

CITIZENS' RESOURCE CENTER

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Basic Introduction to the Selected Tool

The Citizens' Resource Center (CRC) is a knowledge hub based on the concept that disaster reduction begins with knowledge. The CRC was established in Port Blair, in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, after the tsunami in 2005.

Project Brief

SEEDS established the Citizens' Resource Center as part of its project "Safe School Safe Community & Citizens' Resource Center: Strengthening Links Between Schools and Surrounding Communities for Disaster Risk Reduction and Its Institutionalization." The CRC component of the project was implemented by SEEDS in collaboration with the Port Blair Municipal Council and supported by Dan Church Aid, Freidrich Ebert Stiftung, UNISDR and Christian Aid.

Relevance of the Tool

The establishment of the CRC was prompted by the fact that each year natural disasters leave millions of families homeless, children orphaned and cause enormous losses of livelihoods. Yet we continue to be unprepared and wait for the worst. This very thought prompted the establishment of the CRC where people can gain knowledge, develop awareness and promote small community initiatives to help build a safer tomorrow for those communities. Also, the establishment of CRC was seen as a part of the process of institutionalization, as it is linked to school safety and community safety.

The knowledge available on the islands was scattered and had to be consolidated in one place that could serve as a reliable source of information. The CRC was established to make this knowledge available to the community in the most interactive manner possible. The most vulnerable groups, specifically the children of Port Blair, were targeted as beneficiaries of the CRC's activities.

Application of the Tool

The Citizens' Resource Center was constructed jointly with the Port Blair Municipal Council to create a permanent repository of knowledge resources on disaster reduction and create a constant reminder for citizens to be alert and aware of the risks they face.

The educational component of the hub was set up to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice through interactive devices. This disaster museum displayed interactive models, panels and displays on the islands' geography, strengths and vulnerabilities. The knowledge was presented through various sections such as trivia, and stories from the communities were presented in the form of case studies to help people understand and be reminded of the destruction that took place during and after the disaster on the islands. Games such as Risk Land have been introduced to learn how to prevent disasters.

The CRC has also provided for a training center, which can be utilized by local community-based organisations as well as government officials to undertake periodic trainings on subjects relevant to disasters and development. The schools, as a part of their school safety efforts, further enhance the value of the museum by organizing events related to disaster management or environmental management. These activities have helped strengthen the knowledge base of the school communities.

The population of these islands is small and therefore it is required that these communities remain connected at the center. Thus, utility spaces have also been created, such as places for ATM

from that, the park has been developed to ensure that children continue to visit the museum. A film has also been produced to disseminate knowledge about the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to the community.

Overall, the disaster museum has been useful in disseminating knowledge on disasters to the larger community, including small children.

Outcome of the Tool

Impact on the Community

The center was established for the community and offers direct access to information resources on possible hazards on the islands, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes. The user friendly structure allows even illiterate citizens to learn about disasters, disaster management and disaster preparedness. The film on the Andaman & Nicobar Islands is one of its kind and therefore adds value to the community. While knowledge of risk reduction is enhanced, the community, especially children, can learn and apply knowledge of the major do's & don'ts in the event of a major disaster.

This is the only one of its kind in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Since ownership lies with the Port Blair Municipal Council (PBMC), it will be institutionalized as part of the community. It is expected that nodal bodies such as the PBMC will introduce many more tools on disaster risk reduction through this center.

Impact on the Implementing Staff

The implementing staff was involved in developing, designing and building the CRC. The process of research and development led to creative thinking of how to present the most complicated tools in the simplest manner. The research enriched the staff's knowledge of disaster risk reduction. It also induced them to develop linkages to the Citizens' Resource Center in projects conducted with different stakeholders.