

# **Independent Evaluation of Expenditure of DEC India Earthquake Appeal Funds**

**January 2001 – October 2001**

## **VOLUME TWO**

### **Full Evaluation Report**

*Humanitarian Initiatives, UK  
Disaster Mitigation Institute, India  
Mango, UK  
December 2001*

## **DEC Evaluation: The Earthquake in Gujarat/2**

### **VOLUME TWO**

#### *Full Evaluation Report*

Map (on printed version)

Acronyms

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## **VOLUME TWO**

### **FULL EVALUATION REPORT**

*Tony Vaux*

Team Leader

#### **Acronyms**

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>BRCS</b>	British Red Cross Society
<b>DEC</b>	Disasters Emergency Committee
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (British Government)
<b>DMI</b>	Disaster Mitigation Institute (Ahmedabad, Gujarat)
<b>ECHO</b>	European Commission Humanitarian Office
<b>GSDMA</b>	Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority
<b>PDS</b>	Public Distribution System
<b>SCF</b>	Save the Children Fund (UK)
<b>SEWA</b>	Self Employed Women's Association
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	UN Children's Fund

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*'Nothing is as strong as self-reliance'* -villager named Rambha in Lakadia, Bhachau.

### **1.1. Earthquakes in India**

1. Earthquakes are not uncommon in Western Gujarat. There were three severe tremors in the Bhavnagar area in October 2000 –these may have been early warnings of what was to come. The earthquake that occurred at 8.46 am on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2001, with its epicentre just north of the city of Bhuj, had exceptionally severe consequences. Its effects need no exaggeration. Measured on the Richter scale it was not 7.9 as most DEC agency reports stated, but -according to the Government of India's official figure<sup>1</sup>- 6.9. The confusion arose because other sources within India and abroad gave higher figures, up to 7.7<sup>2</sup>, and somehow this was transposed upwards.
2. Nearly twenty thousand people died<sup>3</sup> and over a million homes were badly damaged or destroyed. The problems for aid agencies were compounded because the effects of the earthquake were spread over such a huge area. The last major earthquake in Gujarat at Anjar (Kutch) in 1956 measured 7.0 on the Richter scale but caused damage only within a single sub-District. By contrast, the 2001 earthquake practically destroyed four large towns and badly affected 23 Districts. It was an event of overwhelming importance throughout the Western part of Gujarat –Saurashtra and Kutch- with damage inflicted right across the State.
3. A measure of 6.9 on the Richter scale is not so very extraordinary in itself. Earthquakes of that severity are fairly common in India. In the last century there have been more than 250 earthquakes above 6.0, many of them comparable with this one<sup>4</sup>. North-East India experiences an earthquake measuring over 5.0 on the Richter Scale every 4 months and over 6.0 every 9 months. Assam experienced a colossal earthquake measuring 8.6 in 1950, -one of the largest recorded anywhere in the world. But the Gujarat earthquake was unexpected, and had not been prepared for.
4. The mortality caused by earthquakes in India is not well recorded but seems to vary widely. Human factors, notably building methods, play a major role as well as severity, timing, extent and population density. In California earthquakes of this magnitude cause little or no mortality. Seismic safety costs money and preparedness saves lives.
5. There is an in-built tendency for these 'Acts of God' to inflict their worst effects on the poorest people. None of the modern industrial establishments of Gujarat was damaged. *'God must be an industrialist'* said The Times of India. Industrialists can afford solid buildings and have the power to ensure that they are properly constructed.

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<sup>1</sup> National Centre for Disaster Management (NCDM). For more on earthquakes in India see *'Manual on Natural Disaster Management in India'* NCDM, Delhi, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> US Geological Survey.

<sup>3</sup> All statistics are political. A figure of 12,251 quoted in Times of India 19<sup>th</sup> October is based on estimates from 'District authorities' meaning political opposition. Aid agencies have often used figures as high as 50,000. See for example Indian Red Cross/IFRC 'Report by the India Earthquake Recovery and Rehabilitation Mission' p1.

<sup>4</sup> NCDM op cit p23

6. In this earthquake relatively few people were killed in buildings made of shaped stone blocks or reinforced concrete frames –provided that the normal building regulations had been followed. The problems occurred in traditional village houses constructed from rough stones with scanty cement and in buildings that had simply been badly constructed. Outrage followed the collapse of shoddily-built apartment blocks in Ahmedabad, 200 miles from the epicentre. In Kutch, the older areas of towns and villages were reduced to rubble –which is essentially what they were made of. But even within those areas many buildings withstood the earthquake.
7. Houses with heavy tile roofs suspended on walls made of rough stones crumbled as the earth vibrated below them. Sometimes poorer people escaped because their houses were built only of mud and thatch. The rich were safer in buildings caged in concrete and steel. Overall the immediate effect of the Gujarat earthquake was worst in the middle sections of society, especially those living in older houses. But the poor were especially vulnerable when it came to the distribution of assistance.
8. All sections of society showed a remarkable readiness to declare ‘business as usual’ – in fact a few weeks after the disaster we saw a sign bearing those words stuck on a heap of rubble in Bhuj. Three days after the earthquake trade in Ahmedabad was back to normal. By the end of the week small stalls had appeared even in the most devastated areas.
9. Gujarat will experience more earthquakes. It is located in the Himalayan collision zone where the Indo-Australian tectonic plate slides under the more northern Eurasian plate in a predominantly northern direction at a rate of one or two centimetres per year. With an earthquake over 5.0 predicted every 20 years<sup>5</sup>, Gujarat is not so vulnerable as the north of India, but disasters, including cyclones and droughts, are common enough to make mitigation important. And with 56 million people in India affected by disasters every year<sup>6</sup> and Gujarat experiencing a serious cyclone every three years<sup>7</sup> it is important that the lessons should now be learnt.

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<sup>5</sup> In and around Gujarat, magnitude 6.0 or greater: 1819, 1845, 1847, 1848, 1864, 1903, 1938, 1956, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> NCDM op cit p1

<sup>7</sup> Recent ones were 1975, 1976, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1996, 1998, 1999.

## **1.2. The Appeal**

10. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2001 twelve aid agencies from the UK and Ireland launched an Appeal for ‘the survivors of the earthquake’ that eventually raised over £24million of which £5m was retained by individual agencies. One of them (CAFOD) dropped out early and left the other eleven<sup>8</sup> to spend the money. The DEC Chief Executive quickly used his discretion to extend the time-period for spending the funds from 6 to 9 months. But this timescale was still to prove a major obstacle. Within four weeks the agencies had to present their plans for that period. They had to finish their operations by the end of October. This evaluation was intended to assess what had happened up to that date. But because some 40% of the funds remained unspent at the end of October, the DEC had little choice but to allow an extension, or to be more exact, an extremely long ‘period of closure’, with a final end to operations at the end of July 2002.

## **1.3. Methodology of the Evaluation**

11. **Stakeholder analysis.** The views of evaluators need to be based on explicit values and must reflect the opinions of the primary stakeholders –the people who were to be helped. Those views must also reflect the perspectives –as far as we can judge them– of the donors, the people who voluntarily contributed to the Appeal. Because the donors gave to the Appeal and not to specific agencies within it, this is an evaluation of the total response, not of individual members.
12. **Use of the Red Cross Code.** We use the Red Cross Code<sup>9</sup> as the basis from which to explore values because it is the most widely accepted set of humanitarian values and all DEC members must sign up to it. By agreement with the DEC we have used this instead of the DEC’s own ‘six principles’ which lack the same universal acceptance. The Code was evolved in the West and has not been negotiated with local NGOs or the people in need. In the decade since the Code was devised little has been done to promote it and too often it is just a ‘badge’ acquired easily by declaration. There is no process of scrutiny and even commercial security companies have signed up to it.<sup>10</sup> But it is in the public domain, and anyone donating to the DEC or receiving its aid could reasonably expect agencies to follow it.
13. **A voice for the ‘survivors’.** The most difficult voice to hear is that of ‘the survivors of the earthquake’ for whom the Appeal was launched. Accordingly we commissioned a public opinion survey, through the Disaster Mitigation Institute in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It covered 2,372 people in 50 rural and urban locations and was supplemented by interviews with some 30 key individuals. The results are described in more detail in the Public Opinion Research report (Volume Three). The research took twelve people six weeks to complete, and was supervised by three specialists. Our methodology may need improvement. But this is the first time as far as we are aware that such research has been used in a major evaluation. We hope that we will at least establish the principle that research into public opinion is a necessary part of DEC evaluations.

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<sup>8</sup> ActionAid, British Red Cross, CARE, Christian Aid, Concern, Help the Aged, Merlin, Oxfam, Save the Children, Tearfund, World Vision.

<sup>9</sup> The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. See Appendix. Full text and commentary at [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

<sup>10</sup> Armorgroup, which includes Defence Systems Limited (DSL) for example.

14. **India-UK/Ireland balance and composition.** We have tried to integrate India and UK/Ireland perspectives within the evaluation team. Operations in India were managed and supported by Mihir Bhatt, Director of the Disaster Mitigation Institute (DMI). These comprised the public opinion research led by Preeti Bhat, preliminary review of financial issues by Nimish Shah, and a review of shelter issues by Kirtee Shah. The Team Leader and main report-writer was Tony Vaux of Humanitarian Initiatives. Hugh Goyder, also of Humanitarian Initiatives, undertook the UK stakeholder survey, review of Sphere and comparison with other DEC evaluations. Alex Jacobs of 'Mango' was in charge of the financial management review. Sarah Routley gave methodological support for the public opinion survey. For more background on the team see Appendix Three.
15. **DEC Agencies.** We undertook 'stakeholder reviews' with the UK/Ireland offices of DEC agencies and with regional and field offices. In each of the three main field visits formal consultations were held with representatives of DEC agencies as a group. Extensive consultations took place with Government at National, State and District levels. We consulted UN agencies and DEC local partners, usually without the presence of member agency staff.
16. **Self-appraisal.** We have tried to encourage self-appraisal by DEC agencies. In meetings this worked well, but the results in written form were disappointing, probably reflecting the heavy workload of staff in the field. We made it clear from the start that we would not evaluate each agency and expected them to conduct their own evaluations. Some have done so. Oxfam, in particular, deserves credit for a very honest internal evaluation, and their willingness to share it with us.
17. **Institutional Learning.** As ALNAP recently concluded- '*Unless the evaluation process recognises its role in relation to institutional learning, it will lose its status*'<sup>11</sup>. From the perspective of the DEC members the best use of an evaluation is probably to lead to improvements in performance through institutional learning. Rather than commenting on individual actions and events (much of which is now 'water under the bridge') we will focus on drawing out learning points. But for these points to be absorbed agencies would need to allocate time to debating and communicating them. A question remains about the use of this report -does it need a process of discussion in order to extract the most value?
18. **Limitations.** The evaluation team has a number of significant links with DEC agencies, most notably with Oxfam. One of the team members, Mihir Bhatt, directs an organisation that is a partner of some DEC agencies. Mango has provided finance staff for DEC members, including for Gujarat. The gender balance of the team should have been more in favour of women. In retrospect we can see that the public opinion research could have been directed a little more towards poor and excluded sections of society in order to counter other biases. To an extent we have tried to counteract these factors in the final report.

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<sup>11</sup> Accountability and Learning in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP): '*Humanitarian Action: Learning from Evaluation*' Annual Review 2001.

19. Some other factors were beyond our control. Because of the muddle about DEC timescales, most DEC evaluations are supposed to happen at the end of the process but actually take place in the middle. The solution should not be to tinker with the evaluation timetable but to sort out the timescales. Another limitation is that the length of this main report is not meant to be more than 30 pages. Despite exceeding this limit by 50% we still cannot always give the nuances of the debate or enough practical examples.
20. But the main limitations are our own. We received more than full cooperation from the DEC members and Secretariat, we were welcomed everywhere and the debates were enthusiastic.
21. **The report.** In order to compress the results, the DEC itself is the focus of the Executive Summary, and the full report focuses more on programme issues. Detailed reports on the Public Opinion Research, Shelter, Financial Management, and Sphere Standards are given in Volume Three. For general information about the DEC and its members please see the DEC website.

## 2. THE AFFECTED AREA

*'Kutch presents an epitome of the larger story of India- constant invasions, a fusion of cultures: a dawning sense of nationalism. Kutchi annals are full of dramatic episodes; there is a remarkable wealth of 'remembered history', little of which has been written down.'* L.F. Rushbrook Williams: 'The Black Hills'<sup>12</sup>

22. **Problems of information.** There is dearth of recent research material on the sociology of the earthquake area. Aid agencies such as Concern that tried to obtain material experienced the same limitation. As far as we could ascertain the best source of basic social information remains the (rather archaic) District Gazetteers. Many DEC agencies seem to have relied, at best, on anecdotal information for their analysis of the background to the earthquake. Lack of information –of many kinds- has been a major constraint on the response. We have suggested that the DEC as a body should offer to help members with information management –and social information could be part of this role.
23. **Physical Factors.** Most of the area affected by the earthquake is low-lying and flat. As a result there was much less disruption of transport and communications than many outsiders had expected. Road links with Kutch were restored within hours and railways within days. Before many aid agencies had arrived, electricity supplies had been restored across much of the area and within a month or so water supplies were back to the (rather inadequate) levels that existed before the earthquake. For more on this see the DEC Monitoring Report of March 2001.
24. **Environmental Factors.** Fortunately this earthquake has not caused major environmental change, as happened in 1819 when an earthquake caused the sea level to fall in the Great Rann (a huge salty estuary), and left harbours cut off from the sea. But the area is now in the grip of a long-term process of land degradation through deforestation, pollution and industrial development. Water tables are falling rapidly, and there is a particularly severe risk of salinity. The impact of water-harvesting projects in some areas will be greatly diminished by these factors.

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<sup>12</sup> L.F.Rushbrook Williams: *'The Black Hills: Kutch in History and Legend'* Shenval 1958.



25. The area is extremely dry. Rain only falls in any significant amount every third year or so and many villages are normally served by water-tankers. Agencies unfamiliar with the area put themselves under excessive pressure to achieve results before the 'monsoon'. A European perspective on such matters may have distorted the response. Even though the rains were unusually heavy this year, the issue for people was not so much 'shelter' as livelihoods and security of possessions.
26. **Political Factors.** The political environment was extremely important, yet few DEC agencies read it properly. The Government of India was particularly favourable towards Kutch for a number of reasons. One was a fears of a separatist movement in an extremely sensitive location next to Pakistan. Kutch is almost an island poised in a salty lagoon between India and Pakistan. It has a language closer to Sindhi (a language of Pakistan) than Gujarati. Kutch has links with a scattered and influential trading community all over the world. Kutchi businessmen are a powerful economic and political force in Bombay. There is a fierce sense of independence which was admired in the earthquake response, but also gives government misgivings about Kutch. Not long after the disaster the people of Anjar organised a march to demand help for rehabilitation. They were apparently successful in achieving tax concessions on goods related to construction.
27. On top of this the State Government is the only one in India aligned to the national Government in Delhi, and very vulnerable. It has lost some recent elections and postponed others in Kutch because it is afraid of losing. The national Government was therefore very anxious to give the maximum support. As so often in India, where there is a political will, remarkable things happen. Services, including the food supply, were restored within days of the earthquake. Villagers reported that they had started receiving cash handouts within a week. Immense pressure was placed on the bureaucracy. By October, an amazing 96% of applications for compensation had been processed and payments had been made in respect of 143,802 totally collapsed houses and 836,333 partially damaged houses. DEC members needed to know –and should have known- that the government response would be on a massive scale.
28. They also needed to know that the civil service would be used as a political tool. Because they had just lost the elections in the District Panchayats (Councils) the State Government made heavy use of the civil service rather than local political institutions. The Village Panchayats had been dissolved on the pretext of the 'drought' emergency. This meant that there was little political pressure coming from below –and opened up a clear space for civil society organisations.
29. In short, the context meant that there was no need to bail out the government. But there was a very strong need to make sure that the government response was sensitive to the poor, rather than to its own political supporters. Unfortunately this leaves much doubt about DEC activities such as construction of health centres and pre-schools, partly because the DEC is substituting for what government will willingly do, and partly because the lack of political structures at the local level may undermine their ultimate use.
30. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that the survival of the national government depended on holding onto Gujarat. During October the Gujarat Chief Minister was replaced, and mainly because the national leadership thought he had failed to respond adequately to the earthquake.

