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Regional Knowledge Platform

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Editorial

Human Rights and Post-disaster Reconstruction

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Over the years we have been seeing the social sector becoming increasingly rights based. There is a distinct paradigm shift from the approach of charity and benevolence to one based on entitlements and rights. International human rights instruments have been increasingly influencing the policies and programs in the social sector, be it by government or non-government agencies. These international legal instruments very clearly mandate that every one has the right to life with dignity and respect for their rights. Accordingly, humanitarian agencies both, the State and the civil society institutions are coming under pressure to own responsibility to provide assistance to disaster victims in a manner that is consistent with human rights.

Post-disaster reconstruction efforts therefore, cannot ignore this basic and core principle. Most countries in the world today have not only accepted these basics of human rights framework but also have incorporated it into their respective constitutions and legal frameworks, thus making itself responsible to protect the rights of its citizens. The Humanitarian Charter and the Code of Conduct in Disaster Response has emerged as an appropriate instrument to guide the post disaster programming efforts of humanitarian agencies.

Post disaster reconstruction therefore, would mean that all efforts are made to ensure right to participation of the affected communities and due respect to their traditional / cultural appropriateness. It is not mere building houses, laying roads and providing water and electricity. It is to promote a sustainable habitat process. Disaster, no doubt has an ugly face bringing-in destruction but at the same time, it offers an opportunity to build for a better future. Building better, should not be construed as building stronger, rather it is to help create habitat meeting not only of the basic needs of people but also it is culturally suitable, technically sound, environmentally appropriate, economically affordable and responsive to the newer / emerging needs of the community towards education, healthcare, security and livelihood challenges.

The aforesaid rights approach is inextricably related to the other human rights including that of protection against forced eviction, harassment, other threats to physical safety and well-being, rights to be protected against arbitrary displacement from their habitual residence and indiscriminate armed attacks. The articles in this issue of basin-South Asia Newsletter display a deep commitment to the aforesaid principles by the authors and their organizations.

NM Prusty

NM Prusty is a humanitarian development professional. He is currently Chairperson, Sphere India which is a national level coalition of humanitarian agencies in India that include INGOs, Red Cross, national NGO networks, UN agencies and Government of India.

Focus

Post-disaster Rehabilitation – Issues in Deepening People's Participation

After each major disaster in recent years, almost every agency claims to have adopted participatory process in their response. However, the quality of participation in the different interventions is a subject of debate. This article is primarily based on the experiences of disaster response in last 15 years in South Asia with a focus on participatory housing reconstruction.

Damage assessment

Disasters have an impact on various dimensions of human life both short term and long lasting. In the past, experience of humanitarian response has shown that often, response is determined by logistical capacities to deliver rather than capacity of the communities to recover.

At the stage of damage assessment itself, government institutions are seen to carryout technical exercises to assess the extent of damage with little participation from the affected people. This leads to a vague assessment of "what was". Mechanical categorisation of damages that determines the access of the affected communities to compensation and rehabilitation benefits is accompanied with community level conflicts delaying the rehabilitation process. A good example is the distinction between a 'pucca' (permanent) and 'kutcha'(temporary) based on reductionist parameters that determine the nature and quantum of relief to an affected family. A mud house which existed for over 100 years and is washed away in a cyclone, floods or tsunami, is classified as a 'hut' and merits lesser relief support as seen during the floods in Rajasthan.

It is also seen that in order to access rehabilitation benefits, many affected families use intermediaries, as the due processes are subverted either on technical grounds or around issues of evidence of entitlement. Wherever assessment was conducted in a decentralised manner involving communities, NGOs and the government, as seen in Gujarat, it brought out new categories, new ways of establishing legal evidences to include tenants, migrants and squatters and hence reducing community conflicts to a great extent.

Interim shelters

The interim rehabilitation phase is usually the most significant phase, as it is the first step towards recovery and is a statement on the dignity of living of the affected people. Often a temporary shelter programmes are developed without looking into the appropriateness of the material, safety of women and the quality of the environment as noted by in studies by housing and land rights network. Although, Sphere standards have been developed for the design of shelters and provision of basic amenities, compliance is far from satisfactory.

