

Community Participation

Poor women and men know best what the problems are in their own settlements and what solutions would suit their needs best. It's the women and men who will use the new toilets who best know the design and layout that will suit their community best, and how their community can organise the maintenance over the long term so that it's really effective.



The Bhoomi Pujan at Shanti Nagar

For these reasons, Shelter Associates and Baandhani have been working with the women and men in the slums where we are building toilets. They have been holding initial meetings to explain that this is a PMC-NGO project. Later meetings are held to get discussions going about problems in existing toilets, the designs of the new ones, and later, to work out a maintenance system. In several slums this has sown the seed for new Baandhani community groups



Community discussions about the designs



Working out the nitty-gritty at a meeting at Bharat Nagar

The following pages outline the experiences of building toilets and getting going on maintenance at the different slums. These stories from different communities illustrate how local residents are getting involved in the PMC-NGO toilet building drive, to ensure that the toilets built meet their needs, and to set up maintenance systems which will work for them.



Little people participate too: these kids are at Shanti Nagar

In the process, people are getting together to discuss different issues. Starting with toilets, this leads on to other aspects of the settlement... and has the potential to be just the beginning of a series of community settlement improvements in slums across Pune.