



# International Women's Day



**Delhi, N.INDIA:** International Women's day was celebrated by *Tara Projects Association* at Bawana, Delhi on *8th March 2019*, in which more than 500 members including social workers, health workers, students, micro-credit beneficiaries, self help group members, mainly women attended the event.

The program began with *Moon Sharma* from Tara speaking about the importance of the International Women's day and its theme. She emphasized that all the women should come together in solidarity and need to work against social evils in our society that are against women. She gave an example of her own journey and of other women active in Fair Trade and are working to achieve gender equality. She motivated all the women present there to know more about their rights and take their lives in their own hands. Only then we will be able to move forward together and have balance in society.



Ms. Joy McBrien, from 'Fair Anita USA' also spoke about the issue of gender equality and the challenges faced worldwide. Vikas Kumar from Tara spoke that it is also very important to work to change the traditional mindset of men. He said that it is necessary that men accept women equally and respect each other and they will have to complement each other to face the issue of inequality and injustice in our society.



On the importance of gender equality, Pankaj Mehndiratta mentioned that both men and women should have equal access to resources and opportunities including decision making. He asked all the women participants to encourage their daughters to attend regular schooling so that they can be active and play more meaningful role and gain recognition in the society.

Thereafter a street play was held on importance of gender balance by the health workers. The play depicted two contrasting scenarios, one where the parents treat both boy and girl child as equal and another family where parents are gender biased. The play conveyed the message that we should treat the boys and girls as equal and takes care for both of them.

The highlight of the day was a rally organized where all carried placards and banners, displaying slogans of equality, women rights and girl's education. This was followed by a cultural program by the local girls. The program concluded with all the participants taking a Pledge to work for creating gender balance at all levels.



**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** An awareness seminar was organized by Village Community Development Society (VCDS) in partnership with ADECOM Network and MAITRI India on the topic of 'Women empowerment', and on 'Women and child protection against domestic violence' at Parangini village, which is located in interior rural area with limited transport facilities. The village has more women population than man. Ms. Fathima from ADECOM Network shared the

key points on the importance of womens' protection from domestic violence, causes and reasons for domestic violence, and the way to get protected from domestic violence. VCDS volunteers from Germany and France shared their countries policy on women's protection from any form of violence and importance on girl child education. Ms. Kousalya - convener of 'Navajothi Women's movement' and Mr. Pannerselvam of VCDS explained about the abuse and harassments faced by women, girl children, how to get protection and the assistance from police and legal aid cell groups. The programme helped the participants to know more about the women issues and rights of women.

**Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Florance Home Foundation (FHF) celebrated the day in its 'Community development centre' in Killai, in which more than 25 women participated, and demonstrated the womens' rights displaying placards.





**Bogra, BANGLADESH:** *Pollee Unnnyon Prokolpo* (PUP) has been working for women empowerment as well as Gender equality since 2001. Involving with this activity, PUP had been conducting various discussion meetings, seminars, yard meetings, campaigns on different gender and women rights-based issues to reduce violence against women, child marriage, domestic violence etc. On the occasion of International Womens' day, PUP arranged a discussion meeting in which Government Officials, Local Government representatives, NGO leaders, Journalists, and civil society representatives took part. The theme of this year women's day is **"Think Equal, Build smart, Innovate for change"**. District administration arranged a fair on occasion of International Women Day, and invited the organizations who are working on women empowerment to participate. PUP was invited by the district administration to participate in the fair with their handicraft products along with women artisan group members.

## ABBÉ PIERRE DEATH ANNIVERSARY

**Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Abbé Pierre, founder of Emmaus movement death anniversary was observed on 22nd of January every year. In Kolunji ecological farm, Vidiveli children and KUDUMBAM staffs organized a day of reflection on Abbé Pierre's contribution in empowering the poorest of the poor. Also discussions were held on the recent changes on increasing poverty, and the new forms of exploitation of children and women, and the role of Emmaus groups around the world in addressing these issues.



