Learnings from the Coalition Building in Cities Program:
Ternate and Semarang, Indonesia

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Ternate is a small island vulnerable to volcanic eruption

What is the project?

The Global Disaster Preparedness Centre (GDPC) has tested an innovative approach to assist Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies to increase city-wide collaboration around climate-smart community resilience and disaster risk reduction. The program was piloted in Luganville, Vanuatu; Ternate and Semarang, Indonesia; and is currently underway in Myanmar.

For more information on what the program involved see the Case Study [LINK].

Why work in cities?

Rapid and unplanned urbanization and climate change increases risk and vulnerability in cities; but means there are opportunities for organizations to prepare and reduce the risks; keep people informed; and help them have a voice in city policy and planning.

Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI) - Indonesian Red Cross Society, with the support of the Global Disaster Preparedness Centre, chose to pilot the Coalition Building in Cities Program in two very different cities. Semarang is a large city in Java that has already carried out some coalition and resilience-building work through the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities initiative. Ternate is a small city located on a small island in North Maluku in eastern Indonesia where the project was a very new concept.

PMI learned that although city size may make a difference in whether the project activities

have city-wide reach and impact (due to project resources and funding), overall the key factor for a successful coalition was the commitment of the coalition partners.

Working collaboratively with a wide range of partners and facilitating a coalition was a new experience for PMI in both cities, involving a new and challenging methodology that led to strengthened relationships at city level, community-level action, and a renewed commitment to working together.
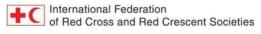
Build a strong foundation

In Semarang, PMI was able to use the 100 Resilient Cities process as a foundation for its work, building upon the previous collaborative approach and risk assessment that had been done under 100 Resilient Cities.

The Chief Resilience Officer role was established

"The coalition program gave us a lot of support, starting from training government officers. We also collaborated on community-based disaster risk reduction." M. Luthfi Eko Nugroho, current Chief Resilience Officer of Semarang

> "It's important to really work hard to build a strong foundation for your coalition because this is the umbrella and this is what is going to make everything work."
> Arifin M. Haddi, National Head of Disaster Management, Palang Merah Indonesia

under the 100 Resilient Cities initiative. The Officer is an important figure in coordinating resilience initiatives in Semarang, so it was important to get their involvement in the coalition.

In Ternate, PMI had to start from scratch. There were no pre-existing resilience or coalition mechanisms in place, and they did not have an office in Ternate City or strong city-level working relationships with stakeholders. As a starting point they brought in the expertise of Semarang's Chief Resilience Officer to help Ternate stakeholders develop a foundation of understanding around resilience and a strategy for implementation.

In both cities there were a few key building blocks that were important to have in place when building a coalition:

- Strong leadership to motivate and integrate different stakeholders

- Project coordinators with strong interpersonal skills – making connections, building trust

- Commitment from stakeholders (and follow through – keep working at it!)

- Establishing a shared vision and approach through training and workshops

- A strong evidence base to provide a platform for advocacy and action

- Structure for coordination (e.g. working groups)

PMI and GDPC learned that the rate of progress and the amount of support the coalition needs will depend on the awareness and experience that stakeholders have in collaborating. Stakeholders in Semarang required a lot less support but the program had a bigger impact in Ternate in terms of awareness and capacity, as the concepts were very new.

Suggestions from PMI and partners

- Use existing processes and expertise: PMI flew the Semarang Chief Resilience Officer to Ternate at the beginning of the project to increase stakeholder understanding around resilience.

- Think about the context of the city you choose – What is the capacity of stakeholders? Are people interested? Is collaborative, resilience-building work already underway? Where can you have the most impact? How long do you have? What are the available resources?

Achieve more through stronger networks and relationships

One of the biggest learnings for coalition stakeholders was the benefits of working together. They found they could be more effective by aligning their activities and sharing knowledge. They developed stronger networks for their everyday work. Stakeholders gained understanding of what other coalition members do - and this helped overcome "sectoral egos" – the tendency to think that each sector can address the issues by itself.

