

Annual Progress of University programs - 2005

1. Eastern University – (E.U)

Financial support of the year 2005 – LKR 460250

Description of the project

The eastern university has developed a course on Diploma in Sustainable farming is a specially tailored for ODW and will serve students who live in the Eastern provinces. The course focuses on sustainable agriculture methods, post harvest technology and agri-business.

Long-term objectives

The long-term goal of the programme is to improve the knowledge and skills of the students to meet the local needs towards sustainable economic development.

The specific objectives

- To create self- employment opportunity for unemployed youth.
- To change socio- economic conditions of farming communities.
- To upgrade the nutritional standard of rural poor.
- To impart basic and in- depth knowledge on farming system.
- To provide practical experience and applied knowledge in farming system.

Results achieved in the year of reporting

The agreement between EU and the PSO has signed in July 2005. Studies have been started in October 2005. There were 35 students interviewed for the course and 28 have registered from the CFHD, NERTRA, KV and FIOH. But there are only 20 students are attending classes regularly. The course will be ending in September of 2006. The course it self has an arrangement that the medium of this course should be in English. But it was changed to Tamil based on the performances of students while the time of interview.

2. Open University – (O.U)

Financial support of the year 2005 -

Brief description of the project -

The programme in Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood focused on the rural youth who have been deprived of formal education due to north east conflict and other unforeseen reasons. The target group was expected to have an agricultural background and they would be willing to secure their livelihood in agriculture or a related field such as post harvest processing, marketing of agricultural produce, rural constructions and rural welfare work.

The programme of study designed by the Rural Research Unit (RRU) in collaboration with the academic department of agricultural and plantation engineering covers different aspects of rural agriculture with practical bias. The programme of study is delivered through animators stationed in the areas of students supported by course materials given to the students and carrying out field work specific to selected areas. This is programme of study that deviates from conventional classroom teaching or distance learning methodology and at the end getting the students to sit for a final test. The emphasis of the programme is laid to ensure that students get hands on experience by doing things and sharing experiences with colleagues. The programme seeks to empower rural youth to stand on their strength and engage in a sustainable livelihood while remaining in their home areas

At present RRU has set up four centres in different parts of the country: Vavuniya, Badulla, Kalmunai, and Ampara. The maximum number of students attached to each centres is limited to 30 and each student group is assigned a trained animator. Each Centre is provided with basic agricultural equipment. The first batch of students numbering 86 is now actively participating in the programme and the programme will be completed in April 2006. After an assessment based on actual work done by individual students and the knowledge gained through lesson materials the successful students will be awarded the *Certificate in Agriculture for Sustainable Livelihood*

The RRU and the department of agricultural and plantation engineering have been closely and frequently monitoring the progress of the programme and of the view that enrolment of a second batch of students is worthwhile with certain alterations suggested.

Goal of the project

The long-term development goal is to create a community of farmers who could critically evaluate the options available to them and take informed decision using latest technology and information.

First Phase of the Project: programme development

Programme development started in November 2004 with the financial assistance of the ODW. The programme development included the following that concluded satisfactorily with a few exceptions as mentioned below.

1	Training of animators	Four animators were trained on following areas: Teaching methodology Basic mechanical workshop practice such as welding, carpentry, sheet metal work, food processing (curd, cordial, jam making, mushroom cultivation) Computer awareness Lesson preparation Farm practice Training on basic electrical and civil construction work
2	Setting up of a mini workshop	Mini workshop was set up at the Colombo coordinating centre to provide training for animators and if needed for selected students. The workshop was provided with following: Arc welding Unit, Table mounted drilling machine, band saw, circular saw, jig saw and basic workshop tools such as saws, screw drivers, hand drills and power tools
3	Renovation of farm and protected house and installation of solar dryer	Hydroponics system was set up in the protected house.
4	Development of lesson materials	Lesson materials for 12 courses were prepared. Some lessons were translated into Tamil. In view of preparation of suitable lessons to be given out to students resources were gathered in the form of test books, leaflet, CDs

The assessment would be at two levels: one of assessing the concrete results by way of physical infrastructure and improvements to the livelihoods achieved, and the other how effective the pedagogical approach had been. The first would require a baseline survey to be conducted at the beginning. The second would be assessed by evaluating the innovations and adaptations made possible through the distance education component of technology transfer.

