

# Grassroots Women's Initiatives in Reconstruction and Governance

## International Community Visit & Exchange Workshop

August 18-22, 2008  
Tamil Nadu, India

Post-tsunami initiatives across South Asia have taken a long journey from recovery to development, and are now focusing on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Initiatives and responses from grassroots communities have reached a new level whereby policy makers, government institutions and experts are recognizing the efforts and skills of the community.

In this context Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) on behalf of GROOTS International facilitated a learning exchange between grassroots communities from Sri Lanka and India. The exchange took place in the districts of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu from August 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008, and gave an opportunity for grassroots women to share their learning, initiatives and best practices in rebuilding resilience among communities.



This exchange comes as a result of continuous efforts to rebuild flood-affected communities in Moratuwa and Matara of Sri Lanka by NGO Sevanatha. Sevanatha was established in 1989 with local government support and focuses on urban development and empowerment of under-served communities. For the last

two years GROOTS International has been collaborating with SSP, a development organization working in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, to assist in strengthening the women-centered approach to development in Matara and Moratuwa. The exchange was designed in a way that linked disaster to development, highlighting the importance of adequate preparation and understanding of future risks, and provided a platform for community groups from Sri Lanka and India to share the initiatives they have implemented in their villages.

Visitors partaking in the exchange included Kanta Rana Arunalu Society of Moratuwa, Jayashakti Forum of Matara, and the Mayor of Matara, Sri Lanka.

Hosting the exchange and presenting their ideas in Tamil Nadu were the grassroots women's groups of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam.



"The objective of this visit is to share women's initiatives in post-tsunami development processes. We need to develop the livelihood activities promoted within a community, strengthen the role of and relationship with local federations and financial institutions, experience of community center management and harness projects with local government support."

**Pavithra, Secretary of Rana Arunalu Women's Development Society, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka**

The exchange visit was begun with introduction and orientation about the programme in Cuddalore on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008. Later the team visited various villages in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam districts to learn and share women's initiatives after tsunami.

## TSUNAMI - What happened after that?

### The situation after tsunami

Grassroots leaders from Tamilnadu explained the initiatives in rebuilding community after tsunami. Leaders like Manimegalai, Chinnaponnu, Mohana, Chitra, Ezhil Arasi and Uttara were briefed about the experience in working with community. Following the tsunami, affected areas received a high volume of aid and relief from national and international NGOs and the government for the construction of temporary shelters and improvement of access to drinking water, clothing, food, and health services. After one month the flow of relief came to a halt. Only a handful of the NGOs that first came to the affected areas have remained.



### ASHAA group formation

SSP approached the Cuddalore and Nagapattinam area villages of Tamil Nadu in January of 2005 and collaboratively carried out an assessment of the water, sanitation and health situation in the area. In a dialogue workshop with the communities of these villages it was decided to address the identified issues, and with the support of SSP the female community organized themselves into ASHAA (Arogya Sakhis for Health Awareness and Action) groups. Each group was given exposure to the nearest public and private health facilities and the services they offer. By utilizing these services and improving primary health care, these ASHAA groups have begun to prevent diseases and the need for expensive healthcare. The success of the first ASHAA groups has had a rippling effect on nearby villages and, with the assistance of the established groups, a further 60 ASHAA groups have now been formed.

### Some roles of the ASHAA groups are to:

- Provide a communal women's resource center for meetings and activities
- Strengthen partnerships with village Primary Health Centres (PHCs)
- Create local community health fund with monthly contributions
- Organize regular in-village health check-up camps and hospital referrals
- Conduct workshops on nutrition and healthy living involving all members of the community
- Support government officials for completion of their programs
- Emphasize the importance of immunization and institutional delivery for women
- Develop local community federation for advocacy
- Develop new and existing livelihood activities for income and education
- Implement community 'trainers team' for each activity
- Maintain village cleanliness and encourage responsible waste segregation and disposal

## Working with Primary Health Centres

One of the major achievements of ASHAA is the reformed partnership of communities with village Primary Health Centres (PHCs). These government-operated clinics provide each village with a local health center and assigned village health nurse (VHN). Prior to the tsunami, the village nurse came to the village erratically and did not provide adequate care for the patients. The villagers had negative misconceptions about the quality of service, thus the center was ignored and the villagers came to favor the more expensive option of private hospitals. This incurred an average expense of Rs. 200 per month per person on family health.

