**OL 345 Assignment One Discussion**
**Online Learning: OL 345 Community Based DRR Training.**
**Center for Sustainable Development.** https://csd-i.org/disaster-risk-reduction-online-drr-training/

Good morning class and welcome back.

It is estimated that 70% of recent disasters were related to extreme weather events—a proportion that is likely to grow as climate change processes increase the unpredictability and intensity of weather events. Because of this, disaster risk reduction should become an integral part of adaptation projects. Community based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) holds the same merit that community based adaptation does: ownership and sustainability.

Disaster risk reduction means reducing and preventing the effects of the disaster; while disasters have always been part of history, and seem to be increasing in number, risk reduction can reduce death and suffering, the destruction of assets, and response and recovery times.

Community members with greater resources, sound housing, savings, and food reserves are at an advantage during disasters. The very poor are at a disadvantage: in the aftermath of a disaster they frequently don't have savings and food reserves to fall back on during a period of recovery. On top of this, the poor frequently live on marginal land which increases their risk to disaster: living on steep hillsides and suffering from mudslides during heavy rains—or living alongside a river or a coastline and suffering from flooding and shoreline erosion.

These challenges facing the poor in disaster prone regions can frequently be mitigated by using solutions from other programs within your project. For example, if your project has a climate smart agricultural component, or a food security, nutrition and home gardens component, those will reduce risk for these families by increasing resiliency through providing food reserves. If your project has a micro-enterprise or micro-savings program this will also reduce risk by providing savings to live on during a recovery period. If your project has a watershed restoration component—that can reduce flooding. As you can see there's quite a bit of overlap between DRR and community-based adaptation.

So in this course were going to be analyzing the hazards, looking at the root causes of the hazards, clarifying the risks, exploring the existing capacity for the community to reduce risk, and looking at activities and programs that can be used to reduce risk.

And since this is a community-based course will begin the course by revisiting the participatory capacity and vulnerability assessments that we did with our community members in OL 343 and OL 344. It's conceivable that you already have all of the information that you need from the assessments that you did then. However if you're missing a few key pieces of information you could arrange a short meeting with a few representatives of your committee to get this information. If that's the case the first two assignments will be quick and easy for you!

On the other hand maybe your participatory assessment covered a different topic and didn't include assessing disaster-based hazards and risks. So these next two weeks are your chance to go back to your community and facilitate a DRR focused PCVA. I'm providing workshop overviews, how two cards, and lesson plans to simplify this process for you.

**Risk definitions:**
**Risk** is the chance of injury or loss of life as defined as a measure of the probability (likelihood) and severity of an adverse effect to health, property, or the environment.

**Risk analysis** is the systematic use of information to identify hazards and to estimate the chance for and severity of, injury or loss to individuals or populations, property, or the environment.

**Hazard** is a source of potential harm, or a situation with the potential for causing harm, in terms of human injury, damage to health, property or the environment.

**Hazard assessment** means the identification of hazards in a given location, and is a process of estimating, for defined areas, the probabilities of the occurance of potentially damaging phenomenon of given magnitudes within a specific period of time. The purpose of hazard assessment is to specify the nature and behavior of the potential hazards and threats people face. Key hazards could include flash flood, floods, snow and wind storm, lightning, drought, and earthquakes. Secondary hazards as an outcome of key hazards could include landslides, mudslides, and snow avalanches.

**Vulnerability** is a set of conditions which makes people, property, infrastructure, resources, or the environment susceptible to adverse impact from a hazard events.

**Response and recovery capability** is defined as locally available strengths and capacities to reduce the impact of adverse conditions of the disaster. Impact severity and extent of vulnerability are dependent upon the capability or capacity to reduce the severity of impact.

**Risk evaluation** is the process by which risks are examined in terms of costs and benefits, and evaluated in terms of acceptability of risk considering the needs, issues, and concerns of stakeholders.

**Risk reduction** measure is an action intended to reduce the frequency and/or severity of injury or loss. For example: flood control mitigation or emergency response exercises.

Source: Methodology for Community-Based Hazards Vulnerability Risk Assessment in Gilgit District. Babar Khan. UNDP Regional Climate Risk Reduction Project for Himalayas (Pakistan). 2011.
http://www.academicstar.us/UploadFile/Picture/2016-3/201637235155185.pdf

As you are enrolled in Community Based DRR, very likely the project that you've been developing over the past few courses has a DRR component. You also very likely put together a series of activities that could be solutions for helping your community members reduce their risk to disaster related hazards. As the frequency and intensity of natural disasters are increasing due to climate change, your climate change adaptation activities may be useful in reducing risk too.

