

This year DMI-AMA Joint Centre conducted a study on the neglected area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for natural disaster reduction in Gujarat

- (a) build capacity for management of disaster relief and rescue,
- (b) raise awareness related to disaster preparedness,
- (c) conduct policy research on disaster preparedness and management,
- (d) undertake project management for disaster response.

Output and Learning Areas:

This year it conducted a study on the neglected area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for Natural Disaster Reduction in Gujarat with the Benfield

Hazard Research Centre (UK). The study assessed the role of the commercial sector—corporate associations, big and small business houses and entrepreneurs—in responding to disasters in Gujarat. It concluded that the private sector, equipped with the traditional commitment to disaster response and with management, financial and technical resources can be effective partners in disaster mitigation. Further research on their role as responders and cause of human disasters was warranted.

Action Planning:

The Centre plans to appoint a coordinator and initiate various activities during the upcoming year. These would include thematic workshops and seminars; disaster awareness campaign for the corporate sector; advisory and counselling services and continued policy research for disaster risk mitigation.

K. Sphere Resource Centre (SRC):

The Sphere Resource Centre was set up in 2003 in the background of various global and local developments related to Sphere. Since 1998 DMI has built up a pool of resource material and teams to set up this centre. Plans to set up this centre in partnership with a leading INGO did not work out. The Sphere Project is an international inter-agency collaboration to improve quality of disaster assistance and enhance accountability of humanitarian agencies. DMI has been associated with the Sphere Project since 1998 as a global pilot agency. Inspired by the need for downward accountability, DMI launched the Sphere in India Campaign in 1998.

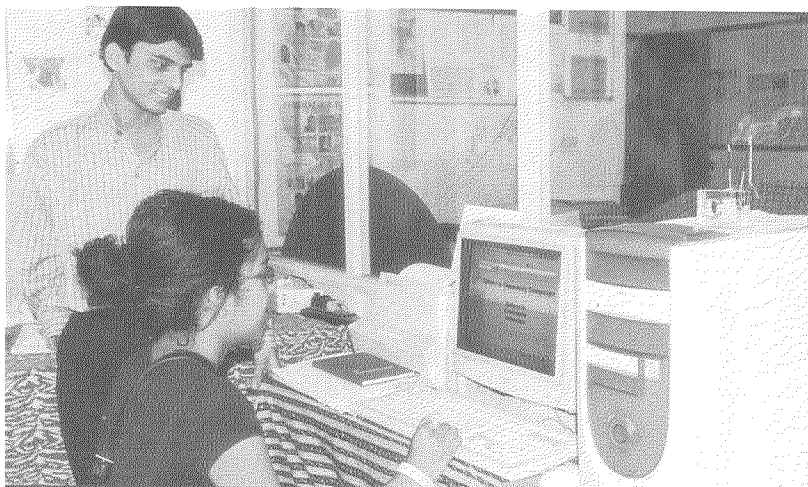
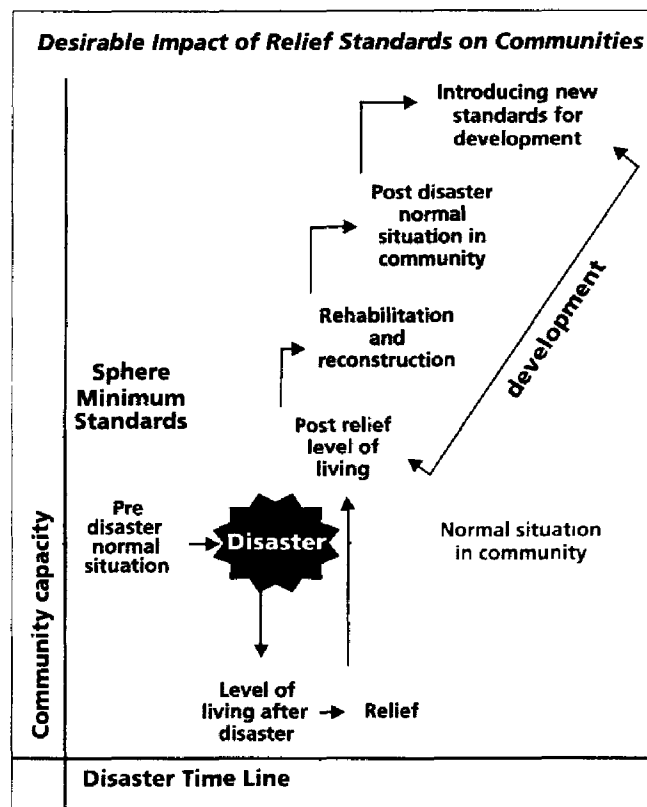
Output and Learning Areas:

