

Assessing “Preparing to Excel in Emergency Response (PEER) Project” in Organizational Capacity Response Quality Improvement

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Abstract: The frequency of global disaster is increasing continuously in the future which causes deaths and material damages. At the same time, the response capacity of the organizations related to disaster management is insufficient. PEER Project initiation as a model has been established to reach capacity improvement of organizations involved in disaster management. The development includes the regulations establishment, guidelines, standard operating procedures, training, socialization, and implementation in each region. This study aimed to analyze the effect of PEER Project on organizational capacity response quality improvement. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The population was organizations involving in emergency response from 8 regional branch offices were chosen. Modified Capacity Assessment (MOCA) tools were used to assess improvements. Regional branches showed varied trends, ranging from -8.5% to 71.3%. The mean scores achieved as compared to the maximum scores of MOCA components were 77% for finance, 59% for logistics and administration, 76% for human resources management and capacities, 51% for coordination, 69% for Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL), 73% for resource mobilization, and 66% for quality response capacities. The result from Kruskal Wallis test was significant differences between scores before and after PEER Project implementation in aspects of Human Resources Management and Capacities (HRMC, $p = 0.025$), Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL, $p = 0.025$) and Resource Mobilization ($p = 0.025$). The coordination and logistics-administration components should be of particular concern to the next project due to the low MOCA scores.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a disaster prone country which suffers various threats based on meteorology and geophysics sciences. The threats are often manifested as disasters that disrupt human activities at different levels. Report of the Indonesian National Agency for Disaster Management shows that since year 1815 to 2017, the disaster has surged Aceh to Papua for 25,218 times (BNPB, 2018). Frequent world disasters cause loss of life and material damages will keep increasing in the future. Nevertheless, the capacity of response to the disaster has a significant wide gap that raises many critics on its disaster management (Whybark, 2015, Proudlock et al, 2009). Part of the United Nation Organization which handles the coordination of humanitarian aid informs that there exists a significant wide gap of response capacity of the aid and the needs. During

2017, USD 24.4 billion has been needed to respond the disaster in the world but only 1.4 billion USD or 5.7% was fulfilled (UN OCHA 2018).

Those efforts are seldom to be conducted in coordination with other responses. This role should be in accordance with the organization's capacity in order to deliver quality aids (Whybark, 2015). In order to address this deficiency, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) initiates a program called Preparing to Excel in Emergency Response (PEER) Project to improve individual and organizational capacities to be able to achieve a quality response of non-governmental organizations in Indonesia. Organizations enrolled in the PEER Project are the *Pos Keadilan Peduli Umat* Human Initiative (PKPU HI) and the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC). These two organizations were chosen because they are part of religious-based non-governmental organizations which play an active

role in disaster response and humanity crisis at local, national, and global levels (Bruce and Terry 1990, Cheena et al, 2014, Fiddian and Ager, 2013).

Organizations low capacity and decreasing response quality become the focus of this research. The elements of decreasing response quality discussed by Whybark (2015) are limited to global logistic capacity, difficult collaboration among institutions and/or international organizations, increasing dependent food aids to non-government organizations such as humanitarian organizations to give response during the crisis. If these are allowed then high cost activities will occur and longer time of response will be needed since the frequency of disaster with aid needs will increase too (Social Issue Report, 2011 and Baird, 2010).

This research is aimed to evaluate the organizational capacity of the two chosen organization, PKPU-HI and MDMC, during one-year implementation of PEER Project. The type of this research was an observational, cross-sectional survey with explanatory research using a quantitative method (Santos-Silva, 1999). In this research, there were two main variables observed: organizational capacity and response quality (Whale & Whargade, 2006). Kruskal Wallis test was used to determine the PEER components affecting on the improvements of organizational capacities and quality of responses (Sugiono, 2014).

2 METHODS AND DATA PREPARATION

This research used an observational, cross-sectional survey with explanatory research using a quantitative method. The research analyzed the improvement of organizational capacity response quality of PKPU HI and MDMC after PEER Project implementation. The population of this research was the PKPU HI headquarter office in Jakarta and its regional offices in Bengkulu, Bandung, Surabaya, and Makassar and MDMC headquarter office in Yogyakarta and its regional offices: Sumatera Selatan, Jawa Barat, Nusa Tenggara Barat and Maluku Utara. The respondents were project managers and head of the regional offices.

There were two main variables which are observed in this research: organizational capacity and response quality. Operational definitions used in this research was to determine the variables into empirical indicators. The institutional capacity

variables consisted of capacity and human resource management, logistics and administration, finance, monitoring of evaluation accountability and learning - MEAL. While response quality variables comprised of coordination, resource mobilization and capacity of response.

The instrument used in the assessment was questionnaires comprising questions on indicators of research variables in PEER Project which is called MOCA. Identification of indicators in the questionnaire refers to MOCA format. Primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected directly on face-to-face interviews with Project manager of each organizations as respondents to verify secondary data of PEER Project. Secondary data on response quality and the organizational capacity were obtained from CRS Indonesia. This research was conducted in PKPU HI offices and MDMC offices as advised by PEER Project. This research was conducted on May and June 2018 for PEER Project activities during years 2016-2017. Ethical clearance was obtained from the *Komite Etik Penelitian Kesehatan* of Nursing Faculty Universitas Airlangga. Data analysis was conducted based on Kruskal Wallis test to determine the PEER components affecting on the improvements of organizational capacities and quality of responses.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Preliminary test results to two chosen organizations after one year implementation of PEER Project, PKPU-HI and MDMC shown in Table 1 indicates that there is an increase of MOCA Scores in general from year 2016 to 2017. This means that the PEER Project shows a good performance in improving the organizational capacity. Only one branch has a decrease performance. The gap between head offices and the branches in two organizations appears in the test result which becomes a concern for further study. However, the results in Table 1 is in general form. The detail factors in the evaluation has not been explored yet.

