



FRIEND IN NEED TRUST

Facebook Posts of 2017



[DATE]

[Company address]



**FRIEND IN NEED INDIA TRUST
Annual Report 2017**

Table of Contents

1. Introduction to Facebook posts of FIN	3
2. Kameswaram happenings	5
2.1. <i>Changes in FIN team</i>	5
2.2. <i>Efforts were made to give FIN identity to masons and FIN Masons will get:</i>	5
2.3. <i>Action Packed World Toilet Day Celebrations in Kameshwaram!</i>	6
2.4. <i>A father says that having a toilet has contributed to improvement of his daughters cognitive abilities</i>	7
2.5. <i>Village panchayat rushes to save FIN decorated bus stop</i>	9
3. Cultural tid-bits- In and out of Kameswaram	10
3.1. <i>Celebrating Ayutha puja and Vijaya Dasami</i>	10
4. Action Research at FIN	11
4.1. <i>How we do research in FIN India</i>	12
4.2. <i>What is the essence of Action-Research for FIN India?</i>	13
4.3. <i>Another story of Action Research in FIN!</i>	15
4.4. <i>Action Research: Recording of Tacit Knowledge – A very big effort</i>	17
4.5. <i>Action Research Climate Change</i>	18
5. Capacity Building of FIN	19
5.1. <i>Making the Website – a very big effort</i>	19
6. Training and Teaching	19
6.1. <i>Training through Internships</i>	19
6.2. <i>Meet our new friend - Nrupaja Bhide!</i>	21
7. Advocacy	22
7.1. <i>A story from Kameswaram</i>	22
7.2. <i>.Continuing on the 'H' of WASH - Whose side are you on?</i>	23
7.3. <i>Advocacy for safer Sanitation</i>	24
7.3.1. <i>Article on access to clean water and sanitation</i>	24
7.3.2. <i>Reflections on Sanitation stories in Indian Cinema</i>	24
7.3.3. <i>Ecosan toilet model</i>	25

7.4.	<i>Advocacy: Hygiene Behaviour</i>	25
7.4.1.	<i>Technology based solution for Hygiene Behaviour</i>	25
7.4.2.	<i>About open defecation in India</i>	26
7.4.3.	<i>On the Annual report on status of Education</i>	26
7.4.4.	<i>Advocacy for cleaner India and support to Swachh Bharat Mission</i>	26
7.5.	<i>Advocacy through Events</i>	26
7.5.1.	<i>Interview with Mr. Anil Raj Rai of Clean India Mission</i>	26
7.5.2.	<i>Trash Walk and SDG</i>	30
7.5.3.	<i>Rushva Parihar's talk at TEDxBandra on sanitation in India</i>	30
7.5.4.	<i>Advocacy-Climate change</i>	31
7.6.	<i>Advocacy: Waste Management</i>	31
7.6.1.	<i>Increasing awareness about landfills by Shanmugarajan</i>	31
7.6.2.	<i>The spirit of Mottainai</i>	32
7.7.	<i>FIN in Prayer for relief to Chennai Flooding</i>	33
7.8.	<i>Trash Walk in Maastricht a model for Kameswaram</i>	34
8.	Innovations created in Kameshwaram	34
8.1.	<i>Attractive ecosan with bathroom model</i>	34
8.2.	<i>An improved version of our public waste bin</i>	35
9.	Acheivements	36
9.1.	<i>Partnerships</i>	36
9.2.	<i>Awards</i>	37
	Appendix: The Facebook strategy of Friend in Need	37

1. Introduction to Facebook posts of FIN

Starting from the assumption that a variety of factors impact the environment and a safe and uncontaminated environment is necessary for good health, Friend In Need India Trust (FIN) aims to contribute to environmental protection and health via focus on: (i) construction safe toilets; (ii) appropriate treatment of waste water; (iii) appropriate waste management and (iv) inducing hygiene behaviour on the part of citizens. We refer to this as the FIN diamond model for environmental protection via building of WASH capabilities as shown in Figure 1.



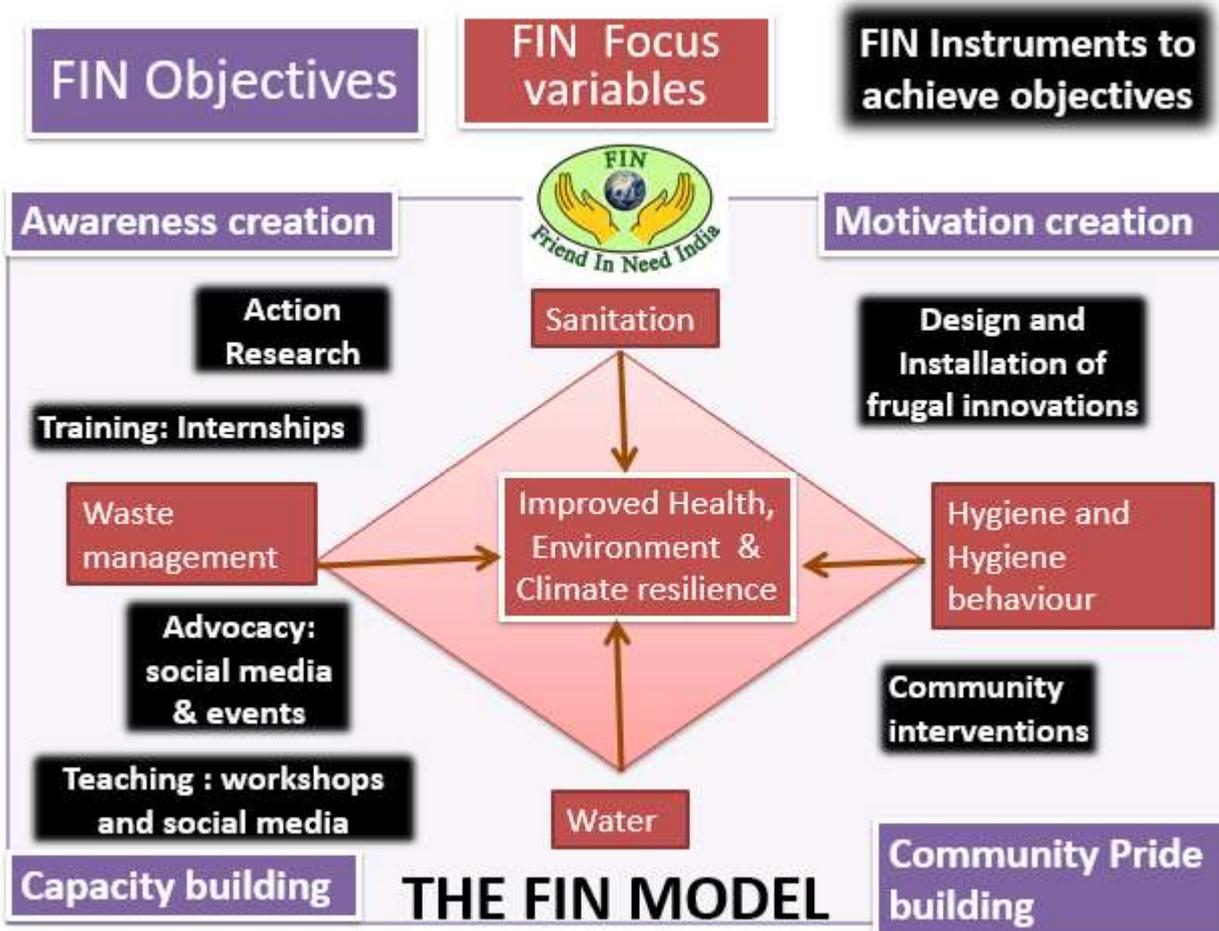
FIN is based in the village of Kameshwaram in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu. Kameshwaram serves as a living lab wherein solutions are co-created with local residents via action-research projects supported by public and private agencies. Volunteers and members of the academic community are actively engaged in these missions.



FIN pursues four types of pathways to achieve concrete targets in its focus areas. They are through: testing existing technology for adoption, creation of innovations, capacity building in governance and communal art as shown in Figure 2.

The actions of FIN have been categorised into different categories. These are summarised in figure 3.

Figure 3: FIN objectives, focus variables of transition pathway and instruments



We now give examples of work along each of the pathways undertaken in 2017 through our Facebook posts of 2017.

2. Kameswaram happenings

2.1. Changes in FIN team



Mounigapriya, Masters in Zoology was recruited.



Mr. Vijayakumar retired

2.2. Efforts were made to give FIN identity to masons and FIN Masons will get:

- One photo of the team per year.
- Three cotton shirts with the logo of FIN.
- Documentation of their work – with before and after pictures every year in the form of an album that will be given to them every year (Paranjothi is least interested in this and must be coaxed into doing a good job – have enlisted Mouni also for the task).
- An annual medical check-up
- Two workshops (1 hour in office and 2 hours in the field) on innovation per year that I will personally conduct for them – where I will ask them questions and they will teach me and we will discuss.
- A bank, ATM and phone literacy workshop by Shanmugan – where he will show them whatever they want.



2.3. Action Packed World Toilet Day Celebrations in Kameshwaram!

November 20



An action speaks more than a million words – doesn't it? Starting from Saturday, workshops, art activities and dances formed the celebrations for World Toilet day to nudge efforts from all towards a Cleaner India!

December 2

And what really happened on #World Toilet Day in Kameshwaram!

What are the chances of a bus stop in a remote village becoming popular on the internet as a nudge innovation for behavioural change? Created by the joint efforts of Friend In Need India (FIN) and Chinmaya Vidyalaya from Nagapatinam, that's how famous this bus stop in Kameshwaram became. FIN continued to use a combination of art and science this year as an instrument for encouraging youth to become change-makers, culminating with the Kavadi dance by Manikandan, FIN mason, and his friends! Mani explained, "This is a light kavadi - only 45kgs!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZMM7oKqt0Q>

What else? Read on.....

In preparation for World Toilet Day celebrations on November 19th, a two-day workshop was held for students of Chinmaya Vidyalaya. Both days had two interesting sessions for the children, an informative presentation followed by a fun-filled activity session. On the first day, Prof. Shyama briefed the students on the importance of behavioural change, for example not littering, to attain the national mission of a clean India. The session was very interactive that stimulated the students' thinking on the impact of their actions on the environment. "People would rather dump their waste on the street, than make an effort to dispose it responsibly. We need to change this!", said one of the students. Then, led by their arts teachers Mr. S. Prabhakaran and Mr. R. N. Cinthan, students worked on the bus-stop for artistic maintenance.

