

Gates Foundation



**Sustaining Multi-Stakeholder
Localization: Challenges
and Emerging Opportunities
from the Asian Preparedness
Partnership (APP)**

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SM Tower, 24th Floor, No. 979/67-69 Phahonyothin Road

Phaya Thai Sub-district, Phaya Thai District

Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Tel:+66 2 298 0681-84

Fax:+66 2 298 0012

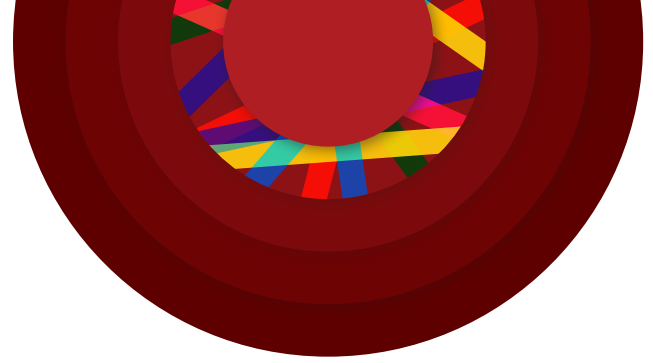
Email: adpc@adpc.net

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Author – Ms. Ronilda Co, Program Manager, Localization, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center.

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Lay-out and design by: Mr. Lowil Fred Espada, ADPC



INTRODUCTION

Context: The Need for Humanitarian Transformation

In 2016, the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) outlined the global state of humanitarian affairs. The world has witnessed an unprecedented surge in humanitarian needs - driven by protracted armed conflicts, recurrent disasters, and the escalating impacts of climate change. This surge underscores the urgent necessity to transform the humanitarian ecosystem. Such transformation is not merely an operational imperative but a moral and strategic one, essential to advancing global commitments to sustainable development and ensuring that no one is left behind.

At the heart of this transformation lies the principle of localization - placing people and communities at the center of humanitarian decision-making, resource allocation, and action. Localization calls for a new paradigm of humanitarian work, one that shifts the balance of power and prioritizes national and local actors who are closest to the risks, realities, and opportunities for resilience.

Localization: A Cornerstone of Humanitarian Transformation

Localization represents a fundamental shift in how humanitarian assistance is conceived and delivered. Moving away from the traditional top-down approach, it acknowledges the indispensable role of local communities and institutions in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. It promotes a bottom-up approach where local and national actors lead across the entire disaster management cycle.

By investing in and strengthening the capacity of national and local actors, localization fosters self-reliance and reduces the dependency on international humanitarian mechanisms - whose resources are increasingly overstretched by the scale and frequency of global crises.

The Asian Preparedness Partnership: A Regional Model for Localization

In response to the WHS's call for a more localized and inclusive humanitarian system, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), together with six founding member countries - Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka - co-created a pioneering multi-stakeholder initiative: the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP), launched in 2016. Lao PDR joined the Partnership in 2023.

The APP embodies the spirit of localization through its National Preparedness Partnership (NPP) established in each member country. These partnerships bring together key national stakeholders - government agencies responsible for disaster risk management, civil society organizations, and the private sector networks - to jointly enhance national and local preparedness capacities. In the case of the Philippines, the partnership goes beyond the three sectors and includes the academe. By facilitating collaboration across stakeholders and borders, APP strengthens the region's collective ability to anticipate, respond to, and recover from disasters through a truly locally led and sustainable approach.

Purpose and Scope

This document outlines the challenges and emerging opportunities confronting the sustainability of a multi-stakeholder localization model, focusing on the seven National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs) under the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) - ADPC's regional flagship initiative for advancing localization. It highlights the NPPs as national, country-driven, and nationally owned mechanisms that drive localization efforts within each country.

The paper aims to raise awareness and provide guidance to those engaged in promoting localization through a whole-of-society approach. It also underscores the complexity of sustaining multi-stakeholder partnerships beyond project or program cycles. Lastly, it explores pathways for sustaining the model in each country, grounded in the unique contexts, institutional environments, and dynamics that shape each partnership.

The content of this paper draws upon the collective experiences, reflections, and shared learning of the National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs) across APP member countries, as discussed during regional workshops, national consultations, and country-level implementation processes.

THE CASE FOR LOCALIZATION



Evolution of the concept

Localization is not a new idea. Across crises and contexts, local actors and communities have consistently been the first to respond when disasters strike. They also sustain long-term recovery and bridge it to development interventions and services. Their proximity, indigenous knowledge, and cultural understanding enable more timely, effective, and contextually appropriate responses than externally led efforts often can.

Localization, therefore, represents a renewed commitment to an enduring principle within the humanitarian and development sectors: that sustainable and effective responses must be locally led and owned.

The 2016 WHS was a turning point in global policy discourse, calling for a shift from “delivering aid” to “ending need.” The Grand Bargain (2016) and the Charter for Change further emphasized that strengthening local and national capacities is essential for humanitarian effectiveness. Together, these frameworks reframed localization not as an optional reform, but as a structural necessity for achieving sustainable outcomes.

