Small Groups of 8-10 (but not more than 12) people are the foundation of TIST - The International Small Group and Tree Planting Program. The Small Group is a community of people who willingly and purposefully gather together to support one another and perform agreed upon tasks. TIST Small Group members identify local sustainable development goals that include tree planting and conservation farming. They work together to start nurseries, plant trees, and do conservation farming along with other sustainable development best practices. All group members have good ideas to share with each other. They divide responsibilities. Small Group members encourage each other and check that all are doing the work they agreed to do.

TIST Small Groups develop best practices in starting nurseries, transplanting seedlings, and caring for the trees. They share these best practices with other Small Groups through talking with each other and through the Chezhumai newsletter. TIST also makes it possible to share information with many other Small Groups around the world!

TIST Small Groups develop brotherhood among the villagers. A close affiliation is developed among the Small Group members by way of weekly meetings.
We all know that it is easier to share new ideas in a smaller group than in a big crowd. Every member of a Small Group brings out his or her views, concepts and plans. With rotating leadership every member gets many chances to become a leader and co-leader and can serve and help the group members accomplish what they have decided to do at that meeting. This develops self-assurance. Cooperative learning and information sharing habits are developed among the members in the group discussion, and they become more able to solve their day-to-day problems straightforwardly. Members of TIST Small Groups have realized the importance of being in a group for the growth of the village - ultimately the country.

Since 2002, 235 TIST Small Groups have started successfully in Tamil Nadu. Every TIST Small Group has a name selected by the group members and has been starting nurseries, planting trees and doing conservation farming. This is very exciting news!

Successful activities of TIST at Mel Kodungalur

Salsa Group

Seven members of Ulundhai village have formed a Small Group called Salsa that was registered on 29th November 2003 under the TIST Program. This group has shown utmost importance to the TIST Program and started to grow trees by pumping water from long distance and deep bore wells. Primarily, 5.5 acres of dry land was selected. Now they have 5.5 acres of land full of Casuarina trees approximately to the height of 3.5 feet, totaling to 22456, for which they can get from TIST payments of Rs.7,850/- continuously once in every three months. The idea of conservation farming had made them to go for intercropping like Ground Nuts, Ladies Finger, Green Chilly & Thill, which has also started bringing income to the members of this Small Group. If they had waited for the outbreak of rain for farming, now they would have not seen the benefits. The ready money received from TIST had stimulated all the members of this group to go to tree planting and conservation farming in another 5 acres. The idea of plant tree today, get rain tomorrow and be happy in future is strong among the group members.

Mr. Ganga, Salsa Group / Tel. +91-44-22246844 E-Mail prabakar@tist.org
Chandiran Group

Inspired by the Salsa Group and motivation from TIST had triggered this Small Group to join the TIST Program in full fledge by growing Casuarina seedlings and then transplanting them in 1.5 acres of land. Though Ulundhai is severely affected by chronic drought, but still the hard exertion by the group members keeps the Casuarina field green and healthy. Now the Casuarina plants are 3 feet in height. This group has also planted Ground Nuts, Ladies Finger, Green Chilly & Thill as intercrops in between the Casuarina plants. In matter of a few weeks, this intercropping will start bringing in revenue for the group members. This group has already started to receive payments from TIST for their Casurina trees. With this payment, Mr.Perumal, one of the members of this group has decided to hire a JCB (mobile excavator) to dig a huge well in the dry layer of Kili River. The group members are confident in bringing up more than 20,000 Casuarina and other trees in another 15 acres of land in the next six months. Mr.Perumal also says that growing Casuarina is easy, because Casuarina needs very little water when compared with other trees.

The Salsa and Chandiran Groups of Ulundhai Village will have at least 1,00,000 live trees in an area of 27 acres of land by beginning of December 2004.

Successful activities of TIST at Attuputtur

Perumal Group

Marutham, a village, which is 7 km from Sungvachatiram is full of pride in working with TIST. In the month of June 2003 this Small Group started working with TIST by planting a few thousand saplings of Casuarina. Since the group members believed in the TIST Program and its outcome, they took utmost care in keeping the saplings green and healthy to reap the benefits from TIST.
The saplings were transplanted from polythene covers to 6 acres area in the month of September 2003. The plants stood dull immediately after transplantation for couple of weeks, but regular watering brought them back to healthy life. They had been pumping water from various sources like, well, lake, bore well and of course little rainwater. Today, they have approximately 74,000 Casuarina trees. The trees were planted with an interval of one meter, but now the space between them is so little, because they are grown very dense. Already they are more than 6 feet in height; once the plants are trimmed in the sides, and then their vertical growth will be tremendously increased. All the members of this Small Group are very proud and happy to receive the payment for their 74,000 trees. By December 2004, they have planned to extend their work by planting trees in another 5 acres of land, so that, they may be the first Small Group to have more than 1,00,000 plants under TIST Program in Tamil Nadu.

TIST India

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