Strategic Approach to Capacity Development for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

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Section 2: Capacity Development in the Disaster Risk Reduction Context

SENDAI FRAMEWORK
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

UNDRR
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

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Capacity Development in the Disaster Risk Reduction Context

CD is defined in the DRR context to be, "the process by which people, organizations and society systematically stimulate and develop their capacities over time to achieve social and economic goals."[27] Effective CD efforts are generally those that build upon existing capacity (rather than starting anew with each successive project), that are widely-inclusive in their management, and that foster a higher degree of ownership. Through capacity assessment, the capacity of a group, organization or society may be reviewed against desired goals in order to build a better understanding of what capacities are needed, why they are needed, and who they are for.[28,] [29] Successful capacity assessment is contingent on understanding the obstacles that inhibit stakeholders from realizing goals and identifying those areas where capacity enhancement will have the greatest potential.

Within the DRR context, capacity is defined to be, "the combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organization, community or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience."[30] This broad-reaching application could include infrastructure, institutions, human knowledge and skills, and collective attributes such as social relationships, leadership and management.

A nation's or a society's DRR capacity is made up of multiple "elements". To enable understanding of capacity needs and resources, and to support CD planning efforts, these elements have been grouped according to type and by the level or levels at which engagement exists. CD planning must seek a diverse range of capacity elements[31], which are generally characterized as Functional or Technical[32], and likewise Hard or Soft. Capacity elements are also

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27   United Nations General Assembly, 2017. P. 12.

28   United Nations General Assembly, 2017. P. 12.

29   CADRI, 2011. P. 12.

30   The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/276 endorsed the recommendations of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Indicators and Terminology Relating to Disaster Risk Reduction on 2 February 2017. United Nations General Assembly, 2017. Report of the Open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction.

31   Oxford Policy Management, 2010. P. 1.; Few, 2015. P. 11.

32   The World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) applies a slightly different categorization scheme, which includes: Technical (tools and infrastructures); Financial (investments); and Human (knowledge and skills).

distinguished as 'hard' or 'soft', and oftentimes functional and technical capacities possess both hard and soft characteristics.[33] When assembling an effective suite of interventions capable of addressing capacity needs in a multifaceted and holistic manner, knowledge of the various options and the differentiation that exists between them is critical.[34]

Capacity Domains

Though not without exception, CD efforts generally target one or more of the following four capacity 'domains' illustrated in the figure below.

Leadership

An expanded concept of leadership is used in the CD context. Leaders provide vision and build competence and integrity. Leadership development programmes, partnership and coalition building, and identifying and supporting champions of change are all measures that support leadership capacity.

Institutional Strengthening&Development

Policies, systems, and processes that organize and manage development objectives, including disaster risk reduction, provide strength and foster growth. This might include strategic planning or reform; policy dialogue; establishing DRR platforms, offices or strategies; legislative actions; decentralization initiatives; national CD strategy development; organizational effectiveness measures; and others.

Knowledge

Many education- and training-based CD efforts focus on building and enhancing individual and organizational awareness and knowledge. This may be supported through a combination of methods and channels including classroom-based education and more informal methods like social marketing, on-the-job learning, coaching, and mentoring. Organizational-level actions may support information gathering, sharing, and dissemination.

Accountability

Building accountability into systems, structures, and processes helps stakeholders to individually and collectively establish and act on expectations, to monitor progress towards goals and objectives, and to learn from and adjust according to outcomes. CD interventions might include creating or strengthening public sector oversight and arbitration, creating coalitions and networks, and conducting public information campaigns or town hall meetings.

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33   Morgan, 2006. P. 8.

34   CADRI, 2011. P.13-14.

Capacity Types

Interventions may be functional or technical in their foci and can be classified as either "soft" or "hard" in their presentation, as defined in the figure below.

Functional Capacity

Support planning, leadership, resource management, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Examples include stakeholder engagement, the development of DRR policies, mainstreaming DRR in development plans, and the establishment of coordination mechanisms.

Hard Capacities

Tangible and visible and therefore easier to conceptualize, identify, measure, and assess. May be technical or functional, including hard skills, explicit and tacit knowledge and methodologies, organizational structures, systems, procedures, or policies, and others.

Technical Capacity

Typically associated with a subject matter or expertise such as engineering or cartography. Training to support technical capacity is the most common CD activity.

Soft capacities

Often intangible and invisible and therefore difficult to conceptualize, identify, measure or assess. Includes social or relational elements such as organizational culture, commitment, and values; leadership qualities; political aptitude; implicit knowledge and experience; learning; analysis; organizational adaptability and flexibility; commitment; and accountability.

Capacity Levels

Finally, the span or manner of influence of each capacity intervention on the CD process may also be differentiated according to three distinct 'levels' of capacity, as defined in the figure below.

The Enabling Environment (Systemic Level)

The broad social system within which people and organizations function, including all the rules, laws, policies, power relations and social norms that govern civic engagement. It is what makes disaster risk reduction activities, and the efforts to build capacity in support of them, accessible, acceptable, and accountable, and is therefore essential. It has been described as a context that provides the prioritization and motivation to turn development of DRR structures and skills into effective action. Actions might include improvements to policy frameworks, finance, labour markets, the political context, policy, and the legislative environment; class structures; culture; and other support networks.

