
4-5. The Project on Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Management in Central America “BOSAI”

Countries in Central America frequently face natural disaster risks such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activities, hurricanes, floods, and landslides. The Center for Coordination for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC), which represents the governments of six countries in the region (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama), created a plan regarding cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on the development of disaster-resilient societies.



Fig. 4-5-1 Central America and project sites



Fig. 4-5-2 Used tire wall, Costa Rica

The project on Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Management in Central America, called the BOSAI project, covers the period from May 2007 to April 2012 and aims to reduce disaster risks and damage by increasing the disaster management capacity of communities and local governments. The main component of this project is to transmit the spirit of “BOSAI”, or disaster preparedness and the willingness to face current disasters, learn from past disasters, and prepare for future disasters.



Fig. 4-5-3 Early warning system, El Salvador

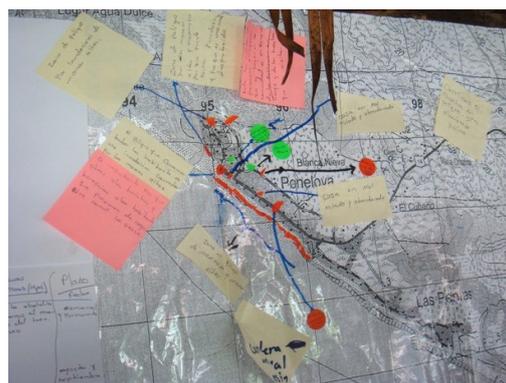


Fig. 4-5-4 Tsunami DIG, Nicaragua

Pilot projects are being implemented in communities in each Central American country using the various tools and methods that have been developed, such as the Disaster Imagination Game (DIG), hazard mapping, risk evaluation, evacuation drills, and disaster education activities, as well as the

installation of rain gauges, river gauges, used tire walls, volcano monitoring systems, and early warning systems. The BOSAI project has three internal inputs: long-term experts, short-term experts, and donated equipment. This project also has four related inputs: a training course in Japan, a training course in Mexico, Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), and cooperation with other international donors.



Fig. 4-5-5 Sandbag collection, Panama



Fig. 4-5-6 Community Risk Map, Honduras

ADRC dispatched Mr. Arakida to Central America to serve as a long-term expert for JICA from September 2006 to August 2009. He organized a kick-off meeting for the BOSAI project in May 2007, supported the creation of annual operating plans in each country, held various workshops at the national, municipal, and community levels, and arranged Japanese professors to visit as short-term experts. He also developed coordinators to conduct activities in various communities and to coordinate detailed plans with key players in each country. He and other experts traveled around six countries over the course of three years.

Mr. Arakida brought various experiences and techniques from Japan and other Asian countries to the BOSAI project, but he also learned some useful lessons from Central America, including the ability to develop low-cost early warning systems in cooperation with residents in both upstream and downstream areas, and the importance of holding a preliminary training course before sending trainees to attend training in Japan. Some of these lessons are likely to be spread to the countries of Asia through future ADRC activities.



Fig. 4-5-7 Volcano education, Guatemala



Fig. 4-5-8 Coordinators' meeting