**Field Guide: Overview of Developing a Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Plan**

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It is estimated that 70% of all disasters are now related to extreme weather events. This percentage is likely to increase 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. This field guide presents an overview of establishing a CBDRR program in a community.

**Local Context.**

**Conducting a participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis.** In OL 343 you conducted a participatory capacity and vulnerability analysis as part of developing your project. Use the same resources yet focus the assessment on hazards and disasters. Examples could be floods or extreme weather events such as hurricanes. One of the exercises in the CBDRR Field Guide is to draw a participatory map. It is useful to transfer the information from the map into a larger format and place it on a public wall where everyone in the community can see it and better understand how disasters can impact their village.

**Sustainable Management**

**Setting up a CBDRR committee.** In week 8 of OL 342 you set up a community based project management committee. You can use the same technique to set up a Community Based DRR committee. This committee will be able to work with your NGO to create long-term associations with government agencies that can support long-term DRR activities. The committee will be in charge of developing a DRR plan, and for coordinating disaster teams.

**Planning for the Future**

**Developing a DRR plan.** Developing a DRR plan will include each of the activities in the following list—and maintaining them in perpetuity. This will involve a plan for consciousness-raising among community members about DRR challenges, connecting with an early warning system, organizing teams, training teams in evacuation and search and rescue, and prioritizing mitigation strategies. The plan can include an advocacy campaign for obtaining government support.

**Community Engagement**

**Promotion to community.** Frequently community members don't have a clear picture of how and why disasters happen. They also may not know how to react when a disaster is building or is already in progress. Workshops and simple posters or how-to cards need to be developed to help them understand these concepts and to learn that there are things that they can do to reduce the risk caused by disasters, and to mitigate the severity of the disasters.

**Organizing teams.**

Based upon the results of your community’s participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment, you should now have prioritized list of hazards and disasters. As part of the DRR plan the committee will prioritize preparedness activities, risk reduction activities and mitigation activities. Teams should be organized for each of the major priorities. If, for example, the type of disaster your community faces necessitates evacuation, an evacuation team should be established that develops a plan to lead an evacuation at the appropriate time—and then lead an actual evacuation if necessary.

**Early warning systems.** Traditionally, community members have not had warning of when they need to evacuate—and frequently they have left it too late. Your government’s meteorological office may have the capability of, for example, in a potential flood situation, evaluating when water has reached a critical height and can announce that a flood is imminent. Communities should form partnerships with these offices and ensure that they have clear access to early warning information in case of disaster.

**Disaster mitigation.** In the context of flooding, disaster mitigation can mean actions that you perform that reduce risk or increase resilience. So for example, reforesting the deforested hillsides could allow water to percolate into the underground water system rather than run off the denuded hillsides and cause flooding. Planting Vetiver grass along eroding riverbanks can reduce erosion. Relocating houses above floodplain can reduce loss of property and injury.

**Evacuation training.** If people need to evacuate, they need to know when to evacuate, they need to know what to do with their valuable possessions and assets, they need to know where to go where it's safe, they need to know what to take with them, and they need to know what to do when they get to shelter. Capacity building workshops led by the evacuation team can train community members in each of these—and most importantly—can lead them in practice drills.

**Search and rescue training.** Search and rescue team members learn specific techniques that are safe, and are given simple tools such as lifejackets, safe boats, inner tubes, and flashlights which give them the confidence and the capability to look for a missing person or of rescue a trapped elderly or disabled person.

**Evaluating Capacity Building Needs for Community Members**

Evaluate results of participatory mapping of disaster risks and hazards—and select a range of appropriate disaster risk management practices. Develop an overview for committee members of disaster risk management practices including developing management, preparation and recovery for floods. Make an appointment to propose appropriate techniques to the DRR Management Committee for feedback.

**Lesson Planning**

Prioritize which DRR technique should be introduced in the first workshop. Contact DRR expert of feedback and input

Develop a workshop lesson plan. Draw a how-to card. Arrange the date and location for the workshop with your community contact person. Arrange for supplies and tools for the workshop with your community contact person.

