
Building Capacity in Disaster Risk Management

Red Cross Red Crescent lessons learned
in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

strategy2020

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Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

- 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises**
 - 2. Enable healthy and safe living**
 - 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace**
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International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2010

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Photo front page: Community members constructing a river embankment for flood-mitigation, part of the CDRR project in Unha ri, Hongwon county, South Hamgyong province (April 2010).

Credit: Won Jong Chol/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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Building Capacity in Disaster Risk Management

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is located on the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, bordering China, Russia, and the Republic of (South) Korea. The country regularly experiences severe flooding and droughts and, less frequently, typhoons and tropical storms. More regularly, small-scale disasters are caused by flooding, mudflows, and fires – especially between July and September. In 2006–2007, the country was hit by extremely heavy rains, causing widespread flooding and landslides, killing 454 people and leaving 170,000 homeless.

The Red Cross Society of the DPRK has a particular mandate for disaster management in the country as the only non-governmental agency auxiliary to the government in disaster response. In 1998 it established a separate disaster management department to focus on preparing individuals and communities for natural disasters and, where they occur, to reduce their impact. This briefing sets out the findings of a review of this programme of work ten years on, to assess its performance and identify directions forward.

Despite positive achievements in terms of disaster management, the country remains highly vulnerable to natural hazards. Dramatic levels of deforestation and

This river embankment in Unha ri, Hongwon county, South Hamgyong province, prevents damage from yearly recurring flash floods.

Credit: Won Jong Chol/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

inappropriate land use aggravate the impact of floods and mudflows, adversely affecting agricultural production and contributing to food shortages. As a result, farmers seek to increase the availability of arable land, even on the slopes of steep hills and mountains, cutting down trees without considering the risks involved. The harsh winters and lack of adequate fuel, food, water and sanitation and health services make the need for short- and long-term assistance particularly pressing.

What is the programme?

The DPRK Red Cross disaster management (DM) programme was set up to reduce the risk of natural disasters and to help communities protect themselves and overcome the effects of disasters. Its main objective is to raise awareness of disaster risks and how to prepare for disasters at the community level, but it also combines physical (structural) mitigation measures, such as building river embankments, with softer (non-structural) measures, such as early warning, contingency planning, and risk mapping.

The programme targets the most flood-prone provinces in the country. In 2009, it supported south Hamgyong, south Hwanghae and south Phyongan, and by 2010–2011 also incorporated north Phyongan. During the past five years, the programme has implemented community-based disaster preparedness activities in 100 communities (*ris*), each with an average of 3,500 inhabitants.

The key areas are:

- > **Disaster management planning and organizational preparedness** – This includes the ability to predict and plan for disasters in order to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities, and to respond to and effectively cope with their consequences. It also includes ensuring sufficient capacity in skilled human resources, financial and material capacity for effective disaster management.
- > **Community preparedness and disaster risk reduction** – This part of the programme was set up in 2002. It works to increase the self-reliance of individuals and communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters, to improve their livelihoods and to raise public awareness on risk reduction – for example through tree planting and road safety.
- > **Disaster response and recovery** – This includes improving the disaster response capacity to meet the immediate needs of people affected by disasters, and improving the capacity to restore or improve pre-disaster living conditions and reduce the risk of future disasters.

The DPRK Red Cross was founded more than 60 years ago, and today is a significant actor in the humanitarian field in the DPRK. It has received consistent support over the past decade from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), its Red Cross sister societies and their donor governments.

Programme review

In November 2008, a team of partner representatives from IFRC carried out an evaluation to observe and assess the impact of various disaster management interventions.

The review had two key aims:

- > to review the strategic consistency and implementation of the various components of the DM programme, focusing on achievements, constraints, progress and challenges from 2006 to 2008, and to make recommendations for the future
- > to review the targeting of beneficiaries and gender integration in the DM programme.

