

The International Small Group and Tree Planting Program (TIST) Offer to Small Groups in Tamil Nadu, India

Summary

TIST works with small groups of 6 to 12 people who want to improve their local environment and to increase their income by planting trees. Small groups prepare seedlings and plant them in their local area. **TIST** pays the group **38 Paise** every 3 months for up to 50 years for every living seedling or tree. Small groups own the trees and keep the fruit, and can use some of the trees for firewood or lumber. In addition, the groups may sell a new product from trees, a “carbon credit” for the greenhouse gas that trees take out of the air. The following describes what small groups must do to join the program, and the benefits they will receive.

Small groups do the following activities.

- Sign a Small Group Covenant to work together as a small group for at least 5 years
- Meet as a small group one or more times each week
- Meet with other groups in their village one time each month
- Grow 1000 or more seedlings each year for the next 5 years.
- Find areas around farm plots, houses, paths, temples, churches to plant the trees
- Prepare ground for the trees, including preparing holes
- Transplant seedlings at the start of the rainy season
- Weed the trees (and water if necessary) until the seedlings are at least 1 year old
- Help count the trees
- Turn in monthly reports
- Create a bank account for the small group at a local bank branch
- Transfer Greenhouse Gas credits created from the trees to I4EI
- Prepare more seedlings each year and plant more trees each year

Small groups will get many benefits.

- The small groups own the trees.
- Trees provide the small groups with shade, firewood, lumber, better soil, fruit, nuts, medicine, and material for crafts.
- **TIST** will deposit **38 Paise** for every living tree or seedling, every 3 months, into the small group bank account. The more live trees that groups have, the more money they get.
- **TIST** will help small groups get training on business skills, saving money, better agriculture, and other things can help members in their villages.
- **TIST** will help the small groups sell the Greenhouse Gas credits.

Mentor groups: Some Small Groups that have many trees and do all the things that **TIST** requires can become “mentor groups.” Mentor groups can find new Small Groups and encourage them to do well in **TIST**. Mentor groups then receive bonuses based on how many trees the groups they mentor plant.