

ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE ROADSHOW: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DISASTER COMMUNICATION FOR REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE MECHANISM IN THE PHILIPPINES AND MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) is a multilateral, regional, and multistakeholder, multilateral organization with a focus on regional disaster preparedness and response coordination. This study aims to explore whether the AHA Centre successfully disseminated information about the ASEAN disaster management mechanism through the One ASEAN One Response Roadshow in the Philippines and Malaysia, while examining how intercultural communication differences in these two countries influenced the success of the information dissemination process. A case study approach will be utilized to provide a detailed examination of the phenomenon within real-life contexts, considering multiple perspectives and collecting abundant qualitative data. The findings from group discussions and observations indicate that participation of each representatives from government and UN agencies, international and intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisation, private sectors and media fulfilling the disaster communication foundation as an effective process of dissemination and information exchange. The results from this study reinforce the significance of a well-structured communication framework in enhancing disaster preparation and response, providing valuable insights for future disaster management initiatives within ASEAN region and beyond. Lastly, after understanding roles and responsibility of each organisation, the FGD was conducted to test appropriateness of employing information exchange from different cultures, contextualise key common understanding for an effective sharing experience, and expedite the inward and outward looking for each organisation to adjust and implement better approach for adaptability purpose.

INTRODUCTION

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provides a global strategy to significantly reduce disaster risks and losses across social, economic, and environmental sectors (Asian Disaster Reduction Center, 2015). As the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action, it emphasizes a people-centered approach, recognizing that disaster risk is multi-dimensional, involving people's vulnerability, exposure, and the characteristics of hazards and environments. The framework aims to enhance community resilience by reducing disaster-related mortality, economic losses, and damage to infrastructure. ASEAN, a region highly vulnerable to natural hazards, has embraced the Sendai Framework principles, aligning them with the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) to enhance regional coordination and resilience.

Despite these efforts, the ASEAN region has experienced a significant rise in disaster occurrences in recent years. From 2021 to 2022, the number of natural hazards nearly tripled, with floods being the most common, followed by landslides, wind, and storms. Other hazards such as earthquakes, droughts, volcanoes, and tsunamis occurred less frequently but still contributed to the region's vulnerability. Hydrometeorological hazards are particularly prevalent in ASEAN due to its tropical climate, and the increasing frequency of disasters highlights the importance of continued regional collaboration and the implementation of effective disaster risk reduction strategies under the Sendai Framework.

According to the AHA Centre (2023), from January 2022 to January 2023, the ASEAN region experienced an average of five disasters daily, impacting 59,800 people and displacing 4,300. On average, four people died, one went missing, and 32 were injured daily, with a daily financial loss of USD 1.08 million, totaling USD 392 million in damages. The increasing complexity of disasters in ASEAN is exemplified by past catastrophes like the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, which spurred ASEAN member states to enhance their collaborative disaster response (Lachica, 2021; Velasco, 2023). The One ASEAN One Response Declaration was introduced to promote swift, coordinated action in response to disasters, pooling resources and capacities from all ASEAN members.

The AHA Centre, established in 2011, plays a central role in coordinating disaster management in the region. Its four core functions include coordination, resource management, disaster information management, and knowledge dissemination. The Centre facilitated the response to Typhoon Noru (Karding), which hit the Philippines in September 2022 and affected Viet Nam, Thailand, and Lao PDR. The typhoon impacted over 1 million people, with vulnerable groups suffering from food, water, and shelter shortages. The disaster also disrupted essential services, including schools and hospitals, and endangered infrastructure valued at USD 39.6 billion. The extensive damage highlighted the critical need for regional cooperation in mitigating the devastating effects of such disasters.

