

# PDR-SEA

NEWS

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## Humanitarian Response to Fire: Peat Project -Indonesia

*page 2*



## Regional Response to Environmental Disasters -ASEAN Initiative

*page 3*



## Safer Shelters against Typhoons -Vietnam

*page 4*

### **also inside**

*project updates*

*Networking in Lao PDR..... 5*

*DRC Course in Vietnam..... 5*

*Upcoming event..... 5*

*book review..... 6*

## Humanitarian Response to Fire: Peat-Project, CARE International, Indonesia



Indonesia hosts the third largest tropical rain forest in the world. Forest resources are the backbone of the Indonesian economy. However, the forests face a constant threat of destruction from fires. Since 1982, there have been 6 large-scale forest fire outbreaks in Indonesia. The major one being, 1997-1998 fire, which destroyed more than 11 million ha of forest. Furthermore, these large fires have increased the vulnerability to new ones. Since 1997, small fires are occurring almost every year, particularly in Central Kalimantan. This is due to the fact that large parts of the peat land are degraded, resulting from failed plans of converting them to paddy fields. Human mal-practices, such as slash and burn, large-scale land conversion etc., is one of the biggest contributors to this increase in fire disasters.

According to the State Ministry of Environment, the vulnerability to large-scale forest fire outbreaks have increased due to:

- Lack of knowledge on forest fire prevention and mitigation techniques, which is exaggerated by the lack of operational procedures and appropriate institutional arrangements to coordinate mitigation efforts at national, regional and international levels,
- Lack of capacity in prevention and mitigation, in terms of human resource, equipments and facilities at all the levels, and
- Lack of financial commitment to fund prevention and mitigation activities at all levels.

In response to this need, **CARE International**, developed a household livelihood security (HLS) based approach to disaster management, in East Kalimantan. The project aimed to facilitate the establishment of integrated and functional structures for disaster preparedness and the adoption of local level disaster mitigation measures, such as applying environmentally sustainable land use management techniques.

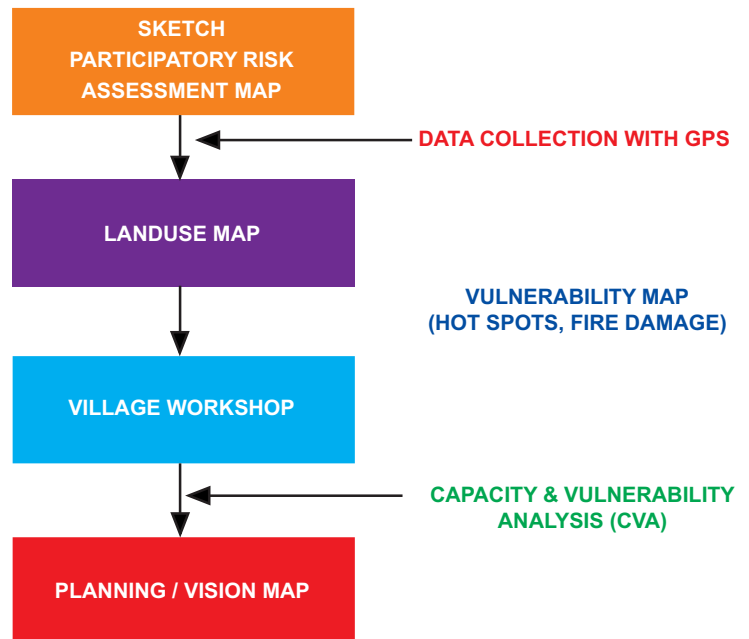
In 2002, CARE decided to expand the successful approaches to Central Kalimantan, to include and focus on peat land, because it was more vulnerable to fires. With DIPECHO funding, the one year PEAT-Project started in June 2003. The

PEAT project incorporated a wider humanitarian focus, and not just fires alone. It targets 3,200 vulnerable families that rely on these peatlands for their livelihood.

In all target villages, the PEAT project develops local capacity to effectively address forest fires. This is achieved by:

**Establishing fire brigades:** CARE organizes fire suppression trainings. It trains existing community based organizations, mostly farm groups in fire management. The curriculum is developed together with GTZ-IFFM (Integrated Forest Fire Management) project. So far 78 brigades, in 41 villages have been established. The brigades set up Standard Operation Procedures based on local indicators and Early Warning System Information.

