

LINKING GOOD PRACTICE
COMMUNITY-BASED
DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT
WITH GOVERNMENT
POLICY AND PRACTICE

TURNING PRACTICE INTO POLICY

tearfund

Contents

BOOKLET CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Phase 1	3
Findings	4
Conclusions and recommendations	6
Phase 2	7
Findings	8
Conclusions and recommendations	9

CD ROM CONTENT

Turning Practice into
Policy Research Report



LINKING GOOD PRACTICE
COMMUNITY-BASED
DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT
WITH GOVERNMENT
POLICY AND PRACTICE



Photo by HEED

tearfund

INTRODUCTION



HEED

Raft made of banana trees to escape flooding in Bangladesh

A strong national policy framework is essential to support and scale-up Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM). This is especially crucial in the context of global climate change, which is expected to increase the frequency and severity of hazards. It is increasingly recognised by NGOs, government and institutional donors that to achieve this 'scaling up' it is important not only to demonstrate good practice at the local level, but also to identify, and seek to address, the constraints on investment in CBDRM faced by national governments.

Consequently, between 2006 and 2007 Tearfund undertook an extensive piece of research among communities and governments in South, South East and Central Asia and Africa on CBDRM. This was done in two separate phases. Phase 1 focused on identifying good practice CBDRM, while Phase 2 focused on identifying challenges in linking CBDRM with government policy and practice, and methods to overcome them. The combined results are included in the report, contained within the attached CD Rom, and can be used by civil society, governments and institutional donors to generate increased governmental support for CBDRM.

PHASE 1

In 2006 Tearfund and partner organisations undertook fieldwork with facilitators in local community focus groups in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, India, Indonesia, Malawi and Sri Lanka. This identified what local people considered to be good practice CBDRM, such as actions, measures or processes that they deemed had, or could have, a positive effect in reducing their vulnerability to the hazard(s) to which they are exposed.

To supplement these field findings, expert opinion was subsequently sought from academics and practitioners with specific experience of the subject. A workshop was held on 12 December 2006 where experts and specialist members of Tearfund's staff considered and discussed a draft report. Feedback from the workshop has been incorporated into this report.

'Training is perhaps more important than any physical measure in one key aspect. It is dynamic. If you build a flood protection measure it relates to our current knowledge of flood protection. If you train someone well, they will be able to respond to situations 30 years from now.'

Professor Ian Davis,
Tearfund workshop



Grain storage facilities for drought mitigation in Rajasthan, India

DRR team / Tearfund

Findings

In total, 53 examples of the type of intervention that can be considered good practice CBDRM were identified. These provide a broad range of approaches including structural and non-structural, and within the different time contexts of Normality/Pre-disaster Development, Emergency/Chronic Crisis and Recovery. The interventions were categorised as Financial, Natural, Physical, Human and Social, based on the concept of sustainable livelihoods.¹ Tearfund found that there were three fundamental factors contributing to good practice CBDRM:



DRR team / Tearfund

Diversification of livelihoods through kitchen-gardening in Malawi

- Good practice CBDRM is based on some important 'principles' that are applicable in most contexts.

These include the participation of local stakeholders in decision-making, the involvement of local government and the linkage with development plans. The adoption of appropriate principles will begin a process that should ultimately lead to the development of CBDRM measures, described in the Phase 1 report as 'examples'. These may include building houses on stilts in flood-prone areas, or the introduction of specific crops better able to withstand drought conditions.

- Although specific examples of CBDRM can be almost limitless, they fall into a more manageable list of 'topics' and relate to the variety of different hazard settings found across the world.

These topics help create the CBDRM process as they indicate the range of options that can be discussed by stakeholders as part of prioritisation and decision-making. Topics include the diversification of livelihoods and

¹ Adapted from the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets.



DRR team / Tearfund

Participation of local women in decision-making, India

This does not all happen in a vacuum: it happens within a particular context. The context (such as the level of democracy and decentralisation) influences the CBDRM process. However, the processes of decision-making regarding what risks exist, which ones are important, which ones can be reduced, and how best to achieve this will nearly always be different. Therefore the CBDRM examples adopted in one location at a particular point in time may well be very different from the CBDRM examples appropriate in another place or time, even when exactly the same principles are followed.

hazard-resistant construction, for example, and are the basis of the research findings in the Phase 1 report.

- Good practice CBDRM can be thought of as operating in a loop: the 'principles' of CBDRM are applied to make improvements in the implementation of CBDRM 'topics', resulting in specific 'examples' of CBDRM.

The examples, and how effective they are at reducing risk, should be fed back into the broader continual learning process of a risk-reduction approach, so as to improve methods and understand emerging issues.

A policy shift [is required], moving away from central-dominance to 'people-centric institutions', where local people are enabled to plan for all aspects of disaster risk management.

