



World Rivers Day!



Bogra, BANGLADESH: Pollee Unnnyon Prokolpo (PUP) functions as a district level Secretariat for some social and environmental movements at National level. PUP also has membership and affiliation with various social, environmental and rights based movements and networks across the country. On 22 September 2019, PUP observed World Rivers day jointly with “Bangladesh Environment Movement (BAPA)”, “The Awakening Citizens Committee (SNAK)” along with civil society leaders, local government representative, teachers and students.

World Rivers Day is a celebration of the world’s waterways observed on the fourth Sunday of September every year. It highlights on the values of rivers, strives to increase public awareness, and encourages the improved stewardship of all rivers around the world. Rivers in virtually every country face an array of threats, and only through active involvement, their health in the years ahead can be ensured.

PUP participated in the huge rally around the main streets, and in the human chain at the city centre in *Bogra* with banners and placards to create awareness about the necessity of pollution free river flow for environmental balance. The main focus of the rally and Human-chain was to save and release the “*KARATOYA*” river in *Bogra* from the illegal grabbing by politically influence powerful persons, and also from the pollutions caused by industrial wastes.

Land grabbers have occupied huge valuable land on both sides of the river in *Bogra*

town to construct commercial and residential buildings. Farmers grow crops during dry season as the river has almost no water flow then. A huge chunk of the *Karatoya river* has allegedly been occupied using forged land documents by local people at several important areas in the riverside, according to Bangladesh Department of Environment. To address all these issues, PUP with its network organisations, at the end of the rally & human chain, handed over a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner, who assured to take all necessary steps to protect the river.



Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: ‘St. Xavier’s Industrial Training Institute (ITI)’ - a technical unit of *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* is conducting technical employable courses to the rural youths. For the period 2019-20, ‘Enrolment counselling’ for academic year students was organized at Government ITI’s in *Ulundurpet & Chinnasalem*. Through this Counseling, the technical ITI of VCDS received 15 students for Computer Maintenance & Fitter courses, and 2 students for Embroidery & dress

making courses. In total, VCDS has now 28 students for first & second year courses, and the class has started from *15th of September* for current academic year.



In the month of *October 2019*, 10 students from ‘Social work department’ of *Azim Premji university* came to VCDS on a one day trip to visit and interact with their students and staffs to learn about the social conditions, the daily struggles faced by the rural poor, and how education & women empowerment can contribute towards social change. They also visited one of the non-formal school run by VCDS, and interacted with the parents and the students.

Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: **Work camp:** ‘Florance Home Foundation’ (FHF) organised 10 days rural camp for University students from *3rd to 13th of September 2019* in their Centre at *Killai*. More than 65 students and 4 professors from St. Joseph’s College of Art and science in *Cuddalore* participated in the rural work camp. Government officials, Local village leaders, and Resource persons were invited to participate in every day event, and spoke on specific topics. Participants found the work camp very useful and meaningful for their future life. Listed below are the different activities during the work camp and topics covered by external speakers:

- Medical camp.
- Awareness on **Family Planning**;
- **Demonstration on Kitchen Garden**;
- **Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation**;
- **Swach Bharat Campaign and Cleaning**;
- **Awareness on Women Empowerment**;
- **Importance of Education among Irular people**;
- **Awareness on Effects of Alcohol Consumption**;
- **Awareness on Health and Hygiene**;
- **Campaign on Environmental Awareness and Tree Plantation**;
- **Promotion of Human Values and Ethics among School Students**;
- **Preparation and Survey on Socio Economic and Education Status of the People**;



Wandering storyteller: From 14 to 15th October 2019, FHF also organised 2 days workshop on the topic 'Teaching education by Art form' in their centre at *Killai*. *Kumar Shaw* from *Chennai* – an avid traveller, story teller and a theatre actor was invited as Resource person to provide training to more than 50 children. Kumar envisioned himself to be the story-collector on a bicycle, who travelled across the country gifting a balloon for every story he collects.