It has been seen that after few days of living in temporary shelters, many families go back to their original settlement and try to rebuild their own interim shelters. This silent action of the affected families provides deep lessons for humanitarian agencies to design their response. In many cases, male members of the community continue to live in the camps while women and children come back to their original sites rebuilding their own interim shelters. It may be argued that temporary rehabilitation requires speed in construction, hence the need for standardised solutions. However if owner driven processes are promoted, it is possible to engage users to ensure speed as well as strengthen the resilience of the community along with many psycho-social benefits.

In all major disasters, interim shelters have been constructed using standardised materials and technology whereby a major part of the aid has gone to external manufacturers and suppliers. Although disaster aid provided material benefit to the affected people, it was not integrated into the local economy in a visible manner. In this sense, a people centred process of providing interim shelters has the potential of contributing to the local economy along with psycho-social benefits.

Usually interim shelters are expected to last one year. In reality, by the time people are completely rehabilitated, it is about 3 to 5 years. As the material and the technology used in interim shelters is alien to the people, they do not have the necessary capacity to repairs their shelters and depend on providers for even the smallest needs. As indicated in the table below, when people have built their own interim shelters from local materials, such structures have a longer life span and are better maintained. Such structures are found to be in use even after the new houses are built as additional storage or living space.

Permanent shelters

For permanent shelters, relocation is generally a preferred practice especially by government agencies for reasons of easy delivery and locational safety of the people. However it is an extremely complex proposition.

Once the relocation process starts and the government is faced with the gigantic task of finding suitable alternative land which is

	Parameters	Local material and skills	External materials and skills	Technology transfer with focus on local resources
1	Upgradation of local skills	➔➔	↓	↑
2	Use of local materials	↑	↓	↑
3	Cultural affinity	↑	↓	↑
4	Enviromentally sound	↑	↓	↑
5	People's contribution	↑	↓	↑
6	Cost-effective	↑	↓	↑
7	Solution to local problem	↑	↓	↑
8	Participative & inclusive	↑	↓	↑

↑ = positive, ↓ = negative, ➔➔ = no change

Houses with local materials and skills

Houses with external materials and skills

House with technology transfer with focus on local resources

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Reconstruction for Development

A long-term, participatory perspective for post-disaster reconstruction

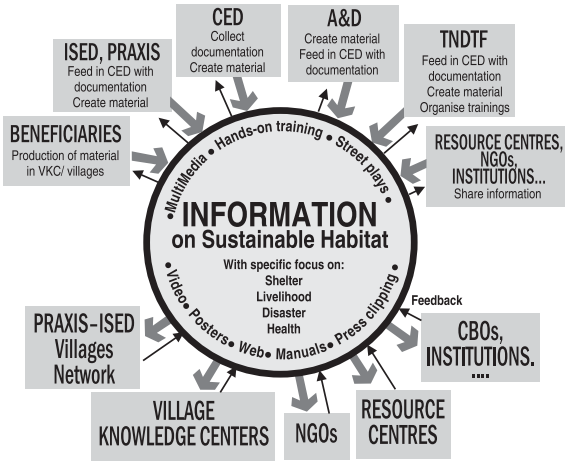
Post-disaster reconstruction is an opportunity to build from scratch and correct the wrongs of past skews in development. However, it is very important that reconstruction does not remain at the level of buildings, housing or infrastructure but goes beyond to processes and methods. It is with this approach for sustainable habitats that Architecture & Development undertook a project for "Habitat Sensitization and Awareness" under the banner of Reconstruction for Development Centres (RDC).

RDC has the primary thrust of demonstrating that one can build a better habitat for all (including the most vulnerable) that would be affordable, cost effective, ecological, environmentally sound, viable, socially acceptable… and aesthetic. The RDC project (*www.rdc.net.in*) strongly rooted in partnership and brings together Architecture & Development (A&D), Centre for Education & Documentation (CED), Institute for Social Education & Development (ISED), Praxis and Orissa Development Technocrats Forum (ODTF).

