

Participatory Disaster Management Planning As An Educational Process: An Example From Kathmandu, Nepal

BACKGROUND

Kathmandu Valley consists of 5 municipalities (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bakhtapur, Madhyapur-Thimi, Kirtipur) and approximately 100 Village District Committees (VDCs), and is the exclusive center of politics, and economy of Nepal. The population of the Valley is more or less 1.4 million in the area of 668km², in some city core area, population density amounts to more than 1,000 persons/ha. The population within the 5 municipalities is 870 thousand and its area is around 100km². On the other hand, for the 100 VDCs, the population is 520 thousand with area of 567km².

Kathmandu Valley has suffered a number of historical earthquakes. In 1934, strong earthquake hit the Valley, causing significant loss to lives and properties. It is said that this earthquake has a recurrent period of seventy years which points that a big earthquake hit the Valley at any time. The Valley was also affected by 1988 earthquake, which suggests that the Valley is a high hazard prone area. In the next 30 years, the population is estimated to become double to 3 million. Unplanned urban growth, along with new building constructions has become prominent recently, and aggravated earthquake vulnerabilities. Thus, earthquake risks of the Valley need urgent attention.

OBJECTIVES

As a part of the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) funded project, the overall goal of the study was to formulate a holistic disaster management plan. In order to achieve this goal, the pilot study was designed aiming to get the feedbacks from the actual community activities. Three pilot areas of different characteristics were selected by examining the results. High vulnerability areas with high injuries and casualties, most of which locates in the city core areas, are regarded to be the most needed for taking prompt actions in this pilot study.

ACTIVITIES

■ **"Learn":** In the "Learn" process, knowledge of the science and technology, such as earthquake

mechanisms, damage estimation, and building vulnerability is disseminated by the initiatives of municipalities. At the same time indigenous knowledge such as personal earthquake experience of 1934 or/and 1988, past earthquake damages in the area, roles and functions of the local communities, and CBO activities are introduced by the local residents.

■ **"Think & Plan":** In the second "Think & Plan" process, hazards and resources are visualized and necessary countermeasures are planned. *"Community Watching"*, a walking tour of a community to identify hazards and resources along the designated route in small groups with experts such as a structural engineer, an urban planner etc, is an useful tool to know the earthquake risks of neighborhoods. During the tour, participants check evacuation routes, open space, water resources, public facilities, building vulnerabilities, and hazardous objects, carrying a map and taking photos. Based on this experience, DIG (*Disaster Imagination Game*) workshops were conducted. DIG is a map maneuver exercise on a bigger scale map, (at least 1/10,000 maps are recommended to be used) to mark hazards, resources, roads, bridges, public facilities, and plan countermeasures using the maps, assuming various situations. For more relaxed atmosphere, a *Participatory Learning and Action* (PLA) is useful for children and rural illiterate groups to substitute for DIG.

After the series of workshops and discussion, certain consensus among the community were developed and a disaster management map for the community was produced using local materials, different colors of Tikka stickers, ladies' cosmetics. The PLA methods are also useful to Disaster Management and the map produced by their own hands and materials creates a sense of pride and ownership of protecting your neighborhood by yourself.



■ **"Action":** "Action" process is to acquire direct experience and training. Getting a first hand experience is vivid and appealing. During the pilot project, most people were concerned about the two points; one is whether their houses are earthquake-resistant or not, and the other is how to react to earthquakes. These two points are basic questions of how to survive in earthquakes. The *earthquake drill* provides practical experience how to react in the real situation. The drill is to train safe evacuation process and procedures in the earthquakes, and impart *first aid* and rescue knowledge. The earthquake drills were done with collaboration of the police, Nepal Red Cross Society, schools, clinics.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Following were the major outcome of the Study:

- Local government is expanding DIG to other wards
- Disaster Management Committee was established in the ward 20 during pilot activities,
- CBO initiative area is continuing disaster mitigation effort and
- Municipal level Institutional Framework is proposed

During the pilot activities, a Municipal Disaster Management Framework was proposed. This framework aims to strengthen the chain of command and communications among local city government, wards, CBOs and citizens. A Disaster Management Committee, directly under the Mayor, manages, leads and authorizes all the disaster management activities.