ASHAA has negotiated with PHC doctors and nurses and the picture has changed dramatically. The nurse now visits the village weekly and provides medicines for basic illnesses to ASHAA leaders who distribute them throughout the village. Once the infrastructure and medicine stocks had improved the villages began to utilize the PHCs, thus saving up to Rs. 200 per month.

**Uttara** from Velangirayan Pettai describes the situation in her village: "There was nobody accessing PHC healthcare. Now the commu-

nity access government health schemes such as Adolescent Girls' Assistance, Pregnant Ladies Scheme, Senior Citizens and Widows Program, etc. ASHAA also assist the village health nurse and PHCs to provide polio vaccines for children, awareness on seasonal illness like malaria, chikun gunya, typhoid etc. Working with school children in creating awareness on seasonal illness has been found to be very effective. ASHAA is recognized as a huge success in our village."

## Health Check-up Camps



SSP facilitated ASHAA groups to provide their communities with regular health check-up camps. These camps are held at the women's resource center and are attended by a doctor, laboratory staff and assistant. Initially the doctor requested Rs. 1,000 consultation fee, with a further Rs. 40 laboratory fee per testing. ASHAA negotiated this price down to Rs. 500 and Rs 20 respectively. A Rs. 10 contribution was taken from each ASHAA member to cover the expenses of the camp.

## Partnerships with Health Institutions

**Sarada** spoke about how ASHAA women in Rasapettai organized their first village health check in her village. "My village is surrounded by sea and river on three sides and it is difficult to access health care services that are not available within the village. Now that we have these check-ups, we can detect illnesses at an early stage without the inconvenience of leaving the village." 54 out of 56 women in Rasapettai were found to have anemia. One woman had a 5kg ovarian tumor identified and subsequently removed at Puducherry Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) where ASHAA has a tie-up for referral services.



**Vijayalakshmi** from Thazhankuda explained how they have partnered with Puducherry Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). During village level health check-ups, doc-

tors refer some patients to government or private hospitals, but either people cannot afford private medical care or they have negative perceptions about government health services and therefore do not seek appropriate medical care. ASHAA in conjunction with SSP approached the Puducherry Institute of Medical Science (PIMS) to obtain free and discounted medical services for those referred through ASHAA health camps. PIMS and SSP jointly arranged a specialized medical camp which provides free services such as transportation, minor surgeries, medication, and hospitalization.

ASHAA women are following up with PIMS after every referral cases. ASHAA makes sure that women get adequate treatment and facilities and confer with PIMS authorities to improve the services and provide free testing, minor surgery, hospitalization and medication.



## Accessing Government Schemes and Programs

ASHAA groups have worked with the state government to identify and implement various healthcare schemes designed for their benefit. **Kalavathy**, a senior ASHAA leader from Puthukuppam village, described her experience of accessing government schemes and programs for the community. After the tsunami Kalavathy initiated helping people to get government assistance in various sectors. She has not only assisted her own village but has trained ASHAA members from other villages how to negotiate with local and district level government authorities in order to identify and access available schemes. "You have to keep going to government offices; it's the only way to become familiar with the schemes as well as the officials. I know all the government schemes by heart".

### Kitchen Herbal Garden



Kasturi spoke about traditional herbal medicine usage in Tamil Nadu. She explained how Gram Moolika Company Limited (an initiative of a women's group in Madurai facilitated by CCD) has helped

ASHAA groups to get herbal plants to grow in their houses. Seeds of medicinal plants are distributed to ASHAA groups and training is given on the benefits, preparation and prescription of herbal medicine for basic illnesses. Many villages are now using these plants and enjoying the benefits of tending to their own primary healthcare. By using these herbal medicines and PHCs, side effects from modern medicines are reduced and money is saved on healthcare and transportation

#### How to make a healthy living and earning?

Neelavathy explained how the ASHAA group in Thennampattinam village has encouraged women to start their own vegetable gardens. Seeds of traditional vegetables were selected according to the nutritional deficiencies common throughout the villages, i.e. anemia. In the initial stage they covered 250 households. When the vegetables from these seeds were harvested, the new seeds were given to more households in the village. "Eventually, when our own needs have been met, we will start to sell the seeds and vegetables at local markets".

She listed many schemes that she has assisted the community to access: Varumom Kappam scheme (State Rural Health Mission program), a marriage assistance scheme, maternity care (Rs. 6,000 benefit per women), tsunami affected children assistance and Ecosan toilets for those without sanitary facilities.