On the second day, the NSS wing of Chinmaya Vidyalaya under the leadership of Mr. Venkadesh gathered in Kameshwaram to celebrate the event. This day started with an informative session by Ms. Nrupaja Bhide, a recent graduate from United Nations University-MERIT, The Netherlands. The students were thrilled to discover the techniques used by her to create and maintain a massive garden in her terrace, embracing nature. She uses biodegradable waste to grow organic fruits and vegetables. Her idea for creating a similar "Kitchen Garden" laboratory in the school was an instant hit with the students, who were excited to experiment the same in their homes and school. The next

was a painting session in which the students collaborated with local artists to spread eco awareness through wall art. It was interesting to note that the students chose to depict takeaways from the morning session.

All these efforts of the students were appreciated by Swamiji Acharya Ramakrishnaji and the school Principal, Mrs. Bennet. The dignitaries planted saplings on compost from the ecosan toilets built by FIN in Kameshwaram, to reinforce the idea of making best from waste. Ex-Vice President of the Panchayat, Mr. Kamaraj and the Assistant Project Officer from Nagappatinam District Collectorate also attended the session and planted the saplings. And the day concluded with a dance performance by the masons who built the toilets, in celebration of the World Toilet Day.

FIN has been introducing frugal, social innovations, since it started working with the Kameshwaram community after the devastating tsunami in 2004. An example of its frugal innovation is a public waste bin that costs 1/10th of the government-provided metal bin, and which is much easier for the waste collectors to use. However installation of bins is not enough to ensure clean public spaces because of the habit of indiscriminate littering. Forced to think of alternatives to bring a behavioural change, FIN came up with the idea of a nudge innovation in the form of a clean and aesthetic bus stop that would motivate people to keep public spaces clean. To bring about this change through community art, FIN joined hands with the arts department of Chinmaya Vidyalaya in 2016. The art in the bus stop was the effort of 20 students working for a week. FIN hopes that such community masterpieces will soon reach a tipping point and become a self-propagating idea.

Prof. Shyama V Ramani believes nudge innovations, like a beautiful bus stop or a live lab, are more effective than the traditional methods to create awareness. FIN strongly believes that empowering the youth, through concrete actions supported by science based teaching, would help not only in increasing the respect they have for the environment, but also for the waste pickers who help in keeping it clean.

2.4. A father says that having a toilet has contributed to improvement of his daughters cognitive abilities

May 29

Story from Kameshwaram: So, what's the toilet done this time?

It was a hot day in Delhi and we were having our usual arguments and my phone was constantly ringing and I was not picking up my phone, because I was busy arguing.

My mother's nurse wanted the AC on and both my mother and I were content to have the fan – that too at medium speed and not running at its maniac fastest level.....

Just as I was trying to convince the nurse that we didn't need it because: "see the presswali outside is ironing everyone's clothes without any fan or AC".

The nurse reminded me: "You are the one recovering from a heat stroke – which we are all going to get with this hot air blowing on us!"....

..... And again that telephone rang and the nurse gave it to me to shut me up...

"Madam, major news from Kameshwaram!"

What had happened? More heat problems?

Had a snake bitten another villager? With the heat snakes are coming out more.

Had another pack of mad dogs chased a child? One summer, a pack of dogs maddened by the heat had become as dangerous as a pack of starving wolves in a lonely forest and shots had to be fired to chase them away.

But wait, Mr. Paranjothi's voice sounded extremely cheerful.

"Paranjothi Sir – so major good and not major bad news?"



“Major – very good - Madam!”

“Please tell me.”

“Karunanidhi came to the office today. You remember Karunanidhi?”

The only Karunanidhi I could remember at that moment very vaguely was the Karunanidhi in my class – more than 40 years back, who used to always come first in class, and who was the IIT hopeful of the teachers (and of course he got in!). None of us others did!

Hearing my silence, Mr. Paranjothi continued.

“Madam, when the district collector of Nagapattinam, Mr. Palanisami, wanted to see an ecosan toilet and see how human waste is transformed into compost – we went to Karunanidhi’s house.”

Of course, of course. . . . I knew this Karunanidhi a lot better. A farmer with a wonderful smile, who had spoken from the heart to the district collector and explained how the ecological toilet using less water was particularly appropriate for farmers. We had repaired their ecosan toilet, when the roof (made by another agency) had caved in rendering it un-usable.

“Yes, Paranjothi – I now remember Karunanidhi and his family very well. How are they?”

“Madam, Karunanidhi’s daughter has got the highest marks in Kameshwaram in the State level 10th class exam. And every student in Saint Sebastian School in Kameshwaram has passed!”

“Wonderful Paranjothi. Absolutely splendid! Please convey my congratulations to the girl, her family and the school director.”

“Madam – please hear this. Karunanidhi came all the way to our office to tell that it is because of your blessings and the repair of the ecosan toilet – that his daughter could study so well. I have been trying to call you so many times and you never picked up.”

Oops. Oops. I deserved the scolding. . . .

Paranjothi continued : “Karunanidhi’s message is this: Please tell Madam that it is because of the toilet that my daughter could perform brilliantly! Please thank her on our behalf. Please ask her to continue doing this.”

I was very touched – I had never imagined this – of all possible news!

Then, instead of the hot air from the fan overhead – I could only feel the cool breeze coming from the ocean in Kameshwaram. And both my mother and the nurse were sleeping peacefully.

“Thank you Sir. Thank you for phoning to tell me this. I am very happy for all of us!”

And both of us thought of the unspoken remainder. We must of course continue to build more of the ecosan models till all have a toilet in Kameshwaram. I have no idea how we are going to get the funds. But as it comes in a trickle from time to time and people also contribute and ask for ecological toilets – we will build more. As we have done so far! At our very slow but sure pace!

2.5. Village panchayat rushes to save FIN decorated bus stop

June 8

Let's give a big hand to the Kameshwaram Village Panchayat team and the FIN team there!!

I was waiting for Sueli to come and eat lunch in my office – I had a lot of Afghan pulao and palak paneer made by another friend, and I had offered to share. But, where was she? So I reached out to my telephone to see the latest on whatsapp (I must stop being so addicted – but it's so difficult!)

WHAT! What was happening?

You know – we in FIN believe we can improve public hygiene by creating community pride in public spaces. But how? I decided to try building it through art. With wonderful cooperation from all FIN interns and members and the enthusiastic teachers and director of the Chinmaya Mission School in Nagapattinam – a wonder was created!

A bus stop was transformed by children into a work of art and it became the pride of the village! Minnal Kodi was the watchful guardian during the evenings when she went to give the space – a touch-up! The residents were proud of it! Outsiders came and admired it! In beautiful calligraphy – the public was requested to keep it clean.

In the early hours of this morning – Mr. Kanagasundaram, the village Panchayat Head (i.e. locally elected council) was going for an early morning errand on his bike – when he was stunned. On the walls of the beautiful bus stop – over the beautiful paintings of the children – were plastered the



advertisement for the opening of a new shop in Kameshwaram selling groceries.

In India, especially in rural India, there are companies specialized in sending out men with posters – of political leaders, weddings, sales etc. at night. Under the cover of darkness, they just plaster the posters on everything and anything and everywhere and anywhere. As you can see in the photos – they plastered the shop ads even over the sign to the medical clinic.

Without a second thought, Mr. Kanagasundaram called Mr. Paranjothi – who came rushing to the site from his bed. And without bothering about the errand – Mr. Kanagasundaram called all Panchayat members and together they went to the shop.

“Sir, I don’t know who did it” said the shopkeeper.

“Which was the company you hired to do this? Who were the boys? Are they from Kameshwaram” asked the Panchayat.

“I don’t know Sir – my sister in law only arranged for us and she is out of town for 10 days” was the clever reply.

Anyhow, the Panchayat severely reprimanded the shopkeeper – who promised never to put posters on the bus-stop again.

And the FIN team spent the day sponging out the advertisement.

“Madam” said Paranjothi – “Thank goodness – you let me buy good quality paint. Otherwise all the paint would have come off with the sponging.”

So please let’s give a big hand to the Kameshwaram Panchayat team for taking swift action and to the FIN team for laboring the whole day to bring the bus stop back to its pristine beauty!

3. Cultural tid-bits- In and out of Kameswaram

3.1. Celebrating Ayutha puja and Vijaya Dasami

September 29

Celebrating Ayutha puja (prayers to instruments of livelihood) and Vijaya Dasami (day of new beginnings) in Kameshwaram

Dear All,

In India many will be celebrating the ‘Ayutha Puja’ i.e. day of prayer for the ‘instruments of livelihood’ today and tomorrow is ‘Vijaya Dasami’ – the day of new and fresh beginnings for attainment of personal targets. For instance, today I am showing respect to my tools of livelihood – meditating a nano-second to thank my brain and body, cleaning my desk, dusting my computer, ensuring my pens and pencils are in good shape, putting up all my papers neatly and making my targets for the coming year! And tomorrow, I have to do a little bit of all activities in which I want to make progress with great concentration while praying for grace and success! I will be joined by millions of Indians doing the same in their homes!



In Kameshwaram, there is a viral fever epidemic and most of our staff is sick. This is because of untimely heavy rains. In fact, this is the situation in many cities and towns of Tamil Nadu – all pointing to climate change. This morning, there was a stampede on a pedestrian bridge at a Mumbai railway station in the morning rush. Again, though cause is not clear, heavy rains have played a role according to the news. 22 people are dead, more victims of climate change, and they were just going to work as they do every working day. What an immense tragedy. No words and no amount of tears are enough as a response. We must intensify our efforts to develop climate resilience. Here, FIN Trust is pushing to promote better waste management practices with segregation at source and hygiene behaviour.

Still Mr. Paranjothi, keeping up traditions, has been cleaning the entire office for Ayutha Puja with whoever was well since the past few days. Today, the prayers were performed in our village office. Ms. Minnalkudi, our faithful guardian of the bus stop and the village council members, Mr. Kanagasundaram, Head and Mr. Kamraj, Vice-Head of Panchayat graced the occasion along with their children.