ADPC defines localization as a process that strengthens national and local actors to lead in defining, planning, and implementing disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and climate actions toward safer, well-prepared, and resilient communities.

This definition illustrates that localization entails more than transferring funds to national and local actors; it involves transforming relationships, governance structures, and accountability systems so that decision-making power rests with those closest to affected populations. Effective localization also requires sustained investment in local institutions, fair risk-sharing, and recognition of national and local actors as equal partners rather than implementing agents.

Ultimately, success in humanitarian and development work should not be measured by the volume of aid delivered or the speed of external intervention. Instead, it should be assessed by the resilience, self-reliance, and institutional capacity that interventions help to build within local systems. Localization, when meaningfully implemented, is not only a matter of effectiveness but also of equity, dignity, and sustainability.

In this way, localization directly contributes to global frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement, all of which emphasize resilience, inclusion, and national ownership.

From Concept to Practice

Translating localization from principle to practice remains complex. It requires institutional transformation, systemic shifts in power dynamics, funding models, and accountability mechanisms. Genuine localization means recognizing local actors not merely as implementers but as equal partners - co-creators of strategy, policy, and solutions.

Regional and national platforms such as the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) illustrate how this can be achieved in practice. By fostering partnerships among governments, civil society, private sector, and the academe, the APP provides a structured mechanism for collaboration that strengthens national preparedness systems while advancing locally led humanitarian action.

Localization, therefore, is not just a reform agenda - it is a redefinition of humanitarianism itself: one that recognizes that sustainable resilience begins at the local level.

THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

Achieving effective localization requires the active collaboration of multiple stakeholders across all levels of society. No single actor - government, civil society, or the private sector - can independently address the complex and interconnected nature of humanitarian and development challenges. Disasters and crises today are multidimensional, cutting across social, economic, political, and environmental systems, and therefore demand equally multifaceted responses.

Recognizing this, ADPC has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach as a strategic framework to advance localization. This model enables the participation of actors with complementary mandates and capacities, fostering shared ownership and collective accountability. In doing so, the multi-stakeholder model becomes both a means and an outcome of localization - reinforcing the principle that sustainable resilience is best achieved when all of society contributes their unique strengths toward a unified vision, leaving no one behind.

Rationale for Multi-Stakeholder Partnership

The rationale for forming a multi-stakeholder partnership at the national level rests in the complementary mandates, perspectives, capacities, and resources that the national actors in each NPP bring as illustrated:

