

Documentation of Good Practices in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in India



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Project conceptualized and supported by EFICOR is being implemented as a collaborative effort of Sphere India members, their partners and larger humanitarian community through Sphere India Information and Knowledge Management subcommittee.

Section A. Basic Information

The programme title	Documentation of Good Practices in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in India
The name of the Implementing Partner requesting funding	EFICOR
Description of the programme	The good practices will be drawn from across the cross-section of the country through a call for short proposals. On the basis of the proposals received, 30 good practices will be short-listed by a Panel of Experts for full on site documentation and award. The good practices thus collated will be shared with other DRR practitioners through a National Workshop, wherein the good practices will also be presented the award/certificate. The good practice so garnered will be published in a book and also made available in an electronic version for wider dissemination by both EFICOR and Sphere India and their partners.

Section B Programme Context

India has been traditionally vulnerable to natural disasters on account of its unique geo-climatic conditions. Floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes and landslides have been recurrent phenomena. About 60% of the landmass is prone to earthquakes of various intensities; over 40 million hectares is prone to floods; about 8% of the total area is prone to cyclones and 68% of the area is susceptible to drought.¹

The devastations that happen every year have been consuming a steadily increasing share of development aid. Anticipated changes in climate are likely to exacerbate this. The outcomes of climate change - frequency and severity of climatic extremes, which increases the frequency of weather-related disasters like floods, droughts and intense storms - are on an increase. In the decade 1990-2000, an average of about 4344 people lost their lives and about 30 million people were affected by disasters every year². According to one World Bank estimate, reported direct losses are on the order of \$ 30 billion over the past 35 years. In 2005 alone, disasters in India caused direct losses approaching rupees 87,500 crore. During the period 1994-98, approximately 120 million people were affected by natural disasters in one-way or the other and according to one estimate economic losses piled to about 28,000 crore. The losses mounted to rupees 47,000 crore during the period 1998-2003. Authentic count of loss of human and cattle life as a whole is not available.³

The Government of India has in the recent year, taken a more proactive approach towards the management of disaster, both natural and man-made. There has been a paradigm shift from just having response/relief mechanism to creating preparedness and mitigation measures. The Disaster Management Act 2005 and the formation of the National Disaster Management Authority for the purposes of the Act are the significant legislative provisions in this direction. The Disaster Management structure within the Government has undergone a change too; there will be state and district level Disaster Management Authorities, with their specific disaster management plans.

Section C Programme Design

¹ Disaster Management in India – A Status Report. August 2004. Pg 3. Government of India. Ministry of Home Affairs. National Disaster Management Division.

² Ibid

³ Disaster Management in India-a New Awakening. R.K. Bhandari. Pg 3. http://www.vitcdmm.org/journal_on_disasters.pdf

The disastrous effect of many natural disasters on a community can be prevented or reduced by putting in place risk reduction mechanisms. The government, disaster management and development players in the past few years have recognized the importance of such pre-disaster risk reduction measures. Many communities have traditional risk reduction practices and some have been introduced to such measures by the government or other non-government agencies. These measures, though common to specific geographic locales or communities, maybe altogether unknown to others, even though they may have the potential for replication or providing insight in building resilience in another disaster prone community.

EFICOR, in its involvement in community based disaster risk reduction and interactions with other players in this arena, has realized the lack of and exchange of such traditional or contextualized knowledge. Having such a knowledge base would not only help in gaining knowledge of traditional and innovative risk reduction measure but could also to guide policy makers and DRR practitioners in making community-centric and community-friendly legislations and programmes, drawing from and building on the strengths of communities, instead of imposing on them uncommon ideas and practices which usually do not prove to be effective.

Keeping in mind such a scenario, EFICOR intends to collate good practices across the country which has helped in reducing risk and strengthening reliance of different communities which face cyclones, drought, earthquakes and floods. These could be indigenous/conventional or contextualized models with special reference to flood, cyclone, drought and earthquake.

It is envisaged that an initial desk research will yield an inventory of agencies – both government and non-government – involved in disaster risk reduction initiatives in these areas prone to these four disasters. This done, these agencies will be sent an invitation for submitting a entries in a prescribed format documenting any good practice in CBDRM they might be involved in. Such a call will also be posted on web portals commonly used by disaster and development professions and newspapers. On the basis of the proposals received, 30 good practices will be short-listed by a Panel of Experts and audited by a team of researchers on site. Based on this exercise the short-listed good practices would be awarded a Certificate of Recognition by EFICOR and Sphere India. The three best practices, as adjudged by the Panel of Experts, would be also be given a monetary award of Rs. 10,000 each.

The good practices thus collated will be shared with other DRR practitioners through a National Workshop, wherein the good practices will also be presented the award/certificate. The good practice so garnered will be published in a book and also made available in an electronic version for wider dissemination by both EFICOR and Sphere India and their partners.

