

Hello and thank you for your interest in TIST!

The International Small Group and Tree Planting Program (TIST) is a program administered by Clean Air Action Corporation (CAAC) and Institute for Environmental Innovation (I4EI). The TIST program is designed by and for subsistence farmers. Since 1999, TIST participants have been working to address local sustainable development goals including tree planting, education, and sustainable agriculture. Through these and other activities, TIST participants are making profound, measurable impacts in a variety of development areas. The TIST program is funded through the generation and sale of carbon credits, with 70% of the profits, as well as all co-benefits, remaining with the farmers.

In this packet, you will find information to help you better understand the history, structure, values, benefits, and best practices that help make TIST a success.

TIST works directly with subsistence farmers to provide a range of education and training programs, support in tree planting and sustainable agriculture practices, and leadership development. TIST farmers organize themselves into Small Groups of 6-12 members, who organize themselves into Clusters of Small Groups within walking distance of one another. At times, TIST works with various community based organizations and partners with groups to bring the TIST program to new places. The program is open to anyone who is willing to adopt the TIST values and best practices.

TIST is happy to share expertise, advise, or experience with interested parties. The program does not fund NGO's or other projects.

In addition to this packet of information, please visit TIST.org, TIST.org/mobile, CleanAirAction.com, and I4EI.org to learn more. If you have any questions or want to learn more, please don't hesitate to ask.

If you are interested in visiting TIST's field operations, or want to learn more about a specific country's operations, please email johnambler@tist.org. If you are interested in conducting academic research, please send a detailed concept note to info@tist.org for review.

If you are willing to share, we would love to learn about how you heard of TIST.

Small-Hold Farmers Restore the Environment

TIST farmers are successfully counteracting the devastating effects of deforestation, poverty and drought through an innovative solution: *planting millions of trees*.

Small-Scale Farmers Are Changing the World

TIST farmers plant trees that hold and improve the soil on their farms while sequestering carbon as they grow. Regular audits of the farmers' results create high quality Carbon Credits and verify many non-carbon benefits. Credit sales provide income to the farmers and sustainable long-term funding for the program. Working together, TIST farmers restore their land and create over 6 dollars of benefits for every dollar invested in the program. Results increase as farmers recruit their friends and neighbors to TIST – a business solution to global poverty and pollution.



18 months of
tropical
reforestation



TIST- From Pilot Project to Proven Results

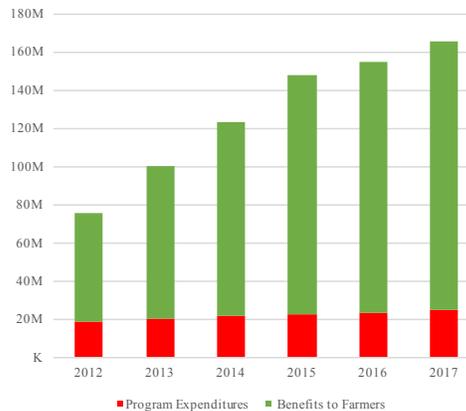
- 86,000+ smallhold farmers in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and India
- 17+ million trees alive and monitored today
- Award winning global monitoring system
- All tree data available at TIST.org
- 70% of carbon profits go to farmers
- Numerous social, health, and environmental benefits
- Gender empowerment



