

Does Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction work? Experiences with the Eruption of Mount Merapi in Indonesia Part II: Re-evacuation and Response



Volunteers on the way to collect data of casualties of the eruption on the 5th of November in Argomulyo Hamlet, Sumino. Data Collection & Assessment Coordinator pointing at the Merapi Photo: Edi Kusmaedi (TRK-INSIST)

CMDRR Framework

Cordaid aims to increase resilience of communities through the approach of Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR).

The **CMDRR framework** consists of the following fields of action:

1. Training of NGO staff and communities on CMDRR process;
2. Community managed disaster risk assessments and analysis;
3. Creation and implementation of risk reduction action plans to address priority risks;
4. Formation of community structures to manage the CMDRR action plans;
5. Community managed documentation, monitoring & evaluation systems.

CMDRR is different from most other DRR approaches in that it starts at the community level, by stimulating and facilitating community members to increase their own capacity to address disaster risk. It is not implemented *in* communities, but *by* communities themselves, who lead the way. In this way, CMDRR enables communities and individuals to prepare themselves for hazards in a way that reflects their own priorities and builds on their capacity and knowledge.

On October 26th 2010, Mount Merapi, one of Indonesia's most violent volcanoes, erupted after four years of sleep. Further eruptions and evacuations occurred on the 30th of October, the 3rd of November and in the early hours of the 5th November. Merapi's violence caused the displacement of more than 280,000 people, the death of 260 people and the destruction of villages, houses, community infrastructure, livestock and livelihoods.

Since 2002 Cordaid supports Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR, for explanation see textbox) in several countries, among them Indonesia. In Indonesia, Cordaid works with local partner organizations Bina Swadaya and Insist at village level in several districts in Central Java and Yogyakarta province. In the district of Magelang, located in the area affected by the eruption, Cordaid has a long relationship with four villages (Sengi, Krinjing, Ngargomulyo and Sumber) through the work of her local partner Bina Swadaya. The eruption provides a real life case that informs all involved on the effectiveness of the CMDRR work. Therefore, Cordaid started to document events during and after the eruption to identify lessons for future CMDRR efforts.

The DRR forums of the villages, organized through the CMDRR programme, functioned well during (re)evacuation, the distribution of aid and the start of return and recovery. In the four villages where Bina Swadaya is working no deaths and no injuries were caused by the eruptions.

Re-evacuation

The DRR forums shared stories of the terrible night of the 4th to the 5th November and how they had to re-evacuate their villagers further away from the hail of ash, sand and hot gases emitted from Merapi to the safety zone 20 kilometer from Merapi's crater by themselves. As a DRR forum member in Sengi village describes: *"The second eruption has forced us to evacuate the whole village to other safe places. We are proud that in less than 24 hours we could coordinate with many stakeholders to find 30 evacuation points for 4500 community members and in less than 12 hours we managed to coordinate with many stakeholders to get some food distribution."*

Independent Since the eruption of the 4th/5th November occurred faster and more severely than the first big eruption on the 26th of October, the second

evacuation was more chaotic than the first one. However, in the end all evacuated villagers were traced by the DRR forums and reunited. The DRR forums did not receive assistance of other parties, but managed the (re)evacuation and the locating of the villagers by themselves. As a member of the DRR forum in Krinjing village said: *“This year the Merapi eruption was unpredictable. We had to do series of evacuations. We are proud that during the evacuation process the community and us were able to work together, and could manage the process without depending to other parties.”*

Pride Not only the members of the DRR forums were proud of themselves, also community members appreciated their work. For example, an older lady of Ngargomulyo says: *“I’m proud of Pak Yatin, our village head, he is a very responsible man. Pak Yatin and his men who are wearing uniforms (she meant DRR forum members) worked hard to bring us to safer place and they found this place for us and fulfilled our need for food as well.”*



After the fourth eruption on 5 November 2010, more than 35,000 IDP's were sheltered in the one of biggest stadium in Yogyakarta. Photo by Sumino (TRK-INSIST)

Emergency response

Some families soon returned to the villages, others have stayed longer in evacuation posts or in host families in safe villages. DRR forums together with the head of their villages had to and still have to look after their villages.

Representation In each of the evacuation points there are two committees, one representing the IDP's and one representing the host community. It is important that the host community is represented since they are providing additional food for the evacuees by themselves and thus run the risk to run out of food supplies while hosting the evacuees. Both committees are self organized and include a coordinator and a team in charge of

receiving visitors and aid. Cordaid's partner organization Insist visits the evacuation points regularly to discuss recent development, to check the number of evacuees and their needs and to provide the aid needed, which is then distributed by the DRR forums.