At the community level, the involvement of community-based organisations within the coalition gave communities a stronger voice with government stakeholders.
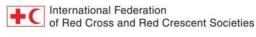
> "The coalition helps people to get to know each other and leave egos at the door."
> Iskander Abdurahman, Kosekate (NGO)

> "Having good relationships with stakeholders helped with collecting more data. The program has ended, but we are still working to improve the data."
> Jefry Benba, Khairun Ternate University

Networks and relationships created through the coalition have continued after the project ended through informal groups and social media groups. It wasn't all easy though - organisations have different purposes, timelines, and priorities for activities and initiatives.

Suggestions from PMI and partners

- Coalition members need to get to know each other as organizations and not be reliant on one representative.

- Stakeholder workshops, such as human centred design training, provided opportunities for coalition members to get to know each other, and to see how they can come up with solutions together.

Overcome the challenges of working with many stakeholders

Collaborative multi-stakeholder initiatives can often run the risk of pushed or led by one organisation. The coalitions in Semarang and Ternate found practical ways to promote a concept of shared ownership and promote collaboration.

In Ternate, the Regional Disaster Management Agency (Badan Penanggulangan Beneana Daerah) carried out the secretariat role, with support from PMI. In Semarang, PMI had the key coordinating role but each meeting was hosted by a different organisation with up to 40 organisations attending monthly meetings.

Each government department also had a focal person whose responsibility it was to be part of the coalition. This helped to formalize their participation but also may have contributed to the problem of disruption caused by personnel changes which was an issue for both coalitions.

Two of the biggest challenges for the coalitions were facilitating decision-making across many stakeholders and scheduling - the difficulty of getting busy stakeholders together.

"A really big challenge was how to involve all the stakeholders, including the private sector, to make one decision."
Nia Astria Manoy – Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI) Ternate

"Every stakeholder has a busy schedule and so it's difficult to get them together. And if it's raining people don't turn up." Andi Mappasaloi, Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah - District Emergency Management Agency. (Right, pictured with Hasyim Yusuf)

Suggestions from Coalition partners

- Be patient. Each stakeholder works at a different speed and you need to know when to push and when to move more slowly.

- Be a participant, not just a facilitator – have some tangible examples of your work to give the other stakeholders confidence in your abilities.

- Encourage involvement of more than one person from each organisation to minimize disruptions caused by personnel changes.

- Share roles and responsibilities in the Coalition, e.g. by hosting meetings and taking the lead on actions and projects.

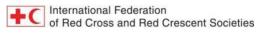## Obtain local government endorsement and support

The convening power of local government leadership was essential in bringing the coalitions together. In both cities a letter of decree was issued by the Mayor that tasked departments with being involved in the coalition. This level of support gave the two projects legitimacy and helped to get stakeholders involved.

"It's very important to involve other stakeholders in the development of the city because the city in the future can face many problems. So, when you involve many stakeholders, many things, many ideas can be solved."
Ternate Assistant Mayor Muhdar Din

"The Government of Semarang gets a lot of benefit from the project. It helps inform planning regarding which areas are vulnerable and therefore improves preparedness." Bunyamin, Head of City Planning Department, Semarang

The Mayor of Semarang has demonstrated a strong commitment to resilience building and collaboration. His catch-phrase is "We have to move together." This has had a big influence on coalition stakeholders. In Ternate, the active involvement of the mayor was very influential in ensuring the participation of agency leaders in regular meetings.

Government departments have realized the value of bringing stakeholders together - helping them in planning, information, sharing the work, and improving public awareness. Departments have acknowledged that they need help to address disaster risk reduction and the coalition is seen as a way to achieve this.

An important learning for creating initiatives like the Coalition Building in Coastal Cities and Communities Project is the impact that political leadership and the end of mayoral terms can have on the project. The Mayoral decrees in Ternate and Semarang only last for the duration of the Mayor's term. Aligning the start of a project with a government term may be sensible in this context.

Suggestions from Coalition partners

- Build relationships with local government first – once they are on board it's a lot easier to engage other stakeholders.

- Demonstrate the benefits of multi-stakeholder input for government planning processes.

- A formal agreement involving local government authorities builds project legitimacy with coalition stakeholders.

- Think about aligning the start of the project with an electoral term so that government support continues.

Engage the private sector

Private sector companies have an important role in disaster risk reduction and resilience building in cities – this includes business continuity planning,

"Every company has some kind of procedure around emergency response but by joining the coalition we can synchronize work of the company and the government." Bramastyo Pandu Anendito, Perta Daya Gas (Supervisor)

"Be consistent and involve the community in the program. Invite village leaders to come together and input into the coalition." Sawami Sawa, private sector coalition member

improving operational practices, and bringing their perspective to joint planning initiatives.