TIST Farmers address hunger and nutrition

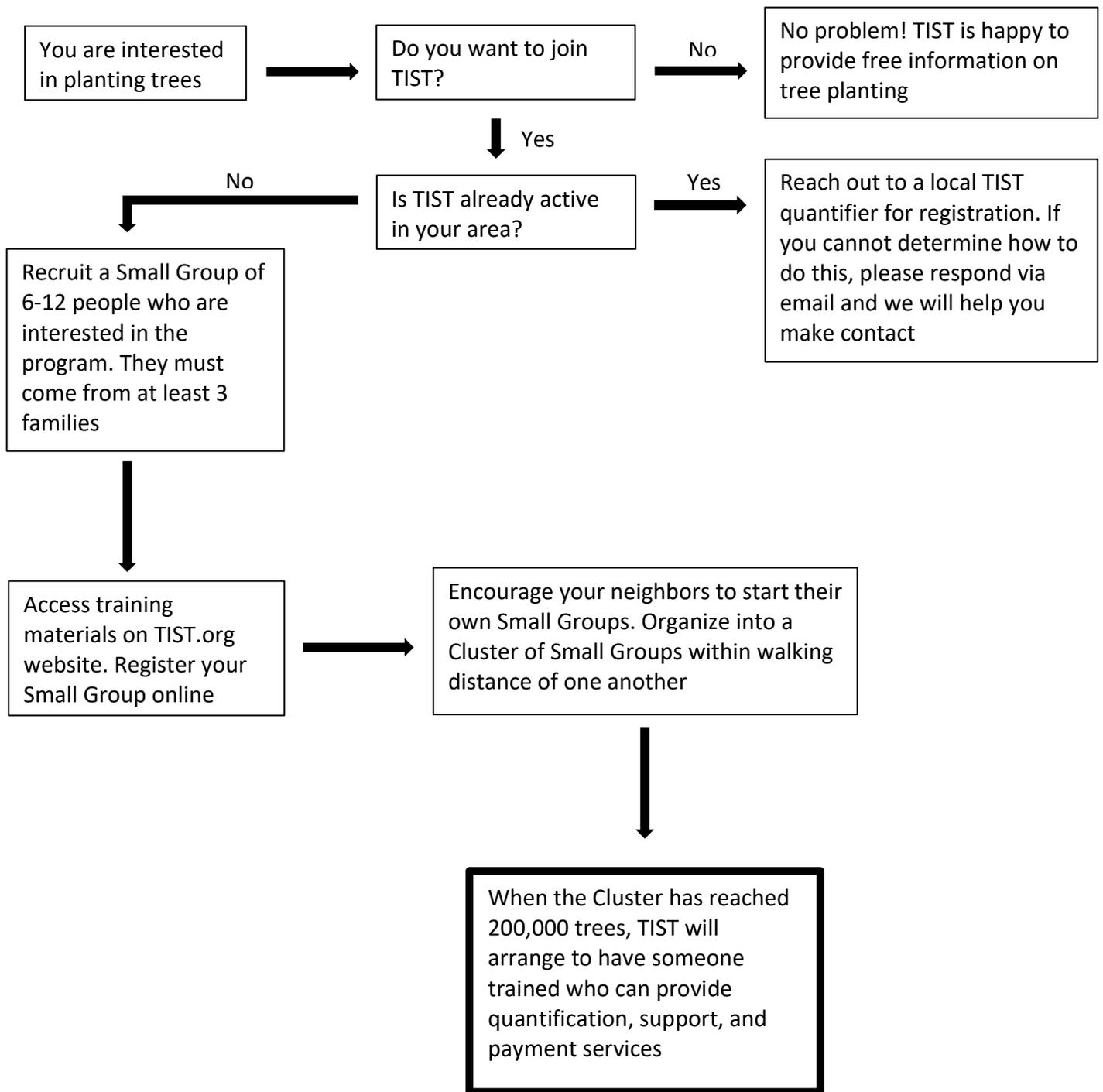


TIST Expenditures and Benefits to Farmers



Accomplishments

- “Best Offsetting Project” Environmental Finance
- American University W. K. Reilly Award Environmental Leadership
- \$140+ million in verified benefits
- 4.8+ million metric tons of CO₂ sequestered



TIST Benefits

The TIST program provides numerous types of benefits across a range of operational areas. These benefits are created by a broad diversity of people in different climates and conditions. Because the TIST program is voluntary, benefits are not evenly distributed; rather, they are created and accessed at the discretion of each TIST member. Below is a partial list of benefits created from trees, the Small Group structure, and TIST project management.

