

Disaster Risk Reduction Integration into Development

Context

That disasters and development are closely linked, and that disasters can damage or destroy developmental efforts, are widely accepted by national and international stakeholders in Tajikistan and particularly UNDP. It generally understood that the sustainable development can reduce the risk of disaster. At the same time, if disaster risk reduction (DRR) is not addressed as an integral part of development, then the result can be an increase in disasters and negative impacts on livelihoods, leading development efforts to accomplish the complete opposite of what was intended.

UNDP, like many organizations in Tajikistan, espouses the view that disaster risk management should be an integral part of the development process. In the past, UNDP focused on disaster risk management projects that addressed disaster warning, planning and response capacity building. UNDP is currently increasing attention to the integration of disaster risk reduction into the development process by making DRR an active component within its portfolio of development programs and projects.

UNDP Tajikistan's Experiences

Disaster risk reduction is a crosscutting policy for UNDP. To date, UNDP Tajikistan has incorporated DRR into the country strategy documents (e.g., United Nations Development Assistance Framework and UNDP's Tajikistan County Program). The next step is to incorporate DRR actions into UNDP Tajikistan's portfolio of development activities. To this end, since 2010, UNDP's Disaster Risk Management Programme (DRMP) has been implementing projects supported by UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) to integrate disaster risk reduction into development activities managed directly by UNDP and by other parties. This project incorporates DRR addressing relevant hazards and vulnerabilities (risks) to achieve sustainable results and where possible reduce disaster risks through integration of disaster risk reduction and risk assessment into project activities and outcomes.

UNDP DRMP built capacities of relevant UNDP personnel on methods and approaches for DRR integration into projects and programmes. Screening all ongoing UNDP projects to develop DRR integration action plans specific to each project. Results included a need to conduct hazard assessments for micro-hydroelectric plants, linking management systems to share information about potential disasters and mitigating natural hazard risks associated with microcredit loans.

In 2012, UNDP initiated a DRR certification process. DRR certification can assist projects to:

- Define hazards that threaten implementation and outcomes, and
- Identify and implement specific actions to address these threats.

Through certification UNDP projects are better able to assure developmental outcomes will not be damaged or eliminated by disasters in the near or long term.

Programs can achieve a partial or full DRR certification depending on the level of assessment conducted and the integration of DRR actions into development activities. While partial DRR certification is not the preferred result, it recognizes progress towards full DRR certification as the certification process itself can require a significant change in how development projects are designed and implemented.

The DRR Certification process is ongoing and has focused on DRMP's own portfolio, and the Energy and Environment programme, both in the process of partial certification. Lessons from the DRMP and Energy and Environment certification efforts to be used to adapt the process for other programmes in the UNDP portfolio. The DRR Certification process is being shared with other developmental programs in Tajikistan with the endpoint of promoting the process across the developmental sector in the country.

Project Level Experience

UNDP has been implementing a number of disaster response, mitigation, risk reduction and recovery projects since DRMP establishment 2003. With the establishment of the Tajikistan National Disaster Risk Management Strategy, based on Hyogo Framework for Action, by the Government in 2010, UNDP Tajikistan shifted focus on disaster risk management programming to increase the integration of DRR into DRMPs' project portfolio.

Even before enactment of the National Strategy, DRMP and UNDP's Communities Programme initiated a project to incorporate disaster risk reduction sections into District Development Plans (DDP) developed and implemented by District authorities. In collaboration with Government authorities and other stakeholders, a DRR methodology was approved as part of the standard development planning process.

Disaster planning chapters cover local hazards and risks and address risk reduction, response and preparedness activities. Since 2009, twenty District Development Plans have been developed which included chapters on DRR. Hazard maps and "Safety Passports", produced by Committee for Emergency



Mastcho Central District Hospital Reconstruction works, 2012

Situations and Civil Defense (CoES), provide information related to risks and hazards in each districts and are used in the plan development process.

