World Reconstruction Conference 4

Inclusion for Resilient Recovery
Geneva, Switzerland | May 13–14, 2019

THEMATIC SESSION 4
Community-led Recovery
May 13th, 2019/ 11:00-12:30, ROOM 4

Context	Community recovery from disasters can be a complex and often lengthy process, with different communities recovering at different rates. The recovery element of the comprehensive approach to disaster management - prevention, preparedness, response and recovery - can be the most complicated and protracted. The best outcomes are achieved by ensuring recovery strategies align with community need and are led by the affected community. This requires a collaborative, coordinated, adaptable and scalable approach where the responsibility for disaster recovery is shared among all sectors of the community including individuals, families, community groups, businesses and all levels of government. A community-led approach supports the rapid restoration of services essential to human wellbeing and presents an opportunity to build resilience and improve community circumstances and preparedness.
	It is essential to tap into grassroots expertise in disaster risk management and promote scalable models that engage directly with communities, making them equal partners with governments. In the event of disaster, studies show that 90% of survivors are rescued by their own neighbors, often with little or no external support. This core community strength in responding to and protecting against natural hazards and climate change needs to be the central pillar of sustainable recovery and reconstruction planning. Strengthening communities' resilience goes some way toward the ultimate goal of strengthening societal resilience.
	New evidence from flood resilience surveys shows that community investments can build resilience while delivering broader development benefits, such as better education, transportation, and food supply (ADB, 2019). Proper waste management, for example, keeps rivers and drains unclogged and reduces the spread of disease after a flood, while benefitting a community more broadly by improving public health and wellbeing in normal times.
	Recent experience after major earthquakes and tropical cyclones in Asia further demonstrates the role of local communities and indigenous groups as custodians of local knowledge and experience relevant to effective DRM. In particular, indigenous groups, with their long history in their home locations, possess better information about severe but very low-frequency events, catastrophes that are all but invisible to modern modeling techniques and observations using short time periods. The most striking recent example of this is from the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. For example, Kelman, Mercer, and Gaillard (2012) identified in communities in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea several ways in which indigenous knowledge pointed to vulnerabilities that were not recognized through more modern scientific knowledge. Another example is traditional building techniques, such as those used to build hazard-resilient vernacular housing in Nepal.
	Community resilience relies on three essential characteristics: the ability to anticipate and learn from threats; the ability to take action to mitigate and withstand the adverse effects of threats, collectively and as individuals; and the ability to return to a new

	normalcy, improved by lessons learnt from the adverse experience (IFRC, 2011). It is important to recognize the prominent features and strengths of community-led partnerships for resilience: • Communities have organized, informed, experienced constituencies • Communities have field-tested practices and solutions • Communities have holistic, multi-dimensional approaches to resilient development • Communities make government programs responsive and accountable to resilience priorities of the poor • Community-led partnerships foster innovation Community-based collaborations underway in Brazil, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines and Uganda provide evidence for the creative approaches that grassroots organizations are advancing for resilient development. In connecting community initiatives and priorities to local and national government programs and policies, governments can be increasingly effective in the delivery and implementation of their programs and services, as well as more responsive and accountable to the needs of disaster-prone communities. Communities gain additional important benefits from these institutional partnerships. First, everyday living conditions can be greatly improved for community members, with higher incomes, increased productivity, food security, and access to resources and technology, as well as better public infrastructure and basic services. Any or all of these advances help to reduce the stresses that the poor or vulnerable experience on a daily basis. Second, improved well-being and greater stability equip communities to better withstand and combat the adverse effects of natural disasters, hazards and climate change. Third, the partnerships transform the relationships between local communities and other institutional actors, positioning grassroots communities as proactive, knowledgeable stakeholders taking a determining role in their own resilience and development. Local and national governments are increasingly inviting community representatives to decision-making positions, recognizing them as legitimate recipients of technical support, assigning to them public roles as trainers and monitors, enabling them to influence public policy and decision-making processes and resourcing them through institutional funds.(GFDRR, 2015)
Speakers / Panelists	Moderator : Margaret Arnold, World Bank Panelists : - Hirabayashi Atsutoshi, Senior Advior (Recovery and Reconstruction, Community Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) - Mario Flores, Habitat for Humanity - Gerald Potutan, International Recovery Platform (IRP)