

EM-DAT plays an important role in disaster loss monitoring, serving as a reference for many organizations globally. Despite its strengths, EM-DAT's global focus sometimes limits its ability to incorporate critical local-level data. This limitation often arises from local reports not being accessible online or being available only in local languages. To address this gap, EM-DAT initiated an effort involving country-level (academic) stakeholders.

In this initiative, efforts are directed towards developing training materials and providing training towards improving the resolution of disaster loss data at subnational levels, with the aim of addressing gaps in EM-DAT's coverage.

Pilot Project in Africa and Asia

The pilot study, funded by the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance of USAID, tests the standardization of retrospective disaster data collection in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Cameroon, and Uganda. Partnerships with national and regional institutes (see **Box 1**) focus on improving disaster loss data gathering at the national level. The CRED team provided training, leading to disaster impact data collection at the subnational level.

An Adapted Data Collection Tool

Given the complexity of the current EM-DAT IT data collection tool, a more user-friendly and simplified version has been developed specifically for local data collection contexts. This new tool is designed to address common challenges, such as intermittent internet

Box 1: Information on Partners and Training Experience

Partners:

- Network for Information, Response, And Preparedness Activities on Disaster (NIRAPAD), Bangladesh;
- Institute of Civil Engineering, College of Engineering, University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines;
- National Civil Protection, Cameroon ;
- School of Public Health of Makerere University in Uganda.

Training Highlights: 68 participants (41 males, 27 females) from academic institutions and national protection agencies participated. The training was interactive, with practical simulations using Kobo Toolbox and discussions on mobile data collection challenges.

connectivity, and is well-suited for environments that require flexibility. The Kobo Toolbox for offline data collection, enhancing compatibility and data migration capabilities has been incorporated for this purpose. Central to this initiative is the training provided by the CRED team, which equips local stakeholders with the skills necessary for effective data collection and analysis. The training program focuses on improving disaster data recording skills, with an emphasis on subnational data collection and its policy relevance. By the end of 2024, partner countries aim to establish their disaster loss databases, and this experience will be evaluated. The main phases of the project and the contributions of each partner are detailed in **Figure 1**, illustrating the collaborative effort.

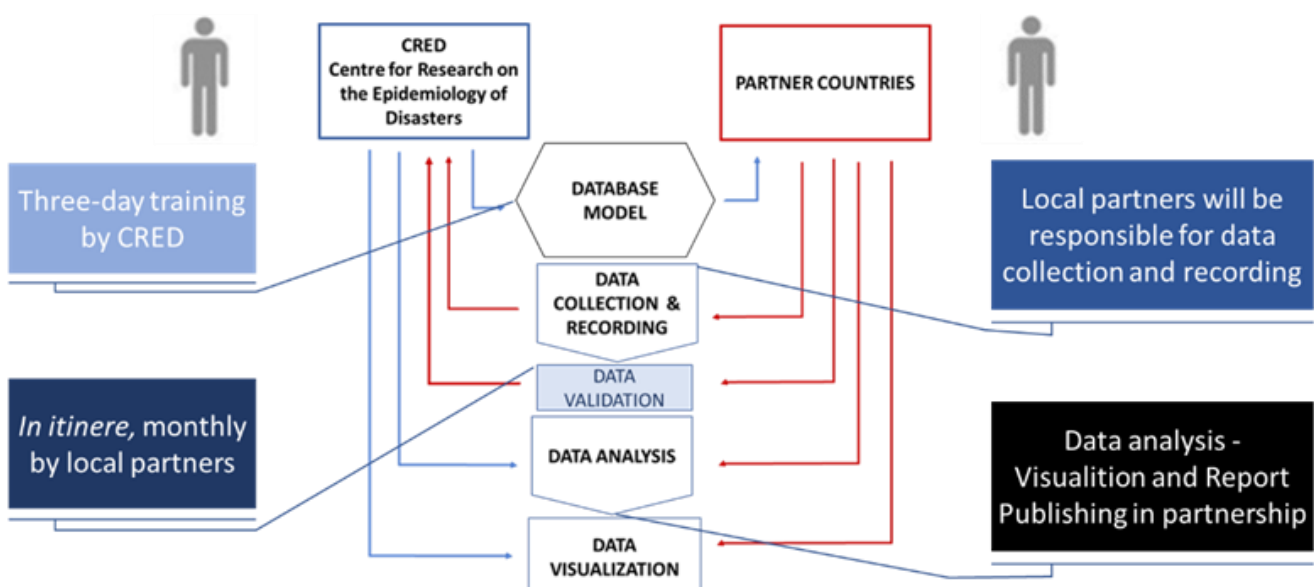


Fig. 1. Local Disaster Loss Database Collection: a Stepwise Model Presenting the Phases, with the Training Representing the Initial Stage

