

Agricultural Development & Training Society (ADATS) Bagepalli 561 207

ACTIVITY REPORT

Period: 1 April to 30 September 2009

6th Consortium Project Numbers: Icco 03-02-00-679 & EED 20090222 G

"Coolie Sangha Building in Chickballapur District"

A. COOLIE FAMILIES FULLY ACCESS ALL STATE WELFARE & TRANSFERS

REVIVING UNITY & DISCIPLINE IN ALL VILLAGE CSUs

STAFF & FUNCTIONARIES

A.1. Role Transforming Field Workers & Mahila Trainers as Area Managers

Though every single Staff Member and Coolie Sangha Functionary was involved in the long drawn out process to develop our Strategic plan, we still decided to hold 10 sessions, 2 at each Taluk, for the Staff, and a total of 130 Special Meetings at the Cluster level.

Follow up was strict and unsparing. It was made clear that we had not made a critical appraisal of our performance just in order to produce a well sounding document. ADATS follows a system of performance salaries which reward Results rather than actual Activities. Recognising that the execution of arduous jobs and tasks was vital to kick start implementation of the new Strategic Plan, we abandoned performance salaries during this reporting period. Instead, subjective assessments were made of efforts made by each individual Field Staff and salaries paid accordingly.

Role transformation was not a painless. The final outcome of this organisational revamp exercise will be known when we conduct our next Effects Monitoring exercise in April/May 2011.

A.3. Election of 2 CSU Representatives per village every year

The BCS President, who is also the chief returning officer for all elections in the people's organisation, made his rounds to sit at each Cluster Meet to determine which Representatives needed to be changed in order to increase efficiencies. Village CSU Meetings followed up by choosing persons who would regularly attend Cluster Meets and the monthly Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings, represent their problems and opinions, and report back in the villages.

Except at Chickballapur, all elected CSU Representatives attended the 2 day meetings very regularly.

A.4. Annual Election and orientation of 87 Cluster Secretaries

14 elections took place for Cluster Secretaries. In the remaining 73 Clusters, the same Secretaries continued, unchanged.

MEMBERSHIP

A.7. Identification of women family managers and altering CSU membership to women's names (every year)

245 families that were managed by women were identified in the Mahila Meetings. Respective Cluster Meets recommended that these memberships be changed from the names of men to that of women.

34% of Coolie Sangha memberships are in the names of women – i.e. these families have women managing family affairs. Indicators used for this count are control and decision making on finances. But only 12% of the total families are genuinely single women headed – i.e. without any male adult in the household. The difference of about 3,300 families, after discounting an element of tokenism, represents brave women who have taken on family management in spite of having men around.

A.8. Motivation of Coolie youth to represent families and alteration of CSU membership

Village CSU Meetings encouraged 168 youth to take membership in their names and represent their families in the Coolie Sangha. This was done with some sensitivity without offending the sensibilities of older, longstanding members who had given the best part of their lives to building the Coolie Sangha Units.

All these youth have completed schooling, but continue to live in their villages without wanting city jobs.

A.9. Annual membership appraisal at Executive Committee Meetings

The Coolie Sangha is a membership based organisation with an annual renewal through the declaration of family incomes and paying of Sangha Tax. Though the 2009 Memberships were finalised on 31 January 2009, we could not immediately glean learning because we were pre-occupied with the start of this current programme.

In April 2009, 34 special Cluster Meets appraised what happened. These were further discussed in the fortnightly Executive Committee Meetings.

500 WEEKLY VILLAGE CSU MEETINGS

A.10. Conducting 500 weekly CSU Meetings

326 CSUs held regular weekly meetings during this reporting period. A quorum of two-third the membership strength is insisted upon, and the minutes have to be properly recorded. The respective Cluster Secretary or Women's Committee Member normally conducts a CSU Meeting, but this is not compulsory.

Almost 150 villages held irregular CSU Meetings for various reasons, ranging from absence of the Cluster Secretary, the fact that they met every single day during NREGA works, etc. But informal gatherings of groups of Coolies to discuss some issue or the other do not count.

A.11. CSU level resolution of inter-Coolie squabbles

163 village level squabbles among Members were settled in the CSU Meetings.