Kumar shared with the children that his journey has helped him get close to a lot of people. "I've met old people who have literally seen their towns change. They have an amazing visual collection of stories. They've seen bullock-carts being replaced by cars, they've seen highways come up in places where the wolves used to sleep", he said with much affection. Spending good part of his formative years in an orphanage, he said that life taught multiple lessons to him. But he viewed every incident as an opportunity to explore life. Storytelling is not a profession for him, but a deep rooted passion and he used that passion to teach important life lessons to children. Hearing all his stories, the children enjoyed very much the workshop. He entertained the crowd with timely and fascinating tales. Enacting them as well, he engaged the children in joy and happiness.

Bogra, BANGLADESH: ICT center: *Pollee Unnyon Prokolpo (PUP)* established a Computer training centre to provide quality computer training and internet based service delivery to the community people. This ICT centre (Information & Communication Technology) has become a one-stop service delivery point. Nearly all the services of information technology are available under one roof such as Computer Training, Internet Service, Computer Service, Photocopy, Laminating, and Spiral Binding. This centre established with support from *Emmaus Montbeliard* provides Training and Services at an affordable cost to the community people, specially youth and students. It was inaugurated by the Additional Director of Social welfare Department of Bogura District on *1st September 2019*. Elected Vice Chairman of *Shajahanpur sub-district*, Municipal Councilor and Urban Social welfare officer of *Bogura* were also present at the inauguration ceremony. Revenue from this centre also helps PUP to address various social issues.



Rajshahi, BANGLADESH:

'Fashion Revolution week' is observed worldwide which falls on the anniversary of the Rana Plaza factory collapse, which killed 1138 people and injured many more on 24th April 2013. During this week, brands and producers are encouraged to respond with the hashtag #Imadeyourclothes# and to demonstrate transparency in their supply chain.

In 2013, a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh collapsed, killing more than 1,100 workers and injuring many more. This was the deadliest disaster in the history of the clothing manufacturing industry. The Rana Plaza building was known to have been built with substandard materials under faulty conditions, yet the factory remained

very active up until the deadly collapse. The building's owner, Sohel Rana, illegally constructed the upper floors of the building to house factories with several thousand workers and large power generators that shook the building whenever switched on. The day before the collapse, large cracks appeared in the building and an engineer who was called to inspect the building determined it was unsafe. Rana and the factory owners, however, ordered workers to return the next morning. When the generators were switched on that day, the building collapsed. Murder charges were brought against Rana and 37 others held responsible for the disaster.

FASHION WEEK REVOLUTION



The tragedy highlighted the dreadful conditions that many peoples in the garments were working in. Six years after this incident, clothes are still being made by some of the poorest, most overworked and undervalued people in the world. A report published by 'Worker Rights Consortium' gives a shocking picture of repression, violent attacks and intimidation of garment workers in Bangladesh who are simply trying to campaign for a living wage. Desperate workers have been asking for

more money since the minimum wage was raised in November 2018 to the equivalent of \$22 a week, less than 45 cents an hour.

In 2018, 3.25 million people took part during the 'Fashion Revolution week' to ask, #WhoMadeMyClothes? That question, when a brand is tagged on social media with this hashtag, it has already resulted in major change within the industry. The girl in the picture working in Thanapara Swallows holding the clothes is a direct witness to Rana Plaza incident. As a producer organization to using the hashtag "I made your cloths", Thanapara Swallows organised a meeting with producer groups on 10th September to discuss about the current scenario of garment workers, and shared the discussions with their buyers.



ORGANIC Agriculture training

For the year 2019, two groups in India (VCDS & KUDUMBAM) received the support under Emmaus International 'Annual Solidarity programme'. Both the groups are utilising the support to enhance farming methods for better crop & food security, and to enhance involvement of youths in Sustainable agriculture practices.

Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Village Community Development Society (VCDS) started to implement the initiative from the month of July with the identification of farmers for the village level farmers club. Village level meetings were organized in Vanniper, Ulagapuram, T. Parangini, Kurur and Siruvadi to interact with the farmers and to give orientation to them on the solidarity initiative. The farmers gathered information about their participation, activities and benefits involved in the initiative. Many farmers were interested to get involved in the project but twenty members were selected in the beginning and the others were informed that they will be included in the following year. As the first activity, the farmers were invited to take part in compost making training in the month of August at VCDS Vellakulam farm in which 25 farmers took part and learned the techniques of compost making and benefits of using compost in the farmland. The farmers prepared 25 compost pits during this one day training program.



Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: KUDUMBAM, which started its project implementation from June 2019 was involved in enhancing capacities of rural youths, university, school students, farmers - both men and women in Sustainable Agriculture development. Trainers training for students: A 10 days training was conducted on Roof top gardening for 18 University students, 2 days training on Sustainable agriculture for 40 college students, and Training on Seed ball preparation, Waste management training & identification of herbs for 30 school children. Awareness training to youth: Climate change and its impact was explained to youths from villages. During the training, they have understood the present crisis of drinking water, different types of Diseases, Migration and unemployment problems.



Strengthening capacities of marginal farmers: Application of Vermicompost/ compost, Application of green leaf manure or green manure, and Application of tank slit was explained. Training on Mixed cropping cultivation: 25 Farmers were educated on mixed cropping concept which minimizes the water usage, pest problems and could be harvested in different period. Nursery raising: Raising of nursery and planting of trees in schools, common lands, tank bunds and farm lands to revive the village ecology and economy was organised. Also Trainings were provided to women farmers on nursery raising, which can be the base for their economic empowerment by making it as their income generation programme for their future.

Rajshahi, BANGLADESH:

Thanapara Swallows organized Annual farmer conference on 27th July 2019 where 100 farmers from 32 farmers organization participated. During this meeting, farmers shared their problems in addressing issues related to agricultural activities, and the solutions found.

Bangladesh has a primarily agrarian economy. A plurality of Bangladeshis earn their living from agriculture and it is the single largest producing sector of the economy since it

comprises about 18.6% of the country's GDP and employs around 45% of the total labor force. But the farmers are mostly vulnerable, as they are not getting available agricultural supports and services from the government. They are not getting just price of their produced crops. Also as agricultural labourers, they are getting low wage and especially women labor are facing wage discrimination. In most of the cases, they are not aware about their own rights. Lack of farmers organizations was also a barrier to raise their voice.



Thanapara Swallows established 32 farmers organisations consisting of 3072 farmers. They organised training programs at regular intervals to these farmers group to address all the above issues. After attending intensive meetings, trainings, workshops and discussion on agricultural rights and women rights, now the group members and individuals have brought a qualitative change in their knowledge, skill and attitude. As a result, the target groups now play a continuous proactive role in taking measures against any kind of agricultural rights violation as well as promoting and protecting the standards of Human Rights in the community. During this Annual conference held in July 2019, farmers also shared their practical experiences and advantages in practicing organic farming methods, and how they find solutions collectively through their farmers' organisations.

STOP Violence Against Women

Bogra, BANGLADESH: PUP is working under 'Net to Right' network with five member organizations in different parts of Bangladesh. With support from Swallows in Denmark, PUP is working since July 2019 on the project titled "Developing Young people's understanding of Women's rights, and to combat domestic violence against women through Advocacy".

Under this project, PUP has formed one Presser group involving 25 different stakeholders of the union jurisdiction. Also 4 volunteer groups of school students with 20 – 25 members in each will be formed for advocacy on different women rights based issues such as: Demerits and disadvantage of Child Marriage, Harmful effects of domestic/family violence's, bad effects of Sexual Harassment and the burden/effect of Dowry for a needy family. PUP will then provide training to make them capable for advocacy on these issues.



On 30 September 2019, PUP organized a meeting at *Shablul High School in Bogra* to form a student volunteer group. With support from school teachers and Management committee, on that day, one group of 25 members has been successfully formed. PUP will now provide them Capacity building and Leadership training to make them capable for advocacy with local administration & local government representatives as well as law enforcement authorities.

Emmaus India National meeting - Aug 2019

Pondicherry, S.INDIA: Emmaus India National meeting took place in Pondicherry on 23 August, followed by visits to South Indian groups from 24 to 25 August 2019, in which representatives from 4 Emmaus groups took part.





