It is not new that individuals who have different opinions and ideologies often work against each other instead of working for each other. What happens when such a situation is the cause behind failure of a development scheme that aids in improving people's lives?

Yes, the answer is simple, we need to explain citizens the importance of the developmental scheme and ask them to work towards it by keeping their personal differences aside. Like a common proverb reads “it is easier said than done”. But Madupadu Gram Panchayat (GP) of Nellimarla Mandal in Vizianagarm District has successfully managed to create a common goal among its citizens and shows us how it should be done.

Madupadu has a total of 81 households and it has been a ‘sensitive village’ in Police terms which means a violence prone area. As citizens were at all times engaged in clashes and running behind police stations, there was hardly any time for them to think about developmental activities for improving the status of their village.

Change Agent!

Mr. Sudhkar, District IEC & HRD coordinator noticed that there is much more to be done in the village than just motivating them to build toilets. He recognised the fact that lack of unity and a common goal is the reason the village is in a sensitive state.
Mr. Sudhkar, (Centre)  

Therefore, even before working on awareness for construction and usage of toilets Sudhkar started motivating children to go back to school by buying books, bags etc... and building a rapport with them. Similarly, he worked out a rapport with every family in the village there by creating a special place for himself in their lives. Slowly when issues started to fall in place, Sudhkar made the community members deliberate on village development of which sanitation was one of the first and foremost activity.

**Process of construction and Utilization of toilets**

The Sarpanch of the village, field assistants, Panchayat secretary and one volunteer formed themselves into a group to handhold the process of constructing toilets for all in the village. In this process, Sarpanch Mr. Achuth Rao and volunteer Mr. Srinivas spent their personal money to support financially dependent families.

This team also procured material for all the 80 households at one go and began construction of toilets. However due to lack of sound knowledge on leech pits, the first few toilets had sceptic tanks which increased cost of construction. But by educating themselves about leech pit system this issue too was solved resulting in 100% construction of toilets in Madupadu.

Madupadu and its citizens are very happy with the turn of events, from the village being “Police sensitive” to how it is now sensitive to its citizens and its development.

**Present status of the village**

Post construction of toilets and ensuring 100% utilization of the same, the GP

- Laid cement roads
- is able to ensure drinking water to all
- planning to build drainages
- has constructed soak pits to harvest rain water
- improving facilities in the school

*Madupadu’s achievement speaks volumes about how right kind of awareness and unity can bring about great changes in the village. In the big picture it is also evident that sanitation issue has not one method to achieve 100% construction and utilization. Each GP has to find the key to their success.*

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**Advantages**

*Abundant water supply and availability of space to construct toilets have largely aided in the ease of construction process needed to consider two factors that stood as major challenges in most villages.*

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Photo Credit: E. Manikanta Reddy, Program Officer, PRIA