

# Project Completion Report

## Permanent Housing Project – Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai

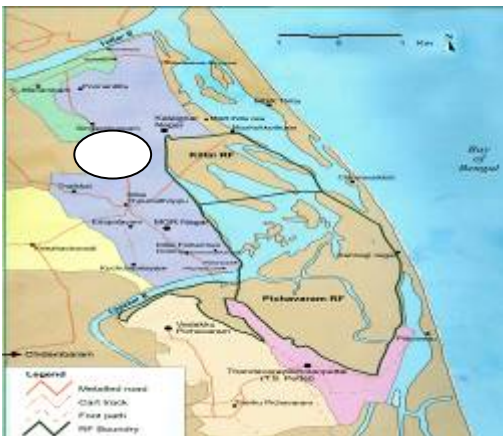
### KAMAKSHIPURAM

#### 1. INTRODUCTION– CREED–Centre for Rural Education and Economic Development

In 2004 – 2005, it was a major challenge and turning point in the history of CREED, an organization with standing experience in the Development sector for more than two decades, in addressing the Tsunami Response Program in Chidambaram region of Cuddalore District in the state of Tamil Nadu, S. India. In all our initial Relief and Rehabilitation efforts, there was a preference to look at issues that the vulnerable communities, who were undermined in receiving entitlements. The communities belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Irula tribes and the other Backward and the Most Backward Sections, received little attention in the mainstream relief and rehabilitation measures.

CREED was fortunate to have the generous Donor, Handicare International, who had come forward in uplifting the desperate homelessness conditions of 17 families belonging to the Most Backward Communities [MBC] in securing livelihood restoration opportunities through provision of funding support for the construction of 17 Permanent Houses for the families affected by Tsunami.

This Report aims to highlight the whole program mechanics funded by Handicare International.



Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai is a small coastline village situated at the brink of Vellar Estuary at the left up-most section of the map provided as seen. CREED had arranged the purchase of land for 17 families for the construction activities. The village is circled in the map.

The families originally had their sub-standard habitation in the banks of the backwater were re-located as per their preference and aspirations.

## **2. The Demographic and Occupational Profile of the Families**

The Project affected positively the lives of Vanniya, the Most Backward agricultural families in the village location. All these 17 families were living in desperate situations that depended greatly on working through agricultural fields during seasonal cropping. In times of agricultural failures and non-seasonal farming, they tend to depend on livestock rearing. Alternative livelihoods depended on ferry transports, using the backwaters across Porto Nova.

## **3. Community Mobilization by CREED**

CREED had started assisting these 17 families in the village location through organization and strengthening of Self Help Groups among them for their social and economic development purposes. Upon this experience and consultation, they wanted CREED to look in to their vulnerability factors and thus there was a proposal, submitted to Handicare International, for seeking financial assistance.



***Community Members at Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai*****4. Rationale for Construction of Permanent Houses**

With an advent of Tsunami as Disaster and the need for fulfilling and addressing the welfare and livelihood issues of the affected families, the Government of Tamil Nadu had come forward to providing free land facilities and entitlements thus encouraging the Civil Society, I-NGOs and the Corporate Sector to share the burden of Exchequer under **Public-Private Partnership Scheme**.

Since CREED was from the beginning involved in relief operations and with longstanding credibility and partnerships the NGO enjoyed across different Government Departments, the District Administration had invited bidding from CREED to evolve certain levels of program implementation under the Public-Private Partnership Scheme.

In the under-served locations and the villages categorized by the Government as 2<sup>nd</sup> Line Villages, it was the responsibility of CREED and the Donor agencies to identify suitable housing development projects in accordance with the guidelines as stipulated in the Government Orders and the terms and conditions as outlined in the PPPS. CREED, in furtherance of fostering the genuine aspirations of the selected 17 families affected by Tsunami and as per the willingness expressed by the Handicare International, had implemented the construction activities in Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai village.