Learning from recent disasters affecting multiple countries, the AHA Centre has made an effort to enhance disaster preparedness and mitigation, the AHA Centre works collaboratively with ASEAN Member States (AMS) and their national disaster management organisations to provide comprehensive information on multi-layer, multi-hazard, and multi-boundary disasters. By following regional disaster management mechanisms, AMS aim to reduce losses and casualties through consultative and coordinated efforts. To support this, the AHA Centre developed the One ASEAN One Response (OAOR) Roadshow to disseminate key information about disaster response mechanisms, clarify coordination roles, and establish interoperability with United Nations (UN) agencies. The OAOR aims to involve multiple sectors, including national disaster organisations, NGOs, the private sector, and media, to foster collaboration and increase awareness of ASEAN's disaster management mechanisms.

The OAOR Roadshow is set to take place in 10 ASEAN countries, with each nation's National Disaster Management Organisation engaging relevant humanitarian actors before, during, and after disasters. In 2023, the AHA Centre successfully conducted OAOR Roadshows in Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Effective communication and meaningful interaction between stakeholders and the AHA Centre are crucial for the success of these events. Each ASEAN country's unique cultural and national disaster management mechanisms require coordination with UN agencies, international humanitarian organisations, and the private sector to align with ASEAN's regional disaster management mechanisms and ensure interoperability in disaster response.

The OAOR Roadshow emphasizes the importance of effective communication in disaster management by enhancing the understanding of national disaster management organisations, humanitarian actors, and key sectors. It aims to promote collaboration among these stakeholders during the preparedness, response, and recovery stages of disaster management. The roadshow seeks to implement targeted communication strategies tailored to each ASEAN country to ensure a comprehensive understanding of regional disaster management mechanisms. This approach is essential for fostering active participation and strengthening coordination among stakeholders across the region.

Haddow & Haddow (2013) highlight that disaster communication management blends communication and management perspectives to promote mutual understanding between relevant stakeholders. This underscores the importance of communication between the AHA Centre and National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) for identifying needs and coordinating disaster preparedness and response efforts. The researcher aims to explore whether the AHA Centre effectively disseminated information on disaster management mechanisms through the OAOR Roadshow in the Philippines and Malaysia, while examining how intercultural communication differences in these two countries influenced the success of the socialisation process carried out by the AHA Centre.

Some previous studies tried to discover how each country in ASEAN, through their NDMOs, designed communication strategies to disseminate disaster management mechanisms to their national and local government officials (Barber, 2015; Fakhrudin & Chivakidakarn, 2014; Rahmadewi & Sudirman, 2021; Rum, 2016; Simm, 2018). It means those studies only focused on country-level perspectives and how they trickled down to national, provincial, and local levels. This research brings a collective perspective on how the inter-governmental organisation like AHA Centre successfully socialises and disseminates disaster management information to NDMOs in 10 ASEAN member states. This research focuses on the regional level while involving many stakeholders in relevant countries to collectively acknowledge the importance of ASEAN disaster management mechanisms for its all-member states so that we will have basis to further develop communication strategy on disaster management for ASEAN countries in the future.

The research contributes by offering a regional-level perspective on how the AHA Centre, as an intergovernmental organization, successfully disseminates disaster management information to National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) across 10 ASEAN member states. Unlike previous studies, which focused on individual country-level communication strategies, this research emphasizes the collective efforts and multi-stakeholder collaboration in promoting ASEAN disaster management mechanisms. The findings provide a foundation for developing future communication strategies for disaster management in ASEAN, advancing regional disaster preparedness and response coordination.

METHODS

The researcher employed a qualitative methodology to gain an in-depth understanding of the disaster communication process, with the goal of generating insights into regional disaster management and response processes. This approach includes conducting comprehensive interviews, active participation in observations, detailed case analysis, and a thorough review of relevant documents. The primary aim is to understand the experiences, motivations, and behaviors of the subjects from their own perspectives.

This study analyzed the effectiveness of the disaster communication process carried out through the One ASEAN One Response Roadshow, specifically focusing on how intercultural communication in the Philippines and Malaysia influenced the success of the information dissemination process. A case study approach will be utilized to provide a detailed examination of the phenomenon within real-life contexts, considering multiple perspectives and collecting abundant qualitative data. The data collection process will involve interviews with individuals involved in the case, observations of the roadshow in its natural setting, and an analysis of related documents and publications.

