

Thanal **News**letter

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September witnessed a lot of activity at Thanal with many of our team members attending national/ international meetings, seminars, exchange programmes, sessions, field visits etc. It is heartening to observe that world over, experts in agriculture, environmental science, and related fields are increasingly turning to agroecology as a key strategy to address global challenges like food insecurity and climate change. This shift towards agroecological approaches

is driven by growing recognition of the limitations and negative impacts of conventional, industrial agriculture. Agroecology offers a more holistic and resilient approach to food production, capable of providing nutritious food while mitigating climate change, preserving biodiversity, and empowering local communities. By adopting Agro Ecological principles, we can build a more sustainable and equitable food system that benefits both people and the planet.

REGIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME AT PENANG, MALAYSIA

Thanal team members visited Penang, Malaysia to attend the Regional learning exchange programme for youth on Agroecology. This was organised by Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific and its partners as part of ‘16 days of Global Action on Agroecology’- an annual campaign that promotes agroecology as a solution to the climate crisis and food insecurity.

As a part of this exchange programme, participants visited agricultural fields, attended sessions on SRI (System of Rice intensification - a paddy farming method to increase productivity while reducing cost and environmental impacts) , composting sessions and field training to facilitate knowledge transfer.

Team also witnessed a seed exchange ceremony with teams from different countries exchanging native seed varieties to signify

resistance to the current threats to seed sovereignty across the globe. Around 30 people participated for the programme from various agroecology advocates and network partners etc from Asia Pacific Countries.



LEARNING FROM THE FIELDS Canadian Team Visits Thanal's Organic Farmers



In Trivandrum, a three member team from Canada - Professor of British Columbia University, Ms Hana Witman, Project Coordinator Ms. Carolina and The Diaz Canada Association of Organic Farmers representative , Ms. Evelina visited Thanal farmers to learn about our agroecology practises and how it helps in

mitigating the challenges posed by climate change. Thanal team members took them to our organic certified farmers fields . The farmers showed them their crops, soil conservation, natural farming practices, biodiversity conservation practices etc.

COMMUNITY HEALTH LEARNING PROGRAMME, SOCHARA, BANGALORE

Thanal founders Sri Jayakumar and Smt Usha S took a half day session on Agroecology, food systems and health and chemical safety issues in which Thanal has been working for more than two decades. This was part of a community health programme organised by Sochara, an NGO based in Bangalore. The programme is unique as it encourages participants to explore the social paradigm of community and public health based on community needs and first-hand community experiences. The participants were concerned about climate change and related issues in the context of landslides in Wayanad and there were detailed discussions about how we can combat these challenges in the future.



FIRST ASIA PACIFIC CONGRESS ON ORGANICS AND CLIMATE CHANGE, BANGALORE

Thanal members attended the first-ever Organics and Climate change Conference in Bangalore, India hosted by Hasiru Dala and the India Zero Waste Alliance, with support from GAIA Asia Pacific and powered by the HLL Management Academy and the Urban Movement Innovation Fund. This event brought together participants from 16 countries. This event featured three main activities: the congress, expo, and study tour. The event explored innovative strategies in organic waste management, agroecology practises in farming, highlighted the critical role of farmers and local communities, and emphasised how strong governance can drive impactful climate action. On the first day, Sri. Jayakumar, Executive Director, Thanal led the plenary on Agroecology and Urban Farming session which explored the scope and potential of agroecology in reduction of food wastage and thereby combat climate change. A pivotal moment arrived with the reading of the Bengaluru Declara-

tion on Organics and Climate, where participants united in their resolve to combat climate change through innovative waste management strategies. The declaration calls for immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to organic waste, firmly rejecting waste incineration as a viable solution.



WINGS OF FIRE Trivandrum International School, Trivandrum

On 6th and 7th of September, Trivandrum International School campus hosted the Wings of Fire Programme, where students presented their innovative projects aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. This programme highlights our commitment to nurturing problem-solvers and future leaders who engage with pressing global issues. Mr. Jayakumar of Thanal trust inaugurated the event and guided and mentored the participants. It was indeed awe inspiring to see the new generation kids bring out sustainable solutions for the environment, eco restoration and agriculture.

Congratulations to all participants for their dedication and creativity in addressing climate and sustainability challenges.

ORGANIC COMPOSTING CLASS



On 11th September, a session on organic composting was conducted at Cherukara hamlet, Kulathupuzha by our team member Mr. Ajay Sreedhar. Total 60 beneficiaries attended his class. He began his class alerting everyone

how plastics have become an integrated part of this society and showcased reports on how microplastics have been found in human bodies and the need to avoid plastics in everyday life. The class covered the importance and advantages of organic compost, materials required and their availability, different composting methods and preparations and features of ring compost, biobin, thumburmuzhi, fence compost, vermin compost etc and encouraged self-help groups to create ring compost together.

CARBON NEUTRAL MEENANGADI AWARENESS CLASSES

On September 22, 2024, an awareness class was held in Meenangadi as part of the carbon neutral initiative, engaging Kudumbhasree members from the 10th Ward in Vattathuvayal and the 12th Ward in Kolambatta. There were 20 participants, including 13 from Kolambatta and 7 from Vattathuvayal. The class focused on climate change and community initiatives. The class began by highlighting the urgency of community involvement in combating climate change. Strategies for individual participation were discussed, emphasising local actions that yield significant environmental benefits. A demonstration of energy-efficient stoves showcased their features and advantages, particularly in reducing carbon emissions and enhancing cooking efficiency.

