

## Annexure 1



Accion Fraterna

Work in **Integrated Water  
Resources Management**

in Anantapur



*Humankind has, through its long history, been struggling against powerful and inimical forces to create a humane, compassionate and just society. We are a part of this struggle. Our Dharma or code of values lies in*

- concern for others
- work beyond duty
- excellence in work
- reaching as many people as possible



Accion Fraterna (AF) is a Voluntary Organisation founded by Father Vincent Ferrer in 1982.

Since 1987, AF has been intensifying its efforts in watershed development and drought proofing. Today, AF's primary focus is Participatory Watershed Development, and Human and Organisational Resource Development.

### Accion Fraterna is committed to

- transforming the semi-desertic land of Anantapur into a land capable of sustaining its population, with people and land living in harmony with each other.
- being an integral part of the people of Anantapur in their historical journey toward a humane, compassionate and just society.

### Father Vincent Ferrer

Father Vincent Ferrer is well known as a social worker in India and internationally for his relentless work against poverty in the Indian states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Born in Spain in 1920, he came to India in 1952 as a Jesuit Priest and founded the Maharashtra Sethkari Sanghatan at Manmad. He shifted to Anantapur in 1969, where he founded Rural Development Trust (RDT).

RDT has been serving the people of Anantapur, a region in Andhra Pradesh severely affected by drought and poverty. In 1982, Fr. Ferrer founded the Women's Development Trust (WDT) and Accion Fraterna (AF) as fraternal organisations of RDT. In 1995, he set up the Fundacion de Vincente Ferrer in Spain to support programmes being implemented by these three organisations. Apart from these, a few hundred Indian voluntary organisations trace their origins to Rural Development Trust and Fr. Ferrer. RDT, WDT and AF now work in 1,500 villages of Anantapur district. Their programmes directly cover a population of about 2 million.

In recognition of his services, Fr. Ferrer has received many awards from Spain and India, including the 'Principe de Asturia de Concorde' (Prince of Spain Award for Peace and Development) and two honorary doctorates. He is also recognised as an 'International Citizen of Spain'.

At 82, Fr. Ferrer is actively associated with development in Anantapur. A living example of an outstanding social worker committed to the cause of the poor, he continues to be a source of inspiration to thousands of individuals involved in development work.

### Anantapur District

Anantapur district is located in southern Andhra Pradesh in south India.

The district receives the least rainfall in the state of Andhra Pradesh averaging 522 mm annually, against a state-wide average of 926 mm. In fact, it receives the second lowest rainfall in India. Nevertheless, rainfed farming is the mainstay of the region's economy. With few options available economically, the majority of the people are dependent on only a single crop - that too a mono crop of groundnut sown under rainfed conditions each year.

With a population of about 4 million, Anantapur is one of the poorest districts in the country. One direct indicator of its poverty and backwardness is its rural indebtedness - 45%, against 18% statewide. Irrigation facilities are lowest with only 15% of cultivated area under irrigation, against 43% statewide. Interestingly, most of the irrigation is dependent on ground water.

In the last 10 years (1993-2002), there were only three "good" crop years and seven drought years.

Living is a challenge and survival a way of life, for the people of Anantapur District. The root of poverty in the region is essentially borne out of moisture-stress. Thus, soil moisture and water conservation, along with water utilisation, are the key issues for development.

That is why watershed development and management become major dimensions of any development effort in this region.

## Accion Fraterna's work in Integrated Water Resources Management in Anantapur

It is pertinent to note that AF sees the need for long-term intervention rather than implementing short-term projects, withdrawing and moving on. Thus, it seeks to play a part in social reconstruction rather than merely programme execution.

