



PROGRESS REPORT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Sl.No.	Abbreviation	Expansion
1	APRLP	Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihood Programme
2	CEC	Centre for Environment Concern
3	CLDP	Comprehensive Land Development Programme
4	CSO	Civil Society Organisations
5	DDP	Desert Development Programme
6	EPA	Employment Potential Assessment
7	FFS	Farmer Field School
8	ICRISAT	International Crop Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics
9	INDIRAMMA	Integrated Novel Development in Rural & Model Municipal Areas
10	ITES	Information Technology Enabled Services
11	LEISA	Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture
12	LMD	Local Market Development
13	NABARD	National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development
14	NPM	Non-pesticidal Management
15	NREGP/S	National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme/Scheme
16	PDS	Public Distribution System
17	PPME	Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
18	REDS	Rural Education Development Society
19	RTI	Right to Information
20	SERP	Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty

1. SUMMARY OF PROJECT AIMS

OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVE :

To enhance the quality of life of 60,000 resource poor farmer and farm labour families by facilitating access to : a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) 2 or 3 additional livelihoods, (c) basic needs and (d) pro-poor policies through participatory process focusing on gender and equity.

Specific Project Objectives:

I. Capacity building

- 1) Of the total 60,000 farmer and farm labour families, 80% men and 60% women have knowledge on :
 - a) Sustainable Agri-practices.
 - b) NREGP
 - c) Social Welfare schemes like : PDS, Old age pensions, Arogya Sree (A scheme providing medical aid for heart surgeries)

II. Sustainable Agriculture and Diversified Livelihoods (including off-farm and Non-farm livelihoods) :

1) Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA)

- ❖ Of the total 48,000 farmer families, 80% families :
 - 1) Grow border crops
 - 2) Arrange pest traps
 - 3) Introduce bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides.
- ❖ 30% improve their land carrying capacity through land developmental works under NREGP.
- ❖ 60% have diversified crops with food crops, fruits, fodder, useful bio-mass etc.
- ❖ 30% have either dairy animals or small ruminants. (80% women and 20% men)

2) Employment Generation :

Of the total 36,000 farm labour families (including small and marginal farmer families) :

- ❖ All the job seeking families (100%) have accessed employment under NREGP. (70% women and 30% men)

3) Alternate livelihoods for women and youth

- ❖ 2400 women have either some non-farm livelihoods or their own enterprises.

- ❖ 3000 families have their youth (50% boys and 50% girls) trained in non-farm skills.

III. Policy Advocacy

- ❖ 80% men and 60% women from 7800 families attend campaigns on NREGP, RTI etc.
- ❖ Identify the policy and implementation issues and raise them in appropriate forums.
- ❖ Changes in Policies and processes favourable for women.

IV. Internal Capacity building of Accion Fraternal.

- ❖ AF has :

1) Gender sensitive staff.

2) An operational PPME practice in place.

3) Improved expertise in :

- Sustainable Agriculture
- Working with youth and organizing trainings in employable trades and entrepreneurship.
- Non-farm livelihoods development including LMD, Value addition, Resource mobilization etc.

2. PROGRESS REPORT

2.1. SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1.1 STATUS OF FARMERS, FARM LABOUR, WOMEN AND YOUTH

2007-08 was an eventful year for the farmers of Anantapur district. There were adequate, timely and evenly distributed rains in the district right from the preparatory cultivation time to harvesting time. This resulted in good yields of groundnut in the district. The smiles returned on the gloomy faces of the farmers after a long time!

The normal rainfall of Anantapur district during Kharif season (June to October) is 449 mm. But the district received 623 mm., during Kharif. Every month of kharif received more rainfall than the normal. This enhanced the retention of moisture in the parched soils of Anantapur district which aided luxuriant crop growth. The pest and disease attack was also low because of good rains. So there were good yields this year.

The normal average yield of groundnut in the district is 800 kg/ha. Almost the whole district recorded above normal yields during the year. According to crop estimation surveys carried out by the Chief Planning Officer and the department of Agriculture in all the 63 mandals, the average yield of Anantapur district during 2007 Kharif is 1200 Kg./ha,. In AF's project area of 8 mandals average yield recorded was 1188 kg/ha.

During 2006 the market price of groundnut was varying between Rs.17 to Rs.18 per kg., but during this year the prices touched an all time high of Rs.22 to Rs.26 per kg. So with good yields and higher market prices the farmers have been a happy lot this year.

2007-08 was a good year for the farm labourers too! They had sufficient work during this kharif season, as the crops were good. They could get 50% more wages on agricultural labour works @ Rs.80/- to Rs150/- per day during harvesting season as against Rs.50/- to Rs.100/- per day during last harvesting season. This sudden escalation in wage rates can be attributed to the high wage rates in NREGP works.

In AF's programme villages about 44,842 farm labour families availed 18,66,149 person days of employment under NREGP during the year on an average each family could avail 47 days of employment at an average wage rate of Rs.87 per day. So on an average each labour family could earn Rs.4,089 during the year in NREGP, in addition to agriculture wage labour. 3594 families (8%) have availed 100 days of employment as planned, and have earned Rs.8,000/- to 10,000/- per family during the year.

The year was good for women also. The farmer women were happy since they had a bumper crop and could realize good market price for their produce. The farm labour women were also happy since they could earn almost triple the wages in NREGP compared to what they normally used to earn as agri-labourers. This enabled them to save more. Women have also started purchasing milch animals and there is a raising trend of dairy development during the year.

Though the farmers, farm labour and women are happy, their youth – the next generation, are highly disillusioned, confused and leading a directionless life.

Anantapur district has about 1,00,000 educated / uneducated, unemployed rural youth in the age group of 18 – 25 years. Out of them about 25 to 30% stop their education at primary school level. About 45% drop out at high school level (10th standard) and about 15 to 20% drop out at intermediate level. Only about 10% of them reach the degree level. Particularly the 70 to 75% section of the youth who have reached high school level and beyond are highly dis-illusioned. With their poor educational status they neither get employment in private / Govt. sector, nor they are interested in agriculture. They neither have the capital nor the entrepreneurship to go for self-employment nor do they possess any skill to go for skill based employment. With all the livelihood options shut for them some have become liabilities to their parents and to the society, while some indulge in anti-social activities and a hard working few have taken to strenuous physical wage labour works. Most of them are leading futile, meaningless and unproductive lives.

2.1.2 NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

Given the harsh agro-climatic and other disabling conditions of Anantapur district, the following needs of farmers, farm labour, their women and youth have to be addressed in order to diversify and stabilize their incomes and make them self-reliant, so that they lead their lives with some self respect and dignity :

1. Improving the carrying capacity of their lands through better soil fertility and moisture retention.
2. Developing natural resource base like storing surface run-off, growing useful vegetation etc.
3. Reducing investment on agriculture and promoting value addition to produce to realize more net income.
4. Promoting diversity in agriculture to make it sustainable.
5. Promoting diversity in their livelihoods by:
 - Supporting women for purchasing and managing dairy animals / small ruminants.
 - Supporting women to develop non-farm livelihoods.
 - Supporting women and youth to become entrepreneurs or self-employed.
 - Supporting youth in acquiring various non-farm skills and getting skill based employment.
 - Supporting farm labour to access wage employment.

6. Improving their access to basic needs like education, health, food security, housing and other social welfare schemes.
7. Improving their awareness on existing Govt. programs.
8. Lobbying and advocating for (a) proper implementation of existing Govt. schemes, and (b) better pro-poor and agriculture policies.

2.1.3 THE BENEFITS OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES:

1. The **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)** has :
 - Enabled small and marginal farmers to develop their lands by taking up soil bunding, rain water harvesting, horticulture and other useful plantations.
 - Created a good source of wage employment for farm labour.
 - Enabled women labour to earn high as well as equal wages, which is a significant thing in their lives.
 - Enabled farm labour to bargain for better wages in agricultural labour works.
2. The **Integrated Novel Development In Rural And Model Municipal Areas (INDIRAMMA)** scheme has enabled many poor farmers and farm labour to have their own pucca house.
3. The **Arogya Sree** Scheme launched by the State Government has helped many poor families to get free medical treatment including major ailments and surgeries.

In general 2007 was a fruitful year for farmers, farm labourers and women with a bumper harvest and some good govt. schemes. People are aware it is an exception and their problems are not over, and they still have a long way to go!

2.2 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

"2007-08 – A YEAR OF CHANGE"

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION:

The year of 2007-08 has been a year of big change for AF. A change that was successfully managed. The change has renewed its commitment, enhanced its capacities, and importantly it has become more relevant and meaningful to the present context in Anantapur district.

Accion Fraterna started the implementation of the current (2006-09) 3 year "Sustainable Income Security for Rural Poor" project in April 2006. The project was to promote watershed based sustainable rural livelihoods in its operational area of 54 villages. However, during the first year of implementation, the context changed dramatically. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) introduced by the Central Govt. had picked up momentum by then. This had a direct bearing on AF's programme priorities, as it also aimed at taking up extensively watershed related activities like soil bunding, rain water harvesting and plantations under this programme.

2.2.2 MID COURSE CHANGES IN THE PROGRAMME:

In this context AF felt it was appropriate to effect mid-course programmatic changes, than to duplicate the same activities, as the Government would be doing under NREGP, in same villages. AF also felt it was a wonderful opportunity to organize and empower the people, so that they can exercise their right under NREGP effectively and benefit from it. So AF initiated a participatory change process in order to re-define its program priorities, involving all its staff and CBOs. The priorities were redefined taking into account and the problems and needs of the poor farmers, landless, women and youth in the changed context. (Concept Note : 2007)

2.2.3 PROGRAM PRIORITIES RE-DEFINED:

The reworked program priorities are summarized here under :
Social and Gender Equity would be a cross-cutting theme across the programme.

1. Promoting Sustainable Agriculture (adopting LEISA / NPM methods) including dairy and livestock development.
2. Empowering farmers and farm labourers to access and utilize the NREG scheme effectively.
3. Promoting agri-processing as well as alternate non-farm livelihoods and entrepreneurship, particularly among women.
4. Promoting non-farm job oriented skills and skill-based employment among rural youth.

5. Taking up lobby & advocacy work for proper implementation of existing Govt. programmes and better pro-poor policies.

These changed program priorities, allowed AF to go for expanded outreach of 240 villages in 8 mandals in full and a small cluster in another mandal covering about 60,000 families of farmers and farm labour.

2.2.4 MANAGING CHANGE :

The process of change management, though laborious and taxing at times, was a relatively smooth and swift manoeuvre by AF thanks to its openness to change, effective communication and high degree of adaptability. During this process, all AF staff were on their toes, (a) Working out the changes in structure and roles, (b) Getting the necessary orientations and re-training, and (c) Re-working the log-frame, plans, budget, monitoring and reporting systems etc.

By the end of June 2007, the staff were geared up to take on their re-defined roles with renewed enthusiasm and vigour. The timing was just immaculate and the setting perfect for AF staff to launch their core program of promoting sustainable agri-practices, when the kharif season had just begun.

Co-incidentally, just at this juncture, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) – a State Govt. agency, came forward to collaborate with AF in implementing its Non-pesticidal management (NPM) program. This perfectly supplemented AF's sustainable agriculture program as it had similar objectives and complimentary activities. This new collaboration was advantageous to AF as it provided (a) useful training and resource material on NPM, (b) educational aids on NPM and (c) village activists (para agricultural workers at village level) to launch its sustainable agri-program. So AF was happy to collaborate with SERP, inspite that it is aware of usual problems in working with Government.

