

Chapter 10

The Empowerment of Local Community Groups as a New Innovation in Cross-Border Disaster Governance Frameworks

Yenny Rahmayati

10.1 Introduction: The 2004 Aceh Tsunami and Earthquake

Natural disasters will be the major form of transboundary disaster over the next few decades. Asia in particular remains a place prone to different sized natural disasters ranging from tsunamis to earthquakes, floods and forest fires, all of which have cross border impacts. Although there have been numerous studies about disaster governance, most of these discuss the subject from a policy level perspective, while giving less attention to the role of the community. Yet in many disasters, local communities are the first groups to engage in emergency efforts before the arrival of international assistance. Their role needs to be empowered through their inclusion in cross-border disaster governance frameworks so that they can drive policy innovations in building social resilience to future large-scale disasters.

Based on empirical evidence from the 2004 Aceh tsunami and undersea earthquake, this chapter explores the role of local community groups (local NGOs, local traditional groups, women's and youth groups) and how to empower them through their inclusion in the cross-border disaster governance frameworks. This includes recognising the ways in which these groups could fit into wider governance regimes in terms of their role and relative power to influence policy choices through their interactions and engagements with agencies that function across national contexts and jurisdictions.

Three projects carried out by local community groups are presented as case studies. The first was the 'Aceh Post-tsunami Cultural Heritage Project', conducted by the Aceh Heritage Community Foundation (AHC). The second project, entitled 'Strengthening Capacity of Community and Schools' aimed to develop psychosocial and creative development programs to prevent child labour in Nangroe Aceh

Y. Rahmayati (✉)

Centre for Design Innovation (CDI), Swinburne University of Technology,
Melbourne, VIC, Australia

e-mail: yrahmayati@swin.edu.au

Darussalam' and was developed by Anak Bangsa Foundation (YAB). The third project, 'Strengthening Capacity of Community Learning Centres (PKBM)¹ in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam to provide training and income generation options for older children', was initiated and implemented by Community Learning Centres/CLCs (PKBM). These case studies provide evidence about how the involvement of local community groups support disaster recovery efforts that foster the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in areas affected by natural disasters. This process eventually leads to the sustainability of the future development of the Aceh region. A recommendation for a model of cross-border disaster governance is provided at the end of the discussion.

On 26 December 2004, an earthquake measuring 9.1 on the Richter scale was followed by a massive tsunami, which struck Indonesia's westernmost Aceh province. That was one of the largest natural disasters in Aceh's history. The epicentre of this earthquake was located 250 km south-west of the region. Its rupture—a slippage of up to 10 m—resulted in the ocean floor being lifted and (permanently) dropped, pushing the entire water column up and down and generating a series of powerful waves. Tsunamis swept violently up to 6 km inland over the shorelines of Aceh and surrounding islands. The disaster affected the housing and settlement sector tremendously. Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh Province, was one of the hardest hit spots, along with Aceh Jaya and Aceh Barat. In all affected regions, 126,741 lives were lost and, in the wake of the disaster, an additional 93,285 people declared missing. Some 500,000 survivors lost their homes leaving 20% of the Acehnese homeless (Bappenas 2005b), while as many as 750,000 people lost their livelihoods. Some Acehnese lost their land as the tsunami washed it away and partly even changed Aceh's coastline. Others found it hard to locate their lots in the ruined land, and many had no proof that the lost land was theirs (DTE 2005). In the private sector, which constituted 78% of the destruction wrought by the earthquake and tsunamis, up to 139,195 homes were destroyed or severely damaged, along with 73,869 ha of land with varying degrees of productivity. In the public sector, 669 government buildings, 517 health facilities, and hundreds of educational facilities were destroyed. By the time the reconstruction process was officially completed in 2009, 147,000 houses had been rebuilt for survivors (BRR 2009).

Two days after the disaster on 28 December 2008, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, declared the tsunami a national disaster. But due to the large-scale damages and casualties, the disaster not only attracted national concern, but also gained the world's attention. Billions of foreign aid dollars for reconstruction were offered, many international NGOs jumped into the fray, and Indonesian governmental agencies came to Aceh's rescue. In response to the disaster, 124 international NGOs, 430 national NGOs, dozens of donor and United Nations agencies, various government agencies (some military), and many others were involved in the emergency response, rehabilitation and reconstruction process in Aceh (BRR 2005).

¹Community Learning Centres (PKBM) are local community groups at neighbourhood/village level, led by a *Keuchik* or local traditional leader (head of the village).

