

60 Risk Reduction In Practice: A Philippines Case Study

BACKGROUND

In the past 20 years, disasters have killed over 31,000 and affected more than 60 million people in the Philippines. While volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occasionally strike, windstorms are the deadliest hazard.

During the 1980s and 1990s, nine massive typhoons lashed the archipelago, killing 13,000 people, affecting 51 million and costing US\$ 2,8 billion in damage alone. Public and non-governmental agencies, as well as the Philippines National Red Cross (PNRC), have traditionally provided relief to disaster-affected people. But since 1995, the PNRC has broadened its approach towards more proactive risk reduction. With support from the Danish Red Cross (DRC), PNRC initiated community-based disaster preparedness in five mountains, coastal and urban provinces.



OBJECTIVES

The community based disaster management activities were aimed to link to the overall development practices, covering different issues like health, education. The objectives of the initiative were to enhance the community resilience to disaster reduction through appropriate partnership with local government units.

ACTIVITIES

Much can be done - with relatively simple means - at the community level to reduce the impacts of natural disasters. The PNRC encourages people to collaborate in protecting their lives and the resources on which they depend. The approach is called integrated community disaster planning program (ICDPP) and employs six steps:

- **Partnership with municipal and provincial government units** This helps to root the preparedness concept in local planning, to gain technical and financial support for mitigation measures, and to ensure the program's long-

term sustainability.

- **Community disaster action team formation and training** The core of the program is the group of community volunteers (including fishermen, women, youth and businessmen) who are trained in vulnerability and capacity assessments, disaster management and information dissemination. They work with the community to prepare a disaster action plan.

- **Risk and resources mapping** This identifies the most important local hazards, who and what may be at risk, and which mitigation measures are possible. The maps are often employed as land use planning tools by local government units.



- **Community mitigation measures** Based on the disaster action plan, the community will initiate mitigation measures, which may be physical structures (e.g. seawalls, evacuation centers), health related measures (e.g. clean water supply) or planning tools (e.g. land use plans, evacuation plans). These measures are undertaken by community volunteers with support from the Red Cross and local government.

- **Training and education** This is integral to all steps of the program - both in training the disaster action teams and in disseminating information to the whole community.

- **Sustainability** Long-term impact can only be ensured by embedding the concept of community based disaster preparedness within local government units (LGUs). This means incorporating the recommendations of community disaster action plans into LGU land use planning and annual budgeting. Sustainability also implies regular update training of the disaster action teams.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The ICDPP project covers 75 rural communities in 16 municipalities across five provinces. A total of 105 mitigation projects have been completed, including seven sea walls in three provinces. From 1995-2000, the project directly benefited 154,700 people

■ During 2000, a typhoon hit a project area on Limasawa island in Southern Leyte province. The community safely evacuated 300 people without injury or loss of life. Community disaster action teams – a new approach – have proved to be an important core element. Volunteer labor has been invaluable in helping to build mitigation structures.

■ Collaboration with local government units (LGUs) has been a prerequisite for the program's success and long-term viability. Many LGUs have incorporated community disaster action plans into their own development plans – resulting in projects such as planting trees to prevent landslides, cleaning canals to prevent flooding, constructing flood control dykes.

LGUs have paid up to 75 per cent of the costs of these mitigation measures, as well as providing specialist equipment and technical design input.

■ Red Cross hazard mapping has helped to capture local knowledge of natural hazards and transfer this information to municipal planners for incorporation into land use planning.

■ Community-based disaster preparedness is helping strengthen the public system of disaster coordinating councils at municipal and village levels.

■ The program has given PNRC the evidence needed to lobby the national government to incorporate preparedness activities within their disaster response budget line.

■ Construction of physical mitigation structures by community volunteers has created a sense of solidarity among people that, together, they can reduce vulnerability to disasters.

■ Preparedness and mitigation have gained a higher profile within the PNRC's disaster management services, strengthening the organization's capacity to reduce disaster risk.



LESSONS

■ Mitigation is not just about natural disasters. Some measures are health-related (e.g. tap-stands to provide clean drinking water and reduce the risk of disease)

■ Capacity building of community disaster action teams must not be underestimated. Staff must clearly understand the causes, signs and effects of different risks. They must be trained in hazard mapping and skilled in community work.

Follow-up support is needed to keep disaster action teams busy and interested.

■ Persuading communities to prioritize long term disaster mitigation measures (e.g. dykes, evacuation centers) above more immediate concerns (e.g. upgrading already-safe drinking water supplies) can be difficult.

■ Continuous lobbying of local politicians is needed to ensure that community risk maps and disaster action plans are incorporated into public land use planning.