UNDP also indentified a DRR opportunity through community-level disaster risk reduction activities, focusing on the root causes of disasters and aimed at social vulnerability reduction. Through UNDP's network of province-level Area Offices, the Energy and Environment Programme launched the creation of local-level DRR Funds, utilising income from UNDP-supported micro-loan programs. Under this approach, funded by UNDP's BCPR, three micro-loan organizations were capitalized with two objectives, to:

- Increase lending to boost local economic grown and reduce livelihoods vulnerability (with 40% of the recipients women) and
- Generate funds from the loan proceeds which could be used at the sub-district level for risk reduction (70% of income) and response (30% if income).

The resulting funds are managed by local committees with involvement of CoES, UNDP and other stakeholders. Under agreement with the micro-loan organizations, at least 25,000 USD expected to be available annually to each committee for DRR and response activities over a five-year period.

Coming at the DRR issue from another perspective, UNDP collaborated with WHO in Tajikistan to pilot a project to reduce seismic and other hazards in District-level health facilities. WHO in Tajikistan had conducted an extensive Hospital Safety Index (HSI) assessment covering 30 District hospitals. The HSI results identified a number of critical structural, non-structural and operational issues that needed direct attention. UNDP and WHO collaborated on selecting health facilities that could benefit from a combined approach, where UNDP addressed critical structural issues and WHO addressed critical non-structural and operational issues. This effort brought together UNDP's capacities in infrastructure development and WHO's abilities in capacity development.

As part of the project, UNDP commissioned the Tajik Institute for Geology, Earthquake Engineering and Seismology to conduct details physical assessments for three hospitals and develop recommendations and project designs for risk reduction activities. These efforts drew on experience gained within a previous DIPECHO-funded intervention on seismic retrofitting of a school in Dushanbe.

UNDP and WHO are, based on the pilot project, working on a join project to replicate the collaboration in other health care facilities in Tajikistan. Integral to this effort will be lobbying with the Government and other donors on the need to include disaster risk reduction in retrofitting as well as in the construction of new health and education facilities.

A more local, community-focused, approach to DRR was piloted through grants to NGOs in 2012, focusing on four districts, Farkhor, Muminabad, Asht and Konibodom. The projects were intended to shift from a "band-aid" approach to DRR (focusing DRR activities where disasters had already occurred) to anticipating where disasters may occur and using a set of structural and non-structural measures to reduce disaster risk. The means applied under the three grants, to ACTED, Caritas and ACT Central Asia/YGPE¹, involved wide range of DRR activities, including awareness raising, establishment of trust funds, introduction of energy efficiency stoves and windows, tree planting, improved pasture management and risk reduction works. UNDP also developed a number of guidance notes, and mythologies, on shifting from a band-aid to proactive approach and conducted several briefings and discussions on the shift in DRR integration for national and international actors.

This effort demonstrated that DRR can be applied as a proactive process, addressing both structural and non-structural aspects of risks (and particularly reducing socio-economic vulnerability). However, there remains a strong tendency to use funding to address the impacts of previous disasters (in an effort to reduce the chance of recurrence) as well as a weakness in local capacities at recurrent maintenance. This later issue can likely be addressed through the micro-loan DRR fund mechanism discussed above.

Way Forward

UNDP Tajikistan will continue to implement the integration of DRR into its development portfolio to improve the sustainability of development results, increase the resiliency of project beneficiaries, and, through the DRR certification process, make risk reduction an integral element of UNDP's assistance to the people of Tajikistan. UNDP will ensure the country's strategic development documents, such as Mid-term Development Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy and others, incorporate disaster risk reduction. UNDP is also beginning implementation of a number of community-level DRR-focused projects incorporating climate change considerations, including energy efficiency, heat preservation, infrastructural projects and awareness raising events.

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Construction of greenhouses, Konibodom, 2012

¹ YGPE is a Tajik NGO.