**5. Conditions, Obligations and Restrictions under the Public-Private Partnership Scheme**

The Public-Private Partnership Scheme as laid down by the State Government of Tamil Nadu, vide Government Order MS.25, Revenue [NC.III], Department dated 13.1.2005 or read with Government Order MS.26, Revenue [NC.III], Department dated 13.1.2005 emphasized certain conditions, obligations and restrictions imposed on the significance of Tsunami as the natural disaster and in furtherance of rehabilitation, the following run were the contents/context:

- The safe bearing capacity of the soil for basement in consonance with standards as prescribed from preventing the infrastructure from obvious seismic, cyclone or other coastline calamities
- The components in relation to all infrastructure as per the Public Works Department guidelines and norms
- The designs and lay out of infrastructure as per Town and Country Planning norms
- The involvement and active participation of implementers such as the Civil Society, I-NGOs and the Corporate Sector in fulsome coordination and cooperation from the Government line Departments under the supervision of the District Administration

Part of the Public-Private Partnership Scheme also envisaged the Implementing Agencies to strictly adhere to the Environmental Checklist drawn from the Environmental and Social Management Framework [ESMF].

## **6. Pre-Project Planning**

CREED had recruited a team of experienced and trained Engineers and skilled construction workers for undertaking detailed assessments and consultations with the local communities benefiting from the project outputs.

This process involved the stakeholders in appraising and deciding upon the construction designs and layouts as recommended and approved by the Government – mostly the UNDP approved housing and infrastructure designs and layout. The communities, especially women, had intensively appraised on the proposed layout and designs of the construction of Permanent Houses. The positive outcome of the consultation had resulted in providing suggestions on basic designs and layout of the Permanent Houses.

CREED had accepted the above decisions of the communities and their aspirations, and suitable designs and drawings were developed by the experienced technical staff team of

CREED. The modified designs and layout were then submitted and placed at the Village Meeting to gain their acceptance and consensus.

After the above stage, CREED had started submitting suitable applications under the Public-Private Partnership Scheme in fulfillment of gaining written approvals and permissions from the District Collector of Cuddalore to ensure that the Designs and Layouts being approved by the Public Works Department and the Town and Country Planning Bodies. Such in-house planning consisted of the following structural components of the Project:

- Layout
- Ground Floor Plan
- Staircase Details in the Ground Floor Plan

## **7. Institutional Arrangements and Strategies**

CREED had a belief that strategic alliance and partnership with the District Administration and the communities should be an important avenue of cooperation since their statutory endorsements and on-site appraisals shall form the basis for the smooth and effective implementation of the Project activities.

CREED had further desired that the project formulation should also take in to consideration of empowering and enabling the local communities gaining more rights and control over planning. CREED also expected the formation and strengthening of the Village level institutions to take up most of the local planning arrangements.

## **8. Proposal Submission to Handicare International: Consultations and Appraisals:**

With all back up information, CREED had approached Handicare International in exploring if Handicare International could positively consider the proposal from CREED.

The officials from Handicare International and their authorized representatives had visited frequently to CREED and the affected village location for appraisals and finally an agreement was signed between CREED and the Handicare International for the taking

up of the construction activities. The Grant Contract had stipulated the following suggestions that are broken down as follows:

- Insistence on CREED to obtain in advance all relevant approvals, permissions and endorsements from the Government Departments and especially from the District Administration
- Insistence on the technical aspects duly complied with/adhered to in matters relating to the drawings, estimations, designs and layout
- Clearly defined PERT CHART for the beginning and completion of the Project activities

CREED, as a responsible organization, had also contemplated on the following aspects, beyond the vicinity of the Grant Contract:

- Relocation Issues
- Participation
- Local appropriateness
- Physical planning issues
- House allocation
- Gender issues
- Community spaces
- Equity issues
- Human sensitivity



*Throughout the Project, Gender-centricity was employed as strategic tool to avail fulsome support from the communities*

In addition, the construction Project had strictly adhered to the simplified guidelines as stipulated by the Government through the communication received from the District

Administration. CREED was grateful to Handicare International for the extension of financial assistance in carrying out this most worthy Project.

## 10. Methodology

After executing a formal agreement between CREED and Handicare International, a methodical approach was found essential as described below:

### Human Resources

In order to effectively implement the Project, CREED had recruited a band of Project personnel which comprised of:

- 1 Project Engineer
- 1 Project Coordinator
- 2 Technically qualified and experienced Supervisors
- 1 Non-Technical Supervisors
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Store Keepers
- 2 Watchmen [Night Watchman and Day Watchman]

### Procurement, Storage and Distribution arrangements

CREED had taken steps to make arrangements for procurement of the construction materials with logistics arrangements for storing the materials and distribution. For procurement, CREED had adopted norms providing space and scope for the Purchase Committee to take decisions on purchases/procurement of materials having quality.



