



*Blending with nature through*  
**Roof Garden**



**Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Ten years before, people in urban areas spent their leisure time in maintaining orchid and bonsai trees (*ornamental plants*) as indoor plants which required more investment. Times and seasons have changed, and people in towns and cities are now showing more interest on Terrace / Roof gardening. Increasing pressure on land and escalating costs have also added to its growing popularity.

Available gardening areas in cities are often seriously lacking, which is likely the key drive for many roof gardens. Plantings in containers

or special bags available in market are used extensively in roof top gardens for growing different types of vegetables, green leaves, shrubs, herbs, creepers etc. Also Coke bottles, take-away plastic boxes, old sacks, coconut shells, old broken buckets, dented kitchen pots and pans can also be used as containers for establishing terrace garden.

These use much less space than traditional gardening, and it also encourage environmentally responsible practices, eliminating tilling, reducing pesticides & weeding, and encouraging the recycling of

wastes through composting. The coir pith waste & kitchen waste, vermin compost and red soil are enough to start a terrace vegetable garden. The vegetables required for the family can be cultivated through this gardening without worrying about space, and an hour a day is more than enough to maintain the green area, which also provides the time for exercise and improves the fresh air intake.

Understanding the interest of the people in *Cuddalore* town in this recycling concept, *Florence Home Foundation* (FHF) organized a training program to its staff members on 'Terrace vegetable gardening', and in the month of *August 2016*, FHF distributed vegetable seeds, bags & compost to ten families to begin their terrace gardening. The trainers from FHF gave them training on how to maintain the garden, and after one month, vegetables like ladies finger, brinjal and beans were ready for harvest.

By knowing about the need and interest of the people living in *Cuddalore* Town, we, the staff members of FHF got training on Terrace Vegetable Gardening and create such



vegetable gardens in some homes at *Cuddalore* for this season. We gave vegetable seeds, bags and compost to 10 families who have space on their terrace. After one month, the vegetable like ladies finger, brinjal and beans are ready to harvesting. Hope in future, the demand will be increased among the habitats in urban. Now people have started managing the organic waste themselves rather than waiting for the government to tackle the problem, and they have also planned to grow more plants to ensure that they need not buy vegetables from the market in the days to come.

## INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS



**Delhi, N.INDIA:** Post-graduate Social Work students from *Indira Gandhi National Open University* (IGNOU) visited TARA in the month of *September*. During the discussions, *Moon Sharma* shared with the students about Emmaus movement, its values and actions worldwide. Thereafter *Vikas kumar* explained them about the various Solidarity projects implemented collectively by Emmaus groups in Asia on Water conservation, Micro credit, Eco tourism, Skill development, Mutual health organization and Education program for the needy children in the community.

The students were also informed about *Fair Trade movement* and its history. They were told about the standards of Fair Trade and its importance in present times. It was emphasized that it is important to work on the grassroots level to support the marginalized. It is important to work for the eradication of poverty. To work for the Sustainable development is very important to save our future generations. The students were enthusiastic to know about the Emmaus & Fair Trade movements and their actions, and they appreciated various community development projects carried out by TARA, & showed interest to be the volunteers of TARA in near future. The students also saw the preparation of the Solidarity sales held each year to support the Emmaus solidarity projects.

**Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* is a well known document that gives importance to 'Child Rights'. *Community Health Education Society (CHES)* from *Chennai* wanted to upgrade and update the knowledge on UNCRC to adolescent girls and boys by getting training in 'KUDUMBAM' which have immense experience related to this subject



KUDUMBAM team has already received this training on 'Child rights' from 'Save the Children, Lund' in Sweden. The programme runs in the name of 'Lalitha and Babu' - Lalitha for girls and Babu for boys. It contains following 13 thematic areas - Me-Myself-I, My Emotions, Empathy & Respect, Communicate, Same/Different, Gender Challenges, Love-Love-Love, Me & my Body, Together/Alone, Violence & Substance Abuse, Child Marriage, Health is Wealth, I am Agent of Change. These themes relate to different articles of UNCRC.

57 adolescent boys and girls from Chennai and 14 staffs from CHES participated in the training programme from 25 to 29 Sept 2016 at KOLUNJI ecological farm of KUDUMBAM. The participants were divided into four batches according to their age group and 10 trainers facilitated the different batches with 13 themes. All the themes were taken into exercise, games, energizer and discussions. Participants felt the training programme very useful and motivating, and requested KUDUMBAM to organize more similar programmes.

**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Under 'Non Formal Education for Democracy' NFED programme, VCDS organized a meeting between *Parents Teachers Association (PTA)* and *Executive Committee (EC)* members. Both the team met at VCDS Karasanur centre on *25 September 2016* to discuss and evaluate the progress of the non-formal Schools run in the neighbouring villages of VCDS.