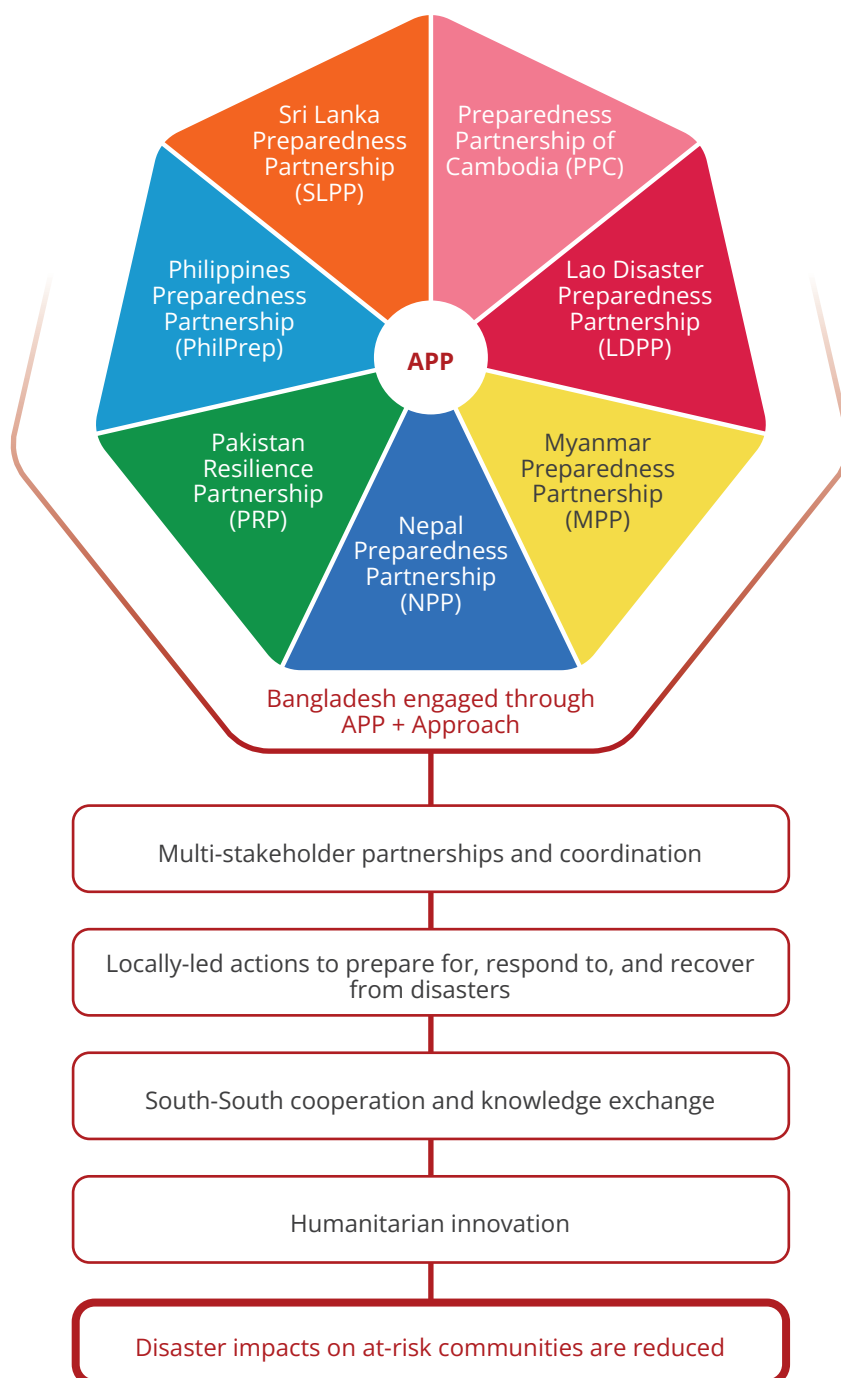


The Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP): A Regional Model

The Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) exemplifies the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing localization. Launched in 2016 by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) with support from the Gates Foundation, APP serves as a regional platform to strengthen locally led disaster preparedness and response. The initiative catalyzed the establishment of National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs) in each APP implementing country - Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Lao PDR (joined in 2023). Each NPP is named accordingly by the members as shown in the illustration.

Each NPP consists of the government agencies responsible for disaster risk management, civil society organizations, and private sector networks. In addition, media, academia, and other relevant stakeholders may be included as determined by the NPP National Steering Committee (NSSC) Co-Chairs. Notably, the Philippine Preparedness Partnership (PhilPrep) formally includes the academe as a core member, recognizing its vital role in generating knowledge, strengthening capacity development and the use of evidence-based insights to inform policy and practice. This inclusive structure ensures that decision-making is collective and nationally driven and aligned with local priorities while benefiting from regional exchange and peer learning.

National Preparedness Partnerships



Currently in its third phase of implementation, the APP continues to advance joint multi-stakeholder preparedness and response. Phase 1 (2016–2019) focused on co-creation and mobilization of diverse actors - government, civil society, and private sector - to establish the foundations for collaboration. Phase 2 (2019–2023) emphasized implementation and consolidation, strengthening both regional and national partnerships. Key achievements from this phase include:

- ⌘ Improved multi-stakeholder coordination through new interfaces and partnerships among government, civil society, and private sector actors.
- ⌘ Strengthened coordination mechanisms via joint simulations, assessments, and response operations.
- ⌘ Enhanced and updated national and subnational plans and policies integrating roles for non-governmental and private sector actors.
- ⌘ Enhanced capacity of local actors through mainstreamed capacity development programs with a pool of local experts.
- ⌘ Increased integration of humanitarian standards and tools for preparedness and response.
- ⌘ Enhanced private sector participation and strengthened business resilience through engagement and capacity building.
- ⌘ Improved advocacy for localization through cross-country learning, knowledge exchange, and regional collaboration.
- ⌘ Nurtured innovative, locally led approaches to disaster risk management across APP countries.
- ⌘ Scaled out the APP model to Lao PDR and Bangladesh, demonstrating its adaptability and relevance beyond its initial cohort.

Through these milestones, the APP has evolved into a recognized regional model for locally led disaster risk management, demonstrating that resilience is best achieved when all sectors of society work in concert toward a shared vision of preparedness and sustainability.

The third phase of the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) - focusing on consolidation, scaling, and sustainability - began in 2023 and will continue through 2026. This phase aims to institutionalize and sustain the multi-stakeholder partnership model across regional, national, and subnational levels, with the overarching goal of enhancing disaster preparedness, response, and recovery capacities.

The key outcomes targeted under APP Phase 3 include:

- ⌘ Strengthened subnational and local organizations for disaster preparedness through inclusive partnerships and active community engagement
- ⌘ Institutionalized partnerships and coordination mechanisms that embed the “whole-of-society” approach across governance systems.
- ⌘ Enhanced regional cooperation and institutional mechanisms that amplify and accelerate the localization agenda through shared learning and collective action.

As the APP progresses through its third phase of implementation, valuable lessons have emerged from the experiences of National Preparedness Partnership (NPP) members across the seven participating countries. These insights - drawn from both challenges and opportunities - are informing ongoing efforts to refine strategies for advancing localization in disaster risk management.



