

Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihood Program 2009-12



PROJECT UPDATE - 2011

For the period 01.01.2011 to 31.12.2011



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General Information

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Introduction.

The year 2011 has been a good year for AF - EC, as the organization has become more compact, cohesive and more flat with 3 tier new structure and recruited and trained more women staff. It has resulted in improved efficiency and effectiveness. During this year the systems of staff accountability, transparency in financial transactions and CBOs involvement in decision making have been firmed up. The overall discipline in the organization has been established.

During this year various campaigns and training programs were organised on Sustainable Agriculture involving CBOs leaders. Particularly the 4 day mega training by Natural Farming expert Mr.Subhash Palekar attracted the attention of the whole district.

2. General Situation of Anantapur District

2.1 A favorable year for wage laborers:

The year 2011 was relatively favorable for the wage laborers of MGNREGS. They availed good wage employment under MGNREGS during Jan - June 2011. But there was less work for them during July - Dec' 2011 as the MGNREGS works were reduced in order to avail labour for seasonal rainfed agricultural operations. It must be noted that in Anantapur district, most of the labourers are also farmers. However the laborers did not get sufficient employment during Kharif 2011 from agricultural operations, as the crops failed due to lack of timely rains, which also resulted in very low or no crop yields. During the year 2011, 40% of Job card holders in the district (311,390) availed wage labour under MGNREGS. Out of them 31% families belong to SC& ST communities. AF has been motivating the labor families to avail maximum days of employment every year.

2.2 A "hopeless year" for farmers

Farmers lost groundnut crop during 2011 kharif (severe drought) as there were no timely rains. The erratic rainfall adversely affected groundnut and other crops. Farmers lost the hope by end of September and left the crop for grazing. There was a huge crop failure all over the District. It had also affected some of the project activities like application of Bio-fertilizers and Bio-pesticides planned during September to December 2011.

The traditional water bodies and bore wells did not get recharged this season due to scanty rainfall. The extent of cultivation in Rabi season has come down drastically. The farmers with fruit trees also face problems this year, because of no ground water.

3. Changes in AF Staff

During the year 2011, 12 staff members (7 men and 5 women) left for various reasons and 31 candidates have been newly recruited, of whom there are 24 Women. Presently, AF has 40% women staff (32 out of 80). AF has started to work with fewer no. of STOs and appointed a Karyakarta (village volunteer) in all the project villages. Since these karyakartas are village - based, they can provide a closer support in implementation, monitoring and follow up at each

farmer family level. They will be paid monthly performance-based incentives, as per the recommendation of the GSS.

4. Update on other Programs of AF

4.1 Update on NABARD watersheds

AF is working in 6 Watersheds funded by NABARD. Totally, Rs. 69 millions has been sanctioned for these watersheds to be implemented in 4 years. During the year 2011, AF has implemented various activities like; (a) Soil conservation, Rain water Harvesting (b) Plantations (c) Providing loans for Agricultural Productivity Enhancement, Non-farm livelihoods etc. All the above activities were implemented through village watershed committees in a participatory and transparent manner. The details of works & payments have been clearly displayed on the walls in prominent places in the villages.

4.2 Update on IWMP watersheds

The State Govt. has sanctioned 3 mega watersheds to AF by 2011 under its Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP). Muttala mega watershed sanctioned in 2009-10, covers 4 villages. The Project period is 7 years and the total financial outlay is Rs. 30.42 millions. Bandameedipalli mega watershed has been sanctioned in the year 2010-11. It covers 4 villages. The financial outlay of this watershed is Rs. 59 millions. The third watershed sanctioned under this project is Kuderu watershed. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) is under preparation. The activities taken up in these watersheds are related to Natural Resource Management, Productivity Enhancement & Livelihood Promotion. The implementation of activities in Muttala watershed has been very effective in terms of participatory process as well as physical achievements. The state Government is organizing exposure visits to Muttala watershed from other districts of Andhra Pradesh.

4.3 Update on CDM-Bio-gas project

AF's Biogas project under CDM has progressed well during 2011. The proposal has gone for registration in UNFCCC. AF is in final lap of preparation work in CDM project. All the other approvals have come including the Host Country approval. The registration with UNFCCC is only a formality now and is expected by March 2012.