**Developing coping strategies to overcome fires through vision mapping:** Vision mapping combines PRA with GIS and aims to help communities develop a vision on how they want to address their increased vulnerability to fires. Based on a vision of 3-5 years of their land use, communities develop plans to strengthen coping mechanism. The flow chart below provides an overview of the vision mapping process. The process is currently on-going in all 48 villages.





## Towards Establishing a Regional Emergency Response and Strategic Planning Institute for Environmental Disasters: an ASEAN Initiative

Environmental Disasters have become a reality in the Southeast Asian region. With countries in this region emerging as growing economies, pressure and demand on the natural resources are constantly increasing. Several countries in this region share the same landmass, river systems, coastlines and air spaces and therefore are vulnerable to the impacts of each others' activities. The most recent, significant and lasting environmental disaster, the July-October 1997 forest fires of Indonesia, which had extensive transboundary consequences, brought to the fore the necessity of inter-governmental and regional cooperation in managing, protecting and mitigating the impacts of environmental disasters. This realization triggered regional dialogue on how to better manage, protect and take mitigative actions against such disasters.

The ASEAN plays an important role in promoting regional cooperation in disaster management. There are several examples of ASEAN initiatives on regional cooperation on disaster reduction, that may be cited, such as the Haze Technical Task Force, ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN), ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Haze, ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management. The most recent success was, the signing of the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, on November 25, 2003. This agreement is designed to prevent haze from land and forest fires through monitoring, assessment and prevention, technical cooperation and scientific research, mechanisms for coordination, lines of communication, information exchange, simplified customs and immigration procedures for emergency response and disaster relief, and the establishment of an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for activities under the agreement. For more information on the agreement visit: [www.aseansec.org/15129.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/15129.htm)

Last year, ADPC was commissioned by the ASEAN Secretariat to conduct a *feasibility study for the establishment of an ASEAN Emergency Response and Strategic Planning Institute for Environmental Disasters*. The study is being carried out by a team of consultants from ADPC, with a representative from the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, ADRC. The first time this idea was conceived was during the Eighth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment held in October 2000. ASOEN was requested to explore this initiative in consultation with existing ASEAN mechanisms and was tabled during several subsequent meetings of ASEAN. In November 2001 at the 8th Joint SRFA Meeting, ASEAN presented the draft of terms of reference (TOR), and it was recommended that the study should be conducted in all ASEAN Member Countries, AMC. Presently, the study is underway and several consultations have taken place in all AMCs.

For more information on the study contact Mr Aloysius Rego, Team Leader, Disaster Management Systems at [ajrego@adpc.net](mailto:ajrego@adpc.net) or Ms Lolita Bildan, Project Manager, Climate Risk Management Program at [lolita@adpc.net](mailto:lolita@adpc.net)

*continued from page 2*

**Developing Disaster Management curriculum in Bahasa Indonesia:** CARE has developed an Indonesian language disaster management curriculum that provides a general introduction to disaster management. This provides participants a humanitarian perspective to disaster management. This is important because most people active in fire management have, a natural resource background.

**Enhancing Preparedness:** CARE is working to enhance preparedness by linking communities with existing early warning systems. One of the main weaknesses at present is that communities lack access to early warning systems. This is partly due to the limited coverage of the meteorological network, but mainly because communities cannot access the information. CARE is in the process of developing community radio systems, and training them to collect meteorological information based on which, they can calculate the fire hazard rating. The community radio will broadcast information provided by the early warning systems to communities. The communities will do their own observations and accordingly take decisions and preventive measures in line with previously developed SOP.

For more information on the project write to Bud Crandall, Country Director at [budc@cbn.net.id](mailto:budc@cbn.net.id) or Johan Kieft, Program Leader [johanvoeby@cbn.net.id](mailto:johanvoeby@cbn.net.id)

echo from the field...

## Development Workshop-France Promotes Preventive Action to Reduce Vulnerability to Shelter- Vietnam



In Vietnam, vulnerability of housing and infrastructure to natural hazards such as storms, is extremely high. Due to frequent impacts of natural disasters, most households are in a state of recovery from disasters. The cost of building material continue to escalate and the poor sectors find it difficult to invest in good building materials to disaster resistant housing. Schools and commercial buildings that cater to these sectors also suffer from disaster impact for similar reasons.

*"We are happy with our newly rebuilt house. All we look forward to is paying the loan money back and being able to send our children to school", says Ms Thuy, a beneficiary from the Quang Tho Commune.*

Prevention Committees have been established by DW and plays a central role in coordinating commune activities.

**Practical demonstration:** In selected hamlets DW demonstrates with families how preventive action can realistically be applied to existing homes and village buildings, showing achievable, durable and affordable strengthening within the community that respect local habits and resources.

