

Chao Phraya River communities gear up for upcoming flood season

Interest Story

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PATHUMTANI, Thailand- The 2011 floods that swept across north northeast and central Thailand, resulted in one of the most economically taxing disasters in the country's history. As floodwaters swept southward across the country, the central province of Pathumtani acted as a final buffer between the floodwaters and the nation's capital, Bangkok. However, the flood-barrier could not compete with the overwhelming volume of water. Communities along the Chao Phraya River were forced to evacuate their homes. Both industrial estates and residential areas were inundated in the floods. Flooding caused an estimated \$45.7 Bn total in economic damages and losses in Thailand.

'Displacement' an aftermath of flood

Chavarat Srimupan, a representative of the Bangduea Sub-District office reminisced of how people had to relocate after much of the Sub-District, located along the west bank of the Chao Phraya was inundated by floodwaters.

“Most of Bang Duea was directly affected by the floods. There were only a few communities that were not directly affected. However, even in these communities people felt the affects of the flood through traffic created by those who were displaced. It is in these communities that we set up bases of operation to administer aid to those affected by the floods,”

he said

The 2011 Floods displaced thousands as people across Thailand sought drier grounds. With more prepared communities, central emergency centers can be established, and less families will be displaced in the future.



Mr. Chavarat Srimupan instructs his team members how to properly elevate a collapsed structure to save a victim trapped underneath.

Building necessary skills

Mr. Srimupan was among the participants that took part in ADPC's Community Action for Disaster Response (CADRE) training conducted at Border Patrol Police base in Pathumthani. CADRE teaches community members to be prepared in the case of a disaster situation. The program provides specially trained instructors to disseminate the knowledge and skills necessary for community leaders like Mr Srimupan to respond appropriately to disaster situations before professional responders arrive.

In the interest of replicating the CADRE experience for many communities, Instructors are specially trained in a CADRE Training for Instructors (CADRE TFI) course. CADRE TFI trains potential instructors to enhance their organizational ability, be comfortable in leadership roles and teaches them how to effectively disseminate training skills. Most importantly the course also aims to develop a deep technical knowledge on specific CADRE skills. Through this specialized training instructors are able to build the necessary skills in community leaders to meet CADRE objectives.

One of the goals of the CADRE training is to reduce mortality rates by teaching community leaders to prioritize emergency care where there are limited resources.

"I believe life is the most important consideration in a disaster situation. We can always rebuild infrastructure. Life, on the other hand, cannot be replaced. The training emphasizes this reality. We must always prioritize human life over material losses," Mr. Srimupan said.

Hopes for the Future

Mr. Srimupan has a large build, is unusually tall and can look intimidating. However those who know him always describe the resident of Ban Duea as an amiable character. He was even nominated by other training participants as a team leader for the upcoming disaster simulation exercise scheduled later that day.

“ I'd like this training to be continually implemented and improved. There are many people out there that need access to this knowledge. I hope CADRE can reach out to more communities and more people,

he said.