The local NGOs and local traditional groups that existed before the tsunami, especially those concerned with social, religious and human rights issues, were also involved in the disaster response. Aceh, which been isolated due to a long separatist conflict, suddenly opened to the world. Despite differences in terms of demographic, socioeconomic and political lines, local groups in Aceh worked together with other national and international agencies in the name of humanity, all of them joined in cross-border forces and flows in emergency response and rehabilitation (Miller and Bunnell 2013). The combined local, national and international aid resulted in large-scale post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. That in turn led to enormous changes in urban space. In addition to new housing, much of the infrastructure had to be repaired. The economy had to recover, including people's means of subsistence and livelihood (DTE 2005). The rehabilitation and reconstruction phase was officially completed in 2009.

Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh Province, was one of the hardest hit spots besides Aceh Jaya and Aceh Barat. However, among these three badly affected areas, Banda Aceh received more attention from the agencies and organisations. This because of the 29-year conflict between Aceh separatist movement and the Government of Indonesia has isolated Aceh and disrupted the urban-rural connection (Miller and Bunnell 2013). This study focuses on Banda Aceh and surrounding areas (part of Aceh Besar) as this is the concentration zone of tsunami emergency response, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

10.2 Local Community Groups in Aceh

Over the past two decades, 'non-governmental organisation' or NGO has become a familiar term not only for social actors but also academics (Martens 2002). Werker and Ahmed (2008:74) define NGO as "the subset of the broader non-profit sector that engage specifically in international development". The term has been used synonymously in the literature with several others, such as private voluntary organisation, private non-profit organisation and voluntary association/organisation (Tongsawate and Tips 1988). There are four types of NGOs based on the orientations: charitable, service, participatory and empowering while based on the level of operation, it was categorised into community based, citywide, national and international (Cousin, 1991). In Aceh, before the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster hit the region in 2004, the existence of NGOs, either international, regional/national, or local, was less significant. Local traditional groups were more dominant and played an important role in the community: as stated in a 2005 report by the BRR (the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias),

Aceh has a rich tradition of associations, ranging from faith-related and community-based organization (e.g. *Panglima Laut*, the association of fisherman, savings clubs, and funeral societies) to semi government structures, based on elected neighbourhood and community representatives (BRR 2005, p. 45).

These groups have been instrumental in maintaining the traditional values of the community.

The international, regional/national, and local NGOs in the Aceh region came into existence during the peak of the armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), who sought independence from the Government of Indonesia (GoI), and GoI forces—that is, from the 1990s until the tsunami occurred. During this period, most of the NGOs operating in the region focused on human rights issues while the rest were concerned about social culture issues and only a few focused on the development issues. According to the BRR:

Aceh's recent history of conflict and international isolation means that civil society has evolved rather differently compared with other provinces. There are few local NGOs with large-scale operational capacity, but on the other hand there are many who are strong in advocacy and in protecting human rights, and there are strong associations, for example of fisher folk (BRR 2005, p. 182).

However, the 2004 tsunami catastrophe changed this situation. Immediately after the disaster, large numbers of organisations including UN bodies, international NGOs, regional/national NGOs and foreign government agencies suddenly established operations in Aceh. Many new NGOs established after the tsunami were located in urban centres, as there was more access to funding. As a result, the distribution of funds from the agencies and donors also concentrated in urban areas. Meanwhile, rural areas were isolated from aid not only because of accessibility but also due to safety reasons:

Rural coastal Aceh has been particularly neglected; entire villages along the west coast had to be abandoned after the tsunami because humanitarian aid and reconstruction resources arrived too late, too irregularly, or not at all (Miller and Bunnell 2013).

The distribution of aid in rural areas relied more on the existing local traditional groups, such as *Panglima Laot* or a local community-based fishery management system.

Eventually there were around 490 organisations operating in Aceh and Nias, of which 291 were NGOs and donor agencies (BRR 2005). Although the international NGOs (INGOs), United Nations agencies (UN), regional/national NGOs, and government donors were dominant in number, this chapter argues that they could not make the best effort without support from local community. The chapter takes the position that the local community is a valuable resource, because they understand more about the location and situation than larger organisations. Their empowerment enhances the effectiveness and the outcomes of the recovery process as well as ensuring the sustainability of development in the future.

The 2004 tsunami disaster also brought a great change for the development of local NGOs in Aceh. New local NGOs concerned with the area of development began to appear, with areas of focus including education, health, livelihood, environment, social-cultural issues and community development. In addition, the existence of local community groups was strengthened by the rehabilitation and reconstruction policy which required every party involved in the reconstruction and rehabilitation effort to include local community groups in their programmes. This

policy was part of the concept guided by the Master Plan of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias.

