1. **Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

Between 2013 and 2016, UNDP supported OPM, District Local Governments and communities through a project “Strengthening Capacities for Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Building” to manage and utilize the environment and natural resources for improved livelihoods and to cope with the impact of climate change. The project sought to strengthen the capacity for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and humanitarian response, including mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and building capacity for risk reduction, response and recovery among communities affected by disasters and climate-induced risks.

Two non-core projects supplemented the main component and were implemented in the Karamoja sub region and Oruchinga Settlement Camp in Isingiro District. The Karamoja project titled “Enhancing Food Security, Livelihoods and Resilience Building in Karamoja Region” was financed by the Japanese Government and was a response to the food crisis in the region. The Oruchinga project was funded by the Swedish Government and focused on integrated community risk management interventions.

The project aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Government of Uganda through enhancing sectoral coordination and mainstream disaster risk reduction into national and sector-specific development policies and programmes; generate evidence base for disaster risk reduction and strengthen post-disaster recovery; enhance community resilience to disasters; and, build local capacity for comprehensive disaster risk reduction. The project had four Result Areas:

1. Strengthened national disaster risk reduction institutions, enhanced sectoral coordination and disaster risk reduction mainstreamed into national and sector-specific development policies and projects.
2. Evidence base for disaster risk reduction generated and post-disaster recovery strengthened.
3. Enhanced community resilience to disaster.
4. Training and capacity building for comprehensive disaster risk reduction.

**Relevance**

The project was relevant because Uganda is susceptible to highly devastating disasters, including hydrological, geological, climatic and human-induced that exert a significant toll on its population and impose significant socio-economic costs which, to some extent, affect the country’s ability to maximize the benefits from its economic growth and social development.

Despite the high frequency and magnitude of disaster occurrences, the country had insufficient evidence-base for prioritizing geographical, sectoral and hazard-specific interventions. It was also faced with the following challenges: lacked real-time weather and climate monitoring and tracking as well as early warning generation capacity; had no plans for mainstreaming disaster and climatic risks in national, sub-national and sectoral development planning processes; and, lacked adequate post-disaster response and recovery mechanisms and planning, among others.

The project was also relevant because it was based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Hyogo Framework for Action, the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) (2010-2014), and Uganda’s National Policy on Disaster Preparedness and Management.

**Effectiveness**

The evaluation mission perceived effectiveness from two angles, i.e. programmatic effectiveness and operational effectiveness. Programmatic effectiveness was based on the four expected result areas and the ten specific outputs. Operational effectiveness focused on the extent to which project processes exploited and benefitted from existing systems; and on how partnership in the project added value to their respective operations.

Under programmatic effectiveness, activities under four result areas were executed and ten outputs expected:

1. Strengthened national disaster risk reduction institutions, enhanced sectoral coordination and disaster risk reduction mainstreamed into national and sector-specific development policies and projects –all activities under this result area were implemented as planned. Only efforts to mainstream DRR in national and sector-specific policies and plans seemed to lag below expectations;
2. Evidence base for disaster risk reduction generated and post-disaster recovery strengthened – all planned activities were implemented as planned and expected;
3. Enhanced community resilience to disaster – all planned activities were implemented and outputs achieved as planned;
4. Training and capacity building for comprehensive disaster risk reduction – the training needs assessment did not follow standard procedures but the training programmes were handed down as planned despite some delays in a number of cases.

Operational effectiveness was realised in various areas:

UNDP was able to leverage her technical expertise and vast experience in working with governments and communities to establish and strengthen institutional, policy and legislative mechanisms, capacity building, risk assessments, community based approaches across different thematic areas including DRR and Climate Change.

The project aligned programmatic support with national development objectives and strategies which condition enhanced stakeholder compliance towards achieving shared goals and objectives.

One of the project strategies was to work within existing Government institutions and Systems -- the project focused on strengthening systems and structures that are spelt out in the National Policy for Disaster Preparedness. For example, the reactivation of the national platform for coordination and information sharing improved awareness on disaster issues in the country and increased appreciation of the linkages with different sectors.

The capacity development approach enhanced the management and technical capacities, systems and processes within GoU – building on existing capacities, systems and practices as well as complementing the support of development partners and donors to the Government.

The project’s success was also realised because of focusing not only building the capacity of districts but also communities, which has led to reduction in disasters and has also speeded up response capacities at local administrations and community levels.

