IDENTIFYING PARTNERSHIP NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract
The scale, frequency and complexity of disasters as physical and social phenomena can only be addressed by deploying a wide range of knowledge, skills, methods and resources, both in development and emergency programming. This means that disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives must be multi-disciplinary partnerships involving a range of stakeholders. However, whilst the need for such multi-stakeholder co-operation is generally acknowledged, there is little guidance available on how to create effective DRR partnerships. This paper explores some of the theoretical and practical issues in identifying partnership needs and opportunities and promoting dialogue and collaboration. It draws on the experiences of developing the *Characteristics of a Disaster-resilient Community*, a resource for local-level DRR planning and evaluation that is currently being field-tested by a number of international and local NGOs.

1. Introduction

Two of the main challenges to making community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) effective are its sustainability and replicability (Twigg 2005). Both can be addressed through the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships that supply the range of skills and resources needed to

2. Characteristics of a Disaster-resilient Community

Guidance developed recently, the *Characteristics of a Disaster-resilient Community*, provides a means of identifying and assessing such partnership dimensions in local DRR initiatives. Commissioned by a group of international NGOs working in DRR (ActionAid, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, Plan International, Practical Action and Tearfund), the guidance shows what a disaster-resilient community might consist of by setting out the many different elements of resilience. It also provides some ideas about how to progress towards resilience.

A pilot version was published in 2007 (Twigg 2007) and is now being tested in the field by the commissioning agencies and many other organisations. A revised version, with additional guidance on ways of using the *Characteristics*, will be published in June 2009. The guidance

together with background material and case studies of applications.[1]

The *Characteristics of a Disaster-resilient Community* guidance note is a resource, not a manual. It is designed to support processes of community mobilisation and partnership for DRR. It is not prescriptive. Users can select relevant information and ideas from it to support their field work, according to their needs and priorities. This should be the result of discussion between communities and the organisations working with them.

The guidance can be used at different stages of project cycle management, for example for baseline studies, project planning (especially in identifying indicators for logical and results-based planning frameworks), and monitoring and evaluation. It can also be linked to other tools used in DRR projects (e.g. vulnerability and capacity analysis) and used to frame research. Much of the information relates to community capacities in DRR: the guidance note may therefore be useful in assessing, planning or reviewing work that focuses on capacity-building. The findings of reviews and assessments carried out using this note may also have some value in advocacy work at local and higher levels.

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[1] www.proventionconsortium.org/?pageid=90

3. Contents of the *Characteristics*

The main section of the guidance note is a series of tables setting out a comprehensive but not necessarily complete set of the characteristics of a disaster-resilient community. These are

		o	Planning régimes
5	*Disaster preparedness and response*	o	Organisational capacities and coordination
		o	Early warning systems
		o	Preparedness and contingency planning
		o	Emergency resources and infrastructure
		o	Emergency response and recovery
		o	Participation, voluntarism, accountability

For each component of resilience, the tables provide a further breakdown, identifying a set of characteristics of a resilient community. Again, the number of characteristics varies according to the nature of the component (an example is given in Table 2, using a single component from Thematic Area 3: Knowledge and Education).

Table 2: From Components to Characteristics

Component of resilience	*Characteristics of a disaster-resilient community*
Education and training	o Local schools provide education in DRR for children through curriculum and where appropriate extra-curricular activities. o DRR/DRM and other training addresses priorities identified by community and based on community assessment of risks, vulnerabilities and associated problems. o Community members and organisations trained in relevant skills for DRR and DP (e.g. hazard-risk-vulnerability assessment, community DRM planning, search and rescue, first aid, management of emergency shelters, needs assessment, relief distribution, fire-fighting). o Householders and builders trained in safe construction and retrofitting techniques, and other practical steps to protect houses and property. o (rural) Community members skilled or trained in appropriate agricultural, land use, water management and environmental management practices. o Community experience of coping in previous events/crises, or knowledge of how this was done, used in education and training.

4. Potential for exploring DRR partnerships

The guidance note permits investigation of DRR partnership issues, both through the way it is structured conceptually and its applications.

4.1 Concepts

Two features of the *Characteristics* framework are particularly relevant to investigating the principles and components of partnership.

