

## **Concept Paper**

### **Title:**

'ALERT' (Accident Leaders & Emergency Response Teams)  
A community based disaster response programme in the 'Gitanagar' slum of Mumbai, India

**Period:** 3 years

**Estimated Total Budget** xxxxxxxxxx

**Project Site:** Gitanagar Slum, Mumbai, India

### **Funding Body:**

The Department of Public Health, Directorate of Health, Government of Maharashtra,  
Mantralaya, Madam Cama Rd, Nariman Point, Mumbai, India

### **Organization Applying for Funding:**

The MumbaiPrepared Initiative  
Website: [www.mumbaiprepared.com](http://www.mumbaiprepared.com)  
Contact Person: Dr Shweta Gidwani

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## The **ALERT** Project (Accident Leaders & Emergency Response Teams)-

### A community based disaster response programme in the 'Gitanagar' slum of Mumbai, India

The world is rapidly urbanizing. By 2005, 49 percent of the global population lived in urban areas (UN 2007). In developing countries, this rapid urbanization has led to a dramatic rise in slums and temporary settlements. Estimates suggest that one out of every three people in cities in developing countries now live in slums (UN-HABITAT 2008). In India, for example, 44 percent of all urban housing is classified as slums (UN-HABITAT 2008). Further, within these rapidly changing settlements, the cumulative effects of climate change, environmental degradation and poor resources pose a combined hazard to the occurrence of major disasters; natural and man-made.

Disasters result not only in death and disability but they also cause a significant social, economic and psychological burden on the individual and community. Until recently, the focus disaster management has been concentrated on stockpiling of resources and developing prompt and responsive emergency medical services. While much progress is needed in these areas, particularly in resource-limited settings, it is becoming increasingly evident that developing intrinsic, community preparedness and response capabilities, helps reduce the social, economic and individual consequences of these emergencies (WHO 2007). Acknowledging the need for such a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan in 2005 set out

the Hyogo framework for Action 2005-2015 which outlines the importance of building community resilience in disaster preparedness.

We propose one such community preparedness and response project called 'ALERT' (Accident Leaders & Emergency Responder Teams) in the urban slum of 'Gitanagar' in Mumbai, India.

The 'Gitanagar' slum has an estimated population of 10,000 people (2001 CENSUS) and is located vulnerably on low-lying reclaimed coastal land, on the southern tip of Mumbai. The ALERT project is a community disaster risk-reduction and emergency preparedness project for this slum area.

### **Project Outline:**

#### **Aim:**

- 1.To develop an organised framework through which awareness, education and training regarding disaster preparedness and response can be provided.
- 2.To provide some basic disaster relief equipment and train people to use them appropriately.
- 3.To establish community training centres to ensure sustainability of the programme.

#### **Methods:**

We plan to roll out the ALERT project over a 3 yr period in three phases.

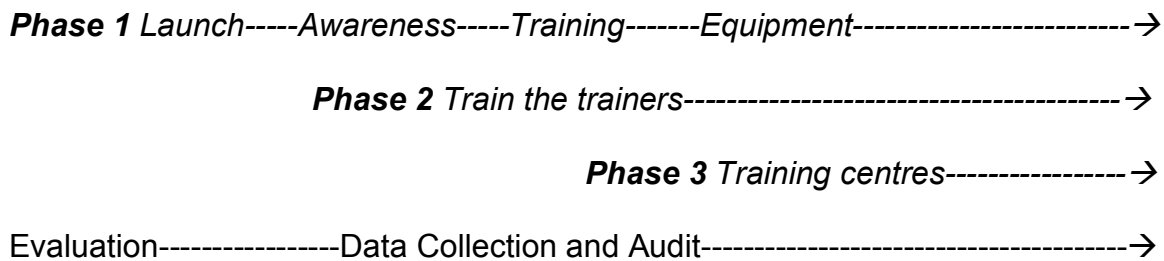
Phase 1: Awareness, Training and Equipment Delivery

Phase 2: Re-training, Training the Trainers and Equipment Delivery

Phase 3: Identifying and establishing designated Training Centres within the existing set-up e.g. primary care centres, schools or community gathering areas.

