

Global Summit 2018 Stronger Together: Connecting Communities Outcome Report



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Every 2 years, GNDR holds a Global Summit, bringing members together to enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing across the network. This Summit is a key component of [GNDR's 2016-2020 strategy](#) 'Stronger Together', which has three objectives: i) increase the impact of civil society in influencing policies and practices at local, national and international levels; ii) enhance collaboration capabilities of civil society and cooperation with other stakeholders; and iii) strengthen the creation, analysis and sharing of knowledge. The Summit contributes to all three objectives by providing capacity building on advocacy and collaboration, and facilitating knowledge exchange.

Funded by the **German government**, and organised with the support of **Mercy Malaysia**, GNDR's 2018 Summit 'Stronger Together: Connecting Communities' brought together 120 participants from across 70 countries around the world; 89 of these participants were fully funded by GNDR. This year's focus on collaboration has allowed the network to work in depth on strengthening and facilitating partnerships between civil society and other actors in resilience building. The Summit is also a key opportunity to check in with a diverse portion of our members and assess joint progress towards our strategic aims, and identify priorities for the next year's workplan and indeed the next global strategy.

¹ Summit group photo

“In the EU we think you are extremely relevant, because you represent the local people”

- Carl-Henrik Hall, EU Delegation to Malaysia

The 2018 GNDR Global Summit ‘Stronger Together: Connecting Communities’ is built on a history of facilitated learning and understanding of the work undertaken by GNDR on behalf of the members. This year’s Summit objectives, designed to benefit all members and stakeholders, including civil society and governments, provided practical actions for the benefit of communities and people at the frontline of disasters. We celebrated diversity, inclusion, participation and culture with a very engaged, global audience in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 22-25 May 2018.

91% of our participants agreed that they now have a better understanding of the approaches that one can take to collaborate effectively with multiple stakeholders.

- GNDR post-summit evaluation

This year’s Summit had four objectives:

1. Improve understanding of the work undertaken across GNDR and the benefits of being a member
2. Facilitate collaboration between members and (i) other members; (ii) donors, governments and the private sector; and (iii) the Secretariat
3. Enhance accountability of GNDR’s governance structures and advisory bodies (the Board, Regional Advisory/Steering Groups) to members
4. Empower members to share knowledge and experience with each other

In line with our values, GNDR’s Secretariat worked hard to ensure that key principles of inclusion, sustainability, cost-efficiency and participation were reflected in the organisation of the Summit. Special consideration was given to gender balance, diversity in geographical representation, and inclusion of different groups of society (e.g. people with disabilities). In addition, the sustainability of the event was maximised by limiting the amount of printed material, and distributing reusable water bottles to Summit participants. As well as being more geographically diverse than previous Summits, this year’s event was more member-led and more participatory in the design and implementation of the agenda, directly addressing member’s needs and requests, and empowering participants to be leading the achievement of the Summit’s objectives: for example, a training session was organised for participants on partnership brokering, responding to a request from members to include more training. This year’s Summit also provided more opportunities to engage with and learn from other stakeholders, including UN agencies, donors, and national and local government representatives.

“By supporting your work [...] the EU aims to contribute to make the people-centred approach as operational as possible. We believe your work is crucial and we want you to succeed.”

- Carl-Henrik Hall, EU Delegation in Malaysia



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The Global Summit was designed around the themes of Comprehend-Connect-Collaborate-Communicate. To enhance outreach and encourage online participation, all plenary sessions were livestreamed. For the first time ever, participants had the opportunity to lead sessions themselves under each of these four themes, providing an opportunity for a wealth of experience to be shared. Sessions covered a wider range of topics, such as climate information services, advocating for a local DRR bill, climate change in the SIDS, and resilience in protracted crises in the Arab region. As a result, *99% of participants took away more knowledge about the work being done across the entire network and not just in their country/region/continent*³.

“It’s an honour for me to be here and have the opportunity to meet more than 100 network members working on the same theme all around the world!”

- Sani Ayouba, President of JVE Niger

The Summit contributed towards priority 1 (understanding disaster risk) and priority 4 (Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk) of the SFDRR; strengthened knowledge and capacities required to achieve all SDGs but in particular Goal 1, 11 and 13; build awareness and capacities for localisation in development and humanitarian action as per the Grand Bargain; and build skills of multi stakeholder collaboration, referenced in all post-2015 frameworks as critical if targets are to be reached.

² Participants from the Latin America during a session

³ GNDR post-summit evaluation

Several member-led sessions provided participants with the opportunity to learn more about inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially women, people with disabilities and refugees, in disaster risk management directly from the experience of network members. Other members presented their experiences in ensuring resilience of health workers and infrastructure in the face of disaster risks such as earthquakes. Strategic sessions on integrating climate change adaptation into DRR work and effective collaboration with governments, gave participants the opportunity to learn more about how civil society's role can be strengthened.

"....the work CSOs do is and remains relevant in the face of changing conditions in the communities and countries of activity"

- Dato' Dr Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus, President, Mercy Malaysia

These member-led sessions highlighted how GNDR members have very diverse areas of work within the DRR umbrella: learning about other organisations' areas of work, be it gender perspectives, infrastructure resilience, or inclusion of people with disability, encourages the adoption of a more holistic approach to local resilience.



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4 Participants during a member-led session

Often left alone to solve problems, the local CSOs realised the strength of sharing. They learnt that while similar problems have different geographical contexts, issues remain the same and approaches can be replicated.

“At previous summits I met few people, and the selective programmes that I went to were not interactive enough, on this one I have been involved in every activity. [...] Today I have learnt, you don’t stand alone out there, you’ve got people that will actually help you along the way!”