40 MM Blue Metal



20 MM Blue Metal





River Sand



Country Bricks

Careful attention was paid in purchase/procurement of Steel and Cement as per ISI standards and quality tests undertaken for bricks and sand. This also included arrangements for collection of water intended for the construction as well as for curing purposes.

### **11. Project Revisions and/or Budgetary Projections**

CREED has contributed towards purchase of 1 acre of land for the purpose of construction of Permanent Houses. Owing to the unexpected heavy rainfalls and copious rains during the North East Monsoon season, entire activities were at crossroads and the following reasons had blocked the progress of the Project activities:

- Increased demands and non-availability of Bricks, Blue Metal and River Sand
- Closure of Brick line Units, and Blue Metal and River Sand quarries
- The need for importing Bricks, Blue Metal stones and River Sand from distant places
- The cost escalation in procurement of construction materials – especially Bricks, Blue Metal and River Sand
- Lack of labor force availability

As a result, CREED had adopted a flexible approach with requests made to Handicare International in the understanding that the obvious delays might be condoned. In addition, request was also sought for the extension of the Time Line of the Project until November 2006 as against the previously agreed time line from February 2006 until July 2006.



The authorized India Consultant of Handicare International also visited the location for overseeing the progress of the activities and had further favored on the release of 2<sup>nd</sup> Installment of grant from the Handicare International.

**Project Progress Indicators [in physical standards]**



*Inauguration by Mrs. Sulo Krishnamoorthy, Vice President of Handicare International*



*Column Erection*



*Grade Beam Laying*



*Processing Grade Beam*



*Grade Beam Steel Fabrication*



*Using water resources in the location for curing purposes*



*Above Basement Level*



*Roof Laid with Inner Plaster work completed*



*Wooden materials for Windows and Doors*



*Stair case*



**Plastering Work [Outer Plaster]**





*Over view of Roof Laid*



*Over view of the row of Permanent Houses*



*Over view of completed Permanent Houses*

**13. MONITORING & EVALUATION: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHECKS**

As per the PERT Chart, the Monitoring procedures throughout the implementation of the Project had been intact. Internal monitoring was done greatly by the staff of CREED in coordination of the different Committees constituted at the community. External monitoring was done by the authorized representative of Handicare International. The Technical staff team of CREED had frequent site visits followed by the Legal Holder of CREED and the Technical Project staff team to make on-site appraisals.

While such internal and external monitoring and evaluation systems were in constant functions, the Government officials had also undertaken periodical and intensified monitoring and evaluation systems. These included the frequent visits made by the officials from the Local Bodies, Revenue Department, Public Works Department and the District Administration, especially the direct physical verifications done by the District Collector of Cuddalore.

The findings of the Government level monitoring and evaluation were frequently reflected during all Review Meetings as held at the District Administration under the presence of the District Collector.

**15. Problems and Constraints experienced**

A number of practical problems and constraints have been experienced throughout the Project implementation stages – greatly related in terms of accidental setbacks such as rainfalls, heavy floods, labor scarcity and acute shortages of important construction materials such as Bricks, Blue Metal stones, and River Sand.

The key problem that the construction activity encountered was in terms of collection and import of essential materials such as River Sand and 20MM and 40MM Blue Metal stones. These generally depend on Quarry-based production. Since mining River Sand and Blue Metal quarries frequently generate the levels of controversy across Tamil Nadu, the problems of procurement and transport were consistent.

Since the collection zones lie in Sithamalli in Mayiladuthurai Taluk of Nagapattinam District and Sethiyathoppu in Chidambaram Taluk in Cuddalore District function as the main source of supplies, conflicts were widespread between various Suppliers ranging from local suppliers to the suppliers even from the distant places such as Salem and Coimbatore.

In addition, the proximity, vehicle arrangements and issues related to the tonnage also created problems. At times, there was a need to make use of Bullock Carts and other means to lift up 'Link' transportation always involving costs and extra expenses. Though adequate attention was made in meeting the recordable procedures for the material procurement, the Enforcement Department had also given unexpected hindrances.