Benefits of Trees

Trees that provide shade from the hot tropical sun, cooling their house, allowing grass for their cows to grow
Trees along streams or rivers clean and retain the water and protect the banks
Trees that prevent erosion on steep or hilly areas
Trees that provide a windbreak - that keeps the laundry on the line, and the roof on the house
Trees that provide firewood for the family without long and dangerous walks to a forest
Trees that provide medicines from the bark
Trees that provide fruit to eat and to sell
Trees that provide fodder that keep cattle alive during drought
Trees that provide food and shelter for bees that make honey to eat and to sell
Trees that provide fertilizer for the farm and garden

Benefits of Small Groups

Opportunities to work together on a joint project
Opportunities to learn together about health, or farming, or food
Opportunities for leadership experience and growth
Opportunities to discuss ways to improve their farms
Opportunities to work together to implement improved farming practices
Opportunities to develop best practices and share them with others
Opportunities to make joint financial decisions
Opportunities to support each other in times of need

Benefits of TIST's Approaches to Project Management

Opportunities to learn from each other and gather information they need in Seminars
Opportunities to develop local organizational approaches
Opportunities to "Go and Do" with energy and without hindrance
Opportunities to learn and use group facilitation skills
Opportunities to learn technical and administrative skills
Opportunities to travel, teach, encourage other TIST farmers
Opportunities to measure results and assure quality

TIST History

Preface

Founded in 1993, the Clean Air Action Corporation early work focused on market development efforts, policy and regulatory development, and the application of air quality regulations. Early successes included projects limiting emissions such as Methane, Sulfur Hexafluoride, and NO_x across the United States. In the late 1990's, a desire to combine climate change mitigation with improving the lives of the poorest people in the world led to the creation of the company's flagship program: The International Small Group Tree Planting Program (TIST).

Origins

In 1998, Bishop Simon Chiwanga had a challenge; dealing with tens of thousands of parishioners spread over large distances, he needed a better way to organize his diocese, the Diocese of Mpwapwa, Tanzania. Thinking outside the box, he invited a team of missionaries, led by Ben and Vannesa Henneke of the Truro Anglican Church in Fairfax, Virginia, to lead seminars on the formation and organization of Small Groups. These groups, comprised of 6-12 people, would engage in Bible study, support, and planning. Small Groups discerned and implemented certain Best Practices, such as rotating leadership, Kujengana, collaboration, and servant leadership. *Although they didn't know it at the time, the structure of Small Groups and Best Practices would be shaped by the needs and desires of its members into The International Small Group and Tree Planting Program (TIST).*

The following year, a second mission trip continued the facilitation of Small Group seminars. In these seminars, participants were asked to think about the type of world they envisioned for themselves and their children. Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of \$280, and Mpwapwa is one of the country's poorest regions. Adult life expectancy is 52 years, with approximately one in three young adults testing HIV positive. Literacy rates are approximately 80% for men and 57% for women. Compounding these challenges, "slash and burn" subsistence farming had led to erosion, decreasing crop yields, widespread deforestation, and famine. Participants, who were almost exclusively subsistence farmers, identified specific needs such as reforestation, sustainable agriculture, poverty reduction, and the elimination of famine. They further identified planting trees, HIV/AIDS education, and Conservation Farming, as strategies for addressing these needs.

In December of 1999, 40 participants in the diocese of Mpwapwa and Clean Air Action Corporation (CAAC) built upon several ideas including Small Groups, the sharing of Best Practices, and the need for reforestation, to develop the initial TIST program. Through tree planting, education, and collaboration, Small Groups were able to directly respond to the needs professed by their members. The goals of this program were: conservation agricultural management, food security, basic business management, and the creation of a virtual cash crop through carbon sequestration.

In the coming year, TIST spread to 40 new Small Groups. By training new trainers and relying on word of mouth, TIST was able to begin a sustainable model of viral, organic growth. By the end of 2001, the word had spread with over 600 more Small Groups joining the program. Additional Small Group training in tree planting, nursery care, seedling care, public health, and Conservation Farming further leveraged the passion and work of Small Group members.

Expansion into Kenya, Uganda, and India

In 2001, CAAC staff visited India for an employee's wedding. Seeing widespread drought and deforestation, they identified an opportunity for TIST to help. They held seminars and found receptive farmers eager to implement the program. As villages began planting trees, India and Tanzania started an information-sharing program to provide insight and encouragement. The success of India's program demonstrated to CAAC that TIST could work outside of Tanzania.

