INFOCUS
Enabling Policy Environment: Contingency Plan Development

SUBJECT

Cities in Ghana, like anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa, have grown substantially over the past decades. Rapid urbanization has outpaced the capacity of the authorities to plan and sustainably manage cities. Consequently, urban planning lags urban growth. Overall, the sprawling of towns has increased poverty and income inequality and has resulted in the growth of informal settlements and increased disasters.

In Accra, flooding, fires, diarrheal disease have become perennial events. In recent years, there has been a high incidence of disasters occurring every year, leaving negative impacts on both lives and livelihoods. Strengthening preparedness for and response to emergency situations at national and district levels are critical to saving lives, protecting livelihoods, and enhancing the recovery process from disasters, to successfully avert and mitigate the negative impacts that affect resources, assets, and the society. Contingency planning is a key preparedness and response tool, a mandatory part of an Integrated Disaster Risk Management Approach (IDRM). The contingency plan ensures that cities know what to do when a disaster strikes and have the systems and tools to respond fast.

It identifies stakeholders, institutional arrangements, and responsibilities that are to be taken to prevent the escalation of the crisis and to stabilize the situation. It also indicates additional opportunities for prevention and defines the demand for (financial) resources in the direct aftermaths of the event, and therefore **is critical when developing a Disaster Risk Finance Strategy**. Moreover, it is essential that contingency plans at the city level are standardized, updated and coherent with national contingency plans. Within the project "Developing Risk Management Approaches for Climate Risks" the partnership between GIZ and Allianz Reinsurance provided guidance to three Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), Ghana, to develop and test contingency plans.

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On behalf of
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

CHALLENGES

Limited knowledge on developing contingency plans.

MMDAs often have limited knowledge on how to develop a forward-looking and effective contingency plan, who to involve, and how to monitor and update the same.

Insufficient data on disaster prone areas and clear overview of available resources.

These data would help MMDAs prepare and respond accordingly when disasters occur. Thus, if the data is missing, it complicates the development of contingency plans as it is unclear which disasters occur where, which areas and assets are under high risk as well as which financial resources are available for contingency planning.

MMDAs develop mitigation plans as contingency plans.

Most MMDAs are unable to distinguish between mitigation plans and contingency plans which affects their way of responding to the situation. It is important that MMDAs have both mitigation and contingency plans in place.

SOLUTIONS

1. **Contingency plan guideline development.**

   A contingency plan guideline has been developed for MMDAs to enable them to prepare a good contingency plan. The contingency plan lays out a clear process or step-by-step instruction that allows for proactive preparation and management of emergencies rather than a reactive one, which would result in inefficiencies and failure to save lives and limit loss and damage to infrastructure and economic activity.

   The guideline equally gives a clear distinction between a mitigation plan and contingency plan. This is crucial since in some cases MMDAs might have to prepare mitigation response to lower the probability of the actualization of an identified risk as well as a contingency plan to take care of whatever risks that would remain.

2. **MMDAs develop own contingency plans.**

   Capacities of MMDAs were built to help them draft contingency plans on their own. Based on the contingency plan guideline MMDAs developed plans for flood and fire for specific locations in their area.

   In most cases, MMDAs were supported by external institutions in drafting contingency plans for these specific hazards. The following stakeholders have been included in the process to assess their individual risk profile, needs and capacities: Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ga East Municipality and Ga West Municipality.

3. **Simulation exercises for flood and fire.**

   A simulation exercise concept for flood and fire has been developed to support MMDAs with conducting simulation exercises for testing and further developing contingency plans in the GAMA. It is aimed at developing practitioners' competency to plan, implement and evaluate different types of exercises.

   Moreover, a practical simulation exercise for fire and flood has been run for some MMDAs in GAMA to evaluate if the contingency plans developed could be operational in case of a real disaster.

4. **Development of a monitoring tool.**

   A monitoring tool has been developed for MMDAs to enable them to keep track of relevant measures and resources during contingency planning and to ensure that the right things are done.

BEST PRACTICES

While contingency planning is and should be adjusted according to locality (each case is exposed to differing configurations of disaster threats), there is a distinct set of aspects that prove to be important in any best practice case. The Contingency Planning Guideline highlights that the planning process should be a collaborative process in order to remain relevant to all stakeholders in the public apparatus. In addition, it provides the following key principles that shape each stage of the Contingency Plan Cycle:

1. **Practicality.**

   A contingency plan should have solutions that can be immediately implemented in any disaster event. Therefore, it should contain precisely formulated steps to increase the success of mitigating negative impacts.

