

CAPI Blog 3

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Sharing Best Practices



Since September the main CITYNET project that I have been working on has been the Community Based Adaptation and Resiliency Against Disasters II (CBARAD-II) project in Iloilo, the Philippines. Our office in Yokohama hosted a study visit with 14 delegates from the Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (CDRRMC) in October and then I got the opportunity to go to Iloilo as a part of a Technical Advisory Visit with delegates from the City of Yokohama in November. What I found particularly rewarding about the visit was the fact that I got to see firsthand the project that I was helping with. You never really get the full idea of what is going on in a community if you are in an office, in a separate country and a time zone away.



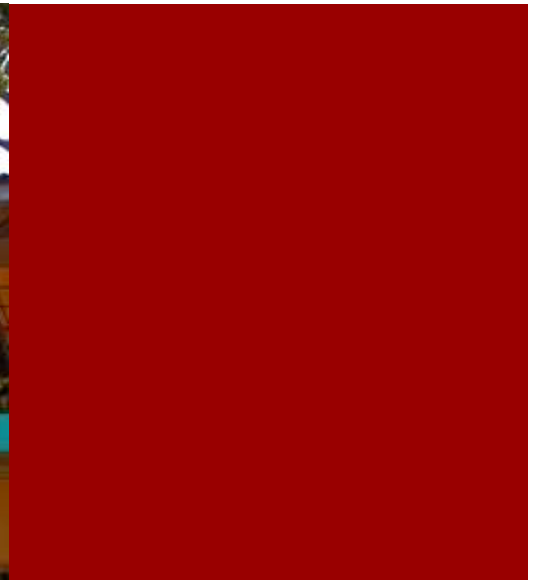
On the first day of our visit we were able to go to three pilot barangays (barangays are like local communities) from the first phase of the CBARAD project. CBARAD-I worked in five barangays to create a culture of disaster resiliency. The project mainly focused on floods and all five barangays were flood-prone and in at-risk communities. During our site visits we were greeted by members of the community who proudly showed us the DRR measures that their community had in place, clear outputs of the first phase of the CBARAD project.

As a part of the CBARAD project, lists of vulnerable individuals in the community were created so that community members were aware of who would need help evacuating during a crisis and therefore they could be immediately assisted. The centers are all equipped with toilets that are accessible for people with disabilities and also have emergency supplies like floatation devices, hard hats, fire extinguishers, a wheelchair, and medical supplies. Evacuation sheets have also been pre-made so that barangays can respond immediately to evacuee needs during a disaster.



They showed us how during an emergency their community centers served as the local disaster management centers as well as an evacuation centers.

We got to visit an elementary school that has over 400 students and serves as an evacuation shelter during disasters.



This school was the first school where the Japanese disaster education program “Kaeru Caravan” was introduced. The Japanese program was localised and renamed KABALAKA Camp because Kabalaka means ‘to care’ or ‘nurture concern’ in the local dialect. Frog Caravan is a workshop that was created by the NPO Plus Arts and uses games and interactive activities in order to teach children of all ages about disasters. The program raises disaster awareness for children as well as their communities and KABALAKA Camp sessions are always done in community spaces that have a lot of traffic, which increases the number of individuals that the education can reach. The program is easily localised because it uses simply acquired household items. School teachers are trained as camp facilitators so that the disaster education can become an integral part of the elementary school curriculum.



One of the main activities during our visit to Iloilo was to conduct an Evacuation Protocol and Coordination Planning Simulation Exercise that lasted two days and tested the City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council's ability to efficiently manage a disaster response during a disaster situation. The simulation was organized with help from the City of Yokohama Crisis Management Bureau and Yokohama City University (YCU).





A big part of the exercise was taking Yokohama's best practices in crisis management and finding out a way to localise them to the Iloilo context. The simulation exercise that was conducted is a paper drill used by the crisis management bureau to test their capacities. On the first day of the exercise a representative from the Crisis Management Bureau presented to Iloilo council members on how Yokohama prepares and tests their disaster response. He explained to CDRRMC members the duties that are carried out by the Disaster Response Headquarters and provided many examples of activities that are carried out by emergency response centers in Yokohama during disasters. The Acting head of the City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office in Marikina presented on CITYET member city Marikina's best practices in evacuation protocols.

By sharing best practices from Japan as well as another city within the Philippines, Iloilo CDRRMC members were given an opportunity to see how Yokohama's best practices could be localised to the Filipino context. After the

presentations council members were asked to sit with their implementing units and create their own Evacuation Protocol and Coordination Plan. At the end of the exercise each unit was given the opportunity to present their ideas and plans to the rest of the council. You could really see just how inspired each member was.

The simulation exercise was conducted the next day and it was a surprise to all participants. You never know when a disaster will occur and this drill followed that model. Though the city mayor is the head of the council it was decided that he would not participate in the drill because it would better assess the council's ability to create an efficient disaster response. Participants were divided into their implementing units and given situation cards. They were required to quickly respond to the situation at hand. Because of the nature of disasters there is no right answer. Members of the city council secretariat needed to respond quickly to the situation and disseminate information to the relevant individuals within the council. The exercise was localised by taking Japanese situation cards

and adjusting the situations so that they matched the Iloilo context. The exercise lasted the entire day. It was fascinating to see how each unit responded to information and the channels that were used in order to disseminate that information.

This simulation exercise as well as the KABALAKA Camp showed me how international cooperation extends past high-level policy talks and is an integral part of local-level development projects.

Being a part of this Technical Advisory Visit allowed me to experience how Japanese best practices in DRR can be localised to help communities outside Japan build more sustainable practices. Our world is becoming increasingly borderless and development projects need to take advantage of that.

