed.

At *Sangam Vihar*, a program was organized in collaboration with the 'Social Welfare Department, Delhi Government' where more than 150 women including *Anganwadi workers* participated. They marched together holding placards and banners with slogans of Gender Equality and Women Rights. *Rashida Begum* the social worker, speaking about gender equality mentioned that men and women are born equal. She urged the participants to treat their children equally. She also recited a poem on Gender Equality

At *Badarpur*, women beneficiaries including artisans/ micro credit/ skill development/ MHO beneficiaries participated in the program. Social workers and all present had discussion on the theme "Fair Trade Fosters Decent Work and Gender Equality at Workplace", deciding to work in this direction. Many women beneficiaries shared their stories of struggle and success achieved.

Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:

Kudumbam celebrated the day at its centres in Kolunji & Tranquebar. At Kolunji, Dr.Subha - Associate professor, Dept. of women studies, Bharathidasan University was invited as the chief guest for the occasion. She spoke about the need for celebrating women's day. Over generation, women work for the whole day doing all the household chores as well as farm level activities. Due to the present drought situation, agriculture work has been drastically reduced. In this situation, men migrate to cities and women are forced to manage all the burdens. All women should be united as a group and they should fight for their rights on equal wage, education and land rights. More than 100 women participated in this program and got benefitted.



At Tranquebar, Dr.Uma Maheshwari - Chief Superintendent, Karaikal Government hospital participated as the guest of honour. She focused mainly on women health, malnutrition, and anaemia during pregnancy. She insisted on the intake of nutritional foods such as green leaves, fruits, millets and vegetables. Most of the diseases are food borne. So a woman has to take care of herself in order to look after her family. Around 80 women participated in this program.



Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Village Community Development Society (VCDS) is working along with MAITRI - India and ADECOM Network on 'Women's Protection from Domestic Violence' through awareness campaigns, seminars and community awareness program in 5 villages. On 14th March, VCDS conducted a community awareness program in *Thenkolappakkam* village on the eve of World Women's Day.

Delegates from ADECOM Network and VCDS shared information on how to protect women facing domestic violence, how to approach the issues legally and protection of girl children against abuses and harassment, and what kind of counseling can be given to the victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment & abuses. More than 75 members took part in the awareness program, and six case studies has been identified. As an outcome of the seminar, members of the village requested for a medical camp to detect & treat cancer and Oral diseases as there is an increase in the use of tobacco among women & increase in Alcohol consuming level among youth.

Charghat - Rajshahi, BANGLADESH: On 8 March 2016, *Thanapara Swallows* celebrated International Women's Day in which around 250 men and women participated in the rally, which moved on to the main streets in *Charghat bazaar* and finally a discussion meeting was held at *Thanapara* headquarters.



Emmaus Asia Regional Board

Date: 23 - 25 March 2017

Venue: AEP, Beirut - Lebanon



BEIRUT: Emmaus Asia Regional Board met at *Association d'entraide Professionnelle in Beirut, Lebanon from 23 to 25th March 2017*, in which delegates from *India, Bangladesh, Lebanon & France* participated. Several discussions were held during the meeting in preparation for the *Board meeting* of Emmaus International (EI) scheduled to take place in *France in May 2017*.

After the welcome session by the chair, the agenda for the meeting was adopted. The main decisions of the Asia Regional Assembly held at *Delhi in October 2016* and followup / actions taken have been reviewed by the members, after which the minutes has been approved. Thereafter Treasurer presented the payment details made by Asian groups in 2016. She informed that all the full member groups & trial members have made their contributions towards Emmaus International membership fee & Solidarity sale contributions for 2016.

Moving ahead, discussions were held on the 3 struggles chosen at Jesolo World Assembly in April 2016. *Gregoire from EI* made a PPT presentation explaining the transition for International Solidarity & Campaigning from the priority action areas to three struggles, after which Members also shared regarding the main inspiration in creation of their respective associations. Thereafter member groups present shared in detail regarding the projects implemented collectively on Water, Micro credit, Eco tourism & Training programmes in the year 2016. Also the groups reported on projects supported by '*Foundation Abbé Pierre*' & '*Emmaus Montbeliard*' based in France. Thereafter *Gregoire* shared with the members the details of the new calendar for *Annual Solidarity programme, and for FAP & Montbeliard projects*, which comes into effect from the year 2017. The sources of funds, criteria and the work schedule for the above 3 programmes were explained in detail.

Members also were informed in detail regarding the details of the organisation AGIRabced based in France with members of retired volunteer experts who provide free of charge their availability, experience & profesional know-how. Also their missions in different parts of the world, specially in Asia. Member groups who are interested to contact this



group have been asked to refer to the details in the working document, and contact AGIRabced in case they prefer to invite some volunteers.

Thereafter member groups presented their projects for the year 2017, which will be submitted for approval by the Board of Emmaus International in May 2017. Following their presentation, *Tara & Thanapara* updated the members regarding the progress of mutual health programme in their respective organisations. Their presentation included the details of the project area, health situation in the area, Initial actions of MHO and how it took shape, the challenges in the initial stages, the details of membership fee yearwise, day care support and medical tests provided, and the achievements as on today.

A PPT presentation on different stages in handling trial membership requests, followup with the groups after they become trial members, how to handle the requests for full membership and requests for fundings from external groups were explained to the members. Also the tools to be referred & the responsibilities of the Secretariats & elected members in various stages of the process have been explained. Thereafter discussions took place on the trial member groups in Bangladesh and Srilanka, and on the new applications for trial membership from India.