2.2.5 IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF RESULTS DURING 2007-08 :

Thus AF's changed program was launched in villages in July 2007. Now, after 9 months by March 2008, AF made a good progress inspite of a delayed start by 3 months. It has achieved and even surpassed the planned outputs and results for 2007-08 in all the areas except one or two. The reworked systems are also fairly in place.

The awareness campaigns and capacity building, though very hectic, with weekly Farmer Field Schools (FFS), awareness campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security, NREGP and gender made a good progress, as planned. 23,038 families were covered as against the planned 27,600 families for the year 2007-08.

The core programme of promoting sustainable agri-practices, was a huge success. There was equal enthusiasm both from farmers' side and AF's side as well. Almost all the planned outputs and results were exceeded in the following aspects:

- 27,360 farmer families adopted some of the selected NPM/LEISA practices against the planned 15,000 farmer families.

- 20,652 farmer families adopted some form of crop diversification with food crops, tree crops and bio-mass plantations, against the planned 14,400
- 12,325 farmer families could access NREGS against the planned 7,200.
- 23,180 men labour could access over 50 days of employment against the planned 12,600 and 8,935 women labour could access over 40 days of employment against the planned 5,400, under NREGS.

Elaborate awareness campaigns were organized on NREGP in order **to educate labour on their rights under the NREG Act**. They were organized at village, mandal and district level and they were very well attended and received by the labour. Totally 3,368 men attended the campaigns against the planned 1,950 and 2,308 women attended against the planned 1,950. These campaigns had a visible impact on the labour, as it made them aware of their rights, made them confident of demanding their rights and a feeling of solidarity among the labour.

AF, together with other NGOs like CEC, REDS, Jana Jagruthi, organized a District Level Labour Conference on NREGP. It was attended by about 1000 labour from various part of the District. The conference was addressed by very eminent human rights activists like K.R. Venugopal, and other NGO leaders like K.S. Gopal, Minar pimple, APREGS Director Mr. Murali etc. This conference asserted the rights based approach to NREGP and set a direction for labour and NGOs for their work about NREGP. (See the Annexure for a detailed report).

Further, **AF together with other likeminded NGOs lobbied and sorted out a number of policy and implementation bottlenecks** in NREGP. The NGOs who have interest in NREGA have been **working as a loose network at District and State level** and thus exerting an influence on the Government for a favourable policy environment and easing the bottlenecks in implementation.

In the following program areas the achievements were below the planned targets :

1. Only 584 women could be covered under non-farm livelihood support against the planned 1,200 for 2007-08. This is mainly because it took longer to evolve a livelihood support policy. It is possible to cover the back-log during 2008-09, as the activity has picked up well.
2. Only 167 boys and 348 girls totally 515 youth could be covered under non-farm skills development against the planned 1500 youth. This is mainly because it took some time for AF (a) to conduct Employment Potential Assessment (EPA), (b) to prepare database of rural un-employed youth, (c) to look for expertise in skills training for meaningful collaboration with AF and (d) to start the training centres. AF expects to clear the back-log of 2007-08 during 2008-09 as the preparatory works for youth resource centres are over and are likely to open in the beginning of 2008-09.

2.2.6. COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Collaboration with NABARD for funding 3 watershed projects would begin by April 2008. The villages have been selected and qualifying conditions have been fulfilled by these 3 villages. Collaboration with ICRISAT continues for seed development and seed multiplication of groundnut.

The on-going collaboration with Government for watershed development and Comprehensive Land Development Project (CLDP) came to an end by 31.03.2008 on completion of the projects. The Government came up with New Watershed Guidelines 2008 for future Watershed Development Project Implementation. The new guidelines will come into effect from 1st April, 2008. AF hopes to take up new watershed projects with Government in future under New Guidelines.

2.2.7 BUDGET REALIZATION:

Given all the changes in programme activities and time to settle down, the budget realization was low at about 50% for first 2 years together. However, AF is confident to achieve its physical and financial objectives by 31st March, 2008.

2.2.8 OUTLOOK FOR 2008-09:

Outlook for 2008-09 looks bright. AF will make a sound beginning in Youth Sector by introducing job oriented trainings for boys and girls. The plans and arrangements have been made to open two Driving Schools – one at Anantapur and another at Kalyandurg, and preparatory work is completed to start other job oriented trainings in Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES), Hospitality Management, Customer Care & Sales, Electrical Wiring etc., This is a new field for AF to work with rural educated youth for alternate employment. AF would consolidate its work on Sustainable Agriculture by intensifying and adding new practices of LEISA. AF is poised to play a very constrictive and proactive role together with other NGOs and CSOs on NREGP, and other policy issues.

2.3 OUT COMES

2.3.1 EFFECTS REALIZED DURING 2007-08

Sl. No.	Effect Indicator	Unit	Planned value by March 09	Baseline value as on April 06	Achieved value as on March, 08
1	% of 48,000 farmer families adopting NPM/LEISA practices				
	a) Border Crops	Families	38,400 (80%)	13,440 (28%)	42,177 (88%)
	b) Pest traps	Families	28,000 (60%)	1,962 (4%)	10,930 (23%)
	c) Bio-fertilizers	Families	33,600(70%)	4,920 (10%)	17,499 (36%)
	d) Bio-pesticides	Families	19,200 (40%)	--	9,671 (20%)
2	% of 48,000 farmer families with land development measures (Under NREGS)	Families	14,400 (30%)	2,422 (5%)	12,325 (26%)
3	% of 48,000 farmer families with diversified cropping (Food crops, fodder and bio-mass)	Families	28,800 (60%)	3,840 (8%)	22,204 (46%)
4	% of 48,000 farmer families with either dairy animals or small ruminants	Families	14,400 (30%)	3,368 (7%)	6,049 (13%)
5.	% of 36,000 men and 36,000 women from labour families, who have accessed employment under NREGP.				
	Men (50 days per year)	No.	25,200 (70%)	--	23,180 (64%)
	Women 40 days per year)	No.	10,800 (30%)	--	8,935 (25%)
6.	Women labour with either non-farm livelihoods or their own enterprises	No.	2,400	236	584
7.	Labour youth trained in non-farm skills	No.	1,500	103	167
	Boys/Men	No.	1,500	128	348
	Girls / Women				

The following effects have been observed in the implementation of NREGS during the year:

1. Farmers and farm labour's participation has improved in planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities at village level.
2. The system of operationalisation of the scheme is improving
3. The accountability of Govt. staff has also increased.

4. The quality and transparency of the program have been increasing because of the active involvement of NGOs, CSOs and people in the program.

2.3.2 IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS BY FIELD STAFF :

1. Farmers participation in the campaigns was good because the content (Sustainable Agriculture Practices, NPM/ LEISA) is contextual and need-based in the present scenario of high cost agriculture with un-reliable yields.
2. Women participation in the gender training was good because issues related to agriculture, livelihoods and skills development were also discussed apart from women related issues.
3. The Farmer Field Schools, with practical on the field observations, have raised the enthusiasm of farmers in adopting NPM/LEISA practices.
4. The FF Schools have promoted mutual learning amongst participating farmers.
5. The farmers' response for bio-fertilisers is positive and encouraging, though the conditions have been not so conducive.
6. The usage of bio-pesticides has made farmers to experiment different combinations.
7. Agriculture wage rates have increased in villages and seasonal migration has drastically reduced because of NREGS works.
8. People are more inclined towards up-scaling the existing livelihoods, than taking up new livelihoods.
9. Demand for employment has increased substantially in villages because of NREGS.
10. Bargaining power of farm labour has improved leading to a steep raise in agriculture wage labour rates in the villages.

2.4 OUTPUTS

2.4.1 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FROM 01.04.2006 TO 31.03.2008 IN AF's PROJECT VILLAGES

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	PHYSICAL OUT PUTS						Remarks
			2006-07 (As per old log-frame)			For 2007-09 (As per new revised log frame)			
			Planned for 2006-07	Realized during 2006-07	% of realization	Planned for 2007-09	Realized during 2007-08	% of realization	
1	Farmers' trainings(*)	No.	1620	799	49	0	0	--	Activity replaced by farmers' campaigns from 2007-08.
2	Farmers' campaigns	No.	0	0	--	480	282	59	New activity started during 2007-08 as per the revised log frame.
3	Labour trainings (*)	No.	216	215	100	0	0	--	Activity replaced by labour campaigns on NREGS from 2007-08
4	PGN trainings (*)	No.	54	49	91	0	0	--	Activity stopped from 2007-08.
5	Gender sensitization trainings.	No.	1296	308	24	960	368	38	--
6	Women's Days	No.	54	31	57	96	48	50	--
7	Ecology Days	No.	2	0	-	4	0	-	--
8	Grama Sabhas (*)	No.	54	54	100	0	0		Activity replaced by farmers' campaigns from 2007-08.

During This year, though the implementation of the program was delayed by about 3 months, because of programmatic changes, the capacity development activities went on a hectic pace almost as scheduled. This is mainly because, the start of progame implementation coincided with the start of Kharif season and AF staff focused on realizing the outputs with urgency and vigour. The farmers' trainings and Grama Sabhas (Village assemblies), which were conducted during 2006-07, were replaced by village level farmers' campaigns from June 2007. These campaigns serve the dual purpose of creating awareness on sustainable agricultural practices on one hand and a village assembly on the other. In these 9 months AF organized 282 farmers' campaigns (117%) as against the planned 240 for 2007-08.. In these campaigns awareness was created on (a) non-negotiable practices in Sustainable Agriculture including NPM / LEISA practices like Border crops, Pest traps, Bio-fertilizers, Bio-pesticides etc., (b) Growing horticulture and other useful plantations, (c) Growing food crops, (d) seed multiplication etc.

48 Women days were conducted exactly at cluster level as planned for 2007-08 (100%) but the coverage was more. 6364 women (177%) attended as against the planned 3,600 and 1,443 men (120%) attended as against the planned 1,200. Additionally mandal level women's day campaigns were conducted at the 8 mandal headquarter villages of AF's project area, where in totally about 9,000 participants attended (about 85% women and 15% men) ranging from 800 to 1200 participants per campaigns. (For details on mandal level women's day campaigns please refer Annex. – III). In these campaigns issues like, women's rights, gender discrimination, socio-economic status of women, girl child education and social evils like child marriages, dowry, domestic violence etc., were discussed.

Only 368 (77%) gender trainings could be conducted against the planned 480 for 2007-08, because kharif season was running out of hands and hence focus was on farmers' campaigns.

Only 23,038 families (83%) have been covered under AF's various capacity development programs during this year against the planned 27,600, because (a) Lesser number of gender trainings conducted and (b) Ecology days not conducted. Ecology days could not be conducted because the program implementation began in July (June 5th is the ecology day)

2.3.2 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOODS:

PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOODS FROM 01.04.2006 TO 31.03.2008 IN AF's PROJECT VILLAGES

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	PHYSICAL OUT PUTS						REMARKS
			2006-07 (As per old log-frame)			For 2007-09 (As per new revised log frame)			
			Planned for 2006-07	Realized during 2006-07	% of realization	Planned for 2007-09	Realized during 2007-08	% of realization	
1	Farmers' trainings on LEISA (*)	No.	1080	341	32	0	0		Activity replaced by farmers field school from 2007-08.
2	Farmer Field Schools	No.	0	0	--	19200	7640	40	New activity.
3	Soil & Moisture conservation measures (Bunding)	Ha.	1920	1235	64	0	0	--	Activity continued under NREGP from 2007-08.
4	Rain Water Harvesting Structures	No.	94	115	122	0	0	--	Activity continued under NREGP from 2007-08.
5	Bio-fertilizers application	No. of families	1620	1707	105	33600	19766	59	--
6	Bio-pesticides application	Ha.	2700	4904	182	12000	14990	125	--
7	Border Crops	Ha.	5400	4054	75	216000	104476	48	--
8	Pest traps	Ha.	0	0	--	16800	16605	99	New activity started during 2007-08 as per the revised log-frame.
9	Horticulture	Ha.	486	651	134	0	0	--	Activity continued under NREGP from 2007-08.