2. **Simplicity.**

   In line with the practicality principle, a contingency plan is to be easily implemented and thereby user-friendly. This ensures an easy integration into (existing) disaster risk management schemes and swift decision-making during a disaster event.

3. **Realistic.**

   Given the varying capacities of city authorities, a degree of feasibility is to be considered when defining a contingency plan.

4. **Efficiency.**

   Equally important is the consideration of resource-availability. As MMDAs budgets are often stretched and subject to prioritization, an appropriate and efficient use of resources is to be ensured.

5. **Effectiveness.**

   The operationalization of the plan should be targeted at acquiring the desired results.

6. **Imitable.**

   To keep a contingency plan relevant to current and future disaster risks, it should be regularly tested through exercises. Therefore, a section should be dedicated toward facilitating simulations.

7. **Long-term Planning.**

   An adequate monitoring and evaluation scheme should be included in a contingency plan to guide periodic updates.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the project it was found that in order to improve the development of a contingency plan, it is recommended that:

1. **MMDAs have high interest in learning how to draft a contingency plan.**

   The training conducted by the project revealed how city authorities, especially the national disaster management organization (NADMO) unit and planning department within the MMDAs, are interested in learning the procedures or steps to develop contingency plans.

   There was high interest among representatives from the authorities since the knowledge gained could be utilize in other disaster management aspects as well. This interest is key to succeed in developing practical, realistic and effective contingency plans.

2. **Data on disaster prone areas and available resources should be known by city officials.**

   Data is an important aspect in contingency planning. It enables city authorities to identify risk areas and plan to reduce the impact on properties and livelihoods. Through the project, city authorities gained better access to data on disaster prone areas and were more aware of available resources which facilitated the drafting of the contingency plans.

3. **Local NGOs should be integrated as they are critical for the response phase.**

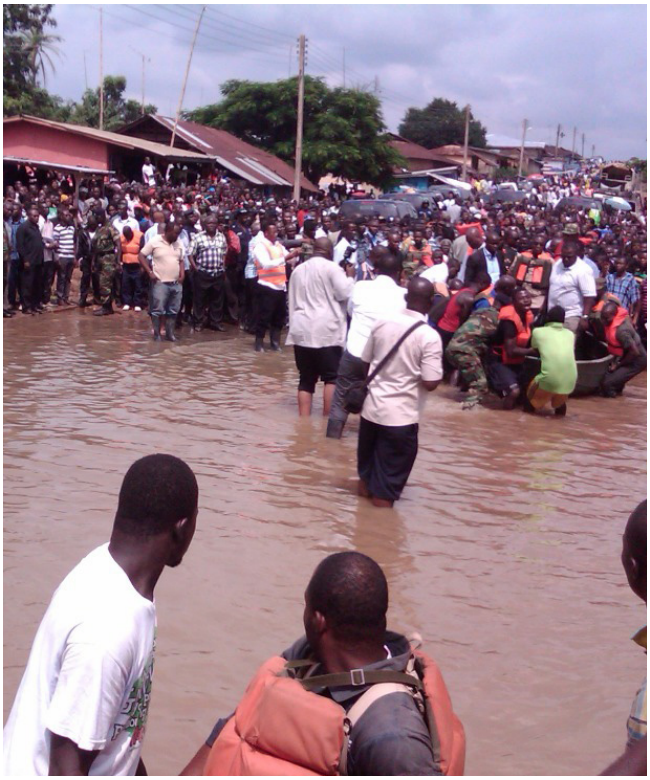
   Even though they have not been involved in the contingency plan development of this project it was found that their involvement is essential to improve the coordination between official authorities and the first response phase. Further, it would help to include micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and neighborhood associations.