Evaluation Report, Jan 2002

### Combating desertification and improving the carrying capacity of the land by

- restoring traditional water bodies
- harvesting rain water
- developing surface and ground water resources
- conserving soil and moisture
- promoting diversified vegetation by afforestation of various kinds

### Strengthening human and organisational resources in the district by

- creating awareness on issues pertaining to desertification
- building village-based organisations such as the Water Users' Association for effective participatory watershed development and a village development committee to ensure the effective functioning of these organisations
- training and building the capacity of the government and voluntary organisation

### Advocacy and lobbying for changes in policy by

- networking with organisations and individuals on issues of water, watershed development, gender equity and women empowerment, forest and environment
- networking NGOs at district, state and national levels, playing a key role in promoting Voluntary Action Network Anantapur (VANA), Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN, Hyderabad) and Voluntary Action Network India (VANI, Delhi)

### Conducting research with

- ICRI (International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) and AME (Agriculture, Man and Ecology, an Indo-Dutch bilateral project) on groundnut management
- CESS (Centre for Economics & Social Studies) on livelihood strategies
- the UK Natural Resources Institute (NRI-UK) on water and livelihoods

### Diversifying agriculture production and improving resistance to drought by

- promoting rain-fed horticulture and drought-resistant dry land farming
- providing credit support towards dairy development
- upgrading local cattle breeds to high yielding varieties
- promoting fodder development and veterinary services
- encouraging use of non-conventional energy
- enhancing non-farm income and employment opportunities



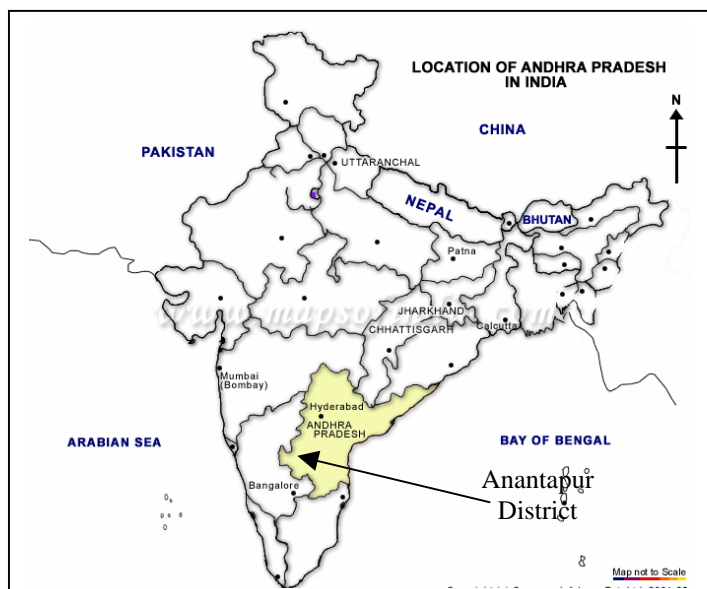
## Recognition and honours

In recognition of AF's pioneering contribution to watershed development in Anantapur, its director Malla Reddy has been invited to participate as a member in the following major policy initiatives

- Andhra Pradesh State Water Conservation Mission, a constitutional body chaired by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh
- Andhra Pradesh State Land, Water and Trees Authority, a constitutional body chaired by the state Minister of Rural Development
- Andhra Pradesh State Watershed Development Committee, headed by the Special Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh
- Andhra Pradesh State Regional Consultative Committee of National Banks of Rural Development (NABARD) Watershed Development, chaired by the Special Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh
- National Consultative Committee for Agriculture, Man and Ecology (AME) Programme, a bilateral project of the Governments of the Netherlands and India

AF strongly believes:

- in the dignity and value of each human being, without which the deprived are unprotected and easily dispensed with
- in the sacredness of life
- in the common destiny of mankind
- that the end does not justify the means
- in the simple values of speaking the truth
- in not harming others
- in helping those in need



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**Achievements  
Accion Fraterna**

**Anantapur,  
10 years after...**



## Accion Fraterna is a voluntary organisation with a difference.

**A**F's Participatory Watershed Development Programme has brought unity and cooperation to the project villages where once there were discord and bloodshed. AF's message "Stop Bloodshed and Start Watershed" has created a positive social environment in hitherto divided and faction-ridden villages.

