

DISASTER REDUCTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AWARENESS BUILDING ON INTEGRATED LOCAL RISK MANAGEMENT (ILRM)

Coping with hazards

Central Asia and especially its mountainous areas are prone to natural disasters that frequently affect both the population and the economy. They cause casualties, damage infrastructure and hamper sustainable development.

Local communities lack the technical knowledge and the necessary skills to manage natural disasters themselves. Awareness is the base for any measure to be taken to reduce the vulnerability of communities to these hazards.

After decades of rigid top-down ruling and the resultant passivity, people have become accustomed to waiting for state institutions to provide relief and reconstruction rather than taking action themselves.

Increasing awareness strengthens the understanding of Integrated Local Risk Management (ILRM) and prepares the local floor for disaster reduction and mitigation.

For many years, disaster reduction activities were not considered important for development. They were frequently conducted as stand alone projects having a rather erratic impact on other development activities. However, the following citation reflects the changing notion and pertinence of disaster reduction management in development work:

“Several years of development can be wiped out by one individual disaster, [...]. Therefore, disasters have to be seen essentially as a development failure and their reduction is not only a topic in and of itself but increasingly an issue for all development activities”.

Climate change has triggered an increasing number of natural disasters over recent years in Central Asia such as floods, droughts, mudflows, and avalanches. These disasters sometimes affect the same areas causing extreme hardship for the local population.

Goal and objectives

The main goal is to build and strengthen awareness of Integrated Local Risk Management (ILRM) with a focus on prevention and preparation at community level and develop the capacity of the community and village institutions to undertake appropriate and sustainable disaster reduction activities.

The primary objectives are:

- To elaborate, test, adapt and use a didactical tool for ILRM especially for high-risk communities ('Learning for Sustainability', L4S)
- To raise awareness and improve the capacity of communities regarding ILRM through L4S workshops
- To develop a mobile exhibition including a film on ILRM to be shown in various villages during L4S workshops
- To initiate and support innovative small-scale mitigation measures as possible follow-up actions to L4S workshops

Approaches

The project is based on the ILRM approach consisting of four key assumptions:

1. Disaster reduction is seen as a cycle, where prevention, response and recovery contribute equally to the reduction of risks and the effects of disasters. However, the ILRM project focuses mainly on the prevention side.
2. ILRM requires a multilevel stakeholder understanding involving different vertical levels of interaction, from international and national levels, down to a local level.





L4S workshop on ILRM (Kotormo village, Batken district, Kyrgyzstan, 2006)

3. ILRM implies a strong horizontal multi-sector structure, involving politics, governmental services, communities, and science.
4. Disaster reduction is an integrated part of sustainable development.

L4S is a participatory, didactic approach developed by the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE, University of Berne, Switzerland) intended to address a broad range of topics at village level such as natural resource management, decision-making and energy saving. During an L4S workshop, learning groups composed of various stakeholders with different knowledge, experience, interests, and perceptions, work on risk management issues for several days according to pre-defined objectives. Participatory learning methods, context-based learning, sharing of experience among participants, and development of systemic comprehension are the main characteristics of the approach.

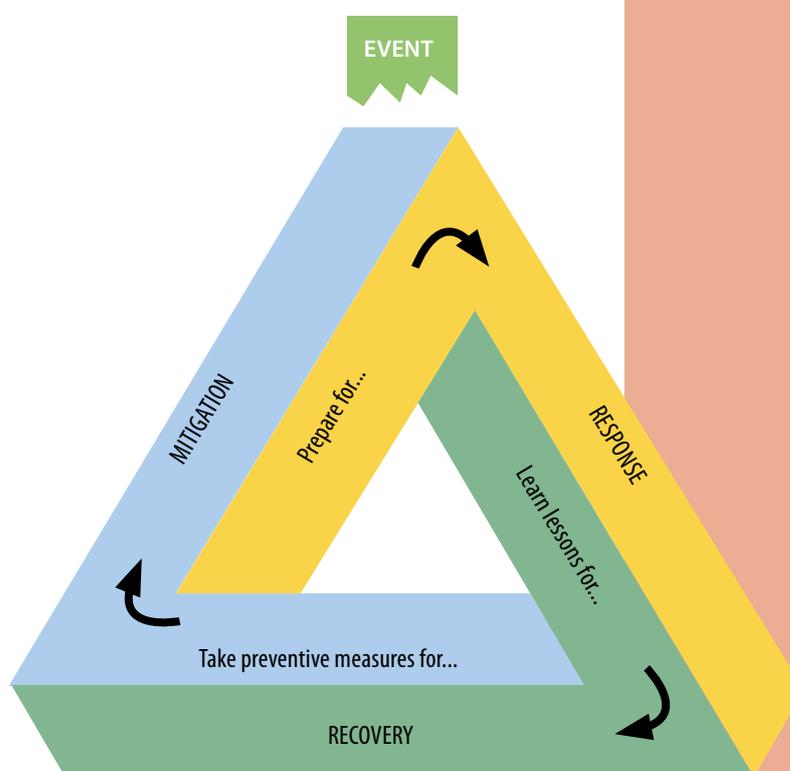
Implementing the ILRM approach

The L4S module 'Integrated Local Risk Management' (ILRM) provides practical methodological and thematic guidelines for a 5-day workshop. The training is specially targeted at members of local councils such as municipal administration, local development commissions, TPC (Territorial Public Council), village rescue teams, etc. During three pilot L4S workshops, the module was tested and moderators trained in using the elaborated materials. The workshops provided a film and information materials for preparing an exhibition. The exhibition 'Local risk man-

agement through risk dialogue' accompanied the L4S workshops from village to village. After the pilot phase, ten workshops were implemented in the GBAO, Northern Tajikistan, and southern Kyrgyzstan. The L4S workshop in Kyrgyzstan was conducted jointly by CAMP Kuhiston and CAMP Alatoo. It was the first step in disseminating a new module in Kyrgyzstan.

