



Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Reduction

"If human development is the 'what' of UNDP's mandate, then capacity development is essentially the 'how.'"

— UNDP Capacity Development Group

UNDP understands capacity development as a locally-driven, society-wide transformation, and recognizes that capable individuals, organizations and societies play an indispensable role in the successful reduction and management of disaster risks.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The UN General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Five-Year Review of the Millennium Declaration took place in September 2005. The meeting identified that public sector capacity is lagging behind all other Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators, underscoring the fact that capacity development is one of the key challenges facing low-income countries and their external partners.



Women of Gojal, Pakistan, are trained in search and rescue (© UNDP Pakistan).

A capable and accountable state, supported by an effective civil society and engaged private sector, is indispensable for the sustainable reduction of disaster risk. Without capable and viable national institutions, there is little that external resources can do to reduce

risks and promote sustainable recovery. Also in 2005, 168 countries drafted and approved countries drafted and approved the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) at the World Conference for Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Japan. The HFA provides guidance for achieving a set of outcomes and results towards reducing disaster risk over ten years (2005-2015), and underscores the relationship between reducing disaster risk and achieving the MDGs. The HFA aims to mobilize stakeholders at all levels to pay increasing attention to DRR as part of their wider development agendas, and, crucially, recognizes the cross-cutting and central role of capacity development in that task. Indeed, none of the HFA five priorities for action can be achieved unless capacity development measures are made an integral part of the action agenda.

UNDP APPROACH

Over the years, UNDP has invested heavily in training and skills-building of **individual capacity** in DRR and recovery. However, training is only one methodology for capacity development and it cannot be conducted as an isolated intervention. UNDP also recognizes that sustainable capacity development also requires building organizational capacities, for example a national disaster management authority or a crisis management center. **Organizational level capacities** help develop and apply internal policies, arrangements, procedures and frameworks, which is necessary to deliver the organization's mandate.

UNDP SUPPORT SERVICES

UNDP plays an important role within the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) system and works towards implementing the five priority areas of the HFA.

THE BASICS

UNDP defines capacity development as “the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time.” Simply put, if capacity is the means to plan and achieve, then capacity development describes the way to those means.

Capacity development commonly refers to a process that is driven from the inside and starts from existing capacity assets. Capacity building, however, refers to a process that supports only the initial stages of building or creating capacities, often by outsiders, and is based on an assumption that there are no existing capacities from which to start. It is therefore less comprehensive than capacity development.

For UNDP, developing sustainable DRR capacities at national and local level is based on the following assumptions:

- Locally generated, owned and sustained capacity is essential to the success of any DRR enterprise.
- The development of DRR capacity is the concern of an entire society, rather than of any single agency, professional discipline, or stakeholder group.
- The development of technical capacities associated with professional disciplines or functions—such as environmental management or land-use management—needs to be combined with other types of capacity development that include the promotion of leadership and other managerial capacities and performance-enhancing measures.
- An enabling environment—i.e. strong political ownership and commitment at the highest levels of authority, extensive participation, transparency and clear public accountability—is essential for translating capacity into performance.

HFA Priority 1: *Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.*

Institutional arrangements refer to the policies, systems and processes that countries use to organize and manage their national development policies and objectives, including reducing disaster risk. UNDP support services for this HFA priority area may include: a) the facilitation of reform strategies, policy dialogue forums and consultation processes with stakeholders; b) the creation of offices for DRR; c) the development or revision of legislation and DRR strategies; d) support for decentralization initiatives; e) capacity assessment of legal and institutional systems coupled with proposals for an effective disaster management system or national capacity development strategy; and f) the introduction of organizational effectiveness measures.

UNDP increasingly uses partnership approaches, such as twinning arrangements between institutes in the global South, and between Southern and Northern

institutes, to support institutional and organizational development objectives. In addition, UNDP recognizes that motivation is important to sustain institutional reforms, as is a generally supportive country environment offering public safety, basic services and the rule of law. Addressing financial integrity is a strong motivator for institutional reform, while salary reform will help to attract and retain good employees.

HFA Priority 2: *Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.*

The assessment and monitoring of disaster risks is the basis for effective, targeted and sustainable prevention and mitigation of risk. Examples of UNDP support to capacity development in this area include: a) facilitating orientation workshops on methodologies for systematic disaster loss inventories for operators, policy staff and managers; b) organizing training for national counterparts in hazard/risk modeling; c) supporting the development of early warning protocols to integrate early warning systems into decision-making processes

management systems; and d) providing hardware, software and technical equipment for DRR units at the central and local government level.



