Problem Strategy/ Challenges

Background: Bihar, one of the most disaster-prone states of India, faced severe floods in 2008 in 5 districts due to a breach in the embankment of river Kosi. Over 5.3 million people were affected. To support the Government of Bihar (GoB), UNICEF in association with the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) began a flood recovery programme in 68 villages.

By 2017, the CBDRR-SSP reached over 1,122 villages and 3,318 schools. Further, the SSP has been recognised by the GoB, and the “Mukhyamantri School Safety Programme (MSSP)” was launched in July 2016 to cover 75,000 schools in Bihar.


• Methodology: After a document review, the evaluation collected qualitative data from sampled schools and villages. This included 51 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with DRR Catalysts, NGO partners and different stakeholders, Key Informant Interviews (KIs) were conducted with 74 persons between the village and state levels, along with a Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice (KAP) survey. The selected respondents for FGD, KIs and Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) surveys is shown in the right.

• Conclusions:
  ○ Relevance: The CBDRR SSP has demonstrated its relevance in disaster risk reduction and improved knowledge on rights and entitlements.
  ○ Effectiveness: The pilot programme has been effective in providing a platform for vulnerable communities for engaging with government and other partners on disaster associated risks. Community leadership in the form of DRR catalysts and DRR champions is key enabling participatory development. Women and children can be further included in the planning process, the model has in fact built their capacities in dealing with disasters. The school safety programme provides evidence on the effectiveness of the model in addressing children’s knowledge on disaster preparedness.
  ○ Sustainability: Both CBDRR and SSP have demonstrated strongly components of sustainability along with their achievements in increasing knowledge on and preparedness towards disasters. Further, UNICEF and implementing NGO partners as Institutions have ensured that both programmes receive the required handholding and technical support at different levels.
  ○ Gender and Equity: Both programmes have been inclusive in capacitating communities and schools to plan for disasters. However, as a part of the CBDRR programme, more efforts can be made in order to include women in the DRR planning process, especially to address underlying risks - malnutrition, birth registration and WASH related issues.

Lessons Learned

• Critical to have necessary links in the governance chain and meaningful interaction with government and informal functions to ensure resources from government schemes/programmes are actually used: The efforts of UNICEF and implementing NGO partners with respect to involving and interacting with government officials at block and district levels to leverage entitlements from programmes, must continue to sustain the programme.

• Including women in the planning process is of utmost importance: While the programme has been raising awareness among women, including them in the process of planning is equally important. This predominantly means including women who are non-members and are a part of the village community. Their issues pertaining to disaster are best addressed when they take charge, and play a leading role in the DRR planning of the villages and therefore, should be engaged in the process.

• Periodic analysis of CBDRR-SSP monitoring data is critical: Regular analysis for tracking progress and taking mid-course corrections of the programme is important. This will ensure that both the block and district administrations understand and contribute towards the DRR requirements along with providing the necessary support.

• Geography in terms of vulnerability to disasters is the only necessary targeting criteria for such DRR capacity building programmes, as opposed to other criteria such as income, caste and demographics. The selection of villages and schools for the programme was based on their vulnerability to disasters. The methodical prioritization of the geographies has ensured that people who have experienced disasters now feel confident and enabled to effectively deal with them. The programme, therefore, must continue its approach of selecting geographies that require the necessary support and intervention to build DRR capacities.