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2 Years After Tsunami

Tamil Nadu fails on tsunami housing

New Delhi: Two years after the Indian Ocean tsunami, many Indian survivors in the southern state of Tamil Nadu still do not have adequate housing, compounding their trauma, a report released on Friday said. Cramped bathing spaces, tiny kitchens and lack privacy for women were among the problems faced by tens of thousands of people living in temporary and permanent homes, the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), a local voluntary group, said. The government has rejected the reports' findings. "People will look at what has not been done, rather than what has been done," C.V. Shankar, Tamil Nadu secretary for relief and rehabilitation, said, adding that in most cases, voluntary groups consulted local communities before building shelters.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DELI11965.htm>

Reconstruction in earthquake-hit Yogyakarta

YOGYAKARTA, 10th January 2007: Racing ahead of schedule, Habitat for Humanity Indonesia has achieved its target of building 1,000 houses for survivors of last year's massive earthquake in Central Java, six months ahead of time. As of November 2006, a total of 1, 085 houses had been completed.

The success to date can be put down to several specific reasons. First is the ability to harness "gotong royong" or a strong grassroots spirit: almost all the labor for rebuilding a community comes from within that community.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/YAOL-6XD2ZG?OpenDocument>

Towards a healthier Aceh

closely watches the unloading, unwrapping and checking of the glistening medical equipment. Inside, the clinic is crowded with curious villagers, mostly women and children, all trying to catch a glimpse of what has arrived.

Muara Batu, situated in the east coast of Aceh province, is about 30 km from the nearest hospital located in the city of Lhokseumawe. This distance is further exaggerated during times of emergency, such as when an expectant mother enters labor.

"It adds anxiety to pregnant women, especially first-time mothers," explains Yusni, a community leader in Muara Batu.

The village, situated on the east coast of Aceh province, used to have a clinic in its community hall. But it was destroyed by the tsunami. "With the community clinic gone, women have become less keen on going for monthly check ups and prefer to give birth at home," says Yusni. "And this is not really safe."

But today he breathes a sigh of relief. "This is good. Now we have somewhere closer, and health personnel to turn to."

The clinic in Muara Batu is one of 27 health clinics that are being built by the Hong Kong Red Cross branch of the China Red Cross in partnership with the Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia-PMI). The clinics will be staffed by professional health personnel and monitored regularly by doctors, all of whom are provided by the local government health department.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/AMMF-6W3HLZ?OpenDocument&nostyle=1&HTML=02>

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ECOSAN TOILETS

Maximum 'ECOSAN' toilets for fishing village

NAGAPATTINAM: The Government is providing sustainable sanitation facilities at the permanent shelters in tsunami-hit areas. It is based on the experience gained in the field of sanitation, health and hygiene at the shelters.

Kameshwaram, a tsunami-hit fishing village, has the distinction of getting the maximum number of 'ECOSAN' compost toilets in the country with the opening of 100th Household Centered Environment Sanitation Toilet (HCEST) here on Saturday. As many as 100 toilets were constructed by Society for Community Organisation and Peoples Education (SCOPE) of Tiruchi, a pioneer in the field of ECOSAN compost toilet in the country. M. Subburaman, Director of SCOPE, said that toilets each costing of Rs. 7,000 were built with financial assistance from Nagapattinam District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), UNICEF, and Friends-in-Need, an NGO from France. The toilets were considered a good model for high water table sandy coastal areas where conventional ones could not function well.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/01/07/stories/2007010714450300.htm>

Sanitation key factor in tsunami rehabilitation

CHENNAI: Sanitation was the most important, but also the most difficult component of the tsunami rehabilitation programme, C.V.Shanker, Officer on Special Duty, Tsunami Rehabilitation, said.