KEY CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER LOCALIZATION

During the APP Regional Steering Committee (APPRSC) Reflection Workshop held in Sri Lanka on 23–24 July 2025, representatives from the seven National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs) identified several key challenges encountered under APP Phase 3, along with their commitments to address them. These challenges primarily concern **sustainability of the multi-stakeholder partnership model within national systems – particularly in the areas of institutionalization, governance, and financing**,



Embedding the NPP in National Humanitarian Coordination Systems, Policies, and Programs

A major challenge lies in ensuring that the partnership in each country, i.e., NPP, is institutionalized within national humanitarian and disaster risk management (DRM) systems, rather than operating as a project-based modality. Embedding the NPP within existing coordination structures, policy frameworks, and programs is essential for long-term sustainability.

The following section outlines the current status of NPP institutionalization in each country.

Lao Disaster Preparedness Partnership (LDPP)

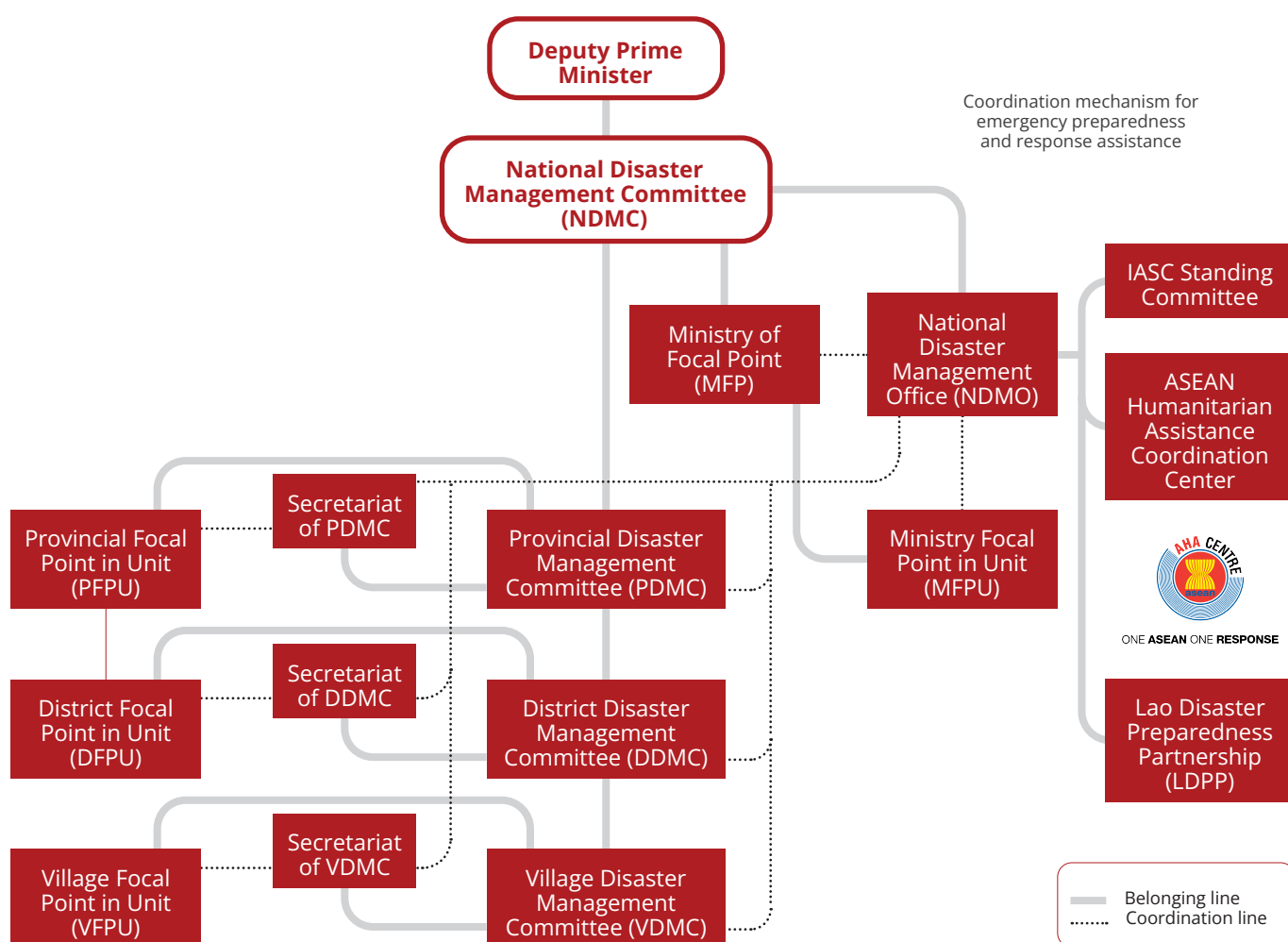
The Lao Disaster Preparedness Partnership (LDPP) is the newest member of the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP), having joined in 2023. Given Lao PDR's national governance context, the LDPP could not formally mobilize or implement activities without official recognition from the relevant government ministries and authorities. This requirement for authorization became the key factor that led to the LDPP's embedding within the national humanitarian coordination mechanism, which is led by the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC).

