

Summary Report

Assessment of Disaster Management Planning, Policies and Responses in Thailand

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), dated December 24, 2009, outlines the ASEAN countries' regional cooperation and other measures to prepare for and respond to disasters¹. One of the actions required by AADMER is for the ASEAN governments to review their policies on disaster management planning and emergency response, and to ensure civil society participation as important stakeholders in preparedness and response². The AADMER Partnership Group (APG)³ promotes civil society participation in the AADMER implementation, and its current initiatives in Thailand, which are led by HelpAge International is part of the APG Consortium Programme, Phase 2, known as "Facilitating Partnerships of National and ASEAN DRR Authorities and Civil Society to Support AADMER Implementation." In line with the Phase 2 programme, HelpAge-APG commissioned a study (in partnership with Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation - DDPM) to review Thailand's policies and plans; highlight the role of civil society and provide their inputs on challenges and lessons learned from the tsunami and flooding crises, including meeting the needs of vulnerable groups; provide recommendations by civil society for improved responses in the future; and provide examples of good practice in relation to disaster response collaboration in Thailand. This document summarizes the key results from the larger report of the study, and will be disseminated to stakeholders engaged in disaster management in Thailand as a means for greater coordination and knowledge building.

1. AADMER BACKGROUND

In drafting the AADMER agreement⁴, ASEAN relied in part on the UN's Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) as the basis for its provisions, while also expanding beyond HFA preparedness to cover the response and recovery actions as well. The AADMER provisions for country implementation are divided into two phases: Phase 1 from 2010-2012, and Phase 2 from 2013-2015. It covers all aspects of the disaster management and outlines a detailed roadmap in four strategic areas: 1) risk assessment, early warning and monitoring, 2) prevention and mitigation, 3) preparedness and response, and 4) recovery. AADMER's approach in all four strategic areas is a multi-partnership approach that engages all stakeholders, including government organizations, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises, and local communities, and relies heavily on community-based disaster preparedness and early response.

2. UNDERSTANDING THAILAND'S POLICY ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Thailand has two laws that pertain to disaster management: 1) the National Social and Development Act, B.E. 2521 (1978), and the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act, B.E. 2550 (2007). This first law established the National Social and Economic Development Board (NESDB), which provides advisory services and development planning to the prime minister and the cabinet, including how best to provide disaster resilience in Thailand as

¹ The ten ASEAN member states include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

² Thailand's Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), under the Ministry of Interior, is designated to serve as the focal point with ASEAN in relation to AADMER, and to coordinate implementation of its provisions.

³ The AADMER Partnership Group (APG) is a working group of international NGOs headed by Oxfam and composed of ChildFund International, HelpAge International, Mercy Malaysia, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children International, and World Vision International that supports a "people-centred" implementation of AADMER with the objective of strengthening the overall ASEAN humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction strategies.

⁴ AADMER was initiated in 2004 after the Indian Ocean Tsunami. The Agreement was signed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministries in 2005 and became legally binding as it entered into force on 24 December 2009 when ratified by all ten ASEAN Member States. This makes the AADMER the first legal-binding HFA-related instrument in the world.

it relates to its social and economic development. The second law established the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), the focal agency to carry out disaster management planning and response in Thailand. It also established the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Committee (NDPMC) that is chaired by the prime minister or deputy prime minister. Both the NESDB and the DDPM have a key role in the development of various plans in relation to disaster management and mitigation, which are outlined below:

i. The Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, B.E. 2555-2559 (2012-2016)

The Eleventh Plan (2012 – 2016) states its vision as “A happy society with equity, fairness and *resilience*”. One objective following from this vision is to ***develop people with integrity***, knowledge and skills appropriate to their *ages*⁵, and to ***strengthen their social institutions and local communities for positive adaptation to changes***; a second objective is to build a secure natural resource and environmental base by supporting ***community participation*** and improving ***resilience to cushion impacts from climate change and disasters***, thereby potentially ***decreasing the vulnerability of the country population and national economy to climate change and natural hazards***. Therefore, the NESDB will work with other government agencies to support its plan and implement actions that achieve the plan’s objectives.