Aid distribution The government provides about 60% of food needs, the rest comes from donations. DRR forums provide support when and where no government assistance arrives. A DRR forum member in Sumber village says: *“All DRR Forums in 4 villages coordinate the aid distribution very well. When there is an excess of aid in a village and another village needs this aid, the excess can be transferred to the ones in need.”*

However, it should be noted that there is a risk of jealousy between different groups of people in different villages. For example, people in host families feel they receive less aid than the people in evacuation centers. Also, people from villages without a DRR forum, feel left out since the aid for them is less equally distributed than the aid for people from villages with a DRR forum.

Return & recovery

The DRR forums together with household members are collecting data on damage in the village and hamlets. They are also coordinating with village heads to consolidate the information and prepare a clear plan for recovery activities.

Damage report DRR forums collected information on damages and with support of Insist and Bina Swadaya they organized damage assessments in the villages. They reported that springs are not functioning in their villages, so there is no water for agricultural irrigation or for household water. The national water piping system is damaged in the villages, where it existed. There is no electricity in the four villages and there is no plan to fix the electricity system. Lands are burnt and



“The right side of the photo is used to be a rice field, which is now all covered with ash” - Photo by Yatno, FPRB

destroyed by ash and will take months to be restored. Villagers have little saving for buying new seeds, and the harvest which is the usual source of funds for new seeds has been lost. Animals have not been lost; village planning resulted in evacuation of animals or sale of animals before the eruption so families had cash to restart their household level farms. Homes are covered in ash and fallen trees. In Ngargomulyo village alone up to 180 houses are badly damaged by the heat of the eruption and the weight of ash on the roofs.

have alternative strategies for small-scale income generation whilst the land is prepared for new agriculture. Together with the community Cordaid’s partner organizations are now exploring possibilities for creating these alternative livelihoods.

Alternative livelihoods It will be months before land can be used for agricultural production again, so households need to

Valuable lessons

Using the above description of the response and recovery process after Merapi’s eruptions, the following positive results of the CMDRR programme can be identified.

Strengthening of position of the community The DRR forums are recognized by their communities as the ones leading preparedness, response and recovery. They are also recognized by the village head who feels that their role is critical in assisting the people of his village. The DRR forums are also registered in the database of the disaster management agency at the provincial level; organizations such as UNICEF, PLAN Int, CWS and other organizations contact them to be informed about the needs of the villagers. The government department for community protection provides information to the DRR forums on Merapi status and danger updates. Hence CMDRR seems to give communities a stronger position in coordinating and advocating their needs before, during and after disaster. It seems to break with previous practices of waiting for relief from outside, making the villagers more confident to actively engage in pursuing their needs.

Distribution of aid The distribution of aid is very well organized by the DRR forums. They make sure that there is not an excess in aid in one village while others have nothing.



After the second eruption of 31 October 2010, some villagers in Pakem (village not affected by the eruptions) collect and transport fresh grasses out of solidarity with villagers in upper slope villages of Merapi who face serious lack of grass for their livestock (Photo: Saleh Abdullah, TRK-INSIST)

Damage assessment DRR forums are key in organizing quick damage assessments that provide essential information for planning recovery strategies. They will continue to provide information and advocate for their needs in the longer term recovery process, when attention for the disaster has faded away.

Solidarity DRR forums from Bantul, another area where Bina Swadaya is working, which was not affected by Merapi, collected funds from their communities - around 20 million rupiah - and donated it to the DRR Forums in Magelang. DRR Forums in Klaten from villages of Gaden and Bero, also located outside the danger zone of the volcano, collected funds from their communities as well. They collected 16,190,000 rupiah and donated it to the DRR forums in Magelang and to an evacuation point in Klaten. This shows

very well how DRR can stimulate solidarity among vulnerable communities.

Summarizing, it can be said that the community structures created through CMDRR contributed in a positive way to the organization of (re)evacuation, management of aid and ensurance of well being of evacuees and hosts as well as to the start of the process of return and recovery.

Cordaid is currently collecting funds to support the remaining evacuees and host communities, as well as to facilitate the return and quick recovery of the affected population.

Cordaid will support its partners Bina Swadaya and Insist to provide early recovery assistance to the communities. This includes ensuring that food and water are available in the target villages, as well as the cleaning of villages and the repairing of infrastructure. In addition, Insist is working with the government. They are assisting in the development of the government recovery program to ensure communities' needs are considered in the recovery efforts.

Note: This document was written on the 12th of December when the status of Mount Merapi was still a bit uncertain, although the government had lowered the level of danger. It could be the case that some facts mentioned in this article, like the number of evacuated people, have turned incorrect by time of reading due to the fast changes in the situation. To know more about the preparedness measures and the first evacuation undertaken by the community, read 'Experiences with the Eruption of Mount Merapi in Indonesia part I: During the eruption.'



An older woman receiving a box of personal health kits distributed by TRK-INSIST (Photo: Edi Kusmaedi, TRK-INSIST)

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