

ELEMENTS OF REPLICABLE MODEL TO INCREASE INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN COMMUNITY DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

PLAN INTERNATIONAL ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL HUB

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Inclusive Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (ICDRM) project, funded by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Plan International Asia Pacific Regional Hub and Plan International USA conducted a formative study titled Elements of Replicable Models to Increase Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Community Disaster Risk Management in the municipality Sablayan in Occidental Mindoro, the Philippines. This study assessed the potential of the program elements to be developed into replicable models for making disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) more inclusive.

Both the Tau-buid in Sitio¹Malatongtong, Barangay Burgos and the Alangan in Sitio Calamansian, Barangay San Agustin have experienced various kinds of disasters. As indigenous peoples (IP) groups, their experiences in DRRM became the focus in this study, which had the following aims:

- Determine if the DRRM activities carried out by the ICDRM project were effective in increasing the representation, participation and decision-making of indigenous people (IP) in DRRM committees.
- Gain an in-depth understanding of the specific DRRM needs of the vulnerable populations to be served by these activities.
- Identify and describe the challenges and opportunities that could hamper or facilitate their adoption and use.
- Gather the views, ideas and perspectives from beneficiaries about how they can participate in building an inclusive DRRM model and eventually take ownership.
- Analyze how the proposed models would fit within the current DRRM environment with respect to policies, government regulations and funding.

METHODOLOGY

This research team invited 59 respondents (Table 1) from two Mangyan IP groups — the Alangan in Sitio Calamansian, Barangay San Agustin and the Tau-buid in Sitio Malatongtong, Barangay Burgos. Since the study was exploratory, grounded theory was chosen as an approach to collect data and conduct analysis. The methods used for data collection were desk review, key informant interview (KII), in-depth interview (IDI), and focus group discussion (FGD). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team had to modify some of its methods for data collection because of health and safety protocols. Participant observation was not carried out, since staying in the communities and houses of Mangyan for an extended time was not encouraged. Thus, remote interviews were conducted to collect the data when travel restrictions were issued in the Philippines.

¹ Sitio refers to a subdivision of a barangay in the Philippines. Typically, its location is usually far from the center of the barangay.

TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS ACROSS ALL METHODOLOGIES

METHODOLOGY	TYPE OF RESPONDENT				TOTAL
	MANGYAN COMMUNITY	B/M LGU	MANGYAN CSOS	PLAN	
KII	4	6	-	2	12
IDI	3	2*	-	-	3
FGD	36 (4 FGDs : 2 sessions with women; 2 sessions with men)	-	5 (1 FGD)	3	44
Total	43	6	5	5	59

*Not included in the total, as they are not unique respondents. The LGU representatives counted as IDI respondents, who are already included in the tally of KII respondents.

The research team used thematic content analysis for the information collected from the interviews and secondary sources. Inductive coding was undertaken on group-related information and ideas as well as to identify common themes. The team did manual coding to organize the data. As more data was collected and reviewed, more concepts and categories emerged, which helped establish a foundation for theory building.

FINDINGS

There are four replicable elements identified under Plan International’s ICDRM project interventions in Sablayan. The elements were grouped into the following domains: (1) increase IP participation in formal DRRM structures and policymaking; (2) strengthen IP representation in risk governance processes; (3) address IP vulnerabilities to disasters; and (4) increase participation and leadership of IP women in DRRM.

1. Domain 1: IP participation in local DRRM structures and policymaking

The ICDRM project supported interventions enhancing the existing municipal and barangay DRRM structures, which led to expansion in membership to include representatives from vulnerable groups. In the municipality of Sablayan, this new policy established the municipal Indigenous Peoples’ Mandatory Representative (IPMR) as the representative of both Alangan and Tau-buid tribes in the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MDRRMC), which provided a platform to formally coordinate IP.

DRRM-related concerns. At the barangay level, aside from the barangay IPMR, the increase in the number of elected IP officials in the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC) enabled Mangyan members to participate in sub-committees, thus amplifying their voices in decision-making. The project supported the enforcement of policies, through the passage of Municipal Executive Order No. 2019-029 and barangay resolutions in IP inhabited barangays, which institutionalizes the representation of IP in local DRRM structures.

