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Sharing What Works Through South-South Cooperation: The Case of the Risk Reduction Management Centre Replication Project

Rachel M. Cohn
SIT Graduate Institute

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SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION: THE CASE OF RRMC REPLICATION PROJECT

SHARING WHAT WORKS THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION:
THE CASE OF THE RISK REDUCTION MANAGEMENT CENTRE REPLICATION
PROJECT

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PIM71

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Development at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

November 10th, 2013

Advisor: Marla Solomon

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAPA – Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BCPR – Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CCA – Climate Change Adaptation
CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency
CPR – Crisis, Prevention, and Recovery
CRMI – Caribbean Risk Management Initiative
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
EWP – Early Warning Point
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization (part of UN system)
FP – Focal Point (in UNDP system)
GIS – Geographical Information System
HLC – High Level Committee
IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development
IP – Implementing Partner
NGO – Nongovernmental Organization
N-S – North-South
NSC – North-South Cooperation
ODPEM – Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (Jamaica)
OECS – Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
RBLAC – Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
RRMC – Risk Reduction Management Centre
RSCLAC – Regional Service Center for Latin America and the Caribbean
SIT – School for International Training
SSC – South-South Cooperation
TC – Triangular Cooperation
TCDC – Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNEP – United Nations Environment Program

ABSTRACT

The Risk Reduction Management Centre (RRMC) Replication Project, an initiative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), aims to take a Cuban best practice in disaster risk reduction and adapt it to the local context of five other Caribbean countries. This project differs from most development projects in that the individuals and institutions providing the assistance (in this case technical training and know-how) are themselves from a developing country (Cuba). This model, wherein developing countries provide resources, information, and training to other developing countries, is known as South-South Cooperation (SSC).

This capstone uses the case of the RRMC Replication Project to offer recommendations for SSC. The questions that it specifically aims to address are: What are the advantages and disadvantages of technical SSC? How do the general advantages and disadvantages found in the literature apply to the RRMC Replication project? Are there additional advantages and disadvantages that can be drawn out from the RRMC Replication Project? And how can the RRMC Replication Project best use the advantages of SSC, and address its disadvantages, for the remainder of the project (scheduled to conclude in December 2013)?

Using the case study methodology, this capstone assesses the RRMC Replication Project through a review of primary and secondary documents and video footage, reflections on the author's personal experience as a UNDP intern, and in-depth interviews with individuals involved in the Project. The study finds that using the lens of the RRMC Replication Project many of the advantages of SSC are revealed, including the ability to share proven solutions among similar countries that results from the similar contexts of receiving and providing countries; the emphasis on adapting projects to the local context of the receiving country; the value of having an extensive and two-way exchange of knowledge that benefits all parties involved and leads to increased regional solidarity; the empowering effect that SSC can have on both receiving and providing countries; the humility and respect for national sovereignty shown by the providing country; and the lower costs of SSC—all leading to more efficient and more sustainable development. Disadvantages and challenges of SSC seen in the RRMC Replication Project include lack of capacity for the providing country to share the information effectively and for the receiving country to take on the information effectively, the assumption that because a model works in one place it will automatically work in a neighboring country, and not being able to avoid issues that all development projects seem to have.

This research shows in practical terms the strengths and challenges of SSC technical exchange and explains why UNDP is in a unique position to advocate and facilitate such exchanges. The RRMC Replication Project has facilitated the meaningful exchange of knowledge about disaster risk reduction among six countries and among multiple government agencies, professional institutions, and individuals, leading to increased understanding and increased preparedness across the Caribbean. The author concludes that the RRMC Replication Project demonstrates the value of SSC and provides an example of the possibility of bringing the best of the North-South and South-South models together to promote truly sustainable development on a regional level.

Keywords: South-South Cooperation, Triangular Cooperation, Technical Cooperation, Knowledge Exchange, Sharing Best Practices, Regional Development, Sustainable Development, Caribbean, Disaster Risk Management, Disaster Risk Reduction, UNDP.

Introduction: Contextual Information and Research Question

Many people have decried the paternalistic nature of international development relationships and projects, yet most international development cooperation continues to be northern, developed countries providing funding and solutions for southern, developing countries. What if the North does not really have the best solutions for the South's problems? Are the results and benefits of a project different if cooperation is between southern countries?

For my internship, I worked with the Crisis, Prevention, and Recovery (CPR) team of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean. Within the CPR team I worked on the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI), a regional platform for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. One of the components of CRMI that I was most involved in was the Risk Reduction Management Centre (RRMC) Replication Project. The RRMC Replication Project aims to take the Cuban best practice of RRMCs and replicate it in five other Caribbean countries (The British Virgin Islands, The Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago). The RRMCs focus on reducing risk from disasters through using a multidisciplinary approach and performing risk and vulnerability studies that lead to informed local decision making. Authorities from the Cuban National Civil Defense have shared the concept and methodologies of the RRMCs with technical professionals from the five pilot countries, who are now adapting the main components of the centers to their specific national contexts. What makes this project different than most development projects is that the individuals and institutions providing the assistance (in this case technical training and know-how) are themselves from a developing country.

This model, where developing countries provide resources, information, training, and equipment to other developing countries for the purpose of development, is known as South-

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South Cooperation (SSC). Created by the South, for the South, the SSC model is based on a set of principles that includes respect for national sovereignty; equal rights and non-interference in the domestic affairs of nations, irrespective of their size, level of development, and social and economic systems; the promotion of solidarity among developing countries; respect for diversity of approaches to social, economic and cultural development; and adaptation of projects to local context and capacities, among others.

Through applying these principles, SSC can be used as a powerful tool to make development projects more cost-efficient, more effective, and more sustainable. It can also be used to increase solidarity among countries and regions, to level the development playing field, and to empower both the providing and receiving countries. Although there are many advantages to South-South Cooperation, there are also significant barriers and challenges to successful implementation of a South-South project.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is two-fold. Firstly, using the case study methodology, this capstone aims to assess the advantages and disadvantages of South-South Cooperation in the RRMC Replication Project in order to extract lessons learned that can be applied to the broader field of SSC. Secondly, this capstone aims to provide a set of recommendations for improvement of the RRMC Replication Project's SSC component for the remainder of the project, which is scheduled to conclude in December of 2013.

Research Questions

What does a case study of the RRMC Replication Project offer in terms of recommendations for SSC?

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of technical SSC?

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- How do the general advantages and disadvantages found in the literature apply to the RRMC Replication project?
- Are there additional advantages and disadvantages that can be drawn out from the RRMC Replication Project?
- How can the RRMC Replication Project best use the advantages of SSC, and address its disadvantages, for the remainder of the project?

Choice of Topic

My interest in this topic stemmed from various sources. Throughout my personal experiences working in the development field, and throughout my coursework at SIT Graduate Institute, I was always very aware of the unbalanced power dynamic of the North-South Cooperation (NSC) development model and the detrimental effects that it can have on the developing countries involved. While working for the Alliance for Conservation and Development in Panama, I saw, for example, how Conservation International created sustainable tourism programs in a newly created national marine reserve in Panama that matched their Arlington, VA, headquarters' priorities but not the priorities of the communities directly involved, who were still trying to understand why they could no longer fish where their families had been fishing for generations.

Another event that put me on the track of studying South-South Cooperation was a report that we received in the CRMI office from some colleagues working on a similar SSC project in the UNDP Pacific Regional Office. They had just been evaluated and one of the criticisms of the project was that they did not focus sufficiently on the SSC aspect of the project, in terms of promoting it, evaluating it, or measuring it. My supervisor highlighted this, commenting that this was an area that we needed to learn more about and to work on.

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And lastly, when I traveled to Cuba as part of my internship to attend a technical training conducted by the Cubans for the five pilot countries, one of my duties was to work on creating a video for CRMI that highlighted the RRMC Replication Project as a South-South Cooperation initiative. This is when I really started to see some of the advantages of our SSC initiative firsthand and realized that this was an aspect of our project that I wanted to explore further.

When I started to explore the literature I saw that there was still much to be learned about SSC, and I also learned that the triangular cooperation (TC) model that the RRMC Replication Project is based on is relatively uncommon in the Caribbean Region. Triangular cooperation occurs when a northern country or NGO or a multilateral institution provides the resources or support necessary for an exchange among two or more developing countries. TC has the potential to bridge traditional NSC with SSC, bringing the benefits of both. For this reason, when I saw that its use was relatively uncommon, but knew that it seemed to be working well in the case of the RRMC Replication Project, I developed the hope that by using the RRMC Replication Project as a case study, I could provide a clear picture of the value and limitations of using this model in the Caribbean and on a larger scale.

Literature Review

Introduction

For decades the common practice in international development has been that richer developed countries from the northern hemisphere provide aid and projects for the poorer underdeveloped countries of the southern hemisphere. According to the dominant development discourse, the North possesses the capital resources and technical skills that the South lacks, and therefore the North can and must promote international development by providing economic, financial, and technical assistance to the South (ROA, 2010). This traditional cooperation model, known as North-South Cooperation (NSC), has been widely criticized for its paternalistic approach and its failure to significantly reduce economic and social inequalities between northern developed countries and southern underdeveloped countries (Carrillo Roa & Santana, 2012).

South-South cooperation (SSC) is developing countries¹ providing resources, information, training, and equipment to other developing countries for the purpose of development. This alternative form of development addresses many of the issues that have plagued NSC, therefore offering a viable alternative and/or addition to NSC. Although SSC makes up a relatively small proportion of current development assistance on a global scale, its importance and prevalence have increased significantly in the past decade. SSC has recently become a buzzword in development circles, with speculation that it could play a leading role in the development field in the future.

¹ The definition of a “developing” country is widely debated. For the purpose of this paper I use the UN categorization that North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia and New Zealand are developed regions, whereas Africa, Americas (excluding N. America), Central America, South America, Asia (excluding Japan) and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) are developing regions.

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This literature review seeks to set the context for the CRMI RRMC Replication Project case study. It therefore looks at what SSC is (its types, definitions, principles, etc.), its conceptualization and history, and its documented advantages and disadvantages. Lastly, since CRMI is a UNDP Regional Service Centre project, it will briefly explore the role that UNDP has played and still plays as a promoter and facilitator of SSC.

What is SSC?

One of the challenges of working on SSC is that the concept is multifaceted and very broad in nature. SSC can be used to refer to anything from China building a mine in Botswana, to Brazil signing a trade agreement with Uruguay, to Cuba providing a Venezuelan medical student with a scholarship to study medicine in Cuba. According to Lechini (2009), SSC can be broken into various categories: economic-commercial, technical-scientific, academic, and diasporadic. Within each category there are also many variations. For example, South-South Technical Cooperation can take different and evolving forms, including capacity development, knowledge sharing, exchanging of experiences and best practices, training, and technology transfer (ILO, 2012). Lechini further subdivides the four categories of SSC into sub-regional, regional, inter-regional, and global. Others make the distinction between bilateral (country to country), multi-lateral (one country to multiple countries), and triangular cooperation (cooperation from one southern country to another with the support of a northern country or NGO or a multilateral institution). The RRMC Replication Project is a technical, regional, and triangular SSC initiative, where the cooperation is in the form of the transfer of knowledge and technical expertise related to RRMCs from Cuba to the five Caribbean pilot countries, with funding and coordination support provided by UNDP.