The idea

The idea of the RDC project is to bring information from grassroots (essentially issues raised by the people), add global analytical and diverse perspectives, and take the value added information back to the grassroots. It is expected that through this effort, people will gain new and much wider perspectives to their problems, especially understand the impact of the choices being made today on the future development process. This will enable them to articulate their priorities and make informed and better choices thus creating a better future.

ISED and Praxis play the role of Local Access Points (the source of grassroots



information and the means of empowering the people) and CED plays the role of the hub (which scans for a wide variety of perspectives to feed the local data / issue and transforms the information to a much stronger political tool). A&D and ODTF bring in the habitat perspectives and provide inputs on technologies, methodologies and techniques. ODTF also play the role of being a mobile team, available for technical support to organisations involved in reconstruction. A&D also demonstrates at the ground the approaches for building participatory and sustainable habitats in reconstruction through building of houses and infrastructure for the tsunami affected populations.

Information available under RDC

- A monthly compilation of articles and clippings on habitat and disasters
- In-depth analysis and backgrounders on:
  - o Coastal Zone Regulations
  - o Livelihood Issues of the traditional fishing communities
  - o National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- Films
- Interviews on a variety of topics
- Posters
- Booklets & Manuals

All the materials are available in Tamil and English.

Why is the information produced different ?

- The information produced by RDC is based on grassroots issues.
- The information is a collation of a variety of points of view of the different stakeholders – people, NGOs, government officials, activists, youth, women etc. and hence presenting a wide canvas of the issues
- It is one place where a variety of initiatives and viewpoints is hosted – sometimes opposite and contradictory – giving the user the opportunity to arrive at their own perspective
- The information is dynamic – production is never 'completed'. The materials undergo changes, companion volumes are added etc. as they get used at the field.
- The information is not produced by one entity or organisation – every partner is involved in the production and dissemination of these materials.

Conclusion

The RDC programme has undergone its own trial by fire but has emerged through it with a reiteration of commitment to the original objective. The programme has been a one-off experience, different from Common Action Programmes or other networking initiatives but relevant as partnerships are here to stay.

Radha Kunke

Radha Kunke is Executive Director of Architecture & Development, and has worked on various development issues for the last 17 years. She is currently involved in habitat related issues especially cooperation, exchange and knowhow.

Contd. from page 3

Post-disaster Rehabilitation...

usually not available. Despite, the argument of relocation for safety, when the required lands are to be found and procured, they may not be as per the requirements of the community or may be very costly. This unduly delays the reconstruction process and divides the community, artificially creating long-term tensions (as in case of post-tsunami response in South India).

It may also be noted that in many cases, only damaged houses are relocated leaving other houses of the settlement in the old location. Since safety is a primary concern for relocation, the remaining houses continue to remain vulnerable. It has also been noticed that the people who have relocated, come back to the old location and build some shelter on their own as it is linked to their livelihood activities. Hence, there is a need to rethink about the relocation options. Perhaps it is a better practice to promote in-situ rehabilitation with overall attention on habitat safety. The in-situ habitat safety promotion will not only reduce the vulnerability of affected people but also improve the safety conditions of the disaster prone area as a whole.

Permanent housing process also needs to be examined in terms of use of materials and skills for a sustainable rehabilitation. It has been found out that if all parameters mentioned in the table above are to be adhered, use of external materials and skills has to be avoided. Promotion of local skill and material without any improvement even though sustainable, is accompanied by old problems like safety features and maintenance. When traditional technology is promoted along with improved know-how, the housing quality improvesproviding higher control in the hands of local people.

Binoy Acharya & Vivek Rawal

Binoy Acharya is a Founder-Director of UNNATI. He is known as a trainer working on issues of governance and social inclusion.

Vivek Rawal is a trained architect working on rural housing and urban issues. He is actively involved in post-disaster responses.

Publication

Guidelines for Rebuilding Rural Transport Systems

In the areas bordering the Tsunami ravaged coastal stretch in Sri Lanka, rural roads including feeder roads, bridges, culverts, footbridges and access road in the western, southern, eastern and northern provinces of Sri Lanka have suffered serious damage by the tsunami's devastation. As a result difficulties were faced in reaching a number of these areas after the destruction, for humanitarian assistance collection of information and in attending to other urgent needs.

