



INSIDE INDIA

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Focus on the Disaster Management Support Project

Lessons Learned from the Disaster Management Support Project: U.S./India Collaboration Needs to Continue

For the past six years USAID and the Government of India have formed a remarkably strong and successful partnership designed to address the challenges of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Through the Disaster Management Support (DMS) project, U.S. and Indian disaster managers shared their experiences facing the disasters that befall both countries - floods, droughts, earthquakes and hurricanes, to name a few - and their expertise to identify what is needed for a successful, holistic disaster management system in India. An important aspect of this project is the knowledge exchange that has occurred through workshops, training, peer exchange visits, and the provision of technical assistance and equipment.

As the project nears completion in March 2009, USAID and the Ministry of Home Affairs reviewed achievements and identified strategies to sustain and replicate successes at a recent two day "Lessons Learned" workshop in New Delhi. Successes highlighted at the meeting included: on-site disaster response management through the adaptation of the Incident Command System; advanced use of forecasting and early warning tools for extreme climate events; capacity building of disaster management training institutions; promotion of earthquake safety; and strengthened community-based disaster preparedness.

The event was well attended by senior Government of India officials including members of the National Disaster Management Authority and the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs who expressed their high level of support for the project. USAID/India Mission Director George Deikun in his remarks emphasized the importance of the workshop and noted that future collaboration is "the way forward for ensuring the sustainability of the DMS project successes and accomplishing our mutual goal of minimizing physical damage and loss of lives." All of the participants agreed that the key recommendation from the workshop was that collaboration between the U.S. and India in this sector must continue in some fashion after the project ends in March.



USAID Mission Director George Deikun at DMS Workshop. *Photo IRG*

Disaster Management Support at Work: Delhi School Retrofit for Earthquake Preparedness



Duck and Cover: learning earthquake preparedness techniques. Photo GHI

As part of the Disaster Management Support project, USAID is assisting the Government of India to prepare for future earthquakes through structural and non-structural measures under the "Delhi Earthquake Safety Initiative for Lifeline Buildings." USAID has partnered with GeoHazards International (GHI), California, to bring their decades of experience with earthquake safety to disaster managers, school superintendents, and hospital administrators in

Delhi. Focusing on earthquake retrofit and non-structural earthquake mitigation, American and Indian experts have come together to analyze and develop retrofit designs for five buildings in Delhi, identified as "lifeline" buildings (hospitals, schools, police headquarters, and key government buildings), which are critical for serving earthquake-threatened communities.

USAID Mission Director George Deikun recently visited the Ludlow Castle School in Delhi, one of the five "lifeline" buildings supported by USAID, to view the progress of the current retrofit work. In addition to structural modifications being made to the school, which serves approximately 2,000 students, the project also included basic disaster awareness training for staff, students, and parents, the development of an evacuation plan for the school, and regular preparedness drills for the school community.

The school building will serve as an emergency shelter in the event of an earthquake or any other disaster and it is being used by the Delhi Government, the National Institute for Disaster Management, and others as a model technology demonstration unit within the country and around the region. The Delhi Government has already expanded the program to nine schools (one in each district) in collaboration with GHI and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). They also have plans to expand it to nine hospitals.