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Complicating things even further, for years there was no single working definition of SSC. As late as 2011, an internal review of SSC within the UN stated, “There is still no universally accepted definition nor clear understanding of these concepts at the operational level” (UNJIU, 2011, p. 7). In response, the United Nations High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation proposed in 2012 the following operational definition of SSC:

A process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. (p. 5)

This definition clearly indicates the breadth of the different activities and actors that fall under the wide umbrella of SSC.

Because it is an inherently political process, the providers of SSC and their motives for providing assistance vary widely. Differences among providers of SSC include the nature of their development cooperation institutions and modalities; their ideology and discourses of development assistance; their economic and political positioning within international and regional regimes; and the relative amount of the contributions that they provide relative to their GDP (Mawdsley, 2012). For example, although the main providers of SSC in Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of number of projects provided are Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico (SEGIB, 2012), if the amount of aid is calculated relative to the country’s GDP, Cuba actually provides the highest amount of cooperation relative to its GDP.

Despite these wide differences among the actors, all SSC initiatives share a set of common governing principles. Different SSC documents and agreements have slightly different variations, but the main ideas remain the same. The principles outlined by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in 1978 (one of the first

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conferences to focus on the concept of SSC) are: the strict observance of national sovereignty; economic independence; equal rights; and non-interference in the domestic affairs of nations, irrespective of their size, level of development, and social and economic systems.

The UNDP Unit for SSC Handbook (n.d.) adds to these guiding principles by stating the following:

SSC must strive to promote solidarity among developing countries in their effort to achieve social and economic progress consistent with the basic principles of equality among all states. SSC must be aimed at providing special assistance to least-developed, land-locked, island and most seriously affected countries. SSC relations between developing countries must be based on respect for diversity of approaches to social, economic and cultural development. (Guiding Principles of SSC section, first paragraph)

The Nairobi Outcome Document (2009), which grew out of a more recent global conference on SSC, states the same principles as policy principles and adds another category of operational principles. Like the previous documents mentioned above, it suggests that the normative principles are: respect for national sovereignty and ownership, partnership among equals, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs, and mutual benefit. The operational principles, on the other hand, are: mutual accountability and transparency, development effectiveness, coordination of evidence- and results-based initiatives, and a multi-stakeholder approach (HLUNCSSC, 2009).

The fact that SSC is defined as cooperation guided by this certain set of principles implies that it is possible for there to be cooperation among southern countries that does not follow these principles, and therefore would not properly be considered SSC. At this point there does not seem to be a particular body that is responsible for assessing whether these principles have been upheld in the case of a southern country providing assistance to another southern country. Another issue is that today, the words 'southern' and 'developing' are often seen as synonymous in the

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development field. Yet as developing countries in the southern hemisphere become developed, the term South-South Cooperation may become confusing and inapplicable.

History of SSC

Although the call for SSC has gained momentum in recent years, developing countries working together is not itself a new phenomenon. Since the end of World War II, the prevalence and intensity of SSC on a global scale has oscillated widely, gaining traction just to be brought down again by the political and economic circumstances of the times.

Although not commonly discussed in the UN literature, the roots of SSC can be traced back to the decolonization that occurred at the end of World War II and the subsequent rise of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was created in 1961 and made up of countries that declined to be under the control of the East or the West (SEGIB, 2012). This development was closely tied to the “making of the Third World” (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2010) and the subsequent emergence of a “southern consciousness,” where “developing countries, identified as the south, recognized their common identities and challenges and realized the need to join forces against international system asymmetries” (Carrillo Roa & Santana, 2012, p. 369; Ayllón, 2009).

The Asia-Africa Conference in Indonesia in 1955, otherwise known as the Bandung Conference, called for the “promotion of mutual interest and cooperation” among African and Asian developing countries, making it the first major political commitment to SSC. After the Bandung Conference, it was with the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, and the Group of 77 within the United Nations in 1964 that developing countries truly began to join together to promote their shared interests and to strengthen their collective position in the world economic system (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2010).

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In 1978, the United Nations held a Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which led to the “Buenos Aires Plan of Action” (BAPA), considered by the UN to be the principal founding document of SSC. Approved by delegates from 138 countries, the document solidified the term “technical cooperation between developing countries”, or TCDC, and promoted technical assistance among developing countries based on respect for individual countries and their particular characteristics.

In order to provide follow-up and to ensure implementation of the BAPA, the United Nations established in 1980 the UN High-Level Committee (HLC) on South-South Cooperation. The term TCDC was officially replaced by the term SSC in 2003, and the UN HLC still exists today under the name of the UN Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

The movement towards solidarity between developing countries that had been promoted during the 1960s and 1970s was hard to sustain in the long-term, because of the worsening economic situation of the developing countries. The oil crisis of the 1970s and the debt crisis of the 1980s severely limited developing countries’ ability to support other countries, when most were frantically trying to stay afloat themselves (Carrillo Roa & Santana, 2012; Morais de Sá e Silva, 2010). The large amounts of debt led to structural adjustment policies in the 1980s and early 1990s that further tied developing countries’ hands on spending, including support to other countries.

It was not until the aftermath of structural adjustment and other North-South development policies became clear (increased poverty, inequality, dependence, etc.) that SSC was seen once again as a potential alternative that might enable sustainable development without many of the negative consequences of NSC. In the last decade, as many developed countries have experienced economic crises, many developing countries have actually experienced incredible

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growth rates, throwing them onto the global development stage not only as recipients of aid, but also as potential donors. According to Carrillo Roa and Santana (2012), it was a combination of “the impulse of emerging countries and the fatigue of traditional donors” (p. 369) that pushed SSC once again onto the international development agenda.

During the first decade of the new century there have been a series of important meetings and agreements encouraging and committing to SSC, particularly within the UN. “The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness” (2005) called for the use of SSC as a more effective tool for development. “The Accra Agenda for Action” from the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in 2008 acknowledged that there is much to be learned from developing countries themselves, and it further emphasized the need for increased support for SSC: “We recognize the importance and particularities of South-South cooperation and acknowledge that we can learn from the experience of developing countries. We encourage further development of triangular co-operation... It [SSC] plays an important role in international development co-operation and is a valuable complement to North-South co-operation” (UNCTAD, pp. 116 and 117).

In 2008, 30 years after the adoption of BAPA, the UN decided to convene a High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which took place in Nairobi in 2009. The resulting agreement, “The Nairobi Outcome Document,” gave a major political boost to South-South Technical Cooperation, requesting UN system organizations to play a catalytic role in South-South and Triangular Cooperation and to make additional efforts to ensure that they meet member states’ expectations regarding support for such cooperation (ILO, 2011; UNJIU, 2011).

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The steering committee responsible for organizing the Bogota High Level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development in 2010 created the “Bogota Statement Towards Effective and Inclusive Development Partnerships.” This document outlines general guidance for effective SSC as a tool for establishing horizontal partnerships for development, and it encourages the UN and its member countries to continue providing the necessary support for SSC and TC.

The Advantages of SSC

Reading about the history of SSC, one can clearly see that on a global scale there is an increasing interest in and demand for SSC. There are many reasons why SSC is a promising model for promoting sustainable development, ranging from practical (i.e., it is cheaper to hire an expert from a southern country than a northern country) to more political (it leads to less dependency on the North and more relationships and solidarity with southern neighbors).

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Source</i>
Similar contexts	Carrillo Roa and Santana
Respect for recipients needs/Demand-driven	SEGIB; Carrillo Roa and Santana
Promotes horizontal partnerships instead of donor-recipient relationship	Carrillo Roa and Santana
Has limited or no conditionality	Ayllón; SELA
Promotes regional integration and solidarity	Ayllón; SEGIB
More efficient than NSC	Ayllón; IFAD; SELA
More effective than NSC	IFAD
More sustainable than NSC	IFAD; Carrillo Roa and Santana

Figure 1: Advantages of SSC cited in literature (not exhaustive list)

One major advantage of South-South technical cooperation is that the solutions that are being shared have been created in a context similar to that of the target country. When a project is created in a Washington DC office for a rural village in Haiti, there is high potential that the creator/grant writer does not understand completely the context of the problem that the project is trying to address. Southern countries, however (particularly if they are neighboring or from the

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same region), tend to have similar histories, climates, issues, etc. They are therefore able to draw on their own experiences that more closely resemble the target country context than the experiences of northern donors (Carrillo Roa & Santana, 2012). If a developing country has created an innovative solution to a problem, it is likely that the same solution will work in the country next-door. And, although this is not mentioned in the literature, it seems likely that the individuals involved in the project will have an easier time relating to each other, because they have all experienced the problem being addressed; and, depending on the context, they may also share the same language, cultural background, way of life, etc.

On the other hand, because of the principles that SSC is founded on (including respect for individual countries and national sovereignty), there is also acknowledgment in SSC that each country is different and that projects must be adapted to the target countries' specific context and needs. As opposed to the one-size-fits-all (cookie-cutter) approach that is often used in NSC, SSC allows for the sharing of innovative approaches to similar but not identical problems, respecting the specific characteristics and historical contexts of the target countries and "contributing to reducing gaps and asymmetries between and within countries" (SEGIB, 2012, p. 13).

SSC can also lessen the power dynamic that is often at play with traditional NSC. Whereas NSC uses the donor-recipient model, most implementers of SSC steer clear of this language and prefer to refer to themselves as partners. "There is much evidence to suggest that countries that have for decades been humiliated by colonial exploitation, and then by demeaning postcolonial foreign aid relations, are appreciative of the social relationship this [SSC] helps construct. To take just one of many possible illustrations, Paulo and Reisen quote the Prime Minister of Botswana: 'I find that the Chinese treat us as equals. The West treats us as former

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subjects” (as cited in Mawdsley, 2012, p. 264). SSC projects tend to be much more demand-driven and less based on the political interests or donor preferences of the implementing entity.

In the past this power dynamic has led to a situation where northern countries and donors could require a long list of conditions under which the aid, particularly but not limited to loans, would be provided. SSC projects, on the other hand, have little to no conditionality (Ayllón, 2009). Generally speaking, they are not in the form of loans, and there are no expectations that the assistance will be reciprocated or paid back. Having no conditionality linked to the assistance leads to greater flexibility in terms of transferring of good practices and sharing of experiences (SELA, 2011).

Continuing in the political sphere, another major advantage of SSC is that it promotes regional integration and solidarity among neighboring countries. Whereas the NSC model is set up in a manner that forces southern countries to *compete* for scarce resources, the SSC model *builds connections* and strengthens relations between partners in the region, taking into consideration their complementary cooperation skills and development needs (SEGIB, 2012). By working together, developing countries involved in SSC can better understand each other and form links both on a personal and political level.

On a more practical level, multiple authors have pointed to the fact that SSC tends to be more economically efficient than NSC (SELA, 2011; Ayllón, 2009). The logic behind this is that SSC is more cost-effective because hiring of technical experts and charges for services tend to be much cheaper in developing countries. Although this may be true in most cases, one must be careful not to over-generalize, considering the wide range in the cost of living in southern countries: In Cuba, for example, services are much cheaper than in northern countries, but in Trinidad and Tobago or Jamaica prices would be comparable to if not higher than in many

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northern countries. Another argument is that capitalizing on local knowledge and know-how is more efficient not just in the short-term but in the long-term as well, because the availability of this know-how lowers program development and delivery costs, reduces process failure, and offers already tested solutions (IFAD, 2011).

