

PROMOTING ACTION FOR DISASTER RISK GOVERNANCE AND WORKING TO ACHIEVE PREPAREDNESS FOR RISK REDUCTION THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN NEPAL – PARIWARTAN

DRRM Localization Trainings Process, Results, Lessons Learned and Way Forward

PROJECT BRIEF

The project “Promoting Action for Disaster Risk Governance and Working to Achieve Preparedness for Risk Reduction through Technical Assistance in Nepal” (PARIWARTAN), funded by United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA), was designed to build upon the activities carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) through its first phase project — Technical Support to the Government of Nepal in the Implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017’ that contributed to the Government of Nepal’s effort in implementing the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 with amendment in 2019. The main objective of PARIWARTAN Project was to contribute to improved federal, provincial, and local DRRM legislative and regulatory framework to ultimately build a resilient community.



One of the principal components of the Project is capacity building of local governments on DRRM. The PARIWARTAN Project reached out to 702 of the total 753 local governments through DRRM localization trainings based on the Disaster Risk Management Localization Manual which was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) and formally endorsed on 1 December 2020. The remaining 51 local governments were covered by other DRRM capacity building initiatives managed by IOM and/or projects on DRRM namely Tayar and Bhakari, funded by USAID.

The objective of the DRRM localization trainings was to enhance the understanding of elected representatives and officials of local governments and build their capacity to contribute in the development, drafting and/or revision of local DRRM Acts and/or strategic action plans responsive to the local contexts.

THE PROCESS

IOM developed the Disaster Risk Management Localization Manual based on the findings of a ‘needs and capacity assessment’ study conducted in 2018 and 2019 in 20 selected municipalities across all seven provinces. The study highlighted the current DRRM scenario at the local level as the ‘moment of maximum opportunity’ (MOMO) for building the capacity of elected municipal leaders and staff to design and implement robust DRRM policies and plans and to further contribute to the localization of the DRRM Act and activities at the provincial and local levels.

Based on the study findings, a draft training module was developed in coordination with MoFAGA as well as the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD). The module was tested by conducting pilot DRRM capacity building training in 20 selected municipalities by IOM. Suggestions received from different agencies and feedback received during training were addressed in the training manual.

The DRRM Localization Training was implemented more like a mission than a component of any project. The process started with the building of a strong team, which served as the backbone of the whole initiative. From March 11 to 15, 2020, a five-day long national-level training of trainers (NToT) was conducted to 21 selected participants (6 women, 15 men) in Kathmandu. Following the NToT, 14 participants (4 women, 10 men) were selected based on their performance to be engaged with IOM as master trainers in rolling out the provincial ToTs (PToTs) across all seven provinces. A refresher training was conducted in February 2021 as the training schedules had to be halted because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 14 master trainers rolled out a total of 19 four-day long PToTs across all seven provinces to develop government master trainers. Government officers from various local governments, District Coordination Committees (DCCs) and District Administration Offices (DAOs) participated in the provincial ToTs. The PToTs produced a total of 349 skilled provincial trainers (45 women, 304 men) including 47 participants from provincial governments, 102 from district offices and 200 from local governments.



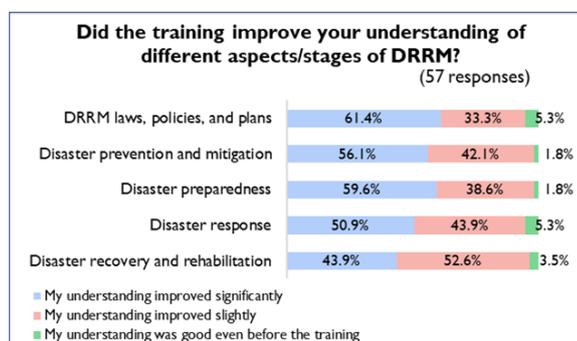
The localization training event was launched on June 17, 2022. For the delivery of local-level trainings, the PARIWARTAN Project partnered with a consortium of National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) – Nepal, Practical Action Consulting (PAC) and Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal. The partner organizations divided provinces to cover, based on their institutional presence, experience, strength and network. The Project also coordinated with Municipal Association of Nepal (MuAN) and National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) and with the Provincial Ministries for smooth conduction of trainings.

