

Appendix 4: Capacity Development Obstacles

- **Insufficient understanding or appreciation of DRR-specific capacity development needs**

The initial challenge many stakeholders confront, and likewise one of the principal drivers behind the drafting of this Strategy, is the fact that there exists insufficient understanding and appreciation of the capacities required to bring about DRR and the methods that exist to build them. In other words, it is often the case that CD for DRR does not occur because stakeholders don't know what to do, or they don't believe it to be necessary. A large part of the problem stems from the fact that most CD research focuses on general economic and social development needs and not on DRM or risk reduction, and that there exists a continuing lack of understanding regarding the definition and scope of CD as a field and as an approach.⁵⁰ This has collectively led to a shortage of "robust, evidence-based guidance on how capacity for DRM can be generated at the national and local levels effectively".⁵¹ At the same time, a lack of appreciation for the importance of CD for DRR activities has translated to insufficient dedication of dedicating human, financial, and other resources to such efforts, and has stymied efforts to develop concerted and coordinated CD plans.

- **Over-reliance on training and education**

Where CD for DRR is occurring, there is an overwhelming emphasis on providing individuals with training and education while neglecting the organization-level and enabling environment needs and structures.^{52, 53} Training and education are critical component of CD efforts in that they can help to raise awareness of key issues, impart the knowledge required to act appropriately and effectively, and enable appropriate technical and administrative skills. They are generally easy to design, develop, and conduct, recipients are typically willing and oftentimes highly motivated to participate, and positive results can be quickly achieved. However, excessive focus on the capacity of individuals impacts sustainability when staff turnover and attrition results in an immediate loss of institutional knowledge.

50 Morgan, 2006. P.2.

51 Few, 2015. P.9.

52 Hagelsteen and Becker, 2014. P.94.

53 Morgan, 2006. P.4.

- **A lack of access to or existence of facilities, programmes, or resources to support awareness, knowledge, and skills**

While the research shows that most CD for DRR efforts are focused on providing training and education, there is also a scarcity of facilities, programmes, or resources equipped to support development of the awareness, knowledge, and skills required to achieve DRR objectives. Without such facilities and programmes in place, DRR-relevant staff and stakeholders are unable to easily address their knowledge and skills gaps. This results in persistent and increasing reliance on international development organizations and donors for such needs, and likewise the extent to which end users can influence or direct their own education and training remains limited. Although a major source of these challenges is the shortage of accredited and quality-assured training programmes in the DRR Sector,⁵⁴ it is at times just a lack of materials in a language understood by stakeholders. It is also the case that CD project reports are not often published, and those that are commonly have the results omitted (thereby preventing peers from identifying good practices and lessons learned to incorporate them into their own efforts.)⁵⁵

- **Failing to provide access to or support for disaster risk reduction capacity development opportunities for staff that are not traditionally involved in Disaster Risk Management (DRM)**

Even where CD for DRR activities are being pursued, they are typically concentrated within and on the needs of those departments and agencies most closely affiliated with, responsible for, or focal point for governmental DRM (e.g., national or local offices of emergency management). Other individuals, agencies, or organizations that do not play as obvious a role but are nonetheless critical, such as elected officials, other line ministries (e.g., finance, agriculture, education, national statistics) planning agencies or departments, humanitarian organizations, private sector entities, and others, are excluded from crucial capacity and capability gains. The same is often true of DRR policy and legislation that is too closely focused on the needs of the DRM system and on disaster response and recovery activities in lieu of approaching DRR from a more comprehensive, integrated, and all-of-society vantage.

- **Insufficient availability of resources (Human, technical, financial, other)**

Competition for both financial and human resources is a persistent challenge in almost all DRM matters, and the resourcing of CD efforts is no exception. Insufficient resources also extend to technologies, tools, equipment, information, data, and other resources. Without proper incentives or recognition of some future returns, there is little appetite to motivate investment in such resources by private sector entities and academic institutions.