The combination of all of these advantages arguably makes SSC more effective and more sustainable than traditional NSC. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) states the advantages in this way:

Direct exchange of knowledge and know-how, through SSC, raises IFAD's development effectiveness by enabling (through M&E, shared evidence-based knowledge management and joint analytical work) tested approaches to be replicated. This enhances the probability of investment programmes achieving their development objectives on a sustainable basis (reduced risk of failure). It also provides stronger foundations for earlier and predictable scaling up—effectiveness at a higher level and on a broader basis. First and foremost, however, it is the empowerment of people, inherent in SSC that underpins overall development effectiveness. (IFAD, 2011, p.6)

Carrillo Roa and Santana (2012) also refer to the increased use of local resources in SSC, which generates an increased sense of project ownership, which again increases the likelihood of sustainability. Considering these factors, local empowerment may be the most important advantage of all.

The Disadvantages of SSC

Although there are many documented advantages to SSC, the model has not been able to escape some of the same issues that NSC faces. It also faces multiple challenges, both in approach and in practice, such as lack of proper indicators for assessing effectiveness and lack of funding.

<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Sources</i>
Fragmented assistance and coordination problems among donors	Carrillo Roa and Santana
Still can be issues of power dynamics	Ayllón
Specific foreign policy interests can skew project	Carrillo Roa and Santana

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away from the true needs of recipient	
Lack of standardization	SELA
Little culture of impact assessment	Carrillo Roa and Santana
Lack of available funding	HLESSC
Can be difficult to find skilled people suitable for specific cooperation projects	
Potential lack of technical competence in developing countries	

Figure 2: Disadvantages of SSC cited in literature (not exhaustive list)

The issues that SSC continues to share with NSC are multiple. Like NSC, SSC can be fragmented, and there can be problems of coordination among donors. As Carrillo Roa and Santana (2012) state, “SSC is a concept with ideologic, political, and technical hues that is innovating international cooperation for development but whose operation has not fully pulled away from the paradigm of traditional NSC” (p. 369). It is not reasonable, for example, to assume that with SSC there is automatically no verticality or unequal power dynamics between the partners (Ayllón, 2009). All aid and cooperation is political in nature, and donor countries are always going to have their own self-interests involved, even if that self-interest includes supporting less-developed or other developing countries.

Some of the advantages of SSC can also be seen as disadvantages. For example, its great flexibility also involves negative effects. In addition to there being little conditionality, there has also been a lack of impact assessment (Carrillo Roa & Santana, 2012) and proper documentation of SSC initiatives. According to SELA (2011), there are no unified information systems, little monitoring and evaluation, and no standardized methodology to do either.

A somewhat obvious disadvantage of SSC is that southern countries do not have the same economic resources that developing countries have to spend on cooperation. Oftentimes the providers of SSC are recipients of northern aid themselves, and they are working hard to fight their own development issues. Triangular cooperation is a way to address this issue, but at this point it is not yet well funded.

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Another potential issue with SSC – one that is not frequently cited in the literature – is the question of technical and training competence. Does a developing country have the technical expertise needed to address a specific problem? Technical expertise tends to be highest where education is best, which tends to be in more developed countries. And, if the technical expertise is there, transferring the knowledge requires that the country also have the needed training capacity to successfully do so. For example, Cuban Civil Defense has created an innovative model for disaster risk reduction, but their training capacity is much more traditional and less developed, which can compromise the success and sustainability of the knowledge transfer.

SSC and the UN

One of the main funders of triangular cooperation, and the main promoter/coordinator for other SSC, is the United Nations (UN). The UN has held most of the main conferences relating to SSC and also has a Special Unit for SSC, which is dedicated to promoting SSC across all UN agencies.

Nevertheless, there is still much work to be done within the UN to get SSC right. In 2010, the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation requested that the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System perform a system-wide review of the existing UN institutional arrangements in support of SSC and TC. The resulting report criticized the UN system for an absence of a common definition among agencies, lack of dedicated intra-agency support structures, weak overall SSC governance, poor application of guidelines and guidance, weak reporting mechanisms, underfunding of SSC, lack of effective action at a regional level, and lack of a coherent policy or strategy for triangular cooperation, among others (JIU, 2011).

In the “Bogota Statement Towards Effective and Inclusive Development Partnerships,” the UN clearly states that SSC is intended to be complementary to NSC, not to serve as a

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replacement, and that triangular cooperation should serve as a bridge between the two types (HLESSC Steering Committee, 2010). For this reason it is important to study and analyze existing programs of this sort to see what can be learned and how the concepts of SSC and TC can be improved.

Research/Practitioner Inquiry Design

Data Collection

This Capstone research paper uses the case study methodology to assess the RRMC Replication Project as a SSC initiative. The case study combines a review of primary and secondary documents and video footage, reflections on my personal experience, and in-depth interviews with individuals from CRMI, from the five pilot countries (both UNDP office and implementing partner representatives), and from the UNDP Cuba office.

I began by reviewing the existing scholarly literature on South-South and triangular cooperation in both English and Spanish in order to gain background information and to create the advantages and disadvantages framework described in my literature review. I then looked at various UN agency (particularly UNDP) documents in order to find lessons learned so far and to examine how the advantages and disadvantages were described there. The documents that I reviewed included a series of UNDP Actions and Agreements, Policy Papers, Concept Notes, and Progress Reports.

In order to describe CRMI and the RRMC Replication Project and to assess SSC within the project, I then turned to internal CRMI documents. These documents included evaluations for workshops where questions about SSC were asked, the final report of the consultant in charge of drafting the Project Document for CRMI II, the final CRMI II Project Document (aka logframe), CRMI quarterly and annual reports, and promotional documents created by CRMI to share information about the RRMC Replication Initiative.

I was also fortunate to have access to the video recording of parts of the technical professional training on the RRMCs, which took place in April 2013 in La Havana, Cuba. The workshop was filmed to create promotional and educational videos about the Centers and the SSC initiative. I reviewed the sections where participants were interviewed about SSC, the

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presentation given by the program manager about the history of the project, and the opening and closing remarks of the Cuban officials (head of Civil Defense, second head of Civil Defense, and Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Cuba). I used partial transcription to record the relevant sections of the videos.

As an intern for six months with CRMI, I was able to use my personal experience to add to what I learned through document and video review. I knew a lot of the history of the project from my time in the office, and I was also able to refer back to journal notes that I kept during my time at the 10-day technical training in Cuba and in the office throughout my six-month internship with CRMI.

Finally, I was able to conduct nine in-depth interviews with individuals directly involved in the RRMC Replication Project to hear their impressions about the project and their experiences with SSC. During July and August of 2013, I interviewed the CRMI project manager; the CRMI program assistant in the UNDP Cuba office; the UNDP Country Office Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Focal Points for the British Virgin Islands, Guyana, and Jamaica; and five implementing partner representatives from the British Virgin Islands, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Jamaica. For a complete list of people interviewed and their positions, see appendix A. In order to select my participants, I sent an email request for an interview to all six UNDP Country Office DRR Focal Points (who are in charge of coordinating the Project in their given country and liaising between that country's National Disaster Agency and the UNDP Regional Center), and all ten technical professionals (two from each pilot country) who had participated in the April RRMC training, meaning that they are representatives of the National Implementing Partners (National Disaster Agencies and Local Government) who will be directly involved in the implementation of the project.

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I provided interviewees with an informed consent form (Appendix B) and an interview guide (Appendix C) prior to our scheduled interview. I then used a more detailed list of questions to guide my interviews (Appendix D), which lasted approximately 30 minutes. Because the interviewees were scattered across the Caribbean, the interviews took place via Skype. The interviews were recorded, and then transcribed. Interviews in Spanish were translated only in the case of the direct quotes I used in the results section.

Data Analysis

Data from the videos, internal CRMI documents, and interviews were coded and inserted into an Excel sheet according to the set of advantages and disadvantages established from the literature and also other patterns and trends that arose as I began to analyze the results. I saw which relevant comments did not fit into the predefined categories and then added additional categories accordingly. Those new categories were where I looked for new information that could be added to the existing literature. I also noted themes and highlighted quotes that I wanted to insert directly into the body of the paper. Within each theme or category, I compared the different types of sources (used triangulation) looking for similarities and inconsistencies.

Ethical Issues

All interviewees received a consent form detailing the purpose and scope of my research project and stating that they had a right not to participate. Interviewees are identified throughout my paper by position (CRMI Project Manager (CRMI PM), UNDP Country Office Focal Point (FP1-3) and National Implementing Partner (IP1-5)) and not by name. The capstone proposal was submitted to my supervisor (the CRMI Project Manager) and her supervisor (The Crisis Prevention and Recovery Team Leader) to seek full approval of this research project from CRMI and UNDP.

Limitations

One limitation was that for mainly logistical reasons I did not have access to interview many of the Cubans involved in the project: Like most Cubans, they had very limited access to the Internet and no Skype. Thus the main documentation I have from Cuba was from my personal experience at the RRMV Technical Training in La Havana, Cuba from April 8th-18th, 2013 and footage from the videos that were shot during the April workshop. The only Cuban participant I was able to interview was the CRMI Assistant in the UNDP Cuba Office, who has been very involved in the implementation of the project. To address this limitation, my work focused more on the impressions of and impact on the five pilot countries participating in the project.

Another limitation was that the CRMI SSC pilot initiative will not be completed until December 31st, 2013. At the time of writing this document, the actual implementation of the replication project was only beginning in all five pilot countries. I was therefore not able to draw any conclusions about the overall sustainability, success, or impact of the project in this paper, since they are yet to be known. In order to address this I focused on the design and process and any interim or process results, as opposed to the final outcomes of the RRMV Replication Project as a S-S initiative. Doing my research at this time also had the advantage that I was able to provide recommendations for improvements to be applied for the remainder of the project.

The fact that I am a member of the CRMI team potentially influenced the responses that I got from the individuals that I interviewed. CRMI is providing the funding for the project, and interviewees may have been hesitant to express concerns about the project to me as the project intern, or to put the CRMI project in a negative light. To avoid this to the best of my ability, I stated clearly that their honesty and feedback would be valuable in providing recommendations

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for changes and adjustments. The advantage of my position as an intern was that I knew the actors personally and had a deeper understanding of the project as someone who had been closely involved in the everyday implementation.

I also recognize that I was interviewing individuals who may have seen themselves as representatives of their institutions and government agencies, so that they would feel obligated to answer the questions with the position of the agency or institution that they represent, rather than their personal opinions. This was particularly clear to me in one country, where the director of the national disaster agency would not allow me to interview the individual who attended the workshop, instead preferring that I write a formal request letter to the director asking permission to interview the workshop participant's supervisor as the official representative of that country.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section aims to present the case study itself. It begins with an overview of the history of the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI) including its first and second phases and a description of the Risk Reduction Management Centre (RRMC) Replication Project, which is itself a subset of the second phase of CRMI. It then presents the responses from the individuals whom I interviewed about the RRMC Replication Project as a South-South Cooperation initiative, including what SSC means to them and how they saw it play out in the Project. Lastly, the case study turns to the UNDP Focal Points interviewed who eloquently describe the role that they see UNDP playing in the RRMC Replication Project and other SSC initiatives and why they believe that UNDP is in a unique position to play this role.

History of CRMI

CRMI I.