Accordingly, the measurement instrument of organizational capacity variables in Table 2 was used as a guideline in assessing the performance of organization in PEER Project. The values in the table is based on MOCA Assesment in PEER Project.

Table 1: Measurement Instrument of Organizational Capacity Variables.

Construct	Instrument	Measurement result	Weighted value	Results
Variable of organizational capacity and response quality	Closed-ended questionnaire	top	5	item score x weight , “good” if $\geq 60\%$ and “insufficient” if $<60\%$.
		high	4	
		medium	3	
		low	2	
		bottom	1	

Source: PEER Project (2018), Sugiono (2014)

Table 2: Average percentages of organizational capacity of all regional branch by components.

Section	PKPU HI				MDMC				All Regional Branches		
	Bengkulu	Bandung	Makassar	Surabaya	Malut	Jabar	Sumsel	NTB	mean		
	trend in 2016 to 2017 (%)								2016	2017	trend
Finance	34.8%	20.0%	6.5%	69.9%	78.6%	10.7%	38.5%	73.3%	57.8%	77.1%	33.4%
Logistic & Administration	10.0%	52.4%	14.3%	91.6%	37.5%	7.1%	0.0%	94.7%	43.6%	58.9%	35.0%
Hum Res Mangt & Capcts	-6.8%	-2.7%	55.8%	49.3%	95.5%	11.5%	48.1%	53.6%	56.7%	75.5%	33.2%
Coordination	-31.8%	-9.5%	11.1%	23.2%	130.0%	20.0%	55.6%	9.1%	44.2%	51.1%	15.5%
Mont Evt Accountblt & Lrng	-29.5%	-18.0%	11.4%	19.5%	64.5%	7.7%	57.6%	34.5%	61.0%	69.4%	13.7%
Resource Mobilization	-35.3%	0.0%	40.0%	28.6%	38.5%	-9.1%	23.1%	30.0%	67.5%	75.0%	11.1%
Response Capacity	-3.4%	30.8%	68.4%	31.0%	58.8%	9.7%	5.9%	42.9%	51.4%	65.6%	27.4%
Total	-8.9%	10.4%	29.6%	44.7%	71.9%	8.2%	32.7%	48.3%			24.2%

Source : PEER Project, 2018

The implementation of PEER Project started in 2016 with initial assessments on 7 components using questionnaire based on MOCA standards. The results are shown in Table 3. Significant components were Human Resources Management and Capacities (HRMC, $p=0.025$), Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL, $p = 0.025$) and Resource mobilization ($p = 0.025$). The insignificant improvements of the finance component of the two institutions may be caused by the high standard of financial management that have already been implemented on daily bases by the institutions so that PEER Projects did not add more values. PKPU HI uses the ISO 9001: 2008. Some aspects of finance included the availability of response budgets, the knowledge on how to access funds at the head office, the application of small cash management mechanisms and the availability of emergency fund management transaction documents. All of these processes could be found in routine institutional activities. Human Resources Management and Capacities was significantly improved. The possible factor that led to this result was that at the time the PEER Project was implemented, both institutions were in their process of building management system standards for emergency response staffers /volunteers. The HRMC component emphasized on how staffers acquire skills and training experience, branches having divisions of tasks, the number of

staffers/branch personnel, branch heads/staffers having financial control, staffers having training experience, the staffers having the capacity to adapt to changes in structures and planning. In the coordination component, Gittel (2002) in Shen & Stella (2004) describes two problems faced in an emergency situation i.e. the low uncertainty and more dynamic situation that can be addressed by regular response team meetings. Branch offices were possible to partner with local/ international/ local government/ organizations, participating in partnership and cluster meetings. Every training session of this project became an important topic for the participants. The role of coordination maximizes the effectiveness of the response and minimizes the gap needs to be improved. There were needs for staffers, equipment and knowing how to access emergency response funds in each.

Specialized training sessions on the MEAL component in PEER Project also provided new knowledge for the institutions so that it was significant in this project. The involvement of all age groups in the emergency response, proposal and budget process, the use of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time based methods appealed to staffers and institutions. Branches were also required to have data collection forms to monitor emergency response activities prior to the end of project implementation, to evaluate and engage beneficiaries in emergency response

activities according to disaggregated data. Resources mobilization improved significantly. For trainees of PEER Project agencies, implementing emergency responses was essential for providing services and determining funding strategies, and establishing mechanisms and volunteer mobilization procedures. Speed and accuracy were important factors for institutions to remain exist in service. In addition, response staffers were trained to write grant proposals to agencies at local, regional and even international levels. Both institutions also had adequate response staffers, enabling them to pay attention to the process of assignment and what factors should be done. Assessment on logistics and administrative components revealed that both institutions had standard response procedures, emergency financing procedures, emergency response volunteer procedures and rescue equipment although they had not been fully implemented. Generally, branches did not have logistics and office warehouses that accommodated rescue equipment and goods supplies. The response capacity component of the branch in the needs assessment, incorporating mainstream protection in the program, applying the sphere standard, implementing the quick review was still in its initiation process so it requires good practice (Sphere Project, 2011). So far, writing situation reports in every emergency response program has been practiced.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The results enable each branch or organization to monitor and improve their capacity. Based on the evaluation results, the coordination and logistics-administration components should be of particular concern in the next project due to the low MOCA scores. Improvements are needed for the next PEER project, focusing on coordination, administration and logistics and response capacity components.

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