4.4 Update on Low Carbon Farming (LCF) project

AF has been piloting the LCF project to help Anantapur farmers especially rainfed farmers to generate income through carbon credits in agriculture. AF is one among the 5 network members who have taken up this pilot programme. During 2011, LCF was done in paddy crop by 838 farmers in 1315 acres in 55 villages. AF has established reference plots of Paddy and Groundnut crops in Upparapalli village. A lab is established to measure green house gas emissions. One research Assistant and two lab assistants were appointed to collect samples of GHG emissions and analyze in the laboratory. The experiments now are being carried out. We have to wait up to March 2012 to see the results of the pilot project. We are only optimistic, but not aware of its carbon market potential.

4.5 Update on E&E coalition Program

During the reporting period the E&E coalition mainly focused on; (a) Its Strategic future direction, (b) Reflection on its program, (C) Leadership in the coalition, (d) Rules of engagement and (e) Partners' mutual exchange visits. The present Plans & Budget were reviewed and a new action plan was prepared. The coordination and legal responsibilities of the E & E coalition has shifted from Timbaktu Collective to REDS, Tumkur.

4.6 Update on Food and Water Security Coalition Program

AF has been playing an important role in strengthening the food and water security coalition being the member of steering committee. The coalition has been involved in planning the next phase of its programme during the year.

5. Important Events / Trainings

5.1 Training on Zero Budget Natural Farming – an alternative to HEIDA

Accion Fraterna has been passionately working towards bringing a paradigm shift in agriculture from HEIDA (High External Input Destructive Agriculture) to LEISA. To increase awareness on LEISA among farmers of Anantapur district, AF had organized a training program on Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF). This 4 day training program for farmers was organized in collaboration with Timbaktu Collective during April 25 - 28, 2011 at MGR functional hall in Anantapur town. Mr. Subhash palekar, a renowned expert in Natural Farming from Maharastra was the resource person. 720 farmers (170 women and 550 men) have attended the meeting from all over the district. The participants from AF project villages were mainly karyakarthas, convenors and co-convenors of Sasya Mitra Groups (SMG) and Grama Sasyamitra Samakyas (GSS). All the methods and techniques discussed were simple, practical, cost effective and nature friendly. The participant farmers were very attentive and learned many useful SA practices. This mega training event drew attention of not only farmers but also various farmer organizations, civil society organizations, CBOs, Government functionaries, elected representatives and policy makers as it focused on the ill effects of Green Revolution model of agriculture and advocated a low external input, farmer centric, eco friendly and integrated farming model suitable for drought prone rainfed conditions and small farmers.

5.2 Training and seminar on Social Business, Civic Driven Change and Social Return on Investment

The NGO sector has seen a phenomenal change during the last few years. The whole development sector is undergoing a metamorphosis. The current emerging paradigm shift in this sector is to look at social business as an important approach to achieve the development goals. As a leader in this sector, Accion Fraterna is always keen to explore new emerging ideas. As part of this exploration, AF has organized training on Social Business, Civic Driven Change and Social Return on Investment in collaboration with Context International Cooperation, Netherlands.

This five day training and seminar was organized from 13.09.2011 to 17.09.2011 at AF Ecology centre, Anantapur. 30 participants from India, Srilanka and Netherlands have attended the training. The resource persons were Fons van der velden, Udan Fernando and Pradeep Esteves from Context, International cooperation, Netherlands and Satyasree Goswami from Foresee social entrepreneurs, Bangalore. The purpose of this training was to develop an understanding about Social Business approach to Social Change and application of Social Business in real life. The training dealt with the conceptual understanding and practice of Social Business, Civic Driven Change and Social Return on Investment. It also analyzed the importance of social business in developing country like India. The 3 day training was followed by a two day seminar on Social Business in which the ways for taking forward the concept and practice of Social Business was explored. This two day seminar was attended by about 50 NGO leaders and staff from across the country. This seminar exposed the NGO leaders to the concept of social business as an approach to social change.

5.3 AF Ecology Centre wins “Krishi Sahayog Samman” National Runner Up Award for 2011.

The presentation of Mahindra Samridhi INDIA AGRI AWARDS 2011 was organized by Mahindra & Mahindra Farm Equipment Sector in partnership with Zee news, on 21.02.2011 at Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi. There were 6 categories of Awards, to recognize and encourage individuals and organizations working for the betterment of farmers and agriculture in India.



Central Agriculture Minister Shri Sharad Pawar and Mr. P.K.Das, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperation presented the awards, which included a trophy and cash award.

In the NGO category, AF Ecology Centre won the “Krishi Sahayog Samman”, National Runner-up Award (Second position) in recognition of its services to the farmers and to rainfed agriculture. The Award carried a Trophy and cash Reward of RS. 100,001. The Award was presented by Mr. P.K.Basu, Secretary, Agriculture & Cooperation to Dr. Y.V.Malla Reddy, who received it on behalf of AF. Dr. Malla Reddy dedicated the Award to AF staff and the farmers who worked with AF.