RESULTS

Dimension 1: Disaster Communication Strategy Foundation

The OAOR Roadshows in the Philippines and Malaysia targeted different audiences. In the Philippines, the focus was on the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) members, including the Office of Civil Defence, Armed Forces, UN agencies, private sectors, NGOs, and media. In Malaysia, the target audience included Federal Ministries, the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), High Commissions of Embassies, International Organisations, and State Ministries.

Table 1. Target Audience

Country	Target Audiences
Philippines	NDRRMC Members
	UN Agencies
	Private Sectors
	Non-government organisations
	Media
Malaysia	Federal Ministries and relevant agencies
	High commissions of embassies
	International organisations
	State Ministries

The second foundation is the Commitment from Leaders. The OAOR Roadshow arranges a sequence of agendas designed to the specific needs of each country. When it comes to disasters, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of how a country's disaster mechanisms are established. This includes knowing the specific roles and responsibilities of each institution involved, as well as how communication channels are organised to ensure that needs and responses are coordinated effectively during emergency situations.

It is particularly important to understand the disaster mechanisms at a regional and ASEAN level when affected country is requiring greater assistance. Therefore, we can understand the scope of the roles and responsibilities of institutions in the affected country and the coordinating function of the AHA Centre as regional entity.

In the Philippines, it is clear that they have structure organisation within National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) comprising its members to play relevant role for disaster management. During the Roadshow, the Chairperson clearly stated that collective resources, understanding, and robust for disaster preparedness and response is important so that NDRRMC is playing a vital role in many aspects to best assist people between and during emergency.

The Chairperson, a Secretary of National Defence is responsible for the oversight function during disaster preparedness and emergency response operations. The Philippines has a well-defined structure for the active involvement and collective management of catastrophes by stakeholders. The Chairperson's involvement in determining the request for further humanitarian assistance is very significant.

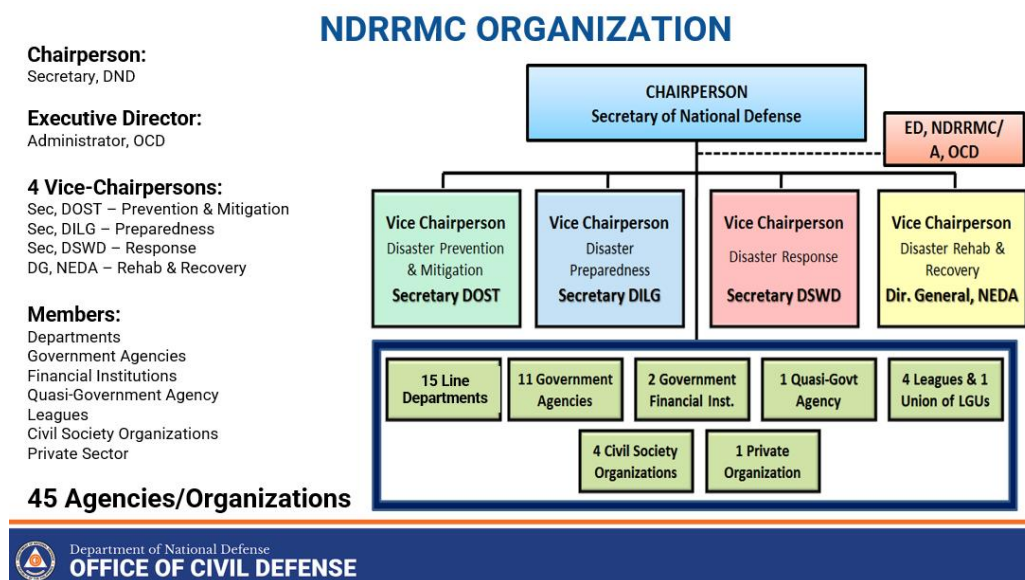


Figure 1. Structure Organisation of NRRMC Philippines

In Malaysia, National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) plays crucial roles as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief coordinator in country. As they are a Prime Minister's Department, their roles are important within and beyond country.