In the context of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh and Nias islands, the definition of participation must be materialized in a cooperation model and framework wherein the respective governments (central and regional) join hands with the community in reconstructing Aceh and Nias Island (Bappenas 2005b, p. 7–2).

Moreover, the government's rehabilitation and reconstruction policy recognised the importance of involving women and youth groups in the redevelopment programme in order to ensure the sustainability of programmes. Women are the backbone of the culture in Aceh, while youth are the future generation who will continue the development. Although youth is a group that still depends on adults and needs protection and support from them, especially in distressing and difficult situations like disaster (Fernandez and Shaw 2014), the youth are a significant population group in the demographic profile of the Aceh region and for this reason have significant influence on the development.

10.3 Opportunities and Challenges

Community organisations played a role in every phase of disaster response including the rescue, relief and rehabilitation phases—a role that was even most important than the roles of other related parties such as government and aid agencies (Nakagawa and Shaw 2004). The same was true in Aceh's post-tsunami recovery. They played a significant role because they are groups who have a good understanding of local situations including problems and obstacles that may appear. Therefore, their involvement becomes vital to ensure the effectiveness of the recovery programme. Lawther (2009) highlights that the best outcomes from the recovery efforts can be achieved through the promotion of high levels of community involvement (see also Pyles 2007). Secondly, they are active players in the development, not only passive recipients, so the benefit from the redevelopment will meet their needs. Thirdly, their participation will enable them to continue the development independently once the external parties have left. Community has many capacities that can be empowered. They can adapt successfully and function effectively in post-disaster situations (Norris et al. 2008). Given the nature of informal organisations, local community groups have a high level of independence as they are usually managed by volunteers and provide mutual aid and self-help (Pyles 2007). A similar idea was proposed by Lawther (2009), who argued that the extent to which communities can restore normalcy and reach sustainability depends on whether the recovery process is able to empower local resources.

The importance of the involvement of the local NGOs and local community groups has been addressed in the Master Plan of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh:

While many INGOs and donors have programs to help strengthen civil society's capacity, the most important roles civil society can play immediately are in ensuring citizens know and claim their entitlements and are aware of recovery programs intended to help them, helping communities voice their grievances, and tackling problems of corruption and abuse. They can also provide independent monitoring of recovery projects, ensure the needs of the most vulnerable groups are met and serve as an interface between citizens and all institutions involved in the recovery of their communities. Civil society can also play a valuable role in helping tsunami-affected communities understand the many challenges involved in delivering such a large and complex recovery program (Bappenas 2005a, b, p. 182).

Considering this important role, the involvement of local NGOs and local community groups therefore becomes a vital issue in ensuring the effectiveness of the post-disaster recovery programme. In post-tsunami Aceh, many funding donors and INGOs tried to engage the local community in collaborative activities in order to achieve better outcomes of the their recovery programmes. This was also part of the effort to strengthen the role and existence of the local community groups. As highlighted by the BRR, 'Civil society can and also should continue to strengthen the already strong foundations of community so essential to a stable working environment enabling all national and international contributors to deliver their products and services with confidence' (BRR 2005, p. 182).

However, the involvement of local community groups in Aceh's post-disaster recovery also had challenges. Community engagement is commonly believed to not be part of the solution, but part of problem (Pearce 2003). This notion has prevented community groups from fully participating in the aid distribution process. Meanwhile, the insufficient number of existing local NGOs also became a challenge. In addition, their capacity was weakened after the disaster due to the loss of resources, including financial resources and inadequate number of staff. After the tsunami, many local NGO staff were recruited by the INGOs, UN agencies and foreign institutions, leading to a lack of local human resources that became one of the challenges facing local NGOs (Bowden 1990).

Furthermore, there were some challenges in terms of collaboration of local community groups with external parties including agencies, donors, INGOs and government institutions. The first was that inadequate skills and facilities have prevented local groups from collaborating with other organisations. Skill factors cannot be underestimated in community engagement (Lawther 2009), both in technical terms but also in terms of non-technical skills such as managing conflict that potentially occurs in collaborative programmes. Quarantelli (1997) highlights that there are two possible conflicts that may occur: conflicts among the local groups, and between local and outside organisations and agencies. Meanwhile, Bowden (1990) argued that both NGOs and governments have a limited willingness and understanding to collaborate, which could lead to conflict. The second challenge was about communication: the local community groups received less support from the government because there was a lack of communication between them. Therefore, it is fundamental to build clear and consistent communication as well as building good relationships between agencies and community groups to handle issues efficiently in the shortest time (Lawther 2009). The third challenge is about the post-conflict and

peace process between Aceh separatist group with the Government of Indonesia. The insecure political situation during the peace process after the tsunami has led to lack of support for the establishment of collaboration activities between local community groups and external parties. Many the international agencies were hesitating to work and distributing their aid to the conflict zones which were also affected by the tsunami. Security issues, safety and trust become the main obstacles in building mutual cooperation.