As a result, the LDPP is now an integral part of Lao PDR's national disaster risk management (DRM) system, ensuring close alignment with government priorities and coordination structures from the outset. Notably, it is the only National Preparedness Partnership (NPP) under APP that is both formally embedded in a national system and operates under its own official partnership branding. This

approach demonstrates Lao PDR's commitment to institutionalizing multi-stakeholder collaboration as a foundation for localized disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The key challenges facing the LDPP are twofold: (1) operationalizing the LDPP's roles and responsibilities within the country's disaster management coordination mechanism; and (2) embedding LDPP initiatives within the organizational systems and networks of its members—particularly the Lao Civil Society Organizations Coordination Committee (LCCC), represented by CHIAS, and the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), representing the private sector. Strengthening this internal integration is essential for enabling each institution to effectively fulfill its roles and responsibilities as LDPP members within Lao PDR's national humanitarian coordination system.

Organizational structure of disaster management in Lao PDR



Philippine Preparedness Partnership (PhilPrep)

The Philippines offers a promising example of progress in embedding diverse stakeholders in the country's disaster risk management systems. Its National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (NDRRM) Act of 2010 mandates a multi-stakeholder approach by including representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

Within this framework, the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) - a member of the Philippine Preparedness Partnership (PhilPrep) under APP -

represents the foundation and people's organization category of CSOs in the NDRRMC. Similarly, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), which serves as the private sector representative in PhilPrep, has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) that formalizes its role in mobilizing support for response and recovery operations following disasters.

Both CDP and PDRF actively collaborate with the OCD - the Secretariat of the NDRRMC and the government representative in PhilPrep - to strengthen disaster preparedness, prevention, and mitigation efforts.

This integration demonstrates how multi-stakeholder partnerships can effectively complement national coordination systems when properly integrated or institutionalized.

Thus, in the Philippine context, the CDP and the PDRF have long been embedded within the government's national humanitarian coordination architecture, well before APP's establishment. Their participation in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Council (NDRRMC) reflects the government's long-standing commitment to a whole-of-society approach to disaster risk management.

The key challenge, therefore, lies in exploring where and how the PhilPrep partnership itself can be institutionally embedded and recognized - beyond the individual participation of its members - to reinforce its collective identity and leadership role in advancing localization and resilience-building efforts nationwide.

Nepal Preparedness Partnership (NPP)

The Nepal Preparedness Partnership consists of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Disaster and Conflict Management Division, representing government; the National Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (NDRC) representing civil society; and the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industries (FNCCI),

Nepal's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2017 (DRRM Act, 2074) established the legal foundation for creating multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms at the national, provincial, and local levels. In line with this Act, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Executive Committee under MoHA endorsed in 2019 the Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR). The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) - established the same year under the DRRM Act - hosts and coordinates the NPDRR.

The NPDRR serves as Nepal's national multi-stakeholder coordination and policy dialogue mechanism for DRRM, supporting implementation of the DRRM Act and the National DRR Policy and Strategic Action Plan (2018–2030). Its membership

includes government ministries and line agencies, semi-government organizations, international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, UN and bilateral partners, academic and research institutions, the private sector, media, and representatives of disaster-affected communities.

Complementing this, the Disaster Preparedness Network (DPNet-Nepal) functions as a national coordination and knowledge-sharing platform that brings together government agencies, civil society, international organizations, academia, and the private sector engaged in DRRM. DPNet also serves as the secretariat and technical backstop for the NPDRR, facilitating dialogue, documentation, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Members of the Nepal Preparedness Partnership (NPP) are individually embedded within both NPDRR and DPNet as active members of these platforms, though not as a collective partnership under the NPP branding. Nonetheless, the NPP is recognized and interfaces closely with NPDRR and DPNet, championing localization of DRRM in the country.

Sri Lanka Preparedness Partnership (SLPP)

The Sri Lanka Preparedness Partnership (SLPP) comprises the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) representing the government, Janathakshan GTE Ltd. representing civil society, and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) representing the private sector.

At present, the SLPP as a partnership is not yet embedded within any formal national coordination mechanism in the country.

Preparedness Partnership of Cambodia (PPC)

The Preparedness Partnership of Cambodia (PPC) brings together three core stakeholders: the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) representing government; Cambodia Humanitarian Forum (CHF) represented by the Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK), representing civil society; and the Federation of Associations for Small and Medium Enterprises of Cambodia (FASMEC) representing private sector.

According to the Royal Decree on the Organization and Functioning of the NCDM (2015), NCDM is composed of ministers of several sectors, as well as representatives

of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), and Civil Aviation Authority. The NCDM is responsible for coordinating among government ministries, sub-national disaster management committees, and international and local humanitarian aid agencies during disasters. While this reflects a coordination mechanism involving multiple actors, civil society organizations and the private sector are not formal members of the NCDM. Rather, they are engaged individually through the Committee's coordination processes, particularly in disaster response and recovery operations.