Action Fraterna is a voluntary organisation with a difference. It has concentrated efforts in enabling about **0.4 million people to survive in a chronically drought prone, arid, rain-shadow area in Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh**, a southern Indian state. A majority of the people are small and marginal farmers who depend on a single crop of groundnuts, which is in turn dependent on the erratic, elusive and oft-belated rain. Their life is thus a gamble and an ongoing struggle for survival.

Over the last 10 years, Accion Fraterna has covered 250 villages of Anantapur district under its watershed development programme. These villages are spread over a geographical area of approximately 3,195 sq km. The programme has had a direct impact on 70,072 households and a population of over 3,92,000 people.

The strategic interventions of AF focus on water and land, with conservation and sustainability as keywords. During the last 10 years its watershed programme has ensured that most of the precious rainwater that falls on the dry and parched lands is retained. This pioneering effort aimed for an optimal, replicable and scalable mix of traditional wisdom and modern technology.

Renovation of traditional surface water conservation structures (tanks, ponds and springs) resulted in transformation of dry and uncultivable lands ensuring better survival for people, cattle and crops. Alongside, mango orchards helped fetch enough income to meet the survival needs of marginal farmers and their families through the long summer. Most importantly, the effects have begun to show in the reversal of desertification in a region traditionally considered drought-prone.

### Qualitative achievements

Accion Fraterna has contributed to wide **public awareness and debate** on challenges faced by drought prone and resource poor areas. It has focused on the 'criticality' of water in the process of rural development.

Accion Fraterna has used the **cultural and print media, meetings, workshops and mass campaigns** to awaken the public, politicians, the Government, professionals and technocrats. This has influenced policies, increased knowledge and changed attitudes of over 3 million people in Anantapur.

Accion Fraterna has **developed and demonstrated "participatory approaches" and multi-village institutional systems** to promote and institutionalise peoples' participation for sustainable micro watershed development. This approach is people centric, gender equitable and poor friendly.

This participatory approach has **positively influenced the government** both at national and at state levels to make the "micro watershed development policies" more people centric, eco-friendly and water focused.

Today, about **7,000 micro watershed development projects** in Andhra Pradesh follow the participatory approach and systems developed by Accion Fraterna. Many thousands of other people have benefited by exposure to Accion Fraterna's watershed programme during the past 10 years.

Accion Fraterna's Participatory Watershed Development Programme has brought **unity and cooperation** to the project villages where once there were discord and bloodshed. Accion Fraterna's message "**stop bloodshed and start watershed**" has created a positive social environment in hitherto divided and faction-ridden villages.

## Major policy implications of AF's watershed interventions

Globally, water issues are increasingly occupying centre stage in any discussion on development. However, the focus is still on how rivers and dams can be used to irrigate dry lands. Instead, here is a model that **challenges the convention**, and **forcefully demonstrates** that **conservation of existing soil and water resources** is a much more appropriate approach, one that can work **cost-effectively** in **areas of extreme poverty**, with the **continued participation of user-communities as stakeholders**.

AF's work **impressed upon the government** the vital importance of **renovating traditional waterbodies**, rather than indiscriminate construction of checkdams.

As a result of AF's work in mobilising **local self-governance** bodies such as the *panchayats* and *gramasabhas*, **community participation** is today an integral part of the **national Watershed Guidelines**. More importantly, the **Land Water Tree Act** (soon to be enacted in Law), is a direct result of AF's consistent lobbying efforts to **check and monitor groundwater use (and abuse)**.

Moreover, the AF approach **ensures long-term community participation** by involving **stakeholder user groups** in the process right from the start, and who are also responsible for continued maintenance. User groups **share in the total costs** of renovation and maintenance, thus putting into practise the often mooted but seldom implemented **policy of cost-sharing**.

Extending its visionary logic into related areas of work, AF has **expanded the horticulture programme** from being a mere tree-planting exercise into a **long-term integrated package of care, conservation and protection** – a programme now **adopted as the norm** by district and other government bodies.

