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From Rehab to Development

It has been a prolific year of rehabilitation with many big and small agencies pitching in their bit for the tsunami affected district of Nagapattinam. Having completed a year of rehabilitation work, it is now time to look back at what has been done, see how far we were able to achieve what we set out to, where we faltered and why?

Where shall we move from here? Do we have the wherewithal to chart out a long term development plan for the people? All these questions bubble up during this transition phase....a phase where experiences have to be documented and learnings consolidated, giving a concrete base to build on during the development phase.

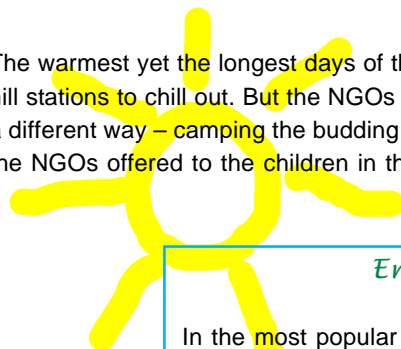
Lot many things have been said and done....like the ill-effects of surplus distribution, importance of equitable distribution, minimizing exclusions.... How far we have been able to address this? Many things have been studied and documented...the owner-crew dynamics, dynamics of group ownership, the evolution and the working of Self Help Groups, effects of shrimp farming on other livelihoods.... How are we going to make use of these learning during this transition phase? Will our learning contribute to developing a long term perspective in development? This is the time when we have to evolve a long-term strategy, considering the disaster proneness of the region. Resources generated in terms of knowledge, human and materials are enormous. We should be able translate these resources and the goodwill we have with the community into a long term strategic plan.

Things seem to be bright at this juncture. A sound base has been set....kudos to the yeoman service rendered by the NGOs and the much needed support provided by the government. Having set a firm base for development by the NGOs, the Government will now set the tune for overall development of the district by bringing in bilateral and multilateral institutions. No reason for complacency for the NGOs...on the contrary they have to play a greater facilitating role ensuring that the community has got a voice in the whole process, and their linkages with the government is strong.

Let us move on with a greater determination, audacity and enthusiasm.... ■

Fun in the Sun

The warmest yet the longest days of the year have come! It's summer in our town. The 'affordable' tend to travel to hill stations to chill out. But the NGOs working among the Tsunami affected have decided to chill out the summer in a different way – camping the budding ones for talent expression and capacity building. Here is a short note on what the NGOs offered to the children in the summer camps.



Enabling little ones to bloom

In the most popular pilgrim town of Nagapattinam district, Thanjavur Multi-purpose Social Service Society (TMSSS) held a camp from 15-20 May 2006 for around 500 children from 20 villages across the district. The age group of children ranged from 5 to 15 years. The children were given food and accommodation. The camp aimed at identifying talents, motivating children to empower themselves, and orienting them on emerging initiatives like the children Panchayat and children parliament. The highlight of the camp was that it provided training to 25 unemployed youth including 5 staff of TMSSS. Children were also trained in clay modeling, drawing and painting. The participants were taken to Trichy on a one day tour. ■

Pradeepa 2006 - a call to arise

A summer camp for the differently abled children of Tsunami affected area of Nagapattinam district was inaugurated at JJ Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Nagapattinam on the morning hours of 15 May 2006. The programme, named as 'Pradeepa 2006', was captioned *expression of talents*. Pradeepa 2006, meaning talent in Hindi, was a week's programme aiming at identification and expression of talents in the differently abled children as well as giving them training to develop their potentials.

Leonard Cheshire Project Nagapattinam (LCPN), an NGO working for the differently abled children in the Tsunami hit Nagapattinam were the organisers.

Around fifty children from Nagapattinam taluk ranging from 6 to 16 years – most of whom are students – participated in the camp. 'Pradeepa' was a different programme in more ways than one. Dance, games, painting, drawing, skit, handicrafts all formed part of the event. Apart from this, there were sessions on self esteem and confidence building, child rights, communication skills, leadership and public speaking, and a session on the Disability Act. The camp, for sure, is set to make difference in the lives of these differently fortunate little ones of the town.

The advocacy efforts of LCPN are paying dividends. Speaking at the inaugural session of the camp Mr. Hena Baskar, Principal of JJ Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Nagapattinam declared that the school management has made a decision for shifting the classrooms for the disabled students of their school to the ground floor following the request of the NGO. ■





Feast of fun and frolic

St. Antony's Higher Secondary School in Nagapattinam went 'house full' from 23-25 May 2006, during the annual holidays when Real-Plan organised summer camps for the students. The scene was like a 'mela' and as the vehicles poured in to drop the children at the venue, the sound of greetings and shouting echoed all round. Real-Plan, the NGO that organised the camp brought together around 1500 children from 20 villages. The purpose of the camp was to give children a stage for fun and games, to showcase their talents and train them in cultural programmes.