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	PHYSICAL OUT PUTS						REMARKS
			2006-07 (As per old log-frame)			For 2007-09 (As per new revised log frame)			
			Planned for 2006-07	Realized during 2006-07	% of realization	Planned for 2007-09	Realized during 2007-08	% of realization	
10	Plantations (Fodder, timber, bio-mass etc.)	Ha.	3510	6531	186	19200	7510	39	Activity jointly undertaken by AF and NREGP.
11	Crop diversification (Food crops)	Ha.	0	0	--	7200	7442	103	New activity started during 2007-08 as per the revised log-frame.
12	Fodder plots	No.	1134	1333	118	12000	12200	102	--
13	Bio-gas units	No.	30	32	107	800	377	47	--
14	Smokeless Chulhas(*)	No.	600	474	79	0	0	--	Activity stopped from 2007-08.
15	Improved breed calves born	No.	270	234	87	4800	2967	62	--
16	Cattle health camps(*)	No.	54	50	93	0	0	--	Activity being covered by the Govt. Animal Husbandry Department in all project villages. So stopped from 2007-08.
17	Non-farm IGPs (Livelihood support)	No.	350	0	-	2400	584	24	Activity started by the end of 2007, as it took longer to evolved AF's livelihood policy.
18	Youth trained in Skills	Boys	0	0	--	1500	167	11	New activity. Youth training centres, are likely to open in April 2008.
		Girls	0	0	--	1500	348	23	
19	Employment generation under NREGs.	Men	4860	6687	138	20340	23180	114	--
		Women	3240	3601	111	7560	7935	105	--

During this year, AF laid high emphasis on conducting Farmer Field Schools every week in each of its 240 program villages (For more details on Farmer Field Schools, please refer Annexure – 1 on Sustainable Agriculture). Totally 7640 FFS (99%) were conducted against the planned 7680 for 2007-08.

The NPM program was highly successful right from its inception in last Kharif. 51,361 ha. (165%) was covered under Bio-pesticides, Bio-fertilizers and pest traps as against the planned area of 31,200 ha. and 1,04,496 ha., (97%) was covered under border crops as against the planned area of 108,000 ha. for 2007-08 This was possible because AF created sufficient awareness on these practices in FFS and campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture

The crop diversification program was also a big success. 7,442 ha., (207%) was covered under food crops like millets and pulses as pure crops as against the planned 3,600 ha. for 2007-08. This was possible because of :

- AF's awareness campaigns on sustainable agriculture and food security.
- Involving farmer women who were showing interest in growing food crops.

The NREG program was well utilized by the farmers and farm labourers alike. Under this program, the farmers could develop their 32,688 ha. of dry land, (151%) as against the planned 21,600 ha. for 2007-08. The farm labour also utilized the program well. 23,180 men labour (184%) could avail employment for more than 50 days during the year as against the planned 12,600 and 8,935 women labour (165%) could avail more than 40 days of employment during the year, as against the planned 5,400. (For more details on NREGP, please refer Annex. – II).

Only 7,510 ha. of useful fodder, timber and bio-mass plantations (78%) could be raised as against the planned 9,600 ha. for this year. This is mainly because AF depended on Govt. for the resources for this activity. The pitting work for plantations was mobilized under NREGS and the plants were mobilized from Forest Department, apart from AF's own nurseries.

Only 584 women (49%) could be covered under non-farm Income Generation, (Livelihood support) Program as against the planned 1200 for this year. This is because it took longer for AF to evolve its livelihood support policy. Now that the policy has been operationalised the back-log of this year is expected to be cleared during 2008-09.

Only 167 boys (22% of the planned 750 boys for 2007-08) and 348 girls (46% of the planned 750 girls for 2007-08) have been trained in job-oriented skills during the year. Even these outputs were achieved partly by mobilizing trainings from Government Institutions and partly from AF's own village level tailoring centres. This is mainly because it took time for AF to do the preliminary ground work for establishing Vocational Training Centres. These training centres are expected to function from the beginning of 2008-09 and the backlog is expected to be cleared in the next year.

2.3.3 POLICY ADVOCACY

PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN POLICY ADVOCACY FROM 01.04.2006 TO 31.03.2008 IN AF's PROJECT VILLAGES

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	PHYSICAL OUT PUTS						Remarks
			For 2006-07			For 2007-09			
			Planned for 2006-07	Realized during 2006-07	% of realization	Planned for 2007-09	Realized during 2007-	% of realization	
1	PGN trainings on Policy Advocacy (*)	No.	108	29	27	0	0	--	Activity replaced by campaigns on policy advocacy from 2007-08.
3	Mandal level campaigns on NREGS	No.	0	0	--	16	8	50	New activity started during 2007-08 as per the revised log-frame.
4	District level campaigns on NREGA	No.	2	2	100	2	1	50	--

During this year campaigns on policy advocacy were conducted at mandal and district levels as planned. In these campaigns awareness was given to labour on NREGS with regard to their rights and entitlements. The problems faced by labour and the bottlenecks in the implementation of the scheme were also highlighted. The following issues came up for discussion during the campaigns:

2.3.3.1 implementation issues :

1. Formation and strengthening of labour groups.
2. Receipts for acknowledgement of job applications in NREGS.
3. Shelf of works and timely sanctions.
4. Nursing mothers who can't attend works, because of small babies.
5. Provision of on-site facilities like drinking water, shade, crèche etc.
6. Regular weekly wage payments for labour.
7. Transparency in payments in the villages etc.

2.3.3.2 Policy issues :

1. Provision for raising horticulture plantations.
2. Provision for raising farm forestry.
3. Provision for compost making.
4. Providing tools to labourers etc.
5. Providing shade at work-site.
6. Providing crèche for the children of women workers.

2.3.4 GOVT. FUNDED WATERSHEDS & OTHER PROGRAMMES :

2.3.4.1. *Outputs realized during 2007-08 (Under APRLP, DDP, CLDP)*

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	Outputs realised April 07 to March. 08	
			Physical	Financial (Rs.)
1	DIVERSIFIED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE			
1.1	PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT			
1.1.1	Revolving loans to farmers for productivity enhancement of groundnut and other crops.	No. of farmers	70	420,000
2	PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES			
2.1.1	Farmers field schools conducted	No.	7,460	746,000
2.1.2	Exposure visits on sustainable agriculture	No.	5	32,600
2.2	DRY LAND MANAGEMENT			
2.2.1	Soil & Moisture conservation works (Bunding)	Ha.	223	210,576
	Rain Water Harvesting Structures	No.	36	2,401,246
2.3.3	De-silting of tanks	No.	32	1,182,542
2.3.4	Un-cultivable lands developed	Ha.	58	218,460
2.7	INCOME GENERATION (LIVELIHOOD) PROGRAMME		-	-
2.7.1	Non-farm income generation activities taken up	No. of IGAs	11	110,000
Total				5,321,424

2.3.4.2 *Closing of Govt. funded Watersheds :*

The **Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project** and the **Comprehensive Land Development Project** came to an end by 31.03.2008, on completion. So APRLP

watersheds in 9 villages and CLDP programme in 11 villages (13 blocks) will be closed by 31.03.2008.

The DDP VIII project will however continue during 2008-09 in 5 watershed villages. More over the Govt. has come up with new watershed guidelines, which will come into effect from 01.04.2008. AF expects a fruitful collaboration with Govt. by taking up new watershed projects under these new guidelines.

2.3.4.3 Govt. Resources accessed by the farmers under NREGS – ap during 2007-08 (for land development works)

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	Outputs realised April 07 to March 08	
			Physical	Value of work (Rs.)
1.	Soil & Moisture Conservation works	Ha.	29,609	47,374,400
2.	Rain Water harvesting Structures	No.	528	11,616,000
3.	Horticulture	Ha.	424	3,392,000
	Total	--	--	62,382,400

2.3.4.4 Collaboration With NABARD

AF'S collaboration with NABARD for funding 3 watershed projects would begin by April, 2008. During 2007-08, four Sramadans (Voluntary work by the villagers) were organized in each of the above watershed villages to qualify them for selection, as part of the selection process under NABARD guidelines. NABARD has also sanctioned 3 more watershed villages to AF, which will follow the qualifying processes during 2008-09.

CASE STUDIES

SHG WOMEN'S SUCCESSFUL FORAY INTO A NON-CONVENTIONAL LIVELIHOOD

- A Case Study of Mahalaxmi Self-help group from Chapiri village.

Mahalaxmi self-help group is from the village Chapiri of Kalyandurg mandal. The group has 10 women members from economically backward farmer and farm labor families, with just 2 to 5 acres of dry land. These families depend on non-farm income generation activities. Considerably, as rainfed agriculture is not remunerative, particularly with such small land holdings.

During 2007-08, the crop yields were very good, which created a huge labour demand for groundnut harvesting and threshing works. At the same time the labourers in villages had a choice to work in NREGS works, which were highly remunerative compared to the low agricultural labour wages. So, the demand for labourers skyrocketed in villages.

"I earned Rs.2,500/- from thresher during last season. More over I was able to thresh my groundnut free of cost, which would have costed me Rs.3,000/-. Hence my net income is Rs.5,500/-. I am very happy that I get income in every season."

Nagamma, Member Mahalaxmi SHG.

In this back drop, Mahalaxmi SHG approached AF staff with an income generation proposal to purchase and rein a groundnut thresher. Considering the demand, AF also felt that it could be a feasible income generation activity because (a) mechanical threshing is economical compared to manual job and (b) it is



much more faster. So, AF under its livelihood support programme provided an incentive of Rs.6,700/- per family to jointly establish and manage a thresher. All these families pooled up their incentives, added their own contribution of Rs.23,000/- and purchased a thresher for Rs.90,000/-.

The thresher was rented out for 35 days during harvest season @ Rs.1,200/- per day.

the daily expenditure for thresher operator, labour and fuel came to Rs.500/- per day, and each family got a net income of Rs.70/- per day. So each family earned Rs.2,450/- during the season. Thus, a sustainable off-farm livelihood is created because of SHG women's initiative and AF's support.

WOMEN FARMER SETS AN EXAMPLE IN PRACTISING LEISA

- Case study of Ms. Parvathamma from Gubanapalli village

Ms. Parvathamma, is a women farmer from Gubana Palli village of Kalyandurg mandal. Her family includes her husband, 3 sons and a daughter. She has 5 acres of dry land, 3 buffalos and 5 cows.

"I got bumper crop yields because of good rains and following LEISA practices. I saved Rs.8,000/- applying bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides instead of chemicals in my 5 acres of land. More over these methods are safe for my family's health".

- **Ms. Parvathamma**
Women Farmer

Ms. Parvathamma was investing Rs.11,000 on chemical fertilizers and pesticides every year, for growing groundnut crop in her 5 acres of land. Though she got good yields initially, gradually the yields started decreasing due to recurrence of pests and diseases. During the drought years when there were low crop yields, she suffered losses and used to borrow money from money lenders for crop investment. As a result her family got entangled in debt trap and was forced to work as wage labourers.

