

Institutionalizing Disaster Risk
Management in Higher Education
and Training Institutions

case study 2

The Institutionalization of Disaster Risk Reduction in Community Development Education: The U. P. CSWCD Experience

The Changing Scenes in Community Development

When Community Development (CD) was first introduced as an academic discipline in the Philippines in the 1950s, it was anchored on the western and functional perspective that development can take place through consensus building and partnership between the government and the local

people. Community Development became a very popular way of engaging the people in implementing community projects planned from above.

In the Philippines, the development agenda in the 1970s were very political in nature: martial law, poverty, human rights violations, dictatorship, and the breakdown of democratic institutions. A new perspective on CD evolved which emphasized structural analysis and community organizing as an approach in confronting the status quo. Adopting the conflict perspective to induce social change, CD proponents from the CSWCD and the more progressive groups provided an alternative perspective and methodology to mainstream thoughts and practice. This was done through organizing communities and sectors to challenge the Marcos dictatorship. Community development programs integrated CO and other participatory strategies as a venue or entry point for organizing. In preparation for the eventual transformation of the socio-economic and political structures, initiatives were carried out which adopted the tenets of the alternative paradigm.

Non governmental organizations spearheaded the propagation and practice of socio economic work. The organized communities became the venue for alternative health and educational systems, science and technology, and new methods of production and distribution of goods and benefits. In some areas, the people instituted reforms for bringing peace and justice in their communities. The more progressive and cause oriented groups saw the need to respond to people affected by the war between the military and the armed communists or Moro separatists. People were uprooted from their communities and had to live in hamlets. Emergency assistance became a real need and the cause oriented groups had to face the challenge of meeting the needs of the civilian affected by the war. This was the beginning of the cause-oriented NGOs' work with disasters victims.

From being too political in the 70's and early 80's, a shift in focus of organizing took place after the ouster of the dictator. With Marcos gone, new centers and arenas of power, in addition to the



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political one, were pushed such as economic empowerment, gender and development and the environmental. Those who were less concerned with the political agenda started to undertake social services and economic projects, but using the organizing and empowering concepts. At the same time, the support for organizing projects became lean as funding institutions became more interested in projects that provided tangible and material impact for the local communities.

But unlike the small, pragmatic and petty community projects that simply aimed to cushion the misery of the people, the socio economic works by the organized groups were ideologically and politically motivated, aimed at empowering the local communities in developing the basic services and the economic base. These found ways through community resource management for the upland, foothills, floodplains and coastal agro resource zones. Many activists who had training in the natural, basic and applied sciences pushed for socio economic transformation of these communities.

When natural disasters struck the country in the 90's one after the other, a community based approach was adopted mostly by nongovernmental organizations in facing the new challenges. The mega earthquake hit Central and Northern Luzon in July 16, 1990 and devastated many communities being served by the progressive NGOs. After the 1990 earthquake was the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in June and the Ormoc flashflood in November, both in 1991. These were followed by the eruption of Mt. Mayon, flashflood in Mindoro Oriental and other disasters that made the Philippines a major contributor of disasters in the world at a time when the United Nations declared the 1990s as the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction.

A number of NGOs which were undertaking organizing and socio economic projects in their areas were confronted with the challenge of meeting the needs of the communities affected by disasters. The communities and people assisted or organized by the NGOs were being isolated, destroyed or, at worst, vanished from the surface. The NGOs had no choice then but to add or shift their thrust from political organizing to disaster related socio-economic empowerment, disaster relief programs and rehabilitation.

Response of the Academe: The CSWCD's Experience

Responding to disaster victims has always been within the realm of practice and service in social development. However, due to the traditional method of doing it through the distribution of relief bags, the approach was criticized as a dole out that only stirred and perpetuated dependency among the recipients. This practice was a manifestation of the prevailing perspectives on disasters in the past, though many today still practice the same. From emergency management, the concepts and approaches metamorphosed to disaster preparedness, disaster management and now disaster risk reduction.