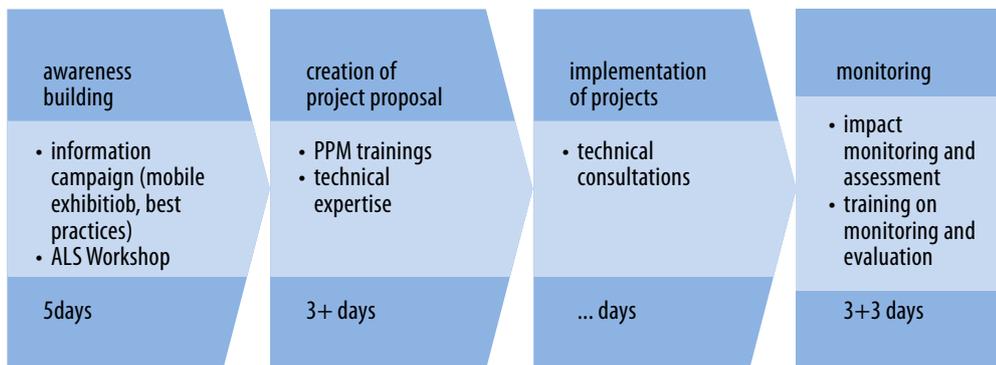
The developed methodology was validated through a multi stakeholder roundtable. The proposed adaptations and improvements after review concerning the recommendations were made and tested by CAMP Alatoo in collaboration with the UNDP Disaster Risk Management Program (DRMP) in Kyrgyzstan.

Some project funds from the SDC's Disaster



Risk reduction cycle (according to the Disaster Reduction Program by SDC)

Risk Reduction Program and the UNDP were allocated for the implementation of innovative small-scale mitigation measures. They were defined by the villagers themselves, and then implemented together with local authorities responsible for disaster management. The grants program is administered within the CAMP Small Grants Program. Participatory project management workshops were conducted for all communities involved helping to orient their project implementation goal.



CAMP's conceptual understanding of integrated local risk management (ILRM)

Results of the ILRM workshops

So far fifty L4S workshops have been carried out in Tajikistan and fourteen in Kyrgyzstan. Five and seven small-scale mitigation activities have already been implemented in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, respectively.

- The awareness of villagers has been increased and the mobile exhibition has helped to disseminate information among local authorities, teachers, school officials, and the public at large.
- The disaster preparedness capacity of communities has been developed by increasing knowledge of risk reduction and by assisting the formulation and elaboration of community risk management plans and corresponding maps.
- Trained communities are now able to identify and implement small-scale mitigation projects complementing the disaster preparedness and providing new opportunities for learning.
- Other partners active in disaster reduction such as international programs and development institutions are interested in the ILRM L4S module; for them several moderators have been trained in different regions.

Mobile exhibition including a film on ILRM (L4S workshop in Rivak village, Shugnan district, GBAO, Tajikistan, 2005)

Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT)

The REACT group has been established to promote information sharing, logistics and other resources between partners active in the disaster management sector including the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Government of Tajikistan. The group involves over fifty states, local and international organizations. Involved parties meet regularly to coordinate and share experience of issues related to disaster management, including preparedness, response, mitigation and capacity building activities with national bodies.

A similar structure might be developed for Kyrgyzstan in the near future.



Achievements and difficulties encountered

Small-scale projects have shown how motivated local communities can make a big contribution to implementation even without having the appropriate tools and means available. The success is also partially due to close cooperation between ministries of emergency and their respective organs or with specialised services such as the 'Centre of Competence for Disaster Reduction' (CCDR) created in the frame of the DRP by the SDC in Dushanbe in 2005 and now sharing premises with CAMP Kuhiston.

In some villages the proposed contingents for L4S workshop participants were not fully exploited, while even small-scale ILRM actions usually need a larger budget compared with regular projects at village level.

Recommendations

- In order to have appropriate risk reduction structures constructed, external technical backstopping is needed throughout the process from planning to implementation.
- Only participants for whom the topic of ILRM is relevant should be selected; this needs exploration before the workshop
- Publication of good practices should be updated annually based on results from monitoring.
- Many natural disasters have occurred in recent years in Central Asia and the lessons learnt and the experience gained need to be disseminated.

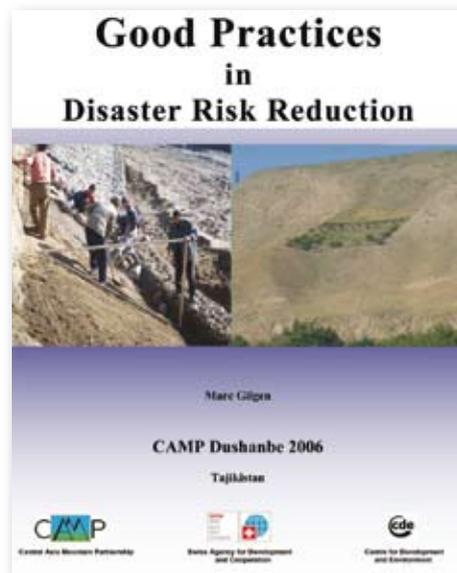
Publication of successful local disaster risk management practices providing villagers with ideas and inputs for possible measures (CAMP Kuhiston, 2007)



Sketch of land use, risk prevention and mitigation measures designed by villagers in a L4S workshop



Implementation of small scale mitigation project (Veshab village, Ayni district, Tajikistan)



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