HIGHLIGHT

ASEAN-Help-ASEAN: Distributing Temasek Foundation’s Reusable Face Masks to Support ASEAN Combatting COVID-19

MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK

Monthly Disaster Review and Outlook for December 2020

THE OTHER SIDE

Muhammad Fauzie Ismail
Hi Readers,

As we say goodbye to a challenging 2020, Volume 68 of the AHA Centre's Column brings a variety of stories and updates from the ASEAN disaster management sector.

This volume takes a look at a partnership effort between the AHA Centre and the Temasek Foundation to distribute reusable face masks to ASEAN communities in the Highlight article, while also exploring the partnership between the Centre and the Asian Institute of Management in the Partnership section. Insight celebrates International Day of Persons with Disabilities by looking at inclusive disaster management, while the Other Side interviews Malaysia’s Muhammad Fauzie Ismail. Alongside our monthly disaster review, Volume 68 closes with a recap of the recent EU-SAHA project steering committee meeting that was held in early December.

We hope you had a safe holiday period, and wish you all the best for 2021 and all that it entails.

The Editor
Ms Adelina Kamal, the Executive Director of the AHA Centre, highlighted her appreciation of Temasek Foundation’s support to the region’s fight against the pandemic. “This cooperation between Temasek Foundation and AHA Centre reflects our commitment to fight hand-in-hand against the pandemic in the region,” she stated.

The overall donation by Temasek Foundation is comprised of 750,000 packs of reusable face masks, which include two reusable face masks in each pack, making the total donation of reusable masks reach 1.5 million. The packages were provided to the AHA Centre through Temasek Foundation’s supplier located in Tangerang, Indonesia, and continued to be distributed to all ASEAN stakeholders who accepted the offer through the AHA Centre.

This partnership effort also provided a significant opportunity for the AHA Centre, Temasek Foundation and other ASEAN bodies to further engage with local, grassroots organisations to deliver the facemasks to communities. Examples were highlighted in Jakarta as the ASEAN Foundation worked alongside local non-profits – such as Diberi untuk Memberi (Given to Give) – to distribute masks to street food sellers, local medical centres and the general public throughout the island of Java. Such partnerships that span from regional to local level serve to represent the true unity in the region’s fight against the pandemic, as well as strengthen and develop networks between the engaging organisations.

This is not the first time that the AHA Centre and Temasek Foundation have worked side-by-side on humanitarian issues in the region. In late 2018 the two organisations worked together on disaster response efforts in Central Sulawesi, with Temasek Foundation providing direct material support for communities affected by the earthquake and tsunami – support that was facilitated and distributed through the AHA Centre’s broad network of responders in the field.

Singapore’s Temasek Foundation recently donated 1,500,000 reusable face masks to the AHA Centre to be distributed to the communities in ASEAN Member States, as well as Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) and other ASEAN centres and entities who are based in Jakarta, Indonesia. The donation aims to support the ongoing COVID-19 response in the region by ensuring people can continue their lives as safely as possible under current health protocols. The face masks have been distributed by the AHA Centre to ASEAN Member States through the National Disaster Management Organisations, as well as directly to other Jakarta-based stakeholders since December 2020.

“We are grateful to Temasek Foundation for the support to the AHA Centre and the region. We hope to continue strengthening the partnership and good cooperation between the two organisations in the future.” - Adelina Kamal

Mr Siva Balan (right), the Director of Operations of the AHA Centre, received the reusable face masks from the Temasek Foundation’s representative.

1,500,000 REUSABLE FACE MASKS DONATED TO THE AHA CENTRE TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITIES IN ASEAN

Distributing Temasek Foundation’s Reusable Face Masks to Support ASEAN Combating COVID-19

ASEAN-HELP-ASEAN
GENERAL REVIEW OF DECEMBER 2020

December 2020 recorded a significant shift from the five-year average (2015-2019) for ASEAN disaster statistics. Higher numbers of disaster occurrences and affected population were recorded, but at the same time there were lower figures for displacement, casualties, and damage to houses. The number of disasters was six times higher than the five-year average, 2.5 times higher than December of the previous year, and almost two times higher than the previous month (November 2020). Flood events made up the majority (73.5%) of recorded disaster occurrences, with most such events occurring in Indonesia. This weather was influenced by the Madden-Julian Oscillation, which propagated eastwards toward the Pacific Ocean, dissipating toward Southeast Asia, except Myanmar. Weather conditions for most of the ASEAN region were also largely due to La Niña, with this forecast to continue until January 2021.

A total of 25 significant earthquakes (M≥5.0) were reported in the region by local authorities during December 2020, with one earthquake resulting in minor damage in Central Java. Recent volcanic activities were reported for volcanoes Mount Ibu, Lewotolo and Sinabung in Indonesia, resulting in closer monitoring together with authorities during December 2020, with one earthquake resulting in minor damages in Indonesia. Recent volcanic activity was also reported for lower alert level mountains including Indonesia’s Ibu, Semeru and Dukono, as well as Mayon, Taal, Bulusan, and Kanlaon in the Philippines, but there were limited impacts and damages as a result.

