

*report on
training programme*



June 2003 - May 2005

a project of
The Other Media, New Delhi
with the support of

The New World Foundation*

The New World Foundation



Association for India's Development

Zero Waste Centre

The Zero Waste Centre was established at Kovalam on 28 April 2003, by Thanal, in order to complement the Zero Waste Kovalam programme with the support of Kerala Tourism. The idea of a 'Centre' evolved from a demand from the local community, especially women, for a place to assemble, to discuss issues and to get training for a livelihood. Zero Waste Centre was envisaged as a resource use and education centre and a hub for the Zero Waste campaign in the State. Primarily the Centre looks at the elimination of toxic and unsustainable materials through the setting up of progressive and sustainable resource use models that are suited to local needs.

By translating the theory of 'Material Substitution' - a component of the philosophy of Zero Waste, into practice, the ZWC made a marked difference in Kovalam. Exploration in this direction resulted in vocational training programmes on sustainable materials and products. The scope of material substitution encompasses employment generation, development of skills, revival of traditional wisdom in resource use, reduction in the use of plastics, elimination of unsustainable materials and conservation of nature.

Training Programmes

Objectives

- Conservation of Nature
- Reduction of toxic and unsustainable material use
- Developing and reviving skills in people for better material use
- Documentation of sustainable material use practices, products and processes
- Generation of employment and revenue for the people
- Creating an awareness on the need for and importance of sound and ethical resource management
- Building relationships in the society

Strategy

- Identification of the existing pattern of material use and analyzing its impact
- Exploration of the available sustainable raw materials and their scope
- Exploration and revival of traditional wisdom and developing skills in people
- Creating an awareness in the society in order to regain the space for such products and services



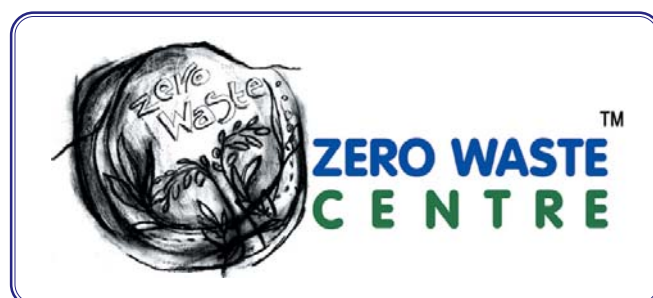
Back ground

In 2001 November, Thanal organized an International Skill share on 'Zero Waste', at Kovalam. Experts from across the country and outside India participated in a dialogue with the local community. The group comprised Government officials, business men, elected representatives, community leaders, women groups and NGOs. An exhibition of products made from jute, paper, bamboo and coconut shell was also organised. The discussions centered around how to handle plastics. Naturally the participants, who were attracted to the beautiful utility products exhibited and impressed by their potential to replace plastic products in Kovalam, unanimously decided to phase out plastics in Kovalam by phasing in alternative sustainable products. Local women who were also discussants in the skill share, expressed their interest in participating in training programmes on these products.

In response to the demand from the local women, in March 2002, training programmes were organized at four places in Kovalam on three materials -: Paper, Jute and Bamboo. The overwhelming response compelled Thanal to organize another training programme in July 2002, on coconut shell.

The Venganoor Grama Panchayath - Local Self Government - expressed their interest in supporting trained women to start small enterprises. As a result, a coconut shell craft unit and a paper bag manufacturing unit were born. This in turn created a demand for regular training programmes and a full fledged training centre.

Since its inception in April 2003, the ZWC has organized different training programmes on topics ranging from students leadership and community leadership to organic farming and entrepreneurship development.