In the first decade of the century it was estimated that 250 million people were affected by natural disasters each year. It is expected that could rise 50% by 2015 to an average of 375 million people affected by disasters each year, in part because of climate change. Disasters are harder on poor people. In rich countries, an average of 23 people die in any given disaster; in the least developed countries this figure is 1,052. Some groups—women and girls, the chronically sick, and the elderly are even more vulnerable, their ability to cope undermined by discrimination, inequality, or poor health.

It's not only poverty and climate change causing an increase in the number of people impacted by natural disasters. It's also exacerbated by environmental challenges such as the deforestation of hillsides due to expanding farming activities or collecting firewood. Deforested hillsides allow for increased rainwater runoff that can lead to flooding. So, in an effort to reduce risk from suffering from disasters we need to look at a combination of poverty reduction, consciousness raising about disasters, adaptation activities, and environmental restoration.

**What we will do in this course.**
We're going to do six important things in this course as part of developing a disaster risk reduction plan for your community.
1. Very clearly describe the highest priority, specific hazard that your community faces.
2. Establish a CBDRR subcommittee to provide long-term consistency and management for a DRR plan.
3. Offer a consciousness raising workshop for the subcommittee so that they can learn about the different components of a DRR plan.
4. Develop teams that would provide services for the community that would range from disaster prevention to search and rescue.
5. Provide consciousness raising meetings, handouts, and posters for community members about DRR.
6. Identify a mitigation activity for community members to implement and lead them in a training workshop about its implementation

**How will we do this?**
We will start this course by determining what our community member's vulnerabilities are, what hazards they face, what their capacity is to implement and maintain activities, analyze what existing techniques they are successfully using and what resources are locally available. In other words we need to determine what can they do, what local resources and techniques they have available for doing these activities, and what would they be motivated to continue to do after your NGO's subsidies and technical resources come to an end.

The first two assignments may be a repeat of other assignments you've done in other courses. If that's the case—perfect! It will make your first assignments very easy to complete. However, your earlier findings may only represent three quarters of what we need to find out for this assignment—or maybe you didn't do anything like this assignment in the earlier courses. In the early courses we were looking at challenges in a very general sense—now in this course we are going to get very specific about the descriptions of the challenges.

**Getting Started**
The first thing that we need to do is a participatory needs assessment which will evaluate the hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities that your community members may face in a natural disaster—and determine if they have adopted any coping strategies to solve the challenges that they face.

We then need to look at resources that they have available for improving existing practices and exploring new ones. These resources could be in the form of capability (capacity), human capital, land, building materials, labor, and grasses, hedges, and trees for planting in the watershed and along stream beds and shorelines.

As your ideas develop for refinements in your project design you need to consider two things. One is to seek the advice of an expert in the chosen activities who is familiar with working in your region and with your community's culture. This expert can help you determine what will work and what will not, what activities communities are likely to maintain over a span of time—and which they're unlikely to maintain over span of time. They can also connect you to extension services.

Two, you need to regularly share your developing activity design with the community members in an effort to make sure that you're heading in a direction that they like, that they're comfortable with, and that they will feel ownership in.

You also need to be thinking about the development of a DRR committee if you haven't already done that. This might not happen overnight, but it will simplify the training as the committee might have a vested interest in encouraging all members to participate.

You may have already done this in a previous course—if so great—that will reduce your workload. On the other hand, you might have established a community water management committee—if that's the case then you can fairly simply be able to develop a DRR subcommittee without having to go through a lot of work.

The improvements that we make should be planned such that effort and costs don't outweigh the benefits—and lead to eventual abandonment after project subsidies terminate. Also your project design should encourage reliance on local resources and capacities—in other words we want to reduce reliance on "giveaways" because your organizational giveaways will stop once you're project is done.

When you're clear about the community's context, capacities and resources, you can begin proposing disaster risk reduction practices which will be meaningful for them. In the course we will examine things like consciousness-raising, mitigation activities such as reforestation, and the training of disaster teams who will assist in evacuation and search and rescue and the advent of a disaster. Even though you will have maintained contact with your community, once you have come up with a draft plan of the whole DRR component, it will be time to present it to the community for their feedback and comments.

I'm very much looking forward to doing this course with you. I suggest we get going—please move onto Assignment One Homework!