A total of 26 significant earthquakes (M≥5.0) were reported in the region by local authorities during December 2020, with one earthquake resulting in minor damage in Central Java. Recent volcanic activities were reported for volcanoes Mount Ibu, Lewotolo and Sinabung in Indonesia, resulting in closer monitoring together with authorities during December 2020, with one earthquake resulting in minor damages in Indonesia. Recent volcanic activity was also reported for lower alert level mountains including Indonesia’s Ibu, Semeru and Dukono, as well as Mayon, Taal, Bulusan, and Kanlaon in the Philippines, but there were limited impacts and damages as a result.

For specific updates on the national scale, the relevant ASEAN Member States’ National Meteorological and Hydrological Services should be consulted. For the January to March 2021 period, models predict above-average rainfall over eastern parts of the Maritime Continent, and southern Viet Nam. La Niña conditions are still present over the tropical Pacific Ocean, with climate models predicting La Niña conditions to last throughout the first quarter of 2021. La Niña conditions are typically associated with wetter-than-normal conditions over the Southeast Asia region, making rain-induced landslides – such as rain-induced landslides – more likely.

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INCLUSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

With International Day of Persons with Disabilities being celebrated on 3 December 2020, it brings with it a timely reminder to explore disaster management in relation to persons with disabilities across ASEAN. While different populations face similar risks of exposure to the impacts of disaster, the vulnerability of communities such as persons with disabilities can be much greater.

Increased vulnerability is related to socio-economic conditions, civic and social empowerment, and access to mitigation and relief resources for persons with disabilities, and see them disproportionately affected in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations. This is usually due to inaccessible evacuation practices, disaster response actions (including shelters, camps, and food distribution), and then ongoing recovery efforts.

Findings reveal that persons with disabilities are more likely to be left behind or abandoned during evacuation in disasters and conflict, which is often due to a lack of inclusive preparation and planning, as well as inaccessible facilities and services, and transportation systems. Most shelters and refugee camps are not accessible, and people with disabilities are many times even turned away from shelters and refugee camps due to a perception that they require "complex" medical services.

Disruption to overall physical, social, economic, and environmental networks and support systems affect persons with disabilities much more than the general population. There is also a potential for discrimination on the basis of disability when resources are scarce. Furthermore, the needs of persons with disabilities continue to be excluded through the longer-term recovery and reconstruction efforts, thus missing another opportunity to ensure that cities are accessible and inclusively resilient to future disasters.

Mainstreaming disability into emergency responses and preparedness, by making disability issues and persons with disabilities visible in national and international actions plans and policies, is essential to ensure equality and human rights for all. Studies show that including the needs and voices of persons with disabilities within all stages of the disaster management process – especially during planning and preparedness – can significantly reduce their vulnerability, and increase the effectiveness of government response and recovery efforts.

However, despite an increasing worldwide focus on disaster risk reduction as opposed to disaster response, most city and related government agencies fail to adequately plan for – or include – persons with disabilities in their disaster management activities. Rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts must not only be inclusive and responsive to the needs of all people, including persons with disabilities, but should include the participation of persons with disabilities, to ensure that their needs and rights are respected. Women with disabilities are a particularly vulnerable group whose needs should be included at all stages of recovery and reconstruction efforts.
In 2018, AIM launched a number of programmes about Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), with a specific focus towards leadership and management. This area of study came about as a response to the key challenge of rising numbers of emergencies, crises and disasters across Asia. In the first DRR programme from the institute – the Strategic Disaster Risk Management and Leadership programme (SDRMLP) – AIM invited the Deputy Executive Director of the AHA Centre, Mr Arnel Capili, to present in Manila. Mr Capili talked about the AHA Centre and its role in DRR management, which provided a practical perspective to support the students learnings from AIM. This initial small partnership drove AIM to return the support to the AHA Centre by offering its strategic thinking and leadership professors to the AHA Centre to teach in the AHA Centre Executive (ACE) Programme, supported by Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) and over 20 training partners.

Since this initial engagement, both the AHA Centre and AIM have continued to support each other’s programmes with AIM’s SDRMLP utilising resource speakers from the AHA Centre, and the ACE Programme strengthened by AIM’s delivery of the Strategic Thinking and Humanitarian Diplomacy course. This ongoing engagement is supporting both organisations to bridge the science and policy gap in ASEAN disaster management, and ensure mutual value is recognised through the development of diverse and deep ASEAN disaster management skills and capacities. It also increases and expands diversity and opportunity in the sector across the region, and promotes stronger interventions and outcomes from academic and implementing agencies in disaster management.

The future is also bright for this partnership, as well as other partnerships between the AHA Centre and regional academic institutions. Opportunities for the AHA Centre and the ASEAN region to improve and strengthen data utilisation are clear, as AIM holds one of the fastest super computers in the region. With the AHA Centre’s access to regional data alongside AIM’s super computer and data scientists, opportunities to develop collaborations for disaster data analytics hold strong potential. Co-developing and implementing certified training courses – similar to the ACE Programme’s Strategic Thinking and Humanitarian Diplomacy course – is also a valuable consideration for the future.
The Integrated Programme in Enhancing the Capacity of AHA Centre and ASEAN Emergency Response Mechanisms (EU-SAHA) began in early 2020, and although many activities have been pushed back due to the global pandemic, the AHA Centre continued with the implementation in the programme’s inaugural year. On 8 December, 2020, the Project Steering Committee for the EU-SAHA came together in an online environment to undertake their first formal meeting, aimed to provide a report and updates on the implementation process after the first year.