During this meeting, discussions were held about the problems faced by the children and teachers during the school hours, how NFED programme has their village to rectify the social problems, and how it has addressed the problem of education among children and their learning disabilities. They also placed their demands for the future execution of the NFED schools in several other villages.



# SKILL DEVELOPMENT



**Rajshahi, BANGLADESH:** Between the period April to September 2016, PUP provided Handicraft (*Hand Sewing Embroidery*) training to 25 ultra poor village women at *Bamonpara village of Bogra district*. PUP has been providing this skill development training since 2009 with the support from *Bangladesh NGO Foundation*. Every year, PUP provides handicraft skill development training to around 50 rural women in two batches, and for each batch, the duration of the training is six months. After successful completion of the training, PUP provides them employment opportunity in their own producer groups.



On 30 September 2016, PUP organized a training completion ceremony for a batch of 25 women. Deputy Director and Assistant Deputy Director of *Bangladesh Social Service Department* participated in the event as special guests, and they appreciated the efforts taken

by PUP for providing this Skill development training to the grassroots people, which makes them self-confident and self-reliant. This type of trainings provide them earning opportunity which increases their social status, and it also helps them to educate their children in a better environment, improve their sanitation & drinking water facilities.

Deputy Director also shared with the trainees that the product they produce are sold in European markets, which also contributes in bringing foreign currency into Bangladesh, which is a great support to the

country. He thanked PUP for taking such efforts, and requested to conduct more such programs for rural women. The celebration ended with the distribution of tools and material kits for the trainees.

**Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** *Florance Home Foundation (FHF)* had been conducting vocational training (*Tailoring & Embroidery*) courses to rural women since the year 2000. Until 2005, nearly 250 women completed their six months training courses, and obtained their certificate by which they were able to get free sewing machines from the State Government. It helped them to open a tailor shop, or earn income from their home. From 2006 onwards, the number of students declined, and hence FHF stopped the training course temporarily.

FHF runs two children home, one for boys at *Killai*, and 32 students stay here and continue their education in nearby school. The other centre for girls at *Semakottai* was started in 2006 to reduce the school dropouts. It accommodates 23 girls between the age group of 6 to 16 years. In this area, FHF has started a



tailoring course to create self-employment opportunity for rural young girls and women. On 30 June, the inaugural ceremony was organized in the presence of chief guests from *Indian Bank* (Self employment department), Ex-president of the village, Village councilor & other leaders from the village.

More than 50 members participated in the ceremony. Chief guests shared with them the importance and need for skill training which provides economic independence & self

dignity to women. Trainer team from FHF also shared with the participants the different type of tailoring activities. Motivated by the speeches, on the same day, 12 participants joined the course, and altogether there are 22 students who will get benefit from this training course. A special teacher for handwork & embroidery, and another for Tailoring had been appointed. Students contribute a meager amount as fee which helps to purchase the raw materials for their course.



**Pudukottai - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Drought is a recurrent phenomenon and an important constraint on agricultural production which causes enormous socio-economic and environmental impact in terms of food and livelihood insecurity, increasing poverty and vulnerability, and negative environmental consequences. Farmers make various adjustments in their production, consumption & livelihood practices and adopt conservative measures to reduce the negative impact of drought.



The loss in agricultural output is not the only consequence of drought. In rural areas where agricultural production is the major source of income and employment, a decrease in agricultural production will reduce the demand for products. This will lead to a reduction in income and

employment, and the income of rural households engaged in providing agricultural inputs will also decrease.

By the time these effects have fully played out, the overall economic loss from drought may turn out to be several times more than what is indicated by the loss in production of agricultural output alone. The loss in household income can also result in a decrease in consumption by poor people, whose consumption levels are already low. Farmers may attempt to cope with the loss by liquidating productive assets, pulling children out of school, migrating to distant places in search of employment, and going deeper into debt. The economic and social costs of all these consequences can indeed be enormous.

Kudumbam, an Emmaus organization in *Trichy* runs a model farm and training centre, *Kolunji* at in Pudukottai district, Tamil Nadu, which works for the upliftment of small and marginal farmers by providing training on Organic and Sustainable farming techniques. On 19 August, KUDUMBAM organized a conference on *'Drought coping mechanism'* to ensure food production, and around 104 farmers participated.



During the conference, millet seeds were distributed to 125 farmers, and Azolla seeds were distributed to 145 farmers. One month before this conference, KUDUMBAM made a study on drought and its impact, & the key issues and its alternatives among 73 farmers. During this study, farmers requested for quality *'drought tolerant'* millet seeds to be distributed during the conference. Due to the continuous drought in the last 3 years, there was acute fodder crisis which led to distressed sales in cattle. To overcome the situation and to improve the fodder availability, KUDUMBAM distributed fodder grass slips and Azolla seeds to the farmers.