Major vocational training programmes organised for the community by ZWC during 2003 -2005 :

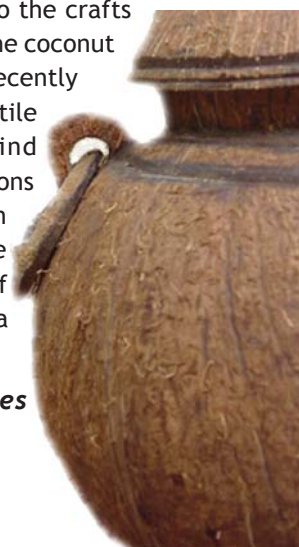
Coconut Shell craft

The Coconut tree has been called “Kalpavriksh” meaning wish tree by the people of Kerala. This is because from its roots to leaves no part goes waste. This tree provides food, edible oil, soft drink, toddy (a fermented drink) and also provides firewood , wood for construction and leaves for thatching roofs . The ash from its leaf stem is a good washing powder since it provides natural sodium hydroxide. Coconut shells can be converted into activated carbon as well as containers and cooking vessels. This

tree has always played a significant role in the culture, religious faiths and livelihood in the State of Kerala.

Coconut has a natural hardy shell, which yields to the crafts person’s vision and skill. Little wonder then that the coconut shell with its natural bowl shape has been till recently used as a utensil in the homes in Kerala. It is versatile in its shapes, texture and sizes and can find contemporary uses in homes, hotels and institutions as cutlery, crockery or desktop stationary. Craftsmen in Kerala have created art and craft from the coconut shell and these adorn the showcase of homes across the world, as a collector’s item, a composition of skill and craft.

(See annexure 1 for training programmes conducted during 2003-2005)



Paper Craft

Revitalizing the society is an essential part of any waste management programme. The ZWC attempts to eliminate the notion of waste by considering materials such as paper merely as discards which are recovered and converted back into utility and craft. Old news paper and magazine paper have for long been shaped back into useful packaging covers and sold in the groceries and bakeries. Many women and children in poorer households made a living out of this self-employment. The advent of plastics has taken away from these women their rightful vocations.

ZWC is attempting to revive paper in our society through better product design, development and training for the women who wish to make this a vocation. This essentially means revitalizing of the society through better management of resources, generating financial benefits directly for our women and creating a lot of employment. And above all it is a zero waste process!

So far , around 190 designs of paper based products have been developed through the joint efforts of Zero Waste Centre and the trained women’s groups.

(See annexure 2 for training programmes conducted during 2003-2005)



PATCHWORKING WOMENS' LIVES INITIATIVE



Patchworking Womens' Lives Initiative was conceived to reassert the role women have played in the traditional textiles of India, by opening up opportunities for independent employment and alternative livelihood schemes for women. This in turn would improve the status of women in large segments of Indian society. Traditional textiles directly or indirectly narrate stories with spirit, creativity, skill and relevance to the social changes in society. Continuing this tradition of intersection, creativity and commerce, *Patchworking Womens' Lives* provides an opportunity to women, to create work which is meaningful, which also takes the maker out of the cycle of poverty and invisibility and at the same time compels the viewer to see it as artistic expression.



The initiative uses a unique resource "WASTE" or discards as we call it. It aims at eliminating waste by reusing uneven pieces of fabric discarded by tailors. The discarded fabrics which would normally be dumped or burnt on the beaches of Kovalam, are retrieved, to be used as the main ingredient for this work.

The ZWC gives training for one and half months in collecting and categorizing of discarded fabrics according to nature and colour. The training also includes creative exercises in composition, colour theory, simple geometric drawings and calculations. According to the concepts put on paper, the discards are stitched into unique functional and aesthetically pleasing products. They include various kinds of bazaar bags, butwas, coin bags, purses, quilts and small stuffed toys.

Wall hangings depicting the indigenous trees of Kerala were created. The women were essentially trained to observe and study nature and concretize their observations in the form of sketches. These creative exercises removed the inhibitions the group had about their drawing and skills of representation. The training programme also assesses the dynamics of the group and tries to inculcate a feeling of support and interdependence within the members while establishing a feeling of mutual concern and team spirit. To this end, group assignments were carefully formulated to test the group's viability and sustainability for the future.



