

Flood in Ladakh **After the emergency, GERES is working on reconstruction**

Aubagne, August 13, 2010 - The teams, based in Leh in Ladakh, in the Indian Himalayas, composed of 16 permanent employees and 56 persons in six local partner NGOs, and working on GERES projects, have escaped unscathed the violent floods that hit the region on the night of August 5. However, we regret the disappearance of three relatives of our local accountant, whose house was swept away by the flood. The association wishes to express its deep sorrow and convey its unwavering support to their families.

For over twenty years, GERES has been working in Ladakh and in the valleys of Zaskar, Kargil, Lahaul and Spiti, in partnership with six local NGOs (LEDEG, LEHO, LNP, SECMOL, SKARCHEN and Ecosphere) and Indian government with public funding (European Union, Government of India, ADEME, ...) and private (Ensemble Fondation, Michelham Lord of Hellingly Foundation, Abbé Pierre Fondation, Allibert, GEG, Legallais Bouchard ...).

We work together in the field of social and economic development and environmental protection. A pioneer in the implementation of passive solar architecture in the Himalayas, GERES has to its credit a number of technical achievements, social and environmental. A major programme underway (Passive Solar House) includes the introduction of energy efficiency technologies in the construction or rehabilitation of 1,000 domestic and community buildings. These new structures play a key role with local populations. They promote the improvement of living conditions, economic activity and craft.

It appears that the buildings of our project have well withstood the floods, but this is not the case of recent facilities built too quickly, despite the rules of town planning. Half of the homes located in Choglamsar, downstream suburb of Leh, have been destroyed. If it is not possible to directly link the floods to climate change, it is feared that they will worsen. In one area normally totally spared by the monsoon, it is the second episode of serious flooding after the 2006 flood.

GERES is already getting ready for the reconstruction phase. In remote villages, access is still cut, but our teams are at disposal of the local partners and residents to assist them.

Yesterday, GERES has participated in a meeting with local government, international and local NGOs to develop a strategy to define in which areas the buildings should be temporary or permanent, according to the context, the level of damage, the availability and cost of land. GERES, appointed as technical local referent, will participate in planning workshops to share its reconstruction expertise. A specific programme for damaged areas will be launched to rebuild with bioclimatic techniques and criteria (areas of reconstruction, materials ...) to avoid the renewal of this disaster.

Regarding the resumption of the HSP "Passive Solar House", it will be considered as soon as the lines of communication will be restored. Remember that this project will disseminate the processes and methods on a very large scale.

If you wish to support GERES in this reconstruction phase, send a gift to: **GERES, 2 cours Foch, 13400 Aubagne** with mention "GERES India" on the back of the check. GERES is a member of the French Committee for International Solidarity (CFSI), Coordination Sud and adheres to the Charter Committee of Don confidence.

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