I. CBARAD Project concludes with a more resilient Iloilo City

The five-year project (2012-2017) for CBARAD I and II combined came to a remarkable conclusion last week in Iloilo with concrete outcomes making the city of Iloilo a more resilient city.

The sustainability of the project activities is now institutionalised through a number of ordinances passed in Iloilo which allows for planning, budgeting and implementation of various disaster risk reduction activities introduced through the project. One such highlight is the operation of Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction Information Center, commonly known as the KABALAKA gallery where people can visit and learn about various DRR activities as well as ways to better prepare themselves against disasters.

During CBARAD-II, a total of 201 activities were conducted in Iloilo with a major accomplishment of establishing a City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (CDRRMC) allowing for the city to develop protocols for coordinating with various offices and agencies. Risk assessment of the barangays are also continuing along with scheduled disaster drills in most of them.

Through CBARAD-II devices and equipment to help conduct DRR trainings and activities have also been introduced. The Flood Early Warning Device will help residents to take pre-emptive measures when sudden rise in water level is detected in the river. The specialised ambulance donated through Yokohama Fire Bureau is added to the fleet of Iloilo City Emergency Responders (ICER) for both response and training purposes. ICER has also received training equipment including Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and related accessories. In the areas with shortage of water, a total of six 2,000 liter water tanks were installed at three elementary schools which may also serve as an evacuation center during disasters.
The CBARAD project also enabled collaboration with various stakeholders including the schools and universities, PWD association and federation, regional agencies and an international NGO which helped develop a comprehensive DRR strategy and plans for the city of Iloilo. Iloilo city has embraced the products of CBARAD project to further strengthen the communities and its residents. The project will undoubtedly stand as a model city for other Filipino cities as well as members of CITYNET.

This project was conducted as a part of grassroots international cooperation project through JICA in collaboration with the City of Yokohama.

II. Nepalese Engineers Visit Yokohama as a part of Training on Structural and Seismic Engineering

As a part of a continuing city-to-city cooperation between Yokohama and Kathmandu, the second year training on structural and seismic engineering commenced in Yokohama inviting engineers from Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office. The second year training focuses on building inspections, steel frame and wooden structures as well as retrofitting techniques.

Field visits to construction sites, steel frame manufacturing factory, Yokohama Municipal Disaster Prevention and Learning Center, urban redevelopment project area, construction site of an elementary school and a wooden model house were a part of the week-long training. During the training, the engineers were introduced to several architectural practices conducted in Yokohama including the utilisation of heritage buildings, Yokohama’s measures against earthquakes, quality management of public buildings and seismic isolation device.

The visit to the city hall’s base isolator was an introduction to the technique where existing buildings can be retrofitted with the device. While the method is costly, the base isolator allows the building to move up to 60cms during an earthquake thus neutralising most of the shock waves that may otherwise be felt directly by the building. The base isolator was installed by cutting the foundation, lifting the building and implanting the devices.

The visit to the Yokohama City Municipal Disaster Prevention Learning Center provided practical experience to feeling an earthquake on an earthquake simulating machine as well as practicing extinguishing fire and taking other preventive measures during a disaster. The center provides easy to understand DRR knowledge to the public in the form of videos, practical experience, explanation and online quizzes.
Another interesting visit was to the steel fabrication factory where heavy metal steel columns were being fabricated according to the design order received from the architects. The key point of the visit was the quality of the fabrication which includes welding the steel parts to form part of the structure which are then transported to the construction site for assembly. As the welded parts are used in construction of buildings, the welded joints are carefully checked for any possible cracks using an ultrasound by a third party before being shipped.

High quality welding techniques are essential for steel fabrication parts used in constructions. The process also includes using bolts to join steel beams.

Among the other site visits, the community regeneration project site also offered insights into how the old community was revitalised by expanding roads, rebuilding public housing complexes and enhancing livelihood by creating a park and constructing a community center.

The output of the five-day training will be utilised to develop the remaining training modules for 2017 which will be conducted in Kathmandu.

III. 21st CITYNET Japan Forum on C2C Cooperation for Post-Earthquake Support on Reconstruction

The annual CITYNET Japan Forum to disseminate international cooperation activities of CITYNET conducted through the City of Yokohama was held on March 15 in Yokohama. The 21st CITYNET Japan Forum focused on the city-to-city cooperation between Yokohama and Kathmandu on the post-earthquake support for reconstruction.

Mr. Rishi Ram Pudasaini, Civil Engineer from Kathmandu Metropolitan City Office (KMC) presented the review of the first year training including the commitment and plans of the office for reconstruction. Kathmandu now has electronic building permit system through which building construction permit can be applied in all 35 wards. The city is also in the process of forming monitoring and supervising committee for taking action against illegal structures. The city also recently formed ward level Disaster Management and Citizen Protection Committee in 25 wards and intends to have the committee in all 35 wards.

On the occasion, Mr. Takeo Ota from the Conformity Division and Mr. Hiroyuki Wada from the Structure Safety Division of the Housing and Architecture Bureau of the City of Yokohama also presented on the findings of the first year training. Their report indicated the diversity in structures in Kathmandu which includes but not limited to stone masonry, brick buildings without concrete pillars, and reinforced concrete buildings which made reconstruction work complicated. The shortage of engineers as well as the understanding of the National Building Code by builders have also contributed to weak buildings according to the findings.

Participants receive an explanation about the ultrasound inspection which is conducted to detect flaws in the welded metal parts.
IV. CYO welcomes new intern from Meiji Gakuin University

Twice a year, CYO welcomes interns from Japanese universities to experience working at the office. For 2017, we welcome Ms. Suzuki from Meiji Gakuin University to the office for the 100-hour internship. Ms. Suzuki is a 4th year student with a major in Public Administration and Developmental Policies. Her specific focus is on “Community-based Inclusive Development Policies” and plans to get a Master’s degree on this academic field in the U.K.

“Working at CYO is such a great opportunity for a person like me who aims to work an international organization in the future. This experience gives me a broad perspective every time I work, and I am sure there is still possibility that I can learn more from this organization. I am thankful to be able to contribute to city-to-city corporation and to the disaster prevention programs.”