BUILDING IN LEH 2011

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

A year after the August 2010 floods in Ladakh, the children at Leh Girls School were still using a partially collapsed and dangerous toilet block. This project provided a replacement three cubicle toilet block and new hand washing facilities for the school.

With the introduction of modern imported materials to the Himalayan region of Ladakh, many of the safe and sustainable construction practices appropriate to the region have been disappearing. In Ladakh, a desert region without a waterborne sewage system, the introduction of flushing toilets is wasting precious water supplies and increasing the risk of disease.

GOAL ACHIEVED

This is a follow on project from the ASF-UK ‘Learning in Leh’ workshop. It demonstrates the positive outcomes and research conducted during the workshop and makes the findings accessible and useful to the local community.

The replacement design showcases safe and sustainable building technologies appropriate to the ecologically fragile and remote Himalayan region of Ladakh. The project draws on simple traditional technologies to help reduce vulnerability to future disasters (such as timber seismic banding), and demonstrates how local building materials (including salvaged materials) can be used in a modern way.

The project shows how improvements to the traditional design of composting toilets, such as use of simple passive solar technologies to assist ventilation and reduce smells, can make them a more attractive alternative to flushing toilets.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Part of the project included the provision of a strategy for further improvements to the toilet area of the school, including more hand washing facilities and replacement toilet blocks. A previous lack of forward planning and knowledge of appropriate building design and construction, had resulted in an unsafe toilet area with poor layout and restricted functioning. We hope this strategy, combined with the built prototype, will assist the school in securing funding for further improvements to the sanitation provision at the school.