Strengthening NPP Governance

Another key challenge confronting the sustainability of each National Preparedness Partnership (NPP) is the absence of a dedicated, independent secretariat. Given that each partnership involves multiple actors and organizations - often complex institutions in their own right - establishing such a secretariat is crucial for effectively coordinating implementation, facilitating learning, and mobilizing resources for joint initiatives. A dedicated secretariat also serves as the central mechanism that unites and amplifies the pioneering efforts of all partner organizations within the NPP.

At present, the grantee organization that manages the APP funding in each country also serves as the de facto secretariat. Under this arrangement, existing staff of the grantee organization assume the secretariat's coordination and management functions in addition to their regular duties, supported by project funds. As a result, secretariat functions are not performed on a full-time basis, limiting the partnership's ability to effectively coordinate, document, and collectively implement activities in a timely manner.

Among all NPPs, only the Preparedness Partnership of Cambodia (PPC) has established a separate secretariat to strengthen coordination, manage competing priorities, and reduce fragmentation among its three core members. The PPC secretariat - currently staffed by a single personnel housed within the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) - plays a vital role in linking partners to ensure timely delivery of activities and results. However, to ensure long-term functionality and sustainability, the PPC secretariat's institutional capacity and resources must be further strengthened.



Mobilizing Flexible and Long-term Funding

A persistent challenge - predating even the recent global funding cuts to humanitarian and development actors - is not merely the scarcity of resources for locally led initiatives, but the inflexibility of the available funding. In many cases, funding structures restrict local actors from determining and addressing their own priorities for reducing risks, strengthening preparedness, responding to, and recovering from disasters.

Moreover, most funding streams remain project-based, misaligned with the long-term and systemic nature of addressing disaster risk and vulnerability. This short-term approach limits local ownership and undermines the continuity of resilience-building efforts at community and institutional levels.

As financial flows from international donors and development partners continue to dwindle, there is an urgent need to develop and engage innovative financing mechanisms across multiple levels - subnational, national, regional, and global - and across diverse sources including government budgets, philanthropies, and the private sector.

Securing adequate and flexible financing is essential for sustaining the locally led and owned initiatives championed by the National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs) in APP member countries. Flexible funding allows NPPs to respond more effectively to evolving priorities, while long-term financing anchors their institutional sustainability and the broader localization agenda.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND LESSONS LEARNED



Advancing Localization through Context-Specific Embedding of National Partnerships

Drawing from the challenges identified across the seven APP countries, several opportunities and lessons have emerged that demonstrate how multi-stakeholder partnerships can be effectively institutionalized within national disaster risk management systems. The following sections outline these opportunities, which reflect context-specific approaches to advancing sustainable localization.

A key dimension of sustainability in the APP lies in ensuring that the NPPs evolve from project-based platforms into institutionalized mechanisms within each country's disaster risk management system.

Embedding the NPP within its member organizations - across government, civil society, and the private sector - ensures that its structures, norms of collaboration, and mechanisms for joint action continue beyond the project's life cycle. Institutional embedding strengthens ownership, accountability, and financial viability, aligning partnership with existing national systems and reducing reliance on external facilitation.

Through this process, the NPP becomes part of a whole-of-society ecosystem for preparedness, where government leadership is complemented by civil society's reach and agility, and private sector resources and innovation. It reinforces and transforms partnerships from time-bound collaborations into sustained governance structures that anchor localization within national institutions - systems, mechanisms, policies, and planning processes.

Lao Disaster Preparedness Partnership (LDPP)

As the LDPP is already embedded within the country's humanitarian coordination system, the remaining challenges lie in operationalizing this integration and in embedding the initiatives of civil society and private sector members within their respective organizational structures.

Given these challenges, the partnership is well positioned to address the first challenge - operationalizing the LDPP - by replicating the LDPP at subnational levels and jointly developing standard operating procedures, operational guidelines, an integrated database and information management system, and simulation exercises. The second challenge - embedding LDPP initiatives within member institutions - can be addressed by institutionalizing LDPP's work within the policies, programs, and operational frameworks of its member organizations.

Philippine Preparedness Partnership (PhilPrep)

In the Philippines, while civil society and private sector representation have long been embedded in the national disaster risk management system, the challenge lies in leveraging this foundation to institutionalize the PhilPrep partnership itself. Building on this existing institutional foothold, the PhilPrep under APP has strengthened this engagement by providing a structured platform to advance localization, capacity development, and shared learning - both within the Philippines and across Southeast and South Asia.

Furthermore, PhilPrep members can explore opportunities to strategically embed their partnership in other avenues - as a capacity building and innovation hub, highlighting their leadership in advancing localization of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) and climate resilience at the national level. In this direction, PhilPrep plans to develop a localization curriculum based on the localization model that will emerge from its ADRF-supported locally led initiative. Through this effort, the partnership could evolve into a national hub for capacity building and innovation on localization, working in close collaboration with the Civil Defense and Disaster Management Training Institute. In addition, PhilPrep will continue to identify and pursue further opportunities to institutionalize its role within the country's national DRRM systems.