31. **The Public Distribution System (PDS).** There is a tendency for aid agencies to cope with the complications of politics by ignoring government altogether or view it simply as an obstacle to doing what they want. Few, if any, seriously considered using the mechanism that already existed for the distribution of food to the poor. The Public Distribution System (PDS) operates a fair price shop in practically every village, providing basic foods at cheap prices to ration-card holders. This remarkable apparatus was functioning again within days of the disaster and enabled government to distribute 15,000 tonnes of food within a month, rendering private efforts in this sector largely superfluous. Because of political pressures, ration cards lost in the earthquake were quickly replaced. Rather than set up their own systems, involving endless surveys to find out who was in need, DEC agencies could have used this existing system and spent their time improving rather than duplicating it.
32. In the DEC research, people expressed concern about those who had lost their cards in the earthquake, migrants and people who were recently married and not yet registered. Moslems felt that the system did not properly reflect their larger family size. Agency work to improve the system could have had considerable impact.
33. A similar system was set up at the Government's request by the NGO consortium, Abhiyan (supported by SCF) to deal with non-food items. The two systems together offer a remarkable basis for reducing future vulnerability. They should be studied and lessons learnt for the future.
34. **Economic factors.** There is a massive and increasing economic disparity between the highly developed port areas and the declining rural hinterland. Increasingly the needs of the rural areas are being met by cheap goods from the towns rather than by rural craftsmen. Craft workshops in the villages must turn for survival to specialised urban markets or export abroad. After the earthquake the towns had to recover before rural producers could recover their markets. Aid agencies which supported 'traditional' rural crafts such as black-smithy found that the issue was not tools but markets. DEC members tended to limit their inputs to production, ignoring the more crucial issues of economic change.
35. The largest source of income for the rural poor is migrant labour and the largest single activity is salt-making. Small-scale production in the salt-pans has been on the decline because of problems of access to government land and increasing mechanisation by large companies. There are now enormous disparities between incomes going to companies and the wages paid to the sub-contracted workers. But despite the poverty of local labourers, there is still a threat that wages will be further undercut them by labour from the tribal areas and from outside Gujarat. The earthquake made it difficult for local labourers to leave their homes and families. The minimum required was a single secure room, and something more solid than a tent. Temporary housing not only offered shelter but also enabled labourers to return to work.
36. Kutch's historical role as a centre for trade and seafaring has created a substantial inflow of remittances. There is money in Kutch. The World Bank notes a credit-deposit ratio of 10.9 in Kutch compared with 85.7 in Ahmedabad. This suggests that better-off people in Kutch have substantial deposits and relatively few debts to banks. This is corroborated by the extraordinarily rapid reconstruction process in the towns and the appearance of fine new houses in devastated villages. By contrast, the poor make little use of bank lending and rely on moneylenders for loans, paying very high rates of interest.

37. **Social Factors.** Gujarat is a relatively prosperous State. The area affected by the earthquake is poorer than the average (26% people below the poverty line compared with 24% for the State) but well below the national average of 36%. Literacy rates in Kutch are 53% overall, and 41% for females –a little above the Indian averages<sup>13</sup>. The concentration of scheduled castes (12%) is much higher than the Gujarat average (7%) but below the India average (16%). In addition there are substantial numbers of scheduled tribes (7%) and minorities (20%). The largest among these ‘backward’ groups are the Moslems, constituting nearly 16% of the total population.
38. Kutch is home to India’s most dynamic port, Kandla, which now handles 17% of the country’s maritime traffic. By contrast a large number of villages receive water only by water-tanker, and there are often migrations because of drought. It is an area of contrasts.
39. The trading process generates social capital but civil society of the kind that leads to greater equality is lacking. In the earthquake area there are few examples of the dairy co-operatives and water-users’ associations that are common elsewhere in Gujarat. In the last decade there has been an increase in the number of NGOs, many of them arising from needs felt during times of disaster. They were eager to involve themselves in this new catastrophe.
40. Caste retains a strong link with occupation. This has a direct implication for donors. An agency helping weavers will be helping a particular caste. If it works with a weavers’ organisation, that organisation is likely to be a caste group and may have an exclusive attitude towards other social groups. Even training for blacksmiths, weavers and carpenters is likely to involve a strong differentiation by caste. Oxfam, for example, worked with an organisation that turned out to be almost exclusively concerned with one particular caste (the Rabari community of herders) and it resisted Oxfam’s attempts to include others.
41. Villages in the earthquake area are physically separated into distinct sections based on caste. In some cases a group may be invisible from the other, literally and metaphorically. If asked about the population of the village higher castes may ‘forget’ about poorer caste groups, and so they are left off the lists for distribution.
42. **Gender.** Reflecting the overall situation in India, the number of women in Kutch District is less than men (964 per 1000) indicating a relative lack of resources allocated to female children<sup>14</sup>. But the status of women is a complex issue. The custom of covering the face in the presence of men does not mean that women do not take part in community issues. Women’s economic and social roles are important and recognised with respect. Programmes run by women or involving women are not a problem.
43. **Previous disasters.** The area had attracted national attention during previous disasters including the Morvi Flood of 1979 and more recently the cyclones of 1998 and 1999. Kutch is a marginal area, suffering a series of droughts in the last decade. There is a certain readiness for further disaster both in the government and in the network of NGOs (Kutch Navnirman Abhiyan –known simply as ‘Abhiyan’) which was specifically formed after the 1999 cyclone to co-ordinate NGO activities around disaster relief.

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<sup>13</sup> World Bank/ADB op cit.

<sup>14</sup> In the State of Kutch, female infanticide was practised by the dominant landowning families until suppressed by the British in the nineteenth century.

44. Gujarat State has the strongest tradition of NGOs in India. It is home to the powerful Gandhian network as well as a number of huge organisations set up by religious and business groups. It has a group of the most progressive NGOs in the country.
45. In conclusion, the earthquake area presented severe complications in the social sector because of caste, the presence of excellent NGOs, and a powerful and willing government structure -but not one oriented towards the poor. Success came to external agencies which made the strategic link by using NGOs to address social complexities, and then turned to make the government focus on the poor. Those that tried to go it alone, or worked with caste groups, were much less successful.
46. **Learning Points-**
- The effects of earthquakes vary according to severity, timing and aftershocks interacting with physical and social characteristics of the area. It is unwise to make false assumptions –such as that the area is ‘cut off’ and supplies have to be rushed in from far away, or even from abroad.
  - The government’s PDS offers an important potential channel for relief assistance. It could be developed as a tool for disaster relief. Study of this system would contribute to disaster preparedness in India.
  - The irregular occurrence of earthquakes in the area makes it difficult to measure the benefit of seismic safety against cost.
  - Interventions in support of livelihoods have to be based on a proper understanding of markets.
  - In the absence of formal sociological data, NGO partnerships become more important, and are also the best way to reduce future vulnerability.
  - Many DEC members underestimated local capacity.
  - The Abhiyan network should be evaluated in order to extract further lessons.

### 3. SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE EARTHQUAKE

*‘Discrimination is always there in our village. It was there during rescue and relief activities after the earthquake. We have to live in this village so we do not talk about that now’ -labourer, Vamka Village, Rapar.*

47. 26<sup>th</sup> January was Republic Day and parades were due to take place at 9am. When the earthquake happened, fourteen minutes earlier, many children and onlookers were out in the open getting ready for the celebrations and so escaped the collapse of walls and roofs. If the earthquake had occurred at night when people were asleep in their houses the mortality would have been very much higher. As it was, the spread of injury and death depended on what people happened to be doing.
48. Mortality was highest among women because many were at home doing the household chores. The loss of mothers became a major social problem. Many young children were left in the care of grandparents and older relatives (especially older women) while the fathers went out to work. As HelpAge have pointed out, in many families the value and status of older people increased. By contrast those widowed by the earthquake faced huge social problems. Such women were often unable to establish their rights of ownership to their house-plots unless they received assistance in doing so. ActionAid was perhaps the only DEC member to recognise and address this issue.

49. Many people were temporarily or permanently disabled. But aid agencies only offered immediate medical treatment. Statistics for operations hid the fact that many people needed rehabilitation in the home, and help with adapting to new circumstances because of disability. Because there was so little help, many people unnecessarily lost mobility and livelihoods. The issue of disability was badly neglected. Agencies sometimes referred to the presence of a specialist organisation, Handicap International. But they were working only in a very limited area. Every agency should have addressed disability as an integral part of its programmes.
50. **Livelihoods and shelter.** An important characteristic of the area is that for a majority of people houses are workplaces as well as homes, and so the earthquake destroyed livelihoods as well as lives. The problem was not simply the direct destruction of workplace homes but also that people could not go out to work because they had no safe place to keep their possessions. The rapid provision of semi-permanent, secure structures was extremely important for recovery. SCF and Caritas (CAFOD) were the only agencies to recognise this issue. This is a serious shortcoming of the DEC response, especially because funds were lying unused at the crucial time.
51. **Discrimination.** In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake there was a process of social levelling. There were tales of friendship and neighbourliness cutting across caste and religion. The armed forces, government officials and workers in water, electricity and roads all did heroic work<sup>15</sup>. But even from the start there were signs that the rich were more willing to exploit the situation than the poor-  
*'They (people of the better-off communities) would call the rescue personnel and tell them- "sir, come here, we have our relatives buried here". In fact there may or may not have been people buried at the spot, but they managed to get their streets cleared of debris in this manner. Our people did not use this trick and they were too scared to approach the rescue people, so we could not get the rescue workers to pay any attention to us.'* -man in Anjar<sup>16</sup>
- A poor Moslem woman told us-  
*'The leaders and committee members got lots of relief. The ex-Sarpanch (village leader) has built a new house outside the village. Nobody is bothered about the poor'*
52. Some organisations came to the earthquake area specifically to help certain groups such as caste Hindus, dalits<sup>17</sup>, old people, women and so on. What were the legitimate limits of discrimination? The government took the view that those who had lost the most property were entitled to the most help. Was this right?

<sup>15</sup> Described more fully in the DEC Monitoring Mission report of March 2001 (see DEC website).

<sup>16</sup> Dalit is the most acceptable word for scheduled castes, formerly known as 'untouchables'.

<sup>17</sup> The quotation is from BSC Ahmedabad and ISI Delhi 'Relief Activities in the Earthquake Affected Areas of Gujarat: The perceptions of the -Marginalised Communities'. Dalit is the most acceptable word for scheduled castes or 'untouchables'.

53. DEC members were not as alert as they should have been to the process of discrimination and social division which occurred during the earthquake response. Disasters shake up society and the ownership of resources becomes fluid. This usually results in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. The axiom of social processes in disasters is- *‘to those that have, more shall be given. And from those that have little, even what they have shall be taken away.’* The effects are particularly pronounced –and well known- in the Indian subcontinent because of the stratification of caste. It can be reasonably predicted that issues of social justice and social exclusion will be core concerns for any poverty-focused response to disaster. In the absence of efforts to the contrary, the long-term result of the Gujarat earthquake is social polarisation.

#### 54. Learning Points.

- In societies where there are problems associated with the legal status of women, agencies should expect the issue of widowhood to be important.
- The issue of disability is often neglected. It should not be left to specialist organisations (there are none big enough) but integrated into disaster responses.
- The notion of shelter can be a misleading one; houses are places of work as much as protection from the elements.
- Poverty-focused agencies must expect to make explicit plans to deal with the tendency for wealth to polarise in disasters.

## 4. PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

55. For details of the methodology and findings see the detailed report in Volume Three. We found a reasonably high level of satisfaction among ‘consumers’ of DEC services-

**Table: Percentage of persons satisfied with response (DEC research)**

	Food and Nutrition	Drinking Water and Health (Long Term and Short Term)	Shelter and Services		Livelihood
			Temp	Permnt	
Quality	98%	90%	81%	80%	83%
Quantity	80%	68%	86%	45%	40%
Accessibility	95%	57%	86%	60%	61%
Affordability	99%	86%	90%	50%	60%
Reliability	99%	68%	92%	60%	50%

56. Overall people were more impressed with the immediate relief response than with progress of livelihood issues and permanent shelter. What people were commenting on was the general response, not specifically that of the DEC. The research offers more detailed insights-

57. **Spread.** The research showed that the geographical spread of the response had been uneven. Sufficient and excess relief was received by 73% of villages in Kutch but only 54% in affected areas outside Kutch. The urban-rural bias was even more pronounced, with 74% of rural communities recording satisfaction but only 28% of urban communities.

58. **Timeliness.** Timing of relief distributions was generally good in relation to food (100% satisfaction), clothing (80%), water (77%), blankets (70%) but less so for temporary shelter (51%) –probably reflecting the fact that so few people got this kind of assistance. Further dissatisfaction was expressed about livelihoods support (60% thought it was too late) and the most dissatisfaction concerned the slow progress on permanent housing (96%). People also expressed dissatisfaction with insensitivity in the timing- *‘we had not yet buried our dead and we were expected to stand in line to collect relief items. I refused to open my door. What use is food to the dead?’*
59. **Quantity.** There were nearly 500 interventions recorded in the 50 villages but half of these were assessments, meetings and surveys. Despite so much gathering of information, from the people’s point of view there was still wide variation in the quantities of aid given. 44% of communities stated that they had received insufficient clothes and 28% received too many. Similar observations are made about food and tents. Over 50% of communities felt that shelter interventions were in insufficient amounts. Water was considered adequate in 78% of communities but 21% experienced serious problems including some communities which had to wait up to four days for tanks –supposed to be filled daily- to be refilled.
60. **Quality.** 79% of people thought that the quality of relief interventions was good with only 17% thinking it was OK and only 4% considering it of low quality. Food, water and domestic kits were thought to be of particularly high quality, while there were lower levels of satisfaction with the quality of blankets, medical work and livelihoods interventions. The issue of quality in shelter interventions produced a range of different views. Some thought tents were of high quality but found them too small and too hot.
61. **Appropriateness.** Without exception communities felt that the clothes distributed were not appropriate, particularly in the case of women, especially older women, Muslims and men who normally wore traditional clothes. The majority of communities stated that the clothing was only used for filling quilts –‘we got many clothes but I haven’t seen anyone wearing them’ as one person said. There was praise for a 3-month food distribution by World Vision as this took the pressure off people having to find employment immediately and gave them greater security. Oxfam’s distribution of seeds to all farmers with land was thought more appropriate than government’s which was directed only to those with more than 10 acres.
62. **Selection of beneficiaries.** People felt that organisations should distribute to the poor first, and not on a first-come first-served basis. They wanted outsiders to ask communities who were the poor rather than rely on the views of leaders. They objected to the use of the Government’s grading system (based on damage to houses) as the basis for other distributions. Similarly there was resentment about the government’s plan to give larger amounts to those who had larger houses. People noticed that an agency distributed many tents in some communities but refused to help others. They stated that the criteria were not known to them.
63. **Cultural change.** There was a widespread view that the processes used to distribute relief were often unacceptable to women and particular social groups. Such programmes were designed without knowledge of community norms, or with the aim of changing them –which proved unrealistic.