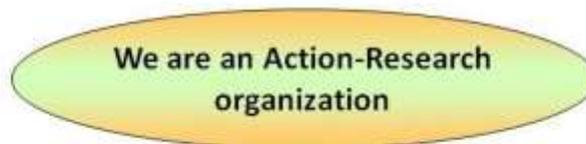
On this auspicious occasion, we seek your good wishes and blessings for our mission to make Kameshwaram a model village - clean, healthy and resilient to climate change, through quiet, gentle, slow nudges and installations and conversations with Kameshwaram residents. And we hope you support our documenting the process truthfully and completely - so that the knowledge so generated can be of use to others as well.

Nandri. Thank you.

Shyama and all of us in the FIN team

4. Action Research at FIN

At FIN we undertake action research because we believe in practically delivering the policy interventions instead of keeping it as black and white recommendations.



What? How? Why?

- 1. What's action research in general?** It's finding solutions to socio-economic problems through hands-on research that involves a 'field action' component in addition to documentary analysis, data collection, reflection and conceptualisation.
- 2. What's action-research in FIN India?** A research program that not only contributes to enlarging the existing knowledge base, but also brings about a positive transformative change (however small) in the context being studied.
- 3. How do we do it FIN India?** Through: (i) Co-creation of solutions; (ii) Capacity building; or (iii) triggering of positive behavioural change.
- 4. Why do we like action-research in FIN India?** Because we feel that while research methods and research output in the social sciences are becoming more sophisticated and enriching scientifically, we need to do more to solve practical problems and bring about positive social change.

4.1. How we do research in FIN India

A personal story from Sueli Kyomi Brodin

May 7, 2016

“I have an assignment for you!” Prof. Shyama V. Ramani of UNU-MERIT said. “You are going to visit a typical Indian village – a representative village in a developing country. Immerse yourself. Observe carefully. At the end of your visit, tell me your opinion on why the state of sanitation and hygiene is the way it is. Take as many photographs as you can, even of toilets. They can serve as photographic evidence for our research.”

As we drove to the village of Chhipadi in the state of Gujarat, India, one hour away from Ahmedabad, the sixth largest city in India, I was pensive: “How do you invite yourself into a stranger’s home and ask if you can take a photograph of their toilet? Would that work in the Netherlands?”

Our small group consisted of two representatives of two related NGOs focusing on sanitation and waste management issues, Mr. Rangi of FINISH Society India and Ms. Alix Reichenecker, a researcher at WASTE; Ms. Praachi Kumar, WASH researcher at UNU-MERIT; and myself, communications officer at UNU-MERIT. Mr. Rangi was leading the visit, as he knew the village well after having recently supervised the installation of wash basins in the public secondary high school on behalf of FINISH Society India.

Defining Chhipadi as a village may seem a bit misleading. Indeed, the inhabited area immediately struck us as being much larger than the usual European village. According to information found online, Chhipadi counts a population of 15,500 inhabitants representing a little over 3,000 households. Children form a large part of the population, with 12.8% of them between the ages of 0 and 6.

Our visit took place soon after Diwali, the festival of lights, celebrated all over India with great enjoyment. This meant that schools were closed and most children were at home, except those taking special classes or vocational training lessons. As we started off our tour, two young men enthusiastically volunteered to accompany us and started answering our questions about life in the village. One of them worked as an English teacher in the neighbouring town and the other one was a student in engineering in Ahmedabad. The English teacher seemed especially pleased to practise his language skills.

Pride and responsibility

What systematically struck me during our tour, which lasted a few hours, was the enormous contrast in cleanliness between public and private spaces. The streets surrounding the village and the open spaces inside it were covered with litter. Yet, the main shopping street, the shops, the private homes, the classrooms and the Hindu temple were clean and well kept.

The same observation applied to the state of the toilets. The public toilets at the government office and at the public school were in appalling condition, in total contrast with the two private toilets we were able to see, one inside a family household and another one outdoors, which were perfectly clean. The rudimentary toilet in the private vocational tailor’s school was also clean.

The people we met and spoke to along the way were friendly and welcoming. A middle-aged woman who was heating water in the street to wash her dishes kindly invited us for a cup of tea inside her small home. Her kitchen and all her pans were spick and span and she had a warm smile on her face as she started boiling some milk tea with freshly ground ginger. That cup of tea turned out to be the tastiest masala tea of my entire week in India.

The woman was open and hospitable and did not mind answering our questions. She told us that each household in the village was entitled to a daily supply of 30 minutes of water. When we asked her if she recycled the water, she said that she did not. There was a modest shop in the front side of the house, where her husband sold mainly cleaning products such as soaps, shampoos, and detergents. After taking several pictures with her family of five, we overcame our shyness and

embarrassment and asked her if we could see and take photographs of their toilet and shower facilities.

Again, with a proud smile, she showed us the spotless spaces, which looked as if they had already been cleaned that day.

As we continued our walk through the village, we saw a woman washing dishes on the ground near one of the three big water towers. Another woman crouching next to her was sweeping the dirt and the litter around them, as if she wanted to create a circle of cleanliness around them.

"Is open defecation a bad thing?"

A little later, we arrived at the secondary public high school of Chhipadi. We were invited to join a classroom and say a few words about sanitation practices in our respective countries. Alix demonstrated the six-step hand-washing method. The teacher and the students listened with their full attention. The boys and girls were seated separately on each side of the room and they all looked neat and tidy. Their schoolbooks and notebooks were impeccable.

When we asked them about toilet practices in India, Praachi said something that provoked a reaction of uneasiness and confusion in the classroom. She asked the students to raise their hands if they thought that "open defecation was a bad thing". Many students did not seem to know how to deal with that question. They seemed to be caught in a dilemma. Were they supposed to give the answer that they thought we expected, and by doing so, condemn a behaviour that they perhaps also practised? Eventually they all raised their hands with uneasy smiles...

The teacher and the students became more vocal when we asked them about the toilet facilities in their school. They had many grievances. They said that the school's toilets were inadequate and that there were too few toilet facilities in relation to the number of school children. They also complained that the toilets were run down or broken, ill maintained, dirty, smelly, and did not offer any form of privacy.

When we saw the dreadful toilets with our own eyes, we understood what the students meant. No wonder that open defecation could appear as a cleaner and more private solution!

Private vs. Public

Our minds were bustling with questions: How could the same people be able to keep their own houses so clean and yet accept the streets around their village to be so dirty? How could the local authorities justify the lack of waste management in the village? How could the school leaders and parents endure sending their children to a school where no one could possibly use the filthy and degraded toilets?

When we would ask some of these questions out loud, the villagers nodded uneasily with a half-smile, but stayed silent. They did not seem to know what to say nor did they seem to want to discuss them.

When we reported back to Prof. Ramani, I ventured an explanation: "The people we met obviously cared about cleanliness and knew how to keep a place clean. They even demonstrated a lot of pride in it. That was clearly not the issue. However, they only seemed to care for the places they felt responsible for. They did not seem to mind the bad management of public spaces and public facilities in the village. It was as if they considered this responsibility beyond their scope of action."

Everyone agreed with my hypothesis. But it opened a larger question: How to build pride in caring about the state of community goods? How to build civic pride?

4.2. What is the essence of Action-Research for FIN India?

May 19

See the photo below! And the article by Sueli Kyomi Brodin

Go for Action Research

Written by Sueli Brodin Thursday, 05 January 2017 09:50

Shyama V. Ramani, Professor of Development Economics at UNU-MERIT, has been working on the issue of sanitation since the tsunami of December 2004. It all started as a charity project to build toilets for women in a small coastal village in Tamil Nadu, her home state in the southernmost part of India. “The tsunami had destroyed the vegetal cover around the village and the women could no longer relieve themselves in the bushes as they used to. They needed toilets.”

But the project failed, and so Shyama decided to begin studying sanitation drives herself. “As a donor I had simply gathered funds from my academic network in Europe and given them to NGOs. But after three years, when the NGOs had failed to build sustainable toilets, I realised the problem was systemic. I found bad and abandoned toilets everywhere in India and I learnt that countries in Africa were dealing with the same problem. I decided to try to find out where things had gone wrong and how I could help to improve hygiene in villages in developing countries through sanitation coverage and waste management.” After three years of research, she discovered the academic literature was not very helpful either. “To find the answer, I had to jump in, not as a donor, but as an actor in the development process. I had to go from being a charitable academic person to becoming an academic social entrepreneur.”

She created a social venture called Friend In Need India, based in the coastal village of Kameshwaram. The staff are village residents, while students and other professionals make up the cadre of volunteers who assist in local capacity building. “Our objective is to make Kameshwaram as clean as any village in the world, with complete sanitation coverage. We want a Kameshwaram with clean fields, clean ponds, clean roads and a clean beach – which means we have to convince the villagers to use garbage bins and toilets! We’re still experimenting with different models by which to accomplish our mission, and we’re documenting the process so that others can learn from our experience.”

Living lab

To manage the organisation, she draws on a heterodox method called action research. “The world is now so complex that even if we understand the problems, we don’t understand how to effect solutions. For this we need to reduce the scale enormously and to work with experiments. So I do solution-oriented research by trying out little action projects and seeing how they work, or how they don’t, and why. For example, to motivate more people to use toilets, we held two toilet beauty contests in 2007 and 2009. Aesthetics was only one criterion for being selected as the most ‘beautiful’ toilet. Innovation in design, decoration and cleanliness, proper usage and judicious use of water were also taken into account. I was able to publish academic articles based on the experiments carried out in the village, relating not only to sanitation but also to access to medicine, food security and innovation. The village became a living lab.”

Action research means designing the studies such that they not only enhance existing knowledge, but also bring about positive transformative change, however small that may be. To this end, Ramani says, the co-creation of knowledge is essential. “Social scientists usually analyse data collected by governments or agencies, or that they have collected themselves. But beyond a few discussions about the questionnaire perhaps, or a few discussions about the results afterwards, we just walk away from our subjects to write our research papers. In action research you can’t do that. You have to focus on a problem, interact with your participants, involve them and make at least a bit of a positive change in the system through your research project.”

It also means stepping outside the comfort zone of a formalised, monodisciplinary approach, which can be quite a challenge for traditional economists. “One cannot model everything. We cannot capture everything in measurable, quantifiable terms. We need to adopt a more ethnographic or anthropological, sociological approach, and only then apply the economics toolkit.”