Although the project is divided into three phases, the start of a new phase does not mean the end of the previous phase, but rather the project develops a multi-layered structure as each new phase is launched (Fig 1). Built into the entire project will be data collection, audit and evaluation systems.

**Fig 1.**



*Awareness and Training:* Through an active campaign within the community, the project will be formally launched and local people will be encouraged to register their interest. Local partnerships will be sought to tie-in disaster awareness messages and deliver training through visual aids, community screening of short films, children and youth will be encouraged to participate in street plays, live demonstrations and hands-on teaching. The materials used for training will be based on international standards, drawing from organizations such as WHO, UN, International Red Cross etc. These will be made available in the local language and taught in specific context of this community. The first phase of training will be delivered by highly experienced field-workers who have worked in humanitarian relief operations. This will allow them to share their real experiences with the local people and harness the local knowledge of disasters thus making the training relevant.

During Phase 2, a second round of refresher training will be provided and feedback about Phase 1 will be sought. At this stage, there will be a strong focus on developing capacity within the community by organising intense training programmes for future trainers and local ALERT project leaders.

**Equipment:** Two levels of 'Life-saver Emergency Kits' -a smaller 'household kit' and another larger 'community kit' will be made available to the community. These kits will have a combination of standard, approved emergency relief equipment in the ratio of one 'household kit' per 10 people and 'one community kit' per 100 people. These will contain such items as fire extinguishers, fire blankets, evacuation slide sheets, limb splints, burns dressings, basic life support equipments and basic medications. A variety of private manufacturers will be approached to provide this equipment at a subsidized rate for the duration of the project. Most of this equipment is locally manufactured and available in Mumbai.

**Training Centres:** In the final phase of the project, existing sites within the community will be identified and designated as permanent training centres. These places will serve as centres where education material is stored, on-going training is provided and where relevant disaster risk-reduction information can be accessed.

**Funding:** Funding will be used for the following:

A) to prepare and deliver standardized and easily reproducible multi-lingual awareness and training aides.

B) to provide re-usable and long-term basic equipment packs

C) to employ staff for training, data collection and project supervision.

The details of the funding are enclosed separately.

**Potential Barriers:** Building partnerships within the local community and agencies already working within the community is critical to the deployment of the project. Lack of interest and local support due to a concurrent over-riding un-related local need may prevent up-take of

the project. Further, the provision of adequate quantities of equipment is limited by the costs set by the manufacturers as negotiated for this project.

**Evaluation and Sustainability:**

The project will have a strong intrinsic data collection and audit system focussing on needs and vulnerability assessments, acceptability, feasibility and sustainability of the project.

The short and medium term sustainability of the project will rely heavily on local collaborations, committed project leadership and a large volunteer base to provide the first phase of deliverables. The establishment of training centres will ensure long-term sustainability of the ALERT project.

Natural and man-made hazardous incidents have been on a rapid rise. In 2008 alone, 321 disasters killed 235,816 people and affected 211 million others at a total cost of 181 billion U.S. dollars. (CRED, UNISDR 2009). This, along with the colossal growth of slums, the increasing land pressure due to rapid urban migration and the rising threat of climate change appear to be converging to a point of impending catastrophe. There is growing acknowledgement that disaster and risk reduction is an urgent component of the broader concept of sustainable development (UNISDR 2004). Further, to achieve the millennium goal of environmental sustainability and more specifically improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers (UN 2008), it is vital to develop such self-sustaining community based programmes. The ALERT project promises to lay the foundations for developing a robust community-based disaster reduction framework, which will undoubtedly develop internal reliance, resilience and capabilities and thus save lives in this vulnerable community.

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