The need was to build systems that would not be too complicated, keeping in mind the costs involved not only in setting up, but also in maintaining the infrastructure, Mr.Shankar said while addressing the inaugural function of a workshop on Water and Sanitation in Post-Tsunami Reconstruction, organised in the city on Thursday by the Tsunami Rehab Information Network (TRINet) in collaboration with Project Management Unit, Tamil Nadu Government.

Issues to be considered while providing for sanitation, especially in the tsunami-hit coastal areas, include groundwater level, permeability and soil texture.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/15/stories/2006121501680600.htm>

Reconstruction Efforts Focus On Housing And Community Development

Habitat for Humanity announced that in the two years since the deadly Indian Ocean tsunami, the organization has assisted nearly 10,000 families with permanent housing such as built, repaired and rehabilitated houses with tsunami-affected families in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Habitat's community-based disaster response model encourages participation by village leaders and affected families.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/habhum/116789492523.htm>

Health insurance scheme for tsunami victims launched

Nagapattinam: A health insurance scheme, supported by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, has been launched for tsunami victims in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. As many as 50,593 beneficiaries have already been identified to avail of the scheme and the enrolment process would be completed by March 2007, District Collector Tenkasi S Jawahar said in a statement on Monday.

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/004200701240325.htm>

Girls from tsunami-hit villages given training

More than 120 girls from six tsunami-hit villages near Velankanni and Nagapattinam attended a special training programme on health awareness and personality development.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/01/22/stories/2007012206270200.htm>

Poverty Housing: Asia Pacific Report

"A Right to a Decent Home" is an extensive survey of the housing landscape in the Asia-Pacific region. The report, the first of its kind by Habitat for Humanity, examines the state of poverty housing conditions, the causes and effects of substandard housing and initiatives needed to improve housing conditions.

This report complements Habitat for Humanity studies on housing conditions in Europe and Central Asia, and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

http://demo.habitat.org/ap/poverty_housing_report.aspx

LOCAL PLAN: Tsunami affected villagers in Koh Yao map out a community plan

Local villagers of Pru Nai village in Koh Yao district of Phang-Nga who were affected by the tsunami, discussed and exchanged their ideas and experiences during group activities for community planning. Their gathering was arranged by Asia Foundation and Give2Asia – AIG to enhance their capability in analysis and direct their own community development. This includes the management of natural resources which should lead to resolving their community problems such as the land issue. The local villagers also realized the importance of decentralization and in protecting their legal rights as well as establishing strong networks for natural hazard victims for future cooperation in both short and long term.

<http://www.thaisnews.com/index.php>

Turning catastrophic event into opportunity for development

Chennai: How a catastrophic event such as the tsunami was converted into an opportunity for more effective disaster management formed the crux of the deliberations at a day-long media workshop organised at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, here on Tuesday. Titled 'Science and Tsunami: Two years later,' the seminar examined various methods undertaken by the Foundation and other organisations to use science to turn the disaster into an opportunity for growth.

M.S. Swaminathan, chairman, MSSRF, set the tenor for the rest of the proceedings by stressing that enormous progress had taken place in the last two years since the tsunami. Linking vulnerability with natural disasters, environmental degradation, poverty and hunger, he highlighted the importance of pulling oneself out of the vicious spiral in order to ensure sustainable development. Prof. Swaminathan also said resilience required not only science and technology but also social, economic and gender equities.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/27/stories/2006122711930400.htm>

'Gyan Kendras' for Women

Nagapattinam: The Project Concern International (PCI), India, in partnership with the Avon Foundation, United States, on Thursday, launched 'Gyan Kendras' (Centres of Knowledge) for women of eight worst tsunami-hit villages at Thirumullaivasal village in the district.

Addressing the inaugural function, Henry Alderfer, Country Director, PCI India, said that there was urgent need for such centres aimed at empowering women and children in the tsunami-affected villages.

The centres would benefit more than 1,600 girls, women and children every year once it started functioning in full swing, he said. Its activities included economic development, shelter reconstruction, water and sanitation services and education, he said.

