

## Building on our community experiences

### COMMUNITY DESIGNS

When SA got into the current project, we looked back at the experience of community projects to help work out designs. The design adapted for each toilet block in this project is based on discussions with community members.



The women and men at Adarsh Indira Nagar met to discuss the layouts of their new blocks

The idea is to incorporate the wisdom of past lessons learned in other cities. This has included locating entrances carefully so that people can't see right into the blocks (something that isn't pleasant for people using the toilets, nor for people living right next to the blocks), constructing kids' toilets and ensuring that the gents' and ladies' sections are well separated, with entrances at opposite ends of the block: this makes it safer for the women.

Even when construction work was on, discussions continued with the local communities, who had clear ideas about what they needed, so the designs got adapted and changed because they noticed that they didn't feel would work out: an entrance facing someone's house, or a need for walls to shield other entrances. So the designs got adapted even once the drawing stage was long over and the gattus were going up. Unlike the old PMC-built toilets, which were just plopped into slums, local people have been active in contributing to these new blocks.

So each block is different, reflecting local needs and conditions, unlike the standard PMC blocks which look as if they have been dropped from the sky regardless of anything at all, let alone the needs of the people who are supposed to use them.

### COMMUNITY-MANAGED TOILETS

Building a lovely toilet is relatively easy. Keeping it lovely for years is the tricky part.

The PMC project wants the NGOs to employ a caretaker to maintain the blocks, paying his/her salary out of a monthly contribution of Rs. 20 from each household using the toilets.



The women at Bharat Nagar discussing maintenance options for their toilets

But the SA/Baandhani team is following a model where the local community, not the NGO, works out their own maintenance system. This might involve employing a caretaker, but it might not. The main thing is that the local women and men know how things work in their settlement, so they are the best people to work out a system that will work for them. SA and Baandhani will support them, but the community is in charge.