Engaged in the meeting were all key members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) – including representatives from the AHA Centre, EU Mission to ASEAN, the Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Division of ASEAN Secretariat, the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB), and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). The meeting was also co-chaired by the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) of the Philippines, and the EU Mission to ASEAN.

The first PSC meeting primarily reported on the four key outputs or results that form the target of EU-SAHA overall. While the pandemic created obstacles for the achievement of outcomes as originally planned, there was still considerable progress in activities that form each of the key programmatic outcomes.

**OUTPUT/RESULT 1:**

Efforts undertaken during 2020 as part of this output/result included the hiring of specialist staff, as well as the implementation of a capacity development project. There were eight positions fully-funded by EU-SAHA filled during the year, alongside eight partially-funded positions. Alongside this, a key component of the EU-SAHA programme – namely the Leveraging ASEAN Capacities for Emergency Response (LACER) project – was implemented with the support of the ERB and MSB. This AHA Centre institutional and operational capacity strengthening project developed and validated its baseline information with the AHA Centre, and finalised a workplan for the coming phases that was also presented at the PSC meeting.

**OUTPUT/RESULT 2:**

Activities implemented during 2020 under Output/Result 2 were primarily focused on strengthening multi-stakeholder engagement and communication, and increasing brand awareness of the AHA Centre. The included the development of the EU-SAHA Communication and Visibility Plan, and the publication of EU-SAHA fact sheets to support basic communication of the project. Communication activities supporting the responses to a number of tropical storms in Viet Nam and Super Typhoon GONI (ROLLY) in the Philippines were also implemented, as were other communications efforts to support AHA Centre events and engagements during the year. Finally, recruitment was undertaken for a consultant to deliver a media monitoring and journalism workshop, with the event targeted to take place early in 2021.

**OUTPUT/RESULT 3:**

The key activity underneath this output/result was the publication of the 2018 After-Action Review – an evaluative and reflective report that encompassed the AHA Centre’s largest year of disaster response since its establishment in November 2011.

**OUTPUT/RESULT 4:**

Working towards the fourth output/result in 2020 included the review and improvement of the AHA Centre’s current Knowledge and Change Management (KCM) systems. This entailed reviewing the original strategy developed in 2016, and updating it to suit the current context of the AHA Centre. This included re-developing the KCM framework, developing a taxonomy system and guideline for documentation, reviewing 2020 workplan and tasks both for the AHA Centre and the wider AADMER programme workplans, and synchronising the upcoming workplans (2021-2025) between the AHA Centre and AADMER. Additionally, 2020 also saw the development and publication of the 2nd ASEAN Risk Monitor and Disaster Management Review (ARMOR) – which also forms a key element of the AHA Centre’s knowledge management processes.

After the in-depth reports and reviews, the EU-SAHA workplan was also delivered and discussed by the PSC during their meeting. This included highlighting risks and challenges – particularly related to the ongoing pandemic – and how such issues may be overcome to ensure the continuation of this all-important programme.
This month, Muhammad Fauzie Ismail from the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) of Malaysia chats to the AHA Centre about his regional disaster management experience. As an AHA Centre Executive (ACE) Programme graduate in 2015, Fauzie spoke about his experience and his hopes for disaster management in Malaysia and the wider ASEAN region.

Muhammad Fauzie Ismail was deployed as an ERAT member to Palu during the 2018 triple disasters response in Central Sulawesi. Having been involved in a number of disaster responses over the years, Fauzie remembers the 2018 Central Sulawesi response vividly. “Despite being able to experience the actual deployment first-hand, the most valuable learning point was the importance of having effective training – especially from the ASEAN-ERAT Induction Course, ARDEX and other similar trainings” Fauzie says. “These trainings are carefully constructed to enable the participants to visualise the real situation, and I feel that all these trainings really prepared me prior to actual deployment.”

More recently Fauzie’s challenges are related to the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which he is working to support community behaviour change within the ‘new normal’. Without face-to-face communication and with social distancing, he and his team have to be creative to find new ways to relay messages down to the community at grassroots level. While the pandemic may have added extra challenges, Fauzie still highlights the importance of technology in the future of ASEAN disaster management.

“I believe leveraging technological advancement is the key to our future response. Usage of new and emerging technology such as mobile solutions, social media and digital communities will provide us with new ways for ASEAN and their beneficiaries to communicate faster and better”

“With help from such technologies, we can respond faster and make accurate decisions on the ground in disaster response.”

-Muhammad Fauzie Ismail
ONE ASEAN
ONE RESPONSE

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ABOUT ASEAN
The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.

ABOUT THE AHA CENTRE
The AHA Centre is an inter-govermental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of State / Government from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.

ABOUT AADMER
The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.

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