

Evaluation Findings: Disaster Preparedness for Safer School (DPSS) Project, Bangladesh

Implementing Organization: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Sector: Disaster Preparedness



CONTEXT

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world and typically affected by disasters including floods, cyclones, river erosion, drought, tornadoes, landslides, and earthquakes. School children are considered the most vulnerable population group as a result of poor school construction and low level of awareness and preparedness that had already contributed to high casualty rates among school children in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh DPSS project was designed based on experiences and lessons learned from the Nepal DPSS. Due to both time and budget constraints, the project failed to achieve some certain expected outputs including awareness campaigns and community outreach. Despite these, the project brought experiences that serve lessons worth learning for both managers and implementers of similar programs/projects.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Goal: reduce the number of deaths and injuries and the social impact caused by disasters through strengthening the capacity of the National Society and by building safer, more resilient schools and communities.

Objectives: 1) Improve safety of public schools through increased hazard awareness and DM skills among school children, teachers and parents; 2) Increase disaster awareness of communities ; 3) Enhance capacity of BDRCS in DP program, awareness raising, DP measures and advocacy for standardization of disaster management in public schools

Timeframe: 7/01/12 – 05/31/14 (20 months) with 4-5 months delay

Target Beneficiaries: Students in 20 core schools and 30 noncore schools

Location: Dhaka (areas of high earthquake risk) and Rangpur (areas of moderate earthquake risk)

Hazards: Dhaka : fires, earthquakes, and water logging; Rangpur: earthquake and cold waves

Partners: ARC, IFRC, National Society for Earthquake Technology – Nepal

Methodology: External evaluation using qualitative research methods, with purposive sampling of 12 core schools and 8 non-core schools in the three operational districts

Evaluator: Muhammad A Kashem



Actionable Learning and Recommendations

School selection criteria: The selection criteria of 'must be a public schools' were misleading and contradicting with other criteria such as 'highly disaster prone' and 'number of students.' In Bangladesh, public schools were likely to have smaller number of enrolled students due to the government's enrolment ceiling policy. In light of this, a school Selection criteria should avoid setting of the condition 'public schools'. A more appropriate way to put it is: a school (either public or private) containing large number of enrolled students, and having fragile building infrastructures and located in the low lying and densely populated areas of low income settlement and population.

Training: the program would have been greatly impacted if refresher trainings on First Aid, LSAR DRM, and VCA were conducted. New training courses like Psychosocial Care (to manage disaster-stricken trauma) for the volunteer were also suggested to add.

Evacuation Maps: Evacuation Maps should be displayed in public space at the early stage of the project. Also, routine and planned orientations of school students, teachers and staff to the maps could make the maps more meaningful.

Structural mitigation: The current DPSS design that does not attend to structural mitigation needs had lowered the level of satisfaction among the beneficiaries. As the structural mitigation was beyond the project scope, the concerns could be addressed through advocacy initiatives by the HNS to the government.

Support from adults for child-participation: Support from teachers, community members and program staff, is key to child involvement. The adults must therefore be equipped with the right attitudes and skills on how to involve and facilitate child participation.

Design of Student Disaster Safety Clubs: Establishing this new student body specifically for the project in a school where the RCY structure has already existed would hurt the RCY. In Bangladesh, the new body drew active RCY members, resulting in their routine activities faded and the RCY weakened. The suggestion was: no additional new body should be formed; RCY should be brought to the fore and play multiple roles for carrying forward co-curricular activities along with DPSS awareness promotion. However it required activation and adequate support for RCY in an overall enabling environment. Also, continuous institutionalization of RCY in schools should be taken forward

School cooperation: The DPSS project activities were not well implemented in the schools, despite the government orders related to integration of DRM approaches. The reluctance to execute the orders was attributed to academic workloads and lack of initiatives from the SMCs. Engagement and capacitation of SMCs would be essential to ensure school cooperation. Engaging them is also

important for fundraising with the purposes of strengthening RCY movement in schools, as well as integration of DP activities into regular academic calendars.

Holistic Approach: Though the project claims deploying multi-hazard approaches to address local demands and priorities; it is yet to translate the claim into practice. A stronger focus should be made towards other local hazard priorities beyond earthquakes.

VCA: VCAs were used only for school based DP planning and small scale mitigation works. VCA should be used to empower students and communities as a whole to be able to self-assessing vulnerabilities and undertaking mitigation measures by their own.

For more information or full evaluation report please contact:-

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