

## Multi-hazard HOPE Course in full swing

After the successful conduct of Hospital Preparedness for Emergencies (HOPE) Pilot Course (multi-hazard curriculum) on July 2008, at Kathmandu, Nepal, the multi-hazard HOPE curriculum was re-introduced in PEER countries from August to December 2008.

### NEPAL

On November 11-14, 2008, various government and private health institutions participated in the national HOPE Course conducted at Kathmandu, Nepal. Nepal has a total of 156 HOPE graduates (as of December 31, 2008).



*Presentation of a hospital disaster response plan as one of the exercises in HOPE Course (HOPE Nepal, November 11-14, 2008).*

Nepal has also conducted self-funding HOPE courses through the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

Ms. Susan McIntyre, Regional Advisor, USAID/OFDA, was the Chief Guest during the closing ceremonies. She commended the new set of HOPE graduates who will be added in the cadre of HOPE Course advocates

and become Nepal's aid in making the country a safer place to live in. She also highlighted the plight of parents who lost children in schools in recent China earthquake due to poorly constructed school buildings. The conduct of HOPE Course is one way to increase awareness on the importance of preparedness to mitigate the effects of natural and human-induced hazards.

### BANGLADESH

In Dhaka, Bangladesh, national HOPE Course was conducted on November 24-27, 2008, involving the government and private health facilities. Bangladesh has a total of 90 HOPE graduates (as of December 31, 2008). With the vision of interlinking coordination of pre-hospital emergency response and mass casualty management in hospitals, two MFR-CSSR (Medical First Responder and Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue Course) graduates from Fire Service and Civil Defence-Dhaka, joined the course as observers.



*Group work during HOPE Course (HOPE Bangladesh, November 24-27, 2008).*

### PAKISTAN

Pakistan, the youngest PEER-member country, conducted the national HOPE Course on December 15-18, 2008. Pakistan has a total of 117 HOPE graduates (as of December 31, 2008). Ms. Anne Arnes, USAID Mission Director in Pakistan, graced the closing program as the Chief Guest. She highlighted USAID/OFDA's role in assisting member countries improve their emergency response systems through PEER. Her message



*Final Exercise during HOPE Course (HOPE Pakistan, December 15-18, 2008).*

has helped put across the importance of increasing awareness and develop a culture of preparedness in response to disasters.

### PHILIPPINES

Philippines was the first of the PEER countries to conduct the national multi-hazard HOPE curriculum, on August 26-29, 2008. Philippines has a total of 98 HOPE graduates (as of December 31, 2008). Philippines has also conducted HOPE courses on self-funding, through the Department of Health-Center for Health Development, National Capital Region (DOH-CHD NCR); and partnership between Office of Civil Defense-Regional Center 6 (OCDRC6) and DOH-CHD Western Visayas.



*Simulating hospital operations management during disasters (HOPE Philippines, August 26-29, 2008).*

HOPE Course has evolved from the identification and mitigation of structural, non-structural vulnerabilities, organization and medical concerns of health facilities and the ways of enhancing preparedness and response capacity through development and implementation of hospital emergency response, to addressing multi-hazard incidents, including the whole gamut of hospitals' role in disaster risk management.

## India runs PEER Courses under PFAP

NSET/PEER in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India, conducted series of PEER courses from November 3 to December 27, 2008, all of which were funded under the Partial Funding Assistance Program (PFAP). The main thrust of this series of PEER courses is to increase the pool of PEER instructors in India.

PEER courses conducted within the above dates were: Medical First Responder (MFR) Course, Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue (CSSR) Course, Training for Instructors (TFI), MFR Instructor Workshop (MFRIW), and CSSR Instructor Workshop (CSSRIW). Participants to these courses were nominated by the MHA-India. The course participants also form part of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) of India.

This series of PEER courses were all organized in cooperation with the host training institution, Central Training College-II (CTC-II), at Coimbatore, located in State of Tamil Nadu, India.

PFAP PEER Courses at CTC-II kicked-off with MFR Course on November 3-15, 2008. Honorable K.M. Singh, IPS (Retd), Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), graced the inaugural session of the course. He highlighted that the demand for emergency response force is ever increasing after the rescue role played by NDRF personnel during the 2008 monsoon havoc in Koshi River, in Bihar State.

Instructors to above five PEER courses were composed of national and regional PEER instructors. As of December 31, 2008, India has a total of: 135 MFR graduates and 97 CSSR graduates. Out of these numbers, there are 101 TFI graduates, 81 MFRIW graduates and 71 CSSRIW graduates in India.



## PEER Graduates: From Training to Action

### PEER and Mumbai Fire Brigade Response

#### INDIA

Below is an excerpt from the personal account of Mr. Prabhat Rahangdale, a PEER graduate and instructor, relating his PEER training with his experience in emergency response.