In July of 2003, CAAC organized a conference in Morogoro, Tanzania, that fundamentally altered the trajectory of TIST's progress. The seminar drew on the experience of Tanzanian and Indian participants to offer training and knowledge-sharing to Ugandan farmers. Overcoming initial skepticism, the participants took the program back to Uganda and were met with overwhelming enthusiasm. The Morogoro Seminar was one of the first examples of "Come and See", wherein new participants are invited to come and witness the potential of TIST firsthand. This strategy has been used ever since. Following the Morogoro Seminar, TIST in Uganda began to experience viral growth, as the program spread to new villages and towns.

TIST's expansion into Kenya was facilitated by a partnership with USAID that provided the resources to implement the current program, as well as the opportunity to significantly expand the social and sustainable development components. CAAC continued the practice of cross-country information sharing by bringing Tanzanian participants into the Mount Kenya region to train and spread the Best Practices, as well as bringing Tanzanians to Kenya for Come and See. In the following year, TIST's program in Kenya exploded. During this time, several currently integral components of TIST were developed. The TIST Values of honesty, accuracy, transparency, mutual accountability, service to one another, and small budget/big results were formally articulated. These values were vetted by other countries' participants and came to undergird the entire program.

In order to administer to rapid geographic and participant growth, TIST implemented a new system in Kenya called "Clusters". Clusters were designed to provide services such as training, administration, payment, and newsletter distribution, to Small Groups living within walking distance of one another. Cluster organization borrowed previous TIST practices, including rotating leadership and the policy of "one man, one woman". This operational unit has become one of TIST's defining features and a huge part of the program's success. By the end of 2006, TIST was operating in four countries, with over 20,000 members in 2,800 Small Groups.

Growth

Over the following decade, TIST has celebrated many milestones and organizational successes. In 2011, TIST was the first program in the world to receive dual validation and verification from VCS (Verified Carbon Standard) and CCB (Climate, Community & Biodiversity) for its carbon sequestration work. This unmatched endorsement of TIST's data management, community benefits, transparency, and efficacy has set the program apart in the realms of carbon offsetting and social development.

While TIST celebrated its "first in the world" status, it also marked the ten-year anniversary of the program expansion in India. Two years later, a large celebration in Uganda marked their decade of growth, with Kenya following in 2015. As the programs evolved, new strategies were developed and implemented to support the work of the TIST farmers. Leadership Councils, comprised of excelling program participants, were formed to provide feedback and take on decision-making responsibilities at the local level. They quickly became a critical place for identifying talent and leadership among program participants. Using such strategies, TIST has

created self-sustaining in-country capacity, with leadership and expertise provided by participants themselves.

Always an important part of TIST, information-sharing strategies have worked to allow the program to grow and refine itself organically. The Small Group is the building block of these strategies, wherein individuals share things that worked and did not work, with people in similar situations. Clusters allow for information sharing on a larger level, followed by groups of Clusters, and finally inter-country trips and exchanges of information. These various levels of exchange have facilitated viral growth and constant distillation of effective practices on every level of the organization.

Over the past decade, TIST has experienced massive growth, in terms of participants, Small Groups, Clusters, trees planted, and hectares of reforested land. From 2006-2017, membership approximately quadrupled. Today, there are approximately 16 million live trees planted as the result of TIST participants' work. The value of this work is comprised not only of the carbon sequestration and corresponding carbon offsetting products, but also in the massive production of ancillary benefits that farmers experience through TIST including: fruit, fodder, fuel, windbreak, leadership development, HIV/AIDS education, general health information, clean stove construction, and social network creation.

TIST Values

TIST Values are the foundation of TIST and serve as a guide to the behavior of participants and the operations of the program. TIST Values were originally outlined by farmers and TIST employees in Kenya and were then introduced into other project areas. Farmers and organizers have edited and refined these values over time, to best define certain aspects of participation in TIST.

The present version of the TIST Values is:

We are honest

We are accurate

We are transparent

We are mutually accountable

We are servants to each other

Participation in TIST is dependent upon accepting and demonstrating TIST values. The TIST Values increase trust amongst farmers and between farmers and the organization. An emphasis on service to one another, honesty, accuracy, accountability, and transparency helps the organization to overcome challenges, while promoting unity.