## Training on FINE ARTS



**Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** A training programme on *'Fine Arts'* was organized by *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* on 13 & 14 August 2016 in their *Karasanur* centre. The training aimed at focusing to bring out the talents of the rural children. They had an opportunity to understand and practice fine arts, and young artists were identified through this training.

The students were highlighted with the job opportunities associated with the fine arts and how it can help the rural children to fight for their need and people's rights. The children with drawing abilities were identified and their skills were tuned up. Many children said that their concentration has increased after practicing the drawing techniques. They can now freely take part in the competitive exams and involve in group discussions to express themselves.

After participating in this training program, the young people in the working areas of VCDS are now presenting themselves very bold, and are actively taking part in the village discussions with local leaders and government authorities. Their body language and the way of expression of their ideas had now changed, and they have understood how to voice their rights to gain attention. They have broken the myth that only the money and strongest can speak and make them hear & the villagers don't know to behave.

# KANDY - GALAHA - SRILANKA

# HILL TOP

# SUMMER CAMP

**Galaha, Srilanka:** *Gami Seva Sevana (GSS)*, established for more than 30 years, in the hilltop of *Kandy* in *Srilanka* were involved in Non formal education, micro credit, skill training programs for community leaders, and are also involved with 1000 to 1500 farmers in facilitating the procurement of grains & collective marketing of seeds, and also in marketing of vegetables and organic foods.

They have a training centre, two dormitories with kitchen/dining rooms, and two farms - One around the Administrative office in 16 acres of land with sloppy & hilly landscape where varieties of spices could be seen. And the other farm of 50 acres, located 40 km away from GSS office, where GSS works among 130 families in 8 villages around this farm in establishing “Organic home kitchen garden”.

In the month of August 2016, the *Zonal education office* at *Kandy* contacted GSS to organize a Students camp at their training centre for around 200 participants. Due to acute scarcity of water in the hill area, GSS explained the difficulty in providing water facility to the participants, and in providing accomodation to such a large number of students and the provision of meals.



However the officers and teachers assured GSS that they would extend their unstinted support and co-operation to conduct the camp as planned.

The aim of the Students Camp was to instill awareness and enthusiasm into the male & female students on the importance of their concentration on the educational activities and not to indulge in wasting their valuable time at the educational institutions. This camp lasted 10 days, and the officers & teachers were able to observe positive signs of reformation amongst many students, and they informed that the purpose for which this camp was conducted was really fulfilled. They also indicated that they intend to conduct another camp of this nature at GSS during the next holidays when the problem of water scarcity is sorted out.



**Delhi, N.INDIA:** Poverty is much more than lack of money. All that matters is not what a person has, but what a person is and can become. Based on this idea, TARA worked together with the team of doctors, social worker and physiotherapists from *Belgium*. The team of medical experts consisted of a *Dr.Herman Valentin* - a physiotherapist, *Mil* - a social worker, *Merel & Annelien* - occupational therapists, and *Iris* - a student from Ghent University, Belgium. The team arrived in Delhi on 22nd July.

The aim of the visit team was to discuss about building a health project in *Bawana*, and examine the persons with special needs in the two villages - *Bawana & Badarpur*. The focus group discussions (FGD's) were held to understand the needs, problems and the possible solutions in the community. A feedback session was organized to analyse the socio-demographic baseline survey conducted in *Bawana*. The survey helped the volunteers to understand and observe the existing problems in the community. The outcome of the survey emphasized the need to invest and train the volunteers/trainees to empower them. The FGD's organized were helpful to bring out the



necessity to initiate a health care centre and to work on the other aspects like hygiene, sanitation and unity.

The medical team examined several persons with special needs. It was a good experience for the parents, and they learnt to take care of their children with love and respect. The doctors informed the parents

about the health situation of their children and they need to be cared for the rest of their lives.

It is also very important that these children interact actively and make friends. The

volunteers can play an important role to impact positively their lives. The

volunteers also attended the workshop to become aware about the role and responsibility of a community health worker. In their free time, they will help the persons with the basic exercises, will interact with the persons with special needs and support them wherever needed.

The Belgian team also discussed about the future project plan and formulated activities to be implemented. The team were also informed about the support to be received from Foundation Abbe Pierre to construct a multi facility community centre which will



provide access to quality health, ethical finance, community meetings, training sessions and housing for the homeless in emergency situations. The social workers and volunteers will play an important role in the project implementation.

The Belgian team also spent some days to help the members in *Badarpur* community. They visited mutual health care centre supported by Emmaus International. They examined several persons with special needs as well as the women suffering from joint pain. The medical team found their visit very motivating and decided to come back again to work in both communities in 2017.



# SOLIDARITY sale



**Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** Collective Solidarity sales were organized by Emmaus groups in Tamilnadu at *Trichy* on 31 and 31 July 2016. It was a two day event with exhibition cum sale mela on alternative food production to sensitize the general public about the importance of traditional millets & pulses together with different delicious recipes prepared from these grains.