1. PROGRESS MONITORING PROTOCOL

PROJECT Objective:

To enhance the quality of life of 60,000 resource poor farmer and farm labor families by promoting; (a) Sustainable Agriculture, (b) Additional off-farm & non-farm livelihoods, (c) Youth rehabilitation in non-farm sector, (d) Access to basic services and (e) Pro-poor policies, through CBOs, in a participatory approach encompassing gender and equity.

1.1 Achievement of Project Objective

IND No	Impact Indicator	Status during the Reporting Period
1	Status of family - Economic and Food Security.	<p>The dry spell in September resulted in huge crop loss and severe drought across the district. The farmer and farm labor were left with no income from agriculture. Added to that, the price hike of food grains, fuel costs and indiscriminate power cuts have affected the lives of farmer and farm labor families. Severe seed scarcity is expected for the next crop season. The acute scarcity of fodder might lead to distress sale of cattle and small ruminants and migration to cities.</p> <p>Govt announced crop insurance for the year 2009-10 and all the 8 mandals of AF's project area have been covered. AF-EC campaigned and promoted millets and pulses through Village Seed Banks. 2,090 rainfed farmers sowed millets, pulses, Castor etc in their 1184 acres of lands. But, only 40% of the normal yields were realized in the above crops, because of unfavorable weather conditions.</p> <p>MGNREGS provided relatively good employment to wage seekers during Jan - June 2011. But these works were reduced during July - Dec' 2011 to make labor available for agricultural operations. However the laborers did not get sufficient employment during Kharif 2011 from agricultural operations, as the crops failed due to lack of rains. During the year 2011, 41% of enrolled labour families under this project (5100 families) availed wage labour under MGNREGS. Out of them 36% families belong to SC& ST communities.</p> <p>The target families are continuously able to access the PDS. 17,294 farmer and farm labor families (81% of the total 20,764 families, enrolled into AF's SMGs) are accessing Public Distribution System (PDS), which has ensured food security to an extent.</p>

2 & 3	Diversity in skills and employment. Occupational mobility among rural boys & girls towards non-farm sector.	<p>The poor rainfed farmer and farm labor families of Anantapur district need additional sources of income to withstand the highly adverse living conditions like harsh climate, unproductive agriculture, lack of industries & marketing facilities, poverty etc. So, AF is striving hard to bring livelihood diversity & upward occupational mobility of rural women and Youth in Off-farm & Non-farm sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2009-11, AF provided alternate livelihoods support for 2,607 farmer and farm labor women. Of them 2,170 (83%) have been enrolled into AF's SMGs. During 2011, of these 2,170 women, 1,143 (53%) are continuing those livelihoods and earning an income of Rs. 2,500 to 4,500 per annum. • Women from 1032 SMG families have accessed loans from banks and purchased Dairy animals, Sheep & Goats during the year. • During 2011, 600 rural youth, 202 boys and 398 girls have been trained in job oriented skills during the reporting period. Of them 210 youth (35%) have found employment. <p>This has enhanced the self worth of these rural women and youth in the community. Their importance has grown in the family and their opinions are being considered in family decisions. They have become confident, want to work and earn more.</p>
4	Rate of distress migration.	<p>The employment Guarantee programme has mostly arrested the distress migration of labour. The agriculture crisis, financial breakdown and the consequent distress among the poor farmers during the year has led to some migration in the district. However, its rate is very low in AF's project villages. The migration has started mostly from end August. Also the distress sale of cattle was witnessed in the district.</p>