A.12. Responsive Legal Aid & Aid Distress for land and wage struggles

16 cases of Legal Aid & Aid Distress for land and wage struggles, totalling Rs 144,320 were given out in this reporting period.

87 WEEKLY CLUSTER MEETS

A.13. Conducting 87 weekly Cluster Meets attended by CSU Representatives and ADATS Field Staff

Fresh Minutes Books were printed, stationery obtained and distributed to all the Clusters.

61 Clusters met regularly during this reporting period, under their respective elected Cluster Secretaries. All the elected CSU Representatives, Village Health Workers and Balakendra Teachers from the village CSUS that comprised each Cluster, attended.

ADATS Field Staff left at noon every day to attend a Cluster Meet. It is because they can effectively work for any 6 days a week, no Area has more than 5-6 Clusters.

26 entire Clusters met irregularly only when they found the need.

A.14. Scrutiny and approval of Sangha Fund spending decisions

491 decisions relating to spending of moneys, taken by the Mahila Meetings, were scrutinised and approved in the Cluster Meets.

Unfortunately, elected Cheque Signatories thought it necessary to attend Cluster Meets only when there was such a pending approval. This definitely erodes the Mahila Meetings' control over Coolie Sangha finances.

A.15. Scrutiny and approval of CCF decisions

Similarly, 35 Mahila Meeting decisions on releasing/blocking Coolie Credit Fund loans were approved at the Cluster Meets.

5 MONTHLY TALUK COOLIE SANGHA MEETINGS

A.18. Conducting 2-day Taluks Coolie Sangha Meetings every month, attended by CS Functionaries and ADATS Staff

All 25 Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings were held during this reporting period. As mentioned earlier, Chickballapur was the only Taluk where the 2 days and 1 night meetings were truncated to just 1 day.

A.19. Election of 5 Taluks Secretaries every year: alternate annually by sex

6 elections were conducted during this reporting period, 1 more than usual. This was because the elected Taluk Secretary of Bagepalli was thrown out when it came to light that he was using the newfound electoral success of the Coolie Sangha for his personal advantage. He had cornered government contracts, acted as an agent for ordinary people to approach the MLA and MP, etc.

A.20. to A.23. Running of the Taluk Coolie Sangha Meetings

There was never a dull moment in any Taluk Coolie Sangha Meeting. Issues were discussed threadbare, and learning gleaned on the functioning of NREGA works, irregularity in the PDS,

distribution of bicycles and other material in government schools, and a horde of other pro-poor schemes of the government.

ADATS Staff, who have to compulsorily attend but not participate, were shred to pieces for even small mistakes and oversights.

A.24. Taluks Coolie Sangha decisions implemented by respective fortnightly Executive Committee Meetings

The 5 Executive Committees, comprising elected Taluk Secretary, elected Cluster Secretaries and Women's Committee Members at each Taluk, met 39 times during this reporting period. ADATS Field Staff and either the BCS President or BCS Treasurer were compulsorily present.

ACCESSING STATE WELFARE & TRANSFERS

EGA WORKS

A.26. Execution of corruption-free EGA works for 100 days every year from 2009 onward

In this reporting period, we finally saw the fruit of a 2 year long struggle to get the district notified under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). A total of 744 works were taken up by Member Coolie families in the village CSUs.

Field Staff supported every single Member Coolie get a Job Card with all adults in the family photographed and entered. 3,000 copies of the Gazette Notification, Rules & Regulations were printed and distributed to all the villages. This helped hapless Gram Panchayat officials were at a total loss as to the new rules and procedures that needed to be followed.

Initially, village officials waited for "official works" to be notified. It took a lot of bullying and persuasion before they understood that Work Gangs were free to do works of their choice that they had identified in their Job Applications. When they realised that every single procedural demand of the Coolies was perfectly according to law, they succumbed.

Then came problems during payments. Most GP officials tried to misinterpret the rules and claimed that payments would be made based of quantities. This too led to a lot of struggle before they relented and admitted that EGA Wages were to be paid based on attendance. Even the weak and infirm who didn't do all that much work had to paid the exact same as the strong and able.