Furthermore, many existing local NGOs could not fully participate in the redevelopment process. Their expertise centred more on social and political issues, especially human rights issues, which was not in line with the post-disaster redevelopment programmes. They were not familiar with the redevelopment programme and this weakened their capacity to act and lead the initiatives. In many cases, the lack of technical expertise in certain issues has prevented the local groups from taking a lead in collaborative programmes (Lawther 2009).

10.4 Enhancing Local Community Groups' Capacities in the Post-disaster Redevelopment of Aceh

The enhancement of the role of the local NGOs and local community groups needs to be addressed in the disaster governance framework to ensure the success of post-disaster recovery and redevelopment in the future. As stated in the Master Plan of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (Bappenas 2005a, b, p. 7–2), 'The principle [sic] purpose of synergic cooperation between the government and the community (development actors) is to achieve greater development results by joint cooperation as compared to the results achieved by individual effort of each development actor'.

Recent trends show that disaster governance has acknowledged community participation as an integral aspect of the programme (Méheux et al. 2010). It is also believed to be a basic component for achieving resilience of the community (Norris et al. 2008). Such acknowledgement confirms that local community groups should take an active role and turn their position from the passive 'victim' who receives humanitarian aid into an active agent in the programmes (Davidson et al. 2007). Without the involvement of community leaders, social networks and hierarchies, meaningful and comprehensive community participation cannot be achieved (Daly and Rahmayati 2012). Participation of government institutions, NGOs and the general public becomes necessary in disaster governance (Newport and Jawahar 2003). This can be implemented through training programmes and opening access to other parties for collaboration, especially to the donors who can support redevelopment through financial sources. Regulska (1999) argues that as a newly established political actor on the local scene, NGOs have found themselves needing to affirm their identity and presence, establishing a variety of external relations with other local

partners (local governments, other NGOs, citizens, or business communities), and building alliances to assist them in achieving their goals.

The enhancement of role of the local NGOs and local community groups in disaster situations can be achieved through the improvement of organisations' capacity, internally and externally. Internal capacity development can be carried out through the improvement of management, resources and capacity-building. Providing access to resources becomes important, as it can facilitate the process of problem solving that may occur in stressful life events (Dombo and Ahearn 2015). Meanwhile, the improvement of external capacity can be achieved by integrating the programmes of the local community groups into the government planning/actions. In post-tsunami Aceh, the integration of the local community groups into government and reconstruction programmes has been properly accommodated. It is proved by the inclusion of this issue in the Master Plan of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias (Bappenas 2005a, b, p. 7–6) One of the efforts to reconstruct the Aceh community is through the policy of empowering the existing religious, customary and other social institutions in Aceh, especially for *Mukim*² and *Gampong*³ institutions". These two institutions have a dominant role in community. This is confirmed by the Law No. 18 Year 2001 about Special Autonomy for Aceh Province.

Lu (2014) has argued that highlighting collaboration between various organisations in various communities is necessary for disaster governance. Partnership or collaboration is one of the schemes of an integration strategy. The coordination between the government and the local community groups is very crucial in this strategy. Each party can give support to others, while minimising the overlapping of programmes between them. Tongsaawate and Tips (1988) argue that efficient coordination would allow the governmental organisations (GOs) and NGOs to learn from each other and to play positive and complementary roles, and thus contribute more to national development.

However, coordination is not easy to implement as conflicts sometimes occur, for example in the different perceptions and the lack of understanding between two parties. Sometimes the government or reconstruction authority does not have a clear strategy to support development programmes that involve the community. The unavailability of accurate supporting data means that the government programmes cannot achieve their goals. The Community Learning Centers (CLCs), especially CLCs who focus on the vocational training programmes for the community, are one example of this. They are very weak with a lack of training curricula, lack of funding, lack of teaching staff and limited facilities. Those problems could not have arisen if there was support from the government and inclusion in government programmes for improving curricula, provision of facilities or capacity-building

² *Mukim* is a term for a customary community unit, which has certain boundaries, customary apparatus and symbols, ownership titles and control of certain resources and infrastructure, possessing a locally-specific social order.

