

**UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN INDIA (UELCI)
INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF WEAKERSECTIONS IN INDIA (IRDWSI)
RELIEF EFFORTS IN AREAS AFFECTED BY COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN GUJARAT**

Reporting Period: April 2002 to December 2002

ACT APPEAL NUMBER: ASIN 21

1. NAME OF ACT MEMBER: UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN INDIA

Dr K Rajaratnam
Executive Secretary, UELCI
No, 94, Purasawalkam High Road
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
Tel: 00 91 44 5329068
Fax: 00 91 6421870
Email : kraja@gltc.edu

William Stanley
ACT Member, UELCI
IRDWSI Office
503, Revathi Hills
B. S. Layout, Seethammadhara
Visakhapatnam. A.P. 530013, India
wstan@vsnl.com

2. IMPLEMENTING ACT MEMBER And PARTNER INFORMATION

2.1. Description of ACT Member

United Lutheran Church in India (UELCI) is an umbrella organisation of ten Lutheran Churches in India, based at Chennai. Through Integrated Rural Development of Weakersections in India (IRDWSI/WIDA) a project of Division of Social Action of UELCI, UELCI responds to emergencies. UELCI is a member of ACT. IRDWSI is working in different States of India on behalf of UELCI, particularly among the Adivasis, Dalits, Fisherfolk and the peasants. As these communities are vulnerable to disasters, UELCI is committed to work among the poor and the marginalised both in terms of long term development accompaniment and at the time of disasters through a systematic intervention based on rights based approach.

2.2. Description of ACT Member's Implementing Partners

SETU: Centre for Social Knowledge and Action, AHMEDABAD

SETU has carried out relief operations during the drought period between 1984-88, during communal disturbances in 1986-87 and 1990, during floods in 1993, cyclone relief in 1998-99 and working in the present earthquake relief and rehabilitation. It is based at Ahmedabad, Gujarat. SETU is a partner of UELCI.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE EMERGENCY SITUATION

On 27 February 2002, 58 people were killed at Godhra on the border of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, in an attack on a train carrying Hindu activists on their way back from Ayodhya. This triggered retaliatory violence against the Muslim minority in large parts of the state, including Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha, Panchmahal, Vadodara and surrounding areas of central Gujarat, Rajkot, Morbi, Bhavnagar and the northeastern tribal belt, bordering south Rajasthan.

3.1. Sequence of Events

- Since 15 February, large-scale mobilisation of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) activists started in Gujarat. Two or three carriages full of these activists were going to and from between Ahmedabad and Ayodhya everyday in connection with the building of the Ram temple.

- It is reported that these Hindu activists used banners with Hindu messages to decorate the railway carriages, got down at every railway station to shout slogans and make speeches about their temple project. According to some newspaper and TV reports, the activists were demanding free food from hawkers on the train, misbehaving with women and indulging in anti-social behaviour in general.
- On the morning of 27 February, an angry "Muslim" mob surrounded the Sabarmati Express returning from Ayodhya and torched three coaches. This resulted in the death of 58 passengers, many of them women and children. Most of them were from Ahmedabad and towns and villages of north Gujarat who had gone to Ayodhya as kar sevaks or volunteers of VHP.
- Almost immediately, retaliatory stabbings took place at Baroda. That evening a Gujarat Bandh was declared by the VHP at Ahmedabad.
- From the morning of 28 February, violent retaliation targeting the Muslims began, which took the form of systematic looting and burning of Muslim shops, restaurants and businesses all over Ahmedabad, attacks on vehicles and mob attacks on Muslim residential areas leading to mass killings.
- Eyewitness accounts of Setu team, newspapers and TV reports confirm that the violence was made possible by police complicity and inaction. Even though the law and order machinery had broken down there was delay in calling in the army.
- The Hindu mobs burnt the Wakf Board and Minority Economic Development Board located in the old Secretariat building at the state capital, Gandhinagar. Trucks driven by Muslims were burnt in front of the Gujarat High Court and shops were burnt and a Dargah razed to the ground in front of the Police Commissioner's office. This suggests the extent of the breakdown of the Constitutional machinery.
- Over the next five days the violence spread in the villages and towns of Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Patan, Mehsana, Sabarkantha and Panchmahal districts in the north, Kheda, Anand and Vadodara districts in central Gujarat. Violent incidents were reported from Rajkot, Bhavnagar and Morbi cities and some villages.
- Sporadic violence continued till mid-June after which isolated incidents took place till September 2002. However, insecurity and distrust between the communities continues and after the electoral win of the BJP, these feelings have intensified.

