

A note on the contribution of European students and other visitors to whom we are very grateful for the learning they have stimulated and the insight they have provided as external observers.....

January 2012

In case you are interested in volunteering...



Action-Research organization



Who are we?

Association Un Ami (France) and Friend in Need (India) are non-profit action-research organizations created in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami of December 2004 to help an isolated fishing village named Kameshwaram located on the Indian coastline, to attain the Millennium Development Goals or MDG

What? Why? How?

1. What's action research? It's finding solutions to socio-economic problems through hands-on research that involves a 'field action' component in addition to documentary analysis, reflection and conceptualisation.
2. Why action-research? Because, while research methods and research output in the social sciences are becoming more sophisticated, they are also becoming increasingly useless to solve practical problems and bring about positive social change.
3. How action-research? By designing the research program such that it not only contributes to enlarging the existing knowledge base, but also brings about a positive transformative change (however small) in the context being studied.

Who are working in FIN / Un Ami ?

Paranjothi,
Field Coordinator
in Nagapattinam, India



The
Permanent
Team

Raji, Administrator
in India



Shyama, Director,
in Paris, France



Nico, Web master
in the Netherlands

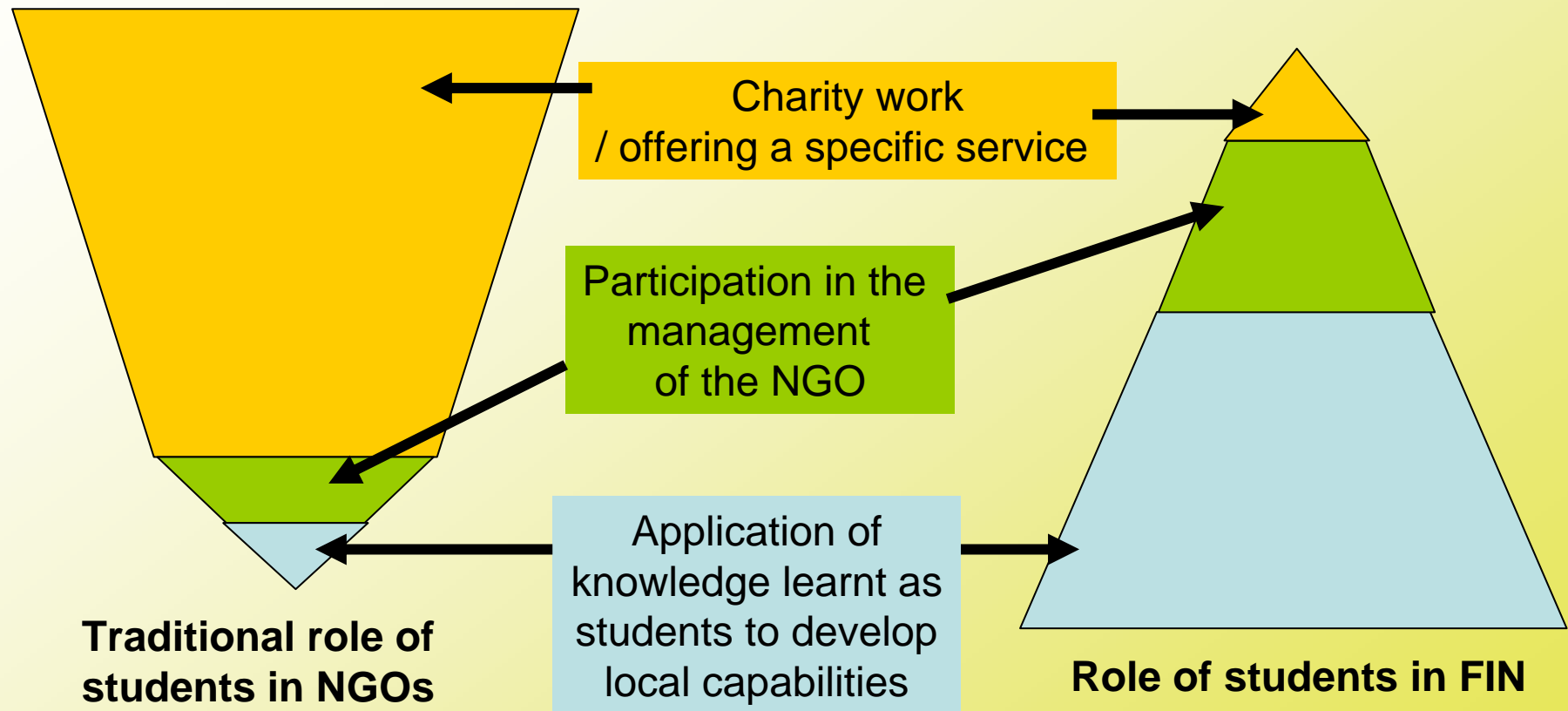


Christine, Administrator
in France



And the floating team = lots of lovely people
who help with translations and fund raising!!!!
+ idealistic and passionate students !!!!

Role of students in traditional NGOs and FIN...



This is because FIN is an academic 'Action Research' unit...

Illustrative examples.....



Annabelle Didier and Antonin Benyacar (July 2006-July 2007)
ESC-Grenoble (France)

Mission: To evaluate the first projects of ecosan construction.

Observation: Outsourcing problem – FIN cannot control quality of installations as a ‘financier’ of other constructing NGOs.

Impact: FIN hired 1 local staff to be in village on a daily basis and 1 to come from the city regularly and send in reports to ensure quality.