**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** In Tindivanam, the students of *Siruvadi* gathered in their village and observed the day. *Ms.Andal*, village representative of Navajothi women's movement, volunteers and VCDS field staffs took part in this event. *Mr.Easuraj* of VCDS shared the life of Abbé Pierre with the students and the parents. *Ms.Shanthi*, teacher of the non-formal school shared the principles of Emmaus movement, how VCDS is working on those principles to help the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable people of the society.

**Delhi, N.INDIA:** In *Delhi*, staff members of *Tara Projects Association*, the producers and volunteers remembered *Abbé Pierre* on his 12th death anniversary. A prayer meeting was organized on the occasion and the participants paid their homage to *Abbé Pierre*. Remembering him on his death anniversary, *Vikas Kumar* shared with the participants, *Abbé Pierre's* life history and struggles in building the Emmaus movement. He remembered him as a tireless anti-poverty crusader and champion for the outcasts of society. On this occasion, Tara staff members and producers also paid their respects to *Abbé Pierre* by observing a two minutes silence and paying floral tributes to him.



Thereafter participants were informed about the origin of Emmaus in 1949, how *Abbé Pierre* became famous during the cold 1954 French winter making his famous call when he went on air to demand shelter for thousands of people threatened with death during a bitterly cold winter. His appeal set off a wave of sympathy and motivated many to come out of their homes and support the needy. The participants at the meeting were also informed about the Emmaus's ongoing struggle against the causes of poverty. The prayer meeting concluded with the participants taking a pledge to carry forward his legacy and work hard to fight against causes of poverty.

## HELP & CARE ROHINGYA

**Cox's bazaar, Bangladesh:** Emmaus International has provided financial support to implement the project named *"Supply vitamin-enriched food supplements to malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women, elderly people who are forcibly displaced from Myanmar to Bangladesh"*. The project is implemented through the organisation Gono Shasthaya Kendra (GSK) – a group based in Dhaka who already work in refugee camps. The total grant approved for the project is **42122 €**. First part (70% of the grant - 29845 €) has been released in October 2018, with which following activities has been implemented by GSK:



- Distribution of supplementary food named Minavit among the Rohingya refugees to improve the nutritional condition.
- Awareness training on Nutritional value of foods, so that the beneficiaries can identify the impact of vitamins on human body.
- Demonstration & Training on how to cook Minavit, so that they can cook for themselves in a better way to keep food value.



## ORGANIC Agriculture training

and use of herbs, designing a household nutritious kitchen garden, Preparation of herbal growth promoters, Preparation of herbal pest repellent. In the session they also discussed about water management techniques such as Roof water harvesting, Recycling waste water and using water in an efficient way.



The last day training focused on how to facilitate a demonstration of agriculture related input preparation methods. 27 women from 6 villages participated in the training. *Mr.Ramadass, Mr.Chelladurai, Mr.Baskar and Mrs.Usha* from Kudumbam facilitated the training to women farmers.

**Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Sastra University and Kudumbam organized a three day training in February 2019 on roof top gardening for women entrepreneurs at Kolunji ecological farm. 60 women in two batches participated from 7 different villages. The following sessions were imparted to the women participants as part of the training - Preparation of coir pith compost, Cultivation

Another 3 day training program was organized by Kudumbam from 25 to 28 February for women lead farmers at Kolunji ecological farm. Two days training focused on topics related to Bio input preparation, Seed Production, nursery production, Value addition.





**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** On 4th January 2019, a village level farmers meeting was organized at Vanniper village. The farmers' association members of Village Community Development Society (VCDS) were present in the meeting. The association includes small and marginal farmers who own land or lease out the land for agriculture. They shared their experiences and difficulties they face because of the climate change and global warming. The major problem they face is the lack of ground water and usage of chemical fertilizers. They also pointed out the illegal action of the government officers in community water bodies and failure in helping the farmers in advance and effective techniques of agriculture. The volunteers of VCDS made a study on the farmers urgent problems, during their stay at VCDS.

