



TREE PLANTING

NEWSLETTER



'There is a need for environment protection and a responsibility we all have to Mother Earth that sustains us.'

MASARD to Plant Trees

We are pleased to announce that our partners, MASARD, are now delivering successful tree planting projects throughout all of the villages they support. This work is in addition to the tree planting we fund at CRUSADE. We at SOTE are delighted to be able to support them, with the help of our tree sponsors, in their mission of encouraging a healthier and more financially secure lifestyle to a combined population of around 100,000 villagers.

'They will have healthier lives and less diseases'

John Fernandes

Dr. John Fernandes, CEO, reported that there is a lack of trees across the villages he works with. Due to the climate in Tamil Nadu, this decline in 'green cover' causes nights to be cooler and days to be hotter than they need to be.

Dear Supporter

I am delighted to bring you this year's Tree Planting Newsletter.

Following my first visit to India this January, I am really encouraged by the tremendous work being carried out by our partners and would like to share with you some important updates.

Thank you for your continued support without which, these projects would not be possible. 2019 will be a very exciting year for tree planting in Tamil Nadu.

Emily Parish
Development Officer

Future for Tree Plantation

The Problem:

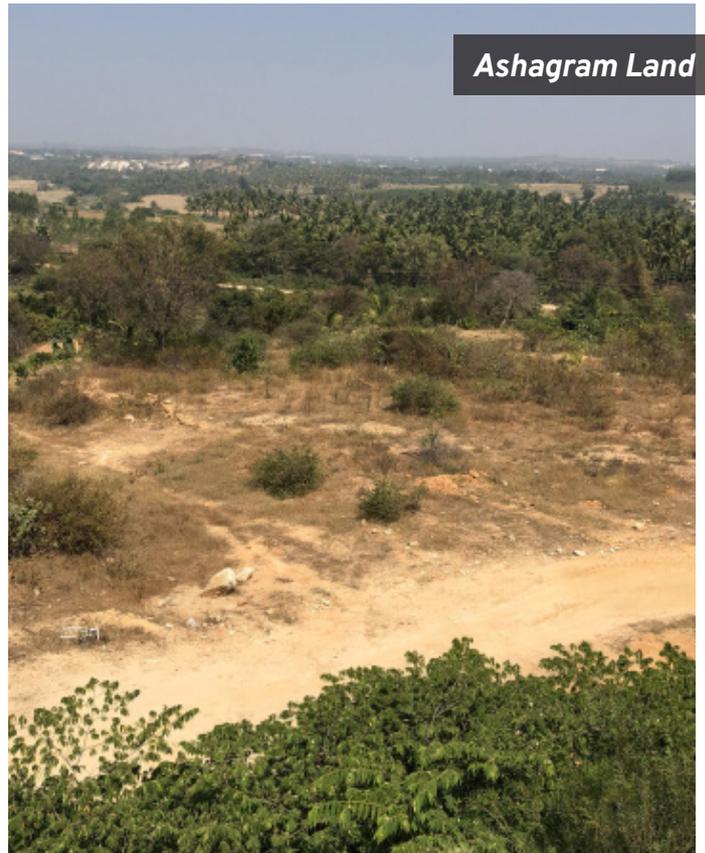
An 'acute lack of awareness of the need to protect the environment.' According to CEO, Dr. Fernandes, 'People cut down trees and do not replace them with new ones.'

The Solution:

MASARD are organising a climate change awareness campaign across the 15 villages.

Institutions throughout the villages such as schools, utility buildings, Women's Self Help Groups and local businesses will be supported to plant 5000 perennial trees on their premises and public spaces. This will also include the use of innovative watering technology, tree-guards for the first 6 months and maintenance by nominated members of staff and WSHG members.

An additional 1,000 trees will also be planted on land owned by MASARD (right), which is close by the soon-to-be women's refuge centre. These trees and their maintenance will be funded by SOTE.



Ashagram Land

'The easiest and most effective solution is to plant trees.'

John Fernandes

Cultivating Trees

In 2018, Jothi and the CRUSADE team established the Pudupakkam Nursery. 2,000 plants have been cultivated here to make the tree planting programme more sustainable. The Centre also produces natural compost and organic vegetable plants for demonstration.



CRUSADE staff tend to their tree saplings

Throughout the year, 1257 fruit tree and timber seedlings were distributed to 585 Women's Self Help Groups in 38 villages. This included Mango, Guava, Gooseberry, Pomegranate, Chikku, Lemon & Coconut. Teak saplings have also been provided to these groups, for a nominal charge.