It is challenging to maintain Red Cross collaboration with local government units without establishing a political dependency that may collapse at the next election

CONCLUSION

An integrated, community-based approach to disaster preparedness and mitigation has proved very popular and effective in reducing the vulnerability of thousands of Filipinos to both natural hazards and health risks. The success of the Red Cross program depends on collaboration with local government. This in turn helps the PNRC to advocate for stronger preparedness and mitigation measures to be incorporated in local public land use planning.

Community-based disaster preparedness is only a supplement to – not a substitute for – regional and national disaster management. ICDPP is best suited for reducing the impact of small-scale local hazards, although elements of the approach can be adapted to alleviate the effects of larger disasters as well



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61 Training: As A Tool For Professional Development

BACKGROUND

Learning is a serious business as it relates to managing knowledge and its application. Each day is a venue for learning. Everyone is engaged in this activity knowingly or unknowingly. Aware of the importance of learning, specifically on disaster risk management, several directors of the Citizen's Disaster Response Center (CDRC), who left it in 1998 formed the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) Philippines in early 1999. *CDP was established in the Philippines in October 1984 as a response by cause oriented groups to the socio-economic and political crisis in the country and to the occurrence of natural and human sourced hazards. CDP was a brainchild of former members of the Board of CDRC for the purpose of providing consultancy and training services on disaster risk management. While CDRC concentrates on assisting its partner organization in rehabilitation and response, CDP will focus on organizing learning forums, training, conferences, partnership development and providing consultancy to various organizations, mostly outside of CDRC ambit.* The Center, even on its formative stage has been providing consultancy services to NGOs, government and international organizations. This is so because its leaders have a wealth of experience and knowledge gained from its previous organization, that specializes on community based disaster risk management. Meanwhile, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), a well known resource center in Asia tapped CDP on one of its courses—the Community Based Disaster Management (CBDRM). The case, which will be discussed in this short paper is the blending of the knowledge between an Asia-wide center (ADPC) and a local national-based entity (CDP).

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this informal partnership from CDP's side is to advocate to the region-wide training center the knowledge and expertise developed from a local perspective. On ADPC's side, the objective is to tap people who have the theoretical grounding and practical experience on CBDRM.

ACTIVITIES

Since 1999, CDP has provided the following consultancy services.

- Reviewed CBDRM curriculum, designed and wrote the CBDRM participants workbook and trainers guide
- Acted as resource persons during CBDRM courses and facilitated curriculum review
- Participated in various ADPC's CBDRM activities in Bangkok and in other Asian countries
- Acted as ADPC's evaluators on specific projects in India and Laos
- Organized and hosted ADPC's CBDRM activities in the Philippines.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The assistance of CDP on curriculum development of the CBDRM course is a major contribution to ADPC. Recognizing that the Philippines is relatively advanced in CBDRM practice, ADPC held its CBDRM-12 in the Philippines, with CDP as the organizer and main partner. More than 300 people from different parts of the world representing various organizations have been trained on CBDRM. Participants come from managerial and practical levels.

Here were participants who were able to influence decision and policy makers on the validity and importance of CBDRM approaches. They championed the cause of CBDRM in their respective organizations. For example, Dr. Ian Wilderspin of the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), who was an IFRC delegate stationed in Vietnam when he attended the course. He led in the promotion of CBDRM training and in the implementation of CBDRM projects in Vietnam. To date, through a pool of national Red Cross trainers, over 12,500 school teachers have been trained on disaster risk, who in turn are educating the school children on disaster risk reduction. Another example is Ms. Yuka Makino, who was a JICA expert when she attended the course. She is now promoting CBDRM to her current organization, the World Bank. One more example is Mr. Talmage Payne of Asia World Vision, who embraced the CBDRM approaches wholeheartedly and one of the supporters of CBDRM in his organization. More

and more participants continue to apply the tools learned from the course to their field of assignment.

LESSONS

■ Training is an effective tool for learning. Participants contribute significantly to the course improvement through their critique, feedback and evaluation.

■ Participants vary in experience, educational background and perspective. It is not easy to have a common understanding of concepts and terminology.

■ Sharing among participants is as important as interactive lectures.

■ A variety of techniques in adult education is essential to encourage learning. Field practice is always appreciated by the participants to test theoretical inputs.

■ Creativity and innovation are always to be expected from the participants. Trainers should know how to learn from


■ Communities should be the ultimate beneficiaries of the CBDRM course and therefore trainers and participants should never lose sight of this dictum.

FUTURE

■ Continue to update the course content, incorporating recent practices and innovations. This applies to any training course.

■ Tracing of the "career" development of selected people who attended the course, how they are able to impart the knowledge and skills learned from the course and to what extent they are able to influence policy and decision makers.

■ Documentation of selected cases undertaken as a result of the training.



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