

# FOCUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

An Affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network

# FOCUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



# PROJECT IMPACT STORIES

**Area of intervention**

India, State of Gujarat, **District** - Junagadh,  
**Talukas** (Sub district): Talala & Malia Hatina

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**Focus Humanitarian Assistance**

An Affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network  
305 Maker Bhavan, No. 3  
21 New Marine Lines  
Mumbai 400020



**Villages:** Borvav, Bhalchhel, Bakula  
Dhanej, Chitravad, Chitrod,  
Galiyawad, Ghaba, Haripur,  
Hiranvel, Khirdhar, Maljinhva,  
Ramarechi, Sangodra, Virpur,  
Umrethi, Amrapur Gir,  
Devgam and Jalondar

# PROJECT IMPACT STORIES

**Enhancing Disaster Resilience and Promoting  
a Culture of Safety among Vulnerable  
Communities of Rural Gujarat.**

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# tents

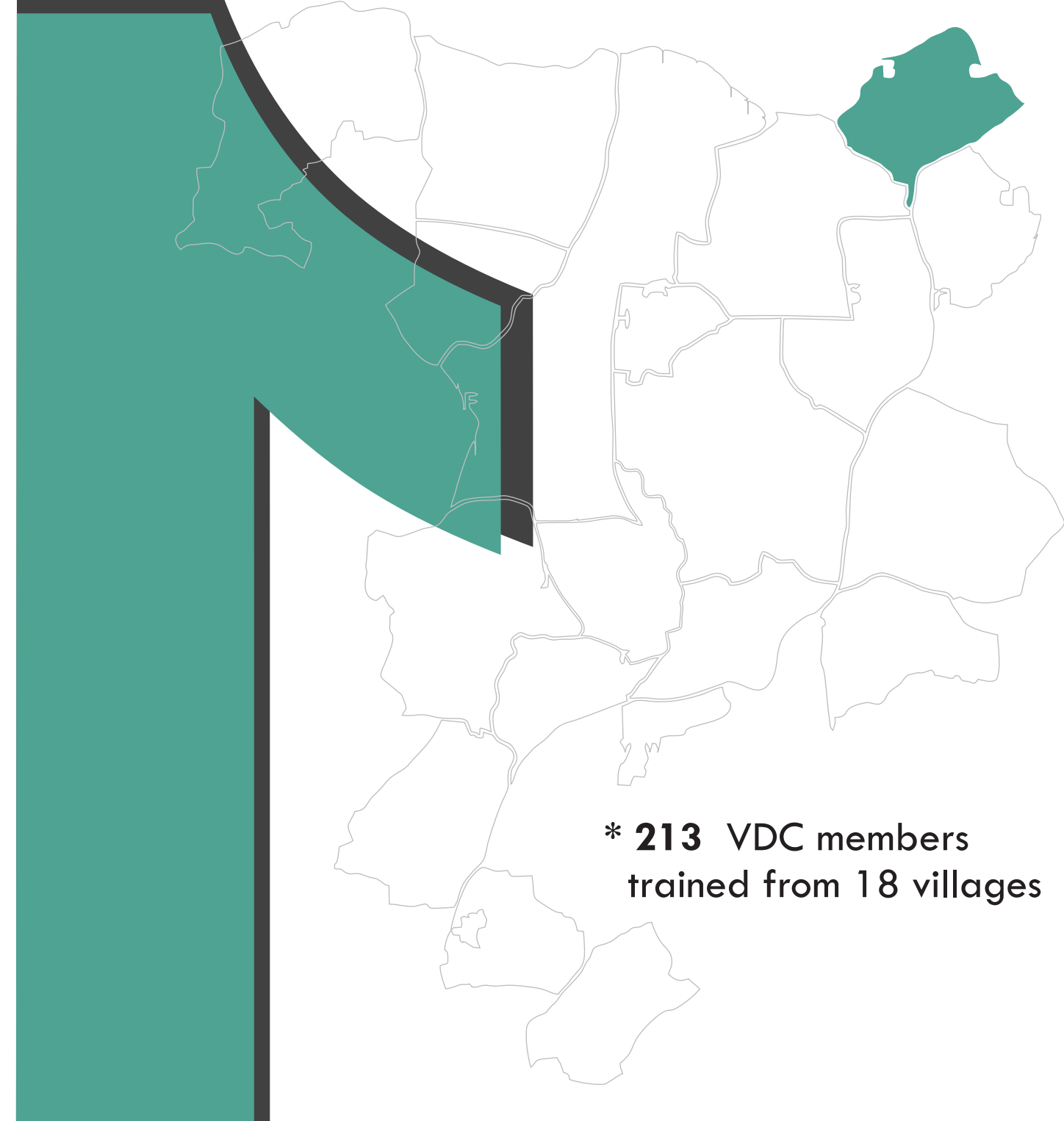
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# VDC training

Village Development Committees are those formed at the community level comprising of 7 - 12 members of common interest groups - to ensure disaster resilience, promote a culture of safety and lend support to project staff members. The Village Development Committee (VDC) represents the local community and its needs, conveys the same to the implementing agency and thus plays a key role in the entire project.

The DIPECHO project aimed to build the capacities of VDC members so as to ensure a more sustainable impact. To this end VDC members are involved in the entire process, right from planning strategies, to implementation activities and even monitoring outcomes. They are also trained in disaster safety practices.







Badhrudin demonstrates the use of a siren from the stock pile stored at his house.

The tragic incident underlines the need for a well trained emergency team that can provide basic first aid services. Given that medical facilities cannot be depended upon in these areas, villages have to rely on their own local resources. Badhrudin, feels confident that they have such a team that will respond to an emergency situation and effectively deal with it.

The VDC and CERT teams of Bhalchhel village meet on the 2nd of every month. If members aren't regular, they are dismissed from the team – in this way the 30 member strong group remains active. Mock drills and CERT trainings for the larger

community have been planned twice a year and 5 safe shelters for specific disasters have been identified in the community. In the last mockdrill 300 community members participated. The drill focused on those staying in kaccha homes, given the greater degree of risk they face. As VDC president Badhrudin takes a special interest in the proceedings. He initially went door to door convincing people to participate in the programme and illustrating its benefits. The village stock pile is stored in his house and every month he cleans the equipment and ensures its proper storage.

*“My daughter's death is added motivation now”, he says, “I don't want others to face a similar tragedy – so we must have a good emergency response team right here in our village”*

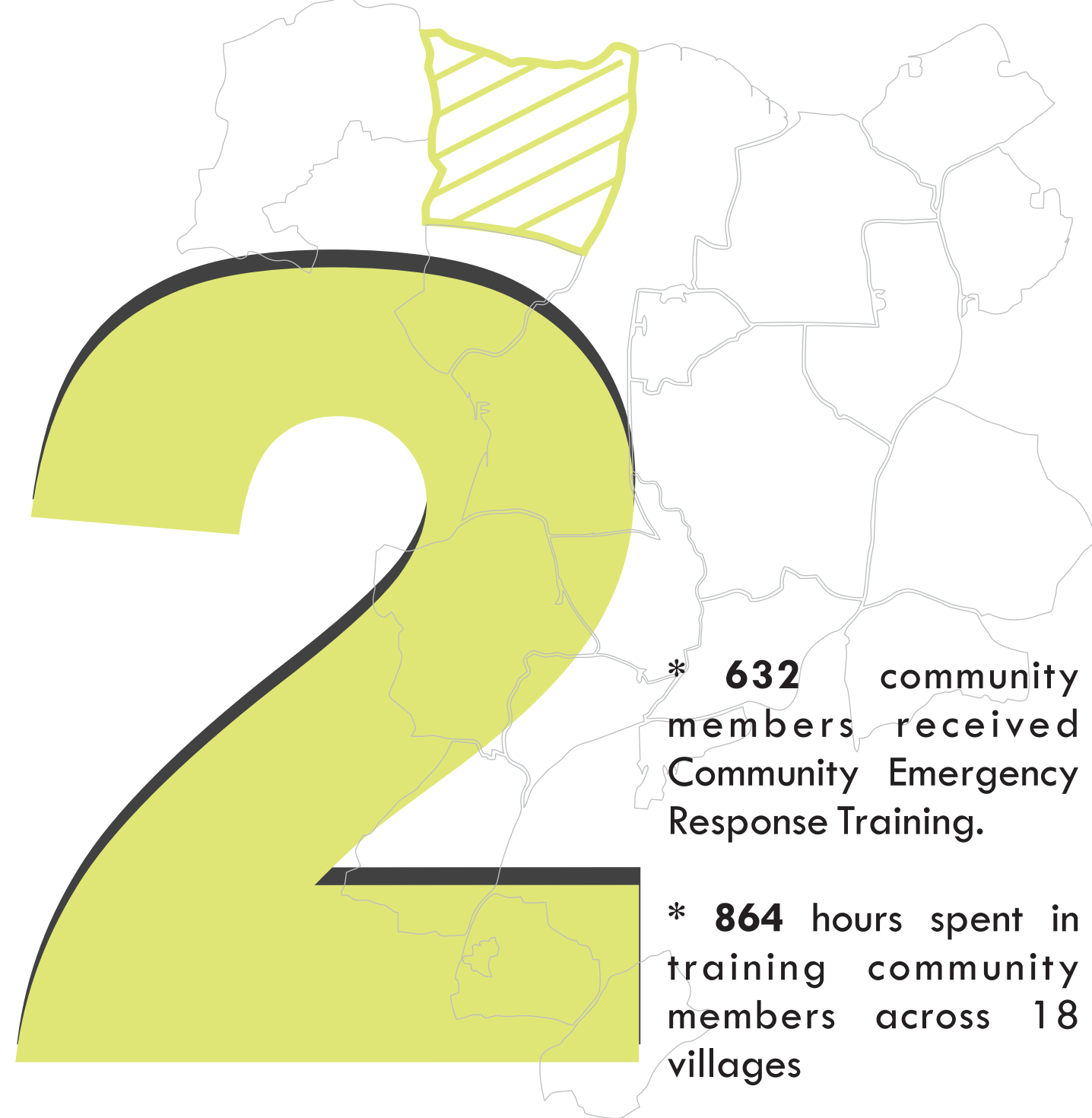
# certtraining

The community is the first responder in any disaster as emergency services (fire brigade, ambulance etc.) cannot immediately reach the site of a disaster to assist those affected. Given that the initial few hours after a disaster are crucial in saving lives, Focus Humanitarian Assistance recognizes the need for community members to be aware, adequately trained and ready to face any possible disaster.

Community Emergency Response Team training is designed to prepare community members to help themselves, their family and the community at large in the event of a disaster. The training module introduces CERT members to the concepts of disaster, disaster management and preparedness, the do's and don'ts in various disasters, first aid, fire fighting and other techniques that are important to know in any emergency.

Upon completing the training, participants are encouraged to continue their involvement by participating in training activities and volunteering for projects that support their community's disaster preparedness efforts.

About 30 volunteers from each of the 18 villages covered under the project were trained by Focus Humanitarian Assistance.



Inculcating safety practices in children is the surest method to facilitating a culture of safety and preparedness within a community. Thus, training sessions should include teachers from aanganwadis, balwadis, primary schools, high schools and colleges. Through the FOCUS - DIPECHO Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) programme held in Jalondhar village, Gujarat - aaganwadi teacher; Trikunaben Joshi received this crucial training.

Trikunaben played two important roles in the project's implementation. The initial being that she passed on her information and training to children in her care - and through these children to their parents - thus widening the scope of the project's outreach. She used games and activities to teach children in her care about disaster

do's and don'ts. Furthermore, she shared information related to disaster awareness from the CERT manual with parents when they came to drop off or pick up their children.

Trikunaben's second crucial contribution was her ability to encourage women to participate in meetings and training programmes. For seven years, through the process of effectively educating children, Trikunaben has gained the community's trust, especially that of women. Plagued by very low levels of education and awareness, Jalondhar has a conservative culture that frowns upon women stepping outside the house. So entrenched are these parochial gender restrictions that only 4 women in the village besides herself, work outside their homes. Despite this, Trikunaben was able to convince families to allow women to participate in the project.

# trikunaben

Through her relentless efforts of going door to door to explain the project's benefits, 7 women attended training sessions and joined the VDC.

When discussing the project's impact on her own life, she recounts incidents where children have been injured while playing and she has been able to administer first aid. Trikunaben also shared how a woman from the community was bitten by a cobra and she was able to administer first aid and apply a tourniquet, on account of the training she had received.



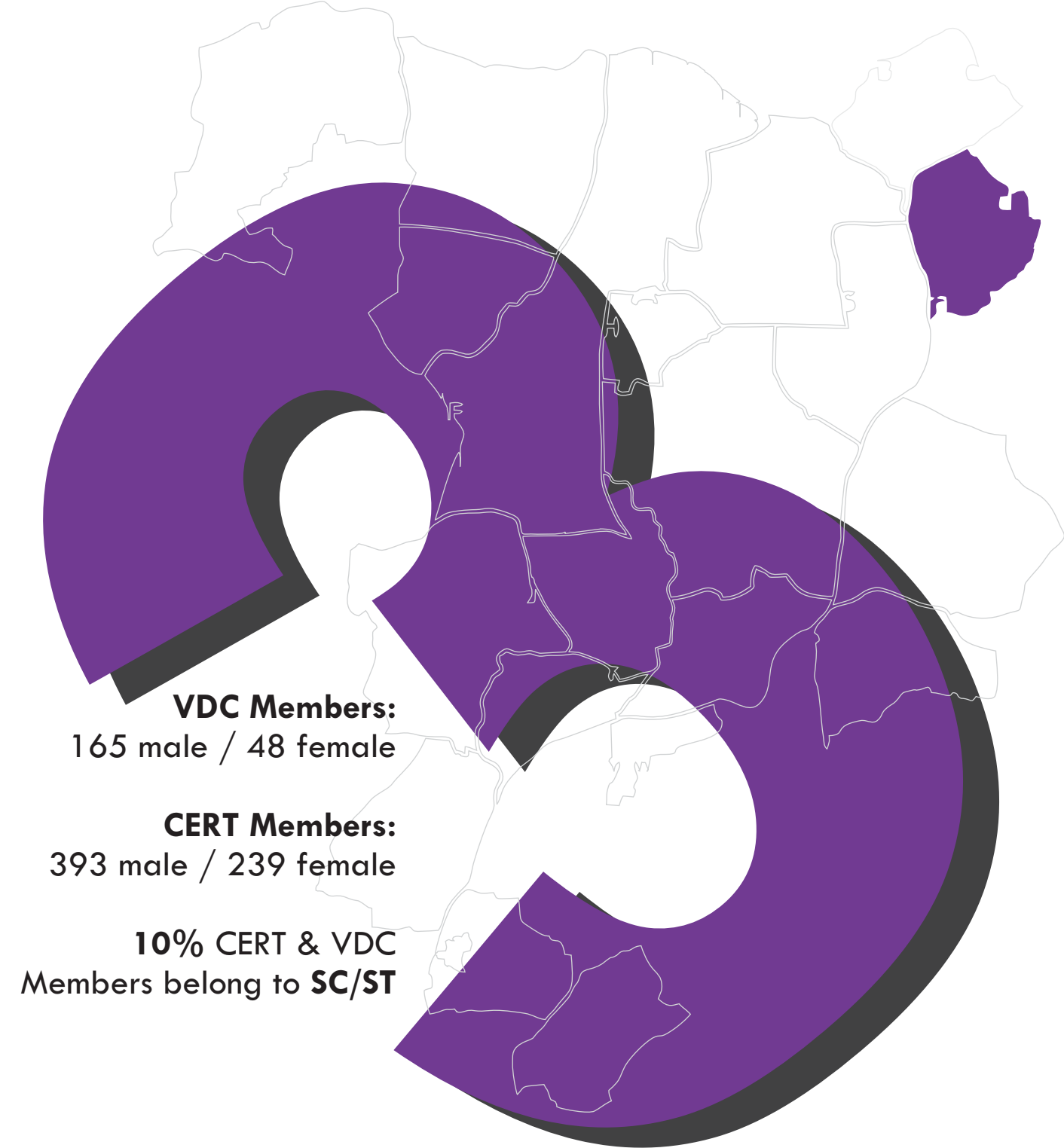
**Trikunaben**  
**Community Emergency Response**  
**Team Members (CERT)**  
**Jalondar Village, Gujarat**



# gender & caste

Mainstreaming - Children, Human rights, Gender and Environmental impacts, in all its initiatives - FOCUS India seeks to ensure that women are adequately and appropriately involved in all aspects of the project cycle – from project design and decision-making to implementation and evaluation. To this end, all training and community meetings involved men, women, children and disabled in these communities.

10% of scheduled caste and tribes were involved in CERT training sessions and incorporated in village disaster committees. A minimum of 30% participation from women was encouraged in all CERT training programmes.





**Panchayat & VDC members  
Chitrod Village, Gujarat**

In Chitrod Village of Junagadh District, Gujarat, an interesting cultural change was brought about through the FOCUS – DIPECHO programme. As part of the

implementation process, community members were invited to group meetings facilitated by FOCUS staff members. However, given the community's conservative culture, men and women wanted to initially meet in different locations.

Over time, maintaining this gender based segregation proved increasingly difficult, given that community members had to take collective decisions.

Thus gradually men and women started meeting in shared spaces, exchanging ideas and planning future activities. Initially, elderly members of Chitrod expressed their disapproval over the lack of gender segregated meetings, but over time, they too began to accept that this was a more effective method of functioning as a community. Jigyasaben, the village Sarpanch is an active member of the VDC. She encourages women to contribute to discussions and share their perspective.

Besides gender, the social barrier of caste, was also breached through VDC meetings and CERT trainings. Comprising of 5 major caste communities; Patel, Kholi, Maldani, Gadhvi and Dalit – traditional caste based practices are stringently observed. However, for the CERT training all members of the community were included. Of the 32 trained participants, 9 were from the Dalit caste. More importantly, of these nine dalits, 7 were women. Dalits traditionally are not allowed in certain areas frequented by higher caste members, including temples. However, VDC meetings took place in the local *madir* and all members across castes were invited to participate.