Nepal Preparedness Partnership (NPP)

Looking ahead, there is significant opportunity for the NPP to position itself as the focal point for DRRM and climate resilience localization within NPDRR and DPNet. By also embedding its Strategic Action Plan within these official national coordination mechanisms, the NPP could help catalyze a more strategic direction in advancing locally led, inclusive, and sustainable disaster risk governance across the country. In addition, embedding the partnership within private sector networks is essential to harness the sector's unique capacities, resources, and innovations in advancing localization in Nepal.

Furthermore, the NPP plans to replicate its partnership model at the provincial level, thereby strengthening local leadership, enhancing institutional ownership, and empowering subnational actors to lead preparedness, response, and resilience-building efforts within their own contexts.

Sri Lanka Preparedness Partnership (SLPP)

The SLPP currently faces the challenge of not being embedded in any formal national coordination mechanism. However, the ongoing revision of the Disaster Management Act presents a timely opening to address this. In August 2025, the new administration directed the review and amendment of the Disaster Management Act (No. 13 of 2005) to better reflect current disaster risk management needs. This process presents a strategic opportunity to strengthen multi-stakeholder inclusion in Sri Lanka's disaster governance framework. The SLPP could contribute to this reform in one of two ways:

- ✦ By following the Philippine model, where multi-stakeholder participation is legislated without direct attribution to the partnership; or
- ✦ By reflecting the Lao PDR model, where the national partnership is formally recognized and integrated within the legal and institutional framework.

In this latter approach, embedding the partnership not only within government systems but also within civil society and private sector structures is essential to ensure that each actor can effectively fulfill its roles within the national coordination mechanism.

By engaging proactively in the law revision process, the SLPP can help advance a whole-of-society approach to disaster risk management - formalizing multi-stakeholder collaboration and strengthening the foundation for localization in Sri Lanka.

Preparedness Partnership of Cambodia (PPC)

In Cambodia, the main challenge is that civil society and private sector actors are not formally part of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) structure. This gap, however, opens an opportunity for the PPC to drive institutionalization and policy engagement. Given this context, the PPC has an opportunity to explore pathways for institutionalization as a partnership driving localization of DRRM and climate resilience in Cambodia. One potential avenue would be for the NCDM to formalize the PPC as a technical or thematic working group on localization, thereby integrating its Strategic Action Plan as a guiding framework - or “compass” - for advancing locally led disaster and climate resilience initiatives nationwide.

Moreover, embedding the PPC’s work within the organizational systems of its core members - the Cambodia Humanitarian Forum (CHF) and the Federation of Associations for Small and Medium Enterprises of Cambodia (FASMEC) - will be essential to strengthen their institutional capacity and ensure that each can effectively fulfill its responsibilities within national coordination mechanisms.

Embedding the National Preparedness Partnership (NPP) will manifest differently across countries depending on context, institutional frameworks, and policy environments.



Strengthening Partnership Governance through a Dedicated NPP Secretariat

In response to the challenge of establishing a dedicated and independent secretariat, there is growing recognition that such a mechanism is central to the institutionalization and sustainability of each National Preparedness Partnership (NPP).

As partnerships mature, their coordination needs become increasingly complex. An independent and jointly governed Secretariat provides the organizational backbone that ensures consistent communication, effective knowledge management, coordination of joint activities, and follow-through on collective decisions.

By providing a dedicated institutional home and staff, the Secretariat enhances the NPP’s capacity to operate as a formalized national mechanism rather than a project-based platform. Its establishment - or strengthening, as in the case of Cambodia - ensures continuity of key partnership functions such as coordination and stakeholder engagement, documentation, policy dialogue, and resource mobilization.

Ultimately, the Secretariat strengthens institutional coherence, accountability, and operational efficiency, thereby directly contributing to the intermediate outcome of institutionalizing multi-stakeholder cooperation through sustained structures that embody the whole-of-society approach.

As APP Phase 3 progresses, each NPP has the opportunity to establish its own dedicated and independent Secretariat. The current grant support for NPPs - designed to strengthen partnership mechanisms - is sufficiently flexible to be directed toward activities that enhance governance, including the establishment of a Secretariat. In addition, each NPP will receive technical assistance through a country sustainability advisor to help mobilize resources for long-term partnership continuity. Developing sustainable financing for the NPP Secretariat should be a key component of this resource mobilization effort.



Building on the Asian Disaster Readiness Fund (ADRF) and Tapping Other Innovative Financing Sources and Mechanisms

In response to the challenge of mobilizing flexible and long-term funding, the Asian Disaster Readiness Fund (ADRF) represents a significant innovation in advancing locally led financing for disaster preparedness and resilience. Launched by ADPC in July 2024, the ADRF supports the implementation of subnational and locally led initiatives across APP member countries through the National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs). Its establishment signaled the development of joint proposal by NPP members in each country, ensuring shared ownership and collaboration from the outset.