(i)   Governance Thematic Area

The *Characteristics* assign high importance to Governance, which is a fundamental issue in DRR (UNDP *et al*. 2005). A whole thematic area (no. 1) focuses on this, but governance is really a cross-cutting theme underlying the other thematic areas. The components and characteristics that come under this heading (see Table 3) are relevant to work under the other four themes, because they are issues likely to affect any type of DRR initiative. The list of individual characteristics shows how partnership elements run throughout the thematic area: issues such as integration of activities, shared visions, consensus, negotiation, participation, collective action, representation, inclusion, accountability, volunteerism and trust.

hematic Area 1): Components and Characteristics

Characteristics of a disaster-resilient community
1.1 Shared vision of a prepared and resilient community.
1.2 Consensus view of risks faced, risk management approach, specific actions to be taken and targets to be met.
1.3 Vision and DRR plans informed by understanding of underlying causes of vulnerability and other factors outside
1.4 Community takes long-term perspective, focusing on outcomes and impact of DRR.
1.5 Committed, effective and accountable community leadership of DRR planning and implementation.
1.6 Community DRR (and DP) plans, developed through participatory processes, put into operation, and updated periodically.
2.1 Community understands relevant legislation, regulations and procedures, and their importance.
2.2 Community aware of its rights and the legal obligations of government and other stakeholders to provide protection.

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	5.3 Responsibilities, resources, etc., defined in community disaster plans.
	5.4 Shared understanding among all local stakeholders regarding DRR responsibilities, authority and decision making.
	5.5 Community-managed funds and other material resources for DRR and disaster recovery.
	5.6 Access to government and other funding and resources for DRR and recovery.
6. Partnerships	6.1 Local stakeholders committed to genuine partnerships (with open and shared principles of collaboration, high levels of trust).
	6.2 Clear, agreed and stable DRR partnerships between local stakeholder groups and organisations (communities and CBOs with local authorities, NGOs, businesses, etc.).
	6.3 Processes are community-led (supported by external agencies).
	6.4 Local capacity and enthusiasm to promote DRR and scale up activities (through community-external actor partnerships).
	6.5 Community and local groups/organisations have capacity to recruit, train, support and motivate community volunteers for DRR, and work together to do so.
7. Accountability and community participation	7.1 Devolved DRR structures facilitate community participation.
	7.2 Access to information on local government plans, structures, etc.
	7.3 Trust within community and between community stnty stnty

		implemented at national, regional, local levels. Training resources (technical, financial, material, human) made available by government, emergency services, NGOs, etc., to support local-level DRR.
4.	*Cultures, attitudes, motivation*	Political, social and cultural environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression, and stimulates inquiry and debate. Official and public acceptance of precautionary principle: need to act on incomplete information or understanding to reduce potential disaster risks.
5.	*Learning and research*	National and sub-national research capacity in hazards, risk and disaster studies (in specialist institutions or within other institutions), with adequate funding for ongoing research. Encouragement of inter-disciplinary and policy-oriented research. National, regional and international cooperation in research, science and technology development. Comprehensive agenda for scientific, technical, policy, planning and participatory research in DRR.

People who work on community resilience need to be conscious of the enabling environment and the effect it may have on their work, but they cannot be expected to analyse it in detail. An individual project will probably undertake a quick, subjective assessment of the enabling environment. However, an organisation working on a number of community projects in a particular country — e.g. a national or international NGO — may wish to carry out a more thorough assessment to inform its work or to support advocacy.

Many features of the ideal enabling environment will be missing in many cases. In some situations the lack of key components of support may be so great that it creates what may be   -level initiatives. Users of the guidance note will therefore have to base their plans on realistic assessments of the type and level of external support they can expect.

4.2 Applications

Over the past few months, a large number of local, national and international organisations have been testing the *Characteristics* in their work. The principal applications have been in project design (including establishing project-specific indicators) and evaluation; others include design of research frameworks, development of more generic vulnerability and DRR indicator frameworks, teaching and training.

5.   Feedback and conclusions

Feedback on the use of the *Characteristics* to date has been patchy. Work is continuing on collecting evidence from user agencies and the lessons will be incorporated into the planned revision of the guidance note.

Overall, and notwithstanding the examples abo