ii. The Master Plan on Water Resource Management (2012)

The Master Plan on Water Resource Management was developed by the Strategic Committee on Water Resource Management (SCWRM), following the severe flooding in Thailand in 2011. The Office of the NESDB serves as the secretariat of the SCWRM, and was one of two special committees established by the Cabinet following the severe flooding. The Master Plan consists of 8 major work plans and 2 action plans: 1) Action Plan of Water Management for the Urgency Period (short-term) and 2) Action Plan of Integrated and Sustainable Flood Mitigation in the Chao Phraya Floodplain (long-term). The Master plan seeks to clarify the roles of the government agencies involved in water and flood management, and to prevent and minimise losses and damage from medium- to large-scale floods. In addition, it seeks to improve existing flood prevention system, urgency flood management, increase capacity in the warning system, build confidence and stability in flood prevention in communities, agricultural areas, industrial sites, and important economic zones, and ***integrate participation of stakeholders from all sectors for effective water management***. It also provides a framework with a Single Command authority on water management for effective planning and timely response. All relevant agencies are obligated to work under the Single Command system in adhering with the “***2P2R policy—prevention, preparedness, response and recovery***”.

iii. National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan B.E. 2553-2557 (2010-2014)

At the direction of the NDPMC, the DDPM formulated the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan (NDPMP) B.E. 2553-2557 (2010-2014) to provide a framework and guidelines to facilitate and ensure effective collaboration among concerned agencies of all sectors and levels in preventing and handling a disaster. The plan follows 4 strategic components: 1) prevention and impact reduction, 2) preparedness arrangement, 3) disaster emergency management and 4) post-disaster management. The CSOs are identified as supporting agencies for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strategic components.

⁵ In promoting development participation, the government should recognize Thailand’s ageing population. In Thailand the population of people 60 years and over increased from 1.21 million in 1960 to 4.02 million in 1990, and will reach 10.78 million in 2020 and represent 15.28 percent of the population.

In terms of a framework for the disaster emergency management (component 3), the lead manager of any disaster response in Thailand is based upon the severity scale of the disaster, which is classified into 4 levels of severity. As per the NDPMP, private sectors, ***foundation and NGOs are classified as auxiliary organisations in association with government agencies to support Emergency Operations Center of all levels and join the operations as Emergency Operations Center Commander assigned according to their own capacity and resources.***

In terms of guidelines, each agency concerned is required to formulate its sectoral action plan and budget to support the implementation in line with its assigned tasks and compatible with geographical, economic, social and environmental condition including the existing resources of each locality. In addition, each provincial cluster, province, Tambon Administrative Organisations (TAOs) and village needs to prepare a Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan. In these plans, vulnerable groups - including children, old persons, people with disabilities, and pregnant women - will be listed by community members and prioritised in receiving assistance.

iv. Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) on Disaster Risk Reduction (2010-2019)

In alignment with the UN's Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and AADMER, Thailand's DDPM in conjunction with relevant government agencies, civil society and the private sector, also prepared a Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) to support disaster risk reduction. The final action plan result was endorsed by the Thai Government on 24 March 2009. SNAP comprises four disaster risk reduction strategic components of ***prevention and mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, and post disaster management.*** In addition, SNAP represents a national framework, providing a national strategic plan which is then utilized by all government agencies to prepare specific agency action plans; this has the effect of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into governmental agency planning and response.

In addition, SNAP recognizes the strengths of multi-stakeholder partnerships in disaster management. Key stakeholders involved in disaster management in Thailand include DDPM and other government agencies, the Red Cross Society, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, foundations, voluntary groups, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), private businesses, and academia. Therefore, SNAP encourages the multi-stakeholder partnership/network planning in Thailand that will support coordinated and well-managed prevention and preparedness activities, coordinated and well-managed responses to disasters and recovery, as well as providing systematic mechanisms to avoid duplication and conflict among the stakeholders in implementing the four disaster reduction strategic components.

3. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE TSUNAMI AND FLOODING CRISES

Government Policies and Plans

Due to inadequate knowledge and preparation exercises of disaster management policies and plans, as well as political manoeuvring and pressures, the government's response did not follow the policies and plans previously adopted and resulted in ad hoc arrangements to address the unfolding situation.

Multi-stakeholder partnership and CSOs participation

The principal lesson from the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 and the Flooding in 2011 - which caused extensive damage to lives, property, and economic development in Thailand is the need for improved coordination between government and INGOs, NGOs, and CBOs. Most of INGOs, NGOs, CBOs operated independently, which resulted in duplication and wasted resources.

The current networks in Thailand are working on various issues and rely heavily on informal and person-to-person relationships. There are no centralised platforms for disaster management. Many of the ASEAN countries have initiated more formal networks known as 'Working Groups' to share information, identify and work together on common themes and coordinate among relevant sectors and government.

The government's and CSO's multi-stakeholder partnership platforms and activities lack involvement of vulnerable groups. There is a need to mainstream vulnerable groups in disaster management planning and policies.

Addressing Needs of Vulnerable Groups

Women - Older women, women with disabilities, women headed household, women migrant workers and pregnant women are not adequately recognised as being vulnerable and requiring specific services, such as accessible toilets, safety in shelters, and reproductive and maternal health care.

Older People -Older people have lifelong experiences in dealing with natural disasters, and were not consulted in developing DRR plans for their communities. Due to age-related issues such as mobility and health, some older people may need special services in times of natural disasters. The current DRR policies and response plans by the government and CSOs do not take this into consideration, placing older people at greater risk.

Children -Small children and orphans are not adequately recognized as being vulnerable and requiring specific services, such as addressing post-disaster stress through child-friendly spaces, provision of nutritious and hygienic milk and food, and safety in shelters due to risk of sex abuse and trafficking.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) - Knowledge and information on how to be prepared for disasters did not reach PWDs before the flooding occurred. And, the PWDs had limited access to assistance services during the disaster, particularly the deaf faced difficulties in communication, and others faced physical difficulties in moving to safe areas and/or staying at temporary shelters.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS BY CIVIL SOCIETY STAKEHOLDERS

A. Policy Environment, Implementation and Support Systems

- The Thai Government must ensure that the national disaster management policy directives referenced above are implemented and tested; all concerned agencies need to understand their respective roles and responsibilities, and be able to apply their own action plans jointly with CSOs and the private sector.
- The Thai Government must use the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan (2010-2014) as the main policy guideline to facilitate and ensure the systematic collaboration and cooperation among concerned agencies at all levels in dealing with a disaster situation.
- An information database should be developed to improve early warning for flooding and other disasters and support emergency responses. At the same time, local contingency planning (disaster risk reduction) should be developed and implemented to reduce risks to communities.

B. Multi-stakeholder Partnership and Networking

- There should be a formal platform for a regular coordination between different sectors, particularly, the government and CSOs. Thus, a more formal CSO network is needed to support better coordination, as noted in the following recommendation.
- According to Social Development and Human Security Office, each province should have Provincial Coordinating Centre for Civil Society Organizations. The CSOs and vulnerable groups must become members and work with the Provincial Coordinating Centre to fill any relief and recovery gaps and create a network that can apply the Thai Government's policy guidelines, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Thailand should support a stronger and more formal CSO network. A centralised platforms for disaster management similar to those in some ASEAN countries should be , such as the Indonesian National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Indonesia, the Disaster Management Working Group in Myanmar and Vietnam, the INGO Network in Lao PDR, and the DRR Working Group in Cambodia.
- The APG has identified CSOs working directly with women, older people, children and PWDs. These vulnerable groups have their own network and thus it is recommended that these CSOs need to mobilize these networks to engage the DRR network. Information on the inclusion of vulnerable groups and additional specific recommendations is provided in section C below.
- People affected by disasters should be encouraged to develop networks and network sharing in support of preparedness and policy development. For example, the tsunami-affected persons created their own community network and various sector networks, and worked together with other stakeholders to share their experiences in other affected areas. They create a platform to reflect their needs and to advocate for appropriate government policies on disaster management.

C. Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable groups can also contribute in **prevention and mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, and post disaster management**. Different capacities, skills, knowledge possessed by vulnerable groups can be drawn on as local resources, and provide additional resources in disaster management, especially contributions from women, older people, children and PWDs. Women are a particularly good resource in mobilizing their peers, caring for family members with special needs, organizing food preparation and distribution, and knowledge of household needs in the community. Older people's life experiences, traditional and indigenous knowledge, and information on past climatic events, can provide key insights into a community's vulnerability and capabilities, and thereby provide valuable inputs into community-based plans. It is important to involve children in disaster management as they represent the citizens of tomorrow and can reduce their own vulnerability by knowledge of what to do in a disaster situation. Schools should include disaster preparedness in the curriculum and carry out drill exercises to better prepare the children to protect themselves and their families. These children when they become adults will then likely be active in supporting community-based planning and preparedness for their communities. PWDs can also be trained in what to do in a disaster situation, and thereby protect themselves and provide support to each other. They can also be advocates in their community for raising awareness, creating enabling environments, and providing training and technical support. Therefore, it is important that these vulnerable groups participate in community planning exercises as it relates to the four strategic areas. Additional recommendations for inclusion of vulnerable groups in disaster management are referenced below:

- The NDPMP should include guidelines for people with disabilities, elderly, women, children, such as DRR monitoring, listing and mapping of vulnerable group in the area, early warning instructions, and relief and recovery instructions.
- Reconstruction design should incorporate mobility for the physically challenged, for example construction of ramps in houses, shelters and public facilities. Evacuation areas should have appropriate user-friendly design. The environment and facilities should address specific needs of all groups including vulnerable groups, for example systems for protecting women and children from sexual violence and exploitation, special efforts to prevent abuse in camps and families, etc.
- The information about relief and recovery assistance should be provided by each government agency (e.g. types, amount and responsible agencies), especially the rights of vulnerable groups to receive this assistance.
- Participation of vulnerable groups in planning, decision making processes, program development and implementation and taking up roles and task achievement should be encouraged. Requirements for vulnerable groups should be promoted in overall disaster management strategies and plans of both government and non-government agencies, including inclusion in credit and income generation programs.
- Society should recognise older people and those with disabilities as requiring specialised assistance but also recognise older people as experienced, capable, and active contributors to family life and livelihoods. Trauma can also be reduced by encouraging the children and elderly to talk together, and to facilitate their joint participation in disaster, relief and recovery.
- Capacity building is required for specific vulnerable groups to prepare themselves before, during and after disaster as well as to understand the relevant policy and rights.
- Building and strengthening the capacity of community networks for disaster assistance and linking those networks to work together with government are essential.
- Gender is a cross-cutting theme among all vulnerable groups, which should be mainstreamed in preparedness and response activities. It requires analysing situations through a gender lens and incorporating gender-sensitive strategies in disaster management plans, and in recovery programs.
- Priority must be given to family reunification in the case of separated children. Setting up of orphanages and the institutionalisation of children should be the last option for affected children. Initiatives and funding to support surviving family members and relatives to support these affected children is preferred.

5. GOOD PRACTICES: DISASTER MANAGEMENT COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

The following are examples taken from the recent disaster crises in Thailand that represent good practices of disaster management coordination and collaboration.

A. Joint Commemoration of the ASEAN Day for Disaster Management (ADDM) and International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR)

The ADDM and IDDR both serve as a strategy to increase the level of public awareness for disaster risk reduction. Thailand has been leading in organising the ADDM for the past few years as a Co-Chair of ACDM Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation, and Lead Shepherds for Public Education, Awareness and Advocacy for the ADDMER Work Programme.

B. Ban Nam Khem and Tsunami Affected Community Network

Ban Nam Khem used its resources in the community, and based on the community-based disaster management (CBDRM) approach, identified its mitigation measures and management resources. **The community members participating in the process included vulnerable groups (such as pregnant women, small children, and persons with disabilities). A hazard map was also developed, with a list of people who need help (and their locations) so that when disaster strikes these groups would be provided early response.** The community was awarded as a resilient community in 2008 by the DDPM.