64. **Priorities for intervention.** People constantly emphasised the need to restore livelihoods rather than receive relief and expressed some frustration that outsiders did not listen to them on this point. They wanted to receive cloth and make their own clothes rather than receive clothing but no-one took any notice. They particularly valued cash interventions because they increased people's capacity to choose their own priorities and focus on livelihoods. Similarly distribution of building materials was seen as preferable to construction because it gave greater choice.
65. **Representation.** People distinguished consultation with leaders, with relief committees and with the general community –giving a strong preference for the latter. Leaders were the least likely to be representative, but relief committees were also viewed with suspicion as not representing all the different groups (castes). People felt that general consultations should have been more common. Out of 175 interventions considered in the survey, only 61 involved the general community. There were suggestions that key community representatives, informally selected, might have played a better role than the formal leaders and committees.
66. **Consultation.** People felt that even after they were consulted their views were not incorporated into plans, and blamed this on agencies having designed their programmes in advance. There were a number of exceptions given. EFFICOR had modified the size of tents after complaints. Under SEWA's insurance scheme (CARE) men had been allowed to participate etc. But the overall view was that communities should be involved at all stages- selection of beneficiaries, decisions about priorities and programming. If there had been better consultation they felt that recovery would have been faster.
67. **Participation.** Participation was often seen as a ploy to secure what was to the agency's advantage such as free labour and reduced costs. One observation was that 'consultation was sought only to complete the paperwork'. Instead of leading to a sense of partnership such 'participation' seems to have alienated the community. A troubling finding is that among communities assisted by DEC agencies, three times as many were considered to show insufficient participation compared with other communities. People noted that consultation was most likely to be done effectively by agencies which were already known and trusted in the area (the CARE partner SEWA was given as an example). In general people felt that they had not been involved enough in the assessment process and the selection of beneficiaries but only on small modifications to pre-existing programmes<sup>18</sup>
68. **Learning Points.**
- There was a tendency for aid to focus too much around the centre of the earthquake area.
  - Urban areas have been neglected.
  - Clothing is a culturally sensitive issue.
  - Ignoring cultural distinctions of caste and gender was not acceptable.
  - Although the research was not skewed towards the poor, it reflects a strong feeling that the poor should be targeted.
  - People place great emphasis on livelihoods.
  - People felt ill-informed about the aid-givers and their criteria.
  - There are serious concerns about consultation and participation.
  - As far as possible, consultation should be open to all, not restricted to leaders.

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<sup>18</sup> People in the research project proved to be very interested in the process of categorising the different levels and types of participation. See full report.



## 5. EVALUATION AGAINST THE RED CROSS CODE

### **5.1. Red Cross Principle<sup>19</sup> One: The humanitarian imperative comes first.**

**‘The prime motive of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster’ –from subtext.**

*‘Because they had something to give, they gave it to us’ - DEC Public opinion survey.*

**Key Issues:** Relief planes, global needs, time-scale for response, DEC systems

68. The story of the initial relief phase has already been told in our Monitoring Report of March 2001. Despite over 200 aftershocks in the first fortnight, including a massive 5.9 shock on 28<sup>th</sup> January, nearly 30,000 people from the armed forces and government staff were mobilised to respond in the first few days along with 13,000 contracted staff. At the height of the response there were- ‘448 NGOs, 332 voluntary doctors, 70 nursing staff and 7332 volunteers assisting’<sup>20</sup>. A fact which only came to light recently (having been ignored by the global media) was that a search-and-rescue team from the Tamil Nadu fire-brigade was mobilised on the day of the disaster and achieved just as much as the much-publicised foreign teams. Perhaps it is only natural for aid agencies to emphasise their own achievements, but there is a danger in doing so that they belittle local efforts and contribute to arrogant and even racist attitudes in the West.

#### **Relief Planes.**

69. Once again DEC members were guilty of wasting money by sending off relief planes with materials that were unnecessary or available locally at a much cheaper price<sup>21</sup>. An exception is the Red Cross hospital, flown out from Europe. This was justifiable because the District Hospital in Bhuj had collapsed. But Oxfam pumps, pipes and buckets flown out immediately after the disaster remained unused weeks and even months later<sup>22</sup>. Water-tanks were available locally and were being distributed in large numbers by other agencies. A similar flight was sent out by Concern<sup>23</sup>. Each flight costs over £100,000 and yet practically all the items could have been bought locally at a fraction of the cost, and with additional benefits to the local economy. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that these decisions were based more on a desire for publicity –or at best a culpable laziness about the use of DEC funds- rather than assessment of needs. They constitute a violation of the ‘humanitarian imperative’. In view of the persistence of this problem, and its potential to discredit the DEC, we suggest that any agency organising a relief flight should (for the record) submit a short justification to the DEC within a week of doing so.

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<sup>19</sup> The Code is divided into Principles. They should not be confused with the seven ‘fundamental principles’ of the Red Cross movement such as humanity, impartiality etc

<sup>20</sup> GSDMA

<sup>21</sup> The same issue was raised in the DEC’s Orissa evaluation.

<sup>22</sup> The buckets were seen by the evaluators in March –still unused. Oxfam’s internal evaluation raises similar questions.

<sup>23</sup> This caused controversy and some demotivation among Concern staff.

**Relative global needs.**

70. A wider question arises from the fundamental nature of public Appeals. Some aid agency staff have argued that a substantial proportion of the funds raised for Gujarat could have been better used elsewhere, notably for the earthquake in El Salvador, which had received much less media attention and (consequently) much less aid. DEC Appeals are based on three criteria: public interest, need and capacity to respond. The critical issue is the way in which public interest is created by the media. Since this may derive from the chances of news-slots and the impact of specific images, an Appeal does not necessarily correspond simply to need and capacity.
71. There are also variations in the amounts raised relative to need. The Orissa cyclone of the previous year caused a similar level of damage and need but raised only a third of the amount raised for Gujarat. The Kosovo crisis, with much lower mortality rates than either, but much greater media attention, raised nearly eight times as much as Orissa. Thus, at the very heart of the DEC's functioning is a contradiction of the 'humanitarian imperative'. In terms of public appeals –and their results- humanitarian need does not come first.
72. In Gujarat the mismatch became stark because of the unexpectedly high response to the Appeal and because of massive response from other quarters, notably from India. DFID and ECHO also tend to follow 'public interest' (often a euphemism for media coverage) and so compound the problem. There is normally only one DEC Appeal in a year but commonly twenty serious disasters. The major donors, public and broadcasters should be persuaded to put their generosity on a more equitable and sustained footing.

**DEC time-scale for response.**

73. Many assumptions are made about the expectations of the public without much evidence. A result of this has been a rule that DEC funds should be spent within six to nine months, and concentrated on relief rather than longer-term issues. A recent survey suggests that the public holds no such view and recognises the need for longer engagements. The DEC's short timescale causes serious problems in following Red Cross Code Principles, notably the requirement to build local capacities and reduce future vulnerabilities.
74. In Gujarat, the mismatch between availability of funds and timescale became so great that some managers began to make spending funds their objective rather than helping the 'survivors of the earthquake', as required by the Appeal. Levels of consultation, participation and involvement in management declined. A steady decline in the quality of operations (with exceptions) has been noticeable in DEC responses since March. At the time of our Monitoring Report aid managers felt confident about their programmes and morale was high, but this confidence declined over the following months as the October deadline approached and they became more and more concerned with spending the money.
75. Some managers had received explicit instructions to spend up to 'targets' almost regardless of other issues. Recognising these pressures DEC aid managers in India met at Gandhidham in Kutch in April and drafted a request to their head offices to extend the deadline for spending funds. In particular they referred to the need for more time for-

- Consultations with the affected people
- Understanding social and environmental issues<sup>24</sup>
- Public awareness programmes, especially about seismic safety
- Adjusting their plans for village ‘adoption’
- Co-ordinating more closely with government
- Strategising beyond issues of shelter and rebuilding

76. These are almost exactly the points on which the evaluation now criticises the agencies, suggesting that the fundamental problem of the response was not a failure of aid managers in the field but a systemic problem of an inappropriate timescale.
77. The request for an adjustment in time-scales was sent to the head offices of DEC agencies but there was little response. The same managers met again in June, reiterating the same points and concluding- *‘Although many of the agencies have now developed programme plans to utilise the DEC money within the 9-month timeframe, many feel that the programmes have been strongly influenced by the timeframe rather than determined by the most appropriate/desirable approaches and best utilisation of NGO competencies.’*
78. At the Annual General Meeting of the DEC early in July there was strong pressure from some agencies to extend the deadline, and resistance from others. The 9-month timescale for spending funds from DEC Appeals had come about as a result of a review process in the mid-1990s. According to DEC Trustees consulted for this evaluation, the process was affected by a sense of dissatisfaction among the broadcasters. They had found that DEC members were keeping back Appeal funds for long periods and spending them on regular long-term development programmes. They had insisted on a deadline, and the members were now afraid to go back to the broadcasters asking for longer. Uncertainty about the views of broadcasters had become a source of tensions between DEC members.
79. In the case of Gujarat, the DEC Chief Executive tried hard to keep to the 9-month spending period. In July he wrote- *‘In discussions with Members in April and June, the difficulties had already been highlighted, but the Secretariat had always insisted that an extension to the 9-month implementation period was not acceptable. The policy position was reconfirmed at the AGM, where it was agreed that any policy changes would have to be discussed at the September Board meeting.’*<sup>25</sup>
80. There were different views among DEC members. Some with large networks such as the British Red Cross expected little difficulty in spending very large amounts within nine months. Those that had to mobilise different partner networks in different countries, such as ActionAid and Christian Aid, needed more time. Their stronger poverty focus also favoured a more long-term approach.
81. The outcome was a ‘fudge’ by the DEC Secretariat in the form of a ‘closing down period’ of nine months from October. Some agencies realised that this was actually a green light to extend their programmes. It just had to be called something else. But managers in the field received poor or confused information and many continued to believe that October was the deadline and ‘closing down’ meant literally that.

<sup>24</sup> Reference was made to an Oxfam project which became a focus of caste violence in which 8 people were killed.

<sup>25</sup> Brendan Gormley to Trustees 16/7/01

82. Agencies tried to scale up to meet their commitments to spend DEC funds but those that persisted in being operational rather than using local partnerships got into considerable difficulties. Those with the largest shares were Oxfam, SCF and British Red Cross. Unable to overcome severe internal difficulties, Oxfam had been unable to develop a strategy and had to return more than half its funding to the DEC. The British Red Cross and SCF planned to use substantial amounts for reconstructing government buildings –not the best possible use of funds- and anyway their plans were falling far behind schedule.
83. All three agencies experienced problems of recruitment, the most severe being Oxfam where the lack of long-term strategy meant that posts were only offered for short periods. The process became a vicious circle with poor programmes failing to attract good staff. By contrast agencies working through local partners, notably ActionAid, were able to scale up and take more funds.
84. The experience brings into question the original allocation between the agencies. This derives from the Indicator of Capacity (IOC) mechanism which is based on a global assessment of agency capacity. The Gujarat case reveals very clearly the limitation of such a mechanism. The key to success in Gujarat was not global capacity but local partnerships. World Vision and CARE were able to gear up smoothly by deploying staff from their massive operations in India. World Vision –without expatriates but drawing on its large programmes in India- took a further £0.4m over its initial DEC share. ActionAid, Christian Aid and Concern did well by mobilising the support of local NGOs. ActionAid with no expatriate staff scaled up very fast and by June requested a further £0.6m on top of its initial share of £1.2m.
85. A good example of a member which showed a flexible response is CARE, which despite a substantial operational capacity in India correctly decided to work largely through NGO partners in its livelihood programme in Gujarat. Notably, CARE provided insurance through the Self Employed Women's Association (a union of 300,000 women) to 5,000 vulnerable women. This programme is one of many examples that could be given of opportunities to scale up through local organisations.
86. It was the more operational agencies, working on their own -SCF, British Red Cross, Merlin and Oxfam- that experienced the greatest difficulties. SCF did well in partnership with Abhiyan and the Red Cross operation was outstanding in the relief phase working within the Federation, but both were less impressive in rehabilitation. Merlin was unable to find a role for its skills in the health sector because the government already had those skills and was supported by massive multilateral organisations such as UNICEF and WHO. Oxfam, with an unrivalled set of partner agencies, failed to make effective use of them because of internal malfunctioning.

87. According to DEC rules the plans submitted at the outset of an Appeal must be *'must be completed over a period decided by the Trustees, currently six to nine months'*. The intention is clearly that all funds should be used in the initial period. After such projects have been completed there is provision for a 'fund closing' mechanism by which *'All remaining funds... will be divided amongst participating agencies on the basis of proposals submitted for long-term reconstruction and/or disaster preparedness by members committing to longer term presence in the disaster area.'* While the Chief Executive undoubtedly did right by using the closing mechanism as an extension, it makes a nonsense of the Rules if half the funds are carried forward into a 'closing' mechanism, and the closing mechanism lasts as long as the actual period of spend.
88. Using more funds in the rehabilitation phase undoubtedly reflected the realities of the Gujarat case, but the DEC rules distorted the process of planning. Instead of making strategic plans related to the actual 18-month period of spend, managers planned in two phases that did not correspond to either relief or rehabilitation. The result was a serious loss of efficiency overall.
89. **Conclusions.** The details of this process are spelt out in more detail in our report on Financial Management (Volume Three). Funds were not spent efficiently between the different agencies. By the time Oxfam reduced the amount it intended to take, other agencies had lost the opportunity to use it. Oxfam managers struggled to meet targets for spending while other managers could have used more if there had been a more flexible system related to need and capacity. Many local NGOs with international reputations complained of under-funding.
90. Funds were used to substitute for government rather than address the real issues of social marginalisation. The process was too much driven by the determination of some members to spend their 'share' in order to maintain their global allocation for the future.
91. Any reform arising from the issues raised in this report would require a fundamental change not only in systems but also in behaviours. They do not all have to be the same. Up to a point competition works well in driving agencies to succeed in particular niches. In totality they cover a wide range of funding and response options. But the Gujarat case shows that they are not good at adapting to different situations. The simplest way to address this is by improving the mechanism by which funds are allocated within the group. Since the argument is that different situations require different solutions our recommendation is not to tinker with the IOC mechanism but simply to regard it as a starting mechanism for analysis and negotiation rather than a rigid formula that obliges each agency to spend a predetermined proportion of DEC income.

## **DEC Systems.**

92. Planning and strategy are essential in order to ensure that the humanitarian imperative comes first. This has to be based on proper assessment (see below) and formal processes of analysis, discussion and review. We found few records of these processes and in an alarming number of cases they did not happen. DEC systems contributed to the problem because the timing of DEC documentation is not well aligned to realities in the field, and the formats are not sufficiently strategic. The issue of formats is now being addressed by the DEC in the new Handbook, but the issue of timing remains unresolved. Currently members must submit a plan for 6 months within four weeks of the Appeal. The first couple of weeks are chaotic and the second may be spent getting relief work organised. There has been no time for planning but agencies then become caught into plans which have never been properly debated but become rigid because they were submitted to the DEC. The DEC can release funds for initial relief but must have plans as early as possible. We consider that an extra two weeks for planning could make a crucial difference.
93. It is also important that the DEC Secretariat remains in close touch to prevent straitjacketing and encourage an approach to planning that remains responsive to needs. Above all the DEC needs to be more active in ensuring that agencies have the best and most complete information about DEC systems, requirements and projections. This is a further argument for the DEC to take information management as a key function.
94. **Conclusions: Principle One.** At first sight the humanitarian imperative should have presented few difficulties in this situation. There was no pressure to appease warring parties or external pressure to work on any basis other than need. Unfortunately the mismatch between funding and capacity and the inappropriateness of DEC timescales and systems caused a considerable deviation from the ideal. But some DEC members recognised the issue and balanced their response very effectively.
95. **Learning points**
- Evaluation suggests that relief flights are unlikely to be necessary in India, and perhaps should be viewed with more caution elsewhere.
  - The process of DEC Appeals leads to an inefficient allocation of resources for disasters on a global scale. The DEC and its members should take this up with DFID, ECHO and the broadcasters.
  - The ability to scale up is related more to the ability to form partnerships than to global capacity.
  - The DEC's 'IOC' mechanism of allocation of funds to members should be regarded as a starting point only, and reviewed in each disaster.
  - The DEC should move from planning at four weeks to planning at six weeks and improve the quality in terms of analysis and strategic input.

