

2. Highlights of 2009/2010

2-1. DRR Policy Peer Review (Pilot Project)

The ADRC launched its new initiative "DRR Policy Peer Review" as a pilot in FY 2009 for further supporting the efforts for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in member countries, as well as for promoting information sharing and strengthening the relations among member countries.

Peer Review is generally the evaluation and review of certain subjects by other professional and technical people in the same field in order to appropriately maintain or enhance the quality of the subjects based on high technical point of view. In the context of this project, it means that outside experts from member countries and in the field of disaster risk reduction review and assess disaster risk reduction related measures, programs and policies of member countries for further promoting disaster risk reduction.

The topic selected for the year's review was "disaster education and public awareness," and Bhutan and Thailand were selected as countries to be reviewed. After country reports were submitted by the two target countries, each reviewer team consisting of a member country representative, an expert from Japan, and an ADRC officer visited Bhutan and Thailand respectively as explained below.

Thailand

On 17-18 November 2009, the ADRC reviewer team comprised of Mr. Naoki Shiratsuchi of the Japanese Red Cross Society, Dr. Alvaro Antonyan of the Armenian National Survey for Seismic Protection Agency, and one of ADRC staff members visited Thailand.

During the two day survey, the team visited various ministries and institutions, including the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM, ADRC's counterpart in Thailand), the Ministry of Education, the National Disaster Warning Center, and the Thai Red Cross Society to examine how disaster education and public awareness have been promoted by both governmental and non-governmental organizations in Thailand.

Through the survey, the reviewer team identified various CBDRM and disaster education activities which have been undertaken by various actors in Thailand. The team also learnt that, Thailand, as the lead shepherd country of the ASEAN Regional Drawing Competition, has played a key role in the organization of this regional event with the main aim of raising public awareness of disaster risk reduction.

Based on the observation of the review team, the following strengths and weaknesses were identified.



Fig.2-1-1 Interview survey in Thailand

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thai government's strong commitment to making disaster management a priority • Well established institutional arrangement in national and local government for decision making and coordination at policy level • Active approach to support the strengthening of disaster risk management cooperation in the ASEAN region • A fair allocation of budget to disaster risk management efforts at the national level • High level of awareness, motivation, capabilities of officials at the national level • Diligence, educational level, discipline of the Thai people • "Home-court advantage" of many international disaster risk management organizations in Thailand, including the UNISDR, ADPC, and the IFRC. Also, regional support by JICA and ADRC • Because Thailand is not a particularly disaster-prone country, there is some breathing time to prepare (in disaster-prone countries where large-scale disasters occur frequently, many resources have to be allocated to relief and recovery activities, leaving little left to prepare for future emergencies). • Existing MoUs and plans that stipulates strong cooperation between related agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of personnel at the local level in disaster management • Need to prioritize the disaster risk management and allocate more budgets at the local government • More clear mechanism for coordination and information sharing at project/activity level • Securing qualified personnel at the local level, as many roles are played by a small number of prominent members of the community (such as school teachers) • Activity monitoring, data collection and analysis, outcome measurement • Further promotion of the ASEAN Regional Drawing Competition, including active participation of member countries and partnership with other agencies

Based on the above observation of the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of Thailand, the reviewer team provided the following recommendations to Thailand.

1. Maintain and develop the pace of efforts at the central government level
2. Strengthen efforts at the local and community level
3. Set priorities (for example, types of hazards, regions, or target groups)
4. Further promote partnerships and cooperation with relevant organizations
5. Monitor activities and measure outcomes
6. Explore ways to further promoting the ASEAN Cooperation

Bhutan

Another reviewer team comprised of Dr. Koichi Shiwaku of the Earthquake Disaster Mitigation Research Center of the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention (EDM-NIED), Mr. Arshad Nawaz Chheena from Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and one of ADRC staff member visited Bhutan on 25-26



Fig.2-1-2 Interview survey in Bhutan

November 2009. They learned about ongoing efforts and policies in the field of disaster education and public awareness by visiting the Department of Disaster Management (DDM, ADRC's counterpart in Bhutan), the Department of School Education, the Department of Geology and Mines, the Standard Quality and Control Authority, and UNDP Bhutan office.