A.27. Support to Gram Panchayat level issues and struggles that emanate from identifying leakages in the implementation of the EGA

The starting of NREGA works was not smooth. Gram Panchayat officials did not relent without a fight. There were a total of 82 major strikes and struggles, each different from the other, to implement our objective of zero tolerance in corruption and leakage.

Village CSUs realised that they were a bit isolated. So Coolie Youth were mobilised to go to neighbouring villages where there were no Coolie Sangha Units, explain the EGA, take digital photographs and force the officials to issue job cards.

OBTAINING STATE BENEFITS

A.28. to A.32. Making annual Customer Demands & Satisfaction (CD&S) Surveys of pressing needs by 14,609 Member families

Once again, CD&S survey was not conducted during this reporting period, mainly because of intense involvement with the starting of NREGA works.

In spite of not following the established procedure to record and execute Member Coolie demands, a lot was done:

- 223 elderly and physically challenged persons were assisted to get pensions during this reporting period.
- 493 Member Coolies got free houses sanctioned from various government schemes
- Corruption free distribution of free books and clothes for children was overseen in 455 government Schools, largely because of heavy CSU Member presence in the School Betterment Committees.
- 502 Coolies got fresh Election ID cards, 581 families got Ration Cards.
- 281 homes got free electrification.
- 35 villages obtained water supply.
- 52 free bore wells were drilled under the SC/ST Corporation.
- 87 crop insurance claims were settled.

CENTRAL ACTIVITIES

A.33. Project direction, Coordination and procurement of Reference Material

This reporting period saw a maturing in the Staff. They were able to censure each other and ensure that the new strategic plan started off properly. The Project Director was preoccupied with larger issues effecting the district like, for example, lobbying for more NREGA wages, a larger share of anti-poverty allotments, inviting private investments that would create jobs, etc.

A.34. Maintenance of 915 CSU and 915 CCF accounts and meeting statutory requirements of the Coolie Sangha

As always, the mid year audit went smooth and financial statements were made with the assistance of FMSf.

A.35. Creation and maintenance of family-wise Membership database

InfoNeeds®, our digitized monitoring solution, was worked upon to meet new requirements:

- A new module was developed to monitor NREGA works.
- The Biogas CDM module was modified to deal with multiple ERPA's since another CDM Project to build an additional 18,000 domestic biogas units was ready for implementation.
- A new module was created to monitor the Celina Cow Fund.
- The Trees module was modified to monitor the Marcus Tree Fund.
- And finally, the Polygon Recorder for recording discrete plots and prove tenure was tweaked to make final preparations for the upcoming A/R validation.

A.37. Creation of linkages between the Coolie Sangha and wider society, including expert community

ADATS continued to give a lead to the Fair Climate Network. 2 CDM Meetings were held during this reporting period, one at the very start of the reporting period and another in July 2009. The latter was to finalise a big deal with Icco wherein they would support the Tech Team for 3 years. After that, we had the visit of the Icco Director and Chairman in August to actually open the FCN Tech Team at Bangalore.

Throughout this reporting period, we had an average of 2 groups of visitors every single week. They included climate change activists from India and abroad, potential carbon investors, scientists and sector specialists, and very many grassroots NGO leaders who wanted more clarity on how to access carbon resources.

Besides, ADATS handled about 10 NGOs who had already taken the plunge to develop CDM Projects.

In the very last days of this reporting period, we had the visit from Icco's newly formed carbon investment company, the FairClimateFund. Not only was an ERPA finalised for our newly registered domestic biogas CDM Project, but we helped break a deadlock in financial negotiations of yet another CDM Project.

ADATS efforts were not uniformly met with applause and appreciation. Some found our strict and uncompromising position on Carbon Revenue sharing with actual End Users who generated the CERs to be a bit too strict. But we refused to budge since this was the basic precondition on which we had agreed to share our experiential learning with others. We believe that we have set a high benchmark and standard, and intend to stick to it.

A.38. Recognising and championing positive Coolie values and practices onto wider society

Not all visits were CDM and climate change related. Very many friends and colleagues from the development world visited us to study the Coolie Sangha model in all its aspects.