The eight-strong team assessed these areas of work through a literature review, semi-formal and informal interviews with staff and volunteers, five days of field visits in north Hamgyong and south Phyongan provinces, and a two-day workshop in Anju city.

What did the programme achieve?

The review showed that the DPRK Red Cross DM programme has been successful in several areas. In particular, the quick response during the floods in 2006 and 2007 demonstrated the effectiveness of disaster preparedness measures that had been put in place beforehand. Thanks to the ability to mobilize large groups of community members to construct mitigation interventions, more than 100 communities could be supported with structures to mitigate floods and mudflows, making the environment somewhat safer. Since 2008, the DPRK Red Cross has managed to pre-position emergency family kits in seven warehouses across the country, for rapid deployment to 27,000 families in case of emergency.

Meanwhile, thanks to support from partners and donors, the programme has developed its professional capacity for DM, and the DM department has been keen to follow up on lessons learnt and recommendations from past reviews.

Findings

The findings are presented under six key themes:

- > disaster response
- > community-based disaster preparedness
- > the role of the Red Cross
- > integrating related programmes
- > training
- > measuring and documenting impact.

“The programme changed people’s mindset. Before, disasters just ‘happened’ – now people realize they can do something about them.”

(County DM coordinator)



While the Red Cross is supporting the communities with construction materials and fuel for transport, community members contribute with physical labour for the construction of different mitigation projects.
Credit: Won Jong Chol/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Disaster response

Disaster response within the DPRK Red Cross involves the national disaster response team (NDRT) and six provincial disaster response teams (PDRTs), which are currently being established, supported by the Red Cross county branches and thousands of trained volunteers in the communities. At the same time, water rescue teams have been formed at the main river in Pyongyang and at the busiest beaches in the country.

How the programme is run

The NDRT consists of 12 staff from different departments, with an emergency operating centre that is active 24/7 during the flood season. The team is ready to be deployed to disaster-affected provinces to help carry out assessments and plan emergency responses. In situations where fewer than 200 households are affected, the response is carried out by provincial teams.

Community-based disaster management committees (CDMCs) play a key role in the response to any anomaly affecting their community. CDMC members that represent the different public institutions in the community (such as the health centre, school, cooperative farm, local government and others) receive extensive training on how to prepare for, and respond to, disasters.

Province-level response

Province-level DM working groups have been in place since 2004, meeting once a year. To strengthen the disaster response organization at provincial level, PDRTs are currently being established, in order to clarify the role division between the NDRT and the provincial branches in disaster response situations.

At the same time, the review team emphasized the importance of provincial contingency plans – especially in view of the coordination with local players, such as the CDMC, government, health centres (including first aid posts) and others.

Rescue teams

A key element of the programme is its set of specialist rescue teams, which are trained and equipped to respond to a range of situations and environments:

- > **The river rescue team** – This is based in the heart of Pyongyang. It consists of 15 trained staff who operate from a building near the Taedonggang River. The team has two inflatable boats and two scuba-diving sets, which have recently been replaced. In the flood season, the team is on 24-hour standby, while during the winter one person is on call, and can mobilize a team if necessary. During the floods in 2005 and 2007, the team saved 70 people and helped to evacuate an estimated 5,000.
- > **Two sea rescue teams** – These are in place at the two most popular beaches on the east coast of the country: Wonsan and Majon. Each team is made up of ten volunteers, who are mobilized during the summer months between June and September. The teams operate from water safety rooms that are strategically located on the beaches, provided by the coastal authorities in Wonsan and the local hotel resort on Majon beach. At the end of 2009, two ten-person rubber boats arrived from China to facilitate the teams' work in reducing drowning incidents. The Taedonggang water rescue team technician trained the two coastal teams in operating and maintaining the boat engines.

The evaluation team highlighted the effectiveness of the river rescue team but questioned its ability to provide 24-hour service all year round, given the scarce resources. It suggested that the team should be activated only after flood waters reach a certain critical level.

