

Promoting and Strengthening NGO Cooperation through The Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN) Network Development

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Why ADRRN?

The Asian Disaster Risk Reduction Network (ADRRN) is necessary because there is a felt need to:

- Get to know about the existence & work of different institutions
- Share Experiences, templates, formats, policies, best practices etc
- Undertake joint work: for example in water-resources area between India and Nepal
 - It is strange that we still have difference of opinion on even the cause-effect relation for flood hazard.
 - Environmental degradation etc
- Develop shared vision on what works and what doesn't
- Facilitate rapid propagation of knowledge, experiences, lessons learned from case studies and actual disasters,
- Achieve actual progress in terms of saving lives from disasters
- Set values, norms, and standards for
- Monitor compliance to standard
- Encourage partners/members to observe the standards by:
 - Naming & Shaming

Network structure of ADRRN

Any network should have nodes and branches. A node is a center that provides the links to branches and to other nodes of lower hierarchy. ADRRN also has a structure. Ideally the structure should consist of:

- A Center
- Regional Network
 - Regional NGO
- National Network
 - National NGOs

Currently, in its youth, the role of the center is kindly played by ADRC.
The national NGOs are the members of ADRRN.

We do not have any regional or sub-regional structure so far.

Relationship within the Network

Relationship between the centre and the member of ADRRN

Communication: The network can be functional effectively only if an effective system of communication between the members and the center has been established. Similar system is necessary also to be established among the members. Communication within the network should ideally be via email, internet, and web-sites of the center and the members.

Program collaboration: The network should allow development and implementation of program collaboration between the Centre and any or a group of members. The program could belong to any aspects of disaster risk reduction and emergency response planning and capacity enhancement. It could also be focused on geographical areas, or sector-specific, governed by the felt-need by and subsequent agreement reached between the member(s) and the Center.

Event-related Visits by center to member or vice-versa: It should generally be encouraged to arrange visits by the Center to the Member and vice-versa. Such visits could coincide with disaster events or other events such as a Disaster Day in the Member country. Given the fact that visits by international

dignitaries are generally rated very high in developing countries, arranging High Level Meetings during such visits by the Center to the Member country could be of extra benefit, especially in areas of policy influence, at very low extra cost.

High Level Meetings have been a very productive tool for the World Seismic Safety Initiative (WSSI).

Factors influencing center-member relation:

Volume of Communication: Regular contacts are helpful in developing understanding and communication.

Program collaboration augments such relation. A working relation with shared responsibilities, help build trust.

Binding instruments such as a memorandum of understanding could be very instrumental in binding the institutional relationship close.

Member-member relation

Project collaboration: Any collaboration between Members of ADRRN should be encouraged. Very successful cases of effective collaboration are plenty. Economy resulting from such collaboration can not be overemphasized.

Event- related visits by member to other member or vice-versa: Such visits could be during a disaster event or also during any national event such as conferences, disaster reduction day celebrations, and even country-level workshops. Such interaction help develop contacts between professionals of the two countries.

Factors influencing member-member relation

Similarity in problem / focus areas: Shared focus areas of activities may become the cause of strong bond between specialized NGO, although it may also give rise to turf issue if handled not properly. The Implementation of the Municipal Earthquake Risk Management Program in Nepal by NSET and IndGESI in India by SEEDS happens to be one of the stronger bonds between the two NGOs. There is closeness of approach in conceptualization, and mutual cooperation in the implementation of projects such as Parvat Yatra, Shake table demonstration, Mason Training along the Himalayan Ranges.

Geographical proximity: Geographic proximity offers possibilities of collaboration that must be exploited.

What can be done to strengthen the ADRRN network

Define and develop standards: One of the most important outcomes of ADRRN should be development of appropriate standards of work and intervention by the different NGOs of different countries. Such standards should cover across nations, regions, and areas and they should be there for every kind of hazards and for the different phases of disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Example areas to develop shared standards could be: disaster relief services, disaster definitions (small disaster vs. large disaster), how and when to declare emergencies, how to manage the flux/volume of external assistance during disasters.

These standards should inherently propagate the applicable approaches and principles of disaster risk reduction and emergency response planning, capacity enhancement and implementation of DRR. Some of the agreed upon principles are:

- Bottom-up approach
- Public private partnership
- Joint work by Governments, Civil Society and Business
- Involvement of "the vulnerable" in disaster risk reduction, in projects for enhancing livelihood opportunities
- Strive for creating a group of "respectful" and "dedicated", professionals in a variety of sectors

Recognize the work

Disaster risk reduction does not as yet get recognition from the government or the formal establishment in many Asian countries so far. Recognition still goes to the works of charity, which is many times identified with organization of relief and rehabilitation works following a disaster. On the contrary, the contribution by any institution or individual in reducing the risk is not recognized because there is no indicator to measure the reduced risk and enhanced capacity in terms of preparedness. Therefore, it is necessary that a Network establish a system of recognizing good practices and contribution by institutions and individuals, and publicize their work widely. Such recognition could be made also by institutionalizing or encouraging international/regional institutions to establish awards, recognition plaque, memorial lectures etc,

Support local initiatives

The Network should always support financially or otherwise all the activities at the local levels. The Center should in turn support the Members enabling them to mobilize support for the grassroots level activities. Such support could be of the following forms:

- Small grants for program support
- Intellectual Support
 - E.g. to NSET Masons
- Awards/Scholarships to students, interns
 - to undertaker basic research
- Dissemination of best local practices, e.g.
- Dissemination of best methodologies, indicators, proven traditional wisdom
- Dissemination of best national policies towards NGOs

Identify areas of cooperation and implement joint projects

It is generally felt that a concept paper should be prepared which could identify the areas of cooperation and also possibly the areas suitable for initiating joint projects. This concept should also provide the template for developing the joint projects or cooperation before, during, and after disasters. The basic contents of such concept paper should be:

- Guidelines
 - Templates
 - Modus Operandi for Member-member and Member-Center cooperation each phase of disaster.
- The paper should be publicized widely.

Make a case in the World Conference in 2005

ADRRN is a new institution. It is still in its developing phase. However, considering the need to show a solid presence in the forthcoming UN World Conference on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction in Kobe in 2005, it is necessary that ADRRN develops well before the Conference the following:

- Clarity of concepts and ideas on the mission, vision, objectives, Modus Operandi in 2004
- A Plan of Action for ADRRN, for submittal to the World Body
- A model for integrating Disaster Risk Reduction in Development. This requires to identify and partner with existing Global or Regional/National Platform for dialogue with Development Partners, such as
 - Multilateral Agencies, Banks
 - Bilateral Agencies
 - UN System
 - Multinational NGOs
- Define and reach agreement on Modus Operandi of smaller National NGOs in relation to with the above-mentioned bodies

Perhaps the Center should start these initiatives.

Disaster preparedness network of Nepal

The following is a brief on the Disaster Preparedness Network (DPNet) of Nepal

- There are 22 member in the Network
- Members include:
 - o NGOs e.g. Nepal Red Cross Society, NSET
 - o Individuals
 - o Government Agencies
 - o Government – operated long-term projects
 - o Emergency response agencies: e.g. Police
- Currently DPNet is in its Institutionalization phase
 - o It is mobilizing wider social acceptance, intellectual support
- DPNet has good relation with external agencies: EU, IFRC etc
- DPNet has a track record of implementing joint works by its partners. The collaborative works are in the fields of:
 - o Mainly training programs
 - o Awareness programs e.g. Earthquake Safety Day