During 2007-08 AF started it's sustainable agriculture programme in Gubanapalli village and conducted a series of awareness campaigns and meetings. Parvathamma was one of the motivated farmers, of the village, who came forward to adopt sustainable agri-practices. Under the guidance of AF staff she practiced all the LEISA/NPM methods and her 5 acres of groundnut crop. She applied farm yard manure and neem cake which resulted in good crop growth and effective control of root grub. Bajra and cow pea were sown as border crop in order to protect the crop from Peanut Stem Necrosis Disease. She arranged pest traps and bird perches in the field to control the pests. She applied "Jeevamritham" – a liquid bio-fertiliser made from cow dung, cow urine, pulses and jaggary to the crop. She also sprayed neem oil and the decoction made out of green chillies / garlic for controlling Red hairy caterpillars. For all these LEISA/NPM methods Parvathamma invested only Rs.3,000/- for her 5 acres of groundnut crop.

M/s. Parvathamma and her family members are feeling very happy for practicing Low External Inputs Sustainable Agriculture. Because all other factors being the same, their net income from groundnut crop from their 5 acres of land will increase by at least Rs.8,000/- every year, as their expenditure on fertilizers and pesticides has come down from Rs.11,000/- to Rs.3,000/-. Their experience has convinced them that Bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides are equally effective when compared to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The added advantage is that they are economical, harmless and nature-friendly.



M/s. Parvathamma vowed never to go for chemical farming again. She has set an example in the village for other farmers to emulate by practicing Low External Inputs Sustainable Agriculture.

“GARDEN OF VEGETABLES” BECOMES CHEMICAL FREE

- A Case study of Kurakula Thota village

Kurakula Thota is a small hamlet village, situated at about 3 Km. from Kalyandurg town. The village has only 64 families belonging to a single backward community. For the past 100 years, all the families have been growing only vegetables and greens. Hence the village name “Kurakula Thota”, which literally means “Vegetable garden”. They have been growing only vegetables and greens as their small land holdings of 2 to 3 acres are insufficient to raise other crops. They have neither become too rich, nor starved even during series of droughts, as they have regular income throughout the year.

Earlier the farmers used farm yard manure to grow their crops. But for the past 20 years, they have started using chemical fertilizers and pesticides to arrest the growing incidence of pests and diseases. These vegetables grown using chemicals obviously had residues of chemicals left over in them. So apart from supplying nutrients and vitamins essential for good health and longevity, these vegetables also supply poisonous chemicals hazardous to human health. More over the farmers were getting low returns on investment because of high investments on chemical fertilizers and pesticides.



During 2007-08, AF started its sustainable agriculture program in the village. It explained to the farmers the ill-effects of high cost chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and also about growing healthy vegetables at low cost with better returns for farmers. AF had organized a series of through awareness campaigns and motivational meetings in the village. Practical demonstrations were also organized on preparation and application of bio-pesticides. The farmers gradually responded positively and formed into two Sasyamitra (farmer) groups with 30 men farmers and 20 women farmers. They decided together to use only bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides for growing vegetables.

Consequently the village has now 15 Vermi Compost units, 60 Farm Compost units and they all use bio-pest control methods such as Neem oil spray, decoctions of neem, chilly and garlic, pheromone traps, bird perches, border and trap crops etc. Some of them have also applied Jeevamritham – a liquid bio-fertilizer to their vegetable crops. So, the cost of cultivation has come down and they are able to recycle the farm waste. There is good cooperation, knowledge sharing, and exchange of experiences. They feel happy and proud they spread health among themselves and among the consumers.

Now, the whole village is using only bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides to grow their vegetables and greens! They have started selling their organic produce at Kalyandurg with self certification and have a reasonably good market for that. Now Kurakula Thota, a tiny hamlet village has become a model for organic farming of vegetables..

AF is also helping the farmers to get organic certification, so that they can realize better value for their produce.

TEENAGE GIRLS EARN SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-WORTH THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING

- A Case Study of teenage girls from Bandameedapalli village

Bandameedapalli is a small remote village situated at about 100 km. from Anantapur in Kundurpi mandal – a remote mandal headquarters. There are 218 families in the village, out of which about 85% are poor, with only 1 to 3 acres of dry land. So they are forced to work as wage labourers.

The teenage young school drop-out girls from these poor labour families had to work as wage labourers in their village and sometimes even in surrounding villages to meet the family needs. Some of them were interested in learning tailoring but they had no opportunity, as there was no training facility for tailoring in the village. Their parents, who were daily wage earners could neither take the initiative and arrange training for them nor afford the costs involved.

“I am very happy that I am earning money without going outside the village for hard manual labour work”

Vijaya Laxmi – A teenage girl

So some active teenage girls took the initiative, discussed with other teenage girls in the village and formed “Sri Chaitanya Group” with 30 girls. AF staff conducted a meeting with these girls and their parents and

finally it was decided to try and establish a tailoring centre in the village with AF’s support. Each girl contributed Rs.300/- towards the salary of the instructor. The villagers provided a rent free room for the centre. The response from the young girls and their parents was overwhelming, as this was precisely what they were looking for. So AF started a tailoring centre in October, 2007. All the 30 girls were trained in the first batch of 4 months duration.



Further AF staff played a key role in linking them up with a garment business promoter from Bangalore, who will supply them

ready-to-stitch garment, pieces. They will be paid wages @ Rs.10/- piece and each girl can stitch 8 to 10 pieces per day.

Now the girls are earning about Rs.80/- to Rs.100/- per day by stitching the garments on contract with the business promoter. They are expecting to earn Rs.120/- to Rs.150/- per day in the next 3 – 4 months as their skills and efficiency increases. These girls have several reasons to rejoice (1) Their family income has increased, (2) the drudgery of physical labour has reduced, (3) their self-worth and esteem has increased and (4) their morale is high, (5) they can look for better grooms and a better married life.

“After my marriage I can manage my family without depending on my husband’s earnings”

P. Geetha – A teenage girl

Already about 400 girls have been trained in 12 centres across AF’s project area. Out of them 65 girls have been linked to garments industry, who get contract jobs from business promoters from surrounding towns and Bangalore city also. 15 girls have been linked to the job of stitching uniforms for RDT school children. 45 girls have setup their own business in villages. Further AF is making efforts to link the remaining girls to the garments industry.

NREGS – FROM DISTRESS AND DESPAIR TO RESTARTING LIFE

Case Study of a farmer – turned labourer from Chapiri village

Mr. Vannur Swamy is a poor farmer from Chapiri village of Kalyandurg mandal. He is living with his mother, wife and three daughters in a small hut. He has 3 acres of dry land in which he used to grow groundnut crop under rainfed conditions.

The income from agriculture was in no way sufficient for the family of 6 members. To add to the families' woes, droughts were occurring with alarming regularity, which made him dependent on money lenders for crop investments. Both the debts and problems started growing year after year./ so he and his wife were reduced to agricultural wage labourers to feed the hungry mouths at home and to clear the growing debts. But this paltry earning of Rs.30/- per day was grossly insufficient, as they had to clear the debts also, apart from running the family. They were forced to stop the education of their elder daughter and their children looked weak and sick because of malnutrition. This almost drove them to a point of no-hope!

We did not invest any capital other than our labour and earned good income from NREGS. This additional income helped us in getting out of the clutches of money lenders

Vannur swamy & his family members

Chapiri

During 2007-08 National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched in the district. AF staff conducted village level awareness campaigns to the farmers and labourers on NREGS. Vannur Swamy and his wife attended the campaigns, and realized that it was very good opportunity for them to recover from their pathetic condition. So, they applied for a job card and for employment under NREGS with the help of AF staff.



During 2007-08, wife and husband together accessed employment for 125 days in bunding, farm ponds, bio-diesel plantations and earned an amount of Rs.11,825/-. The remaining days they worked as agricultural labour and earned Rs.7,200/-. Now there is a life regained and noticeable change in the living standards of the family. This year they re-admitted their elder daughter in school. Now the children are getting nutritious food and have new books and clothes. They have cleared old debts upto Rs.2,500/- and purchased groundnut seed worth Rs.1,000/- for sowing in their lands. They started saving small amounts in their

children's names in the post office. Now his family is happy. They say they are extremely thankful to both NREGS and AF for supporting them and saving them from distress.

ANNEXURES

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

1. Background:-

The deteriorating natural resources, harsh agro climatic conditions, and counter-productive high cost and high chemical input agriculture practices, together with mono cropping of groundnut under rainfed conditions, have altogether turned rainfed cropping into a risky gamble in Anantapur district. To add to this, mono cropping has increased the incidence of pests and diseases and reduced the yields. More over it is high time, we shake ourselves out of slumber and take note of the chemical pollution, of our natural resources and the slow poison being administered through our food crops.

So, responding to the distress of farmers, AF made Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture it's prime agenda, because (a) it deals with bio-fertilizers and biological control of pests and diseases, (b) it promotes diversified cropping practices, (c) it requires low investments, (d) it is nature-friendly and (e) it is beneficial to human health.

Co-incidentally at this juncture, SERP – a State Government agency came forward to collaborate with AF in implementing it's Non-Pesticidal Management (NPM) Program. This new collaborative program perfectly supplemented AF's own sustainable agriculture program, with similar objectives and complimentary activities. So AF joined hands with SERP and launched the joint collaborative NPM program in it's total outreach of 240 villages from 8 mandals.

2. SERP NPM Programme

Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) is a part of Ministry of Rural Development of Andhra Pradesh. Among many other activities SERP has taken up Non Pesticidal Management (NPM) of pests & diseases in crops.

2.1 Out reach

This programme is being implemented in 18 districts with 86 NGOs in Andhra Pradesh. As regards to Anantapur disgtrict nearly 10 NGOs are participating in implementation of NPM programme. AF is having a lion's share in the implementation of this programme in the district. The details are as follows:

Sl. No.	Organisation	Clusters	Villages	Farmers	Area in ha.
1	AF	48	240	13,811	27,295
2	Other Organisations (NGOs + CBOs)	27	134	11,091	46,189

The NPM programme in the district is gaining momentum season after season, as the farming community is gradually realizing it's effectiveness in control of pests and diseases.

3. Formation of village level Institutions and promotion of village level activists:

3.1 Sasyamitra groups (SMGs):- Sasyamitra groups are formed with 25-30 farmers based on the crops they grow and based on contiguous area. From each enrolled family one woman and one man are the members in SMGs. For each group one Convener and Co-convener are nominated by the group members. Thus, 5-8 groups are formed in a village based on the village size. The purpose of the SMG is to promote and practice chemical free agriculture in their villages :

- i) By using NPM methods to control the pests and diseases
- ii) By using LEISA practices to reduce investment on rainfed farming.
- iii) By diversifying the cropping pattern and land use.

Accordingly 1399 SMGs are formed with 37,785 farmers in 240 villages during the 2007 crop season.

The Sasyamitra groups have been actively participating in Farmer Field Schools, being conducted by the Village Activist weekly once on a fixed day.

Sasyamithra Samakhyas (SMS)

Village level federations are formed with the Conveners and Co-conveners of the SMGs, in which 50% of the members must be women. They are called Sasyamithra Samakhyas (SMS) – The federation is a village level body and its main role includes :

- Collection of enrolment fees from farmers
- Follow up of SMGs
- Monitoring of FFS
- Preparation of NPM plans.
- Maintenance of village level NPM records

AF is also thinking to promote Cluster level and Mandal level networks and encourage farmers to lobby and advocate for pro-farmer agriculture policies.

3.2. VO - NPM Sub-committee:

VO is a federation of women SHGs at the village level and it has been organized and supported by Government. It is an all women body. Since NPM is a Govt. programme, VOs is involved in implementing the NPM programme. A separate sub-committee is set up by VO for implementing the NPM programme. It is called NPM Sub-committee.