It is necessary to recognize the importance of transport in rural areas where around 80 percent of the population in Sri Lanka live. The total road network in Sri Lanka is about 96000 kms of which 64650 kms are rural. This rural road network serves the education, health, economic and other social needs of the large rural population of the country.

Both local and international organizations are currently involved in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of affected rural transport infrastructure in Sri Lanka. However, there are no acceptable technical standards or approved methodology in this otherwise laudable effort. The **Lanka Forum on Rural Transport Development (LFRTD)** wishes to bring to the attention of those organizations active in this field, some guidelines developed by them for the furtherance of rural transportation in developing countries.

Location specific provision

The Sri Lankan government proposes to re-establish the communities shattered by the Tsunami in new well planned settlements, further inland with a 100 meter coastal buffer zone. There is thus a simultaneous need for the provision of connectivity through appropriate rural transport and travel facilities sufficient to enable that community to perform the various socio-economic activities to sustain their livelihood development.

Reliable connectivity

Reliable connectivity is an important issue that needs to be taken care of in the process of reconstruction of affected rural transport infrastructure.

- ***Economic connectivity:*** connectivity to markets, banks, and economic centres in village or towns would ensure direct connection between the producers and markets and obviate the intervention of middle men leaving more money in the hands of the producer.
- ***Social connectivity****:* connectivity to schools, hospitals, places of religious worship and other places of common interest is also crucial
- ***Domestic connectivity****:* connectivity for collecting of firewood, drinking water, subsistence agriculture, etc. is critical for domestic activities.

Economical and standard designs

It would be prudent to avoid expensive over-design and adopt design standards suitable for low traffic volumes and short haul distances often encountered in rural areas. Research presented to the LFRTD has shown that 42%of rural roads carry less than 50 vehicles per day (vpd), 33% carry 50-150 vpd, and only 25% carry up to 200 vpd. Well designed and constructed gravel roads with acceptable gradients, curvatures and directness can carry mixed traffic up to 200 vpd. Higher grade roads such as those that are tarred or cement surfaced would be required where the traffic volume is over 200 vpd. Lower grade roads could be upgraded as development grows. Phased provision of connectivity could help increase the number of kilometers rehabilitated and postpone more expensive resource options until their necessity is validated.

Use of local resources and appropriate technology

Appropriate technology is defined as efficient, low cost and amenable to labour intensive methods. The use of low-cost technology does not imply relaxed construction standards. Utilization of labour resources available within the community would be especially advantageous as it would mean earnings for the community members during the construction phase and thereafter in road maintenance, and inculcate a sense of ownership among the community which is very necessary for road maintenance. The Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), South Asia, in Colombo, has admirably used low cost technology and community participation in a series of community roads constructed by them in association with the relevant pradeshiyasabha, in the southern and Uva provinces, including community based road maintenance.

Environmental and social impact assessments

These should precede any transport infrastructure construction however small. It's necessity is well demonstrated by the example in Rekawa, in the southern province, where a causeway constructed across the lagoon adversely affected the lagoon eco-system and caused the lagoon marine life to perish, resulting in the lagoon fisher community losing its livelihood. After much agitation the reconstruction of the causeway in a different design enabled the restoration of the lagoon eco-system and the livelihood of the fisher community. The beneficiary community should always be consulted right at the planning and design stages, as they well know their environment and have a good knowledge of their socio-economic needs.

Community participation in the provision of transport services

"Roads are not enough"; communities need transportation services for their mobility especially for larger distances. Where such services are not available and unlikely to be provided by operators, the community can be mobilized to provide its own transportation service. The Kosgala Community Bus Service, which is owned and managed by the villagers of Kosgala and Kahangama has provided a bus service to Ratnapura for the benefit of the three villages of Kosgala, Kahangama and Hulpe, for the last sever years. ITDG, South Asia has innovated similar intermediate public transport services using trucks converted for passenger and goods carriage, owned and operated by the communities of Mulberrigama in the Soonriyaweva divisional secretariat division in the southern province and at Rukmalgama and Nikaweritiya in the north western province.