Progress of the first batch of students so far

Field work/workshops conducted	Lessons completed and project work	Planned work for the remaining period	Difficulties and overall performance
Centre: Vavuniya No. of students: male-12 female-14 [Tamil medium]			
A camp was held on preparation of a balanced diet A workshop was held on mushroom cultivation Environmental Observatory tour was arranged	Three courses out of 6 completed The remaining courses 60% complete All students have started project work	Visit to Post harvest Institute, Anuradhapura Complete remaining lessons Conducting spot tests for assessment	Although there is disturbances the performance is satisfactory

Field work/workshops conducted	Lessons completed and project work	Planned work for the remaining period	Difficulties and overall performance
Centre: Mahiyangana No. of students: 13 Welimada-11			
A camp was held on preparation of a balanced diet Workshops were held on mushroom cultivation and fermentation Environmental Observatory tour was arranged Visit to Horton Planes to study its ecosystem	All courses completed for the semester All students commenced projects	Complete semester 2 courses Conducting spot tests for assessment	No special difficulties, but students complain travelling difficulties Progress is satisfactory
Centre: Kalmunai No. of students: 21 (total)			
Seminar was held on community health Workshop on organic farming	Three courses out of 6 completed Remaining courses 30% complete	Complete remaining courses Study tour to Malwattta Farm, state owned model farm of the area Conducting spot tests for assessment	Difficulties due to frequent disturbances related to ethnic problem Progress is not satisfactory
Centre: Ampara No. of students: male-02, female-03			
A camp was held on preparation of a balanced diet Workshops were held on mushroom cultivation, rice processing Environmental Observatory tour was arranged Visit to Horton Planes to study its ecosystem Participatory seminar was held with the village community on public health and hygiene	All courses completed for the semester All students commenced projects	Complete semester 2 courses Conducting spot tests for assessment	Progress of students satisfactory

Proposal for enrolment of the second batch of student

After giving thorough consideration to the comments made by animators and on the basis of findings made during supervisory visits by the senior staff it was agreed that the programme seems to succeed in some centres whereas in some centres difficulties have arisen due to frequent disturbances prevailing in the north and east. Therefore we

suggest relocating the existing centres and including new two centres for the reasons mentioned below.

Centre	New location for next batch	Reason for change or no change
Vavuniya	Chettikulum	The situation of the present location is deteriorating and conducting classes and field work is becoming difficult. The Chettikulum is also located in the same district, but free from disturbances at present.
Mahiyangana and Welimada	No change	This centre is functioning smoothly, there is a demand from students
Kalmunai	Potuvil	Kalmunai is located in eastern province and the regular interaction with students has been reported extremely difficult due to frequent protest campaigns connected with north east conflict. Therefore it is suggested to shift the centre to Potuvil area which is dominated by Muslim community
Ampara	Dehiattakandiya	Ampara experiences similar difficulties as Kalmunai and at present too the student number is low. The best alternative for this centre is thought to be and the trained animator is also willing to serve in
New	Monaragala-Uva province	To include different agro-climatic zones with water shortage and high poverty

The following lessons learnt during the first year have made us to revise some of the activities and the locations to meet our objectives in the next three years.

- Some of the students have dropped out after a few months as their expectations were different. These students were mostly the ones that have been following a number of courses and they are more interested in collecting qualifications than doing work to gather experience.
- Ampara centre was worst affected with the student numbers dropping to less than five.
- Kalmunai and Vavuniya centres had more students but they were constantly affected by uncertainties in the area that had an impact on their participation.
- Mahiyangana and Welimada fared much better and the student participation and activities were well attended.

Due to difficulties encountered in using the Open University facilities in these locations, we had to rely on alternative arrangements and make use of temporary facilities. This had an effect on providing learning facilities such as workshop tools and basic equipment that we procured for the purpose. At present, the equipment are installed at the Colombo centre for controlled study of their performance, and next year we need to shift them to the centres.