## **5.2. Red Cross Code Principle Two: Aid is given regardless of race, creed or nationality.**

**‘We will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment’ –subtext.**

*‘The people were unaware of any needs assessments being carried out in the early stages of the response.’ -DEC research report.*

**Key issues:** assessment, targeting, co-ordination.

### **Assessment.**

96. Despite many requests the evaluation team was unable to locate any assessment material of high quality. Although agencies referred to their ‘assessments’ these often turned out to be no more than an exchange of correspondence or views between agency staff. Assessment ‘visits’ were little more than a rapid tour of the area with a few random questions –sometimes conducted by people who had never been in Gujarat or worked in a traditional caste-based society.
97. This is a matter of considerable concern because the fundamental weakness of the DEC response was a lack of appreciation of the wider context. Our research suggests that many people had visited the villages asking questions but very often these were attempts to identify recipients for the goods on offer, rather than actually assess needs<sup>26</sup>. This may be understandable up to a point during the initial relief phase. The problem is that agencies did not go back later and do the work properly.
98. Assessment is required both under the Red Cross Code (Principle Two) and also under the Sphere Standards –and DEC agencies have signed both. The issue is covered in some detail in our Sphere review (Volume Three). Perhaps Sphere’s division of assessment into separate branches (Water, Nutrition, Food Aid, Shelter and Health) has contributed to our perception that the people in need were not given real choices. Whatever the reason we would suggest that as a minimum each member should have carried out a comprehensive review of needs, including the views of all major stakeholders, within six weeks of a disaster, and that this document should be the basis for longer-term planning.
99. Our research indicates that ‘assessments’ were duplicated, and that people in some villages felt abused by the process. Out of 50 villages in the research, none received less than eight agencies offering help in the relief phase. The DEC has a minimal responsibility within its own network to share information about such assessments to prevent duplication. The DEC Monitoring Report refers to cases where DEC agencies have distributed the same goods to the same people.
100. Maximum use should be made of what is already available. A remarkable feature in Gujarat was that the local NGOs Abhiyan and ‘Patheya’<sup>27</sup> compiled comprehensive databases soon after the earthquake. But as far as we were informed, this documentation was used only by SCF, Concern and ActionAid.

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<sup>26</sup> See findings p3.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Patheya’ *Some basic information on earthquake affected Kutch District*, Ahmedabad March 2001.

## Targeting.

101. The public opinion research was specifically designed to examine what ‘the survivors of the earthquake’ thought about the targeting of assistance and the requirements of Red Cross Principle Two. A particularly stark finding is that ‘communities felt that relief was not given according to need’<sup>28</sup>. This refers mainly to the initial relief period. It shows a critical attitude towards organisations that select beneficiaries according to their own mandate and distribute aid either through them to other groups or to that group only.
102. Of those who felt that they had been wrongly discriminated against in relief assistance, the most common issues were caste, politics and location. Less common issues were religion, assessment of damage, assessment of individual needs and size of the community group (larger groups were perceived to receive more). The least common objection was against discrimination by gender, age and occupation –which was widely regarded as acceptable.
103. The research matches the evaluators’ general conclusion that the main problems of discrimination surrounded caste and politics –and that certain rural areas near the epicentre got most aid, while urban areas and those further away got least.
104. **Geographical spread.** Because the public opinion research took place over the whole of the affected area it is possible to compare levels of satisfaction in different places as an indicator of actual distribution. While sufficient or excess relief was received in 73% of communities in Kutch, the level was only 54% outside Kutch. This corroborates the view taken by Concern that other areas had been neglected. The greater discrepancy was between rural (74% cover) and urban areas (only 28%). Dissatisfaction was expressed by 71% of urban communities compared with only 26% of rural communities. Yet with the exception of some urban work by Unnati (ActionAid and Christian Aid) DEC members have worked almost entirely in rural areas.
105. **Rich and Poor.** The research indicates a widespread view that aid did not go to the poorest but accumulated in the hands of the rich. People refer to an indirect process of discrimination through village ‘representatives’ especially the Village Leader (Sarpanch) and Relief Committee. People had both positive and negative reactions to this. Powerful spokespersons were regarded as important in attracting aid to the village as a whole<sup>29</sup> but there were fears about their ability to influence the flow of aid within the village for their own purposes. The overall perception is that more relief went to those with strong political connections –and strengthened their political power- while less went to the lower castes, women, migrant groups and minorities, notably Moslems.
106. The level of acceptance of ‘positive’ discrimination by gender, age and occupation is qualified by insistence that it must also relate to need. Some people felt that discrimination was justified when HelpAge targeted old people but only because old people were left out by other agencies. There was not full agreement on this. Others stated that the criteria should be purely economic (needs) independent of age or other factors. Discrimination by occupation was acceptable whereas discrimination by caste (which is closely related to occupation) was not.

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<sup>28</sup> p3

<sup>29</sup> ‘one strong well-connected leader is better than a hundred others’ is one recorded comment.



107. This became a serious issue where DEC members worked with caste-based NGOs. At the State level there is little risk of such a bias but a number of NGOs in Kutch simply represent their own caste. Oxfam was insufficiently aware of this problem when it established its compound on property belonging to a caste-based organisation (MKT) which then used its influence on Oxfam to divert disproportionate aid to their own caste group, the Rabaris..
108. In the DEC research, people made little distinction between aid from government and from other sources. But a survey<sup>30</sup> among the poorest groups carried out by the ActionAid partner Behavioural Science Centre (a radical Catholic-based organisation) concludes that government had failed to reach the marginalized groups whereas NGOs had been more successful.<sup>31</sup> Because our research was designed to be representative of all points of view –and was based largely on open public meetings- we may have understated the sense of alienation felt by the most vulnerable groups, and specifically the marginalisation of women. The research report notes- *‘women, lower caste groups and those representing smaller numbers stated that they were often left out of decision-making in the relief committees and hence were also omitted from the distributions.’* As one person said- *‘When the clothes were dropped on the road by trucks, there was a stampede. The women were too shy to go.’*
109. **Agency demands.** The request by agencies for a ‘community contribution’ or ‘participation’ (See Principle Nine for more on this) could become a source of discrimination. In one case older people were asked to collect tents from a distance of 15km<sup>32</sup>. From the perspective of the people affected it seems that a bewildering array of people came and asked the same questions. There were complaints about insensitivity in some cases (*‘we had not yet buried the dead and we were expected to stand in line...’*) and there were complaints about repetitive surveys in some areas while others received no attention at all.
110. **People and animals.** One of the main focuses of civil society in Gujarat is the care of animals, especially (but not exclusively) cows. When the disaster struck, twelve veterinary teams were immediately deployed to the area and 2006 animals were treated for injuries from collapsed buildings<sup>33</sup>. Gujarat has a large number of animal sanctuaries (Panjrapols) and special feeding points for cattle (Gaushalas). The earthquake area, with a strong Jain influence, is probably the most animal-sensitive part of India. A number of agencies mistakenly directed their resources to fodder distribution only to find that local organisations were addressing the issue on a much more lavish scale and that government, under local pressure, had also introduced a very generous scheme. Arguably animals did better than (the poorest) people.

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<sup>30</sup> BSC/ISI op cit.

<sup>31</sup> The report gives a figure of 2% scheduled castes (dalits) receiving aid from government compared with 53% from NGOs. This may be an exaggeration. Regrettably, a good deal of the report reads as an attack on government rather than a social survey.

<sup>32</sup> From discussions with HelpAge we know that they (later at least) allowed other family members to collect.

<sup>33</sup> GSDMA

### **Co-ordination.**

111. A fundamental purpose of co-ordination is to reduce duplication and ensure better targeting. It is therefore especially relevant to the issue of discrimination. In the Gujarat case, the local NGOs were the most effective at co-ordination and the multilateral agencies the least. The Abhiyan NGO network set up information centres all over Kutch at a very early stage, provided guidance to newly-arrived agencies about needs and gained government approval to host meetings for co-ordination. The attempts by the UN to set up co-ordinating processes were a failure. As recorded by the Monitoring Mission, a series of UNDAC teams arrived soon after the earthquake and requested information from all concerned, but did not feed back any information or guidance. The UNDP delegation, which arrived later, picked up on the process more vigorously but lacked the resources to manage the task effectively.
112. Some international agencies seem to have been reluctant to be co-ordinated by a local NGO. There was a great deal of gossip about Abhiyan. The DEC did well to set up its own co-ordinating mechanism within days of the disaster and to continue meetings on a regular basis throughout. The meetings were especially useful at channelling the concerns of field staff and provided important moral support to local managers. The attempt to create a database started rather late and was hampered by resource problems. The need for such a service had, however, already become evident. In the Monitoring Report we recorded how, by March, staff from the British Red Cross and World Vision had begun to compile their own lists of tent distributions in order to avoid duplication. By the time the DEC database was established other databases had also been compiled.
113. The excellent work of the convenor of DEC meetings, Chris Cattaway of SCF, has demonstrated the need for information management, and also that it is time-consuming, especially in the first few weeks. We propose that a DEC Liaison Officer should be present during the first few weeks to exchange names and addresses between DEC members, provide public information about the DEC (especially to government and the media) and ensure that member agencies have access to and understand DEC documents and procedures.
114. The official government co-ordination body, the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, reported to us that not a single international NGO had shared information with them. SCF pointed out that they made great efforts to liaise with government, and suggest that the problem may be internal communications. For many months SCF negotiated plans for reconstructing public buildings with officials at District level only to find out that a parallel set of discussions had been going on at State level with UNICEF. SCF had to start negotiations all over again.
115. Co-ordination with government requires persistence and persistence implies resources for constantly travelling to different offices and locations. The DEC could improve its efficiency by handling the flow of general information in a more collective manner.

## **Conclusions: Principle Two**

116. Assessment by DEC members appears to be well short of the standard expected under Sphere and the Red Cross Code. This led to deficiencies of strategic analysis. DEC documentation should be adjusted to encourage better assessment and planning.
117. Discrimination is caused by prejudice or lack of information. DEC agencies come with their own set of prejudices regarding focus on age groups and gender, but these were generally perceived to be acceptable –with the caution that need must always be the prime issue. A prejudice in favour of rural areas has led the DEC members into a deviation. If DEC agencies had undertaken strategic reviews a few weeks after the disaster they would have picked up on that, and also on the relative neglect of areas furthest from the epicentre.
118. Lack of information arose because of deficiencies in communication between agencies. A very considerable step forward was taken by creating a forum of DEC members. This now needs to be taken forward.
119. **Learning points.**
- Assessment by DEC members is not sufficiently broad-based, strategic and consultative. Further work is needed on the minimum standards for assessment and to integrate this into DEC systems.
  - DEC members made a false assumption that needs in urban areas would be adequately addressed by government.
  - People shared the Red Cross Code view that ultimately need alone should be the criterion for selection but many thought that positive discrimination was necessary. Discrimination by gender, age and occupation was found to be more acceptable than discrimination by caste, religion and politics.
  - Caste-based NGOs do not make appropriate partners, and at most should be part of a much wider network of relationships.
  - Management of information is given inadequate attention and resources. Deficiencies led to considerable duplication in the relief phase.
  - Overall, co-ordination was wrongly perceived as the hosting of meetings rather than the collection and analysis of information.
  - Co-ordination by the UN should not be relied upon as an adequate mechanism.
  - The Abhiyan co-ordination process should be evaluated.
  - The DEC co-ordination meetings in Gujarat represent a positive step forward and now need to be transformed into an information management programme.
  - DEC members were not sufficiently persistent in their liaison with government.

### **5.3. Red Cross Principle Three: Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.**

**Key Issues:** Religion, politics

120. **Religion.** Three of the DEC agencies (Christian Aid, Tearfund and World Vision) are explicitly Christian. The question arises whether they complied with the Code. We found no evidence of any problem. This is important because the status of the Christian minority in the State is sensitive and any violation of the Code could have had serious consequences.
121. Our survey revealed a case, unconnected with the DEC, where a Christian group had built houses for Christians only and given an option for others to convert to Christianity if they wanted a house. This group was requested to leave the village. Perhaps such events occur only on a very small scale. The number of Christians in the affected area is very small indeed. In Kutch District there are only 1,277 Christians according to census data. They are concentrated in Gandhidham where there are reported to be 12 churches. It is true that both Tearfund and World Vision based themselves in Gandhidham and in the initial relief phase it is likely that church-goers may have used their contacts to secure assistance –it would be surprising if they did not. It is also true that the staffing of those organisations is limited to Christians. But we found no evidence of bias in the allocation of DEC funds. No such allegation was made in our public opinion survey. On the contrary, World Vision was regarded as over-generous to everyone in their distributions!
122. Hindu organisations such as the RSS were highly active in the earthquake response and did little to disguise their preference for helping caste Hindus. They played a major role in directing aid. But with their links into the ruling Party (and reputation for genuinely good work) they were unchallenged. We found no connection between such groups and the DEC.
123. **Politics.** Inevitably there are connections between NGOs and politics. Often these are tacit, and change over time. Many of the NGOs working with DEC members are – as it happens- broadly ‘Opposition’ (Congress). But none of this need cause concern for donors. The main criticism of the DEC response in Gujarat was that it was not political enough, in the sense of engaging with the wider issues of the response, notably the tendency for government aid to benefit the better-off.
124. Some negotiated with government about their own schemes, but only a very limited number of NGO partners took on the core strategic role of acting as an intermediary between the people and the government. Oxfam engaged in advocacy but did not link this sufficiently closely to the perceptions and experiences of the affected people –probably because of Oxfam’s fundamental lack of good local partnerships. The ActionAid/Christian Aid partner Unnati is an outstanding example of what could be done. By focusing on the neglected urban areas and working closely with people in informal settlements around Bhachau, they were able to bring about major changes in the process of reconstruction. Settlements which might otherwise have been wiped off the map were included in the plans and the people participated in decisions about the future.

### **Conclusions: Red Cross Principle Three**

125. Discrimination by religion or politics has not been a problem in relation to this response. Fear of political bias should not prevent agencies responding to needs by using their influence on behalf of the poor to make a difference to the wider picture. In the context of such a massive government response, a greater focus on influencing and advocacy would have been appropriate.

126. **Learning Points:**

- Unnati (ActionAid) was able to identify an issue of crucial importance that had been neglected by other agencies. Their work should be studied further as an example of good practice.
- Advocacy without links into programme and wider involvement of the people is likely to be ineffective.

### **5.4. Red Cross Principle Four: We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.**

**‘In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence on a single funding source’** –subtext.

127. This Principle has only limited application to the Gujarat earthquake. As already discussed (Principle One) DFID appears to have established a relationship with some members which makes it difficult for them to refuse to act as DFID’s partners. In this case DFID’s influence was to reduce the proportion of DEC funds used in the relief phase. The problem could be more serious where DEC members were seen to lack independence, or even be agents of the British Government.

### **Conclusion: Red Cross Principle Four.**

128. The Red Cross Code offers a particularly useful tool to limit the danger described above but this is a case where the lack of indicators and monitoring systems might be a serious limitation.

### **5.5. Red Cross Principle Five: We shall respect culture and custom.**

*‘We were told to stand in a queue to receive items. All castes had to stand together. The lower castes felt bad and couldn’t stand with the higher castes, so couldn’t get anything.’*  
DEC survey.