It is advantageous to encourage those modes of transport that are environmentally friendly, socially acceptable, economically and locally maintainable. Immediate attention could be drawn to short term constructions such as foot-bridges, causeways, and culverts. Local materials such as coconut and Palmyra trunks could be used for foot bridges. However, they should be on a temporary basis. It is essential that when permanent constructions are done, they should be well planned, using local materials as far as possible and enlist the participation of the beneficiary community in the planning, execution and care of the transportation facilities. Bicycle being a common mode of transport, consideration should also be given to the promotion of the use of bicycles by providing bicycle lanes and bicycle parking facilities.

Extracts from Practical Action Guidelines for Rebuilding the Rural Transport System destroyed by the tsunami. For details contact: srilanka@practicalaction.org.lk

Report

Rebuilding after the Tsunami: Using ICTs for Change

"The free flow of information breeds truth and affects change, before citizens can bring about change, they must be heard. Affording a voice expedites the healing process. Information technology can amplify that voice."

– Henry H. Perritt, Dean, University of Chicago

The Internet has played a significant role in supplying aid, money and information in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami. Hours after the waves swallowed coastlines and swamped villages, an electronic movement was under way. Donations poured into aid agencies through websites. Friends, relatives and strangers turned to the web for information about missing relatives and tsunami survivors. Individuals, linked by an electronic network from text messages to websites, began answering pleas for help, releasing lists of survivors and funnelling hundreds of millions of dollars to aid agencies even as authorities struggled to gain control of the situation.

NGOs in Sri Lanka and India, including Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), the Tamil Nadu Women's Collective, Centre for Education and Communication(CEC), and Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reforms (MONLAR) used their websites to publish information on tsunami impact, about who had been affected, the scale of the disaster, and what they were doing to help. Text content was supplemented with image galleries and all four organizations used their websites and emergency email broadcasts to appeal directly for funds.

This is the first time charities in south Asia have had the ability to report directly on Internet with regard to their own emergency relief efforts. This was achieved, thanks to path-breaking **Ek-Duniya Web Services (EDWS) – the local language web-content hosting and communication** initiative of OneWorld South Asia (*http://southasia.oneworld.net*). OneWorld South Asia is the South Asian Centre of OneWorld Network (*http://www.oneworld.net*) – the participatory media network comprising a worldwide ring of twelve OneWorld centres – that aims to use ICD towards for promoting sustainable development and human rights. Within this vision, OneWorld South Asia aims at harnessing the democratic potential of the Information and Communication technologies to:

- ⇨ Facilitate ICT assisted communication opportunities to strengthen the voice of the poor;
- ⇨ Develop information services, products and ICT assisted development interventions; and
- ⇨ Build capacities to respond to the needs of grassroots communities and civil society partners towards realisation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ek-Duniya Web Services facilitates shared ownership of customised web-platform to partner organisations, and help develop their ICT capacity for quality web presence, effective e-Communication and advocacy. The goal is to build ICD capacity among grassroots and intermediary civil society organisations of South Asia to enable their communication opportunities for pro-poor development planning and policy.

Central to this initiative is an easy-to-use tool, customised on open source Content Management System (CMS) – Plone, which the partner organisations can use for design and update of their webiste with little technical expertise. The requisite expertise is developed through an appropriate two-tired training model. The model also involves post implementation hand-holding support to reinforce these newly acquired skills. More than 60 civil society websites and on thematic developmental topics are presently hosted on EDWS.

OneWorld South Asia is now extending Ek-Duniya Web Services to organisations working on Tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts – in Sri Lanka, India and in future to other locations, while strengthening the support mechanism for existing partners. Supported by the Commonwealth Connect – the new ICT4D programme of the Commonwealth, this initiative would enable organisations involved in tsunami reconstruction work to publish regular updates (text, images and audio) about their work to audiences in South Asia and beyond. They would be able to share techniques, best-practice and learning experiences. Duplication of efforts would be reduced if organisations made their plans and projects easily accessible online. Commissioning of these websites and email solutions and training of web-content development would make the organisations' communications more effective – on and offline. More, better quality South Asian produced local content in local language and English would strengthen NGO arguments, and overall credibility, making it possible to communicate more effectively to donors and funding agencies.