Dr. Henry Alderfer pointed out that PCI was one of the first international organisations in India to aid tsunami survivors and rushed supplies and emergency medical care to thousands of people. Long-term recovery efforts, with a focus on women and children, continue to benefit 65,000 people.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/15/stories/2006121513700300.htm>

Monitoring NGOs in construction

Government "failed" to monitor relief work of NGOs: Nagercoil: The Government has failed to monitor the activities of voluntary agencies involved in tsunami relief work in Kanyakumari district, complained a section of the fishermen community here. A close watch of the activities of the NGOs would have ensured equitable distribution of relief materials, they said.

"The NGOs had a lot of resources. They wanted to distribute them to the affected. But they could not approach the affected directly," alleged P. Syprian of Pallam. Favouritism shown by influential among the villagers prevented many affected people from getting free vallams, fishing nets, motors and other benefits from voluntary agencies, he said. The frustration of fishermen here forced them to float a third association to get their "due share." On the complaints, Collector Sunil Paliwal said the officials could guide only those NGOs which were willing to work with the Government. "We cannot call the shots for all the NGOs," he said.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/26/stories/2006122607420500.htm>

India's islands face tsunami housing crisis

Permanent shelters for tsunami survivors in India's Andaman islands do not reflect local needs and threaten to undermine the traditional way of life of indigenous people, a report said on Friday.

Two years on, more than 9,700 families are without permanent shelter and live in temporary homes of corrugated iron which often become unbearable in the summer heat. "Prefabricated steel structure houses ... have been conceived more on the basis on capacities of delivery agencies rather than community needs and priorities," the report by the Society for Andaman and Nicobar Ecology (SANE) and agency ActionAid said. Homes for fishermen were being built on hilltops while farmers will get houses far from their fields, the report said. Activists say most families will be relocated from the sites of their original homes and even to different islands.

"People don't know on which island they will be relocated ... two years on, not one permanent house has been built," Vivek Rawal, co-author of the report, told a launch news conference. The strategically important islands, close to the Strait of Malacca, are directly ruled by New Delhi, a factor activists say has resulted in little consultation in rebuilding efforts. "This is the result of centralisation of decision-making and lack of autonomy and freedom of the local community to discuss," said Vivekanandan of the Chennai-based Tsunami Rehabilitation Information Network, which also worked on the report.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DEL259728.htm>

Pathology supplies donated to tsunami hit maternity clinic

A maternity clinic in the tsunami devastated area of Kalutara in Sri Lanka is set to benefit from a donation of laboratory equipment and supplies as a part of a new Challenge Anneka project.

The donation of glass slide jars with lids and diamond pencils to mark pathology slides will help to ensure the Magalkunda Maternity Clinic, which is being rebuilt, after suffering structural damage during the Asian Tsunami in 2004, can continue to provide ante- and post-natal care to more than 2,500 families in the region.

Commenting on the impact of the loss of a local clinic, Amina Cheal, assistant producer of Challenge Anneka, said: "Mothers have to travel long distances to the nearest clinic where up to 150 people queue to see one doctor. This means heavily pregnant women, mothers and children stand on a narrow dirt road in scorching heat."

"The clinic lost all of its medical facilities and equipment to the tsunami. The doctors, nurses and midwifery staff have all been dispersed to different clinics, so there is no-one locally to monitor pregnancies."

<http://www.mlwmagazine.com/story.asp?sectioncode=201&storyCode=2041204>

Women SHGs concentrate on income-generating units

Nagapattinam: Women self-help groups are now concentrating on more viable and income generating units in Nagapattinam district to enable each member to earn not less than Rs. 2,500 a month.