Both coalition projects found it very difficult to get the private sector involved, with limited engagement within the two coalitions. There was some success at getting businesses to participate in business continuity training, but Palang Merah Indonesia and American Red Cross struggled with involving them at the strategic level for activities such as city risk reduction planning.

Reluctance or unfamiliarity with working closely with the government was suggested as a reason why the private sector was difficult to engage. Another strong message was the time that it takes to build relationships.

Benefits noted by the private sector companies that did engage with the project were:
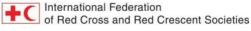
- Better access to information about disaster risk reduction and government initiatives

- Better alignment with government regulations

- Improved business practices – e.g. contingency planning and taking actions that address city risks.

Suggestions from Coalition partners

- More time is needed for relationship building and sustainable engagement with the private sector.

- Demonstrate the value of collaboration to the private sector in addressing the vulnerabilities that their businesses, their employees and their customers face.

- Engage the private sector in two-way discussions from the beginning of the initiative.

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Focus on effective communication and awareness raising

Using both informal and formal communication methods allowed for good information sharing between coalition partners.

WhatsApp groups were an effective way to communicate across hierarchies and sectors as they avoided the bureaucratic hurdles and delays of using formal letters. They continue to be used by coalition members. Formal letters from senior authorities were used for things like invitations and provided the authority to get action happening.

"All the stakeholders have a WhatsApp group and can share information. It is a much faster way to communicate with coalition members at all levels, without protocol." Herry Firmansyatt, PMI HQ Project Manager

"The coalition has helped me to be more knowledgeable as a reporter, so I can give information to the community." Teguh Budiantoro, Radio Republik Indonesia

Palang Merah Indonesia used the media to build awareness of disaster risk reduction and the programme itself. They used advocacy campaigns and had an agreement in Semarang for the national radio station to cover the work of the coalition for one year.

Media outlets were enthusiastic about the project and in the future it could be a good idea to involve them as members of the coalition.

Public awareness campaigns were used to demonstrate simple and practical steps that people can take in their everyday lives. However, achieving meaningful behaviour change on issues such as water use in Ternate was noted as very difficult.

Suggestions from Coalition partners

- Utilize the media in your city to publicize the coalition's activities and raise awareness around resilience and risk reduction. Consider including the media in the coalition.

- Work to build a spirit of resilience in the city at two levels: Government through better planning and regulation, and in the community through communicating how every person can make a difference.

Allocate time to create sustainable outcomes

The limited timeframe of two years was one of the biggest challenges for coalition partners and PMI. Carrying out the groundwork of building relationships with coalition partners, training in new processes, and the risk assessment leaves little time for making progress with risk reduction activities. This was particularly the case in the larger city of Semarang.

Establishing informal forums or using pre-existing groups has enabled stakeholders to maintain communication and coordination after the project ended. This includes establishment of a Disaster Management Forum in Ternate, which used learnings from the coalition process and has extended the project's work around early warning systems into 10 more communities. Funding was also sought from American Red Cross to install more rainwater harvesting kits across Ternate City.

"We still try to sustain the communication and coordination. I hope we can work together again as this project is a good opportunity for our people in Semarang City to better understand city resilience." Yuliana Rahmawati - Bintari (Indonesian Association for Sustainable Development)
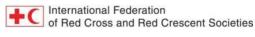

"We took the learning from the coalition into the Disaster Management Forum, including how to collaborate and communicate." Ridwan Lessy, Khairun University

"Working together at the city level can help the communities of Semarang because there are things we cannot do by ourselves, there should be cooperation with stakeholders." - Hevearita Hunaryanti , Vice Mayor of Semarang

"In both cities we have been able to work with the Mayor's office. And that gives testimony that National Societies are able to get out of their comfort zones and partner with these different government institutions."
Colin Fernandes, American Red Cross

In Semarang, the Mayor has agreed to continue the roll out of early warning systems to 15 more villages, however the expansion on these activities is awaiting the next budget cycle after upcoming elections.

