

OUR EXPERIENCE

Exchange Program

A Local Partnership and Exchange Initiative

BACKGROUND

Since the Aceh tsunami in 2004, a variety of inspiring initiatives to improve tsunami early warning and preparedness at the community level have been carried out in Indonesia with the support of numerous organizations. As a result, many valuable experiences are now available and ready to be shared with others. These experiences are not only important for further replication, but also provide valuable input for improving procedures, mechanisms and institutional capacities related to InaTEWS, especially by addressing the link between the National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) and the local levels.

THE INITIATIVE

To make these experiences and lessons learnt available and to facilitate discussions and learning processes, a local partnership and exchange initiative was conceived and implemented. The “Exchange Program” included two approaches:

Inter-district & inter-province cooperation provided opportunities for cross visits among pilot areas to exchange experiences, good practices and lessons learnt. Furthermore, initiatives for networking and cooperation between districts and provinces related to tsunami early warning were supported by the program.

Exchange & dialogue between the local and national levels provided national stakeholders with opportunities to gain deeper insights into local preparedness mechanisms. In turn, local stakeholders from the pilot areas had the chance to visit the NTWC at the BMKG and the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) Operations Center to learn about national procedures.

THE GOAL

The local partnership and exchange initiative aimed at the horizontal dissemination of experiences, best practices and lessons learnt, as well as the promotion of networking between districts and provinces for the purposes of sharing resources and warning services. It was expected that the initiative would also contribute to the clarification of procedures, roles, and responsibilities regarding tsunami early warning services between all administrative levels.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

With the inter-district and inter-province cooperation approach, five districts in Java (Bantul, Purworejo, Kebumen, Cilacap, and Ciamis) made progress in establishing a forum for tsunami early warning. The initiative receives support from both the province (Yogyakarta, Central, and West Java) and the national level. In Bali, an initiative of the provincial government to link the provincial Emergency Operation Center (PUSDALOPS) with all tsunami prone districts was supported.

During several cross visits between pilot areas, a number of specific topics were addressed. Pilot Area Java received working group members from Bali and Padang to share insights on community awareness initiatives. Evacuation planning at the sub-district level was the focus of a 3-day visit to Bali.



Visiting BPBD Denpasar



Visiting PUSDALOPS Bali Denpasar



Dialogue in PUSDALOPS Bali

In their cross visit to Bali, a group from Ciamis learned about the early warning mechanism implemented in the tourism sector, while sharing their experiences from the Pangandaran tsunami 2006. During all visits participants had the opportunity to learn about the installations and procedures of the respective local PUSDALOPS.

As part of the local-national dialogue program, visits by partners from all three Pilot Areas to national institutions (BMKG and BNPB) have increased the common understanding of the early warning system and contributed to the improvement of procedures. During the visits specific questions from the pilot areas were raised and agreements made to resolve open issues. The visits also triggered further initiatives for local-national cooperation. For instance, BNPB will design a technical assistance program for tsunami preparedness tailored for districts along the southern coast of Java.

LESSONS LEARNT & POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

The Exchange Program strengthened local capacities and ownership as it built up on local experiences, assuring that the involved stakeholders were the protagonists of a learning process, which was based on collective observation and reflection. At the end of each exchange visit, participants agreed on follow-up activities.

The participatory planning and open dialogue approach of the program proved to be a suitable mechanism for multi-stakeholder coordination, which led to clarifications on roles and responsibilities, and improved procedures between actors from different levels and sectors involved in InaTEWS. The Exchange Program placed emphasis on organizational, rather than individual, capacity building by focusing on an exchange between organizations through an action learning approach with a (short) reflection on theory and practice at each stage of the warning chain.

Visits and dialogues need good content and methodological preparation, as well as professional facilitation, in order to enable a participatory and structured learning process.

The Exchange Program proved to be a suitable learning mechanism to strengthen tsunami preparedness and early warning, and received positive feedback from all participants. It triggered further networking and cooperation. Replication is possible if sufficient technical support and funding is available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It takes numerous motivated and proactive individuals and institutions to make an Exchange Program happen. The main actors were the local tsunami working groups and partner institutions in the three pilot areas. At the national level, the BMKG, BNPB and DEP DAGRI were actively involved. A number of persons were engaged in facilitating and organizing the dialogues and exchange visits from behind the scenes. Additional funding for the Exchange Program was generously provided by AusAID.



Discussing Warning Dissemination Technology



Witnessing SOP Drill in PMI Bandung



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