### Community Health Fund

To sustain the health services and network, ASHAA have created a common health fund for the community. Each and every member should contribute a minimum saving every month to conduct health related activities. This idea is being spread across the villages to get more membership and coverage. ASHAA also maintain a health database with information on the doctors in the district, pharmacies, medical laboratories, infrastructure facilities of the hospitals, etc.

### Looking to the future



According to **Neelavathy**, ASHAA groups in Thennaampattinam have plans for the future. In their view primary health is currently being handled well. They are planning

to create better relationships with testing labs, PHCs and government hospitals to get minor surgeries to provide at free of cost. They are also raising awareness about the use of toilets and maintaining sanitation. The village is a leader in health, water and sanitation: about 90% of the households are using individual toilets which have been constructed using government schemes. Today, it is estimated that about 100 villagers have constructed toilets by accessing government schemes and by contributing their own funds. She plans to capitalize on a government scheme that provides a subsidy of Rs. 1,500 for each new toilet built to spread use. The Health Federation, newly formed, plans to use funds to loan money for the construction of toilets and finance general health expenses.



## Women's Resource Centers



The conversion of community centers into women's resource centers has been an important step for ASHAA groups. The center provides a space to hold regular meetings, conduct health camps, training events and workshops; in addition to being an arena for educational advertisements (posters on positive health practices, etc.) and a storage space for activity resources.

### How is the centre managed by women?

Each ASHAA group has appointed leaders, eight of whom form a management committee to maintain the center. A single manager is not appointed; instead the women take turns to coordinate activities.

Women's resource centers are central to the organization of ASHAA groups, and almost every group has access to one such center. Thus, it seemed only appropriate that the exchange visit should be inaugurated at one of the centers.

### Plans for a community space in Matara

The planned women's resource centre in Matara will be a two storey building in a busy area serving many surrounding communities. The first floor will be reserved for shops and the second floor for women's groups meetings and other activities such as training. Designing is being done in collaboration with the community and the centre is anticipated as a landmark for the Matara community.



### Case study: Thennaampattinam

The village of Thennaampattinam in the district of Nagapattinam is a model for how ASHAA can become pivotal in the long-term development of a community. Initially, ASHAA began with three members, including Neelavathy, an exceptionally motivated and committed leader. It was difficult at first for her to recruit members. Today, however, based on its record of achievements, ASHAA is so popular that it seems like all women want to join it.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of ASHAA has been its ability to give women a voice and the confidence to speak in the face of power. The local governments, or panchayats, are comprised fully of men. Before the formation of ASHAA, only one or two women from SHGs would be present at these meetings. After ASHAA was formed, its members began voicing their complaints to the panchayat and putting pressure on its members; demanding answers, action and accountability.

Within the panchayat meetings, ASHAA members have lobbied for improvements on issues for which they cannot act fully themselves. For example, they have complained to the panchayat about subjects such as the inconsistent availability and prices of rice, kerosene and other products sold by the government during particular times of the year. They have also complained about alcohol abuse in the village. After one woman committed suicide from the stress of dealing with an alcoholic, violent husband, ASHAA banded together and compelled local vendors to sign an agreement agreeing to cease the sale of alcohol to the village.

Significantly, ASHAA has reformed the process to access to water on the pipeline system that delivers it. The pipeline became contaminated because villagers would siphon water from self-created taps and leave them open. With the leadership of ASHAA, new taps were created that avoid contamination and allow the villagers access to water free of tax.

## Sustainable Livelihoods



The effects of the tsunami highlighted the reliance of agriculture, fishing and farming, on the livelihoods of those living in both Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. As these areas are prone to natural disasters that affect

both fish and land, the sustainability of these incomes is threatened. By developing alternative means of generating income, a community can ease their reliance on these trades and enhance their skills in other areas.

**Alamelu** from Samiyar Pettai explained how women received driving tuition and vehicle donation from an NGO:

“After the tsunami an NGO donated a truck to 12 members of the federation to be used for transporting fish to market in the morning and to be offered for hire during the rest of the day. Now we have sufficient money to take a loan and buy Auto Riskshaw”, confident Alamelu says.

## Federations



Communities in Maharashtra have found that by forming federations of workers, problems of low sales and poor marketing can be collectively addressed and overcome. As a group, raw materials and services can be accessed at subsidized rates and inter-group loans can be arranged to suit the needs of individual members. Women fish vendors and farmers have used this model to form their own federations, and used the exposure visit as an opportunity to share their expertise with the visitors from Sri Lanka.

