

# Commune Disaster Management Planning As An Educational Process: Oxfam Experiences In Vietnam

## BACKGROUND

Flash floods, landslides, slow on set floods and storms are the major disasters in Vietnam. To mitigate the disaster risks and respond to these disasters Oxfam has been facilitating Community Based Disaster Mitigation (CBDM) out activities since 2001, and aims to integrate disaster management with its ongoing development programs through Commune Disaster Management Action Planning and implementation. Problem.

## OBJECTIVES

The objective was to ensure that women and men in the communes understand that they play a key role in reducing vulnerabilities to disasters and increasing capacities in their communities and support them to achieve this.

## ACTIVITIES

The Commune is the lowest administrative unit of the Vietnam Government administrative structure. Oxfam piloted the Commune Disaster Management Action Plan (CDMAP) formulation and implementation process in 6 communes of Ha Tinh province, which are prone to flash floods and 8 communes of Dong Thap province prone to Mekong slow onset floods. The following steps have been undertaken for developing and implementing the CDMAP since August 2002.

■ **Participatory Tools and techniques:** Participatory tools and techniques for analyzing community vulnerabilities and capacities were developed incorporating experiences from other countries, Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) and other related actors.

■ **Training of Facilitators (ToF) course on Action Planning:** For improving the skills and capacities of the facilitators, six-day (ToF) courses were organised by Red Cross facilitators and attended by representatives of the Women Unions, Red Cross, govt. departments from province, districts and communes. For ensuring gender equality emphasis was given to bringing equal numbers of male and female participants and equal participation of both women and

men during the process.

■ **CDMAP formulation:** The trained commune facilitators organised 3 days workshops ensuring participation of disaster experienced men and women to analyse vulnerabilities, capacities and measures to be taken to reduce vulnerabilities. After the 3 day exercise the Village Heads compiled the outcomes of the workshop and prepared a draft copy of the CDMAP. Two facilitators who participated in the ToF course organised earlier from the district & province were responsible for providing backup support to the commune facilitators in term of quality of facilitation, participation and information.



■ **Consultation meetings:** Having the draft CDMAP the commune organised consultative meetings to make the CDMAP more realistic and workable. Initial participatory Monitoring & Evaluation indicators and mechanisms were also discussed.

■ **CDMAP sensitization with district and province:** CDMAPs were shared with province and district Authorities to involve them and to get their support while implementing the CDMAPs and to incorporate CDMAP monitoring aspects within district/ provincial existing monitoring mechanisms.

■ **Endorsement of CDMAPs by the District People's Committee:** Having sufficient discussion among the district People's Committee and commune Leaders, the district People's Committee approved the CDMAPs for implementation by the Commune People's Committee.

■ **Implementation of CDMAP:** Oxfam provided necessary funds to the District Authority to implement some priority activities of the CDMAPs including capacity building for commune & village disaster management bodies. District partners are currently implementing the identified activities.

■ **Micro- Macro links of CDMAP experiences:** Oxfam and partners CDMAP experiences are being presented at the province and National levels through workshops and bilateral meetings aiming at changing the policy and practices of the respective departments

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

■ More than 100 facilitators have been trained who are qualified to facilitate participatory hazard, vulnerability, and capacity assessment processes, and are able to develop local Action Plans. They are sharing their experiences working with other organisations and government departments.

■ Based on CDMAP, the households, commune and district leaders have started to preparedness and mitigation activities. At the household level the members are taking preparation to respond the floods through the preparedness initiatives.

■ The National and provincial government recognised that the disaster management action planning process was an appropriate strategy and they are planning to replicate the lessons in other communes

## **LESSONS**

Participation: To facilitate the participatory methodologies in action planning is a big challenge. Sometimes the facilitators want to make the process short so that the real needs and appropriate actions are not easily brought out. More attention is needed on how to make the sessions more interesting and participatory. Following two issues are important:

■ Capturing gender desegregated data and needs, and ensuring equal representation and participation of men and women remains a big challenge.

■ Household level preparedness activities are still not sufficient. The district and commune authorities need to pay more attention to engaging and helping households in disaster preparedness and mitigation.

## **FUTURE**

Oxfam is planning to replicate the lesson learnt from the action planning process in other provinces. We are also advocating for the related government departments to have more community capacity building activities in preparation of community plans to make the disaster management process sustainable.



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# 74 National Seismological Observatory Center (NSOC), Yemen, 1989-2004

## **BACKGROUND**

During the period (1989-2004), following the December 13 1982 earthquake (M 6.0), different technical and scientific activities were initiated toward the establishment of National Seismological Observatory Center (NSOC). These activities came under a multi-level project. The basic step was the deep concern of the government in resettlement and reconstruction of the damaged areas.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Special committee founded at Geological Survey Board to investigate earthquake-affected area, took the responsibility of installation and operation portable seismic stations and preparing the basic requirements to establish a national seismic network.

The presence of (NSOC) in its current state was only possible due to the concern and support of the most relevant body to earth sciences, supreme council of reconstruction (currently the ministry of public works), Program for Assessment and Mitigation of Earthquake Risks in the Arab Region (PAMERAR) and Reduction of Earthquake Losses in Mediterranean Region (RELEMAR)

## **ACTIVITIES**

Dialoguing with colleagues in different communities is making a positive contribution to the different fields of natural disaster reduction. It seems that we are hoping still for better understanding and the necessary steps to reduce risk through with planning. The mechanisms may still need a lot of time and adaptation to different local levels. Therefore, an example of implementation mechanisms is provided here, based on author's experience of the seismological field as its priority here in Yemen for any future supporting or planning to reduce probable disasters. The National Seismological Observatory Center (NSOC) attended several meetings during the period 1993-2004. These meetings identified and approved our seismic priorities at local, regional and international levels. We hope for more

activity and more responsibility for applying this knowledge. At local level there is some progress, which is reflected in a recent Sana'a Workshop dealing with disaster management.

## **LESSONS**

■ It is quite important to target the elements most required for reducing seismic risk in development regions by executing flexible and local experimental elements of the seismic code within the main seismic building code, and recording this.

■ All things related to natural disaster mitigation programs should be strengthened and documented to help ministries and governments in making the right decisions and allocating resources to these programs.

3) We need to support local seismic networks and also to support experts in seismological fields.



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