



## Press Release

Embargo: Wednesday, March 30, 2005

### Village Information Center for Women and Creative Centre of Learning for Children

Oxfam India / Svaraj in partnership with Madhar Nala Thondu Niruvanam, a local Non Governmental Organisation, and OFERR (Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation) is launching its first multi-purpose community building to serve as a Creative Centre of Learning for Children and a Village Information Centre, for women and children of fisher communities in Cuddalore District who have been affected by the tsunami.

*We are in the process of changing our name and logo! In our fight for a world free from poverty and injustice, we are striving to achieve an Indian identity.*

*We are committed to poverty alleviation and community-centered development. We believe that empowering people to fight for their basic rights will set them free from a life of exploitation.*

As part of this effort, nine Self Help Groups (SHGs), in Thazhanguda, a village in Cuddalore district, have been organized and assisted to build this center. The Village Information Centre is equipped with a computer system and will be managed by the Village Sangha of the Nine Women SHGs. The fisher women will be trained to browse and access information related to storm warnings and fish aggregation areas. This information would be displayed periodically at the Village information Centre, which would be accessed by the community.

The Creative Centre for Children has the capacity to accommodate 40 children who will be provided with educational and play equipment.

In addition

- SHGs will enlist women members from all the 115 families affected by the tsunami disaster.
- The Village Women's Sangha, with the assistance of Oxfam India / Svaraj will undertake capacity building measures including leadership training, developing computer skills and confidence building.
- A grant of Rs 50,000 will be made available to the Women's Sangha in the village, to help families in their post-tsunami rehabilitation.
- Families affected by the Tsunami will be assisted in acquiring bank loans.

*Smt. Devaki, aged over 60 years, who came to see the Village Information Centre exclaimed "Now, I can find out my grandson's tenth standard results from this centre, as soon as the results are published in May this year."*

The Village Women Sangha in Thazanguda has completed the construction of the multi-purpose community building. The District Collector, Cuddalore has kindly agreed to inaugurate this building and the Village Information Centre on March 30, 2005, at 3.30 p.m. Ms. Bharti Patel, Director Designate, Oxfam India / Svaraj will preside over the function.

We acknowledge with thanks the kind support of IBM, who has donated computers for the center and International Flavours and Fragrances who have provided funds to build the center.

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