During the Roadshow, Federal Minister in the Prime Minister's Department highlighted that the role of National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) is critical to collectively work with relevant government institutions and other organisations within and beyond country. Federal Minister plays a key role in ensuring all mechanisms in in line with national and ASEAN frameworks.

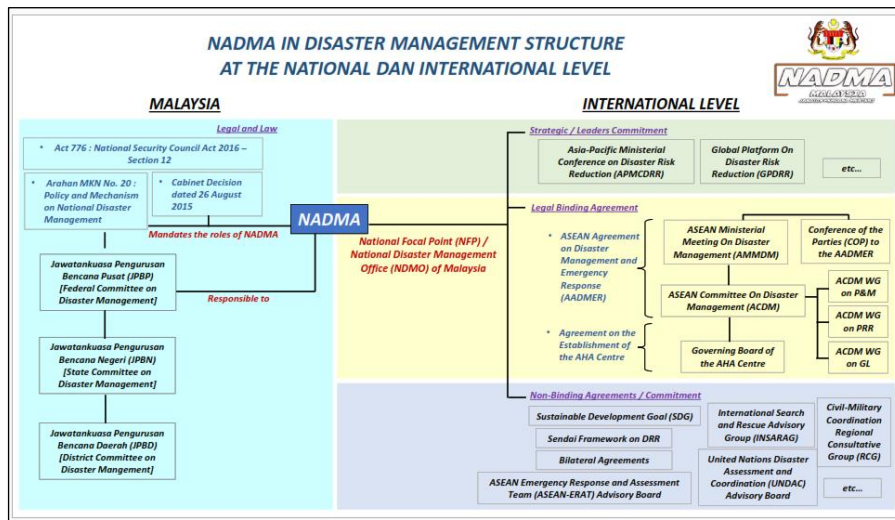


Figure 2. Structure Organisation of NADMA Malaysia

The third foundation is the Inclusion of Communication in Planning and Operations. During OAOR Roadshow, there are four sessions of presentation from NDMO, ASEAN Secretariat, AHA Centre, and UN OCHA.

The objective of this session is to share information with stakeholders, private sectors, inter-governmental and international organisations, and other humanitarian actors about the importance of actively and proactively participating in every stage of a disaster particularly during the preparedness and response phases. Furthermore, throughout these sessions, all participants engaged in discussions with other groups to action based on decision from leaders or responsible entity, what actions to be done, responsibilities, and coordination process for the whole cycle of disaster management.

In the Philippines, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) established response clusters to facilitate effective coordination and communication in disaster response efforts. These clusters assign specific responsibilities to different agencies and organisations, ensuring clear lines of authority and enabling collaboration between clusters. Therefore, by implementing coordination, the anticipated roles and duties of other humanitarian actors can be more concentrated, resulting in their meaningful participation throughout the entire process.

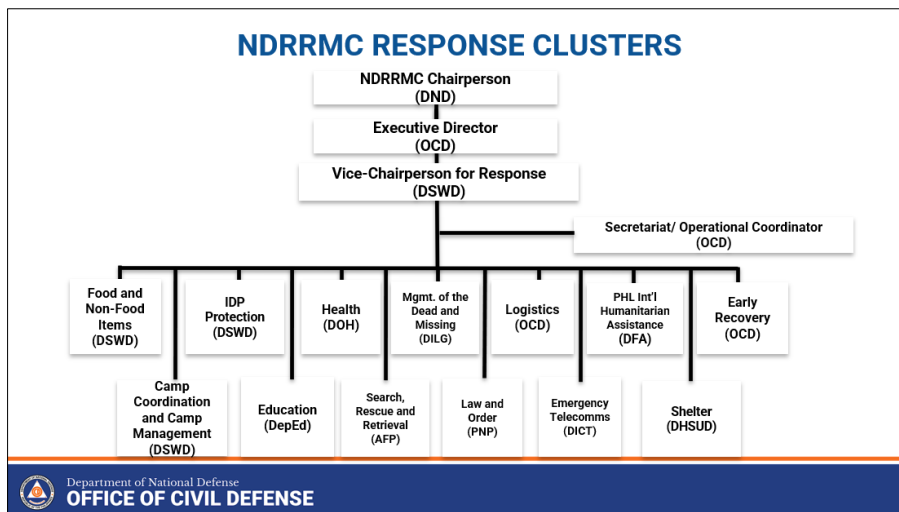


Figure 3. Response Cluster Structure for Coordinated Information Process of NDRRMC Philippines