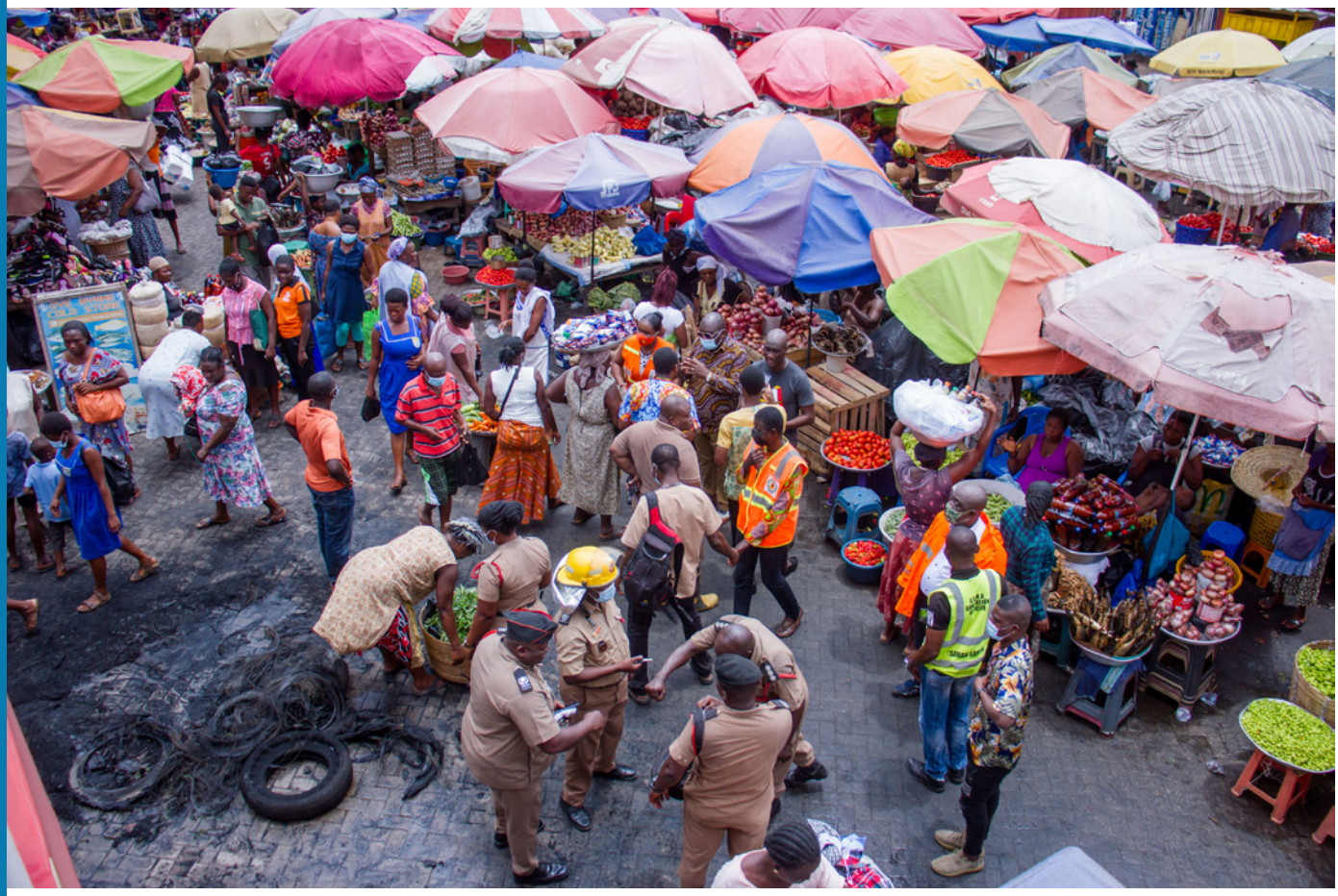
4. **MMDAs assess the possibility to connect pay-outs of pre-arranged funds with the contingency plans to divert them straight to the stakeholders in need, speeding up and improving their own planning.**

   Further, **Early Warning Systems can be connected with the contingency plans** to trigger early actions (e.g., cleaning critical culverts just before the rain comes).

5. **The local contingency plan should be connected to any sovereign contingency plan.**

   By reviewing the plans, the project enabled such an alignment.





Activity name
Enabling Policy Environment: Contingency Plan Development

Focus area
Ghana – Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)

Local partners
GA East, GA West, AMA, GMet, NADMO

Target group
Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

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Developing risk management approaches for climate and health risks

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For more information please refer to the factsheet "Developing Risk Management Approaches for Climate Risks in Ghana."

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