³ *Gampong* is a legal community unit that constitutes the lowest administrative organisation under the direct supervision of the *mukim*, and is headed by the *Keuchik*.

training for the teaching staff. Nevertheless, these problems can be solved through development of good communication between GOs and NGOs, conducting deep discussions and building each other's trust. Some assistance from third parties, such as the donor agencies, as the facilitators is sometimes required. Financial support from the government becomes an additional important collaboration to enhance the success of redevelopment programmes.

10.5 Case Studies

As noted previously, three examples of projects carried out by local community groups in Aceh's post-tsunami recovery and redevelopment are highlighted for discussion in this chapter. The types of activities and collaboration carried out as well as the outcomes from each project were analysed. The finding shows that each project has different implications and demonstrates different strengths or lessons learned. The case studies presented are based upon the author's experience in Aceh's post-tsunami response between 2005 and 2009 while working as the Project Coordinator of the ILO-IPEC Aceh Programme and as the Executive Director of Aceh Heritage Community Foundation, a local non-profit community based organisation in Banda Aceh. They are also based upon extended observation several years. The data collected through series of fieldworks conducted in Banda Aceh from 2007 to 2012. During this period, site visits for direct observation and semi-structured interviews with the coordinators in-charge in the projects were conducted. The research was supported by reviewing project documentation and reports from public authorities, NGOs and aid agencies. The observations focused on the urban centre of Banda Aceh and the peripheral areas (western part of Aceh Besar). These areas were among the most devastated by the tsunami, and also the concentration zones of post-tsunami responses. The highlights issues were emphasised in the process of activities, how they collaborate and build synergy and the outcomes.

10.5.1 Aceh Heritage Community Foundation

The Aceh Post-tsunami Cultural Heritage Project by the Aceh Heritage Community Foundation (AHC), was an example how local NGOs worked within the regional network for Asia and the Pacific. After the 2004 tsunami, one danger in the process of reconstruction was that old, historically and culturally valuable buildings and complexes fell victim to the immediate need to restore and rebuild the urban fabric of towns and villages. Responding to this concern, and initiated by the Aceh Heritage Community Foundation (AHC), the 'Aceh Post-Tsunami Cultural Heritage Project' was carried out. The project aimed to assess the condition of Aceh's cultural heritage after the disaster and investigate the cultural rehabilitation process in the post-disaster situation. The project contributed to strategic actions for cultural heritage

rehabilitation, as well as providing lessons that may prove useful in other similar situations all over the world.

The project consisted of several activities including an on-site Inventory of 'before' and 'after' the tsunami; research of old photographs and historical information; and setting up a database of recent and old photographs, sketches, measured drawings, maps, plans, descriptions and historical information. The project was carried out with the assistance of the Lestari Heritage Network based in Penang-Malaysia (formerly known as Asia and West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation or AWPNUC).⁴ This network connected AHC to foreign/international donor agencies and other heritage organisations in places outside Aceh such as Japan, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Singapore. The main actors in this project were young people: most of the project participants were students from a local university. They came from different backgrounds such as architecture, economics, history, and engineering, supported by senior academics as advisors. The key partners and allies of this project were the Lestari Heritage Network (Malaysia), the Nara Machizukuri Center (Japan) and the Asia Research Institute (Singapore). Contributions and partnerships carried out through this project included providing expertise, collaborative research, an exchange programme, and fundraising activities.

This project produced real outcomes that have been used by parties involved in the post-disaster reconstruction process of Aceh. The main products were a comprehensive Inventory of Heritage Buildings and Sites after the Tsunami; research reports; and brochures, catalogues, posters and calendars. In addition, this project has increased community awareness, especially among younger people, of the importance of caring about their heritage, and has provided them with the skills and the capacity necessary for further safeguarding and conservation efforts. This project has also given an actual example of how cultural heritage can be an important tool in rebuilding cities and communities after disaster, a model that can be used and applied in other disaster-stricken areas all over the world in the future.

10.5.2 Yayasan Anak Bangsa/YAB (Anak Bangsa Foundation)

Strengthening Capacity of Community and Schools to develop psychosocial and creativity development programs to prevent child labours in in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam is a collaborative project between the Anak Bangsa Foundation (YAB) with the Education Office, Social Affairs Department and the Sharia Court. It was an example of how local community groups can work with national or local governments. The project was funded by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for International Programs on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) as part of their programme in assisting the community in Aceh after the earthquake and tsunami disaster. The project focused on education and child protection issues, and offered

⁴The network changed their name again to Asia Heritage Network (AHN) in 2012.

alternatives of intervention to respond to the condition of children in Aceh in the disaster recovery phase. The main objective was to prevent vulnerable children from entering into child labour. This was done through the provision of relevant services which assisted 'at-risk' children and their families.

