

## Community Projects

IFSP supports improving the village infrastructure. This includes roads and drainage, agricultural production, health, water and sanitation. During the participatory needs assessment (PNA) in a village, the families raise and discuss their serious common problems. Subsequently the families by themselves with the facilitation of trained teams (PNA teams) identify the causes of the problems and the appropriate and practicable solutions. These solutions are intensively discussed and formulated as community projects for the village. These projects are then technically evaluated and plans for implementation are prepared.

### Storm water disposal system for Gopalapuram

The storm water disposal system for Gopalapuram is such a community project supported by IFSP. The first phase of the project is completed by now. Gopalapuram is located in the coastal area close to Nilaveli and the landscape is like a dish surrounded by lagoon and sea. Therefore it easily gets flooded with few heavy rains and the families living in this village undergo many hardships. They temporarily displace from their houses to schools or public buildings and become a burden to the government for food and basic needs. Floods submerge their crops cultivated and their only source of income is lost. Roads and temporary huts get damaged. Sanitation of this area becomes poor due to flooding over wells and toilets and water stagnation. As a result, in the past years people were severely affected by diarrhoea and other water spread and water borne diseases. During the rainy season in 1998, three people died due to chronic diarrhoea. Further, the village leaders revealed that a drainage structure built by the British has been completely abandoned during the past four decades.

Project planning was done together with the families of Gopalapuram and village officials supported by the IFSP engineer. It was planned to construct concrete drainage channels

towards the lagoon and to the sea. The drainage channel for phase 1 is 600 meter long and the total cost amounted to Rs.1,225 million. IFSP was keen to obtain maximum participation and contribution from the villagers as well as from the Pradesha Saba. As a result, nearly 30% of the cost was shared by the village: 23%



Constructing the storm water drainage system in Gopalapuram

from the villagers and 7% from the Pradesha Saba Nilaveli. People have voluntarily performed site clearing, excavation of drains, back filling of earth after construction and assisted in the construction of masonry walls and other structures. The Pradesha Saba, Nilaveli supported the construction of two culverts along the roads and provided hume pipes from their own funds.

### Capacity building

Since this project had a very high priority for the village, proposed by the people and planned together with them, their participation and

contribution was high. The Rural Development Society, Gopalapuram which is the community based organisation (CBO) of this village received construction materials, funds and necessary technical support from IFSP. The CBO organised the people, purchased locally available materials and did the construction of the drainage channels. The commitment and the enthusiasm shown by the CBO and the people in Gopalapuram, convinced IFSP to continue with the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the storm water drainage system. Strengthening the CBO and encouraging the self-help capability of the people is one of our main targets.

Community projects are based on priorities for developing the village. These projects are promising tools for CBO strengthening and for community mobilisation. While the projects are being implemented, the CBO gradually experiences and learns to contribute actively and to request services and support. This would include technical and management advice, applying proper procedures required by the supporting institutions, handling of funds and purchase of materials as well as regular maintenance and sound documentation. Above all the CBO gets used to work as a team together with the villagers and take the ownership of their asset.

### Direct benefits of the Gopalapuram storm water drainage

With the completion of the first phase, the chances for damages by flood during this rainy season are reduced. People are highly relieved and are preparing for their cultivation. The second phase is planned to commence in January 2001 and this will help to further minimise the flooding, water stagnation and the related harmful effects.

To supplement the benefits of the storm water disposal project, specifically to improve the health and sanitation of this village, financial and technical assistance is given to 22 families to construct toilets. This project is also organised and implemented by the RDS Gopalapuram with the participation of the respective families and is nearing completion.

### Community centre Kumpurupitti

Another example for a good community project is the Kumpurupitti nursery school and community centre next to an abandoned Kovil and opposite the church. The population of Kumpurupitti had expressed their priority for such a public building during PNA. Work started in March 2000 by signing the agreement between IFSP and the Rural Development Society (RDS) Kumpurupitti. Since then a lot of activities took place: Removing parts of an old building, digging foundation and putting the new building up. The nursery school and community centre consists of one large room, offices and toilet. The building shall serve as a sub-post office in future. Timber for the roof and



Kumpurupitti nursery school and community centre: cleaning the yard and establishing the fence

fences and for furniture was made available by families from Kumpurupitti. The opening will take place soon.

### Vaccination campaign

IFSP contributed to the National Immunisation Campaign which took place from 27<sup>th</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November. The campaign was organised by the Department of Health and supported by UNICEF. Polio vaccination was done in many villages in Muthur and Eachchilampattai.

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

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