Tsunami Affected Community Network – composed of community organizations from the 6 tsunami affected provinces - organised a conference in January 2013 called, “From 7 Years Tsunami Commemoration to Thailand Flood”. The conference was attended by 18 tsunami networks including vulnerable group networks of women, PWDs, children and older people, to discuss the supporting policy and mechanism on disaster management required from all relevant sectors regarding the experiences from the tsunami and floods. The meeting resulted in concrete recommendations for the government and CSOs to take forward.

C. Multi-stakeholder Collaboration during the 2011 Flood

The lessons gained during the crisis have been consolidated through a series of interactions between different concerned stakeholders. Strategic recommendations and proposed actions for flood preparedness and emergency response have been framed based on the extensive lessons learned and shared with the public. The case studies that follow are examples of multi-stakeholder collaboration during and after the flooding crisis.

Thaiflood.com - A private sector group called ‘Thaiflood’ has been founded by Internet pioneer and founder of Kapook.com, Mr. Poramate Minsiri since October 2010 which has become one of the main sources of up-to-the-minute information on flooding across the country. The group plays its roles as an information centre via ‘*thaiflood.com*’ and helps coordinating the relief efforts of other parties and communicates with its volunteers and the others via social networks at *Facebook.com/thaiflood* and at *Twitter.com/thaiflood* (@*thaiflood* and #*thaiflood*).

Relief Thailand - The Relief Thailand network is initiated during the 2011 flood by the Nation Group. The network is participated by group of private companies, Community Organisations Development Institute (Public Organisation) or CODI, Community Organizations of Tambon Level, Thaipat Institute, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Foundation for Consumers, Ramathibodi Hospital, Rama Channel, volunteers, etc. The network provided knowledge on disaster preparedness, prevention, response and how to live with future disasters via seminars, workshops, TV programmes via Nation Channel and Rawangpai Station (the 1st TV network on disaster in Thailand) as well as other publications.

Ladkrabang Model - During 2011 flood, the King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology (KMUTL) worked with 61 communities in Ladkrabang area to set up Flood Monitoring

Center. Community contingency plan was developed for better response. The water level was monitored, reported and early warning was issued. Flood response and recovery plan was implemented and adapted to local conditions throughout the country. There was also a group of volunteer students called Moh Fai-Moh Ban. The group offer assistance to the nearby communities and transferred their knowledge and experiences in the area so-called 'Ladkrabang Model' using indigenous knowledge combined with modern technology.

Volunteer Network for Crisis Response - Thaiflood also helped promote the multi-stakeholder collaboration of 'Volunteer Network for Crisis Response', which organized volunteers to response to the crisis, including the following teams: Relief Donation and Distribution Team, Resource Mobilization Team, Operational Team, Coordination Team, Information Team, Media Outreach Team, Technical Team, and the Provincial Relations Team.

National Disaster Preparedness Day 2012 - The National Disaster Preparedness Day 2012 was organised on 5 May 2012 at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL). This platform showcases knowledge and experiences from various networks as well as by the Tsunami Affected Community Network. Hazard and human mapping (digital format) were developed by the Task Force for dissemination and use widely in disaster/flood management planning by communities and different groups. The cases and outputs from the event were further disseminated via www.thaiflood.com and other social Medias to raise public awareness on disaster responses and create connections among networks to work together - using the same database.

National Disaster Task Force - Although the changing environment is one of the factors that could not be controlled, it can be learnt to adapt ourselves to live with it. The 'National Disaster Task Force' initiated at the National Disaster Preparedness Day 2012 is an open platform for multi-stakeholders (particularly the civil society organizations) to decide and identify directions, approaches from different models on disaster management.

This summary report is based on information from the report entitled Assessment of Disaster Management Planning, Policies and Responses in Thailand prepared by ASEAN Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and commissioned by HelpAge International and AADMER Partnership Group (APG).
The document is available at www.helpage.org/resources/publications and <http://www.aadmerpartnership.org/resources/publications>.