**A**lso, unique to this community is the proactive role community members have taken in implementing the project. Right from renting rooms to conduct VDC meetings, to displaying safety equipment from the stock pile to all visitors, community members have taken complete ownership of the project. These proactive measures can be credited to the lead role taken by Panchayat members. Of the 13 VDC members, 4 are from the Panchayat and similarly of the 32 CERT members, 16 are Panchayat members.

The community plans to sustain Disaster Preparedness related activities through their own local resources because they understand

the necessity of being prepared in the event of a disaster. In their words, the greatest benefit of the project has been the generation of a trained group of 32 members that are ready to respond in any emergency, *“just give one call,”* they say *“and 32 people are there to help”*.

**Jigyasaben  
Sarpanch and VDC member  
Chitrod Village, Gujarat**



# government networks

Through its school-based DRR projects, affiliation with the AKDN and other initiatives, FOCUS has developed a productive working relationship with government authorities at National, Provincial, District and Community levels.

In each of the 18 villages covered under the project, a special attempt was made to involve local and district level government officials in all processes undertaken.

Land officer Chirag N. Purohit of Virpur Village, Gujarat is an example of government networks forged through the project.





Chirag N. Purohit,  
Talati (Land Officer)  
Virpur Village, Gujarat

**D**espite having spent six years in a Government post, Mr. Chirag Purohit seems highly energized, innovative and comes across as a man of vision. Prior to becoming a land officer, Mr. Purohit used to teach Accounts at a local college. He enjoys working with young people and has a drive to initiate social change.

Having spent many years as a government official Mr. Purohit points out a crucial reason why some development programmes fail. *“They don’t involve the people and that’s why they’re not sustainable”*, he states, *“if you want a programme to continue, locals must develop an attachment to the process”*.

To this end, he points out that the DIPECHO project implemented by FOCUS, India is on the right track. He developed an interest in the programme when he realized that the processes employed aimed to include all members of the community and enable them to develop a stake in the outcome. As an example of this, he recounts the Participatory Risk Assessment mapping exercise that took place in the initial stages of the programme, where all community members were invited to chalk out their homes, institutions, public spaces, resources, safe shelters and the best exit routes on the ground.

**chiragpurohit**

## VDMP map displayed in Virpur, Gujarat

**D**rawing from this information a Village Disaster Management Plan (VDMP) was digitally generated by the FOCUS India team, through GIS mapping technology and a chart of the same was posted in a well frequented location of the village. What struck Mr. Purohit the most about this particular process was that once the Village Disaster Management Plan was posted in the village, a huge crowd of community members gathered around it for hours, verifying details and cross checking information.

When asked if the project impact is visible, Mr. Purohit shares a personal change that was brought about through the programme. “Before”, he shares, “*whenever I saw a road accident, I would just drive on without bothering to stop and enquire if anyone was hurt or needed help. Now, after attending a few training sessions, I feel that in an emergency situation, I can be of some assistance, so I stop*”. He adds that he sees this transformation in others as well. The training sessions, in his opinion, have given community members a sense of self worth. They now feel that they can contribute something of value, know how to take care of themselves and others and are able handle any emergency or crisis situation.



Disaster Management processes must involve community members in the planning stage because locals best understand existing opportunities and constraints in their communities. They therefore need to be involved in the identification and resolution of disaster risks and vulnerabilities. This information should be generated in a way that is understood by all members of the community and is accessible to all. Top down disaster management and response programmes fail to address specific local needs of vulnerable communities, ignore the potential of local resources and capacities and may in some ways increase the vulnerability of the community. Thus **Village Disaster Management Plans (VDMP)** implemented by FOCUS India take all these factors into consideration. Involving all members of the community in an initial PRA exercise to map local resources and risks, the VDMP is then digitally generated through GIS technologies and displayed in a frequently visited area of the community.



**Over 144 hours spent on developing VDMPs & SDMPs**

“

When my husband suffered a heart attack I didn't even know how to react and he passed away.

Now if someone in the community suffers from a heart attack I know what to do. After these training sessions, I feel better prepared to help others in a similar situation in the future.

”

**community**observers



**S**ix months prior to the commencement of the Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) programme in Bhalchhel village, Gujarat - Chotiben a fifty year old housewife, became widowed. Her husband suffered a heart attack in the house and before family members could identify what the problem was and take action, he had passed away.



**Chotiben**  
**Community observer**  
**Bhalchhel Village**

So when Chotiben heard that an organization was conducting training programmes on responding to emergency situations in her village, she went to observe.

**C**onvinced that she could learn something of value, she began to attend meetings and training sessions. She has thus far attended 14 VDC meetings and 4 CERT training sessions. Although she is not a part of either group, she makes it a point to attend meetings and encourages other women to also participate. Fifteen women joined the VDC on account of her relentless efforts of going from door to door to encourage women to attend these meetings. Seven members of the Mahila Mandal that she belongs to are on CERT/VDC

committees - so occasionally these meetings become a platform to discuss disaster related do's and don'ts, safety measures around the house and how to respond in the event of an earthquake.

In her opinion the most important skill she gained through the programme was learning how to give CPR. She knows firsthand how swiftly a heart can stop and the pain of losing a loved one. Consequently, she feels that it's crucial to know how to revive someone through administering CPR and hopes that in the future she can help others in such a situation.

**chotiben**

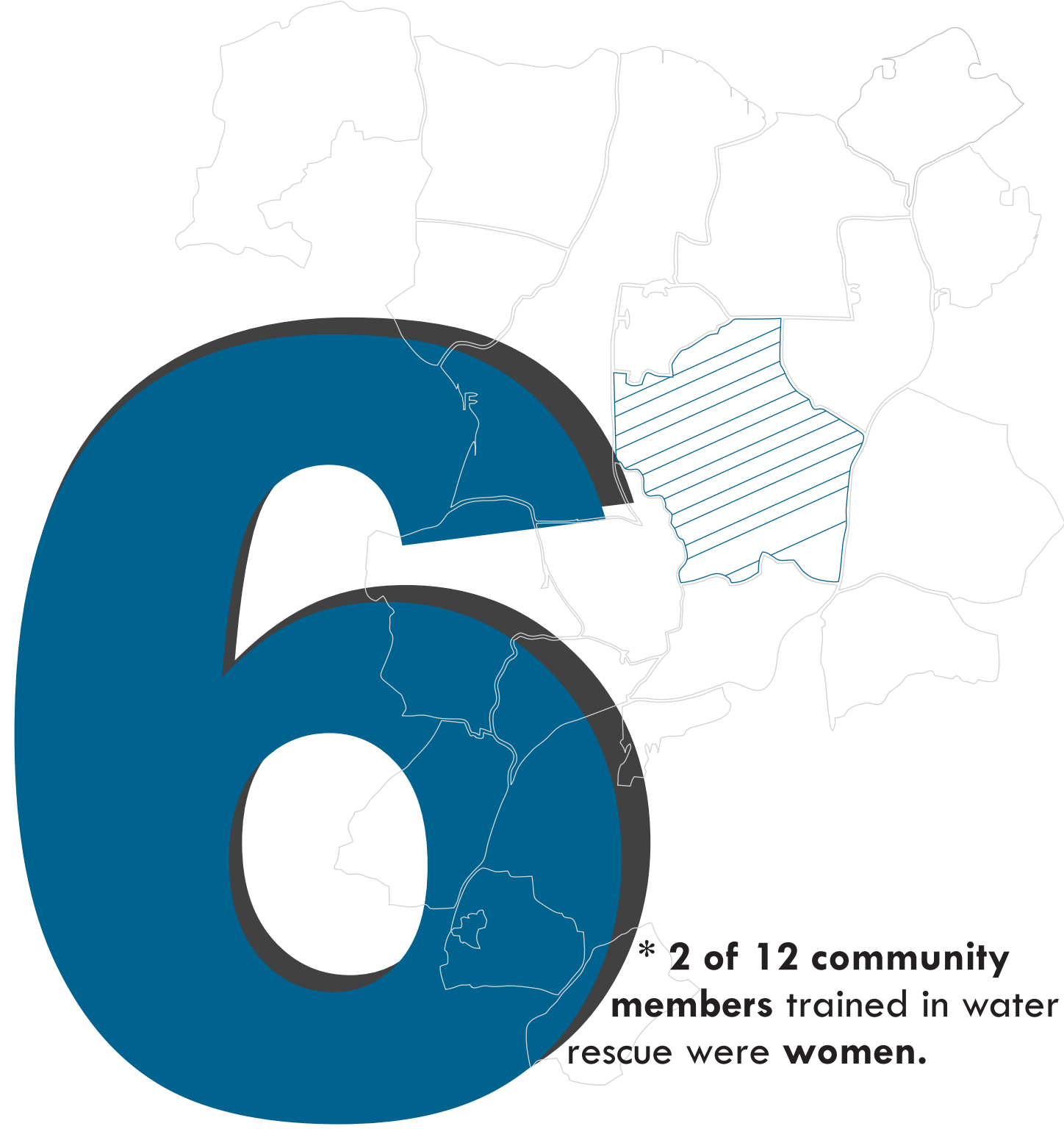


Through the Water Rescue training programme organized by FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance in coordination with Rapid UK, 12 members from villages covered under the project were trained in water safety practices.

The programme was initiated on account that all 18 communities fall in the High Moderate Zone B for cyclones given their proximity to the coastline. These areas are also prone to flooding during the monsoon.

Considering these factors it was evident that villages in this area should have community members who are trained in water safety practices and rescue techniques.

Each trained participant was given a life jacket and throw-line to use in the event of an emergency or disaster. It is anticipated that these trained water rescue members in turn will teach water safety practices to other members of the community thus increasing the scope of the project's outreach.





**Shabnamben**  
Water Rescue Training Participant  
Chitravad Village, Gujarat

**A**s a newlywed housewife, Shabnam doesn't have the freedom of mobility that she experienced as a single woman. At twenty five years old, the four walls of her house have become the only world she knows. With the permission of her husband, she hopes to visit her maternal home in Chitravad, several kilometers away.

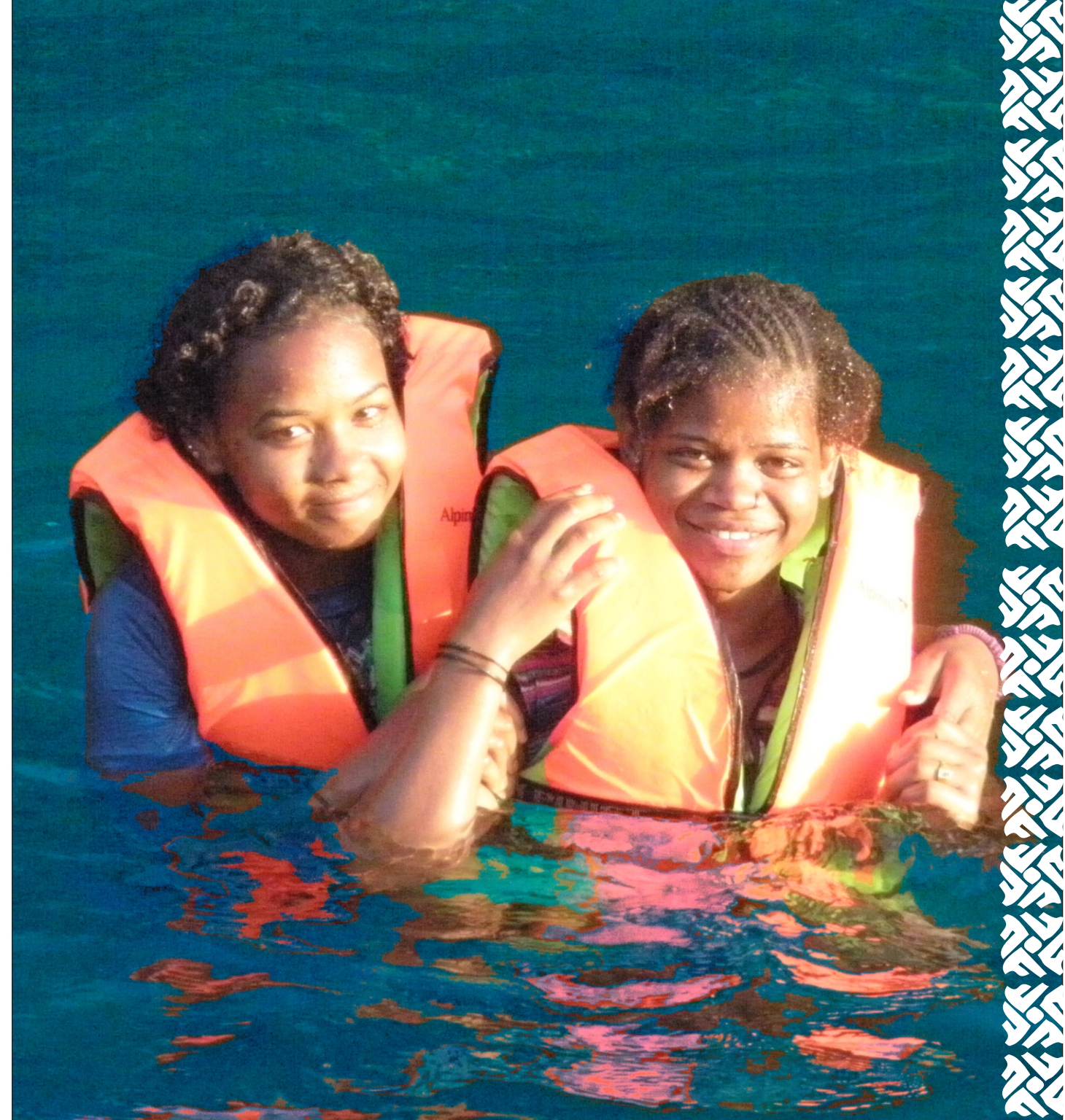
In her marital home, she comes across as demure and shy, constantly checking her husband's reaction to what information she shares. It's difficult to imagine that she once made the twenty four hour journey outside Gujarat to attend an overnight, 3 days long, water rescue training programme in Kolad, Maharashtra.

Shabnam was one of only two women who were selected for UK Rapid's Water Rescue Training programme in Kolad, a rural area situated off the Mumbai-Pune expressway. It was her first and only trip outside her hometown. The training programme's selection process filters out community members who don't know how to swim. Having grown up with a river in her backyard, Shabnam has no fear of water and is a strong swimmer.

**G**iven the parochial and cultural restrictions placed on women in this region, the Focus Humanitarian Assistance team found it difficult to enroll female participants for the training. With great effort, that involved spending long hours, convincing family and community members of the benefits of such a training programme, they were able to recruit two women in total, from the 18 villages covered under the project.

Over three days of water rescue training, Shabnam learned how to rescue someone with a rope, using a boat in a rescue attempt, gauging the flow of water with a wading stick, responding to a drowning victim and several other water safety techniques. However, the most important part of the training for her was learning how to keep herself safe when responding to an emergency. A few days after returning from training, this very technique, saved both her own and another's life.

**Shabnam learns how to rescue a victim during the water rescue training session at Kolad, Maharashtra.**





The members of Shabnam's community depend on the river passing through their village as a water source. They spend many hours washing clothes and utensils, filling water and bathing in this river. Shabnam happened to be at the river, a few days after her training programme, when a young boy lost his balance, fell in and was being carried away by the current. On account of the monsoon, the river was swollen and the current swift. Drawing from what she learned in the training programme, Shabnam reached out her hand to the boy and pulled him to safety. Earlier she might have jumped in and tried to save him, but the water rescue training programme

taught her that there are other safer rescue methods that should be exhausted first. More importantly, Shabnam realized that unless she kept herself safe, she couldn't help anyone else. She continues to pass on this information and other water safety techniques to all her friends and family members. One day she hopes to hold her own training session for the entire community.

Having only studied up to standard ten, Shabnam longs to keep learning. Being the youngest in an already impoverished family of four, she was unable to afford further education. "Training programmes", she says, "give her the opportunity to learn and discover new ideas, skills and concepts" and in the future she hopes to attend all training sessions that come to her area.

