



Community
Practitioners
Platform
for Resilience

WHAT COMMUNITIES WANT: PUTTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PRIORITIES ON THE AGENDA FOR 2015

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Huairou Commission

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To find out more about the Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Campaign, please contact Katia.Araujo@huairou.org

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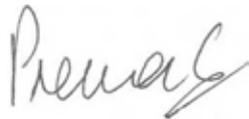
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FOREWORD

This action research, conducted by the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience in seven Asian countries, is an effort to capture the voices of community leaders and bring the resilience priorities of poor, disaster-prone communities into debates that will shape the new policy frameworks on disaster risk reduction to be launched in 2015.

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As policymakers prepare to renew their commitment to sustainable, resilient development in 2015, the views of various stakeholder groups are being sought through a series of global, regional and national consultative processes. For the most part, however, members of poor, disaster-prone neighbourhoods worst affected by natural hazards and climate change are absent from these consultations. Yet, it is these communities whose survival and wellbeing will be most affected by the policies and programmes that emerge from these debates. As their location, economic conditions and socio-political marginalisation render them highly vulnerable to the ill-effects of disasters, climate change and development failures, organised groups of poor women and men have been steadily evolving innovative strategies to protect their lives, livelihoods and homes from destruction. It is essential, therefore, that new agendas aimed at transforming the lives of the poor and marginalised take note of what poor people themselves have to say in this regard and recognise the leadership they have shown in advancing disaster and climate resilience.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This action research, conducted by the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience, seeks to capture the voices of community leaders and bring their resilience priorities into the debates that will shape the new policy frameworks on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and sustainable development that will come into effect in 2015.

Twelve organisations surveyed 603 community leaders living and working in poor, disaster-prone communities, both rural and urban, in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Focus group discussions and interviews with government officials were held in each of these countries and detailed documentation of community resilience practices were undertaken in Nepal and the Philippines.

This action research examines where communities are most impacted by natural hazards and climate change, their capacities to address these impacts, the extent to which support from other stakeholders is aligned with their priorities and the conditions under which government programmes are responsive to their needs. By asking communities to identify elements that advance and undermine their resilience, the study presents insights into their views on the most crucial elements of resilience building. Finally, the study provides communities the opportunity to make recommendations for governments to effectively advance community resilience priorities.

Communities report that the worst impact of disasters is on their basic needs and livelihoods. In the context of climate change, they report that their livelihoods and health are most affected. Community capacities to build resilience are indicated by the extent to which they have led actions to address disaster impacts, training they have received and expertise they have acquired. Community-led initiatives consistently emerge as the highest proportion of all local interventions to address the impacts of disasters. There has been significant investment in training to help communities increase their awareness of risks, build their skills as organisers and trainers and secure their livelihoods. Almost a third of community leaders surveyed possess demonstrable expertise in transferring their resilience practices. These findings make a strong case for NGOs and governments to promote community-led practice transfers that can rapidly scale up community resilience in the face of increasing small- and large-scale disasters.

The action research reaffirms the importance of grassroots women's leadership in advancing community resilience to disaster and climate change. Women have emerged as the main actors at the forefront

of grassroots action to reduce vulnerabilities. Grassroots women leaders from organised groups and networks contribute to enhancing community capacities by transferring knowledge and practices. Women who participate in decision-making committees and larger networks consistently report being able to leverage support from government and NGOs in response to the needs of their communities. Organised, aware of risks and having tested their practices, these women leaders are well equipped to identify and articulate their needs for training in livelihoods and resilience building practices that go beyond awareness building. This reflects the strong impact of a conscious empowerment strategy of investing in grassroots women so that they acknowledge themselves and are acknowledged by other stakeholders as experts. Thus, formally recognising and investing in grassroots women leaders will help channel resources to effectively address community resilience needs.

Grassroots participants identified several local and national government initiatives that strengthen community resilience. However, it is evident that these programmes have been more responsive to community priorities and needs when communities have engaged or partnered with government agencies. A considerable number of formal community partnerships with local and national governments now offer institutional precedents for collaborating with communities, assigning them public roles and recognising their contributions to advancing resilience.

Communities also state that government infrastructure, livelihoods and disaster risk reduction initiatives can exacerbate risk. This occurs when programmes destroy the environment or are poorly implemented and thus inaccessible or ineffective at the local level. Communities consistently recommend greater consultation with them to reduce these risks.

In terms of defining resilience, communities regard three factors as crucial to building community resilience. These include an informed constituency base organised for collective action; a body of knowledge and practices that enables them to combat the effects of disaster and climate change, particularly with regard to livelihoods; and government-community partnerships to enhance accountability and responsiveness to communities.

It is evident that a community-led approach to resilience combines actions to advance knowledge, demonstrate solutions, mobilise communities and build relationships with decision makers. Support for this approach calls for decentralised, flexible mechanisms that enable multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder strategies. The Community Resilience Fund, operational in India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines, is one such mechanism. It has enabled communities to organise themselves, test innovative solutions for livelihoods and basic needs, cross-fertilise solutions and leverage partnerships.

Based on their understanding of resilience and challenges posed by government-led initiatives, communities recommend that priorities for government action should be to promote livelihood adaptation strategies, consult and partner with communities, and improve the quality of infrastructure and delivery of government programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While recommendations emerging from this study target new policy agendas which will be agreed upon in 2015, they are equally relevant for fast-tracking local implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action from now until 2015.

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1. Invest in community-led transfers to scale up effective resilience practices;
2. Incentivise community-led, multi-stakeholder partnerships; create mechanisms that formalise community roles in government programmes to make them more responsive and accountable to community resilience priorities;
3. Foster community organising and constituency building in addition to technical know-how for building resilience;
4. Set aside decentralised, flexible funds to foster multi-dimensional community resilience building efforts;
5. Recognise grassroots women's organisations and networks as key stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring resilience programmes.



01

INTRODUCTION

THE COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS PLATFORM FOR RESILIENCE

In 2009, the Huairou Commission (HC) and Grassroots Organisations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) International were invited by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) to build a Community Practitioners Platform (CPP) for Resilience in order to bring the voices of locally focussed communities into policy debates at UNISDR. The Platform thus represents a unique opportunity for organised communities living and working in disaster-prone urban and rural areas, to play an active role in driving resilience building agendas at local, national, regional and global levels. As a global networking and advocacy space for communities working at the grassroots level, formally endorsed by the UNISDR as a key stakeholder group in the ISDR system, this platform is also an opportunity for community leaders to directly represent their concerns to policymakers and engage decision makers in collaborative partnerships.

Since its inception, the Platform has focussed on:

1. Building a body of community-led practices and innovations;
2. Building community-based coalitions and linking these to institutional champions at the local, national, regional and global levels;
3. Bringing the voices of grassroots women and their communities into decision-making forums.

The Huairou Commission is a global coalition that empowers grassroots women's organizations to enhance their community development practice and exercise collective political power at the global level.

Driven by grassroots women's organisations from around the world, the members and partners of the HC believe it is in the best interest of local communities and grassroots women to expand their participation and leadership in community development work on the issues that affect their daily lives. HC members agree that grassroots women's participation in local to global decision-making is a reliable route to achieving gender equitable, pro-poor policies and investments. The HC is structured as a global membership coalition of women's networks, NGOs and grassroots women's organisations in more than 50 countries.

The majority of the HC's work takes place through four campaigns: AIDS, Community Resilience, HIV-AIDS & Homebased Caregiving, Governance, and Land & Housing. These campaigns were identified in a bottom-up way from the work and interest of grassroots women's organisations in its membership. Campaign members are grassroots groups, NGOs and other partners who use the HC's thematic campaigns as collective organising spaces in which grassroots women can lead the demonstration and transfer of practices within and across countries and leverage their constituencies

and robust practice base to negotiate with decision makers. Member network GROOTS International, a global network of women led grassroots organisations leads the HC's Campaign on Community Resilience.

Observing that local grassroots women's groups are underappreciated and underfunded despite being large-scale, widespread and highly effective actors in community development, GROOTS counters the pattern by advancing the knowledge of grassroots women and championing them as experts who can influence development policies and programmes.

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BUILDING THE COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS PLATFORM IN ASIA

The CPP was launched in Asia in 2010 at a Practitioner-Policy Dialogue on Local Mechanisms for Climate Resilient Development held in New Delhi, India, in collaboration with the Alliance for Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, India. The meeting included NGOs and community practitioners from Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and five Indian states, namely, Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand. The CPP meeting offered the participants an opportunity to showcase community-driven practices and partnerships. In addition, they dialogued with representatives of the National Disaster Management Authority of the Government of India, district officials, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Department for International Development (DFID), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and the World Bank.

At the regional level, the CPP has enabled community leaders to represent their concerns at Asian regional forums, such as the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference in Yogyakarta in 2012, the Asia Pacific Urban Forum convened by ESCAP, ISDR Asia Partnership meetings, and civil society consultations with ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). At the same time, community leaders in India, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines are creating multi-city, multi-province platforms to build common agendas, coalitions and partnerships at the national and local governments.

Since 2010, member organisations in India have been linking communities in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu so as to build coalitions of community leaders engaging and negotiating with local, district, state and national government officials in various forums, and create a common CPP for Resilience in India. Member groups use the common platform to transfer practices on sustainable agriculture and food security. On the basis of these practices, they build partnerships with state governments and access support from government technical institutes such as Krishi Vigyan Kendras or agricultural research centres.

In Indonesia, the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC) began by facilitating a partnership between the Makassar local government and Komite Perjuangan Rakyat Miskin (KPRM), a women-led urban poor organisation. KPRM has brought together a citywide, multi-stakeholder, pro-poor alliance on disaster risk reduction called SIAGA, which collaborates with local government to build a resilient city by raising awareness on DRR and publicising the 10 Essentials of UNISDR's on Making Cities Resilient Campaign. Among other activities, KPRM engages with local authorities to upgrade informal settlements and highlight the problem of malnutrition in Makassar. Since 2012, UPC has organised community-led risk mapping processes to enable communities to identify resilience priorities and negotiate with local authorities on key concerns. The experience in Makassar has resulted in efforts to transfer lessons and explore further community-city partnerships by mobilising and linking communities in Lampung, Surabaya, Jakarta, Porong, Kendari and Makassar.

In Nepal, Lumanti Support Group for Shelter has formed a national network that links more than 500 women across 16 different community-based organisations (CBOs), such as Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj (NMES), a squatter women's federation focussing on urban housing and basic services; HIMAWANTI Nepal, where women explore strategies to protect forest resources; the Disaster Management Committee of Butwal and the Community Women's Forum. These grassroots organisations develop urban and rural resilience strategies that form the basis of their negotiations with decision makers. Their members are part of local decision-making bodies through which women can advance their resilience-building concerns.

In the Philippines, six NGOs and 12 organisations with grassroots constituencies are creating GROOTS Philippines, a multi-city, multi-province network in which *Damayan ng mga Pilipinong Api (DAMPA)* takes the lead on disaster-related activities¹. Community leaders network with other community leaders, barangay officials, municipal officials and NGOs to identify common learning and advocacy agendas to advance effective community-driven resilience strategies. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), a strategic partner that recognises the value of collaborating with CBOs, is exploring with GROOTS Philippines how to establish decentralised coordination mechanisms to disseminate lessons learnt, and fast-track the local implementation of the National Disaster Risk Management and the Climate Change Act. In addition, the network also partners with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to influence communities' access to programmes for social protection, livelihoods and infrastructure.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

This action research, conducted by the HC on behalf of the CPP for Resilience in seven Asian countries, seeks to capture the voices of community leaders living in disaster-prone settlements, and bring these into debates that will shape policy agendas beyond 2015. Its central themes, therefore, are the actions communities are leading and the assistance they need most in the context of disaster and climate resilience.

The main objectives of the research are to understand the capacities of local communities to address the adverse effects of disasters and climate change; the kind of support other stakeholders have provided; the extent to which support is aligned with community priorities; and the factors that communities consider critical to their resilience. The main research questions include:

1. What are the major impacts of natural hazards and climate change on grassroots communities?
2. What capacities do communities have to address the impact of natural hazards and climate change, and how do they use them to devise strategies to address the adverse effects of disasters and climate change?
3. What kind of support have communities received from stakeholders, and under what conditions does external support prove effective in building community resilience?
4. What factors do communities identify as advancing or undermining their resilience building efforts?
5. What recommendations do communities have for government policy and programmes to strengthen community resilience?

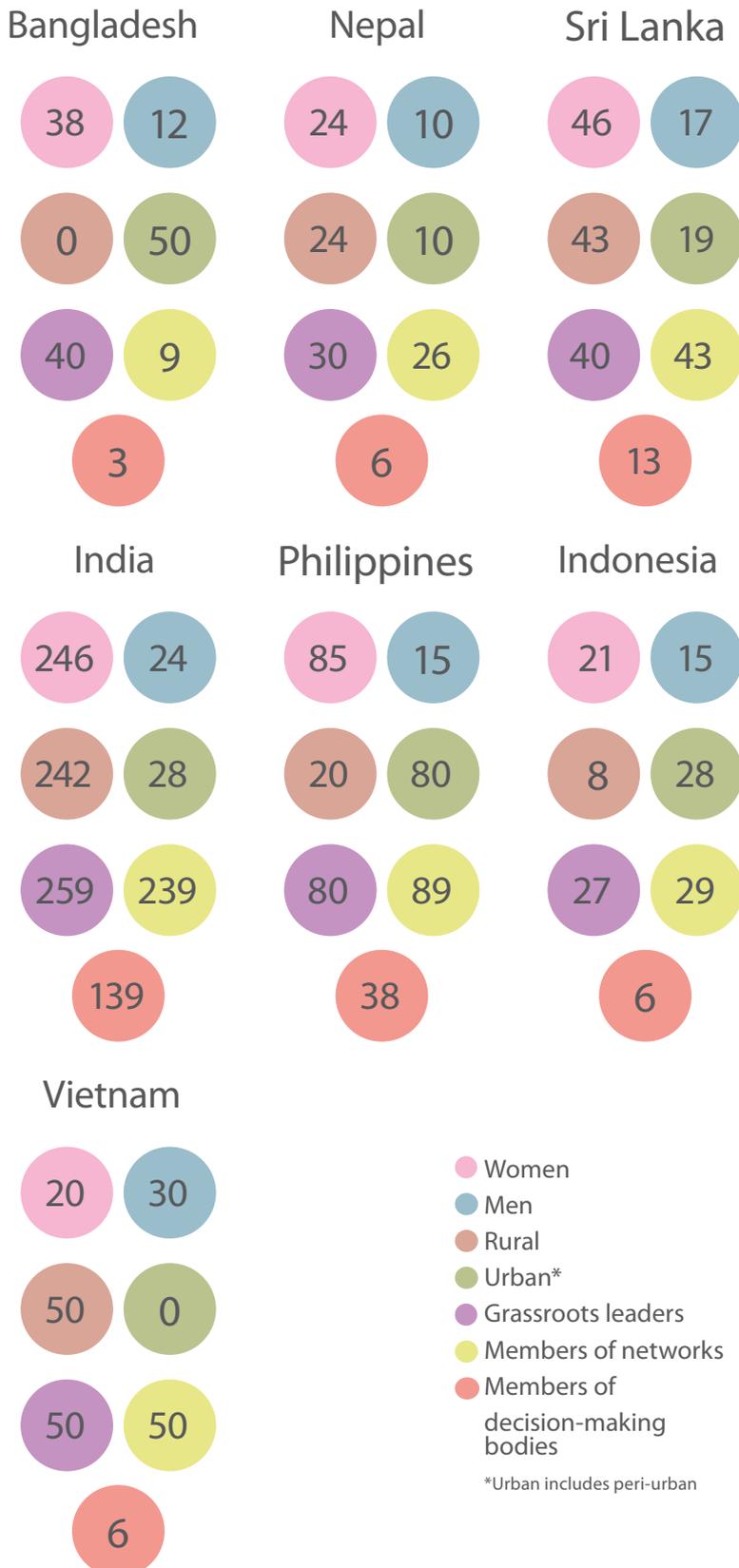
METHODOLOGY

The study was designed and implemented by the HC in collaboration with Best Practices Foundation (BPF) in 2012. A quantitative survey, qualitative focus group discussion (FGD) questionnaire designed for community leaders, and an interview guide for government officials were developed and distributed to participating organisations in Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam. BPF then trained CBOs and local NGOs to administer the survey, and facilitate and document the FGDs. The BPF team also undertook two in-depth case studies on the basis of field visits to DAMPA in the Philippines and Lumanti Support Group for Shelter in Nepal in January 2013, where the team interviewed multiple stakeholders, including grassroots women leaders, community members, and local and national government officials.