The pilot study has also encouraged Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) to formulate 4 technical working groups; Awareness Raising, Building Improvement, Rescue Activities, and Information Networking, to assist in the Disaster Management Committee and to suggest and research technical matters. Outside experts are suggested to be included. The KMC is trying to promote the enhancement of its Disaster management section to a department with increased employees

LESSONS

Mobilizing Community Based Organizations is the key to the success of the participatory planning

■ Reinforcing Linkages between the Community and Public Authorities is essential to enhance communication and understanding on risk and mitigation issues

■ Key issues for Community-based Disaster Management activities are the roles of community-based organizations (CBOs) and public administration enforcement

■ Disaster Management gives practical survival knowledge

■ Children are the most perceptive target groups, and through the educational process, they can create ripple effect to their families

■ Networks have been developing through pilot activities. It is important to keep the momentum, and expand it

FUTURE

Based on the current experiences, it can be concluded that to enhance the community initiative in disaster mitigation, following are the major points, which need special attention in future.

■ **Balance Best Mix:** Roles and responsibilities for different stakeholders and sector

■ **Emphasis on Participatory Planning Process:** Through involvement of communities and people

■ **Focus on Total Institutional Mechanism:** To synthesize community based planning processes

■ **Importance of Social Issues:** To develop social index representing social issues in the neighborhoods



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54 The Gadap Rain Storm Assistance Project And Gulu : A Disabled Person Struggled For His Family Development

BACKGROUND

A heavy rainstorm on February 18, 2003 stuck Gadap and destroyed the whole area badly. Gadap is 54-kilometer northwest direction from Karachi, Pakistan with the population of 32,000. The people of Gadap are very poor and leading a miserable life. The community consists of daily wage earners; agricultural laborers and poultry farm workers. Women are generally engaged in domestic chores like fetching water, collecting fire wood, and cooking. The heavy rainstorm in 2003 threw Gadap community into a position where they had no shelter, food and medicine. Seven people died at spot and more than hundred were injured badly. Gulu was identified by Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan in Gadap as the most affected person by the rainstorm.

OBJECTIVES

The main goal for the implementation of the Gadap heavy rainstorm assistance project was to provide food and non-food items to the victims of this disaster. The objectives of the project were as follows:

- Assist families in returning to their normal life conditions,
- To assist most vulnerable women and children victims of the rain storm,
- To protect 200 most affected families with food and shelter.

ACTIVITIES

Major activities undertaken after the disaster included situational analysis, identification and listing of the deserving beneficiaries, purchasing and transportation of relief items and coordination with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Government of Pakistan (GoP) for quick delivery of services and to avoid duplication of relief.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The implementation of the project brought a positive impact on the lives of the Gadap

community. The poor and affected families had received Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan assistance package within twenty-four hours at the time of need. Food and non-food items helped them in their survival. The communities of Gadap in the post disaster phase acted positively in rebuilding their houses and in changing their lives.

LESSONS

Local CBO is very effective in implementation of the project on account of their familiarity with the area. Due to timely response, during an emergency, the communities returned to normal lives. Coordination with all actors during disasters has also good impact of sharing information and services to the communities. Community participation does not merely imply involvement of communities in NGOs activities, rather it means facilitating the local capacity-building process to enhance the ability of communities to take decisions when NGOs left the area. In case of the Gadap relief assistance, the local people participated in the process of house reconstruction. Therefore, community's own initiatives in pre and post disaster crisis could be supported as much as possible by local CBOs.