Managing relief items

The Red Cross has pre-positioned emergency stocks for 27,000 families in seven warehouses, for immediate deployment in case of disaster. The aim is to have a minimum of 3,000 kitchen sets, 3,000 jerry cans and 3,000 tarpaulins in each warehouse, as well as other emergency items, such as blankets. At the time of the review, stocks were available for only about 24,000 families. The DPRK Red Cross is trying to ensure the continuous replenishment of the minimum stock levels.

In June 2008, a review of the warehouse management system found that minimum standards were being met according to the IFRC logistics and procurement

Findings

→ Learning point: Addressing gender-related issues

After a disaster takes place in a community, it is the women who are the focal points for receiving aid, as they are the first to ensure their family's well-being.

After the 2007 floods, during workshops and individual interviews, several female beneficiaries complained about the relief kits they had received. Their feedback enabled the DPRK Red Cross to adapt the relief kits to the particular needs:

- > The buckets in the kitchen sets were of poor quality. (The DPRK Red Cross has since replaced them with better-quality buckets.)
- > Hygiene kits did not address specific female hygienic and sanitary needs.
- > The kits lacked certain relief items that are useful for lactating mothers and other vulnerable groups, such as a washing basin.

The evaluation team highly appreciated this proactive approach of gathering feedback on gender-related issues, and recommended that it should become a regular part of the post-recovery programme, including feedback from men and young people.

procedures, although as warehouses were using the maximum capacity, best storage practices could not always be maintained. In all warehouses, and at the DPRK Red Cross logistics department, staff were using relevant documentation correctly, meeting IFRC procedural requirements.

The evaluation team identified a need to relocate or refurbish the majority of the warehouses, to ensure that the relief items were properly protected. Since the government provides all warehouses for free, the DPRK Red Cross has relatively little say in their location and maintenance, so the evaluation team recommended that it should upgrade the facilities at its own expense.

The DPRK Red Cross is already addressing several of the review recommendations relating to improving its warehouse management system. At the same time, it is discussing the need to increase the overall warehouse capacity and to address ownership and insurance issues. This is vital to enable the DPRK Red Cross to stock the required 27,000 relief items.

“The key to our success in this ri is good community awareness and understanding... The establishment of a good CBDP committee is the key impact and our main achievement. We can think, plan, evaluate and report on the DM process. Our DM work is carried out now in a planned and organized way.”
(Ri CBDP chair, Misang-Ri)

Findings



Community-based disaster preparedness

The community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) programme has been implemented in 100 ris in the most flood-prone provinces in the country. The evaluation found that the programme has been successful in striking a balance between structural mitigation measures, such as river embankments, and softer measures, such as evacuation plans.

Each of the CBDP programme activities is set out below.

Process and participation

After selecting the most vulnerable communities to participate in the CBDP programme (based on criteria ranging from existing hazards to the level of proactivity of community leaders), a community disaster management committee (CDMC) is set up. The CDMC is normally chaired by the head of the cooperative farm, and is made up of representatives of different social groups in the community, such as the farmers', women's and youth associations, the health clinic, and the school, kindergarten, and nursery.

Motivation and commitment are key issues. Motivation is higher in those communities that have already experienced a disaster, as the perception of risk among these communities is higher.

The Red Cross donated new rubber boats for the Wonsan and Majon coastal water safety teams. Many people who visit the beaches cannot swim, or are surprised by the strong currents of the sea. The teams have therefore been established to protect swimmers during the busy summer season (June 2010). Credit: Pak Eun Suk/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Equipe

Where labour-intensive mitigation works (such as riverbank reinforcements) are constructed, the programme needs to mobilize many community members. This is only possible in between the crop-planting and harvest seasons, which makes planning a key factor in the successful implementation of the programme.

To avoid creating unnecessary expectations about future support, the DPRK Red Cross does not offer any incentive to community volunteers helping with the construction of the mitigation works. Their labour is considered to be the contribution from the community, while the Red Cross provides the materials, such as cement, steel bars, and fuel. The DPRK Red Cross is planning to distribute Red Cross t-shirts and jackets during the DM programme for 2010–2011.