Development Workshop France, DWF addresses this issue through awareness raising, practical demonstration and policy change, through a DIPECHO funded project being implemented in Thua Thien Hué province, Central Vietnam. The project aims to reduce vulnerability and damage to houses and small infrastructure by adopting preventive measures to strengthen shelters, reduce risk of damage to property by securing family investment in shelter and help families invest in reinforcements rather than repairs of structures.

DWF's focus is on reducing vulnerability through exchange and communication with the population to promote preventive measure in strengthening structures through:

**Animation:** A participatory programme in each commune, works to stimulate short and long term awareness of the need to take preventive measures to strengthen building and reconstruction work. Animation uses a large variety of local skills including theatre, poetry, song, school competitions and special action weeks, around a theme or a specific project such as strengthening a market.

**Developing the social and institutional environment:** DW works with beneficiary families and helps them strengthen their homes, and works with community and women's and farmers unions, and local government. Commune Damage

**Access to credit:** DW is developing opportunities for access to small credits for poor families to help them undertake strengthening of their homes.

**Training:** The programme provides technical training to builders, organisation and animation training to village leaders, and institutional support to communes.

**Working with schools:** One focus is on working with rural schools to make children more aware of the need for prevention, to help teachers integrate the theme into the school, and to work on making schools storm resistant.

Development Workshop France works in collaboration with the Thua Thien Hué Consulting & Designing Construction Company, Hué and the People's Committee of Thua Thien Hué province. The project builds on experience gained by DW in flood and storm related work since 1989 on UNDP and Australian Aid supported projects in central and northern Viet Nam. Between 1999 and 2002 the project received funding from Canadian International Development Aid (CIDA) and the Foundation Aide Viet Nam Canada.

*For more information on the project write to Mr Guillman Chantry, Project Coordinator [dwon@dng.vnn.vn](mailto:dwon@dng.vnn.vn) or visit: <http://www.dwf.org/vietnam/preventdamage/home.htm>*



# project updates...

## Networking in Lao PDR

A two day networking meeting was held on January 15-16, 2004 in Lao PDR. This meeting was jointly organized by NDMO, Lao and PDR- SEA 2, under the networking component of the project. The meeting provided a platform for disaster management focal persons from different government agencies, NGOs, police and the media to discuss disaster management issues in the country. The objectives of the meeting were: to update focal persons' knowledge about the disaster situation in Lao PDR, inform the participants about the government's disaster management focus and strategy for the next 15 years, share each agency's activities in disaster management and plan on strengthening coordination among organizations.

During the meeting, the different government and non-government organizations, shared their experiences and work in disaster management in Lao PDR. Mr Vilayphong, acting Deputy Director of NDMO, presented the current disaster situation in the country. In the strategy the government proposed to promote CBDRM and to encourage coordination and networking to fulfill a number of issues, such as: better information exchange, dissemination of warning system, conducting drills and demonstration activities etc. One of the recommendations made after the presentation was, that a booklet be produced for wider dissemination and awareness building in Laos. An overview of the activities of the ASEAN regional program was presented by Mr Phetsavang, Director of NDMO.

A Planning Workshop was held on the second day where participants were divided into 3 groups to discuss and make recommendations on four key areas:

1. To improve collaboration on information exchange between and among agencies in the network – government and NGOs
2. To contribute to capacity building on disaster management of the disaster management network
3. To integrate disaster management into their project activities of the disaster management network
4. To increase the co-operation between the government and the NGOs. The entire report is available online at: [www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/networking.htm](http://www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/networking.htm)

## Second Training Course under the Capacity Building Component

The Disaster Risk Communication at community level was the second training course under the capacity building component of the PDRSEA project. The training was conducted

in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam from February 9-14, 2004. The course aimed at enhancing the capability of participants to design activities and materials for public awareness in the context of disaster risk communication with specific target groups at community level, using multiple modes of communication. It also taught the participants to evaluate the impact of such activities.

It introduced a "systems planning approach" to disaster risk communication. A two-day fieldwork was organized to provide an opportunity for participants to apply the classroom learning in a community setting. The participants conducted PRA in 2 communities in Ho Chi Minh City. They analyzed the results of assessment and designed a disaster risk communication campaign based on their analysis. This campaign was pre-tested in the community groups for feedback. The course emphasized the importance of participatory impact assessment in disaster risk communication. The participants were encouraged to design post course assignments as part of their learning. A 30 minutes video film on the training covering different in-class and field-based activities, was produced during the course of the training.