3.2. Impact on Human Lives and description of Damages

- According to the Citizen's Tribunal Report (published in October, 2002) across Gujarat, over 1,100 Muslim owned hotels, the homes of not less than 1 lakh families, over 15,000 small and big business establishment, around 3000 handcarts and over 5000 vehicles were badly damaged or completely destroyed in the attacks.
- According to official reports 950 people were killed in the events in Godhra and in the aftermath. Unofficial estimates put the figure at over 2000 as many deaths in incidents of arson on the highways went unrecorded as well as deaths which took place in the interior areas where the bodies were found much later.

3.3. Impact on Implementing Partner - Setu

Ahmedabad city was in curfew, UELCI coordinating office based at Setu could not function for a week. The tension and fear for safety, lack of public transport and breakdown of law and order affected everyone, both physical movement and mental state. Till end of June 2002, several staff members could not attend office due to curfew and constant fear and insecurity. By then one staff member was forced to leave his home and look for alternative housing.

4. RESPONSES BY ACT AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

4.1. Response by UELCI – ACT Partner

UELCI was informed of the communal carnage and its impact by SETU. After the Godhra incident and its following events, UELCI contacted ACT and informed on the simmering situations in Gujarat. The proposed ASIN 11 evaluation had to be postponed indefinitely.

Immediately, the SETU staff and the UELCI staff met in Hyderabad and decided on an appropriate response to the communal riot situation. It was decided to respond to the immediate needs of the victims. They had already been provided a roof over their heads by the efforts of their religious organizations and the urgent need was for food and sleeping materials. It was decided to assist with food assistance for a period of 30 days as well as basic sleeping materials. Accordingly an appeal was made to ACT.

4.2. Response by SETU – Implementing Partner

Seeing the serious breakdown of law and order machinery, Setu team focussed on this issue through media advocacy. The team intervened through the Star TV network, BBC and national and local English newspapers as well as electronic newspapers such as Rediff.com.

The team participated in networking with other NGOs for restoring peace in Ahmedabad and participated in a peace prayer March 1 and peace march on March 4.

The team coordinated with other NGOs and as well as international donors like Oxfam and Action Aid to plan for relief activities in about 20 camps with 40,000 people, scattered over Ahmedabad. The team member met the District Collector to finalise relief modalities, police protection and prompt disbursement of compensation to affected families.

5. LOCATION OF THE RESPONSE

UELCI/SETU focused on seven camps as listed on the side. As many NGOs were already engaged in relief activities in Ahmedabad, Setu decided to focus on immediate relief activities in the affected areas of interior rural villages of **Sabarkantha District**. This is a predominantly tribal area, bordering Rajasthan. Relief efforts were focused to cover poor Muslim families. This was followed up with legal support and advocacy efforts for compensation.

Sl	Block	Villages/Campsites
1	Idar	Sabli
2	Vadali	Vadali Camp I
3	Vadali	Vadali Camp II
4	Idar	Mansuri Masjid
5	Idar	Gambhirpura
6	Idar	Madina Society
7	Idar	Madina Masjid
	2	7

6. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide immediate food assistance and sleeping materials
- To conduct legal and media advocacy
- To undertake peace reconciliation efforts

7. METHODOLOGY

The team under the guidance of UELCI conducted a detailed survey at seven camp sites and recorded where the victims were coming from, number of deaths in each family, details of loss of property and means of livelihood. This survey was carried out in consultation with community leaders and the beneficiaries were jointly identified.

