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Enabling Local Action

Localisation and contextualisation of
Disaster Risk Reduction Management in East Africa
Conference Report 26 – 27 April 2017

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Executive Summary

The East African region routinely experiences a variety of hazards and disasters, such as the current drought situation in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

This conference, co-hosted by the Humanitarian Leadership Academy and the Kenya National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), was convened to share and document learning from the region's public and private sectors, humanitarian responders, and academic institutions.

The main objectives of the conference were to: (a) share experiences and learning on the localisation and contextualisation of resilience and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in devolved systems; (b) identify disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) planning and implementation models that work at the local level; and (c) explore opportunities for collaborating between the different levels of planning and implementation for disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM).

This conference followed an earlier one in 2016 (co-hosted by the Humanitarian Leadership Academy ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016) which focused more on the meaning of the two concepts. The 2017 conference took this a step further by providing an opportunity for different actors to share practical experiences and learning gained from the process of localisation, and to explore how this could be scaled up.

During the conference, experiences were shared from different countries at the national and sub-national levels. Academic and learning institutions shared their methods for capacity development and knowledge management on DRRM.

Similarly, evidence of collective and innovative ways of involving communities in DRRM activities was shared.

The conference created four main proposals for mainstreaming DRRM into development programming:

1. Policy development: the policy, legal and institutional framework was considered important, as this guided thinking and priority setting. It also established a framework within which programme design, resource allocation and implementation took place.
2. Analytical tools: systems, standards and tools, which help communities to identify their vulnerability to hazards, and approaches to mitigating or preparing for disasters.
3. Mechanisms for collaboration: systems and structures which facilitate and promote government, not-for-profit and private collaboration and coordination, with a view to ensuring complementarity while at the same time avoiding duplication of efforts, all aimed at improved service delivery.
4. Harnessing humanitarian learning and knowledge: learning and knowledge are critical for promoting skills development, as well as evidence-based policy-making. This adds to the quality of localisation and contextualisation of humanitarian assistance.

Charles Lwanga-Ntale
Director
Humanitarian Leadership Academy Kenya

"The history of humanitarian support and the challenges in an ever-evolving sector meant that old tools, systems, and ways of doing things had to change to be more pragmatic and responsive to the needs of communities"

Why should humanitarian response be localised and contextualised?

Local governments and communities are usually the first to identify hazards, risks and disasters and to mitigate or respond. They coordinate and sustain multi-stakeholder platforms for promoting DRR; engage local players and citizens in DRR activities; enhance local institutional capacities for DRR actions; and use their own resources to develop and apply innovative approaches for DRR.

In Kenya, for example, the country's devolution process has evolved to improve democratic governance. Disaster risk reduction and management are some of the functions that were devolved to county level, the key assumption being this would lead to increased participation of communities. While the devolved county units

were expected to take up various responsibilities, including that of managing disaster issues, limited capacity, weak planning and coordination systems, an absence of financial resources make it difficult for the sub-national units to be efficient or effective. National institutions and local organisations in the country can help improve humanitarian responses to crises, they have often been kept at arm's length by the international humanitarian community.

Humanitarian action needs to be grounded in local capacities, resources and contexts. When this happens, it has the advantage of being less costly by avoiding multiple layers of delivery. In the long term, it is also more sustainable and accountable to those for whom resilience and response programmes are being delivered. As noted at the World Humanitarian Summit "*national and local responders are (also) more likely to work within existing infrastructure and markets, which can improve the sustainability of response efforts*".



Helen Asnake



Rebecca Ssany



Nelson Mutanda

How is this happening in practice?

The experiences of locally implemented DRRM initiatives were shared to explore the lessons learned and identify ways forward for the conceptualisation, design and implementation of DRRM programmes at sub-national levels. These included:

- Devolution of DRRM from national to county level and below in the County Government of Kakamega (CGK) in Kenya
- Facilitation of the integration of DRRM into three district development plans in Uganda
- Integration process from national to district level from Ethiopia
- Strengthening of national NGO capacity alongside international NGOs and shifting the power to locally owned and led humanitarian response.



Agnes Koome



Discussion group



Agnes Koome

What lessons do we learn from East Africa?

Integrating hazard and risk issues in development planning is the right thing to do – economically, politically, and ethically. However, uptake of integrated planning is hampered by the absence of easy-to-follow approaches, particularly those which are accessible to local governments, where most community-focused development planning happens.

With the renewed interest in decentralisation as a way of improving democratic governance and service delivery, local governments are increasingly challenged to develop systems and acquire competences for design and implementation of programmes that focus on local areas. This is particularly true for issues that are relevant to devolved functions and where skills may be short. Disaster risk reduction is one of these functions. Building on the momentum of devolution and decentralisation in development planning and service delivery for various East African countries, the implementation of locally-led crisis response can be supported by working with several stakeholders at local, national and other levels. Coordinated, multi-sector integrated approaches are needed for further developing and testing innovative methodologies to produce locally-led humanitarian assistance and protection responses.

Also, institutional setting, legislation, and policy space are key factors for effective, integrated planning. However, while the aim of integrated planning is to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, the outcomes in terms of actual value added or benefits are not easy to see.

There are two main reasons for this. The first is that integrated planning for DRR&M and development is still short of approaches or clear examples of the impacts of risk factors on sector planning. The second reason is that the enabling conditions and characteristics of the policy process under which DRR&M and development policy and planning can

be established, tend to vary from one sub-national entity to another. Because community responsibility for disaster preparedness and effective response is key in determining how both policy integration and implementation work, there must be motivating factors for planned actions to be put in place to address DRR issues.