Considering the historical and socio-political context of the perspectives and methods of work taught and practiced by the University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community Development in Diliman, dependency creating processes to help the poor and the vulnerable is a mortal sin to be committed. What were espoused were empowering methods such as organizing, conscientization, participatory research, popular education, bottom-up planning, social mobilization, advocacy and the like. Giving relief or engaging in emergency assistance during disaster was less preferred compared to the more political tasks of educating, organizing and mobilizing the poor, the depressed, the marginalized, and the disadvantaged communities. Livelihood programs were considered as palliative and counter empowerment, much more assisting the disaster victims. The tasks of responding to disaster victims were relegated to the welfare agency of the government, humanitarian organizations and traditional civic groups, mostly through the provision of emergency relief services like food, used clothing, medical and temporary shelter.

Thus, when the mega-earthquake happened in June, 1990, the CSWCD saw the need to respond to the communities in a more participatory and empowering manner. It launched a Re-

lief and Rehabilitation Program in Brgy. Estrella, Rizal, Nueva Ecija. During the first semester of the academic year 1990-1991 (June-October, 1990), alternative classes were conducted, focusing on disaster management. Teams of volunteer faculty, staff and students were sent in the area and did appraisal of the general situation, site selection, community assessment, resource generation, relief operations and rehabilitation work. By the second semester, in November, 1990, the CSWCD started the fielding social work and community development students in the community for their practicum courses.

The program documentation and evaluation reported that, primarily as an academic institution, the College

... Acted more like a private voluntary development agent when it sent reconnaissance teams to two of the worst hit provinces... Armed with plenty of good intentions but backed up by limited resources, the CSWCD appears to have committed itself to an impossible mission. Unable to tie up with a partner development agency to help defray field costs and also unable to raise enough funds to continue the program on its own, the CSWCD was forced to terminate the program prematurely...

The CSWCD experience shows that community empowerment is a key concept and an integral component of disaster management. Communities which hardly get their rightful share of basic facilities and services during normal times become even more isolated from access to relief and rehabilitation assistance during times of widespread calamity. The CSWCD found out that some two weeks after the earthquake, the barangay had not yet received any relief assistance. An empowered community would not simply have waited it out but would have exerted some effort to gain access to relief goods and services coming into the province. (Fernandez, 1994; 66-69.)



Vision Statement

Katarungan, Kapayapaan at Likas-Kayang Kaginhawahang Pinagsasaluhan ng Bayan at Sanlibutan. (Justice, peace and sustainable well-being shared by the Filipino people and the global community.)

Mission Statement

Academic excellence in the service of the nation and the global community through participatory, gender responsive, empowering and transformative development praxis.

Core Values

CSWCD's development praxis is anchored on people's participation and empowerment, personal and social transformation, solidarity with marginalized groups, and gender-responsiveness.

Its pursuit of academic excellence rests on integration of theory and practice, and is infused with passionate scholarship, critical thinking, innovativeness and creativity.

<http://cswcd.upd.edu.ph/>



In December 2006, in the aftermath of typhoon Reming in the Bicol region, the UP CSWCD department, led by the Research and Extension for Development Office (REDO), the CSWCD Student Council and classes CD 11 and 131, responded by organizing a relief operation activity for Bicol. Relief goods were collected to help the victims, and some of the REDO staff also joined in the multi-sectoral task force (Tabang Bicol) together with other people's organizations and NGOs to organize large-scale relief and medical missions for the affected areas.

The Integration of Community Disaster Management in the Field Instruction Program of the Department of Community Development

Barely a year after the mega-earthquake, Mt. Pinatubo erupted on June 12, 1991. Prompted with the need to respond to the situation and bearing in mind the lessons gained from the previous experience, the Department of Community Development ventured into community disaster management by incorporating CDM in its Field Instruction Program. Instead of pursuing the program by itself, the Department worked in partnership with other organizations such as NGOs, the academe, the church and the people's organizations. Based on the experience of the Department during the period 1990 to 1999, four schemes were identified in working for community-based disaster management (Luna, 1999).

