

Enhancing Community Readiness to Climate Extremes.

Tan My Chanh Commune, My Tho City, Viet Nam

Case Study

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Tan My Chanh Commune

Tan My Chanh Commune is located in My Tho City, Tien Giang Province, in southern Viet Nam. This area is known for its picturesque rural landscapes, characterized by lush rice paddies, fruit orchards, and winding rivers. Tan My Chanh, like many communes in the Mekong Delta region, has a rich agricultural tradition, with local communities primarily engaged in farming and horticulture. The commune contributes to the vibrant culture and economy of My Tho City, which is famous for its scenic beauty and as a gateway to the Mekong Delta's waterways.

Tan My Chanh Commune, like many areas in the Mekong Delta region of Viet Nam, is prone to several natural hazards such as flooding, river bank erosion, saltwater intrusion storms and typhoons. These hazards pose challenges to the local community, particularly those reliant on agriculture, and necessitate ongoing efforts in climate & disaster risk management and adaptation strategies.



Tan My Chanh Commune
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Community Readiness to climate & disaster risks

Community Readiness to Climate and Disaster Risks refers to the capacity of a community to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of climate change and disasters. Effective community readiness reduces the adverse impacts of climate and disaster risks, protecting lives, livelihoods, and the environment. Some of the key components in enhancing the readiness of communities are:

Awareness and Education: Communities need to be informed about the risks posed by climate change and disasters, including understanding early warning signs and the potential impacts on their environment and livelihoods.

Preparedness Planning: Developing and implementing plans that outline specific actions to take before, during, and after a disaster. This includes evacuation plans, emergency shelters, and resource allocation.

Response Capabilities: Communities are the first responders to disasters. Hence enhancing these capabilities enables a community to respond effectively to protect lives, minimize damage, and recover quickly.

Enhancing Community Readiness in Tan My Chanh Commune

The Urban Resilience to Climate Extremes in Southeast Asia (URCE) Program, which was supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), played a pivotal role in enhancing community readiness in Tan My Chanh Commune by providing technical support to strengthen the community's planning process, improve coordination, and enhance understanding of risks. The different interventions carried out under the three components are described below.

Awareness and Education

The URCE Program pioneered Urban Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) which is an approach that focuses on engaging and empowering urban communities to actively participate in disaster risk reduction and management. This participatory process involves local residents, community organizations, and stakeholders in identifying vulnerabilities, assessing risks, and implementing strategies to mitigate and respond to disasters. A series of Urban CBDRM programs were conducted focusing on vulnerable populations of Tan My Chanh Commune. The Climate-inclusive Hazard and Risk Assessment conducted under the same program provided vital information about the anticipated climate risks. ADPC through this program provided assistance in establishing a pool of trainers on CBDRM, leading to the facilitation of annual trainings organized by the local people's committees at the commune and ward levels in the two target cities in Viet Nam.



The Urban CBDRM trainer and commune facilitators conducting the training workshop at the commune to validate the information and share the assessment result.
Photo credits: ADPC

Preparedness Planning

The preparedness capacity of at-risk communities was improved by generating community hazard maps incorporating the information of at-risk populations, shelter locations and evacuation routes. The maps are displayed at the commune center leading to improved awareness of urban communities on response mechanisms during a climate-induced disaster. Moreover, these maps are useful for the commune leaders in revising the annual CBDRM plans of the commune. The hazard maps were developed adopting

a participatory approach involving all stakeholders from the Commune Peoples Committee and the communities living in the commune.



URCE Team Members developing the community hazard map in partnership with the Peoples Committee of Tan My Chanh Commune, My Tho City.
Photo Credits: ADPC



Community Hazard Map displayed at the hamlet center in Tan My Chanh Commune, My Tho City.
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Response Capabilities

To improve the response capabilities, it is essential to streamline the flow of early warning information till the last mile. Understanding this importance, ADPC assisted in developing an SOP for Impact-based Forecasting and Warning (IbFW) at the community level. The purpose of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Community-level IbFW is to promote resilience to multi-hazards and to improve the policy and institutional arrangements at national, province, city levels and commune levels through integrated and effective standard operating procedures for IbFWS. Therefore, the SOP for Community-level Impact-based Forecasting and Warning (IbFW) aims at becoming a practical guide for stakeholders, who can refer to it in the event of a forecasted or existing hazard or during

any of its identified stages (Normal Stage, Alarm Stage, Warning Stage) in Viet Nam, and take adequate actions accordingly.



SOP for Community Level Impact-based Forecasting and Warning

It is also essential that disaster management plans are already in place and have been practiced and tested prior to any warning. Hence, a tabletop simulation exercise was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the city's emergency coordination and the Community-based Disaster Risk Management Plan, along with other implemented disaster risk reduction mechanisms. This exercise greatly contributed to empower the responsible officials by delivering potential recommendations to address the challenges and gaps in the city's emergency coordination and the community-based disaster risk management plan, leading to the strengthening of emergency coordination mechanisms in Tan My Chanh Commune.



Tabletop simulation exercise in My Tho City, Viet Nam Photo Credits: ADPC

Furthermore, the URCE Program also assisted with equipment to strengthen capacity for emergency response to disasters in Tan My Chanh Commune. The resources such as electricity generators, portable speakers, electric saws and lawnmowers were provided to Commune Peoples Committee. These resources would maximize the effective execution of response functions.



Handing over equipment such as chainsaws, power generators to strengthen community readiness and local preparedness (Tan My Chanh Commune, My Tho City, Viet Nam) Photo Credits: ADPC

Bottomline

The diverse activities carried out under the URCE Program contributed to improving the readiness of communities living in Tan My Chanh Commune. The activities were delivered around three essentials of Community Readiness which are Awareness & Education, Preparedness Planning and Response Capabilities.

Community readiness is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires the collective effort of government agencies, organizations, and the public. It aims to ensure that the community can effectively respond to emergencies, minimize harm, and recover swiftly. A ready community is resilient, adaptable, and equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to face various challenges.

Quote

Mr. Dao Ngoc Thi, the head of Commune Peoples Committee greatly appreciated the interventions undertaken by ADPC towards strengthening the community readiness in Tan My Chanh Commune. Below were his words:



Annually, following the province and city's clear directives, we diligently craft a disaster preparedness plan. The insights acquired from the Community-based Disaster Risk Management training courses will prove instrumental in refining and enhancing the Disaster Risk Management Plan of the Commune. This, in turn, will empower us to efficiently mobilize resources for both immediate and long-term disaster preparedness and response efforts in the future."

*This case study was developed from the interventions of the **"Urban Resilience to Climate Extremes in Southeast Asia (URCE)"** program implemented in Viet Nam. The main aim of the program was to improve the resilience of urban systems and communities to climate extreme events*

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