Participants engaged actively, raising questions about composting and menstrual health. The effective hands-on demonstrations helped participants retain information better.



FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

MY EXPERIENCE WITH BIODIVERSITY MONITORING IN FARMERS' FIELDS

By NEHA MADHAVAN

Project Officer, Carbon Neutral Meenangadi Project, Wayanad

I always believed I had a solid understanding of agriculture because I studied it in a structured academic environment. I received a great deal of philosophy, science, and technical knowledge from my undergraduate studies, but one crucial thing was missing : the practical experiences working with farmers in my native. When I recently went to a few different farmers' fields as part of my new profession as Project Officer at Thanal, this difference became evident. These field trips gave me insights into agroecology, agricultural production, and biodiversity that I could not have acquired in a classroom. Thanal is an environmental research organisation which has been working for the past three decades on sustainable agriculture. So, many farmers I visited were associated with Thanal and had set up their fields using agro ecological principles. They weren't just growing one or two crops, but a variety of species, all coexisting in a way that promoted biodiversity and sustainable farming. Each farm was like a small ecosystem, with crops, insects, soil, and water all playing their part in creating a balanced environment. It was enlightening for me to witness agroecology in action for the first time. These farmers were protecting the environment for coming generations in addition to providing food for their families and communities. One of the most striking aspects of my visits was encountering a wide range of crops I hadn't studied before. The local names of these crops were unfamiliar to me, and I quickly realised how important it is to understand the agricultural language specific to a region. My theoretical knowledge suddenly felt incomplete because I couldn't engage in a meaningful conversation without knowing these terms. One of the most memorable experiences was meeting a farmer who specialises in cultivating pepper. What made this farmer stand out was not just his dedication to farming but the fact that he had developed his own pepper varieties and had even obtained patents for them. It was inspiring to meet someone who had merged his

education and experience in agriculture and was receiving recognition for his efforts. His success story reaffirmed for me that farming, when done with passion, knowledge, and innovation, can bring about rewarding results. I also met a farmer who dedicates his time to training young people in agriculture and biodiversity. His goal is not just to farm but to instil a societal responsibility toward nature in the next generation. This farmer understood that the future of sustainable farming lies in education, and it was heartening to see someone so invested in passing down both skills and values to young people. Each farmer I met shared unique insights, from crop cultivation techniques to their philosophies on nature and sustainability. The exposure I gained from each of them enriched my understanding of the diverse approaches to farming. These field visits were more than just an educational experience, they were a personal transformation. I learned that biodiversity monitoring isn't just about the scientific processes happening in the fields but also about understanding and respecting the local context in which these processes occur. Farmers possess a wealth of knowledge that is one overlooked in academic settings. Meeting farmers who excel in different areas, whether it's developing patented crops or educating the next generation, broadened my understanding of agriculture. From each farmer, I learned something new and meaningful, which deepened my appreciation for the diversity of farming practices.

Moving forward, I am committed to combining my academic background with the real-world lessons I've learned from these farmers. My field visits taught me that effective biodiversity monitoring and sustainable farming rely not only on scientific knowledge but also on meaningful communication and collaboration with those who work the land every day. Through this experience, I've gained a deeper appreciation for the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical wisdom, and I'm excited to continue learning from both worlds.

ACCOLADES



It is a moment of immense pride and happiness that Wayanad District Panchayat has been awarded the prestigious 19th Rajiv Gandhi National Award by the Tirupati Academy of Grassroots Studies and Research of India. The Panchayat’s remarkable contributions in 2023, particularly in the fields of education, climate change awareness programs, and the publication of the district’s carbon emission report, have been rightfully recognized. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the District Panchayat for their significant role in driving the sustainable development of Wayanad.

VIDEO OF THE MONTH



 https://www.instagram.com/reel/C_cWDf8Sxkm/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

In September, the little ones from Kido International Preschool visited our Thanal Organic Bazaar during their “you are what you eat” themed week to observe and taste our organic goodness . It was a day filled with discovery and joy as they experienced nature’s bliss firsthand. Our team enjoyed spending time with these kids, showing them various vegetables and plant varieties, feeding them fresh fruits and juice and also teaching these young ones how to do planting.

ONAM CELEBRATIONS AT THANAL





Your donation, regardless of its size, holds the power to catalyse positive change towards a greener and sustainable future.

Your support will enable us to extend our outreach to a wider range of beneficiaries, including farmers and marginal communities. With your contributions, we can provide essential assistance to small scale or disadvantaged farmers by giving them training, supplying organic seeds, saplings and other resources that are crucial for sustainable agriculture and safe food. These resources often come at a higher cost compared to conventional alternatives, making your support even more valuable.

For your convenience, we have provided our account details below:

Account Name: Thanal

Account Number: 21780100017799

**Bank Name: Federal Bank,
Sasthamangalam**

IFSC Code: FDRL0002178

Thank you once again for your generosity and commitment to our shared cause