Cost escalation has become a key problem followed by the backlog of work progresses. In addition, since the entire site was marooned during 2005 floods, it was the major problem for CREED in replacements of valuable construction materials and its obvious necessity of safeguarding in the right places.

The constraint as felt during the course of implementation of the Project was such that the land area selected for the construction activity lied across low lying topography. Leveling of land however had resolved this issue. When speeding up of the construction work in consistency with Government expectations and the dire need of the beneficiaries for the peaceful settlements, it was a major challenge for CREED to place huge quantity of time and energy in fulfillment of the work schedules. However, CREED was able to accomplish tasks.

## **16. SUSTAINABILITY AND POST-PROJECT MAINTENANCE**

**H**ousing and sustainable Habitation Management are crucial issues in any Rehabilitation Plans and the Project such as the one that CREED had implemented in funding support from Handicare International is not exclusive.



However, the owners of Housing are expected not only to gain a greater control over ownership, but they should be keen on maintaining the assets with a focus on community-based Habitation Management.

Habitation Management in any given situation requires considerable time gap for familiarization of the environment in which the habitants could gain a sense of adaptability and it would be even more critical to assess the mindset of the intended beneficiaries in terms of their judicious and optimum use of water and maintenance of sanitation.

CREED will also express ongoing commitment and involvement with the communities of Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai to ensure that the Gender involvement in sustainable management of the assets created.

The beneficiary families of Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai will be encouraged to form their own Association to look after the post-maintenance of the assets created. In addition, CREED will undertake continuous efforts with the Government to ensure that other important infrastructure entitlements being favored on these 17 families.



*Many families in Kamakshipuram of Ponnanthittu-Thonithurai village had started beautifying their environment by raising homestead flower gardens.*



*Provision for Septic Tank in all 17 Permanent Houses will enable the families gain further entitlements from the Government*

## **17. Important Events and Social Gatherings**

CREED had taken all possible steps for the women's Self Help Group members to avail 'safety net' programs of the Government as well as approaching other Donors for

generating resources for stabilizing their livelihood restoration. For example, the Save the Children Fund had come forward to providing livelihood inputs for these hosts of 17 families. On 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Day of Tsunami, i.e. 26<sup>th</sup> December 2006, the District Collector of Cuddalore had officially inaugurated the Project at the Killai Special Meeting. The beneficiaries had preferred the location to be called as Kamakshipuram.



*Stone laying arrangements*



*The District Collector formally inaugurates the Project*



*The keys for the Beneficiaries were handed over in the presence of the District Collector*

### Convergence and Advocacy

CREED has been in constant touch with the District Administration of Cuddalore to ensure that the beneficiaries to be favored through enjoying existing policy provisions of the Government in

Tsunami Response Program. At the project site, Electricity poles were installed. Along side, CREED has also been taking up continuous advocacy efforts to provide Drinking Water facility and Road formation activities, and the Government will be providing these basic infrastructure services in due course.

HOUSE NUMBER 01



KALYANI [WIDOW]

HOUSE NUMBER 02



MALATHI AND MARI

HOUSE NUMBER 03



KANAGAMBAL AND MARIMUTHU

HOUSE NUMBER 04



VASUKI AND MURUGAN



HOUSE NUMBER 05



MARAGATHAM AND VIJAYAKUMAR

HOUSE NUMBER 06



YASOTHAI [WIDOW]

HOUSE NUMBER 07



SARASWATHY AND THIYAGARAJAN

HOUSE NUMBER 08



LAKSHMI AND MURUGAN

HOUSE NUMBER 09



JEYAMALATHI AND MOORTHY

HOUSE NUMBER 10



GOMATHY AND UTHIRAPATHY

HOUSE NUMBER 11



REVATHY AND RAJARAM

HOUSE NUMBER 12



VEERAMOORTHY AND  
VEERAMUTHU



HOUSE NUMBER 13



SARASWATHY AND RAMALINGAM

HOUSE NUMBER 14



VIJAYA AND RAMACHANDRAN

HOUSE NUMBER 15



SAVITHRI AND SETHUPATHI

HOUSE NUMBER 16



SELVI AND RAJAMANICKAM

HOUSE NUMBER 17



ARUNA AND RADHAKRISHNAN



*Resumed Habitation at Kamakshipuram*