Continuity can also be achieved by embedding the assessment issues relating to shocks and stressors into formal city planning processes and budgets. For example, the city-wide assessment was used by the Ternate Water Supply Department (Perusahaan Daerah Air Minu - PDAM) to inform their planning and by the district Disaster Management Agency (Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah - BPBD) to inform early warning volcano work.

Suggestions from Coalition partners

- Allocate sufficient project time to allow for relationship building, training, establishing a structure, and technical work.

- Work to get your priority issues embedded in long-term city planning processes and budgets.

"We learned how to assess, how to collect data, and how to make connections. We can now involve stakeholders. It strengthened how we worked, but it also helped us prepare to work with others in disaster."
Rusihan Ismail, PMI North Maluku

Increase National Society skills and capabilities

The project involved some very new concepts for PMI - advocacy at the city level, working with senior government officials, and working with multiple stakeholders.

The design of the project is quite complex –

working in coalition, undertaking a citywide assessment, applying human centred design. It was difficult for staff to understand the project and its different approaches, while also taking on role of being an initiator, mediator and facilitator.

Training on leadership and advocacy helped staff learn how to lobby and advocate to partners. They gained a lot of confidence over the project period.

In Ternate, the project created connections with stakeholders and awareness of PMI within local government and communities.

Many stakeholders outside of PMI also learnt a lot about how to operate a coalition, how to work together in new ways, and how to better communicate. The BPBD in Ternate felt that project had improved community knowledge of evacuation and disaster preparedness. In Semarang, the current Chief Resilience Officer noted the program provided a lot of support and training and also collaboration in work to increase awareness within communities.
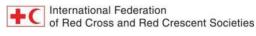
Suggestions from Coalition partners

- The people you place in coordination roles are integral to the success of the project – make sure they have strong relationship building and networking skills.

Get everyone involved in the City-wide Risk Assessment

The assessment training in Semarang included members of the disability community, with sign-language translators present for deaf participants and other accommodations made in order for the event to be more inclusive.

"We can learn by doing and collaborating. I still try to make my students aware of the assessment results." Nani Nagu, Khairun University

The assessment tool helped PMI take a more integrated approach to risk and vulnerabilities across different levels – linking community-level concerns with the city-wide context of risks, vulnerabilities and capacities. Community and city-wide information were fed through to the national level and informed advocacy messaging. Community consultation and input was an important part of creating an assessment report and plan that was accurate and relevant at the community level.

The city-wide assessment had a strong impact in

"After the citywide assessment, we took the data and made a plan. We knew more about saltwater intrusion and could plan for it." Ferry Ratmin, Ternate Water Supply Department (Perusahaan Daerah Air Minu – PDAM)

Ternate, where it was carried out in full as a field exercise (in Semarang it was a desk-top exercise based on pre-existing assessment results). There was good buy-in to the process and the results were used by government agencies to target vulnerability and inform their planning and mapping processes.

"That science background was really helpful, the university was great for bringing theory into practice in the field." Teguh Wibowo, National Chief of Disaster Risk, PMI

Work with experts to create a strong evidence base

Universities were an important member within both coalitions. Their experience in assessment, analysis, and report writing helped with the city-wide assessment and planning processes.

Their research and data informed planning of individual projects such as water availability in Ternate and continues to contribute to government planning. In Semarang the current Chief Resilience Officer already had a strong relationship with universities and joint research is continuing.

Information from the academic sector also provided a strong basis for PMI to engage in discussions and advocacy with the government.

The importance of local relationships and long-term engagement needs to be noted. External climate change resilience expertise was utilized but did not have much impact – this could be attributed to timing (being brought in too late in the project) and lack of follow-up.

Suggestions from Coalition partners

- Connect with the community voice – make sure that your city-level results are based on community-level information.

- Involve universities and other experts so that the coalition is working from a shared base of science and evidence.

- Ensure there is integration and follow-through when involving expertise and support from outside of the city/country so that it is not seen as "fly in, fly out" or an add-on.

"There's no single problem, a problem never stays alone. A lot of things are linked to the problem and there are many departments involved. So, we have to sit together with stakeholders who have expertise, those who have authority on the issues and solve the problem together." – Jaya Tulha, American Red Cross. Photo in Wonosari Village, Semarang.

For more information about the Coalition Building in Cities Program visit: www.preparecenter.org/activities/coalition-building-coastal-cities