The passion with which a community or their representatives want to take this forward will depend on their interest. Successful integration, therefore, in part, relies on the responsibility which communities or their representatives assume to prepare for, prevent, or mitigate the impacts of disasters when they happen. In turn, interventions that promote community motivation and confidence to address risk and vulnerability issues also promote effective policy, planning, and practice.

The first step in integrating DRR in development planning is to ascertain if demand for the integrated plan exists, and if it does not, to create it. The demand needs to be in existence among a cross-section of political and technical decision-makers as well as policy entrepreneurs. This would enable the finalised plan to simultaneously reflect the identified or expressed needs of the community, while at the same time ensuring ease of buy-in, implementation, and sustainability.

Demand for the plan begins with a recognition that a problem or range of problems exist, for which an integrated planned action is needed. Alternatively, it may also be conceptualised that by having an integrated plan in place, greater efficiency and effectiveness would be realised on the development landscape. In this case, a problem is described as the perceived gap between an existing and ideal situation.

Gathering information about the root causes of the perceived problem or problems is an important starting point for understanding the needs, and to the extent this information should also be drawn from those people who will benefit from the interventions.



Kidist Hailemariam



Discussion group



Samuel Wamukoya

What can we do to improve?

Certain common elements emerged as to what the ideal situation would look like:

- Clearly defined policy guidelines and legal framework mainstreaming DRRM developed with a 'bottom-up' approach
- Structures in place to implement the policies and legal frameworks
- Local, regional and global knowledge fully utilised;
- Traditional early warning mechanisms for communities included in the identification of and planning for hazards
- Funding committed for the full life cycle of DRRM project implementation
- Meaningful and structured approaches to capacity building with a database of trained personnel
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities agreed by all actors
- Cross-sectoral, integrated and focused on prevention and resilience planning
- Formalised local DRRM structures including all actors
- Standardised tools and frameworks for an integrated risk-approach across all hazards

- Partners working in a coordinated manner without duplication of roles
- Devolved funding, planning and risk analysis for DRRM
- Integrated and mainstreamed DRRM in development plans with adequate budget allocation
- Informed communities, capable of preparing for, reducing the risk of and managing disasters.

In all East African countries there is a need to strengthen coordination for effective response and to document the key lessons learnt for improved preparedness initiatives.

Community readiness systems should be enhanced through community led risk analysis, planning, and implementation of risk management measures. Capacity of devolved units to facilitate and support local communities on disaster risk management must be strengthened. Despite the drought response, it is important to integrate the vision of 'ending drought in emergencies' into the next planning cycle.

What we learn from this conference is not only for East Africa; its outcomes will be shared at an upcoming conference to be held in London in June 2017.



Facilitator in action



Charles Lwanga-Ntale



Facilitator in action



Saba Al Mubaslat



Facilitator in action



Professor Kennedy Onkwere

"In all East African countries there is a need to strengthen coordination for effective response and to document the key lessons learnt for improved preparedness initiatives."

Case Study 1: Uganda: Integrating DRR in development planning

In Uganda, planning and policy processes for disaster risk management have historically paid varied attention to the potential impacts of risks, vulnerabilities, and uncertainties to society. Despite the increasing recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of risks, planning and budgeting has not been commensurate to the needs.

Similarly, where they exist, sector-led DRR responses are not mainstreamed into district development plans. Further humanitarian work at the sub-national (district) level has narrowly focused on response, with little or no attention paid to preparedness, mitigation or resilience.

Consequently, long-term development programming remains inadequate, with no fitting plans or budgets for preparedness strategies. A risk-sensitive and integrated approach to planning is therefore required, that considers both preparedness and mitigation, and emergency response in development planning and allocation of resources.

The objective is to design and test an approach for incorporating hazards and risks in development planning. The initiative was undertaken on the

premise that for development to become more resilient to the impacts of hazards, the planning landscape needs to adopt a disaster risk sensitive approach. Three districts, namely Adjumani, Bududa and Kasese were covered in the exercise.

Findings reveal that several local efforts are being made. However, many weaknesses and challenges remain. First, none of the districts had a specific budget line to address DRR issues. Second, while the respective district planning units encouraged sector heads to incorporate DRR issues in their sector plans, no skills or guidance were given on how to do this.

Further, even where some efforts had been made to have plans in place, the view among local officials was that capacity to have those plans financed rested with external actors that operate at the national level.

Yet even with the outlined challenges, the District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) were aware of their roles and made frequent efforts to highlight the need for adequate financing, with mixed success.

Some sectors, such as health, carried out disaster risk planning (including disease surveillance and preventive health). The education sector also introduced DRR in their instructional materials in schools.

Case Study 2: Kenya: Strengthening sub-national implementation

The Kakamega County Government (KCG) in Kenya is implementing a programme which seeks to address the hazards and disasters affecting the region. To achieve this, the county government has put in place a Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (and is in the process of drafting regulations) with a view to preventing, mitigating, or responding to disasters in the county.

The county is also in the process of putting up three disaster management centres, and recognises the importance of collaboration in pulling together resources.

With support from the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, KCG has completed a Hazard and Risk Profile and the training and orientation of its

Disaster Management Committee. KCG is also collaborating with other institutions to enhance capacities in the different sectors, aimed at ensuring they have risk-sensitive plans.

A resource centre has been established at County Headquarters. This contains a variety of learning materials on DRR issues and is accessible to humanitarian sector workers, volunteers, public officials, as well as researchers. KCG is now in the process of developing a contingency plan.

With training and orientation for the county level of the Disaster Management Committee now complete, the learning process is being cascaded to the lower district level where all district DMC members are to be equipped with similar skills.

A unique collaboration has also been initiated between Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (Centre for Disaster Management), the Kenya Institute of Management, and the Kenya Red Cross Society.

Humanitarian Leadership Academy

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