Prabakar and Adhi Attend TIST Seminar for 7 Countries Held in Morogoro, Tanzania

By Sarah Fraser, I4EI

TIST held a very exciting seminar in Morogoro, Tanzania from 21st July until 1st August 2003 with over 60 members from 7 countries - Tanzania, Uganda, ...
Kenya, South Africa, India, UK and USA! Project manager of TIST in India Mr. Prabakar Srinivasan and member of a Small Group in Vedal village Mr. Adhikesavan Ekambaram were among the participants in the seminar. Participants shared and worked on best practices for small group meetings and forming new small groups in their communities as well as best practices for starting and maintaining nurseries, tree planting and conservation farming. The seminar also included HIV/AIDS education and a call to action in the participants' communities.

**Morogoro TIST Seminar – An Invaluable Experience**

*By Adhikesavan Ekambaram and Prabakar Srinivasan*

It is impossible for one to comprehend the experience of participating in the TIST Seminar, held in Morogoro, Tanzania, without having participated in it. It was a wonderful seminar where every participant was able to learn from the best practices of other TIST participants worldwide and also share and teach their own expertise and experiences in a truly interactive manner. The seminar not only focussed on tree planting but also on how TIST participants can benefit in other areas such as Education and Health. The seminar was conducted in such an interactive manner that there was never a dull moment, and it felt like watching a good action movie, except that now you were acting in it as well!! Every session had something new and exciting to learn from, providing us with new tools to bring the benefits of TIST to all areas.

On the very first day of the seminar we all introduced ourselves to others participants and started with the Promises for the seminar. In all we had 14 Promises made starting from - building relationships while learning together to that of how small groups can enhance your life and your community. Its remarkable that we had participants with 20 different spoken languages in the seminar but the entire seminar was held in English with translation done in Swahili and at times in Tamil too. By the end of the seminar, every participant was well versed with the various issues covered in the seminar, which was the result of shared experiences and expertise of the participants. Here are some of the areas on which participants were interactively trained:

- How to form small groups
- How to work in small groups
- How to recruit group members
- How small groups can be accountable
- Advantages of paired sharing
- Characteristics of a good Servant and Leader

The seminar also included HIV/AIDS education and a call to action in the participants' communities.
How to help a Leader have a Servant heart

Crop rotation
Sustainable agriculture
Nursery development
Seed selection
Alternatives to firewood usage
Drip irrigation
HIV/AIDS - Its impact on the society, agriculture and economy.

We had also learnt on the best ways to communicate with others and sharing experiences using the Internet.

We also had the tremendous experience of hearing from prominent speakers and experts such as Dr. Chande, a renowned environmentalist, Mr. Larvale who is a Journalist, and Professor Mukasha.

We would like to thank the facilitators of the seminar (especially Mr. Ben Henneke and Mrs. Vanessa Henneke) for imparting the knowledge that we gained as participants and for the excellent design and implementation of the seminar. Even though the nearly 70 participants were from 7 different countries, the tremendous interactive nature of the 2 week seminar brought us all very close together in an amazing bond of love, affection and a will to do good through TIST. This clearly exemplified the power of the Small Group approach used by TIST.

Grow Trees! Get Rains!

By Elumalai Arumugam - Asst. Agricultural officer

Recently, in Tamil Nadu with the advent of the TIST Program, poor & deprived villagers of a small village named Aandiseruvallur had started undertaking the process of planting trees not only to earn extra income for themselves, but also to reforest their area, bring rains and promote sustainable economic development. Almost all the people in this village are now actively participating in this program by forming about 30 TIST Small Groups which have already planted almost 2,500 trees and seedlings. The efforts of Mr. Prabakar, Mrs. Sreelatha Prabakar, Mrs. Kokila Kumar, Mr. Chidambaram and other TIST staff in promoting this program have been tremendous.

TIST has also paid the Small Groups in Aandiseruvallur cash incentives for their tree and seedling plantings. Recognizing my expertise as an agricultural officer and my tremendous knowledge of the various localized issues, TIST has given me the privilege of coordinating the groups’ administrative tasks such as group registration, collection of Small Group Monthly Reports (SGMR), providing training to groups, opening small group savings accounts and making payments to groups in Aandiseruvallur and

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other villages. I have also provided my voluntary support to Prabakar and the rest of TIST staff in recruiting TIST groups in other newer villages such as Kottavakkam, Melpadavur, Seruvallur-Mettucolony etc. TIST had also invited me to attend the training seminar held in Morogoro, Tanzania. Unfortunately I missed out on this tremendous opportunity since I was unable to get the required travel documents in time to make the trip. However, I am extremely grateful to TIST for this generous invitation.

TIST brings to our deforested and drought prone area an opportunity and potential to bring about tremendous benefits and development through reforestation, conservation farming, community education, new technology and most importantly bringing people together by working in Small Groups for a common goal. I request you all to join and support TIST and plant lots of trees to improve our land cover and bring rains back to this once fertile and prosperous part of Tamil Nadu.

Neem Trees

By Prabakar Srinivasan and Elumalai Arumugam-
Asst. Agricultural officer

Several TIST Small Groups in Tamil Nadu are planting
Neem seedlings and trees. You may be aware of the many benefits of the Neem tree. Here are some:

- Neem leaves turn into manure for the land
- Neem leaves can be fodder for the cattle
- Neem leaves and seeds when crushed & mixed in water can be used as pesticide.
- Dried Neem leaves when mixed with Urea enhances the effectiveness of Urea.
- Neem leaves can protect vegetables from insects.
- Neem oil kills insects.
- Neem wood can be used as fuel and for construction of homes.
- Neem leaves contain N.P.K in the ratio of 2.5, 0.6, 2.0
- White ants do not affect the land near neem trees
- Neem leaves if mixed in ratios of 2% to 10% with Rice, Maize and other cereals could protect them from various insects and pests and increase their shelf life by up to a year.
- 1 Kg of Neem leaves can be ground well, mixed in 20 liters of water and can be filtered and used for sprinkling on vegetable crops preventing the vegetables from being attacked by pests. Root knots which appear in Tomatoes, Ladysfinger (Okra) and Brinjal (Eggplant) plants will also be controlled.
- A more dilute mixture of Neem leaves and water may also be used for drinking
- Neem can provide an answer to many diseases. Traditionally Neem products have been used against heat rash, boils, wounds, jaundice, leprosy, skin disorders, stomach ulcers, chicken pox, etc. Modern research also confirms Neem's curative powers in case of many diseases and provides indications that Neem might in future be used much more widely.
Small Group Monthly Reports to TIST coordinators. About 40 groups have opened savings accounts at their local post offices and the remaining groups are urged to open their accounts immediately. TIST has also been making quarterly payments to groups that have submitted 3 consecutive SGMRs by issuing vouchers that are payable at the post office where the group has opened its savings account. Please contact Prabakar, Chidambaram, Elumalai, Ranganathan, Adhikesavan or other TIST staff or coordinators if you have any questions about any of the TIST procedures.