



Biodiversity Conservation



ESTABLISHMENT OF FODDER BANK TO PROMOTE GRASSLAND BIODIVERSITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DROUGHT RELIEF

Project Objectives

- Availability of fodder through conservation of local land races of fodder varieties in partnership with communities.
- Provide quality fodder during drought periods for the local livestock population.
- Establish Germplasm Bank of fodder varieties to provide **propagating materials of fodder crops**.
- Check degradation of wastelands by bringing them into vegetation cover by the local fodder plants.
- Facilitate or the exchange of knowledge on nutritive fodder to the local communities for livestock with quality fodder.

Project Background

The project is located in the drought prone area of Rayalaseema, Andhra Pradesh. Although cash crops are irrigated by groundwater, most of the small farmers practice rain-fed agriculture. In this region crop by-product is the main feeding sources for cattle. However the frequent drought spells often force the farmers to dispose of their cattle creating a variety of livelihood hardships. **Animal Care Land** the NGO is aiming at helping small and marginal farmers, the landless and shepherds by promoting biodiversity through fodder cultivation on barren wastelands. It has helped farmers with the development of these unproductive areas and supplied them with a better means to feed their livestock with nutritional fodder. The NGO approached **United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Small Grants Program (SGP)** with the idea.

Project Strategy

The NGO was advised by **Centre for Environment Education (CEE)** to link the project with the local government. The NGO then approached the District Collector and got 93.31 acres of waste land allocated for 5 years on lease initially to cultivate the fodder species and demonstrate to the farmers the usefulness of the local fodder. Links were established with the local animal husbandry department, banks to link the loans for purchase of milch animals by the Self Help Group (SHGs)

The overall strategy in the project was to develop & demonstrate fodder cultivation and then propagate the fodder slips into the farmer's fields through the SHGs. Secondly link the cattle development and animal husbandry practice through the department in the area with the SHG members. The income generated by the farm will meet the expense on yearly basis for the maintenance of fodder development. In last 3 years nearly Rs. 45,000 income has emerged from the farm and this is institutionalised by the NGO **Animal Careland**.



Geographical area	: Railway Kodur Mandal, Kadapa District in Andhra Pradesh.
No. of Beneficiaries	: 250 Families in – 12 Villages and Scaled upto 1800 families in 45 Villages.
SGP Grant	: Rs. 14,70,000 scaled to Rs. 20 lacs.
Co. Financing	: Rs. 74,00,000 -Rs. 108,00,000
Project Time Period	: 2004-2006 - 2008-2010



Project Beneficiaries

The poor, remote tribal communities and marginalized farmers of the area.

Community Participation

Nearly 40 Village organizations (Gram Samakhyas) and 500 women Self Help Groups (SHGs) with a membership of about 7500 women have been linked through the project. All decisions of loans for Milch Animal are discussed in village meetings and the loans are arranged by Animal Care Land through Animal Husbandry Department and Indira Kranthi Patham of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). Greater emphasis is to build skills in communities. Animal health camps are regularly carried out in the program. The nearby villagers have shown greater interest. The project started with 6 villages has reached out to communities in more than 45 villages.

Project Lessons and Results

- 60 Acres of barren wasteland brought into cultivation for fodder species and now enhanced to 80 acres under the scheme.
- 2.5 MT of fodder seeds, 36 MT of hay and 45 MT of Silage were produced and the same was purchased by communities through women Self Help Group (SHGs).
- Mobile door-to-door campaign was organized to encourage fodder production and the communities have accepted the same.
- Spreading of knowledge to the beneficiaries through propagation of fodder seed materials. 4 to 5 different varieties of fodder species undertaken for cultivation.
- 560 Kg fodder feed supplied to 146 farmers on cost payment basis and this practice is scaled upto 1500 Kg. to 400 families.
- Provided employment of 3323 person-days in first project and this has been further enhanced to 10,000 person-days.
- 13.5 MT of fodder distributed to 182 beneficiaries under Fodder for work programme. It is equivalent to 3375 rations for local livestock population towards minimum maintenance.
- 205 local beneficiaries given 18 MT of Hay for participating in field operations as a community approach.
- Conservation of indigenous fodder species and also preservation of surplus fodder in the form of Silage and Hay. Farmers were provided trainings on the same and slips were distributed.
- Low and irregular milk production of native cattle improved by making available green fodder during the dry period resulting in regular supply of milk and assured income generation.
- Dairy enterprise received a boost as the farmers realised the **importance of green fodder for livestock**. More than **180** farmers were **provided cattle loan through banks** and nearly **80% returned the loans in time**.
- The economic enhancement of the farmers gave a scope for further fodder cultivation in their own fields thereby leading to continuous fodder supply and assured income through productive livestock

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