THE SAMPLE

Surveys were administered to 603 participants, of which 480 were women and 123, men (Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1 STUDY SAMPLE BY GENDER, TYPE OF SETTLEMENT, GROUP STATUS, GROUP AFFILIATION, AND MEMBERSHIP OF DECISION-MAKING BODIES



The grassroots participants from Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam belong primarily to rural communities, whereas the majority of community participants from the Philippines, Indonesia and Bangladesh reside in urban settlements.

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Overall, the study targeted organised communities who are part of the Platform for Resilience. While all have been affected by disaster and are experienced in addressing its impacts, their scale and level of experience differ. The sample covers two types of organised communities: Groups in Indonesia, Nepal, India and the Philippines, that have been part of the Platform for three to four years, and possess more experience in disaster risk reduction; new entrants to the Platform in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Since 2009, GROOTS International and the HC have also been testing a Community Resilience Fund (CRF)². This is a decentralised, flexible mechanism that channels resources directly to communities, enabling them to address local priorities and scale up practices in partnership with local or national government. As the CRF is currently operational in four of the countries participating in the study – Nepal, India, Indonesia and the Philippines – examples from these countries shared in the action research draw upon efforts supported by the Fund.

The Community Resilience Fund evolved by GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission, is a unique mechanism that channels flexible funds directly to grassroots women's organisations living in disaster-prone communities. It counters the predominantly top-down approach to DRR, where priorities for resources that flow down to communities are pre-identified by national agencies and frequently not aligned with local priorities. By placing resources directly in the hands of grassroots women's organisations, the CRF enables grassroots women to exercise public leadership through which they mobilise communities, nurture grassroots learning and innovation, transfer practices and build partnerships. It allows communities to leverage resources from local or national governments, scale up solutions and influence decision-making. Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, Norad, SIDA and the World Bank GFDRR, the CRF is currently implemented in 18 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Asia, member organisations Lumanti Support Group for Shelter in Nepal, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India, the Urban Poor Consortium in Indonesia and DAMPA in the Philippines are implementing the CRF.

The action research also examines the contribution of women leaders to the resilience building capacities of their communities. To this end, it examines their priorities, the difference between men's and women's capacities, and the extent to which women leaders are taking the lead in

advancing community resilience and partnering with local and national government agencies to negotiate for programmes that benefit the larger community.

ENDNOTES

¹ This includes CBOs such as DAMPA, KPS, ULAP, MAPAGPALA, COWOMB, KUMAKAZA, BUPCC, PAGKAINA, Maguikay, Tulhoa, Bantay Banay (Cebu City) and Bantay Banay CDO. It also includes NGOs such as Philssa, COPE, CO Multiversity, Lihok Pilipina, GWEC grassroots women empowerment centre and the Bantay banay network.

² Kumar, N., 2011. *Community Resilience Fund (CRF) 2011: An Assessment of the Asia Chapter internal report of the Huairou Commission.*



02

HOW COMMUNITIES
EXPERIENCE THE EFFECTS
OF NATURAL HAZARDS
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DISASTERS IN ASIA

The Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster-prone area in the world¹. Between 1970 and 2011, 74 per cent of all disaster-related human fatalities occurred in Asia; of these, 50 per cent are concentrated in South and South-West Asia². In 2011, 80 per cent of the \$366 billion in losses was incurred in Asia alone³. Among the seven countries covered by this study, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam have the highest Annual Expected Losses (AEL) of any country in the world, due to disasters⁴. Indeed, the number of disasters has increased sharply in the last two decades, with the incidence of floods tripling from 50 to 150 per year between the 1980s and 2000s⁵. According to the Asian Development Bank, most of the world's largest disaster-prone cities are located in Asia⁶, which also represents the area with the highest risk of flooding⁷, particularly in India, Bangladesh and China. Economic growth has resulted in greater exposure to disaster risk, especially in growing, densely populated and poorly planned urban settlements.

This steep rise in the incidence of natural disasters and weather-related events, in which poor communities⁸ are most severely impacted, creates an urgent need to understand how communities experience the impacts of these events and what can be done to mitigate them. Given that disasters have multiple impacts, there is a need to identify which of these affect communities most and how they should be addressed. With the exponential growth in disasters and the extensive risk involved, communities will have to face the challenge of creating local resilience practices that can be rapidly scaled up.

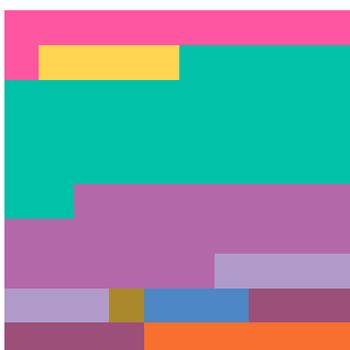
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HOW DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT COMMUNITIES

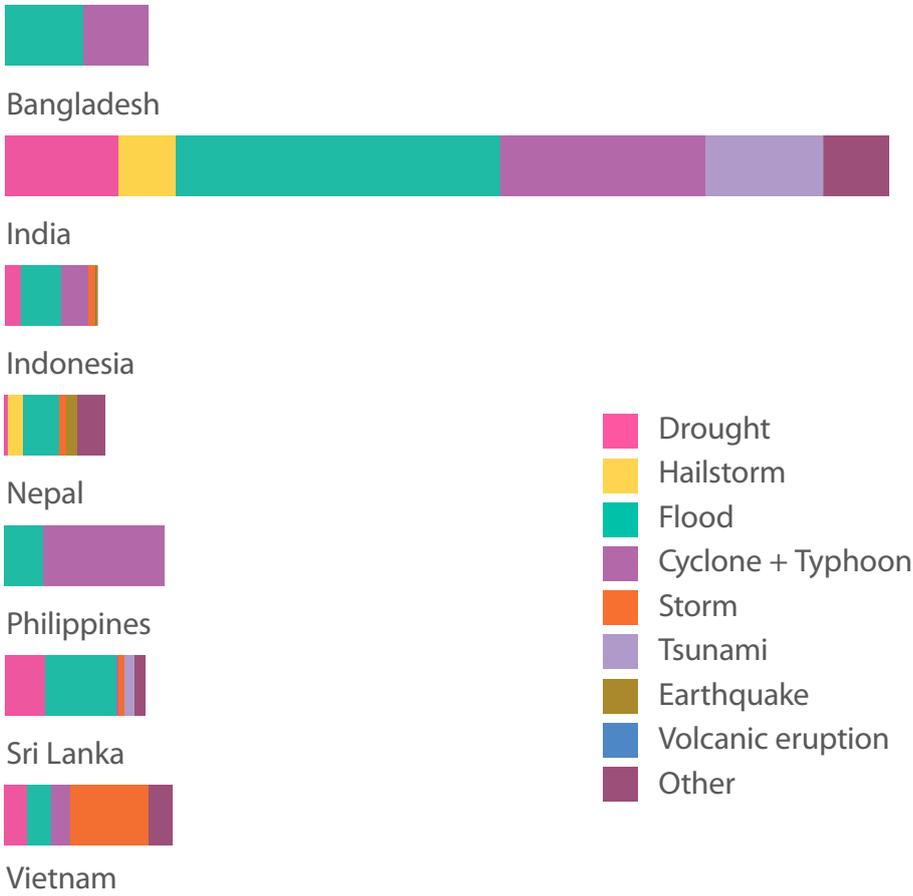
The majority (99.7%)⁹ of community members surveyed report being affected by natural disasters. This study also found that across seven Asian countries, flooding (37%)¹⁰ is the most frequently reported form of disaster, followed by cyclones and typhoons (24%)¹¹ and drought (11%)¹² (Figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1 NATURAL HAZARDS EXPERIENCED BY COMMUNITIES OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS

Responses collected from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

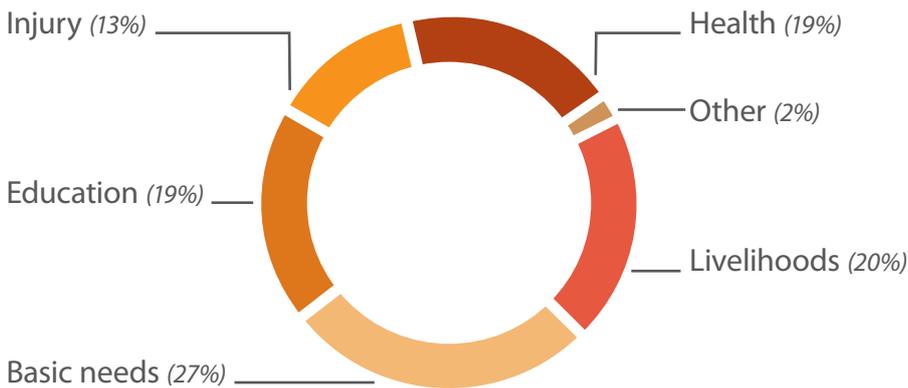


N = 1,148 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.



While the literature on disaster risk focusses primarily on macro-level impacts of natural hazards, this action research focusses on the effects of natural disasters from the perspective of communities at the local level (Figure 2.2). Communities report that basic needs (27%) and livelihoods (20%) are areas most severely impacted by disasters¹³. Basic needs affected include housing, food and lack of access to safe drinking water. While those affected by droughts, floods, cyclones and tsunamis report lack of access to drinking water as a significant impact, storm-affected populations maintain that the destruction of houses is the main consequence. In typhoon and hail-storm affected areas, access to food is reported as the major impact.

FIGURE 2.2 IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS ON COMMUNITIES



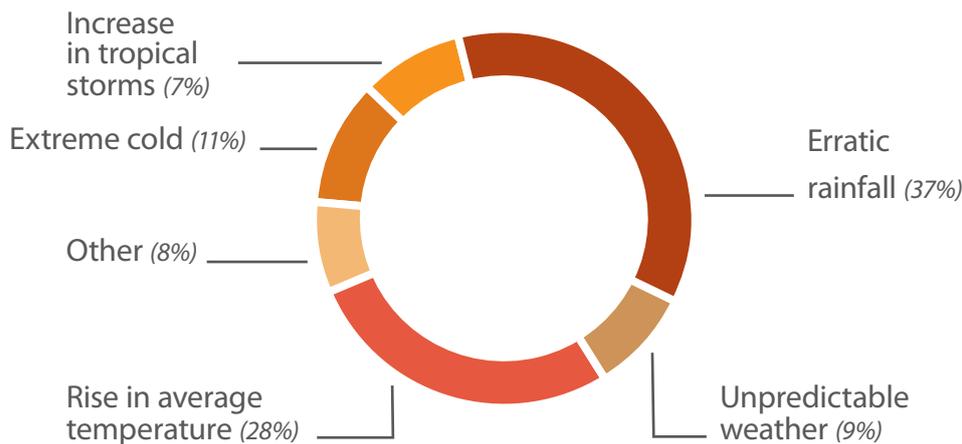
N = 5,665 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

An overwhelming majority (93.6%)¹⁴ of participants say they have experienced some form of climate change. This is reported to be in the form of erratic rainfall (37%)¹⁵ and a rise in average temperature (28%)¹⁶, as shown in Figure 2.3. Erratic, unpredictable rainfall is experienced variously across geographies as shorter, dryer rainy seasons, unseasonal rains or very heavy rainfall leading to flooding and silting. Rising temperatures are reported to manifest as longer, unbearably hot summers. According to a woman leader from Bangladesh, *“the climate appears to have changed. We feel very hot in summer and not very cold in winter. Sometimes, heavy rainfall during the rainy season causes waterlogging”*. Corroborating this view, a woman leader in Jakarta said, *“emperatures are high and floods occur more often. Fishing is affected; incomes are on the decline. The weather is erratic, with sudden spells of heat and rain. Ten years ago, the situation was normal but we have seen pronounced changes in the past two to three years”*.

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FIGURE 2.3 TYPE OF CLIMATE CHANGE EXPERIENCE



N = 1,026 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

Findings indicate that women who are part of decision-making bodies and larger networks are more aware of climate change and its effects than those who are not. There are differences too, between rural and urban dwellers' knowledge and experience of climate change and its impact. Rural inhabitants cite rise in average temperature and erratic rainfall as the types of change they experience the most, while urban communities mention extreme cold and unpredictable weather. Urban dwellers also report a greater awareness of climate change. Of those who claim to not know whether they are affected by climate change, the majority are rural women, indicating the need for more awareness among these populations.

According to the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the shortage of evidence concerning the role of climate change in “economic disaster losses” is due to the fact that “most data are available

for standard economic sectors in developed countries”¹⁷. The current study, however, shows that in developing countries, climate change is experienced primarily in the context of livelihoods (45%) and health (26%)¹⁸, as shown in Figure 2.4. Rural communities’ livelihoods in India, Nepal, and Vietnam are affected most. While this impact is experienced primarily due to crop damage and lower yields, fishing and daily labour are also compromised. Speaking about the impact of climate change on livelihoods in her community, a community leader in Bihar, India, said, “Seasonal work has been affected by changes in climate and low production of agriculture crops. We cannot fetch a good price either in the rainy season or the summer. The quality of our produce has declined. Agriculture is our source of income. (Climate change) affects our daily needs and income. People in my village depend solely on agriculture for work. People are selling their land to real estate developers because we have had poor crops for many years. This affects the local paddy production and daily labour work”. In contrast, urban communities in Bangladesh and Indonesia cite health as the area most impacted by climate change¹⁹.

Figure 2.4 IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ACROSS SAMPLE



N = 1,163. Total responses exceed 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

Current research on the negative health impacts of climate change pays little attention to long-term, indirect health effects such as “increased susceptibility to infection” and “increases of malnutrition”. Instead, they focus on immediate effects “often easier to obtain and quantify, like death statistics or hospitalisations”²⁰. This study underscores the long-term indirect health impacts of disasters, such as a heightened vulnerability to fevers, malaria, diarrhoea and gastroenteritis, which often result from food scarcities, contaminated or no water, and an increase in pests.

ENDNOTES

¹ ESCAP and UNISDR, *Reducing Vulnerability and Exposure to Disasters: The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, 2012*.

² *ibid.*, p. 4.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ ESCAP and UNISDR, (2012), p. 32.

⁵ *Responses to Natural Disasters and Disaster Risks*, ADB, 2012, p.V.

⁶ *ibid.* p.V.

⁷ *The geographical distribution of flood risk is heavily concentrated in India, Bangladesh, and China, causing high human and material losses (Brouwer et al., 2007; Dash et al., 2007; Shen et al., 2008) in IPCC (2012), p.254.*

⁸ ‘Community’, for the purposes of this study, is defined as an interacting population of people living in the same area.