The Caribbean Risk Management Initiative was established by UNDP in 2004 as a regional program to improve capacity for managing climate-related risk across the Caribbean, through knowledge transfer strategies and integration of climate change science with the traditional disaster risk management communities. The initial funding came from UNDP's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). Additional donors included the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land, and Sea; Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the UNDP Spanish Trust Fund; the UNDP Gender Thematic Trust Fund; and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The first phase of CRMI (from April 2004 – December 2010) was executed from the UNDP Cuba and UNDP Barbados Country Offices.

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CRMI is different than most UNDP projects, in the sense that it uses the Direct Implementation (DIM) modality. Most UNDP projects use National (government) or Agency (NGO/civil society) implementation where the country or partnering organization is responsible for project management and UNDP plays a supporting and monitoring role. In DIM projects such as CRMI, the responsibility for the project management lies within UNDP.

As a program designed to exchange information and knowledge and to develop capacities in the thematic areas of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) across diverse linguistic and cultural communities in the Caribbean, South-South Cooperation has been an integral part of CRMI from the beginning. In order to facilitate sharing across the region, CRMI I created a trilingual web-based DRR/CCA knowledge platform and researched and published on best practices of DRR and CCA in the region. For a list of objectives, main activities, and results achieved during CRMI I, see appendix E.

CRMI also supported the Cuban Civil Defense in creating a model for DRR that focused on prevention and empowering local government. Known as Risk Reduction Management Centres (RRMCs), the first one was piloted in 2004 (financed by CRMI), and by the end of the first phase of CRMI, Cuba had undertaken to replicate this model and had established 54 municipal-based RRMCs in the most vulnerable territories in Cuba, mostly on the western and eastern tips, which are highly susceptible to hurricanes and other extreme weather events. This model was identified by CRMI as a best practice in the field of DRR and CCA in the Caribbean. During the last year of phase I (2010), CRMI worked with Cuban authorities to extract lessons learned and document the Cuban RRMC experience.

CRMI II.

The final evaluation of CRMI I paved the way for proposing a second phase, and there was widespread agreement among involved practitioners that the project could be deepened and strengthened to the benefit of the region (CRMI, 2009a). The idea of CRMI II was to build on the advances made during the first phase of the project and to tackle emerging issues such as gender integration into DRR, planning for recovery, and seismic risk. CRMI hired a consultant to assess the feasibility of a second phase and to obtain stakeholder input on the continuation of CRMI. The consultant found that capacity in the Caribbean for managing climate-induced disaster risk was still low, despite gains made by CRMI I and other initiatives undertaken by regional governments, the UN, and other development partners (CRMI, 2009b). He also found that many Caribbean countries expressed interest in learning from the Cuban risk management model.

In the final approved Project Document that formalized CRMI II – meant to run from September 2010 to December 2012 – a pilot replication project was included as one of the main components. Project management was to be moved from UNDP Cuba & Barbados to the UNDP Caribbean Sub-Regional Centre in Trinidad and Tobago, with the eventual aim of transitioning project direction and management to a national or regional institution for continued sustainability. Work continued on the documentation of the RRMC model (what are its main components, which parts are replicable, etc.) and on reaching out to countries to participate in the pilot project.

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Unfortunately, CRMI II faced several hurdles: In 2011, the Caribbean Sub-Regional Centre in Trinidad was closed and the CRMI Project Manager was let go.² In this transitional period the project suffered from a lack of clear leadership and a lull in activities. In mid-September 2012 the person who had previously managed CRMI I from 2009-2010 was employed to run the CRMI II project out of the Regional Service Center for Latin America and the Caribbean (RSCLAC) in Panama City, Panama (CRMI, 2012). One of the first tasks of the new project manager was to revise the Project Document in order to reflect the above-mentioned circumstances and to apply for a project extension until December 31st, 2013. For the complete list of objectives listed in the most recent Project Document for CRMI II, see appendix F.

The Cuban Risk Reduction Management Centre model.

The RRMCs serve as a tool to increase local governments' capacity to reduce risk in their territories. Specifically, the RRMC facilitates the collection and management of hazard, risk, and vulnerability data in a given territory, through studies and analysis in coordination with key territorial actors. Providing this information to decision makers at the lowest level of government allows them to make informed decisions in preparation for and during potentially hazardous situations. The RRMC is also linked to vulnerable communities through an early warning point system, for improved communication and coordination of prevention and recovery actions. The seven pillars of RRMCs are early warning points, multidisciplinary groups, risk and vulnerability studies, databases, geographic information systems (GIS), communications, and public awareness/community preparation.

² This was caused by a UNDP decision to restructure in 2011, centering all regional and sub-regional services in the Panama-based Regional Service Centre, which also resulted in a reduction of staff (including the CRMI manager) attending to disaster management in the Caribbean.

The RRMC South-South Cooperation Project.

The main objective of the RRMC Replication Project is to enhance capacity for local risk management and decision making through South-South cooperation. The specific objectives of the project are:

- To build local capacity for risk assessment, analysis, and management for the purpose of informed decision making at a local level and improved coordination with national level
- To strengthen use of risk management tools such as hazard and risk studies, vulnerability assessments, GIS mapping, and database management
- To strengthen community-based early warning systems and ensure they are connected with risk reduction mechanisms in the district
- To strengthen South-South Cooperation as an effective vehicle for development
- To document knowledge generated through the initiative, at three levels: Cuban experience in risk reduction management; target countries' experience in adapting the model; and sharing the South-South initiative and results with the greater Caribbean and global community.

For the adaptation, each pilot country has access to a maximum of \$25,000 of UNDP funds and is also required to demonstrate commitment to sustainability through the provision of in-kind or cash support. All workshops and technical assistance are fully funded by the CRMI project.

The process started in 2009 with a thorough documentation of the RRMC model. Cuban practitioners involved in the creation and management of the RRMCs gathered lessons learned and methodology used in Cuba for implementation into a document entitled "*Cuba: Best Practice in Risk Reduction*". In September 2010, national RRMC managers from across Cuba gathered to share their experiences in a two-day workshop. The systematization process

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demonstrated a high level of support for the RRMIC model by Cuban mayors, municipal decision makers, and local authorities. As a workshop output, a guide was developed to orient other Caribbean countries as to the key elements of the model and the conditions necessary for its implementation. A detailed description of the replicable components of the model and a checklist of conditions necessary for participating in the pilot project were sent by CRMI to all national disaster authorities in the Caribbean.

The pilot project was designed with extensive opportunities for exchange between Cuba and the five pilot countries. In late 2010 UNDP Focal Points and national disaster agency representatives from four countries that had expressed interest and met the minimal criteria (The British Virgin Islands, The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago) attended a study tour in Cuba to learn about the model and explore the possibility of adapting the model to their own context. After the lull in activity (2011 – mid 2012), the current project manager met via Skype with all four of the UNDP DR Focal Points who had attended the study tour plus the DR Focal Point for Guyana to reassess interest. She then traveled to three of the interested countries to consult, explain the process, assess the proposed selected territories, and discuss the model further with national and local authorities. All five countries were also required to provide baseline DRR data about their countries to use as a tool for measuring results as well as a way to share the specificities of the selected territories with the Cubans. The baseline data information also contributed to shaping the training agendas of the workshops in Cuba, to meet the needs of the participating countries (CRMI PM, personal communication, July 2, 2013).

The first official event for CRMI II took place in February 2013, when one national-level decision maker from the national disaster agency and one local government representative from the target region from each country attended a training in Cuba. This three-day sensitization

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workshop provided a brief overview of the model and allowed the representatives to see an RRMC and an early warning point (EWP) firsthand. The representatives returned to their respective countries, where they set out to create Implementation Plans detailing how the model would be adapted to their country's particular context.

In April 2013 there was a ten-day training in Cuba for the technical professionals that would be doing the hands-on implementation in their countries. Two representatives from each country attended. The participants learned about technical components of the RRMC model, such as GIS, Risk and Vulnerability Studies, database management, etc. and also had the opportunity to see the RRMCs and EWPs in person.

Following a slight delay while contracts were signed between the UNDP Regional Centre and the UNDP Country Offices and procurement procedures were finalized, project implementation began in the five countries in June 2013. A webinar was held in July for the UNDP focal points to share their experiences to date. Further exchange will occur when the Cuban experts involved in the project travel to some of the pilot countries to provide two- or three-day technical assistance missions to improve implementation. Lastly, exchange will also occur between the six countries when representatives from the project gather at the annual Comprehensive Disaster Management Conference in Barbados in December 2013 to discuss the project and identify lessons learned. For a complete timeline of the scheduled RRMC Replication Project activities from November 2012-December 2013, see appendix G.

The RRMC Replication Project also has a Knowledge Management Strategy, designed to ensure communication between Cuba and the five pilot countries and among the five pilot countries. Part of that plan includes the creation of Twitter, Facebook, and TeamWorks (UNDP social networking site) accounts for CRMI. Each country will also be required to provide a

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progress report midway through implementation to share with the other five countries, and complete a final case study to document its experience adapting the RRMC model.

* * *

This next section presents the experiences of the individuals involved in the RRMC Replication Project. During the interviews and recorded videos, participants spoke extensively about what SSC meant to them, the differences they saw between the RRMC Replication Project and other development projects that they had been involved with, what they saw as the advantages and disadvantages of SSC in terms of the RRMC Replication Project, and ideas that they had for improvement of the remainder of the project and other future RRMC replication initiatives.

Definitions of SSC

The individuals whom I interviewed had varying degrees of experience with and knowledge about SSC. All people interviewed reported having heard of SSC before, although in some cases only vaguely. Two of the UNDP Focal Points (FP1 and 3) had worked extensively with SSC projects (one was the SSC Focal Point for her country office and had taken a UN online course on SSC) whereas for one of the Focal Points (FP2) this was the first SSC project she had been involved with. Overall, the UNDP Focal Points had a good understanding of SSC, whereas the term was not as clear to many of the implementing partners. One implementing partner understood SSC to involve any agreement where two or more countries worked together to share experiences, but he did not identify it as something that applied only to cooperation between or among developing countries (IP1, personal communication, June 26, 2013). Another implementing partner believed that South-South Cooperation was an organization with the goal

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of strengthening the ties among the Caribbean countries and among other countries in the South (IP2, personal communication, June 28, 2013).

How is the RRMC Replication Project Different from More Traditional Donor-Recipient Projects?

When asked how the RRMC Replication Project and other SSC projects were different from the more traditional N-S development projects they had been involved in, participants talked about the importance of being able to exchange knowledge with other countries. They talked about the fact that the RRMC Project was regional (not just within their own country), and that it was executed on a local community level, as opposed to a more national policy level. FP2 stated that it was unique because almost all other development projects in her country were centered around the capital city, because that is where donors were interested in working, while this project was located in a remote area because the Civil Defense Commission got to choose the location for the pilot themselves (personal communication, July 11, 2013). One of the implementing partners mentioned the unique opportunity of actually getting to travel to the country where the model was created in order to see it firsthand (IP1, personal communication, June 26, 2013). This same implementing partner also talked about how it was unique that each country actually got to create their own Implementation Plan by taking the model and adapting it to their own country's context, as opposed to other more traditional projects where they were not asked what they wanted. Two implementing partners stated that they did not see a difference (IP 3 and 4), one pointing out that the way resources were managed through their country was the same as any other project.

Advantages of SSC

There are many advantages of SSC that can be seen through the lens of the RRMC Replication Project. Advantages the participants spoke of included the similar contexts of receiving and providing countries, and therefore the ability to share proven solutions among these similar countries; the emphasis on adapting projects to the local context of the receiving country; the value of having an extensive and two-way exchange of knowledge that benefits all parties involved and leads to increased regional solidarity; the empowering effect that SSC can have on both receiving and providing countries; the humility and respect for national sovereignty shown by the providing country; and the lower costs of SSC – all leading to more efficient and more sustainable development.