The project used two strategic approaches, a community-based programme and a school-based programme. The community-based programme was implemented through the establishment of a children's creativity and recovery centre (CRCC) in the area where many vulnerable children lived, while the school-based programme was implemented (in collaboration with the District Education Offices) through the establishment of a mobile library and psychosocial services that served several schools and several temporary refugee barracks. This programme was delivered at three elementary schools in Aceh Besar District through the implementation of series of workshops which used media to highlight children's rights and the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) issues to the related stakeholders. In addition, YAB also worked closely with the Social Affairs Department to provide input to the Sharia Court to develop *Qanun* (Aceh provincial regulation) on child protection. The detailed collaboration was implemented through several activities such as joint research, a workshop and development of the draft of *Qanun* on child protection. Besides the Social Affairs Department and Sharia Court, YAB also collaborated with teachers in elementary and junior high schools in Aceh. The collaboration was conducted to reduce the number of illiterate school students and to mainstream student dropouts back to formal school.

This project succeeded in achieving its goal of preventing vulnerable children from becoming child labourers. According to the ILO internal report (2007), activities provided at the CRCC motivated children to continue their studies and produce creative works. Children's groups that were formed through the CRCC such as the art, drama, music, dance, and agriculture groups have encouraged children to develop self-confidence. These groups have become a positive model for children's groups in other locations. The CRCC also gave support to non-formal education by assisting children who had dropped out of school to return to school under the coordination of the Education Office. This project has been successful in preventing vulnerable children (boys and girls) from dropping out of school through literacy and numeracy assistance. When the project was completed, 319 boys and 302 girls in three elementary schools have access to a mobile library, psychosocial support, and creativity development programmes which are supported by teachers and community. Besides the children, other groups were indirect beneficiaries of this project including parents and families of the children, teachers, and communities.

10.5.3 Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat/PKBM (Community Learning Centres/CLCs)

Strengthening Capacity of Community Learning Centers (PKBM) in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam to provide training and income generation options for older children is a collaborative project between Community Learning Centres/CLCs (PKBM) and the Aceh Education Office. It was an example of how local traditional groups work with national/local government. The Community Learning Centres (CLCs), known locally as PKBM, is a community network existing across the Aceh region. The centres, run by volunteers from the local community, have a role in providing various non-formal education and life skills training within the local communities, and is a potential vehicle to deliver education and training services within the communities outside the formal education system. The PKBM programmes are mainly supported by the budget from the Local Education Office (*Diknas*); however, their capacity has been limited by lack of funds. The volunteers are not really capable of developing PKBM as a financially independent institution. This project was funded by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as part of the above-mentioned YAB project. The project focused on community- and capacity-building for the youth of Aceh, seeking to respond to the medium- and longer-term needs of older children in Aceh (15–17 years old). The purpose of this project was to prevent vulnerable children from exploitation by the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) through the provision of education, life skills and training services. This project also assisted these children in finding decent work opportunities, and aimed to strengthen the capacity of the *Keuchik* (traditional village leaders) and PKBM volunteers to become more effective community service providers. The project was implemented through four approaches. First, surveys were undertaken to outline the on-going programmes of the PKBMs, calculate numbers of dropout school children, and identify marketing opportunities for products that these children could produce. The second approach was strengthening the capacity of the PKBMs, through collaboration with the Education Office to develop of training modules on management, motivation and leadership. The capacity-building also covered training on children's rights issues and how to work with children. The third approach was for the PKBMs to deliver some vocational training, covering various skills including automotive repairs, haircutting and make-up application, screen printing, traditional handicraft, sewing and embroidery, carpentry, and the production of mattresses and other products from cotton. The fourth approach was facilitating PKBMs to establish a KBU (small business group) to help participants develop a business plan. As the donor, the ILO also provided equipment to support this start-up business programme. The groups were monitored by the Education Office to ensure the businesses addressed market demand. Start Your Business (SYB) training was also provided under this project, to assist youth from 15 to 25 years old who wanted to start some form of micro-business.

This collaborative project has succeeded in preventing vulnerable children from becoming exploited by the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) through the

provision of education, life skills and training services. According to the ILO internal report (2007), at the end of the project, 340 girls and 155 boys had been prevented from becoming victims of WFCL through the provision of skills training and activities developed by ten PKBMs. The capacity of the PKBMs also has improved, especially in managing and providing activities to children. Several groups of children who graduated from the training programmes have followed the SYB training and some have successfully established their own businesses. The internal capacity of PKBMs has also been improved following issues identified by tutors, PKBMs' staffs, village leaders, religious leaders, field workers, youth and women's groups who collaborated on the project. The partnership between PKBMs and the Education Office has strengthened the successes of this post-disaster recovery programme. The Community Learning Centres (PKBM), which are supported and managed by the community—including village leaders, *PKK* (women's group) and *Karang Taruna* (youth group)—were the key to sustainability. These stakeholders have understanding that the main function of PKBM is to support children's growth and development as important assets for the sustainability of the development programme in future.