**Shabnam and other community members learn how to administer CPR to a victim, during a water safety training programme.**

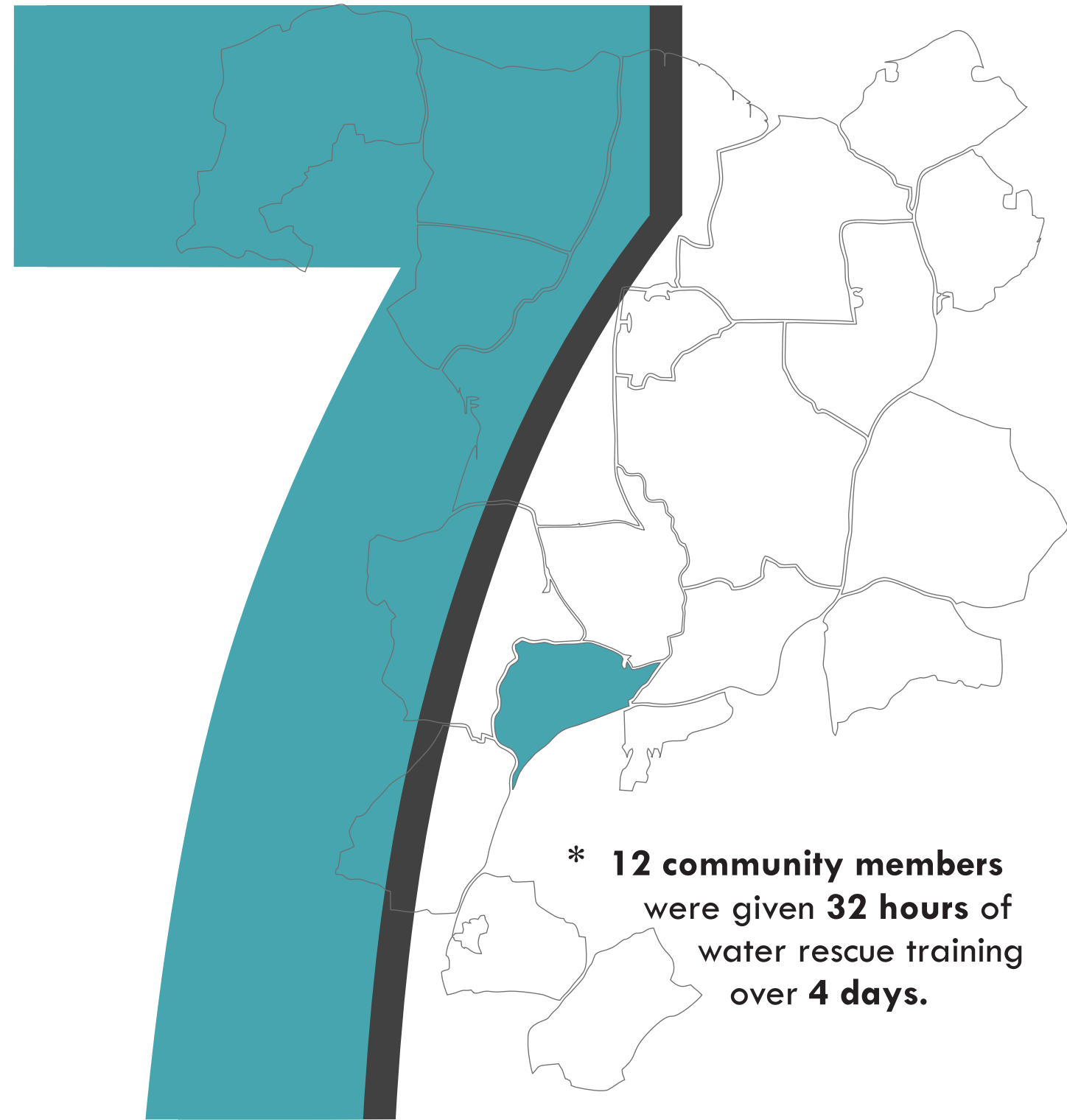
# waterrescue

“

Before this training I used to be scared of the water. Every time I went into the river near our village my heart used to beat very fast and I used to feel breathless.

But now I know that I'm a strong swimmer and I don't need to fear water. This training helped me to discover my own abilities, to trust my skills as a swimmer and most importantly, to believe in myself.

”



\* **12 community members** were given **32 hours** of water rescue training over **4 days**.

A man with dark hair and a focused expression is sitting on a stone ledge. He is wearing a bright red life jacket with black straps and buckles. His skin is wet, suggesting he has been in water. The background is a blurred stone wall.

Naresh learns how to use a lifejacket during a rescue attempt.

**D**espite having grown up along the banks of a river, Naresh was always afraid of water. When all his friends used to go for a swim, Naresh reluctantly joined them. *“I never knew how strong the current was, so I was always afraid of being swept away”*, he shares. Nonetheless, Naresh learned how to swim and became one of the fastest swimmers in his community. Thus when he was selected to attend the Water Rescue Training programme organized by Focus Humanitarian Assistance, Naresh was very apprehensive about participating.

The three day long programme in Kolad, Maharashtra aimed to train one participant from each of the 18 villages covered under the project, in water safety practices and water rescue techniques. Naresh's inhibitions slowly dissolved after the first day of training and he began to overcome his fear of the water.

**naresh**bhai

**H**e pins this transformation down to the fact that he learned how to gauge the force of water prior to entering it and thus could be better prepared. Testing currents through a wading stick is one of the first water safety techniques taught through the programme. “Besides”, he says grinning shyly, “with a lifejacket on, it’s not so scary to swim”.

Of all the training activities, learning to use a boat in a rescue attempt was Naresh’s favourite. He had never been in a boat before and enjoyed learning how to navigate it through strong currents. His most memorable experience in the training programme was learning how to work as a group to salvage an overturned boat.

This 22 yr old MA student spends his free time, showing members of his community how to use a rope when rescuing someone and how a lifejacket functions. He is eagerly awaiting the stockpile delivery to his village, so that he can demonstrate more techniques with the rescue boat. Now, he doesn’t have to be cajoled into entering the water, he demonstrates to onlookers how to test the current and dives right in.

**Naresh demonstrates how to use the throwline in a rescue attempt (Khirdhar Village)**

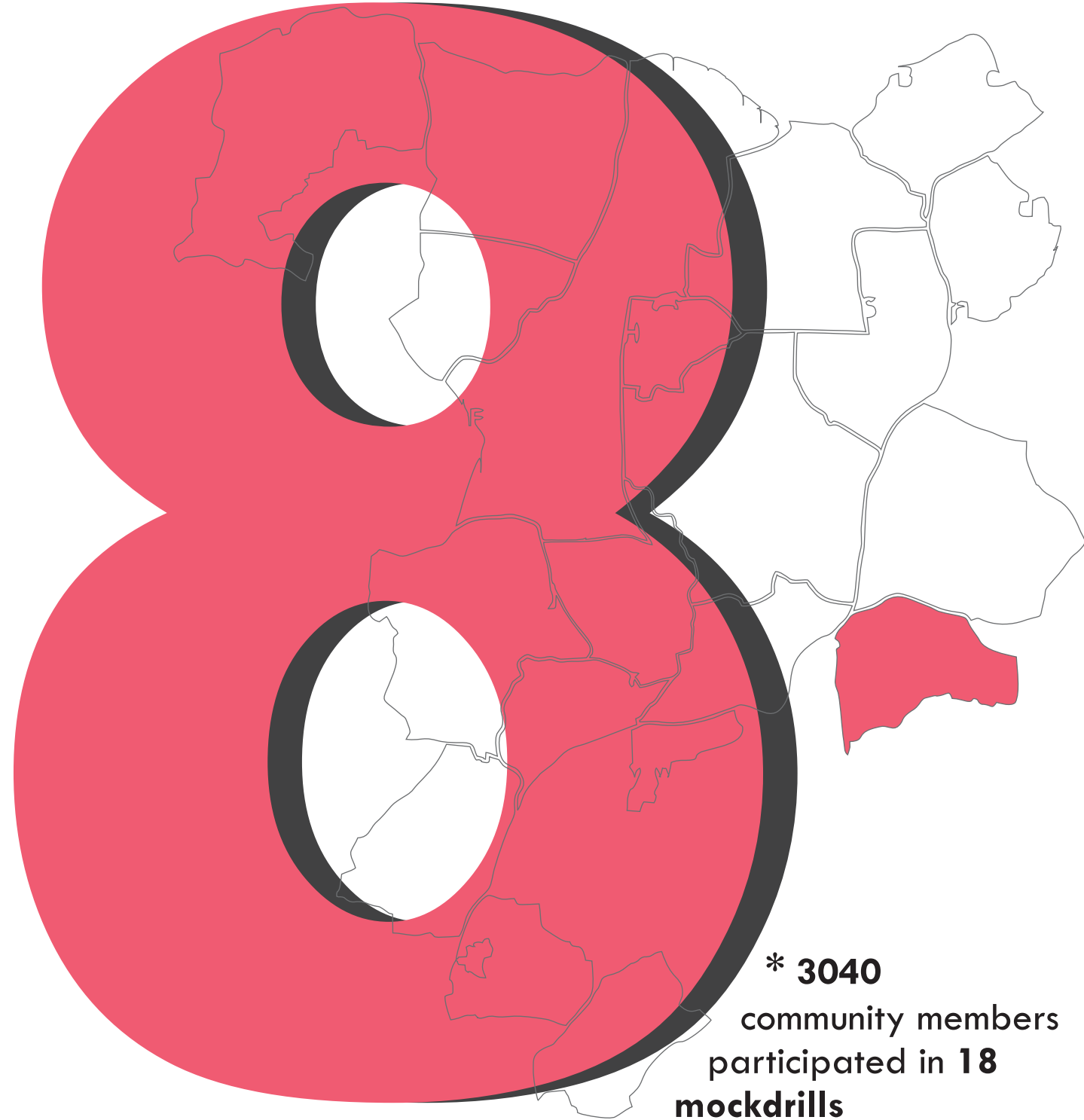


# early warning



When I first started going from house to house during an early warning mock drill, I used to feel very shy. Consequently, people used to not give much importance to what I was saying and this made me hesitate in my role of implementing the community's early warning system.

I've been working in the fields my whole life and have never had the opportunity to take on a leadership role prior to this programme. Slowly, through meetings and training sessions, I was able to overcome my shyness and play an active role during mock drills in my community. People have started listening to me and it feels empowering.....







When Amir first started attending VDC meetings in his community, he felt like it was a waste of his time. Attendance was sparse and the idea of a community being prepared for imminent disasters was a new concept. It took about 10 meetings before the VDC team was fully formed and functional.

He attributes this change to the goal of community safety and preparedness that the project promoted. “I feel that I’m learning how to keep myself and other’s safe so these meetings are valuable”. He adds that now the monthly meetings are fixed in advance and attendance is no longer an issue.

# amirsurachane

As a VDC member, Amir was given the role of spreading early warning messages and evacuating community members during mock drills. Initially, he used to feel immensely shy and reluctant to go from door to door informing people. In turn, some community members used to not take the process seriously and make fun of mock drills or early warning systems.

Overtime however, Amir's confidence grew and mock drill evacuations became his favorite activity during the course of the project. The most important collective learning attained through early warning and evacuation processes was the identification of valuable resources that the community could avail of in the event of a disaster. They realized that rickshaws, jeeps and tractors could double up as ambulances or evacuation vehicles during an emergency. Through the DIPECHO project, community member learned how to evaluate resources and vulnerabilities in their village and take responsibility for their own safety.

**Early warning system** is a comprehensive communication system that is able to notify all members of a community about impending natural disasters. It helps people living in an area where natural disasters are frequent, to know as early as possible about an imminent disaster so that they can take appropriate action. FOCUS, India's mission is to reduce deaths, injuries, and property damages caused by all natural and manmade disasters. We do this by providing effective early warnings of these disasters at a very small cost to all persons, businesses, and public locations. Through the DIPECHO project FOCUS, India implemented an innovative early warning system by piggybacking off an already existing, affordable and widespread network; mobiles!

SMS based early warning and message dissemination has been implemented in other disaster related projects by several agencies. However, the unique adaptation implemented through the DIPECHO project included an updated data base of recipients, with a tracking system to monitor how many community members received the early warning message, how many listened to the complete message and details of those members for whom the message delivery failed. In order to familiarise community members with the process, 1 – 2 disaster related messages were sent every month for the duration of the project. VDC members were involved during these trial runs and their effectiveness at informing others was gauged and cross-checked. This voice call facility was handed over to the district collector at the end of the project and related training was conducted for government officials at Junagadh on EWS and GIS based VDMP, to ensure scaling-up.

**O**n 11th November, 2009 Cyclone Phyan was spotted off the coast of Gujarat and posed a potential threat to villages covered under the DIPECHO project. Wind speeds ranging from 65kmph up to 125 kmph were predicted to hit Gujarat costal areas.

The situation afforded Focus Humanitarian Assistance staff and beneficiaries of the project, an opportunity to implement preparedness measures undertaken through the project. Immediately the early warning SMS system was activated and messages regarding the cyclone's proximity, wind

speeds, safety do's and don'ts, preparedness measures etc. were circulated to all community members.

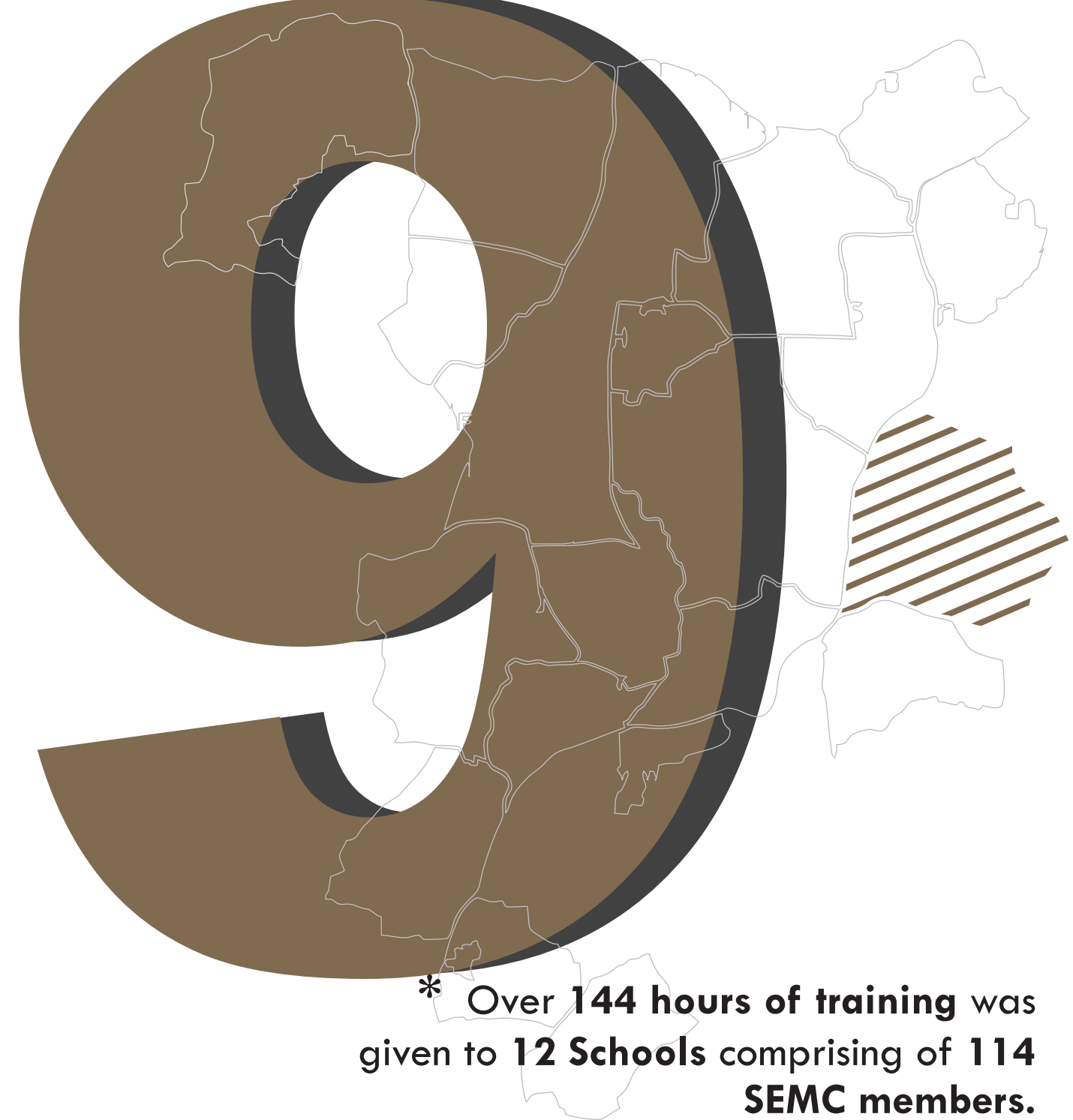
During the entire course of the cyclone FOCUS India had crucial information in their database on project areas that could have been potentially hit. Through the GIS based early warning system, at any given point of time information could be retrieved in terms of;

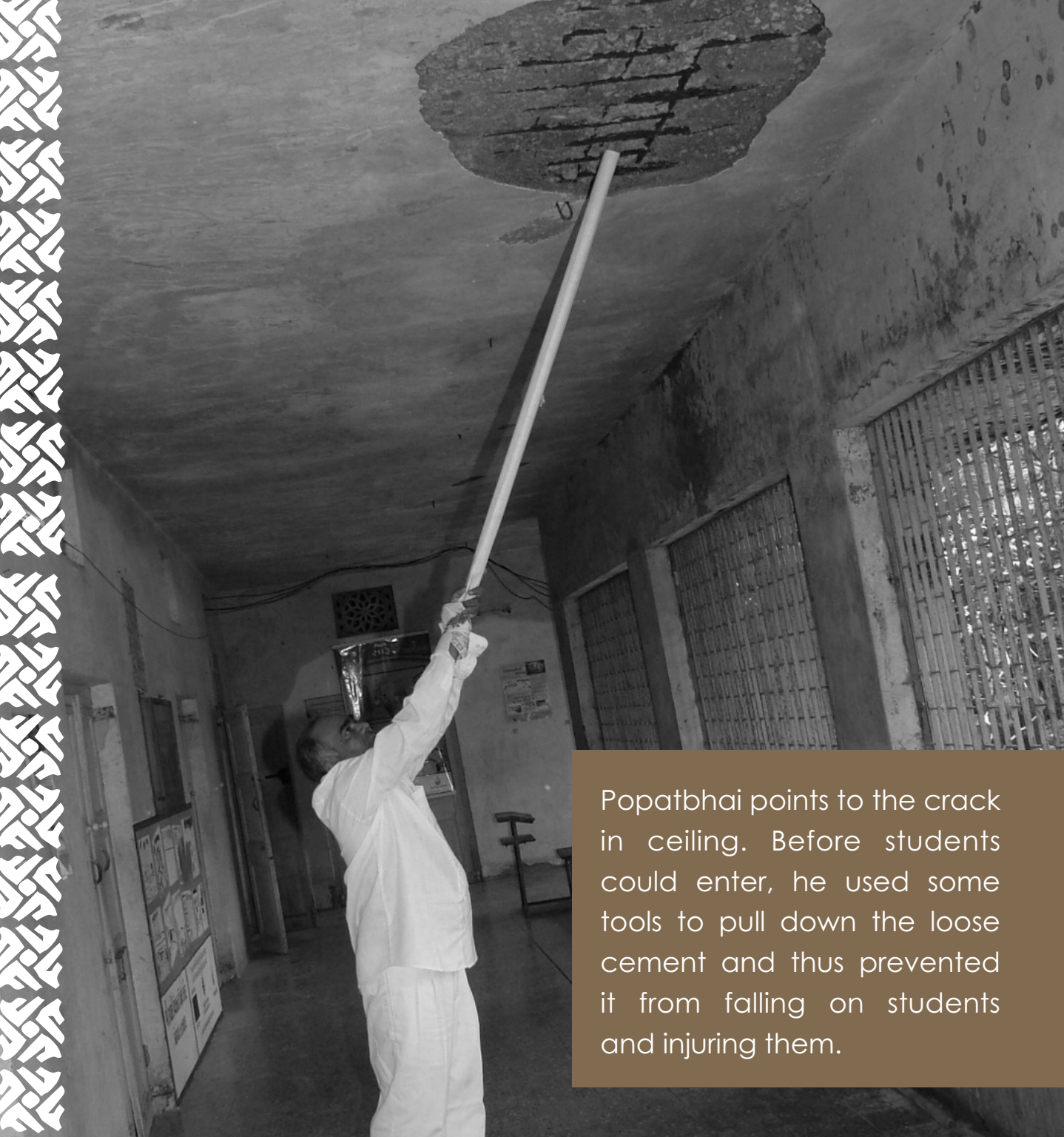
- \* Critical infrastructure
- \* Health Facilities
- \* Connectivity
- \* Safe shelters
- \* Evacuation route
- \* Vulnerable areas
- \* Vulnerable groups
- \* Volunteers

## GIS based Early Warning System

# SEMC training

The School Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is a body of selected members from various departments of the school management who are responsible for ensuring student's safety. It comprises the Principal, 2 - 3 teachers, 2 - 3 parents and 2 students. The SEMC has to constantly strive to improve structural and non structural aspects of the school environment in order to enhance safety and minimize damage. It is responsible for periodically reviewing and updating the school disaster management plan and also ensuring that training is imparted to the next batch of students after the current trained batch passes out from school.