Discussions were held on the projects implemented with support received from Emmaus International, Emmaus Montbeliard and Foundation Abbe Pierre in the year 2018. Two groups in South India also shared about the action plan for the 2019 project on Sustainable Agriculture. It was interesting and useful for the groups to exchange the ideas and experiences. Thereafter details were shared regarding 'Emmaus Ethical Fund'

(EEF), how it originated in 2007 in collaboration with Banca Etica, and the decision of the Board meeting in 2018 to redefine the potential purposes of EEF with 4 goals.

Discussions also were held about SKILL INDIA program, with the goal of creating opportunities for the development of the talents of Indian youths, and also to identify new sectors for skill development. Recent changes in PGSOC (Participatory Guarantee System – Organic Council) were shared, and discussion took place on how Indian groups were affected by this changes.



Thereafter members were informed regarding the 'Global Peace March' which is to begin in *Delhi* on *2nd October 2019*, walk through 11 countries and end on *2nd October 2020* in *Geneva*. Aim of this march is to take Gandhi's message of justice, nonviolence and peace to the Global community. Members appreciated the efforts taken by Jai Jagat committee for organising this long march on the eve of 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi, and assured that they will discuss with their team members to see how they can participate in this march.



On *24th August*, the team visited the VCDS farm at *Vellakulam*. They visited the *green house* constructed with support from Emmaus International. Capsicum was planted, and two women had been working in the house. The team also had interaction with the farmer's club of VCDS. In the noon, the team visited the *poultry farm* of FHF project in *Veerappar*, went around the farm, planted tree saplings, and left to *KUDUMBAM* in the evening. On *25th August*, Emmaus team participated in the inauguration ceremony of the Boys hostel and Community kitchen constructed with support from 'Foundation Abbe Pierre' at *Kolunji*

ecological farm. They also participated in the closing session of a training program which took place for 3 days on Integrated Farming System for professional and youths. Thereafter meeting took place with staff team of Kudumbam. They explained the different activities implemented on Micro credit, roof top gardening, nursery raising, and other agricultural activities. The team also visited roof top gardening at Kudumbam office in Trichy which has been well maintained.



Pereira, COLOMBIA: America international Emmaus work camp took place in Pereira, Colombia from 14th till 23rd September 2019, titled - "Lucie Coutaz – social change for a more inclusive and sustainable world". Around seventy companions, volunteers and group leaders participated in the work camp and discovered a range of locally-led alternatives.

The camp days had been split across manual work, training sessions, field visits & cultural events. Participants took part in various workshop sessions to understand the initiatives led by Emmaus groups on the topics of education, recycling and collection, struggle for gender equality and art for social change. Also participants were involved in manual works – Collecting & sorting, recycling and repairing, farm work and selling at the bazaar. They also participated in the march in the city centre on the concept of inclusiveness & bringing about social change.



After the introductory session on the first day, members were explained about the history of Emmaus movement. The Mayor of Pereira city welcomed the participants and informed about water supplies and organic coffee production in the region. Thereafter *Ms. Stella Cano* spoke about FARC, national situation, and recent murders of social leaders, journalists and candidates of regional elections. It was heart breaking for the participants to learn about the challenges being faced in bringing peace and development in the region.

An interesting workshop was held on 'Education and Social transformation' towards a more inclusive world. Emmaus groups in all 4 regions are working hard and challenging the existing education system which is holding back the growth of the children. There are so many children who, despite of having 'Right to Education' are deprived of this fundamental right altogether due to family, cultural and financial situations.





A second workshop titled '*Waste management and Environment*' took place, where every group discussed and shared about the initiatives being taken in their groups. Emmaus groups in America region are actively involved in collection of old and waste goods which are repaired, recycled, upcycled and resold. This workshop helped the participants to understand the core struggles of each region as well as they fetched ideas from each other that can be implemented in their communities.

An eye opening workshop on '*Gender equality*' was also interesting where all the groups were asked to describe the characteristics of a man and women 50 years ago. It was astonishing and sad to realize that not much has changed in the situation of women in last 50 years. Women still continue to fight for their rights, they are still demanding equality and respect and they are still being dominated. This raised a point that we have a long way to go and work harder in this direction.