Accordingly, 1500 families from 7 camps were identified for assistance. The final number of beneficiaries was 1223 as we received funds in stages and in the meanwhile 227 families were able to return to their villages.

8. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Area of Operation – 7 relief camps located in Idar and Vadali Blocks of Sabarkantha District in the North Gujarat.

ASIN 21- AREA OF OPERATION



9. TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

All target beneficiaries belonging to Landless and Marginal Farmers from Muslim Community who were victims of communal violence. Initially 1500 families were targeted but this figured was revised according to stage wise receipt of funds and return of some families to their original places of residence. The details are given below:

SI	Block	Villages/ Campsites	Families Proposed	Families Covered	Original Place of Residence of Beneficiary Families	Distance from Ahmedabad
1	Idar	Sabli	151	173	Villages of Himmatnagar, Idar, Vadali, Khedbrahma and Bhiloda Blocks	115 kms.
2	Vadali	Vadali Camp I	600	400	Villages of Idar, Khedbrahma, Danta and Vijaynagar Blocks and some from Mehsana	125 kms.
3	Vadali	Vadali Camp II	246	190	Villages of Idar, Khedbrahma, Danta and Vijaynagar Blocks and some from Mehsana	125 kms
4	Idar	Mansuri Masjid	133	150	Nearby villages of Idar Blocks	105 kms.
5	Idar	Gambhirpura	141	102	Nearby villages of Idar Blocks	110 kms.
6	Idar	Madina Society	107	107	Nearby villages of Idar Blocks	105 kms
7	Idar	Madina Masjid	122	101	Nearby villages of Idar Blocks and Idar town	105 kms
2	7		1500	1223		

10. DESCRIPTION OF ASSISTANCE

10.1. Food Assistance: Each family was provided with food materials like Wheat, Dal, edible oil, sugar, tea, for 30 days.

10.2. Sleeping Materials Assistance: Each of these families was provided with sleeping materials consisting of 4 bed sheets per family.

All the above activities were carried out in close co-operation with the communal victims living in the camps and Shramjivi Samaj based in Bhiloda, Sabarkantha District.

Food and Sleeping materials Assistance			
SI	Block	Villages/ Campsites	Families Covered
1	Idar	Sabli	173
2	Vadali	Vadali Camp I	400
3	Vadali	Vadali Camp II	190
4	Idar	Mansuri Masjid	150
5	Idar	Gambhirpura	102
6	Idar	Madina Society	107
7	Idar	Madina Masjid	101
	2	7	1223

11. TIME FRAME OF THE PROGRAMME

The relief programme for victims of communal violence consisting of food and sleeping materials assistance was planned for completion within one month, i.e. – 15th March to 15th April- so that immediate assistance could be given to the victims. However, we had to extend the programme till December 2002.

12. CURRENT AND OVERALL STATUS IN AREA OF OPERATION

After the communal carnage, and after a period of six months, most of the Muslim families in the relief camps have gone back to their original villages and trying to re-establish their old pattern of life. However, the Hindu residents of the village have given them a very hostile reception and the Muslim families have realised that they would not be accepted in their old villages. So the Muslim families have tried to look for safe residential locations, usually in villages with larger Muslim population or nearby towns. In this way, a ghettoisation process has started in the rural Gujarat.

Earlier, since the 1990s, a ghettoisation process had begun in urban areas and this trend has shifted to rural areas after the events of February 2002. In the long term, this trend has serious implications for the peace and reconciliation process.

See Annexure – for an article on the Pathology of Gujarat.

During the report period the damage assessment of house and business as well as fixing of compensation amounts by the Government was more or less complete. In this process, Muslim communities have encountered discrimination and injustice as assessing officers belong to the majority community. Many families have not received the compensation amounts.

Another critical issue is the justice process. Muslim families are still finding it impossible to pursue the cases related to the loot, arson, murder and destruction. In many cases, the police had not recorded FIRs (First Information Report) in the initial period.

After the electoral win of the BJP, the sense of fear and insecurity intensified. The attack by militants on the Hindu temple at Gandhinagar has further increased the feelings of mistrust between the two communities.