Popatbhai points to the crack in ceiling. Before students could enter, he used some tools to pull down the loose cement and thus prevented it from falling on students and injuring them.

**H**aving spent his entire career at Saraswati School as a peon, Popatbhai Singhala knew it's layout like the back of his hand. Situated in Borvav village, an area that receives close to 6 aftershocks each winter season, Saraswati School showed all the signs of seismic structural wear and tear. Large cracks along the school's walls and ceilings put the lives of close to 200 students at risk each day.

Popatbhai had never attended any previous training sessions up to this point. Bearing the brunt of the responsibility to provide for his family, he only studied up to standard ten. So when the school Principal invited him to join the

Training of Trainer's (TOT) three days workshop organized by Focus Humanitarian Assistance, he gratefully accepted. In his own words, *"this training was the first learning opportunity I have had since my childhood"*

During the training session on Disaster Preparedness and Response, Popatbhai learned the reasons behind aftershocks and the extent of damage they can cause. He also learned how to respond in the event of a disaster (fire, cyclone or earthquake) and key points to keep in mind. Popatbhai shared how the training session gave him an opportunity to learn first aid, CPR and identify between poisonous and non-poisonous snakes. The entire experience, for him, came with the joy of learning something new!

popatsinghala

**S**haring learning space with school teachers, principals, parents and the village Sarpanch - Popatbhai initially maintained a low profile, as a silent observer of the training proceedings. However, gradually, he began to contribute to discussions, sharing examples of structural risks at his school. The TOT training session increased his self-confidence and he began to value his own experiential knowledge.

When asked to recount the most crucial learning gained through the workshop, Popatbhai shares an incident that occurred one week after the training session. Given the extent of structural damage, a portion of the school's ground floor

ceiling began to cave in. About 25 kilos of cement hung perilously from the ceiling, close to the building entrance that was used daily by young, first to third grade students. Drawing from his newfound learning of preventing disasters and being aware of potential risks – Popatbhai noticed this danger a few minutes before school began. He used some tools to pull down the loose cement and thus prevented it from falling on students and injuring them.

Being more aware - is the most important learning the training workshop imbibed in Popatbhai.

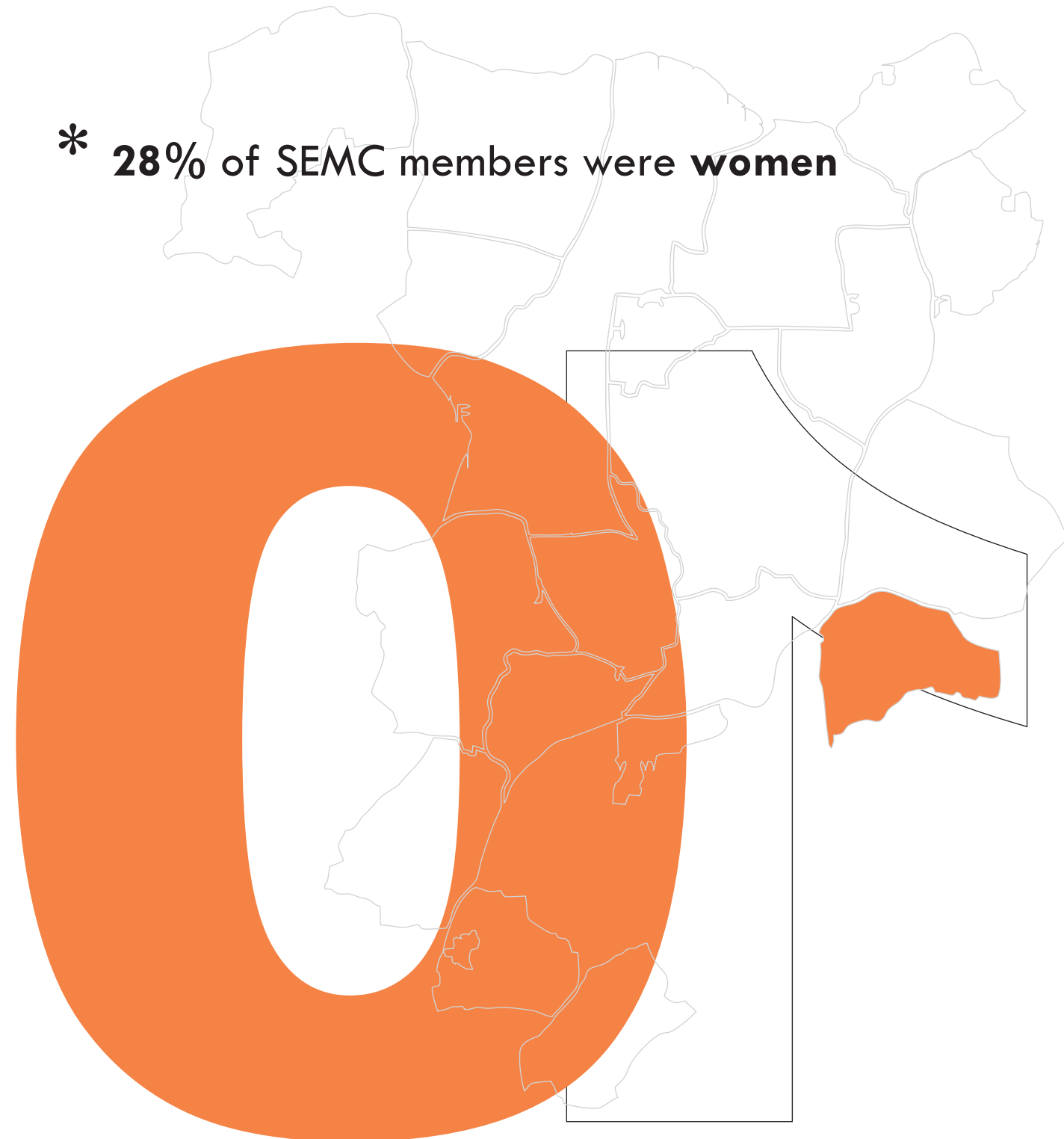
**Retrofitting initiated by school authorities on their own initiative, after the SEMC training.**



The training module for the School Emergency Management Committee introduces the members to the concepts of disaster, disaster management and preparedness. It highlights different aspects of school safety and emphasizes the need for safety practices such as conducting regular mock drills.

The SEMC manual serves as a reference for understanding the nature of disasters and the importance of forming school based emergency and safety teams. It also provides a framework for the Terms of Reference for various emergency task force committees.

IEC material such as SEMC manuals, posters, activity sheets, video clippings and handouts were used to facilitate the learning process and spread awareness/preparedness related information.

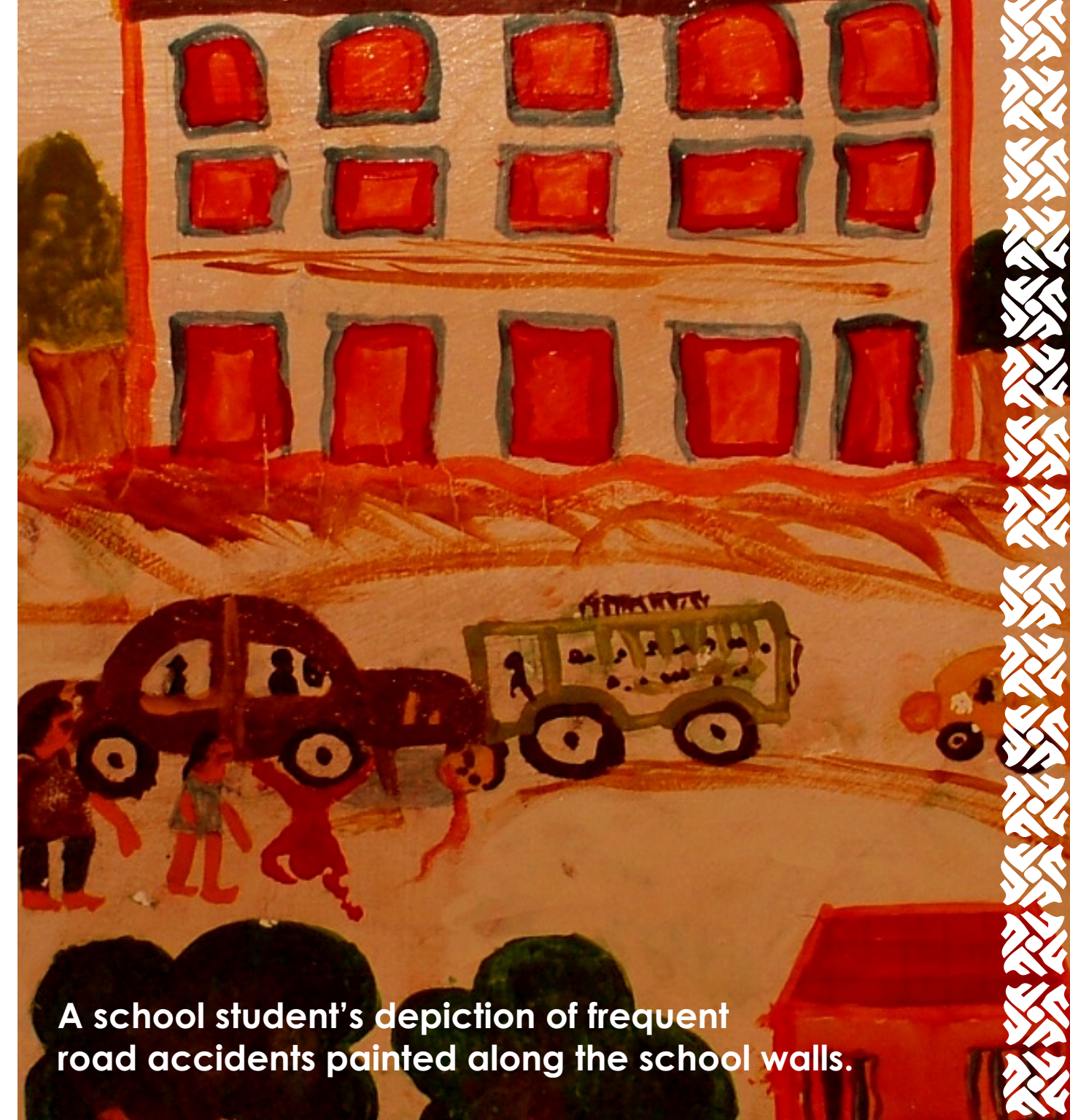


As a High School Math and Science teacher, Jagdish had read extensively on earthquakes, cyclones and fires. He'd even looked at illustrations of fire extinguishers, first aid kits and lifejackets. But despite this book knowledge, Jagdish never felt like he would know how to handle an emergency situation because he had no practical experience with the same.

So when Focus Humanitarian Assistance organized an Emergency Response Training Programme in his school, Jagdish got the experience

he'd been looking for. As a member of the School Emergency Management Committee, Jagdish learned how to map hazards, vulnerabilities as well as capacities and resources of the school. During this process, his team realized that the school's one and only fire extinguisher was outdated and empty. They also noted an important risk around the school – that of frequent road accidents.

After this mapping exercise, the SEMC team of Uma Primary School in Virpur set out to make some alterations in the school's functioning. An example of this is the new weekly activity they initiated. Saturday mornings are now devoted to disaster awareness and preparedness.



A school student's depiction of frequent road accidents painted along the school walls.



Learning from his own experience during the training session, that creative group activities must be incorporated so as to facilitate learning, Jagdish insisted that all information should be presented in creative ways through skits, discussions and games. These sessions were managed by the students themselves, giving them collective ownership of the learning process. Disaster related news from around the world is disseminated to students in a similar fashion.

**Jagdish and his students display their disaster awareness related model at Uma Primary School, Virpur.**

The impact of these efforts was evident from day one, according to Jagdish. Students initially used to be scared to go to school during the monsoon, on account of heavy flooding and bad roads. However, now he feels that they've become more confident – especially the girls – and believe that they can take care of their own safety and the safety of other students in a crisis. Jagdish shares that on a personal level as well, he has gained a lot from the Disaster Preparedness programme at his school. As an example of this he illustrates how he recently worked with a few students on a project to create awareness about road accidents, how to prevent them as well as how to respond to such an emergency situation. An exhibit of the same will be displayed at the Annual Science fair in Talal, so that other schools can benefit from this information.

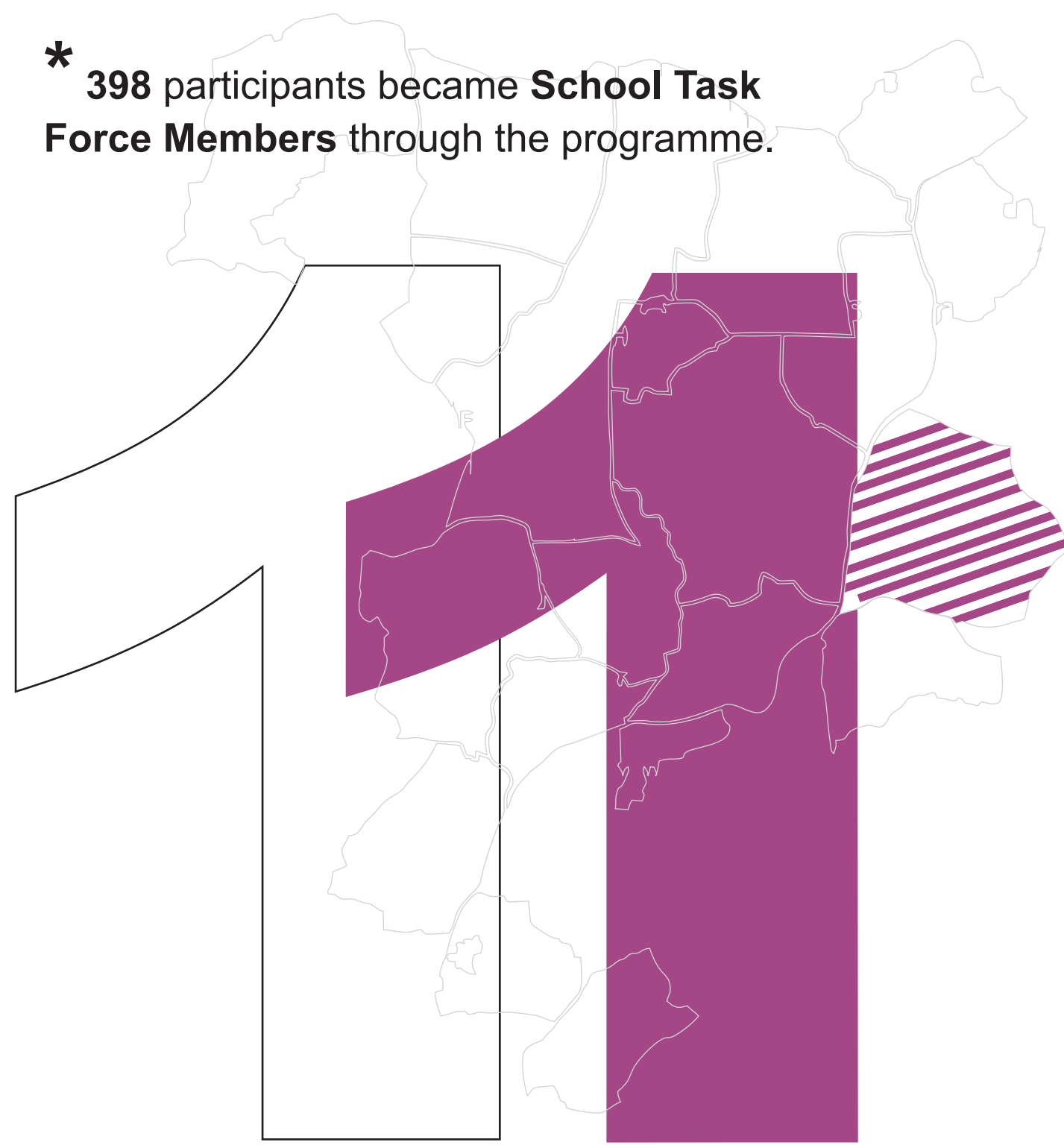


A group of dedicated students, teachers and professionals can comprise the Task Force. These members were then trained on general coordination and use of the Disaster Management plan. Training sessions covered their roles and responsibilities in the event of a disaster.