The project is relevant even today as post-tsunami rehabilitation efforts are still under way. Much more is yet to be accomplished – on shelter, livelihood, education, and healthcare services. In India and Sri Lanka, only around 30 per cent of shelters destroyed in tsunami have been reconstructed; similarly a good number of schools and primary health centres are to be built. NGOs, together with government and International aid agencies, are still working for return of normalcy in life and livelihoods of the people. The Secretary General of Commonwealth rightfully points out, "the challenge before us is not just about deploying technology, but about using *technology as a tool for transformation*, in our education systems, health and very fabric of society".

Naimur Rahman

Naimur Rahman is Senior Programme Manager (Technology Services) in OneWorld South Asia – the South Asian Centre of OneWorld Network. In this capacity, he is responsible for leading development of information and communication technology tools and services to address development need and concerns of civil society partners.

Focus

Sustainable Reconstruction of Tsunami-affected Villages in Karaikal, Pondicherry –

Experiences in Participatory Design and Technology Choice

Background

With support from the Swiss Solidarity Chain/ Swiss Red Cross, Development Alternatives has initiated reconstruction of habitats in three villages destroyed by the tsunami in Karaikal district of Pondicherry. The project has been developed based on a firm commitment to people-based habitat processes – a time tested formula for success of reconstruction initiatives.

One of the first milestones in the project, was to understand user preferences and habitat needs. The idea was to develop a design brief, design solutions and a menu of applicable technology options through a participatory process – keeping the social, cultural and environmental priorities of the people at the centre – both in the short and the long term.

Towards this end, stakeholder workshops were organised in the three project villages: Kottucherry Medu, Karaikal Medu and Kilinjal Medu. The intention of the workshops was to develop a shared understanding of the reconstruction needs and possible reconstruction response between the village community and Development Alternatives as the lead facilitating agency. The workshops also served to strengthen the rapport between the project and the village communities.

All the workshops were well received by the people, and were attended by 80-160 representatives in different meetings.

A. VRC formation and strengthening

The importance of a Village Reconstruction Committee (VRC) as a body of representatives responsible for managing and monitoring reconstruction processes within the project was discussed with the three communities.

VRCs of 11 people from each village, with 5 men and 6 women members considered as "responsible" by the villagers were formed.

Community sharing of design options

B. Village planning

A visioning exercise was undertaken by the community in the three villages to discuss and map out their ideal village within the "Boundary Conditions" of plot area, cost per unit etc laid down by the government. The exercise was carried out in smaller groups of 4-7 people to draw layout plans of their dream village on large sheets of paper and then presented to the rest of the gathering. All layouts, included dwelling units, roads, community buildings, telephone booths and other basic infrastructure.

C. House designs

The exercise for design of dwelling units was also done with the participants in smaller groups and later presented to the larger gathering through sketch drawings. These were accompanied by 1:50 scale models in Kottucherry Medu. The designs prepared by the smaller groups were displayed for voting by the rest of the community. The designs with the greatest number of votes were selected **1:1 scale demonstration** models, using bamboo poles and *saris*. These models were very effective in providing a sense of space and scale to the larger community and were soon after developed as technical drawings for submission to the government using the feedback from the people.

1:1 Scale Models of house layouts at Kilinjal Medu

D. Indicators of sustainability

Indicators of success of the project based on sustainable building practices were discussed and defined. The participants discussed indicators around social impacts such as equity and safety including provision of toilets especially for women; environmental impacts such as waste generation, recycling of materials and resources including water and; financial aspects such as livelihood creation.

E. Choice of technology for reconstruction

Technology options for reconstruction were displayed and discussed with the community in the three villages. The people were explained the pros and cons of various building materials and technological options such as Fly Ash Blocks, Micro-concrete Roofing Tiles and Rat-Trap bond for walling. The people voted for different technologies by using coloured stickers to indicate their choice.

