

Reducing Risk in the South



Photo: UNOSSC- Jessumra

UN Recognition of AIDMI Work in Nairobi, GSSD Expo 2013.

Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into development must take place at many levels, from villages to global meets. And that is exactly what the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) strives to do with its very limited resources and small team.

The Global South-South Development (GSSD) Expo, 2013 was hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya from 28 October to 1 November 2013, and AIDMI was invited to be a part of this expo.

A Partnership Forum titled as Global Centre of Excellence for South-South Citizenry-Based Development Academies (SSCBDA) and South-South cooperation for improving pollution management and environmental health in low-and middle-income countries was organised on October 31, 2013 by AIDMI with the UN Office for South-

South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and the World Bank.

Distinguished participants from Asia, Africa and other continents attended the forum. This included donors interested in partnership, NGOs interested in hosting and think tanks promoting South-South cooperation in various capacities.

The partnership forum focused on South-South Cooperation at the local level in two areas:

First, the overwhelming demand expressed by participants in ongoing SSCBDAs for a similar event to be held in their countries. There were two prime objectives of this partnership forum. The first was to bring the concept of the SSCBDA to other regions and the second objective was to bring in potential funding partners to participate in the SSCBDA. Thus, the overall focus was on scaling

up and mobilization of financial resources and operational links.

Second, South-South cooperation program on pollution management and environmental health being developed by the World Bank in close cooperation with China, prospective donors and World Bank client countries. The overall focus was on obtaining perspectives and views of government and other client country stakeholders for collaboration in further developing and implementing this pollution management and environmental health program in the light of reducing risk.

The forum was divided into three key parts; a) introduction of the South-South Development Academy, its objectives and achievements so far, future outlook; b) UN Office for South-South Cooperation vision for the Citizenry-Based Development Academy and; c) South-South

2010-2013	Theme	Location	Participants	Countries
First	Earthquake Recovery	Bhuj, Gujarat, India	62	9
Second	Tsunami Recovery	Banda Aceh, Indonesia	60	4
Third	Harmonizing DRR and CCA for Preparedness	Camaringes Sur, Philippines	134	8
Forth	Child Rights	New Delhi, India	66	11
Fifth	CCA, DRR and Ecosystem	RMKupang, NTT, Indonesia	174	5
Sixth	Application of Cash Transfers for DRR and CCA	Odisha, India	31	5
Seventh	Integrating DRR and CCA	Philippines	50	7

cooperation for improving pollution management and environmental health in low-and middle-income countries.

The discussion on SSCBDA was organised bearing in mind the growing demand for similar academies across Asia and between Asia and Africa. The expected outcome was scaling up of activities for the global centre, mobilisation of resources and engaging partners.

The first presentation of the session was made by Denis Nkala, Regional Coordinator, South-South Cooperation (Asia Pacific, UNOSSC) on UN Office for South-South Cooperation vision for the Citizenry-Based Development Academy. He presented how these academies were making a difference in both, the concept of reducing risk as well as on the details of activities in Asia over the years. The concept of use of cash transfer in relief and recovery and Child's Rights to Safety in Schools was well received by the participants from several Asian countries.

The second presentation of the forum was made by Mihir R. Bhatt, Founding Director, AIDMI on the introduction of the South-South Development Academy, its objectives and achievements so far along with its future outlook. Mr. Bhatt introduced the Global Center for Excellence in organising the SSCBDA hosted by AIDMI in India by explaining that the main role of the Centre is to spearhead the

implementation of the sub-academies in the Global South with support and inputs from a regional advisory group. He pointed out the contributions made in this process by Zenaida Delica; Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre in Thailand; Centre for Disaster Preparedness in Philippines; and Tsunami & Disaster Mitigation Research Center in Aceh, Indonesia.

He stated that in line with the objective of the UNOSSC, the Center contributes to the enhancement of the capacity of government, civil society and communities, including UN agencies in the Global South through the SSCBDA for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG); the goals of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) and; climate risk adaptation priorities of the developing countries in the Global South.

Launched since 2010 – a Southern learning platform for sharing knowledge, skills and practices – the SSCBDAs brings together representatives from communities, civil society organisations, local government, Universities, the local private sector and UN Agencies in an enabling and empowering learning environment for a suitable period of time to deliberate on a specific issue concerning the global South, he explained.

Mr. Bhatt shared the key achievements of the SSCBDAs and stated that these academies have improved South-South networking across 200 organisations from South

and Southeast Asia and enhanced understanding of Southern issues on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, including 'Green' recovery and safer development.

These academies (see the table) have identified, discussed and captured a number of relevant development approaches currently being practiced in the Global South such as climate smart disaster risk management approach, small and micro-businesses focused approach, micro-insurance and cash transfers approaches, rights and risk reduction approach, data transparency approach and sanitation and water security approach.

He mentioned that the SSCBDA has tremendous potential for replication and scaling up keeping in view the constantly growing demand. He explained that it is a sustainable mechanism under the UNOSSC and is now institutionalized as part of the GSSD Academy platform. Mr. Bhatt, in the end stated that the stage is now set for SSCBDA to move from academy based support to institutional support and demanded 3 year institutional support for expanding the activities of the Global Center for Excellence in organising the SSCBDA from donors and UNOSSC.

The demand for AIDMI's active role in integrating DRR with development is tremendous, from Cambodia, Brazil, China, Thailand, and Nepal. Ways are being found to address this demand. ■

– Mihir R. Bhatt and Denis Nkala