



ADRC Highlights

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Monthly News

Vol. 200
November
2009

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Recent Natural Disasters in Asia

Assessment Mission to Padang and Pariaman, West Sumatra, Indonesia

Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) sent a team of two senior researchers, Mr. Masaru Arakida and Mr. Tetsuo Ibaraki, to Indonesia to make an immediate assessment of areas stricken by the earthquake on 30 September off Sumatra Island. The researchers visited the cities of Padang and Pariaman, and the Padang-Pariaman District of West Sumatra Province from 5 to 7 October 2009. Their primary objective was to explore how ADRC and other relevant organizations might be able to help the disaster-stricken areas recover and rebuild their communities. The following is an overview of their mission.

Day 1: 5 October

The ADRC team visited the governor's house of West Sumatra Province in Padang City, where the emergency center responsible for the province was set up following the earthquake. On the way to the governor's house from Padang International Airport, the team saw many modern multi-story buildings that had collapsed, but noticed that most of the older one- and two-story buildings survived the earthquake. The contrast between the damaged and undamaged buildings was quite remarkable. The ADRC team joined many other international aid agencies and NGOs in sharing information and exchanging findings.



[Collapsed multi-story building]

Day 2: 6 October

The ADRC team met with professors at Andalas University and exchanged information about the earthquake damage. They learned that the university had been asked by the Indonesian government to assess the damage sustained by houses in the community. The ADRC team then went to the Padang-Pariaman District, about an hour away from Padang City, and examined some severely damaged schools and other buildings with some local government officials. The ADRC team noticed that the damaged school buildings had a relatively small number of pillars and were built with brick walls not strong enough to withstand an earthquake.



[A damaged school]

Day 3: 7 October

The ADRC team visited areas where hundreds of people were reported to have

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been killed or still missing due to landslides. The earthquake ground motion combined with rainfall seemed to aggravate the landslide hazard. On the way to those sites, the team witnessed many small communities that had been totally devastated. The situation in those mountainous areas was quite different from that of Padang City and Pariaman City. They suffered large numbers of casualties and are in urgent need of rescue and relief aid.

Upon their return to Japan, the ADRC team reported on the status of the earthquake-stricken areas to relevant organizations within Japan. The “build back better” approach would be of great importance during the recovery/rehabilitation phase in Indonesia. ADRC will continue to work on promoting this approach in the coming months.



[Landslide area]

● Promoting Cooperation with Affiliated Institutions

JICA Training Course: “Dissemination and Establishment of Disaster Prevention Culture for Asian Countries”

ADRC conducted a training course entitled “Dissemination and Establishment of Disaster Prevention Culture for Asian Countries” with sponsorship from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from 31 August to 2 October 2009. This course aimed to help to raise public awareness of disaster risk reduction, which is a key component in reducing disaster risk. JICA and ADRC conducted a training program on disaster education in schools in 2006 and 2007, and in 2008 redesigned the program to include specific efforts to raise public awareness of disaster risk reduction.

This course aimed to foster a culture of disaster reduction awareness in countries throughout Asia, not only by spreading relevant knowledge through school education, but also by raising the awareness of disaster risk among the general public.

The nine participants were officials in charge of disaster risk management in organizations including disaster management agencies, meteorological departments, and a Red Cross society in five countries: Azerbaijan, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. They attended a series of lectures by the Hyogo Prefecture Board of Education and Kobe City Board of Education on disaster prevention education systems, disaster prevention teaching materials, and manuals on disaster prevention education in schools. They learned various methods of promoting a disaster prevention culture by participating in disaster drills and a volcanic eruption experiment, and by visiting disaster prevention education facilities and schools, including the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI), Maiko High School, and Fujitokoha University.

These visits provided an invaluable opportunity for the participants to see how a disaster prevention culture is being fostered in various grade levels, and how it is being extended from schools to the general public. The trainees were excited to utilize what they learned in Japan to contribute to promoting a culture of disaster prevention in their respective countries.



● Announcements

Visiting Researchers for the ASEAN GLIDE Project

Three visiting researchers, Mr. Meng Hong Ling (Singapore), Mr. Lu Ngoc Lam (Viet Nam) and Mr. Azmi Bin Atan (Malaysia), have been undergoing training in Japan as part of the ASEAN-GLIDE project. This project aims to organize a web-based historical disaster database using the GLIDE system to facilitate disaster risk management. These three researchers have been visiting both public and private organizations involved in disaster risk reduction activities, as well as learning the GLIDE system so that they can use it in the development of disaster databases in their own countries. Mr. Lam and Mr. Atan will be in Japan until the beginning of December 2009.



[(from left to right) Mr. Atan, Mr. Lam, Mr. Ling]

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