KUDUMBAM sold different varieties of traditional rice, small & minor millets and

alternative food items in the stall. FHF sold some jack fruits, guava, papaya and amla, & VCDS sold coconut, coconut oil, chikku fruit, mango and jack fruit. The response of the public had been encouraging, and around 4000 people visited the food stalls. Jointly the three groups managed to raise an income of 550 euros which will be contributed to Emmaus International to support the Solidarity projects worldwide.



**UNITED KINGDOM:** I am *Grace Milner*, a young Rotarian from northwest England. This summer I finished college and decided that, instead of going straight to university, I wanted to take some time away from the classroom to gain valuable life skills and have more experiences. The goal for this gap year is to develop my confidence and independence, as well as to learn more about different cultures around the world. I will then be going to the University of Bristol in *September 2017* to study Geography.

I was lucky enough to be given the chance to travel to Tamil Nadu for two months at the end of 2016 to volunteer with the *Florence Home Foundation (FHF)*, and experience tourism in the area. At first I was very nervous, this would be the furthest I had ever travelled by myself, but soon those feelings turned to excitement



as I learnt more about the work I would be doing. I arrived in Chennai on *September 15th* and have been very busy ever since.



My first impression of India was pretty much what I expected: very warm weather, wonderful new flora and

fauna, and crowds everywhere I turned. The food took a little time to get used to, but I have now been able to try a huge range of dishes and am thoroughly enjoying them. I'm looking forward to learning how to make some dishes so that I can share them with my family when I return to the UK.

The volunteering work that I have been able to get involved in so far has been brilliant. From visiting the boys in the FHF home in *Killai* to learning embroidery techniques from the women at the training centre in *Semakottai*, I can definitely say that I've already had plenty of unique and fulfilling experiences. Also, I've been able to visit many different tourist attractions such as Pondicherry beach, Auroville, a temple and even got to stroke the temple elephant!



I have been able to meet lots of new people of all ages who have all been very welcoming to me. It was particularly great to meet an Interact Club from Pondicherry full of students my age. Being able to freely chat with them and learn more about their lives as well as sharing information about life back home was really great. Thanks to FHF & Emmaus for giving me this opportunity to volunteer, stay & work with FHF, and I look forward

to getting involved in many more activities and events, & seeing more tourist attractions in the coming weeks.



## RELIEF and RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

**Tamilnadu, S.INDIA:** The 2015 South Indian floods resulted from heavy rainfall generated by the annual northeast monsoon in November–December 2015 last year. They affected the Coromandel Coast region of the South Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and the union territory of Puducherry, with Tamil Nadu and the city of Chennai particularly hard-hit.

The income generation activities of Emmaus groups in Tamilnadu initiated with Emmaus support in the last 5 years have also got damaged during the Cyclone Roanne in November 2015 followed by floods. On their appeal to Emmaus International for an amount of 25039 euros to repair their infrastructures & to distribute the relief kits, Emmaus International released the requested grants in three phases.

VCDS in *Tindivanam* VCDS chose 150 tribal and poor dalit families and distributed the relief kits immediately after the floods. They also reconstructed the two irrigation wells in their *Vellakulam* centre. The structure of both the wells with motor pumps was drowned because of the soil erosion in its banks. Reconstruction of these wells now supplies water for agriculture purpose, nursery, cattle's and human consumption. Income from this farm also supports three persons who are incharge and taking care of this farm. VCDS also reconstructed the roofs of the cow sheds which were established with support from *Emmaus Montbeliard*.



FHF in *Cuddalore* distributed the relief kits to 500 families which were of immense support in fulfilling their basic needs. Continuous rain has led to cracks and leakage of water all over the building in FHF administrative office at *Pudupalayam* leaving it unsafe for the staffs to continue their daily work. This centre has been renovated with support from Emmaus, and now the building looks vibrant and safer for the employees. FHF also managed to do renovation works in their two Children homes' where around 55 children are accommodated. And in their multi-farm at *Veerappar*, a nursery unit has been erected, and goat shed unit has been repaired.



KUDUMBAM with their administrative office in *Trichy* has established a Community Livelihood training centre in *Nagapatinam district* on the east coast of *Tamil Nadu*. This centre, which has been constructed in 2006 with support from Arrezo in Italy, provides trainings on sustainable agriculture, organic certification & in collective processing and marketing of organic products. During the floods, the electrical lines, sanitary & drinking water pipelines with the fence in the farm has got damaged.

The nonstop rain has also submerged and destroyed the standing crops, which is used to produce seeds. With support from Emmaus, KUDUMBAM renovated and repaired all the above damages, and now the centre contributes in enhancing capacities of young widows & marginal farmers.

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