Assessing need

In order to accurately assess the actual needs before deploying resources, the teams carry out vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCAs) in the CBDP communities. However, the evaluation team uncovered some confusion about exactly how the data were collected. In particular, the unusual speed with which DPRK Red Cross implements projects indicated that the normally slow participatory methods, which are vital to stimulate a community-led development progress, may be at risk of being overlooked.

Vulnerable individuals (including people with disabilities, pregnant women, orphans and others who would find it harder than most to maintain food security) were assessed informally, often by members of the committee and of the wider community. Responsibility for each of these families or individuals was then allotted to male leaders in the units in which they reside, who must ensure that their basic needs are met.

The evaluation team recommended further training to ensure that all VCAs meet IFRC standardized criteria.

Coverage and approaches used

The community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) project was first piloted in 2002, when nine pilot ris implemented small-scale mitigation measures. By 2008, it was reaching the target of 100 ris in 24 counties or cities in three provinces – an impressive achievement. The evaluation team acknowledged the increased workload for HQ staff, and recommended additional capacity building for provincial branches, to allow them to take on more practical work and reduce the involvement of HQ.

There has been some inconsistency in approach. Fifty ris have implemented hazard-mitigation measures with full support of the Red Cross, while the remaining 50 have received training and planning support but have had no formal input to help construct physical measures. The latter ris have faced greater challenges in improving their physical safety, although some have received support to build river embankment walls. By the time of the evaluation, the team was pleased to see that the Red Cross was already

addressing this discrepancy, and was moving to a model of assessing the needs of each ri individually, and planning tailored support according to the actual risk.

Early warning and evacuation

The CBDP programme has helped to establish or improve early warning systems and evacuation plans in all targeted ris. Some communities already had their own traditional systems, which the CBDP may have helped revive or upgrade.

The ris reported that they conduct drill exercises twice a year, using bells and hand-driven sirens to alert people and to evacuate individuals to designated sites. In Kisang-Ri, the 2007 floods were the real test: paddy fields were lost, but lives were saved, with about 150 people spending up to 30 hours in safe houses in the ri, or on high grounds in temporary shelters or tents. These soft elements of the preparedness are very strong in the DPRK programme, and the evaluation team described them as “highly commendable”. It recommended that the DPRK Red Cross should capitalize on these successes in its communication materials.

Mitigation

Since it is critical to safeguard livelihoods and ensure food production, the protection of farmland and household assets is a major objective of the project.

The main types of mitigation works are stone and concrete erosion walls or dykes. By limiting the number of mitigation interventions from which a community can select, according to the existing hazards, the DPRK Red Cross has been able to rapidly replicate its approach in many communities. The evaluation team suggested that using stone-only options could increase sustainability of the construction, as these are easier to repair locally without further costs. Where cement is used, this should be done with smaller stones rather than boulders, with iron reinforcements, to prevent the need for repair after each flood. Meanwhile, to ensure the sustainability of CBDP activities, responsibility should be handed over to local authorities for maintenance and repairs wherever this can be negotiated.

The evaluation team recommended that budgets should be set aside to adapt to more uncertain weather patterns due to climate change, rather than basing assessments for future need only on past experiences.

Community-based tree planting

In areas with high levels of deforestation, reforestation is essential to reduce erosion and risk of floods and landslides. The DPRK Red Cross is actively contributing to government reforestation programmes. It has established tree nurseries and mobilized volunteers to participate in spring and autumn tree-planting events.

The evaluation team recommended that Red Cross reforestation support should focus on planting trees upriver from flood-prone areas, alongside erosion and slope stabilization.

Findings

→ **Learning point:**
Greenhouses

Ten participating ris received material support to build a 300m² greenhouse in their village. Around 50 per cent of the vegetables produced in the greenhouse are distributed to vulnerable households, with the remainder being sold at local markets to raise income for future CBDP activities.