⁹ 601 out of 603 respondents (99.7%) reported having been affected by a natural disaster.

¹⁰ 425 of 1,148 responses (37%), pertain to floods.

¹¹ 279 of 1,148 responses (24%), pertain to cyclones and typhoons.

¹² 123 of 1,148 responses (11%), pertain to drought.

¹³ 1,529 of 5,665 responses focussed on basic needs (27%), while 1,136 of 5,665 responses related to livelihoods (20%).

¹⁴ 559 of a total of 599 respondents (93.6%) said that they had experienced some form of climate change.

¹⁵ 387 of a total of 1,044 responses pertained to higher incidences of erratic rainfall.

¹⁶ 296 of 1,044 responses pertained to a rise in average temperature.

¹⁷ IPCC, 2012: *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Field, C.B., V. Barros, T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, D.J. Dokken, K.L. Ebi, M.D. Mastrandrea, K.J. Mach, G.K. Plattner, S.K. Allen, M. Tignor, and P.M. Midgley (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, 582 pp. p.9.

¹⁸ 522 of 1,163 and 306 out of 1,163 responses cite impacts on livelihoods and health, respectively.

¹⁹ *ibid* “Rapid urbanisation and the growth of megacities, especially in developing countries, have led to the emergence of highly vulnerable urban communities, particularly through informal settlements and inadequate land management (high agreement, robust evidence).” p. 8.

²⁰ *ibid* p. 252.



03

USING COMMUNITY
KNOWLEDGE AND
INNOVATION TO BUILD
A CULTURE OF SAFETY
AND RESILIENCE

In the context of natural hazards and climate change, communities are viewed primarily as victims. They are rarely seen as agents of disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. This perspective usually results in communities, particularly women, being marginalised from decision-making processes and their initiatives and capacities being overlooked and underutilised. In an effort to highlight the capacities and leadership demonstrated by communities, this study examines three main areas: The extent to which communities have taken leadership and collective action to address disaster impacts, the kind of training they have received, and the extent to which they have trained their peers and perceive themselves as experts in the field. To assess future capacity-building needs, communities were also asked to identify areas of training that would help them build their resilience to natural hazards and climate change.

COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS

According to De Ville de Groyet (2000)¹, affected community members are often the first to act during and after disaster. This action research reaffirms that communities are indeed at the frontline of disaster, leading local innovations tailored to address community priorities. About 45 per cent² of all interventions reported points to community-led, collective action (Figure 3.1). Other interventions reported have been led by external actors, such as government and NGOs.

FIGURE 3.1 INITIATIVES LED BY TOP THREE STAKEHOLDERS TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF NATURAL DISASTERS



N = 4,831 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as respondents provided multiple responses.

Community-led initiatives are most evident in the areas of basic needs and livelihoods, where communities experience the greatest impact. Half of the responses (50%)³ state that interventions relating to basic needs have been led primarily by the communities themselves: They have constructed or repaired damaged infrastructure and houses, addressed

sanitation issues, informed and coordinated support with authorities, and prepared and distributed food to the survivors. In Kembang Lestari district, Indonesia, communities linked to the UPC describe how they have organised public kitchens, set up tents for shelter, mobilised local funds and worked together to repair houses damaged during flash floods in 2007⁴.

In addition to short-term collective action, communities also demonstrate leadership in initiating innovative practices in the context of long-term problems and recurring disaster impacts. In Nepal, a community grain fund organised by grassroots women to improve food security has inspired the community to set aside savings for a community disaster fund (Box 3.1).

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BOX 3.1 COMMUNITY GRAIN BANKS FOR FOOD SECURITY IN NEPAL

Criss-crossed by rivers, forests and grasslands, Bardia district, Nepal, is prone to annual flooding. For its residents, particularly the 350 households squatting along the riverbanks, this results in severe food shortages and loss of property and livelihoods. It was in this context that NMES⁵, a network of landless women working across 40 districts, considered establishing a disaster relief fund with community contributions. Contributing cash posed a problem for the families involved, but they were willing to set aside grain to initiate a community grain fund. Since 2012, nine communities have established community grain funds in Nyaulapur and Kamala Fata to prevent food crises during floods. The adult members of every family each contribute a fistful of rice or wheat to the grain bank every day. This is stored until the end of the month, when it is sold in the local market by a committee of community representatives so that it can be consumed before it perishes. All proceeds are credited into the community disaster relief fund.

On the benefits of the grain bank, a leader of NMES said, *“Previously, we had no food, or could not cook what we had during the floods, so we remained hungry for days. Our children starved. It was hard for pregnant women and old people. We could not step outside our homes because the village was inundated, so we stayed indoors, waiting for relief. But today, the grain in our banks is enough to feed the whole community for three days. We set up community kitchens and cook for everyone. It is really nice; we like this system.”*

Inspired by the benefits of saving grain for difficult times, grassroots communities in Bardia district have begun saving small amounts (approximately USD 1) every month at the local bank so that they have access to an emergency fund when disaster strikes.

Source: Focus group discussion with focal persons, NMES, Nepal, 12 January 2013.

In the livelihoods sector as well, community-led initiatives emerge as the predominant form of intervention (47%)⁶. These include pressing government for support to restore livelihoods, adapting cultivation patterns, rotating crops and negotiating access to credit from a variety of sources. Several women's groups have used the Community Resilience Fund to adapt their livelihood strategies to the impacts of disaster and climate change (Box 3.2).

BOX 3.2 TRANSFORMING WASTE INTO INCOME IN THE PHILIPPINES

Parola, Metro Manila, is one of the largest slums in the Philippines. The communities living in Parola Tondo Barangay, part of the Faro Compound Repair Yard (FCRY), have little or no access to basic amenities. As in many slums, their waste management systems are inefficient. The problem is compounded during the floods, when still more garbage washes up along the Pasig River. The FCRY community, one of DAMPA's 217 CBO members, has been working collectively to address this problem, employing a two-pronged strategy to reduce garbage and convert waste into income. Through the Community Resilience Fund, DAMPA has offered FCRY seed capital to initiate a waste management programme. Community leaders have created posters to urge people to segregate their waste and deliver recyclable materials, such as bottles, cans, metal objects and newspapers, to a committee that uses seed funds to buy recyclable waste and resell it to junk shops. A part of the profits goes to DAMPA, while the rest is divided among FCRY members.

Source: Focus group discussions with women's groups, FCRY, Parola Tondo Barangay, Philippines, 12 January 2013.

RURAL AND URBAN PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

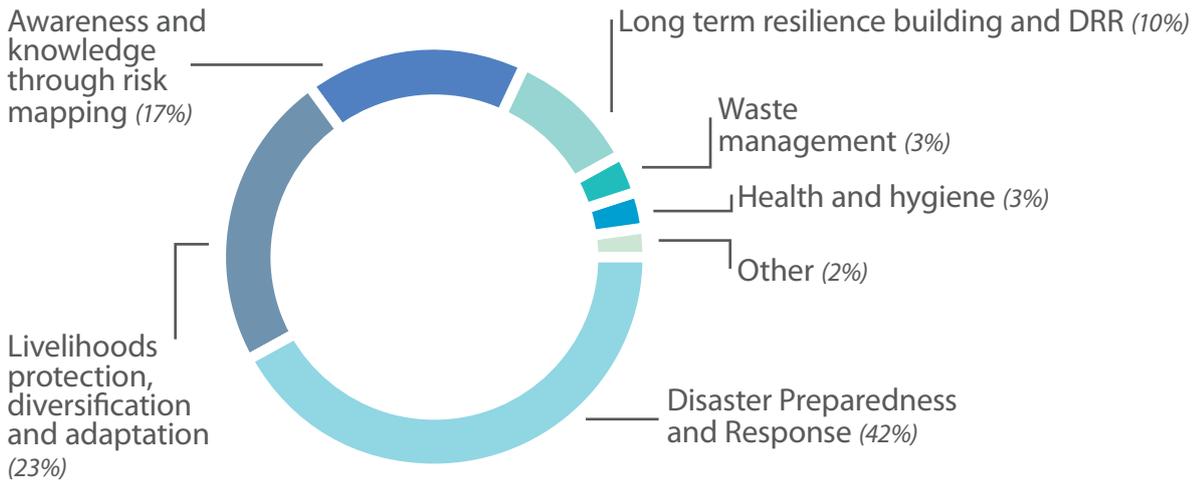
Rural and urban responses in the context of community actions prioritised are quite similar in terms of the effects of natural disasters. As expected, the differences in disaster impact experienced in rural and urban areas determine the differences in the emphasis on the type of initiatives led by urban and rural communities. For instance, urban communities report higher levels of impact in the areas of injury, health and unemployment, and consequently display significantly higher levels of action in these areas. Rural communities, on the other hand, show higher levels of action in the education and livelihoods sectors, where they experience crop and property loss.

TRAINING

In addition to community-led action, the kind of training communities have received is another indicator of the skills and knowledge they possess and can draw upon to advance local resilience priorities. The largest number of community responses on the type of training received indicates that most (42%)⁷ have been trained in disaster preparedness and response (Figure 3.2).

FIGURE 3.2 TYPE OF TRAINING RECEIVED

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N = 662 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

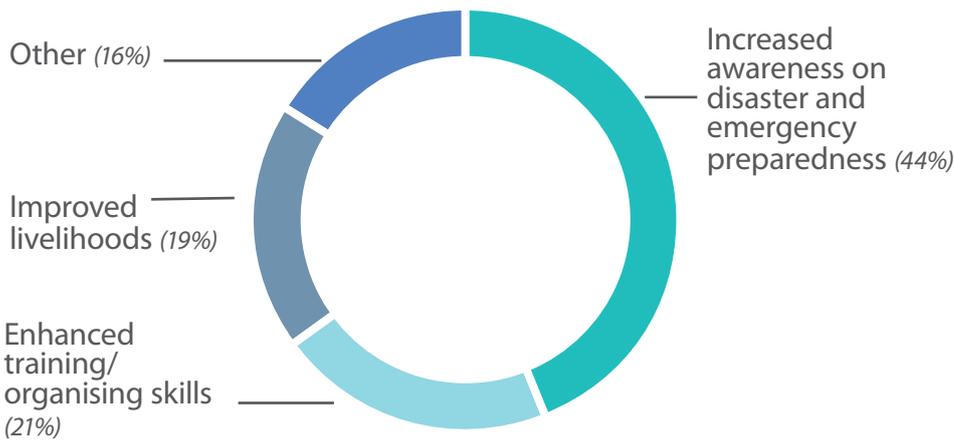
According to the respondents, community training in emergency preparedness and response has comprised developing and using early warning systems, administering first aid, preparing contingency and shelter plans, employing search and rescue techniques, and forming disaster committees and emergency task forces.

Strengthening and diversifying livelihoods emerges as the next major training focus (23% of responses)⁸. In the context of agriculture, communities have learnt organic farming skills and techniques, crop rotation, low input based farming methods, collective farming and how to cultivate drought-resistant crop varieties. Non-farm livelihoods training includes fish processing, insurance sales and waste management. About 17 per cent⁹ of responses point to more general awareness building on climate change and disaster. Organisations from India, the Philippines and Vietnam have accessed training to combat the effects of disaster and climate change, whereas those in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka report not having received any training. Well organised grassroots organisations focussed on reducing disaster risk for several years prioritise livelihoods training and resilience building, whereas newer entrants into the field require general awareness raising around disaster and climate change issues.

IMPACT OF TRAINING

Those who have undergone training say that it has offered an understanding of disaster and equipped them with practical tools to counter disaster impacts (Figure 3.3).

FIGURE 3.3 HOW TRAINING HAS HELPED



N = 489 responses.

The primary benefit of training, from a community perspective, has been improved awareness of disasters and emergency preparedness (44%)¹⁰. Training has helped communities organise mock drills and simulation exercises in preparation for safe evacuation. They can now identify collective vulnerabilities, risks and hazards, and are more confident of coping with disasters. It has also contributed to a sense of empowerment, as indicated by the second benefit reported, namely, that it has enhanced community expertise as organisers or trainers (21%)¹¹. The third benefit communities report having received from training is reduced vulnerability, stemming from improved agricultural practices (19%)¹².

In Vietnam, women who have learned what to do during storms and typhoons maintain that they are better prepared to cope with these phenomena now, and that they make sure to share their learning with other community members (Box 3.3).

BOX 3.3 WOMEN LIST THE BENEFITS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING IN VIETNAM

Following a typhoon, women's group leaders from Go Cong Dong district, Vietnam, were trained on climate change by the Women's Union in the Commune People's Committee (CPC). In the process, they learned about the impacts of climate change, how to receive and convey early warning storm alerts, and how to protect themselves in these situations. The trainees then shared their newly acquired knowledge with other group members. The community now reports being better equipped to safeguard their families and homes, and evacuate, if necessary. Fishermen have received technical guidance on communicating distress signals at sea. Many households have participated in training organised by the CPC and the Personnel Department of Natural Resources and Environment, where experts on climate change trained heads of hamlets and farmer

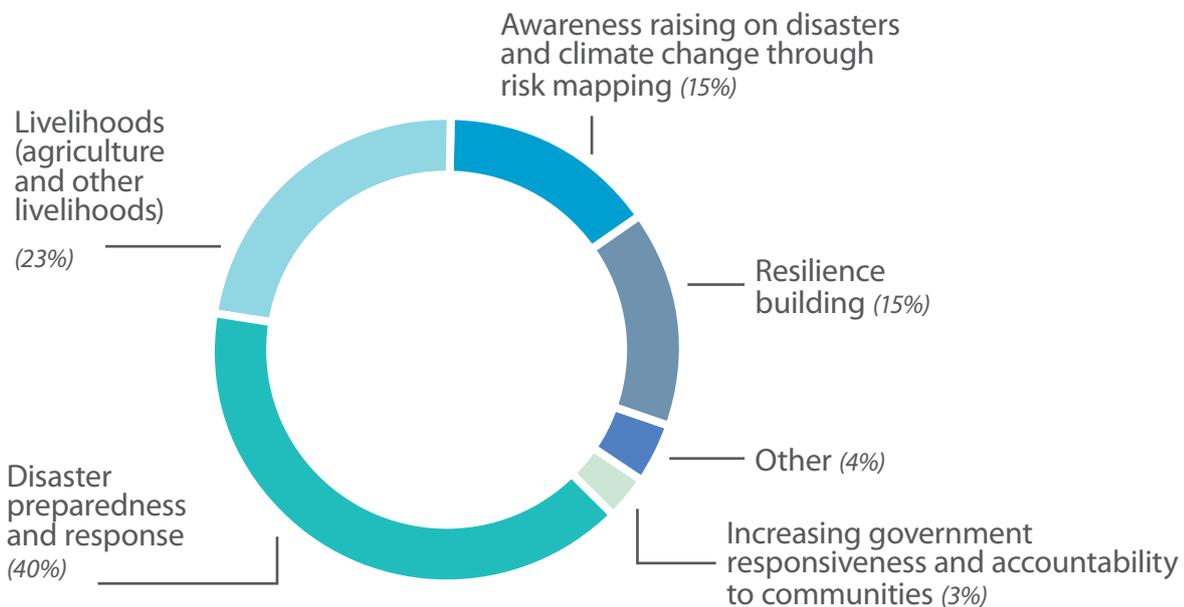
associations on adaptation strategies for their farming practices.

Source: Focus group discussion with women's groups, Hall of Tan Thanh Commune People Committee, Tien Giang province, Vietnam, 9 January, 2013.

