What is a Newsletter?

Why CHEZHIMAI is being started.

By Jacob Chimeledya and Blair Henneke.

Welcome to the TIST newsletter, your connection to the growing TIST world. In this you will find articles submitted by those in the TIST community—coordinators, administrators, and most importantly, members of the small groups who wish to share information. This is a forum for you to share anything related to TIST—from success stories about your efforts, to best practices you’ve discovered, to problems you have encountered and requests for help, or suggestions you have that might help others avoid problems. This is a way for each of the TIST’s body parts to stay in touch with what the rest of the body is doing, learning, and achieving. All members of the community are encouraged to use this newsletter as a way to share information and stay connected to the rest of the community. Because this project includes North Americans, Europeans, Tanzanians, and Indians, all articles will be published in both Tamil and English so that all members of the organization can both submit articles and read the information and ideas shared here.

If you wish to contribute an article for the next issue, you may write about what you think about the TIST program, what seems to work well; stories of what worked, what didn’t, and what was learned that others could learn from; updates on how the program is working in your village, and any new groups that have formed; best practices that your group has discovered; tips, ideas, or information; and any other information that you feel the whole TIST community would benefit from or should be aware of. All members of the community are encouraged to submit articles. You can give these to your TIST Organizer Prabakar Srinivasan during his visits to your village, and they will be read, selected for publication in one of the future issues, and translated either from English to Tamil, or from Tamil to English.
What is TIST??

By Prabakar Srinivasan

**TIST** is a revolution

*People’s emotion*

This is our new venture

*With this comes the development of the villages*

*For that purpose we begin this program*

TIST is THE INTERNATIONAL SMALL GROUP AND TREE PLANTING PROGRAM that helps in the reforestation and economic development of areas around the world. The program is designed to reduce Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in the air by small groups planting trees that will reforest the area and provide shade for our houses, convenient access to wood for cooking, some lumber for building, better control of erosion and improved access to water. Most of the trees will grow to their full size, and more trees will be planted if any are used for firewood, lumber, etc. Because companies in North America, Europe and Asia are interested in helping reduce CO₂ in the air (also called Greenhouse Gases), they are willing to provide funding to the TIST program by paying in advance for the “Carbon Credits” that the program creates. This purchase provides the funds for the TIST program.

TIST was first launched in Tanzania Africa in 1999 where 40 groups joined to plant about 50,000 trees. Today TIST in Tanzania comprises of 655 groups who have planted more than 20 lakh trees. TIST is also being launched in other East African countries such as Kenya and Uganda, and of course in your area in India.

**TIST Benefits**

- Reduction of Greenhouse Gases in the air.
- Replenishes the soil by reforestation in your own lands.
- It also provides revenues for the participants to help sustain themselves during the dry seasons.
- It helps you to interact with others, get united and work together
- It helps its participants to develop their communication skills
- It helps to get better rain
- It helps you to gain knowledge in various areas
- Makes your village green and more beautiful
- It improves your agricultural practices

The environmental TIST project is a community-based project where TIST has helped 655 small groups to plant 20 lakh trees in Tanzania. It is also being launched in other East African countries such as Kenya and Uganda, and of course in your area in India. The TIST program is designed to reduce Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in the air by small groups planting trees that will reforest the area and provide shade for our houses, convenient access to wood for cooking, some lumber for building, better control of erosion and improved access to water. Most of the trees will grow to their full size, and more trees will be planted if any are used for firewood, lumber, etc. Because companies in North America, Europe and Asia are interested in helping reduce CO₂ in the air (also called Greenhouse Gases), they are willing to provide funding to the TIST program by paying in advance for the “Carbon Credits” that the program creates. This purchase provides the funds for the TIST program.

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It was decided on May 31st, 2002 to start the TIST program in India, more particularly in Northern Tamil Nadu, by an American Environmental company called Clean Air Action Corporation. Initially, a small village called Marakkanam near Pondicherry was considered to launch the program. However, since Marakkanam was already well forested, the program was launched in and around Vedal which we visited first on June 15th, 2002. On this memorable day, we had a great opportunity to meet several villagers under one roof. Then on June 22nd and 23rd, we conducted our first TIST seminar in Vedal which gave us tremendous encouragement to proceed on the project.

From Vedal, we have taken the TIST program to other villages like Jambodai and Andiseruvallur. Thanks to the first set of groups in Vedal, who planted hundreds of seedlings before August 15th, the TIST program in Vedal was mentioned in an audio visual presentation made in the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. Heartily congratulations to every one of you for making this happen in a very short span of time. Today we have more than 50 groups which have already started planting trees and contributing to protect the environment. Several groups have also received cash payments from TIST for their seedling and tree plantings. Greenery is the best way of protecting the environment, which can only be achieved by planting more trees all over and safeguarding waterbodies. Scarce rains and drought conditions have always plagued villagers in this area. Reforestation of our area will prevent us from facing worse conditions year after year. As the saying goes “Tiny drops of water make a mighty Ocean”, through the efforts of your small groups, TIST will spread greenery and bring the benefits of a healthy environment. Therefore,
encourage your friends to form groups and join TIST so that they too can receive cash for planting trees.

The TIST Team

Most you have met with and been helped by members of the TIST staff who have been travelling to your village and organizing the TIST project. The local TIST Organizer for your area is Mr. Prabakar Srinivasan. Prabakar also gets routine support for his work from Ms. Kokila Kumar, Ms. Sreelatha Prabakar & Mr. Chidambaram. Please feel free to approach the TIST staff if you need any assistance and they will be very happy to help you.

Apart from the TIST staff, several others have contributed towards implementing TIST in your area. We would like to thank them for their support and request their continued support, which will enable us to march ahead and achieve more successes:

- The villagers of Vedal, Jambodai, Andisevallur, Mollachur and Thangal who have expressed tremendous interest in the project
- Agricultural officers Mr. Elumalai and Mr. Renganathan, and Forest Officer Mr. Elumalai, who have helped us in reaching out to the villagers
- Ms. Savitri, Ms. Hema and Mr. Natarajan who have helped us on the editorial side
- Post Master of Vedal Mr. Narayanan for his support in opening savings accounts for Small Groups
- Mr. Adhikesavan, Mr. Harikrishna, Mr. Sundaram, Mr. Ranganathan and several others for their inspirational support in bringing TIST to their villages
- Mr. Udayakumar who makes our travel pleasurable with his humour on the most undulating path
- Mr. V.S. Sakalagunam- the panchayat head of Vedal for his tremendous interest and support in bringing the benefits of TIST to not only villagers in Vedal but also to the neighbouring villages.

There have been several others who have helped us in making TIST happen in the Vedal area and we express our sincere thanks to all of them.

Going Forward…

As you must have already heard, TIST is conducting registrations for Small Groups in your area. If your Small Group is not already registered, approach Prabakar or other TIST staff and get registered. Also, encourage your friends and relatives to form Small Groups and register with TIST. Explain the benefits of TIST to them and ask them to meet Prabakar for more details. Following registration Prabakar will be providing you all with a Welcome Packet and will also
We will form a group, being the citizens!
We will plant more and more trees!
We will reduce the famine, faster and faster!
We will strive for the development of our country!
We will control the pollution, through a green revolution!