Kamal shared about the details of visit made with *Oswald* to YP, Indonesia from 4 to 9 March 2017. He said that the main objective of the visit had been to study the present situation after the demise of *Mr.Supapto* in Jan 2017 which has created a void in the development initiatives of YP, and in the

communication with EI & EA. Also to discuss with *Ms.Anna-Liisa* – the cofounder and with Board & staff team of YP regarding the handover process visualised with another organisation (The Salvation Army), and draw out a plan of action on the role of EI & EA in strengthening future interventions. Regional Board expressed their condolences for the death of *Mr.Supapto*, and they were of the opinion that Emmaus Asia wishes to extend all support to YP in this difficult situation.

Thereafter discussions were held on the contributions made by Emmaus groups in Act Emmaus Digital platform, and members were informed that the different initiatives that have been uploaded by member groups in the website. Thereafter the video documentaries of VCDS (India) and Jekawili Association (Ivory coast) has been displayed, and members found both the videos interesting. And members were informed that the 'Heritage & Communication department' at EI will be publishing one documentary per month in 'Act Emmaus' website which will help people to understand the diversity of our Movement and our struggles across the world. Thereafter discussions were held on the possibilities of organising a work camp in Asia during the end of this year.

Lena and Gregoire shared with the members regarding the working group of 4 members on 'Ethical Finance & Solidarity economy', which met in Nov 2016 with the aim of relaunching 'Emmaus Ethical Fund' managed by EI. In **preparation for the Board meeting** of EI to be



held in *May 2017*, the Regional Activity report and utilization of funds for the year 2016 were presented and approved. Projected budget for the year 2017 was also presented and approved by the Regional Board. There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 7 pm on *24th March 2017*, and visits were arranged to AEP activities the next day to meet and interact with Micro credit beneficiaries.

Remembering our Founder

INDIA: Florance Home Foundation (FHF) in *Cuddalore, Tamilnadu* organised a meeting in their Administrative Office at *Pudupalayam* where more than 40 members were present, and a photo exhibition of Abbé Pierre was displayed for the public.



Village Community Development Society (VCDS) in *Tindivanam, Tamilnadu* organised a session for the school children of *Parangini village*, during which the life history of Abbé Pierre and about Emmaus movement with his activities worldwide was explained to the participants. Also a poetry competition and an essay writing on Abbé Pierre life history was conducted.

BANGLADESH: Thanapara Swallows (TSDS) in their premises at *Rajshahi* organised a gathering wherein staffs, children and their parents, local villagers and a youth group participated. Members were informed the history of Emmaus through a powerpoint presentation, and the life history of Abbé Pierre followed by a question/answer session, wherein participants were asking their clarifications on the Emmaus activities.



training programs

Delhi, N.INDIA: *Tara Projects Association* organized 4 different training programs on Life skills, Fire fighting, First aid & Capacity building during the first quarter of 2017. The objective of these trainings was to raise awareness and develop capacities of the producers, adolescent children from the learning centres, staff and community representatives. These trainings covered approximately 200 persons.

In the 3-day training program on **Life skills**, the students were made aware about various stages of our life, the importance of dignity, self assertiveness, the skill of decision making and problem solving. The various aspects of Gender equality were also covered in the program. The trainers from 'Modi Care Foundation' provided the training by using innovative techniques & involving students in various group activities. The sessions organized were interactive and participatory.



In the training organized on **Fire fighting**, the trainer demonstrated use of fire safety equipments such as hose reel, fire fighting cylinders, fire alarms and smoke detectors. On this occasion, a fire was setup & participants were asked to demonstrate the knowledge gained about use of fire safety equipments. During the training a mock drill was conducted and the participants were trained on emergency evacuation procedures. An emergency response team was constituted to meet the threat from fire or any other natural disaster.

Under the **capacity building program**, 25 young girls and women were provided training on Jewellery making at *Sangam Vihar* community. During the training programs, participants learned the weaving, assembling techniques, use of hand tools carefully and proper finishing. The participants used raw material like beads, thread and hooks etc. All took keen interest to learn the jewellery assembling craft. The master craftswomen from *Aadarsh Hasthilp Samiti*, from Badarpur provided training to the participants.



Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* organized a 3-day training program on 'Folk arts' from 17 to 19th March 2017 at its centre in *Vellakulam*. More than 65 students including teachers from 24 villages participated in the training which mainly focused on 'Parai Muzhakkam and Parai Adavugal'. Parai is an instrument widely used by the marginalized people to bring out their voice and seek attention for the problems they face in their daily life. It attracts the attention of others easily, and it is also considered as the voice of the oppressed. *Mr.T.Aaron & Mr.S.Karmegan* from 'Thozhan Kalai Kuzhu' were invited as the trainers who provided following trainings to the participants - Parai Adithal, Parai Adavu, Oyil Aattam, Yoga, Seminar on Leadership qualities, Awareness songs, Brain power boosting games.

The training was useful for the participants in understanding the history of the musical instrument – *Parai*. The participants gained confidence that they can address the problems of people in their villages through this art. Participants also felt that there is a need to strengthen and spread the traditional folk arts which are now becoming less famous and unidentified because of the western music & arts, as the folk arts are the back bone of Tamil Culture and Heritage. This training also aimed at forming a strong cultural troop at district level involving more youths with social responsibility.



Rajshahi, BANGLADESH: On 5 January 2017, PUP organised a rally & a training session to create awareness among the people on the importance of paying VAT & TAX. PUP has been working with Democratic Budget Movement (DBM) since 2012. The main aim of DBM is ‘Decentralization of National Budget’ and raise voice to prepare ‘District wise Budget’, so that root level people can participate in the budgeting process. Preparing a budget considering the demands of the grassroots will be much realistic.

Hence DBM pressurizes the Government to prepare a budget integrating the demands from the root level.

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