The review team had some reservations about the effectiveness of this intervention in reducing disaster risks, as for the cost of building one greenhouse, three mitigation projects could have been constructed.

“In recent floods it has been quite apparent that the effects of the disaster here have been less severe than in areas without CBDP activities. People know how to respond as a result of the CBDP response training, and it has increased the Red Cross profile too.”

(Worker, South Phyongan Province branch)



Role of the Red Cross

The DPRK Red Cross is widely recognized within the DPRK as playing a key role in the rapid and effective response to a range of disasters in the country, thanks to large numbers of trained volunteers and its strong links with other national and international agencies. The evaluation concluded that the DPRK Red Cross has established an impressive disaster response capacity during the past five-to-eight years.

Since 2004, when the Sinuiju Red Cross city branch was involved in the response to the Ryongchong train explosion, there has been growing national and international recognition of the DPRK Red Cross role in disaster management. Today, the DPRK Red Cross is widely acknowledged as the main agency providing key information from disaster-affected areas as a result of its swift, reliable damage and needs assessments. It is also the only agency with substantial stocks of non-food relief items prepositioned across the country.

The DPRK Red Cross is a member of the cabinet-level National Disaster Coordinating Commission (NDCC), which oversees the coordinated response in major emergencies, and of the province-level disaster management working groups, working alongside representatives of the government departments. Internationally, it works with other Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in the IFRC's disaster management

Training on the use and maintenance of the new motor boats for the Wonsan and Majon coastal water safety teams was facilitated by a technician of the Taedongang river water safety team in Pyongyang (June 2010). Credit: Pak Eun Suk/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Findings

working group for East Asia. At the same, it mobilizes its own staff when required, and was recently involved in IFRC disaster relief operations in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Since 2007, the DPRK Red Cross has been actively engaged in the DPRK inter-agency contingency planning process, collaborating with international organizations represented in Pyongyang. An inter-agency rapid common assessment tool was developed, in agreement with the DPRK government, which is mainly considering flood scenarios. The evaluation team described the inter-agency planning as “a commendable achievement”, and noted that it is “rarely seen developed to this extent in other parts of the world”.

→ **Learning point:**
Being prepared for unusual situations

In the DPRK context, the Red Cross movement has an additional, special role. This was illustrated recently, when the IFRC DPRK delegation was asked to transmit information – via the National Society – about the search for an apparently missing aircraft, when a neighbouring coast guard vessel asked to be granted access to DPRK territorial waters.

Although the incident was probably a false alarm, it emphasized the need for the IFRC delegation and the DPRK Red Cross to adjust its internal contingency plans and standard operating procedures for this kind of situation. This includes regular updates of stand-by contact networks between officers on duty in the IFRC and the DPRK Red Cross, as well as access to office facilities outside of office hours, means of communication, and security procedures. The delegation has identified the need to check and rehearse the procedures regularly.

“We are always conscious of our role as the DPRK Red Cross in bridging the gap between the donors and the beneficiaries.”

(Won Jong Chol, branch secretary of South Hamgyong province)



Integrating related projects

The DM programme focuses on supporting flood-prone communities through structural mitigation measures (such as embankment walls) and non-structural measures (such as early warning systems). Since health risks are key in any disaster situation, the evaluation team recommended that the DM department should be integrating its community-based activities with the health and care department, and, more specifically, the water and sanitation programme.

Community-based development programmes usually identify local need through vulnerability and capacity assessments, generating a long list of risks, and proposing relevant actions to address each one. Contamination of water sources due to flooding poses serious health risks. Most communities involved in the CBDP programme prioritize the protection of key water sources, to ensure access to safe drinking water.

