



TREE PLANTING NEWSLETTER 2023-2024

Dear Tree Planting Sponsors,

As we announced in our last newsletter the scheme now concentrates on providing sapling fruit trees for families to plant around their dwellings. These trees are very popular with the carefully selected families as they provide not just shelter but fresh produce and often some income as well. In the last twelve months, 1,800 have been planted.

In addition to the trees, the scheme promotes kitchen gardens and there are now over 200 in operation. Furthermore, 3,400 packets of seeds were distributed to 750 Self Help Group members and 14 campaigns promoting the environment were held.

We have included in this newsletter a range of case studies that demonstrate how your money has been spent and we thank you most sincerely for your ongoing support.

'Looking after trees involves our whole family'

Shali (mother) and Srinivasan (father) have two children, Nandhini aged 11, and Bharat aged 10. Eight months ago, WWI presented the family with a plantain sapling which was planted in the open space next to the family home. The family were determined to care for the sapling together and saw impressive growth within the first few months.

A short time later, WWI presented the family with a further two plantain trees, a chiku tree and a mango tree sapling. When SOTE visited the saplings, the plantain tree had provided a huge yield of delicious fruits, and the younger trees were being well looked after. Shali shared 'Fruits from the market are very costly, especially bananas, our fruits are free of cost thanks to sponsors'

The Children help their parents water the trees daily with government water which runs free of cost nearby. Along with their cow and chicken, this family have taken on self-sufficiency with great pride.



CARE children creating kitchen garden



Shali and family with first banana yield

'Teak trees will give my family a better future'

Sarsamma, aged 43, is registered for 100 days of work via the government scheme and spent her spare time working the waste land behind her home into a haven of teak and fruit-bearing trees. Her children are 17 and 4 years old.

She shares 'Before the trees I had many unwanted weed bushes and shrubs. I cleaned the space to create a place I could earn money, eat from, and plan for the future.'

CRUSADE provided saplings at a nominal cost and a fence was constructed to protect the land from hungry goats. The land currently hosts several teak trees, okra plants, guava and pomegranate trees, and sprouting seedlings of medicinal herbs and vegetables. Fruit trees will be used for personal consumption with the surplus donated to neighbours.

The teak trees are expected to grow to around 35ft over the next 20 years and their hardwood will provide valuable future income.



Sarsamma and her teak trees



Janet & Murray with SOTE school trees now 2 yrs old



Local farmer preparing coconut from SOTE tree



Children with trees they helped to plant on rural roads



2024 SOTE visitors planting trees at WWI compound



Meena (purple) with kitchen garden yields



'Our local animator helped me create my garden'

Meena lives in Pathakotte village, a village where SOTE has previously installed a reverse osmosis plant. Six months ago, she began to transform the space in front of her home into a large kitchen garden with the encouragement and support of village animator, Mangala (photographed in blue).

In just 6 months, Meena has harvested two crops and shares: 'Daily whatever I need, Chilli and sambar radish, green spinach, and tomatoes, I can get it from my garden. Money saved and time saved. On our land we have put this garden. Vegetables in shops go from place to place here, we get it straight away. It gives us fresh food, and it gives us happiness. Mangala has helped me very much.' Meena sends her thanks to SOTE tree planting sponsors.

'I grow herbs for local children & families'

Tyrus, aged 70, is a member of his local Self Help Group for people with disabilities (PwD Group) funded by SOTE. He has a hearing impairment and his two children suffer from physical and mental disabilities. Sadly, his son, Issac Newton, died aged 21 in late 2023. Tyrus cares for his daughter at home and leans on his PwD Group for socialisation, support and access to SOTE incentives. CRUSADE staff attended Issac's funeral and laid down flowers.

Growing around the perimeter of Tyrus' home is an impressive collection of medicinal plants. Seeds and training were provided by SOTE and Tyrus has a great passion for maintaining them. He shares: 'I like to grow medicinal herbs to help local families and children, as well as my own. People come to me for herbs and natural cures. I grow echinacea for snake and scorpion bites, I give kupinani herbs if children have bronchitis and grow ginger and pepper for coughs.'



Tyrus with herbs, and with daughter and photo of late son



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