



**KOBE REPORT draft**  
**Report of Session 4.7, Thematic Cluster 4**  
**Community Based Disaster Management**

**1. Summary of the session's presentations**

The session gathered a group of experts in community-based disaster management from international NGO, expert consultant, academic, and UN organisation. The presentations were based on their experiences on projects and researches that had been deployed at the grass-roots level. Moreover, this session tried to observe and further explore the issue of sustainability in community-based disaster management. The underlying premises of this session was based on a discussion of how community-based disaster management can sustain and continue to growth over time. Relating to this, this session also tried to raise a set of targets that could be and ought to be realised in community based disaster management (CBDM).

In the course of trying to focus on a few main thematic segments on the sustainability issue of CBDM, four segments were established:

- Governance
- Education
- Sustainability
- Safer Construction

These four thematic segments acted as a kind of guiding posts on sustainability in community based disaster management. Below is the briefing on the sub-themes that were discussed through experts presentation on CBDM.

**2. Partnership**

The discussion started off the session stressing on the importance of maintaining harmonious relationship in partnership building on disaster management. In CBDM, partnership is not a platitude but necessary factor in making CBDM last a long time. The importance of building a harmonious partnership is to have everyone cooperate on the same plane of field, where no one is above each other. In trying to achieve that kind of a relationship, it is critical that NGOs play an active role in acting as a binding force between the local people and the government. Most often NGOs have the closest relationship with the local communities, their people, their government (both official and unofficial), as well as have a close working relationship with the government.

Historically, NGOs started their activities in the relief field, responding to crises and disasters. NGO movement came out of a social movement with different members of civil society such as the church groups, women's group, students and other informal groups. Over time, NGO movement followed the path from relief-based to development-based work. Now, NGOs can be said to be at the helm of development process. As NGOs are now moving towards more development-based work, it is critical that NGOs intervene at the policy level, to help prepare communities in dealing with disaster risk.

An important aspect in developing good governance is the need for incorporating more than government in its process. Good governance is not just about the government, in fact, it was more than that. Good governance involves participatory process that includes people at the community level up to the government level.

### **Governance**

Good governance is one of the driving factors in achieving sustainable CBDM. As aforementioned, one of the important aspects of good governance is that it involves more than the government itself and that it is participatory from the grass-roots level, including the community members. In strengthening governance, it is important that local governments are involved as the decision makers of disaster management programme. Often times it is the government at the national level that get involved in the decision making process for disaster management and other policy related issues. However, it is the local government that knows the people and are often in touch with the community. Hence, there should be more momentum towards leveraging local governments to make the decisions, together with the community people, on disaster management practices.

### **Education**

Education is the foundation for creating civil society, and it can be applied to the process of imparting disaster mitigation activities. There is a need to augment education in disaster management at both formal and informal level. Also, education is a tool to reach both the young and the old and it can be done at the most grass-roots level, from local villages in the rural area to the universities in urban areas. To this extent, education in disaster management has a great potential imparting disaster knowledge and enhancing awareness; and this can be a tremendous tool in promoting CBDM. More educational training programmes and outreach activities have to be created to suit the local community.

### **Safer Construction**

One of the fundamental building blocks of society is housing. Hence it is critical that the current housing stock and the newly constructed houses are retrofitted. It has been noted that approximately 60 per cent of the world's housing stock is informally built and many of them are outside the radar of government surveillance. Having such a high percentage of housing stock escape the government radar on housing development, it is extremely important that safer construction for both formal and non-formal housing is implemented. In the case of formal housing, appropriate government funding and building codes should be provided and more importantly updated. In the case of informal housing, it would be important to promote safer housing practice through mason training and non-engineered retrofitting programmes at the grass-roots level. There is a great need to have more training programmes and information source for village masons and local construction engineers that are involved in the non-formal housing construction.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is the umbrella concept of CBDM, because non-sustainable and piece meal CBDM efforts would increase the risk more for communities. It is critical that CBDM efforts last a long time so that culture of prevention would be developed, implemented by all stakeholders in disaster management, as well as managed by them. It is not effective in the long run to have short-lived programmes on CBDM that would be terminated after a certain period of time. Sustainability is a complex issue, which cannot be achieved via one-size-fit all solution. One of the critical strategies for developing sustainable CBDM is to create demand at the community level, whereby there is an incentive for the community people to get actively involved in mitigating disaster risk. To do this, CBDM activities ought to be interesting and appealing to the people, small enough to manage (the concept of "small is beautiful"), and should be an agent in building trust with people. Above all, one important aspect of building sustainable CBDM is through its institutionalisation. To institutionalise CBDM, it is critical that CBDM becomes a part of government initiative: that it is accepted at the government level and reflected in its policies.

### **3. Primary Issues:**

- Education: Education is the key to sustainability and empowerment. Education is a way for people to learn and be capacitated to use the information that is given to the communities. Also, more investment in children's school education ought to be made. Furthermore, education in disaster management ought to expanded to cultural efforts such as building museums and resource centres for the public.

- Partnership: Partnerships with the government and NGOs that can compliment with each other is important. CBDM is not a hierarchical and static movement. In fact, it is and ought to be inclusive and dynamic, because it ought to involve all stakeholders of community.
- Structure: Structural measures for building safety ought to be integrated as a part of the larger social system.
- Development: It is critical to recognize that CBDM is an integral part of the disaster management and development process. CBDM is not an independent concept on its own. Efforts in CBDM need to be able to relate with other disaster management efforts.

#### **4. Suggested targets and indicators to measure accomplishments**

- By 2015 all schools should be earthquake resistant. Schools are considered one of the primary public infrastructure, hence, important to invest public funding to protect and strengthen the educational infrastructure.
- Establish resource centres that can act to educate the public through non-formal and formal method by 2015.
- National-Local- and Civil Society partnership ought to be built in a formal manner via institutional measures of CBDM.
- Promote the creation of local museums of technology and disaster mitigation at a regional level.
- Building empowerment centre specifically for women's education in all new schools built by 2015.
- CBDM departments should be created in local government offices which is funded by the national government.

#### **5. Partnerships**

- There ought to be a national-local-NGO partnership network group created in every country at the regional and local level to promote efficient collaboration and avoid redundancy.
- Line ministries ought to designate one department in working together on CBDM activities.
- Partnership framework ought to be established between international organisations and civil society groups (both formal and informal) to build sustainable development in the context of CBDM.
- School programmes at both national and local level ought to be integrated in national government efforts in promoting CBDM activities and knowledge sharing.

#### **6. Name, affiliation and contacts of presenters and title of presentations**

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 "Developing Targets by 2015"

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“Sustaining CBDM, SEEDS Perspective”

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“Community Based Disaster Management—Regional Experience from Asia”

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“Promoting sustainable, active community participation in DM”

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