### Fish Vending Federation

“After the tsunami a team of women from CCD Madurai come to our village and shared their experiences of how they overcame problems of migration in their area, and how the formation of a worker's organization helped to ensure them a good income. We were impressed with their ideas so started organizing a similar group with a savings and loan scheme. The Fish Vending Federation was formed in 2005 and now has 803 members in the federation with Rs. 3,226,000 local funds for revolving.”

The Fish Vending Federation has brought the following changes:

- Organized all vendor women's activity
- Regular loan for business
- Common place for auctions
- Created local fund for rotation

### Farmer's Federation



“Before the tsunami our situation was very bad because every farmer was accessing pre-monsoon loans from local money lenders for sowing, seeds and fertilizer purchase. Only when the crops were harvested could they repay the debt... Post-tsunami research says that for up to 10 years there will be no good income from agriculture crops, but with the support of CCD trainers and our traditional knowledge we have started to rework our farming and have already got good results. To strengthen this we have created a local federation that will encourage sustainable development”.

## Impact of federation on community

- Farmers are accessing loans at 12% interest per annum and group is benefiting from 6% interest
- Collective purchase and sale of crops
- Farmers are providing crops as a loan repayment
- 10 months duration for repayment
- Rs. 300 as membership fee for each farmer yielding an annual expense saving of Rs. 5,000 per member
- Technical support and government subsidy for crops insurance
- Local committee within the federation where they can take care of marketing and finance
- Tradition, technology and infrastructure development

## Alternative Income Generating Activities



The village women's resource centers have proven to be an important tool in the mobilization of women into developing and practicing new skills for income generation. to the centre being built, women would work from home and training had to be imparted on site. The construction of a communal centre has enabled the women to meet in a mutual environment and, with the help of NGOs, has begun to serve as a training centre, learning environment and storage space where the women are confident to invite outside trainers to build on their skills. According to Revathy from Kuravalloor village, "activities such as incense stick making, yoga, tuition for children and literacy classes for adults have already started".

Women's groups are accessing computer education and training for children: "Computer coaching is very popular and all our children have learnt the basics of computer" says Sudha from Kandankadu.

At the two women's resource centers visited the exchange team witnessed an infectious enthusiasm to use the centre as a nodal point for training and marketing support for all the group income-generating activities. The shops built into the façade of the resource centers are being used for community businesses – hiring of utensils and furniture for weddings and other ceremonies, setting up provision stores that sell daily essentials and food stuff produced by self help groups (SHGs).

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**Aggarbathy (Incense stick) production:** Several batches of women are now trained in aggarbathy production. The federation leaders arranged the training by contacting experienced trainers and have made the necessary local market linkages to ensure that the groups produce articles according to market standards (concerning scenting and packaging, for example) and that the activity is profit-making. Wholesale consumers pay less, so federation leaders have identified individual consumers such as temples and local markets are strong.

Kasturi gave the advice on how to scale up and formalize a company: "If you are strengthened you will have many more women. Training over 200 women and forming a cooperative is ideal. Ensure that women work from home... To manage this activity you need to improve on capacity and skill. You need to have reliable and safe storage to keep the materials. The centre will also act as a place for training, scenting, packing and marketing".

**Coir Production:** 'Coir' is a rope product made from natural coconut fibres. Coir production was started in Marthampattinam village after identifying potential trainers. ASHAA have formed activity groups, identified local markets and slowly increased the production.

**How is the training sustainable?** - Usha Nandini and Chitra from Samiyar Pettai feel that in order to sustain the activities they must be cautious and prepared. They want to give all training for free for few months to encourage participation. Once people start the activity and become used to it, they will implement a charge for the training.

## Disaster Task Force and Hazard Mapping



In addition to strengthening health services and livelihoods, it is essential for a community to increase their environment and infrastructure's resilience to natural disasters. The exchange teams observed some of the initiatives taken by the communities of Nagapattinam, namely the formation of a Task Force team and village hazard mapping.

The formation of a Disaster Task Force in Keezhmoovarkarai village was part of integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities with ASHAA initiatives. When the ASHAA group learnt how to prepare their community by forming Disaster Task Force from ROSE, an NGO working with another coastal community, they immediately formed the task force in their own village. Men, women and youth were assigned roles according to their abilities in the different sub-groups of warning, safety and rescue, first aid, monitoring, etc. Now this team from Keezhmoovarkarai is providing training to other villages to form such groups.



