

Well Prepared National Society India Case Study

Introduction

Since the earthquake in the Gujarat on 26th January 2001, the Indian Red Cross with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and a number of Partner National Societies has been undergoing an aggressive transformation process in developing its disaster management facilities, tools and approach.

The Indian Red Cross is now being perceived as a leading humanitarian agency in India by different stakeholders. The change has been brought by committed leadership, dedicated DM Department, established Disaster Management Centre (DMC), assembled Mobile Disaster Units (MDU), Disaster Assessment & Response Team (with Emergency Equipment, Rub Halls and Regional Warehouses with disaster preparedness stock), Cyclone Shelters and trained volunteers & staff in DM, which are at the core of IRCS strength in disaster response.

The Process

- In the year 2001 by using “Well Prepared National Society” questionnaire, a desktop exercise was carried at the National Headquarters to assess the Organisational Disaster Preparedness capacity at national level. The characteristics of WPNS and the outcome of the capacity assessment were compared to extract the input for the DP/DR programme planning.
- Further in 2002-2003 with regard to meet the objective of carrying out capacity building interventions at the State Branch level the WPNS questionnaire was converted into “Well Prepared IRCS State Branches” . The reformulated questionnaire was primarily used for prioritising the intervention in eight out of thirty five states, where the most vulnerable disaster prone states were selected through a scientific process based on the VCA model.
- After prioritising the geographical intervention, the WPSB was used to carry out the capacity assessment of all the selected State Branches for input into the year 2004 planning for disaster management capacity building programme for the branches.
- In Gujarat as a step further the Well Prepared State Branch questionnaire was converted into the “Well Prepared District Branch” and the questionnaire was completed in the workshop by the different district branch representatives after the discussion on the characteristics. The intention to carry out this exercise combined with other objectives, by default, gave impetus to design a “Disaster Preparedness Capacity Building” (DPCB) workshop which has been successfully completed in Gujarat and will be carried out in other seven states in the year 2004. The DPCB workshop has been conducted with the following objectives:
 - Understand the characteristic of “Well Functioning IRCS District Branches” and complete the checklist in the workshop.

- Make aware and orientate the key district branch representatives about the basic disaster management concepts.
- Familiarise them with the IRCS National Disaster Response System and Gujarat State Branch DP programme plan.
- Address IRCS DP district priority areas within volunteer management resource mobilization and information and reporting.
- Promote and distribute SPHERE manuals to the district branches.

We can summarise the entire process as follows:

- Step 1 : Assessment of Organisational Disaster Preparedness capacity at National level.
- Step 2 : Formulation of “Well Prepared State Branch” questionnaire.
- Step 3 : Assessment of Eight State Branches DP Capacity.
- Step 4 : Formulation of “Well Prepared District Branch” questionnaire.
- Step 5 : Plan to use in other states and in Gujarat for the district branches and carry out DPCB workshops.
- Step 6 : Repeat the national exercise to understand the impact of DM programme while using WPNS characteristics as an ideal mark and findings of capacity assessment in the year 2001.

Lessons Learned

The WPNS tool is very useful to assess and understand the organisational disaster management capacity, prioritising the intervention and programmes planning but is comprehensive in nature to be used at district branches level and needs further simplification.