



Message from Sristi

Dear friends,

Greetings from Sristi Village! The number 8 holds great significance in many cultures. In the Chinese culture, Eight ('Ba' in Chinese) has a similar pronunciation to the character 发 ('Fa' in Chinese) which means wealth. The number 8 is believed to bring great prosperity and success, so it is very popular amongst Chinese people. Likewise, we also hope to bring you lots of good fortune in our 8th newsletter!

Firstly, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our supporters. Sristi would not have been able to attain our goals without your continuous support. There are many people who have gone beyond to help us in our endeavours. We would like to thank Roland Frutig, from Switzerland who is now supporting various non-profit work around India. He is also our mentor, advising us through our regular Skype meetings. A big thank you to two couples, Leon and Brigitte, Christoph Ratz and Karin Ebert both from Germany who have set up their own organizations back home to support our work. Mr. Shanmugam, Phocos India Solar Pvt Ltd., Puducherry have significantly enhanced the quality of life at Sristi by donating a solar refrigerator, batteries and inverters, enabling non-stop power supply at Sristi. Also, we would like to mention Mr. Arul Murugan for his guidance and Mr. Saurin for his unending support. We are very grateful to these people for their wonderful contributions!

We would like to share about our upcoming initiatives. We have plans to construct a school for 50 children with special needs living in nearby villages. We receive many calls from parents daily who wish to enroll their kids, but we lack the facilities to accommodate their requests. Currently, we are looking for a low cost and durable way to construct eco-friendly fireproof roofs. Once this is set up, we would be able to accommodate more students. On another hand, we have applied successfully for a grant from the Vikaas project from National Trust which is part of the government of India to support educational supplies for 15 children. Their recognition of Sristi as a formal organization marks a new milestone in Sristi's (short) history!

We hope you enjoy this issue. We always look forward to having you at Sristi Village!

We are constructing a "chicken tractor" - a moving chicken pen which relocates every once in a while to different parts of the farm. Chickens play an important ecological role as pest removers and can also help improve soil fertility.

Yours sincerely,
G Karthikeyan
Director, Sristi Foundation



Our Team



Meet Kannan who has been working at Sristi for 4 months. He recently graduated from a diploma in agriculture and currently oversees all farm-related activities at our land. He also provides everyday training to our members. A super humble guy who always has a pair of hands to help with a big smile!



To recycle wastewater at Sristi Village, our German volunteers, Louis and Malte, are constructing a swale system which channels water from the plumbing systems to a water-harvesting pit after passing through the roots of water-filtering plants which remove toxins.

A quick update from Sristi...

Our hands were kept busy for sure during the past 6 months. As usual, we welcomed volunteers and visitors from all over the world who were interested to learn more about our community. Thank you all for your enthusiasm and positive energy! We also had the wonderful opportunity to collaborate and exchange innovative ideas with people involved in social work. Here are just a few of the highlights...



We celebrated Diwali with the family members at Sristi! Every single one of the members helped out with food preparation. There was so much delicious Indian snacks to go around!



80 fellows from Teach for India Chennai visited Sristi and helped us with our farm work. We loved their contagious energy and enthusiasm!



Sristi has been working with a group of students from Wageningen University, The Netherlands as part of the Academic Consultancy Training program. We loved their ideas so much Kirstin Torgerson was able to visit our Sristi village and witness our project.



It was fantastic to meet so many like-minded, motivated people driving positive changes in their communities at the annual fundraising dinner "Battle of the Buffet (BoB) 2016" at Chennai Trade Centre!

From street child to farmer



Living on the streets, Arun was subjected to everyday teasing by the other people. They would deliberately agitate him until he starts spouting vulgarities and create a scene on the streets daily while they stood by and laughed. His aggressive reactions only encouraged them to continue. His father passed away when he was young and his mother was unable to provide care for him. He frequently got into violent altercations on the streets with the other children and started drinking with the street boys. Later, he was admitted into an orphanage where he was provided food

and shelter. As a child amongst other children he was fine. But once he became an adult he didn't feel valued enough. I had the impression that staying amongst kids didn't foster his potential. He kept running away until he ended up outside on the streets again. Finally, a social worker referred him to Sristi. Initially, we at Sristi were apprehensive because of his aggressive tendencies. After a few days here, we noticed that Arun was very interested in the farm animals. Thus, we assigned him to help out in the animal husbandry unit. Now, he takes charge of the work there and we are very happy (and so are the animals) to see him cooperate as part of our Sristi community! His behaviour also took a 180 degree change within just 6 months - he became much quieter and is now very friendly with new people at our village! Turns out all he needed was a caring environment where he feels valued and can realize his full potential.

Unpredictability of the Monsoon

The long-term goal of Sristi Foundation is to become self-sustainable, both financially and operationally. One way of doing this is to utilize our 8.39 acres of land as an organic farm to grow food crops, both to sustain our own needs and to sell on the markets. One of the initiatives at Sristi village has been to cultivate a chilli plantation on the farm land. Hundreds of hours of back-breaking work was put into leveling the land, digging trenches, preparing soil beds, sowing the seeds, and preparing the ground for cultivation by our members. However, to our major disappointment, none of the seeds grew this season.

This has been an unusually hot October. Timing the planting of seeds with the monsoon season is crucial to farm successfully in Tamil Nadu. Approximately half of the annual rainfall is received from October to December during the North East monsoon season. The recharging of groundwater is entirely dependent on the rains; the lack of which signals water scarcity and thus aggravates the challenges of farming. Farmers in Tamil Nadu are especially dependent on the rainy season because the rest of the year is generally hot and dry. Data from the Indian Meteorological Department's monitoring stations for the past 60 years has illustrated that temperatures across all 6 states of the Western Ghats, including Tamil Nadu, have increased significantly. The repercussions of climate change are obviously problematic for the farming population.

Since the monsoon season is late this year, there is a lack of water for irrigation. The results of our chilli initiative has been disappointing, but we are quite helpless against the unpredictability of the weather. We are hoping that the monsoon will start soon for our crops to grow, but of course no one can predict the weather. In the meantime, we can only prepare and hope for the best.



We hope you've enjoyed this issue of Sristi News! Without your generous and unwavering support, we would not have achieved what we have created today for our community. The contributions of our donors, staff, volunteers and friends are always greatly appreciated! Please send your contributions to:

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Name of the Account : Sristi Foundation
Account Number : 33435575197
Name of the Bank : State Bank of India
Branch : Ariyankuppam, Puducherry
IFS Number : SBIN0016563

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We are raising funds to dig a borehole and set up solar water pumps to provide drinking water. Our drinking water is currently being transported by pipelines from nearby villages, which is energy intensive. **We are looking at a total budget of €3,500 to complete this project.** Your support will be greatly appreciated!

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at sristivillage@gmail.com. You can find out more about our work at sristivillage.org or on our FB page. We can also be reached at +91 90 477 87 887 (Karthikeyan Ganesan, Director of Sristi Foundation). Thank you for your immeasurable support! We look forward to seeing you at Sristi Village!

Newsletter edited by: Liu Yihui, Singapore