1.2 Achievement of Project Component Objectives

PC O No	IN D No	Desired End Result by March 2012	Achieved during January-December 2011	Remarks
1	1	<p>Of the total 16,000 small and marginal farmer families, at least 1,600 families (10% of the target families), reduce their Cost of Cultivation by practicing at least 3 of the following LEISA practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pest traps. • Use bio-pesticides. • Use bio-fertilizers. • Practice SRI and provide Azolla & alleys in paddy. 	<p>Of the 15,605 small & marginal farmer families enrolled into AF's SA program; During the Reporting period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1167 families (About 7%) have used Pest traps in their fields. • 860 families (About 4%) have applied Bio-pesticides to their crops. • 1266 families (About 8%) have used Bio-fertilizers like Jeevamritam to their crops. • 590 families (About 4%) are practicing SRI and have provided Azolla & alleys in paddy. <p>Totally, during the Reporting period 850 families (About 5% of the enrolled families) have adopted at least 3 of the above LEISA practices saving cost of cultivation by atleast Rs 1500 per ha.</p>	<p>Performance of this indicator is low because:</p> <p>(a) AF is working only with focus groups and the no. of enrolled farmer families in each village has come down from 200 to 75 and the indicators have been measured only w.r.t. the enrolled families.</p> <p>(b) SMGs were formed only during 2011 and it is taking time for them to settle down.</p>
	2	<p>Of the total 16,000 small and marginal farmer families, 20% practice multiple cropping with at least 3 of the following crops :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit tree crops. • Farm forestry with wild fruit, fodder and bio-mass plantations. • Food crops like millets, pulses etc. • Vegetables • Fodder. 	<p>Of the 15,605 small & marginal farmer families enrolled; During the Reporting period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 390 families (About 2 %) have grown Fruit tree crops. • 1,443 families (About 9 %) have raised Farm forestry through seed dibbling. • 2,090 families (About 13 %) have grown food crops like Millets & Pulses. • 1120 families (About 7%) have grown Vegetables in their farm lands. • 1267 families (About 8 %) have grown fodder in their farm lands. <p>Totally, during the Reporting period 1,215 families (About 8% of the enrolled families) have adopted multiple cropping with at least 3 of the above crops.</p>	<p>Performance of this indicator has gone down compared to last year because:</p> <p>(a) All the reasons mentioned above.</p> <p>(b) AF itself is not providing fruit plants & has to mobilize it from Govt. & other agencies.</p>

	3	Of the total 16,000 small and marginal farmer families, 10% improve the carrying capacity of their lands by accessing land developmental works under MGNREGP.	<p>Of the 15,605 small & marginal farmer families enrolled, only 265 families (2%) have accessed land devt works like Farm Compost Pits, Farm Ponds & Soil Bunding under MGNREGP during this year. Of the 4,600 small & marginal farmer families in the 16 NABARD & IWMP watershed villages, during the Reporting period,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 311 families have accessed SMC works like soil and stone bunding. • 194 families have raised mango plantations in their 410 ha. of dry land • 122 families have raised Bio-mass plantations in their 375 ha. of land <p>Totally, during the Reporting period 625 families (4%) have improved the carrying capacity of their lands by accessing land devt works under MGNREGS, NABARD watersheds & IWMP watershed programs.</p>	NABARD & IWMP watershed programs were implemented as planned during the reporting period.
2	1	Of the total 13,000 farm labor families (incl. small & marginal farmers), 60% families get at least 60 days of employment under MGNREGS during a year.	<p>During the Reporting period, of the 12,432 farm labor families enrolled;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,418 persons (3,412 men & 3,006 women) from 5100 families (41% of the farm labor families) could access wage employment in MGNREGS. • Women got equal wages, on par with men. 	MGNREGS provided timely employment to wage seekers during Jan - June 2011 when there was no other work available in villages.
	2	Of the total 13,000 farm labor families, 90% access basic services like PDS, education, health etc.	<p>During the reporting period, of the 650 farm labor families surveyed (5% sample);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 530 families (About 81%) have accessed PDS. • 217 families (About 33%) have 316 children of primary school age. Of them 287 children (About 91%) have been enrolled. But 32 children (About 11%) have dropped out. <p>Presently, 255 children (About 81% of the school-aged children from the labor families) are continuing in primary schools, which indicates a better retention rate in primary schools</p>	The divide between the rainfed small and marginal farmers & laborers has become very thin. So, both farmer and labor families were considered for the survey.

	3	Of the total 13,000 farm labor families, about 650 families (5%) access credit support from Banks for the purchase of dairy animals or small ruminants.	Of the 650 farm labor families surveyed; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 families (About 2%) have accessed loan from Banks & other agencies for purchase of dairy animals during 2011. • 28 families (About 4%) have accessed loan from Banks for the purchase of Sheep and Goats during 2011. 	--
	4	1,300 Rural youth (Girls & Boys) from atleast 10% of the 13,000 farm labor families, diversify their occupational base thro' acquisition of job-oriented skills.	Of the 12,432 farm labor families enrolled; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2011, Youth (Girls & Boys) from 600 families (About 5%) have acquired skills to diversify their occupational base. • 398 Girls have been trained in garment making & Embroidery. • 202 Boys been trained in Driving, IT Enabled Services etc. 	-
3	1	Building issue based alliances with concerned NGOs & CSOs: <p>a) To focus on policy & implementation issues related to agriculture, off-farm & non-farm livelihoods, accessing employment and basic services etc.</p> <p>b) To mobilize public opinion on the above issues and represent them in relevant forums</p> <p>c) To lobby with Govt. for appropriate action.</p>	AF has taken the following measures to focus on issues related to policies, mobilizing public opinion and lobbying with Govt.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participated in Issue based alliances like (a) Food security coalition (b) All India Coordinated Millets Improvement Program (AICMIP) (c) E&E coalition for Social equity (d) Watershed Development programs. • Also AF has been lobbying for taking up dry land horticulture under MGNREGS. Now this has become a policy. • Discussed with CBOs, at different levels to identify issues related to SA and Rural livelihoods and consolidate people's voice for advocacy. • Arranged public campaigns and rallies at different levels on SA, environmental degradation, desertification and gender equality to publicize the issues and for a Govt - public interface. • Presently lobbying with Govt. for promotion of Millets & their inclusion in PDS. • Presently advocating incentives for millets and pulses cultivation 	-