Involving Women Self Help Groups in the project is very important to Jothi and his team and all members are working hard to maintain their trees.

Overall, the project has created the much-needed awareness in growing trees in the community and for the environment in general. Families are benefitting from the extra shade and enjoying the fruit.

Health workers and WSHG members support villagers with maintenance of the trees.

Training in Herbal Medicine

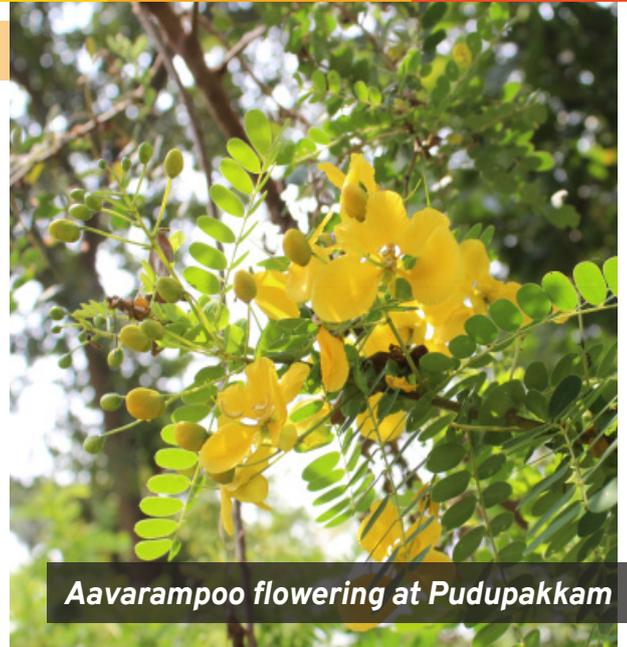
Over the past year, the CRUSADE team have been delivering training in herbal remedies, as part of the overall programme. This training helped village Health Workers and 400 members from Women's Self Help Groups to diagnose and treat minor ailments and cure chronic health issues such as diabetes. 1,200 herbal plants were also distributed to Women's Self Help Groups and their fellow villagers.

'We call aavarampoo the diabetes killer.'

CRUSADE Health Worker

During my visit I met with several Health Workers who are all observing significant improvements in health following the prescription of herbal remedies.

Jothi and his team have been growing important herbal plants such as aloe vera, mint and the yellow aavarampoo at the Pudupakkam Nursery. They also created and distributed a booklet on "Growing and using Herbal plants for Primary Health Care" to all villages and groups (See right).



Aavarampoo flowering at Pudupakkam



NEW Kitchen Gardens

Dr. John Fernandes and his team are promoting the importance of kitchen gardens and encouraging all 15 villages to develop their own.

Villagers are provided with seeds and tree saplings and are able to use their kitchen wastewater for the plants. They do not spray fruit and vegetable plants with pesticides, which is healthier for the individual and the environment.



Murray and Janet visit a new kitchen garden in Pathakotte

Almost 95% of the villagers who will benefit from the kitchen gardens are extremely poor and, although they are agricultural workers, are not accustomed to the concept of growing their own food.

MASARD have delivered training in the cultivation of a selection of crops and provide a follow up service within the critical first months.

So far, John and his team have supported four model kitchen gardens. These plots are central to MASARD's plan to promote the programme throughout neighboring villages.

In 2019, Dr. Fernandes predicts many more kitchen gardens. The benefits of these kitchen gardens are many, including environmental and economic sustainability and the empowerment of women.

We visited a teak planting project on a small farm, owned by Meenakshi, in Sengazhuneermedu, a village about 40km from Chennai. She has been selected for help because she is poor and has limited acreage.

CRUSADE provided 100 teak saplings to Meenakshi, at the highly subsidised price of 10 rupees each, which she grows around the edges of a 1-acre field, which she uses for the cultivation of jasmine.

Meenakshi has help to maintain the trees from fellow Women's Self Help Group members, Manjula and Sumathi (right). The women use organic cow dung to fertilise the field.

Teak is a hard wood, which commands a very high price. Meenakshi and her husband are planting trees for the future security of their family, as well as to provide shade.

They are thankful to CRUSADE for giving them a great start and are excited to watch their trees grow.

CASE STUDY

Meenakshi told us...

'I am keen to develop my farm. Thank you for encouraging me to start this initiative.'



Manjula and Sumathi



Meenakshi's teak and jasmine plantation with adjoining rice paddy