**Key themes:** culture and discrimination, psycho-social projects

### **Culture and Discrimination.**

129. Relief items were considered generally appropriate by people in the research project except in the case of clothing- *‘Without exception communities felt the clothes distributed were not appropriate, particularly for women, the elderly, Muslims and men who wore traditional clothes.’*<sup>34</sup> Oxfam was among those that adapted rapidly to this issue, substituting locally made traditional clothes for those from outside and making a very appropriate link between relief and livelihoods.

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<sup>34</sup> Survey Findings section 2.1.5.

130. The research found a widespread perception, even among the poorest people, that it was 'unacceptable' for all social groups to be catered for together, especially in feeding centres. The issue also arose in relation to new permanent housing schemes. Concern's partner Navsarjan challenged this attitude by adopting the pro-active position that anyone receiving their help must be prepared to take water from a Dalit.
131. The Red Cross Principle of 'respect for culture and custom' potentially contradicts Principle Three of non-discrimination. If discrimination is part of local culture and custom (and apparently accepted by the excluded groups) should it be respected? If women are not expected to take part in village meetings, should that be accepted? The Code reflects the realities of life in that Principles do not always converge on a simple solution.
132. Blunt insistence on Principles can lead to perverse results, but absence of Principles can lead to erosion of any values at all. In Gujarat, members of the higher castes (even if poor) sometimes opted out of such interventions, refusing to eat with and live next to lower caste community members. Sometimes they managed the process in such a way as to exclude other social groups. A more positive way of viewing the caste system would be as a way of ordering society to cope with risks and external threats. In return for giving services and accepting a lower social status, poorer people are entitled to protection from external threats and assistance during times of crisis. Although little of this rationale remains valid today, there is an element of truth in the argument that eroding caste may mean increasing future vulnerabilities – in contravention of Red Cross Principle Eight.
133. Our analysis of targeting issues under Principle Two shows that people in the earthquake area share a range of views on the 'culture-versus-discrimination' debate as they do in the West. The situation is changing rapidly. The presence of one of India's most modern ports in Kutch, the expansion of Gandhidham as a major trading centre and the steady expansion of modern industry is bringing the effects of globalisation to the remotest villages. The old certainties of caste and status are breaking down.
134. Where they come into opposition with each other the Code Principles have to be ranked. They appear to be in an order of priority, although this is not explicitly stated. The exact sequence of priority may be affected by circumstances and the values of an agency. Taking the current order, the humanitarian imperative (the priority of human need) as well as the principle of non-discrimination take precedence over respect for culture and custom.
135. Where a Principle is given lower priority than another, affirmative action can be taken to reduce the negative effects in relation to that principle. For example, HelpAge India discriminated by providing food for old people, but ensured that there was enough so that other members of the family could benefit.

### **Psycho-social' projects.**

136. 'Psycho-social' interventions can be critiqued on the basis that they represent an imposition of Western individualistic culture and psychiatric science on very different cultures, where the issues of grief and suffering are bound by strong social and family traditions. There has been much criticism of this practice, especially in the Balkans<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'Evaluation of Norwegian Support to psycho-social projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Caucasus' March 1999.

137. A number of agencies have offered counselling to people ‘traumatised’ by the earthquake. Of course, most people are not suffering from any medical condition but simply experiencing normal processes of shock and grief. Medical interventions may even be harmful in disrupting social processes.
138. Some DEC members turned to medical institutions for solutions and there was some loose talk about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A staff member with one of ActionAid’s partners asserted that those she was ‘counselling’ were far more in need of practical assistance than ‘a shoulder to cry on’. They wanted advice about government compensation, prosthetics and money for funerals. Where people needed personal support they turned to their own community rather than to outsiders.
139. The evaluators invited the prominent psychiatrist, Dr Derek Summerfield<sup>36</sup>, to review ActionAid’s report on their psycho-social activity. He wrote-  
*‘There is no literature to show that victims of disasters –manmade or “natural”- do better overall when drawn into projects addressing their “mental health” as an issue apart.... It’s unclear whether they {ActionAid} use the language of the trauma school, “psychological counselling” etc, because they see these as methods proven elsewhere or whether it’s just a gloss (for funders etc) on what they are doing anyway because such language has come to be routinely deployed –almost as an aesthetic issue- in situations of catastrophe...’*
140. ActionAid viewed its psycho-social work within a social context and linked it to public information and advocacy work which brought practical benefits to people in distress. As such it was an example of good practice in an area where there is a real risk of cultural imposition.

## **Conclusions: Principle Five**

141. There is a problem for aid agencies that they do not want to impose their own views about culture and custom but recognise that culture and custom are imbued with power relationships, and these are of concern. The people themselves seem to be ambivalent. They are uneasy about outsiders confronting social divisions, yet recognise that they are unjust. This Red Cross Principle is likely to clash with others and therefore judgments can only be made by establishing an order of priority. This might vary a little between agencies and situations. The current order should be taken as the starting point.
142. **Learning Points:**
- Medical approaches to grief and suffering should be treated with caution.
  - Aid agencies should not separate psycho-social projects from other interventions in the social and advocacy sectors.
  - Great care is needed with the language of psycho-social response.
  - ActionAid’s work offers an example of good practice.

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<sup>36</sup> Summerfield contributed to Save the Children’s critique of psycho-social projects- ‘Rethinking the Trauma of War’ Free Association Books 1998.

## **5.6. Red Cross Principle Six: We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.**

**Key Issues:** Shelter, operational and non-operational approaches

143. **Shelter.** Over a million houses were destroyed or severely damaged by the earthquake. By favouring the principle of ‘owner-driven’ reconstruction the government has avoided many of the pitfalls that beset the Latur operation and enabled the reconstruction process to proceed relatively fast. Some credit for this is probably due to Praveen Pardeshi of UNDP (former District Collector in Latur) and to the World Bank/ADB team which assessed rehabilitation needs<sup>37</sup>. DEC agencies did not play an active role in that crucial debate and were much more varied in their response to (or knowledge of) the lessons from the past.
144. The basis of the Government intervention in Gujarat was a graded set of financial inputs related to the extent of loss. The amount of compensation was proportional to the value of the damaged property, and so basically the rich got more. The effect was exacerbated because more powerful people were better able to manipulate the system. Some very impressive houses have come up rapidly, while many people still live in tents. The inequality inherent in the government’s approach has been remarked on by some NGOs, but the opportunity for a concerted effort by civil society to bring more equity into the process has been missed. Not enough has been done to help poorer individuals to secure their rights in this difficult process.
145. The merit of the core government programme is that it builds on local capacities. But there is an alternative scheme intended for villages where there has been total destruction and the people are ready to move to a new site. They can enter into an agreement by which an external agency ‘adopts’ and rebuilds the entire village. In that case the owners are expected to hand back their compensation to that agency and provide half the costs of the new housing. To make the scheme work everyone in a village has to agree, a formal agreement must be signed and the external agency must provide the public buildings such as school and health centre.
146. Except for CARE, those DEC agencies which initially engaged in ‘adoption’ have abandoned the attempt to collect the government compensation from the people. The process proved too difficult, and they have decided to pay for the entire housing project. Practically all ‘adoption’ schemes are now run entirely by the outside agency without the attempt to obtain a cash contribution from the people. In fact such agencies have begun to compete with each other to show their generosity. The owners get a new ‘seismic-safe’ house and also keep the compensation money. This adds to the overall effect of economic polarisation and undermines the principle of building on local capacities.
147. The most useful intervention by DEC agencies was in providing temporary shelter. Single-room constructions with bamboo and tile roofs have been particularly effective in helping people to escape from the squalor of tents and tarpaulins, but without the expense of permanent reconstruction. Those provided by Abhiyan (SCF) and Behavioural Science Centre (ActionAid) are designed so that the materials can be used for the reconstruction of a permanent house when required.

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<sup>37</sup> ‘Gujarat Earthquake Recovery Program’ March 14, 2001



148. It is estimated that only 4.5% (and absolute maximum 10%) of permanent re-housing will be done by private sources such as NGOs.<sup>38</sup> These ‘adoption’ projects are carried out by contractors rather than by the people themselves. By far the majority will be done by the people themselves with whatever external assistance they can obtain. A few DEC agencies have offered specific inputs to owners reconstructing their own houses. Concern offers modest amounts of materials and funds and HelpAge has provided funds for an additional room for an old person. ActionAid has provided materials and on-site support. CARE and others have trained masons.
149. With limited experience in the area, Concern made a good overall analysis but was excessively cautious in its approach, reducing the proposals from its partners to what they thought was a reasonable input. An old woman in Surendranagar District was given Rs15,000 (£215) by the Concern partner Navsarjan but said that she had to borrow Rs50,000 (£714) from the moneylender in order to complete the house. To an extent this was her own decision. She, a Dalit, had decided that the house must be constructed strictly according to local culture and custom –with stone bases for the pillars and carved lintels. She could have built more cheaply, but Concern’s estimate that a seismic-safe house could be constructed for Rs 20,000 (£308) is far below other estimates, and half that of the common UNDP/Abhiyan ‘minimum’ design. The woman’s indebtedness now undermines her ability to escape from the clutches of the village elite, and Navsarjan’s objective of empowering Dalits.
150. In another Concern project, villagers were given 5 bags of cement and required to show proof of proper use before receiving a second 5 bags. The local NGO had originally asked for the full costs of reconstruction but Concern had asked them to propose a much smaller project. The people had to arrange transport of their allocation at their own cost. When the DEC research team visited the area, the villagers said that they had to spend too much time and money in proportion to the benefit, and that in any case the input was far below the minimum needed to build a house, estimated at 40-50 bags. Several people returned the cement (at their own transport cost) saying that they could not use it. Building on local capacities requires realistic assessment, and an element of trust in the views of people and partners.
151. But the most serious problems were in the ‘village adoption’ scheme. CARE and Tearfund used DEC funds for ‘adoption’ schemes. Other DEC members, World Vision for example, supported ‘adoption’ projects but did not use DEC funds for them. The evidence suggests that members should have been even more wary of abandoning the principle of building on local capacities. As our shelter consultant put it, most of the new settlements are culturally and aesthetically ‘pathetic’. It is contrary to the Red Cross principle to promote contractor-driven processes of building when options for self-help were available.
152. There are a few cases where villagers wanted to relocate to completely new sites and live in houses built in rows like the ‘quarters’ for mill-workers or married servicemen. But the offer of gigantic sums of money may have coloured their views. The result may not be houses and communities but simply assets. The lesson from the Latur earthquake is that such settlements are likely to remain empty, or will be sub-let to others. The owners will meanwhile rebuild their original house, in the way that they like, regarding the ‘adopted’ house as a free gift that could not be refused.

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<sup>38</sup> See shelter report.

153. The use of contractors has negated what little positive benefit these projects might have had. If local labour had been used millions of pounds would have flowed into the local economy. Injustices in the use of labour could have been more easily challenged. Opportunities for skill development could have been built into the plans. Instead, at least 25% of the funds<sup>39</sup> will have gone to the contractors as profit, while the rest will go to migrant labour and suppliers of materials.
154. A further criticism of these housing projects is that they do not reflect the local concept of housing as a function of both shelter and livelihood. The home is not simply a source of protection from the elements but also a safe storage area, a pen for animals, a place to process agricultural products and a base for self-employment in crafts and services. In many ways the house is more a centre for cottage industry than a shelter. Yet housing schemes approach the issue as if people were industrial workers who go out to work and simply need a space to eat and sleep. These faults may arise from failures of consultation –and from preconceptions by aid managers. These new houses will not enhance local livelihoods. In extreme cases the effect will be negative. The new site may be far from the place of work, and may engulf agricultural land- in some cases the common grazing-land that had been used by the poor.
155. Instead of building their response on local capacities –notably the opportunities for employment and the rights of poor people to compensation from government-agencies have focused on providing external solutions. By putting so much effort into these mistaken schemes, they have missed the opportunity to focus on what was really needed: support to the process of self-help reconstruction –not just by providing materials but by securing entitlements. Although ActionAid was not alone in supporting self-help housing it was the only DEC member to give adequate emphasis to social mobilisation and advocacy in order to secure government compensation for vulnerable people.
156. ActionAid also picked up another important issue -the need to focus on particularly vulnerable people such as widows and (to a limited extent) disabled people. Hundreds of thousands of claims and payments were being processed –in fact over a million. The government insisted on making payment by cheque and few people had bank accounts. There was a huge demand for help with forms and procedures. The Gujarat-based NGOs Abhiyan and SEWA played major roles, but not with the specific support of their DEC partners. The DEC members focused too much on what they were doing themselves rather than on the wider picture.
157. **Operational and non-operational approaches.** Gujarat is famed in India for its traditions of social work and remarkable depth of civil society. Under the Red Cross Principle of building on local capacities there was little justification for agencies running their own projects –being operational. Up to a point an exception can be made for the British Red Cross Society because the local societies happened to be very weak and the Red Cross does not normally work with other organisations. This left BRCS with a gap after the relief phase which they found very difficult to fill.

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<sup>39</sup> Estimate by our consultant, Kirtee Shah.

158. It is very surprising that Oxfam, with a presence in Gujarat for more than twenty years, made so little use of its long-term partners. Respected NGOs such as Gram Vikas Trust (Dwarka) and SETU (Ahmedabad) contacted Oxfam immediately after the disaster only to be told that it was not working outside a small area of Kutch, and only with partners connected with Oxfam's long-term drought programme. The internationally-renowned union of self-employed women –SEWA– was invited for consultations with Oxfam, along with a number of other very distinguished organisations but as SEWA's Director put it- 'nothing came of it'. They were not informed further about Oxfam's thinking. By contrast, HelpAge with limited contacts in Gujarat, was able to develop a link with the highly-respected 'Sadvichar Parivar' – an extraordinary NGO which resembles a trade union of the elderly –and a number of other NGOs into an effective partnership.
159. The assertiveness of some of the local NGOs clearly troubled some of the DEC agencies. SCF enjoyed huge advantages through its association with the remarkable Abhiyan network, but the relationship became strained over the implementation of the temporary housing project. SCF was concerned about inadequacies of implementation. Abhiyan thought that SCF was too much focused on results rather than process. What Abhiyan saw as an opportunity to work with members on a common problem, SCF saw as a failure. What SCF saw as normal professional procedures Abhiyan saw as meaningless bureaucracy. SCF had bent its own rules in favour of Abhiyan to such an extent that our financial consultant became highly concerned. But without waiting for more debate Abhiyan turned to UNDP as a less demanding funder and SCF agreed a parting of the ways. In the end, thanks to SCF's patient project manager and Abhiyan's excellent leadership, the whole process came to be an important learning experience on both sides. But ultimately there is no doubt that SCF's real achievement in the Gujarat response was its link with Abhiyan and the temporary housing project.
160. **Rapid staff turnover.** In this debate, Abhiyan recognised that in quieter times it would have learnt more from SCF's 'professionalism'. It attributed many of the problems to 'a stream of inexperienced staff' below the project manager. Other DEC agencies have been much more severely affected by this problem of staff shortages and inexperienced staff, preventing them from reaching a good understanding of the local situation and partners. Concern, Merlin and Oxfam have all employed three different programme co-ordinators in the earthquake response so far –none of them having any significant previous experience in India- yet (as our financial management review shows) costing four to eight times as much as locally-recruited managers. By contrast, HelpAge and World Vision's senior staff have remained the same through the assessment, planning and implementation processes. Lack of consistency makes it difficult to develop an understanding of partners, and this exacerbates the issue of building on local capacity.
161. One major reason why Oxfam could not tackle the caste bias of its principal partner was because of staff turnover. Added to rapid change there was no hand-over process between two project managers and the time to address the issue was missed. This also reflects a dysfunction between Oxfam's field operation run by the Humanitarian Department in Oxford and the field staff based in Gujarat, Delhi and Dhaka. Oxfam's systems were in disarray because of rapid change and the absence or transfer of senior managers. Without leadership Oxfam never developed a proper strategy and without good strategy could not attract good staff. Appalling living conditions at Oxfam's compound were a further factor. These problems developed into a vicious circle that could have been avoided.