Actors and a director from "Kollywood" industry were invited to share their expertise. Besides this, running and cycle races were also held. A general knowledge quiz competition programme, replicating the model of 'Thanga Vettai', a popular Sun TV programme, was conducted which stole the accolade of all the participants. Most of the parents of the participants were present on the first day the programme. Real is en route to bringing out an evaluatory report on the programme consisting opinions of the participants and the parents by the end of May. ■

Create - 'Sangamam 2006'

'Sangamam 2006', a summer training programme was organised by Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Team (TReART- a network of Centre for Rural Energy and Appropriate Technology Extension (CREATE), Centre for Awareness and Rural Education (CARE) and REAL- Rural Education and Action for Liberation) from 26 to 28 May. Around 550 children from the Butterfly Children Associations took part in the residential camp at Chokkaiyyan Prema Marriage Hall, Vedaranyam. The camp had range of training programmes in fields like yoga, karathe, folk dance, Villupattu, Silambattam, Kolattam (traditional art forms), general knowledge (quiz competition), painting and drawing, disaster management, handicrafts making and magic show. The children also got opportunities to showcase their talents through cultural programmes in the evenings. ■

Racing with a difference

The education division of PHOENIX Federation organised a summer camp from 21st April to 19th May 2006. The purpose of the camp was to identify and develop talents in the little ones through games and cultural activities. The camp included a range of games and training programmes on varied subjects like mental-physical health, memory building, creativity and innovation, fine arts, handicrafts, life education, communication, leadership and personality development skills, national integrity, yoga, and meditation.

A cycle race was organised in Nagapattinam by Phoenix C&ILC (Phoenix Creativity and Innovative Learning Center for All) as a part of the camp. Children of 5 to 15 years age participated in the race. ■



Buruslin P. Mento

A Noble Act

In the face of commercialised education there are a few that have been making a difference. Thirty miles south of Nagapattinam lies Pushpavanam, a beautiful serene village. The SECT (Saroja Ammal Educational & Charitable Trust) has been involved in giving free education and promoting talents of its students in the area since 1994. May 9th marked its 12th anniversary celebration of the organisation and indeed it was a day to behold!



SECT has created a niche in the area for their relentless service. It was started by a single man, Sri. Selvarathinam who is physically challenged. When young, Selvarathinam had to stop his education due to economical constraints. Later in his life he decided to provide free education for all the children of his locality, especially for those with lack

of financial resources. With the support of few like-minded staff, Selvarathinam has been able to run a free tuition centre that gives its beneficiaries a whole range of developmental activities along the pursuit for academic excellence. As a result students who were trained in the centre have all got through the public examinations with flying colours with an exception of a single student. The name Selvarathinam has become a symbol at least among the people of the area - a feat hard to accomplish in such a young age and when one is differently abled.

SECT also conducts a variety of activities like monthly and annual quiz competitions, summer classes for SSLC and higher secondary students, periodical examinations, literary associations and cultural programmes on days of national importance, educational tours, science exhibitions, music and drawing classes, medical camps, tailoring and typing classes for women, AIDS awareness camp and tsunami relief programme, and seminars and debates. Moreover, the former students of the centre have joined the cause of imparting knowledge in whatever little way they can like giving donations, handling classes and promoting students.

Under the larger umbrella of education, the silent but profound work carried out by SECT is a source of great inspiration as well as refreshment for any one involved in the noblest act of educating the young. ■

NGO Profile People's Development Association

PDA was established in 1999 as a consultancy agency, based in Madurai district, providing consultancy services on child rights and later expanding to human rights. Currently PDA's activities are spread throughout India with the main focus on children – mostly advocacy and lobbying for child rights.

PDA's Tsunami Response Programme

PDA entered into the tsunami affected villages on 28 December 2004 with a team of volunteers, staff and relief materials. PDA intervenes in 17 severely affected coastal villages in Nagapattinam with a

vision "to lead the affected humanity towards development, peace, self-reliance and prosperity through relief and rehabilitation programs"

The activities of PDA now touch the lives of more than **7744** families of Nagai District

The activities of PDA during the Relief Phase included:

- Burying or cremating the corpses and debris with the help of volunteers
- Undertaking a survey and study of the affected people and the area

- Supplying immediate relief materials such as water, food, cloths, utensils, milk and other essential materials for cooking and other day-to-day needs.
- Starting socio-psychological services through trauma care and counseling
- Starting community kitchen to feed those who were displaced, homeless and wounded
- Organising medical camps and supplying of medicines
- Providing medical assistance to the wounded and sick due to disaster



- Supplying relief materials to the vulnerable during natural and other calamities such as flood, fire etc happened during the post Tsunami period.