They were further divided into four groups that received in-depth training in their specific roles. These groups included:

1. Early Warning and Evacuation team
2. Search and Rescue Team
3. First Aid Team
4. Fire Safety Team

**\* 398 participants became School Task Force Members through the programme.**



In 2001 when an earthquake shook 18 districts in Gujarat, it affected the lives of over 3 million school children. Shreyas, a student of Saraswati Primary School recounts how he was in school at the time and ran outside along with everyone else during the earthquake. Several of his classmates were injured during the evacuation process. He recalls how frightened they all were at the time, unaware of what to do in such a situation. Luckily for Shreyas, the earthquake that destroyed over 1700 Primary schools across the State, a shocking 55% of the total number of primary schools, left his school undamaged. He could resume class unlike approximately 3 lakh other students across the State.



When informed of this and other disaster related issues during a Task Force Training session conducted by Focus Humanitarian Assistance at his school, Shreyas realized how lucky he had been. The task force training also dispelled a myth he had long since held, that during a quake one must run outside. The 'Drop, Cover, Hold' method illustrated by the FOCUS training team appealed to him and he began to practice this daily at home and in his classroom.

*“He used to come home from training sessions and teach me whatever he'd learned”, says Shreyas's mother. “Now we practice drop, cover, hold together at home”.* Shreyas shares

how he identified safe places at home and after much persuasion got his family to rearrange the furniture in the house, so as to facilitate a quick evacuation in the event of a fire.

The most evident example of the impact that the training has had on his life, surfaced a few days after the programme. Borvav village, where the school is located, experienced a mild tremor that lasted for a few seconds. This time however, Shreyas was prepared. He immediately dropped under his school bench and held on for safety.

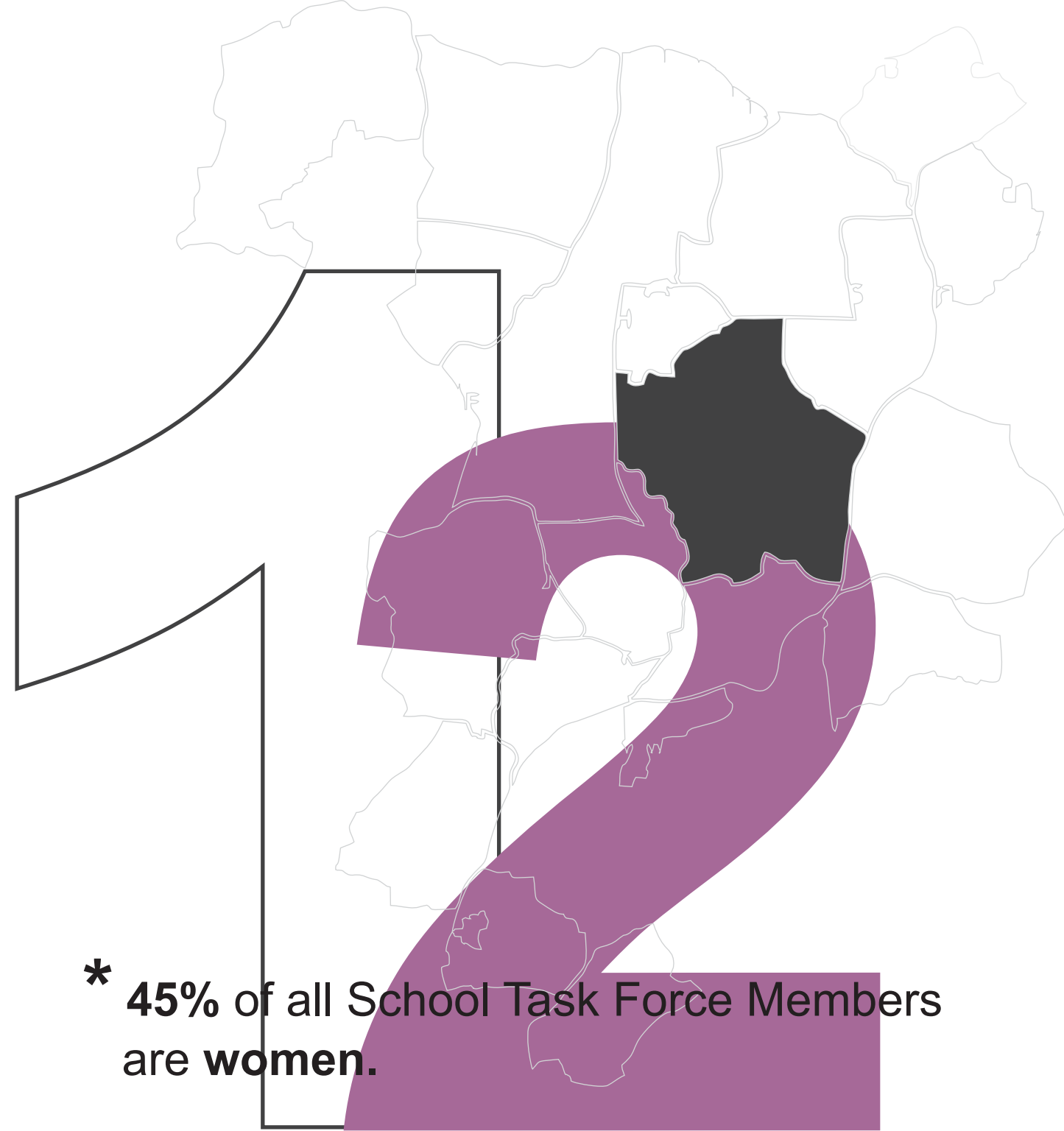
shreyas

# taskforce training

“

During the task force training programme at my school, I learned how to search for and safely rescue those trapped or injured on account of a disaster. After my own experience of being trapped on a bus for three hours in a flood, I was very afraid of the monsoon and flooding. But now I feel confident that if this situation were to happen again, or any other such emergency, in the future - I can take care of myself and assist others as well.

”



In 2009 Chitravad village experienced very heavy flooding. Students returning home from school got marooned on one of the school busses and had to wait three hours before they were rescued, as water levels rose around them, making the bus inaccessible from the nearest road. On this bus was Task force member Kajol Morabia.

On her first day in training, Kajol, a standard twelve commerce student, enquired about flood related safety practices. Experience had taught her never to take her own safety for granted and she was eager to learn as much as she could during the three day training programme on Disaster Preparedness and Awareness.

The training session covered all aspects of disaster dos and don'ts, safety practices in the event of a flood, earthquake, cyclone

or fire, administering first aid and CPR and how to search and rescue victims of disasters. On an average, thirty students from each school were selected for the training programme. During the process, they were divided into four teams: Search and Rescue, Fire Safety, First Aid and Early Warning and Evacuation. Each of these groups were then given more specific information and in-depth training on related techniques and safety practices.

When asked about which team she was a part of, Kajol smiles, indicating that the answer is obvious. After being stuck in a flood for 3 hours, she wanted to learn how to rescue others in similar situations. She joined the Search and Rescue team of her school and continues to teach others how to safely rescue those trapped or injured on account of a disaster.

**Kajal**Morabia

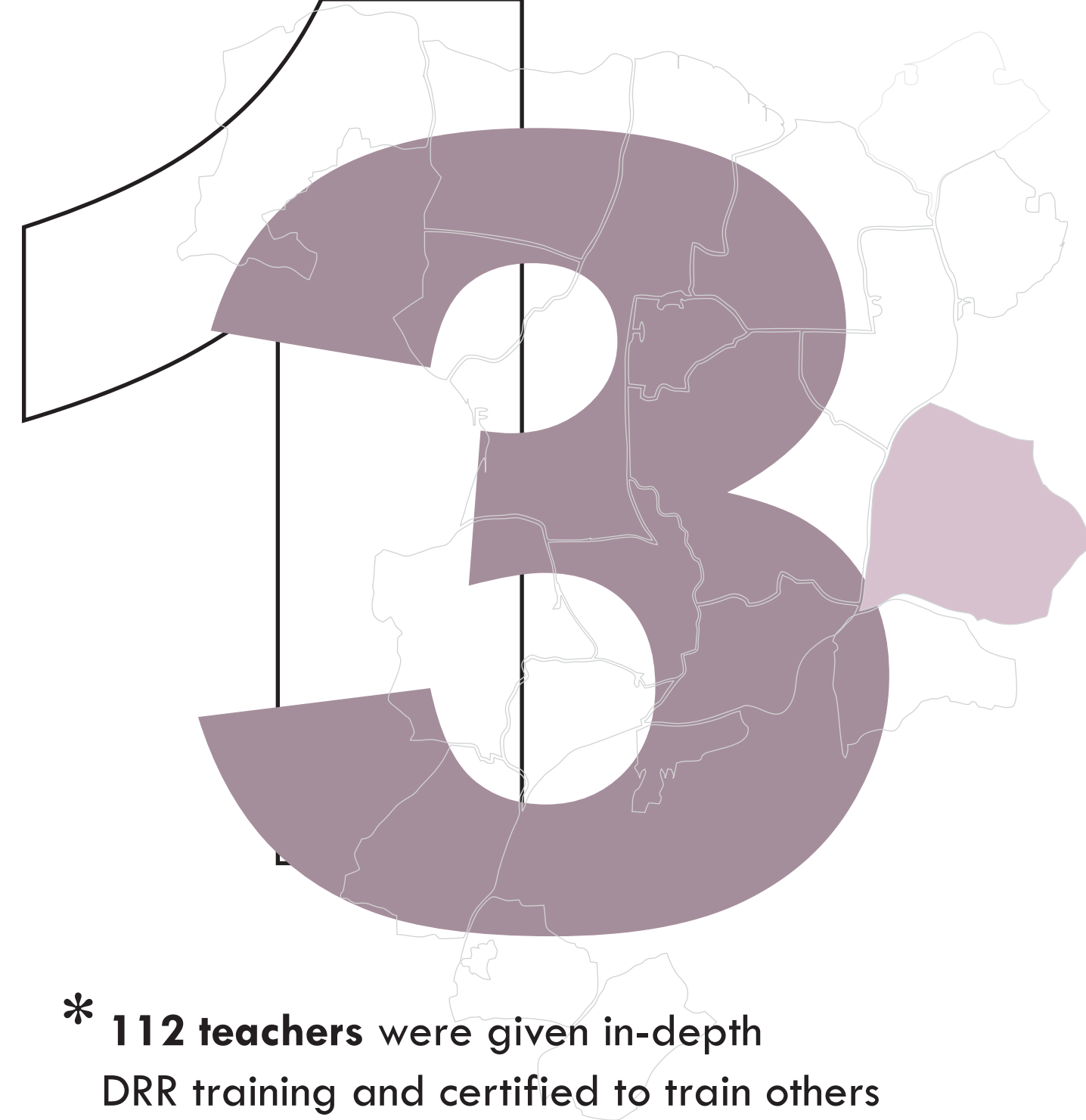


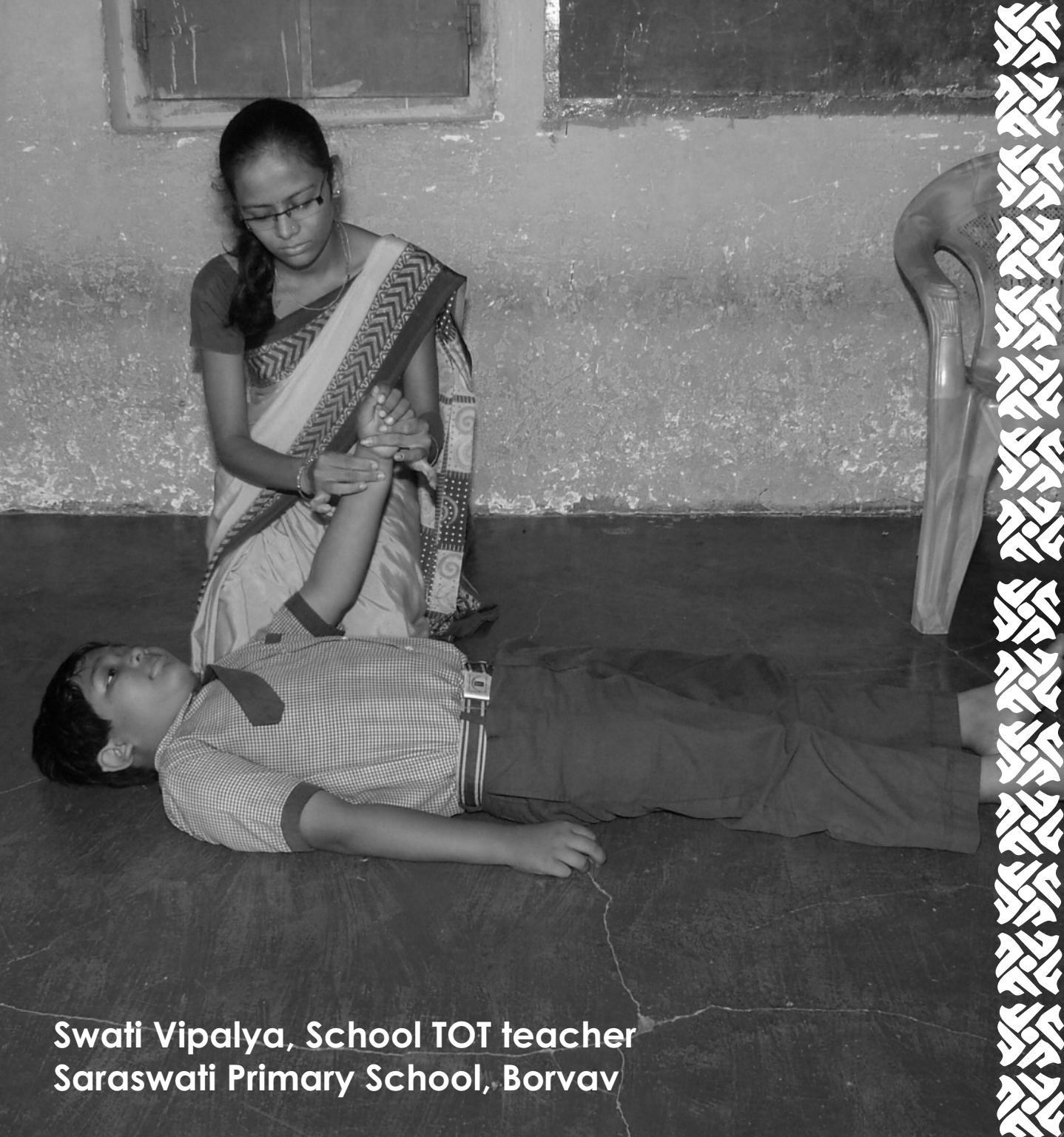
# training of trainers

A teacher plays a very important role in building a child's future, as he/she imbibes values, morals and imparts knowledge at the most formative stages of childhood. The education a child receives in school not only shapes his/her future but also contributes to the development of family and society at large. A teacher therefore can play a major role in impressing upon the students the importance of safety.

The Training of Teachers (TOT) organized by Focus Humanitarian Assistance in each of the 12 schools covered under the project, provides a standardized Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) training curriculum for the teachers and stakeholders of schools. These training sessions provided insights on the concepts of disaster, disaster management and preparedness; and the different aspects of school safety. They equipped participants with the knowledge of emergency life saving skills such as first aid, fire fighting and search and rescue.

Thus, TOT training sessions enabled teachers to transfer their knowledge of disaster preparedness to students and create a culture of safety in the school. Moreover, it lent a degree of sustainability to the project by building a pool of DRR trained locals.





**Swati Vipalya, School TOT teacher  
Saraswati Primary School, Borvav**

In 2001 when an earthquake rocked Borvav village, Gujarat – Swati was a young girl attending school. She ran outside the building in fear, along with her classmates and teachers. She recalls that their response had been chaotic and several children were hurt in the evacuation process. She remembers not knowing what was causing the earth to shake and feeling tremendously afraid for her safety.

Now, almost ten years later, Swati ensures that children in her school know what earthquakes are, how they are caused and do's and don'ts to follow in the event of an earthquake. She devotes Saturdays to disaster awareness related activities and encourages students to practice drop, cover, hold. The school has planned

regular mock drills to facilitate better preparedness among students in the event of an emergency.

As a participant in the Training of Trainers programme organized by FOCUS - DIPECHO, Swati learned how to administer first aid and CPR, search and rescue techniques and other safety practices. She has already had an opportunity to put these new found skills to use. A week after her training programme, one of the students in her class injured his toe and it was bleeding profusely. She was able to administer first aid to the student, stop the bleeding and prevent the wound from getting infected by applying a bandage. *“All these skills are new. I didn't know how to dress a wound and now I can help someone who is injured”*, she says.