TIST Best Practices

One of TIST's greatest strengths is the creation and implementation of best practices. Best practices are developed on every level from individual Small Groups, up to the entire TIST program. They can range from very specific habits that have been proven effective in a small area, to things that TIST relies upon to operate. Best practices are developed through the successes and failures of TIST participants and employees. Because of this process, they are constantly changing. Best practices vary widely in format, with some best practices containing internal sets of best practices themselves. The TIST expansion effort is supported by and relies on these best practices to succeed. Many of these are countercultural in the areas where we operate. Creating an environment that allows for female leadership, managing an accurate quantification process, or de-stigmatizing an HIV positive member are small victories that allow for large results.

Kujengana

Kujengana is a critical component of TIST, and a proven best practice. The Swahili translation of Kujengana literally means, "to build each other up". Within the context of TIST, Kujengana has two parts. Before the end of a meeting, participants say one specific, positive thing that the meeting leader did. In addition, people can mention gifts that the leader has demonstrated. A leader responds to the reception of Kujengana with a simple "thank you," without any further discussion. Most cultures are taught to criticize, and thus implementing Kujengana takes practice and training.

Kujengana is a useful best practice for many reasons. The use of positive reinforcement allows leaders to develop their gifts and talents. When combined with another best practice, Rotating Leadership, everyone in the group is given Kujengana in turn. This practice allows for the group to learn what each member thinks is important in a good leader; each member is able to develop leadership skills simply by listening, even when they are not serving as a leader.

TIST has found the focusing on positives enables otherwise timid people to speak out and grow as leaders. Focusing on negatives can reinforce hesitance to participate. This is particularly true with youth, women, and other social groups that already face cultural barriers to participation. When you focus on positives, people do not rebel or push back, but will listen to your voice with an open mind. Kujengana is best understood as a double blessing that helps both the recipient and the group as a whole.

Rotating Leadership

Rotating Leadership is another proven best practice of TIST that dates back to the program's founding. The concept of Rotating Leadership is one of the original components of Small Group formation and supports other TIST best practices. Rotating Leadership takes place in the Small Group, Cluster, and Group of Cluster levels. At the Small Group level, a new leader and co-leader are selected each meeting to lead the group. At the Cluster and Group of Cluster levels, a new Accountability Person is elected every four months. At this time, the current Accountability Person becomes the Co-Leader, and the Co-Leader becomes the Leader.

Rotating Leadership best practices include: agreeing from the beginning to rotate leadership, giving every person a chance to lead and co-lead, not letting anyone dominate discussion, and remembering to wait for people to speak before posing questions.

The practice of Leadership Rotation allows for Kujengana to work well. With Rotating Leadership, people are able to learn from the Kujengana received by previous leaders and implement these lessons when they become leader. Without Rotating Leadership, this would be a practice that only benefits the leader of the group; with Rotating Leadership, the entire group learns from the experiences of each member and has a chance to apply these lessons when it is their turn to lead. People are also less likely to be critical of leadership if they know that they will have an opportunity. They will try to learn from the successes and failures of previous leaders, rather than engaging in negativity and criticism.

This practice facilitates a democratization of access, allowing youth and women to take on leadership roles that they might otherwise be barred from. By implementing Rotating Leadership practices at each level, TIST is able to develop leaders who can assume increasing responsibility if they want to. In particular, groups such as women and youth report that their experience with Rotating Leadership often encourages them to take more active roles in their community, church, or other civic enterprises. The practice of Rotating Leadership is further connected to the TIST Values, which stress service to one another in place of a tiered model of power; without a single source of administrative power, issues of honesty and transparency are often easier to deal with.

Small Groups

Small Groups are the foundational blocks with which the structure of TIST is built. The use of Small Groups is a TIST best practice, and they are themselves comprised of a series of best practices that allow them to operate. A Small Group is a group of 6-12 people who want to improve their lives and environment by planting trees and adopting sustainable agriculture best practices. The formation of Small Groups helps TIST to service the needs of participants while allowing information sharing at the local level.