Working with the poor

“At UNU-MERIT we’ve developed a variety of tools and frameworks to study evolutionary processes within complex systems, such as the ones we live in today. These tools are used to study industrial capacity building, technology and innovation and governance issues. We also study poverty and the poor. But the research reports are written for qualified, skilled, knowledgeable

people; the people making the decisions. They are not designed to be understood by poor people or to be of use to them. Working with the poor calls for a certain degree of humility, and you have to put in a lot of effort to avoid jargon and boil research findings down to their essence to make them understandable. But it's worth it, because it really helps the researcher to understand the system and its challenges from *their* perspective."

Walking the talk

Shyama calls on researchers to rethink the way they do things. "I'm asking for more humility. After all, what is the meaning of our existence as academics? This is my challenge, because I really feel that what we need today more than anything is to agree on our value systems and open our hearts and minds to operate together and coordinate our efforts. We don't talk enough about morality – and beyond talking about it, why don't we walk the talk?"

Action research is not easy. During the action-research projects in the living lab village, Ramani noticed that students often struggle to leverage their learning in concrete solutions. "They operate in a silo. They probably did very well in their exams but for instance, if I were to ask them, "How can we stop people from littering?" they may blank out and even go through a phase where they think they've learnt nothing. It's only after some guidance that they realise that their knowledge is useful, and then slowly come towards designing a solution."

Shyama sees great value and untapped potential in a multidisciplinary academic environment like Maastricht University. "It would be good to have a cross-faculty elective course where students could work throughout the year on a small but practical problem, here in Maastricht or anywhere in the world, to prepare them as future citizens and change makers."

"When I'm working with European and Indian students in the village in India, I feel that I'm teaching at a level far beyond what I teach in class. I've improved as a researcher, as a teacher, as a human being. The returns are enormous for any academic wanting to do this. It may not attract all students but it will attract some, and these will be the change makers of the future."

4.3. Another story of Action Research in FIN!

By Shyama V. Ramani

May 23

On one sunny Friday, I called up Dr. Manasi to discuss her work on sanitation on slums and for some reason - I was explaining to her about my present philosophy about doing applied work on poverty alleviation through action-research (see previous post) and not just doing research. I could just feel strong emotion across the miles that separated us and through my mobile phone earphones (Please use mobile phones only with ear phones – some think that the radiation could create foundations for a stroke later on!).

But, I couldn't understand it.

For me, it is a philosophy I am trying to live by - a value system framework.

But, why was there so much enthusiasm for it on her part?

Excuse me - but as a scholar - it is my second nature to doubt and question everything and everyone.

Me: "Manasi - I am hearing emotion. So do you think action-research is a waste of time? I know as academics, our careers depend only on our publications and academic politics. This is not for career ambitious economists - yes! no maths. no econometrics. just wordy analysis. Very difficult to publish."

Manasi: "Yes ma'am. I mean No, ma'am - I totally understand and I think this is how research should be done! By at least by some of us."

Me: "Why do you understand? Why?"

Manasi: "Because I have real experiences of it."

"Really? I don't have any! I mean – all the villagers I have worked with so far – are pretty happy people. Can you give me a couple of examples?"

Manasi: "I have too many examples ma'am, but since this is a call – I will give you only two from your favourite topic - sanitation."

“ In Koppal village in North Karnataka, I was doing a sanitation survey and an elderly lady told me, ‘I am not served dinner, lately, in the last few years, my children are tired after day long work, so, they do not have the patience to take me out, in case I feel like relieving myself. This is the after effect of a fall few years ago when I had to go to relieve myself on a rainy day, I slipped and broke my leg, so, nobody has the time to take care and handle such situations. I don’t blame them at all. But, now that you are asking me all this and listened to my problems, will you be able to get a toilet constructed for me?’



Manasi paused, “I did not have an answer. How on earth, could I tell her that, I am here only to do a research project – which hopefully will influence policy?”

“Another example, ma’am” – she continued.

“I was doing another survey on toilet access in a slum in the south west part of Bengaluru and the young man was very eager to share his views, ‘I am unhappy that they have given houses, even though they are seem better than thatched huts, concrete buildings, with toilets....the problem is.... underground drainage leaks, at least three times a week...we have four lanes, either of the lanes will have a leak, so our slum stinks through the year....I am not able to eat my food, I am depressed....before construction, I was happy being in a slum with thatched roofs, I would go and relieve myself in the public toilet but now, I am forced to suffer from foul smell everyday...instances of dengue and malaria have increased...., Are you from the press or NGO? Can you help solve this problem?’”

Manasi said,

“It took a while for me to convince him that I was only gathering data for a research project...and we could not do anything about the drains.”

“He was very annoyed ma’am” Manasi explained, and said:”Oh... then, why did you ask me if you cannot do

anything?”

“See, ma’am?” said Manasi over the phone. “Each time I walk away as a researcher and leave the poor to their problems – I feel I want to do much more for them. That’s why – I am so attracted to this philosophy of action-research. I really look forward to doing some with FIN.”

Me: Thank you Manasi!

Nowif we could only find sponsors for at least some of the experiments we want to do in slums and villages to improve the public hygiene conditions!

4.4. Action Research: Recording of Tacit Knowledge – A very big effort



Cambridge Book Proposal
A very big effort

Dear All,

My target for FIN India for 2017 is to forge collaboration with good academic institutions. I have been working a lot on this and I think I have made good progress! For instance, I think we have already benefitted so much from Dr. Manasi (introduction of interns and guidance for Pauline) and spillovers from Sueli's article all over Maastricht university! Ladies – I am sincerely most thankful to both of you and love working with you two!

Now I had been excited to go to India in September to meet academics in Mumbai and in Trichy, but that is not to be. Initially I had been depressed, but not any more. Shanmugan, Pauline and Rushva will be visiting some top schools in Mumbai and with Rushva being a local and knowing how he is so helpful – everything is bound to be going well. I will be joining them via skype in all meetings.

They will also meet a Trust, i.e. an association which had bought land in kameshwaram in 2005 thinking to build an orphanage there in the aftermath of the tsunami. However, this never took off because orphans had been absorbed and taken care of by the extensive family network. So I am negotiating a sales with this body for FIN Trust. This is land accorded by the government for charitable work and hence we qualify. I am very grateful to this person for considering us, because Christian Church groups, which are very rich, are offering 10 (Yes ten times more) money than what I have saved over the years. However, the villagers do not want another Church group on their premises (they have 3 already) as the pressure to convert will increase in village – this has also been communicated to the Mumbai Trust by the village council. My dream is to build a very modest very eco campus for teaching and learning with room for office staff and visitors.

So all this is very exciting and please join me in wishing the Mumbai troopers a wonderful trip! I put the agenda that I have outlined for them below.

With warm regards to all,

Shyama

PS _ The proposal for Cambridge University Press has been sent. They are on holiday till end August. So I shall know in September.

4.5. Action Research Climate Change

Part 2 - FIN on climate change: How does economic development affect our urban/city ecosystems? A bottom-up perspective

October 24

Among economists, there are two views on how to make economic development happen. One is the top-down view. It advocates that the focus should be on increasing the per-capita income and somehow good things will trickle down to those at the base of the income pyramid. This is the mainstream view.

The other is the bottom-up view (to which we in FIN adhere) that the process of economic development also matters. We need to tweak it all the time, to make it yield maximum welfare, because it happens in a complex system with a lot of uncertainty and we can't predict all that's going to happen. We need to keep fixing problems all the time.

Our lives conform more to the bottom-up rather than top-down view of economic development. We all have dreams. But only few of us reach them in a seamless manner. Most of us grope our way through and have to fix problems along the way - all the time!

Still, both approaches are important and necessary to bring about change. It's good to have dreams, whether we reach them or not. But the most successful ones are those who tweak their dream-effort portfolio and keep changing it all the time, till they get the best fit! What holds for individuals, holds also for firms and for countries!

Continuing on Bangalore or Bengaluru - I found an interesting video, which is nice because it's seeing the change that's happened in Bangalore from the bottom-up perspective of a variety of stakeholders or citizens. All comments welcome.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d307m2ddXe8&t=311s>

Shyama

Part 3: FIN on climate change - Can we do anything about it?

October 29

So what can we do as citizens? Well, this is the issue that we seem to be knowing the least about (note: in FIN have some ideas we are working on, but we are not sure yet of impact.)

At the top, there seem to be many good advocacy groups, doing good research and giving evidence based recommendations.

But as you go down, the ecosystem of "agencies", "firms", "do-gooders" and "NGOs" making change happen on the ground - gets radically sparser! This seems to indicate that making change happen is the most challenging part of climate mitigation!

The general feeling as earlier comments indicated on our previous posts even from climate groups - is that solutions are too costly and the delivery platforms are too complex for citizens to do anything about it.

This top-down view is dominant also, because citizens support it through a sense of helplessness combined with apathy and inaction. However, when citizens wait for the benefits of national programs to trickle down for essential and immediate problems, they may indeed be "waiting for Godot".

This is not just with climate change, but with many other societal problems as well.

But there are silver linings to this black cloud. Again and again, Bangalore or Bengaluru, is popping up as an outlier. Why? You tell me - I don't know! Banglorians are demonstrating repeatedly that it is possible to make positive change happen instead of just sitting, waiting and

complaining about the government! These initiatives are likely to have ripple effects in other cities and might even nudge the government to do better.

Showing by example is always the most powerful trigger for change.

Here's a wonderful article about how citizens saved a number of lakes that we heard about in the videos attached to the previous posts.

<http://www.thehindu.com/.../when-citizens.../article18360798.ece>

Finally, if you have ideas for simple concrete actions by which citizens and students can make a difference to climate change, however small, speak up! The floor is yours!

Shyama

5. Capacity Building of FIN

5.1. Making the Website – a very big effort

We designed and updated our website. A snapshot of the page is given below.



6. Training and Teaching

6.1. Training through Internships

Meet our new intern Pauline!

August 4

What's Pauline going to do in Friend In Need India? Read her letter to find out and extend a warm welcome!

Hello everyone,

I am Pauline, 23 years old, and originally from Germany. There, I grew up in a protected environment with a supportive family and circle of friends until I stepped out of my “bubble” to explore the world. Since then, I have called different places “home” and every time I decided to take on a challenge and moved to another country, I have been rewarded with an insight into new cultures and welcomed with open arms.

Right now, I have just completed the theoretical part of my Master studies in Public Policy and Human Development at the United Nations University- Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology, where I was specialising in Risk and Vulnerability. After spending the last nine months together with an incredibly inspiring bunch of people (we call it our

MPP family) from all over the world, I only have my master thesis left until I will be graduating and sent out into the real working world.

