



**KOBE REPORT draft**  
**Report of Session 3.9, Thematic Cluster 3**

**Supporting community resilience is the key to reducing disaster impact**

**1. Summary of the session's presentations and discussions:**

- a. Resilience includes the capacity to:
- Cope with the impacts of disaster,
  - Recover from disaster and 'bounce back'
  - Adapt to cope better with future risks
- b. Success factors in community resilience:
- Building on the knowledge, capacities and priorities of people at risk
  - Women taking a leadership role
  - Spreading public awareness of disasters
  - Long-term approach to supporting community-led initiatives
  - Scaling up local successes through wider coalitions
  - Developmental approach – supporting livelihoods
- c. Best practice in community resilience to disasters:

**Bangladesh Cyclone Preparedness Programme**

- In 1970, half a million people died in one cyclone
- Cyclone Preparedness Programme evacuated 2.5 million people during 5 cyclones in 1990s
- Resilience through linking hi-tech & lo-tech, national & community levels
- Lesson: scaling up possible through ongoing funding & capacity building

**Heatwaves in Europe, 2003**

- 22,000-35,000 people died
- In the US, heatwaves kill more people than windstorms, earthquakes & floods combined
- Why are authorities so poorly prepared?
- Heatwaves trigger silent disasters, affecting elderly & marginalized
- Lesson: Social contact & community preparedness make up for individual vulnerability

**Honduras post-Hurricane Mitch: empowering women**

- Hurricane Mitch: 6,000+ deaths, lost homes & crops
- Relief mirrored social exclusion by race & class; corruption
- Community-driven, women-centred, pro-poor recovery led to sustainable development & accountability
- Women's holistic approach ensured livelihoods, environmental protection, mitigation of future risks
- Women integrated culture and local expertise which made recovery more effective, long term & collective
- Lesson: Participation of local women & marginalized groups is critical for recovery and resilience

**India: overcoming drought and debt in Andhra Pradesh**

- Emphasis on cash crops in drought-stricken areas has created hunger and debt in Andhra Pradesh
- 5,000-10,000 farmer suicides in past 6 years
- Rediscovery of indigenous farming systems and local seeds has saved lives and livelihoods in 65 villages; and prevented malnutrition
- Low-caste *dalit* women hold key to resilience through their knowledge and control of local seeds
- Lesson: Complex disasters require long-term, developmental solutions, based on local knowledge

**Philippines: link with local government**

- Over 1,800 people killed or missing after December 2004's floods and landslides
- Since 1994, Red Cross has trained volunteers in community-based DP & mitigation
- Red Cross signs MoU with local government unit (LGU) for DP in at-risk areas
- Lesson: aid agencies can scale up DP, attract more resources and influence state policy by cooperating with local government

**Viet Nam: risk reduction pays off for government and communities**

- 4 typhoons lash the Viet Nam coast every year
- Red Cross has helped villagers to replant 110 kilometres of coastal mangrove forests
- No loss of life & limited damage when Typhoon Wukong hit north in October 2000
- Cost/saving: US\$1 million to plant & protect mangroves. Dyke maintenance alone reduced by US\$7 million per year
- Livelihoods improved: villagers harvest crabs and shrimps which live in mangroves
- Lesson: boosting sustainable disaster resilience requires a long-term, developmental approach

**Iran: cost-effective local disaster response**

- 34 international search and rescue teams saved 22 lives
- A couple of Iranian Red Crescent dog teams saved 157 lives
- One 6-day foreign S&R mission costs US\$ 50,000: the same as 2 year's training for a local Iranian dog team
- Lesson: investment in local disaster response is a cost-effective and long-term solution

**4. Primary issues**

One hour of interactive debate during the session among all participants arrived at the following key action points which governments (both host and donor) and international aid organizations need to take in order to promote community resilience to disasters:

- Undertake detailed research to establish baseline data on what proportions of humanitarian aid currently get channelled through national host governments, local authorities, international aid organizations, national NGOs and local CBOs. Communities should be involved in assessing how effectively this money was spent.
- Invest more money and organizational resources (including training and technology) into strengthening community resilience to disaster.
- Focus disaster relief and recovery assessments on capturing local capacities and priorities – not just needs and vulnerabilities
- Build capacity within operational agencies to support livelihoods and long-term recovery following disasters – including research into what works, what doesn't and why

- Create coalitions in which local communities and government authorities gain ownership over disaster relief and recovery project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with women and children taking a lead role
- Document best practice in community resilience, exchange with other actors (local, national and international) and scale-up what works
- Emphasise a sustainable development model for disaster reduction, which integrates community voices into the risk reduction process *before* and not just after disaster.

#### **5.a) Suggested targets and indicators to measure accomplishments**

The following targets aroused heated debate among participants. Some people wanted higher targets, while others urged caution that more work is needed to come up with realistic, workable targets. There was also debate as to whether the targets should refer to either humanitarian aid or development aid, or both.

- At least 25% of humanitarian aid (both international and national) should be channelled through local NGOs & CBOs – some suggested higher targets
- Of the aid given to local NGOs and CBOs, at least half should be spent on community based disaster reduction
- Of the aid given to local NGOs and CBOs, 10% should go to support core costs such as office and ICT expenses.

#### **b) Existing indicators with reference**

- One participant from the Norwegian Red Cross noted that the Norwegian government is already committed to channelling 30% of all its development aid through Norwegian NGOs – which in turn implement projects with local partners

### **7. Any other relevant and brief comments**

Many people came up after the session to say how much they enjoyed the interactive format (with 1 hour of presentations and 1 hour of structured debate) – and contrasted this session favourably with other sessions which were dominated by lengthy presentations without the opportunity for audience participation.

#### **8. a) Name, affiliation and contacts of presenters:**

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