Small Groups are particularly powerful because they maximize accountability on a local, daily level. In large groups, people do not necessarily know what other members are doing. By organizing in Small Groups, each person is responsible to their neighbors. This is a more real and meaningful responsibility.

The nature of Small Groups also facilitates change in traditional cultures that are hesitant to try new things. Small Groups allow for the success of a single “early adopter” to be seen by other group members. This experience of action and direct outcome is a powerful force that cannot be reproduced with publications or Seminars. Similarly, farmers can experiment with a new practice using shared resources or labor, thus sharing the costs of failure.

Certain best practices allow Small Groups to be successful. These include rotating leadership, practicing Kujengana, weekly meetings, preventing one person from dominating discussion, accepting viewpoints without criticism, and identifying Best Practices specific to the environment of the Small Group. Using these best practices, Small Groups are able to plant trees, support one another, quantify their progress, refine their practices, and share their success with one another. Small Groups further work to develop the individual gifts of their members and reach out to other members of the community.

Clusters

Clusters are units of Small Groups that are within walking distance of a central meeting point. This strategy was first implemented in Kenya and has since spread to the rest of the TIST operations. Clusters are designed to provide services such as training, administration, payment,

and newsletter distribution to Small Groups, easing some of the logistical challenges of a being spread out. Organizing in Clusters also helps keep costs low and helps create organizational partnerships. Each Cluster has 30-50 Small Groups, and thus consists of several hundred farmers. When it reaches 400 farmers, the Cluster splits in two. Each Cluster is responsible for specific quantities of trees planted and hectares reserved for planting.

Good Clusters meet every month for training, sharing of best practices, distribution of newsletters, and any other matters they have. Activity at Cluster meetings is recorded and submitted, along with Cluster accounting forms. A good Cluster is constantly working to improve the quality of the data it provides and the data it receives from its Small Groups. Cluster Best Practices also include making on-time payments, recruiting new members, and embodying TIST values. Every four months, Clusters will hold an election to choose new leadership.

A Cluster is led by a Cluster Leader, a Cluster Co-Leader, and an Accountability Person. A Cluster Leader should be a servant to the whole Cluster and exemplify TIST Values, while promoting a strong, unified Cluster. They are responsible for leading Cluster activities such as meetings and quantification trips, recruitment, and payment. The Co-Leader takes over when the Leader cannot attend, keeps minutes of meetings, and helps to train the Accountability person. The Accountability Person helps with budgeting, payments, and record keeping. Clusters rely on rotation, alternating genders, and democratic elections to determine leadership.

Seminars

Seminars are a proven TIST best practice that date back to the foundation of the program. Seminars are an effective method of spreading information and organizing because they allow leaders to share information with a large audience while keeping a level of personal connection. Seminars have allowed TIST to expand into new areas and conduct outreach on a large scale. The TIST program has also used “Come and See” Seminars, which combine information sharing with demonstrations and examples of successful TIST practices.

Like Clusters and Small Groups, Seminars are best understood as both a best practice of the TIST program, and as a set of best practices. Seminar best practices include keeping time, staying focused on “go and do” items, Kujengana, consultation between facilitators, and developing both promises and COS’s for the Seminar. As TIST has developed, several other Seminar-specific best practices have also developed. It is common practice in many developing countries for NGO Seminar participants to demand a “sitting fee” or “sitting allowance” to participate in a meeting. This is a poor strategy for recruiting productive TIST participants and threatens to create a culture of dependency. It is TIST best practice to never pay sitting fees.

Paired introductions are another Seminar best practice. People are paired off and ask each other a series of questions. They then introduce the other person to the group. This generates a significantly more detailed and enthusiastic introduction, while laying the groundwork for new relationships.

When a TIST Seminar needs more energy, one strategy is the best practice of paired shares. In this practice a question is posed, and two people (or four people for a “quad share”) engage in a back and forth discussion on the topic. This serves as both a change of pace and as a way of engaging people in a different manner.

