

GDLN Seminar on Strengthening Disaster Risk Management in East Asia and the Pacific – Summary of June 26, 2009 Video Conference
Community-based Disaster Risk Management

Speakers:

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Main moderator:

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Key topics discussed:

1. Implementation of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Capacity-building at the Local Level in Viet Nam and the Philippines: CBDRM Pilot Projects in Viet Nam and the Philippines
2. Objectives and Challenges in Institutionalizing and Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management at the Local Level

Executive Summary

This seminar on strengthening Disaster Risk Management in East Asia and the Pacific focused on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM). Various recommendations based on findings from Viet Nam and the Philippines were presented on how to implement Disaster Risk Management (DRM) at local level.

- First, it is widely recognized that **DRM needs to be implemented at local level**, however, there are often many challenges to overcome in order for an efficient CBDRM system to be established. A key aim is to **build and strengthen the capacities of communities** to reduce their vulnerability against natural disasters. A key step, which is to increase the community's resilience against natural hazards, involves the local people raises their awareness about the potential adverse impacts from natural hazards.
- Second, experience and **findings** from pilot projects in Viet Nam and the Philippines demonstrate that reducing the risks resulting from natural disasters at community level is difficult and requires the **support of many different stakeholders, NGOs, and government authorities**.
- Third, various structural and non-structural measures were presented during this seminar, which help increase the capacity of communities to absorb and manage key functions and structures during and after a natural disaster, for example, efficient DRM policies and legislation, early-warning systems, drills, and DRM education programs in schools.

- Finally, institutionalizing and mainstreaming DRM at the community level requires the national government to transfer efforts and responsibilities for dealing with natural disasters to the local level (decentralization).

Summary

1. Implementation of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Capacity-building at the Local Level in Viet Nam and the Philippines: CBDRM Pilot Projects

This seminar on strengthening DRM focused on how communities can become more resilient against natural disasters. The Hyogo Framework for Action, which was adopted in 2005, has as one of its key aims to build and increase the capacities of communities at the local level to absorb and better manage disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, as well as to be resilient and able to recover quickly in the event of a disaster.

In **Viet Nam**, CBDRM projects originally began in the 1990s and attempted to understand how communities can become less vulnerable against disasters and can build or strengthen their capacities. These programs were largely introduced and led by NGOs and yielded important findings which led to the development of a government-led program on CBDRM. This is expected to begin later this year and is intended to run through 2020. This government-led CBDRM program will cover at least 6,000 communities (though it is hoped that this figure could rise as high as 10,000). Communities eligible for selection into this program are those from developing areas or those that are already vulnerable to natural disasters.

As mentioned earlier, guidance from the Hyogo Framework for Action facilitated the development of a national strategy on DRM in Viet Nam, of which CBDRM is one part. The HFA also led to the emergence of more NGO-driven action to introduce more CBDRM programs. It is anticipated that a national law on DRM should be established by 2012.

In the **Philippines**, CBDRM projects have existed since the 1980s, but in 2003 they were promoted for the first time at a conference initiated by NGOs and the Philippine Government to bring various actors and stakeholders together. In 2007, a strategic plan was published which aimed to integrate CBDRM as an economic basis for sustainable development. By September 2009, a second national meeting on CBDRM is scheduled, which aims not only to bring all affected actors together, like NGOs, governmental bodies, local authorities, communities, and media, but also strengthen the approach to implement DRM more extensively at the community level.

During this seminar, interim results from pilot projects from both countries, which have been under implementation since 2006, were presented. In Viet Nam, a Natural Disaster Risk Management Project was initiated to understand the challenges in implementing CBDRM: in the first stage (2006-2009), communities in three provinces (Ha Tinh, Thua Thien Hue, Ben Tre) were chosen; in the second stage (2008-2009), the project covered four additional provinces (Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Binh Thuan, and Dong Thap). Likewise, in the Philippines, Dagupan City was selected as a pilot city for DRM to be implemented at the community level. Technical support for Dagupan City and the monitoring of activities is managed by the [Asian Disaster Preparedness Center \(ADPC\)](#).

The following achievements and conclusions were made from these projects:

Viet Nam:

- Work in three provinces (stage 1) in ten communities was completed in March 2009: with a total budget of US\$1.46 million, 2,670 personnel were trained, 10 “safer village” and community plans developed, and 10 clusters of small works completed. Similar activities remain ongoing in seven provinces (stage 2) and are expected to be fully implemented and/or completed by December 2009.