Terracotta products

Terracotta being an ancient medium of expression could survive all the drifts of the modern world. In spite of this the craftsmen are struggling to make ends meet. Earthen utility products which were the



part of day to day life and which had a steady market have slowly been replaced by plastics and metal products. This pushed the traditional communities who were dependant on terracotta to the margins of society.

Efforts are being made around the world to revive this ancient art form and to contemporise the skills in the community and get a new life for the people. The ZWC sees terracotta as a material which can sustain the livelihoods of these potters and can replace toxic materials in use.

The ZWC organizes short term exposure to students and individuals who are working in the field of terracotta. These workshops are meant to promote the use of clay as a medium of expression and to impart new techniques, trends and designs in terracotta to those who have some basic skill and aptitude.

(See annexure 4 for training programmes conducted during 2003-2005)

Organic Farming

Organic Farming was a programme initiated under Zero Waste Kovalam, towards a "toxic-free world". The program was meant to motivate people to take up farming and eliminate the use of chemical inputs from their farming practices. This also meant the revival of traditional wisdom and practices which would help people to practice sustainable and sensible farming.

The Zero Waste Centre acts as a space for farmers and others interested in farming to come together and discuss their issues and to share their experiences in organic farming. All these skill share program were meaningful, creative and active, where farmers came with enthusiasm and interest to share and learn the ways of farming without toxic substances.

This prompted the ZWC to hold more such informal gatherings as well as technical sessions to on toxic free farming and a toxic-free world.

(See annexure 5 for training programmes conducted during 2003-2005)





Resource Recovery

Resource Recovery - a major component of Zero Waste - offers a new opportunity for employment. It however demands an understanding of the philosophy of Zero Waste and skills in material handling. In the foreseeable future,

institutions which adopts a Zero Waste policy will need trained people to help them attain the zero waste goals.

ZWC offers a training program on 'Maintenance and operation of biogas plants and resource recovery facilities'. These short term training programs include hands on experience, field visits and classes on zero waste.

The local demand for such trained man power attracts more people to join this training.

(See annexure 6 for training programmes conducted during 2003-2005)



All these training programs have one thing in common - Zero Waste. All the participants were given a general awareness on material use and zero waste. The trainees were taken out to visit biogas plants and resource recovery facilities in operation. Movies, slideshows were also part of the programme.

There were special orientation programme on entrepreneurship and leadership development. Participants were given ideas on marketing, costing, budgeting, developing proposals etc.

The ZWC has also given technical support to those who wanted to develop proposals in order to get financial assistance.

The ZWC continuously interacts with the former trainees and follows up their activities, giving guidance in terms of quality control and setting quality standards. The ZWC also allows them to utilize the workshop at ZWC to refresh the skills acquired.



Annexure 1.

Training Programmes conducted by Zero Waste Centre on Coconut Shell Craft

No	Date	Course	Particulars
1	July 2003	Basic Course 12 designs of products Duration: 1 month full time course	Five young men from the locality participated. They were sponsored by an organization - Sebastian Indian Social Project - based in Belgium. After the training programme these youngmen formed a production unit under the same organization and now doing business of coconut shell products.
2	Aug 2003	Advanced Course on coconut shell craft Various techniques in cutting, grinding, finishing of coconut shell and designing Duration: 10 days full time course	5 people were trained for 10 days by master craftsman.
3	Sept 2003	Short term training programme on coconut shell craft Duration: 10 days full time Basic techniques	4 women were participated in this training programme.
4	Oct 2003	Short term training programme on coconut shell craft Duration: 10 days full time Basic techniques	5 women from Vellar village of Venganoor Grama Panchayath participated. 3 of them are now associate with Classic Palm Craft Unit in the village.
5	June 2004	Basic Course 12 designs of products Duration: 1 month full time course	5 Women from Muttakkad - a village in the Venganoor Grama Panchayath - participated with the support of Venganoor Grama Panchayath and Kudumbasree Mission. After the training they added 5 more women to their group and started an enterprise "Classic Palm Craft" and are doing business now.
6	Sept 2004	Basic Course 12 designs of products Duration: 1 month full time course	2 women from Koliyoor village of Venganoor Grama Panchayath participated. They are now working in the coconut shell craft unit under Zero Waste Centre as assistant trainers.