Initially, I was afraid that I have set my goals too high: I wanted to work on a project which I am passionate about with a mentor who is willing to take on the challenge to support and guide me through this process. For young people like me who have spent their past years in the academic environment, it is crucial to get some hands-on experience and engage in field research. As a result, I am incredibly grateful to have Professor Ramani as the supervisor for my thesis: “What are the drivers of menstruation related health problems in Indian school girls: lack of knowledge or lack of access to sanitary products?”



You might ask yourself—why did this girl decide to get out of her supportive surrounding in the first place to spend most of her past 5 years abroad? Well, this story goes a little back in time to my childhood where I grew up in a family for whom it was most important to care for others. Since I was little, I had the innate idea to enhance the conditions of people who were less fortunate than myself. This empathy would guide me in to always have clear goals in mind. However, I was not able to accomplish them without an appropriate academic background and therefore, I started studying European Public Health for my Bachelor degree at Maastricht University.

Being part of an international cohort with opportunities to study abroad gave me the chance to find my passion in human development, particularly in the health sector. This dedication remained an important part of the joy I have in guiding others to work together to improve themselves and their community. If you get to know me you will recognise me as the girl who is constantly on her feet, looking for new tasks and projects to work on.

However, over the years I realised that the people I met on my journeys and our shared moments had the biggest impact on me. Becoming a part of their life, getting to know their story, their pace, their favourite places/cuisine and to exchange ideas kept me curious and opened new paths of interests. It is enriching to keep yourself surrounded by people with different viewpoints that challenge you and broaden your mind’s perception.

Over the past years, I understood how essential it is to stay positive, smile and value the little things in life. When I went to Africa for the first time to work for an NGO in Namibia there was a boy who never laughed. After spending a lot of time with him I managed to take a picture when he was smiling at me. Undoubtedly, never has anything made me happier than seeing how something so small can fill my life with joy. Those moments remind you what is important and illustrate, from the small victories you have, what can happen in the long run if you are consistent, course-correcting and patient. Especially during my travels, I love to take pictures of these moments that I can share with people I met along the way.

Getting out of my comfort zone, having a positive attitude, enjoying laughing out loud, being active, and social contributed significantly to my personal growth. However, there are more puzzle pieces to the picture. As much as I love being surrounded by good friends I love to read books and to meditate. It helps me to structure my thoughts and regain focus. What previous years taught me is that you can never foresee the future. When I visited India for the first time 4 years ago, I never thought that I will come back one day- to be able to implement an educational programme and to make a difference. And here I am – excited to become a part of the FIN community and to do research on menstrual hygiene among young female adults in India.

Warm regards,
Pauline

6.2. Meet our new friend - Nrupaja Bhide!

November 26

Our World Toilet Day celebrations were made very special, because of the enthusiastic and sincere participation of Nrupaja, who taught children and adults alike about how waste should not be wasted! We are happy to introduce Nrupaja to our readers and look forward to help spread the teachings of Nrupaja and her parents in Kameshwaram! We would like to salute the entire family for their great work and wish them a wonderful continuation of their truly effective action on the ground for positive change! Here's the letter from Nrupaja.....

Hi everybody,

"You can't connect the dots looking forward, you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust the dots will connect somehow in the future." - Steve Jobs

The first time I read this story and this quote in particular, was in an English textbook in school. I never realized that it would be the defining factor of my story one day. But first things first. Who am I? I am Nrupaja Bhide. I grew up in the city of Pune and also completed my bachelor in mechanical engineering here. While looking for a course that would allow me to learn more about sustainable living, I came across a masters program in Public Policy and Human Development at UNU-Merit, in Maastricht. While it was completely different from the subjects that I had previously studied, it offered a specialization in innovation, which was a good connector between the two fields. The year was full of steep learning curves and I enjoyed it thoroughly. During my last month in Maastricht, I participated in an action-research competition organized by the university. My submission was about changing the paradigm of waste management in Indian cities. Winning the competition will allow me to start a pilot in my hometown, Pune. Unsurprisingly, my inspiration for this project proposal came from connecting a few dots.

It started when my parents noticed that proper waste disposal was becoming a problem as the city grew and changed. We started by collecting biodegradable waste and composting it for ourselves. Within a few months came the realization that biodegradable waste is a great resource and not to be wasted. After a few articles in local newspapers, sharing our experiences and experiments, people started getting interested. Anyone who visited our terrace garden was amazed with the results. Our process was mostly experimental and learning was through trial and error, sometimes with failures. But generally we observed that the plants were healthy and producing high yields, and this was a great motivational factor for others. We conduct workshops and presentations to share all of these experiments and give people knowledge about basic composting techniques. For reaching people outside Pune, we decided to start a Facebook page (because maintaining a blog successfully is just too much hard work!). After much debate we settled on the name Soil Circuit. (<https://www.facebook.com/soilcircuit/>) It tied in nicely with our philosophy that biodegradable waste is a part of the cycle of nature. And when we break this cycle it results in massive unmanageable piles of garbage. But with a few small steps this cycle can continue uninterrupted, this "waste" can give us fresh fruits and vegetables, even in cities.

The action research competition in Maastricht University gave me the opportunity to mould all these ideas and experiences into a project proposal that would have a wider impact than our small family efforts. It also gave me the opportunity to interact with Prof. Shyama Ramani of UNU- Merit who is the pioneer of action research at Maastricht University. She invited me to work in collaboration with her NGO, Friend in Need, and share these ideas in Kameshwaram, Tamil Nadu. From the 16th to the 21st of November I was in Kameshwaram with a packed schedule. We talked in different spaces like schools, temples and even interacted with panchayat members. I am sure that looking

back I will find that Kameshwaram was that the first dot, the beginning, of a new and exciting



journey for me.

7. Advocacy

7.1. A story from Kameswaram

On the H of WASH

The boys may lose their bet! Somebody's singing another song – Brown and Black are Beautiful!

A true story by grouchy Professor

July 25

We were supposed to go into the field and start our interviews, but the boys were still not out of their room. So I went and knocked hard.

“Yes, Ma’am – we are just coming out.” came a voice from inside.

“What is this – being so late? You aren’t girls – you don’t need to put on make-up. Get out fast”.

I am sorry to say that sometimes under stress, I can be rude.

But no insult is ever meant.

“Ma’am, please stay calm” and the door opened and a young gentleman of the team came out.

“See, Ma’am I’m ready. I have already put on my sun-screen. The others are putting it now.”

“Sun screen? I haven’t ever used sunscreen. What is the need for it?”

“Ma’am you will become very tanned.”

“So?”

“Ma’am maybe you don’t mind becoming tanned at your age, but we care ma’am. We are still not settled.”

The other boys came out.

“Ma’am, tanned is simply not cool.”

“Ma’am, you should put sun screen even for health. You are always saying H in WASH that FIN is working on is Hygiene. (Reader – the others are Water, Waste management and Sanitation) Well, I think personal hygiene for health should include sun screens.”

And he got his sun screen and gave it to me. So I had to put it. They were always so kind to me. I felt bad at myself.

“Thank you boys. And I’m sorry for shouting at you.”

Then one of them pointed to the other.

“It’s OK Ma’am, we are used to it. It doesn’t do anything to us now! But you know, (pointing to his friend) he is the one who is always delaying us. He puts on other creams also.”

That gentleman didn’t mind at all. “Ma’am, see I am already dark. I need to look good to get girls. I don’t have a steady girl friend yet ma’am. So, I am putting fair and lovely cream for men at night. That tube is getting over so fast – I’m sure these guys are putting it also behind my back. I’m sure of that Ma’am.”

Now, at my age, I can afford to give compliments to all.

“But you are very handsome. Just continue to be your kind and friendly self and Miss Right will just pop out in front of you and you will live happily ever after together. You don’t need a fairness cream. Already, I don’t understand why girls use such creams.”

Here they just stared at me as if I didn’t really mean what I said. Again, at my age, to drive home a point, one can always remind the audience that one is marching towards the maker and all that is said is really MEANT.

“Boys, I hate seeing only fair women in films and on television, with hour glass figures. I am not saying kick them all out. There can be some fair beautiful ladies, but we should also have dark women, intelligent, kind women in all shapes and sizes – interesting ones – on TV and screen.”

And to drive home the point, “Before I become 80, I hope I will see dark intelligent women on TV news and films etc. etc..H for hygiene in WASH also means we can avoid unnecessary grooming products like fairness creams, because all colors are beautiful.”

“Ma’am – this is not going to happen. So please let us go to the field and start our interviews on state of toilets.”

“Is that a challenge? Are you betting it won’t happen before I am 80? I am going to shout from all corners that all skin colors are beautiful – only health and kindness of heart count.”

“Ma’am – why are you delaying us like this now? Of course, you are going to lose the bet. Forget boys – Ma’am which girl will not want to be fair and lovely?”

So thus chastised, I shut up and we proceeded to go to the field.

But, today – I came across an article that featured this video.....Boys – maybe if more girls sing like this – I will win my bet! I have some time to go before turning 80!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX5soNoPiII>

7.2. *.Continuing on the 'H' of WASH - Whose side are you on?*

July 29

Under the latest version of the Indian ‘Goods and Services Tax’ formulated as part of a major tax reform, bindis, sindoor (cosmetics used by Hindu women on forehead and which in many Indian States signify that the woman is married) and condoms are tax-free, while sanitary napkins are taxed at 12% (instead of the earlier 18%). Gold and rough diamonds will be charged less than 4%.

This is generating heated debate - shouldn't sanitary napkins be tax free?

We note three main points of view – what’s yours? What’s your idea for maximizing access to menstrual hygiene products in India?

Point of view A: This is an outright action demonstrating Patriarchy. Sanitary Napkins must be exempt from tax as it is a necessity for all women in the menstruating age groups. This represents an increase in the cost of being a woman and such gender discrimination is not acceptable. Currently only Ireland, Kenya and Canada have near zero taxes on sanitary napkins. This is a global battle. [Most vocal view]

Point of view B: Currently sanitary napkins are being manufactured by large firms (including many multinationals) that are making high profits and thus it is the responsibility of these firms to price

their products to make them accessible to the public and it makes sense to tax the products of profit making firms. [Equally vocal view of Government Officials]

Point of view C: To improve access to menstrual hygiene products, it is necessary for the Indian Government to invest in or facilitate large scale production of good quality reusable sanitary napkins and reusable menstrual cups. These types of reusable Greener products are becoming popular worldwide. The former, i.e. reusable sanitary napkins, in particular, does not require rocket science for manufacturing. It can and must be made accessible and affordable to all women in India. Under the present law, households which can afford disposable sanitary napkins will be taxed, but what about the millions who can't afford it anyway? [This is the bigger question]

In Friend-In-Need India – we vote for both A and C! What's your take on this debate? We need to make our voices heard for Women's health.



