

LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS: EXCHANGE FOR CHANGE INTERNSHIPS

The Exchange for Change internship program offers young graduates from India and abroad the opportunity to gain practical work experience in the field of disaster mitigation in India and to understand the issues through a direct exposure to disaster risk mitigation processes and activities.

The program has proved to be beneficial for both the organisation and participating individuals. So far 33 young, enthusiastic and energetic interns have brought their knowledge and ideas to DMI. Participants have come from 18 universities. See Annex 9 for a complete list of the Universities from which participants have come.

AIESEC in Ahmedabad is DMI's long-term partner in inviting international interns from the vast pool of candidates from all over the world.

OBJECTIVES OF EXCHANGE FOR CHANGE

The purpose of this program is very much a two-way street. On the one hand, DMI counts on young professionals to contribute to the multi-disciplinary improvement of disaster risk mitigation by providing a global outlook to the DMI team. At the same time the Interns receive first-hand knowledge about global disparities, local vulnerability, and the voluntary spirit of India.

EFFECTIVENESS OF EXCHANGE FOR CHANGE

The Exchange for Change Internship Programme has been successful in bringing different perspectives to DMI and provided it with an opportunity to try new things. It has provided people with good English and technical expertise, such as economics, business, relief management, and computer skills. Interns have performed valuable work on specific tasks at DMI, such as helping coordinate and report on National Course Series, developing and analyzing insurance coverage questionnaires, and writing an Experience Learning Series booklet that documented the Bhuj Reconstruction Plan.

DMI, who partners with AIESEC in Ahmedabad, was awarded "Best Partner NGO" in 2001 by this international student-run organization. This programme has enabled young and enthusiastic interns from around the world to improve their professional, personal and cross-cultural skills while working at DMI. As Rachael Grivas, an Exchange for Change intern from Australia, stated, "I studied economics. But now I want to study disaster risk mitigation and contribute to the humanitarian sector." Another intern is managing a town-level emergency unit in the UK. Another intern is invited by a leading political party of Europe to advise its newly elected mayors on urban risk.

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Interns bring fresh ideas, endless energy and hard work to DMI teams.