One of the key recommendations coming out of the review is the need to integrate water and sanitation in the DM programme, focusing specifically on hygiene improvement. The CBDP programme can draw on the expertise of the water and sanitation programme to ensure access to safe drinking water to disaster-affected populations, by protecting water sources and other interventions. Meanwhile, health and hygiene promotion should be an integrated part of the disaster preparedness activities in the

Head of the corporate farm and chairwoman of the community disaster management committee in Chongdong ri Kumya county, South Hamgyong province, showing one of the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) tools during a training co-facilitated by three Viet Nam Red Cross experts.
Credit: Won Jong Chol/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

communities. This would help meet two aims of the IFRC plan for DPRK: preventing the health of communities from deteriorating, and reversing the setbacks to the current health situation following floods.

→ **Learning point:**
Integrating interventions

The DPRK Red Cross has piloted the integrated community development project (ICDP) in two of the CBDP ris. The project focuses on a range of overall livelihood-improving activities – in particular, health and hygiene promotion, renovating public bathhouses and kindergartens, and home gardening, along with supplying food-processing equipment such as rice mills to improve the nutritional value of food and create job opportunities.

“Participating in the integrated community development project (ICDP) has created an incentive for us to do a little extra for the most vulnerable people in our community: we were able to build a water reservoir, a dam and several irrigation canals and sluices to irrigate a large number of rice paddies. We now have our own mushroom plantation, and from the income this has generated we provide meals to the elderly during the winter.”

(Community disaster management committee chair, Maejon-Ri)



Training

An important aspect of the programme is the training for staff and volunteers who are on standby, ready to conduct needs assessments, provide first aid and assist in relief operations in all disaster-prone areas.

The DPRK Red Cross trains staff, volunteers, and community members. The DM training curriculum is regularly updated with the latest topics, including damage and needs assessment, risk mapping, contingency planning, and procedures for distributing relief items.

“Training is the greatest challenge, because not all ri people are interested. When CBDP was introduced there was some confusion at first. Some people thought: “This is a ri responsibility, not our personal responsibility.” But training has helped people become mobilized and take part in the work.”

(Search and rescue worker, Pongsang-Ri)

Community members drawing their community's hazard map during a practical VCA training held in May 2010, in Inda ri, South Hamgyong province. Credit: Won Jong Chol/Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Findings

Since its first training activities in 1999, the DM department developed a range of training materials – initially relying on direct translations of IFRC course materials, but since 2001 adapting materials to the local context. Much of the material is updated regularly, to incorporate the latest Federation guidelines and information encountered on exchange visits to other National Societies.

The DPRK Red Cross asks all staff returning from international courses and seminars to share their experiences with their colleagues, in specially organized sessions. This system is very effective, and is likely to be a key reason for the speed with which the DM capacity has developed in the region. The evaluation team noticed that the CDMC are using the flip charts, booklets, and posters provided by the DM team: evidence that the DM training does trickle down to ri level.

→ **Learning point:**
Developing training provision

The evaluation team was impressed by the level of training undertaken, but felt that the curriculum was too condensed. They believed that the current format was more appropriate as a general introduction to DM than as a basis for sustainable capacity development. They advised that more specific follow-up training was needed for core staff and volunteers actively involved in CBDP activities or relief operations. They also identified the need to monitor the quality of training, and for follow-up, to assess effectiveness.



Measuring and documenting impact

The review team concluded that the DM programme is performing well. However, indicators are not in place to measure and document the impact of the efforts. More detailed indicators should be identified to measure performance, and success stories should be documented.

The programme currently uses only quantitative indicators, such as the number of volunteers trained, or the number of ris implementing CBDP. Qualitative indicators are absent, but the DM department is fully aware of the need to measure changes in knowledge and practice as a result of community training, or how flood erosion walls improve people's safety and livelihoods.

“A good lesson that we learned in the rainy season this year is that awareness about CBDP at the committee level is not enough. We have to plant more trees... we to have to improve the organizational skills of the committee... There is more work to be done.”

