



You need a hundred lifetimes to understand India – Kipling

What we do and why

The goal

The Friends of H.O.P.E, together with our NGO in India, The Earth Trust, which was formed by Vanya Orr, is helping the desperately poor indigenous tribes' peoples of the Nilgiri Hills region create a **sustainable livelihood** for themselves and future generations.

We do this through **promoting biodynamic organic farming, through health – including promoting the re-introduction of ancient Siddha medicines, and through education – the School eco-club, encouraging the protection of a wonderful eco-system and environment, and helping village women to develop income generation projects for themselves and their village communities.**

The problem

It was recently reported that there are 250,000 farmer suicides a year in India.

On occasions there is human sacrifice – a girl of 7 was killed by two desperately poor illiterate tribal farmers to appease the gods and get a better harvest- “the two men confessed to cutting her open and removing her liver as an offering” (reported January 2012).

Some years ago, just as Vanya Orr was to begin her life's work, and in one of “our” villages, we heard and believe, that a **baby boy was sacrificed.**

Degradation of the environment, over-use of fertilizers, pesticides and weed-killers – increased incidences of breast cancer due to polluted water streams.

Poverty line of just Rs20, 000 a year, that's about £5 a week.

Good news – the numbers of people we help:

800 visitors to our farming models in a year

400 farmers attend training programmes and benefit from our outreach support a year. Hundreds of farmers come to our model nurseries to see how zero input farming can be achieved – no fertilizers, we are only using recycled waste, with amazing yield and quality – kids producing cauliflower weighing over 3kg with the record being 5.7kg grown in 100 days! Strawberry plants yield over 1.5 kg per plant. Panchagavya – a mixture of cow muck, cow urine, ghee, curd and milk subsequently diluted with water can be used not only on the land to help vegetables grow profusely free from pests and disease, but it cures skin conditions and can be taken internally for HIV/Aids!

Over 80 village communities benefit from our work

We are reintroducing ancient (traditional to our region) Siddha medicines. We are in year four of a monitoring programme assessing how **Siddha can be used successfully** for re-building immune systems of HIV/Aids patients. A sickle cell anaemia monitoring programme has just commenced. Traditional organic oils and creams are used for skin conditions, severe burns and joint and muscular problems. Our health team is engaging village groups and conducting health awareness classes, and providing counselling. **“It’s good to know somebody cares, thank you,” is what we are told.**

Herbal medicines and oils are being produced by women self-help groups.

Our eco club children, some 800 students from 14 of the poorest government schools, are so very knowledgeable about biodiversity, organic farming, and the importance of protecting the environment in which they live - we believe they have more knowledge than many university students yet are aged only to 8th standard!

We teach the women to learn to knit, sew and dress-make - each course takes 3 months and is held under the umbrella of our income generation programme.