In Malaysia, the establishment of information coordination among agencies and other humanitarian actors is based on the assessment of needs. When the Prime Minister makes certain decisions, a set of communication and coordination structures and patterns are implemented. This allows agencies, organisations, and all humanitarian players to actively participate in several important aspects and stages.

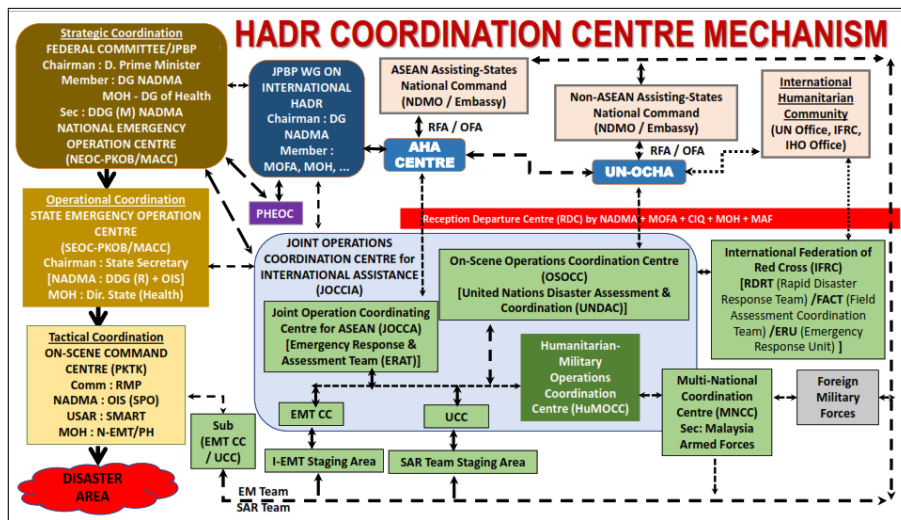


Figure 4. Response Cluster Structure for Coordinated Information Process of NADMA Malaysia

The fourth foundation is the Situational Awareness. In the context of disaster management, both Philippines and Malaysia use the Cluster Approach by the United Nations to work together towards common objectives within particular sectors of emergency response. With that, both Philippines and Malaysia are aware that involvement of relevant sectors and other humanitarian actors need to be upheld to achieve common goals for emergency response. Therefore, the Roadshow involved government agencies, inter-governmental and international organizations, UN agencies, private sectors, non-governmental organizations and media to promote collective disaster mechanisms in a way that they could disseminate it to a wider network. Finally, clear mechanisms will allow every organization to play roles at their best for effective and efficient disaster response operations.