1. CSWCD- Initiated Program

This refers to the CSWCD Relief and Rehabilitation Program that was earlier discussed. The lessons from this experience paved the way towards other mechanisms described in the succeeding section.

2. In Partnership with NGOs

Partnership with the NGOs was done with the latter serving as field placements for Bachelor in Science and Community Development and Masters in Community Development students enrolled in practicum courses. Among these NGOs are the following:

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement

When the earthquake struck in 1990, the PRRM was already a partner of the CSWCD. Three undergraduate students were fielded in Nueva Ecija under the supervision of this writer. Before the earthquake, the students were involved in PRRM's rural democratization program for the farmers. This program was also shaken when the earthquake shook Central and Northern Luzon, isolating some villages in the nearby municipality, namely Caranglan. As a response, the PRRM Nueva Ecija refocused the program, took the initiative to reach the communities, and mobilized volunteers for relief and rehabilitation.

Later, the students reported that initially, they did not know how to go about the task of doing relief. They said that they had been oriented to political and socio economic work, but had no background in handling relief operations.

However, by using their stock knowledge in community organizing and development, they were able to systematize the work of forming community core groups to facilitate operations and, in succeeding activities, in mobilizing resources. It was reported that the work was a very tiring and draining job. They were faced with actual dangers they never expected, like being stranded in the community because of landslides. Despite these and the lack of formal training in disaster management, they learned a lot from the process as they used basic community organizing principles and processes in doing relief operations (Cagioia, de la Cruz and Rosales, 1990).

Philippine Peasant Institute /Project Development Initiative

These two NGOs jointly implemented a resettlement cum agrarian reform program in Brgy. Bulawen, Palauig, Zambales for those displaced by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. Based on the conceptual development framework that:

***Agrarian Reform = Land Transfer + Support
Services + Social Infrastructure Building***

The program distributed 429 hectare of land covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program to the beneficiaries. It also promoted and implemented sustainable programs primarily on food production, health, marketing and income generation, as well as a model agrarian reform community and relocation site (Tanchuling, 1995; 3 5).

The students had the opportunity to learn about partnership between the NGOs and the government, particularly the Department of Agrarian Reform with whom the implementing NGOs had an agreement. It showed that if there is political will in distributing land and in providing support services to the peasants, then, the goals of the agrarian program can be achieved.

Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC) - CONCERN- TABI

Even prior to the 1990 disaster decade, the Department of Community Development faculty and the Office of Continuing Education of the College had already established links with the CDRC and CONCERN, an NGO providing services to farmers in Central Luzon. When the earthquake and the Mt. Pinatubo disaster struck Central Luzon, BSCD students were fielded in peasant communities to assist in rehabilitation efforts.

As part of the rehabilitation program through food security and community health services, BSCD students were also fielded in Tabang sa Biktima sa Bicol (TABI) in the provinces of Camarines Sur, Albay and Masbate. The TABI is a member of the Citizen Disaster Response Network.

Center for Disaster Preparedness-Buklod Tao

Recently, the Center for Disaster Preparedness became the partner of the DCD in disaster risk management program by fielding the students in BUKLOD TAO, a people's organization in San Mateo Rizal. The program covers environmental advocacy, capacity building in DRR, children in DRR, and flood mitigation strategies.

Some Reflections in Working with the NGOs

The partnership with the NGOs had given the students and the faculty of the Department varied exposures and experiences in disaster management. At the same time, the students and faculty provided inputs in terms of organizing, research, training and mobilizing skills that were incorporated in the disaster management processes.