Building partnerships, networks and collaborations also enhanced project effectiveness. UNDP primarily partnered with the OPM at national level and with districts, specifically DDMCs, to implement the project. UNDP also partnered with UNHCR and UNICEF, as well as international NGOs and the private sector, to deliver project activities; and with Makerere University to implement specific project components like research and training. All these have enhanced the effectiveness of UNDP in delivering on her mandate.

Nonetheless, effectiveness was constrained by:

1. Minimal role for local administrative structures in CDRM projects – only at identification of beneficiaries – the project limited the role of LG officials to identification of beneficiaries and ad hoc monitoring;
2. Related to (a) above, there was limited technical supervision of especially construction of the physical infrastructure by UNDP and its Implementing Partners. This could be attributed to limited involvement of district-based technical officers, i.e. District Water Officer, District Engineer, Production Coordinator, District Natural Resources/Environment Officer. Nonetheless, this function improved later with projects implemented by C& D and HJIRA;
3. Delayed release of funds based on UNDP stringent financial management policies and procedures.

**Efficiency**

The project was a three-year exercise that was implemented from 2013-14 to 2015-16. All planned activities under each result areas were implemented, apart from conducting trainings for NPA and mainstreaming DRR in the national and sector-specific development plans. Cage farming in Oruchinga was also still under HJIRA because of delayed funds disbursement.

The overall annual project budget was USD 4,386,340. The overall core resources (TRAC) amounted to USD 2,986,340 and non-core resources to USD 1,400,000 (Government of Japan: USD 900,000; and Government of Sweden (ICRMP) USD 500,000). The initial project budget approved during the project launch in 2013 was USD 3,739,061. This included a funded budget of USD 810,000 and an un-funded budget gap of USD 2,929,061. However, due to emerging issues and increasing levels of vulnerability, additional resources were obtained from the Government of Japan under supplementary funding and the Government of Sweden under the Integrated Climate Risk Management project to enhance communities’ resilience to slow and fast onset disasters in the country.

There was an average annual delivery of 100% on the allocated resources. The minimal 93% in the first year of the project is common to project start-up, which is always compounded by procurement challenges, stakeholder identification and systems building. From the periodic reviews and lessons learning, the project was able to improve its annual total budget expenditure portfolios over the project period.

UNDP had stringent mechanisms for funds transfer which occasionally delayed disbursements; but these are part of the best practices for the Global Envoy Systems. For example, rather than the known system of paying DSA to participants at the venue, UNDP used the electronic funds transfer to pay DSA for participants which worked well to minimise “ghost’ payments. Payments were effected for genuine participants which saved the project loss of funds through fictitious claims. Payments to other IPs followed a transparent requisition procedure that UNDP shared with all stakeholders and is a good practice for all global envoys.

UNDP has vast experience in implementing community-based approaches across different thematic areas including DRR and Climate Change. The UNDP team had the experience and technical competencies to deliver on their mandate. The project was also able to engage other implementing partners to deliver project activities – RAN, the C& D led Consortium, HJIRA and IIRR were all experienced organisations that provided value-for-money services.

UNDP provided technical expertise to IPs as provided for in the project document and work plans. UNDP provided valuable input to RAN in the development of the CRM training manual; undertook onsite spot checks and routine field monitoring visits as it were. Nonetheless, UNDP had limited staff in the light of the activity schedule and thus did not effectively monitor implementation of some community-based DRR and climate change adaptation activities.

**Gender Parity**

* Special focus and attention was given to building capacities among women and to enable them play an active role in disaster preparedness and management at community level by adopting a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach.
* The project specifically undertook a nationwide study to highlight gender issues in disasters and the findings of this study demonstrate that whereas women and men face multiple livelihood challenges and vulnerabilities, women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are most physically, economically and socially vulnerable to hazards/disasters.
* The evaluation also received testimonies of female participation in the cash-for-work project as a priority that aimed to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.
* The community climate risk assessment and adaptation planning process involved bringing together different local stakeholders among the vulnerable communities but with great emphasis on women-led groups to identify community hazards, their vulnerabilities and coping capacities, and through consensus generate community risk reduction measures.

# Impact

The project was to strengthen national and sub-national platforms and coordination mechanisms on DRR-CCA to become fully operational. There is increased sharing of information, coordination and planning for disasters. There is improved coordination, systematic and harmonised response and post-disaster recovery mechanisms and practices.

On the whole, the capacity of the IATC has been strengthened which has increased regularity of the meetings, increased the number of participants, improved information sharing and planning for disasters. There is a paradigm shift in the worldview of relevant MDAs, UN agencies and CSOs from disaster response and recovery to coordinated planning and preparedness. There is more appreciation of the need to interface and share information and plan for disasters before they occur in order to reduce and mitigate effects.