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presently advocating incentives and subsidy for practicing LEISA. • Under ICDS and Midday Meal scheme, AF lobbied for providing fresh cooked millet food for mothers and children in the Anganwadi centers and schools respectively. 	
	2	Bringing on desired changes in policies and / or in the implementation procedures.	<p>The process of Lobby & Advocacy with Govt. is in progress and as a result;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshly cooked food is introduced in Anganwadi centers on an experimental basis in Anantapur district. • Rainfed horticulture is taken up under MGNREGS in some select districts including Anantapur. 	-
4	1	<p>By 2012 AF Ecology Centre has :</p> <p>(a) Improved gender sensitivity among staff.</p> <p>(b) An operational PPME in place.</p> <p>(c) Improved expertise in ; (i) Sust.Agrl, (ii) Alternate livelihoods devt and (iii) Training rural youth in job-oriented skills & Rehabilitating them.</p> <p>(d) Accounts & Finance shifted from RDT and Self - managed.</p>	<p>Gender policy has been framed in a participatory process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presently AF-EC has 80 staff members. Of them 32 (40%) are women. • Of the 31 new staff members recruited during the Reporting period, 24 members (77%) are women. • Ensured equal representation of women in all CBOs and in their leadership positions, giving preference to the women for convener's post. • Making payments related to program activities to women. • AF is working on making PPME operational. • AF has developed a 'change envisaged by 2016' involving all the staff and as seen by the staff. • AF has arranged trainings on Sustainable Agriculture, Seed Banks & Alternate livelihoods devt, to improve their expertise in the above areas. • AF staff has also been oriented on Clean Devt Mechanism (CDM) and Low Carbon Farming (LCF). • Accounts and finance have been shifted from RDT office and are being self - managed by AF Ecology Center, except for FCRA and Income Tax requirements. 	-

2. KEY RESULTS REACHED IN 2011:

2.1 Major Achievements:

Following are some of the major achievements during the year:

2.1.1. The change in the mindset of farmers has started appearing slowly:

AF has been struggling consistently for the last 4-5 years to bring a paradigm shift from High External Input Destructive Agriculture (HEIDA) to Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) in its project area through its Sustainable Agriculture program. It has extensively organized meetings and campaigns to create wide spread awareness on Sustainable Agriculture. Consequently, a slow change in the mindset of farmers, who have been thoroughly indoctrinated to practice the Green Revolution model of Agriculture, has started appearing during this year. In AF's project villages;

- About 50% of the farmers are aware of the various LEISA practices.
- About 8% of the farmers are practicing 2-3 of the 5 major LEISA practices.
- About 10 % of the farmers have reduced the usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides by about 50%.

There is still a big challenge ahead of changing the mindset of the farmers from HEIDA to LEISA.

2.1.2. Organizational Development with Improved systems

2011 has been a year of learning for AF - EC. During 2010, there was an unprecedented huge staff turnover which affected the morale of the organization. This crisis has created an opportunity to rebuild the organization from the lessons learnt. During 2011, AF has recruited more women staff, whose strength grew from about 13% to 40%. The organization became more flat with only 3 tiers. The systems of CBO involvement, staff accountability, transparency in financial transactions and in decision making have been firmed up. The overall discipline in the organization has improved and by the year end, the staff morale grew to new heights. All these positive developments could be attributed to the manner AF leadership has responded to the crisis and change management. It has resulted in a more compact and cohesive organization with improved efficiency and effectiveness.