The administration conducted market surveys in the tsunami-affected areas and identified viable activities, Collector Tenkasi S. Jawahar said here on Friday. The commercial banks have been instructed to provide the SHGs with adequate revolving fund.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/24/stories/2006122404500300.htm>

Women sell kidneys to survive

Chennai, Jan. 13: The state today began a probe into how hundreds of poor women — from city slums and tsunami shelters — have fallen victim to the organ trade. The women themselves spilled the beans at the makeshift camp in Ernavur, 30 km from Chennai, yesterday.

"I sold a kidney for my daughter's wedding," a sobbing Selvi told officials from the Tiruvallur district administration at a grievance redress meeting. "I have five children. My husband is down with tuberculosis and can't go fishing. What else could I have done?" said Rani.

There are at least 40 more in Ernavur who — still languishing in the relief camp two years after the tsunami while many others have found a new life and livelihood — have sold their kidneys, a senior district official said over the phone. "The final figures haven't arrived," he said. "We fear the racket's going on in slums across the state but the tsunami angle has catapulted it into the spotlight." The scandal comes just after the tsunami's second anniversary had highlighted how thousands of tragedy-hit but enterprising women had learnt new professions and turned their families' fortunes around.

But rehabilitation programmes have lagged in the state capital's backyard. Of the 1,200 survivors from north Chennai who were moved to the Ernavur shelters, 600 still live there.

Many others have returned to their old, damaged houses or migrated. The fishermen at the camp spend Rs 30-40 a day on transport fare just to get to their fishing villages so they can put out to sea. Drinking among the men adds to the problem.

"Some of the women said they were forced into selling their kidney because their husbands spent most of their daily income on liquor," an official said. The women say a network of brokers works around the slums and tsunami camps, with their women agents "canvassing" for kidneys.

A chain of hospitals in cities such as Chennai and Madurai carry out the surgery after getting the women to sign the mandatory consent form. But when the time comes for payment, the women get Rs 40,000-50,000 instead of the promised Rs 1 lakh. "I was told the rest had been used up to meet my medical expenses," a woman said.

Clinton wants internet access for rural women

Cuddalore, Dec. 1 (PTI): Former US President Bill Clinton today said he would make efforts to provide internet access to women in tsunami-hit villages in the district to help them market their products.

"Give women internet access to avoid middlemen in marketing their products. I will make efforts for this as it will help the tsunami-hit women to market their produce directly at the international level," Clinton, who visited the district in his capacity as UN Special Ambassador for tsunami recovery, said today.

After watching a small exhibition of the products made by women of Thazhankuda village near here, Clinton said the products like incense sticks were in great demand across the world.

"If you provide internet access to them to market these products, produced at a low cost, it will fetch them a great price," he said.

He said it would be a simple matter but a great help to the women. "I do not think it will be difficult for 'high-tech India' to provide internet access to the low income groups," he added.

The Hindu, Dec 1, 2006

Solar fish dryer unit generates income to SHGs

Nagapattinam: Nearly 30 members belonging to two women self-help groups in Keechankuppam coastal village here now are getting good income, thanks to the modern solar fish drying unit put up by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) at a cost of Rs.6 lakh, as part of the tsunami rehabilitation to fishermen community.

The Collector, Tenkasi S. Jawahar, and also the chairman of the DRDA, who inspected the unit on Monday, said that the members of the two women self-help groups were able to get a monthly income of Rs.2,000. He pointed out that there was a good demand for the fish dried and processed in the unit in a hygienic way than the conventional method of drying the fish along the coast.

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/26/stories/2006122604740200.htm>

Community involvement in construction

Community Involvement in Construction The NGO Centre for Awareness and Rural Action (CARE) initiated a plan involving community in construction of the houses in Kottaimedu village of Sirkali Taluka, Nagapattinam Dt.

Involvement of community in construction process would bring some kind of ownership as well as quality. Community monitoring team comprises various groups such as SHGs, youth groups, traditional panchayats, and children. They will meet every week and review the construction.

The team visit the area once a week and a daily visit by one of the member. The team focus on the quality of the construction like mixing of cement and sand is appropriate, checking the stock register, no. of labours in the site, reinforcement of rods proper etc.

