



Youth for a better future

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Involving youth in integrated DRR activities to promote resilience

In hazard prone areas, it is important to assess the major risks and develop an action plan to reduce those with involvement of all local stakeholders

Barangay Alipao is a district of Alegria, situated in Surigao del Norte in the Philippines. Alipao is located at the foot of a mountain and is therefore highly susceptible to flooding and landslides. The region is also exposed to several other hazards such as typhoons and earthquakes. The residents have identified that waste materials obstruct the waterways in the community, leading to a higher level of flooding during rainy seasons. Waste materials are not properly handled by households and are not collected on a regular basis, leading to health-related issues in the barangay district. This leads to a large volume of waste being scattered after flooding events. Moreover, the slow land degradation due to the malpractice of forest resource management, such as illegal logging and mining, has contributed to a higher impact of these natural hazards.

Integrated Risk Management

Communities express their needs

Between 2016 and 2020, the Partners for Resilience (PfR), through the Dialogue and Dissent programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supported the local government and communities to become more resilient towards the multiple hazards and to use their voice to lobby for their needs. The Philippine Red Cross worked in partnership with the local government to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR) into local planning, policies and programmes. More specifically, this approach is referred to as Integrated Risk Management (IRM).



Scenic view of the mountainous boundary of barangay Alipao

Photo credit: Philippine Red Cross



Waste materials and rocks along the waterways of Barangay Alipao

Photo credit: Philippine Red Cross



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Youth Engagement

Youth as agents of change



Youth volunteer sharing their local disaster risk reduction plans. Credit: Philippine Red Cross

The project team worked with local government units (LGUs) and community members to collectively assess the risks faced by the communities and in updating and strengthening their Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans to be in line with the critical needs in the communities based on the analysis. To ensure the involvement of the youth of Alipao within this process, the PfR team joined forces with the 3FM Youth Ignite: Agents of Change (YIAC) project. Through this smart partnership, the Philippine Red Cross was able to involve the youth of Alipao in this process and they have proven to play a particularly important role towards its success.

Muti-stakeholder partnership

Working together to bring change in the community

As part of its engagement, the Philippine Red Cross has strengthened the capacity of volunteers, local government and the communities to understand the importance of utilising an integrated risk management approach towards building resilience. To disseminate this information, Red Cross (youth) volunteers as well as the barangay youth councils (local youth initiatives) were tasked with tools and knowledge to actively support the capacity strengthening process of the communities. They have supported the analysis of the risk assessments and held awareness sessions in their communities. A total number of 13 youth (7 female and 6 male) were involved in this, contributing to raise awareness on IRM, promote multi-stakeholder engagement across landscapes and ensure that LGUs and communities are regularly engaged in shaping their future prepared for disasters and climate change.

In addition, different local stakeholder were invited to discuss and enhance their skill to advocate and lobby for IRM-sensitive local investments. These workshops have led to a conducive collaboration between local government entities, youth volunteers and local communities to implement projects (e.g. reforestation, livelihood and waste management) which are aiming to better protect the environment and ecosystems and with that to improve the resilience of the communities.

Youth can play a key role in awareness building and in leading actions in their community



Local government representatives and community members with the Philippine Red Cross.
Photo credit: Philippine Red Cross

From planning to action

Community members such as youth and LGUs planning their BDRRM
Photo credit: Philippine Red Cross



With the support of barangay officials and youth representatives, a number of community-led environmental protection activities have been implemented. The tree planting project in Alipao led to the planting of 500 trees in line with the National Greening Programme – a national Philippine initiative to promote reforestation, reduce poverty, promote food security, create alternative livelihoods, and enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation. The reforestation aims to mitigate the risk of floods and landslides and to protect local communities from the destruction of their houses and livelihoods as a result of it. Through the PfR and YIAC interventions, the Philippine Red Cross introduced the integrated approach to address risks. As a result, the Barangay Chairperson, with the help of barangay officials and youth representatives, has introduced complementary activities next to the tree growing initiative to holistically address the risk associated with flooding and landslides in the area. These activities include solid waste management (through waste banking system), the establishment of nurseries to sustain supply of seedlings, alternative livelihood programmes (e.g. climate smart bio-intensive gardening) to prevent intensive use of natural resources, training on disaster preparedness, improvement of early warning systems, and awareness raising on DRR, CCA and EMR. The local government will set aside funding for these activities and at the same time will lobby for increased investments from external stakeholders.