There has been a significant change in awareness about disasters and their impact on livelihoods throughout the districts visited while conducting this exercise. There is also significant appreciation of early warning systems as well as knowledge of climate change adaptation strategies like water harvesting technologies and strategies. Like at the national level, there is also more acceptance of the importance of preparedness rather than response and recovery.

With the establishment of the NECOC, Government confidence levels have increased since DRR institutional capacity has been elevated. Whereas the evaluation mission was able to confirm the capacity and facilities of the NECOC, its utilisation by other MDAs was still minimal.

There is now an authentic Country Hazard Atlas – an aggregated profile for the country, which has been used albeit in a limited scope so far, but with potential of facilitating evidence-based decision-making.

The mission also found out with the Country hazard Atlas, there is an authentic and aggregated database on DRR issues in place, which is a source of credible information to all deserving users. Nonetheless, the Country Hazard Atlas, which is hosted at the NECOC, is yet to be fully utilised by the relevant MDAs, humanitarian agencies, other members of the national platform and other stakeholders.

Through post-disaster support, both national and district officials have the capacity to carry out gender-sensitive assessment of disasters in their areas. However, the enhanced capacity to conduct post-disaster assessments as well as post-disaster response is still inadequate.

Communities now have access to water for domestic use and for their animals. There is mind-set change in the community towards adapting to new technologies. Community members are now flexible and adaptive; accept new ways of doing things unlike in the past when all external assistance was rejected; and are now committed and devoted to working and reducing the effects of dry spells and water shortages in their areas.Through the Cash-For-Work (CFW) strategy, community members used the money to buy household items, which enhanced their livelihoods.

The conceptual understanding of DRM for communities, local governments and other stakeholders at different levels of government has been greatly enhanced as a result of the project. Despite this increased conceptualisation of DRM issues, there are variations in the manner different communities prepare for and manage disasters.

The project was also able to produce a pool of human resources at both national and sub-national levels with knowledge in DRR themes, which was scanty before. This pool has been able to variably create awareness on DRR issues in their respective places of work. OPM officials are using the knowledge to enhance their performance.

**Sustainability**

1. There are established and effective linkages between project components, especially capacity building, and institutional strengthening mechanisms which will ensure that without project support, the institutions are effective and the agencies and officers have the capacity to leverage resources and institutions to plan and implement functions;
2. Adequate project flexibility has facilitated quick adaptation to changing circumstances;
3. Response to new opportunities –for example, OPM and other MDAs will be able to utilise the amended Public Finance Management Act to respond to post-disaster recovery situations;
4. Enhanced risk management capacity of the communities which are now in position to develop plans and implement them; and
5. Integration of the priority functions of the programme into government systems, e.g. the national platform and the early warning systems (the NECOC).

# Challenges

* The relevance of the project was challenged by lack of knowledge on project implementation structures by sections of stakeholders and beneficiaries.
* Relevance was also tested by limited participation of stakeholders in project design.
* Local Government officials, including technocrats and politicians, were not fully involved in CRM project management processes and limited their roles to identification of beneficiaries and ad hoc monitoring of progress.
* The evaluation established that the internal processes of disbursement of the respective funds to the IPs by UNDP in some cases took a considerable amount of time.
* Some functions required longer periods than planned to implement.
* In other instances, the consultants were also relatively expensive and quite often unreliable in delivery.
* Short period for project implementation makes it difficult to measure results at outcome and impact levels. By end of project, some activities were still being implemented and thus it was difficult to measure the changes realised as a result of the interventions.
* While UNDP uses a ‘phase-down’ strategy for national-level interventions at the NECOC and the IATC, at community level the project used a ‘phase-over’ strategy, which has caused constraints with regard to sustainability.

**Recommendations**

* UNDP should provide a bridging fund to complete priority areas not completed under the ended project;
* Future programmes should meaningfully involve all key stakeholders including beneficiary communities and local governments in the design and implementation planning processes;
* Future programming for DRR should explore options of utilising district-based technical staff that have the expertise and understand the local context;
* Such future projects should focus on strengthening institutional capacity of key stakeholders, more especially the NPA for mainstreaming purposes;
* A phase-down strategy for exit should always be preferred for government projects for purposes of sustaining the actions at project end;
* UNDP and OPM should develop and strengthen a multi-level integrated and coordinated approach to disaster preparedness, management, response and recovery; and,
* UNDP should move out of direct implementation and focus more on strategic management issues.