COMMUNITY EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE IN SCALING UP PRACTICES

Despite the numerous skills, practices and vast lived experience that communities have, both governments and NGOs tend to seek expertise elsewhere when designing community training interventions for disaster. There is a need to appreciate the knowledge and expertise that communities already possess and to evaluate how these can best be deployed to scale up tried, tested and effective community-driven resilience practices.

FIGURE 3.4 TYPE OF COMMUNITY EXPERTISE



N = 432 responses



PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY RESPONDENTS WHO ARE EXPERTS IN RESILIENCE BUILDING

Of the 603 community leaders surveyed, 28 per cent see themselves as experts in resilience building, experienced in transferring knowledge and practices. This expertise is mostly in disaster preparedness and response (40%)¹³, livelihoods (23%)¹⁴ and raising awareness on disasters and climate change (15%)¹⁵ as shown in Figure 3.4. In agriculture and allied activities, community expertise pertains to low input farming techniques such as optimising water usage in paddy cultivation, the use of vermicomposting

as an organic fertiliser, tree planting, collective and organic farming, urban gardening and waste management.

In Nepal, India, Indonesia and the Philippines, where the Community Resilience Fund is operational, community risk and resource mapping constitute a key entry point for prioritising risks, identifying resources and mobilising communities into action. In each context, groups of community experts train communities on risk mapping. In Indonesia, the UPC used a small group of community leaders to train other community leaders in six cities in risk mapping through which communities have been mobilised to advocate for their priorities (Box 3.4).

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BOX 3.4 COMMUNITY-LED RISK MAPPING IN INDONESIA

The Urban Poor Consortium has used the Community Resilience Fund to organise and mobilise communities to pursue their resilience priorities through community-led risk mapping. To build mapping capacities, UPC trained community leaders in the cities of Lampung, Surabaya, Jakarta, Porong, Makassar and Kendari to take on the role of trainers. These community trainers then held city level workshops to train groups of five to 10 community leaders from every cluster of kampungs or settlements. These cluster-level community trainers then facilitated a process in which 10-15 families in every kampung mapped their risks and vulnerabilities, following which they held discussions to prioritise concerns and collectively devise strategic actions.

A major issue identified through the mapping in Jakarta concerns the land tenure of informal settlements along the riverbanks. Threatened by the prospect of relocation by the government, these flood-prone communities are pressing the governor to consider settlement upgrading and secure tenure as viable options that would allow them to remain close to their workplaces. In Surabaya, on the other hand, communities have succeeded in securing housing tenure and acquiring government funding to upgrade 200 houses along the riverbank. As these houses are built on stilts, their occupants are better able to cope with floods.

Source: Discussion notes, meeting with UPC staff, Jakarta, 18 February, 2013.

The Community Resilience Fund has also been used to facilitate grassroots women leaders to transfer resilience practices. In India, the Community Resilience Fund¹⁶ has enabled grassroots leaders from Bihar and Maharashtra, India, to participate in community-led peer learning exchanges focussed on resilience building. The exchanges have resulted in practices such as organic farming, collective leasing and farming of land, and federation formation being transferred across communities (Box 3.5).

BOX 3.5 TRANSFERRING PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES THROUGH PEER LEARNING EXCHANGES IN INDIA

In the semi-arid regions of Maharashtra, India, over 300 women members of the Sakhi Federation use the Community Resilience Fund to engage in organic farming practices across 50 villages. They also partner with government-run Krishi Vigyan Kendras for technical inputs. A group of women's self-help groups (SHGs) in Darbhanga, Bihar, with some experience of organic cultivation, visited Maharashtra to learn more. They returned to practice organic farming in their own villages more systematically and with renewed enthusiasm. Adopting the landless women's strategies of leasing land for collective farming in Maharashtra, the women from Bihar shifted from individual farming to collective organic farming on 20 acres of land in 10 villages. Their visit to the Sakhi Women's Federations, each of which comprises over 250 savings groups that cross-fertilise learning and leverage their partners' resources, helped them grasp the value of networks and partnerships. As a result, 20 women's SHGs from Supaul district and another 15 from Darbhanga district are in the process of forming federations and partnering with Krishi Vigyan Kendras in their own state.

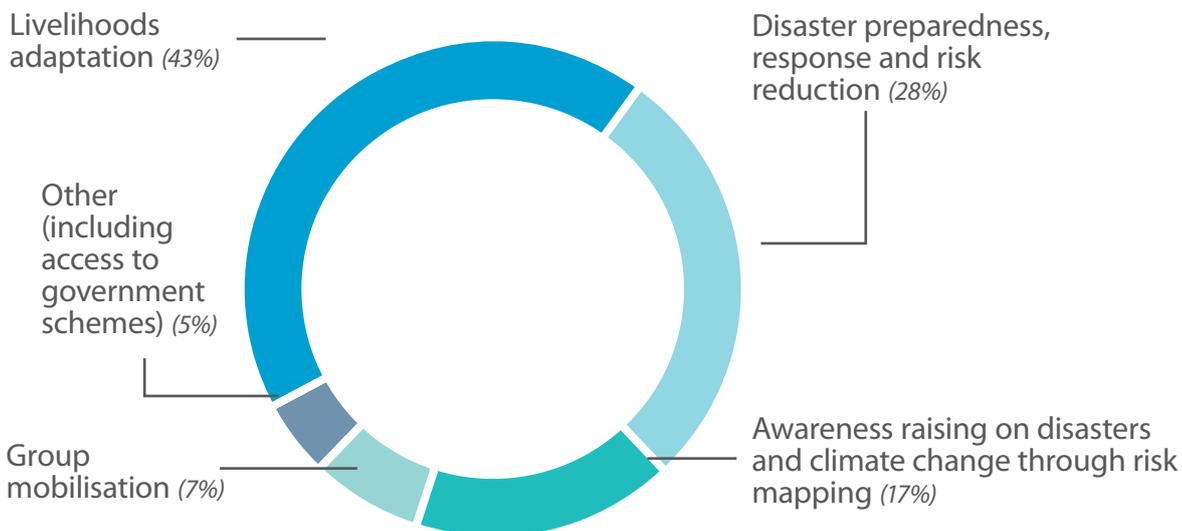
Source: Swayam Shikshan Prayog, 'India South-South Project Final Narrative Report,' December 2012, and key informant interview with P. Chandran, Swayam Shikshan Prayog

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WHAT COMMUNITIES WANT TO LEARN

Communities consistently prioritise livelihoods (43%)¹⁷ as the area in which they are keen to expand their knowledge and practices (Figure 3.5). Understanding and undertaking disaster risk reduction (28%)¹⁸ and generating greater awareness about disasters and climate change (17%)¹⁹ emerge as lower priorities.

FIGURE 3.5 CAPACITIES COMMUNITIES WANT



N=797. The responses exceed the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

CBOs with long experience in the field of disaster resilience mention low input farming techniques, organic farming, vermicomposting, dairy and other home-based income generating activities as areas they need to learn more about to strengthen and diversify livelihoods. In addition, knowledge of agro-based businesses and processes such as food processing, establishing market linkages for agricultural produce and business skills are required. Communities are also interested in receiving technical support for vocational training and development of non-farm work such as tailoring and waste recycling to diversify their livelihoods. Specific to the area of disaster, respondents ask for capacity building on early warning flood and storm prevention, evacuation, and search and rescue techniques.

Communities that are more recently organised around issues of disaster resilience and climate change express a need for basic, practical skills that will enable them to protect themselves and their families in the event of a disaster. A woman from a flood-affected region of Nagawilluwa, Sri Lanka, said, *“When there is a flood, all we know is to get ourselves and our children onto a table and wait. We do not know what else to do. If the tank bund is broken, we need to move people to safety. We have to learn how to do this. We also have to find ways to feed our families and help them survive. There is no system to forewarn us of disaster”*²⁰.

COMPARING MEN AND WOMEN’S RESPONSES

A comparison of men and women’s responses shows a higher proportion of responses from women (58%) than men (18%) stating that they have trained their peers on disaster risk reduction²¹, thereby revealing that women contribute more to scaling up practices and disseminating knowledge. This can be attributed to the fact that several organisations involved in the study use grassroots women-led practice transfers as an empowerment strategy to position women as experts and knowledge holders and to counter the notion that they are passive beneficiaries and victims (Box 3.6).

BOX 3.6 COMMUNITY-LED PRACTICE TRANSFERS IN INDIA

In the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, grassroots women leaders from Tamil Nadu, India, organised themselves to address health and other long-term development and disaster risk reduction issues. Swayam Shikshan Prayog has facilitated peer exchanges between these leaders and women from flood- and drought-prone Maulaganj village in Darbhanga district, Bihar. The women from Tamil Nadu have trained eight women leaders from SHGs in Bihar to undertake community risk and resource mapping. These eight women subsequently trained another 75 women across their district. Training focusses not only on risk,

vulnerability and resource mapping, but also on mobilising communities around priority issues and creating an action plan that is endorsed and supported by the village council.

Source: Swayam Shikshan Prayog, 'Enhancing Capacity to Develop Community Resilience in Bihar,' April 2013.

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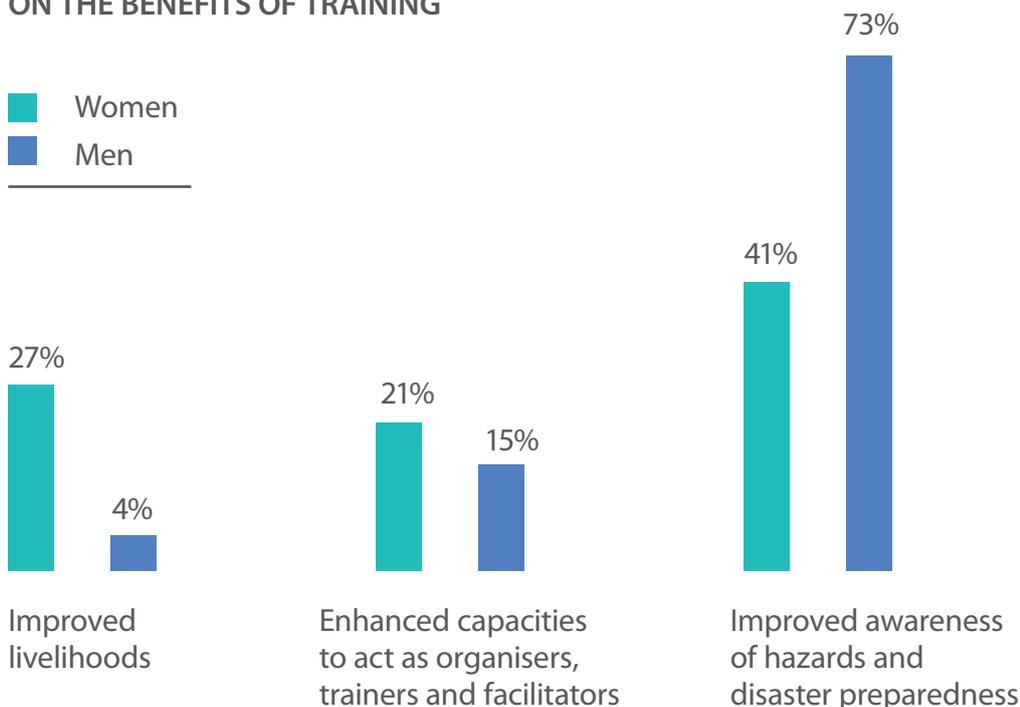
Similarly, a larger proportion of responses from women focus on community-led initiatives in the education (12% vs. 4%)²² and livelihoods (24% vs. 20%)²³ sectors. Actions reported by men focus predominantly on addressing injuries, preventing the spread of diseases and repairing damage to homes and property.

A higher proportion of women (25%) than men (4%) report having received livelihoods training²⁴. In this regard, a slightly higher proportion of women's responses (22%) than men's (19%), point to experience in transferring knowledge and practices²⁵. About 47 per cent of women as compared to 26 per cent of men prioritise livelihoods as a learning needs²⁶.

A higher proportion of responses from men than women pertain to access to government training programmes (32% vs. 7%)²⁷, while a higher proportion of women's responses cite NGOs as the primary source of training (84% vs. 53%)²⁸. Familiarity with specific external actors may have influenced responses in which the women prefer to be trained by NGOs (48% vs. 11%)²⁹ while the men favour government training (24% vs. 12%)³⁰.

FIGURE 3.6 COMPARING WOMEN'S AND MEN'S RESPONSES

ON THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING



Women: N = 441 responses. Men: N = 48 responses.

Women leaders, especially those who are part of larger networks and federations, have more opportunities to both learn and teach. More training is reported among group leaders and those who are part of larger networks (56% vs. 58%), than those who are not (39% vs. 36%)³¹. A higher proportion of group leaders (92%) and network members (93%) demand training than those who are not group leaders (69%) and networks (70%)³². This is because those who have received and benefitted from training seek to build their leadership and training skills to transfer their learning to communities. Already organised, aware and equipped, these leaders can better identify and articulate their needs for training in livelihoods and resilience building.

A woman leader from the Sakhi Federation articulates women's expertise and future learning needs saying, *“Women experts have been organising campaigns to disseminate resilience-related information across communities. We have trained more than 10,000 women. However, we need more training on resilience to climate change, preventing epidemics and water management.”*³³

For the poor, being part of larger, organised constituencies is the most reliable route to influencing external actors and accessing services and support.

Women and men who participate in decision-making committees and larger networks consistently report greater access to support from both government and NGOs. This is a clear indication that for the poor, being part of larger, organised constituencies is the most reliable route to influencing external actors and accessing services and support.

CONCLUSION

The substantial increase in the global incidence of disasters requires a rapid strengthening and scaling up of local disaster risk reduction efforts. The findings from this action research indicate a large number of community-led initiatives and significant investment in training communities. Many community leaders are experienced in training and teaching other communities. Also evident, are demands from communities to increase their understanding of how to address disaster and climate change impacts and, more specifically, protect their livelihoods and incomes. These are areas in which their peers have expertise and experience in transferring knowledge and practice. Efforts to rapidly scale up the knowledge and skill base of communities living with disaster risk, therefore, require government and NGO investment in decentralised, community-led awareness raising and training. Such investment would explicitly recognise the frequently undervalued leadership, capacities and expertise of communities, while exponentially increasing community capacities to protect their wellbeing in the face of natural hazards and climate change.

ENDNOTES

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2012, p.299.

² 2,193 of 4,831 responses (45%) indicate community initiative as the predominant form of intervention across all sectors.

³ 690 of 1,388 responses (50%) indicate community initiative as the predominant form of intervention in the basic needs sector.

⁴ Focus group discussions with women's groups, Kembang Lestari, North Jakarta, Indonesia,

5 February, 2013.

⁵ In English, the name translates to Nepal United Women's Association.

⁶ 480 of 1,014 responses (47%) indicate community initiative as the largest form of intervention in the livelihoods sector.

⁷ 276 of 662 responses (42%) indicate that highest training received has been in disaster preparedness and response.

⁸ 154 of 662 responses (23%) indicate that training received has been in livelihoods.

⁹ 109 of 662 responses (17%) indicate that training received has been on creating awareness and building knowledge on disaster risk reduction and climate change awareness.

¹⁰ 217 of 489 responses (44%) indicate improved awareness about disaster and emergency preparedness as a training outcome.

¹¹ 101 of 489 responses (21%) indicate increased capacity as organisers or trainers in emergency response as a training outcome.

¹² 91 of 489 responses (19%) indicate adapting agricultural practices as a training outcome.

¹³ 173 of 432 responses (40%) indicate that community expertise lies mostly in disaster preparedness and response.

