

Summary paper to

Evaluating Islamic Relief's Capacity Building and Partnership-based Disaster Preparedness in Asia

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Context

Islamic Relief (IR) is an international humanitarian aid agency that works with communities around the world, improving access to vital services, delivering emergency aid, protecting communities from disasters and empowering them through capacity building. A key aspect of its work is disaster preparedness that mitigates the impact of emergencies and allows better emergency response. Recently, Islamic Relief has been looking to expand its field offices in disaster-prone regions in Asia including the Philippines; a country that was hit by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and Typhoon Hagupit in 2014.

This research evaluates Islamic Relief's disaster-preparedness activities, specifically focussing on local partnerships and capacity building in Asia, with the aim of improving its strategy for the Philippines. It also aims to help Islamic Relief shape and improve its disaster preparedness activities when working in partnership with local NGOs or CBOs in other countries, particularly where its disaster response team has a new or recent presence.

Aims

- Critically evaluate the partnerships built between IR and local NGOs/CBOs when implementing disaster preparedness programmes in Bangladesh and Pakistan, as a pathway to integrating partnership-based programmes in the Philippines.
- Evaluate the context and requirements of partnerships with local NGOs/CBOs in order to implement disaster preparedness programmes in the Philippines.
- Determine the applicability of partnership-based disaster preparedness with local NGOs/CBOs as a means of supporting IR's broader Philippines strategy.

Findings

- Results from the case study of Bangladesh show that one of the strengths coming from IRs work with CBO is from the use of Community Needs Assessments. These internal assessments allows IR Bangladesh to evaluate how projects are being implemented by local NGOs and to pre-emptively assess the needs of communities in order to identify the needs of the community, to increase their capacity building and to offset life threatening ailments that are usually attached to the onset of a disaster natural or human induced.

- The current projects being implemented in Bangladesh and Pakistan differ slightly but follow the same scheme. This research found that IR Bangladesh has far more developed climate change and disaster resilience programmes.
- The interviews showed that there is willingness for cultural change as evident in IR's strategic work with partners as well as commitment to spending more time on disaster preparedness. However this highlighted the issue that donors are increasingly giving a higher amount to disaster response rather than disaster preparedness suggesting that there needs to be a cultural shift with the donors too.
- This paper suggests the creation of community steering groups to represent both IR and local community members, who will be responsible for evaluating and monitoring activities will ensure sustainability and greater disaster preparedness.
- This research also realises that local community and faith leaders are continuously interchanging and can pose some difficulties as seen in Bangladesh. However, IR Bangladesh has focused on its training of local leaders and creating a framework that is transferrable when new local leaders arrive.
- This research recognises the community disaster preparedness (CDP) model developed for Bangladesh by Islamic Relief, in which the local community has been actively engaged with. One key aspect to stem from the community that was proposed, was having a Risk Reduction Adaptation Plan, which has been approved by the government and is due to be implemented at both a local and national level, thus exemplifying IR's commitment to local capacity building through partnerships with local organisations.

For access to the complete paper, please contact Research & Development at Humanitarian Academy for Development (HAD) at: research@had-int.org