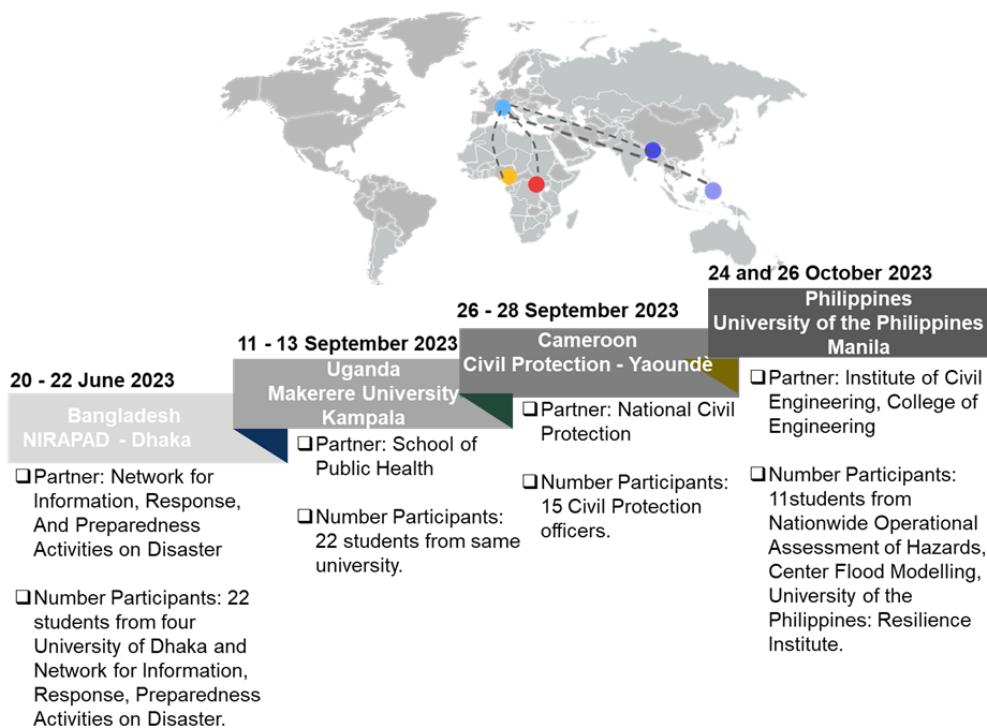


Fig. 2. Roadmap of the Training Conducted by the CRED Staff in Four Partner Countries (Bangladesh, Uganda, Cameroon, and the Philippines)

Training Roadmap and Outcomes

Figure 2 outlines the training roadmap, detailing the schedule and participant numbers. The agenda included institutional meetings and two-day data collection sessions, covering a range of topics including disaster concepts, an overview of EM-DAT, hazard classification, and practical exercises with the Kobo Toolbox. The training witnessed enthusiastic participation, with a strong interest in systematic hazard classification and an initial demonstration of the effectiveness of the developed data collection tool.

Future Directions

The ultimate aim of this initiative is to support the generation of local-level disaster loss data, facilitating their contribution to EM-DAT. We aim to achieve this by cooperating as much as possible with independent and neutral partners, such as academic institutions. Expanding this pilot initiative to more data collection efforts will enhance the availability of rigorous data on disaster losses worldwide, which can be utilized for more informed policy-making. The experience gained from this pilot can guide future endeavors, focusing on building local capacity and sustaining knowledge exchange. An archive of all training materials will be compiled for easy access, including presentations, Excel sheets, Kobo

Toolbox templates, and other relevant documents. Furthermore, the plan is to extend this activity to other countries and regions.

Conclusion

This initiative signifies a step forward in CRED's approach to disaster data collection, potentially bridging the gap between global and local data resolutions. Its objective is to empower local stakeholders with targeted training and technology. This approach could enhance the EM-DAT database, and contribute to an improved global disaster loss data collection.



Fig. 3. Last Training Session in the Philippines, October 24, 2023. Find more pictures at www.emdat.be/news

CRED Updates

- CRED is welcoming two new junior researchers, Emilie Castin and Gurvan Pluën.
- The CRED team is organizing its second Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) meeting on March 18 and 29, 2024, at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.

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