

# TAMWED NEWS



May 2013

## ON THEIR BIKES



Thanks to the generosity of Tamwed supporters, 12 bicycles have been bought for use by our partner CRUSADE's Community Health Workers. They asked for bikes to help them reach outlying rural villages. Jothi Ramalingam, CRUSADE's Secretary, said that his Health Workers wanted to pass on their thanks to Tamwed although some of them needed to practice their cycling skills before risking the rough tracks that pass for roads in many areas.

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Tamwed supports three partner NGOs based in rural South India. CRUSADE and GAWDESY are working on a project to improve diets, increase access to health care and improve the environment in remote areas of Tamil Nadu. The ISLAND Trust is based in the Nilgiri Hills, where it is working with tribal people to adapt to the changing climate.

Our partners work with groups that are now known as 'Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes'. These groups make up 60% of the population of India and were formerly known as the Depressed Classes, or Adivasis ("original inhabitants").

## IMPROVING DIETS

Since September when the project was launched, CRUSADE's 12 Community Health Workers have reached 1,253 women and families. Health Workers are trained to identify the most common problems and refer those that need specialist treatment. CRUSADE runs a homeopathy clinic, and arranges a programme of surgeries specialising in diabetes, hypertension and eye problems such as cataracts. A Training of Trainers programme was conducted for Health Workers and others to tackle the issue of poor diets which was identified as one of the main cause of health problems in the area. A previous Tamwed-supported programme led to the creation of home gardens with medicinal and culinary herbs, vegetables and fruit trees. A plant nursery was set up for training and for growing plants for distribution. Tamwed continues to support CRUSADE's work, adapting projects to the needs of the poorest and most marginalised communities in the area.



Trained Health Workers conducted 50 sessions for 1,500 members of Women's Self Help Groups covering issues such as nutrition and hygiene.



Environment and Climate Change Day was marked by a procession, a village clean-up and a meeting during which cotton shopping bags were distributed.



CRUSADE's Health Workers advise villagers setting up their own herb and vegetable gardens. Six varieties of vegetables have been grown from seed as part of a trial.

**GAWDESY**, the other partner on the Improving Diets project has organised training and events on health, diets and the environment led by their 20 trained Field Workers involving around 10,500 people over the last six months.

As with CRUSADE, diabetes is one of the most common health problems in the area, particularly among women. Local people are encouraged to grow and use a variety of vegetables in a bid to improve their diet which in many cases is based on poor quality rice that is handed out by the government for families with a low income. GAWDESY is encouraging villagers not to burn their household or farm waste, using what can be composted and separating the remainder for disposal.

GAWDESY works closely with the local Lions Club and Panchayat (local government) committees which between them and Tamwed have supplied about 3,500 saplings. Food crops and trees need to be cared for during the increasing extremes of weather that are creating big problems for those who are dependent on the land for food and income.





GAWDESY's 20 Health workers wear identical saris. Leaders of the village Self Help Groups of women where they work have their own colours.



Training posters illustrating life from birth to death and the dangers of constipation.

The Improving Diets Project is supported by Nomads Clothing ([www.nomadsclothing.com](http://www.nomadsclothing.com)) and by Tamwed supporters.

## CLIMATE FUTURES

Climate Futures is a two-year programme, launched in January this year, to assist a remote and marginalised community of tribal people in the Nilgiri Hills to adapt to the increasingly damaging impact of climate change. The **ISLAND Trust** uses trained staff, experts and volunteers to raise awareness in remote villages through film, music, art and dance. This project derived from a previous Tamwed-supported programme that focussed on climate change and agriculture.

Around 500 tribal people are being encouraged to grow and market climate resistant crops, plant trees, improving irrigation and use alternative energy. One of the aims is to produce visual material that can be used to educate and stimulate action by other communities and provoke policy makers into action.

The Nilgiris is designated as a Biosphere Reserve with 3,300 species of flowering plants, 350 of birds and 100 of mammals such as tiger, Asian elephant, and Nilgiri tahr.





Storms and wild animals cause havoc in remote, mountainous areas. Bison, elephants, leopards, and monkeys are some of the animals that can damage houses, gardens and even people in search of food.



Theatre, dance, art and music is being used to inform people about climate change and environmental issues.

Staff have conducted surveys in a sample of 14 villages to find out the level of knowledge about climate change and the actions that people are taking to cope with it. A typical response was to say that climate change is caused by: "Not worshipping god and cutting down trees which increases heat". The solution is to: "Pray to god, avoid using plastics and adopt organic agriculture and the use of natural things".



Climate change, the loss of traditional land and shortage of work means a change to the lifestyle and culture of families like the one above who need to travel many miles to sell their produce. The school on the right organised a competition for the best picture illustrating the pupils' environment using natural materials.

Climate Futures is supported by Artists Project Earth ([www.apeuk.org](http://www.apeuk.org)), Osborne Samuel Ltd ([www.osbornesamuel.com](http://www.osbornesamuel.com)) and by Tamwed supporters.

**There are annual and project reports as well as other information on our website at [www.tamwed.org](http://www.tamwed.org)**

## EVENTS AND FUND-RAISING



Our projects benefit from donations by those who attend our South Indian meals as well as the talks about interesting places at home and abroad arranged by Tamar Travellers. Contact us to be kept informed about these and other social and fund-raising events. We also sell greetings cards and other items made by our partners in India. Tamwed is run by volunteers in the UK with nearly all our funds contributing to projects.

### TAMWED COOKS BAGS

Ten recipes from our famous Indian Meal nights are now available in a cotton bag. Also in the bag are all the spices required to make the recipes and an apron made by Padmavathy - the CRUSADE trainer.

Incredibly good value at £15. Contact Tamwed to place an order.

### TWO SIMPLE WAYS TO HELP OUR PROJECTS

- ❖ **JustGiving.** Use your mobile phone to donate to Tamwed by sending a text to 70070. Just type: TAMW12£X - X being the number of £s you are donating which can be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 10.
- ❖ Go to [www.shop2fundraise.co.uk](http://www.shop2fundraise.co.uk) and get instructions on how each online purchase can result in a small donation to Tamwed.

**If you have any ideas for fund-raising, or would like to contribute towards a particular Tamwed project, please let us know.**

**Please pass this newsletter on to family or friends that might be interested.**