7.3. Advocacy for safer Sanitation

7.3.1. Article on access to clean water and sanitation

March 11

On the occasion of International Women's Day Rushva Parihar wrote an article on how Lack of access to clean water and sanitation continues to affect women.

As we move towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals we should ensure that no one is left behind. Ensuring equal access to women is therefore critical.

#InternationalWomensDay #SDG6 #Sanitation #SDG5

7.3.2. Reflections on Sanitation stories in Indian Cinema

What is happening in India?

June 13

Open Defecation has been recognized as a real problem in India. We also know that no media reaches the masses like Bollywood. Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar has joined the movement with his 'lota' and is producing and starring in one of this year's highly anticipated films 'Toilet: Ek Prem Katha' literally translating to Toilet: A love story. The movie has already been enjoying a great amount of hype, thanks to its unique topic of tackling open defecation, and now, the highly anticipated trailer is finally here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym4EJQ7XORk>

The trailer shows the story of Keshav and Jaya who fall in love and get married. However, Keshav's village does not have a single toilet, which creates a massive rift in their married life. So ultimately it becomes a story of Keshav fighting his village's superstitions and the government's corruption to

ensure proper sanitation for all. Overall, it looks extremely promising as a love story with a strong social message.

'Toilet: Ek Prem Katha' also stars Bhumi Pednekar, Anupam Kher and Sana Khan. Directed by Shree Narayan Singh, the movie is all set to release on August 11, 2017.

Tell us your thoughts on the trailer

7.3.3. *Ecosan toilet model*

August 22

What FIN India is boosting in terms of sanitation technology - the ecological model.

There is another option for the safe disposal of human waste, which does not use water for flushing. This is what we are building in Kameshwaram village and promoting elsewhere. The entire structure is built above ground making it apt for flood prone areas and also hard granite ground which does not absorb waste water easily. This is often referred to as the urine diverting dry toilet or UDDT or Ecosan.

Here's a video that explains the toilet design. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SB-cTsGkmK0>

But, note that there are some major mistakes in the video-

The ecosan toilet also costs at least 30,000 Rs in most places in South India - Not 10,000 Rs. The cost can vary according to prices of materials and also the salaries of masons. For instance, in most Southern Indian states - where masons are far more empowered, they earn much higher salaries than in the Northern states.

The ecosan toilet does need good plumbing - otherwise it can stink.

The ecosan toilet requires effort on the part of the user - more than in other model.

There is no deodorizing process.

It is less costly than a toilet with a septic tank - but the construction does require effort - it is not hassle free.

But it is the least costly way to recycle human waste completely.

What do you think of this type of toilet? Do you think you would be able to use it in cities?

August 27

Guess who's using Ecological / UDDT/Ecosan toilets?

Remember Pauline, our new intern? (August 4, post)

When she read our last post - she wrote to me: "See where composting toilets are being used." I share her link below.

You will never guess....

https://www.ted.com/.../john_hardy_my_green_school_dr.../up-next

7.4. *Advocacy: Hygiene Behaviour*

7.4.1. *Technology based solution for Hygiene Behaviour*

Is this the eco-solution to wild-peeing plague?

January 11

Inventor Victor Massip and his business partner Laurent Lebot came up with the "Uritrottoir" (a mix of the French words for urinal and pavement), which they believe is an environmentally-friendly solution to the stink and mess of public urination.

The City Hall of Paris is looking at this a implementable solution for the problem. Read about their invention here: <http://www.thelocal.fr/.../is-this-the-eco-solution-to-france...>

Do you think Uritrottoir can also be implemented in India? Tell us your thoughts in the comment section below.

7.4.2. *About open defecation in India*

What is happening in India?

June 3

Pushing for an open defecation free India is the motive of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). Recently the SBM has launched a new campaign, which highlights the important connection between sanitation and health. It asks women to ensure that men stop defecating in the open and emphasizes that this will stop the spread of disease.

The ad stars the Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma.

What do you think of the advertisement?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFIkCxrVS5U>

#SwachhBharatMission #DarwazaBand #SDG6

7.4.3. *On the Annual report on status of Education*

India needs to count its broken toilets

August 11

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). in 2016, as many as 96.5 per cent of rural elementary government schools had toilets, but more than one in four (27.79 per cent) were dysfunctional or locked!

Access to sanitation cannot be judged only on the basis of infrastructure provided as it has been observed that there is a large gap between usability and availability of sanitation infrastructure. For instance, if only availability is considered, 95.35 per cent of government elementary schools in rural Uttar Pradesh in 2016 were observed to have toilets. But if we look at the functionality of these toilets, we find that only 54.83 per cent were reported to have working toilets.

Read the full article here: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/.../articles.../59662907.cms>

7.4.4. *Advocacy for cleaner India and support to Swachh Bharat Mission*

March 21

“My friends were running to school to use the toilets. They were ashamed to trek to the fields near their houses to relieve themselves,” says 11-year-old Suchitra K.P, from Kamarahalli village of the Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar. “I had a toilet in my house, and most of my friends wanted toilets in their homes, too.”

Read how her empathy and determination gave a push to the Swachh Bharat Mission, India

<http://www.thehindu.com/.../this-gritty-1.../article17409136.ece>

7.5. *Advocacy through Events*

7.5.1. *Interview with Mr. Anil Raj Rai of Clean India Mission*

How Did Sikkim Turn the Tide for Sanitation in India?

April 3

Friend of FIN Sueli Kyomi Brodin talks to Mr. Anil Raj Rai, Head of the Clean India Mission in Sikkim about this question.

Read her wonderful article here:

<http://www.merit.unu.edu/how-did-sikkim-turn-the-tide-for-.../>

“Worldwide about a billion people defecate in the open — including 600,000 in India. So when Sikkim in the far northeast of India was declared ‘Open Defecation Free’ in 2016, we were curious. How did this small state, capped by Himalayan peaks and dotted with Buddhist monasteries, manage it? How did Sikkim turn the tide?” asks PhD fellow [Rushva Parihar](#).

His supervisor, Prof. Shyama V. Ramani, is an expert on (the evolution of) development economics. In her usual transparent way, she explains how “we are doing research on why some villages are clean and why some are not. This will help us to figure out how the not-clean places can catch-up with the clean ones. Evolutionary catch-up processes are a field we study at UNU-MERIT but only with respect to how countries develop industrial capabilities. Our novelty is to apply this framework to study how countries can attain the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the UN, such as SDG6 on hygiene and sanitation.”

A highlight of the 2016 World Toilet Day conference was the awarding of the Vimal Kshetra Prize to a select group of change-makers. “Vimal means pure and Kshetra means place,” explains Prof. Ramani. “The Vimal Kshetra winners were identified through field work* conducted by Rushva and Indian researcher Shankajit Sen to give recognition to ‘drivers’ of sanitation coverage and usage in India.”

“

After trekking through this beautiful region, we came to the conclusion that the drivers of change had been the state government and the trust of the people in the government... This was incredible!
Rushva Parihar
UNU-MERIT

”

One of the winners was Mr. Anil Raj Rai, Head of the Clean India Mission in Sikkim. Rushva explains: “After trekking through this beautiful region, we came to the conclusion that the drivers of change had been the state government and the trust of the people in the government. Everywhere we went villagers were quite happy with the government. This was incredible! That’s why we decided that the head of the Clean India Mission of Sikkim must be one of the Vimal Kshetra winners.” The friendly and cheerful Mr. Raj Rai boils it all down to four key factors:

i. Women’s leadership

“Women are at the forefront of sanitation programmes in Sikkim and that has worked out well. A mother knows well what’s good for the family and for the children, better than the men. And when women take the lead, men are bound to follow. In my state, you will find a very huge proportion of women in the workforce. Fifty of the elected representatives in local bodies are women and I can say that having a lot of women as local leaders has given a lift to the programmes. If you come and visit any of the northern states, you will see no gender bias. We are very different from the other Indian states in this respect. We don’t have any dowry system in Sikkim. Women are looked upon with respect. We don’t consider them as lower than men and we do not treat them as inferior to men. Husband and wife are on par. In fact I would even say that women have a higher status than men.”

ii. A demand- and community-driven approach

“We learned the lessons from earlier programmes which were supply-driven (and which failed). For all sorts of reasons, the people ended up not using the toilets that had been built for them. We saw that supply-driven programmes don’t really work and understood that demand-driven and community-driven efforts are more sustainable. The real part of the Clean India campaign in Sikkim consisted in creating awareness and creating the demand. This was the longest period. We started in 2004 and achieved our goal in 2008. Only once people had understood the value of hygiene and sanitation and the need for toilets, did we construct the toilets. The construction part only came at the end the process and did not really take time, just one or two months.”

iii. Top-down and bottom-up synergy

“In Sikkim, there was a strong synergy between the providers and the takers. The campaign was initiated by the state leadership and was successfully relayed to the community, through the local village leaders who played a strong role — acting as a bridge between the state and the people. They did this by organising a lot of village meetings to explain the benefits of good sanitation practices (e.g. for development). In the end the community came forward with the demand for toilets. The people of Sikkim are happy about the Clean India programme because it has given them so many benefits, especially in health and education. They are very aware of this. For example school attendance has gone up since toilet facilities were provided. We also noticed that more girls are going to school since we installed machines dispensing sanitary napkins at low cost.”

iv. The carrot and stick approach

“The government cannot maintain all the toilets, so people are given an incentive to maintain their toilets themselves. Every household with a functional sanitary toilet receives a sanitation certificate which has to be renewed annually. This certificate is connected to state benefits and state grants, such as access to housing schemes, or food benefits. Maintenance itself is not difficult, especially when people recognise the advantages it brings. Our secret is the carrot and stick approach!”

“

An ideal village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation... The very first problem the village worker will solve is its sanitation.