Annexure 2.



Training Programmes conducted by Zero Waste Centre on Paper bag manufacturing

No	Date	Course	Particulars
1	Jun 2004	Basic Course 4 designs of products Duration: 10 days full time course	5 women from the locality sponsored by an organization - Sebastian Indian Social Project - based in Belgium. After the training four of them along with 2 new entrants formed a paper bag production unit under the same organisation and are doing business
2	Sept 2004	Basic Course 4 designs of products Duration: 10 days full time course	4 women from Vizhinjam participated in this training programme. Since they were orthodox muslim women and was reluctant to travel outside their homes, the ZWC organized training programme at their door step. Now they are doing business from home depending on the orders they get.
3	Sept 2004	Basic Course 4 designs of products Duration: 10 days full time course	3 women from Thozhichal village of Venganoor Grama Panchayath participated. They now associate with Zero Waste Centre as casual workers.
4	Oct 2004	Paper pen manufacturing Duration: 2 days full time	4 women from Venganoor Grama Panchayath participated. The product is now becoming popular among people who organize seminars, hotels and other institutions.
5	Oct 2004	Making scribbling pads with onesided paper Duration: 3days part time	5 women from Venganoor Grama Panchayath participated. The product is now becoming popular among people who organize seminars, hotels and other institutions.

Annexure 3.

Training Programmes conducted by Zero Waste Centre on Patchworking Womens Lives

No	Date	Course	Particulars
1	Jun-July 2004	Patchworking Womens Lives Duration: 45 days full time	Six women from Vizhinjam and Venganoor Panchayaths were trained. They formed an independent group called 'Vismaya' which works from Zero Waste Centre.

Annexure 4.

Training Programmes conducted by Zero Waste Centre on Terracotta

No	Date	Course	Particulars
1	May 2004	Short term design course Duration: 1 day	It was for 2 people. One of them is a traditional craftsman in terracotta.

Annexure 5.

Training Programmes conducted by Zero Waste Centre on Organic Farming

No	Date	Course	Particulars
1	Jun 2003	General awareness on agriculture and threats from new world order like WTO Half day session	25 farmers attended this session, most of them women.
2	Aug 2003	General awareness on organic farming One full day programme	Attended by mostly women from Kudumbasree units who are engaged in farming in the Venganoor Grama Panchayath
3	Nov 2003	Vermi Composting One full day training	20 people participated.
4	Jan 2004	Making of 'Pancha Gavya' One full day	15 farmers participated in this programme where preparation of 'Pancha Gavya' - a traditional preparation to prevent pests, to boost the growth of plants - was taught
5	Aug 2004	General awareness on Organic Farming One full day programme	30 people participated
6	Aug 2004	General awareness on Organic Farming One full day programme	20 women from Vilappil Panchayath.
7	Jan 2005	Composting One full day	53 farmers participated.
8	Mar 2005	Vermi Composting One full day	20 women participated.
9	May 2005	Experience sharing on organic farming One full day	20 people attended



Annexure 6.

Training Programmes conducted by Zero Waste Centre on Resource Recovery

No	Date	Course	Particulars
1	Oct 2004	Biogas plant maintenance and operation, segregation and sorting of materials on the basis of their characteristics, principles of zero waste Duration: 10 days	3 women were trained. Hands on training at Hotel Samudra and Cluster Biogas Plant at Light House Beach Kovalam. These three women are now working in the resource recovery facilities in Kovalam.
2	Nov 2004	Biogas plant maintenance and operation, segregation and sorting of materials on the basis of their characteristics, principles of zero waste Duration: 10 days	2 women were trained. Hands on training at Hotel Samudra and Cluster Biogas Plant at Light House Beach Kovalam. These three women are now working in the resource recovery facilities in Kovalam.



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