"We are thankful that because of the collaboration of our BLGU, we have initiated activities to nurture our environment such as planting trees. So far that is our role, our biggest contribution of the youth is the active participation in the society where we belong"

"When the program (PfR) was brought to the community, women and youth were able to participate in decision making, they are heard and valued."

- Glydel Hingpit



Through active engagement of youth representatives, youth have truly become the monitors and advocates of the IRM approach in Alipao. As such, they have become the spokespersons for community-based advocacy on environmental protection.

Youth: a resource for the future

Youth engagement in Disaster Risk Reduction is empowering them and, at the same time, is allowing girls to raise their voice and play an active role in their communities

Girls and boys of the youth councils as well as the Red Cross youth volunteers were involved from the start of the programme in 2011 and have been supported throughout the years by both PfR and Youth Ignite. They have taken an active role in their communities and have become spokespersons for resilience. One of the main concerns in the beginning was to ensure that communities and local governments, and particularly the youth, have the capacity and ownership of their own resilience pathway. To do so, boys and girls were involved in capacity strengthening activities including learning visits on mitigation measures and training on community-based disaster risk reduction. With this knowledge, the Red Cross youth volunteers and barangay youth councils members joined forces to carry out community-based advocacy on environmental protection reaching out to 519 families in Alipao. They took part in the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) and served as facilitators in group discussions with local stakeholder and chiefs. During community and municipal dialogues, as well as planning workshops (disaster risk reduction planning and proposal write shops), youth representatives took an active role to bring forward their concerns and views for the future.

Women and youth engaged in community disaster reduction and resilience planning
Photo credit: Philippines Red Cross



Through the strengthened capacity and ownership, the barangay youth councils members served as the programme's link to other barangay officials and the community members. They helped in communicating vital information about the programme during community assemblies and delivered information and conducted follow up with the barangay officials. These activities enhanced the communication and allowed to have a good monitoring regime, especially in the last months when due to the COVID-19 pandemic, movement restrictions did not allow to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, youth groups have taken the initiative to directly engage and implement small-scale projects like clean-up drives to clean the streets and drain the ditches. By doing so, they have set an example which has contributed to raise their voice in promoting environmentally friendly practices and has given them more space to debate public issues in their community, which is usually dominated by elder or adult men.

The role of girls was of particular interest because it allowed to change their own perspective about girls' public engagement in environmental issues and to create more synergies and collaboration with boys.

Glydel Hingpit, a college student and at the same time an elected Youth Council Chairperson of Barangay Alipao, Alegria, proves that the youth can indeed make a difference. She testified how she felt valued and engaged in the Partners for Resilience programme and how this has empowered her:



Local government and youth volunteers working together
Photo credit: Philippines Red Cross

"What I liked in this project is that everyone had a voice and was able to participate in decision making and planning. I also learned that when people start to understand each other's situation and reunite towards a common goal of making things better, men and women can start being equal"

An increased public role for women and youth

Results achieved motivate to do more

The engagement of youth and women, ensured an increased public role; they are better represented in the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plans and community-based proposals. They now have specific roles in the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committee Structure, which was previously only accorded to the male-dominated barangay officials. These particular roles include research and planning, communication and warning, as well as relief distribution. In Barangay Alipao, Glydel leads the relief and distribution team.

Women and youth also have significant roles in the implementation and monitoring of both DRRM plans and community-based proposals. They have been identified as lead implementers of proposed tree growing projects, trainings and even operation of waste banking system. Moreover, it can be observed that the proposed livelihood interventions by the communities currently even target women as direct beneficiaries. Additional livelihood activities that have now been proposed are for example dress making and coconut processing. The intention is to secure diversified income generation for women and their families who now depend on fishing as sole livelihood option. Due to the changing and unpredictable weather patterns already experienced in Alegria, the community is not able to go to sea to fish as often as they used to. This is causing significant loss of income. The proposed diversified livelihood options are also intended for women whose husbands are engaged in tree-cutting or even mining, so to provide them with alternative source of income which do no harm the environment.

A big achievement is the active participation of youth and women in decision making processes as well as in the roll-out of the created plans