Read the full report:

<http://www.ncrc.in/Others/Involvingcommunityinensuringqualityinshelterconstruction-Kottaimeduxperience.pdf>

Community Initiatives in Tsunami—India

What can women do? Rebuilding lives post tsunami.

Some attempts to recover and rebuild since the 2004 tsunami have been successful, while others have been knocked down by constraints or unwillingness. Each tsunami-affected village has had its own problems and its own way of dealing with them.

SHG initiative in appointing teachers

The collective actions of SHGs in C. Pudukkottai to appoint two teachers in their school show that the community could do a lot if its members unite and address issues together.

The primary school in the village has five teachers and more than five hundred students, making for a very poor teacher-student ratio. To address the issue, SHGs decided to do something for this cause. With a force of seventeen groups after the tsunami, the SHGs organised meetings and chose to contribute Rs. 100 per month to appoint new teachers.

Here we present success Stories and community initiatives in Tsunami.

Moving force: Paravathamma

Paravathamma, a pleasant elderly lady of the village of Savadikkuppam, is a moving force behind her community. After the tsunami, she managed to obtain a loan from the bank for fish-vending women who are members of SHGs. She also met the District Collector, BDOs and other government offices to raise issues related to problems in her village.

Paravathamma is very good at organising women and adolescents to obtain health care services for their village.

Initiative that changed the village: Keelamoovarkkarai village

Before the tsunami, to the village of Keelamoovarkkarai had few facilities. There were no adequate sources of clean drinking water, no health care services offered by primary health centres (PHCs) and no hope for better living. After the tsunami, the formation of Arogya Sakhis for Health Awareness and Action (ASHAA) groups and the intervention of Health Guides changed the way the community began addressing issues and solving problems.

Before tsunami there was no village visit by PHC nurse, who is supposed to take care of village health and provide medicines every week. After Chitra developed a good relation with PHC, nurse visits the villages and provide medicines regularly.

Read the stories at:

http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/community_leaders.pdf

From Tsunami Recovery to Disaster Prevention Action Workshop to scale up women/community initiative, Chennai, December 27, 2006

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in partnership with Knowledge Links and Covenant Centre for Development (CCD) organized Action workshop to scale up women and community initiative in tsunami intervention on 27th December 2006 in Chennai, India. This workshop was held with the support of Huairou Commission, Groots International and disasterwatch.net.

Active participation of grassroots leaders, NGOs, Govt Officials and experts made the workshop very interactive by sharing and hearing the initiatives in Tsunami Reconstruction at grassroots level in Tamil Nadu.

Read the report:

http://www.disasterwatch.net/resources%20links/chennai_report.pdf

All-Women Local Bank opens in tsunami hit Meuraxa, Banda Aceh

Banda Aceh, 2 February 2006 – Residents of Meuraxa in Banda Aceh can now deposit their money, apply for loans and get general financial supports and advice from their own local bank named Baitul Quiradh Meuraxa.

The bank is a new branch of the shari'ah-based microfinance institution of Baitul Quiradh Baiturrahman (BQB) – unusual because it is entirely run by women. BQB lost most of their assets and many of their personnel and clients in the tsunami of 2004. Meuraxa, which is a district within Banda Aceh, was one of the worst-hit areas of the tsunami, losing an estimated 90% of its population and almost all of its buildings and infrastructure. *Read more:*

<http://www.undp.org/tsunami/features20060202.shtml>

More than 2,000 tsunami survivors are receiving entrepreneurial training under the first stage of UNDP's small businesses project

The project offers training in business basics, such as in adopting a business plan and in managing finances.

After completing the training, the would be entrepreneurs are then invited to submit business plans – and those that are considered viable receive a grant of US\$150 to help them get started. So far, 300 businesses have been awarded grants.

<http://www.undp.org/tsunami/features191005.shtml>