The minority communities of Gujarat are filled with despair and at the same time the majority community, particularly from the middle classes are in the self-congratulatory mood. The state government has taken initiative in finding the miscreants responsible for the Godhra train massacre but has not made the same efforts to book those responsible for the rape, loot and arson which followed. This has grave implications for the communal harmony in the state.

13. IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIEF PROGRAMME

13.1. Food Assistance

The items distributed as part of food assistance were wheat flour, edible oil, lentils, sugar and tea. Volunteers were identified from among the beneficiaries and these volunteers in consultation with the camp leaders undertook the distribution.

Food Assistance Details

SI	Items	Quantity per Family per day	Families Covered	Total Quantity per Family for 30 days	Total Quantity Distributed
1	Wheat Flour	2 kg	1223	60 kg	73,380 kg
2	Oil	200g	1223	5 kg	6,115 kg
3	Dal	250g	1223	6 kg	7338 kg
4	Sugar	200g	1223	6 kg	7338 kg
5	Tea	50g	1223	1.5 kg	1834.5 kg

Food Assistance Camps Wise Data

SI	Block	Villages/Campsites	Families Covered	Background
1	Idar	Sabli	173	Muslim victim of communal violence
2	Vadali	Vadali Camp I	400	Muslim victim of communal violence
3	Vadali	Vadali Camp II	190	Muslim victim of communal violence
4	Idar	Mansuri Masjid	150	Muslim victim of communal violence
5	Idar	Gambhirpura	102	Muslim victim of communal violence
6	Idar	Madina Society	107	Muslim victim of communal violence
7	Idar	Madina Masjid	101	Muslim victim of communal violence
	2	7	1223	

13.2. Sleeping Materials Assistance

The items distributed as part of sleeping materials assistance were only bed sheets. Though the bed sheets have been termed as "sleeping materials assistance" they served an important purpose in the religious life of the victims, as they had no mats on which to say their daily prayers. Therefore, the bed sheets were used basically as sleeping materials and also as prayer mats.

Sleeping Materials Assistance Data				
SI	Item	Number	Families Covered	Total Quantity
1	Bed sheets	4 per family	1223	4892

Camps Wise Data of Sleeping Material Assistance to Muslim Victims of Communal Violence				
SI	Block	Villages/Campsites	Families Covered	
1	Idar	Sabli	173	
2	Vadali	Vadali Camp I	400	
3	Vadali	Vadali Camp II	190	
4	Idar	Mansuri Masjid	150	
5	Idar	Gambhirpura	102	
6	Idar	Madina Society	107	
7	Idar	Madina Masjid	101	
	2	7	1223	

See Annexure – 2, for Activities Photos.

14. PUBLIC ADVOCACY

14.1. Legal and Media Advocacy

As part of legal advocacy efforts the team has contacted Block level and District level officers to ensure just and proper assessment of property damage so that the victims would receive just and proper compensation for the losses suffered by them. A delegation also met the Collector of the District regarding compensation and the Collector has ordered the Block and District officers to expedite the process. The team successfully intervened in 293 compensation related cases and these individuals received their compensation amounts.

The team also went and met the District Superintendent of Police to ensure that the police register FIRs submitted by the Muslim victims at the local police station. This is important as police were refusing to record the complaints, which directly affects the justice process. The team also followed up 67 complaints registered by Muslim victims at the local police station.

The team from Setu also deposed before a People's Tribunal headed by 2 former judges of Supreme Court, Justice Krishna Iyer and Justice Sawant.

