Learning from the Community: Village Mapping and Key Community Mapping Research Tools

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DMI uses various Community Research Tools in its work to gain a better understanding of the grassroots realities that are at the core of every activity aimed at disaster preparedness. One of the tools to gain this understanding is village mapping, which is undertaken by local communities and facilitated by DMI.

While village mapping gives DMI the local perspective, it gives the community a clear idea of their capacities and vulnerabilities.

On the basis of this information, action plans are prepared by the community members. Each village map is owned by the local community, while the action plans are used to formulate follow-up implementation

The key processes in village mapping and action planning include:

- Identifying key actors
- Organising communities
- Listening to and observing outsiders and insiders
- Acknowledging, measuring and managing local capacities
- Identifying, examining and ascertaining local vulnerabilities
- Describing and designating responsibilities
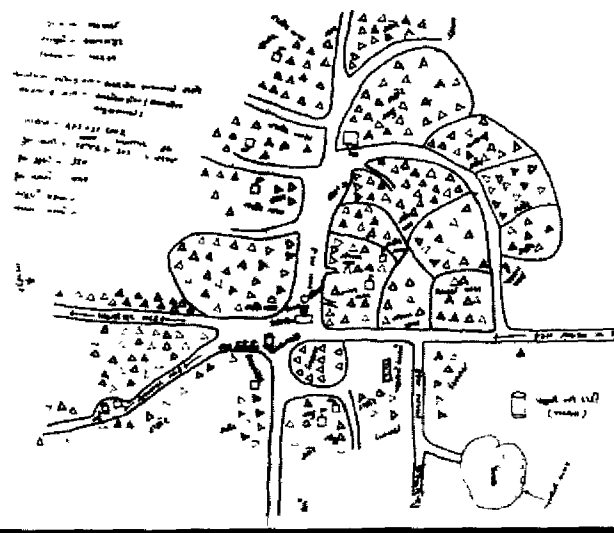- Describing how and why risk mitigation activities were (un)accomplished

A village map prepared by the community to depict affected and saved shelter in 2001.

Objectives of Village Mapping and Action Planning

The aim of this tool is to ensure that disaster mitigation efforts are not top-down, but rather are based on information that comes directly from the community. Information that may be put on maps include showing which buildings suffered severe earthquake damage, hazard prone areas (such as areas subject to flooding), and villagers' desires for improved infrastructure (bus stops, water facilities, etc.) The key actors in mapping risk reality and mitigation measures go beyond the government, donors, and experts to include vulnerable families, CBOs, traditional leaders, and local practitioners.

The objective of participatory risk mapping is not only to build safe housing for the victims, but promote safe building practices by targeted resource allocation, use of local construction materials, supporting local enterprise, improving regulations and integrating development activities with rebuilding

A village mapping exercise shows the perceptions of the community members themselves, not how the village appears from the outside. It can

Community members, men and women, can and do draw risk maps for their villages and shelters 2002.

provide the basis for community-based disaster plans. DMI conducts village mapping at start of its activity in an area to make sure that these activities are community-based

EFFECTIVENESS OF VILLAGE MAPPING AND ACTION PLANNING

Village Mapping gives DMI insight into a community. And when information is put on paper it can give the community itself added insight into and clarity of their problems. It can show that grassroots solutions are in their hands

Other community survey tools used by DMI are included in the following two tables:

A: COMMUNITY SURVEY TOOLS USED BY DMI

Survey Tool	Purpose
Timeline of relief intervention	To determine the level of community participation in various relief and recovery responses, how the community felt about their levels of participation, and how they would ideally have liked to be involved.
Relief allocation quality	To determine what the community felt about the targeting, timing, and quantity of various relief interventions.
Measuring changes in community capacity	To determine how the capacity of the community changed as a result of various recovery interventions and what impacts institutions had on this change.
Participatory Evaluation	To capture issues related to gender, livelihood, institutions and other matters pertaining to lives and life styles of community.
Focus group discussions	To understand the group dynamics and common concerns of the disaster affected community with the help of suitable visuals.
Community profiles	To determine the historical risk and recovery background of communities and major events that led to significant change in the past 10-15 years.
Individual interviews	To capture theme based answers or views from community leaders, government authorities or community workers involved in disaster related interventions.

Case studies emergency	To capture good or outstanding practices in relief management, response, risk mitigation and long-term recovery by focusing on what worked, and why, at the community level.
Missing Voices	To capture voices of marginalized groups, individuals, elders, physically challenged, marginalized workers and migrants who always remain left out of mainstream community processes.
Participatory Risk Appraisal Tools (Applicable to Urban and Rural areas) includes: • Seasonal calendars • Transect Walk • Venn diagram • Problem Tree • Hazard, capacity & vulnerability mapping • Village map • Historical profile • Action planning • Water audit	To obtain information concerning hazards, vulnerability, capacity, and specific mitigation measures suitable to the local community context in both urban and rural areas.

B: Participatory Risk Appraisal Tools

Survey Tool	Purpose–Description
Seasonal calendars	Plots problems (livelihood, water security, hazards, etc.) by month of the year
Transect Walk	An observational activity for outsiders to obtain a cross-section of the community noting various characteristics such as geography/topography, vulnerability, activities, hazard areas, etc.
Venn diagram	A means to note overlapping institutions (or other items) noting centrality to the community
Problem Tree	A diagram showing root causes, the problem (the tree trunk), and impacts (the branches)
Hazard Analysis	Charts the causes of a hazard, amount of warning, ability to respond, and potential mitigation actions
Hazard, capacity and vulnerability mapping/Village map	The community shows the physical location of various items (buildings, infrastructure, hazardous areas, vulnerability, capacity, etc.)
Historical profile	Identifies conditions before, during, and after a disaster, indicating patterns over many years
Action planning	The community identifies and prioritizes problems, causes, possible solutions, obstacles to solutions, partners, and specific activities to implement solutions including responsibilities and timeline for each action
Water audit	Identification of amount of incoming water, use, and balance left