

INDIA WORKSHOP 2008

Date: June 2008
Location: Langasu, Uttarakhand, India
ASF Team: M. Kinnear, H. van den Berg & S. Ernst
Partners: SEEDs India & Gomti Prayag Jan Kalyan Parishae
Donors: Christian Aid, course fees & time donated by ASF team
Project type: International workshop

PROBLEM ADDRESSED



In June 2008 the 'Vulnerability and Risk Workshop' series continued in the state of Uttarakhand in the Indian Himalayas. The workshop was in partnership with the Indian NGO: SEEDs India and the local organisation, GPJKP. As 60% of India's land area could face moderate to severe earthquakes, the project scenario for the workshop was based in an area where the built environment is extremely fragile and the ability to prepare and effectively respond to earthquakes is currently inadequate. The group was challenged with a scenario to provide interim shelter to families as soon as possible following an earthquake.

GOAL ACHIEVED

ASF-UK, thirteen international participants and two social work Masters Students from Delhi engaged in a complex two-week programme of investigation, design, procurement, negotiation and construction of a small intermediate shelter behind the local school. This shelter would serve not only as a prototype for the local community, but also as a much needed additional temporary classroom for this school. The brief was ambitious and the context in which the scenario was based, broadly introduced the majority of issues development practitioners have to engage with, when working in a post-disaster scenario.



METHODOLOGY OF WORK



The design for the shelter developed from the collection of local information on the different technologies/materials/vernacular. Further data collection for humanitarian standards were attained from secondary resources, and were directly fed into the rigorous design process. Locally available materials were procured and local masons hired within a budget of £625 - which was kindly donated by Christian Aid. The original ambitious programme required a thorough redesign to remain within the budget and enable the building to be completed on time.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

The post workshop evaluation process revealed the successes and challenges of the workshop. An interim shelter was designed, procured and built in just 10 days. The group witnessed the process evolve through sketching, building and thinking. The participants had to juggle the overlapping agendas of the intermediate shelter and its future use as a school classroom, which added an interesting dynamic to the process. Another task that a separate team was engaged in was designing solutions for retrofitting the existing school for earthquake resistance and to develop a model school proposal. This has been progressed further since the workshop, ASF-UK are supporting SEEDs and GPJKP to develop a funding proposal. One year on and the interim shelter is in full use as an additional classroom for the school.