Component 3.
Advocacy for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into Urban Governance

3.1. Introduction

In many Asian countries the subject of Disaster management is handled by a national level institution such as a department or a ministry. It can often be observed that the activities and functional responsibilities of such institutions are rarely decentralized or the authority of such institutions has not been adequately delegated to lower levels of government. This needs to be viewed as a hindrance for achieving disaster resilience at the community and local levels. The positive side, though, is that in a few countries certain elements of risk management is being handled successfully by local government institutions such as emergency health services, fire services, ambulance services, etc. Since now many countries are looking at possibilities for decentralization of functions of the center, there is a window of opportunity to integrate disaster risk reduction in the normal business of the local government sector. As evident from more developed countries that by doing so, the impacts of disasters can be reduced to a greater extent, as well as better community preparedness can be achieved. The areas where integration of mitigation and preparedness could be possible are:

- Local government level disaster management committees to strengthen the participatory governance process
- Urban land-use planning for avoidance or minimizing the exposure to hazard events
- Building by laws to have stronger and hazard-resistant construction of houses, buildings and infrastructure
- Emergency response planning for better preparedness
- Annual budget allocations to have consistency in budgetary provisions for risk management activities, etc.

PROMISE advocates strongly for decentralizing the disaster risk management scope to the local government sector to facilitate building safer communities.

Due to the varying nature of policy and local governance structure of the PROMISE program target countries, the requirements for advocacy for mainstreaming risk management in the local government sector in the respective countries range from creating mechanisms for ensuring active community participation in the decision making process to focused lobbying to the decision makers to introduce appropriate policies to ensure risk management as a routine practice in programs and projects undertaken by local governments.

The program countries with deeply rooted centralized hierarchies might need to have simpler, but concerted advocacy strategies with long term commitments on the part of stakeholders. In such cases the stakeholder agencies should be capable of conducting suitable campaigns or/and generating information and advocacy material needed for campaigns to be used by collaborating institutions. The institutions initiating the campaigns should study all available material more importantly, especially the material generated by state-sponsored organizations, so that such campaigns are complementary in approach and in delivery of information products.

The countries with existing mechanism or provisions for introducing such mechanisms which help mainstreaming need to be made more focused on the actions to address related issues and convert the same into a routine practice of decision making process. For example, as per the Standing Orders for emergency response in Bangladesh there is a window of opportunity for establishing Disaster Management Committees at local level to ensure participatory decision making process. However, it needs to create an essential instrument in local governance to facilitate active community participation in assessment of the risk and decision making in undertaking local risk reduction interventions in order to build disaster-resilient urban communities in Bangladesh. It needs more demonstrations to display how an active local level Disaster Management Committee can facilitate a risk management process in the urban local community level and how community can participate in the process to make them resilient communities as a result.

While selecting the appropriate strategy that should be adopted by partner institutions of PROMISE the in respective countries, they need to identify a practical and easy approach for implementing effective advocacy campaigns for mainstreaming risk management at local level. The first task should be to carry out a situation analysis in the respective country. A compromise for integration of disaster risk management into local level planning and programming therefore would require organized action or series of actions directed at influencing people, policies, regulations, practices and systems for enforcement in order to bring about necessary changes. It is about influencing those in power to act and consider bringing changes to present system of governance.

Therefore, the understanding of the imperatives of Advocacy can be summarized as the means for empowering at-risk urban communities by highlighting the need to assert their views for taking actions at local levels through making it a routine practice and facilitating the claims for their entitlements to have a safer living environment, and where necessary, representing and negotiating on their behalf.

The ADPC publication 2006 "Guidebook on Advocacy Integrating CBDRM into Government Policy and Programming" lists out several steps to be adopted in successful advocacy campaigns:
- Identifying policy issues (in order to set an agenda for advocacy initiatives, it is necessary to understand the issues and problems to be addressed in advocacy initiatives)
- Selecting an advocacy objective (it is to clearly determine what changes will actually solve the problem we are concerned about. An advocacy objective should have the promise of getting people drawn to it so that they are motivated

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to work for it and sustain it. Objectives can be long-term or short-term and should have content objectives such as policy changes or process objectives such as building an organization or developing capacity of existing organizations to represent at-risk communities)