¹⁴ 96 of 432 responses (23%) indicate that community expertise lies mostly in livelihoods.

¹⁵ 63 of 432 responses (15%) indicate that community expertise lies mostly in awareness raising on disaster risk reduction and climate change.

¹⁶ Supported by the South-South Programme of the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

¹⁷ 343 of 797 responses (43%) indicate a need for training to develop livelihood capacities.

¹⁸ 226 of 797 responses (28%) indicate a need for skill development training in disaster risk reduction.

¹⁹ 139 of 797 responses (17%) ask for training to improve awareness about disaster and climate change.

²⁰ Focus group discussion with women's group, Praja Diriya Foundation, Nagawilluva, Sri Lanka,

7 February, 2013.

²¹ 154 of 267 women (58%) and 15 of 85 men (18%) report training others.

²² 213 of 1769 initiatives reported by women (12%) and 10 of 268 initiatives reported by men (4%) are in education.

²³ 426 of 1769 initiatives reported by women (24%) and 54 of 268 initiatives reported by men (20%) are in the livelihoods sector.

²⁴ 152 of 613 responses from women (25%) and 2 of 50 responses (4%) from men indicate that the type of training received has been on livelihoods.

²⁵ 5 of 26 responses from men (19%) and 91 of 406 responses from women (22%) are on livelihoods expertise.

²⁶ 305 of 653 responses from women (47%) and 38 of 144 responses from men (26%) ask for livelihoods training.

²⁷ 15 of 47 responses from men (32%) and 36 of 512 responses from women (7%) report access to government training programmes.

²⁸ 25 of 47 responses from women (84%) and 431 of 512 responses from men (53%) report access to NGO training programmes.

²⁹ 294 of 609 responses from women (48%) revealed that women prefer to be trained by NGOs, as compared to 16 of 143 (11%) responses from men which revealed a preference for training by NGOs.

³⁰ 35 of 143 responses from men (24%) and 74 of 609 responses from women (12%) favour government training.

³¹ 290 of 517 group leaders (56%) and 277 of 477 network members (58%) report receiving training, while 27 of 70 respondents not part of mobilised groups (39%) and 40 out of 110 respondents not part of networks (36%) report not having received training.

³² 401 of 438 group leaders (92%) and 376 of 404 network members (93%) want additional training. In comparison, only 48 of 70 non-group leaders (69%) and 73 of 104 non-network members (70%) ask for training.

³³ Focus group discussion with women's group, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Maharashtra, India, 23 December, 2012.



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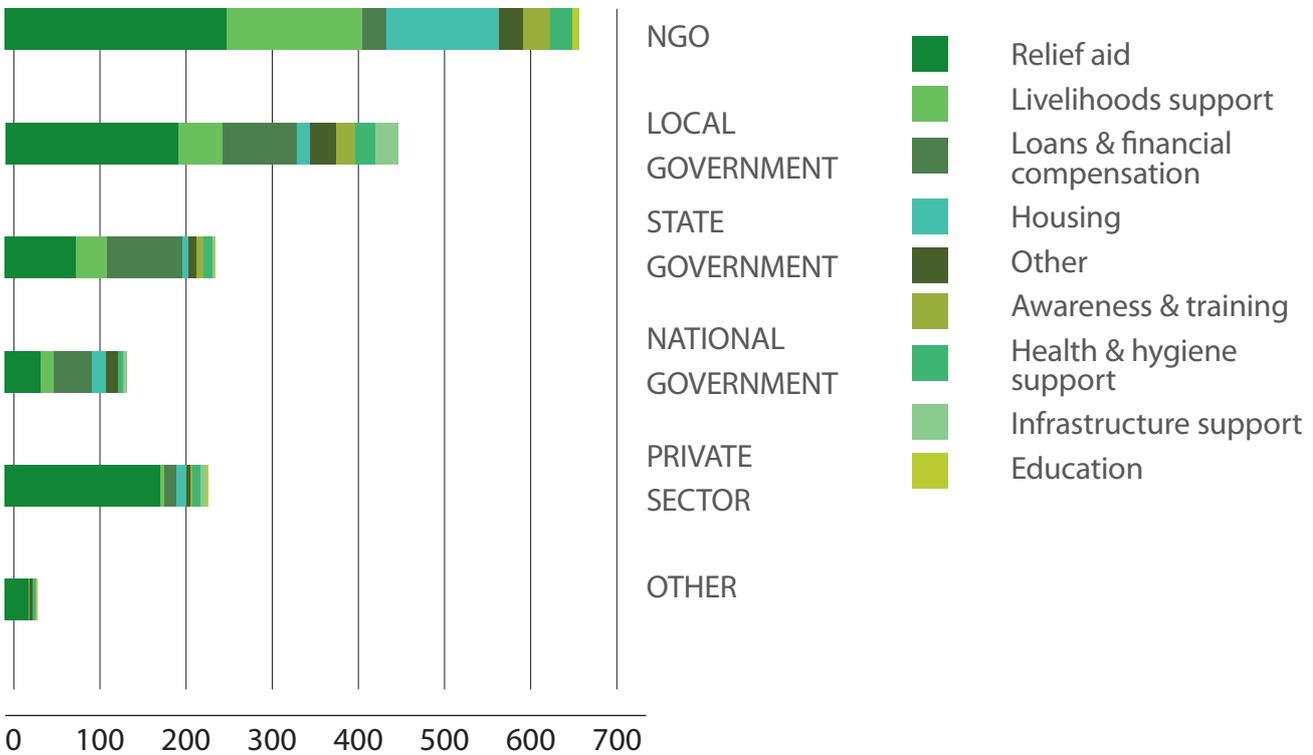
PUTTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PRIORITIES ON INSTITUTIONAL AGENDAS

Despite the capacities and leadership demonstrated by communities, the magnitude and frequency of natural hazards are such that communities require the support of other stakeholders to combat the adverse effects of these phenomena. This chapter examines the extent to which support provided by key stakeholders – NGOs, local authorities and national governments – is aligned to the priorities of communities; the conditions under which government programmes advance or impede community resilience; and the role of community-led collaborations and partnerships in advancing resilience to benefit communities and their partners.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER

Relief aid (Figure 4.1) is the predominant type of support communities have received in the face of natural disasters (44%)¹. Communities report that this has come largely from NGOs (37%), followed by local government (26%)². NGO and local government support is better aligned with community priorities than support provided by other actors, as the former tend to interface more frequently and closely with communities³.

FIGURE 4.1 TYPE OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF DISASTERS

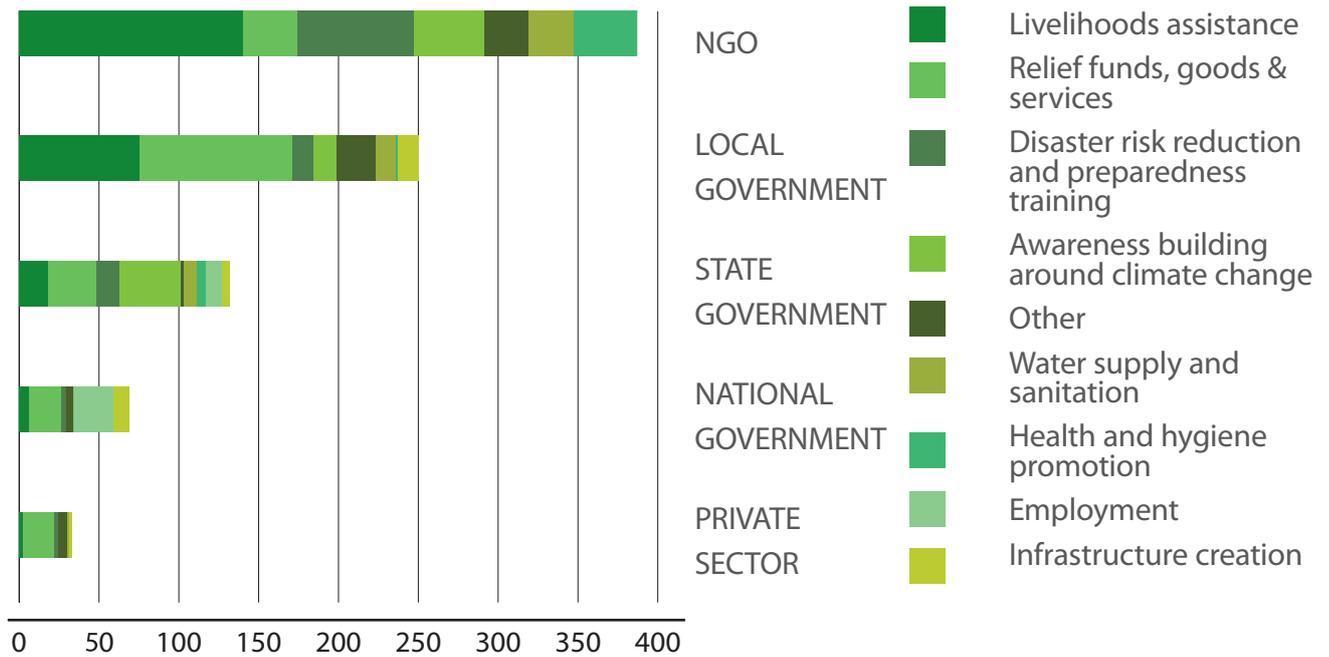


N= 1,780 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

NGOs also provide more support than others for health⁴ – the second highest priority area reported in the context of climate change. In contrast, state or provincial and national government support focusses

almost entirely on short-term relief and compensation. These findings resonate with the World Disasters Report 2010⁵, which states, “While most national and international disaster relief agencies have become increasingly effective in the much needed rapid response to disasters, they are less effective in developing longer-term responses that allow survivors to rebuild their homes and livelihoods. They focus on what they can do for victims, not what needs to be done by them”.

FIGURE 4.2 TYPE OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE



N = 872 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

In disaster-prone communities, NGO support for livelihoods has been in cash (grants or assistance with accessing loans), kind (livestock, seeds) and through training workshops on agricultural adaptation practices⁶.

In the context of climate change (Figure 4.2), most support was reported to be in the form of livelihoods support (28%)⁷ and emergency relief (23%)⁸. NGOs have focussed more on livelihoods support (36%)⁹ while local government has prioritised emergency relief (38%)¹⁰.

Despite health and education being identified as sectors of high impact and therefore high priority areas for communities, health-related support in the context of both climate change and disaster was limited to four and five per cent respectively, with even less support for education.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES THAT ADVANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Communities identify infrastructure, afforestation, agricultural programmes, housing and social protection as government initiatives that reduce their vulnerability and build their resilience to natural hazards and climate change. In Indonesia, the government's mangrove development initiative was named as an example¹¹ of a government initiative that has protected the environment and created a natural barrier that has reduced the impact of strong winds and floods. In Vietnam, community members draw attention to the Government's Decree No. 67¹², which makes special provisions for free housing for those in need¹³. In most cases, however, communities have had to advocate or collaborate with local or national government to ensure that programmes are effectively implemented at the local level and reach the targeted households. Communities from all seven countries provide evidence of leveraging partnerships with government to rehabilitate livelihoods, address basic needs and access health services¹⁴.

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SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

Communities cite social protection programmes as a mechanism for reducing vulnerability to disasters and climate change. Describing national social protection programmes that have helped their communities build resilience, focus group participants in the Philippines mention the Philippines Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, designed to deliver conditional cash transfers to the poor. Participants in India cite the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which offers wage employment for the construction of much-needed infrastructure. Yet, although these programmes do provide a framework and opportunities to support local community priorities, it is evident that community-led collaborations and partnerships are key to ensuring effective implementation at the local level (Box 4.1).

BOX 4.1 COMMUNITY-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS UNDERLYING RISK

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme, or the Philippines Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, provides cash transfers to the poorest families who comply with its regulations with regard to providing healthcare and education to their children aged 0-14¹⁵. As DAMPA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to collaborate on the programme, its leaders work with government officials to identify, survey and map the poorest families through the National Household Targeting System of the DSWD. Once identified and their details verified, households that fulfil the requirements become eligible for cash transfers. DAMPA's partnership with DSWD has also led to the involvement of rural member communities

such as those in Leyte and Surigao in the Kapit-Bisig Laban Sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) programme in upgrading water supply and irrigation, and constructing roads and river embankments. With an in-built mechanism to formalise community involvement and agenda-setting, the programme acts on the basis of community proposals to fund rural infrastructure through local governments¹⁶.

In Maharashtra, India, grassroots women leaders avail the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a national government employment programme that guarantees poor, rural households 100 days of wage employment annually through projects focussed primarily on rural infrastructure, water security, flood control and land productivity. The Sakhi Federation has identified organic vegetable farming as a strategic solution to enable women in the drought-ridden district of Osmanabad, to tackle food and livelihood security issues. To address the acute water shortage, federation leaders approached the village councils for water harvesting structures and made certain that their demands were reflected in the village plans that were conveyed to block and district officials. Consequently, 72 farm ponds and 62 wells are currently under construction on lands leased or owned by women vegetable growers, and 369 ponds in the district are under renovation. The Federation's efforts have resulted in the construction and repair of sorely needed water harvesting structures, better access to water, and wage employment for landless women.

Source: Focus group discussions and interviews with DAMPA staff, Philippines, 11 January, 2013; Sakhi Federation leaders, Maharashtra, India, 21 December, 2012; and personal communication with P. Chandran, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, 1 May, 2013.

LOCAL-LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

As implementation bodies of national programmes on the ground, local governments play a key role in reducing disaster risk. Being most accessible to the people, they are also best positioned to address community priorities. Numerous examples of local government initiatives spurred by community advocacy emerged during discussions with community leaders.

In Tamalwadi, Maharashtra, India, members of the Sakhi Federation recalled the local government responding to their advocacy efforts by using the state Jalswarajya programme to upgrade and improve rural water-related infrastructure¹⁷. They also referred to local government efforts to address the health and water concerns of the community by introducing a larvicide into their water supply¹⁸. Elsewhere, the Ansurda local government in Osmanabad district has implemented a rainwater harvesting system to recharge wells during the rainy season¹⁹.

In Legazpi City, Philippines, community leaders said, “*proposals (with regard to flooding and sanitation) were presented to the local city government and have been addressed,*”²⁰ indicating the responsiveness of local government to community priorities. In Bagong Silangan, a flood-prone barangay in Quezon City, Manila, local government reconsidered its decision to relocate communities from low-lying areas to sites that were remote and unable to accommodate all the families vulnerable to flooding. In response to community advocacy, the barangay worked with the City to construct retaining walls to protect the community²¹. In Surigao del Norte province, where people experience high levels of poverty, deforestation and frequent floods, storms and landslides, communities from the DAMPA federation have made an institutional priority of disaster risk reduction at the local level. They mapped their vulnerabilities and presented the evidence to government officials at the provincial level. In response, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has directed all local government units in the province to raise risk awareness in these communities and develop emergency and disaster risk reduction plans to address the problem.

FORMALISING ROLES OF COMMUNITIES IN LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Communities not only collaborate with local governments but also negotiate formal agreements with them. These formal agreements and partnerships set clear precedents for institutional collaborations between local governments and communities, and demonstrate that local authorities see the value of formally partnering with local communities.

FIGURE 4.3 PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS RECOGNISED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES



FIGURE 4.4 PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS RECOGNISED FOR WORK ON DISASTER AND CLIMATE CHANGE



More than one quarter of the respondents said they have been recognised by the local government (29%)²² for their participation in and coordination of disaster and climate change related programmes (13%)²³ as shown in figures 4.3 and 4.4. Communities in Indonesia and Nepal, for example, partner with local government to find workable solutions to address poverty and the lack of basic services, which are major drivers of disaster risk.

