COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Main benefits of the project

Participatory risk assessments – This will prove to be an invaluable means of helping pilot communities and local authorities develop an understanding of specific local risk factors to flood hazards. As a participatory process, groups will be engaged across each community to share their thoughts, reflect upon their needs and identify and design potential solutions which could minimize flood risk and increase preparedness and resilience. The process encompasses hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments. People's perceptions of risk within a community will also be considered. Risk assessment results will be compiled and presented as community risk profiles and hazard maps, which shall be further used by the community to identify flood risk reduction solutions.

Gender-inclusive participation – The project is designed to help promote more-equal participation of men and women in disaster risk reduction activities and to encourage groups to understand each other's perspectives of disaster preparedness and response. The project activities shall encourage participation of women, the elderly and those with disabilities for enhanced inclusivity in planning and management of disaster risk reduction measures.

Formation of a Community-Based Flood Management Committee – These committees shall play an important role in empowering community members through participation in planning efforts for disaster preparedness. Based on their skills, experience and areas of interest, committee members shall be trained and assigned to work under dedicated sub-teams – for early warning, search and rescue, evacuation, security, health and relief. This is meant to help in assigning roles and responsibilities to committee members and guide them in performing tasks before, during and after flood events.

Value of non-structural solutions – Non-structural solutions are of significant importance in the project. If only a proportion of these measures were to be used during severe flooding, it would still reduce flood damage. This is because people would, for example, have knowledge of safer places, awareness about vulnerable people, be able to provide search and rescue support to other people, have knowledge about access routes to evacuation centres and have knowledge on first aid. In contrast, structural solutions could be wiped out by the flood events. These non-structural solutions aim to encourage better understanding of flood management and invite community participation in developing other localized solutions without involvement of additional resources and funding.

Shift from a reactive to a proactive approach – The historical way of dealing with flood disasters has been to respond after the event has occurred, rather than being proactive ahead of flood events. It is important to change the mind-set and the traditional way of working with external responders for better results.