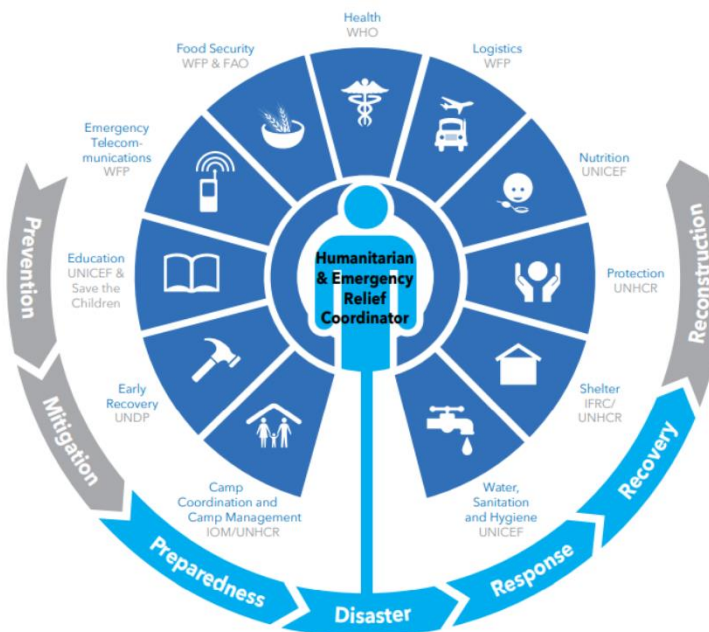


Figure 5. United Nations Cluster System

The last foundation is the Collaboration with Media. The participation of the media in the OAOR Roadshow is crucial. The Philippines and Malaysia sent invitations to local media representatives to participate in the event. The objective was to provide them with knowledge and understanding of the disaster mechanism at a regional level, enabling media crews to disseminate precise information to the broader community concerning the coordination, collaboration, and efforts undertaken by the government and humanitarian organizations in both the affected country and wider regional communities.

During the Roadshow, they actively and enthusiastically engaged in group discussions. In a more strategic context, media will play a specific role to educate publics about disaster management within and outside the country. This serves reputable information to reduce misunderstanding and inappropriate information within communities.

Dimension 2: Intercultural Process and Strategy

The OAOR Roadshow conducted in the Philippines and Malaysia aims to foster a common understanding of disaster management by facilitating active engagement among government agencies, inter-governmental organisations, international organisations, private sectors, non-governmental organisations, and the media. The communication interaction between these institutions and humanitarian organisations entails a process of mutual understanding and arrangement regarding the disaster context, the stakeholders involved, the scope of each institution's role and responsibility, and the level of coordination required to achieve disaster management objectives aligned with the national and regional framework in the ASEAN region.

The attendees of the Roadshow in the Philippines included representatives from government agencies, UN agency, intergovernmental organisations, international organisations, the private sectors, non-governmental organisations, and the media. Most Filipinos are Christians and have robust familial bonds. Their national language is Tagalog, but there are many dialects and languages spoken in this country. They have a strong inclination towards promoting and upholding social peace in the framework of coordination and collaboration, which greatly facilitates the acquisition of understandings of regional disaster management mechanism. The Filipino society encompasses three fundamental ideals, namely "*hiya*", "*pakikisama*", and "*utang na loob*".

In the context of collaboration, the concept of "*hiya*" is observed through the contacts that take place during the Roadshow. During the Roadshow, *hiya* manifests as a sense of shame when one makes a mistake or engages in inappropriate behaviour.

Pakikisama, which refers to the ability to easily socialise with others around them, is a crucial element in this Roadshow. Their profound enthusiasm at this Roadshow becomes evident by their active engagement in interactions and discussions, as they derive great pleasure from socialising with others.

Lastly, "*utang na loob*" refers to the state of always being thankful of everything whether it is a help, understanding, collaboration and many things that support each other. As a result, each institution or organisation expresses gratitude towards one another during the process.

The conduct of OAOR Roadshow in Malaysia is similar to the Philippines in term of audiences and stakeholders which are consist of government agencies, UN agencies, intergovernmental organisations, international organisations, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, and the media. Malaysia is a nation with a predominantly Muslim populace. It consists of three predominant ethnic groups which are Malay, Chinese, and Indian. They preserve using their own ethnics language while abresting respectful attitude when having social interaction. In principle, when different ethnics meet and interact in day-to-day interaction, people will sense mutual respect and cohabitation of different cultural identity. This principle is what they acknowledge as pluralism in a mutual and respectful way.

Individuals that are familiar with diverse ethnic and cultural origins see no difficulties when it comes to communication and discussion. Similar to Philippines, and based on the observations conducted, three communication phenomena were identified. Government institutions have a hierarchical structure that dominates communication, requiring a specific method to be followed. This phenomenon also occurs in the communication that takes place among UN agencies, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the AHA Centre. These interactions are characterised by a consistent adherence to consensus and the procedures that are specific to each country. International and non-governmental organisations share commonalities in terms of their engagement solidarity and transparency in many areas. The private sector exhibits a higher level of proactivity in actively seeking chances for comprehensive integration. The media acts within a more impartial setting and generally serves as an agent that promotes and upholds society fairness.