BOX 4.2 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO BUILD RESILIENCE

46 In Makassar, Indonesia, the women-led, urban poor organisation Komite Perjuangan Rakyat Miskin (KPRM) signed a ‘political contract’ with mayoral candidate Sirajuddin. The candidate agreed to prevent forced evictions and find viable solutions for housing, livelihoods and basic services for the urban poor in return for 70,000 votes from the community. Since winning the elections, the mayor has partnered with KPRM on concerns of the urban poor. KPRM has been appointed to the Poverty Reduction Task Force to handle grievances related to the city’s social protection programme, through which poor families can access subsidised or free health and education services. KPRM is also part of a sub-district monitoring team for the procurement committee that monitors health clinics and health projects. Its strong working relationships with local government have resulted in collaboration on upgrading informal settlements and setting up SIAGA, the Makassar Community Alliance for Disaster Response. This multi-stakeholder, pro-poor, citywide network comprises 15 organisations working on resilience, and works with the City to fulfil its commitments to the UNISDR Making Cities Resilient campaign. KPRM and UPC also convened a public dialogue/ press conference to discuss health and nutrition issues with government officials with a view to maximising services and social protection strategies for the poor. In addition, KPRM collaborates with the City and BPBD, the local disaster mitigation agency, to incorporate disaster risk reduction into poverty reduction initiatives and design disaster management guidelines for schools.

The Sundar Pokhari community of Sarangkot Village Development Committee (VDC)²⁴, Pokhara, Nepal, faced a severe water shortage after their only source of water dried up. As members of the National Network for Women in Community Resilience (NNWCR), they partnered with Lumanti to present the problem to the VDC. The community subsequently received USD 1,150 from the local government to recharge the pond, which also helps break the momentum of landslides, to which the area is prone. An important outcome of this partnership has been the formation of a Users’ Committee, which enables community ownership of the initiative as they can contribute in cash and labour. Bishnu Paudel, Chairperson, Sarangkot VDC, said, “*While this has been a demand for years, it was only after meeting with Lumanti and the NNWCR that we realised the importance of a pond for the community. The work they are doing is excellent but as the budget they allocated was inadequate, we decided to complement their efforts with our contributions*”. Indicating that the VDC recognises the advantages of partnering with the community, he added, “*(Community members) can play an active role by participating in planning, programme design, and implementation. They can lead awareness*

raising efforts and involve every household. The VDC has many wards and the government is limited in its ability. It makes sense for the community to lead this initiative”.

Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/awimssm/kprm-siaga-makassar-reportage-hc> and interviews with Bishnu Paudel, Chairperson, Sarangkot VDC, Nepal, 16 January, 2013.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS THAT UNDERMINE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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Government programmes designed to enhance the wellbeing of citizens can have the opposite effect by creating impediments to advancing community resilience and exacerbating disaster risk in poor communities. One quarter of community members surveyed²⁵ assert that certain government programmes undermine community resilience (Figure 4.5). They cite infrastructure (23%)²⁶, livelihoods (23%)²⁷ and disaster risk reduction programmes (22%)²⁸ as examples of government initiatives that have compromised resilience building efforts and increased community vulnerabilities.

FIGURE 4.5 GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES THAT UNDERMINE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE (TOP 3 RESPONSES)



N = 220 responses. Respondents provided multiple responses.

Respondents identify large-scale public investments in dams, roads and industry as having increased community risk and vulnerability. The absence of critical infrastructure such as overhead bridges or retaining walls, or the fact that these are incomplete or in a state of disrepair, intensify the hazards posed to already vulnerable communities.

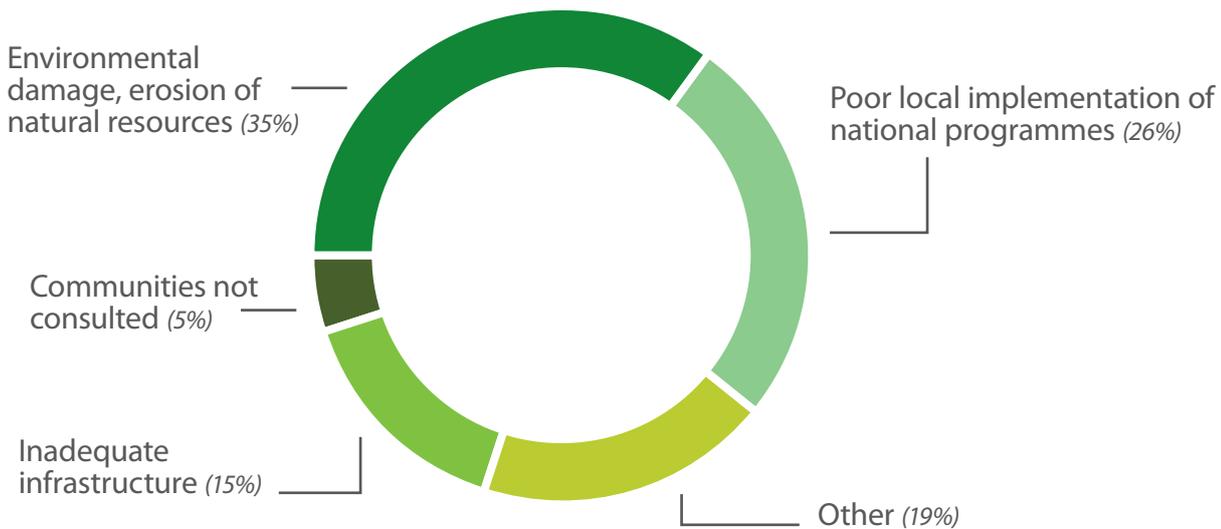
A community leader from Bihar, India, cited the construction of a dam as a threat to her community’s wellbeing, saying, “*The Purvithatha community faces dam-related problems and an increased risk of flooding*”²⁹. Similarly, a community leader from Legazpi City, Philippines, stated, “*the road opening at Barangay 27 caused a minor landslide in Barangay Zone 1. There was also a road elevation which is flooding our community*”³⁰. These examples illustrate the ‘safe development paradox’, where maladaptive government policies, such as “structural responses and alleviation measures (e.g., provision of embankments, channel modification, and other physical alterations of the floodplain environment), designed ostensibly to reduce flood risk, can have the reverse result”³¹.

Grassroots leaders are also critical of livelihoods programmes that they see as poorly planned and ineffectively implemented, with lengthy

bureaucratic processes that render them inaccessible. Elaborating on concerns about ineffective disaster risk reduction programmes, community members point to poor local implementation as a primary concern. A community leader from the Philippines explained, “*Local government units do not know that they are a part of the structure of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Council. They must become aware of this*”³². There is evidently a gap between national legislation and policies, and local implementation of programmes that local communities invariably bear the brunt of.

Elaborating on features of government programmes that undermine their resilience (Figure 4.6), communities emphasise environmental degradation (35%)³³ and poor programme implementation (26%)³⁴ as the foremost deterrents to community resilience. Women leaders from coastal Andhra Pradesh, India, are especially critical of the growing number of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) saying, “*Large initiatives such as SEZs and factories are polluting the sea*”³⁵.

FIGURE 4.6 HOW GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES UNDERMINE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



N = 467 responses. Respondents provided multiple responses.

GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVES ON COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITIES

Interviews with government officials reaffirm that local government is best positioned to understand the realities on the ground and respond to communities through dialogue and collaboration. In Vietnam, proximity to the sea and high salinity areas render hamlets in the jurisdiction of the local government body, namely the CPC, exceedingly vulnerable to devastation by storms and floods. Working in close collaboration with the hamlets and basing its annual storm and flood prevention plans on those

of the hamlets, the CPC coordinates and implements all natural disaster prevention in the area. This includes assisting communities with repairing and reinforcing dikes and managing evacuation efforts, so that the bulk of natural disaster prevention responses “*are implemented smoothly and in cooperation with the community*”³⁶. The initiative owes a large part of its success to its inherent multi-stakeholder planning mechanisms that prioritise community needs.

“Many poor communities have taken the initiative in preparedness and this is good. Areas such as preparedness and prevention are new to the government. The people need to make a noise and force the government to listen because it is their lives and property at stake. Preparedness activities should take place at the local government level in partnership with the communities affected.”

Source: Interview with Francisco Fernandez, Under Secretary, DILG, Philippines, 15 January, 2013.

With regard to the challenges governments face in collaborating with CBOs, government officials interviewed cite attitudes of officials, local government’s inadequate understanding of national policies, meagre funding, and a lack of inter-agency coordination and collaboration as the major impediments to effective risk governance. Other challenges mentioned in this context include hostility and resistance to engaging with poor communities, elite capture of resources, and a lack of government accountability. According to Francisco Fernandez, Under Secretary for the Urban Poor, Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippines, “*Many bureaucrats are hostile to community organisations. However, because poor communities are so well organised, they force the government to collaborate*”³⁷. This official also raises the problem of accountability where local governments, not knowing how to spend the five per cent allocated to disaster management in the initial stages, used the fund for bonuses for officials. Reiterating lack of accountability as a driver of poor risk governance, an official from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal, said, “*Local bodies are not elected, so they have functioned as government appointed bodies for the past 10 years. As a result, the people cannot hold them accountable. Their tenure is temporary, they lack accountability and are only here to make a living*”³⁸. Both comments point to the fact that decision-making with regard to budgets and programme priorities, without an understanding of community needs, indicates an absence of incentives for governments to consult and be accountable to local communities.

Acknowledging the difficulty of working within the limitations of current funding, an official from Kirtipur municipality, Nepal, stated, “*Resources allocated for disaster are mobilised at the central and district levels, where they are utilised mostly for publicity, promotion, awareness raising and relief*

rather than for preparedness or awareness. The fund should be mobilised and utilised at the municipal level instead, because the municipality knows and understands the needs of the communities. This would ensure their optimal utilisation³⁹. His statement underscores the fact that although local governments are better positioned than state and national governments to respond to the needs and priorities of local communities, they are not always invested with the power and resources to act.

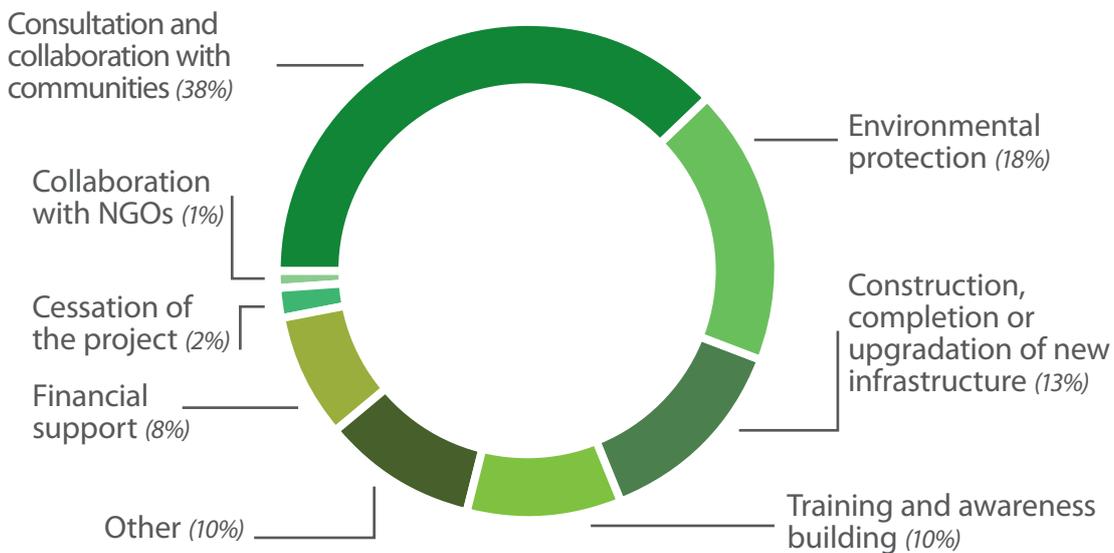
WHAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD DO ABOUT PROGRAMMES THAT UNDERMINE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

“The government seldom involves people; even visits to the community are rare. We want to be involved in government programmes, from budgeting to implementation.”

Source: Focus group discussion with UPC community leaders, Jakarta, Indonesia

Community respondents cite changing the terms of engagement by increasing community involvement in decision-making processes, consultation and collaboration (38%)⁴⁰ as the most effective way to reverse problems caused by government programmes, strengthen programme effectiveness and promote resilience, as shown in Figure 4.7. Environmental conservation (18%)⁴¹, including natural resource management, and formulation and implementation of environmental preservation plans for sustainable development, was the second recommendation.

FIGURE 4.7 WHAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD DO ABOUT PROGRAMMES THAT UNDERMINE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



N=321 Responses.

CONCLUSION

The study indicates that while government programmes can advance community resilience, they may instead exacerbate risk through environmental damage, poor implementation, or inadequate or sub-standard infrastructure. Building resilience requires communities to build relationships and advocate with governments to ensure effective local implementation of large public programmes. As community-government partnerships have been particularly effective in delivering social protection programmes that build the resilience of the poor, communities recommend that governments consult and engage with them to improve programme delivery. Existing formal partnerships between communities and local government demonstrate that local governments do recognise the value of such collaborations.

ENDNOTES

¹ 787 of 1,780 responses (44%) cite relief aid as the predominant type of support that communities have received to counter the effects of natural disasters.

² 666 of a total of 1,780 responses pertain to NGO support while 456 of this total pertain to local government support.

³ “Local governments, mayors and community organisations are at the frontline and centre of disasters and knowledge of resilience building. Putting more emphasis on their views and capabilities is critical for success in reducing disaster risk and building resilience. The HFA2 then can be designed with local actors in mind as a primary implementer”, UNISDR Synthesis Report Consultations on a Post-2015 Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2) Geneva: United Nations, 2013, p.7.

⁴ Of the 78 responses pertaining to health, 25 reveal NGO support in disaster-affected communities. This is even higher for communities affected by climate change where out of 47 responses pertaining to health 40 report NGO support.

⁵ The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 2010: Focus on Urban Risk*, Geneva, 2010, p. 53.

⁶ According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2012, *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, the rehabilitation of livelihoods is an under-researched area, with studies focussing primarily on recovery and reconstruction of ‘lifelines of infrastructure supply’ like water and electricity rather than on “agricultural rehabilitation (e.g., the provision of seeds, planting material, fertilisers, and stock, and the remediation of land)... (which) is particularly important where local livelihoods are directly affected, such as in subsistence or semi-subsistence societies (Dorosh et al., 2010).” p. 301.

⁷ 241 of a total of 872 responses pertain to livelihoods support.

⁸ 200 of a total of 872 responses pertain to emergency relief.

⁹ 140 of a total of 387 responses pertain to livelihoods support received from NGOs.

¹⁰ 96 of a total of 250 responses pertain to relief aid received from local government.

¹¹ Focus group discussions with community leaders, JRMK Community Centre, Kembang Lestari, North Jakarta, Indonesia, 5 February, 2013.

¹² <http://policy.mofcom.gov.cn/english/flash!fetch.action?libcode=flash&id=f15f79da-00d0-4a81-8382-5a8b74078fac&classcode=170;120>

¹³ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Commune People’s Committee, Hall of Long Binh Commune, Go Cong Tay District, Tien Giang province, Vietnam, 8 January, 2013.

¹⁴ Focus group discussions with community leaders in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.