**‘**  
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**’**

Finally, from a situation where there were no trained professionals in water conservation, AF has today created a trained local pool of over 350 grassroots para-professionals – equipped to deal with **both conceptual and practical watershed issues**. In addition, the **AF Training Centre**, the first of its kind in the district, has also trained over **200 workers from 150 other organisations**.

### Strategic interventions

Accion Fraterna's core programme is 'Participatory Watershed Development'. Interventions are strategically designed to create a larger impact on drought and poverty. Its participatory watershed development programme is like a hub influencing the policy environment, organisational and human resource development, government implementing agencies and voluntary organisations in effectively addressing the problems of drought and poverty on a sustainable basis.

### Major physical achievements in the last 10 years

- Covered 250 villages in Anantapur district under its Watershed Development Programme
- Carried out soil and moisture conservation work on 77,568 hectares
- Renovated 220 water harvesting structures and constructed 765 new structures, increasing water storage capacity by 8,564,000 cu m
- Built approximately 6,200 km of bunds for soil and water conservation
- Planted 858,895 trees, generating an annual income of Rs 700 million. This is expected to increase to Rs 1,100 million annually in five years
- Generated employment of 3.5 million person days over the last 10 years, for the extremely poor and landless

## Major physical achievements 1991-2002

Activity	Units	Achievements
Soil and moisture conservation measures	Area in ha	77,568
Development of marginal lands	Area in ha	12,083
Restoration of traditional rainwater harvesting structures	Nos	220
Construction of new rainwater harvesting structures	Nos	765
Dryland Farming Practices	Area in ha	75,295

## Wellsprings of hope

*When Mr Marladet and Mr Mehta, members of a European Union delegation, visited Mukundapuram village in the AF project area, they were invited by the village people to visit an open well, which was apparently in disuse and disrepair*

*However, they were astonished to find it full of water. More so, they learnt that this well had not seen a drop of water in the 15 years prior to the Watershed Programme implemented by AF.*

*The villagers told the visitors: "This is a good indicator of the groundwater increase in our village. Though we lost the groundnut crop, we are happy that rainwater harvesting has restored water in our open and bore wells.*

*"So we can look forward to a good crop next summer at least."*

*Source: Report on the EU Delegates' Visit*

## Current Watershed Development Programme<sup>1</sup> at a glance (2000-2003)

Planned Activity	Units	Target for 3 years	Achieved on 31 March 2002
No. of watersheds in progress	Villages	48	48
No. of village-based watershed organisations	VBOs	48	48
Soil and moisture conservation measures	Ha	17,280	12,998
Restoration of water bodies and rain water harvesting	Nos	150	241
Horticulture	Ha	1,152	613
Dryland farming practices	Ha	24,000	18,000
Afforestation/ vegetation	Plants	—	5,010,340
Biogas units	No	600	154
Smokeless chulas	No	3,600	1,517

<sup>1</sup> This programme is funded jointly by European Union, EED (Germany) and ICCO (The Netherlands).

## Collaboration with government on water and environment related programmes

Recognising that only governments can address problems of drought and poverty on a large scale, Accion Fraterna's role as a key partner is to create effective and replicable models, focusing on a strong participatory approach, simplifying technical concepts into locally understood language, and so on, which can be adapted and scaled up by the government and others. AF also acts as a Project Implementing Agency (PIA) of the state government's watershed programme.

AF sees working with government as a means to increase its outreach, as well as to demonstrate the effectiveness of its approach. Collaboration presents the opportunity to influence the design and implementation of the government programme. Evaluation Report,

Examples of government-AF collaboration are summarised below:

### Government programmes implemented (by AF as PIA) and activities planned for 2002-2003

No. of watersheds under DDP (APRLP)	Villages	11
No. of villages under RIDF	Villages	5
No. of watershed organisations organised	No.	11
No. of water bodies proposed for renovation in 2002-03	No.	61
Horticulture programme proposed for 2002-03	Ha.	500