“When I first participated in hazard mapping training in Thazhanguda village, I didn't know the meaning of vulnerability, risk, resources etc. But we experience this risk every year. This training was a good opportunity to learn how to prepare community, prevent for future disasters and reduce the risk. In this training we have identified vulnerable places and resources, how to reduce the risk while involving community, how to train other communities etc.”

- **Sudha**



### **Case Study: Samarakona Watha village in Moratuwa, Sri Lanka**

Samarakona Watha is located near a large river. This village has a typical recurring problem: rain and river water storms into village at least thrice a year. “When Sevanatha came to our village, we decided to start some activities to reduce the risk of flooding. We identified the prioritized needs and organized the community. The women's group took up the contract and constructed 16 roads in their area. Most of the work is done by societies or groups”. By participating in infrastructure development, women's groups have acquired new skills in decision making, financial management and manual skills such as masonry, measuring and estimates. Now the trained women masons are taking masonry work even outside villages, meaning that not only have they helped in the development of their village but they have acquired a new means of generating income for themselves.

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## Community Trainers



Community leaders can self-sufficiently spread their knowledge and skills by training other disaster prone communities around them and by creating a global network of trainers. Having initiated and sustained innovative community practices after earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and the tsunami, these community leaders have become experts in community resilience and development and are better equipped than anyone else to teach other disaster-prone communities how to shape risk reduction, relief, recovery and reconstruction processes to the advantage of disaster. ASHAA groups have found that training is executed more efficiently if it is divided between teams. For this purpose they have formed teams of two types of trainers.



**Training team:** The role of the training team is to assess new villages, train new trainers, prepare a training calendar, assist in using tools and conduct training to communities at the village level.

**Promotion team:** The purpose of the promotion team is to identify and assess new trainers and to network the trainers with the master trainers, ASHAA groups and PHCs. The promotion team helps to organize and implement village activities by planning, monitoring and reporting

## Learning from Experiences



On last day of the exchange, the teams discussed their observations and experiences in an effort to learn from one another's experiences and take home some valuable lessons and an action plan for their own communities.

All involved in the discussion agreed on the qualities of a strong woman:

- Courageous
- Confident
- Determined and perseverant
- Clear vision and objectives
- Leadership qualities
- Presentation and articulation skills
- Consideration of the needs of the community

And the qualities of a strong community:

- Unity and solidarity
- Motivation
- Shared responsibility and delegation
- Participation
- Savings and credit groups
- Enterprise and marketing
- Preparation for risks and disasters

## The final day workshop



In continuation and conclusion of the community visit was enriched on final day on August 22nd by organising a learning workshop in Cuddalore with Government officials, NGOs, CBOs and grassroots leaders. Mr. Muthu Velayudham summarized how CCD is working with farmers in Madurai and coastal areas of Tamilnadu to promote sustainable livelihoods. .



Mr. Athappan described how Disaster Task Force is being implemented by ROSE and is being scaled up by partnering with other NGOs. He also highlighted the role of ROSE in unorganized labour and addressing development issues concerning community. Anthony Swamy from BLESS highlighted the partnership with govt in development programmes, initiatives with community and NGO partners in implementing water, health and sanitation programmes in Cuddalore district after tsunami. He had pointed out the changing habit of community and acceptance of EcoSan toilets in coastal areas of Tamilnadu.

Jayaratne, Director of Sevanatha, summarized the work of Sevanatha with women in the reconstruction and development phase. Jayaratne highlights the benefit of this exchange visit, "It was very useful exchange visit for our women partners. I witnessed that all women were benefiting from it as well as the Mayor. These visits are very strategic and SSP has arranged it well. So giving a chance to Women's Bank too was useful as we can expand our network and work with their support too."

Finally, the Mayor of Matara highlighted the role of municipality and community in building women's resource centers, promoting training and livelihoods activities, partnership with NGOs etc. "I really impressed with the women groups' initiatives in Tamilnadu. I carry this lesson to Matara to work more closely with women and community in creating space for partnership.

The grassroots women themselves then shared their experiences and the challenges they have faced from having to rebuild their communities. Credit was given to the success of all the communities participating in the exchange, who brought the workshop to a close by discussing their plans for the future.

Kasturi Chandrasekar from Gram Moolike Company Limited (GMCL) told of her impressions of Moratuwa last year. "Moratuwa women groups were not confident to start activities, when we met them a year ago. But now, they have accomplished six years of progress and have plans to achieve in six years what they had initially planned for the next ten years." Sajeevanee Pavitra from Moratuwa expressed some of her plans: "We expect to increase our membership to 400 by the end of December.