This VO-NPM sub-committee consists of 7 members, three members from VO (Village Organization) who are practicing NPM at village level, two progressive farmers, one village activist and one office bearer. This committee plays a pivotal role at village level in planning, implementation, monitoring and taking important decisions regarding implementation issues. Following are it's main functions.

- It reviews the activities that are taken up in the village

- It reviews the work of village activist
- It co-ordinates with Mandal level sub-committee
- It prepares action plan and budget for the village, for every season.
- It is authorized and responsible for managing programme finances at the village level.

3.3 Village level Activist:

Members of VO-NPM sub-committee and MMS along with the cluster activist, select and appoint a village level functionary, who is also a NPM practising active farmer from the village, to co-ordinate the work at village level. He / She is called a Village Activist, who will also be a member of VO-NPM sub –committee. He / She must be literate enough to understand the subject, read and write records and reports. The main role of VA is to assist the Sasyamitra groups to identify the pests, diseases, harmful and beneficial insects and organize SMGs to take timely control measures. He/She also assists the VO-NPM Sub-committee in effective implementation of NPM programme at village level. He extends his assistance to Cluster Activist. He maintains daily record of all the activities.

Area level meetings are conducted monthly once for the Village Activists to review and plan the LEISA/NPM activities.

235 Village Activists from AF's operational area are trained by AF. Refresher trainings are organized once in 6 months by AF, to brush up their knowledge and to update them about the latest NPM practices in agriculture.

3. 4. Cluster Activists :

At cluster level the programme is coordinated by a full time Cluster Activist. The Socio-technical organizers of AF are now working as cluster activists. Coordination of the NPM activities at cluster level is the main job of the Cluster Activist. He coordinates with the Village Activists in organizing campaigns, trainings, FFS, demonstrations and exposure visits. Maintaining data base at cluster level, preparation of cluster action plans and reports and reporting to resource NGO(AF) is also the role of the Cluster Activist.

4. Capacity Development

4.1 Village level campaigns :

Village level campaigns on LEISA and NPM are being organized in all the 240 project villages, under AF's capacity development program. The purpose of organising them is to sensitize farming community in particular and the public in general about the hazardous effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on human beings, flora and fauna, ill effects of mono cropping, and about bio-diversity etc. Awareness is being created among the farming community on how best they can utilize the locally available bio-ingredients as substitutes to chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Emphasis is also laid on introduction of new varieties and practices, reduction in cost of cultivation and increase in productivity.

Process of organising campaigns :

- Planning of campaigns is done by SMGs and staff members jointly.

- The responsibilities are shared between the SMG members and staff.
- The education materials like audio, visual aids literature are used, to educate farmers.
- Exhibition of locally available materials like Neem products, local wild plants used for making decoctions etc., used for practicing NPM and bio-fertilizers is arranged.
- NPM rallies are organized in the villages involving women and men holding banners and placards with slogans.
- The farmers, who have followed NPM practices and adopted non-negotiables will share their experiences.
- Role plays are organized on NPM / LEISA.
- Awareness on Government schemes related to agriculture is also created in these campaigns.

During the project period 407 campaigns were conducted at village level covering 37,598 Farmers in all 240 villages among which 18,533 are women farmers. Awareness is given on LEISA/NPM practices like Border Crops, Pest traps, Bio-fertilisers, Bio-pesticides, crop diversification, seed multiplication etc.

Rallies were organized in each village with placards and banners on LEISA/NPM practices. In each village about 200 farmers (men and women) participated in these campaigns. NPM practicing farmers, village presidents (Sarpanchs), VO leaders and concerned I.K.P. staff also participated in the campaigns. Cultural programmes, Demonstrations and exhibitions on LEISA/NPM practices were organized. The farmers were very much impressed and expressed their willingness and commitment to adopt the practices and stop the usage of chemical fertilisers. However, the availability of green matter is expressed as a constraint for going in large scale composting.

4.2. Farmers Field Schools (FFS) :

Farmer Field Schools are organized to promote knowledge and learning of farmers, particularly with regard to bio-pest management practices. It is a practical, on the field, education program for farmers organized by AF, under SERP-NPM programme. About 25 – 30 farmers from SMGs constitute a FFS.

FFSs are conducted every week in all project villages, during cropping season, once in a week on a fixed day under this joint collaborative program. Strengthening of farmers groups (SMGs) and enhancing their technical knowledge through field experiences are of paramount importance in FFS.

- The farmers groups are formed based on the crops they grow, and based on contiguous area
- Each group has about 25 to 30 willing and active members.
- About 15 men and 10 – 15 women participate in each FFS.
- Village activist forms the groups, each group selects a leader (the group leader is the resource person)

The Agenda of the FFs is as follows:

- Agro Eco system analysis: in this crop pattern is observed by the farmers.
- Identification of beneficial insects, harmful insects and the impact of these insects on crops

- Insects collection both beneficial and harmful insects - by which farmers can understand life cycle of insects
- During FFS farmers analyze the activities taken up in their fields.
- The group leaders record the deliberations in their groups and hand it over to the VA who in turn adds his observations and hands it over to village level NPM Sub-committee

Totally 7,460 No.of Farmer Field Schools have been conducted in AF's project villages during Kharif and Rabi seasons this year. Up to now 1,374 Sasyamitra groups have been formed with 25 - 30 farmers in each group. The Village Activists and Cluster Activists (STO) are facilitating the FFS based on the crops and area. The FFS are being conducted regularly every week wherein the Sasyamitra groups are participating in identifying pests and diseases, collecting beneficial and harmful insects from the fields and getting knowledge on the life cycle of the insects. Farmers also did some small experiments in controlling the pests and diseases by using NPM practices i.e., Bio-pesticides and Bio-fertilisers. Lot of information and experience is being shared among the farmers in FFS, which is treated as farmers 'on the field lab'. Farmers are really able to observe and practice the NPM practices. FFS is very effective instrument to promote LEISA (organic farming) in the coming years. The women farmers are playing active role in farmers field schools. Their participation in discussions and decision making with regards to controlling measures of pests and diseases is very high. The village level VO-NPM sub-committee is supporting and monitoring the proceedings of the FFS

4.3 Village Activist Trainings :

Since village activists are farmers, they need capacity enhancement to implement the NPM program effectively. So AF is organizing suitable trainings for village activists at area level, once in 6 months, where in about 235 VAs from 235 villages are trained. These trainings also create a platform for VAs from different villages to share their experiences which is highly beneficial for mutual learning of the VAs.

Following are the objectives of organizing Village Activists Trainings :

- To ascertain their level of understanding conducting pre and post evaluation.
- To train them on soil fertility management, seed production and seed bank management.
- To train them on composting, vermi composting and developing bio-mass in the fields.
- To create awareness on diversification of agriculture and livelihoods opportunities.
- To make sure that the VAs are insisting farmers to follow non-negotiables in NPM.
- To promote usage of indigenous materials as substitutes to pesticides.

5. ACTIVITIES TAKEN-UP UNDER NPM/LEISA :

5.1. Mechanical pest management:

The pests and diseases that attack crops can be controlled by using pesticides. But AF is against the use of any chemical pesticides which are detrimental to the beneficial insects and micro organisms in the soil. The best way to overcome the menace is mechanical way of controlling pests.

The following mechanical measures have been taken up during 2007-08 for controlling the pests.

5.1.1 Pheremone traps:

In the market synthetic pheromones are available for various types of pests. The male insects are trapped before mating which inhibits the egg laying process. Moreover these traps are indicators of the type of pest that is likely to attack. 10 such traps are placed strategically in an area of 1 hectare. Totally 26,230 pheromone traps have been installed in 3120 ha. of land belonging to 1246 farmers during 2007-08.

5.1.2 White and Yellow boards:

Mostly sucking pests and small winged insects are attracted to white and yellow colours. For example thrips are attracted to white colour, Jassids are attracted to yellow colour. These boards are coated with a sticky substance. When insects come in contact with these boards they get stuck. Totally 39,460 white and yellow boards were installed by the farmers in 5182 ha., of land belonging to 1850 farmers during 2007-08.

5.2 Border, Inter and Trap crops:

5.2.1 Border crop:

As groundnut is the monocrop in Anantapur district covering nearly one million hectares, groundnut crop is subjected to PSND (peanut stem necrosis disease). This is caused by Thrips, which are the carriers of PSND causing virus. The border crop grows taller than groundnut and functions as barrier to ward off the entry of thrips in to the main field.

Millets like Bajra and jowar and pulses like cow pea were grown as border crops in 1,04,476 ha., of area by 28,737 farmers during 2007-08.

5.2.2 Inter crop:

Groundnut is sown as sole crop and as inter crop pigeon pea, castor and other millets may be sown. These inter crops may not compete with the main crop for nutrients as these inter crops are deep rooted. The inter crops do not affect the yields of main groundnut crop but they give additional income to the farmers. Mainly redgram was sown as inter crop by farmers themselves in 1,24,800 ha., of groundnut cultivated area. AF did not provide the seed, but motivated the farmers to go for inter cropping on their own.

5.2.3 Trap crops:

In groundnut crop 125 to 150 castor /sunflower /marry gold plants are grown per ha.. These will attract the harmful insects by virtue of the large size of leaves and attractive yellow color of the flowers. This will help the farmers to take up control measures on the trap crops rather than taking control measures for the whole plot. With AF's motivation the above trap crops were grown in 3600 ha., of area by the farmers themselves.

5.3 Bio – pest management:

5.3.1 Decoctions :

Whenever the pest population crosses ETL (Economic Threshold Level) decoctions made from the indigenously available plants, hot spices like chilly, garlic etc., are found to be the best alternative

to chemical pesticides. AF motivated the farmers to prepare and apply bio-pesticides in 14,990 ha. of area during 2007-08.

5.3.2 Neem oil and Extracts:

Spraying with neem oil proved beyond doubt that it works as a repellent and does not allow the harmful insect to lay eggs. Neem oil does not have any residual toxic effect on crops and fruits. Similarly the neem seed extract besides having the above positive effect, supplements nutrients to the plants. About 1200 ha., of cropping area was sprayed with neem products like neem oil and neem seed extract during 2007-08.

5.4 Biological control:

5.4.1 Trichogramma cards:

Trichogramma belongs to wasp family. These insects lay eggs in the eggs of other crop damaging insects. There by the eggs of the crop damaging insects get parasitization.

These cards were used exclusively in vegetable cultivation in about 40 ha., by 120 farmers during 2007-08. The cost was borne entirely by the farmers themselves.

5.4.2 NPV(Nuclear Polyhydrous Virus).

The NPV solutions are insect specific. They can be prepared in large quantities from the infected insects and sprayed on crops. NPV solutions are eco-friendly and do not have any adverse effect on the flora and fauna. NPV was used exclusively on chick pea crop in an extent of about 120 ha., by the farmers themselves.

5.5 Bio- fertilizers management:

5.5.1 Vermicompost:

Vermicompost had been established as the best alternative to chemical fertilizers, as this supplies the macro and micro nutrients required by the crops and fruit plants adequately. During 2007-08, 2629 vermi compost units were established, and about 1.00 tonnes of vermi compost was produced, which was used for fruit orchards and vegetable crops in an extent of 224 ha.

5.5.2 Farm composting:

The agricultural waste and other organic matter is stored in a pit in the field and subjected to decomposition. This is the best source of insitu bio-fertilizer to the field crops and fruit plants. Totally 9699 farm compost units were established in the fields, which are expected to cover an extent of 3880 ha.