Last year was a landmark in consolidating DMI's Sphere related work. A dedicated Sphere Campaign Team was set up and an internal review of DMI's Sphere in India Campaign was conducted. The review revealed a distinct community focus during the campaign, which was crucial in comparison to the work undertaken by Sphere implementing organisations worldwide. The belief that vulnerable and affected

communities should be at the centre of all attempts to institutionalise, operationalise and contextualise Sphere, led DMI to implement the following activities under the Sphere Community Campaign in 2002–03.

To ensure that local community voices inform the global revision of the Sphere Handbook, three Chapter Consultations were organized by DMI in India, with the support of the Sphere Focal Points. On learning that, the first two National Consultations—on Shelter and Site Planning (September 18, 2003) and on Food and Nutrition (December 16–17, 2002)—had only partially represented the views of the affected communities, the third Consultation on Water and Sanitation (February 10th to 11th, 2003), was designed with twin elements of Community and National Consultation. Follow up exercises on the revision included participation in the Sphere Food Review Group Meeting (Geneva), inputs through Electronic Review Groups to focal points and consolidation of the Revision Process in India. “Sphere is global and let it be. DMI must find local meaning of Sphere Standards through its local community work,” advised Paola Jani before the activities for 2003–04 were planned.

One national course and two local courses to spread awareness related to Sphere were also organised. These courses were held to bridge the Sphere awareness gap between policy related higher-level functionaries and implementation related community workers. About 85% of the DMI team are now trained in Sphere. “NGOs want Sphere training for local actions but always look up to global material. Interest



During the coming year SRC will further stress, pursue and develop the community centred approach to promoting and applying Sphere with a focus on partnerships with local organisations.

in developing local material and trainers is limited," complained Deepesh Sinha.

A dedicated website on Sphere (www.sphereinindia.net) was set up to enable wide and multiple outreach of Sphere-related resources and work in India. The community focus on Sphere was communicated during various interagency meetings in India and abroad. As the Sphere process moves to country piloting, DMI is active in designing the Sphere India Piloting Programme (2003–05). This programme is being informed to reflect a community focus. The Global Sphere Project Evaluation is also being informed by DMI's experience.

Finally, in 2003, the Sphere Resource Centre was organised to consolidate DMI's past work on Sphere and ensure an efficient outreach to the growing demands for awareness, trainings and use of Sphere.

Action Planning:

During the coming year SRC will further stress, pursue and develop the 'community' centred approach to promoting and applying Sphere with a focus on partnerships with local organisations. It will also focus on a 'disaster' specific (drought, cyclone, earthquake) or 'sectoral' (food, water, shelter) capacity building initiatives in acknowledgement of the demand from disaster practitioners. Some of its planned activities include setting up of a mobile awareness unit; making the Sphere website more resource intensive and user friendly; generating visual Sphere awareness material; design course modules for contextual and disaster specific Sphere trainings and strengthening the Sphere India Piloting Programme (2003–05). "DMI must continue Sphere related activities and pass on the consolidation work to NGOs with resources and outreach. It must continue to set out a community sensitive agenda," said Shivani Khanna, about the Sphere Piloting Programme.



Disseminating the message of Sphere through an exclusive 'Sphere Community Campaign,' Website: www.sphereinindia.net

2.3 ACTION LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

DMI as an institute has developed considerably since its origins but it is still a small and flexible organisation. Its year-long journey (2002–03) is marked with milestones of achievements and challenges. An account of these is undertaken to identify potential opportunities and encourage and guide action for the organisation in the future.

The following quotations highlight the perspectives and perceptions of the DMI team and its partners about DMI's key achievements, challenges and opportunities that were prominent during 2002–03.

A detailed study will be conducted (in the later part of 2003) to learn about the learning opportunities and challenges that DMI faces in realising its community-based risk reduction imperative. The findings will inform planning a sporadic learning system in DMI and learning practice in the humanitarian sector

TEAM WORK:

"Team work has helped us face challenges and strive to achieve expectations."