Mushroom cultivation has become very popular and several workshops were conducted and students have started projects in Vavuniya, Ampara and Mahiyangana. We plan to give them technology to dry the excess using a solar dryer so that a different market could be established for the dried product.

The active student groups will be formed in to working associations so that the work could be continued on a collective basis, after completion of their course.

We would be carrying out an evaluation using external resources and will also get a feed back from the students. The proposed method of evaluation is given in the attached sheets.

The new budget is prepared taking into account that we plan to open two more centres in Monaragala in the coming year to supplement the technologies that would be suitable in these water-deprived areas. The Ampara and Vavuniya centres would be relocated at Ampara/Dehiattakandiya and Chettikulam, respectively, to facilitate the use of available farms and other facilities at the new locations. If the prevailing situation in Kalmunai continues we will consider shifting it to Pottuvil in the same district.

The University overhead will be reduced to accommodate expenditure at the new centres.

Institutional set up

The duties and responsibilities of project staff	
RRU	Chairing steering committee
Project coordinator	In charge of the day to day project activities, responsible for implementing decisions of the steering committee, communicating with Animators and giving instructions as and when needed in consultation with the RRU
Coordinating Officer	In charge of coordinating center in Colombo, Attending to the needs of mini workshop and farm, arranging training facilities for animators (and students), Assisting Project coordinator
Consultant	Attending to matters relating to purchases, evaluation, reporting etc
Animators	Conducting teaching sessions at centers, arranging and conducting field work, workshops, reporting student progress on individual basis. Preparation of lesson materials when needed

Financial Status

Code	Description	New BUDGET	Expenditure
			Up to 2005.12.31
	Capital expenditure for 03 centres		
A12	3 workshop tool sets	95,000.00	100,224.00
A13	3 water pump sets	70,000.00	67,295.00
A14	3 farm implement sets	60,000.00	59,775.00
A15	3 measuring and weighing equipment	40,000.00	40,000.00
A16		-	-
A17	10 display boards	10,000.00	10,000.00
A18	3 photovoltaic panels	100,000.00	93,600.00
A19	2 sets of micro hydro units	200,000.00	200,000.00
A20	2 small wind mills	100,000.00	99,000.00
A21	2 ram pumps	-	-
A22	Food processing equipment	110,000.00	113,450.00
A23	2 Magnetic heater/stirrers	-	-
A24	3 vein anemometers	25,000.00	15,000.00
A25	Cost of building rainwater harvester, solar dryer, protected houses ..	150,000.00	150,000.00
A26	Contingencies	164,000.00	164,030.00
A27	Office Equipment	182,000.00	183,050.00
		1,306,000.00	1,295,424.00
	Programme expenditure		
B1	Course fee Rs 6000	510,000.00	504,000.00
B2	Scholarships(90 from 2nd year)	629,700.00	
		1,139,700.00	
	Recurrent expenditure per year	1,518,750.00	
C1	(a) Rs.750 (per hr.) honouraria for 20 hours (for training the trainers)	30,000.00	9,000.00
C2	(b) (i) Hiring a person to coordinate preparatory activity @Rs.25000 /month	300,000.00	300,900.00
C3	(ii) Salaries of trainers /animators @ Rs. 8000 p.m. x 4 (4 to5 month)	684,000.00	652,671.00
C4	(iii) Cost of training	20,000.00	15,230.85
C5	(c) Overtime payment involved in key duty	20,000.00	31,660.74
C6	(d) payments for setting and marking examiners /Materials/Consumables (reimbursable) for the period	150,000.00	111,409.77
C7	(i) Supplies of electricity and water		
C8	(ii) Piecewise charges for hired work/equipment		
C9	Travel-(i) No. of km x Rate (5,000 x Rs 20)	200,000.00	204,599.65
C10	(ii) Board & Lodging for 30 man days (@ Rs750/ day)	18,750.00	29,384.50
C11			
C12	Rent for Office Space	96,000.00	71,000.00
	Sub Total	1,518,750.00	1,425,856.51
	OU-Overheads 20%	303,750.00	285,171.30
		1,822,500.00	1,711,027.81
	Grand total	4,268,200.00	