Mahatma Gandhi

”

Background facts & figures

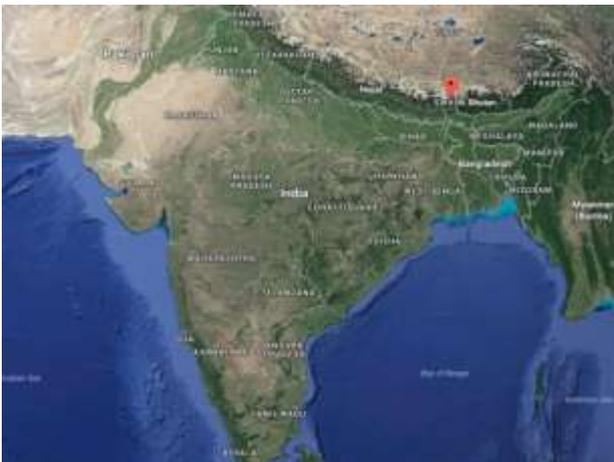
The small northeastern hill state of Sikkim is the cleanest in India, according to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). All 610,577 inhabitants in Sikkim have latrines with high sanitation and hygiene standards; 100% of people in Sikkim use household / community toilets (while 98.2% of households have sanitary toilets). Its four districts are ranked among the top 10 districts in the nation for sanitation and cleanliness.

Sikkim was the first state to be declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) in 2016, followed by

Himachal Pradesh and Kerala. The campaign for a clean Sikkim began in 2004, with the first sign of success coming in 2008 when the Indian Government gave it the Nirmal Rajya award — a national honour for cleanliness. In 2014, the Indian Government launched the Clean India Mission campaign. According to government data, nearly half of India’s population — 450 million people — have no access to toilets and therefore defecate in the open. India aims to become 100% open defecation free by 2019.

The 2016 World Toilet Day conference was co-hosted by UNU-MERIT and Prof. Ramani’s social enterprise Friend in Need India. The research project ‘Incentivising Rural Sanitation through Sustainability Audits’ was supported and funded by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India.

• SIKKIM IMAGES







7.5.2. *Trash Walk and SDG*

What's FIN doing in Maastricht?

October 7

On Monday 2 October, to celebrate the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and his dream of a clean India, we joined Green Office Maastricht and Nurture Nature Global in a public event called Trash Walk and SDG Talks at Maastricht University.

Prof. Shyama Ramani and Dr. Aniruddha Rajput, Chairman, Drafting Committee of United Nations International Law Commission, gave insightful presentations via Skype on water and sanitation challenges in India and on the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on SDG6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.)

Prof. Ramani also prepared a sanitation quiz for the participants, with questions such as:

How many millions of people in the world do not have basic sanitation facilities such as toilets or latrines? How many millions of people in the world defecate in the open? In how many countries in the world do less than 50% of the population have access to basic drinking water? Sueli Kyomi Brodin conducted the quiz adeptly and with great enthusiasm!

These were challenging questions and they gave a lot of food for thought!

The correct answers were rewarded with delicious typical sweets from India, generously brought by Prof. Ramani.

We concluded the event with a Trash Walk in the city park around the Green Office and collected waste that was lying around in the park.

Have a look at the photos below taken during the event!

7.5.3. *Rushva Parihar's talk at TEDxBandra on sanitation in India*

June 23

Our Research Associate Rushva Parihar recently gave a talk at TEDxBandra on sanitation in India and why we should talk about sanitation.

Watch his talk here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8T6qS13ICg>



7.5.4. *Advocacy-Climate change*

Who is the new friend of FIN?

October 14

Introducing climate change in our panorama of interests and how it is affecting Kameshwaram and our work

A new student at United Nations University-MERIT, Manuj Bhardwaj, has formed an NGO with his Chandigarh friends, Nurture Nature Global, and he came to me and spoke most enthusiastically about his NGO and his dreams. Then he invited us to participate in celebrating Mahatma Gandhi's birthday in Maastricht - not the usual sort of festival that attracts people here, but he managed - which showed commitment. And we joined not only because of his enthusiasm, and our own commitment to Gandhian philosophy, but because climate change seems to be here.

We have been particularly hit by climate change in Kameshwaram as elsewhere in India, which has been lashed by untimely rains. Thunder is rumbling so often in the village. Untimely rains seem to be leading to the emergence of new varieties of viruses. A lot of our staff and people of Kameshwaram are sick. "Madam, the doctor says it is like dengue, but not dengue". They are weakened and it takes time to get back strength. So these viruses are not mortal, but they are very debilitating - which is equally bad, because it imposes a severe economic burden on households when their members cannot work.

India has the maximum population and maximum number of cities that are going to be affected by climate change. We all do something about it. Our humble way is to run some posts on climate change and finally come to its links with WASH issues.

Here is a stark video, shared by a Finnie (our group), Manasi, on Bangalore on how it's all linked to urbanization and access to water. At the same time, last week, we got photos of flooded parts of Bangalore and jokes of launch of Uber boats! So there is flooding and lack of water availability at the same time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXMp0ONvxkg>

What I want to know from any of you is:

1. Do you feel climate change happening where you are? Do you think your town or city will be unlivable during your life time due to climate change?
2. How? Why?
3. Is there anyone in the locality doing anything to mitigate (i.e. lower) the impact of climate change?

Thank you in advance.

Shyama

7.6. *Advocacy: Waste Management*

7.6.1. *Increasing awareness about landfills by Shanmugarajan*

January 20

THE FACE OF THE CITY THAT WE IGNORE – PART 3: THE RESETTLEMENT CENTRE AT SEEMAPURI

Following up from Shanmugarjan previous two posts on 'The Face of the City That We Ignore' here is part 3.

After the landfills, we headed to the resettlement centre at Seemapuri where the dry wastes are segregated and sold for a living. The dry waste from about 50 colonies are gathered here. One of the disturbing facts is that there is no segregation at source. Everything is segregated here. Passing by this area, one can witness an array of women separating the dry waste swiftly!

A variety of wastes are subjected to multiple levels of segregation at this centre. The men generally involve themselves in collecting the wastes, while the women actively take part in segregation. The people here earn an average of about Rs. 6000 per month. Human hair wastes are considered to be the most profitable of all the wastes, which can fetch them up to Rs. 3000 per kilogram.

The people involved here refuse to use any sort of safety garments like gloves, citing discomfort and reduction in speed as the reasons.

If necessary steps are taken to enforce segregation at source, the condition of these people would be improved significantly, and more would be recovered and recycled. This way, we can prevent the amount of garbage dumped in the landfills.

Let's start segregating and drive ourselves a step closer to a hygienic and pollution free community!

Post by FIN Intern Shanmugarajan



Photos by: Sueli Kyomi Brodin, United Nations University-MERIT

7.6.2. *The spirit of Mottainai*

July 5

The spirit of Mottainai, by Sueli Kyomi Brodin

Imagine that you're making rice for dinner and that you suddenly spill all the contents of your measuring cup on the kitchen floor... What do you do?

If you've had a Japanese grandmother like me, there's only one choice. You will kneel down... and start picking up all the grains of rice, one by one, even if it takes you half an hour, because you can still remember your grandmother's voice gently telling you: "Ah mottainai!"

This would translate as: "Oh what a waste!" in the sense of: "What a pity it would be to waste this perfectly edible rice!"

What I like about the spirit of "Mottainai" is that it reminds me time and again to respect earthly resources and to do my best to avoid waste.

The concept of "Mottainai" gained worldwide popularity when the Kenyan environmentalist and 2004 Nobel Prize Winner Wangari Maathai embraced it after hearing about it during a visit to Japan. She launched a large scale "Mottainai Campaign" in Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States. Her campaign website explained that the strength of the spirit of "Mottainai" lay in the fact that it captured in one single word the four important Rs for environmentalists: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Respect.

"Mottainai" is often described as an intrinsic Japanese concept, difficult to translate in any other language, but please tell me: Is there a word for "Mottainai" in the languages of India?

July 14

The spirit of Mottainai in India, by Sueli Kyomi Brodin

Dear friends, I was very happy to read your kind comments on the little story I shared last week. Many of you said that you could also relate to the spirit of Mottainai because your own grandmother had also taught you not to waste food (or anything else).

It turns out that a few years ago, a young Japanese mother by the name of Mariko Shinju was so inspired by her grandmother's Mottainai precepts that she decided to write a book called "Mottainai

Grandma" for her then four-year old son. The book became such a success that it turned into a book series which eventually started getting translated into other languages.

After writing my story, I was happy to discover that three of the books in the Mottainai Grandma series will now also be translated into Hindi by the National Book Trust!

Then I learned that their author, Mariko Shinju, was recently in India to present her Mottainai Grandma stories to Indian schoolchildren and that that her message appeared to be very much in line with the values of the #SwachhBharat campaign.

Investigating further, I even found a Facebook page especially dedicated to Mottainai Grandma in India! It is called Mottainai for Swachh Bharat and you can find it via the link: <https://www.facebook.com/mottainai4swachhbharat/>

It makes me very happy to see the cultures of India and Japan coming together through the wisdom of our grandmothers!

July 20

Mottainai - Coimbatore Style!

Meet Padmanaban Gopalan who had a brilliant idea to ensure that excess food reaches hungry stomachs instead of landfills! We salute Mr. Padmanaban and the 'No Food Waste' team. Keep up the great work and all the best of Mottainai to you!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gam_QOvC-3Y

7.7. FIN in Prayer for relief to Chennai Flooding

November 2

FIN in prayer - or a conversation with Shanmugan, a Finnie, in flooded Chennai...just now...a whatsapp conversation across continents from a train

"Shanmugan, apparently rains are very heavy in Chennai still. Hope your travel route to work is ok"

"☹️ Very heavy downpour ma'am.! Stuck at work. Friends who started early are telling me that the roads have started to flood."

"OK we have to do a post to ask for collective praying for rains to stop."

"👉 hope that works 😊"

He has a point of course, and my son would have added 'lol ma' if it had been addressed to him, but for what it was worth, I just prayed.

"Shanmugan, I am just feeling terrible that such a noble city can come to this stage".😞

"Ma'am, Never expected Chennai to receive such heavy rains ☹️"

I've never seen the city experience this amount of rainfall which it has received in the recent years".

"Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata - all our great cities are at high climate risk"

😊Tokyo and other cities in Japan are investing a lot in preparation."