For the facilitation of each local-level training, a provincial master trainer was paired with a DRRM trainer from the partner consortium. The DRRM trainers were selected through a single vacancy call with priority given to local candidates and young candidates with passion and motivation. Eligible candidates were province-wise shortlisted. Part-time trainers were also onboarded as a part of human resource management. Before the rolling out of trainings, a communication protocol was also developed to coordinate with MoFAGA, local governments and other stakeholders. Some innovative approaches were also adopted such as printing out posters to be used as training materials in case of no electricity at the training sites, assigning trainers from one site to another as needed, and using one of the trainers as coordinator when an existing coordinator resigned.

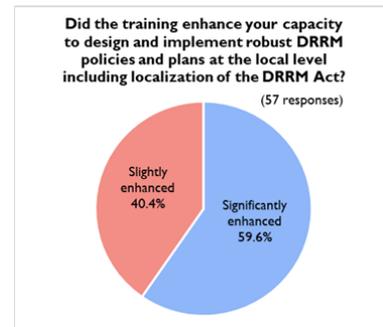
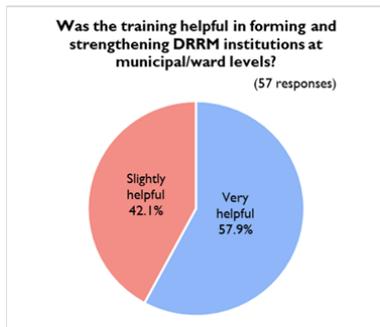
Each training covered 16 sessions, focusing on different aspects/dimensions of DRRM including the roles and responsibilities of local governments, DRRM legislative framework, and collaboration among the three tiers of governments. The training sessions were conducted in a very participatory and consultative environment leading to an intense and comprehensive discussions on local level DRRM issues, challenges and solutions. At the end of the training, each local government prepared an action plan addressing gaps and challenges identified during the training. Besides, each province also held closing ceremony of the PAIWARTAN project which was actively attended by the different group of participants like IOM, donors and consortium partners, representatives of MoFAGA, provincial and local governments, trainers and training participants, media persons, DRR focal persons, UN and other development partners. The participants provided valuable suggestions and recommendations particularly regarding follow-up activities based on their association, engagement and experience with the project. This event helped the team to close the project on a good note.

TRAINING SUCCESS AND RESULTS

A survey was conducted in January 2023 to assess the immediate impact of the trainings on the participants’ understanding of DRRM and the application of knowledge and skills gained during the trainings. A total of 57 participants (government officers) took part in the survey. Results show that over 90 percent of the participants agreed that the training improved their understanding of different aspects/stages of DRRM with significant improvement in the understanding of DRRM legal framework and disaster preparedness. Such improvement in DRRM understanding among government policymakers testifies trainings’ success towards better localization of DRRM laws and policies at the local level.



Likewise, there was a consensus among the respondents that the training enhanced their knowledge and capacity to design and implement robust DRRM policies and plans at the local level including localization of the DRRM Act. Around 60 per cent of the respondents reported significant enhancement in their capacity to do so. While all the respondents agreed that the training helped them in forming and strengthening DRRM institutions at the local level, around 58 per cent of the respondents found the training to be very helpful in this regard. Likewise, all respondents agreed (42 percent agreed strongly) that the training has led to positive change and tangible results in DRRM system at the local level.



Although it is still too early to see the impacts of the trainings, many local governments have already started to act on their action plans with some tangible and promising results. Some key results include:

Sound understanding among consortium partners led to successful completion of DRRM Localization Training on time.

The team members were:

- positive, cooperative and motivated
 - prompt, solution and result oriented
 - worked in a team spirit, shared responsibilities
 - effective coordination and collaboration
 - practiced adaptive management
- Succeeded in bringing all the local governments on the same page in view of their understanding of local level DRRM context and follow-up decisions and actions.
 - Prepared and/or revisited local level disaster risk management plans and programme (DPRP, EPRP and LDCRP).
 - Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) reformed and its meetings regularized.
 - Ward level DRRM plan developed and put into implementation.
 - Allocated dedicated budget and also added additional budget to fund local level DRRM initiatives.
 - Disaster preparedness and risk mitigation activities prioritized.
 - Improved disaster response and relief distribution in recent disaster events.
 - Ward-level DRRM committees formed while in some cases they are further activated and also reformed.
 - Local level multi-stakeholders DRRM committee formed.
 - Follow-up trainings conducted covering different dimensions of DRRM.
 - Increased investment in local level DRRM activities like search and rescue, relief and response, warehouse management, Local Emergency Operation Centre (LEOC), local DRRM plans and others

