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DRR Workshop in Coimbatore:

Ebba Brink

Ebba's trip to Coimbatore & student-led case study on cyclone-affected village Esanur

In early December 2018, Dr. Ebba Brink travelled to visit project partners in Karpagam University, Coimbatore, India. The purpose of the trip was to conduct site visits in the context of the recent cyclone Gaja, provide training to KAHE staff and students on how to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the curriculum and ongoing coursework, as well as to provide input on BINUCOM case studies.

On the first day, Ebba travelled together with Professor Kathiravan Pandiyan and Assistant Professor Hiranmayi Shankavaram to the village Esanur, near the coast in the area most affected by the cyclone Gaja at a 7 hour drive from Coimbatore. The Bachelor's students had participated in volunteer recovery work (e.g., handing

out tarps which villagers could use to mend the storm-damaged roofs to protect against rain) and the Master's students had been conducting interviews with households about the impact of the cyclone. The delegation of teachers observed the students' work and the conditions of the site after the cyclone, and interviewed a village leader about the event. On the second day, Ebba, Kathiravan Pandiyan and Hiranmayi Shankavaram visited local Chettinad houses, UNESCO-nominated architecture contributed in Tamil Nadu by immigrants from Burma, before beginning the drive back to Coimbatore.

On the third day, back at the campus, Ebba, aided by Ms Hiranmayi Shankavaram, held a workshop for KAHE staff and students. Ebba presented a framework for

holistic disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, showing how one could go from a

theoretical understanding of disaster risk to an analytical framework for related research and practice.

Later, the students who had been active in the case area presented their preliminary findings, and together with Ebba, applied the analytical categories to the case of the cyclone-affected village Esanur.

The exercise revealed that most of the risk reduction actions that had been taken in the village were related to (preparedness for) response and recovery, while there were fewer efforts for vulnerability reduction and hazard avoidance.

Among the risks, students had identified the following factors: there were not enough shelters where people could go after the cyclone warning, and some people did not believe the warning since there cyclones had not happened in a long time. Many kachcha (thatched-roof) houses were damaged during the cyclone. Many people rely on farming for their livelihoods, and they further lack of roads and transportation as a hinder to pursue other livelihoods.

Among the capacities in the village, students had identified: high levels of literacy, little evidence of discrimination based on cast (the villagers seemed to have come together at the time of distress), and access to jobs in agriculture.

As a result of previous awareness improving for response preparedness, people were reached by the cyclone warning upon which many tried to go to available shelters (although shelters were too few). After the cyclone impact on farm livelihoods (especially coconut plantations), there was interest in livelihood diversification. Villagers took advantage of the rubble from felled coconut trees to collect material for new roofs for kachcha houses. Of the pucca (tiled-roof) houses, one (?) household had used a roofing technique with interlocked tiles, which had been less affected by the cyclone; there may be potential for scaling up.

Ebba extends her thanks to the KAHE team for an interesting visit and she was impressed by the students' work in the village and their ability to fruitfully apply the framework and concepts introduced to the case.

Workshop on Disaster Management conducted by Dr Ebba Brink

Hiranmayi Shankavaram



The disaster management principles that were addressed are as follows:

- Risk statements
- Disaster management organization
- Response function
- Trigger mechanism
- Hazard and vulnerability analysis
- Mitigation measures

After the initial phase of data gathering in terms of demographics, road network mapping, infrastructure mapping, mapping of the existing housing typologies and the study of spatial extent of the impact, an analysis was carried out. The socio-economic characteristics and community based issues were studied. Alternate technology in terms of alternate construction methods and materials were elaborated on. Quality control of construction materials and the incorporation of disaster resistant technologies were discussed and the workshop concluded with extensive recommendations of pre-disaster, disaster and post disaster mitigation measures.

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