The activities of PDA during the Rehabilitation Phase include

- Constructing temporary shelters for those who were displaced by the calamity
- Providing childcare and supportive services in the Tsunami affected villages
- Organising cultural programs by youth in villages to bring back social harmony and normalcy
- Providing non-formal technical training for youth for alternative skills and employment
- Distributing livelihood assets such as boats, nets, ice boxes, engines and fish selling materials which were washed away in Tsunami
- Constructing of permanent houses
- Engaging in reconstruction of community halls and other community assets
- Engaging in reconstruction of schools
- Supporting empowerment of women vulnerable to poverty and through thrift programs

PDA feels that, apart from bringing back normal life to the Tsunami affected communities, it is now important to look at the social and economic condition of the people from an overall social development perspective. Many issues concerning women, children and other weaker sections of people need to be addressed and effective solutions have to be evolved. PDA is committed to facilitate this process as it believes "Crisis is an opportunity for development, change and growth".

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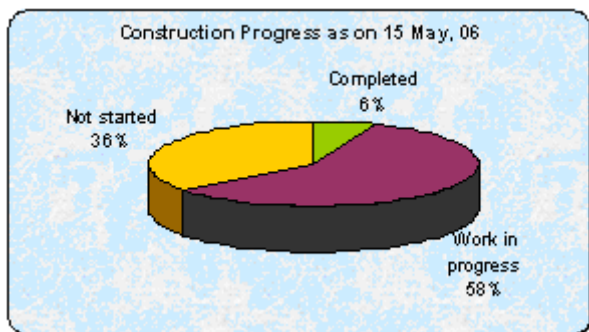
email: joevelu@yahoo.com ■



Shelter progress update

The position of shelter as on May 15, 2006 is as follows:

- Of the total land to be acquired, 92% has been acquired. Only 8% of the land remains to be acquired.



- 6% of the houses that need to be constructed have been completed. The proportion is constant throughout the five taluks of the district.
- Construction has not begun for 36% of the houses

The trends of construction progress over the months indicate that there has been little or no progress in some of the construction sites. There are a few emerging concerns that contributes to this tardy progress:

- Lack/scarcity of materials for construction
- Lack/scarcity of labour
- Problems of cash flow within the NGOs

Possible solutions

- Establishing a material bank whereby the government takes the responsibility of storage of materials required for construction and the NGOs could approach the bank whenever, required. Now the question arises whether the NGOs are willing to make use of such a facility, if the government takes such an initiative. In such cases please let NCRC know so that willingness and requirement could be communicated to the district administration.
- NGOs that face serious cash flow problem are requested to reveal this enabling the district administration to make alternative arrangements like making use of World Bank funds that has already been available with the government.

Also, considering the fact that the community who are sheltered in temporary shelters has to face the blistering summer and floods, the donors are requested to have a realistic look on the current situation and, if needed, NCRC and the district administration could get involved in a dialogue process to solve the issues related to cash flow. ■

Leaving our footprints on the sands of time

The Tsunami has left behind a trail of destruction and trauma that left the coastal communities deprived of their livelihoods. However, what we saw soon after the Tsunami was 'benevolence par excellence'. Around 500 NGOs, individuals and volunteers rushed to the area and rendered services which helped the community to recover from the immediate trauma of destruction.

The initial relief phase was followed by a rehabilitation phase where around 200 NGOs contributed to the rehabilitation of the community. Though a few of the NGOs left the area completing their objectives, others prevail, providing their services with a long term vision. The Government-NGO coordination evolved here was a paragon that could be emulated elsewhere. A big question remains now! Have do we documented the exemplary services rendered by us in the recovery of the community? Staggered responses would be there...like the documents published by the government that acknowledges NGOs work in general... but is that enough? Shouldn't we think of putting things on record and say... yes we did this ...

Our efforts should not go unreported. It should not be like a line drawn in water. Let us all come together to put things down and emphatically say this is what we did for the Tsunami affected community.

NCRC has begun documenting what NGOs have done on relief and rehabilitation.... We request your assistance, and cooperation in this endeavour. ■

Events roundup - May

Core group meeting on Children

29 April, 2006

The core group on NGOs organised a "meet the electoral candidate programme". 625 children from 5 taluks of Nagapattinam district had a face to face discussion with the two electoral candidates and presented various development needs of the children. They presented their electoral manifesto which demands about their rights relating to compulsory education, infrastructure facilities in school, filling up vacancies of teachers, allotting financial assistance for children's education. The meeting was organised to mark occasion of the anti-child Labour Day.