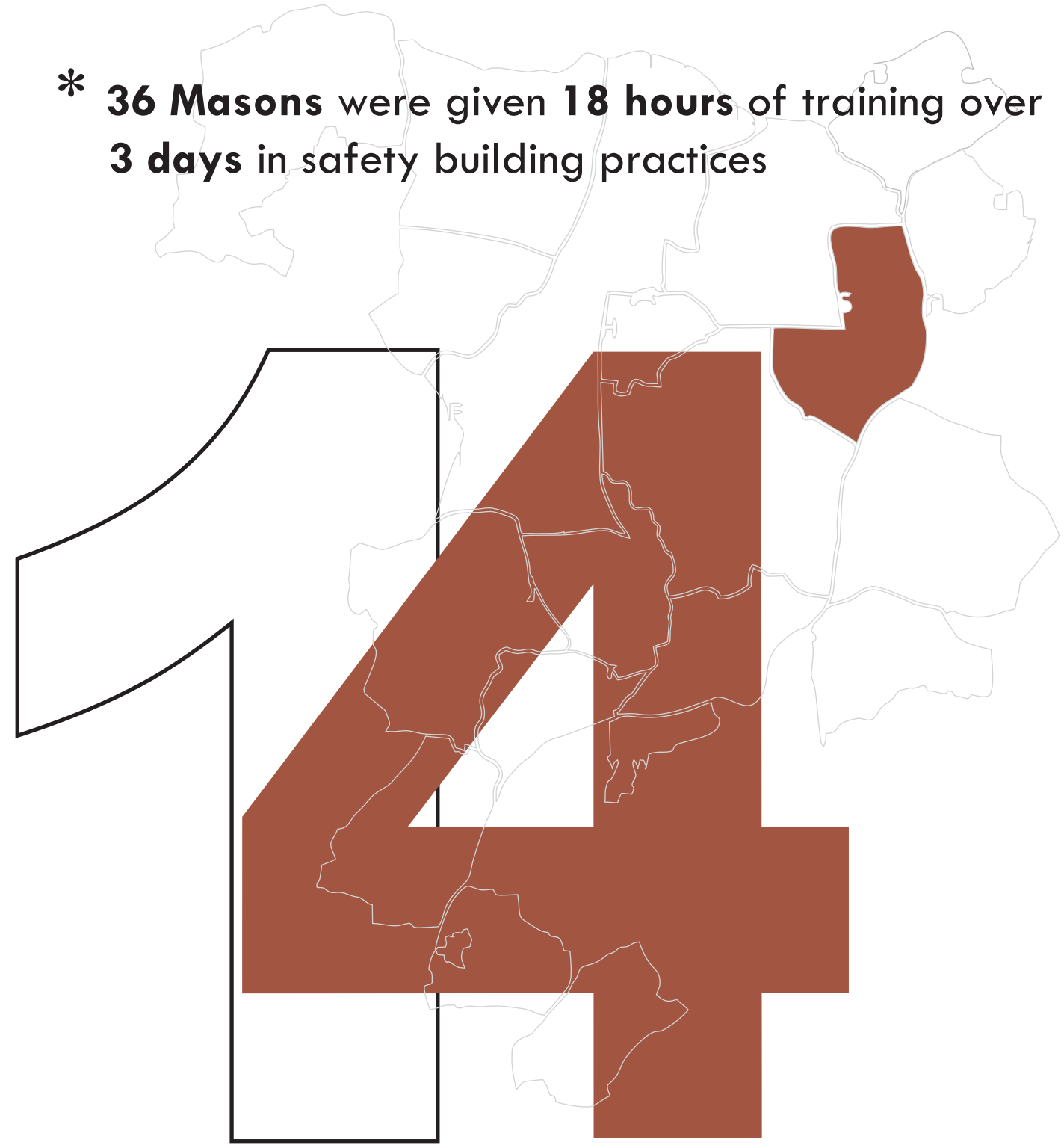
**swatipipalya**

# mason training

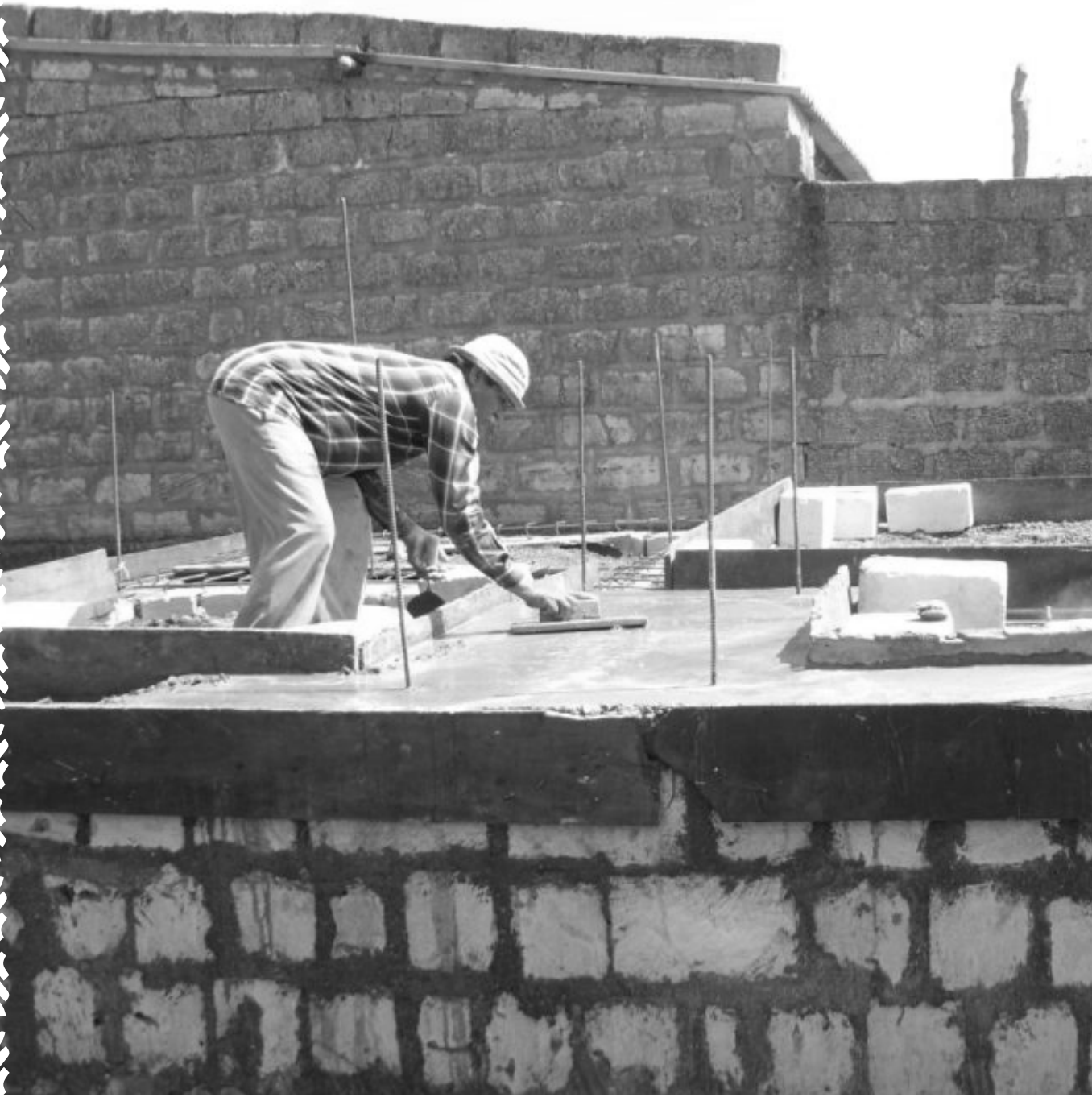
In collaboration with Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, 36 local masons from the villages covered under the FOCUS – DIPECHO project were given important masonry skills related to building structures in cyclone and earthquake prone areas. The aim of behind this was to generate local awareness about structural safety practices and build local capacities in the same.

Training sessions covered several areas of structural safety including; RCC vertical reinforcement, Plinth, Horizontal, Lintel, Sill, Gabel and Roof Bands. Masons were also trained in using Bamboo as an alternative for roofing material.

\* **36 Masons** were given **18 hours** of training over **3 days** in safety building practices



## Khimjibhai Jeevanbhai Chowda, Recipient of Mason Training, Sangodara Village, Gujarat



**A**t the ripe age of fifty, Khimji Chowda has witnessed 4 cyclones in his village; Sangodra, Gujarat. He recounts how wind speeds during a cyclone are so high that they knock trees over and blow the roofs off kaccha houses. On account of its location the village is not only in a High Moderate Intensity Zone B for cyclones but is also in a Moderate Intensity Zone (III) for earthquakes. The area experiences frequent aftershocks, sometimes up to 5 - 6 in a day. Thus as a mason, Khimji has the daunting task of building houses to withstand both disasters.

Having started off as a laborer and picked up tricks of the trade through experience, Khimji has no formal training or expertise in building seismic or cyclone resistant homes. Nor, has he received any input on how to repair damages caused by frequent tremors such as cracks in walls, leaking roofs etc. Thus, through the mason training programme under the FOCUS – DIPECHO project, Khimji was able to develop important masonry skills related to building structures in cyclone and earthquake prone areas.

### **Bamboo-**

*As an alternative for roofing material :*

Bamboo has played an important role in containing costs and providing environmentally friendly alternatives to a scarce resource – timber and the more expensive alternative - precast concrete beams. Therefore in model house specifications, bamboo was selected as an alternative for roofing material



**T**he masonry training programme taught 36 masons how to inculcate better practices in their building techniques. The training covered; building safer roofs that can withstand high wind speeds, repairing structural cracks in walls and roofs, vertically and horizontally reinforcing buildings through using cement safety belts across both planes and several other techniques.

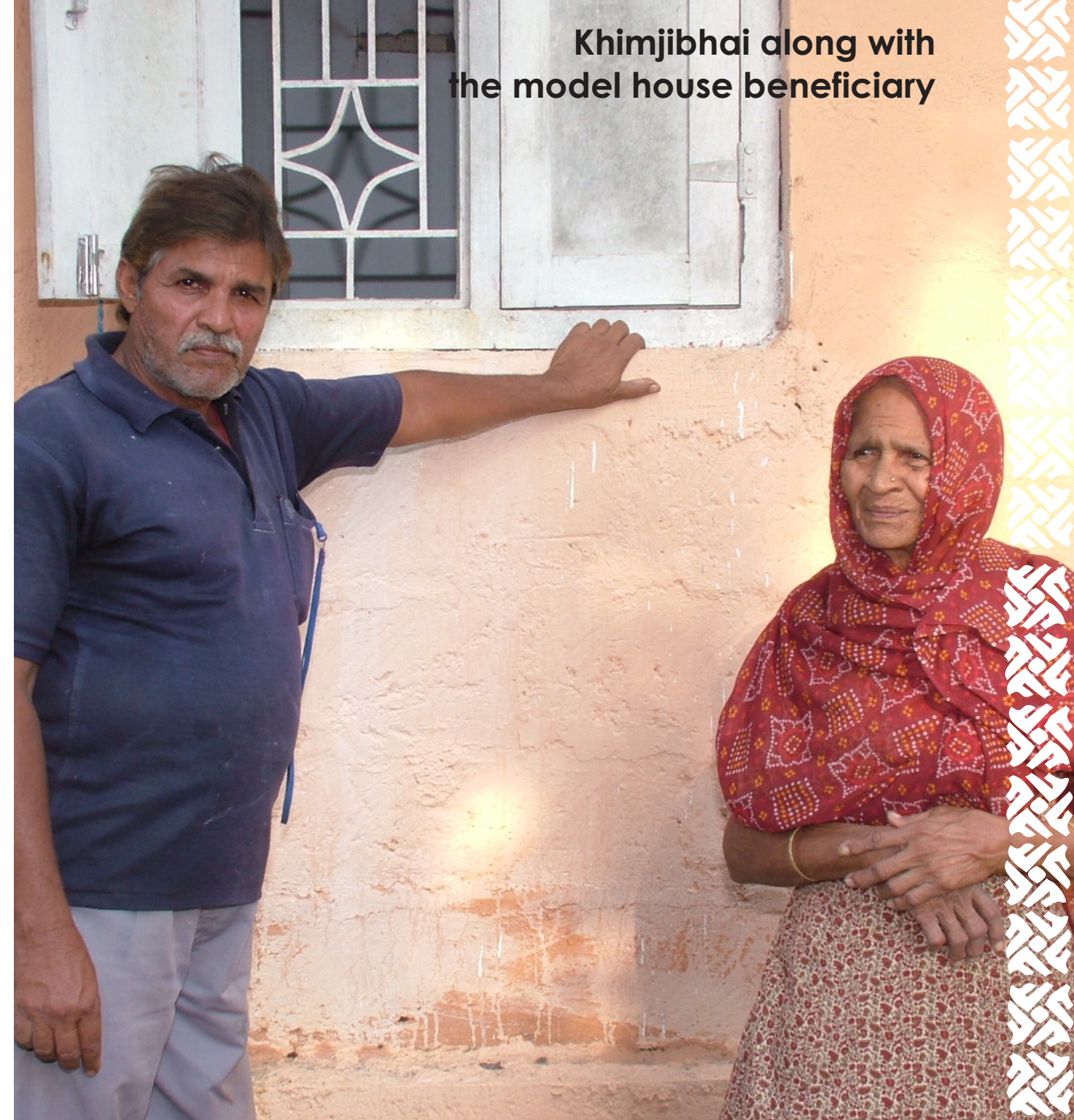
As part of the training process, masons are contracted to build a model home in their own community, in order to practice and implement their learning. Khimji was able to build a model home for an impoverished family who's previous house was beyond repair and had developed such deep cracks that it was on the verge of collapsing. Furthermore, he utilized his

training to repair two structures; a municipal school in his village and the panchayat building in the neighbouring village of Hiranvel. Till date, Khimji has received three requests to build houses fashioned after the model house from other members of the community. He plans to start building these shortly after the monsoon season.

Khimji has shared his learning and new skills with his two sons, who in turn have trained their labourers in a similar fashion and thus the scope of the training programme has widened its base.

**Bamboo** is a highly tensile, environment friendly alternative to traditional timber members, capable of growing in varied geo-climatic conditions and abundantly found in the region. Because it grows very fast, it is a renewable resource.

**Khimjibhai along with the model house beneficiary**



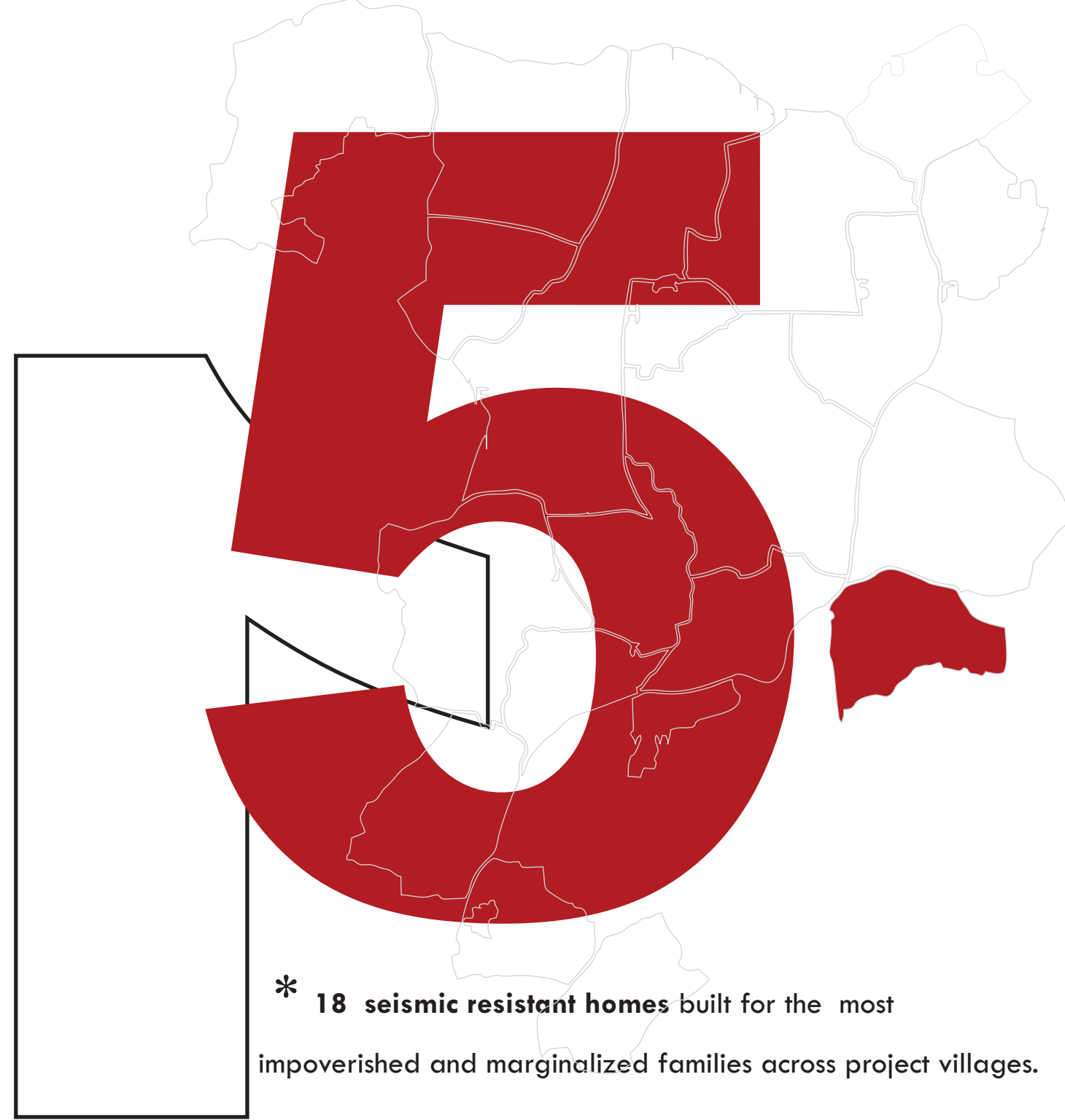
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## Demo/model house:

The demo house is a skillful amalgamation of local practices and technological specifications that is financially affordable to the community. Ensuring local accessibility to disaster-resilient technology is the only way in which transferability and sustainability of the same can be guaranteed.

Hence, the house ranging from 275 square feet to 350 square feet in size is designed with locally available limestone blocks, Mangalore tiled roofs that are supported on bamboo members as per local practices. The newly introduced seismic resistant horizontal bands at the plinth, lintel and gable levels and vertical reinforcements at the corners and around the door openings tie the various structural members and provide resilience to the structure protecting it from natural hazards.