¹⁵ <http://pantawid.dswd.gov.ph/index.php/about-us>

¹⁶ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/12536/690940Revised00port0Complete0lowres.pdf?sequence=5>

¹⁷ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Tuljapur block on 21 December, 2012, and Osmanabad blocks, Maharashtra, India, 23 December, 2012.

¹⁸ Abate, based on the active ingredient temephos, manages a broad spectrum of nuisance and disease-causing insects, such as mosquitoes, before they hatch. It was used to take vector control to the community level.

¹⁹ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Tuljapur block on 21 December, 2012 and Osmanabad blocks, Maharashtra, India, 23 December, 2012.

²⁰ Focus group discussions with community leaders, COPE Foundation Office, La Fuerza Building, Baybay, Legazpi City, Philippines, 22 January, 2013.

²¹ Interview with Crisell Beltran, Barangay Captain, Bagong Silangan, Philippines, 15 January, 2013.

²² 177 of 603 participants report being recognised by local government.

²³ 78 out of 603 participants report being recognised for their participation in and coordination of projects or programmes.

²⁴ A VDC is a local government unit in Nepal.

²⁵ 146 respondents of a sample of 603 said government programmes increase risk and vulnerability.

²⁶ 50 of 220 responses (23%) cited government infrastructure projects as impediments to communities resilience building efforts.

²⁷ 50 of 220 responses (23%) cited livelihood projects as impediments to communities resilience building efforts.

²⁸ 49 of 220 responses (22%) cited DRR programmes as impediments to communities resilience building efforts.

²⁹ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Nav Jagriti, Bihar, India, 6 February, 2013.

³⁰ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Faro Compound Repair Yard (FCRY), Parola, Philippines, 12 January, 2013.

³¹ IPCC, (2012), p.77.

³² Focus group discussions with community leaders, Faro Compound Repair Yard (FCRY), Parola, Philippines, 12 January, 2013.

³³ 162 of 467 responses (35%) cited environmental degradation as one of the foremost features of government programmes that deter community resilience building.

³⁴ 121 of 467 responses (26%) cited poor programme implementation by government as one of the main deterrents to community resilience building.

³⁵ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Sanghamitra, Andhra Pradesh, India, 6 January, 2013.

³⁶ Interview with Đặng Hoàng Thọ, Vice-Chairman of the Commune People Committee, Tien Giang Province, Vietnam, 9 January 2013.

³⁷ Interview with Francisco Fernandez, Under Secretary, DILG, Philippines, 15 January, 2013.

³⁸ Interview with Laxmiprasad Baskota, Section Officer, Disaster Management Section, Ministry of Home Affairs, Kathmandu, Nepal, 14 January, 2013.

³⁹ Interview with Sujindra Maharjan, Chief of Legal Section, Kirtipur Municipality, Nepal, 11 January, 2013.

⁴⁰ 122 of 321 responses (38%) cited consultation and collaboration as one way to counter government inefficiencies.

⁴¹ 59 of 321 (18%) responses cited environmental conservation as a way to counter negative effects on the environment caused by government programmes.



05

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE BUILDING

Based on 20 years of partnerships with women-led CBOs working to advance resilient, sustainable development, the Huairou Commission has been evolving a definition of resilience that attempts to capture its multi-faceted nature (Box 5.1). However, as resilience is a highly debated term, this chapter focusses on understanding its key elements and the factors that advance and impede it, from the perspectives of those most affected by disasters and climate change. Communities make recommendations on how to increase their capacities to prepare for, respond to and recover from the hazards of natural disasters and climate change based on what they see as the critical elements of resilience. Their recommendations are of two kinds – general strategies to overcome the challenges to advancing their resilience, and specific recommendations for governments.

BOX 5.1 DEFINING RESILIENCE

The term ‘resilience’ refers to the capacity of a community to organise itself to reduce the impacts of disasters and climate change by protecting lives, livelihoods, homes and assets, basic services and infrastructure. Resilience includes the capabilities of communities to advance climate-smart development, social networks and institutional partnerships that protect community wellbeing in the face of disasters. The ability to withstand shocks is influenced by access to power, resources and assets. In the pre-disaster context, resilience pertains to measures to proactively reduce vulnerabilities and risks. In post-disaster contexts, it includes the ability to recover from shocks and stresses created by disasters and climate change.

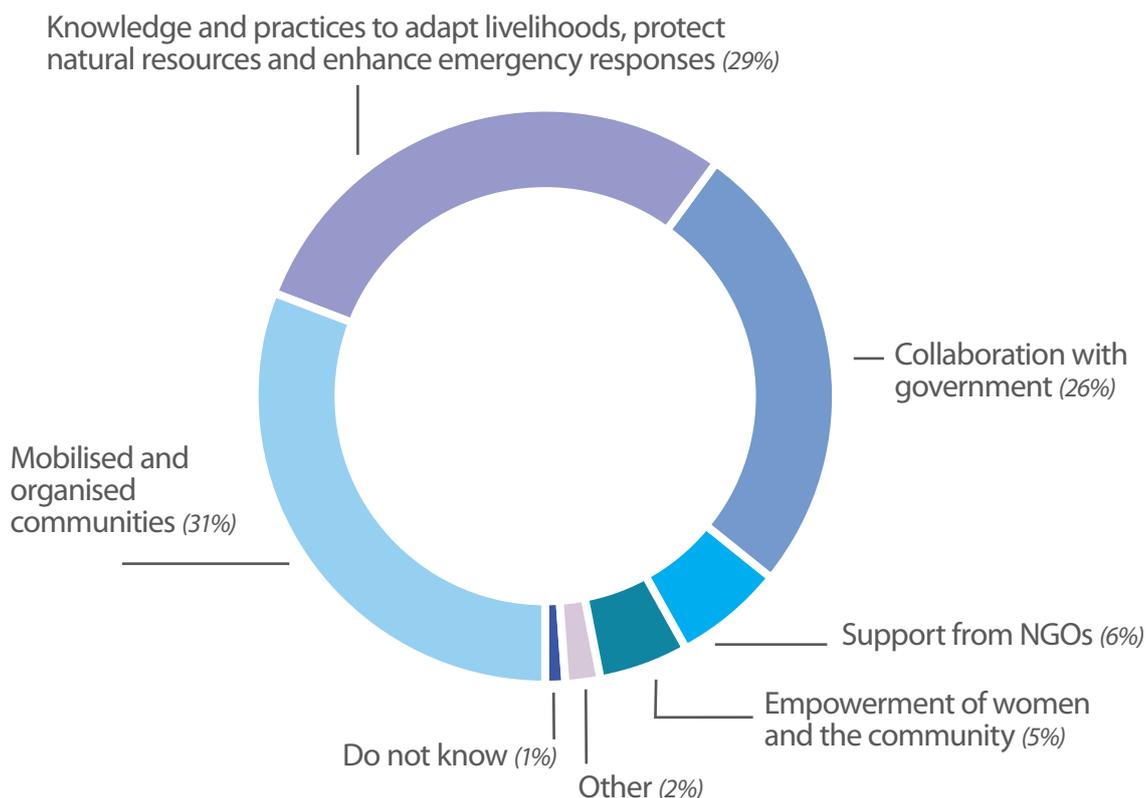
Source: Fordham and Gupta (2011)¹.

KEY ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

When asked to identify the key elements that contribute to their resilience (Figure 5.1), community responses underscore three features:

1. Community organisation and mobilisation (31%)²;
2. Knowledge and practices required to build disaster and climate resilience (29%)³;
3. Collaboration with government (26%)⁴. Of these, knowledge and practices are prioritised by women (32%)⁵, members of larger community-based networks and federations (31%)⁶, and rural communities (30%)⁷. Men prioritise mobilisation and collective action (47%)⁸.

FIGURE 5.1 KEY ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



N = 1,255 responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

Community mobilisation and organisation is considered an essential first step for resilience building. This involves communities assuming leadership, collaborating within their own and across communities, forming disaster management committees and promoting women’s representation within local level organisations. A community leader from Nepal highlighted the importance of mobilised groups, saying, “We need to organise and mobilise ourselves into groups that understand the challenges of disaster management”⁹.

Community leaders in the Philippines said, “Community disaster awareness initiatives must be undertaken to acquaint community members with the concepts and hazards of disaster and climate change. Communities can then organise around these issues. In 1997, when we organised ourselves and used the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre Manual, we learnt just how vulnerable we were as a community that lives between two rivers. We know we have to be prepared. Once we were organised, we were better placed to build our capacities”¹⁰.

A government official from the Philippines endorsed this view saying, “There must be unity and cooperation among community members as it is they who must respond to disaster first. The government and other players only come in later”¹¹.

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES TO ADVANCE RESILIENCE

Two kinds of knowledge and practices are seen as vital for resilience building. The first pertains to adapting livelihoods and protecting communities' natural resource base (9%) while other capacities described as critical include emergency preparedness and response measures (21%)¹² such as risk mapping and analysis, and the presence of active, skilled disaster management committees.

Grassroots women leaders of Ghoghardiha Prakhand Swarajya Vikas Sangh (GPSVS) in Bihar, India, stated that the livelihood skills they want to learn from NGOs pertain to *“new agricultural practices that reduce water use while increasing production and promoting flood resistance, nursery training, mixed agriculture, advanced vermicomposting, and seed production and preservation”*¹³.

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COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT

From a community perspective, dialogue with government officials and access to government programmes is essential to resilience building. Communities believe that a strong relationship with government enables them to convey their concerns and access information on entitlements and programmes. Collaboration, as defined by the participants, includes government recognition of the roles and contributions of women's groups. Several participants said they were part of local or national decision-making bodies so as to influence them from within.

Community leaders from the Philippines emphasise the importance of representation on decision-making bodies, stating, *“We should be part of a National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committee so that we know what's really happening in a particular community and have access to funds to build our resilience”*¹⁴.

Similarly, in Tamil Nadu, India, SSP community leaders advocating for robust, collaborative relationships and the importance of consulting grassroots women's groups said, *“Whenever someone from outside comes to our community, they don't meet self-help groups or 'ordinary' women. They are only interested in meeting big leaders such as panchayat (village council) members. This should change. Decision-making bodies should include representatives from poor communities. We are not aware of new government schemes and programmes so we can't influence decisions made by local government. That's why we push for coordination and partnership with (these institutions). They should actively work with women's groups because they are not aware of the social issues we face”*¹⁵.

A COMMUNITY-LED APPROACH TO RESILIENCE

Responses from the focus group discussions and the survey make it evident that communities have a holistic view of resilience that renders it difficult for them to disentangle the numerous elements involved. They could not separate risk mapping, for example, from mobilising community action or using the findings to negotiate with local government¹⁶.

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Their disaster risk reduction initiatives are so closely intertwined with their development practices that a discussion on integrating these into development is extraneous. By emphasising protection from disaster and reconfiguring relationships with decision-makers equally, their multi-faceted approach simultaneously addresses both the technical and the political elements of advancing resilience. Professionals and policymakers, on the other hand, tend to take a more compartmentalised, sectoral perspective of resilience building, that results, more often than not, in a technical approach, which does not adequately address the absence of institutional accountability to communities.

Communities in Nepal, India, Indonesia and the Philippines leverage the Community Resilience Fund to nurture a community-led, multi-pronged approach to resilience building (Box 5.2). Their approach combines actions to advance community knowledge and practical innovations with leadership and organisation building to aggregate and amplify the impact of community advocacy and practices. These two strategies enable communities to demonstrate an informed, organised constituency base and a practice base, both of which are essential for leveraging partnerships with local and national governments.

BOX 5.2 THE CRF IN ACTION: THE SAKHI WOMEN'S FEDERATIONS IN INDIA

In Maharashtra, India, the Sakhi Women's Federations facilitated by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, use the Community Resilience Fund to address multiple resilience priorities. The Community Resilience Fund supports 150 women's SHGs that mobilise communities and village councils by organising village mapping exercises that enable communities to prioritise their needs. The small grants given to groups are used primarily to demonstrate innovative strategies for livelihoods adaptation such as development of seed and fodder banks, promotion of agro-based enterprises and formation of women's producer groups to process and sell food grains. Women also undertake regular peer exchanges to teach and learn how to build more resilient health, water and sanitation systems, and create safe shelters and infrastructure.

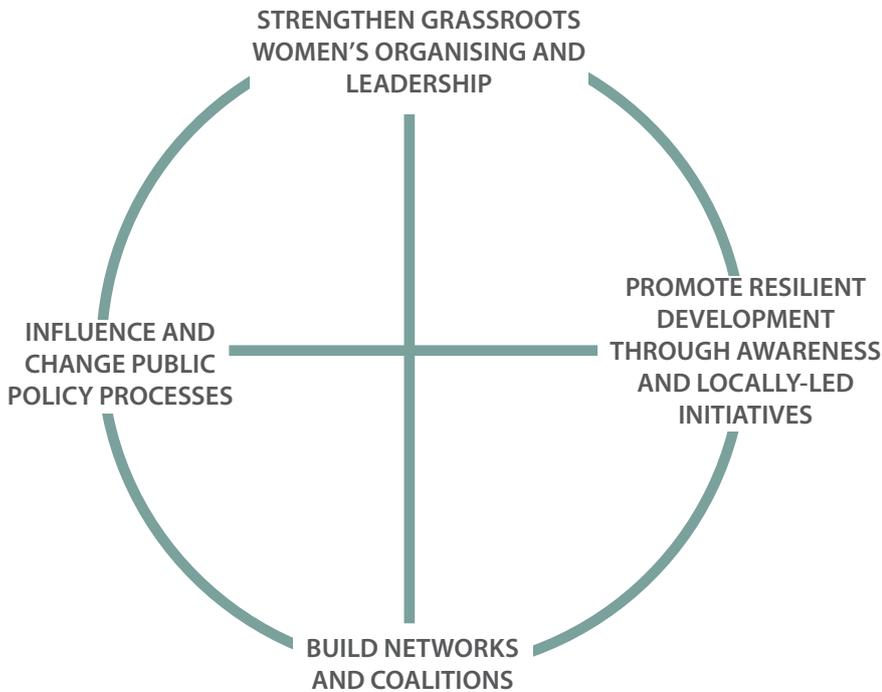
Additionally, women take on public roles as community information facilitators who liaise with governments, weather stations and agricultural scientists on behalf of their communities. These activities, supported by

the CRF, are also used to leverage resources from national programmes such as the MNREGA, and environment and reforestation schemes, in order to combat the effects of drought.

Source: Swayam Shikshan Prayog, March, 2013 *Grassroots Women Build Resilient Communities*.

FRAMEWORK EMERGING FROM A GRASSROOTS-LED, MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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FACTORS THAT IMPEDE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING

The top three challenges to resilience building as identified by the communities are insufficient community mobilisation and organisation for collective action (23%)¹⁷, inadequate knowledge of disaster and climate resilience practices (23%)¹⁸ and ineffective government programmes (20%)¹⁹.

Urban communities (30%)²⁰, men (27%)²¹ and leaders who are not part of larger community-based networks (42%)²² or decision-making committees (31%)²³, in particular, believe that the lack of organised collective action hinders their resilience.

Lack of knowledge and skills on resilience building practices poses a major constraint for rural communities (25%)²⁴, women (25%)²⁵, groups that are part of larger community networks (24%)²⁶ and members of decision-making committees (26%)²⁷.

Ineffective government programmes hinder grassroots communities in the Philippines (36%)²⁸ and groups that form part of a larger network (22%)²⁹.

STAKEHOLDERS BEST POSITIONED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES FACED BY COMMUNITIES

When asked which stakeholders they believe should implement their recommendations, 29 per cent³⁰ of responses favoured a government-led approach. Rural communities (36%)³¹, in particular, hold the government responsible for implementing recommendations with regard to public school education and delivery of social protection programmes.