54 Hemstock, et.al., 2016. P. 16.

55 USAID, 2010. P. 10.

- **Little or no local ownership of capacity development programmes and projects**

One of the most commonly-cited obstacles to CD for DRR is a lack of local ownership in the programmes themselves. It is a common criticism of all CD programmes that external partners and donors dominate program design, methods selection, identification of targets, and other aspects. When recipient community stakeholders are not involved throughout the entire project cycle, or do not feel that they are influential or able to contribute to the process, acceptance and motivation both suffer. From an effectiveness standpoint, ownership is also important because efforts are less likely to target needs accurately and in fact often do no more than alleviate the inadequacies and constraints perceived by the donor or partner.⁵⁶

- **Insufficient focus on sub-national capacity**

An International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (IFRC) assessment of CD for DRR needs found that efforts have largely ignored the sub-national levels of government (states, provinces, etc.) even as local government levels have seen an increase in attention. This “missing middle”⁵⁷ as it is called is found to be problematic given the leadership and coordination value of subnational government in driving a policy agenda like that of DRR and considering opportunities to integrate local and subnational programmes. Also, there are lost opportunities where capacities, policies, and procedures at the national and local level do not coincide or coordinate with those at the sub-national level.

- **A lack of standardized indicators for the evaluation of disaster risk reduction capacity development efforts**

Progress in the improvement and expansion of CD for DRR efforts is challenged by the fact that there are few tools by which programmes and practices may be assessed according to their impacts. As is often true with all CD projects, especially those funded or performed by external partners, reporting systems are much more likely to consider whether project goals have been met than whether the project had an impact on DRR capacity. Another common problem is that reporting systems often limit the scope of their measures in such a way as to reinforce a very narrow view of CD.

56 Oxford Policy management, 2010. P. 3.

57 Few, 2015. P. 10.

- **Lack of general awareness and knowledge of risk drivers and the role stakeholders play in societal disaster risk reduction (including at the local level and among the public)**

A large component of CD efforts are guided by a common awareness of the need for such efforts, as well as their own awareness of how stakeholders' own activities and the activities of others contribute to risk. For instance, if there exists insufficient public awareness of the importance of environmental buffers (e.g., coastal mangroves to absorb storm surges), there will not be a strong public call on government and other stakeholders to acquire the human and other resources to promote and protect such resources. There will also be a lack of outrage against those who act, legal or otherwise, that damages or destroys those DRR resources.⁵⁸ As is true in many respects, public funding and other public and private investment on CD will closely track the public sentiment and the public and policy agendas. Citizens and stakeholders alike need to understand and appreciate the risks that exist and the opportunities that exist to address them to react appropriate to information on CD needs.

- **A lack of understanding of existing legal instruments**

Knowledge and understanding of the various legal instruments guiding DRR, and of the legal instruments guiding other policy pursuits that are linked to DRR in some manner, may be lacking among some or all of the relevant CD stakeholders. Such linkages are not always apparent, and partnerships between the different communities of stakeholders engaged in the various pursuits may not be well-established. Such instruments and endeavors exist at all levels from the most local to the global-international (e.g., conventions and agreements instituted under the United Nations umbrella). It is important that relevant national CD plans and strategies for DRR refer to and include such linkages with other relevant policy areas for DRR, development, and other strategies, including capacity assessments and the crafting of action plans.

⁵⁸ This issue was described by Raymond Burby in *Cooperating with Nature: Confronting Natural Hazards with Land Use Planning for Sustainable Communities* (1998) (<http://bit.ly/2BKLNPN>) where it was stated that, "local governments are responsible for approving development projects and building plans and they are the front-line of risk reduction in planning and building. However, many local governments, especially in smaller towns or poor districts, do not have adequate staff with the adequate technical capacity [to do so]."

- **A focus on non-conflict areas**

Post-conflict areas and the people that live within them are highly vulnerable to the effects of natural hazards. The conflict is likely to have reduced or eliminated institutional knowledge on DRR practices, diverted funding for mitigation programmes, and severely weakened the vital enabling environment within which DRR efforts become possible. These areas are thus where CD for DRR needs are most comprehensive and most urgent. However, the focus of CD FOR DRR efforts have thus far been on non-conflict areas⁵⁹. Even when efforts do focus on post-conflict areas, the fragility of the communities targeted and the institutions and organizations within them are typically less capable of taking a lead role in program planning, design, and conduct. This leads to an ongoing cycle of vulnerability and disaster that stand in the way of post-conflict recovery and development.⁶⁰

59 Lucas, 2013. P. 10.; UNDG, 2017.

60 Few, 2015. P. 10.