Jikesh Thakkar, WSP Coordinator

"Our greatest achievement last year has been the inter-activity centre collaboration and coordination in realisation of an integrated approach to field interventions."

Paola Jani, Exchange for Change Intern, Canada

"The unique coexistence of intern individuality and team work in knowledge sharing and integration has been a highlight in my experience."

Mari Rauhala, Exchange for Change Intern, Finland

ORGANISATIONAL SPONTANEITY AND FLEXIBILITY:

"DMI can upscale and collapse activities very fast. Such a skill is important for a disaster response agency. Irrespective of growth this aspect needs to be preserved."

Arpita Chaitrapati, OR Finance Chief Coordinator

COMMUNITY FOCUS:

"What I like about DMI is that it mobilises community opinion before taking a decision related to field action."

Asifbhai Ahmedabad Community Volunteer, BPP

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS:

"So many organizations came after the riots. They collected photographs of damage but not many helped us. DMI helped us and the activity is still ongoing."

Community leaders, Danilunda Slum, Ahmedabad

INTEGRATED APPROACH:

"Sphere standards are linked to the work of all our activity centres and this is our greatest strength in institutionalising Sphere."

Deepesh Sinha, Sphere Community Campaign Team

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING:

"The experience of working as a part of the Bhuj Reconstruction Project has given me knowledge about slums and a new sense of confidence. Now I can interact with government authorities for my rights as a citizen."

Chandreshbhai, Bhuj Community Volunteer, BRP

STRIKING A BALANCE:

"The real challenge is to strike a balance between field work and office management."

Mihir R. Bhatt, DMI Honorary Director

FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR DISASTER MITIGATION:

"Developing a core financial fund will help DMI implement desirable activities at the appropriate time."

Sean Lowrie, Training Manager, Sphere Project, Geneva

CHANGING EXTERNAL CONTEXT:

"Maintaining professional standards even when the working environment is always changing is essential."

Howard Wright (UK)

LONG TERM PARTNERSHIPS:

"Building long term partnership with other agencies will involve agreement on common working principles right from the beginning."

Mari Rauhala, Social Psychology Professional, Finland

LINK TO OUR ROOTS AS WE BRANCH:

"Although we are growing fast we should not forget the beliefs and traditions with which we started."

Hasmukh Sadhu, BRP Coordinator

MONITORING AGENDA

"More resources will flow in India to finance disaster losses. DMI must strive to ensure that the poor among the victims remain on this agenda."

Mehul Pandya, Field Learning Coordinator

BUILDING CAPACITIES

"We must build community capacity to reduce risk. Building professional capacity will be done by many others."

Himanshu Kikani, IEC Coordinator

BALANCE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL GROWTH:

"Since the external work of DMI is growing rapidly, internal coordination and direction are vital. External spread and internal support will lead to real growth."

Shivani Khanna, SRC Learning Coordinator

PREPAREDNESS FOREWORD TO EFFECTIVE RESPONSE:

"The preparedness approach which DMI acts upon is an important element to be retained in the future development of DMI."

Nadia Hault, Development Studies, Netherlands

COMMUNITY FOCUS:

"Knowledge and understanding of the community is the core of DMI's work. DMI needs to continue and grow in this direction."

Michael Kropac, Urban Development Professional, Switzerland

LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING:

"DMI should develop partnership with local agencies as a strategic investment in building local capacities."

Jikesh Thakkar, WSP Coordinator

FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

"We should be financially self-reliant in order to execute activities without excessive dependence on others."

Learning Resources Team, DMI

DEVELOP EXPERTISE IN NEW AREAS:

"Our work should focus on children. This is demanded by both the slum communities in Bhuj and in Ahmedabad."

Yunus Khatri, BRP team, Bhuj

INFLUENCE INTERNATIONAL DECISION MAKERS:

"DMI is frequently invited to participate in national and international humanitarian forums and thus is in a special position to advocate for field-based disaster management issues."

Amar Jyoti Nayak, Action Aid

CONSOLIDATE AND BUILD VOLUNTEERS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:

"The Community Volunteers Programme of DMI should be further developed as it is an effective way of encouraging community participation in disaster recovery. More importantly the communities are enthusiastic about being a part of it."

Lucia Hugh, Development Professional, Germany