

## The Mid-day Meal Show

The mid-day meal for school children is an initiative of IFSP to improve the nutritional condition of students in rural schools. Most school children do not have breakfast before going to school. They faint during lessons and their capacity to concentrate and learn is severely affected. Drop-out rates in rural schools are reaching 85%. The provision of the mid-day meal has so far contributed to a significant increase in attendance. At the same time, parents and teachers are aware that a mid-day meal is an incentive for students to attend school, improve their learning capability and their future prospects.

To date the mid-day meal has been implemented in 48 schools in war affected villages in Trincomalee district. About 6,800 children benefit. The average cost of a meal per child per day ranges between Rs. 4 and 6. This low cost would enable even poor families to contribute.

IFSP has embarked on a staged and phased approach. During the initial phase IFSP met all the expenses. The second phase requests parents to provide 25% of the cost. The subsequent phase calls for an increase of up to 50%. Thereafter, parents are challenged to fully take over.

The dramatic performance which compliments the activities of IFSP, demonstrates how to improve health and nutrition. The show promotes active involvement and contributions from parents. They are requested to organise and prepare the mid-day meal themselves. The drama enhances the knowledge of how to utilise locally available green leaves, vegetables and fruit which are of high nutritious value. It finally proves to be an enjoyable cultural event for all.

The show has covered all mid-day meal schools in Echchilampattai DS Division and will be continued to the mid-day meal schools in other divisions.

The performance was presented by members of the Women's Development Society of the Trincomalee District Youth Development AHAM (TDYDA).



Suppar Mama (left) represents IFSP. Suppar Mama is a person from a foreign country. He cooperates with the school principal, the Divisional Secretary, the Department of Education, the School Development Society and the Department of Health. Suppar Mama proposes a new idea to the parents, the mid-day meal. He comes with a full load of ingredients (red rice, gram, green leaves, coconut, salt, jagery) for the Illai Kanchi / Kola Kantha.



The mother (right) who prepares the mid-day meal shows how big the pot has to be.



The ingredients are being put in the pot to boil



The kitchen of the school was inspected and the result presented and discussed with parents, children and teachers.

Detailed information about the mid-day meal are available in the Technical Papers 7 and 12.

### Supporting World Food Day 2002

World Food Day falls on 16 October 2002. The theme of this year's World Food Day is 'Water Source of Food Security'. IFSP had commissioned a water survey along the north-eastern coast of Trincomalee with a focus on i) inventorying all wells, ii) estimating the safe yield of the north-eastern aquifer and iii) establishing a water quality and quantity monitoring. More than 3,000 wells were identified, most of them agro-wells which are used for intensive onion cultivation. Over-extraction of ground water takes place. In many locations the water is contaminated by faecal matters and nitrate due to excessive fertilisation. The water is partly unfit for human consumption.

What needs to be done to promote water as a major source of nutrition and food security? As a contribution to this year's World Food Day the Department of Agriculture and IFSP organise a number of events to create awareness among farmers for water saving and improved water use for an environmental friendly vegetable cultivation. The results of the IFSP survey are explained to local communities. Mothers are advised to boil water before giving it to their children. Simple means

such as pitcher and small drip irrigation for intensive home gardening are demonstrated to farmers. More sophisticated systems would include sprinkler irrigation. In cooperation with the Hatton National Bank the Department of Agriculture is promoting such systems at individual farms. Crop diversification is recommended.

At a time when peace is at our door steps the market economy is expected to create new opportunities for agri-business. IFSP continues to contribute to improved nutrition and food security in Trincomalee district. The many activities supported have so far contributed to social integration, reduction of poverty, economic development and regional stability. IFSP is actively promoting a peaceful co-existence between the regional communities.

For detailed information about water in Trincomalee district please see Technical Paper 16 Water Quality Monitoring in the Coastal Area of Trincomalee District, TP 17 Well Inventory in the Nilaveli - Kuchchaveli Area, TP 17 Well Inventory in the Nilaveli - Kuchchaveli Area.

### Christine Schenk

Christine joins IFSP in mid October. She is a geographer and a monitoring specialist. Christine was with IFSP during the IFSP-CATAD project 2001 'Conflict - Threat or Opportunity?' which was jointly supervised by Mrs Rohini Singarayer, Project Director IFSP and Benedikt Korf from CATAD. In February 2002 Christine had assisted us in preparing planning maps in close cooperation with the Planning Department of the Provincial Council.



[www.ifsp-srilanka.org](http://www.ifsp-srilanka.org)

**IFSP news is also available in Tamil and Sinhala**

IFSP Office  
42 Huskison Street  
31000 Trincomalee

phone 026-22023, 22687  
fax 026-22296  
e-mail [ifsp@srilanka.net](mailto:ifsp@srilanka.net)