Similar context.

For the RRMC Replication Project, all of the Caribbean countries face relatively similar hazards when it comes to Disaster Risk Reduction. They are all (except Guyana) relatively small islands in the hurricane belt with extensive coastlines. Their main threats tend to be hurricanes, flooding due to heavy rainfall, high winds, and coastal storm surge. They are also all particularly vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise. They all have remote areas that are easily cut off from the capital city when natural disasters occur. All of the six countries involved, although different in many ways, share a common Caribbean identity and way of life.

In terms of the benefits of SSC, I believe that this is quite helpful to small developing countries, because we are able to gain both technical knowledge and support from sources that we would not have previously explored, and these countries may have knowledge and experiences that are more similar to ours than if we would have been dealing with countries from the developed world. (IP5, workshop video footage, April 17, 2013)

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According to the United Nations' *World Economic Situation and Prospects Report* (2011), Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Jamaica classify as middle-income countries; Trinidad and Tobago is considered to be a high-income country; and all of the countries involved in the project are considered to be Small Island Developing States. Because Cuba is a developing country, although their system is quite advanced in many ways, the technology that they utilize is not expensive (often open-sourced) and therefore is more likely to be affordable in the pilot countries. IP1 illustrated this point by comparing the RRMC Replication Project with a previous project that he had been involved in with the government of Japan. Although he was able to travel to Japan and see their model, he explained that the technologies that they used in Japan were so expensive, that it was very difficult for the Civil Defense Commission to implement the Japanese system in their country because the overhead equipment expenses were so high; whereas when he traveled to Cuba, where the economic situation is more similar, he found that the technologies used in Cuba would be much more feasible in his country (personal communication, June 26, 2013).

Sharing of solutions.

The creation of the RRMC model, and its subsequent piloting in five other countries, demonstrates that southern countries can come up with their own solutions and that development solutions do not need to be imported from the North. "I think that the main advantage [of SSC] is moving away from a perception that solutions all come from outside of countries, or all come from institutions, or all come from the North. And to note that solutions are found in every circumstance and that there are problems and there are solutions in every circumstance" (FP1, personal communication, June 28, 2013).

Not re-inventing the wheel: The RRMC as a proven model.

When discussing the value of SSC and the RRMC Replication Project, multiple participants spoke of the importance of not “reinventing the wheel” (IP1, video footage from workshop, April 17, 2013; IP4, personal communication, August 15, 2013; FP3, personal communication, August 15, 2013). This idea goes hand-in-hand with the concept that if one country has found a proven solution that is relevant to other countries, that solution should be shared, taking those countries’ local context into account. The Cuban Civil Defense has found in the RRMCs a model that has demonstrated significant results in terms of reducing risk and therefore loss of life and damage to goods and livelihoods in Cuba. Working with CRMI, Cuba is transferring this successful model to other countries in the Caribbean, which have seen from the example of Cuba the importance of risk reduction and the value of the RRMCs.

Well, in the specific case of the Centers, through SSC, we can create the possibility of transferring the experience and knowledge of a model that has already been proven to be successful in the country. This experience can be transferred to other Caribbean countries, creating the possibility of being able to lessen the impact of disasters, by focusing on identifying the hazards and a preventative focus on risk reduction. This has contributed, or could contribute, or we hope will contribute, to reduce economic losses and loss of lives of people who live in the Caribbean that are all exposed to the same phenomena, the same meteorological events, and the same climatic events that Cuba faces. In this way we can provide SSC. (CRMI assistant, personal communication, June 28, 2013)

Using a model that has been proven in a similar context also means that the receiving country does not need to spend time and money trying to come up with its own solution. “I would say one of the greatest advantages of SSC is the knowledge that is shared. We were able to gain from a country like Cuba that has already gone through the entire process of realizing the importance of prevention. We can start from here and learn from these people and their experience” (IP2, personal communication, June 28, 2013).

Adapting to local context.

The RRMC Replication Project has made a strong effort to take the local context into consideration while adapting the Cuban model. In fact, because Cuba's political context and economic structure are so different than the other countries in the region, CRMI and the people involved in project implementation recognize that the success of the project probably depends on adjusting for local context. This was one of the main topics that CRMI staff addressed with the RRMC directors when they gathered in September 2010 to begin to systematize and document their experience. A key part of this meeting was discussing the questions: What parts of our model are replicable? Which parts are not? What conditions are necessary for the successful implementation of a RRMC? One of the final products of the meeting was a list of the seven main replicable components of an RRMC to be shared with other Caribbean countries. At the end of the technical professional training workshop in April 2013 the CRMI project manager also stated clearly the importance of adapting the model: "We hope that what happens in the period of this next year is that you are able to make this model your own. That you are able to own it, mold it, utilize it, and strengthen risk reduction in your country" (CRMI PM, video footage from workshop, April 18, 2013).

Participants used words like 'tweak,' 'incorporate,' 'strengthen,' and 'adapt' to describe the process of applying the model in their countries. While talking about what he would take home from the technical RRMC workshop, the training coordinator from the Guyana Civil Defense Commission stated:

We don't want to return to the country and we go and tell the person, look we have a new system from Cuba and we come to give it to you. What we are going to do is that we are going to use what we have there already and try to tweak it and model it so that when we go there it will be easily implemented so that people wouldn't be reluctant to take it on board. My aim is to make what we have better. So the knowledge gained here, I will be

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using that to implement the RRMC within my country. (IP1, video footage from workshop, April 17, 2013)

IP1 clearly references an issue that occurs often with NSC, which is that sometimes projects are so drastic or different from what already exists that they simply do not stick in the long term.

Another implementing partner saw learning about the RRMC model to be adding more tools to an already existing tool belt. One of the Focal Points talked about how much easier implementation would be in this project than a more traditional project since the individuals who designed the Implementation Plans were able to first travel to the country and see the model first hand, and then return to their countries and adapt what they saw to the local context of the pilot community (FP1, personal communication, June 28, 2013).

Thoughts from some of the countries on adapting the model to their particular context

British Virgin Islands

I know that they have been calling it a replication project. However for us, in the British Virgin Islands, we have been looking at it as an adaptation rather than a replication. Because replication suggests that we are going to be taking a lot of the elements that they are presenting and trying to see how they can work. In Anegada it is more trying to *adapt* it. And I think that if you change it from replication to adaptation, a lot of the issues that are coming up can be flagged early, and the expectation of having a little Cuban RRMC in Anegada wouldn't be there. It would be 'these are the areas that Cuba has a lot of success in, you recognize that you know they can be replicated, and this is what Anegada was able to do to it to suit their contexts'. (IP4, personal communication, August 15, 2013)

I am always worried when they say, "you need X amount of computers, Y amount of other equipment" and so-forth, I think in SSC, and in this case [the RRMC Replication Project], it needs to be more about what fundamentally are you seeking to do. And my understanding is that at the community level, or the municipal level, or some geographical zone, you are trying to enhance the broader DRR capacity to reduce the risk by building a resource structure within that community. Now how that plays out is also a function of how structures work in the country, what did they have to put in there, and what kind of programs they believe can work in there. And I think if you do this evaluation next year or the end of next year, you will see that there should be different permutations within each country. (FP1, personal communication, June 28, 2013)

Dominican Republic

In Cuba and the Dominican Republic we face the same hazards and the same threats. And in the Dominican Republic we already have an established structure with

prevention, mitigation and response committees. So with the RRMCs what we come to do is see in what ways the Cuban system can be complementary to the infrastructure that we already have... I think that the Centers, this Cuban model can work perfectly in our country. Of course there will be difficulties and inconveniences along the way, or certain aspects that don't go well with our political system. But with effort, it is possible. (IP2, personal communication, June 28, 2013)

Jamaica

... Sometimes with the traditional North-South partnerships we have seen a lot of cases, and not here at UNDP, just during my professional career, where technology, information, expertise, is transferred and it is just so completely different context that it doesn't work. So the receiving entity has to be able to say, "Can we modify this, how do we fit it into our context?" SSC is really not about the sort of traditional export of knowledge or expertise... There is also this important issue of national ownership. Because part of the ODPEM's story was, yes, appreciating the Cuban model, but wanting to make sure that it fit within the Jamaican context. That is also very important. (FP3, personal communication, August 15, 2013)

Knowledge exchange.

The exchange that the RRMC Replication Project has facilitated as a S-S project is also quite remarkable. Both historically and operationally, there is a significant divide between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries in the Caribbean. The RRMC workshops (one for high-level decision makers and one for technical professionals directly involved in project implementation) were able to bring these groups together and provided an important space for the six countries to share their issues, experiences, and solutions related to DRR. In the workshop for high-level decision makers, participants had a session where a representative from each country spoke briefly about their original proposal and their vision for the project, which was followed by exchange and comments among each other and the Cuban experts. In the technical professional workshop, each country had a presentation slot to explain its main hazards, and in a practical activity each country had to describe its current DRR structure and how the RRMC model would fit into it. Then of course there were the informal conversations that occurred outside of the workshop hours.

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All of the implementing partners that I interviewed spoke positively about the exchange process. IP2 stated, “for us it [the workshop] has been an incredibly important experience, because we have been able to share with the other countries that will be part of the project the different problems that our country faces and we have learned from them as well as the Cuban hosts, what solutions they have to the different problems” (personal communication, June 28, 2013). IP1 stated, “additionally you are able to share your experience with not only the Cubans, but you are also able to share your experience with the other participants - understand their challenges and understand maybe some of their best practices. Also you are able to learn from the Cubans in addition to the other countries. I think that it is a wide spectrum of sharing of information. The five countries have a different way of doing things, there are different social backgrounds, and you are able to share the information and at the end of the day you are able to come up with a better solution maybe to the challenges that you may have ahead” (personal communication, June 26, 2013).

The Cubans seemed particularly eager to exchange with other countries. This can be attributed to their genuine interest and commitment to SSC, as well as their desire to gain more knowledge about the outside world, which has previously been limited to most Cubans due to long-standing restrictions on travel (recently lifted) and limited access to Internet and international media. Although this same exchange could have happened in a N-S regional project, it would be less likely to be across languages, and may not have been as genuine or open.

SSC can be two-way, for the benefit of both countries.

In the RRMIC Replication Project, Cuba is sharing the model with the five pilot countries, and the five pilot countries are learning from each other, but there is also space for Cuba to learn

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from the five pilot countries and learn about the process of sharing their experience with other countries.

I think also what is key is the fact that you have all five countries there with various political and social backgrounds and people with different experiences there, some with GIS experience, some with disaster management experience, some with community experiences, and we were all there able to share information among ourselves as the five pilot countries and we were also able to share information with the Cubans, and of course we were able to learn from the Cubans and I think they were able to learn from us as well when we were there. (IP1, video footage from workshop, April 17, 2013)

When I asked the Cuban CRMI assistant if she thought Cuba had received anything in return from the RRMC Replication Project and other SSC projects, she seemed to think that all types of collaboration were and should be reciprocal. “I think that collaboration is always both ways, isn’t it? Cooperation should always have benefits for both parties, and in the case of the RRMC project, the Cubans have already learned a lot. We have all been able to increase our disaster reduction capacity” (personal communication, June 28, 2013). In terms of her personal learning, she mentioned a particular presentation that one of the implementing partners made about dealing with the psychological toll of disasters in their country. This had never occurred to her before, and it was something she thought that Cuba should try to incorporate into its disaster risk management plans as well.

