

## From Field to Market

Building on our successful work with cotton farmers in Gujarat, this new project is helping farmers in Karnataka to convert to organic cultivation and find new markets for their cotton.



What is the problem or need the project is addressing?

Raichur is one of the poorest districts in India. A decline in cotton prices over the last decade has destabilised the local economy and destroyed the livelihoods of about 1 million people.

Many problems facing cotton farmers are due to the use of pesticides/ agrochemicals. The average cotton farmer spends over 50% of his income on pesticides/ agrochemicals. This has led to an increase in indebtedness, suicides and migration. The problems facing cotton farmers have had a knock-on effect on labourers, and many have been forced to migrate in search of work and sources of income.

What is the project doing?

- Establishing village-level groups to enable farmers to access to a range of benefits and encourage collective working.
- Providing training to support farmers convert to organic farming. This will include: new technologies; cultivation practices; harvesting; storage; marketing; mixed cropping; etc.
- Providing agricultural services to support organic cotton cultivation: agricultural inputs (seeds, bio-fertilisers/pesticides, tools and equipment); drip irrigation equipment; raw material/ inputs etc.
- Establishing a revolving fund will help farmers buy goods/services.
- Lobbying for improvements in domestic and international policies that have a negative impact on cotton farmers and labourers. This will include meetings with key decision-makers, lobbying policy makers and campaigning with the general public.
- Starting a pilot business initiative for landless labourers. This initiative will provide employment, training and income for landless labourers (particularly women).

What impact has the project had?

This is a new project. However we expect the following outcomes:

- Improved performance of cotton farmers through better yields, better quality, better business management etc.
- Reduced dependency on cotton farming through the promotion of rotational crops.
- Reduced production costs and improved personal/environmental health through the removal of chemical pesticides and conversion to Fairtrade/organic farming
- Increased capacity of small cotton farmers and labourers to market their products
- Farmers and labourers are organised into groups that enable them to develop a collective voice and negotiate with policy makers and supply chain actors.
- Strong links developed between groups, enabling effective collective action at district, state and national level.

Our local partner

We have 5 local partners, each chosen because of their different skills and experience:

- SAFAL is an NGO that develops livelihood opportunities for poor communities. It has vast experience of helping communities improve their market access and earn viable incomes.
- PRERANA is an NGO with significant experience in the project area. PRERANA works to improve the livelihoods of poor communities through collective action.
- Navnirman Trust is an NGO that works to empower poor communities by encouraging them to work together. It has significant experience of: mobilising communities to form groups; making them aware of their rights; and supporting them in lobbying/advocacy.
- SEVA is an NGO that is well known for its work in the cotton industry. SEVA has done research into the effects of pesticides/agrochemicals on women/children working in cottonfields and also piloted projects with farmers, labourers and weavers.
- Agrocel is a social enterprise that has worked with TX on a very successful project to support cotton farmers in Gujarat, India. Agrocel will provide technical support to farmers and will help to establish an agro-service centre to provide goods/services.

How is this project funded?

The project is funded by the Department for International Development, UK.