The ADRF's initial focus is on strengthening locally led preparedness by enhancing local actors' ability to anticipate risks, improve emergency response, and sustain recovery through multi-stakeholder approaches. NPPs have concentrated their ADRF-supported initiatives on one or both of the following thematic areas:

- ▣ Strengthening forecast-based, locally led early warning and early action systems to ensure outreach to at-risk, last-mile communities; and
- ▣ Enhancing community resilience through Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM).

The ADRF exemplifies innovative financing in Asia, serving as a regional, flexible funding pool designed to mobilize contributions from multiple donors and other sources in support of localization. Its evolving model seeks to combine grants from diverse funding sources, creating a dynamic and diversified approach to resilience financing that can be tailored to each country's needs. Future expansions of the fund envision extending support to preparedness and climate adaptation initiatives, further reducing dependence on traditional donor aid while fostering local ownership and sustainability.

The ADRF is co-managed by multi-stakeholder national partners and accessed through a closed, non-competitive proposal process. Each NPP manages its own ADRF grant using its respective financial systems, covering both operational and indirect costs. Funding is released based on agreed-upon indicators and performance targets, promoting accountability and alignment with country priorities.

Importantly, the ADRF fosters a bottom-up, "by the local, for the local" approach, empowering countries to determine priorities, project scope, activities, and expected results. It emphasizes inclusion of at-risk and vulnerable groups to ensure diverse participation and representation. The fund also promotes knowledge sharing and learning between national and local partners, creating a feedback loop that strengthens practice and bottom-up accountability. Monitoring and evaluation processes, as outlined in the grant agreements between ADPC and partners, further ensure transparency and results-based performance.

Peer learning and mentoring are integral to the ADRF's governance. The ADRF Committee - composed of two ADPC representatives and one primary representative from each APP implementing country - serves as a peer review and mentoring mechanism. Committee members provide technical and strategic guidance to strengthen proposals before endorsement, ensuring alignment with the fund's objectives and principles. They also monitor progress and assess the impact of funded initiatives, offering feedback and advocating for broader resource mobilization to sustain the fund.

Looking ahead, as ADPC expands the ADRF, there is an opportunity to strengthen the ADRF Committee's role and to co-create with NPPs the fund's future direction and governance model. Such co-ownership will enable countries to more effectively advocate for the ADRF among donors and financing institutions, positioning it as a regional mechanism that channels funding to locally led and nationally owned initiatives advancing localization and resilience across Asia and the Pacific.

CONCLUSION



The journey toward transforming the humanitarian system is both challenging and promising. The experiences of the seven National Preparedness Partnerships (NPPs) under the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) demonstrate that institutionalization, governance, and financing are critical pillars for sustaining multi-stakeholder localization. While each country's pathway will differ based on its context and systems, the shared vision remains the same: to enable and sustain local leadership in disaster risk management, humanitarian action, and climate resilience through inclusive, nationally and locally owned mechanisms that endure beyond project cycles.

As the APP enters the next phase of its evolution, the focus must shift from consolidation to sustainability - ensuring that the NPPs become integral parts of

their countries' disaster risk governance structures. Strengthened institutional embedding, dedicated secretariats, and innovative financing mechanisms such as the Asian Disaster Readiness Fund (ADRF) provide practical and scalable pathways toward this goal.

Ultimately, the sustainability of the APP model rests on collective ownership and continued collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, and the academe (as in the case of Philippines). By sustaining these partnerships, the APP contributes not only to localized resilience but also to the broader humanitarian transformation envisioned in the World Humanitarian Summit and global frameworks for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

ANNEX

Embedding Pathways

The emerging opportunities in each NPP under the section “Advancing Localization through Context-Specific Embedding of National Partnerships” reflect one or more of the following embedding pathways:

1. Integration within national coordination systems – The NPP could be formally embedded as part of the government's humanitarian coordination structure, which includes engagement with other key stakeholders—other government ministries/agencies, development partners, UN agencies—during disaster response.
2. Participation in policy or technical mechanisms – The NPP could serve as a think tank or working group supporting the government's localization mechanism, or as a component of a broader multi-stakeholder platform on disaster preparedness and response.
3. Alignment with national DRRM planning processes – Embedding could also mean integrating the NPP's Strategic Action Plan or program priorities into existing civil society, private sector, and government DRRM plans and programs, thereby institutionalizing its approach and ensuring continuity.
4. Replication at the subnational level – The NPP model could be replicated at the subnational level(s) to mirror its multi-stakeholder composition, enabling inclusive local leadership and collaboration among government, civil society, private sector, and others as appropriate. This approach reinforces the whole-of-society principle and strengthens localized ownership of disaster preparedness and response.

The current opportunities identified by each National Preparedness Partnership (NPP) can be guided by the embedding pathways outlined above as they work toward finalizing their sustainability models.

Gates Foundation



app@adpc.net



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