**Capacity Building**

**Capacity building for disaster risk reduction and mitigation activities for community members.** There are many activities that can be done to mitigate potential disasters. Some, like mangrove plantings along river banks can reduce erosion during a flood season. The reforestation of a watershed can reduce danger from flash floods. Both are activities that communities can do over the span of time. Capacity building workshops give community members the skill sets that they need to do these activities. Other activities like relocating houses to higher ground may be outside of their purchasing power, but committee members can be trained to develop advocacy campaigns for approaching governments for support in more major investments.

**Lesson Plan for Introducing the Development of a Community Based DRR Plan. A workshop for DRR committee members.**

**6 hours plus lunch (can be completed in two, three-hour workshops)**

**PURPOSE:** What workshop participants will be able to do as a result of the lesson.

**Objective 1:** Participants will understand the importance of having a disaster risk reduction plan.

**Objective 2:** Disasters, risks associated with them, community vulnerability and capacity will be clearly spelled out.

**Objective 3:** The need for mitigation and potential mitigation activities will be clearly spelled out.

**Objective 4:** Important elements for the plan and a framework for developing the plan will be carefully spelled out.

**Objective 5:** DRR teams will be defined and team coordinators elected.

**PREPARATION**

* A Community Based DRR committee has been formed.
* A participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment has recently been completed.

**MATERIALS**

* Artist’s drawings/posters; the scenes and people they contain should appear familiar to workshop participants.
* Large sheets of newsprint and tape. Colored markers.

**BEGINNING OF LESSON:**

**Activity 1. One Hour. Introduction to the benefits of having a DRR plan**

**Purpose:** Committee members will understand the benefits of having a DRR plan.

**What to do**

1. Introduction to workshop: Tell the participants what they’ll be able to do as a result of the lesson.
2. Participants will learn that community members are frequently unaware of how and why disasters originate.
3. They will learn that community members aren't always aware of what to do before, during, and after a disaster.
4. They will learn that there are techniques for reducing the risk caused by disasters.
5. They will learn that a plan can be developed to help community members reduce each area of risk.
6. DRR teams need to be developed and will be assigned to key individuals (coordinators) for formation.
7. Let them know that a DRR professional will accompany them on the journey of developing the plan
8. Assign one committee member to be responsible for the overall production of the plan.
9. Discuss how the plan may take several months to develop.

**Workshop Participants:**

Have participants talk about what they do and don’t understand, what they do and don’t like.

**Activity 2. One hour. Prioritizing the results of the participatory capacity and vulnerability assessment**

**Purpose:** To review, prioritize, and clearly state the results of the recently completed PCVA.

**What to do**

1. Clearly note what disasters the community suffers from or may potentially suffer from.
2. Clearly note where (location) the community is most vulnerable and which community members are most vulnerable.
3. Clearly note what livelihood assets and resources are most vulnerable.
4. Note what the community's knowledge of disasters and the risks are.
5. Make a prioritized list of the disasters, vulnerable locations in the community, and livelihood assets and lives most at risk.

**Workshop Participants:**

Have participants talk about what they do and don’t understand, what they do and don’t like.

**BREAK: 15 MINUTES**

**Activity 3. 30 minutes. Introduction to consciousness-raising within the community**

**Purpose:** For committee members to better understand the need for consciousness-raising and some of the challenges.

**What to do**

1. Review what the community members do and don't know about disasters.
2. Discuss how some community members may have strong biases of what to do in a disaster.
3. Discuss how some community members are illiterate and so posters and handouts should not have written words.
4. Describe different ways of getting information out to the community to increase capacity and develop responsibility.
5. Discuss how important schools and school children can be in disseminating this information.
6. Discuss how after initial consciousness-raising, teams will need to provide capacity building to the community.