Morgane Sevat and Timothée Romain (June 2008-August 2008)
(France)

Mission: To formulate a project for waste management of fishermen of Kameshwaram;

Observation: A self-sustaining program of waste management is possible with 15 Rs being paid by each family; initial investment in infrastructure (non-recoverable) of about €40,000 or Rs 20 lakhs is required.

Impact: FIN is still on it. Before trying for funds we want to ensure that ‘maintenance skills’ are developed and a team is created. But, nobody is coming forward. The huge challenge is to change the ‘social identities’ and ‘social image’ associated with this work⁵



Mathilde Lefevre and Jordan Trombetta (July 2009 - July 2010)
ENS-Cachan (France)

Mission: To evaluate how we can create a willingness to pay for toilet repairs and waste management.

Observation: FIN has a real visibility problem within the village. All know Mr. Paranjothi of FIN as a person, but not as a representative of FIN. They do not know of FIN or what it does.

Impact: Many steps taken to create visibility, understanding and trust. Mr. Paranjothi is now clearly aware that not only he but FIN must be known and understood by the villagers.



Sophie Sfez and Gabriela Simonet (Jan 2010 - July 2010)
Paris-AgroTech (France)

Mission: To see if organic farming techniques can be adopted by local farmers and if the students in Kameshwaram can be taught to litter less and throw garbage into specified garbage bins.

Observation: Persistence pays (see their report). It is possible to bring about behavioural change in schools but this must be sustained through accompaniment, monitoring and putting in place a management system.

Impact: FIN is still working on this. The basic problem is to get the school to participate financially and to convince them that parents would also appreciate having a clean school and be willing to participate in maintenance.

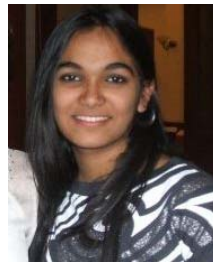


Chloe Mark (June 2010 - Aug 2010) Sciences-Po (France)

Mission: To carry out an audit of the sanitation drive of an MFI (micro-finance institution) partner of the FINISH programme.

Observation: The loans were efficiently converted into toilets, but most of these toilets seem to be environment-contaminating because the septic tanks are too rudimentary to be safe. Furthermore, only a quarter of beneficiaries cited a change in their health status after acquiring their toilet.

Impact: The report was extremely appreciated and led to further demand for sanitation audits.



**Aditi Kumar and Timothée Fruhauf (June 2010 - Aug 2010)
Lady Shri Ram College (India) & Sciences-Po (France)**

Mission: To examine: What are the determinants of the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases in adolescents in Kameshwaram? In particular, is the presence or absence of toilets one of these determinants?

Observation: The incidence of diarrhoea in Kameshwaram is significantly higher than the rate in same age group in high income countries. However, further statistical analysis is required to isolate the impact of access to sanitation from that of other complementary factors like access to water, nutrition, hygiene and waste management.

Impact: Given the excellent quality of the research methodology developed, it will be applied to a larger population study in Kameshwaram.



Marion Menetrier (September 2010 – May 2011)

Mission: (i) To carry out a study of the literature on Bt cotton in India to understand implications of genetically modified plant varieties for rural developing country populations; (ii) organize a workshop of 'Responsible social investing'.

Observation: (i) There is a distinct difference between the findings of academic research and that of activist groups and more research is necessary to identify why this is the case; (ii) The MFI crisis in India has happened for the same reasons as the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the USA and also largely fuelled by hot money from the West, therefore indicators to guide responsible social investing are crucial.

Impact: FIN is confirmed to a good organizer and coordinator of workshops involving debates on sensitive topics. And a research article on Bt cotton is underway.

Tamas Medovarszki (June 2011-September 2011) Sciences-Po (France)

Mission: To coordinate an audit of the sanitation drive of an MFI (micro-finance institution) partner of the FINISH programme.

Observation: Lack of accompaniment of beneficiaries before toilet construction and lack of regular monitoring and accompaniment of beneficiaries after toilet construction is leading to sub-optimal conversion of loans into toilets and ineffective use of toilets thereafter.

Impact: FIN is recognized as an effective organization for carrying out sanitation drive audits.





MSc. students of the Grenoble (France) engineering school ENSE
(May-July 2011)

Masters Dissertation: To evaluate solar energy based products for base of the pyramid communities, with special focus on the requests of the fishermen of Kameshwaram;

Observation: Solar lamps used to guide planes to land can also serve the fishermen's needs. It can guide them to Kameshwaram from a distance of 5 kms in the ocean if it is mounted on a high enough platform.

Impact: FIN will formulate a project proposal to find funding for this.

Others who have helped us....



Toilet beauty contest judges of 2009.
Observation: The toilets constructed in Kameshwaram by NGOs are not sustainable and must be repaired.



French group in 2011. Observation: There is no human resource management structure. So identify a set of projects and have one person responsible for each one.



Sebastien Gaumont who painted and created the FIN office in May 2011
Observation: The neighbours and the Panchayat need to be educated more, for it is a challenge to keep the office premises clean.

**And what of the future?
We would like to continue to involve students.....**

1. for formulating action research proposals



Annabelle and Antonin who helped us get our first action grant

2. for designing and organizing workshops on sanitation and waste management



Mathilde + Jordan in FINISH workshop

3. To organize audits of sanitation and waste management drives



Tamas in sanitation audit

4. To develop knowledge/ tools/ teaching aids for capacity building in NGOs working on sanitation and waste management.

We are just sure of one thing.... It's going to continue being colourful working with volunteers!!!