10.6 Findings and Discussion

Before the 2004 tsunami, the existence of NGOs (international, regional/national or local) was less significant in Aceh, while the role of local traditional groups was dominant. During the armed conflict era, international and local NGOs started to emerge; however, they were mostly concerned with human rights issues. After the tsunami, a great number of organisations including INGOs, the UN and other aid agencies began to appear in Aceh to work on the emergency response, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the province. Although big agencies are large in number and played a major part in this process, the role of the local community groups (local NGOs, local traditional groups, women's and youth groups) was the most important. Post-tsunami Aceh also brought a great change to the development of local NGOs in Aceh. Many new local NGOs were established, with their focus covering a wider range of issues including education, health, livelihood, environment, housing and gender. The Master Plan of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh encouraged this situation by applying policy that strengthened local community groups. This policy required any external actor involved in the post-disaster effort to build synergy partnerships with local community groups including local NGOs, local traditional groups, women's and youth groups. These groups have played a significant role in the post-disaster recovery of Aceh.

There are several points raised in this chapter that demonstrate why the local community groups are important in a disaster situation. First, the local community groups are the local actors who have deep knowledge and understanding of the local situation and conditions including the social cultural aspects as well the geographic location. Secondly, they are the recipients for the redevelopment and rehabilitation

process, hence they know their needs well. Thirdly, their involvement ensures sustainability in the future when all the external agencies have left Aceh. However, a number of challenges have also been identified. The main challenge is the insufficient number of existing local NGOs. Another challenge is the lack of human resources and support from the government. In addition, inadequate capacity-building and facilities also prevent local community groups from building collaborations with other organisations. At the same time, many local NGOs that existed before the tsunami could not fully participate in the redevelopment process since their expertise was not in line with the post-disaster redevelopment programmes. This is another challenge that needs to be addressed.

The case studies discussed in this chapter showed the role of local community groups (local NGOs, traditional groups, women's and youth groups) in the post-disaster recovery efforts. Each case study demonstrates a different model in synergising roles and responsibilities. The first case showed how a local NGO empowered youth in their activities and utilised the regional network in their project. This local NGO also approached organisations from other countries that face similar disasters to obtain support regarding expertise and funding. The second case study demonstrated the beneficial partnership which was built between government institutions with participation from the youth of Aceh and the support of an international agency as the donor. The last case study showed how PKBM, pre-existing local traditional groups in each neighbourhood, developed a good synergy with several government institutions with the supporting funding from an international agency. The empowerment of the local traditional village structure (*Keuchik* or head of village) as well as the involvement of local women and youth groups demonstrates the significance of the partnership model.

Among the three, the first case study analysed in this chapter shows the most successful model of collaboration especially in terms of the independency, not only financially but also in the expertise which were built through the regional networking. The products resulting from their collaboration obviously can be (and has been) used by many parties including government institutions. In addition, this model is more resilient and sustainable as they are still able to continue their activity even after the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase was terminated in 2009. The second and third case studies are very dependent on donor funding and the role of local leader, a position which usually changes every 5 years. Therefore the sustainability of these projects is not assured, unless the programmes were duplicated or continued by the government once the donor agencies left. The external parties also have to support the establishment of self-reliance to discourage donor dependency in future (Cueto et al. 2015).

Despite the strengths and weaknesses of each case, the three case studies illustrate a good model of integration of local NGOs and the activities of local community groups in government planning and action. The collaborations and partnerships which have been built have also enhanced the management skills of the personnel involved. This is seen as one of the benchmarks of a successful model of empowerment of local community groups in post-disaster recovery and development.