Management wise, this partnership relieved the department from the financial and material burden of undertaking and maintaining community based programs. However, since the NGOs managed these programs, the DCD could not have a direct hand on programs that could enable the students to achieve other learning goals. Other knowledge and skills in community development could not be addressed by the partner NGO because of their specific program contents and processes. For example, there was a case when practicum students were given clerical and documentation tasks by the NGO, instead of more exposures in community organizing and mobilization. In cases like these, the faculty supervisor had to make arrangements with the NGO so that the students could be given work assignments where they could maximize learning. This situation is easier to manage in a College or Department initiated program. The faculty project leader and the faculty supervisor can jointly program activities for student involvement in such a way that project and academic objectives could be met simultaneously.

3. In Partnership with the University's Pahinungod Program

When the University established a community volunteers and service learning program, the Pahinungod, the DCD linked up with this Office for placement in communities affected by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in Pampanga and Tarlac. The Office was headed by Prof. Oscar Ferrer, who is also a faculty of Community Development.

The Pahinungod Office provided material assistance to communities through its extensive linkages with various governmental, non governmental, academic, alumni and international entities. At the same time, the students fielded in the communities received logistics support from the Pahinungod program.

The students placed in Pahinungod were fielded in evacuation areas being assisted by the Pampanga Social Action Center, then headed by Father Panlilio, now the governor of Pampanga. Graduate and undergraduate students were also fielded in Capas, Tarlac. When lahar buried Bacolor, Pampanga in October 2005, a group of families organized themselves and worked for the establishment of a new community in Isabela, in partnership with the Habitat, another NGO that promoted the building of shelter through self-help approach. Their experience was documented, presented in an international conference and later published by U.P. Manila (Luna, 1997).

4. In Collaboration with a Participatory Action Research

Dr. Angelito Manalili, a DCD faculty, led a Participatory Community Disaster Management Project on evacuation and resettlement areas covered by the Pampanga Social Action Center. Funded by the Mt. Pinatubo Disaster Program of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies, the action research engaged graduates and undergraduates in undertaking participatory management of the evacuation and resettlement.

Rethinking Community Development and Disaster Risk Management

In 1998, a national conference among the social scientists in the Philippines, sponsored by the Philippines Social Science Council, reviewed the historical development of social science disciplines in the country. One of the papers presented was on Community Development. The paper put forward Community Development as a practice and as an academic discipline with three fields of studies, namely: Community Education (CEd), Community Organizing (CO) and Community Resources Management (CRM) (Luna, 1999). In 2004, another paper discussed the development of the concepts and practice in the Philippines, entitled, "Generation From the Field: The Concept and Practice of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management in the Philippines". This was presented at the Third Practitioners' Workshop on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management in Bangkok, Thailand and sponsored by UNESCAP, ADPC, IFRC and DIPHECO.

The CRM concept that was initially developed in the 1999 paper was re-conceptualized into Community Resources and Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM), as presented in another international conference held in the University of Indonesia and sponsored by the Association of Southeast Asian Institution of Higher Learning. The new formulation is summarized in *Figure 1 and Figure 2*. (Luna, 2006). The new formulation focused on disaster risk reduction and encompasses, not just risks involving the environment, but also in the social enterprises and the community economics.

The framework on Community Development and Disaster Risk Reduction is anchored on the perspectives that disaster is a

social phenomenon. While it is common to designate disaster in terms of their physical agents, natural events "have social consequences only as a result of the actions of human beings and societies" (Dynes, 1992: 15).

Because of the need to produce economic goods and services from the utilization of the nations resources, the risks or possibilities of a disaster are often not given prime consideration in planning. The growth of population and the shortage of land have also pushed the poor further and further to marginal lands such as ravines, steep slopes or even riverbeds and banks (OUNDRC, 1977; 14). In both urban and rural communities, it is not surprising to hear about babies falling into the waters because their houses protrude over the river, or of clusters of lightly constructed houses being washed away by strong currents.

The most vulnerable individuals and groups the poor, children and the elderly, those with disabilities, indigenous people, women, and communities marginalized by the uneven and exploitative utilization of environmental resources usually end up as victims of disasters. In a "no-disaster situation", these people are already much in need. They suffer more when disaster comes!