- Researching audience (it is intended for identifying people, institutions, authorities, etc that need to be influenced as well as those who have capacity to influence such as media, key stakeholders - both supporters and opponents)
- Developing and delivering advocacy messages (it is necessary to draft advocacy messages that will move the targeted audience in favor of the cause for DRM. Effective advocacy messages contain two essential components - the merits or prospective benefits that will occur by adopting the cause, and interests and methods of the cause such as expectations from authorities to integrate risk management into local governance system)
- Understanding the decision making process (this step is intended to learn the decision making process of the respective country. Policy changes required for mainstreaming in some countries can be undertaken at local level with council approval, but in some countries it has to be effected with central government interference)
- Stakeholder analysis (stakeholders are all institutions and individuals who have a stake in mainstreaming risk management in local governance process. They play a different role and can consist of the affected mass, supporters or sympathizers and also those who are against the cause)
- Building alliances and partnerships (to have greater impacts it is necessary to develop alliances and partnerships with individuals and institutions most persuasive to the cause. They can either be those affected of the problem, sympathizers for the cause or experts who have wide knowledge and experience in dealing with such issues)
- Making effective presentations (brief presentations that can be made during meetings, or integrated into letters, press releases, written briefings, advertisements etc are needed to highlight the problem and concerns)
- Fund raising (advocacy initiatives need resources, alliances and networks built in support of the cause to pool resources to the best possible extent to avoid repetition and duplication)
- Evaluation for improving the approaches (M&E process should be an integral part of the advocacy campaign and in order to enhance the effectiveness, the approaches and strategies have to be carefully assessed and revisions made to advocacy material and campaign approach)

The major role in mainstreaming risk management in local governance should be played by the decision makers and they will essentially become a primary target for advocacy initiatives. The advocacy initiatives targeting the elected representatives and local government officials can be connected with policy changes or improvements (setting up local government level disaster management committees, adopting new by-laws, revision of building approval procedures, etc), change of regulations (regulations for urban land-use planning, regulations for issue of building permits, etc), change of practices (road pavements, construction procedures for school buildings and other critical facilities, allocation of land for recreation purposes, etc) capacity building and fund allocation (allocation of % from annual budget, government grants, special projects for risk reduction, etc).

There is a need for creating awareness on the necessary changes from the part of beneficiaries or the at-risk communities to establish a conducive environment to accept the changes. They should appreciate the changes and understand the circumstances better so that the advocates can mobilize community support for risk reduction initiatives. If community support can be ensured, they can easily act as a pressure group capable of demanding necessary changes to ensure better results through mainstreaming risk management as a component in local governance.

The advocacy campaign should target individuals who can be champions and change agents. Such champions can be identified among decision makers and also among community members. They can be used effectively in reaching the respective target audiences to influence others.

3.2. Status Report

ADPC has established a team dedicated to Urban Disaster Risk Management (DRM) to advocate for Urban DRM in Asia and to undertake various programs and projects to demonstrate the mechanisms for risk reduction in urban areas.

ADPC has implemented a 10-year program, the Asian Urban Disaster mitigation Program (AUDMP) with funding support from USAID/OFDA through 1995-2005 in 10 countries in Asia including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Vietnam. This program has advocated for Urban Disaster Risk Management because disaster impacts in urban areas are much higher than other areas. More importantly, since more and more areas in Asia are getting urbanized, future potential disaster losses in urban areas can be much higher. This has been seen from recent disaster events such as earthquake in Gujarat, Greater Asian Tsunami of 2004, 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, 2006 earthquakes in Indonesia and many cities were affected by such events. The AUDMP has advocated for a stronger public sector mechanism to be developed in urban areas for risk assessment, mitigation, preparedness and emergency response and some of the demonstrations in around 30 target cities under AUDMP have demonstrated the effectiveness of such practices.

ADPC annually convenes a Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) meeting where all the national disaster management focal points meet and discuss important matters related to risk management at regional and national levels. In the RCC meeting held in Dhaka in 2003, the RCC has had a special session on Urban Disaster Risk Management and the meeting has focused on urban vulnerability and need for developing city-based mechanisms to handle the risk in future.

ADPC has developed several capacity building programs to present the methodology for assessing vulnerability and risk at the urban level and issues related to urban risk management. Some of the capacity building programs developed and successfully conducted by ADPC during the last few years are Urban Disaster Management (UDM) course, Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction for Cities (EVRC) course, Urban Flood Mitigation (UFM) course and Technological Risk Mitigation for Cities (TRMC) course. Some of the above courses have been institutionalized at local level and around 250 city

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officials and other members of the stakeholder community has been trained during the last 10 years.

ADPC has developed around 15 case studies under its "Safer Cities" series to present the experience in different aspects of urban risk management. Around 1000 hard copies and video and Audio visual material from each case study has been distributed and the case studies have been made available on the website for wider usage by city authorities and other stakeholders. Some of the case studies have been incorporated into other courses conducted by ADPC and also the case studies have been incorporated into some ADPC publications such as Primer (general), Primer on flood mitigation, etc. The experience on Urban Disaster Risk Management has been presented in various international symposiums, seminars and other forums including the World Conference on Disaster Management, Kobe in 2005.

The PROMISE program will continue its advocacy initiatives for mainstreaming risk management in the local government sector in respective countries to build on the experience of the urban programs and projects implemented by ADPC.