In the particular case of Cuba, the benefits of SSC are significant, because it provides access to things the Cuban participants would not otherwise have access to, due to the U.S. embargo. “The collaboration can be an alternative to bring us together with other countries, to get around the embargo a bit, and open up possibilities for traveling to other places, and receiving through the collaboration knowledge, information and access to informative and financial sources that we otherwise might not be able to access” (CRMI assistant, personal communication, June 28, 2013). So when Cuba participates in these collaborations, they are not

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just sharing their experiences, they are also benefiting by receiving knowledge, information, financing, and in some cases technology, that in other circumstances would be very limited considering the economic and political situation of the country.

The Cuban professionals involved in sharing the knowledge through the two workshops were also able to learn how to explain and share their model most effectively – what worked and what did not. “I think that we have also learned a lot from a methodological standpoint. We learned to better manage the methodological approaches to be able to transfer knowledge, and we also learned about sharing with different cultures” (CRMI assistant, personal communication, June 28, 2013). For example, during feedback sessions, the participants repeatedly requested more interactive activities and less recapping of activities. They also at one point refused to do one of the activities that the Cuban professors had planned, stating it was not a good exercise and would not advance their learning. This was a learning experience for the Cuban professionals, who probably would not have received this type of response from Cuban students.

Promotes regional solidarity.

The exchanges mentioned above led to better understanding and a stronger connection among the project participants. It is difficult to assess to what extent the RRMC Replication Project promotes regional solidarity, but throughout my research I did see multiple indicators that these connections were being made among the six participating countries. For example, one of the biggest advantages that IP4 saw in the RRMC Replication Project was the partnership building that it created. She spoke of both the personal relationships among practitioners and the partnerships between the institutions in different countries. “In joint initiatives there is strength in unity. By having the partnerships... you can work together to be able to minimize the duplication

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of efforts and maximize the resources that are coming towards DRR” (personal communication, August 15, 2013).

When asked about the value of SSC in the evaluation for the high-level decision-maker workshop, one participant wrote: “The networking abilities to share experiences through the South-South cooperation is priceless” (CRMI, 2013b). The evaluations are anonymous, but considering this comment could be coming from the Director of a National Disaster Agency, it implies that relationships are being built that could extend much further than the RRMC Replication Project. In fact, through connections made during the RRMC project, Jamaica and Cuba have already applied for an additional SSC grant that would continue sharing Cuba’s DRR model nationally throughout Jamaica.

The Cuban CRMI assistant explained that one of the main reasons that Cuba provides technical assistance to neighboring countries is to act in solidarity with other southern countries. She talked about how providing cooperation was part of a political will that comes from the government’s decision to show solidarity with other southern countries. This stems from a sense of internationalism, which is very much part of the Cuban government’s discourse that a better world is possible and the government has the responsibility to help those in need (CRMI assistant, personal communication, June 28, 2013).

Empowering.

The RRMC Replication Project has also been empowering for both the receiving and providing entities. While attending the 10-day RRMC technical training that the Cuban authorities offered to the pilot countries in Cuba, I was able to see the pride that the Cubans had in their model and in the opportunity to share it with others. When I asked the Cuban CRMI assistant about why Cuba provides so much cooperation to other developing countries, one

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aspect that she commented on was the spiritual aspect of providing aid or assistance to others.

“From the spiritual point of view, or the more subjective, there is this Cuban idiosyncrasy, where we find happiness or wellbeing in being able to collaborate with more needy people. Because of our values, this adds and increases our self-esteem” (personal communication, June 28, 2013).

FP1 also commented on the importance that SSC can have in building capacity of the providing country. He talked about how building capacity was about more than just providing training or equipment to the target country. It is also about giving a space for the use of the skill sets of the providing country. According to him, simply providing this space, where people could highlight and feel proud of their own model, is development in its own right (personal communication, June 28, 2013).

On the other hand, the participants from the five pilot countries were absolutely amazed by the amount that the Cubans were able to accomplish in the RRMICs using open-source and low-cost technologies to collect, analyze, and store data. The fact that Cuba has experienced some of the most significant economic difficulties seen in the Caribbean has not prevented it from being one of the most successful at risk analysis and reduction, and this reassured the participants that if it could be done in Cuba, with so few resources, then it could certainly be done in their countries.

Respect for national sovereignty, humility of providing partner.

Despite their pride, the Cubans were also very clear throughout the entire workshop that their way was not the only way, that their model was still far from perfect, and that it must be adapted to other countries' specific contexts. In his opening remarks for the workshop, the Deputy Head of Cuban Civil Defense encouraged participants from other countries to question the Cuban model and called for an open discussion and exchange among all participants (video

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footage from workshop, April 8, 2013). During the closing remarks the Head of Cuban Civil Defense confirmed this commitment by stating:

It does not matter if you call them “RRMCCs” or “EWPs”. What we are after is the content of what happens in those centers, not what they are called. They also don’t have to have the same make-up as our centers... The important thing is that the measures that you take are efficient, that they are capable of bringing us to reach the goals that we have set. That is what is important. The other important aspect is that each country implement according to their specific geographic conditions, and according to their individual issues... We analyze, think, and do things as we consider them best for our country. But in no moment would we ever consider telling you “do it this way.” No. It has to come from your own analysis, from your own understanding, from your own government, whether it be national or local, but always with the same creativity that you have expressed here at this workshop. (Video footage from workshop, April 18, 2013)

This type of modesty, and respect for other countries and their way of doing things, is exactly what is promoted with S-S cooperation.

More efficient.

From working in the CRMI office, I could see that many aspects of project implementation were in fact less expensive because they occurred in Cuba where the cost for services is much lower. For example, we were able to make six short promotional and educational videos about the RMCC model using a Cuban videographer and video editor who charged \$2,000 in equipment for the entire project, which took over three months to complete. This work would have been exponentially more expensive if done in a developed country. The workshops themselves were relatively cheap to put on, although air travel in the Caribbean is expensive.

I also already mentioned above that because Cuba has already done the work of creating and testing the RRMCC model, the receiving countries could go straight to applying the proven model to their countries, without having to take the time or money to try and come up with their own solution. This also argues for the superior efficiency of SSC.

More sustainable.

Speaking of the same Japanese program mentioned in the ‘similar context’ section, IPI described how that program was simply not sustainable because it was too expensive to implement. He stressed the importance of looking at sustainability and making sure that the target country has the technical capacity and budget available before committing to any type of project. Also, because the national authorities have been so involved in all steps of the project, he hoped that the RRMC project will be sustainable in the long run. There are positive signs that at least one country is already planning on expanding the RRMC model beyond the pilot to other districts and is currently allocating resources for this purpose. Since the project has not yet been completed, it is much too early to assess the actual sustainability of the project, which will not be known for many years.

Disadvantages of SSC

There are also some disadvantages and challenges of SSC that can be seen in the RRMC Replication Project. These include the potential lack of capacity of the providing country to share the information effectively and for the receiving country to take on the information effectively, the assumption that because a model works in one place it will automatically work in the neighboring country, the difficulty of measuring the scalability of impact, and not being able to avoid issues that all development projects seem to have.

Lack of capacity of providing or receiving country.

One potential disadvantage of SSC that was seen in the RRMC Replication Project is the fact that not only does the providing country need to have a successful model, but they also need to have the capacity to systematize and document it and then to transfer that knowledge to the receiving countries. No matter how perfect the model is, if it cannot be explained well, it will not

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be understood and applied. I found that the Cuban's traditional didactic approach based on lectures and one-way transmission was, in my opinion, limited compared to the more interactive, problem-based approach used by USAID or Actionaid International, for example, who have specific departments dedicated to capacity development, trainings, etc. This resulted in the 10-day technical workshop being full of eight-hour days of lectures, with PowerPoint presentations filled with text one could barely see and recaps at the end of each lecture in which the moderator would repeat what the presenter had just said. Throughout this process, I saw multiple participants falling asleep in their chairs.

Another potential disadvantage of the RRMIC Replication Project is that the individuals on the ground in the receiving country lack the capacity to implement the project the way it is implemented in the providing country. FP2 mentioned that one of the Civil Defense Commission's main concerns was the lack of technical capacity of the people in the pilot community in terms of GIS, data gathering, and monitoring, etc. (personal communication, July 11, 2013). The IP from the British Virgin Islands also talked about issues with the limited capacity of the receiving state – in her country's case, their limited ability to influence certain people and institutions that are tightly controlled and more easily influenced (or directed) by government in Cuba.

The Focal Point from Jamaica stressed the issue of making sure that the technology used in the providing country is compatible with the existing systems used in the receiving country. “So whether it is a GIS system, whether it is a mapping system, we can't just assume that whatever Cuba was using in their RRMIC will work here, or will fit here, or that the Jamaican computers have the capacity to run the most modern programs. So the actual interfacing of technology is not something to be taken for granted.”

Recognizing the differences.

Another challenge for the RRMIC Replication Project is avoiding the trap of assuming that because they are similar in many ways, what works in Cuba will automatically work in all the other countries. Despite the similarities among the countries, as a Socialist country Cuba has a very unique political and economic system, and it is therefore important that the replication project be implemented in the specific context of each country. In his closing remarks for the technical workshop, the Deputy Resident Representative for the UNDP Cuba office commented on this issue:

[This project] is a great opportunity, but it is also a great challenge, and I would like to touch on the part of the challenge, in the sense that now it is about, after these two sessions [the two workshops], managing to figure out how to translate this, as the General mentioned, adapt it, modify it, and make it relevant for your own countries, for your own realities. This is the great bet that we are taking with this effort, in this South-South Cooperation Initiative. (video footage from workshop, April 18, 2013)

At the end of the day, it will be up to the five pilot countries to take the main components of the system and apply them in ways that make sense for their countries. Addressing the technical workshop participants, the CRMI Project Manager stated, “The work now is in your field, it is now your responsibility to take this experience that has been provided by Civil Defense and by our other colleagues here in Cuba, and to adapt it to your reality so that it responds to your needs at a local level” (video footage from workshop, April 18, 2013).

Stories of having to deal with the differences.

Jamaica

Cuba has a lot of access to information because of their structure. And in Jamaica, even though we have some information, it may be housed in different Ministries. And because we don't have the same sort of administrative or governance structure, sometimes it is not easy to get access to data. The Natural Resources and Geology Department and the Physical Planning Department may have data but they are not under any obligation to make that data freely available. Sometimes you have to purchase it or it has to be put in a different format or the three different ministries may have different database portals so that the information cannot be exchanged. Whereas in Cuba because of the governance that they have, their data exchange is much more efficient. So it is not

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just a simple thing to say for the RRMC, ‘Ok, you need to have data on flood plains and you need to have data on evacuation routes,’ if this data is held in two different ministries that don’t share a data exchange format. So Cuba would have to then be aware of the different contexts in order to be able to adapt the situation (FP3, personal communication, August 15, 2013).