All these are vulnerable communities that the discipline of Community Development wishes to address.

Disaster affects various levels of social units - individual, group, organizational, community, society and international with in-



Figure 1. Community Resources and Disaster Risk Management



Figure 2. Community Development Framework



creasing structural complexity. (*Drabek, 1986, cited by Dynes, 1992; 16*). It is argued that the focus of planning and action, in order to have the greatest potential impact in enhancing disaster reduction, would be the community level.

In the same manner that community development processes have been adopted and integrated in the management of community resources, as in the case of community based coastal resource management, social forestry, primary health care and the like, the same methods have been used, with the corresponding modifications, to fit the particularities of the disaster situation.. The main features of the approach, as contrasted with the traditional delivery system, are presented in *Table 1*. The approach moves away from the agency-based delivery system that is non-participative, top-down, externally dependent and non-empowering.

Anchored on the same principles of participation, empowerment and people centered development, the processes of community analysis, community education and conscientization, community organization and mobilization, and participatory planning have been integrated in the disaster management processes such as, emergency response, recovery and rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

Unlike in the past where responses to disaster were associated with relief bags that only resulted in a dole out mentality and greater dependency, there have been several efforts, especially by non governmental organizations, to break away from these practices. It is maintained that relief operations have a

significant role in a particular stage of disaster management. However, it is only an emergency response and ultimately, it is the rehabilitation and development of self propelling communities that stands as the paramount goal.

In practice, disaster victims have learned to organize themselves as survivors and partners in development (*Luna, 1997*). Support institutions have established networks to facilitate coordination and resource mobilization. Initiatives to organize individuals involved in disaster management were done in preparation for greater recognition of the disaster management sector and practitioners. These processes are integrated in phases that comprise the disaster management cycle or continuum (*Garcia, 1994; 3-4*).

Disaster being a social phenomenon means that the human system and the community are significant factors in the occurrence, prevention and mitigation of disasters. A disaster can alter the formation, growth, sustenance and expansion of communities. Comparing a community to a collective organism with many parts, unmanaged disaster can result in premature division, destruction or dissolution. If the community is able to withstand the hazards because of a certain level of capacity, then such experience becomes an enabling factor that can reduce its vulnerability to future disasters.

For this reason, it is imperative to understand the phenomenon so that the methods of interventions in the community can be assessed, documented, improved, modified, disseminated and applied to enhance the development of the community.

Table 1. Features of Traditional and Community-based Approaches

Features	Traditional	Community-Based
Locus of Concern	Agency	Community
Participation	Token	Dominant to control by the people
Decision making	Top down	Bottom up
Main actors	Program staff	Community residents
Resources	Program-based	Internal resources with external support mobilized by community
Main method used	Extension services	Community organizing
Impact on local capacity	Dependency creating	Empowering

CSWCD Researches and Trainings on CBDRM

Capability building among disaster workers has been extensively accomplished through informal training. As already mentioned, there is no existing formal academic program on disaster risk reduction in the University of the Philippines system, though there are many related courses or subjects offered by various disciplines in geography, geology, sociology, anthropology, psychology, geodetic engineering, urban and regional planning, public administration, public health, medicine, agriculture and the like. Ironically, the materials and the training modules that exist today on disaster risk management are already voluminous. It might be hard to accept but the fact is that the experiences, researches and extension activities accumulated in the field have not yet been translated into academic programs that can systematize the teaching and dissemination of disaster risk management concepts and processes.

It can be argued that since the NGOs, government agencies, the church and other organizations are already doing training on community disaster risk management, formal training by the academe will just duplicate their work. This argument does not take into account the nature of training being done on the one hand by the above organizations, and on the other, by the academe. The implementing organizations normally train workers on the operations and transfer of knowledge, skills and attitude on disaster risk management. This is different from academic teaching that involves not just the presentation of concepts and process, but the analysis, the critique, the questioning and the synthesis of practice and theory. Instead of simply teaching about the guidelines and mechanics of disaster risk management, teaching in the academe also means doing research to validate concepts and analyze processes to improve practice.