But where we feel we have excelled is in influencing the body politic of the district. Zero tolerance of corruption and leakage in the execution of NREGA, PDS and other pro-poor schemes is gradually becoming the norm. For the first time in 3 decades, we see a public disapproval of corruption which used to earlier be shrugged off as "normal" or "inevitable".

Similarly, opinions on child rearing and child socialisation have radically changed and we would like to believe that we too have contributed to this shift.

Where we have not made any dent at all is with regard to the position of women in the public space. There is a marked and glaring difference in the position of women within the Coolie Sangha and in Panchayat Raj Institutions. Tokenism and back seat driving is the rule in Gram, Taluk and Zilla Panchayats, in spite of close to 40% of elected posts being occupied by women.

B. COOLIE WOMEN ATTAIN A PERSON STATUS WITHIN THEIR FAMILIES

VILLAGE ACTIVITIES

B.1. Holding weekly *in camera* Mahila Meetings in 500 villages

311 villages held quality Mahila Meetings on fixed days every week. These *in camera* meetings of one woman from each Member family discussed a range of issues and planned many a remedial action for practical problems faced by Coolie women.

By and large, Mahila Meetings were conducted by their Village Health Workers. Sometimes, the elected Women's Committee Members went for a special purpose. ADATS Mahila Trainers were able to attend just 2-3 Mahila Meetings every week.

Longstanding Balakendra Teachers – young and educated women who have married into the village and held the post for many years – are playing a vital role in rejuvenating the Mahila Meetings with fresh ideas and courage. Where this is not happening, we are scared that a plateau effect may soon set in with older functionaries getting tired...

B.2. Reviewing *Vokkaku Sanchi Duddu* usage and replenishing "lost" capital with Sangha Funds

Nothing has been done in this regard during this reporting period since we had replenished the petty credit capitals in the last days of the previous 3 year programme.

B.3. Checking that CSU Membership is in names of women family managers (every year)

As already mentioned, 245 CSU Memberships were changed to the names of women.

B.4. Heightened support to inter-caste marriages and festivals

8 inter-caste marriages were conducted during this reporting period. Each was a case in itself, but not a single couple had to tie their knots in fear or in secret.

CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

B.5. Election and skill/ assertiveness training of Women's Committee Members

8 training sessions were conducted by the Mahila Trainers for Women's Committee Members and Village Health Workers. In the main, these were to use the new health facilities offered by the government under various schemes. Even the procedural details on how to summon the free ambulance service, for example, needed to be clarified.

Some of these sessions were held at ADATS Campuses in the Taluk headquarters. But others were held in the government hospitals, with health officials making public commitments.

B.6. Compulsory attendance of 87 WC Members at all CSU and Mahila Meetings

42 Women's Committee Members religiously attended every single Mahila Meeting in their Cluster, week after week. The remaining went to other villages only when there was need.

HEALTH ACTIVITIES

B.7. Monthly skill upgradation and procurement of basic medicines for VHWs

Every month, after the Taluk Coolie Sangha Meeting, Village Health Workers are paid their stipend of Rs 500. Mahila Trainers sit with them for a few hours and discuss special needs for the month and medicine kits, varying slightly for each village, are put together.

In Bagepalli, for the past 4 months, Women's Committee Members and VHWs interact with govt hospital staff once a fortnight. Government Doctors even attended a special session of the BCS Meeting where they answered questions and gave their side of the story.

At Chickballapur, to revive the flagging performance of Village Health Workers, a special health skill training was imparted by the staff of CSI Hospital. 75% of the VHWs attended.

B.8. Disposition funds to conduct surgeries and treat advanced reproductive ailment patients

24 Family Planning camps were conducted during this reporting period when 162 young mothers underwent irreversible operations.

B.10. Providing ambulance services for hauling patients from villages to government hospitals

In spite of government hospitals being supplied with ambulances at each Taluk, ADATS vehicles had to make 172 ambulance runs to haul patients from villages and take them to city hospitals in Bangalore and Kolar.

BIOGAS CDM PROJECT

As mentioned earlier, we had the visit of the Director of the carbon investment company Icco has newly set up, FairClimateFund. In the final days of this reporting period, we negotiated an ERPA wherein we sold 384,144 CERs that will be generated in the first 9 years of the project to FCF @ € 12.72

(5 months into the next reporting period, we are yet to receive € 4.89 million to implement the project)

CERs generated in the remaining 12 years of the project life will belong to the Project Proponent, the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha. Every single Rupee of carbon revenue will go, in full and with nothing held back under any name or pretext, to the 18,000 women who actually use the biogas units.

C. SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PRACTICES ADOPTED

C.1. Transferring of properties in the names of wives

52 agricultural lands were transferred to the names of women in this reporting period.

C.2. Decisions on crop choice, loan and collective sale taken in Mahila Meetings

74 Mahila Meetings implemented their decisions on crop choice in the 2009 cultivation season.

C.4. Encroaching and cultivating adjacent govt waste lands

In Bagepalli Taluk, 11 plots of agricultural lands were encroached upon and given to landless Member Coolie families.

C.6. Redeeming and protection of mortgaged lands

No Cases of fresh mortgage were found by the village CSUs.

C.7. Implementing a Dry Land Development Pilot Project on 200 family hectare plots

145 families were assisted to dig 35,626 pits on 432 acres of dry land. 35,626 pieces of Rockwool were placed in these pits and covered with soil. 35,352 mango and 300 cashew saplings were then planted.

Within a few weeks 1,333 saplings that died due to root shock or transportation problems were replaced.

151 field tanks were installed on these fields.

A/R CDM Preparation

But the largest single activity process undertaken in this reporting period was preparations for final validation of our A/R CDM Project. This was an operation undertaken on a mind blowing scale.

14,264 individual landholdings belonging to 8,964 families from 427 villages were visited by ADATS Field Staff, 3-4 times on average! 24,740 acres of Coolie lands have been irrefutably identified with GIS readings of an average of 7 corners that comprise each polygon. They have been mapped and placed on satellite imageries showing land type, land use, crown cover, etc.

This involved a stupendous 33 steps process grouped as under:

- Preparing A/R CDM Training Material
- Creating Ownership
- Checking Database Landholding details
- Updating Database
- Physically Marking each Landholding
- Orienting/Training Local Youth
- Taking GIS Readings of Polygon Corners
- Downloading into Polygon Recorder and Correcting Shapes
- Cross-checking, Correcting & Sharing Villages Maps with the CSUs

Where the steps were followed to the "t", everything went well. But where shortcuts were taken and, for example, stones were not planted on each polygon corner, readings went wrong, shape maps overlapped, and everything had to be started all over again.

This activity is continuing to this day...

D. COOLIE FAMILIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

D.1. Releasing of need based CCF loans to borrowers

In spite of a crop season falling in this reporting period, only 43 loans totalling Rs 321,000 were given out. 111 instalments totalling Rs 35,871 were repaid. This was partially because of heavy overdue in close to half the village CCFs, but mainly due to drought caused by an unusual 5-6 week shift in the monsoons.

D.3. Provision of veterinary care, insurance cover, marketing and follow-up support

63 Coolie women were given loans totalling Rs 1.9 million to buy cross bred cows. 26 were from women headed households, and the remaining 37 male headed. This was under a special fund created by a rich benefactor.

2 ADATS Livelihood Extension Workers went to the Mahila Meetings to help them select beneficiaries, impart basic training, actually purchase the cows, insure the animals, and make regular visits to deal with settling down problems.

E. COOLIE CHILDREN

E.1. & E.2. Listing of school-age children by Mahila Meetings

799 children were listed by the Mahila Meetings as not in school. Every single one of them was a child who had just reached age. There were not dropped out out-of-school. Every single one of them was admitted to the 1st Std in school.

E.4. Appointing *Balakendra* Teachers and train on teaching skills

All 474 *Balakendra* Teacher underwent 6 two-day training sessions on fixed weekends, once a month. During holiday season these were on conducting various extra curricular activities. But the rest of the year we imparted a core curriculum to make teaching more exciting.

On the second day, they gave their detailed reports on each village *Balakendra*, including the extent of portions covered in government schools, tests conducted, and government teachers who played truant.

The ADATS Extension Worker and Case Workers of the concerned Taluk compulsorily attended these 2 days sessions at our Training Centre outside Bagepalli.