Guyana

Well, I think that one of the disadvantages, because it has been tested in Cuba, under specific types of conditions, you know, whether it is political, environmental, and cultural conditions, in terms of people and how they view disaster and so on, and the type of disasters, doesn’t mean it will necessarily work in Guyana. The disadvantage to Guyana, this may not be true for the other island states, because they might be more similar, quite a lot more in common that they might have with Cuba compared to Guyana, because of our land mass, the fact that this is happening we have disasters that are happening in the hinterland where we have indigenous people, as opposed to on the Coast where there is a built environment, etc. etc. So, the circumstances and so on are not necessarily the same. So, I think that for Guyana, there will need to be a lot more adjusting, and making it more appropriate for the local conditions. So that is the disadvantage in terms of the two situations are quite different. (FP2, personal communication, July 11, 2013)

British Virgin Islands

Cuba is totally different when it comes to the culture. And I think that is one of the main challenges that we are having in terms of the pulling together of the team. In Cuba, if you are told by a government entity to do something, you don’t question it. Here, I guess because of the democracy and everything, persons want to know, “ok this is what you are saying, I understand what you are saying, I can see where you may want to go with this, but how is this going to benefit me?” and sometimes it is difficult to break it right down to a “me” when you are looking at the community. (IP4, personal communication, August 15, 2013)

Language Barrier.

Multiple people interviewed commented on the challenge of sharing information across languages. The IP from the Dominican Republic stated that in order for a deeper exchange to happen among the five pilot countries, the Dominicans and Cubans would have to learn English, or the others would have to learn Spanish. But one IP from an English-speaking country said that the Cubans actually spoke English quite well and they had many Spanish speakers on their island, so the language was not so large an issue for her.

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Scalability.

Another challenge that was coming up in some of the receiving countries was finding a way to maintain the impact of the RRMC model, but on a much different scale. One IP talked about the issue of scalability in the case of her country, which is a series of tiny islands with very small settlements. “When you take a model from a country like Cuba, given its size, its population, everything, and you bring it into the Virgin Islands or a smaller country, you are going to have the challenge in terms of reducing the scope, but still maintaining the impact of the model.”

Can be challenging to uphold the principles of SSC.

Although the project intended to form relationships among the participants of the workshops to increase regional solidarity, most IPs reported not having communicated with anybody outside of their home country since they returned from the workshops. When asked about it, the IP from Guyana stated, “since I have been back here I don’t think that I have been in contact with anyone else from the other pilot countries. So even though the connection probably was made there, I am not sure if the relationship is actually sustained” (IP1, personal communication, June 18 2013).

Can have the same issues that NSC projects have.

Just because the RRMC Project is a SSC project does not mean that it has not run into many of the challenges that many development projects face. For example, the period of inactivity from 2010-2012 has meant that the RRMC Replication Project, which was supposed to be implemented in three years, has been squeezed into one year of implementation. The RRMC project has also faced serious challenges with implementation within each country. It was difficult to find a way to pass the funding from the UNDP Regional Centre, through the UNDP country offices, to the National Implementing Partners. And even once that was resolved, most

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countries are significantly behind on project implementation. At the time of this writing, many of the countries still have marked low expenditures, and throughout my interviews I heard stories about delays in meetings and difficulty convening meetings in summer months because of low attendance.

Recommendations

I asked all of the individuals I interviewed to suggest ways that the RRMC Replication Project could be improved. The results are summarized in bullet form here:

Increase exchange among the five pilot countries

- Monthly Skype conferences or other type of online forum to update each other and to request/offer advice (mentioned by three people)
- Email chain to regularly provide updates/status reports and share challenges
- Online matrix that reports progress and allows comparison among the countries
- Obligatory Facebook posts from each country

Have Cuban experts visit the five pilot countries

- During implementation to look at the circumstances there to provide recommendations/ assess what is working, what could work better, etc.
- After implementation to assess how the implementation was done, what parts of the model were implemented, which parts could not be implemented, adjustments, etc.

Capture lessons learned

- Capture and document in writing what worked and what did not, in terms of both structure and process
- A forum to discuss and collectively document each country's experiences

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- To foster the sharing among the five countries, to look again at what really worked well, how each country particularly adapted the RRMC to their context
- Ensure that people from Cuba are present at this exchange and hear these discussions so that they can also learn from them

For future replication projects of the RRMCs (in the case that there are future projects)

- Look at the Cuban model and a couple of other models in Latin America, see what the positives are from each and then combine them to create something better
- Have the Cubans visit the five pilot countries to see how they adapted the model, what worked well and what did not, what was transferable and what was not, if it is what they expected, and then use that information to strengthen future replication projects
- Have Cubans visit the pilot countries before training to be able to better tailor the training to the individual countries' context. This way during the workshop planning the Cubans can adjust the training so that it will be very relevant to the economic, social, and political situation within the particular country
- Have Cuban experts spend extended time (two weeks to one month suggested one, three month period suggested another) in the pilot countries during implementation
- The creation of a network of expert consultants available to support the pilot countries with their knowledge and advising
- A methodological guide that accompanies the implementation of the Centers
- More frequent exchange among countries, multiple workshops, webinars, videoconferences, etc.

Beyond the RRMC Replication Project

Many of the project participants spoke of their desire for the Centres to be replicated further in their home countries, and all UNDP Focal Points responded that they would advocate for similarly structured projects in the future, where UNDP is facilitating the sharing of knowledge and technical expertise among Caribbean countries. The CRMI assistant spoke of her hope that other Caribbean countries would see the success of the pilot countries and would like to adapt the model to their contexts as well. The IP from British Virgin Islands recognized that the amount of funding provided for this project was relatively very small, but that the ideas gained would last longer than just this project. “It will take a lot more than this project. This project is actually going to just light the fire for us. We need sustained efforts” (IP4, personal communication, August 15, 2013).

FP1 had hopes for a continuation or expansion of CRMI. “I hope we don’t see it [the RRMC Replication Project] as a be all and end all. I hope that we see this as a learning experience and that we are able to frame a next step where we can build on this experience, maybe drawing on other examples as I said, to see how we can move forward and what makes sense in the different country contexts” (FP1, personal communications, July 18, 2013).

SSC and UNDP

UNDP’s comparative advantage.

Why is UNDP in a good position to advocate for SSC? All of the UNDP Focal Points that I spoke to were able to articulate clearly the role that UNDP should play in SSC and why it should play that role. Through our conversations, they clearly highlighted four main components that place UNDP in a unique position to advocate for and facilitate SSC: its global presence, its

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expertise in knowledge management, the neutral and unbiased platform that it can provide, and its extensive global network of experts.

Global presence.

What other development institution has offices in over 170 developing countries?

“UNDP is on the ground in 170 countries now. So there is a key opportunity to ensure that the experiences of one country, if they are beneficial, can be shared with another country. In this sense UNDP is actually strategically placed to help the countries to learn from each other” (FP3, personal communication, August 15, 2013). Another FP added that not only does UNDP have a presence, but they also are closely involved in the solutions being created in each of those countries.

I think we have some niche areas of some strengths that we need to tap into, and I think that is one that we can, we have a presence and a relevance in countries around the world, we have a footprint on the ground in most of those countries, and therefore we are involved in addressing solutions on the ground in those countries. And therefore with that and our network we have the capacity to really look and see how some of these things work and therefore how they can translate to other countries and other regions and I think that lends a basis for S-S. (FP1, personal communication, July 18, 2013)

UNDP is well placed to identify appropriate experiences, appropriate and relevant, because for each country while the experience might be good it might not necessarily be relevant. But I think that UNDP has the strength, because of its presence in so many countries, that identifying those experiences and their relevance and sharing it and bringing it to the attention of the other countries, I think that is one of UNDP's greatest strengths. I don't think that there is any other international development institution that has that wide coverage, that can bring that level, you know, the expansive knowledge that UNDP can bring. (FP2, personal communication, July 11, 2013)

Also, UNDP has five regional centers that have a unique perspective in terms of being aware of what is happening in all the different countries in the region.

Experts in knowledge management.

UNDP is known for its ability to capture lessons learned, identify best practices, and document experiences. This skill-set is crucial for successful SSC, since the first steps to sharing

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experiences is recognizing them and then documenting them in a format that makes them transferable.

Neutral unbiased platform.

Another asset that UNDP has is its global recognition as a neutral entity. “UNDP has a comparative advantage globally as a UN agency to have a neutral and unbiased platform for stakeholder sharing so that we can actually utilize that opportunity to say that we will share experiences on agriculture or on CCA without any sort of hidden or political agendas” (FP3, personal communication, August 15, 2013).

Network of experts.

Although the UN system has many different organizations that work on issues related to development (UNWomen, FAO, UNEP etc.), it is the job of UNDP to set the development agenda and incorporate all of the work being done across all of the UN agencies to best achieve sustainable development. Being part of the broad, global UN network positions UNDP to see best practices across all the UN agencies and promote documentation and sharing. So even if, for example, UNEP, the environmental program, has particular expertise in one country or area, UNDP can take that knowledge and transfer it to other countries where it is relevant.

Role of UNDP.

Considering the above-mentioned factors, the Focal Points saw UNDP as both advocate and facilitator of SSC. For them, the UN’s roles in terms of advocacy should involve making the various stakeholders aware of SSC, promoting SSC, and engaging stakeholders in being participants. The facilitator role, which was played by CRMI in the RRMC Replication Project, involves the connecting of creative solutions with countries that share similar challenges. “UNDP’s role should be to build on the advantage of a platform for neutral engagement so that we should be able to bring the partners together to be able to share what their issues are, what

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their constraints are, and what their challenges are, in order to allow the technical exchange to work” (FP3, personal communication, August 15, 2013).

Discussion

Advantages and Disadvantages

For the most part, I found the documented advantages of SSC listed in the literature to hold true for the RRMC Replication Project. There were also multiple themes that came up throughout my conversations that were not covered extensively in the literature that I reviewed, but that were true for the RRMC Replication Project and could be extended to apply to other SSC technical cooperation projects as well. The opportunity to exchange knowledge – the recognition that South-South Cooperation can be a two-way process where both providing and receiving countries can gain – was not widely discussed in the literature. The fact that the RRMC Replication Project as a SSC project has been empowering to both receiving and providing countries was also not extensively discussed. The RRMC Replication Project shows that SSC can be empowering to the providing country, because it provides them with a space to share what they have created and feel proud of it, and recognizes that solutions don't have to come from the North: and also empowering for the receiving country, because they see what can be done in a similar country and have the feeling that they can do it too. These findings would apply for other technical knowledge exchange SSC, where one country shares a creative solution with one or multiple other neighboring countries.

In terms of the disadvantages, SSC, and particularly technical SSC that involves knowledge exchange, must take into account the difficulties of successfully documenting and transferring the knowledge from one country to the next. The RRMC Replication Project demonstrates that identifying a solution as a best practice is only the very first step in a long series of events that need to occur before knowledge can be transferred successfully.

Recommendations

In terms of the recommendations provided by the individuals I interviewed, I agree that most of their suggestions would be valuable additions to the RRMC Replication Project. Some of the suggested changes are already in the plans for the remainder of CRMI II (such as bringing the countries together at the end of the project to share lessons learned, and having the Cubans visit some of the countries to provide technical expertise but also to see how the projects are going in those countries). Other recommendations, such as extended visits from Cuban experts or more in-person exchanges among the countries might be difficult simply because of the high cost of travel in the Caribbean.