**LUNCH: 30 minutes.** If the workshop is to be held in two sessions, this is a good breaking point.

**Activity 4. 30 minutes. Introduction to early warning systems**

**Purpose:** For participants to learn what an early warning system is and how important they are.

1. Participants will learn that frequently meteorological offices can provide early warning information to communities.
2. Tell them how early warning systems work.
3. The early warning team will need to learn how to connect to early warning system networks.
4. The early warning team may need to purchase a dedicated telephone and an alarm system.
5. Your NGO will help develop a training program for the early warning team.

**Activity 5. 30 minutes. Introduction to evacuation**

**Purpose:** To learn the steps involved in evacuating vulnerable community members.

**What to do**

1. Describe how the evacuation team will need to determine a safe place to evacuate to.
2. Describe how the shelter may need to have basic provisions.
3. Describe how the evacuation team needs to interact with the early warning team.
4. Describe what community members should do with valuable assets, what they should take with them, and what they should leave behind during an evacuation.
5. Describe how the evacuation team needs initial and ongoing training.
6. They may need to buy basic equipment like megaphones and flashlights.
7. Describe how the evacuation team needs to develop an evacuation plan—and practice and rehearse.
8. Describe how community members need to practice and rehearse the evacuation procedures with the team.
9. Your NGO will help develop a training program for the early warning team.

**Activity 6. 30 minutes. Introduction to search and rescue**

**Purpose:** To have a simple introduction to search and rescue during disasters.

**What to do**

1. Describe the basics of a search and rescue operation during a disaster.
2. Describe how the search and rescue team needs to interact with the early warning team and the evacuation team.
3. Describe how a search and rescue team needs initial and ongoing training.
4. They may need to buy basic equipment like life jackets, inner tubes, stretchers, a boat, and flashlights.
5. Describe how the search and rescue team needs to develop a search and rescue plan—and practice and rehearse.
6. The search and rescue team will need to hold consciousness raising workshops with community members.
7. Your NGO will help develop a training program for the search and rescue team.

**Workshop Participants:**

Have participants talk about what they do and don’t understand, what they do and don’t like.

**BREAK: 15 MINUTES**

**Activity 7. 30 minutes. Introduction to disaster mitigation activities**

**Purpose:** To learn about basic mitigation activities and levels of investment of labor and money.

**What to do**

1. Discuss with the members simple mitigation activities that can be done to reduce risk for their specific type of disaster.
2. Discuss with the members that the mitigation team will need to develop a plan for activities and for funding.
3. Discuss with the members that community members will need to be trained in implementation of the activities.
4. Your NGO will help in developing a mitigation plan and training program.

**Activity 8. One hour. Organizing teams**

**Purpose:** To initiate teams for reducing disaster risk in the community.

**What to do**

1. Review the prioritized list of the disasters, vulnerable locations in the community, and livelihood assets and lives at risk.
2. Make a list of teams that need to be developed to reduce risk within this prioritized list.
3. Teams may include:
   1. a training team for consciousness raising and capacity building within the community
   2. an early warning team
   3. an evacuation team
   4. a search and rescue team
   5. a mitigation team
4. Discuss who would be the best people in the committee to coordinate the formation of each team.
5. Elect individual team coordinators.
6. Discuss with the coordinators who would be the most qualified community members to lead the individual teams.

**Activity 9. 30 minutes. Conclusion**

**Purpose:** To review the elements of developing a DRR plan.

**What to do**

1. Reinforce the benefits of developing a DRR plan. Review the basic components of the plan.
2. Review who is in charge of which components (the writing of the plan and the formation of the teams).
3. Set a goal for a timeframe of completing the plan. Set a goal for a timeframe of establishing and training the teams.
4. Your NGO will help in developing the plan.
5. Ask the committee members for initial feedback on which of these activities presented in the workshop are the most interesting/appropriate for their needs. This is not a binding list – but will help start them thinking about what may need to be included in a plan.
6. Ask the committee members which one of their selected activities would they feel would be the best for the first community member training workshop.
7. Have participants talk about what they do and don’t understand, what they do and don’t like.

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