Further, EFICOR will, as appropriate to the context of its work, use these examples or lessons learnt thereof for guiding its own DRR project designs and in its training so as to disseminate the learning gained to it partners and other agencies.

This entire exercise will be carried out in partnership with the Sphere India Managing Committee which will be a significant part of this venture. The partnership will be right from the designing of the project, through the call for submission of best practices to the final workshop, book release and promotion of the published good practices through their website and partners. Detail of this partnership is further discussed under the Project Management section.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) will lend general support and participate in the final process as assured by Prof. Vinod Menon, member NDMA, though there will be no formal partnership agreement with it.

Section D Programme Approach

Partnership with Sphere India

The project will be undertaken in partnership with Sphere India to widen the scope of the initiative in terms of reach and acceptance. Sphere India, being a body of many member organizations with involvement in the area of disaster management in India, would allow for access to a wider community of disaster and development agencies/individual with community level involvements.

Panel of Experts

A Panel of Experts will be constituted by EFICOR and Sphere together. It will consist of individual known for their experience, expertise and commitment to the cause of disaster risk reduction/development in India and have the ability to measure, analyse impact of programme on community. This committee will guide the progress of the project and can also make necessary amendments in the design or other aspects of the project.

The Panel of Experts will be assisted by a group of researchers who audit at the field the good practices submitted. If there is any direct entry from the member's organisation, he/she will voluntarily not participate in the evaluation of that entry.

Documentation

In-depth documentation will be done by the short terms researchers on site. The tools used will be Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and other relevant PRA techniques at the field using a checklist developed by the researcher. The documentation is to be strengthened through photographs and other necessary documents.

National Workshop

The data will be collated and shared with DRR practitioners through a National Workshop. The purpose of National Workshop would be to share findings and add value to the findings through the inputs provided. Thereafter the finding will be published in a book form.

Award

The award will be in terms of a Certificate of Recognition for all the 30 short-listed good practices and a monetary award of Rupees 30,000 each for the 3 best ones as adjudged by the Panel of Experts. The certificate will be jointly given by EFICOR and Sphere India.

Dissemination and Use

EFICOR will ensure that lessons from the models and practices documented are incorporated in its projects. This will be done by a process of organizational knowledge transfer wherein an information sharing workshop for the project staff, who will identify approaches, practices relevant to their area/project and forward these recommendations to the managers for incorporation in the current project design.

Further EFICOR will use its training programmes, especially Disaster Management trainings, to disseminate these good practices among its partners and enable them to understand and incorporate DRR practices in their projects as well as advocate for mainstreaming of DRR in the local context. Like wise, the Sphere India Management Committee will also disseminate these good practices among their partners.

EFICOR, as member of the NGO Task force of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), will push for incorporations of the lessons drawn from these documented best practices in the relevant forums of the NDMA wherein it participates.

Section E Programme Management

EFICOR is a relief and development agency that has been involved in managing drought, cyclone, flooding, epidemics and earthquakes through all phases of the disaster cycle in India for the past 40 years. EFICOR bases its relief operation on the 'Red Cross Code of Conduct' and is one of the pioneering organizations who initiated the institutionalization of the SPHERE project in India. It also organises project management and disaster management workshops/seminars for smaller local partners.

Since 2003 EFICOR has been involved in Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) projects, the first one in the Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh. Now called Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) projects, these initiatives have covered about 42 villages in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Bihar, largely dealing with flood and drought hazards. Last year it had initiated a DFID funded (through Tearfund UK) two phase project on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction in India intending to cover about 50 additional villages in Bihar, Orissa and Assam in five years.

This project will be done in partnership with Sphere India Management Committee, of which EFICOR is a member. Under the Sphere India Management Committee, a Sub-Committee will be constituted to specifically carry out this project and which will be chaired by EFICOR. It will comprise of members from EFICOR and other co-opted members from the Sphere India Management Committee. The ownership of this project will be with this committee, which will also be the decision making body for this specific project.

This Sub-Committee will appoint a Panel of Experts to provide technical inputs and shortlist the best good practices from the entries received.

The Sub-Committee will also appoint a Research Coordinator and other short-term researchers to carry out this project. The short-term researchers will be responsible for the audit and complete on-site documentation of different short-listed good practice. The Research Coordinator will coordinate this exercise and also be responsible for the final document in terms of a published compendium of these good practices in a book and an electronic version of the same. The Research Coordinator and her/his team will be responsible to the Sub-Committee.

The finances will primarily be undertaken by EFICOR but if the need arises Sphere is willing to raise financial support as well. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn out between EFICOR and the Sphere India Management Committee for these purposes.

Section F Risk Assessment and Management

The possible risk in carrying out such an attempt would be that people may not respond to the invitation. But constituting an award and giving certificate of recognition along with Sphere, will minimize that risk as it would be viewed as a desirable recognition.

Another risk could be the authenticity of the information provided. The risk of such happening will be reduced by sending an audit team to verify facts and do a fuller detailed documentation.