In partnership with the Christian Aid UK, the DCD ventured into DRR training and research. The DCD was tapped to do an intensive training on DRR among its partner organizations in the Philippines. This was followed by a project **“Towards Building Disaster Resilient Communities: A Documentation Project”** that aims *“to document the processes and experiences of Christian Aid partners in their implementation of pilot projects on building disaster resilient communities in different settings (e.g. coastal, urban, terrestrial) in order to draw and disseminate lessons in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) among NGOs, POs, government agencies and development and humanitarian agencies.* The specific objectives of the project are (DCD, 2008):

- To document, assess and synthesize the methods, strategies and approaches used in DRR in various communities, community development and project settings (e.g., coastal, urban, terrestrial, etc.)
- To draw out significant concepts, principles, indicators and guidelines on building disaster resilient communities that is grounded on Community Development (CD) perspectives as well as the practical experiences of communities and NGOs

- To assist NGO partners in determining the appropriateness of existing indicators used in monitoring and assessing the processes and initial outcomes of their pilot DRR projects
- To prepare learning materials for use in the training of fieldworkers, researchers and grassroots organizations involved in CD and DRR
- To identify possible areas of collaboration to help strengthen existing DRR and CD programs and initiatives in the Philippines and the region.

Graduate Courses in CBDRM

With the need for developing perspective and skills in community-based disaster management among the graduate students of the College, the contents of a seminar course in CD planning and administration was focused on CBDM and later CBDRM as risk reduction became the working framework after the 2005 Kobe World Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction. The course was an elective and included an exposure trip to vulnerable and disaster affected areas such as Albay, Infanta and Buklod Tao in San Mateo. Most of the trips were done in Albay with exposure to the Public Safety and Emergency Management Office. Later, the disaster risk management term was used as the term as new perspectives in disaster emerged. When the MCD curriculum was finally revised, two new courses were instituted namely:

CD 235: Community-Based Disaster Risk Management
CD 227: Rebuilding Displaced Community

In 2007, the CSWCD came out with the Strategic Plan 2008-2010. One of the plans was the development of a curricular program on DRR and the formation of a cluster on DRR. The Department of Community Development is presently leading in the development of the curriculum. The institution of a new curricular program in U.P. goes through a long and tedious process of consultations and academic review and critiquing by the department faculty, college faculty, social science cluster of the university curriculum committee, the Presidential Advisory Council (composed of all the vice-presidents, the Chancellors from the seven constituent universities, to system officials and chaired by the U.P. President for inter-university and resource requirement review of the proposal) then back to the social science cluster, then curriculum committee, then university council and finally by the board of regents. Based on the CSWCD experience in instituting its Doctor in Social Development program, it took two years for the new program to be finally approved for implementation.

Since the process of institutionalizing DRR in the CSWCD is a continuing process, the curricular program development and the establishment of academic body as a mechanism for DRR implementation are currently in the pipeline for consultation and program development. The initial concept of graduate DRM programs aims to develop graduates who are equipped with perspectives, skills and attitude necessary for disaster risk management practice, research and education. It will be

developed for practitioners in both public and non-government setting, for educators who would be teaching DRR in tertiary levels as well as in non-formal setting; and for researchers who are challenged to advance the knowledge frontiers of DRR.

Establishment of Organizational Mechanism for DRR

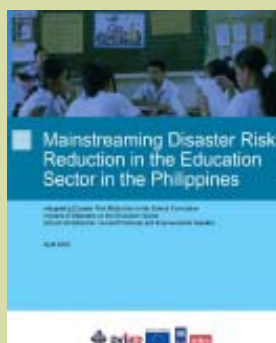
In line with the CSWCD Strategic Plan, a DRR Cluster composed of faculty and staff who are interested in DRR was constituted. The cluster serves as a coordinating body, documentation, communication and data base center, the lead in DRR direction setting and resource mobilization and linkages building.