Houses handed over

9 May, 2006

Chaitanya Seva Trust handed over the keys of 25 houses to 25 tsunami affected families in Madavemedu of Sirkali Taluk, Nagapattinam

Meeting on Community radio

20 May, 2006

A meeting on community radio was organised by NCRC at NCRC office. Representatives of 18 NGOs working in Nagapattinam who have been running community knowledge centres/resource centres participated in the meeting. The meeting was organised to:

- Explore possibilities on setting up community radio service in Tsunami affected villages of Nagapattinam drawing lessons from UNDP, VOICES Bangalore and AID, Nagapattinam.
- Garner networking support for AID, Nagapattinam who has started community radio services in selected villages in Nagapattinam.

At the end of the discussion, it was decided to carry out a sector as well as geographical wise piloting of community radio in Nagapattinam district. Other than piloting, selection and profile of villages/audience and their need assessment, content hub, exposure visits to successful projects were also discussed.

Expert consultation meeting on technical guidelines for construction

22 and 23 May, 2006

NCRC organised an expert consultation meeting to have a re-look on the existing technical guidelines for construction, based on the socio-technical assessment study carried out by NCRC with the support of UNDP and Hunnarshala. The two day meeting attended by experts from IIT Chennai, IIT Kanpur, RedR, Hunnarshala Auroville, Town planning department – Vizag, SIFFS, NCRC Team.



Meeting on improving sanitation in temporary shelters

27 May, 2006

To plan out ways and means to spruce up the sanitation conditions in the shelter ensuring a decent living in the shelters, NCRC organized a meeting with the NGOs constructed/maintaining the temporary shelters in Nagapattinam on 27th May 2006 at NCRC office. It was decided to revive WESNET (Water Environment and Sanitation Network) that formed last year and got defunct later.

A core group (comprising PHOENIX, EXNORA and World Vision) has been formed that will assess the situation vis-à-vis sanitation in temporary shelters and would decide on which are the ones to be covered before the monsoons. The locations where the families are shifting to a permanent shelter location before December will not be covered.

UNESCAP–NGOs Meet on livelihoods

30 May, 2006

To generate ideas and share the programme and plans of UNESCAP for livelihood promotion in Nagapattinam, a meeting was organised by NCRC at its office. Dr. Amitava Mukherjee and Miguel Perez Ludena of UNESCAP, 17 NGO representatives and NCRC representatives attended the meeting.

Following a brief introduction on UNESCAP, the NGOs shared the work they do related to livelihood and sought the support of UNESCAP, which promised to provide technical support to NGOs. UNESCAP has commissioned consultants to do a feasibility study based on which future activities will be planned.

Engineers training programme

31 May, 2006

NCRC along with UNDP and DRDA organised a training programme for the engineers, supervisors and architects from GO's and NGO's, and site engineers of the contractors who are actively involved in construction. The training, held at SIFFS

training centre Tarangambadi was facilitated by Prof A.R. Santhakumar – Consultant to UNDP and Mr Dipan Shah – UNDP. The training was organised to improve the quality of reconstruction underway in the region.

The training sessions covered topics like

- Why structures fails
- Designing homes not houses
- Building for future
- Project Management – a tool for implementers
- Learning from past – an experience sharing
- Habitation planning



Book Review

Global Survey of Early Warning Systems – An assessment report of capacities, gaps and opportunities toward building a comprehensive global early warning system for all natural hazards

With a view to establishing a “worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards building on existing national and regional capacity”, United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan in March 2005 requested that a global survey of capacities and gaps for early warning systems be undertaken.

The present report, prepared based on UN secretary’s request, is a synthesis of the findings of this survey, which was carried out by the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in collaboration with a multi-party working group established at the 11th Session of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) in May 2005.

The report says that to be effective, early warning systems must be people-centered and must integrate four elements – (i) a knowledge of the risks faced; (ii) a technical monitoring and warning service; (iii) the dissemination of meaningful warnings to those at risk; and (iv) public awareness and preparedness to act. Failure in any one of these elements can mean failure of the whole early warning system.

The electronic copy of this report is available at the IEC unit at NCRC

Kalagarai Vilakkam is an NCRC publication, developed purely for information purposes. The information contained herein has been collated from various sources and NCRC is not responsible for its accuracy or any actions taken based thereon.

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