(Ri CBDP chair, Misang-Ri)

Provision of food-processing machines is a crucial part of the integrated community development project (ICDP). This noodle machine in Sinsong ri, Kumya county, South Hamgyong province, generates additional income for the community, reducing overall vulnerability and allowing for more proactive disaster management activities. Credit: Sacha Bootsma/IFRC

Findings

Impact evaluation should also use statistics on damage to ris caused by natural disasters, to ensure that the DM programme targets the most vulnerable ris. Although this information is already gathered by county and provincial Red Cross branches, the data remain off limits to international IFRC staff, thus creating an information gap that impedes appropriate and transparent decision-making on strategic issues within the programme.

During the review, the evaluation team was unable to visit the reportedly successful mitigation works. However, it recommended that the DPRK Red Cross promoted further the need to document success stories – especially for experience exchange and fund-raising purposes. Success stories should include technical information, human interest stories of beneficiaries and volunteers, and before-and-after photographs.

→ **Learning point:**
Measuring impact of early warning systems and training

The evaluation team recommended that the programme carry out simple studies to reveal the wider effects of the programme. One example would be to assess the impact of the DR training at ri level. In the participating ris, the CDMC established early warning systems and identified sites where threatened families could seek refuge for a 24–30-hour flood event. Local residents were trained in these procedures each spring and autumn.

The programme could measure the impact of this system through a knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) survey to identify what proportion of ri residents could point out the agreed evacuation sites, and which items families planned to take in the event of an expected 24-hour evacuation.



Summary of lessons learned

- > Once a programme grows to a certain size, it is important to review its capacity, ensure the quality, and consider the future direction. Building staff capacity at provincial level is important to ensure sustainable long-term leadership and independence from HQ, so that HQ can focus on strategic programming aspects.
- > It can be tempting to roll out projects quickly, but it takes time to engage communities in participatory methods, although this approach is vital to stimulate sustainable community-led development. So, it is important to allow sufficient time to implement community-based disaster preparedness work thoroughly.
- > Gender and other equality issues should be part of any programme. In cultures where inequality exists, incorporate equality into recruitment, training, vulnerability and capacity assessments, damage and needs assessments, and monitoring and evaluation.
- > Where mitigation measures such as flood embankments and river erosion walls have become damaged over the years, reconsider the design, and incorporate possible adaptation to climate change.
- > To ensure the sustainability of CBDP activities, negotiate a handover of responsibility to local authorities – for example, for maintenance and repairs – where possible.

*Renovation of public bathroom facilities is another activity implemented under the umbrella of the ICDP, such as in this kindergarten in Maejon ri Pyongwon county, South Phyongan province.
Credit: Sacha Bootsma/IFRC*

Findings

- > Community tree planting is a vital approach in countries that suffer from deforestation. As well as curbing erosion and landslides, it can be an important source for forestry products, such as firewood, and can help communities understand the importance of reforestation as a longer-term measure to protect their security.
- > Cross-sector integration is crucial to maximize output and avoid duplication of efforts. Particularly because of the public health implications of flooding, DM should incorporate elements of community-based first aid and water and sanitation.
- > Ensure that training materials offer sufficient detail to ensure a thorough awareness of skills for volunteers and staff to play a role in CBDP activities or relief operations.
- > Make sure the impact of all programmes is accurately measured and documented. Targeted disaggregated data should be collected and analysed for reporting purposes, as well as for continued quality assurance. Indicators should include changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practice among beneficiaries, and how quality of life has been enhanced by reducing disaster risks.
- > Address the lack of awareness about these projects by finding opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of DM and community-based disaster preparedness programmes for fund-raising and sharing best practice.



With the support of the ICDP, communities like Maejon-ri, Phyongwon county, South Phyongan province, have managed to significantly increase their capacities, thanks to the generation of additional income for the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, the ICDP has been an incentive for the communities to initiate their own projects with their own means, for example a mushroom plantation, provision of meals to the elderly during the winter and the construction of a water reservoir, a dam and several irrigation canals and sluices to irrigate rice paddies.

Credit: Sacha Bootsma/IFRC

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Building Capacity in Disaster Risk Management

Red Cross Red Crescent lessons learned
in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
