

MSE Support workshop (Southern Region)

30th Oct 2009 – 1st November 2009 at CReNIEO, Muttukad, Chennai



The southern regional MSE support workshop was organized on 30th Oct 2009 – 1st November 2009 at CReNIEO, Muttukad, Chennai. The aim of the workshop was to review the producer level trainings organized under the Fair Trade Plus project in the southern region and to discuss the plans for developing a road map for the follow up actions.

Twenty artisans and 10 IMO's representatives participated in the workshop.

Day 1, 30th Oct 2009

Inauguration

The workshop was inaugurated by Mr L.V.Saptarshi IAS (Retd), President, CNRI Confederation of National Rural NGOs). Mrs. Krishnammal Jaganathan (Alternate Nobel Prize winner), President LAFTI (Land for Tillers in India) was the guest of honour in the inaugural ceremony. Mr. lytha Mallikarjuna, Executive Director, FTF-I presided over the inaugural ceremony of the workshop.

Salient points from the address by Mr. L.V.Saptarshi are as follows:-

- Creating replicable examples is the most important factor which counts while analyzing the success of any efforts for inclusive development.
- In Fair Trade it is important that the standards are applicable to all and thereby creating a level playing field for all to take benefit from trade.
- But it needs to be made in the wider context of trade as well to derive benefit for more and more disadvantaged sections of the society
- Resistance from the more powerful partners in trade often in the name of labour, social or environment aspects make the participation of less powerful difficult in trade
- The struggles from the less powerful for dignified income is getting less support from the state most often such struggles are crushed strongly
- Labour reforms are taking away the right of employees for dignified income
- The benefit of high price at retail did not reach the producers in the mainstream trade
- Gandhi ji's vision about khadi & village industries is very much relevant for its ability to provide large scale employment to the marginalized

Ms. Krishnamal Jaganathan addressed the audience and appreciated the efforts being mooted by FTF-I to support grassroots level producers.

Mr. K. Panchaksharam, Secretary, SIPA and founder president in Key Note address, explained about the evolution of Fair Trade and its present reach out. He invited the participants to the importance of building up the Fair Trade market. He opined that the all in the Fair Trade fraternity can opt between just feeding to the market or creating a wider market. The latter will be helpful to ensure long term sustenance of Fair Trade.

Dr. Pothi Reddy, President, SIPA presided over the inaugural session. He emphasized that the relevance of Fair Trade lies in the opportunities created by it to producers to earn sustainable and fair income. It should continue to fetch fair income to producers to retain its value and identity in the market.

Session: Expectation Setting & Experience Sharing

The session on expectation setting was led by Ms. Manisha Jani, Program Manager, Triadcraft Exchange. The session was chaired by Prof. V. Purushothaman, IFFAD.

Session: Establishing Qualitative Supply Chain Systems through Implementation of SFTMS

The participants were divided into two groups of CEOs and producers.

The producers session was led by Mr. Ram Bhat and Mr. Ramasamy, SIPA. In the session the producers were enlightened about the implementation of Fair Trade standards. They were also informed requirements related to Fair Trade certification which is coming up under the STFMS.

The producer session was led by Ms. Padmaja Pai. She helped to them understand the system required to build up Fair Trade adherence. She also explained the dynamics of third party certification and interpreted Fair Trade standards on the basis of the acceptable benchmarks related to the Fair Trade certification process coming up under the labeling process. She also explained about the consumer attitude towards social brands and labels in the leading Fair Trade markets.

Day 2, 31st Oct 2009

The day was started with an Open Session in which all the participants were encouraged to share experiences. They shared the difference being made by Fair Trade initiatives in their economic as well as social lives. They also shared the benefits they derived from the Producer workshops organized by Fair Trade Plus project. The points shared by them are summarized as under:-

- Fair Trade has brought more dignified approach in workplaces,
- Relationships between the stakeholders in the supply chain is better and cordial in Fair Trade
- Fair Trade fraternity supports the process of building up Fair Trade adherence
- It seldom imposes system rather it helps to build up appropriate system in organizations/ producer groups
- Fair Trade Plus provided opportunity to closely understand the demands related Fair Trade adherence
- Fair Trade Plus also provided opportunity to understand the over all operations of Fair Trade
- Fair Trade also provided limited opportunities to understand the demands in the market related to products/ trends/ long term styles
- Fair Trade Plus also helped to know about several new players in the Fair Trade market.