Media advocacy was undertaken through the printed media, electronic media as well as national television. Articles and interviews were written and given in the following media:

National Journal and Newspapers	International Journal and Newspapers	Electronic Media and News services	National Television
Outlook	New York Times	Rediff.com	Star News*
Frontline	L'express (French)	Reuters	
Economic and Political Weekly		BBC (Radio)	
The Times of India		BBC World Service (TV)	
The Hindustan Times			
The Telegraph			
Deccan Herald			
Indian Express			

*3 senior members of Setu appeared 8 times to highlight issues related to basic infrastructure at camps, rehabilitation and police inaction in recording FIRs

The team was able to raise understanding in other states about the communal situation in Gujarat and its implications. Apart from media advocacy described above, the team leader addressed three lectures to academicians, media persons and Members of Parliament in Mumbai, Pune and Delhi. Setu team also had a meeting with leading intellectuals, former judges, human rights activists on the present situation and the long-term implications for peace and reconciliation. The implications of the election results in Gujarat and the sweeping win of the Hindu right-wing party for the politics of the country as a whole was also discussed. A Gujarati member of the British House of Lords, who later raised these concerns among the intellectuals and scholars in Britain, attended these meetings.

14.2. Peace and Reconciliation efforts

The team participated in several collective efforts for peace, including a Peace March, in the state along with Gandhian leaders and concerned citizens. The team also organised two youth camps focusing on communal harmony and multiculturalism supported by Oxfam. 35 men and women between the age group of 25 - 35 years attended these camps. One -third of the group was Muslim, one-third tribal-indigenous and the rest were Hindus. These 5-day camps were held in south and central Gujarat in June and September 2002.

The team worked with children through Activity Centres in Takatuka, Kushalpura, Torada, Ramayan and Mahabharat (in five villages), where Muslim and Hindu children attended. Stories, songs and discussions on communal harmony were regularly organized along with art and craft activities. These activities were supported by CRY – Child Relief and You, Mumbai. Details are as follows:

**Communal Harmony Activity Centre
September 2002 to November 2002**

SI	Name of the Villages	Muslim	Dalit	O.B.C.	Others	Total
1	Takatuka	20	16	5	-	41
2	Khushalpura	20	26	3	5	54
3	Torda	15	24	-	-	39
4	Ramayan	26	16	10	2	54
5	Mahabharat	14	17	14	-	45
TOTAL		95	99	32	7	233

In partnership with SAMERTH, Ahmedabad the team produced a set of 8 booklets focussing on Gujarat's multicultural traditions and its expression in the art, architecture and everyday life of all Gujaratis, irrespective of religions.

Another effort was made when beneficiaries (in camps where we provided food and shelter materials assistance) went to their villages in order to complete formalities related to damage assessment. In this process the beneficiaries were filled with fear and insecurity and anticipated further violence. The team members worked with the Dalit and OBC communities in the villages to ensure that they assisted the Muslims returning to complete assessment formalities.

15. STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The relief programme was coordinated by a Coordinator and he was assisted by 14 volunteers (2 per camp) and 3 Camp Coordinators.

16. PROCUREMENT DETAILS

Items procured in Ahmedabad

Tea, Bed sheets

Items procured in Bhiloda, District Sabarkantha

Wheat flour, dal lentils, sugar and oil

17. COORDINATION

17.1. Coordination with ACT

Discussions took place in ACT office at Visakhapatnam in June 2002 regarding stocktaking of communal situation and the relief activities. Director for Emergencies of UELCI visited the area of operation on 27th July and visited Bhiloda and Idar towns as well as Sabli village. The representative of ACT Netherlands, Mr. Bodegom and Finance Desk Officer Ms. Jessie held discussions on the issues related to the communal situation in Gujarat and its short term and long term implications.

17.2. Coordination Among NGO Networks

The UELCI implementing partner participated in peace and reconciliation activities related to the communal situation in partnership with several NGOs:

1. Shramjivi Samaj, Bhiloda
2. Aman Welfare Trust, Idar
3. Camp Committees of the 7 camps
4. SAMERTH, Ahmedabad
5. Gandhian organisations
6. Citizen's Forums

17.3. Coordination With Government

UELCI implementing team members had several meetings with government officials at the district and state level regarding relief, rehabilitation and damage assessment and compensation issues.

17.4. Coordination of the Staff

Weekly, fortnightly and monthly coordination meetings were organised at the camps site level and coordination office level at Bhiloda and Ahmedabad. Minutes were maintained of all important meetings.