The Organizational Level

Includes the internal structures, policies, budgets, strategies, frameworks, arrangements, procedures, and other factors that dictate or otherwise influence an organization's ability to operate and achieve its objectives. It is where individuals can utilize their skills and abilities to achieve objectives, and where organizational leadership and engagement capabilities are developed.

The Individual Level

Focuses on the capacity of people, including skills, knowledge, experience, and performance. The goal is to increase or improve personal performance. CD occurs through training, education, performing, coaching, mentoring, networking, and observation. It is promoted through incentives and by other means of motivating capacity development participants.

CD for DRR Principles

CD efforts must be approached in a manner that is cognizant of and compliant with generally-accepted CD principles and is comprehensive and complete in its design. The literature review and consultative process uncovered several key guiding principles and foundational elements[35] whose existence stakeholders consider to be highly correlated to successful outcomes of CD efforts. It was felt that each of the principles were important both individually and collectively,[36] and that evidence of all elements was required. (See box "Driving Principles of Effective Capacity Development." More detail on each of these is provided in Appendix 5.)

Foundational Elements of Effective CD for DRR

Several elements that are vital to any CD for DRR effort have been identified through the literature review and consultative process. While most of these are indicative of a strong supportive environment, they are influential at the individual and organizational levels as well. (See box "Foundational Elements of Effective Capacity Development." More detail on each of these is provided in Appendix 6.)

Driving Principles of Effective Capacity Development

01. Efforts are Guided by a Common Understanding (of terms, concepts, standards, and norms)
02. Efforts are Coherent Within and Between Levels
03. Efforts Pursue an "All-of-Society" Approach
04. Efforts are Goal-Driven, Impact-Focused, and Transformative
05. Efforts are Demand-driven and Needs-based
06. Efforts are Strategic and Sustainable
07. Efforts are Nationally-Owned and Coordinated
08. Efforts are Value-Added
09. Efforts are Practical, Replicable, and Localized
10. Efforts Foster Partnerships
11. Efforts are Standard-Conformant or Standard-Setting
12. Efforts Employ a Mix of Activities across Levels / Timeframes
13. Efforts Strengthen Knowledge Frameworks

Foundational Elements of Effective Capacity Development

01. Financial Resources
02. Political Support
03. Incentives
04. A Supportive Culture
05. Existing Structures and Mechanisms
06. Relevant and Valid Information
07. Flexibility and Adaptability
08. Complementarity
09. Innovation
10. An Exit Strategy

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35 Principles and elements are distinguished as follows: a principle is "a moral rule or standard of good behavior or fair dealing," while an element is "one of the parts of something that makes it work, or a quality that makes someone or something effective." (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018)

36 Principles need to be applied in all situations, and all principles need to be applied.

Pursuing CD According to a 'Theory of Change'

A Theory of Change is an effective planning construct that helps stakeholders establish a common and accurate understanding of why a desired change is needed and how that change should occur in a particular context. By establishing a theory of change, it is possible to identify acceptable and realistic targets and goals at a very early point in the planning process. The conceptual theory enables planners to subsequently identify and analyse proposed tasks, actions, and expectations to ensure they conform to the overall construct, thereby ensuring the intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts are both achievable and desirable. In the absence of a common and effective filter or lens that is not only widely accepted by all stakeholders, but also integrated into the planning process, achievement of meaningful coordination will be difficult.

Theories of change are informed by the many factors detailed in this strategic approach, and therefore are unique and non-replicable. Their core purpose, however, is common. They seek to support improvement from an existing level of inadequate capacity to one which is adequate and effective. To understand what this means, CD stakeholders and partners need to answer for themselves (and ensure there exists concurrence among all partners) the following questions:[37]

- **Whose capacities do we need to develop?**

- **To what end do we need to develop this capacity?**

- **What kinds of capacities need to be developed for this?**

- **What will be their purpose?**

- **How do we measure and monitor these capacities and the results they are meant to achieve?**

CD for DRR Process

The Strategic Approach offers a six-step planning process by which the actions and decisions involved may be organized. Stakeholders can incorporate this (or a similar) process to better address Sendai Framework goal and targets and to avoid many of the common obstacles and challenges. See Appendix 3 for a selection of existing planning tools and Appendix 10 for a detailed description of each of the following steps.

Step 1 **Stakeholder Engagement**	Initiates the relationships and dialogue that inform and resource the project and forms the basis of partnerships; helps planners understand the actors and their influence.
Step 2 **Capacity Needs Assessment**	Considers a range of perspectives to ensure a tailored approach; articulates capacities, gaps, and entry points at each capacity level; identifies the cause and impact of gaps; sets the stage for intervention planning; provides initial monitoring indicators.
Step 3 **Define the Intervention**	Involves the design and development of required capacity development intervention plans, which address institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability.
Step 4 **Partnership Building**	Strengthening of CD implementation through the building of partnerships that lend credibility, access, human and financial resources, expertise, and more.
Step 5 **Implementation**	Implementation partners begin to address capacity gaps once the design of a flexible needs-based and demand driven intervention program has been completed.
Step 6 **Monitoring & Evaluation**	Conducted to ensure implementation partners are progressing towards the intended goals, and to ensure those goals are resulting in the changes required to meet capacity needs.