In addition to workshops, participants were also encouraged to do *manual work* at the community. They were allotted different tasks in fields like pamphlet distribution, classification, agriculture, plastic recycling, carpentry and more. They went to collect the old and waste material from the residential areas, classified and sorted them as per categories organized. They also worked and redecorated the showcasing room and organized two sales, one in the city and one at the community premises.

With all the intensive workshop activities and manual work at the community, participants also enjoyed some *Salsa dance* sessions headed by *Mr. Gustavo Arango*. This salsa session set the base for another workshop focusing on '*Art and Culture*'. It is an important part of education which has helped many differently-abled children to learn co-ordination and management. It is a happy and fun therapy that was presented as an example of inclusiveness and sustainable growth of a human mind.

With the same concept of inclusiveness and bringing about social change, a big shout-out was given to the public with a *march* that was carried out in the City center. Participants held banners representing their countries, placards with messages of power, equality, love and justice marching with a fleet of band, playing drums and music making their point loud and clear. Another march was held in the city of *La Celia* where the Mayor of the town also inaugurated a City center which will also serve as a clinic.

All the participants were deeply touched with the hospitality of the people of Emmaus Pereira community and Emmaus International who did their best to take care of the participants. From Asia, two members took part in the work camp – Pallavi (TARA) & Antoine (AEP) who were very much involved in all the activities during the work camp, discovering the diverse activities of Emmaus groups, with many questions to better understand the context. Discussions during the workshop sessions filled the participants with new motivation to continue combating the causes of poverty, wherever they may be in the world. Participants returned to their respective countries and communities, full of new ideas and inspired by this constructive interactions.

HEALTH ENVIRONMENT WORKSHOP™

Bogra, BANGLADESH:

Survey Findings Sharing & Consultation Workshop on “WASH in Health Care Facilities” was organized by ‘NGO forum for Public Health’ on 2nd September 2019 in Bogra. Program coordinator of PUP *Mr. Abu Hassanat* had been invited

to participate in the workshop. District chief of Government Health Department “Civil Surgeon”, Sub-district level government Health officers, higher level of Government officers, local government representatives, most renowned civil society representatives, political leaders and journalists participated in the workshop. Program coordinator of PUP *Mr. Abu Hassanat* has also been invited to take part.

The findings of the survey were shared during the workshop. Participants were alarmed on the current position of overall health and environmental issue. Survey found excessive arsenic in underground water in 3 villages at *Shajahanpur upazila of Bogra district*. As per another survey, most of the hospital and clinical wastes were poorly managed, with no proper system for dumping them. The waste has been disposed in the hospital premises or nearby municipal dustbin, which causes serious health hazard and environmental pollution.



‘NGO Forum for Public Health’ requested the authorities to take immediate necessary actions to stop those bad practices, and ensure no more health hazards and pollutions will happen due to mismanagement of hospital and clinic wastes. Also to take necessary action on identifying Arsenic affected water in the 3 villages, so that people don’t drink water from those tube-wells. NGO Forum asked for support from local NGOs to work together on these issues, and PUP expressed its interest. A plan of action will be made in coming months to work on Public Health and Arsenic issue.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEASANTS' STRUGGLE

Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Peasants struggle day was organized at KUDUMBAM Kolunji ecological farm on 17th July 2019. This programme was jointly organized with Bharathidasan University Women's study department, Trichy. Around 175 women participated in the programme from 10 villages. *Dr.Manimekalai, Dr.Subha, Dr.Lalitha and Mr.Oswald* highlighted the impact of globalization resulting in land alienation, drastically reducing



area under food crop, and increasing area under cash crop. Mechanization of Agriculture has drastically resulted in unemployment for men. In the last 50 years more than 60% of the men between the age group of 20 to 40 have migrated to urban cities, 30% of the young girls between the age group of 15 to 30 have migrated to garment and construction industries. Mono crops have led to concentration of labourers. Appropriate alternatives for addressing the above situations were discussed during this event, such as establishing Community traditional seed bank; Community managed tanks, Collective labour sharing, value addition and collective marketing.

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