**Bogra, BANGLADESH:** On 22 March 2019, Pollee Unnnyon Prokolpo (PUP) arranged a day long discussion meeting on the occasion of "World Water Day". Government Officials, Political Leaders, Local Government Representatives, Lawyers, NGO leaders, Journalists, Teachers, Students, Farmers, Business men and civil society representatives participated in the meeting, and raised their voice and provided valuable suggestions on how should the natural resources including water be used wisely. The District public health officer participated as a chief guest. Discussions were held on the ground water getting reduced day by day. Rivers are dying, lakes & ponds are getting dry, and rainy season is getting reduced. These have created a big crisis for drinking water, and now people are more and more dependent on underground water, because of which it is decreasing gradually, thereby creating a threat to the future generations for their water sufficiency. PUP has been working since last 15 years with various



local, national & international movements to raise voice against environmental pollution and social injustices, and to influence the policy makers in taking immediate and necessary actions.

**Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Florance Home Foundation (FHF) celebrated the day in a nearby school, explaining the children about the importance of Water conservation. Children were informed that drop by drop conservation of water by each of us can save a big amount of water that can be used to meet up societal need. If we all do our part in conserving water, we can make a huge difference for the environment. Also FHF installed a hand pump in local kindergarten school, which will also be useful for the local people.





**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Village Community Development Society (VCDS) organized an awareness rally and a street campaign in its non-formal schools on 'World Water Day' at Parangini and Aavudaiyarpet village. The aim is to make the students more responsible about using water and to make them understand the severity of the recurring droughts. The rally and the campaign highlighted the importance of water conservation, rain water harvesting, effective agriculture, conservation of trees & community forests, reduce water usage and to educate our future generations on water harvest and conservation.

## VISITORS TO EMMAUS GROUPS

**FRANCE:** Board members of Emmaus International - Ms.Maryse Faure and Ms.Nathalie Martz visited Tara Projects Association from 24th January till 4th February 2019 to know about the socio-economic actions of Tara and to meet the beneficiaries of the health, microcredit and education programs.

During their weeklong visit, in Badarpur - Delhi, they visited health center and participated in the mutual health organization (MHO) community meeting. They also met the beneficiaries of micro credit project and the impact it has brought in their lives. Then they visited learning center, computer education and skill development actions. The friends also visited the handicraft producer groups and discussed about their lives and daily challenges. In Bawana - Delhi, the friends visited the multi-facility community center built with the support from Foundation Abbé Pierre in 2017. They were happy to see the center and interacted with the elderly people staying there on a short term basis.

In Nikau – Firozabad, they distributed the nutritional supplements to the education sponsorship children. In Pataudi - Haryana, the friends visited the Fair Trade workshop, skill development center and the water conservation project. They interacted with the youth group members in Bas Padamka village and planted the saplings around the boundaries of the water pond there. Visiting the natural farming project, the representatives interacted with the farmers in Lokra village and observed the natural food cultivation project. Later the team left to KUDUMBAM in Trichy, and visited their group activities related to Organic agriculture until 10th of February. They also visited some tourist locations in the neighbourhood of Kolunji ecological farm, such as cave temple in Kundrandarkovil, Rock fort temple and Sri Rangam temple.





**GERMANY & FRANCE:** VCDS received 4 volunteers - *Jose & Celine* from France, and *Leonie and Jan* from Germany to explore and study the rural life of Indian Women and children, especially in the field of agriculture, education and safety. The French volunteers will be staying in India for 5 months till April 2019 who come from *Pistes – Solidarities*, and German Volunteers will be staying for 2 months till February 2019, who came through *Emmaus Koln*.



**UK:** In the month of February 2019, six members from Macclesfield, UK (*Matthew, Jane, Yvonne, Russell, Georgia & Sanchia*) visited and stayed in FHF for 10 days, got involved in various activities, and also visited local tourist sites.

**LEBANON:** *Camille Chedid* from Lebanon visited the groups in South India from 7 to 11 February 2019, and *Selva Arokiaraj* from India visited the groups in Bangladesh from 1 to 4 March 2019. The objective of the visit was to evaluate the projects implemented with Emmaus support during the period 2017 and 2018. The visits included visiting project site, interacting with staffs & beneficiaries of the project, and discussion with group leaders on the current status, impact and long term plan of the project.



