

community
impact



India

Disaster risk reduction: Community toilets



The construction of a toilet block in Dhanora has been a truly joint initiative between the Red Cross and the local community.

Photo: Indian Red Cross Society

Dhanora is located 50 kilometres from Wani sub district of Maharashtra, close to Wainganga River on Andhra Pradesh border from Maharashtra, this village remains vulnerable to many risks especially during monsoon season. Due to constant risk of flooding, Dhanora has been listed for rehabilitation by the government for 47 years, however this work is yet to be completed.

The community was severely affected by floods in 1958, 1962 and again in 2006. With only a single road connecting the village to other communities, one which gets submerged in water during floods, during the 2006 monsoon, the government had to rescue 500 people by helicopter.

Programme action

In anticipation of rehabilitation work by the government, the villagers have not been improving the structure of their homes. The village lacks in drainage system and as toilets are not available, the practice of open defecation was common. The community remain at high risk of flooding and water borne diseases (due to non-availability of potable water and improper sanitation), as well as other devel-



During the construction of the toilet block, the community took ownership of the project, doing much of the construction themselves.

Photo: Indian Red Cross Society

opment issues.

The community has to depend on the local public health centre for treatment and emergencies. This centre is located about 10 km away from the village. The major problem identified by the community through the VCA process was the practice of open defecation, and the resulting health hazards.

Based on the findings of the VCA, the community, with the support of the Indian Red Cross Society decided to construct 12 blocks of common toilets to address sanitation issues in their village. The community played a proactive role in providing the space for constructions of the common toilets, agreeing upon the construction plans and designs, and the number of units to be constructed. It was agreed to construct six common toilet blocks each for both females and males.

Supported by



IRCS supported the project by procuring the required material, as per the organizations guidelines, a motor for pumping

the water and also provided skilled labour for the construction. Similarly, the community members, with the support from local gram panchayat, provided two syntax water storage tanks of 1,000 litre capacity for storing water and supplied the connections required for electricity, as well as contributing in terms of labour.

A resolution was passed by the community members that it would be the responsibility of all community members to take care of future maintenance and repairs of the toilets. The gram panchayat (local government) will be responsible for appointing a person for cleaning the toilets, while members of the CDMC will monitor maintenance. Some community volunteers also came forward and volunteered to take charge of cleaning the toilets.

Presently, approximately 98 per cent of males and 85 per cent of females in the community are using the common toilets. With ongoing awareness outreach session being conducted by volunteers of the Indian Red Cross Society within the community on best hygiene practices, the community decided to establish a small green garden in front of the common toilets to help keep the surrounding area clean. Indian Red Cross Society has supported by providing plants and fencing materials while the community themselves provided the required labour.

Outcome

The people of Dhanora community are satisfied with the construction of community toilet block and have expressed thanks to Indian Red Cross Society, IFRC and Hong Kong Red Cross for their technical and financial support to implement this activity



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