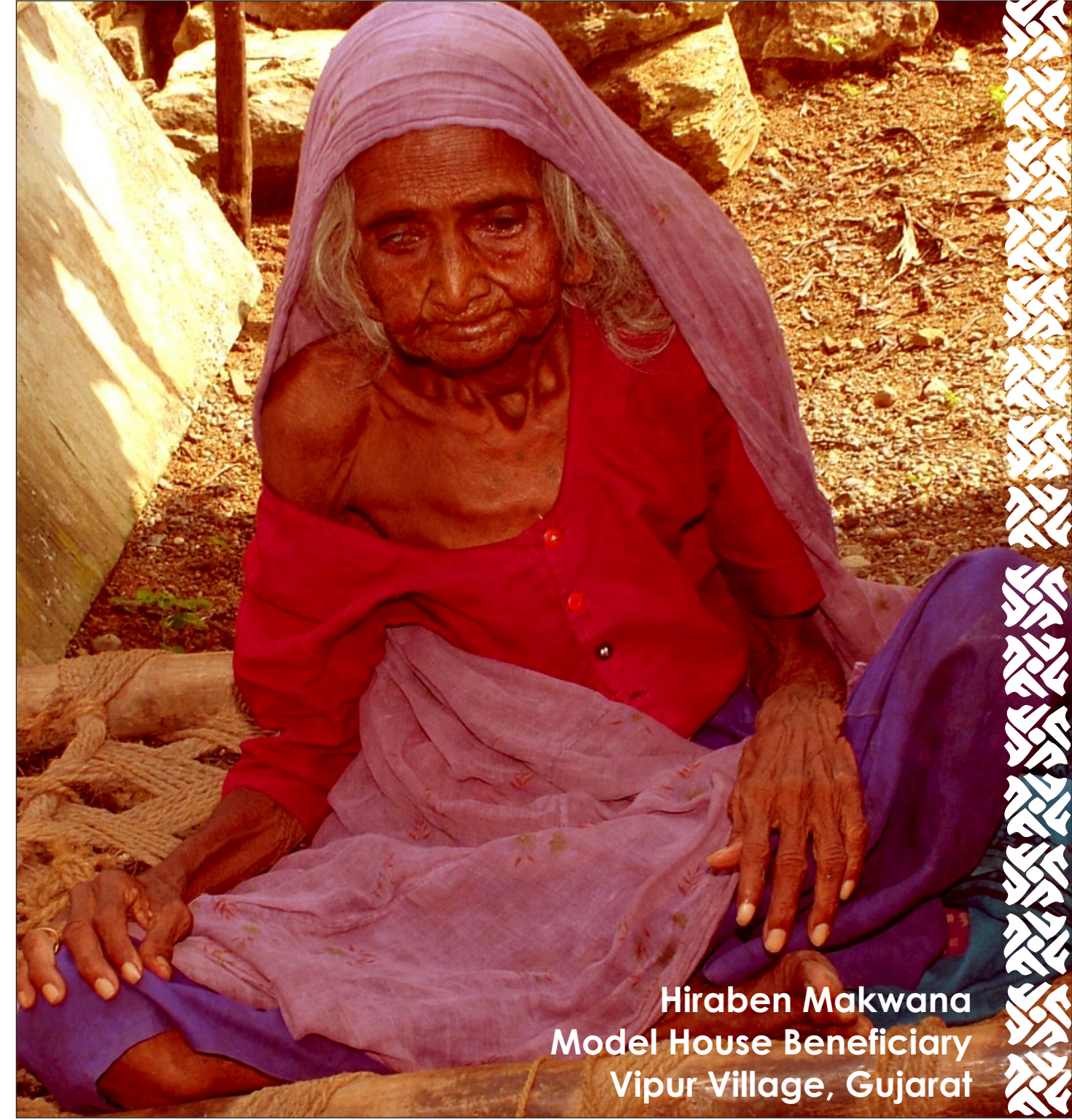
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\* **18 seismic resistant homes** built for the most impoverished and marginalized families across project villages.

**H**aving lived for over a century in one place, Hiraben has seen more developments in her village than any other resident. She witnessed the dawn of electricity and with it television and TV serials. She observed how gender equality slowly made its way into the village from the education of girls to a female Sarpanch. She noticed how development brought new clothes and bigger dreams to other members of her community. And yet for her, the passage of time only came with greater poverty and more hardship.

Hiraben and her son lived in a mud house with no electricity. At 105 she used to walk one kilometer to use the nearest forested area because her home had no toilet. The mud house, as old as its owner, had developed such severe cracks that Hiraben and her son used to sleep outside in the nights for fear of it collapsing and crushing them in their sleep. During the monsoon the leaking roof made it difficult for them to stay dry and the house used to repeatedly flood, destroying the few possessions they had.



**Hiraben Makwana**  
Model House Beneficiary  
Vipur Village, Gujarat

W

hat Hiraben didn't expect to see in her lifetime, was a new house for her family, built to withstand earthquakes and cyclones.

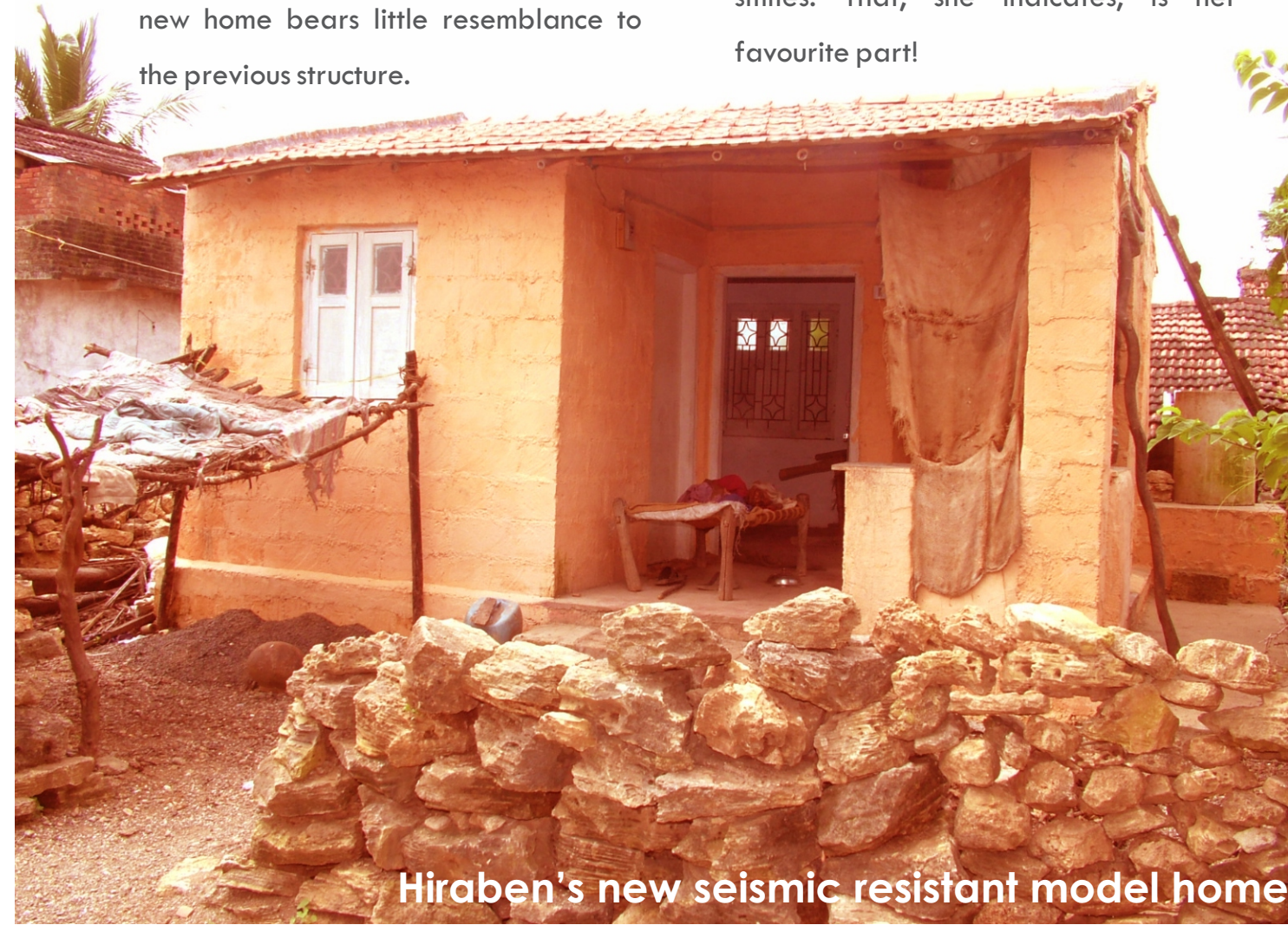
By unanimous consensus the village members decided that Hiraben should be the beneficiary of one of 18 model houses built in the project area.



Hiraben's home before construction

Through the DIPECHO project, Focus Humanitarian Assistance in collaboration with Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, provided her with a new, two room, home and attached toilet. RCC reinforced and fitted with a sturdy roof, the Makwana's new home bears little resemblance to the previous structure.

Vibrant despite her age, Hiraben gestures towards the new toilet and smiles. That, she indicates, is her favourite part!



Hiraben's new seismic resistant model home

Under the DIPECHO programme the purpose of constructing model homes was to demonstrate and promote safe construction practices. Given that demo/model houses were limited to 1 home per village, selection of beneficiaries was a critical process that followed stringent criteria.

**Model House Beneficiaries** were selected based on their economic status, age, gender, caste, physical ability, marital status and the condition as well as geographical location of their home. On occasion community members themselves identified those families that required the most assistance.

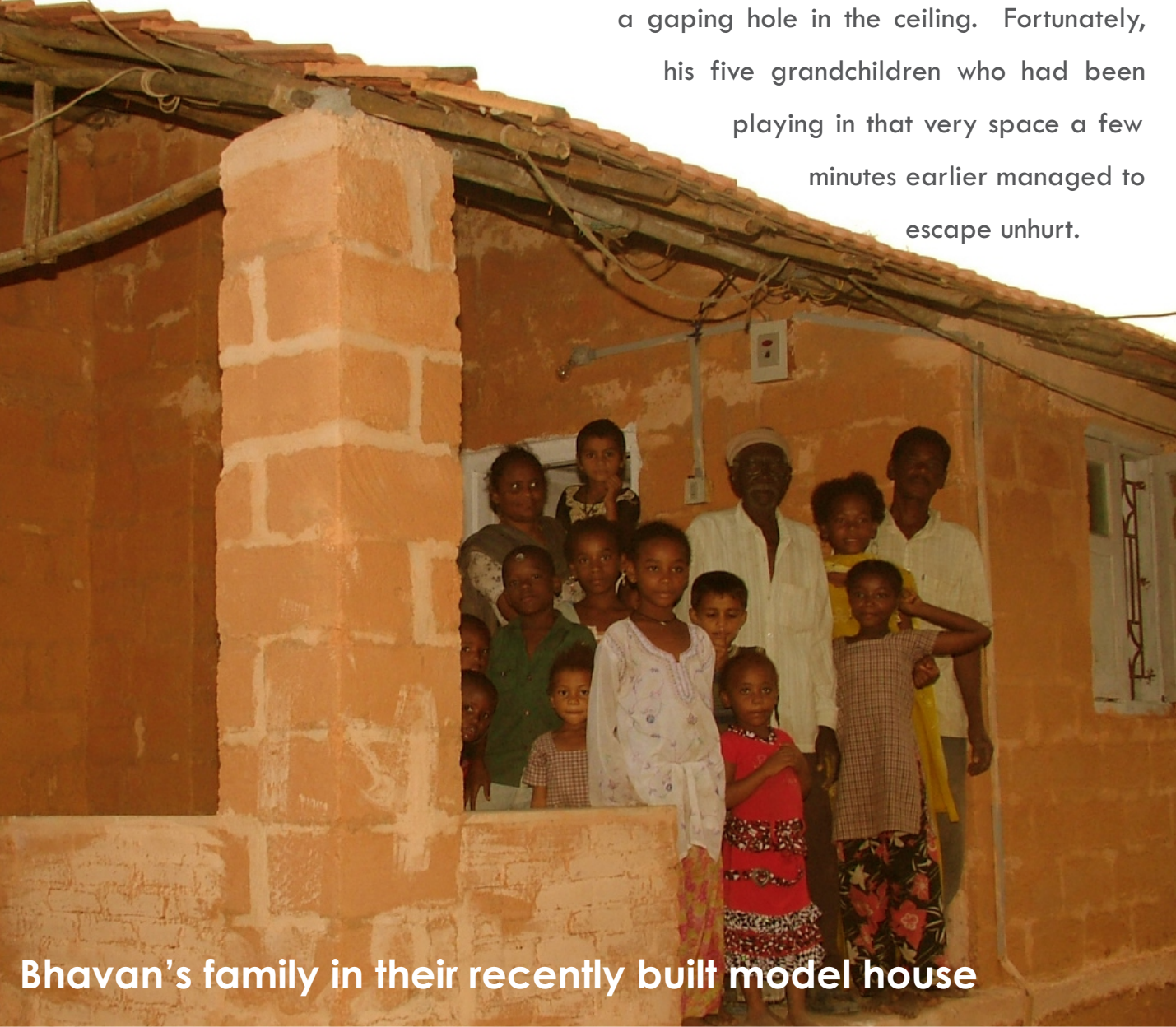
Bhavan Ibrahim is one such story.....





In a rainy August evening, Bhavan Ibrahim's deepest fears came to pass.

The roof of his mud house caved in and left a gaping hole in the ceiling. Fortunately, his five grandchildren who had been playing in that very space a few minutes earlier managed to escape unhurt.



Bhavan's family in their recently built model house

Under the DIPECHO project implemented by Focus Humanitarian Assistance in collaboration with Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Bhavan's family was given a new earthquake and flood resistant house in September, 2010. They were one of 18 such families to receive new homes through the project in disaster prone villages across Junagadh district of Gujarat.

In order to foster a sense of ownership in the project and a stake in its successful outcome, beneficiaries are comprehensively involved in the entire process right from planning the layout, to providing resources such as water, as well as auditing the use of materials and overseeing the construction process.

**88%** of those selected belonged to **Scheduled/Backward Castes and Tribes**

**55%** of model house beneficiaries were **Women**

**90%** of these women were **widowed**

**61%** of those selected fell within the economic category: **Ultra Poor**

**All** beneficiaries were **Landless**

**28%** of model house beneficiaries were **senior citizens**

**2** beneficiaries had **mentally challenged** family members

bhavan**ibrahim**

**T**o this end, Bhavan's entire family pitched in every day, through curing

newly constructed walls, fetching water and taking responsibility for the raw material. At the end of each work day they would take stock of material utilized and that pending - thus taking ownership of its proper use.



**Bhavan auditing the construction of his home as a stakeholder in the entire process.**

**F**or years to come, the house will require no maintenance. It has become a model for the rest of the village and other locals plan to build their homes similarly in

the future. Bhavan will not have to worry about collapsing roofs and his grandchildren can sleep, play and run about in their new home without fear.



**The area where Bhavan's grandchildren were playing when the roof came crashing down.**

**T**he Siddis are a tribal community, whose ancestors were brought from Africa by Arab merchants around 500 years ago to serve as soldiers or slaves under the Portuguese and British authorities, or as servants to the Nawabs.

Rough estimates put their present population at around 20,000-30,000 spread over the states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The majority of Siddis reside for the most part in Junagadh district, particularly in the Talala block, around the Gir Forest and the Gir National Park.

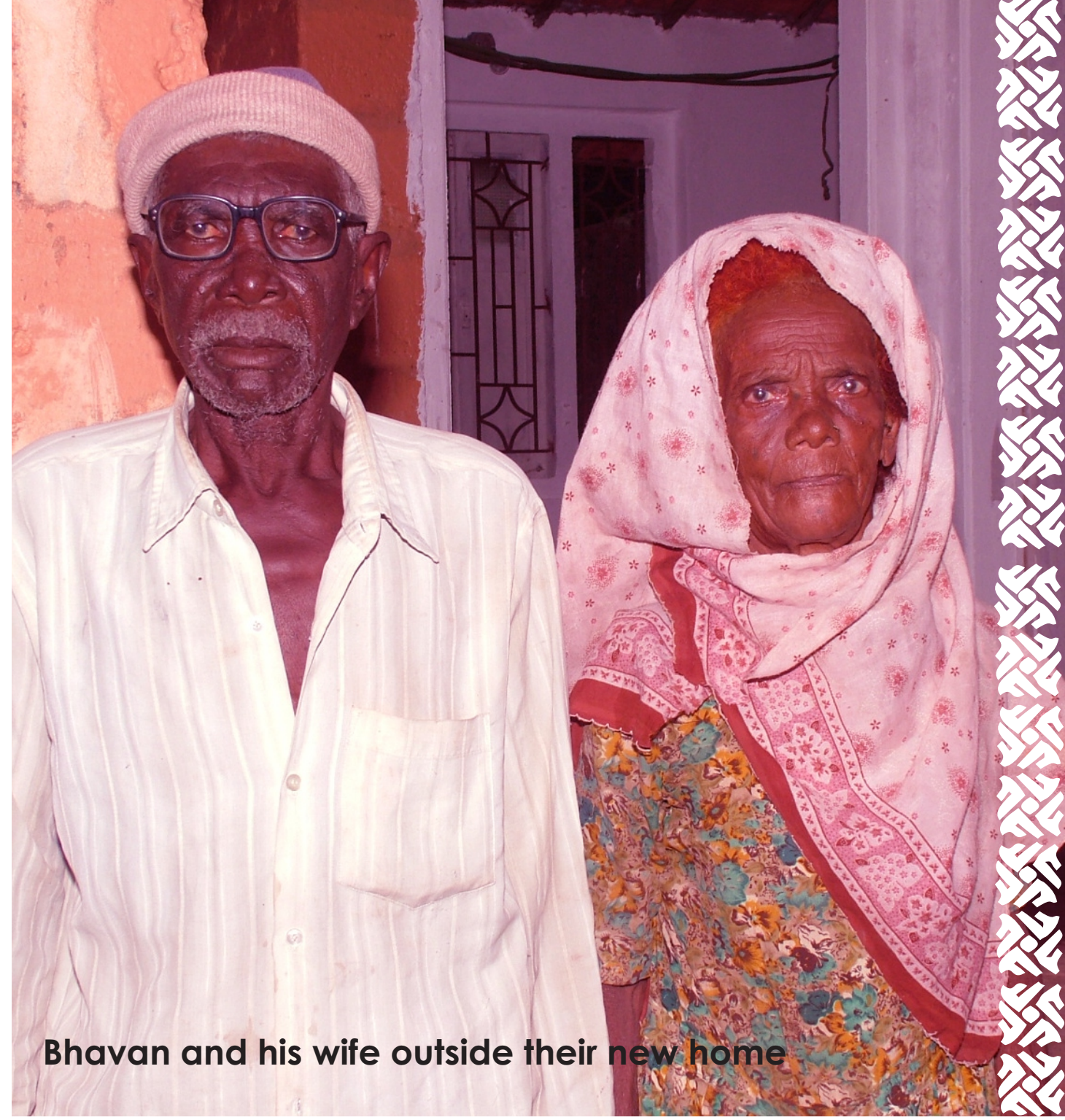
The Siddis are a scattered community. There are 1,089 Siddi households spread over 19 villages in Talala. Siddi

household economies have few options or opportunities for livelihood.