18. RESOURCE MOBILISATION BY IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

The implementing partner also mobilised resources from Oxfam India Trust for carrying out two youth workshops on the theme of multiculturalism. Recognising the adverse impact of the communal carnage on children, the team mobilised resources from CRY Mumbai for running children's activity centres on the theme of communal harmony. Individual donations were raised to run two relief camps in Ahmedabad as well as for purchasing educational materials for 177 school children and 5 college going youths whose school materials were destroyed in the arson and looting.

19. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, MONITORING, REPORTING

19.1. Project Administration

The relief work was administered and coordinated by UELCI.

19.2. Project Finance Management and Controls

The money was received through an FCRA account of IRDWSI a project of UELCI. Once the money was received in this account, the money was transferred to the implementing partner's FCRA account in Gujarat. UELCI took the responsibility along with the partner to operate within the existing management and finance controls. Through ACT and as per the statement dated 16th May 2003, against the target of USD 61,707, an amount of USD 50,090.39 was raised (81.17%), out of which USD 48,144.67 was received in the Bank account (78.02%), the remaining USD 1945.63 is held by ACT, Geneva. The Audit Statement will be sent soon to ACT, Geneva. **See Annexure – 5, for Unaudited Statement of Finance.**

19.3. Project Monitoring Procedures

Meetings related to monitoring were held as and when necessary at different levels – Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and at the camps.

20. IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

The estimated time plan was from 15 March to 15 April 2002 (One month). However, the programme started only in April and was completed in December 2002. The delay took place for two reasons. The first reason was the uneven receipt of funds. The second reason was that due to the continuing tension, there was initial difficulty in procuring food items as most of the traders were refusing to supply food to Muslims.

21. CONCLUSION

Even now, the situation is far from normal. The incidence of violence has gone down and the villages of Sabarkantha have been relatively quiet. However, a more serious trend is emerging where a slow but steady ghettoisation of Muslims in rural areas is discernible. Many families are trying to go back to their villages and rebuild their lives. In many villages they are received with great hostility and non-cooperation from the majority Hindu community, making it impossible for them re-establish themselves. Economic boycott of Muslims is taking place on a large scale. For example, when the monsoon was set in the agricultural season the farmers refused to employ Muslims and offered jobs to non-Muslims.

Another disturbing trend is that Muslims who are unable to resettle in their villages are going back to camps. The government has refused to give them alternate land for housing and as a result Muslim communities are using their own agricultural land, converting it to plots for housing through local government procedures and resettling Muslims from the camps. Naturally, such land is available mostly in villages where Muslims are a majority. In this process, a ghettoisation process has started in Muslim of rural areas, a process that had been till now only observed in urban areas. The earlier villages had mixed populations, which lived together. Now there is a marked trend of creating entirely Hindu villages and Muslims getting concentrated in a few villages where their numbers are large. This has serious implications for peace and reconciliation efforts and the health of the society.

In rural areas, under the instructions of the government, many families have started moving back to their villages. Many families have moved back due to the school board examinations and also because the assessment of damage to properties has begun towards fixing compensation amounts. However, these returning Muslim families have not been received well by the majority community in the villages and this has led to lack of confidence among the Muslim families. Many still fear that they will not be safe in their villages. In addition, as all their houses have been looted and burnt, they have no shelter in the villages and this prevents them from re-settling in their villages. All their household belongings have been destroyed, they have no food reserves and as a result of the social and economic boycott by the majority community their means of livelihood have also been destroyed. In this situation, despite government pressure, it is very difficult for them to resume normal life.

The need of the hour is to assist affected families to re-establish their livelihoods as well as work on peace and reconciliation efforts to try and normalize everyday relationships between the two communities. Efforts also need to be made with the youth of both communities to promote communal harmony and tolerance so that the younger generation can be strengthened to resist fundamentalist forces rising in both the communities.

We are also thankful to ACT and resources agencies who have timely raised resources for this appeal by UELCI. Many more things need to be done but inadequate resources have compelled us to withdraw from the area.

William Stanley
Director, DPAR/UELCI