How Strengthened Nepali Community Groups Reduced Disaster Risk

**Presenters**

**Mr. Shiva Risal, Chairperson Naubahini Rural Municipality, Pyuthan**

* Pyuthan is nearly 17 miles away from the nearest municipality making it difficult for residents to access services. When he went with PAHAL and USAID on joint monitoring trips he could see multiple activities that were happening such as 1000 days mothers, and other activities that were being targetted to rural structure. He leveraged funds from the rural municipality. PAHAL will no longer be working with the rural municipality.
* The governance and DRR activities were well done, was happy to be a part of the system working together and requesting donors and other stakeholders to continue with PAHAL for a few more years

**Shankar Paudel, PAHAL**

* Federalism affected the program in the middle of the program and specifically at the ward structure. Activities a the VDC level were no longer all being covered due to the new structure. Had to take on a new modality. Community Forest User Groups. Started working with CFUGs.
* 403 CFUGs were supported to build ecolgical and resilience capacities
* Green and bio-engineering support for 135 community-level DRR actors
* 12k7 early warning tasks forces formed and trained
* Crisis management and contingency planning support to 84 LDMCs
* 6 mock drills at Village Development Commitee level (VDC)
* CFUGs have provided services to vulnerable communities/households
* Impacts/Results - Almost 2000 HA of land reforested
* 8233 HA under improved forest management practices
* 749 HA of land allocated to the marginalized
* 57 water sources protected
* 90,494 people using climate information for risk reducing activities
* CFUGs are community-level groups with gov’t mandate to protetct and manage land. Are key disaster mititgation actors in the community, they play an advocacy role to the district forest officer and local government (Palika). They also have their own operational plans and budgets that an effectively incorporate DRR plans.
* Lessons/Recs - Work through community institutions whose mandates align with DRR
* Specifically working through CFUGs, defined vulnerability criteria, mandate on valuable natural resources
* Focused capacity-building for community level response & recovery intervention
* Integration - layering of interventions crucial for uptake and food security benefits in short/mid-term

**Minakshi Rokka Chhetri, SABAL/Save the Children**

* DRR and mitigation has been a main theme of the program. Focus on strengthening capacity of most vulnerable communities
* They identified the most vulnerable VDCs and then the most vulnerable wards and then the most vulnerable communities. Identified 176 communities and coordinated with local level to form Local Disaster Management Communities. They integrate the plans through the gov’t system and implement them.
* Have also established Community Resilience Learning Centers which utilizes the REFLECT approach. They make an action plan based upon this.
* There are DDMCs, LDMCs, Warl Level and the Community Level
* Learning from institutional linkages - they have tried to strengthen vertical linkages. Strong institutionalizing of DRR/CCA plans.
* Major changes during program - earthquake, federalism, multi-sectoral integration
* Earthquake was a challenge and also an opportunity in the sense that communities now began to prioritize DRR and mitigation in their planning. Climae Change adaption plans are also now being prioritized under federalism. Was a good opp to mainstream these plans during federalism.
* Recs:
* From a sustainability perspective they have been successful.
* Capacity assessment - hoping they can sustain these as it is a practical tool to plan program interventions
* Importance of mainstreaming DRR and adapting to changes

**Q&A**

**What types of EWS were used in the communities?**

* They have worked on flood EWS and have formed a group with a communication channel that disseminates what is happening upstream to the downstream

**From experience with CFUGs, is it still relevant as there are no longer LDMCs or CFUGs in place?**

* Believes they are still relevant even during the insurgency there were even CFUGs. And during all types of disasters, CFUGs come together and begin responding immediately.

**They used a participatory approach, are they talking about the technical experts who might be in the community or people in the community and just based upon their experiences? Also recommended that all stakeholders be invited, PNGOs, etc.. when developing an annual plan.**

* They do consist of technical experts
* They have been able to reform 24 LDMCs and 86 ward level district committees
* Hazard risk mapping was used for an exercise.
* Gov’t - Focused on PaHAL and how local comm was motivated, also enhanced livelihoods. Equipped with multiple skills. Thanked PAHAL for assisting with development of the municipality.

**Want to talk about some of the results? What were the results/impacts of our projects?**

* SABAL has succcessfuly mainstreamed DRR and LDMCs have access to gov’t system. Local VDCs are commiting more funding now.
* CFUGs are developing and implementing sustainable community forestry plans.

**What do we RECOMMEND based on our learning (WHAT and HOW)**

* Focused capacity building for community level response & recovery
* Integration layering of interventions - holistic DRR & mitigation
* People led solutions and processes (REFLECT, local knowledge, etc,,) to address climate change impact --
* Using group capacity assessments tool to tailor capacity strengthening for sustainability
* Sustainability of community groups through linkages with political/government structures
* Working through community institutions whose mandates align with DRR activities
* Participatory community led vulnerability assessments enables sound analysis and community led solutions for advocacy with local government --Communiity perceptions of risk, not just identifying hazards but understanding their perceptions of the impact of those hazards. Linking this to early warning.
* **Bottom up vulnerability and risk assessment**
* **Integration and strengthening of interventions and finding champions to make sure the plans go beyond just planning but get mainstreamed**
* **Working through Comm institutions - really finding the players where there is a close link such as the CFUG**
* **Sustainability of comm groups through**
* **People led solutions and processes - reflect, local knowledge. How do we look at these together with other assessments, etc..?**
* **Participatory community led vulnerability assessments**
* **Approach should be more broad than deep, work in 1-2 wards**
* **Looking for sustainability through vertical linkages with gov’t structures and engaging at different levels of gov’t**