2.1.3. Improved Gender and Social Equity in AF's CBOs & Program and the CBOs particularly women leaders began to participate in the process of planning, implementation and monitoring at the village level:

Each Sasyamitra Group (SMG) has about 25 families and at least 12 families (50%) are represented by women. Each SMG selects one women and one man as convener and co-convener. Village level federations, called Grama Sasyamitra Samakhya (GSS) are constituted with conveners and co-conveners of the SMGs, in which automatically 50% of the members are women. Likewise Mandal Level Sasyamitra Samakhyas (MSS) are formed with conveners & co-conveners of GSS were also automatically 50% of the members are women. In this way, equal representation of women has been ensured in all the 802 SMGs, 214 GSSs and the 8 MSSs organized by AF with preference to women for the position of convener at all levels. Also the

women headed households, which constitute nearly 5% of the target families, get an exclusive share in program benefits.

This project covers 21,400 target families from 214 villages, excluding 16 watershed villages. Of them 30% are from SC community (who actually constitute 16% of the population in the project area) and 6% are from ST community (Who constitute 3% of the population in the project area). This clearly shows the preference given by AF to the socially disadvantaged by increasing their proportion from the prevailing 21% in the project area to 36% in the SMGs. Each village has 2 SMGs for Rain fed farmers, of which the members in one are predominantly from SC and ST communities who are socially disadvantaged. Each village has also 1 SMG for landless / wage seekers. Most of them are from SC and ST communities, who are generally poorest of the poor. AF has also shown positive discrimination to SC and ST families in Beneficiary Contribution for the project- They also get a bigger share in program benefits.

2.1.4 IMPACT EVALUATION BY EED

EED commissioned an independent 3 member international team for evaluating the impact of watershed programme of AF. The evaluation team lead by Birgit Kundermann conducted the evaluation covering both qualitative and quantitative impact during the month of August and September 2011. The evaluation covered a period of 10 years programme from 2001 to 2010. The evaluation findings have shown very positive results of the programme. The evaluation gave a morale boost to AF - EC as well as to EED and ICCO as it was funded both by ICCO and EED. The evaluation report is annexed.

2.2. CHALLENGES AHEAD

- The changes initiated in the staff structure, participatory systems, CBOs etc., are to be consolidated and strengthened.
- The systems of staff accountability, transparency and performance assessment have to be strengthened and consolidated.
- The NABARD and IWMP Watershed Programmes have to be further streamlined incorporating the lessons from within and outside.
- The effect of climate change on Agriculture and cropping pattern needs to be studied and appropriate adaptation strategies have to be worked out.
- The LCF programme and Biogas CDM programme have to be developed and integrated gradually into the core programme of Sustainable Agriculture.
- The skills training and rehabilitation of rural youth programme needs to be stabilized.
- And then get ready for next phase i.e. 2012-2015 projects.

So, there are many things lined-up, competing with each other and challenging us. And we shall live up to the challenge.

3. KEY LESSONS LEARNT IN 2011:

There were many obstacles in carrying out this program successfully and significant lessons emerged from the implementation are.

3.1. Working with whole village was not effective; Working with focused groups is more effective:

During the first 2 years of the previous phase, AF worked with 200 farmer families and 50 labor families from each village, covering almost the whole village. But it soon realized that this strategy was not effective, as its focus and resources were too thinly distributed to produce any considerable effect and thus the impact of the program itself got diluted. So, AF changed its strategy and adopted a new 2-pronged strategy under which AF is working; (a) Directly with 100 prioritized farmer and farm labor families per village, called "Primary target community", who are covered under this project and (b) Indirectly with the remaining families in the village called "Secondary target community", who are provided with general Awareness, guidance and some need based extension services. Now the program is comparatively more focused and effective and easier to monitor than before.

3.2. One man and one women (2 persons) membership from each family in SMG was ideal, but not practical:

AF had a policy that from each family one man and woman must be enrolled into SMG and both must be involved in SMG activities. AF realized it was too ideal and not practical for both to take part in SMG activities. After considerable discussions with the women and men in the families, AF now changed its policy. The present policy is that atleast 12 families must be represented by women out of 25. This way, 12 women, who are active, will represent their families in SMG and the rest are represented by men. There is no more dual membership in SMGs.

3.3. Women are more enterprising than men in the adoption of LEISA practices:

During the previous phase, AF realized that working with women and changing their mindset was easier compared to men, as they were more enterprising in the adoption of LEISA practices. So, AF is trying to increase women's participation in the program in many areas like; (a) Decision making as Conveners & Co-conveners of CBOs, (b) Cropping choices, (c) Food & Nutritional security, (d) Usage of Bio-fertilizers, and (e) Home based activities.

