

A Study of Sustainability of Disaster Education in Yangon, Myanmar: A Case Study of High Schools in Kungyangon, Botataung, and Pazundaung Townships

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The Cyclone Nargis struck the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in May 2008 and it caused 84,537 people death and 19,359 people injured in 37 townships in Yangon and Ayeyarwaddy Regions. About 60 percent of schools (about 4,000 schools) were damaged and 113 teachers and school personnel lost their lives. The Ministry of Education has been implementing disaster education in terms of formal education and non formal school based disaster education projects in collaboration with external organizations. However, Report on Education for All for Myanmar states that schools usually do not have enough time and resources to organize DRR activities constantly due to tight schedule of teachers and students and insufficient DRR teaching aids to stimulate student's interest and participation. The interview with the teachers during preliminary field survey identified that they did not organize disaster education activities after completion of the projects due to limited human resource, lack of collaboration with local government and community. The interview with students revealed that they have proper knowledge on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) which they learnt from formal and non formal disaster education.

Therefore, the research attempts to study the current status of disaster education and identify the challenges of implementation of disaster education in schools and to verify the benefits of disaster education for the students' knowledge and preparedness action on DRR. In order to achieve the objectives, this research used methodologies of preliminary field survey, literature review, qualitative and quantitative questionnaire survey to the principals and students from high schools in study area. The study was conducted in high schools in Kungyangon, Botataung, and Pazundaung Townships in Yangon Region because Ministry of Education and external organizations implemented school disaster education projects in Kungyangon and Botataung Townships. The schools are categorized into three categories in this study such as schools which continue disaster education activities, schools which do not continue disaster education activities and schools which do not have disaster education activities.

The implementing organizations conducted the capacity building trainings for teachers but the frequency is limited and it did not cover all the teachers in the schools. After attending the trainings, the teachers organized the activities such as town watching and evacuation drills for the students. However, other teachers cannot organize the activities when the DRR in charged teachers transferred to another schools. In addition, the schools do not have collaboration with local government and community to conduct disaster education activities in the schools because DRR is not prioritized and there was no severe disaster experience in the townships. The principals and teachers formed School Disaster Management Committee and developed School Safety Plan but the committee and plans are not reviewed and updated periodically because they have tight schedule with other prioritized activities in the school. The students have proper knowledge on hazards and its impacts, preparedness measures for cyclone, fire, earthquake and flood as they learnt from curriculum and co curricula activities. However, most of the students picked up the wrong answers for earthquake mitigation measures and secondary hazards of earthquake.