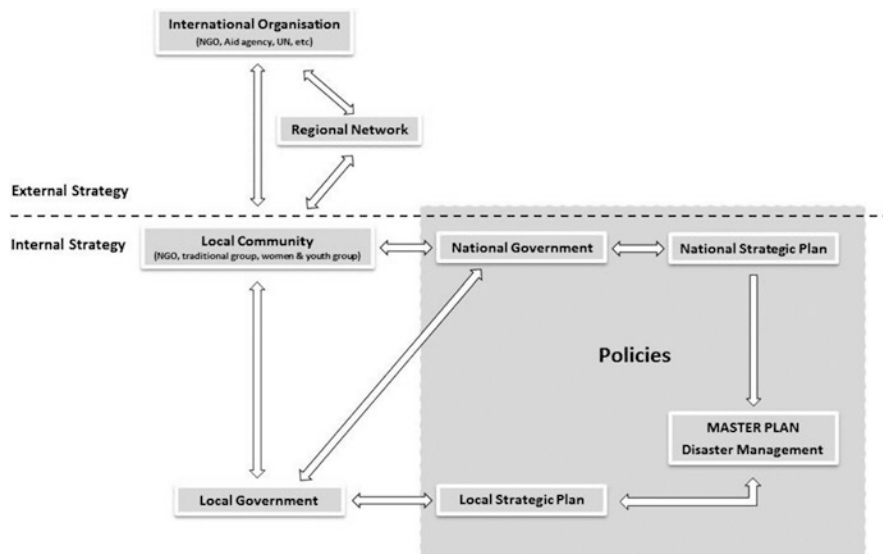


Fig. 10.1 Cross-border disaster governance framework

This chapter suggests a framework based on synergy models that have been demonstrated through case studies (see Fig 10.1). The first issue in developing the framework is the identification of the actors involved. They include the international NGOs, international agencies, regional networks, local community groups (local NGOs and local traditional, women’s and youth groups) and government institutions (local and national). The second issue is the policy that supports the involvement and empowerment of local community groups in the master plan for post-disaster recovery and redevelopment. Figure 10.1 shows how the management works through two different approaches, the internal and external strategy. The external strategy is carried out through the development of direct collaboration or partnership between local community groups (local NGOs, local traditional groups, women’s and youth groups) as the main actor of post-disaster recovery, with the international organisation (international NGOs, aid agencies, UN bodies, etc.) or through the regional network. The internal strategy is implemented through mutual work between community and government institutions at the national and local levels. This collaboration is supported by policy at both national and local levels—in this case, through the establishment of a National Strategic Plan by the central government and a Local Strategic Plan by the local government. These plans become the basis for the development of a Master Plan for Disaster Emergency and Recovery that applies to regular or sudden disasters.

The integration of local community groups into the government programmes has challenges, as it will depend on the governance regimes including political actors, political will and power, tension between local and central government. However, this framework gives some ideas of how to acknowledge the role of local community

groups in post-disaster actions through different cross-border interactions and engagement; it is a new innovation in cross-border disaster governance as well as a new driver of policy invention in building social resilience for future disasters that applies to other urbanising world regions.

The analysis of the three case studies confirms that local NGOs which utilise a regional network shows independence and sustainability, although they are not directly empowered by the government. Meanwhile, the existence of local NGO and community groups that were empowered by the government cannot be assured, as represented in second and third case studies. Their successful programmes were achieved only where there was access to funding. Due to this weakness, these organisations need to be more supported with policy both at local and national levels. Moreover, their role requires strengthening in local and national strategic plans so that their effectiveness can be enhanced in the future.

10.7 Conclusion

Local community groups (local NGOs, local traditional groups, women's and youth groups) in Aceh that were less significant before the 2004 tsunami became important in the post-disaster period, especially during the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase of the Aceh region. Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh Province, received more attention from the agencies and organisations in terms of the aid distribution. This condition has not only encouraged the increasing number of new NGOs or local community groups but also expanded the areas of focus for NGOs into education, health, livelihood, environment, social-cultural and community development. In contrast, rural areas which were also affected by the tsunami remain isolated from aid due to the long armed conflict. As a result, local community groups in rural areas were also less empowered. Cross-border relationships which have been built during the post-tsunami period have capacitated both government and local community groups for managing disasters. The collaboration has also built resilience to future disaster through the development of a structured agenda and policies.

However, to achieve the most valuable contribution from these local groups, some issues need to be addressed to strengthen their role in the redevelopment process. The role of the local community groups in post-disaster recovery can be enhanced in several ways. One important approach is the development of internal capacity through the improvement of management and resources. Another crucial issue is the improvement of external capacity by integrating the programmes of the local community groups (local NGOs, local traditional groups, women's and youth groups) into government planning and action through collaboration. The partnership between local community groups and government agencies will enhance the success of development programmes. In addition, the improvement of the local community groups as organisations that are supported by the community will ensure the sustainability of the development since their active participation makes them active agents of development, not just passive recipients. This condition enables

them to continue the development in future independently, especially after the INGOs and other outsider parties have left Aceh. In conclusion, the role local community groups (local NGOs, local traditional groups, women's and youth groups) in the disaster recovery effort is essential to foster the redevelopment and to ensure the sustainability of the development in future.

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