"Perhaps for the first time in its 122 year-old history, the Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) had to respond to a terror attack call.

It happened at 2235hrs on November 26, 2008, when the Police Main Control asked for help to control fire at **Trident Hotel, at Nariman Point and Hotel Taj Mahal**, caused by terrorists.



Response operations by MFB during Mumbai blasts, November 2008.

entire team displayed conscious gallantry, exemplary courage, leadership, professional expertise and devotion of duty of very high order with grave danger to our life. Because of the gallant service Fire Brigade personnel demonstrated and who, at the same time at great personal risk, a number of persons who would have otherwise died of terror attack, suffocation and heat due to fire, were rescued. The timely firefighting also ensured that the loss of property of both hotels was minimized considerably.

It's not the only instance MFB personnel went beyond the call of duty to save victims trapped due to disastrous situations. Recently, following monsoon rains, the embankment of **Koshi River**, Nepal's biggest, broke on August 2008, flooding several villages in Sunsari District (Eastern region of Nepal, bordering India's State of Bihar). The Koshi River has subsequently altered its flow and continues to flow for the most part along this new course, inundating four Village Development Committee (VDC) areas bordering India and large sections of the state of Bihar (India), where it runs in an uncontrolled 15-20km wide flood up to 60km east of its previous course.



MFB personnel response operations during the floods (brought about by inundation of Koshi River) at Bihar State, India, August 2008.

The flood rescue team under my command was deputed for rescue and relief operation from 31 September to 11 October 2008. The team successfully rescued hundreds of persons from flooded Sahars District, Bihar.

This perhaps was possible because MFB has adapted **PEER** program for enhancement of its emergency responses. After completion of my graduation in TFI, CSSR, MFR and Instructors courses in CSSR and MFR, I took initiative to implement PEER in MFB. With available resources, the first Task Force, were imparted with TFI, MFR and CSSR courses. Also, MFB is the first brigade in India to establish EMS where ambulances are manned by MFR-trained personnel, with 120 personnel manning ten ambulances were trained in MFR.

In my opinion and more than 20 years of experience, whether it is natural or man-made disaster situation, the basic response strategies remain the same. It's only the combination of knowledge and experience which enable the emergency responders to improvise the response strategies as per the situation and challenges demand.

The best example is recent terror attack as well as Bihar flood response. The knowledge gained by me in PEER program and by MFB personnel has defiantly helped in activation, mobilization, coordination, assessment, operation, deactivation and debriefing, during both operations. These above said elements required for professional response and command are incorporated in PEER program. The MFR equipped men and equipment also helped disaster victims in receiving basic life support (BLS) and post-trauma care.

I am grateful to ADPC, NSET, OFDA, USAID and Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue for not only making me able to gain tremendous knowledge but also enable me to spread it, to overcome future challenges in disastrous situations."

#### PRABHAT SURAJLAL RAHANGDALE

Assistant Division Fire Officer, Mumbai Fire Brigade  
(Recipient of President of India Medal for Gallantry)

#### Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia and Philippines

Other PEER graduates also shared similar experiences of responding to major disaster events in their countries. In Bangladesh, PEER graduates from FSCD responded to Savar tragedy (April 2005), which involved the collapse of a 9-storey building (Shahrier Spectrum Garments Industries), and collapse of a five-storey building (Phoenix Garments), February 2006; PEER graduates from Ambulan 118 and BASARNAS in Indonesia were involved in emergency operations for the tsunami in December 2004 and to the earthquake in Yogyakarta, May 2006. In Nepal, PEER graduates from Nepal responded to the incident at Makhan Tole, Kathmandu, June 2007, which involved collapse of residential houses. In the Philippines, PEER graduates from the Bureau of Fire Protection and the Philippine National Red Cross responded to landslides in Guinsaugon, Southern Leyte (February 2006); and HOPE graduates from Region 6 responded to the effects of Typhoon Frank, June 2008.

#### PEER Events / Activities:

##### 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (Jan-Mar 2009), Program Year 6

#### Philippines

MFR Refresher Test Course January 12-16, 2009  
CSSR Refresher Test Course January 21-24, 2009

#### Nepal

HOPE-Training for Instructors (PFAP) February 23-27, 2009  
HOPE Course Materials Review March 5-6, 2009

#### Other on-going PEER activities:

Translation of MFR and CSSR course materials in:

- Bengali
- Nepali
- Urdu

Share your stories, feedback or send questions through e-mail: [peer@nset.org.np](mailto:peer@nset.org.np)

#### Contact Us

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"This publication was made possible through the support provided by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), US Agency for International Development under the terms of Award No. 367-A-00-03-00075-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development.