After the selection of the design for submission to the Government and initiation of the pilot phase of first 100 houses, the families from the village Kilinjal Medu felt that the spaces did not quite correspond with what they had wanted. The Village Panchayat and VRC got together and put up a 1:1 full scale model of a house using bricks as Lego blocks. Detailed discussions with the families led to a change in the design for this village. This change reflected on the site planning exercise also. A second

option of the site plan was prepared, the house design was detailed out and approvals for construction sought from the Planning authorities. The role of the project team has been as "managers of the people's project".

Community meeting to discuss design and technology choice

Further dialogue has led to changing of the door and window specifications from pre-cast concrete to wood, plaster on the red fired brick surfaces of the houses and an introduction of a back-verandah slab. Each change is made after a detailed discussion on implications on structure, cost, time etc. Some changes have been recommended by the project in order to optimize costs and or improve the environmental quality of the project, such as common bath and toilets – with an option to introduce internal walls at a later date, and a roof rain water system. There is also a continuous process of educating the families on the benefits of the structural system and construction technology selected.

The project continues to face a challenge of customizing the houses to individual needs. While the primary structure of the house has been constructed as per detailed design discussions with the village communities, it has not been possible to customize smaller but essential details such as, colour of walls, type of floors which the individual family would definitely like a greater control over. This is because houses have not been allotted yet. In the absence of an agreement on the final list and the process of allotment, the project has decided to ensure that the basic design and specifications are acceptable to the larger village community, while smaller elements that the families will customize will be left to families to change (without structural implications) after they move in.

Mona Chhabra Anand & Zeenat Niazi

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is an architect and housing specialist and is the Director of the Habitat Programme at Development Alternatives.

Regional Knowledge Platform

South Asia

Auroville Earth Institute aims to research, develop, promote and transfer earth-based technologies which are cost and energy effective. These technologies are disseminated through training courses, seminars, workshops, publications and consultancy within and outside India.

Centre for Ecocentric Development and People's Action is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working over the last 14 years for "People Centered, Eco-Centric Development."

Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts is a network of twenty voluntary organizations working for upliftment and disaster preparedness of Fishing Communities in India.

Exnora works as a catalyst in bringing about local initiative and community participation in overall improvement in quality of life. It aims at developing civic and environmental consciousness among citizens through self-help, enactment of suitable legislation and environmental protection initiatives.

Gram Vikas is a rural development organization, working with poor and marginalized communities of Orissa since 1979 making sustainable improvements in the quality of life of the rural poor. The mission of Gram Vikas is to promote processes which are sustainable, socially inclusive and gender equitable, to enable critical masses of poor and marginalized rural people or communities to achieve a dignified quality of life.

Grambangla Unnayan Committee, Bangladesh is a non-profit, non-governmental voluntary development organization working over the last 12 years for people whose lives are affected by extreme poverty, exclusion, deprivation, illiteracy, disease and handicaps.

Orissa Development Technocrats' Forum is a registered society working to facilitate an effective rural housing delivery system in Orissa through formalizing the rural construction sector and the "Promotion of Appropriate Construction Technologies and Opportunities for Sustainable Livelihoods."

Trust for Village Self Governance is a charitable trust focusing on local self governance in villages using Panchayat as a tool. Their focus is on creating sustainable employment and providing opportunities in habitat development.

Unnati is a non-governmental organization working over the last 15 years for "civic leadership promotion and strengthening local self governance."

Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Pakistan works to improve the built environment, particularly housing design and construction, village planning, natural hazard mitigation, environmental sanitation, water supply, and other living conditions. These goals are achieved through the provision of material and technical assistance and construction management services.

Development Alternatives is a not-for-profit sustainable development enterprise that designs and promotes programmes and products which, through the use of alternative technology, contribute to the enrichment of human life.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Swiss Foreign Ministry. The Rural Housing Project (RHP) supported by the SDC focuses on providing choices and access to poor rural families for improved housing, especially for affordable, energy and resource-efficient and environment-friendly building material and technologies.

basin-*South Asia* Regional Knowledge Platform (basin-*SA*) is committed to *"developing knowledge systems and promoting collaborative action within South Asia to enable access by the poor to sustainable habitat and livelihoods."*