3.4. There is a need for entrepreneurs for production & sale of Bio-fertilizers & Bio-pesticides at village level:

All farmers cannot make their own bio fertilisers and pesticides. AF has observed that though most of the farmers are well aware of the multiple benefits of using Bio-fertilizers & Bio-pesticides, yet a sizeable chunk of them are not coming forward. This is owing to many reasons like; (a) difficulty in procurement / non-availability of ingredients, (b) labor-intensive, (c) time consuming, (d) low confidence in their efficacy etc. The farmers also find it difficult to prepare Jeevamrutham as most of them do not have local breed cows; hence they cannot procure cow dung and urine. So, most of the farmers are dilly-dallying situation, whether to go for the Bio-fertilizers & Bio-pesticides or not to go. AF understood that if these products are

readily available at village level, it would be easier for the farmers to try Bio-products. AF is planning for promoting entrepreneurs who would prepare and sell these Bio-products at village level.

3.5. There are many policy and cultural factors affecting adversely the practice of LEISA:

There is a need to overcome some of the physical barriers, for the practice of multiple cropping and inter cropping. The farmers are not willing to invest in food crops like millets and pulses, as there is no credit support, no crop insurance and no assured market for these crops. The farmers' credit worthiness comes down drastically when they do not grow groundnut crop. Since rice is available at rupee 1 per kilogram, the families do not change to a millets based meal. Also eating rice is a status issue!

Growing tree crops has not been easy as they need high initial investment and have a long gestation period before they come for yielding. Moreover the farmer's family has to be involved intensively during the early years of the tree crop growing. Many times the farmers have lands that are far away from their homes; therefore they are unable to give attention and protection to the tree crops. Though the returns from tree crops are comparatively high and dependable, the farmers find the gestation period too long and the investment very high. Therefore it is understood that many farmers find it hard to go for tree crops.

3.6. Understood the importance of local breed of cows in Sustainable Agriculture:

AF realized that the local cows are very critical for Sustainable Agriculture as their dung and urine contain multiple folds of micro-organisms compared to the excreta of exotic breed cows. Unfortunately, in Anantapur District, the local cows are a dying breed, being replaced by exotic breeds. The exotic breed cows like Jersey and HF are said to be not ideally suitable for making bio-pesticides and bio-fertilisers. So, AF decided to revive and promote local breed cows, which survive under harsh semi arid climate and open grazing conditions.

4. OTHER ISSUES

4.1 Some tangible successes during 2011:

- Farmers' preference for the usage of bio-fertilizers (Jeevamritham) and bio-pesticides (Decoctions of locally available herbs) is increasing in vegetable crops because of the intensive campaigning by AF and saving in investment and better yields. (*Please refer case study 5.1*)
- Thousands of women and their families are benefitting from kitchen gardens in 2 ways 1) Nutritional security to the family and 2) Additional income from sale of vegetables. (*Please refer case study 5.2*)

4.2 Failures

- **Vermi-composting discontinued due to its controversy and complications:** AF understood that Vermicomposting has been done with "imported" worms and is very toxic and harmful. Further, Vermicomposting was a labor intensive activity and it needed a relatively high investment to construct a pit for Vermicomposting. All put together it was not picking up with farmers, in spite of high investment and high level of efforts. So, AF decided to discontinue the incentives for vermicomposting.
- **AF's job-oriented skills training program:** This program for rural youth is not functioning effectively as expected. During the year 2011 too the scarcity of lower end jobs in computers, hospitality, retail sales, electrical works etc continued. Also, the rural youth have not shown adequate interest in moving out to cities for employment and most of them preferred to live at home with parents on wage labor works in MGNREGS. This had a direct impact on AF's Skills training program, as it could not go ahead and train so many rural youth in these job-oriented skills, and leave them to their fate, without a job-guarantee.

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1 Case study on Impact of Jeevamritham in Chilli crop

Mr. Adinarayana Reddy s/o Madhava Reddy is a young farmer in Sanapa village of Atmakur mandal. He has 2.4 acres of land under bore well irrigation. Though Adinarayana reddy is hardworking farmer, he could not make sufficient income from Agriculture to meet his family expenditure. The cost of cultivation has gone up because of high use of pesticides to control pest and diseases. Also the costs of chemical fertilizers and pesticides have gone up along with labour hire charges.

In Kharif season 2011, Adinarayana Reddy has cultivated chilli crop in 1 acre of land. In the first three months of the crop, he has used chemical fertilizers and pesticides in high quantities as usual. Though he sprayed chemical pesticides continuously the attack of spodoptera was very high. Unable to bear the expenses he got frustrated and he himself destroyed the crop in ½ acre. He was also thinking of removing the crop in remaining land when he met AF staff. He explained the situation to the staff and discussed the reasons. Upon the advice of the AF staff, he decided to follow SA practices in the remaining ½ acre.