Table 2. CSWCD Academic/Administrative Bodies and the DRR Cluster

Academic Bodies within the CSWCD	Constituents	Functions
Executive Committee	Dean, College Secretary, Chairs of Departments; REDO Director, Administrative Officer and Librarian	Policy and Planning
Department of Community Department	Chair and Faculty	Management of the circular, research and training programs within the department
Research for Development and Extension Office (REDO)	Director and Research and Extension Staff	Undertake research, publication and extension services
DRR Cluster	Faculty and staff	Coordination Documentation and database Direction setting Resource mobilization Linkages building

Dr. Mel Luna presented on the research study "**Impacts of Disasters on the Education Sector**" at the Forum on Disaster Risk Management and Education held last 17 February 2009 at the UP CSWCD as part of College Week activities.

Ms. Lorna Victoria also presented on "**Institutionalizing (CB)DRM In Higher Education and Training Institutions Curriculum and Programs**" on behalf of the CBDRM Training and Learning Circle and the Center for Disaster Preparedness. Mr. Ems Torrente, formerly of the National Economic Development Authority and now a private consultant and a graduate of CSWCD also made a presentation.



Dr. Mel Luna conducted the above-mentioned research study on behalf of CDP for the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC).

The full report **Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector in the Philippines** is published by ADPC and is available online at the CDP website: <http://www.cdp.org.ph/pubs/drr-mainstream-educ.pdf>

The Challenges in CBDRM and Community Development

As an academic discipline and a practice, Community Development is concerned with the welfare, formation, growth, reintegration and rehabilitation of communities through participatory processes. Institutionalizing the practice and study of community disaster risk management is a contribution in reducing vulnerability, risk and impact of disaster events. This poses several challenges to Community Development, as described by the acronym, **DISASTERS**.

D

Decreasing vulnerabilities of the communities by increasing the people's capacities. The growing uncertainties in the physical, environmental, social-economic, and political situation are causing more people and communities to become more vulnerable to disasters. What is needed is to equip people with the various means to increase their capacities through organizing, socio economic work, environmental awareness, education and the like.

I

Integrating indigenous and local knowledge in responding to community disasters. The people have their own way of understanding, forecasting, warning, and responding to disasters. Many of them are often described as irrational, if not superstitious. Yet, in a lot of circumstances, they were effective. Innovations in responding to community disasters have to begin with "where the people are" as a basic principle in community organizing.

S

Systematizing the system, procedures and operations for community disaster management. Involvement in CBDRM is physically, mentally and emotionally draining. This is the reason why there are programs and services for caregivers. The task of systematizing processes is meant to ensure efficiency and good stewardship of the resources funds, time, materials, information and technology. But more than this is the ease and welfare the people and caregivers will have if the systems are all working in place.

A

Advocating and mobilizing resources for disaster concerns. Development work has come to a point where interest groups have to be visible and loud in order for their agenda to be heard. External support for the affected communities is crucial in winning the latter's case. The advocacy role of the academe in the successful fight against a potential disastrous cement plant in Bolinao is a good example of what the academe can contribute for communities threatened by disaster (*Ferrer and Luna, 1997*).

S

Strengthening the interdisciplinary linkages and complementation. The responses to disaster require the joint efforts of the various disciplines and professions psychologists, social workers, community development workers, sociologists, teachers, economists, mass media people, biologists, geologists, engineers, meteorologists, etc. This complementation is imperative to ensure more socially and technically appropriate responses, programs and innovations.

T

Translating national commitment into concrete plans of action that can operationalize CDM at the various levels. Since disasters strike local communities, it is the local institutions and organizations at the provincial, municipal, barangay, and cluster levels that can best undertake and sustain disaster related activities. Incorporating local concerns in the higher local planning bodies is also a way of drawing greater attention and resources for the affected communities.