- Recommendations based on these findings include: decentralize project administration to localities, and pool information and experience during implementation to reduce time; it is essential to strengthen capacity-building and community organizations; assistance must be customized to the varying needs of a particular community; include and encourage communities to participate in DRM efforts; utilize local resources for DRM; and finally, programs should articulate and coherent long-term vision and program.

Dagupan City, Philippines:

- The project covered eight districts (barangays) out of 31. It encouraged locals to not simply participate in the process, but to offer their indigenous knowledge to assist in the creation of evacuation plans, a disaster instruction manual, and an early-warning system, etc.
- Drills were conducted at the barangay and city-levels.
- Furthermore, various structural and non-structural disaster mitigation measures were implemented, for instance, segregation of waste in barangays; mangrove rehabilitation and planting activities; institutionalization of a disaster-conscious 'Culture of Safety' in which 55,000 elementary and high school students received disaster awareness education; and the establishment of a 24-hour emergency operations center.
- It was suggested these activities should be replicated in other barangays in the city and also in other cities in the province.

ADPC publishes a monthly monitoring report about the recent activities in Dagupan City, see the [May 2009 report](#).

2. Objectives and Challenges in Institutionalizing and Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management at the Local Level

The experiences and lessons learned in Viet Nam favor the inclusion of CBDRM into a wider DRM framework and the adoption of a national legislation. Therefore, the proposed key objectives are as follows: to ensure that the capacities of 100 percent of officials at all levels are strengthened and to ensure that more than 70 percent of citizens living in communities vulnerable to disasters receive disaster management training to enhance their capacities to respond to natural disasters by 2020.

Similarly in the Philippines, the objectives are to institutionalize DRM at the local level in order to reduce the vulnerability of communities against disasters. However, CBDRM is still not incorporated into legislation – although an act on emergency response has existed since 1997.

It was emphasized during this seminar that mainstreaming and institutionalizing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is crucial. Communities need to be involved and should participate in this process to strengthen their capacities to cope with natural disasters. This can be achieved by providing the local people with a role in the decision-making process.

A further objective in mainstreaming DRR at local level is to consider factors such as livelihoods, education, climate change, and/or health issues and integrate them fully into all development plans and policies.

These objectives are intended to deliver the mainstreaming of DRR into local school curricula, vulnerability assessments, improved rescue capacities of communities (training, equipment, planning), evacuation plans, early-warning systems, etc.

The challenges, however, lie in the actual implementation and downscaling (institutionalizing and decentralization) of national guidance. This complex process necessitates the involvement and cooperation of many departments and agencies, as all sectors are required to amend existing policies or develop new

policies. This process of mainstreaming DRR involves various actors and stakeholders - ranging from partners in the private sector to the media who are responsible for disseminating information and play an active role in disaster preparedness.

Another challenge is developing a comprehensive legal framework, securing commitment from government agencies (implementation), and initiating a shift from the current mindset to integrate, for instance, safer community plans into overall socio-economic plans.

Again, it is crucial that CBDRM is integrated into the overall disaster framework; the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action is recognized as a “big push” to strengthen and build capacities of communities to make them more resilient against natural disasters.

Further Information

For more information on disaster risk management related to community-based disaster risk management, please visit the following links:

General:

- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, Community-based Disaster Risk Management: <http://www.adpc.net/v2007/Programs/CBDRM/Default.asp>
- UNISDR, Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (2005): <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/docs/Hyogo-framework-for-action-english.pdf>
- UNISDR, Hyogo Framework, Words into Action (2007): <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/docs/Words-into-action/Words-Into-Action.pdf>
- UNISDR, Building Disaster Resilient Communities, Good Practices and Lessons Learned (2007): http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/06-ngos-good-practices/ngos-good-practices.pdf

Philippines:

- Center for Disaster Preparedness: <http://www.cdp.org.ph/>

Dagupan City:

- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), PROMISE, monthly monitoring reports for DRM implementation in Dagupan City: <http://www.adpc.net/v2007/Programs/UDRM/PROMISE/Default.asp>
- PROMISE PROJECT, Philippines Narrative Progress Report: http://www.adpc.net/v2007/Programs/UDRM/PROMISE/MONITORING%20&%20EVALUATION/Monthly%20Status%20Reports/Downloads/2009/2009_05_Dagupan.pdf