Their traditional source of livelihood was the Gir Forest, from where they collected dry wood and other raw materials. While this is now technically 'illegal', the practice persists. Coupled with the lack of opportunities, skills and reduced or no access to the forest, even subsistence poses a major challenge.

Given this community's marginalized status the FOCUS - DIPECHO project took special efforts to reach out to members of the Siddi community and include them in programme activities.

## about the **Siddis**



**Bhavan and his wife outside their new home**

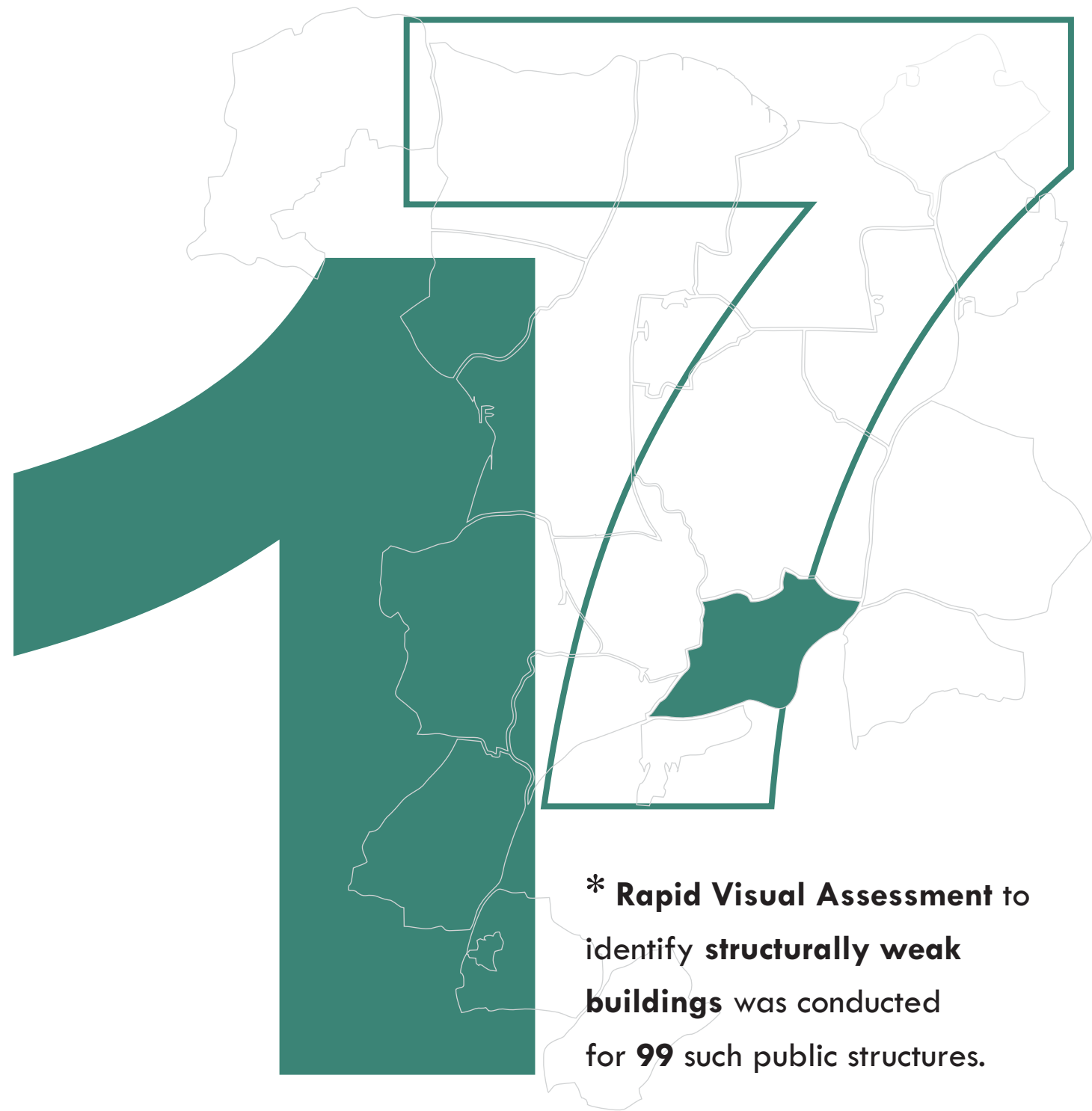


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Prior to the retrofitting process, during the monsoon, we had to cancel classes and close the school at least 10 - 15 times a year on account of flooding or roof leakage. The student's books and personal belongings used to get wet as a result of which their studies were constantly disrupted. This is the first monsoon in the school's history where classrooms have remained dry and student's haven't missed a day of class because of the rain or flooding.

”

----- **Praful Chandra Amrutlal Mehta,**  
Principal, Ramarechi Primary School, Gujarat.



**\* Rapid Visual Assessment** to identify **structurally weak buildings** was conducted for **99** such public structures.

As a young boy, Mr. Mehta studied at the government run Primary School in Ramrechi Village, Gujarat. From a young age he had nurtured a dream of one day being able to contribute to the progress and development of his village. Now as Principal of the very primary school he attended, he feels a sense of pride that he is able to mould the village's future generation.

For over nine years Mr. Mehta had dealt with various administrative issues that came with his position and put processes in place to ensure that students had access to the right resources. However, there was one

pressing issue over which he had little control; Natural Disasters.

Ramrechi, situated on a 15km fault running through the Saurashtra region, is prone to earthquakes and aftershocks. Moreover, its proximity to the coastline makes it susceptible to cyclones, heavy rains and flooding. On account of these natural disasters, the Primary School of Ramrechi village had experienced so much wear and tear that the walls and roof were damaged to a severe extent.

Cracks in classroom walls were so large that one could see through some to the adjoining room. The terrace had also developed several



**Praful Mehta, points to retrofitting work done at Ramrechi Primary School where he is Principal.**

cracks and repeatedly leaked during the monsoon season. Classes were cancelled about 10 – 15 times each year and the school was shut down repeatedly on account of flooding or roof leakage. The student's books and personal belongings used to get wet as a result of which their studies were constantly disrupted.

More importantly, the frequent tremors in this region had made the structure of the school building so weak that there was always the potential of it collapsing on the students. Mr. Mehta along with the administrative board, parents and community members had discussed strategies to deal with the problem – but they lacked the technical expertise to develop a sustainable solution.

**T**hrough the DIPECHO project implemented by Focus Humanitarian Assistance in collaboration with Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Ramrechi Primary School was selected for seismic resistant retrofitting. A structural hazard assessment of the selected school was done and recommendation for retrofitting was given to the school management board. Staff members met with school officials and locals to discuss the extent of damage prior to retrofitting. A local mason trained through the programme was involved in repairing the terrace, sealing cracks in walls, adding vertical and horizontal reinforcement and placing cements bands across the building.



**Water damage visible along the school walls and ceilings prior to retrofitting**

## Restoring Ramrechi Primary School's terrace to prevent leakage.

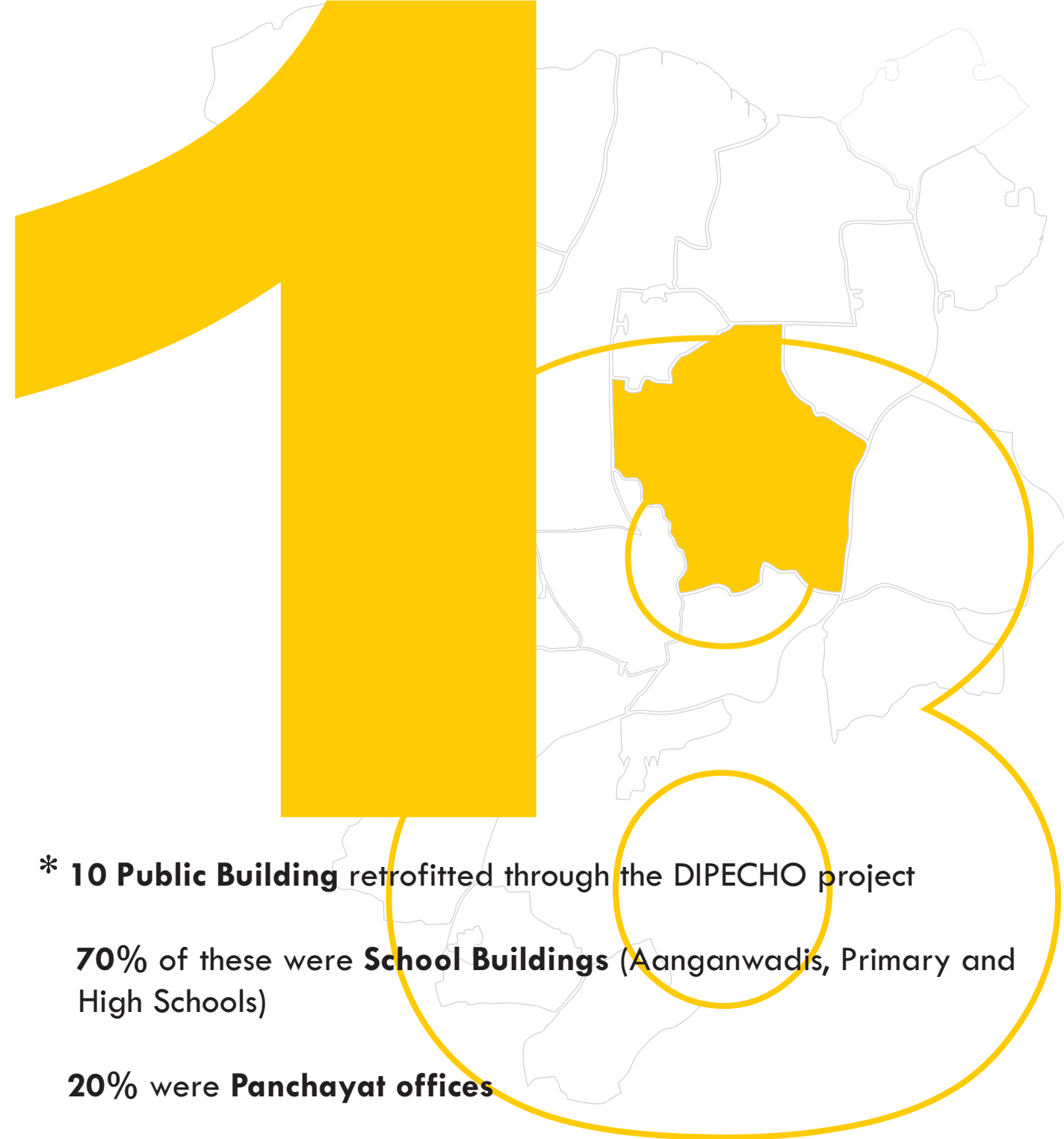


**M**r. Mehta recounts how parents gave him positive feedback on how much safer the school is after the retrofitting process. They don't worry any more about sending their children to school during the monsoon. Mr. Mehta proudly gives visitors a tour of the school – “when I was a young boy”, he says, “this school was only up to standard five and had only two rooms.

*Now it's much bigger and we teach students up to standard eight. But in all the years that I've been associated with the school it has never been safer. This project has given our students a secure space to learn”.*

Through the HVCRA - **Hazard Vulnerability Capacity Risk Analysis** of all 18 villages covered under the DIPECHO project implemented by Focus Humanitarian Assistance - the risk level of each village was determined accordingly. In collaboration with Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, repair and reconstruction work was carried out both on private and public buildings with significant damage. A special effort was made to select those spaces utilized by the most number of people such as educational institutions and community meeting halls.

Diamond School, Chitravad is one such example.....





A drawing by a student of Diamond School, depicts retrofitting activities at the school.

In 1992 Salim Barejiya joined Diamond Jubilee High School as an English teacher. After eight years of dedicated service he was appointed as the School Principal. Now eighteen years in the post, he can recount all the structural problems that the school has faced in the wake of natural disasters.

However, for a new visitor, the tell tale signs of aftershocks and flooding are clearly visible. Large cracks on the outer walls of the school snake their way up to the terrace only to be met by other smaller ones – comprehensively rendering the school structurally weak. Water damaged walls sag under the weight off a two decade

year old building. Most of the top floors were not being used, on account of severe rain damage and water leakage.

Mr. Barejiya was always aware of the potential danger the school building posed to students. However, with the technical backing provided through the HVCR Analysis undertaken by Focus Humanitarian Assistance staff members, he was able to convince the board to make some crucial changes. The structural analysis of the school indicated several high risk factors present in the school that required immediate addressal.

The two storey school initially had the classrooms of the younger students on the upper floor. However, through the DIPECH project implemented by Focus Humanitarian Assistance in collaboration with Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, the school management became aware that young students should be on the lower floors and closer to the exit. This change was immediately put into effect and younger students were moved to the lower floor. Changes implemented on account of the programme included an additional stairway, given that previously the school only had one stairway for all the students to exit from.



Principal Barejiya points to sealed cracks along the school wall, as part of retrofitting activities

Moreover, fire extinguishers were placed at several important locations along the school corridors. The school management proactively implemented other important changes including, removing heavy/glass items and reversing the direction in which doors opened (inner to outer).

However crucial these steps were, it was evident to all that the school required structural repair to truly become safer for its students. This became possible through the FOCUS – DIPECHO project. Seismic resistant retrofitting was implemented which included; horizontal and vertical RCC safety belts, repairing cracks and water proofing the terrace.

A striking example of the impact of the project can be seen in the School Principal himself. During the retrofitting process, Mr. Barejiya learned about various structural related strategies one can implement in order to make a building more resistant to natural disasters. He put this newly acquired knowledge to use and is modeling his new home in his native village along these lines.

Through the DIPECHO project several mediums were used to generate mass awareness and address a widely-diverse audience. These ranged from; folk theatre and puppet shows, to animation movies and documentaries, from posters and wall paintings, to book labels and annual calendars. Event print media and radio broadcasts were utilized to disseminate information and ensure that it reaches the most vulnerable and marginalized groups within project communities.



**POSTERS:** Through the FOCUS – DIPECHO programme 50 posters on disaster preparedness as well as earthquake, flood, cyclone and fire safety were displayed in each of the 18 villages covered under the project. Project schools also received 10 posters each, conveying important disaster awareness and preparedness messages that can be used as teaching tools.

**SHORT FILMS:** In order to address a diverse audience, the DIPECHO project developed a variety of short films for both children and adults - literate and non-literate community members. Close to 4,000 children viewed two animation films on disasters; 'De tali' & 'Asli Hero'. The presentation and content in both these animation films catered to children.

Additionally, a documentary film; 'Agamcheti' (early warning) was screened across all project communities. It recounts the process of village based disaster preparedness and management in a creative story format. These film screenings were attended by tens of thousands of community members.

**CALENDARS:** A three year calendar with disaster related information and significant safety messages were distributed to over 7,265 households in all project covered villages. The aim behind this initiative was to promote disaster awareness messages through commonly used household items.

**SCHOOL BOOK LABELS/STICKERS:** Following the same concept of using highly used/visible items to display disaster awareness and preparedness messages, school book labels were similarly customized and distributed to all children in the 12 project schools.

**WALL PAINTINGS:** Over 120 disaster related wall murals were created in project schools depicting student's understanding and learning gained through the project. Besides promoting preparedness related messages, these student paintings provided FOCUS –DIPECHO project staff with visual feedback on the impact of the project.

**BUS HORDINGS:** Hordings were displayed on 30 buses in the project area disseminating information on disaster awareness and preparedness to the larger public. Public transport was used as a medium for displaying key disaster related messages in order to reach a wider audience.

**DRR DAY:** To celebrate International Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Day (DRR) various mass awareness programs were organized from 8th to 14th October, 2009. A total of 2,447 students participated in rallies and puppet shows.

**MEDIA:** Radio messages were initially broadcasted during the celebration of International Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Day in 2009. Thereafter, local cable networks were selected as a medium to disseminate messages and movies related to disaster awareness and preparedness. Additionally, project best practices and motivational stories from target villages were published in various national, regional and local newspapers.

**PUPPET SHOWS:** In order to address young children in project communities a local art form 'kathputli ka khel'; puppet shows were introduced to disseminate disaster related messages. Puppets enacted 'drop, cover, hold', 'stop, drop, roll' and other safety measures to take during a disaster.

**'BHAVAI' – FOLK ART:** Bhavai a popular folk theatre in Gujarat was used as a platform to promote safety measures for four major disasters; earthquakes, floods, fires and cyclones. The two hour long play both entertained as well as informed over 4,000 community members who attended these performances.

**PUBLICATIONS:** Each of the trained groups; SEMC, TOT, Task Force, CERT and Masons were given training manuals that further elaborated on information covered during the training programmes. A total of 851 such manuals were distributed during the project.



**FOCUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (FOCUS)**

FOCUS is an international crisis response and disaster risk management agency. It helps communities to protect themselves and mitigate potential natural disasters. It also provides emergency relief to communities suffering from natural disasters or man made crises. Over the last 15 years, FOCUS has developed expertise in working directly with local communities to increase their disaster resilience. FOCUS has provided relief and assistance following landslides, earthquakes, cyclones, hurricanes, floods, and wild fires.

FOCUS has also undertaken successful resettlement programs for displaced families and extended relief and recovery support for communities living in vulnerable environments. FOCUS is an affiliate organization of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). During a crisis FOCUS works alongside the global agencies of the AKDN to provide emergency relief and in regions of protracted crisis. FOCUS and AKDN agencies collaborate to provide long term development solutions where it is viable and sustainable to do so.

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