

Flood Preparedness – Lesson learned from private households and small businesses in Can Tho city, Mekong Delta, Vietnam

Do Thi Chinh and Heidi Kreibich, German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), Germany

Abstract:

Due to climate change and its potential sea level rise in recent years, flood hazard has been assessed to be increasing in many regions, causing significant damages to the economy and human livelihood. With the state's 'Living with flood' policy in Mekong Delta, a combination of structural and non-structural flood risk mitigation measures are in use as a key strategy to reduce flood damages and also manage sustainably the Delta's agriculture and ecosystem. However, there is still scarce the information about factors which motivate people to undertake non-structural measures, the spread of various private precautionary measures, and their potential to contribute to damage mitigation and thus adaptation.

This research is based on an analysis of 858 interviews with flood-affected households and small businesses in Can Tho city, Mekong Delta, Vietnam after the severe flood 2011. The findings demonstrate that various private precautionary measures are applied. The two most frequently ones are using mobile flood barriers and elevating the floor level. These precautionary measures have significantly mitigated the flood damages. Preparedness was high: 90% of households and 89% of businesses had undertaken one or more private mitigation measures. Even though the contribution of private households and businesses to flood risk reduction by means of mitigation measures has become an integral component of contemporary flood risk management in Vietnam, operational application of such measures still needs to be improved. Thus, in areas with no regular flooding, one should make better use of past flood experience. To keep the awareness over time, it is recommended e.g. to install or extend historical flood marks right after an event, to implement flood commemoration days and to carry out regular information gatherings. More efficient risk communication to promote incentives is essential.