E.5. Conducting every evening *Balakendra* classes in 478 villages for children to learn and play

Rent was paid every month for all but 97 CSU owned *Balakendra* building, electricity and gas filling charges paid and physical amenities kept in order. Children came before sunset for the every evening programme and played outdoor games. Afterwards, they got together in the buildings to play games, carry out extra curricular activities and also to study.

Balakendras continued to be spaces where a whole lot of other child centric activities took place. *Balakendras* Teachers were also points persons for the village CSUs, especially the Mahila Meetings, to involve themselves in the monitoring of government school performance through School Betterment Committees.

ADATS Case Workers regularly visited these Balakendras and gave support to the Teachers.

E.6. Need assessment and allocation of scholarship benefits by Mahila Meetings

For a few Mahila Meetings from Gudibanda Taluk and Mitemari in Bagepalli, this was the very first time they had to spend Sangha Funds to give out scholarships. For the past 13 years, this budget line had been met by SCNZ. The difference, of course, was that all children had hitherto received the same amount, irrespective of their caste, family income, etc. under a standard class-in-school wise distribution table. Now they had to prioritise based on need.

It was a new and difficult experience for them. ADATS Mahila Trainers had to convince them that the largesse was over and that they had to spend from their own funds.

For the remaining Mahila Meetings, this was nothing new since their equally impressive work with children was never ever supported with external funding.

E.7. Distribution of child scholarships for 9,595 children in Middle & High School classes, based on support table

A total of 10,050 children were given scholarships worth Rs 4.1 million from their Sangha Funds.

Eligible for Scholarship	12,631	Rs 6,059,400
LESS: Children from Families who had not paid up their Sangha Tax	1,162	Rs 544,350
Therefore can Give	11,469	Rs 5,51,0505
Scholarships Given Out	10,050	Rs 4,131,620
Yet to Give	1,419	Rs 1,383,430

F. COOLIE YOUTH

F.1. Forming Youth Groups

It took a while to finalise the Youth Strategic Plan and we were able to submit it to the NZ Government, through SCNZ, only on 1 May 2009. They, in turn, took a 3 weeks to study it and approve. Funding was received in the end of May.

We then had to select Staff and orient them. This turned out to be more difficult than we had expected. Though the LogFrame and Strategic Plan was perfectly clear to us, the people who had prepared it over a one year period, it was difficult for fresh staff to comprehend.

Actual work started only towards the end of this reporting period. In spite of that, lists were drawn up and 40 Youth Groups formed. Large Clusters with a whole lot of school finished Coolie youth had a single Group formed, while smaller clusters were lumped together.

F.3. Supporting College Children

Rs 25,000 has given out to each Youth Group to do as they felt best. It was left to them to decide which college student needed how much, why, whether it was a grant or loan, etc. Even towards the end of the reporting period, the groups were not able to decide. In spite of

that, our newly recruited Staff were under strict instructions not to interfere and short cut the process.

F.4. Conducting Life Skill Training sessions

5 IT Camps were conducted for a total of 177 school finished Coolie Youth during this reporting period in our newly constructed Youth Centre. Of them, 93 boys and 53 girls completed.

Batch No.	Start Date	End Date	Attended	Completed		Total Trained	
				Boys	Girls		
51	04-Apr-09	05-May-09	40	21	13	34	85%
52	08-May-09	08-Jun-09	32	14	7	21	66%
53	10-Jun-09	09-Jul-09	34	16	11	27	79%
54	15-Jul-09	18-Aug-09	41	23	12	35	85%
55	26-Aug-09	27-Sep-09	30	19	10	29	97%
			177	93	53	146	

But we faced a major problem. The quality of IT Instructors was not up to the mark. Most “Just Managed” or received a generous “Good” at the end of their course. Not a single attendee could be rated as “Proficient”. We simply did not do justice to these 146 youth.

Batch No.	Start Date	End Date	Course Completed	Low	Just Manages	Good	Proficient
51	04-Apr-09	05-May-09	34		35%	65%	
52	08-May-09	08-Jun-09	21		52%	48%	
53	10-Jun-09	09-Jul-09	27		52%	48%	
54	15-Jul-09	18-Aug-09	35		63%	37%	
55	26-Aug-09	27-Sep-09	29		90%	10%	