**Delhi, N.INDIA:** Education program of *Tara Projects Association* continues to support the children from the economically weaker section living in Labour Colony in *Firozabad* since last several years. Poverty, large family size, lack of awareness and costly education are leading causes of child labor in the region. TARA is supporting the children by providing remedial education through its learning center in the community. The center has emerged as an important support for these marginalized children, particularly the girls, living in the locality. The education facility

provided to the children is free of cost. Most of the children supported belong to minority community.

TARA distributes educational aids like stationery, school bags, lunch boxes and water bottles to the children, encouraging them to take interest in learning and attending education sessions on a regular basis. The project also includes organizing awareness sessions and outdoor visits for the children to enhance their knowledge and experience. Also TARA organized several awareness





sessions on other related subjects like child rights, human values, life skills, environment protection, health and hygiene during the year. The teachers have been trained to improve their knowledge and teaching skills so that they can help the children learn more effectively. Parents-teacher meetings were also organized on bi monthly basis. Several education visits were also organized during the year. The children

visited several historical monuments, learnt about history and significance of the cultural heritage.

During the year, an Annual Day function was organized and celebrated at the Tara learning centre. Various activities were organized on this occasion and students actively participated in many such activities like theatre, role-plays, singing songs on social issues like the importance of education, female infanticide, dowry system, evil of child labour and human values. The efforts made during the year proved beneficial for the students, parents and the others in the community. There are also still several children who need support to receive regular education to make their future better. TARA is taking all efforts through their Fair Trade partners to continue raising awareness and enrolling more children in the learning center and in regular schools.

**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* had been conducting 18 Non-formal schools in 17 villages of *Villuppuram district*. These schools aim at ensuring and protecting child rights on education, participation and experimenting their scientific knowledge. An annual sports meet was organized by VCDS for the NFED students. The field coordinators conducted different sports event like kabadi, khokho, sack race, balloon blasting, skipping, needle and thread, bun biting, musical chair game etc., in which all the students took part enthusiastically. Prizes were distributed at the closing of the event



**Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** On 4th of February, *Florance Home Foundation (FHF)* organized an awareness meeting in local school to share about importance of education and the necessity to go to school, in which 50 participants including parents & children took part.



**BENIN:** From 29th January to 7th February, the whole Africa region rallied together to show how the most excluded people can organise to reclaim their fundamental rights. Around fifty companions, volunteers and group leaders participated in the work camp that was organized in Benin, West Africa in the region of Lake Nokoué, and at the Emmaus Pahou community in Sainte Rita (in Cotonou), on the topic - **“How do the most excluded in Africa mobilise to reclaim their rights?”** Participants who were from the communities of India, Columbia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Suisse, France, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Togo, Angola, Burundi, RDC, Cote d’voire and Emmaus International discovered a range of locally-led alternatives.

This Africa work camp is the second to be held after the organisation of the Asia work camp in South India in January 2018. Through reflection workshops and fieldwork, participants addressed the three struggles of the movement and discussed their perceptions and practices relating to international solidarity. This interaction filled the participants with new motivation to continue combating the causes of poverty, wherever they may be in the world.

There were also opportunities to discover the activities of the three Emmaus groups in Benin throughout the work camp – Emmaus Pahou, Emmaus Tohoué and the Association des Femmes Amies (AFA). They also took part as observers in Nokoue Water Users' Association. Another highlight of the work camp was the organisation of a big solidarity sale within the community of Emmaus Pahou. Following this Emmaus work camp in Africa, the participants returned to their respective countries and communities, full of new ideas and inspired by this constructive interaction.