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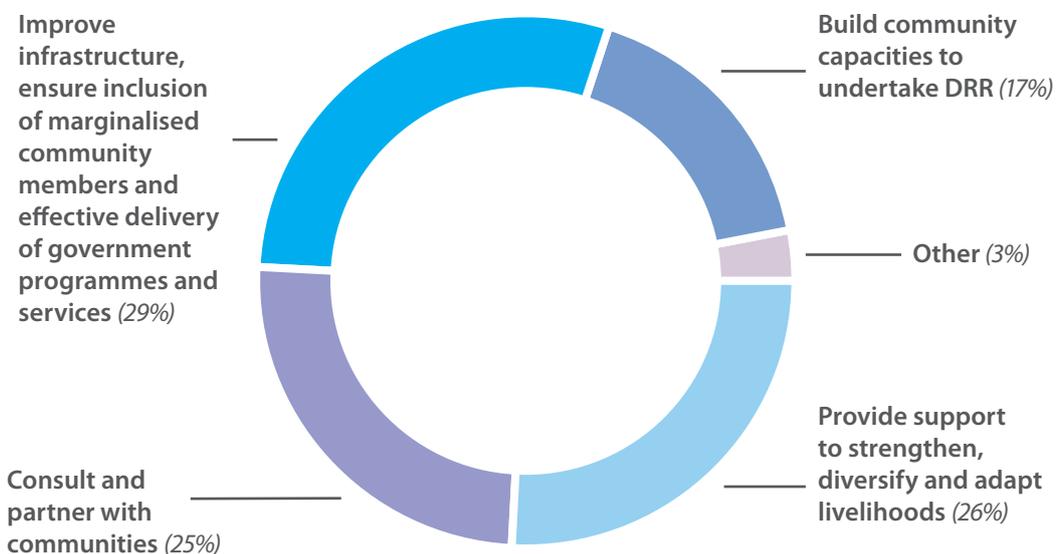
A multi-stakeholder approach in which communities work with NGOs and local and national government was affirmed by the next highest number of responses (27%)³², mainly by urban communities (30%)³³. Discussing the need for such an approach, one leader in Indonesia observed, “*We should advocate against environmentally unfriendly policies developed by the government. The government, social organisations, private sector and media should all take the lead in this*”³⁴.

Local governments received the third largest number of responses (14%)³⁵. Their role was linked to furthering community engagement and consultation in decision-making processes, capacity building and ensuring the effective implementation of government programmes.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS

In the course of identifying problems with government programmes and infrastructure³⁶, communities stated that poor implementation of programmes designed to benefit them exacerbates disaster risk and vulnerability. As government has been identified as the stakeholder expected to take the lead in addressing their challenges, this action research concludes with communities’ recommendations specifically aimed at governments (Figure 5.2).

FIGURE 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS



N = 988 Responses. The total exceeds the sample of 603 as some respondents provided multiple responses.

Communities recommend four major strategies to increase responsiveness of government policies and programmes to community priorities:

1. Provide support to strengthen, diversify and adapt livelihoods (26%)³⁷:

Community leaders emphasise the criticality of protecting livelihoods in the face of natural disasters and climate change, and seek wider opportunities to learn and test strategies to strengthen, diversify and adapt livelihoods. Access to credit is seen as essential in this context.

2. Consult and partner with communities (25%)³⁸: Communities underscore the need to include them in local and national decision-making processes in two ways: By including community representatives in decision-making bodies and by formally appointing CBOs and networks in planning, implementing and monitoring processes so that governments can be held accountable to communities. As a woman leader from Dhaka, Bangladesh, asserted, *“Community members need to unite and form groups. They also need to form DRR committees at the local and government level. Slum dwellers should also be involved in local planning and decision-making processes”³⁹.*

3. Improve infrastructure and ensure effective delivery of government programmes and services (19%)⁴⁰: Effective delivery of basic services, housing and infrastructure is a key need of grassroots communities. They are particularly concerned with ensuring that poor and marginalised communities can access anti-poverty programmes and other government services.

4. Build community capacities to undertake disaster risk reduction (17%)⁴¹: Communities ask for greater government investment in capacity-building for disaster risk reduction and climate change. Women leaders state that this includes establishing women-based disaster risk reduction committees. Other community capacities that require to be bolstered are mobilisation, risk mapping and action plans emerging from mapping and awareness raising about government schemes for the poor⁴².

A community leader in Andhra Pradesh, India, argued, *“Village level committees should be established and their capacities increased. Infrastructure, such as toilets and permanent houses, is required. Free water supply should also be made available to the people. For this to happen, local authorities, such as community leaders, local government members, task force members, but also SHG members, federations and government officials must collaborate with each other.”⁴³*

CONCLUSION

The three most crucial elements of resilience, from the community perspective, are mobilised communities that can take collective action; knowledge and practices they can apply to protect themselves and their

livelihoods; and collaborations with government. This indicates that the ability to build organised, informed constituencies that can influence decision-making is at least as important as technical skills and knowledge to promote their protection and wellbeing in the face of disasters.

Consistent with their definitions of the critical elements of resilience, grassroots communities view insufficient organisation for collective action, inadequate knowledge of disaster and climate resilient practices, and ineffective governance as challenges to their advancing resilience.

62 Thus, their recommendations to governments reiterate the need for learning and testing livelihoods strategies, partnerships with government, improved infrastructure and delivery of government services, and enabling communities to organise themselves to prepare and respond to disasters.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Fordham et al., *Leading Resilient Development*, Huairou Commission, Groots International, Northumbria University School of the Built and Natural Environment and the United Nations Development Programme, 2011.
- ² 391 of a total of 1,255 responses (31%) pertain to community mobilisation and collective action as the main factors contributing to resilience building.
- ³ 370 of a total of 1,255 responses (29%) pertain to awareness raising as the main factor contributing to resilience building.
- ⁴ 328 of a total of 1,255 responses (26%) pertain to collaboration with government as the main factor contributing to resilience building.
- ⁵ 330 of 1,040 responses from women (32%), as compared to 40 of 215 responses from men (19%), prioritise knowledge and practices as factors that contribute to resilience.
- ⁶ 298 of 975 responses from groups that are part of a larger network (31%) as compared to 72 of 280 responses from non-network groups (26%) prioritise knowledge and practices as factors that contribute to resilience.
- ⁷ 254 of 837 responses from rural communities (30%) as compared to 116 out of 418 responses from urban communities (28%) prioritise knowledge and practices as factors that contribute to resilience.
- ⁸ 100 of 215 responses from men (47%) as compared to 291 of 1,040 responses from women (28%) prioritise mobilisation and collective action as factors that contribute to resilience.
- ⁹ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Sundar Pokhari, Sarangkot VDC, Pokhara district, Nepal, 6 February, 2013.
- ¹⁰ Focus group discussions with community leaders, De Dios Compound, Phase 2, Greenland Banaba, Philippines, 10 February, 2013.
- ¹¹ Interview with DSWD officers Evangeline Tuazon and Imee Rose Castillo, Philippines, 18 January, 2013.
- ¹² Of 1,255 responses, 110 (9%) pertain to awareness of and training in knowledge and practices to adapt livelihoods and protect natural resources and 260 responses (21%) pertain to awareness of and training in disaster preparedness.
- ¹³ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Gospurpatti and Nagpiprahi villages, Khushpur district, Bihar, India, 21 December, 2012.
- ¹⁴ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Gate 17 Area D, Barangay 20, Parola Tondo, Manila, Philippines, 10 February, 2013.
- ¹⁵ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Kandankadu, Singarathoppu, Sonankuppam, Nochikkadu, Tsunami Nagar and Thazhankuda villages, Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, India, 20 December, 2012.
- ¹⁶ Focus group discussions across all countries surveyed.
- ¹⁷ 195 of 830 responses (23%) pertain to lack of mobilisation within communities as a factor impeding resilience building.
- ¹⁸ 191 of 830 responses (23%) pertain to lack of knowledge about disaster and climate change as a factor impeding resilience building.
- ¹⁹ 169 of 830 responses (20%) pertain to ineffective government programmes as a factor impeding resilience building.
- ²⁰ 102 of a total of 340 responses from urban communities (30%), as compared to 93 of a total of 490 responses from rural communities (19%), reveal that a lack of organised collective action impedes resilience building.
- ²¹ 43 of a total of 162 responses from men (27%), as compared to 152 of a total of 668 responses from women (23%), reveal that the lack of organised collective action impedes resilience building.
- ²² 85 of a total of 201 responses from groups that are not part of a larger network (42%), as compared to 110 of a total of 629 responses from groups that are (17%), reveal that a lack of organised collective action impedes resilience building.
- ²³ 144 of a total of 468 responses from groups that are not part of decision-making committees (31%), as compared to 49 of a total of 333 responses from groups that are (15%), reveal that a lack of organised collective action impedes resilience building.

²⁴ 123 of a total of 490 responses from rural communities (25%), as compared to 68 of a total of 340 responses from urban communities (20%), reveal that a lack of knowledge and skills impedes resilience building.

²⁵ 168 of a total of 668 responses from women (25%), as compared to 23 responses of a total of 162 responses from men (14%), reveal that a lack of knowledge and skills impedes resilience building.

²⁶ 154 of a total of 629 responses from groups that are part of a larger network (24%), as compared to 37 of a total of 201 responses from groups that are not (18%), reveal that a lack of knowledge and skills impedes resilience building.

²⁷ 85 of a total of 333 responses from groups that are part of decision-making committees (26%), as compared to 94 of a total of 468 responses from groups that are not (20%), reveal that a lack of knowledge and skills impedes resilience building.

²⁸ 44 of a total of 123 responses (36%) from communities in the Philippines reveal that ineffective government programmes impede resilience building.

²⁹ 139 of a total of 629 responses from groups that are part of a larger network (22%), as compared to 30 of a total of 201 responses from groups that are not part (15%), report that ineffective government programmes impede resilience building.

³⁰ 207 of a total of 718 responses from community members (29%) identify national government as one of the primary stakeholders responsible for addressing challenges to resilience.

³¹ 157 of a total of 439 responses from rural communities (36%), as compared to 50 responses of a total of 279 responses from urban communities (18%), hold the government responsible for implementing recommendations.

³² 193 of a total of 718 responses from community members (27%) identify multiple stakeholders as responsible for addressing challenges to resilience.

³³ 85 of a total of 279 responses from urban communities (30%), as compared to 108 of a total of 439 responses from rural communities (25%), prioritise a multi-stakeholder approach to address the challenges faced by communities.

³⁴ Focus group discussions with community leaders, KPRM Secretariat, Indonesia, 2 February, 2013.

³⁵ 102 of a total of 718 responses from community members (14%) identify local government as one of the primary stakeholders responsible for addressing challenges to resilience.

³⁶ Refer to page 48 of this document.

³⁷ 259 of 988 responses from community leaders (26%) pertain to livelihood support as a strategy to improve the effectiveness of government programmes.

³⁸ 245 of 988 responses from community members (25%) pertain to partnering with government as a key strategy to improve the effectiveness of government programmes.

³⁹ Focus group discussions with community leaders in Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 26 January, 2013.

⁴⁰ 192 of 988 responses from community members (19%) pertain to improved infrastructure and effective delivery of government programmes as strategies to improve effectiveness of government programmes.

⁴¹ 167 of 988 responses from community members (17%) pertain to community mobilisation and capacity-building as strategies to improve the effectiveness of government programmes.

⁴² Focus group discussions with community leaders, Kandankadu, Singarathoppu, Sonankuppam, Nochikkadu, Tsunami Nagar and Thazhankuda villages, Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, 20 December, 2012.

⁴³ Focus group discussions with community leaders, Sanghamitra Service Society, Gollagudem Pedapatnam, Machilipatnam Mandal, Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh, India, 6 January, 2013.



**CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS:
PUTTING COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE PRIORITIES
ON THE AGENDA FOR 2015**

Grassroots community views on resilience and documented evidence of their practices confirm that their resilience priorities are best addressed when communities are mobilised and organised for collective action; knowledgeable and experienced in protecting themselves from danger; and work in collaboration with local and/ or national government to ensure that programmes are responsive and accountable to the poor. Towards this end, the action research proposes the following recommendations:

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1. Invest in community-led transfers to scale up effective resilience practices

This action research provides concrete evidence of community leadership, knowledge and practices in advancing disaster and climate resilience. Community-led initiatives consistently form the largest proportion of all local interventions to reduce disaster impacts. A sizeable number of community leaders surveyed demonstrate expertise in protecting their livelihoods and incomes, emergency response and awareness raising through community risk mapping and by transferring practices. Communities have negotiated partnerships with local and national governments to advance their resilience. Yet, the rising incidence of small- and large-scale disasters demands rapid scaling up of community resilience capacities. NGOs and governments must invest in community-led strategies that enable grassroots experts to transfer effective practices. Such strategies would expand local capacities to withstand the onslaught of disasters and climate change while formally recognising community expertise and leadership that is often undervalued and underutilised.

2. Incentivise community-government partnerships and create mechanisms that formalise community roles in government programmes

Evidence shows that where communities have collaborated with government for local implementation, programme delivery of services, infrastructure and social protection has been more relevant, transparent, and therefore more effective. While there is documented evidence of formal agreements between communities and local authorities or national governments setting clear institutional precedents, community-government partnerships are for the most part ad hoc and informal. It is essential to create institutional mechanisms that provide formal incentives for government-grassroots partnerships and formalise the public roles played by communities in advancing resilience.

3. Foster community organising and constituency building along with technical expertise for community resilience

By identifying mobilisation and organised collective action as a key ingredient of community resilience, communities draw attention to their

organising and leadership capabilities, both frequently overlooked and thus invisible to disaster professionals and policymakers. This action research provides evidence that members of groups and larger networks are more likely to access NGOs and governments and the services they provide, thereby endorsing the view that the poor and marginalised are more likely to influence public decision-making and access their entitlements when acting in unison as large, informed constituencies rather than individuals. When supporting communities to undertake disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, NGOs and government programmes tend to invest primarily in training to enhance community know-how. However, organisation and leadership are the foundations of sustained community action and, in the eyes of communities, as crucial as training on emergency response and livelihoods adaptation. It is the organised constituency base of communities that enables them to amplify their voices, expand their impacts and thereby influence decision makers. Thus, technical training on disaster and climate resilience must go hand in hand with fostering community leadership and constituency building.

4. Set aside decentralised, flexible funds to foster multi-dimensional resilience building efforts

Effective community-led resilience practices are characterised by a multi-dimensional approach in which well informed, organised constituencies innovate practical, locally relevant solutions and negotiate partnerships with local and national governments. However, communities are at different stages and scales in their resilience building work. Their varying capacities and differing opportunities provide different entry points for advancing resilience. It is therefore essential to provide flexible resources, which communities can tailor to meet their specific needs to organise, learn, and test localised solutions and build partnerships.

5. Recognise grassroots women's organisations and networks as key stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring resilience programmes

The practices documented in this action research and survey findings reveal that whenever grassroots women's organisations take the lead in advancing disaster and climate resilience, their solutions do not exclusively benefit women, but entire communities. Their numerous public roles to advance resilience include mobilising their communities through mapping, increasing food and water security, supplementing family incomes, advocating for better community infrastructure, and ensuring that poverty reduction programmes reach targeted households through partnerships with local and national governments. These realities contradict the predominant notion of grassroots women as victims

dependent on external help. Policymakers must acknowledge grassroots women's leadership and ensure that organised groups of poor women are seen as key stakeholders with formal roles in planning, implementing and monitoring resilience building programmes.

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