In all 28 participants, from the 6 DIPECHO target countries attended the course. This included NDMOs, DIPECHO and Non-DIPECHO partners such as Jakarta Municipal government, CECI and World Vision Vietnam, Center for Disaster Preparedness and the Pampang Disaster Response Center. Mr. Chung, Regional Chief of the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) and Mrs. Huong, Vice President of the Vietnam Red Cross Society were the guests of honour at the opening of the course. The complete report is available online at <http://www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/awareness.htm>

## upcoming event

Southeast Asian Disaster  
Management Practitioners' Workshop  
Bangkok, Thailand  
May 10 - 13, 2004  
Contact Ms. Imelda Abarquez at  
[ibarquez@adpc.net](mailto:ibarquez@adpc.net)

*Special thanks to our partners in the Indonesia and Vietnam for their contributions.*

*This Issue  
Editor: Ambika Varma*



Networking Meeting in Lao PDR



Pre-testing the Campaign with community members-DRC in Vietnam



Information Management Training in Indonesia

*Information Management for Development Organizations. Mike Powell, 2003, 2nd Edition, Oxfam Development Guidelines Series, 294 pages, Oxfam Great Britain, £9.80. Order from [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)*

We are said to be living in a world of information overflow. With the advances in communication technology, access to information world-wide has increased. This has changed forever the way we live, think, and work. The issue today is that of information overload. We are unable to cope with the amount of information that comes our way. We are also daily challenged with keeping abreast of the changes around us. Development work encompasses a mine of information, because of the very nature of the work. A complex mix of social, technical, political and economic factors influence and affect it. For this very reason information forms the foundation of development work. Information management then is an activity not done in isolation but as part of every manager's daily tasks. Yet in several development organizations, this need has not received due recognition.

**Information Management for Development Organizations** is a timely and authoritative publication meant for anyone working as a manager in a development organization. Written in a simple and easy to read way, this volume introduces this complex subject and how to manage it. The author goads the reader to be sensitive to the issue of information management. Awareness of it, he says, is the first and effective step towards information management. He further goes to state that managing information is not the prerogative of a single individual or expert. It is and should be the responsibility of everyone in an organization, especially every manager.

The subject unfolds in a logical and systematic manner in 7 chapters. It starts with looking at the elements in this book, Information and Development, against the backdrop of global change. Issues such as power, culture and gender are dealt with in relation to information. It also explores the impact of information on development. The book moves on to look at strategic approaches to information management and seeks to define the terms information, knowledge and their management.

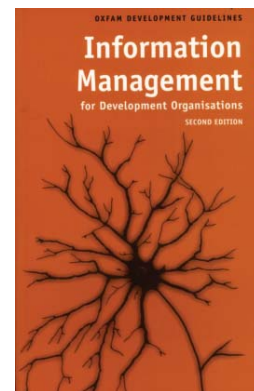
The field of information management has grown from several disciplines, such as business studies, management and organizational studies, librarianship, data processing and computer studies and therefore it has been dealt with, from the respective disciplines' approach. In this book, information management is broadly described in 3 contexts. That which is applied to personal practice of individual managers, to the organizational level and to the tools and skills used to help with the management of information. Each of the three could be dealt with in isolation. However the author explains that, "the full benefit to information management comes when competent managers use appropriate tools in an organization which has given thought to its information architecture and information values." A good information management system not only leads to efficiency and effectiveness but also to creativity and empowerment. Empowerment is what development work seeks to achieve.

The subsequent chapters explore the "how" of information management i.e. dealing with issues of management, usability of information, information systems and structures referred to in the book as "information architecture", and finally Information and Communication Technology, ICT, which has become an integral part of our work. These chapters form the core of the book.

Replete with examples and real case studies, the book is both informative and interesting. The structure of the book itself aids easy understanding. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the chapter, linking it to the preceding chapters. At the end of several of the chapters a checklist of practical questions is provided with an aim to help make organizational choices. The references, annotated bibliography and the maps and diagram section, further helps the readers to pursue this subject beyond the scope of this book.

It is a "must read" for all manager, especially working in the development organizations.

Mike Powell has worked on rural health programs and emergency program management in Latin America and Africa. He now works in the field of information management with local and international development organizations.



# Echoes

a monthly posting of the community of disaster practitioners in southeast asia

Introducing ECHOES...  
a Monthly Web Posting of the Community of  
Disaster Practitioners in Southeast Asia  
<http://www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/mp/echoes.html>