5.5.3 Jeevamrutham :

Jeevamrutham is the cheapest indigenously prepared liquid and solid bio fertilizer. It had been established beyond doubt as the best alternative to chemical fertilizers. Besides this it enhances the microbial population in the soil which supply nutrients to the plants. During 2007-08, 5171 farmers prepared Jeevamrutham and applied to their crops mostly fruit orchards and paddy crop in an extent of 7438 ha., on their own.

5.6 NPM Shops.

The purpose of establishing NPM shop is to promote the usage of Bio-fertilisers and Bio-pesticides, make sure that they are available to the farmers in villages. Entrepreneurship is also

promoted in the process. The NPM shops, are maintained by a model farmer who is also trained by AF in NPM practices. The NPM shopkeeper also teaches the farmer in preparation and usage of bio-pesticides and fertilisers. The required material is procured and kept in the shop for preparing the various kinds of solutions and decoctions. During Kharif and Rabi seasons the readymade bio-pesticides are kept available in the NPM shops. The NPM shops are easily accessible to the farmers within the Mandal. Financial assistance of Rs.15,000 is provided from AF to establish the NPM shop. AF has planned to establish 8 NPM shops in 8 Mandals of the Project Area. Upto now 2 shops are established and 4 are in the process. The material in NPM shops include Neem Cake, Neem Oil, Neem seed powder, Tricho-derma ViridiPharmone traps, white and yellow boards, grease Tricho-groma cards, vermi compost, suchomonos sprayers, Drums etc. The NPM shops are playing key role in promotion of sustainable bio-farming and there is a good response from farmers.

5.7 Vegetation development:

For promotion of Bio-mass in the fields, plantation of forest species and seed dibbling with Pongamia, glyricidia, neem, tamarind seed is taken up in all 240 villages. Plantation and seed dibbling is done on the field borders, soil bunds and waste lands. The vegetative cover protects the soil and also gives the green matter for compost making. During 2007-08, 7510 ha., of fodder, timber and bio-mass plantations were raised by 2682 farmers in AF's project area from 2008-09. The nurseries at village level are raised by SHG women and also saplings are grown in AF's Central nurseries to ensure timely availability of plants in the month of July. AF is also collaborating with Government Forest Department for seedlings for various plantations. Efforts are being put to see that farmers access wages from APREGS for pitting and watering of these plantations.

5.8 Crop Diversification:

Mono-cropping of groundnut in the district, since long time has made the crop susceptible to many pests and diseases resulting in loss of crop yields. Since many years AF has been creating awareness and motivation among farmers to take up multiple/alternative/ diversified cropping system. AF has been successfully promoting horticulture coverage upto normal as an alternate income source to cope up with recurring droughts since many years. So far AF has promoted rainfed horticulture in 64,625 ha., of land. Of late AF has been making sincere efforts to make the farmers take up crops other than groundnut, as pure crop, inter crop, mixed crop and vegetable cultivation, to address the issue of food security in the project villages. Food crops like millets and pulses are promoted extensively in AF's project area. As a result 18,364 farmers have grown food crops like millets, pulses etc., in 7442 ha., of land during 2007-08. AF is also promoting various types of fodders like tree fodder, grass varieties etc., to support dairy development.

6. PLANS FOR 2008-09:

6.1 Scaling up Vegetation Development in Farm lands :

AF has planned to scale up the development of vegetation in farm lands from the present 40 ha., to 100 ha., per village per year in all it's 240 project villages from 2008-09 in each village, raised saplings will be planted in 40 ha., and in the remaining 60 ha., seeds of useful bio-mass plantations will be dibbled on bunds, borders, wastelands etc.

6.2 Establishment of seed banks :

The issue of seed scarcity is being discussed in Sasyamitra groups and NPM sub-committees seriously and all the enrolled families in NPM programme have taken the decision to preserve the required quantity of groundnut seed. Keeping the problem of seed scarcity in mind, AF is encouraging SMGs to establish seed banks in their villages. So the SMGs in all the 240 AF villages have planned to establish seed banks in all villages during the year 2008-09. These seed banks will be maintained by NPM Sub-committees. The field staff are motivating the farmers to preserve the quality groundnut seed after the harvest. Apart from this AF has planned to supply the seed of pulses and cereals which will be collected back by the NPM sub-committee at the rate of one and half times in the form of seed/grains after the crop harvest and will be kept in the seed bank under the custody of NPM Sub-committee. This seed will be redistributed between the member farmers in coming season following the same criteria. In case of crop failure, the actual cost will be collected from the farmers by the NPM sub-committee, procure seed and distribute to the farmers. Thus the seed bank will be permanent and further strengthened. The seed bank also helps farmers in diversifying their crops. The arrangements for procuring seed - Redgram, Cowpea, Greengram, Gingilli, Black gram, Jowar, Bajra and vegetable seed will be made by the ATLS and AOs.

ANDHRA PRADESH RURAL EMPLOYMENT GURANTEE SCHEME

1. Introduction:

NREGP (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) was passed by the Government of India in the year 2005 in order to empower the rural labourers with right to get employment of 100days per year per family during off-season. It was launched in Anantapur District on February 2nd, 2006 by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, came into effect from 1-4-2006 in 200 drought prone and backward districts in India. Accordingly the Government of Andhra Pradesh formulated the scheme called APREGS.

During implementation of APREGS last year, there were many shortfalls like low and delayed employment for job seekers, delay in payments, absence of basic amenities at work spots, incidences of corruption and non-payment of compensation etc. These shortfalls were partly due to improper functioning of Government machinery and partly due to lack of awareness amongst labour community.

APREGS has been implemented in all 240 villages of Accion Fraterna's Project Area covering 8 Mandals in the District. AF staff have been collaborating with Government staff and playing a key role in proper implementation of the scheme

Moreover a pilot project is being implemented with a special drive for total and effective implementation of APREGS with all the promised provisions, in 2 mandals of AF's project area viz. Kalyandurg and Rappthadu.

The purpose of this special drive is to ensure that all wage seeking families access:

1. 100 days of employment per year.
2. All place facilities like drinking water, shade, crèche etc.

A District level UPHHC (District Upadhi Hami Hakkula Committee) is formed with the representative of 4 NGOs i.e., AF, APPS, REDS,CEC. The work plan was prepared by the Committee.

4.1 **Activities taken up:** The activities taken up under APREGS in AF's area are as follows:

Sl. No.	Activity	Unit	Extent Nos.	No. of Farmers benefitted
1	Soil & Moisture conservation works (Bunding)	Ha	29,609	9,904
2	Farm Ponds	Nos.	528	528
3	De-silting of wells	Nos.	260	260
4	Tank de-silting	Cum	26,813	900
5	Horticulture	Ha	354	354
6	Feeder channel	Run.Mts	60836	404
7	Jungle clearance	Sq.Mts.	8,440	29

4.2 Employment generation: There are 60,120 families in 240 Project villages out of which 52,043 families got job cards under NREGP. Among the Job Card families 67,796 persons from 46,838 families worked during the reporting period. Out of the total persons worked, 23,180 men availed 50 days of work and 8,935 women availed 40 days of work during the year 2007-08 A total of 18,98,288 person days were generated by which the families could earn wages of Rs.16,70,49,344. Each person worked for 28 days on an average during the year and earned Rs.2,464 at the rate of Rs.88/day. Among the families worked in NREGP 3,747 (8%) families availed 100 days of employment.

2. AF's role in APREGS

AF has been playing an important role in APREGS right from its inception. It is playing a vital, supportive role to Govt. functionaries in the implementation of the scheme in its project area of 8 mandals and 240 villages. AF played a lead role in "Social audit" of the scheme also. So the Govt. acknowledged AF's role in APREGS by awarding a certificate of appreciation. Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director, Accion Fraterna received this certificate from the Hon'ble minister of rural development, Govt. of India.



AF is planning an important role in :

1. Creating wide spread awareness on the scheme and its provisions.
2. Helping labour families in getting job cards.
3. Helping the farmers and farm labour in planning of works in their villages.

4. Helping the labour families in applying for job and getting the receipt for the same.
5. Making sure that shelves of work are adequate at mandal and district level.
6. Getting work sanctions in time.
7. Helping labours in getting timely payments.
8. Helping labourers to raise their voice on the problems they are facing at mandal / district level.
9. Enhancing the capacities of Govt. field level workers through trainings and assisting them in maintaining quality of works.
10. Policy advocacy and lobby work at state level.

3. AF's Strategy:

AF has been collaborating with the Government and playing a facilitation role in proper implementation of NREGP in AF's 240 project villages. As part of the strategy AF has organized Village, Mandal and District level Awareness Campaigns to laborers and farmers. The objectives of the Awareness Campaigns are as follows:

1. To create awareness on the rights and entitlements of the labourers in NREGP.
2. To bring movement in Government functionaries for proper operationalisation of the scheme and promote transparency amongst all concerned stakeholders and public at large.
3. To ensure effective implementation of the programme in the district.

3.1 Village level awareness campaigns:

Awareness campaigns were conducted in each village by AF staff involving concerned government officials like Programme Officer (PO), Technical Assistant and field assistants. Awareness was given on availing 100 days of employment by each family ensuring on job facilities, timely sanction of works, proper implementation, timely payments etc.

3.2 Mandal level awareness campaigns:

Mandal level awareness campaigns were organized in 8 mandal headquarters covering 2500 men labour and 1500 women labour. These campaigns were conducted during the month of February 2008.

Dr. Y.V.Malla Reddy, Director, AF; Mr. G. Gopal, Project Director, DWMA; Mr. K.S. Gopal, APUHHC President; concerned Govt. officials - Local political leaders – like MPP, MPTC, ZPTC, Sarpanch, attended these campaigns as guest speakers and shared their views.

In each campaign, a massive rally was organized with placards demanding the rights and entitlements of labour under NREGA. Exhibitions was also arranged with posters, banners and photos which gave very good awareness to the labourers. The cultural team enacted role plays and sang songs on REGS.

The guest speakers explained about the rights and entitlements of labour under NREGP. They emphasized that REGS is a boon to the labour families. They felt that REGS is very much needed for the districts like Anantapur, where farmers are committing suicides. The speakers appealed to the labourers and advised to take up the works that will be useful to small and marginal farmers. The labour works should include land development, productivity increase, repair of old tanks, desiltation of tanks, horticulture etc. It was proposed to form a village level committee with educated youth and take the responsibility for implementation of the programme. Dr.Y.V. Malla Reddy gave assurance to the Govt. officials that necessary technical support and cooperation will be extended through AF staff for effective implementation of the REGS in order to ensure 100 days of employment to each family in 8 mandals of the Project Area. The Project Director, DWMA welcomed the support from AF. He gave assurance to the gathering that he would take all necessary measures for effective implementation of the REGS.

3.3 District level awareness campaigns:-

AF, along with some other NGOs like APPS, REDs and APUHAC (Andhra Pradesh Upadhi Hakkula Amalu Committee) organized a district level awareness campaign on 2-12-07 at Lalithakala Parishad, Anantapur and Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director, AF, and Mr. Gopal, Director CEC (Centre for Environment Concerns) took initiative and organized the campaigns. The Government functionaries at state level and district level extended their cooperation in making the campaign a grand success.

