

## World Vision's Regional Response Team

World Vision's Regional Response Team (RRT) was first set up in Africa seven years ago. Its objective is to be the first line of response in category 2 emergencies – i.e, emergencies that can be contained within the region.

The RRT targets national and regional staff and, since its foundation, has involved over 58 people. All those on the team are members of regional or national offices. The initial group of 20 staff were identified through a series of visits to all the national offices in Africa as well as through a series of regional workshops. These visits also focused on relationship building and helping people see the value of the RRT. Those selected were chosen on the basis of 'right attitude rather than right skills': at the time the relief group in World Vision had developed a somewhat negative image as 'cowboys' which led the agency to the focus on the sorts of behavioural competencies already mentioned.

Staff involved in the RRT undergo 10 days training every nine months. This includes training in their technical areas; humanitarian standards and principles; and physical simulations, among other things. Training as a team was found to encourage cohesiveness, which helped when members of the group were either deployed together or in sub-groups into emergencies.

Many RRT staff have gone on to senior positions within World Vision, which views this mechanism as a leadership feeder school and a way of building future relief managers. Staff have to have been deployed numerous times before being promoted. Old members of the team move into an 'alumni' and are invited to coach and mentor new members. Some alumni therefore always attend the annual training workshops.

To begin with World Vision had variable success ensuring members' availability. However, once the national directors realised that having RRT members in their offices actually built their own capacity to respond and meant they could avoid 'calling in the cavalry' this became less of a problem. In fact another challenge was created: RRT members were given more and more responsibility in their own teams, meaning that they became more difficult to pull out for reasons of increased seniority. Hence the decision to keep this particular roster system flexible by moving people into alumni positions and recruiting new members on a regular basis.

World Vision regularly synthesises learning about key aspects of its emergency response, and this includes a set of learnings around the RRT. These lessons, along with their suggested solutions, can be found in Annex 2.

*Based on an interview with Eleanor Monbiot*