- Role and function of local level Disaster Management Fund strengthened while dedicated Emergency Fund Mobilization Guideline developed in some cases.
- Executed integration of DRRM issues in local level school curriculum
- Improved private sector engagement in fire risk management targeted to local level hotels, restaurants and shops

Opportunities, Challenges and Limitations

OPPORTUNITIES

- Powerful backing and endorsement of MOFAGA and proactive engagement of provincial and local governments.
- Improved knowledge and understanding of DRRM among the majority of local governments.
- New leadership and genuine enthusiasm at the local level.
- Strong appetite and willingness of local level participants to learn and apply DRRM knowledge and skills in their local contexts.
- Commitment of local governments to prioritize and allocate dedicated fund to address local level needs and gaps in DRRM.
- Complementarity of project components and its benefit to DRRM Localization training programme.
- Young, motivated and skilled trainers available to implement DRRM Localization training programme.
- Pairing of trainers (from government and partners’ agencies) offered significant advantage and helped to bring views of both government and development partners on one platform.

CHALLENGES

- Human Resource mobilization, Communication and Logistic Management
- Difficult terrain, remoteness and poor accessibility
- Limited resource and restricted operational flexibilities

- High level of diversity (knowledge, capacity, priorities and working environment) among local governments
- Total number of participants attended training significantly varied among partner municipalities
- Coordination among three tiers of governments and also between the municipal staff and local level elected representatives
- DRRM not in priority of all local governments
- Old mindset, response centric and resistance to reform
- Limited knowledge and awareness at the local level – for many local governments, this was the first dedicated training on DRRM

LIMITATIONS

- Limited resources and short implementation period (85 working days) due to COVID-19, general elections, and festivals.
- Agenda like Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), climate change adaptation and resilience building are not adequately addressed.
- For many participants, the two-days training course content was heavy and intense while for some it was technical.
- Inability to conduct residential training due to resource constraints.
- Limited trainers with core technical knowledge.

LESSONS LEARNED

By reaching out to all local governments at the same time with the same training resources, the Project was able to bring all 753 local governments on the same page regarding their understanding of DRRM including their constitutional roles and responsibilities. Localization trainings were proved instrumental in motivating local governments to formulate DRRM plans and policies and take necessary decisions and actions for implementation.

For more effective delivery of trainings of this nature, the Project experience shows that it is important to have robust HR and logistic plans, choose timings wisely to minimize disturbances stemming from festivals and unfavorable weather, devise better accessibility plans for remote locations, and adopt more flexible schedules allowing for uncertainties such as pandemics, and select trainers who are qualified, knowledgeable about local contexts and are motivated. The selection process of trainers for TOT should be further rationalized to minimize the drop-outs and their availability on time. It is also important to match training content with training period and training participants and to ensure a quiet and undisturbed learning environment such as conducting residential trainings. The training period could be more optimally utilized so that the participants could spend enough time on preparing action plan. Pre- and post-training evaluation helped in accessing effectiveness of the trainings, but follow-up assessment would be necessary to measure the outcome-level results of the trainings.

MoFAGA's leadership was instrumental in the success of the training programs, reaching all 753 local levels. The trainings have opened a window of opportunities for future collaboration, coordination and cooperation among the three tiers of government to work in the DRRM sector. Such opportunities need to be seized on time.

WAY FORWARD

The DRRM Localization training programme was successful in creating a firm foundation of DRRM at the local level in Nepal. As a result, the desire and aspiration of local governments to do better with their responsibilities in DRRM has increased. As a result, many new initiatives have begun and many new demands are put forward. It is widely expected that this initiative will be given continuity in some form to capitalize the improved interest and capacity of local governments and therefore support in implementing their action plan leading to making local development risk sensitive and disaster friendly. There is a risk of progress fading away with time if the existing momentum is not retained.

The trainers developed and used by this initiative are the biggest asset, provided they are further groomed (with refresher courses and/or advanced and specialized training) and appropriately mobilized. The roster of trainers and its sharing with relevant agencies is a significant effort in this direction. At the same time, the training manual must be revisited and improvised for making it more contemporary, robust and responsive to local contexts. The agencies working in DRRM must be encouraged to use the training manual and the qualified trainers and also invest in building their career in training field. A new project could be conceived, supporting provincial governments (Provincial Policy and Planning commission or Provincial Research and Training Center) to institutionalize DRRM training and invest in building the capacity of local governments and local agencies as and when required. This initiative will also strengthen the connect between the provincial and local governments and promote more localized solutions and better administration of inter-municipal challenges of DRRM.