Conservation Farming

Conservation farming (CF) is a proven best practice. Education in conservation farming is one of the major co-benefits of participation in TIST. Conservation farming does not damage

the environment, is inexpensive to maintain, is fair to the people working the land, and uses appropriate technologies. Following conservation farming best practices allows farmers to increase crop yield, decrease soil degradation, improve groundwater and local biodiversity, and improve soil development.

In order to implement CF, farmers follow a set of CF best practices. Reducing mechanical soil tillage and keeping a permanent layer of organic soil cover (mulch) helps to conserve and replenish soil nutrients. Diversifying crop rotations also improves soil nutrition while breaking the cycle of crop-specific pests and diseases. This can include intercropping, relay cropping, and/or double cropping. These practices increase yield and lessen risk.

The digging and utilization of CF holes is another CF best practice that increases crop yield by protecting seeds and ensuring they have nutrient rich soil. Weeding and conserving topsoil also give seedlings a better chance of survival. In conjunction with weeding, a strong pest management strategy and deployment of organic/homemade pesticides helps to ensure good crop yields.

Agroforestry

Like conservation farming, agroforestry puts into place conditions to help successful tree and crop planting. Agroforestry is a system of land-use management in which trees are grown amongst and around cropland. The major goals of TIST are accomplished by the introduction and cultivation of agroforestry. When successfully adopted, this practice improves soil quality, biodiversity, and crop yield.

TIST has developed certain best practices in the realm of agroforestry and tree planting that aid in successful implementation. The use of indigenous species, and species that do not use too much water, are considered best practices. Collecting diverse and healthy seeds and storing them properly are also considered best practices. TIST has found that mixing species of fruit, nut, fodder, and firewood trees is a best practice, as diversification not only provides increased co-benefits but also helps to address various threats to the grove.

One best practice that has created particularly good results is the introduction of raised seedbeds. Because roots have a tendency to coil and weaken in a traditional nursery, the use of an elevated structure is critical to the cultivation of successfully transplantable trees. Small Groups work together to construct and utilize raised nurseries in the early stages of sapling cultivation.

Thinning is another practice that has developed in order to meet the needs of TIST participants while advancing the goal program goals. Rather than occasionally clear cutting, the best practice of thinning involves taking down individually selected trees throughout the groves. This allows the remaining trees to thrive while providing necessary firewood and fodder to participants.

Monthly Newsletters

Monthly newsletters are another TIST best practice that has yielded excellent results. The Mazingira Bora (Kenya) and The Tree (Uganda) serve as connections between TIST participants and the greater TIST community. They consist of articles from quantifiers, coordinators, administrators, and most importantly, TIST participants. Newsletters are a forum to celebrate success, share knowledge, and request help in overcoming challenges. TIST works best when people are able to work together to tackle shared problems. While this occurs every day in Small Groups, Clusters, and Seminars, the various newsletters are a way to leverage the knowledge and

power of the greater TIST community across geographic and cultural divides. By publishing in multiple languages, the newsletters encourage cross-cultural learning and collaboration between groups that otherwise might not be able to communicate. While these newsletters are a valuable resource for TIST participants, they also serve as an excellent source of promotional materials, providing easily understandable information for future participants or partners. All the newsletters are published both in print form and on the TIST website.

Gender Focus

TIST works in countries that often have strong patriarchal traditions. As a strongly results-oriented program, TIST wants to avoid the marginalization of half of the programs intellectual and leadership capacity. TIST has developed a series of best practices related to opportunity and gender equality in order to pursue equality, while taking advantage of TIST participants' talents and gifts.

It is TIST best practice to proactively ensure that women have equal access to leadership roles. Rotating leadership helps to identify leadership potential. After this identification, it is easy for the status quo to persist with male-dominated leadership. TIST takes steps to not only identify but also actively support and encourage women who wish to lead.

When attending Seminars, it is TIST best practice for each group to send one man and one woman. This ensures that there is gender equality in accessing and sharing knowledge. It also allows for a broader range of opinions and perspectives to be shared at the Seminars. Similarly, when TIST is sending an expansion team, it sends a team with one man and two women. This sends a message that TIST is not a 'women's organization' or a male-dominated organization, but that women are encouraged to act in leadership roles within the program.