FUTURE

In any disaster, the first people on the picture are the local communities, possibly as victims, but certainly as energetic participants in pre and post disaster situations. The community of Gadap in post phase disaster immediately took initiatives in utilizing the materials in a proper way. Twenty (20) bags of cement to each family provided by CWS-P/A were effectively used in house reconstruction. The community in Gadap arranged sand, local raw materials and completed their house within three months. Undoubtedly, shelter provision is seen as the primary need for a disaster stricken community and, as such, is one of the major spheres of NGO activity in post-disaster situations. This means that NGOs have to be aware of local skills and capacities and help them to adapt these changing needs, rather than totally opposing them.

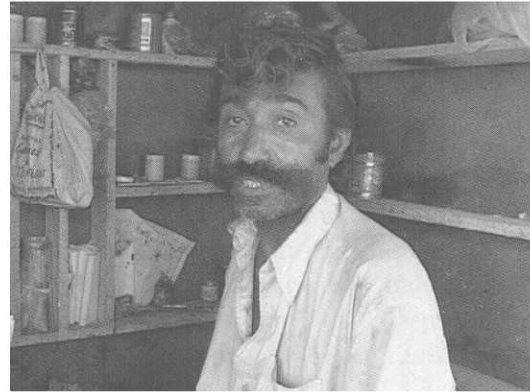
Gulu's Life Sketch and Struggle

Gulu, 35 years old disabled person is struggling through his life for earning bread for himself and his blind mother. The 2003 heavy rainstorm destroyed his house. Gulu said, "I have suffered tragically. Disaster and subsequent nights without shelter and food were horrible for us". He continued, "My life is full of tragedies. My mother Zubaida is blind and my father is dead" Gulu's mother said that Gulu was not by born a paralyzed. He could walk easily in his child hood. In the age of six, he was attacked by a severe fever, which made him disabled. A village doctor (quack) could not diagnose his disease accurately and thus the case went wrong. Later a qualified doctor advised to continue the treatment of Gulu for at least two years. Gulu's father could not afford to continue the treatment after two months because of financial burden. Ultimately he became paralyzed.

Briefing on the rainstorm, he said, "I was not injured, and saved luckily". He mentioned "As a lame man in the community I could do nothing during this disaster. Helping others was not easy for me, even protecting myself and my blind mother was impossible." To him it was a miracle that he and his blind mothers saved in the storm. It was about six years ago Gulu worked as donkey cart driver but that being a hard job, he could not do it properly because of his disability, but he was determined for survival in some way or other. After certain period of time, he managed to find some work in a shop. He was considered and permitted for a sedentary job in the shop. There he was working all day but getting only Rs 20 per day. Gulu said grimly, "This money was not at all enough to meet the cost of our daily food even". It was only three years before that he started a small shop of his own with financial assistance from his brother, relatives and local people of his village. But his luck did not favor him. The rainstorm disaster destroyed his wooden shop and all the materials in the shop were washed away by the rain. He became vulnerable with great risk of survival.

In that difficult situation, CWS-P/A took care of Gulu. He was provided with cement to reconstruct his damaged house. In addition to that, considering his vulnerability and disability CWS-P/A also donated him a cycle wheel chair and a new wooden cabin. According to Gulu he is earning a profit of Rs. 50/60 per day from wooden cabin grocery shop. He works daily from morn till eve, with some break in the afternoon. The wheel chair is very much useful for him since he moves it from one place to another. Gulu now goes to Gadap town, which is 12 km away, three times a week to buy goods for his shop. Gulu is happy with his wheel chair and cabin shop and do feel himself a disabled. Now he is not dependent on others as he can earn his bread.

Gulu's activeness in his survival as a disabled person is much encouraging. No doubt his own confidence and enthusiasm of changing his life condition took him to this stage. Of course CWS-P/A assistance was there in reaching his goal. He is attaining his life's requirement slowly but peacefully. "We hope his dream will come out true", said an elder of the village.



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