

INNOVATING ADAPTATION THROUGH AGROECOLOGY

Andhra Pradesh Community-Managed Natural Farming India

Since 2015, the state government of Andhra Pradesh, India, has taken up “Zero-budget Natural Farming” (ZBNF), a climate-resilient approach to agricultural production. The core objective of ZBNF is to promote farming that is in harmony with nature, based on our belief that nature-based solutions offer the best pathway for tackling human-induced problems in the food, and agriculture sector. The programme is currently working with 650,000 farmers, covering an area of approximately 280,000 hectares.



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AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICES

- ❧ Promoting zero-chemical usage.
- ❧ Adhering to the four, non-negotiable, “wheels” of ZBNF, namely: microbial seed coating; enhancement of soil biomes through inoculants; continuous coverage of the ground; and soil aeration, and humus preservation.
- ❧ Using biological pest control management techniques based on botanical extracts that are prepared locally with local resources, such as neem leaves.
- ❧ Preserving indigenous seeds.
- ❧ Practicing minimal tillage to restore, and preserve soil structure and health.
- ❧ Establishing women’s self-help groups to increase women’s involvement in farming decisions.
- ❧ Conducting participatory, and gender-inclusive, programme planning, implementation and monitoring.
- ❧ Facilitating farmer-to-farmer knowledge dissemination.

IMPACTS

- ❧ **Studies** show that there is no statistically significant difference in the yields of crops grown under ZBNF and non-ZBNF systems.
- ❧ For all crops, **studies** show that, for all crops, there is a substantial reduction in production costs per hectare under ZBNF, compared to non-ZBNF systems. This means that ZBNF systems earn a higher net income per hectare for farmers.
- ❧ The focus on crop diversification under ZBNF not only contributes to improved food security, but also makes farmers less vulnerable to price drops and market instabilities.

PERSPECTIVES

The long-term goal of the programme is to “convert every farmer in Andhra Pradesh” — approximately six million farmers— to ZBNF. It also aims to disseminate the programme’s knowledge, models and resources to other states and countries.