Nearly 1500 labourers from AF Project villages and another 1500 from Project villages of other NGOs from the different parts of the district participated in the campaign. A massive rally was organized, demanding effective implementation of APREGS with all rights and entitlements of labour under NREGA. The rally attracted the attention of thousands of onlookers. The rally was followed by a public meeting at the Lalithakala Parishad and many eminent people participated and delivered speeches, emphasizing on right to work, utilization of 100 days employment, basic amenities at the work spot and role of Government functionaries and labour in effective implementation of APREGS. The speakers from various sectors include Mr. K.R. Venugopal, Retired Collector, EX-Secretary of PMO as the Chief Guest, Mr.Minar Pimple, Asia Millennium Campaign, Mr. K.Sreenivasulu, EX-MP, Dr. Y.V. Malla Reddy, Director – AF, Mr. K. S. Gopal, Director, CEC and convenor APUHAC, Mr. Murali, Director – APREGS, Ms. Bhanuja, Director, REDS, Mr.P. Balaram, APPS, and Mr.Jeevan Kumar, Human Rights. The important messages/awareness given by the various speakers is as follows -

- The labourers must be the main actors in protecting their rights and accessing the benefits in full. The concept of living wage of at least Rs.150/- should be demanded in place of a minimum wage of Rs.80/- which will enable them to live with some human dignity, medical facilities and education to their children. If the labourers could raise their voice and concerns at village level, then the NGOs and CSOs would be in a better position to take their demands to district and state level authorities.
- The labourers should demand 100 days of work and get it. They should submit their job applications in time and take receipts from the concerned officials. They should also approach the mandal level offices for timely sanction of works and timely payments.

- The labour should demand on-job facilities like drinking water, shade, crèche etc.
- In order to create food security to poor labour families, different types of grains should be distributed in sufficient quantities through PDS as part of their wages and the remaining amount should be paid in cash. Wage payment procedures should be to the convenience and needs of the wage seekers.

Mr. Murali, Director, APREGS, acknowledged that there are still many problems that need to be solved and listed the actions being taken to solve the problems. According to him 780 crores worth of works were implemented in 30000 villages in AP State wherein 5 lakh 72 thousand labourers have worked. He explained the highlights and shortfalls in detail about the implementation of APREGS.

- Some of the labour representatives also spoke in the meeting and explained their problems, demands and finally gave some suggestions for proper implementation of the REGS. One of the important suggestion was that the implementation responsibility should be given to local CBOs.

4. AF's ACHIEVEMENTS IN APREGS:

Since AF is active member in the district and State level NREGP committees, it is playing active role in lobby and advocacy work. AF is also collaborating with CEC (Centre for Environment Concerns), WASSAN, and other state level net works. Issues raised at village, Mandal and district level were taken to state level administration (Commissioner, NREGP), regarding on site facilities, timely payments, non-payment of compensation etc., and as a result favourable actions were initiated by the Govt., administration. The resource mobilization and advocacy cell members of AF quite often voiced demands of job seekers in state level NREGP meetings organized by the Govt. As AF has good relationship and accessibility with Govt., officials at all levels the lobby and advocacy work is giving good results.

The village and Mandal level problems were taken to the district and state level meetings by AF.

Following are some of the issues taken up by AF and solved recently:

1. Labourer's medical bills can be certified by the local Doctor's now. Earlier certification by Government Doctor was mandatory (Delay in paying medical bills reduced now).
2. Sanction of Rs.100 wage payment to water supplier's on par with wage laborers.
3. Tools were customized to reduce the drudgery of the labor (Provision of smooth rubber handles to earth excavating tools)
4. Successful lobby with the district administration to take NREGS works even in forest lands.

Expected impacts of the campaign

The campaign aimed to achieve the following impacts.

- Improved awareness amongst poor labourers on the Act and the rights they are entitled for
- Improved alertness in Government machinery
- Improved transparency amongst concerned stakeholders and public at large
- Improved cooperation and coordination
- As a result of the above improved operationalisation of this scheme in the district

The above impacts are likely to lead to the following consequences.

- Increased number of days of work per person per year
- Improved on site facilities including provision of crèches
- Regular payments to labourers
- Reduced corruption

5. POINTERS TO FUTURE:

AF strongly felt that existing ceiling of Rs.100 as daily wage is insufficient to meet the basic needs of food, shelter, clothes, health and education of the rural families in the background of increased cost of living. A concept of living wages of at least Rs.150 should be adopted in the place of a minimum wage of Rs.80.

AF believes that the laborers should get an adequate wage amount which enables them to live with human dignity. Efforts have been put by AF in this regard.

The awareness and motivation has been done to the labor families to utilize the scheme to the full extent, avail 100 days of employment and get substantial income. AF wants to promote savings among labor families so that they will be able to move away from the drudgery of strenuous physical work to other livelihoods like dairy, livestock development, entrepreneurship, and skill based livelihoods. AF is also planning to provide skills to labor women in off-farm livelihoods and play a facilitating role in mobilization of finance from banks and govt. agencies.

Finally AF aims that these poor labour families should use APREGS as a stepping stone to develop alternate livelihoods in course of time, move away from APREGS and this physical drudgery and lead life with basic amenities and human dignity.

WOMEN'S DAY CAMPAIGNS

1. INTRODUCTION:

AF has facilitated the celebration of women's Day involving the women and men of its project villages. AF together with the women leaders played active part in organizing the campaigns. The women leaders included the active members of the women groups, SHG leaders, Sasya Mithra Group (SMG) members, NPM village activists, V.O. leaders and PRIs in the planning. Some interested women groups from the villages took initiative in cooking and serving lunch to the participants at the campaign. The AF staff campaigned and mobilized the women and gave them the awareness on the Women's Day and helped them to participate in the campaigns at the mandal head quarters. Thus 8 campaigns were organized at 8 mandal head quarters, viz Kalyanadurg, Be3luguppa, Settur, Kundurpi, Kudair, Atmakur, Raphadu and Dharmavaram. It is interesting to note that 20% of the total participants have been men, who participated voluntarily and expressed their solidarity with women.

2. Objectives OF Women's Day campaigns:

The rural women are still facing gender discrimination in many aspects. They are not getting equal respect on par with men. Their status in the family, work place, and in the society at large is lower. Generally they are denied equal opportunities in making important decisions such as family finances, marriage, property, child birth etc. The girl children are being discriminated in the aspects of property, education, nutrition etc. More over social evils like child marriages, dowry, domestic violence and alcoholism still exist to some extent, which have a profound impact on the lives of rural women.

The main objective of Accion Fraterna in conducting women's days is to bring awareness and empower women by bringing out their inner abilities and tapping out their inner strengths by bringing them out on a common plat form. This platform is utilized to give self strengthening positive messages and awareness through people particularly eminent women from different fields to thousands of rural women.

The working objectives:

1. To remind the women about their rights and entitlements and the processes to acquire them.
2. To give awareness on the new laws passed by the Government in the favor of women like anti domestic violence, scholarships for girls education and reservation facilities in different Government programmes and their effective utilization.
3. To provide knowledge of employment opportunities that are available within and outside their villages.
4. To give awareness on the importance of the education of the girl child.
5. To give awareness on the health problems of the women and methods to prevent and overcome them.

6. To facilitate them to think independently and enhance their self confidence.
7. To provide an opportunity to have knowledge exchange, awareness and solidarity on different kinds of women problems and their solutions.
8. To encourage them to take part in the decision making related to their family and village.
9. To motivate them to fight against social evils and atrocities against women.
10. To encourage and demonstrate the existing women leadership from among the project villages.

3. Participation and events:

During this year, women's day celebrations were conducted in all the 8 mandals of AF's project area. In each campaign about 1000 to 1200 women and men from about 30 villages of that particular mandal participated enthusiastically. From each village about 30 women and 5 men participated in the campaigns. Many women participated for the first time from BCs and others.

In the 8 campaigns conducted in the project area totally 7650 women and 1400 men attended enthusiastically and made the celebrations a great success.

3.1 Women Rallies:

Each campaign began by an impressive women's rally through the main roads of mandal head quarters. The objective of the rally was to create awareness on Women's Day to people at large. About 800 women participated in each rally. They took out a procession through the main roads of the towns holding banners, placards, singing songs and raising slogans against discrimination and owing to fight for equal status of women in the society. Their problems of discrimination, social evils affecting them were highlighted during the procession. Some women drove bullock carts in the rally to show symbolically that they can also perform the (so called superior) roles that are culturally assigned exclusively for men.

3.2 Public Meeting:

Eminent personalities particularly women from different fields like, Doctors, Lawyers, Police, Women and Child welfare association members, officials from panchyath raj, Zilla Parishad, IKP, DRDA, teachers political leaders, MMS leaders, women group leaders and some journalists were invited as guest speakers in these campaigns.

Following are the important messages given by the speakers from various sections of the society:

1. Parents should treat both girls and boys alike and provide equal educational opportunities to them. Girls should be provided either higher education or skills training to make them self-reliant. Boys should be grown in such a way that they should help their mother and sisters in the household work. All the women present took oath to get their girl children educated at least up to 10th class.

2. Child marriages should be completely stopped. The boys & girls should be married only after they cross 20 years of age when they are in a position to earn and are mature enough to manage the family.
3. Women should collectively exercise their rights to avail the Government schemes like Arogyasri, NREGP, PDS and other social welfare schemes.
4. Pregnant women were advised to take nutritional food and access AN & PN care facilities by the Govt. without fail.
5. Women should develop alternate livelihoods by taking help from Government and non-government organizations. They should also save some amount in order to have some economic freedom and respect in the family.
6. Women should not hesitate to approach judicial remedies in their fight against the atrocities done to them.
7. Women should unite and collectively fight against social evils like alcoholism, child marriages, dowry, domestic violence etc. Many examples were quoted from the villages on how unity and co-operation among women brought significant changes in the society.

3.3 Women group leaders conducted the public meetings:

SHG leaders in 6 mandals took initiative to organize and conduct the entire public meeting. Some women from the villages came forward and shared their observation on the changing mindset of the rural women, for better.

The women participating in the campaigns took the following resolutions unanimously, that:

- 1) They will encourage their daughters to get higher education.
- 2) They will try to stop Child marriages and Alcoholism in their families and villages completely.
- 3) They will make sure that, their daughters have equal share in healthy food along with their sons.
- 4) They will get united and make efforts to solve the problems in their families and villages.

4. Role plays & fun games :

Songs and role-plays on issues of women and their development were performed by RDT cultural team. Through a role play called “GOAL’ it was shown, how the life of a girl was made miserable right from the beginning to the end of her life and how she overcame all those hurdles and proved herself as a successful women. Both the roles of men and women were played by the women. It attracted the participants very much and it was observed that the women watching the play were immersed in it. And responded well with positive answers to the questions asked by the girl character, at the end of the play. Some funny games were also organized during these campaigns, which provide some entertainment and comic relief to the participants. The participants responded positively and felt very happy that it was as if, they re-lived their childhood again. Mementos were

presented to the winners of the fun games and a small memento has thrilled the winners as it was first time ever they were rewarded and honored in that manner.

5. Exhibitions:

An exhibition was arranged at the venue with the (a) photographs of successful women in different fields. (b) Income generation activities and the products like silk saris, work saris, bangles, petty coats etc, (c) NPM methods and products etc. The idea was to create interest and enthusiasm among women and to motivate them to strengthen agriculture and develop alternate livelihoods.

6. Arrangement of a festive – meal :

Meeting came to a close by serving good festive meal to all participants. Meal with vegetable fried rice, lemon rice, curd rice, snacks, sweet and fruits was arranged at the meeting place to all the people who attended the meeting.

7. Conclusion:

The general response for Women's Day Campaigns was overwhelming. The enthusiasm, excitement and happiness were budding on the faces of women. Following are some of the feedback comments made by participants:

Participants' response:

1. "Some women have achieved the impossible through unity. We can take them as role models and fight for our rights."
2. "We will fight against the discrimination & harassments we are facing."
3. "I understood the importance of education for girls. I will try to make my two daughters settle in life first, and then only I will think about their marriages."
4. "We understood the problems of child marriages."
5. "We learnt about the laws that are helpful to women."
6. "Interacting and celebrating with many other women gave us happiness and a feeling of strength, solidarity and security."
7. "We were reminded of our childhood by playing games."
8. "Participating in the rally was a great experience to us."

