

LEARNING FROM REVIEW AND RESEARCH

Although Action Review and Research Services (ARRS) is a separate Activity Centre within DMI, its focus is very much related to learning through its research and evaluation activities in the humanitarian sector. It is designed as a means for DMI to objectively capture and disseminate lessons related to field based humanitarian work from the perspective of local communities and humanitarian institutions and workers. Its focus is on enhancing the say of the poor among the victims in disaster relief and long-term recovery interventions.

The review and research work is selected on the basis of its innovativeness and relevance to risk reduction at the community level. It develops and uses innovative and effective tools to conduct this research and evaluation. The research is designed for the specific context within which it is conducted, and several research tools are used in any investigation. For example, the following tools have been used in recent long term recovery reviews: village mapping, case studies, interviews, report cards, participatory rapid appraisal methods, and participatory evaluation writing methods. In addition, DMI maintains many databases associated with its research activities: 28 types of databases are maintained currently.

The ARRS Activity Centre has conducted the following types of work.

- Action evaluation
- Gender based evaluation
- Livelihood benchmarks
- Water Audits
- Long-term recovery evaluation
- Relief evaluation
- Institutional Analysis
- Action Learning Reviews

Recent studies have included the following:

DEC Evaluation: The response of Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), UK agencies after the 2001 Gujarat earthquake was evaluated. Over 4,500 relief recipients rated the performance of the relief services and materials worth UK £ 22 million provided after the earthquake in 2001.

UNDP Evaluation: UNDP's interventions after the Gujarat earthquake were evaluated through community appraisal tools. Sample villages were covered and multi-level feedback was generated in 2001.

SEWA Review: A multi-level process review of the response of Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) to the Gujarat earthquake was conducted in 2002. The evaluation aimed at understanding how a



The main reason for taking up evaluation and review projects is to enhance the voices of those who have benefitted from humanitarian intervention.

membership based organisation of poor working women helped its 60,000 earthquake affected members rebuild and recover.

Livelihood Benchmark Study: It mapped the macro and micro economic linkages of livelihoods after the 2001 earthquake. Covering 88 affected villages of Gujarat and over 1000 households, it was the first benchmark study of its kind in India.

Rating Urban Relief Performance: A report card on government-provided relief for earthquake-affected children was prepared based on community rating. Similarly, another report card on the relief performance of civic bodies in 5 small towns of Gujarat was prepared.

OBJECTIVES OF ACTION REVIEW AND RESEARCH

The purpose of Action Review and Research is to apply a rigorous methodology to documenting the impacts of disasters as well as evaluating the effectiveness of relief and mitigation efforts. Its aim is to capture best practices and learn from the experiences of key organizations and key events. Thus, it seeks to capture and disseminate lessons related to field based humanitarian work from the perspectives of local communities and humanitarian workers.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTION REVIEW AND RESEARCH

As with other DMI efforts, the focus is on determining what works at the grassroots level and to record the impacts of disasters at that level. This is usually not done in the disaster relief and mitigation field. As an earthquake affected woman in Kutch, Gujarat, said: "You are the first to come and ask us if there should be any changes in the relief activity." Similarly, based on the evaluation UNDP expanded its field level information centres, *Setus* in Kutch.

Community members tell how well what part of the project worked. Such exercise takes time.