Sharing of Case Studies & Experiences by Trainers

Mr. S.C. Raghunathan

- Fair Trade Plus workshops and the visits to the groups helped to understand the understanding of the groups about the Fair Trade
- The trainings were designed in accordance with the requirements of the groups

- Gave attention to help the producers understand Fair Trade
- Helped the participants understand Fair Trade standards by internalizing the core values of Fair Trade
- In some of the groups, we drew up follow up as well on their efforts to improve Fair Trade adherence

Mr. Jayakumar

- The approach was helping the producers to understand that the Fair Trade Plus training is an efforts to build up the marketability of the groups
- More focus was given to prioritize areas in accordance with the background as well as level of Fair Trade adherence of the respective groups during the trainings
- Follow up plans were also chalked out as part of the training
- In all training at least two producers among the trainees were identified to continue with the sharing of information as well as building up of producers level systems
- Many of the groups wanted more training so as to help more producers understand requirements of Fair Trade adherence



Session: Market for Fair Trade Food Products & FLO Certification

Chair. Mr. Mallikarjua Iytha, Executive Director, FTF-I

Mr. Tomy Mathew, Fair Trade Alliance Kerala

- The business model and evolution of Fair Trade Alliance Kerala was explained by Mr. Tomy.
- The success of FTAK was due to the success in communication of the values achieved by Kaerala produces in terms of better wages and social conditions.
- By building up systems for Fair Trade adherence, we ensure that the parameters related to social, economical and environments are maintained at the producer level.
- Working with FLO and the label gives a unique and authentic identity for the values that we add

Mr. Chris Davis, Executive Director, Fair Trade Foundation

- Label is the reason for the success of Fair Trade product in the mainstream market
- Scaling up of Fair Trade is possible by reaching out to the wider-mainstream market as learned from the experience of FLO labeled food products
- WFTO's efforts to come out with label for craf-products through SFTMS is commendable
- But the more practical option of using the already popular label of FLO for craft-products can also be explored
- From the experience of by stint in BAFTS (British Association of Fair Trade Shops), I realized that handicraft alone is not sustainable as retailer and hence traditional Fair Trade shops are giving more attention now to food products

Session on Cooperation, Collaboration for building FT Brand

Dr, G. Arumukham, welt hunger hilfe

- Every efforts to build up a common identity needs developing systems at micro-level as well
- Since the success and continuance of livelihood generation activities, production and marketing are depended on the satisfaction of consumers the producers need to to flow the demands of the market
- The networking platforms such as FTF-I and other federations of Fair Trade organizations shall give more attention to simple & common systems so as to ensure common identity
- Often the producer groups most of them have limited capacity are unable to deliver big orders
- Networking and improving the capacity in terms of quality and quality is required to respond to the market demand for bigger volumes of products
- Case studies from the commercial sector about branding building and positioning will be helpful for FTF-I to make a long term plan

Day 3, 1st November 2010

The Third day was started by the re-cap by Prof. Ratna Natarajan, Chairperson of IFFAD.

Session: Participatory Guarantee Systems, Mr. Mathew John, Key-stone Foundation

He presented the general trends in the organic food market all over the world as well as in India. While explaining the idea of PGS, he opined that it is the affordable and way of getting into organic market, which gives due emphasis to the producers right to fix term for sale.



Prof. V..Purushothaman, explained about the challenges to be addressed vis a vis Fair Trade adherence. He opined that the small organizations working with the Fair Trade movement shall not be getting deprived of the benefits form Fair Trade market once the open system for Fair Trade organizational certification comes under SFTMS.

Mr. Ramamurthy, Asst Director, O/o Development Commissioner, Handicrafts (South) also addressed the workshop participants

The workshop was concluded with the summing up of the master of the Ceremony and Vote of Thanks by Mr. lytha Mallikarjuna, Executive Director, FTF-I.