He prepared Jeevamritham and applied to the soil regularly every week. Also he sprayed Jeevamritham twice on the crop. Surprisingly all the plants have responded well and grew very healthily. The pest has disappeared. The yield from the land in last 3 months was very good when compared to first 3 months. Though the price of chilli had reduced he made good profit because of high yields.

Comparison of expenditure and yields in both methods

In Conventional methods in first 3 months for 1 acre

Expenditure (Rs)		Income (Rs)	
Chemical fertilizer	4000	First Harvest (600 kg x Rs 9.60)	5760
Chemical pesticides and sprays	6000	Second Harvest (650 kg x Rs 9.60)	6240
Labour costs	2000		
Total	12000	Total	12000

In Sustainable Agriculture method in ½ acre in next 3 months

Expenditure (Rs)		Income (Rs)	
Jeevamritham preparation	600	Third Harvest (700 kg x Rs 8.40)	5760
Jeevamritham application	400	Fourth Harvest (750 kg x Rs 8.40)	6240
Labour costs	3600	Fifth Harvest (900 kg x Rs 8.40)	7560
Total	4600	Total	19740

After this experience Mr. Adinarayana reddy is fully convinced about the efficiency of Sustainable Agriculture. He has started growing tomatoes in ½ acre in SA method. "I will never use chemical fertilizer and pesticides," says Adinarayana Reddy emphatically.

5.2 Case study of Earning Income through selling vegetables from Kitchen Garden

My name is Lingamma. I live in Muddalapuram village in Kuderu mandal. My husband had passed away few years back. I have a daughter and a son. After my husband had died, we have stopped cultivating our land as I am unable to raise investment. We have left the land fallow. Earlier we used to grow plenty of vegetables in our farm along with Groundnut crop. So we used to give good nutrition to our children. Now it is not the case as I earn my livelihood by labour work.

AF is actively working in my village and I have taken membership in the labour group formed by AF. They have supplied Vegetable seeds and encouraged me to grow vegetables in Back yard of my house. So I started raising kitchen garden with 10 varieties of vegetables. I watered them by carrying water from nearby bore well and also applied Jeevamritam now and then. Within 6 months, I have got plenty of vegetables and greens which I started sharing with my neighbours. My son had suggested me to try selling vegetables. I tried and found that it is very profitable to sell vegetables. I have decided to make living out of it.



I have improved my kitchen garden further and started selling vegetables in surrounding villages. I earn more than Rs 2000/- per month from vegetables grown from my kitchen garden. My children eat more vegetables now. I preserve seeds and share them with my neighbours. Now I live happily with dignity.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Sl.No.	Abbreviation	Expansion
1	AF-EC	Accion Fraterna, Ecology Centre
2	BIFSRA	Bio-intensive Farming System in Rain fed Areas
3	CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
4	CER	Certified Emission Reduction
5	CLDP	Comprehensive Land Development Programme
6	CBO	Community Based Organization
7	CSA	Centre for Sustainable Agriculture
8	CSO	Civil Society Organisations
9	DPR	Detailed Project Report
10	E&E Coalition	Empowerment & Entitlements Coalition
11	FCN	Fair Climate Network
12	FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
13	FGD	Focused Group Discussions
14	FFS	Farmer Field School
15	GSS	Grama Sasyamithra Samakhyas
16	HEIDA	High External Input Destructive Agriculture
17	ICRISAT	International Crop Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics
18	IFS	Integrated Farming System
19	ITES	Information Technology Enabled Services
20	IWMP	Integrated Watershed Management Program
21	KK	Karyakarthis
22	LCF	Low Carbon Farming
23	LEISA	Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture
24	MFTC	Multiple Fruit Tree Cropping
25	MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
26	MSS	Mandal Sasyamitra Samakhyas
27	NABARD	National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development
28	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
29	NPM	Non-pesticidal Management
30	PDS	Public Distribution System
31	PIME	Planning, Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation
32	PPME	Participatory Planning Monitoring & Evaluation
33	RDT	Rural Development Trust
34	SA	Sustainable Agriculture
35	SC	Scheduled Caste
36	SMGs	Sasya Mitra Groups
37	SRI	System of Rice Intensification
38	ST	Scheduled Tribe
39	STO	Socio-Technical Organizer
40	VER	Verified Emission Reduction
41	WCC	Watershed Computer Centre
42	WDC	Watershed Development Committee



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