" I don't see that happening here. The authorities said a week back that they're prepared. But most of the planners questioned their preparedness. And their fears have come true now 😞"

"Shanmugan, I think all have to act now. Otherwise, like I said in my last post, we'd all be waiting for Godot - or waiting forever. ☐ We cannot wait for government"

"But ma'am what can we do?"☐

"I think there are many things. I have heard there are. But I don't know enough. By the way nobody had any ideas for concrete action to my last post call for concrete little acts. But we have to become experts. ☐We have to do something to build up climate change resilience."

"We can dig further on this, ma'am"🙏

"I hope you reach home safely Shanmugan. Otherwise, please just sleep in the office. keep in touch and be safe. And all the best" 👉

"Just reached home ma'am! Was thinking of staying in office. But luckily got a cab!!😊"

"That's super! Now, if the rains would just stop for a while...." (it is about 23.30 in India now)

Let us pray for the rains to stop in Tamil Nadu and Chennai....and then let us also do something to improve urban climate resilience.

Dear Friends, We published this post on December 5, 2015.

Today, has anything changed?

We have to act as civil society to mitigate climate change. Stand with us

7.8. Trash Walk in Maastricht a model for Kameswaram

April 23

Waste Management - Trash Walk

Dear Friends, From Bangalore to Maastricht - worldwide -citizens are rising to preserve the environment. Here we share yesterday's chronicles of a Finnie, Sueli Kyomi Brodin!



8. Innovations created in Kameshwaram

8.1. Attractive ecosan with bathroom model

Thanks to a generous donation of a well-wisher we were able to innovate to build a better type of ecosan toilet. We are very grateful to Rushva Parihar, part of the FIN team, for having arranged this. Adapting from the design proposed in the handbook 'Ecological Sanitation: A Practitioners' Handbook (UNICEF, 2011, p.29)' and integrating many ideas given by many sanitation experts as well as architects, with whom we have discussed the challenges of ecological toilets, we arrived at our final model. We acknowledge gratefully all ideas given by many that has gone into this design. This is a urine-diverting dry toilet that is often referred to as the 'ecosan' toilet. Thus, no one will have to touch the human compost.



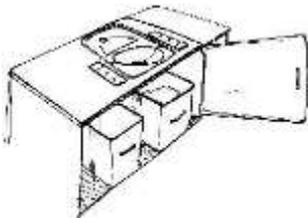


Figure. Single vault ecosan toilet with a 2-hole separation pan and removable bins

8.2. An improved version of our public waste bin

An example of a community waste bin given to the village under the SWACHH Bharath Programme is shown here. Five such bins have been given for the huge area of Kameshwaram of about 936 hectares. Each costs more than 20,000 INR. They are very heavy and one has to bend to open it. One has to get one hands on the waste to remove it properly. After volunteering to clear waste from one of these bins, my sister remarked: “The door of the bin is heavy and difficult to open. I was very afraid that the door might get unhooked and perhaps fall on my back. I found it difficult to keep bending and taking out the waste.”



people to use it.

In contrast, our waste bins consist of wooden sticks embedded deeply in the ground and covered with netting material commonly used in roofs. They are easy to open and workers can easily fill their garbage bags with the waste. (Note: Manual waste picking is still followed in villages. No modern equipment or heavy machinery is involved). Stickers on three sides of the bin nudge passersby to use the bin instead of throwing rubbish on the ground. It has increased visibility and its simple yet efficient design makes it eye-catching, tempting the



We continued to experiment. Shanmugarajan suggested a more standardized frame. Shyama then visioned it (after seeing Marc, the UNU-MERIT Financial administrator make some for his garden) and worked with Paranjothi to make a much more solid and aesthetic version.

Design Innovation 3: Giving of geographical identity to different zones in the villages through a 3 component vector of information: (i) number of bin; (ii) name of place; (iii) number of the ward.



Photo with NAREGA workers. Given the social stigma attached to waste management, families are sending their eldest to work on waste collection.

Impact: The waste bins have attracted a lot of attention and praise – from diverse stakeholders. Households find it convenient to throw garbage in and NAREGA workers find it easier to take out garbage.

- Panchayat members request that it be multiplied. Thus, we are likely to use the remainder after the two toilets on the waste bins.



Photo with Kamraj – the acting head of the Gram Panchayat that includes Kameshwaram and adjacent villages.

- Youngsters and outside workers are happy because the bin labels reveal the geographical identity of the place. For instance, they can ask a friend to meet them near bin number 7 in ward number 6!.

9. Acheivements

9.1. Partnerships

September 8
 What’s happening to FIN?
 Well, we have become an NGO partner of the The CSR Lab of the Maastricht University Faculty of Law, The Netherlands. How did this happen? This is a typical example of a butterfly effect!!! (i.e. small causes can have large effects)

1. One day, Sueli and Shyama are talking. "Can you tell me about Action-Research?" asks Sueli, and Shyama eventually gets to it after finishing to chat about a lot of others things.
2. Then Sueli says: "I'm going to write this out!" And an article appears in the Maastricht University magazine.
3. A former student at United Nations University-MERIT's School of Governance and big friend of Sueli, now a young Law Faculty member, Catalina, reads the article.....and says "Hmmmmm" and invites Sueli and Shyama to discuss ideas for The CSR Lab that she's initiated.
4. The students on the administrative board of Maastricht University read say.... "Hmmmmm".
5. And after a lot of steps related to points 3 and 4, Shyama gives the key note of the Opening of the Academic Year ceremony of Maastricht University on the theme: "Can academics change the world?" and The CSR+ Lab is announced.



Who would have guessed this evolution? Certainly not us!

And this makes us want to have deeper collaboration with academic institutions in India too! Currently, we are supported by some wonderful academics and students in India – but we are not yet an NGO partner of any group of an academic institution, because not many universities have a structure that permits such an affiliation.

But, we are going to explore and you will read about it in the coming weeks as we go about it.

In the meantime – here is that lecture by Prof. Shyama – on “How Universities can make a difference”. All comments welcome as usual.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3JHmQtafKU>

9.2. Awards

November 9

We have an exciting news for you!

We are happy to share that Friend In Need India has been recognized by the Government of Tamil Nadu for its outstanding service in the field of Environmental Protection and Management.

TN Environment Awards were presented on the 7th of November 2017 by the Ministry of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu to recognize and appreciate meritorious individuals/organizations involved in the field of Environmental Education, Awareness, Protection and Management during the year 2016. Friend In Need India bagged the second place in the outstanding organizations category. Prof. Ramani's sister Mrs. V. Vaijyanthi, Mr. Paranjothi, our Field Manager and Mr. Shanmugarajan, our Chennai Representative attended the awards ceremony representing FIN. The Honourable Environment Minister of Tamil Nadu, Shri. K. C. Karuppanan presided over the ceremony and distributed the awards.

The team is very excited about the award and such recognitions definitely boosts our morale. This encourages us to continue working with the Government, to bring a positive change in the coastal village of Kameshwaram with respect to environment, sanitation and hygiene.

We would like to thank the Government of Tamil Nadu for appreciating people's efforts towards conserving the environment. We are sure that such encouragement will help others get involved in this field.

Towards a better tomorrow!

Appendix: The Facebook strategy of Friend in Need

January 5, 2014

By Shyama V. Ramani and Indira Srikant

The community Facebook page of Friend in Need at <https://www.facebook.com/finindia> is a public page accessible to all – including those who are not members of Facebook. We intend to use it as a platform to increase awareness on how economic development happens. It will not contain statistics or plans. Instead, it will be about action and games being played out, sometimes spontaneous,

sometimes well thought out and at all times very complex and interesting. Its larger purpose is to contribute to bridging the urban-rural gap, the developed-developing country gap, the rich-poor gap, through sharing with our readers the joys, the challenges and the pain of bringing about positive transformative changes. Facebook lets us do this through short entertaining posts and imagery. Friend in Need India is a very small (indeed very very small) player in this game, but we hope that by sharing our experience and views, and those of others working in the field, we can make a big impact and inspire others to join our community of volunteers working to make the world a cleaner and healthier place, where all have better opportunities to realize their potential. Do join us! Share the link with your friends – and feel free to send us anything that would be interesting on: pro-poor innovations, social entrepreneurship and strategies to attain the millennium development goals via improved sanitation coverage and waste management

Our Facebook page will regularly have information posted under the following categories:

1. PRO-POOR INNOVATION» (It's not sanitation this time!) – Posts will be on pro-poor innovations that are being created, tried out, adopted or abandoned all over the world. We are also supporting the generation of pro-poor innovations and we will be writing about them. For instance, we are organizing the ‘SIDC2013’ which stands for the ‘Sanitation Innovation Design Contest’ sponsored by WASTE (Netherlands). SANITATION... HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE! – Get to know about experiments all over the world as we march towards ensuring access to functioning toilets to the 2.5 billion people who still need it.
2. ACADEMICS’ CORNER – What are academics saying and doing about attainment of the Millennium Development Goals for all? Under this category, we would like to post any interesting findings or insight generated by academics as well as students on the dynamics of grass roots economic development.
3. WHAT'S UP @ KAMESHWARAM? – Friend In Need is an effort to build a social business for a village with villagers. There are four main challenges: (i) to build capabilities in the FIN staff; (ii) to generate effective demand (i.e. one that people are willing to pay for) from the residents– who are poor to very poor – for toilets and waste collection through accompaniment and motivation; (iv) to generate funds to sustain the livelihoods of FIN staff till the social enterprise becomes auto-financing.
4. FRIENDS OF FIN INDIA – Friend In Need is of course not the only player in the field and in this we hope to share stories of other activist, NGO, public agency, do-gooders out there in the world trying to make it a nicer place to live in!
5. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR YOU! – This is to share insight and inspiration from happy social entrepreneurs for other would-be social entrepreneurs on how to get started, how to survive and how to make an impact.
6. The race is on – And no – it is not a sprint – it’s a marathon that we are running by ourselves! You see, till we figure out how to make Friend In Need sustainable as a business – i.e. till we figure how we can get the salaries of 10 people in Kameshwaram working on toilet construction and waste management to be paid by the people of Kameshwaram and nearby villages – we need to support this social enterprise. This is like developing an innovation in a high-tech sector. It may require a gestation period of 8-10 years because the winning design has to be identified through trial and error. We hope to do this before a decade! We want to create our organizational innovation within 5 years. In the meantime, we need to raise funds to support this innovation creation. We are tapping a variety of sources public agencies, firms and most of all common folks all over the world.
7. Miscellaneous – Greetings on the occasion of Indian festivals, international festivals and anything else relevant to the issues under consideration which we think is good to share!