## Conclusions: Principle Six

162. DEC members have not paid sufficient attention to this Red Cross Principle. They regarded building on local capacities as an optional extra or even a side-issue rather than –as it should be– an integral part of the response, related to Principle Seven, reducing future vulnerabilities.

### 164. Learning Points:

#### Shelter

- Clear lessons from the Latur earthquake seem to have been overlooked by agencies that engaged in village ‘adoption’. They need to examine their learning systems.
- In a context where government is the major player it is not enough for agencies to focus on their own projects. They have an obligation to engage with the wider process.
- That role lies specifically in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.
- The concept of shelter needs to be examined critically in each situation. In this case shelter should not have been separated from livelihood issues.
- The default position should be to help people rebuild their own houses.
- There are opportunities in reconstruction programmes to build on local capacity by employing local labour rather than use contractors.

#### Local Capacity

- The operational approach is not favoured under the Red Cross Code.
- The lack of local knowledge of expatriate staff was compounded by high rates of turnover and produced seriously negative results.

## **5.7. Red Cross Principle Seven: Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.**

*‘No one asked us how we wanted to participate, or if we wanted to.’*

*‘We were consulted so that agencies could get the information to complete their paperwork only’. DEC Survey*

**Key Issues:** consultation; participation; involvement; information;

163. In the DEC research, 59% of people who spoke about participation in relation to their interactions with NGOs felt dissatisfied<sup>40</sup>. Our report states- *‘when communities were consulted they often felt that their views were not incorporated into the programme... The prevailing reason cited was that agencies had designed programmes prior to discussions with communities.’* Although there was more discussion about shelter than any other issue, only in 3 examples (out of 175 interventions) did researchers find that communities felt they had influenced the design or size of housing construction.

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<sup>40</sup> For full analysis see survey Section 2.2.

164. Some examples of good practice by DEC members have emerged from our survey. In distributing blankets, Concern had asked women to form a committee, allowed them to identify the most needy people and then to distribute the blankets themselves. World Vision had negotiated the location of cattle-troughs with the community. A weaving project started by Unnati (ActionAid) was praised because, after discussions, the weavers were taken to another area to select their own cotton and then given assistance with marketing.
165. But the Red Cross Principle demands more than DEC agencies generally offered. It is not simply a matter of having a role, but participating in management. Even in the examples given it was not the beneficiaries who decided the sector of involvement or the broad outlines of the project. Our finding is that levels of participation and consultation were far below the expectations of the community, and that the Principle of involving beneficiaries in the management of relief aid has been almost completely overlooked.
166. **Participation.** To quote from the DEC Survey: *‘Communities felt participation in interventions was on agencies’ terms only, occurring when it was to their advantage, for example in order to reduce costs or to provide community labour. In the majority of interventions, participation was not felt to be advantageous to participants, or even considered desirable.’* Arbitrary requirements for a ‘people’s contribution’ could have a negative effect. When people were asked to collect materials such as tents, sacks of cement etc from the organisation’s office it was often those most in need who could not go. But people had little hesitation in rejecting aid if it was not helpful. A degree of self-selection occurred especially in shelter interventions, notably over issues of financial contribution, relocation, size and design of houses. Donors selected villagers who agreed with them, and vice versa. But this may not have been the best method. It was certainly not the kind of partnership envisaged in the Code.
167. **Consultation.** There was particular resentment over the fact that agencies might ask questions about particular types of assistance but not about what sector of assistance was most important. This may reflect problems arising from Sphere-type assessments by sector—an issue we have examined under Principle Two. As a result people felt that livelihoods issues had not been sufficiently addressed- ‘although communities continuously and strenuously asserted that this was their primary need.’
168. People felt that there was limited consultation on design and size of houses. As already stated, only in 3 examples out of 175 interventions did communities feel that they had any influence. Where they made proposals only small changes were made. In one unfortunate case EFICOR (Tearfund) consulted extensively about the shape of the house but then reversed the view of the people after receiving ‘expert’ advice from outside..
169. Often the general community was not consulted but only leaders. Confidence in the Sarpanch (village leader) was varied. In the relief stage the government used relief committees<sup>41</sup> but these were not properly constituted. The DEC research indicates that the vulnerable groups were often left out of these consultations. The level of consultation was perceived to be related to the level of previous contact –local NGOs did better than operational organisations or outsiders.

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<sup>41</sup> A reason for this was the lack of panchayats because of the cancelled elections (see political background).

170. In a very few cases, agencies compensated for some of these deficiencies by undertaking specific research on community responses. The British Red Cross commissioned an important study of social issues underlying the use of pre-schools<sup>42</sup>. Considering the overall lack of information about the area, more research would have improved the response.
171. **Involvement.** The people's criticism that decisions had already been taken by agencies before consultation took place reflects the fact that they were not involved in the management of aid as required by this Red Cross Principle. Perhaps it is early days yet, and the issue will be addressed in the future.
172. The level of involvement in shelter projects was generally higher than for other programmes. To an extent this is inevitable because of the nature of the transaction. People have to agree to move house, and they may have to agree to hand over their compensation money. The number of cases where communities were informed only, or not at all, dropped over time, but it still remained at 10% of interventions at the time of the survey in September. The only agency to make a strong effort on the issue of involvement was ActionAid which instituted a policy of transparency and invited partners and people to take part in consultative processes. It would be useful to study this experience in more depth, and particularly to assess whether more impact had resulted from it.
173. **Information.** There were frequent complaints about lack of information. At the most basic level people expressed the view that they did not know how participants of housing programmes had been selected. They said that booklets and videos were distributed (especially on seismic safety) but they did not have the time or capacity to work out what was meant. They needed much more intensive guidance and training. It was also a problem that the materials supplied were often different from those in the booklets or training.
174. Much of this information was aimed at individuals trying to make the most of the assistance on offer. If such information was not deliberately targeted to the poorest groups it might even exacerbate the processes of social division. Not all agencies recognised this and ensured that information was targeted to the poor and part of a wider process of empowerment.

### **Conclusions: Principle Seven**

175. This Principle is one that agencies should strive towards in the rehabilitation phase and should certainly be achieved in reconstruction. In Gujarat it is rather too early to make definitive judgments. There are examples of good intentions as well as good practice but generally this Principle was not firmly on the agenda of DEC members. Only ActionAid had a conscious policy relating to transparency, consultation and involvement. The question whether this Principle ultimately has impact on the lives of those in need should be followed up in the last stages of the DEC response, now continuing to July 2002, and perhaps also by the Humanitarian Accountability Project.

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<sup>42</sup> 'Towards Understanding Key Social Issues: British Red Cross Reconstruction Project, Gujarat, India' August 2001.

## 177. Learning Points:

- The view of the people affected is that there have been deficiencies in participation, consultation, involvement and information.
- Participation is perceived to be driven by the agency's own interests.
- Consultation is viewed as superficial, and without result.
- Research can be a legitimate and important part of consultation.
- Information has not necessarily been targeted to the poorest and may have exacerbated economic divisions.

## **5.8. Red Cross Principle Eight: Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.**

*'Everything we had been given is now gone. When the food was eaten we had nothing.'*  
*'Earthquake proofing is fine if you have the means –but what about us poor? What are we to do when we can't even afford roofing over our families?'*

persons in DEC Survey

**Key Issues:** seismic safety, disaster preparedness, NGO partnerships, health

176. **Seismic Safety.** In a section on the Gujarat earthquake, the World Disaster Report 2001 asserts- 'In a State that is not a high-risk region for earthquakes, where annual per capita income is about 11,000 rupees (US\$250), imposing formal building codes to make homes earthquake-proof is not realistic.'<sup>43</sup>
177. Agencies in the field, including all DEC agencies, have taken the view that they cannot take such a risk. The calculations about the possibility of further massive damage from earthquakes (see Background section) are difficult to balance against costs. Left to themselves, people are unlikely to include standard seismic safety features because the cost of this for an average house is about 20,000 rupees – nearly two years' income. Agencies have not had to face up to the issue in quite the same way as home-owners do; and hence tend, too readily, to see the general reluctance to build seismic-safe houses as a sign of ignorance or folly.
178. As our consultant Kirtee Shah has elaborated in his report<sup>44</sup> it is not just the cost of steel bars and concrete frames (recommended to be inserted at three levels, and with connecting vertical pillars to make a 'cage' construction) it is also the inconvenience and cost of the process. Skilled masons will not wait around while the concrete sets but move on to another job. Most villagers told us that they would like seismic safety in their houses but could not afford it. The economics are such that it is cheaper to bribe the engineer who comes to make a check than pay for the cement rings. Our survey reveals a lot of interest and demand for information but it is generally true that people have only adopted 'seismic safety' when made to do so as a condition of assistance.

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<sup>43</sup> IFRC World Disaster Report 2001 p21

<sup>44</sup> See Volume Three

179. This is not so true of the rich. The enormous disparities between levels of government compensation (some people got fifty times as much as others) mean that the rich have a much better chance of adopting safety features. We met more than one village leader who was proud to show us a fully 'seismic safe' house whereas everyone else was rebuilding in mud and rough stones. The overall outcome of the present programmes will be to widen the gap between rich and poor in terms of future vulnerabilities. In any future earthquake it will be the poor who suffer both because they have not adopted seismic safety and also because they may be burdened by debts to make up for the deficiencies in support from agencies. The underlying issue is the inequity and lack of access to government compensation.
180. Kirtee Shah also points out that 'excessive mystification' by professionals has led to over-caution. It is not possible to fully define seismic-safety since nobody knows quite how severe a future earthquake might be. Even the three concrete rings would not be enough in certain conditions. He considers that EFICOR (Tearfund) should have been more robust in relation to the 'expert' advice which insisted on a rectangular house as the only 'seismic safe' solution. The deeper problem is that EFICOR (Tearfund) had got into the wrong strategic position. They had taken full responsibility for the reconstruction of three villages out of over 1,000 in Kutch. In our view could have achieved much more by helping people with information, advice and subsidised materials.
181. **Disaster preparedness.** Building seismic-safe houses is not the only approach to disaster preparedness for the future. The permanent housing created in the 'adoption' schemes such as EFICOR's may reduce vulnerability to physical shocks such as earthquakes and cyclones but they may reduce capacity if they undermine the functioning of the community. If people are put into houses regardless of preferences for neighbours, or in configurations of caste which they do not like, the sense of cohesion which was such a huge feature of the response in January will be much reduced. Neighbours in such a 'community' may not even help each other out of the rubble as they did before. Livelihoods may be undermined by distance from the fields, or use of agricultural land for building.
182. The DEC research is particularly interesting in showing that the affected people had been thinking deeply about the issue of reducing future vulnerability, and along rather different lines from the aid agencies. In their view the right kind of leadership was felt to be the most important capacity of the community by far. People felt that the opportunities for corruption had weakened that capacity compared with what it was before the earthquake. Other sources of human capacity included youth (rescue work), teachers and postmen (specifically for help filling forms) and shop-keepers (giving credit). Helpful institutions were the youth group, relief committee and the SEWA women's co-operative. The flour-mill was especially important for grinding relief grains and also giving free flour during the initial relief period. In physical terms vehicles and phones were rated the most important asset. In general people felt that these assets had increased in number and importance since the earthquake, especially because there were more phones. Their view was that the role of external agencies was limited and that communities were becoming more used to coping with disasters. Actual capacity had increased more in terms of mental preparedness than physical assets. People perceived considerable importance in the role of information. Their contact with government and relief agencies had increased their capacity to help themselves. They particularly valued information on contact addresses, housing designs and about the government rehabilitation packages.



183. Women stated that their capacity and confidence had increased due to their involvement in the response and contact with village leaders, teachers, the pre-school manager and outside agencies. Again, the crucial issue seems to be acquiring knowledge and information.
184. Specific projects were thought to be particularly important for building capacity. Communities had become more aware of the importance of savings and insurance schemes. Others stressed the need for water-harvesting projects.
185. There were several examples of outside agencies undermining local capacity. The relocation of communities to new housing projects was seen as particularly damaging. One agency trained masons but then took them out of the village to work on their project, reducing the community's own capacity to rebuild. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the use of outside contractors rather than local labour and resources. People suggested that outside agencies could do more to spread information about contacts, help to update the ration card system and provide telephones so that the community could better access information.
186. People proposed that each village should have a community centres equipped with first aid, basic essentials and a phone. People saw their capacity to resist disaster in terms of having the right people and relationships in the village rather than in terms of seismic safety. They wanted representative leaders, lists of contacts and people who had been trained in relevant skills such as first aid. The most general request was for communications and information. Women stated that they wanted more information on insurance and access to credit schemes.
187. **NGO partnerships.** Developing the capacity of local NGOs is an important way of reducing vulnerabilities. Agencies which chose to be operational were too inclined to argue purely in terms of efficiency of relief and tend to ignore the long-term impact of a successful partnership. Abhiyan was not simply an agency useful in constructing temporary housing but could have been nurtured by SCF for their unique role in co-ordinating disaster responses. By not making good use of its NGO links, Oxfam's contribution to reducing future vulnerabilities has been greatly reduced.
188. **Health.** A number of agencies provided good responses in terms of curative care. Work by Merlin and HelpAge was described in positive terms by villagers in the DEC research. The attempt to increase community capacity through health education programmes was less effective. Staff from Merlin and Oxfam were not able to identify significant impact arising from such programmes.

### **Conclusions: Principle Eight.**

189. With a requirement for reconstruction of US\$3.5<sup>45</sup> billion for reconstruction to improved standards –and US\$2billion already available<sup>46</sup>– the physical input of NGOs (including the US\$30m from the DEC) was of much less significance than their capacity to make the larger process work for the benefit of the poor. If DEC members had done so they would not only have acted more efficiently but also made a much greater contribution to reducing future vulnerabilities.

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<sup>45</sup> UNDP 'Gujarat Transition Recovery Team: An Update' September 2001. UNDP estimates that a further US\$2.5billion would be required for full earthquake and cyclone proofing.

<sup>46</sup> About half coming from the World Bank and ADB.

190. Village people seem to have accepted as a premise that seismic safety would either not happen or would have limited effectiveness in protecting them from shocks. They focused much more on social development than aid agencies did.

**191. Learning Points.**

- Seismic safety cannot be precisely defined.
- The people saw 'reducing future vulnerabilities' in more social terms than the aid agencies.
- The ability to assert entitlements in relation to government is an especially important way of reducing vulnerability.
- Building and maintaining NGO partnerships is a way of reducing vulnerabilities.
- Health education programmes have not resulted in demonstrable impact.

**5.9. Red Cross Principle Nine: We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.**

*'We don't know the names of some of the NGOs that came. We asked every day. But names were given in English, or they couldn't speak our language, so we never knew.'*

**Key themes:** DEC research, Financial accountability

192. **DEC research.** The views of the 'survivors of the earthquake' indicate some concern about levels of transparency by DEC agencies. With some exceptions it appears that agencies have not done enough to explain who they are. There are positive examples of open discussion with NGO partners, notably Christian Aid's consultation in Ahmedabad in August. We suggest that the issue of transparency should be addressed in more detail in a future evaluation.