- Naa Luse Taiala, Tonga Community Development Trust, GNDR member

Highlights from the summit included a visit to the Selangor State Command Centre to learn about the ‘SMART Selangor initiative’, where participants learnt more about disaster risk management policies and the application of new technology in various elements of resilience.



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During the Summit, Ms. Orsola Lussignoli from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development shared a video message on the role of civil society and its importance in sustainable development and DRR, acknowledging GNDR as an important partner and talking about multi-stakeholder collaboration for DRR. In a session, Animesh Kumar from UNISDR Asia-Pacific introduced Target E of the Sendai Framework (‘Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020’) and mentioned the importance of using local knowledge in policies that integrate SFDRR implementation into development.

“The role of the civil society in national DRR strategies is enormous”

- Animesh Kumar, Deputy Head of UNISDR Asia-Pacific

Outside of the sessions, participants had the opportunity to communicate their stories during the breaks through a Speaker’s Corner. Case studies, impact stories, and resilience activities were showcased during short 3-minute presentations and participants had the opportunity to

⁵ At the Selangor State Command Centre

listen to fellow colleagues' experiences on a variety of DRR topics, ranging from building resilience of the most at-risk groups to experiences in the Sierra Leone mudslide to the realities surrounding the application of early warning systems on the ground.

Next steps for GNDR

GNDR's Secretariat has committed to enhance mutual learning and sharing of knowledge among the membership, in line with Objective 3 of GNDR's Global Strategy, related to strengthening the creation, analysis and sharing of knowledge. A learning strategy based on four approaches (bottom-up, top-down, peer-to-peer and collaborative learning) will be the basis of the Secretariat's commitment to ensure that this wealth of knowledge is leveraged and offered to the network in a systematic manner.

95% of our participants stated that they plan to collaborate with other members after the Summit.

- *GNDR post-summit evaluation*

As we learn the importance of collaboration and how to effectively translate it in practice, the GNDR Secretariat is committed to creating a space for collaboration among its members, as reflected in Objective 2 of GNDR's Global Strategy ('Enhance collaboration capabilities of civil society and cooperation with other stakeholders'). The online community platform will provide members with the space to exchange and engage in collaborative work. In addition, the GNDR Secretariat is reaching out to the network members to assess the level of multi-stakeholder engagement in the process of developing national and local DRR strategies.

The Secretariat is also advocating for recognition of the need to increase capacities of CSOs and governments to collaborate. A guidance document will be produced, aimed at highlighting some key factors and success stories of partnerships for resilience.

We will now focus on systematising the network's advocacy, collaboration and learning, especially through the new Community Platform, which will see the impact of the network spread even further and deeper. A wide range of projects have started and continue for members to engage in, including [Views from the Frontline 2019](#), [Institutionalising Sustainable CBDRM](#), [Civil Society IMPACT DRR](#) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and [Strengthening Collaborative Capacities for Resilience](#). We also look forward to identifying new projects for our members to be a part of, addressing emerging themes in the resilience agenda. A new partnership with the German government, addressing the coherence between global development frameworks, has also been formed.

The European Commission announced a new multi-year, multi-country grant in an effort to advance the effective use of local knowledge in resilience work. GNDR has launched *Views from the Frontline* (VFL) 2019. The VFL programme not only collects local perspectives on risk and resilience, but will also collect data on the extent to which local people are included in resilience processes. It will support communities, CSOs and governments to reflect and act on this local data in order to more effectively build resilience.

As presented during the Summit, the VFL programme will provide insights on which countries are sufficiently including local knowledge and actors in risk assessment processes, design of resilience policies and plans, implementation and monitoring of activities. This will ensure accountability, as actors will be responsible for collaborative and inclusive design of resilience-building activities.

Although GNDR will be able to roll VFL out in a selected list of 50 countries, participants were encouraged to get involved and use the VFL methodology in their own countries.

An evaluation was conducted at the end of the Summit and the results showed that 99% of the respondents know more about the work of other members than they did before the Summit, and over 90% of them had a better understanding of the ways in which GNDR's structure can support their work. Similarly, over 90% of respondents learnt more about DRR and how it can be applied in the organisation's programming. Respondents also felt that they have better collaboration skills thanks to the Summit sessions.

When asked about interesting learnings from the Summit, participants had a wide range of answers, from new approaches to working with local communities, to essential elements of effective partnerships, to using technology for development.

"The business planning example from the Philippines inspired me to think of a similar process targeting the housing value chain"

- *Anonymous written comment*

An outcome of the regional discussion of our Asia & Pacific members and Regional Steering Group, suggested broadening the network's scope to include issues of DRR in conflict and climate change.

Many left Kuala Lumpur with new ideas to apply directly into their organisation's work. Participants mentioned they would utilise the learnings from the Summit in activities related to strengthening collaboration, organising multi-stakeholder forums, and lobbying for greater involvement in the development of DRR strategies, among others.

"I will conduct an awareness session for my colleagues on partnership development"

- *Anonymous written comment*

The Summit was an opportunity to update GNDR members on some important changes in membership and governance structure. This was aimed at enhancing the network's effectiveness to achieve its vision: 'a vibrant, active, collaborative civil society supporting people and their communities, particularly poor and vulnerable groups, to prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from disasters, and adapt to hazards and a changing climate'.

GNDR is also conducting an external mid-term evaluation of our strategy in August. This, coupled with the feedback from members at the Summit, will help us to determine priorities and streams of work for next year. As the network continues to grow, and opportunities for learning, joint advocacy and joint actions continue, we hope that the network as a collective maintains the high momentum and energy seen at the Summit so that we may achieve our strategy objectives together.