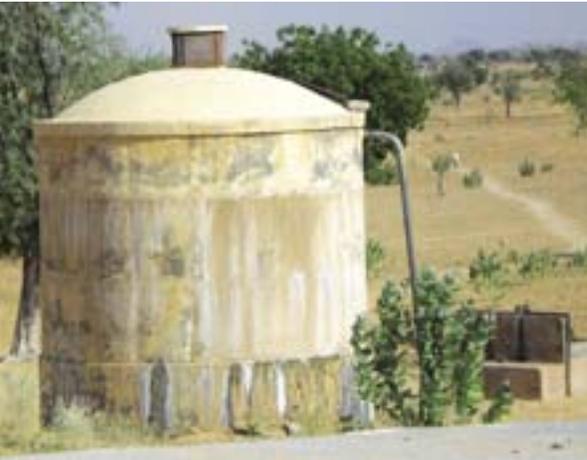
Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, Bangladesh
Unnayan Parishad Research
Institute

The majority of evidence collected was found to be predominantly relevant in the context of normality/pre-disaster development, indicating that more emphasis is needed to determine good risk-reduction practice during periods of emergency/chronic crisis, and particularly recovery. Within these two periods it is noted that external aid providers tend to ignore or belittle existing community strengths and capacities. Consequently these crucial elements of sustainable recovery can commonly be undermined.

Conclusions and recommendations

Understanding the context in which a particular CBDRM activity takes place is crucial. Commitment to valuing principles of good practice within the different topic boundaries leads to examples of good practice CBDRM. If the process is right, then the examples will follow. However, principles of good practice can be applied globally. Ideas relating to how vulnerability is being reduced in some places can be drawn on to inspire similar actions elsewhere.

Country governments, donor institutions, non-governmental organisations and communities can use the Phase 1 research to identify what good practice CBDRM looks like.



DRR team / Tearfund

Government-provided water cistern in Rajasthan, India

PHASE 2

During 2006-07, Tearfund asked a number of expert disaster risk reduction (DRR) academics and practitioners around the world to identify challenges associated with linking CBDRM with government policy and practice; in other words, why CBDRM is not better supported by governments. This was done with the aid of a questionnaire, to which over 30 people responded, and during the workshop hosted by Tearfund on 12 December 2006. In 2007 Tearfund also sought local and national governments' perspectives on CBDRM through a series of semi-structured interviews facilitated by Tearfund staff and partners in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger and Zambia.

Strong leadership and good will from government and civil society is required to build the trust needed for partnership.

Mark Pelling, King's College
London



Evangelical Association of Malawi

Discussion between communities and local government officials in Malawi

Findings

DRR academics, practitioners and governments revealed a number of challenges in linking CBDRM with government policy and practice. These fall into three categories:

- **TOP-DOWN ISSUES:**

Government-related issues that can hinder the allocation of resources for CBDRM

- Competing priorities
- Lack of financial resources
- Low government capacity
- Lack of supportive systems and structures
 - Emphasis on response
- Lack of effective government decentralisation
- Short time-frames.

- **BOTTOM-UP ISSUES:**

Community-related issues that can hinder the flow of information on CBDRM to government

- Poor appreciation of the government context
- Lack of understanding and clarity on good practice CBDRM
- Lack of influence at government level.

DRR team / Tearfund



Donor governments discussing climate change and disaster risk reduction policy

- **SHARED ISSUES:**

Government and community-related issues that can act as barriers to linking CBDRM with government policy and practice

- Different perceptions of risk
- Lack of trust
- Lack of integration of DRR in development.

The report, contained within the attached CD Rom, provides key methods to overcome these challenges, based on the views of those consulted, as well as Tearfund's own experience.

The challenges identified have significant implications for institutional donor organisations. Lack of financial resources and low (staff) capacity are key constraints hindering governments from making more progress. Donors can play a significant role in helping to address these two issues and creating a national political environment that supports CBDRM.

Conclusions and recommendations

Country governments, donor institutions, non-governmental organisations and communities themselves all have an important part to play in addressing the identified challenges.

Tearfund recommends that:

- **NGOS** use this research as an advocacy tool, and seek to influence governments at all levels, in collaboration with others. Seeking to understand government perspectives on DRR is an important starting point in developing a DRR advocacy strategy.
- **GOVERNMENTS** in disaster-prone countries work in consultation and partnership with vulnerable communities, NGOs and other local stakeholders to overcome the identified challenges.
- **INSTITUTIONAL DONORS** develop their own institutional capacity for DRR, in order to engage more effectively with national governments.

The political imperative for developing and developed country governments to act on these recommendations is provided by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005–2015,³ endorsed by 168 governments at the

World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005. One of the three strategic goals adopted at the WCDR is, *'The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.'* This strategic goal requires governments to work to address the challenges in linking good practice CBDRM with their policy and practice.

Tearfund believes that a key constraint to linking CBDRM with government policy and practice is civil society's lack of influence at government level. In light of increasing disasters and the onset of climate change, civil society needs to demand greater accountability from governments, advocating for greater political commitment to investing in building safer, more resilient communities.

3 UN / ISDR (2005) *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster* (Kobe: United Nations).

Turning Practice into Policy
written by Paul Venton,
Independent Consultant,
with Tearfund staff members
Jessica Faleiro and Sarah La Trobe.

© Tearfund 2007

tearfund

www.tearfund.org

100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK
tilz.tearfund.org

For further information contact:

jessica.faleiro@tearfund.org

sarah.latrobe@tearfund.org

enquiries@tearfund.org 0845 355 8355 (ROI: 00 44 845 8345)

Registered Charity No. 265464

18477 – (1207)



Recycled

Supporting responsible use
of forest resources

www.fsc.org Cert no. SGS-COC-003351
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