On behalf of Asia region, two participants from India – *Mr.Pannerselvam* from VCDS and *Mr.Senthil* from KUDUMBAM took part in this work camp, who gave their feedback as below:

- o Benin work camp helped us to learn and understand new issues in people's life. Especially the struggles faced by women and children of Benin and their difficult life conditions.
- o We observed that people don't have proper roads, public transport facility, clean and safe drinking water.
- o We observed how Emmaus groups in Africa work with women and children in providing education, skill training and micro credit to fight against the causes of poverty.
- o It helped us to discover and understand about the activities of the groups from other regions.
- o It helped us to understand the struggles led by Emmaus groups in other regions.
- o It helped us to understand the impact of Emmaus actions globally, while fighting against the root causes of poverty.
- o It gave us an opportunity to visit a new country, compare our groups' principles & action with groups working in other continents.
- o It gave us an opportunity to learn and experience new culture, language and lifestyle.



This work camp in Benin had been an opportunity for second line leaders of Emmaus communities from different parts of the world to come together, understand the present socio-economic issues in Benin & in Africa, and gained deeper insights on the alternatives established by Emmaus groups, and the changes it had made in people's lives. Thanks to the core team members from Emmaus Pahou, Emmaus Africa, Emmaus International and the Board members for making this event successful.

## CYCLONE GAJA HAMMERS TN COAST

**Tamilnadu, South India:** In November 2018, groups in South India were affected by Cyclone Gaja. The cyclone created a serious damage in Kolunji farm of KUDUMBAM, uprooting more than 3000 trees, and destroying the vital units of the farm like nursery plots, bio input preparation units, thatched cattle sheds & training halls. The cyclone also affected FHF, damaging the kitchen sheds, water tank, electrical and water pipelines, doors & windows, and the fences in FHF farm.

Both the groups, with the support from Emmaus International to a tune of 12415 €, reestablished the farm and repaired the damages caused by cyclone Gaja. KUDUMBAM utilized the funds (9750 €) to repair the infrastructures & fences, in cutting & cleaning of trees, and to carry out electrical and plumbing works. FHF received 2665 € for repairing of infrastructures, fences, electrical & plumbing works.



# training programs

**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Indian Social Institute – *ISI, Bangalore* has been organizing ‘Cadre building training courses’ in Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for capacity building of marginalized rural youths for social, cultural, economic and political leadership in coherence with current social situation. *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* was chosen as host NGO for providing this leadership and capacity building training for *Tamilnadu East Zone* and to organize training for 25 cadres from two NGO’s. This cadre building training program will continue for 5 years with cadres equipping themselves with political, history, social knowledge of *Tamilnadu and India*. The fourth phase of the training was conducted in November 2018 on the topic of ‘Human Rights and Legal Literacy’.

The fifth phase of ISI cadre training was conducted at *Karasanur* centre of VCDS from *8 to 10th February 2019*. The training focused on Legal Literacy on different Acts, Prevention of Atrocities Act, Forest & Land Rights Act, Social Security Act, Domestic Violence Prevention Act and Nirbhaya Act. The resource persons were *Mr.Johnson* - Development Consultant, *Mr.Pandiyam* from SASY (Social Awareness Society for Youths), *Ms.Lalitha* from ADECOM Network, *Mr.Ramasamy* – Professor from Gurunanak College, Chennai and *Mr.Arul* from ISI Bangalore.



**Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** A three day training programme was organized at *Kolunji farm* for the migrant girls and their parents from *21 to 23 February*, in which 13 parents and 23 girls participated. It was facilitated by two Advocates - *Ms.Sumathi and Mr.Martin*. The training focused on gender related issues, labour protection laws, strategies to confront sexual harassment, Rights of girl children and Property rights for women. This training was an eye opener for the rural girls and the parents.

## Editorial Committee:

**Ms.Moon Sharma**, India  
**Mr.Camille Chedid**, Lebanon  
**Mr.Selva Arokiaraj**, India  
**Ms.Josephine Pavithra Devi**, India

## For Communications:

**EMMAUS ASIA SOCIETY**  
Door No: 43, Fifth cross street,  
Health Employees colony,  
Nainarmandapam  
Pondicherry - 605 004, INDIA  
**Tel:** +91 94426 17266  
**E-mail:** emmausasia@gmail.com



**EMMAUS**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

**asia**

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

## Compiled by :

**Mr.M.Kamalakaran**  
Regional Secretariat