2. Domain 2: IP representation in risk governance process

Through their increased representation in the DRRM structures in risk assessment and DRRM planning, IP gained opportunities to take part in processes often only done by the local government units (LGUs). This led LGU members to recognize the importance of IP in resilience-building efforts. In both municipal and barangay levels, the representation of Mangyan in risk assessment and DRRM planning led to the development of DRRM plans that included interventions that directly targeted the needs of IP communities.

In terms of approaches, the emphasis on shifting from municipal and barangay activities to sitio-level project interventions was identified as worthy of replication because these facilitate increased participation of other members of the IP community, especially women, in activities such as family-level disaster preparedness training and simulation exercises. The inclusion of traditional IP political structure at all stages of project implementation helped facilitate collective decision-making, as IP leaders coordinate community affairs.

3. Domain 3: Addressing IP’s vulnerability to disasters

The study revealed that capacity-building interventions, such as trainings in family disaster preparedness and simulation exercises, help to raise awareness of disaster mitigation among IP communities, and to some extent, equip them with knowledge to better withstand typhoons. The project’s provision of relevant DRRM materials and equipment complemented disaster preparedness trainings and plans, and the provision of equipment, such as the public address system, improved IP communities’ ability to quickly broadcast disaster warnings.

4. Domain 4: Women’s participation in DRRM

While much effort is still needed to include women in resilience building, the study revealed that the ICDRM project’s initiative to form women’s CSGs is an intervention that should be replicated and expanded. Plan’s support for the formation of CSGs helped women collectively manage their organization, based on the experience of Alangan women. Their savings enabled them to provide for the needs of their families in emergencies. For example, CSG savings supported families during the COVID-19 pandemic when many services stopped and access to markets to buy and sell commodities was greatly curtailed.

Summarized in Table 2 below are the recommendations derived from the study on how to improve inclusion in each domain, paying attention to possible gaps in each domain.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPLICATION PER DOMAIN

DOMAIN	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPLICATION
IP representation in local DRRM structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden representation in DRRM structures to include IP and their organizations. • Support the formation and/or strengthening of IP-led organizations. • Create better opportunities for women to take on leadership roles in DRRM. • Sustain advocacy work among duty-bearers at the barangay and municipal levels to institutionalize an inclusive DRRM approach.
IP representation in risk governance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen community-based interventions and approaches to enable greater participation among women, girls and boys, older persons and persons with disabilities in risk governance processes. • Mobilize the IP community in the implementation and monitoring of DRRM actions. • Support the implementation of effective and inclusive communication strategies to increase access to DRRM information.
Addressing IP vulnerability to disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support efforts toward risk-based and culture-sensitive DRRM programming. • Support measures that strengthen poverty reduction measures among IP.
Women’s participation in DRRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the organizing of work among IP women through advocacy and capacity-building activities. • Implement advocacy work among stakeholders, especially duty-bearers and male IPs, to advance women’s participation in DRRM. • Provide opportunities for IP women to perform a more proactive role in DRRM such as engagement in education and awareness-raising activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals that replicable elements of a potential model on inclusive community-based DRRM are present under Plan International's ICDRM project intervention in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. Insights from the IP in Barangays Burgos (Tau-buid tribe) and San Agustin (Alangan tribe), as well as representatives from the MLGUs and barangay LGUs, civil society, and Plan International Mindoro field office, point to specific project interventions, policies and implementation approaches that can be further developed to form part of a robust ICDRM model.

It is critical to recognize the centrality of the role of IP in helping build this model. More importantly, actions must be founded to recognize IP as rights holders and equal partners in resilience and development. Insights from the study involving the Alangan and Tau-buid tribes show that IP can actively build a robust ICDRM model. This can be achieved by strengthening IP community-based organizations (CBOs), including enhancing the indigenous political structures; engaging IP women and youth; increasing the IP representation in government-mandated bodies; and building their capacities to sustain ICDRM efforts and benefits using culture-sensitive approaches.