SUSTAINABLE RURAL LIVELIHOODS

1. Background:-

Anantapur is one of the poorest districts in the country, where the farmers are largely dependent on drought-prone, un-reliable, rain-fed agriculture. It has a geographical area of 1,900,000 ha., out of which about 1,000,000 ha., is under rain-fed cultivation and about 100,000 ha., under irrigation through un-dependable tube wells and traditional tanks. Groundnut is the major crop throughout the district and is sown as a mono crop in more than 800, 000 ha., in harsh agro-climatic conditions.

The district has a population of 3.7 million or about 740,000 families, of which about 550,000 families (75%) live in rural areas and depend on the un-dependable rain-fed agriculture as farmers and farm labour. The average land holding per family is a meager 5 acres.

The district average rainfall of 520 mm., per annum is unpredictably and unevenly distributed in space and time and the evapo-transpiration is as high as 1850 mm. About 80 – 85% of the farmers depend solely on mono-cropping of groundnut under rain-fed conditions, which reduced the soil fertility and increased the outbreak of pests and diseases in the district. Consequently even average yields happen only in 3 years out of 10 years.

About 70 – 75% of the farmers have no alternative source of income to cope with groundnut crop failure. They are not going for crop diversification because (a) there are not viable alternate crops that can be grown in these harsh agro-climatic conditions (b) the hope of average groundnut crop still flickers, (c) lack of initial capital for fruit tree crops, and long gestation period for tree crops (horticulture), (d) non-inclusion of women folk in cropping choices. They are not in a position to take up off-farm and non-farm livelihoods, as they are neither exposed to them nor they have required skills and capital. Thus this vicious cycle of droughts – crop failure – debts – Mono cropping is continuing year after year. Their ever-increasing debts and the money lenders' high interest rates have led them to abject poverty and a no-hope situation. As a result the farmers are in severe distress and are going for distress sale of their assets, livestock etc., and are migrating to far-off place and facing many hazards. Some women are even forced into trafficking and farmers' suicides are increasing. In last 7 years, over 500 farmers have committed suicide due to high indebtedness as they saw no hope of getting over the distress. The impact of farmers distress has been very severe on women and youth in the villages.

2. IMPACT OF FARMERS DISTRESS ON WOMEN :

2.1 Needs and constraints of rural women:

Rural women are mostly not getting (a) adequate food and (b) nutritious food. Moreover because of the distress conditions they are forced to do physical labour on daily wages, as that is the only other job, they can access. So these poorly fed women are subjected to strenuous physical work, which is leading to many health problems among them, which are not being attended for want of money. Some basic needs of women like clothing, children's needs etc., are also not met properly which is leading to conflicts and turmoil in

the family. As a result women's self-confidence is low and they are hesitant to take part in family decision making and they have a very low estimation of their self worth.

Rural women need financial security to overcome the above miseries. Since agriculture is not remunerative on one hand and is in the control of men on the other, women need some self-managed alternate livelihoods which are both remunerative and sustainable.

2.2 Measures taken by AF to support rural women:

In response to the context, AF re-defined its priorities by bringing the following objectives into sharp focus.

- Diversifying the family livelihood base by enabling women to take up viable off-farm and non-farm IGAs, through AF's livelihood support programme.
- Encouraging women to take up dairy and livestock management and helping them to access.

2.2.1 Formulation of a livelihood support policy:

To achieve the objective of diversified livelihood base of poor farmers / farm labour families, AF formulated a comprehensive livelihood support policy. As per this policy :

- Only women from poor and marginal farmer families and farm labour families are eligible for AF's livelihood support. SC & ST families get top priority.
- The livelihood, proposal should be feasible. The feasibility study will be done by AF's team along with the concerned family.
- The concerned family should contribute 50% of the estimated cost of the proposal or more.
- AF will provide an incentive of 50% of the estimated cost of the proposal, subjected to a maximum of Rs.7,500/- per family.

AF has formed a 9 member livelihood steering committee, comprising of area team leaders, PME cell and senior central staff. This committee meets once or twice in a month depending upon the need, discusses the feasibility of the proposals and accords formal sanctions. After this, the incentive amount is released and the IGA is implemented.

2.2.2 Role of AF Staff:

AF staff are playing an important role in helping the poor women to develop additional livelihoods, by:

- Enhancing their awareness and building their capacities through meetings and trainings.
- Motivating them to develop skills by attending the trainings conducted by Govt. and other NGOs.

- Assisting the poor women in identifying viable income generation activities and preparing proposals and arranging incentives from AF.
- Encouraging them to approach banks and other FIs and helping them in getting loans for development of livelihoods.
- Helping them in establishing marketing / business links or alliances.

2.3 Achievements during 2007-08:

It took longer for AF to evolve its women's livelihoods development policy. So women's livelihood program was started in December 2007. Still the results achieved are quiet substantial, which are indicative of the demand.

AF is expecting to clear the backlog of 2007-08, during 2008-09 as there is a great demand for the program.

During the year 218 poor farmer and farm labour women have taken up various off-farm and non-farm income generation activities in the project area. They are getting substantial income from these IGAs. The type of income generation activities, and coverage of women during the year are as follows:

Sl. No.	Activities	No. of units	Women covered
a)	Groundnut threshers	11	114
b)	Petty coats stitching	1	10
c)	Saree Weaving	6	54
d)	Brick making	2	26
e)	Coffee powder making	1	8
f)	Basket weaving	1	5
g)	NPM Shops	1	1
Total		23	218

More over AF has helped 2212 families to access loans from banks for development of off-farm and non-farm livelihoods.

Activity	No. of animals	Women covered	Amount mobilized from banks
1. Dairy Development	760	724	45,60,000
2. Sheep rearing	3,870	1,488	34,83,000
Total	--	2,212	80,43,000

3. IMPACT OF FARMERS' DISTRESS ON RURAL YOUTH

The impact of farmers' distress has been very severe on rural youth. Every year about 40,000 rural youth are dropping out of high schools and junior colleges, mostly as their parents are not in a position to bear the cost of their education.

The number of drop-outs is increasing year after year. Their education is grossly insufficient to fetch them any employment in Govt. / private sector. They don't have either skills or capital to take up alternate self-employment. So the educated rural youth have become aimless, insecure and frustrated, and have become liabilities to the already distressed, impoverished families.

The situation of uneducated rural youth is still worse. There are hundreds of thousands of such youth in the district who have dropped out at primary school level. They are highly disillusioned with the un-predictive and unproductive rain-fed agriculture. They don't have employment opportunities in their villages, except for agricultural wage labour works now and then during the season. Obviously they are not in a position to raise capital and take up any off-farm / non-farm income generation activities / petty business etc. So totally distressed, in a no-hope situation, they go on distress migration to far-off towns / cities as casual labour. They get mostly unskilled, physically hard and strenuous work like laying roads, digging trenches, building construction works etc. during the migration period of 3 – 4 months in a year, they face a lot of hazards like getting infected with HIV, indulging on petty crimes and even begging for food!

3.1 Needs and constraints of rural youth :

At present there is no proper system to train, support and guide the youth and rehabilitate in alternate livelihoods. Their parents are illiterate and ignorant. Their education is not technical and job oriented. They have no financial resources due to poverty. They have no guidance and support. That is the reason why all these years few rural youth from poorer communities have become entrepreneurs. Just this year, the Govt., started training the youth in job oriented skills. At the moment the Government is planning to train about 1000 youth a year, whereas the demand is as high as 40,000 to 50,000 a year. The Government is aiming to train 25,000 youth per year. For this it is seeking support from NGOs, business and industrial sectors.

The future of rural youth lies in transition from agriculture to small business and skills employment sectors. Given severe crisis of agriculture and distressed farmers, the issue is severe and demands a strong sense of urgency. The institutional infrastructure and mechanisms for facilitating a smooth transition to alternate business or industrial employment for the youth are almost non-existent at present. The need of the hour is to establish systems to guide youth, train and rehabilitate them in some remunerative alternate livelihoods.

3.2 Measures taken by AF to support rural youth.

3.2.1 Establishment of Skill training centres :

As part of youth skill development programme AF has planned to establish skill training centres to impart technical skills to the rural youth. In this context AF has collaborated

with SkillPro Foundation (An organization working on skills training). AF and SkillPro Foundation have signed a MoU to impart the technical training for rural youth. The duration of each training is four months. It includes three month class room training and one month on job training. While designing the curriculum more emphasis is given to practical training than theory. SkillPro would facilitate the placements of the trained candidates within and outside the district.

AF SkillPro have together planned to open 2 Skills Training centres, one at Kalyandurg and another at Anantapur in the beginning of 2008-09.

3.2.1.1 Kalyandurg centre:

Totally 120 candidates will be covered per batch in the following 4 trades at Kalyandurg centre @ 30 candidates per trade:

1. Information Technology Enabled Services
2. Hospitality Services.
3. Customer Relation and Sales.
4. House wiring cum Motor Rewinding.

3.2.1.2 Anantapur centre:

Totally 90 candidates will be covered per batch in the following 3 trades at Anantapur centres @ 30 candidates per trade :

1. Information Technology Enabled Services
2. Customer Relation and Sales.
3. Automobile Mechanism (Two-Wheeler)

A joint team of AF and SkillPro have already participated in the mobilization and selection of youth for different trades. During the mobilization cum selection process, the team created awareness on various trades, the prospects and employment of each trade. A small test was also conducted based on John Holland Test paper to identify, suitable trades for the youth. Finally the team members completed one to one counseling of youth for various skills trainings.

3.2.2 Mobilising, youth to Govt. Skills training agencies:

Apart from the above AF mobilized 218 candidates from it's project area, who were sent to Govt. Skills training centres like RUDSETI, JSS etc., and all of them have completed their training in various trades. AF is collaborating with these agencies in mobilization of candidates for trainings. AF is also providing tool kits free of cost to the trainees, for whom Govt. training centres have not provided.

3.2.3 Establishment of Tailoring Centres:

AF has already established 12 tailoring centres for girls in it's project area @ 1 – 2 per mandal. About 25 – 30 girls are trained in every batch of 3 – 4 months duration. Already about 400 girls have been trained in these centres in tailoring and embroidery.

3.2.4 Establishment of Driving schools

AF conducted a Skill demand of rural youth survey in it's project area, according to which about 1500 rural youth expressed their desire to learn professional driving. So AF planned to establish 2 driving schools, one at Kalyandurg and another at Anantapur to cater to the needs of rural youth from it's 4 operational areas. The purpose of establishing these driving schools is to impart driving skills and provide meaningful employment to the rural, educated, unemployed youth. These driving schools will start functioning from the beginning of 2008-09.

About 30 candidates will be trained in each batch of 75 days duration. It is planned to conduct 4 batches of training in a year in these 2 centres. So totally about 240 candidates will be trained per year in the school.

AF has planned to provide the following additional benefits to the candidates, apart from imparting driving skills:

- To impart skills of simple auto mobile mechanism.
- To impart soft skills like communication skills, vocabulary development.
- To create awareness on first aid, HIV behaving with clients etc.
- To impart driving practice to all trainees, free of cost.
- To arrange for insurance cover to all trainees against any accidents during training.
- To arrange the free for driving licence at the end of the training.
- To arrange for transport charges of trainees from their villages to the venue.
- To do post-training-follow up and try to arrange placements for the trainees in private / public sectors, subjected to availability.

The response for these driving schools in positive in AF's project villages. The schools are likely to start functioning from May 2008.



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