E

Empowering the communities to enable them to influence decisions, policies and programs concerning disaster. Communities become vulnerable when their people are alienated from the developments taking place around them. When they do not have any control over their situation because decisions are imposed from somewhere, they become victims of circumstances.

R

Reorienting the perspectives on disaster response from being palliative and reactive to being preventive and aggressive. Dole out strategies, which have their roots in the provision of relief goods after a disaster event, has to be put aside. For example, relief operations have to be anchored in a perspective of an appropriate emergency response. Creating a disaster conscious culture among the communities, the government, the NGOs and other institutions impel the various sectors to be more preventive and to have sustainable disaster response strategies.

S

Synthesizing experiences and learning toward improving theory and practice in community disaster management. Disaster workers tend to be action oriented, always wanting to respond to the crisis situations. The tasks of documenting, studying, analyzing and synthesizing the experiences to generate learning, are usually neglected. This is a need that can be addressed by researchers and academics in the Community Development discipline.

Conclusion

The focus on risk reduction, rather than disaster itself, is a recognition to the need “to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid or to limit the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development.” The Hyogo Framework for Action Priority 3: Use of knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels, recommends the inclusion of DRR in the educational system and the research community (UN/ISDR,2007;9, 57-69).

Meeting these challenges is not an easy task. It requires resources, political will, conflict resolutions and systems for action. Not everything can be done all at the same time. Somewhere, somehow, there has to be a beginning. Taking a small courageous step is a hundred fold better than dreaming without doing. There have been some steps done in Community Development for integrating community disaster risk management through research, teaching and actual practice. The challenge now for the academe is the provision of support in the process of cruising so that the small steps can be transformed into giant leaps. These leaps should be able to transcend the gaps between spaces, hierarchies, theories and practice in disaster risk reduction and management.

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The forum on **“Conversations on Opportunities and Challenges on Disaster Studies and Research in Colleges and Universities in the Philippines”** was held at the UP College of Social Work on August 8, 2008. It was jointly sponsored by the CBDRM TLC-Phils, College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD) – University of the Philippines, Christian Aid Building Disaster Resilient Communities, UNICEF Education Cluster, and PAEPI-NCR.

CSWCD Dean Amryllis Torres gave the welcome remarks. Presentations were made by Prof. Greg Bankoff who has written mainly books and articles on the Philippines and is currently with the Hull University Department of Modern History; and Prof. JC Gaillard, Visiting Professor College at the College of Geography, University of the Philippines. Dr. Mel Luna of the CSWCD and Dr. Marqueza Reyes, Course Director, WBI-NDCC-EMI Natural Disaster Risk Management Global Distance Learning Program were the reactors.

UNICEF's Ms. Nikki de Vera was the emcee and Mr. Mon Padilla of PAEPI-NCR facilitated questions and comments from participants sitting on round tables. Ms. Jessica Dator-Bercilla of Christian Aid gave a summary of discussion points and ways forward, underscoring the challenge for the University of the Philippines as the country's premier higher learning institution to take on DRM courses. Ms. Lorna Victoria acknowledged the contributions of the forum organizers, presenters and reactors and the active participation of all during the closing remarks.

This case study is the second of a series on "Institutionalizing Disaster Risk Management in Higher Education and Training Institutions" in the Philippines. The effort is an initiative of the CBDRM Training and Learning Circle (TLC). One of its outcomes is to form a workgroup and develop a guideline for institutionalizing Community Based Disaster Risk Management in universities and training institutions in Asia.

The CBDRM Training and Learning Circle (TLC) exists to strengthen and facilitate the crucial interface between training and education for Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) in the Philippines, through ongoing knowledge exchange cycle between community-based organizations, training institutions and universities across the country. The TLC is supported through the cooperation of the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) Philippines, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, Provention Consortium, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in UNDP Regional Centre (Bangkok, Thailand).

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