193. **Financial Accountability.** In this evaluation we were specifically asked to examine the management of financial resources by DEC members. The nine key findings are-

- There was a mismatch between the amount of funds raised, the DEC time limit for expenditure and the needs of beneficiaries. Many member agencies had more money available than they could responsibly spend in nine months.
- Resources have been allocated between member agencies with limited efficiency.
- Member agencies have allocated resources internally with limited levels of efficiency.
- Member agencies have operated with different levels of cost efficiency.
- Financial administration and control has been of a robust professional standard.
- NGO partners have maintained professional levels of financial administration, control and accountability.
- NGOs have been accountable to the DEC for the funds that they have received. Some have also given financial account to beneficiaries.
- NGOs have involved programme managers in financial management. It has not been 'left to the accountant'.
- Field and head office staff have not always understood the DEC's role and operating procedures.

194. The Code does not simply specify assessment at the outset but enjoins ‘regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance’ –a concept which goes beyond Sphere<sup>47</sup>. It requires agencies to ‘report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact.’ Overall we found the level of reports sent to the DEC by members was rather poor. Many appeared to be written by people with no direct contact with the work on the ground.

195. There should be a thorough overhaul of the reporting systems within the DEC, and we are pleased that such a process is already under way in the revision of the DEC Handbook. The main objective should be to integrate the DEC’s requirements with the actual planning and reporting cycles of the agencies. DEC reports would then become a record of debates and discussions closer to the Code’s description. Secondly, in the interests of greater transparency, the reports should be summarised on a regular basis to provide donors with an overview of expenditures and issues –and these should be posted on the DEC website

### **Conclusions: Principle Nine**

196. DEC agencies have done well in relation to financial accountability to donors but less well in terms of open reporting and analysis of impact. A number of agencies have not yet done internal evaluations. They should certainly do so by July 2002. Oxfam deserves credit for carrying out a very thorough internal evaluation and making it available to the DEC.

197. DEC systems of reporting need to be aligned to real planning cycles and made more widely available to the donor public. The issue of accountability to the people in need remains unclear. The DEC research on public opinions has given the opportunity for views to be expressed but the DEC does not have defined norms for transparency and accountability.

198. **Learning points.**

- The DEC research indicates that people expect higher levels of transparency from aid agencies.
- Regular assessment of impact –with transparency about the results- would be a step forward towards meeting the requirements of this Principle.

### **5.10 Red Cross Principle Ten: In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.**

199. A thorough study of this issue has not been attempted; it was not specifically required by the Terms of Reference. A superficial review suggests some issues of concern and that the issue should receive greater attention in a future evaluation.

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<sup>47</sup> See Appendix

- 200.** At first sight the DEC's core image of an old man in front of a shattered house is reasonably positive but closer inspection reveals that he has his head bowed and hands raised in the traditional gesture of supplication used by beggars in India. The Nick Ross feedback film for TV with its 'thank you' parade appeared to be stage-managed, suggesting that the film was designed to show viewers what they might want to hear rather than what people in India really wanted to say. In both cases the issue is about the dignity of the people affected by the disaster.
- 201.** By contrast HelpAge India's booklet 'Gujarat: January 26, 2001' shows a pair of happy-looking (and only moderately old) musicians on its front cover, and has as its main (and spectacular) illustration a very dignified shoemaker with the caption in very small letters- 'providing livelihoods' –all very dignified. The sensitive selection of images reflects HelpAge's comprehensive research programme into attitudes towards older people<sup>48</sup>. This reveals that older people see their needs in disasters very much in terms of livelihoods whereas aid agency staff perceive their needs as food, isolation, health and psycho-social support.
- 202.** In general, we found that materials prepared in the UK were more likely to present people as 'hopeless objects' or 'traumatised' than those coming from India<sup>49</sup>. This may reflect an emphasis on fundraising in the UK, but leads to inconsistency in relation to the Code. It may also reflect general trends in the media. Much of the initial reporting about the earthquake focused on the British 'search-and-rescue' team. While thousands of people were extracted from the rubble by neighbours and government staff, the UK media focused on the 69-strong British team which rescued just 7 people. It is in resisting such distortions that the broadcasting authorities can perhaps best assist the DEC to overcome the public misconceptions.

## **Conclusion: Principle Ten**

- 203.** A detailed analysis of images would need to define the meaning of 'dignified'. We suggest the distinction is essentially between 'having a positive role in society which gives respect' and 'being a burden to society and seeking pity'. If donors are encouraged to respond to negative images they are indirectly being encouraged to develop racist attitudes –perceptions of people in poorer countries as beggars. It would be a beneficial process if donors could be encouraged to respond to images of self-confidence in the face of disaster and more focus on livelihoods rather than relief. This would also develop better understanding of the need for appropriate time-scales.
- 204. Learning points.**
- The Code should act as an important constraint on media images relating to disasters.
  - Research about the attitudes of the 'victims' themselves may lead to better images.
  - Positive images are those that reflect roles in society, rather than helplessness (and uselessness).

<sup>48</sup> 'Older People in disasters and humanitarian crises: guidelines for best practice'.

<sup>49</sup> Materials such as those from Aparajita (VHAI/Christian Aid) in Orissa suggest that this is generally the case.

## **6. General Conclusions**

*'Placing a six-month spending window on emergency funds, it was trapped by imposing a time limit on something that can't always be rushed'*

World Disasters Report 2001 on the DEC.<sup>50</sup>

### **The DEC Response**

205. **Analysis.** Relief items were unnecessarily sent from abroad, expatriates were used where local staff could have done better. The larger DEC members used funds from DFID and ECHO for the relief phase rather than funds from the DEC, and in the end only 13% of DEC funds were spent on relief<sup>51</sup>. Some DEC members did not recognise the particular characteristics of working with a strong and politically-charged government. The levels of assessment, strategy and analysis in most DEC members was poor. But some made a good strategic assessment, realised the importance of the government response and predicted the marginalisation of poorer people.

206. **Learning.** Agencies that had been present in India for many years reacted as if they had just arrived. Gujarat's remarkable plethora of NGOs was not used to full capacity. There was little emphasis on building local capacities and the ability of communities to cope with future disasters. Many of the weaknesses described in this report have been described in other DEC evaluations in other contexts. The issue of timescale has come up time and again. The poor level of assessment and strategy has also been remarked before.

207. Learning by aid agencies from previous earthquakes has been poor, and therefore mistakes were persistently repeated. Ignoring the past, aid agencies responded to the destruction of complex village infrastructures by attempting to build rows of concrete houses as if for factory workers. The main lesson from the Latur earthquake in India only eight years previously had been to help people rebuild their own houses in their own way.

208. **Working together.** Generally speaking, the international NGOs were less effective than the local ones, even in terms of accounting systems and reporting. Their analysis was considerably weaker. By working together the weaker links could have joined themselves to stronger ones, but this did not always happen. As a whole the DEC responded well, but some members did a lot better than others.

209. Evaluations have the benefit of hindsight and some of the issues that now seem obvious were not so obvious at the time. There were genuine dilemmas and difficulties, but many factors could have been understood by better analysis and strategy, together with more willingness to work with others. Some DEC agencies achieved massive impact while others did not. Overall the response was reasonably good, but the achievement of the best is counterbalanced by the failure of the worst.

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<sup>50</sup> Op cit p26. It continues *'Kosovo and Orissa saw huge amounts handed back, and some money had to be reprogrammed, a procedure that proved problematic. Clearly agencies need to communicate to public and government donors alike the field realities of disaster response'*

<sup>51</sup> See financial summary.



## **7. Recommendations**

### **DEC members should-**

- Ensure that consultation with the affected people can be integrated into planning rather than follow afterwards.
- Review their assessment procedures to ensure that the wider context is considered and that assessment feeds into the process of strategic review.
- Ensure that major lessons from previous disasters cannot be ignored.
- Recognise that local partnerships are likely to be more effective than external interventions.
- Recognise that the key to scaling up is not internal expansion but finding ways to work effectively with others.
- Use the Red Cross Code as a quality standard in programme planning.
- Develop indicators of good practice in relation to Red Cross Code Principles.
- Develop policies and procedures around the issue of transparency.
- Recognise the rights of public donors to expect collective responsibility for the efficient use of funds, and to have their understanding deepened.

### **The DEC should-**

- Establish a timescale for Appeals of 18 months divided into two 9-month phases in which twice as much would be spent in the first phase as in the second.
- Regard the IOC mechanism only as a starting point for a self-assessment process which will be signed-off by senior managers.
- Establish the rules for such a procedure and empower the Chief Executive to monitor the process against the rules.
- Develop an information management strategy, drawing on lessons from previous emergencies.
- Field a Liaison Officer at the outset of an Appeal with a brief for information management.
- Continue to encourage a forum of DEC agencies in the field, as happened in Gujarat.
- Develop a wide mailing list in each disaster to ensure that facts such as decisions, procedures and rules are communicated directly to all concerned including programme partners.
- Replace four-week plans with six-week plans and ensure that these are strategic by establishing an appropriate list of headings.
- Proactively use the Red Cross Code as a test of quality.
- Consider the implications of the Gujarat experience for Sphere.
- Pay more attention to images (Red Cross Code Principle Nine) and focus on this in a future evaluation.

## **8. Main Learning Points.**

### **Earthquakes**

- Earthquakes do not necessarily disrupt communications and trade.
- The unpredictability of earthquakes means that there is no easy prescription for seismic safety.
- Permanent reconstruction takes longer than the time in which people can reasonably be expected to live in tents: temporary housing is an important and neglected sector.
- Like other disasters, earthquakes may tend to make the poor poorer unless corrective steps are taken.

### **Preparedness**

- Preparedness was seen by the affected people as being about partnerships and knowledge rather than stocks and skills.
- Partnerships with local NGOs are the best means for external aid agencies to scale up.
- Where such partnerships have been developed there will be an expectation that it will continue in time of disaster; DEC members which drop local partnerships in times of crisis will find it difficult to resume them later.

### **Response**

- Evaluations will continue to question whether agencies allow the desire for publicity and existence of stocks to outweigh humanitarian principles –and therefore agencies should take extra care in making decisions open to such an interpretation.
- Every aid agency should make a full strategic assessment within 3 months of a disaster.
- The strategy should be explicitly measured against the Red Cross Code but further indicators are required, notably in the case of unclear concepts such as accountability, transparency and dignity.
- Research should be used more widely to underpin strategy.
- The strategy must look at the wider picture and include an advocacy strategy.
- This is especially the case where the DEC response is relatively small.

### **Building on local capacities.**

- In the Gujarat case there were no important skills that were not available locally, except knowledge of the DEC member.
- DEC members gave insufficient attention to the development of local capacity, especially of NGO partners.
- Livelihoods were emphasised in the public opinion research as the central focus for relief and rehabilitation.
- Shelter and livelihoods are closely inter-related.
- Employment in construction offers a significant opportunity to support local livelihoods.
- Migrant labour is likely to be exploited and may involve violations of human and civil rights.
- The input must be proportionate to the task. Insufficient help can undermine local capacities.



## VOLUME TWO

### Appendix Two

#### **The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief**

##### **1 The Humanitarian imperative comes first**

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. As members of the international community, we recognise our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility. The prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster. When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

##### **2 Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind.**

Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone. Wherever possible, we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs. Within the entirety of our programmes, we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate. In implementing this approach, we recognise the crucial role played by women in disaster-prone communities and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our aid programmes. The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy, can only be effective if we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for such equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.

##### **3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint**

Humanitarian aid will be given according to the need of individuals, families and communities. Notwithstanding the right of Non-Government Humanitarian Agencies (NGHAs) to espouse particular political or religious opinions, we affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions. We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.

##### **4 We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy**

NGHAs are agencies which act independently from governments. We therefore

formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy. We will never knowingly - or through negligence - allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments.

We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor.

We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by concerned individuals to support our work and recognise the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

## **5 We shall respect culture and custom**

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

## **6 We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities**

All people and communities - even in disaster - possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local NGHAs as partners in planning and implementation, and co-operate with local government structures where appropriate. We will place a high priority on the proper co-ordination of our emergency responses. This is best done within the countries concerned by those most directly involved in the relief operations, and should include representatives of the relevant UN bodies.

## **7 Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.**

Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.

## **8 Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs**

All relief actions affect the prospects for long-term development, either in a positive or a negative fashion. Recognising this, we will strive to implement relief programmes which actively reduce the beneficiaries' vulnerability to future disasters and help create sustainable lifestyles. We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. We will also endeavour to minimise the negative impact of humanitarian assistance, seeking to avoid long-term beneficiary dependence upon external aid.

## **9 We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources**

We often act as an institutional link in the partnership between those who wish to assist and those who need assistance during disasters. We therefore hold ourselves accountable to both constituencies. All our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency. We recognise the need to report on our activities, both from a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness. We recognise the obligation to ensure appropriate monitoring of aid distributions and to carry out regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance. We will also seek to report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact. Our programmes will be based upon high standards of professionalism and expertise in order to minimise the wasting of valuable resources.

## **10 In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects**

Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will cooperate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.

Ends

*VOLUME TWO*

**Appendix Three**

**Composition of the evaluation team**

The evaluation was conducted by a consortium of three organisations led by Tony Vaux of *Humanitarian Initiatives*. The three organisations are-

**1. Disaster Mitigation Institute (DMI)**

DMI was initiated and developed during a period of severe drought in Gujarat from 1987-9 and became an autonomous organisation in 1995. One focus in relation to disaster is on listening to the voices of the affected people and generating community action from those perceptions. DMI engages in research and capacity-building in support of that aim. But DMI is also a disaster response organisation with a strong track record on rehabilitation through its Livelihood Relief Fund. DMI also has a national reputation for policy development on disaster issues and is represented in discussions at the highest levels.

**Founder and Honorary Director:**

**Mihir Bhatt**, has a degree in Urban Studies and Planning. He has published a number of studies and guides. He is from Gujarat and lives in Ahmedabad.

**DMI Survey team**

**Girija Makwana**, trained in participatory methods of mapping the interplay between women, water and work and is responsible for mainstreaming gender concerns in mitigation activities.

**Tejal Dave**, trained as an engineer and co-ordinated NGO responses after the 1998 Kandla cyclone. She works with DMI on promoting safer building practices through community action and capacity building.

**Hasmukh Sadhu**, trained in urban flood mitigation and research project management. In DMI he conducts action research on links between food and livelihoods.

**J.K. Parmar**, trained in livelihood support activities and now works with DMI on protecting and promoting incomes and assets of the poor during and after disasters.

**DMI associate consultants:**

**Preeti Bhat Krishnaswamy** (research consultant) has an MA in Gender and Development from IDS, Sussex. She has been extensively involved in research and evaluation including with Oxfam GB evaluating responses to the Latur earthquake.

**Kirtee Shah** (shelter consultant) is an architect with an extensive private practice. He is founder and director of the Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG) which has been heavily involved in shelter reconstruction projects for thirty years, including responses to the Latur 1993 and Gujarat 2001 earthquakes.

**Nimish Shah** (financial management consultant) is a chartered accountant and senior partner in a prominent Ahmedabad firm of chartered accountants. He has worked specifically with NGOs.

## **2. Humanitarian Initiatives (HI)**

*HI* is a new organisation founded in mid-2000 and registered as a company in the UK in July 2001. The aim of *HI* is to inform and improve aid interventions by analysis and evaluation. Apart from this evaluation it has focused mainly on conflict assessment. *HI* represents three key values-

- Action based on analysis
- Accountability to the person in need
- Accountability to the donor through transparency

**Director: Tony Vaux** (Team Leader) was Field Director for Oxfam in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, for 4 years and also lived in Delhi and Calcutta. He was Oxfam's global Emergencies Coordinator for ten years and is author of '*The Selfish Altruist*' –a personal view of the limits to philanthropy.

### **Other key representatives**

**Hugh Goyder** (Deputy Team Leader) has also represented Oxfam in India. He conducted the DEC's Orissa evaluation in 1999 and has worked extensively as an evaluation specialist for Oxfam, ActionAid and many other agencies. He is a Director of *HI*.

