

Delivering Results and Working in Partnership: Two Key Concepts for South Asia to Accelerate Building Urban Resilience

While working on Duryog Nivaran's (DN's) flagship knowledge product titled South Asia Disaster Report 2016 (SADR 2016): Build Back Better (BBB) several ideas became clearer. These ideas, mostly on urban resilience, are of use in implementing Asian Regional Plan (ARP) on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in South Asia. For the success of ARP it is important, one, to deliver results, and two, to work in partnership. These two concepts, if put into action in South Asia, will profoundly improve the impact of ARP.

Duryog Nivaran is a South Asia network of individuals and institutions looking at alternative ways to reduce risks that local communities face. DN was one of the first to initiate work on urban risk with Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) in South Asia in early 1990s.

SADR is a series of thought provoking reports that aim at changing the way we understand disasters: as a given, top-down, and asset centric. SADR 2016 builds on previous such reports to accelerate Building Back Better in South Asia.

The Asian Regional Plan was developed as a follow up to Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and was accepted at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) in November 2016, Delhi. Urban resilience is high on the ARP agenda.

Asia is a home to some of the most vulnerable cities in the world as well as a hub of some of the most proactive cities promoting risk

resilience. Asian Development Bank (ADB) is active in investing in cities in Asia to take a lead in building resilience.

Many urban resilience initiatives in South Asia face delay in delivering the results as well as failing to mobilise a partnership in cities. The following actions are suggested to help in building such partnerships.

First, it is important – to start with – to have at least one well planned and well articulated project to be successful in delivering the results as well as in its partnerships. Such a project changes lives of many urban projects. There is no South Asia wide review of key urban resilience projects to see what successes partnerships and results look like.

Second, community participation is important in delivering results and making partnerships work around DRR. Well planned and well resourced community participation is important to deliver results. Role of children in such participation is a key in South Asia. More work is needed to find ways to get better and sustained results of community participation.

Third, women and children must have more say in shaping the results of urban resilience and making partnerships work at the local level

South Asia has so much to offer to ARP in terms of reducing risks and building resilience. As we celebrate International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) 2017, urgent ways must be found to leverage this advantage.

- Mihir R. Bhatt

in cities. Direct focus on poor women and vulnerable children is essential while results are achieved and partnerships are made in a cities.

Fourth, connectivity is spreading in South Asian cities and ARP must build on this rapid spread of connectivity in cities to understand and act on resilience. Though several initiatives are taken to find ways to use connectivity to reduce risk; pathways for cities to follow are yet to be traced and strengthened in South Asia.

Fifth, water is a key to air and land related urban work and in South Asia water is often a starting point for urban resilience building. It may be too much of water which results in floods – or the lack of water. The interplay of water, cities, and resilience in South Asia needs more attention in project planning and ideation by national authorities.

Sixth, being resilient can be faster and sustainable if cities learn from own work and the work of others. Often each city invents its own solution which takes time and resources but in many cases (not all) another city in South Asia has already invented a solution that can be widely used. Heatwave Action Plan by Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) in Ahmedabad is an example of city-to-city learning takes place.

Delivering results and working in partnership is important to implement ARP. SADR 2016 is about to be launched in South Asia in November 2017 and will help towards the implementation of the ARP. ■

- AIDMI Team