



Learning Summary:
Coalition Building in
Cities Program
Semarang and Ternate,
Indonesia



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Community Based Action Team (SIBAT) in Wonosari Village, Semarang – the SIBAT teams were strengthened through the coalition project and carried out disaster risk reduction work in the targeted urban villages

The *Coalition Building in Cities Program* was piloted in Semarang and Ternate from 2016 to 2018. Palang Merah Indonesia – PMI supported by the American Red Cross and the Global Disaster Preparedness Centre brought together stakeholders from government, private sector, academia, civic society and community organizations into a city coalition.

The project takes a collaborative approach to assessing and addressing risks and vulnerabilities that face the communities in each city, to increase resilience in the face of increasing climate instability and coastal risks.

What were the key learnings from the program?

Build a strong foundation of knowledge and stakeholder commitment

- Use existing processes and expertise: In Semarang, PMI built upon the collaborative approach and risk assessment created through the Rockefeller [100 Resilient Cities](#) project. In Ternate, PMI brought in the Semarang Chief Resilience Officer to provide information and advice to stakeholders at the beginning of the program.
- Build commitment amongst stakeholders and share responsibilities amongst coalition partners.

For example, in Semarang the coalition partners took turns at hosting the coalition meetings.

“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

- Think about the context of the city you choose. Understand the capacities of stakeholders and of they are interested. Learn if there is there a gap or a need for this type of program and what could have the most impact.

Achieve more through stronger networks and relationships

- Coalition stakeholders found they could achieve more in their daily work by aligning their activities and sharing knowledge. These networks continue after the program ended.
- Stakeholder workshops, such as human centred design training, provided opportunities for coalition members to get to know each other and create a relationship for designing solutions together.

Overcome the challenges of working with many stakeholders

- Facilitating decision-making is challenging in a coalition. Be patient. Each stakeholder works at a different speed and one needs to know when to push and when to move more slowly.

- Be a participant, not just a facilitator – have some tangible examples of similar work to give other stakeholders confidence in this process.
- Encourage involvement of more than one person from each organization to minimise disruptions caused by personnel changes.
- Share roles and responsibilities in the coalition, encourage partners to host meetings and take the lead on actions and projects.

Obtain local government endorsement and support

- Build relationships with local government first – once they are on board it's a lot easier to engage other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate to local government how involvement in a coalition can provide helpful stakeholder input into government planning processes.
- A formal agreement involving local government authorities builds program legitimacy with coalition stakeholders.
- Think about aligning the start of the program with an electoral term so that government support continues.

Engaging the private sector takes focused effort

- Allocate time for relationship building and engagement with the private sector as some organizations may be unfamiliar with working in collaboration with government and non-government organizations.
- Demonstrate to the private sector the value of collaboration and of improving their contingency planning and disaster preparedness.
- Engage the private sector in two-way discussions from the beginning of the initiative – do not just add them at the end.

Focus on effective communication and awareness raising

- Use both informal and formal communication methods to encourage information sharing between coalition partners. WhatsApp groups allowed for fast communication and helped the

coalition facilitators to avoid the bureaucratic hurdles and delays of formal communication.

- Utilize the media of city to publicise 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.

Get everyone involved in the City-Wide Risk Assessment

- The collaborative risk assessment process (including training) increases stakeholder understanding of the city's systems, resilience aspects and builds their engagement in the coalition program.
- Connect with the community voice – make sure that city-level results are based on community-level information by including community-based organizations and representative groups in your coalition. Community-based disaster management groups are also a good way create momentum and awareness around resilience within urban communities.

“Bringing in the science background was really helpful, the university was great for introducing theory into practice in the field.” Teguh Wibowo, PMI

Work with experts to create a strong evidence base

- Involve universities and other experts so that the coalition is working from a shared base of science and evidence. They also contribute skills around assessment and analysis.
- Ensure there is integration and follow-through when involving expertise and support from outside of the city or country, so that it is demonstrate full commitment.

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

Increase National Society skills and capabilities

- Increase capacity for working on complex urban issues. The design of the program is complex – facilitating a coalition, undertaking a citywide assessment, and advocacy with local government. PMI staff and volunteers gained skills and confidence over the program period.
- Recruit National Society staff with strong relationship building and networking skills. The people placed in coordination roles are integral to the success of the program.
- Translate and adapt program material and tools to ensure abstract concepts such as resilience are made understandable and relevant in the local context to the project staff.

Allocate time to create sustainable outcomes

- Allocate adequate project time. Carrying out the groundwork of building relationships, training in new processes, and carrying out risk assessment can leave little time for addressing the risks.

- Focus on long-term sustainability and creating momentum that will last beyond the program term. Work to get the priority risk issues embedded in long-term city planning processes and budgets.
- Establish informal forums or use pre-existing groups to help stakeholders maintain coordination after the program ends.

“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



Ternate coalition members with a rain harvesting unit installed through the project

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