Based on this phenomenon, the interaction process between different stakeholders and their cultures has the same goal, which is to understand the concept of disaster management in the affected country and its escalation to the regional level. Due to their common goals, the relevant parties are consciously and openly willing to understand the regional disaster management mechanism as part of demands for a more resilient community.

Dimension 3: Communication Practicality and Flexibility

The Roadshow in the Philippines and Malaysia serve as a platform for different stakeholders to engage in discussions using a common agreed concept and framework on disaster management. The effective implementation of disaster management in those countries necessitate several cooperation and coordination to maximise its preparedness in vitative programmes and provides assistances. The findings from group discussions and observations indicate that it is crucial to integrate national and regional procedures in order to ensure that both countries are adequately prepared for the upcoming event of a severe disaster. Therefore, all stakeholders would optimise their available resources and fully support the cooperation, coordination and synchronisation in order to minimise the disaster consequences.

Dimension 4: Content Components and Three Criteria

There are four (4) organisations provided information and knowledge about the context of disaster management.

The first is NDRRMC through OCD of Philippines and NADMA Malaysia. They conducted brief presentation about Philippines Disaster Risk Profile and Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) system. During observations, the information was aimed to reveal the disaster profile and situation of Philippines and Malaysia. Stakeholders were expected to understand the overall picture of country risk and profile for the context of disasters. In case of disasters, NDRRMC and NADMA plays important as agency that is responsible to manage disaster preparedness and response. They provided clear information about Philippines disaster mechanisms and extended further to collaborate with intergovernment organisation in case of larger disasters. They were identified as organisations that had capability and knowledge to disseminate relevant information to wider audiences in those countries.

The second is ASEAN Secretariat. They were also identified as organisation that had capacity and authority to disseminate information about regional disaster management. For example, when Philippines and Malaysia hit by a large scale of disaster and those countries need greater support from ASEAN, then the regional disaster management mechanism should be followed for effective and well-coordinated collaboration for robust assistance. The regional framework on disaster management were introduced, and key components and agencies were identified during the Roadshow including roles and responsibilities within ASEAN.

The third is AHA Centre. They were also identified as organisation that had mandate as regional disaster management coordinator when a large scale disaster happened in the region. They had capacity and authority to disseminate information to stakeholder related to coordinating process, providing tools and resources, also designing mechanism for wider collaborations.

The fourth is UN OCHA. They were identified as key organisation that worked together with AHA Centre and NDMOs in affected country to disseminate key similarities between ASEAN and UN mechanisms acknowledging that those are interoperable one another. Thus, there should not be any duplication in terms of coordination, activities and initiatives, methodology of interventions, and reports.

Intergovernmental organisations, private sectors, and media were observed to be complementary agents within disaster management mechanism in-country and beyond context. Their participations was also expected to gather their perspective and expectation from the existing mechanism so that it is clear to everyone who is responsible for which and at what level.

In addition to that, they explored and queries whether any possible opportunity or space for them to expand more of their expertise and resources within existing disaster management mechanism for better disaster preparedness and response operations. Those attitude indicated their willingness to support and be part of the process while putting individual and organisational empathy to leverage their existence during disaster preparedness and response operations.

Roundtables form of seating consisting of four different organisations triggered complex information exchange. In order to ignite more context on disaster management, each table was asked to reflect on the overall information flow, roles and responsibilities, and what to do next. During the observations, it was found that:

- 1) One table consisting of government officials, international organisation, UN agency, private sector and media reached common understanding about disaster management context, opportunity to work together, and collaborations points that could contribute to better

mechanism in the future. The interaction, discussion and information exchange were naturally occurred because they have common goals—better disaster management to minimise risk damage and losses.