We are planning to identify markets for our existing livelihoods and learn new marketable livelihoods. We are going to implement health programs and link with health authorities, give first aid training through the Red Cross and nursing training through the Women's Bank. We will then establish a health unit at the community level. I believe that through this process we can strengthen our organizational capacity and linkages with government authorities."

The organizational structure and employment of committees, leaders and trainers has proved successful in ASHAA groups in Nagapattinam and Cuddalore. Niroshinee from Ran Arunalu in Matara would like to see the same roles for women in her community: "I believe that if we improve our organizational capacity we can move forward. We can form committees for health, marketing and disaster preparedness. We can strengthen our leadership capacity through the formation of committees, and train women leaders. We can prepare for floods if we train a group of disaster preparedness. My main objective is to strengthen the capacity of our society. If everybody dedicates it will be an easy task."



### Recognition of grassroots leaders

Grassroots leaders from Srilanka, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu has recognized and awarded certificate as champions of community initiatives. These recognition was organized by Grassroots Trainers Network, part of GROOTS India.

To know more about GROOTS India, kindly email us at: [info@disasterwatch.net](mailto:info@disasterwatch.net)

## The Future

The key objectives of women's federations for the future:

- Improve women's health and their access to health services
- Promote livelihoods through training, credit and market linkages
- Encourage women's participation in governance and management of basic services (health, water and sanitation)
- Expand and strengthen network of grassroots women's groups to scale up women's leadership and participation in activities
- Strengthen organizations and make them sustainable through centre-based activities
- Make financial provisions in the form of Community Leadership Funds (CLFs)

"I really enjoyed meeting the Indian women leaders. I admire how they have organized themselves after the tsunami, and am impressed with how they cleaned their villages by linking with government authorities; their livelihoods and marketing strategies, disaster preparedness, and the strength of women leaders as trainers", said Niroshinee.

## Participants

### **Ran Arunalu Women's Development Society, Moratuwa**

Mahathelge Pavitra Sajeevane Peiris  
Jalatharachchige Shiromi  
Jayalath Mudalige Niroshinee

### **Jayashakti Forum**

Kalubovilage Ashoka Damayanthi  
Kahingalage Ayesha Subhashinee  
Dissanayake Mudiyanseelage Sriyani  
Gurusampillei Wasanthamala Secretary

### **Sevanatha**

Kananke Arachchilage Jayaratne  
Oshadhi Vajira Randunu Pathirana

### **Matara Municipal Council**

S.M.W. Upul Nishantha, Hon Mayor, Matara MC

### **Sakhi Federation, Maharashtra**

Godavari S  
Jayashree Kadam  
Ranjana Kolge  
Vanmala Joshi  
Kashibai Kolge

### **Mahakalagam, Tamilnadu**

Kasturi Chandrasekhar

### **Women's Fish Vending Federation, Tamilnadu**

Manimegalai  
Chinnapillai

## Women's Federation for Disaster Management and Community Development, Tamilnadu

Ezhil Arasi  
Chitra  
Mohana  
Vijayalakshmi  
Rama  
Alamelu  
Kalavathy  
Revathy  
Uttara  
Sarada  
Chitra  
Neelavathy

## Participating Organizations

**GROOTS** – Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS International) is a network of organizations supporting grassroots initiatives and facilitating learning exchanges across rural and urban grassroots communities. [www.groots.org](http://www.groots.org)

**CWRG** - The Centering Women in Reconstruction and Governance (CWRG) Sri Lanka Project focus on energizing and supporting the women in the two community associations - KRAS Moratuwa and JSS Matara.

**Sevanatha** -Sevanatha is a Sri Lankan development organization established in 1989. Sevanatha has developed micro credit programs, urban environmental improvement programs and awareness-raising on urban poverty issues.

**SSP** - Swayam Shikshan Prayog's (SSP) focus after the mass-scale disasters in three states [Latur (1993), Gujarat (2001) and Tsunami in Tamil Nadu (2004)] has been to address vulnerabilities through community-led reconstruction and development with disaster- affected households to provide training in disaster-resistant construction; mobilizing women to participate in sustainable micro credit and to access basic services. [www.sspindia.org](http://www.sspindia.org)

## Partners

International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC)



Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)



Builders Without Borders (Canada)

