

Development of University Strengthening Program for Enhanced Contribution in Disaster Risk Reduction in Eastern Indonesia.

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Due to its complex seismo-tectonic system as well as its archipelagic geography, the eastern region of Indonesia is prone to various natural hazards. Limited infrastructure development and lack of human development, and in particular tertiary education, in the region that is dominated by small and large islands, have contributed to its high disaster vulnerability.

As stated in the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, the roles of academia and scientific and research institutions are to focus on disaster risk and scenarios, increase research for regional, national and local application; support action by local communities and authorities; and support the interface between policy and science for decision-making. It is therefore important to improve the role of the universities in the eastern region of Indonesia in better contributing to the local disaster risk reduction efforts. For that purpose, a program for strengthening local universities in the region is being developed and implemented by Mercy Corps Indonesia (MCI) within the framework of Technical Assistance and Training Teams (TATTs) program, which has as its main objective the capacity strengthening of local government disaster management agencies. It is expected that by strengthening the local universities/higher education institutions in the region in order to be able to play better their supposed roles, local disaster risk reduction efforts can be implemented more effectively and efficiently.

In this program, the MCI is collaborating with the

national University Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (UF-DRR), to implement the strengthening program in five targeted provinces in the region (Southeast Sulawesi Tenggara, Maluku, North Maluku Utara, Papua and West Papua Provinces) and in one more developed province in western region of Indonesia (Central Java) (see Fig.1). The purpose of involving Central Java province where universities are more developed and progressive is to serve as a benchmark and also as resources to support the eastern region universities.

An assessment of university capacities in the targeted areas, using five indicators of capacity which are related to the institutional setting, human resources, infrastructure and facilities, activities/programs, and financial resources, has been implemented in order to identify the needs in capacity enhancement programs.

The assessment is conducted by collecting secondary data on basic information about the provinces and available higher education institutions/universities in the region, and conducting interviews and focused group discussions with local stakeholders involving relevant public officers, academia and students and local NGOs and visiting some of the most prominent local universities. The collected data is analyzed in order to provide general and detailed information on the current situation and capacities of the local universities according to the above five indicators of capacity. For each of the indicators, a set of criteria for assessing its level is established. The result is

presented in spider diagrams in order to be able to compare and understand the needs of each province in strengthening their universities

The result of assessment shows that basically there are already DRR roles and contribution of universities in the six targeted areas, but most of the involvements are still at individual level rather than institutional. The result of survey generally shows that the universities' role in supporting the local DRR initiatives as well as in supporting the Local Disaster Management Agencies (BPBDs) is still very limited to anecdotal involvement of individual persons, due to the lack of awareness of most of university management, limited availability of disaster-related information at the local level, and lack of communication and coordination between the universities and the BPBDs and other disaster-related local stakeholders.

An additional benefit obtained from the implementation of the university assessment is that during the assessment process, a communication bridge between the universities and the local governments and BPBDs as well as local NGOs within each targeted provinces has been established, which were warmly welcomed by all the parties. At the same time, university networks in the form of University Forums for DRR in Papua, Papua Barat and Maluku Utara Provinces, as well as at the regional level, a university forum for DRR for Eastern Indonesia, have been established, which provide an ideal platform for the involvement of universities in future DRR activities and measures.

A summary of the proposed university strengthening program for the targeted areas developed based on the assessment result is also presented.



Fig.1 Locations of Targeted Provinces of the Program in the Eastern Region of Indonesia