



Report of the GNDR Frontline National Consultation on Disaster Risk Reduction in Cameroon

Summary

A national consultation workshop to explain the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) Frontline survey results in Cameroon to local communities and other disaster risk reduction (DRR) stakeholders took place in the Cameroon Midlands city of Ngaoundéré (Adamaoua Region) on the 4th of June 2016. The workshop was organized by LIDEE (One of the Participating Organizations PO) in collaboration with GEADIRR (Cameroon National Coordinating Organization NCO). The workshop had participants from 5 (North, Adamaoua, Littoral Centre and Southwest) of the 8 regions where GNDR Frontline questionnaires were administered. The 40 participants who took part in the workshop were leaders of POs who participated in the survey, representatives of government ministries (environment, territorial administration, and education), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), counselors, traditional, & religious authorities. The workshop had 3 sections: (i) an introductory section during which national Frontline results on threats, consequences/impacts of the threats, actions taken to mitigate the threats, and barriers to the actions, were explained to participants. This was followed by questions and answers. (ii) Group discussions during which participants in 3 groups reflected on how community members, CSOs, government, and corporate organizations working together, can create and sustainably maintain community resilience against disasters. (iii) A plenary session synthesized the group work and made some recommendations – the most salient of which were to enhance community resilience by identifying and raising awareness on threats to which the communities are exposed, and to involve leaders of vulnerable local populations (people’s elected representatives) and CSOs in the search for resilience building and sustainable hazard mitigation measures.



Figure 1. Group picture of Frontline Cameroon National Consultation on DRR – Ngaoundere 4 June 2016

Introduction

The Global network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) was created in 2007 to foster a local perspective of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) agreed upon at the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan in 2005. GNDR carried out 3 local community based projects (Views from the Frontline VFL) in 2009, 2011 and 2013 which revealed that even though local knowledge is indispensable for adequately informing policy and strengthening disaster resilience, views of local people are often not taken into consideration enough. So GNDR formed a new program called Action on the Frontline (AFL). The aim of AFL is to gather local risk knowledge and priorities, support local learning and action, provide national frameworks for policy making, support effective implementation and set global baselines and monitoring mechanisms for all post-2015 disaster risk reduction frameworks, e.g., the Sendai Framework.



Figure 2 (a) Presentation of the Cameroon Frontline results during a national consultation (b) and (c) are group meetings at the consultation.

GNDR Frontline survey was carried out in 8 of the 10 administrative regions of Cameroon in 54 communities with 374 respondents. It was hinged on 4 main questions regarding threats in the communities, consequences of the threats, actions to reduce the threats and impediments or barriers against the actions. We have presented the results (community/respondent information, risk level, disaster impact/perception, and a national perspective of the 4 main questions) in a separate report to GNDR (GEADIRR 2016). In order to explain and disseminate the Frontline results to community members so as to prepare the next step of using the data in enhancing their disaster resilience capacities, we organised a national workshop in the Cameroon Midland city of Ngaoundéré on the 4th of July 2016. The workshop was organized by a local Participating Organization (PO) called LIDEE, and moderated by GEADIRR (Cameroon National Coordinating Organization NCO). This report summaries activities of the workshop.

Venue and workshop participants

The workshop took place in the conference hall of the Adamaoua Regional Centre for the Promotion of the Women and the Family. Forty people took part (Fig. 1) from 5 (Adamaoua, Centre, Littoral, North and Southwest) of the 8 regions where GNDR Frontline questionnaires were administered. These comprised leaders of POs, representatives of Regional government ministries like environment, territorial administration (representative of Vina Divisional Officer), and education; Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), counselors, traditional, & religious authorities.

Deliberations

The workshop was in 3 sections, the first of which was a presentation of the national Frontline results followed by questions and answers. Altogether, 64 threats were identified for Cameroon, top 3 being traffic accidents (1st), flooding, and fire, while the last 2 are temperature rise and war. Sixty-three consequences were listed, the top 3 being loss of life, loss of assets and injury. Actions to address the threats range from education, raising awareness on DRR, to strengthening security measures.

Questions by participants centered on:

- Non involvement of the local communities in the search for solutions
- Non availability, or where they do exist, non respect of laws on matters of DRR. In certain cases, local administrative authorities and traditional rulers are accomplices in violations of the laws.
- Setting up communities in risk-prone areas due mainly to demographic pressure and lack of hazard maps
- Even though civil society organizations are very active in efficiently and cost-effectively disseminating disaster related information to vulnerable populations thus helping to build their resilience, government often does not consider them as important stakeholders.

During the second section of the workshop, participants worked in 3 groups (Fig. 2) to reflect on a multi-stakeholder approach in resilience building, i.e., how would the civil society, community members, local/national government and corporate bodies working together, create and sustainably maintain community resilience against disasters. The 3rd phase happened after launch break and was a plenary during which group work was discussed and some recommendations made:

- Enhance community resilience by identifying hazardous areas, and raising awareness on threats to which the communities are exposed,
- Involve leaders of vulnerable local populations (people's elected representatives) and CSOs in the search for resilience building and sustainable hazard mitigation measures.
- Increased role of CSO in DRR
- Lack of means to carry out (crude but often efficient) resilience building actions

We are currently using the AFL data to try to build the resilience of the populations in the Lower Motowoh neighborhood of Limbe in the Southwest Region.