- 2) With their respective expertise and resources, roundtable discussion allowed them to be aware of situation, acknowledge their ability and limits and potential ways forward to improve current practice for more effective and efficient regional mechanism.
- 3) Acknowledging all points above, they were triggered to explore alternative initiatives and efforts to adjust their approach to work with government and UN agencies, regional organisations, private sectors and media on disaster management mechanisms within ASEAN context.

Dimension 5: Intercultural Communication Competence Stairs

During the Roadshows, it was identified that regional disaster management mechanism require multiple stakeholders to have common understanding about the framework and certain roles in respective stages. Therefore, the observations on series of agenda during Roadshows provided comprehensive information exchange with cultures as meaningful factor that contribute to the success of the programme.

The level of participants are in the same position, with VIP and key representatives from governments, ASEAN Secretariat, AHA Centre, and UN Agency. Roadshows revealed that dissemination of information and knowledge exchange attributed intercultural communication which mark as important factor in the approach. Therefore, this programme reached four stages of intercultural communication stairs in the following ways:

- 1) At this level, each representative from all organisations lacked of cultural awareness and in principle were self-centric with their own communication setting. Government and UN agencies, international and intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisation, private sectors and media were not at this stage. They were fully aware of cultural differences.
- 2) At this level, each representatives from all organisations shown understanding about cultural awareness but they did not have limited knowledge and skill to effectively negotiate the unfamiliar cultural environment. Government and UN agencies, international and intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisation, private sectors and media were not at this stage. They were nominated based on their level or position within their organisation to attend Roadshows, and most of them were officer and senior officer level or above.
- 3) At this level, each representatives from all organisations were proactively work towards enhancing their communication skills by acquiring more multicultural knowledge. Some individuals were at this stage especially those who were from international and non governmental organisations, private sectors and media. During FGD roundtable sessions, those individuals strived to fully aware of cultural differences. At this level, individual were not instantly becoming culturally aware, but individuals made an effort to be aware and completely attentive to the communication process, as well as focus on achieving the desired objective.
- 4) During this stage, each representatives from all organisations effortlessly and naturally engage in effective conversation with members of the new culture. They possess the ability to seamlessly alternate between the two distinct multicultural communication systems. During the Roadshow, most individuals were at this stage. For example, the discussion in most roundtables further discussed about ways forward to improve current mechanisms and explore each organisations' strength to contribute more to efficient disaster preparedness and response.

Discussion

This research revealed that OAOR Roadshows conducted in the Philippines and Malaysia possessed five (5) foundations as suggested by Haddow & Haddow (2013). The result indicate that participation of each representatives from government and UN agencies, international and intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisation, private sectors and media fulfilling the disaster communication foundation as an effective process of disseminating information and information exchange.

There are similarities and differences between Roadshows conducted in Philippines and Malaysia. The differences are national structures as responsible agency for disaster preparedness and response, cultural differences. While the similarities are common goals to minimise risks, damage and loss during disaster events.

Dissemination of information about regional disaster management requires robust communication strategy which employs intercultural as critical factor to elevate the process into meaningful familiarisation and knowledge sharing session with proactive participations from all individuals (Baraldo & Di Franco, 2024; Fathi et al., 2020; Šakić Trogrlić et al., 2022; Sharma & Tham, 2021; Tang et al., 2024). In addition to that, interview enriches the comprehension of the conduct of OAOR, personal view on the process and participations during FGD also question and answer sessions.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed to assess the success of the AHA Centre in disseminating information about the ASEAN disaster management mechanism to the National Disaster Management Organisation. It also examined the intercultural communication elements that contributed differently in the Philippines and Malaysia during the OAOR Roadshow programme. The findings revealed that the Roadshows fulfilled five foundations for effective disaster communication, demonstrating a robust and efficient exchange process. These elements included active interactions among participants, an inclusive approach, and comprehensive media engagement. The study also highlighted the importance of strategic and inclusive communication in disaster management, underlining the significance of a well-structured communication framework for disaster preparedness and response. Key principles of intercultural communication were employed during the Roadshows, including knowledge from respective organizations, attitude, and cultural contexts. The study concluded that effective information exchange from different cultures and organizations is crucial for effective sharing experiences and adaptability.

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