The Department of Disaster Management, which was upgraded from a division in 2008, has been actively promoting disaster risk reduction including disaster education and public awareness as a lead coordinating agency in Bhutan. Although disaster risk reduction has been a new area for Bhutan, various unique policies and activities were observed during the survey. The below are the strengths and weaknesses identified by the review team.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership of the DDM in coordinating all disaster-related activities and programs in Bhutan • Promotion of the philosophy of Gross National Happiness, which contributes to promoting disaster risk reduction • Richness of human resources in Bhutan • Existence of National Disaster Risk Management Framework and National Disaster Management Bill • Provision of finances: establishment of a relief fund, mitigation and preparedness fund, and emergency response fund • Coverage of all phases of the disaster management cycle (with DDM divisions managing Preparedness and Mitigation, Response and Early Warning, and Relief and Reconstruction) • Full commitment of the country to prepare a National Disaster Management Plan by initiating workshops for the development of local Disaster Management Plans • Promotion of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) • Participation of communities in preparing local plans for specific or relevant hazards • Establishment of an awareness campaign for schools through the development of a School Disaster Management Plan • Masonry training for selected areas • Relationships with international organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs for more linkage between regular teaching system and disaster education • Need for greater enforcement of laws to ensure community safety against disasters • Strength of school buildings has not been checked. • Few staff in disaster-related departments (DDM is fully aware of this issue.) • Multiple hazard situations have not been well considered. • Information gap between rural and urban areas.

Bhutan faces harsh reality of increasing risks of natural disasters such as GLOF. However, relevant agencies have been accelerated their efforts to prevent and mitigate the impact of such disasters, promoting public awareness and school disaster education activities. Their efforts will bear fruits rapidly in light of strong leadership of the government, accumulated human resources, diligent Bhutanese, and the size of the country.

School safety and community safety are interrelated issues. Integrated plans for community safety that include schools are expected to be developed. The government has a responsibility to promote and achieve community and school safety through the active participation and cooperation of both community and schools.

The following are the findings and recommendations of the mission based on the strengths and weaknesses identified, although some of the points are fully recognized by the government.

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1. School Safety and Education
 - Though some efforts have been made to conduct awareness campaigns in the schools, more work can be done to include disaster risk reduction in the regular teaching system, such as incorporating it as a subject in the curriculum of schools/colleges.
 - Extra-curricular activities should be also utilized for school disaster education. These activities can provide more active and exercise-based learning experiences to school children, which helped them learn how to cope with natural disasters in a natural way.
 - Teacher guidelines for disaster risk education should be developed. The guidelines will help teachers promote disaster education in schools.
 - Hazard maps can be utilized for school disaster education so that students will learn the hazards that exist in the areas where they live and where their schools are.
 - The strength of school buildings should be examined for emergency planning and to determine their level of disaster resistance.
 2. Community
 - Hazard maps are expected to be used to create evacuation plans and to identify evacuation sites at the community level.
 - Hazard maps indicating evacuation sites are expected to be developed for/with community members.
 3. Link Between School and Community
 - Community should be involved in school projects since schools are core community institutions.
 - Hazard maps are expected to be developed with the community, and also widely shared with the community, school teachers, and students.
 4. Government
 - Relevant authorities require more commitment to the dissemination of legal frameworks and national policies that can lead to raising awareness of people and protect the community from natural disasters.
 - More capacity development of national/local government officials who are in charge of disaster management in Bhutan. The DDM can focus more on coordinating work, not conducting programs by themselves.

The pilot project taught us that this project could provide us a great opportunity to share good practices and lessons learned among ADRC member countries, rather than reviewing each other. In the pilot project, reviewers learned a lot from the efforts and experiences of Thailand and Bhutan and were stimulated by their unique policies and activities of these two countries.

Utilizing the inputs from these two target countries and reviewers, the ADRC intends to make a better program for next fiscal year. The ADRC would like to express its sincerest gratitude to all of those who have made valuable contribution to the pilot project.