**Sarah Routley** (Research Consultant) studied environmental science and also has a degree in Development Practice and has specialised in community research during disasters. She has worked extensively with international NGOs.

## **3. Mango**

Mango was founded in 1999 to provide financial management support to relief and development operations. It has a register of accountants, a website with free tools, offers training and has set up a financial network in the UK.

**Director: Alex Jacobs** (Financial Management Consultant) has a degree in anthropology and is a qualified chartered accountant. He has worked with Oxfam GB and other organisations in a number of disaster situations around the world. He is the founder of Mango.

## **DEC Evaluation: The Earthquake in Gujarat/6**

### **VOLUME TWO**

#### *Appendix Four*

### **Evaluation Schedule and Persons consulted**

#### **1. Evaluation Team**

Preeti Bhat (PB)  
Mihir Bhatt (MB)  
Hugh Goyder (HG)  
Alex Jacobs (AJ)  
Sarah Routley (SR)  
Kirtee Shah (KS)  
Nimish Shah (NS)  
Tony Vaux (TV)

#### **2. Schedule**

**January 26<sup>th</sup> 2001: Earthquake occurs.**

*{March*

*Monitoring Mission (MB, TV) –report on DEC website}*

#### **June**

Evaluation contract signed.  
Briefings with DEC Secretariat.

#### **July**

Research project team recruited (MB)  
DEC members in UK/Ireland consulted (HG)  
Preparation of evaluation work-plan (TV)  
General reading and data collection

#### **August**

Preparation of finance methodology (AJ)  
Consultation with DEC members in UK/Ireland (AJ)  
Visit to India to negotiate research methodology with stakeholders (TV, SR)  
Training of research team (SR, PB, MB)  
Research project starts mid-August  
Identify and brief India-based financial management consultant (TV,AJ)  
Negotiations with shelter consultant (TV)  
Field Visit to Kutch (MB, TV) -to consult DEC members about research  
-some field visits and discussions with agencies

## **September**

Financial analysis (NS)

Support to research (SR,PB)

Research project ends 28th Sept.

Debrief research team in Ahmedabad (SR,PB).

## **October**

Visit to Kutch for shelter sector (KS)

Visit to Delhi (TV): Meetings with Government of India, UNDP, UNICEF, Red Cross Federation, SCF, HelpAge, Christian Aid, Oxfam)

First draft of research report (SR)

Visit in Gujarat –shelter (KS,TV)

Visit in Kutch -Sphere, general (HG)

Visit in Kutch -financial management (AJ)

Presentation of findings to DEC agencies in Bhuj

Meetings with civil society reps in Ahmedabad and Government of Gujarat officials including Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority in Gandhinagar (MB,TV).

## **November**

Report writing –first draft (KS,AJ,HG,TV).

Presentation of draft reports to DEC members and secretariat in London

Discussions with DEC members as requested (BRCS, SCF, CARE, Oxfam, ActionAid)

## **December**

Final draft of reports

Preparation for publication of research in India

Evaluation completed

### **3. Persons Consulted (non-DEC)**

#### **Delhi**

Alok Mukhopadhyay, Executive Director, Voluntary Health Association of India  
Maria Calivis, Representative, UNICEF  
Dennis Lazarus, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP  
K. Mahesh, Officer on Special Duty to Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, Government of India  
Dr Vinod K. Sharma, Professor (Disaster management), Indian Institute of Public Administration  
Michael Shiromony, IAS, Director (Disasters), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India  
Sri Naved Masoud, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

#### **Ahmedabad**

Binoy Acharya, Director, Unnati  
Amar Gargesh, consultant, IFRC  
Barry Underwood, consultant  
Rajesh Kapoor, Executive Director, Cohesion  
Prasad Chacko, Director, Behavioural Science Centre  
James Dabhi, Behavioural Science Centre  
M.D. Mistry, MP, Disha  
Achyut Yagnik, Secretary, SETU

#### **Gandhinagar**

R.J. Makadia, GAS, Director (Disaster Management), Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority  
P.K. Mishra, IAS, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister  
V. Thiruppu, IAS, Chief Executive Officer, Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority  
S.K. Nanda, IAS, Secretary, Health, Government of Gujarat

#### **Kutch/Saurashtra**

Mrs H. Bedi, Field Representative, Community Aid Abroad  
Sushma Iyengar, Co-Director, Abhiyan  
Bhanu Mistry, Manager at Bhachau, Unnati  
Rakesh Mohan, Project Manager, Aparajita  
Prem, EFICOR  
Dr Unnikrishnan P.V., Emergencies Co-ordinator, Oxfam India Society  
Praveen Pardeshi, IAS, Programme Manager –Gujarat, UNDP  
Professor Kher, Gram Vikas Trust, Dwarka



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**Appendix Five**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**THE INDEPENDENT INDIA EARTHQUAKE EVALUATION:**

**1. Background**

The major earthquake of the 26<sup>th</sup> January, according to official estimates caused the death of 19,988 people, of whom 18,999 died in Kutch District, and injured 1.6 million people. Over 300,000 houses were completely destroyed and nearly 900,000 damaged. The estimated loss including extensive damage to industrial establishments is £3.5 billion<sup>52</sup>. It severely affected nearly 16 million people<sup>53</sup>.

Without doubt the international response to the earthquake on 26<sup>th</sup> January was rapid and massive. According to UNDAC<sup>54</sup>, by 10<sup>th</sup> February 'relief had arrived from 38 countries and the presence of 245 agencies had been registered, including at least 99 international NGOs, 55 national NGOs, 20 donor government teams, 10 UN and intergovernmental organisations and Red Cross Representatives from 10 countries.'

The DEC launched an Appeal on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and established within the first week that the Fund would exceed £15 million and Members were asked to plan a response on that basis. In fact the Appeal has raised over £21 million which again demonstrates the remarkable generosity of the British Public. DFID also make £10 million available for the relief effort with some of these funds going to DEC members.

The initial response of the member agencies concentrated on relief items such as shelter, blankets, household and hygiene kits and the provision of mobile and centre based health care. This was followed up with rehabilitation, and reconstruction and support for livelihoods.

**2. The Evaluation:**

An independent evaluation is an integral part of the DEC's approach. This evaluation enables the DEC Secretariat and its Members fulfil three responsibilities:

- Public accountability
- Demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct
- Learn lessons and improve performance in the future

The basic framework and criteria for the Evaluation team to make judgements and recommendations are the Red Cross Code of Conduct, to which the members are signatories, appropriate Sphere Standards and the Six DEC evaluation criteria of:

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<sup>52</sup> See [www.gujarat-earthquake.gov.in](http://www.gujarat-earthquake.gov.in) figures as at 9<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

<sup>53</sup> The figure for 'affected' is not very helpful. Seriously affected would probably be less than 2 million. See [www.gujaratindia.com](http://www.gujaratindia.com) for detailed figures.

<sup>54</sup> UNDAC 'Team Bhuj Final Report' at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

- **Timeliness and Appropriateness of response** – this would also cover issues of capacity and preparedness to enable a rapid and sensitive response
- **Cost effectiveness** – the efficiency of the response
- **Impact** - reviewing the reduction in mortality, morbidity and suffering achieved by the Member's actions
- **Coverage** – scale and ability to reach those most in need, given political, religious and social context of the emergency
- **Connectedness** – links into local capacity, plans and aspirations and the collaboration and co-ordination of the Members efforts
- **Coherence** - the integration of relief activities to policy and practice changes needed to address root causes

The accountability is not only to the donors, but also to the beneficiaries or claimants of the relief effort. The evaluation methodology should involve the different stakeholder and beneficiaries of the DEC funded programmes

### **The Monitoring Report**

An initial monitoring visit was carried out in March which forms part of the basis for this evaluation and is available on the DEC Website at [www.dec.org.uk](http://www.dec.org.uk). Issues and areas of focus identified in the monitoring report will need to be developed in the main evaluation.

Instead of trying to cover the whole range of activities undertaken by the DEC Members the evaluation team will use three specific windows through which to look at the response.

- **Shelter provision – temporary and permanent**
- **Targeting of response to the most needy and the responsiveness to specific “high risk” groups and individuals.**
- **Financial management and systems**

#### **a. Shelter:**

Given the crucial importance of damage to homes and community buildings in the Indian Earthquake the evaluation will focus on this theme. The report should cover the delivery of immediate relief, the choice of types of temporary shelter- tents, plastic sheeting and local materials, the issue of local purchase against import, and relevant sphere standards. The solutions for hospitals, schools and clinics should also be reviewed.

Secondly the timing and shift to more permanent shelter solutions and the policy and practical choices of the rebuilding and rehabilitation programmes. The lessons from other earthquakes especially Latur in India will be very relevant in judging the choices made and the recommendations for future responses to large earthquakes.

#### **b. Targeting:**

Commentaries on the earthquake response raised several issues about the ability of the relief agencies both governmental, commercial and voluntary to reach those most affected, both physically and mentally, and whose lives and livelihoods had been most harmed, especially in the complex social, cultural and political context of the region.

Targeting was also raised as an issue in the monitoring report whether special needs of interest groups such as the elderly or the physically handicapped had been given appropriate attention. The monitoring mission report also drew attention to the issue of

evaluating the reduction in suffering as well as the effect on mortality and morbidity. A methodology for evaluating the reduction in suffering will need to be developed by the evaluation team.

Effective targeting is dependent of good information management and co-ordination, and the evaluation team will need to draw conclusions on how this was handled and might be better handled in the future.

### **c. Financial Management:**

The complexity of the funding and financial management of the DEC members has meant this issue has been weak in previous DEC evaluations. This component can and should serve as the primary way accountability to the donors is achieved. The evaluation, while not being an audit, which is the responsibility of each member, should look at the total picture of DEC spend. This would include reviewing the robustness of the systems for allocating and tracking spend from the Appeal phase through to the beneficiaries via the different members including their systems of financial monitoring and reporting. Through this exercise the Members should be able to demonstrate that the money was spent on the activities set out in the plans. The evaluation should review the volume of funds allocated under the major DEC programme budget heads.

The evaluation should make recommendations to the DEC Secretariat and Members about the financial framework for raising, budgeting, allocating and monitoring the appeal funds.

## **3. Method**

Participating DEC agencies are required to submit the following material (in both hard copy and electronic format) to the Secretariat to assist the evaluation team's work:

- a summary chronology and key documents on the agency's response to the emergency and their use of DEC funds including financial procedures
- names, contact details and roles during the response of key agency and partner personnel in the head office and in the relevant field offices
- List of indicators used by the agencies to monitor and evaluate their DEC funded activities and any monitoring or evaluation reports.

The Secretariat will prepare a package of materials on each participating agency to be given to the evaluation team, as well as appeal related documentation on financial and other actions and the Monitoring Report undertaken in March 2001. **It will be important that the Consultants review the existing DEC evaluations and the Vine Management Summary Report so that this evaluation builds on the existing body of knowledge available to the DEC Members**

The evaluation team will begin with a review of available documentation. The team will be responsible for ensuring appropriate data-collection is undertaken in the field following their appointment, so that key information that may no longer be available in the later stage of the DEC funded response, is not lost to the evaluation process. Since certain operations will already have closed down by the time the evaluation proper is underway, it might be appropriate to undertake preliminary fieldwork during the expenditure period.

**The main evaluation mission which will be timed to coincide with the last month of**

**the period of action covered by the nine month action plans submitted by the Members (October).** This visit schedule will be confirmed after the review of written material and the visits to the UK offices of the Members. The evaluation team's schedule, accommodation and transport arrangements will be finalised and communicated to the Secretariat and all agencies at least one week prior to any visit.

During their time with each agency the team will interview key personnel remaining in-country (contacting others prior to the field visits or on their return) and undertake visits to selected project sites/areas. The field visit must include at least one DEC funded project for each participating agency. The evaluators will have to make extensive use of agency reports and their own preliminary data collection, where later site visits would prove pointless. It should be noted that in the case of agencies that are part of larger organisations UK assistance might not be distinguishable from that of global counterparts, nevertheless, every effort should be made to distinguish DEC funding.

As well as interviewing the agencies' project officers, key officials in co-ordinating agencies (e.g. UNICEF, OCHA, central and state governments), and partner agencies, a sample of beneficiaries will be selected and interviewed by the evaluators. These interviews will be conducted without agency personnel being present, using interpreters (where necessary) hired directly by the evaluation team. The beneficiaries will be questioned on their views of the assistance provided, the way they were selected and their overall views of the agency. Interviews with individuals may be complemented by discussions with groups of beneficiaries. So as to assess the agency's targeting and beneficiary selection methods the evaluation team will also interview a selection of potential beneficiaries who did not receive assistance.

It is expected that the evaluation team will use gender-aware and participatory approaches to seek the views of beneficiaries and, where appropriate, non-beneficiaries. Inclusive techniques will be expected of the evaluators, to seek active participation in the evaluation by members of local emergency committees, staff of implementing partner agencies and member agencies, and representatives of local and central governments.

**Before leaving the country, members of the team will indicate their broad findings to Country Representative and senior staff of each agency and note their comments.**

A meeting should then be held in London to disseminate a draft report of the evaluation. The report should be circulated one week prior to the workshop to allow for preliminary review by agencies and their partners, and followed by a two-week formal agency comment period.

#### **4. The Report**

The evaluation report should consist of:

- executive summary and recommendations (not more than six pages)
- main text, to include index, emergency context, evaluation methodology, appeal management, commentary and analysis addressing evaluation purpose and outputs to include a section dedicated to the issue taking forward particular lessons learned, conclusions (not more than thirty pages)
- appendices, to include evaluation terms of reference, maps, sample framework,

summary of agency activities, sub-team report(s), end notes (where appropriate) and bibliography. **(All material collected in the undertaking of the evaluation process should be lodged with the Secretariat prior to termination of the contract)**

## **5. Evaluation team and timeframe**

It is anticipated there will be a core team of three people. The Team Leader should have a proven background in emergency evaluations. The appropriate balance and size of team is up to the tendering organisations, but a financial expert and emergency/earthquake housing expertise will be required. There must be at least one Gujarati speaker.

All team members should be gender aware, and a reasonable gender balance is desirable. Consultants or independent evaluation teams short-listed in the tendering process should seek DEC approval for any proposed changes to the composition of the team originally submitted.

The evaluation timeframe should allow for the circulation of a first draft by 4 January 2002, followed by presentation of the draft by the evaluation consultant(s) to member agencies a week later. A formal comment period, of at least two weeks, for participating agencies and their partners will then follow. The completion date for the Final Evaluation Report will be 15<sup>th</sup> February 2002, the consultants having addressed agencies' comments as appropriate.

## **6. Tenders and Evaluation Management**

Tenders should be submitted to the DEC Secretariat by the **closing date of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2001**. A maximum 5 page summary should be submitted with appendices of team member CVs (each CV a maximum of 3 pages) and an indication of availability. The DEC may wish to see substantive pieces work or to take up references of short-listed consultants.

The final decision on tenders will be taken by the DEC Chief Executive, following short-listing and interviews. Key factors will include:

Provisional framework, methodology, team balance and professionalism, local experiences, timeframe and budget (realism not just competitiveness)  
an appreciation of key constraints and comments on the above terms of reference

Tenders will be accepted from "freelance" teams as well as from company, PVO or academic teams. Tenders are particularly welcome from joint UK/Regional teams.

The evaluation Team Leader must, from the commencement of the evaluation, submit a monthly report on actual against anticipated progress. In addition, the Team Leader should alert the Secretariat immediately if serious problems or delays are encountered. Approval for any significant changes to the evaluation timetable will be referred to the Chief Executive.

It is anticipated the selection process will be complete by early **June 2001**.

DMI/HI/Mango

## **DEC Evaluation: The Earthquake in Gujarat/8**

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### **Appendix Six**

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