Evaluation: Community-based disaster risk management
(CBDRM) project in Quang Binh province, Vietnam

Locally grown
preparedness

Abbreviations

BCC	Behaviour change communication
CBDRA	Community-based Disaster Risk Assessment
CBDRM	Community-based Disaster Risk Management
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CDRM	Committee for Disaster Risk Management
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DNDPC	Department of Natural Disaster Prevention and Control
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ERT	Emergency Response Team
EUR	Euro
FA	First Aid
FbF	Forecast-based financing
GIS	Geographic information system
GRC	German Red Cross
GWHF	Golden West Humanitarian Fund
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KAP	Knowledge, attitude and practice
MSC	Most Significant Change
PC	People's Committee
PDRT	Provincial Disaster Response Team
SEDP	Social and Economic Development Plan
TSG	Technical Support Group
USD	United States Dollar
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
VND	Vietnamese Dong
VNRC	Vietnam Red Cross
WB	World Bank

Glossary of key terms

Resilience: The ability to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising long-term prospects.

Vulnerability: The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, environmental and political factors or processes that increase risk and susceptibility of people to the impact of hazards.

Weather: The set of meteorological conditions - wind, rain, snow, sunshine, temperature - at a particular time and place.

Climate: is weather averaged over a long period of time, taking account of the average conditions as well as the variability of these conditions. Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get.

Climate change: A significant change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, wind) lasting for an extended period (decades or longer). Climate change can result from both natural and human activities. Today we tend to use the term for changes in the climate induced by human activity that alters the gaseous composition of the atmosphere due to the release of greenhouse gases (in particular CO_2).

Disaster: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community through widespread losses and disruption that exceeds the capacity to cope using its own resources.

Hazard: Threatening event, or probability of occurrence of a potentially damaging phenomenon within a given period and area.

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Executive summary
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Launched in April 2015, the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) project was designed to reduce the impact of typhoons, floods and other hazards by increasing disaster preparedness amongst four target communities in Vietnam's central province of Quang Binh.

Upon project conclusion three years later, the evaluation shows that both the project design and its implementation approach proved highly effective - and that several lessons can be learnt for future programming in similar contexts.

Locally grown preparedness - the title of this report captures both the result and an overarching success factor of the CBDRM project: Whereas many similar interventions tend to be planned in a top-down fashion, the CBDRM project team carefully ensured that activities were locally driven. This included sound initial assessments ahead of proposal development, capacity assessments of the VNRC Quang Binh chapter and key government authorities, well-targeted training and capacity-strengthening, and alignment with major government priorities, plans and structures.

The evaluation was carried out in March 2018 and based on visits to all four communities (focus group discussions, trend analysis, collection of Most Significant Change stories, site visits) as well as to four of the six project-supported schools (interviews with teachers and students), key informant interviews with numerous project partners, and a staff reflection workshop with the Quang Binh chapter of Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC). While qualitative in nature, the evaluation also incorporated key results from two surveys (amongst school students and households) that had been conducted by another consultant in January 2018.

The findings of the evaluation are summarised below along the lines of the main evaluation criteria.

Relevance
The extent to which the various activities were based on actual needs is seen as one of the project's strongest points: following initial assessments during the inception stage, the project retained flexibility to address needs as they emerged in more comprehensive analyses.

At the institutional level, it was only after capacity assessments that concrete capacity-building plans were devised and implemented. Similarly, in communities, the community-based disaster risk assessments (CBDRA) was the participatory precursor to the development of local action plans and needs-based mitigation measures. Sound mapping through GIS furthermore enabled contingency and DRR action plans.

In effect, the project was co-planned by communities and well-aligned with government priorities. The palpable sense of ownership amongst the various parties engaged did play a strong role - as one interviewee put it, many unified around one goal. Efforts were furthermore coordinated with other interventions, thereby mutually reinforcing rather than duplicating activities.

Effectiveness
With its participatory and multi-dimensional approach (targeting VNRC, the government, communities and schools), the project yielded significant gains in terms of preparedness knowledge and practice. All indicator targets were achieved (or are likely of having been achieved).

In terms of **outputs**, knowledge gains amongst the people in the four target communities stand out as the primary parameter: on all assessed aspects (DRR and climate change), knowledge increased drastically between the baseline in 2015 and the endline in 2018. Critically, knowledge of disaster preparedness measures almost grew two-fold (from index scores of 0.340 to 0.595).

Qualitative evidence furthermore found strong knowledge gains amongst students, as well as greater capacity amongst local disaster management teams. Structural investments (improved early warning systems with greater lead times, mitigation measures) facilitated the adoption of practices.

Moving to the **outcome**-level - the evaluation indeed demonstrates a high rate at which greater knowledge transcended into practice: on (weighted) average, 77.9% applied the key DP measures in practice (during the recent disasters of 2016 and 2017).

Impact

While the impact of this widespread up-take could not be quantified, there is there convincing evidence that the better preparedness led to comparatively lower hazard-induced damages and losses. Both community members as well as TSG and ERT members said that losses would have been greater in the 2017 typhoon and 2016 if appropriate action had not been taken.

Other impacts include gains in terms of better connectedness to and support from government authorities (identified mainly by women in the two rural communities) as well as advances in social cohesion and mutual support (rural areas).

Sustainability

Being needs-based, locally planned, and aligned with government priorities (integration of DRM plans into the overarching socio-economic development plans is a significant achievement), the evaluation rates the willingness and capacity of local actors as well as the enabling environment high. Further consolidation and follow-up is however needed to enhance longer-term sustainability (esp. refresher trainings in First Aid).

Learning and recommendations

The evaluation identifies five **success factors**: a) strong leadership of the VNRC Quang Binh chapter, b) significant uptake and drive by the key government partners, c) the high quality of initial assessments and flexibility to address emerging concerns, d) the combination of needs-based training with consolidation through practice, and e) the complementarity of messaging through different channels. While not all of these can be replicated elsewhere (a/b), the overall lesson may be that local co-planning should be tried out, and that teams should refrain from determining too much too soon.

In terms of learning, the report points to gaps in First Aid training and suggests a re-think to better target lessons to primary school students (what skills will and should they actually apply in practice?). Future DRR projects should furthermore consider the necessary data collection needs to enable a more robust assessment and quantification of impact (in terms of avoided losses): Being able to demonstrate savings and benefit-cost ratios tends to be a good argument for wider DRR investments after all.

Floods and typhoons will continue to pose stressors to Vietnam's central province of Quang Binh - particularly in the context of increased variability and greater incidence of extreme weather events that are amongst the manifestations of climate change. With widespread adoption of preparedness measures in the four target areas of the CBDRM project, these will pose less but still significant burdens onto local households.

Maintaining, consolidating and building on the project's achievements is therefore important. Although the evaluation sees a generally high level of sustainability of project outcomes, some follow-on work is needed. This includes continued collaboration between chapter and government authorities (lateral) as well as chapter and target communities (vertical), and follow-up to elaborate the business plan around swimming lessons in Bao Ninh's newly established swimming pool.

The integration of local DRM plans in respective SEDPs forms a good basis for sustaining skills, structures and equipment - for instance the eventual repairs or replacements of loudspeakers that are part of the early warning systems.

Beyond the immediate realm of the CBDRM project, there is also strong potential to grow further - both in terms of the chapter's capacity, and in terms of applying and replicating the lessons of the project elsewhere. Given the project nature - small in scale but rich in innovation and insights - this may represent a further long-term effect of the work by VNRC, German Red Cross (GRC), and the Walter and Marga Boll Foundation.