In training courses, it is important to ensure that there are adequate resources for individuals and groups to apply what they have learned in the context of their own job or organization (© UNDP).

HFA Priority 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.

Public awareness and knowledge transfer are central to UNDP's DRR work. With its national and local partners, UNDP supports:

- the development of awareness and communication strategies, involving media, and targeting communities and the private sector
- the organization of seminars with parliamentarians, media and civil society about the allocation process of funds for DRR, and methods for making local disaster management agencies fully operational
- the establishment of mechanisms to integrate training sessions on DRR as part of official training programmes for senior and mid-level government officials
- the integration of DRR knowledge within existing primary and secondary educational programmes
- the development of DRR courses at colleges and universities

UNDP also aims to stimulate interaction between organizations through networks, communities of practice, multi-agency information and learning platforms that bring together civil society organizations, donors and government agencies.

HFA Priority 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors

Underlying risk factors in all relevant sectors and at all levels must always be considered when building resilient communities in disaster-prone countries. Risk

reduction standards and measures should be an integral part of the planning and delivery of core development services and processes. UNDP aims to develop capacities for mainstreaming of DRR into ongoing development processes and frameworks. Examples include:

- Sensitization and advocacy-related activities, such as: a) facilitating working groups of development and disaster risk management (DRM) experts to prepare national disaster risk reports aimed at strategic stakeholders in the development community; and b) organizing sectoral workshops and consultations to identify specific opportunities for incorporating DRM concerns in development planning, and vice versa.
- Decentralized infrastructure-building activities, such as: a) conducting training with emergency management committees at district and village levels in accurate warning, shelter management, damage assessments for early recovery and response, and coordination of relief materials during times of crisis; b) developing community-based contingency planning with mechanisms to ensure adequate representation of women at the community level; and c) supporting the establishment of local emergency management and information centres to support effective communication and coordination.
- Activities aimed at developing and strengthening national DRM strategies, frameworks and structures, such as: a) developing policies and protocols supporting the implementation of the DRR plan; b) identifying catalytic areas where DRR can be integrated and add value to other, ongoing or planned UN/UNDP development planning tools (like CCA and UNDAF) and UNDP support interventions; c) integrating DRR into national/local development plans; and d) developing guidelines for various sectoral interventions through consultative and participatory processes.

HFA Priority 5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

UNDP supports at-risk countries in strengthening disaster preparedness planning capacities. Examples include training on post-disaster needs assessments and their analysis, and supporting the development of interagency contingency plans and synchronization with national development efforts.

INTER-AGENCY EFFORTS

In addition, UNDP supports the global Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), with the purpose of advancing the generation of knowledge and related experiences pertinent to developing sustainable capacity for DRR, and aligned with the HFA priorities. CADRI was created in January 2007 as an inter-agency programme of UNDP/BCPR, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the ISDR secretariat. It supports the three organizations to

respond to the UN general commitment to 'Deliver as One'. CADRI services include advising national authorities and organizations on capacity assessments and strategy formulation; training and facilitation services; learning packages, capacity development methodologies and information resources; and knowledge exchange and networking to foster partnerships and to generate and disseminate good practices.

UNDP IN ACTION

Armenia

Armenia's Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) and UNDP Armenia engaged UNDP experts from the Capacity Development Group (CDG) and BCPR to work with MoES to design and facilitate a self-assessment of national DRR capacity in Armenia, based on the HFA priorities 1-5. The process is aimed at designing actionable indicators to measure the current baseline, identify the desired level of capacity for the DRR system and suggest future responses.

The DRR capacity assessment process in Armenia helped key government stakeholders to participate actively in the development of a shared vision for an effective DRR system. The general public was also kept informed of the DRR system exercise by the media, which covered milestone events of the process as part of ongoing public awareness. Based on the results of the assessment process, an action plan for capacity development has been recommended to strengthen the DRR system. The strategic actions include: a) the creation of a national platform; b) devising a national strategy for DRR, which includes a shift towards more effective engagement of communities and schools; c) a new system-wide monitoring and evaluation process to support coordination and information management, contributing to an improvement in compliance; and d) a national disaster observatory to unify databases for DRR institutions. The findings and recommendations serve as the basis for developing a capacity development response – a process led by national partners, with UNDP support.

The DRR capacity assessment process in Armenia has been an innovative exercise. The assessment process established a measurable baseline of DRR capacity, directly engaged six key DRR organizations, and has been verified by a wide range of DRR stakeholders, at the national and local levels. Furthermore, the methodology and tools developed for the DRR system in Armenia are a valuable resource that can be adapted and replicated in other countries and situations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.undp.org/capacity
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