I do, however, agree that it is important to foster the continued interaction of the implementing partners throughout the duration of the project, and creating an email chain or a series of webinars like the one held for the UNDP FPs earlier in the project both seem like excellent ideas. We did create a Facebook page to facilitate this exchange as well, but later realized that although it worked well as a one-way source of information (from administrator to people who 'liked' the page) it did not work well as an interactive platform because non-administrators were not able to post stories or photos. We also created a TeamWorks site for the UNDP focal points to encourage exchange, but the site was not very frequently used. This implies that it is important that CRMI not only provide the available spaces for exchange; but also that they address the challenging next step of ensuring that once the channels are there and open, that they are accessed and used.

One additional recommendation that I would have is that CRMI share some of the issues that I have found the pilot countries are already having in terms of the differences between the their countries and Cuba, so that together with the Cuban authorities, the pilot countries can

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search for solutions to these challenges. This would provide a rich area for learning, discussion, and exchange between Cuba and the other countries, and would possibly improve the long-term outcomes of the project.

SSC and UNDP

From my experience working in the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, and from my conversations with the UNDP Focal Points involved in the project, I am convinced that SSC is an area where UNDP should and can have a positive impact on the global development agenda. In addition to the comparative advantages listed by the Focal Points above, UNDP also has the language capacity and development expertise necessary to share solutions across countries and cultures.

Recommendations for Further Research

It would be interesting to return to do an evaluation of the RRMC Replication Project a year or two after completion to see what has happened with the different pilot Centres and whether they have been further replicated in each country. It would also be interesting to see to what degree the project was successful in each country and study why some may have been more successful than others. The pilot countries are actually fairly different from each other, and it would be interesting to see whether this had an effect. For example, will the pilot in the Dominican Republic work best because the Dominicans are culturally most similar to the Cubans?

Another question that intrigued me, but was out of the scope of this research, is the future of SSC. It would be interesting to study the rapidly changing face of South-South Cooperation: will it ever become obsolete? When and how does a “developing” or “southern” country stop being such? Is it by moving into a more dominant economic power position? Will these more

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powerful southern countries (such as the 'BRICs', etc.) dominate over other southern countries, just as northern countries had before?

Conclusion

The RRMC Replication Project clearly demonstrates the advantages of SSC commonly stated in the literature, as well as some other advantages that can be applied both to this project and other SSC projects. This research shows in practical terms the strengths and challenges of SSC technical exchange and explains, through the words of UNDP Focal Points, why UNDP is in a unique position to advocate and facilitate such exchanges.

Development will always be political, and power will always be at play. In our globalized capitalist society, competition and markets usually prevail, corruption is rampant, and the amount of energy and effort that it requires for southern countries to truly cooperate under these circumstances is daunting. However, it is also clear that times are changing, and projects like the RRMC Replication Project are cropping up around the world in increasing numbers. If there is to be a serious shift in the development paradigm, the underlying concepts behind South-South Cooperation—the equality of all nations, solidarity among developing countries, national sovereignty, and adapting to local context—are incredibly important issues to discuss in both the North and the South. If this capstone leads to even one such conversation, I would be more than satisfied.

To state that, for the reasons explained by this case study, the South-South Cooperation model is better than the North-South model would be an oversimplification of an incredibly complicated issue. And to think that the South-South model should or could ever completely replace the North-South model would be entirely unrealistic. But as developing countries recover from a severe economic crisis and a corresponding cutback in international aid, the timing is opportune to increase the prevalence and importance of South-South Cooperation in the development arena.

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Thinking of NSC and SSC as day and night, or black and white, is ultimately detrimental to the overall goal, which in reality can only be addressed in many shades of gray. In the case of Disaster Risk Management, the two models of development should and do work together to increase resiliency, reduce risk, and improve the lives of the most vulnerable. The Cuban Civil Defence was able to create the RRMC model using funding primarily from the Government of Spain (a northern country). Similarly, although the technical assistance in the CRMI Replication Project is provided from Cuba to other developing countries, the funding comes from the UN, which is supposedly a neutral bilateral organization, but with headquarters in New York (a northern city).

The RRMC Replication Project will conclude in December 2013, so the final results and impacts are therefore yet to be seen. But it is already clear that the RRMC Replication Project has facilitated the meaningful exchange of knowledge about DRR among six countries, multiple government agencies, professional institutions, and individuals, leading to increased understanding and increased preparedness across the Caribbean. It is my hope that the RRMC Replication Project can also be used in the future to demonstrate the value of SSC and as an example of the possibility of bringing the best of the N-S and S-S models together to promote truly sustainable development on a regional level.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Individuals Interviewed

1. CRMI Project Coordinator, UNDP Regional Centre
2. CRMI Program Assistant, UNDP Cuba
3. Energy & Environment/Disaster Risk Reduction Officer and Focal Point for South-South Cooperation, UNDP Jamaica
4. Energy, Environment and Disaster Programme Analyst and Disaster Risk Reduction Focal Point, UNDP Guyana
5. Disaster Risk Reduction Programme Manager, UNDP Barbados and OECS
6. Operations and Training Official, Guyana Civil Defense Commission
7. Deputy Director, British Virgin Islands Department of Disaster Management
8. Local Government Disaster Coordinator, Saint Catherine's Parrish, Jamaica
9. Sub-director of Puerto Plata Province, Dominican Republic Civil Defense

Video Footage from Workshop Cited

1. Operations and Training Official, Guyana Civil Defense Commission
2. Technical Planning Officer, British Virgin Islands Department of Disaster Management
3. CRMI Project Coordinator, UNDP Regional Centre
4. Director, Cuban Civil Defense
5. Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Cuba

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

**South-South Cooperation: The case of the RRMC Replication Project.
SIT Graduate Institute Capstone Research Project**

The purpose of this study is to explore the advantages and disadvantages of South-South Cooperation and how they relate to the Risk Reduction Management Centre (RRMC) Replication Project. It aims to answer the questions: What are the advantages of South-South Cooperation as shown in the RRMC Replication Project? How can this information be used to improve the remainder of the RRMC Replication Project?

You are being asked to participate in a 30-45 minute recorded Skype interview. I will ask you questions about your experience with SSC, your role in the RRMC Replication Project, and your experience with and opinions about the RRMC Project as a South-South Cooperation initiative.

This interview involves no risk. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in this interview at any time. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Your confidentiality in my research is important to me. Your name will not appear in my paper or on my transcriptions, I will instead refer to you by your role in the project and a number (i.e. UNDP focal point 3 or Implementing Technical Professional 2, etc.). I will record our interview in a digital format. Once I transcribe our interview I will delete the digital recording.

I expect to complete my research by November of 2013. If you are interested in seeing the results of this study, or if you have any questions about the interview or study at any time, you may contact me through my personal email at rachel.mikala.cohn@gmail.com.

For the participant:

By typing my name in the blank below, I indicate that I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older. I give my consent to be recorded.

Name

Date

Appendix C: Interview Guides (Provided to Interviewees Prior to Interview)

Interview Guide for UNDP Focal Points

South-South Cooperation, the case of the RRMCM Replication Project

I will have some sub-questions within each of these questions, and may ask all or some depending on the direction that our conversation goes. But this should give you a general idea of the subjects that we will cover:

1. Please describe your involvement in the RRMCM Replication Project (How long you have been involved, in what capacity, etc.)
2. Please describe what your experience has been with South-South Cooperation Initiatives in UNDP? What do you the role of UNDP should be in SSC?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of SSC?
4. What are your thoughts about the exchange process (between the Cubans and the five pilot countries) of the Replication Project so far?
5. What recommendations do you have for strengthening the SSC component of the Project?

Interview Guide for Implementing Partners

South-South Cooperation, the case of the RRMCM Replication Project

I will have some sub-questions within each of these questions, and may ask all or some depending on the direction that our conversation goes. But this should give you a general idea of the subjects that we will cover:

1. Please describe your involvement in the RRMCM Replication Project (How long you have been involved, in what capacity, etc.)
2. Please describe what your experience has been with South-South Cooperation Initiatives
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of SSC?
4. What are your thoughts about the exchange process (between the Cubans and the five pilot countries) of the Replication Project so far?
5. What recommendations do you have for strengthening the SSC component of the Project?

Appendix D: Detailed Interview Questions (Used to Shape Interview)

Brief introduction, clearly stating info about the project, how long the interview will take, no right or wrong questions, brief definition of SSC.

For UNDP Focal Points in the Five Pilot Countries

Detailed Questions for UNDP Focal Points

1. Please describe your involvement in the RRMC Replication Project
 - a. How long you have been involved?
 - b. In what capacity?
 - c. What role have you played in the planning or the project?
2. Please describe what your experience has been with South-South Cooperation Initiatives in UNDP?
 - a. How common is SSC in your office? What percentage (more or less) of your projects are SSC or have a SSC component?
 - b. Why do you think that SSC is important to the UNDP?
 - c. What do you think should be the role of UNDP in SSC?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of SSC, specifically related to the RRMC Replication Project?
 - a. What do you see as the value or the advantage of South-South Cooperation?
 - b. What do you see as the disadvantages of SSC?
4. What are your thoughts about the exchange process (between the Cubans and the five pilot countries) of the Replication Project so far?
 - a. How is this project different than other traditional donor projects that you have been involved with?
 - b. How has the _____ context been taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of the RRMC replication project?
 - c. How does the RRMC meet _____s specific needs?
 - d. How would you describe the dynamics between the UNDP Country office and the implementing partner?
5. What recommendations do you have for strengthening the SSC component/aspect of the Project?
 - a. As a UNDP DRR Focal Point, would you advocate for other projects with a similar model (UNDP as coordinator of knowledge exchange among multiple countries)
6. Any other comments or things that you would like to add?

For Pilot Country Project Implementers

Detailed Questions for Implementing Partners

1. Please describe your involvement in the RRMC Replication Project
 - a. How long you have been involved?
 - b. In what capacity?
 - c. What role have you played in the planning or the project?
2. Please describe what your experience has been with South-South Cooperation Initiatives
 - a. What do you understand by the term South-South Cooperation?
 - b. Is it a phrase that was familiar to you before the RRMC replication project?
 - c. Have you ever been involved in a South-South Cooperation Project before?
 - d. Have you ever been involved in other development projects where the money comes from a donor?
 - e. If so, does the way that the RRMC replication project is delivered seem different to you in any way?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of SSC, Specifically relating to the RRMC Replication Project?
 - a. What do you think the advantages of using SSC are?
 - b. What do you think the disadvantages are?
4. What are your thoughts about the exchange process (between the Cubans and the five pilot countries) of the Replication Project so far?
 - a. How has your experience been learning from the Cubans about their model?
What struck you most about Cuba and the Cuban model?
 - i. Are there other countries that you would like to learn from?
 - b. What are the similarities between Cuba and your country? The differences?
Do you think that because the model works in Cuba it will work in your country?
 - c. Do you feel that the project is taking _____s specific context into account?
 - d. In what ways have you connected with the five countries and Cuba?
5. What recommendations do you have for strengthening the SSC component of the Project?

Appendix E: CRMI I Overview

CRMI I Project Details

OBJECTIVES

1. Increased capacity for climate change adaptation
2. Risk reduction and climate change adaptation integrated into development
3. Increased investment in climate risk reduction projects

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- Stronger regional capacity to support planning and policy development and climate risk management was established in regional centers of excellence including the University of the West Indies, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and the Cuban Institute for Meteorology.
- Supported Comprehensive Disaster Management as a Regional adaptation of the Hyogo Framework of Action, including assisting countries in developing local strategies and plans for implementation.
- Enhancement of the knowledge management platform on DRR in the region through the creation and usage of two web sites dedicated to DRR.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Development of National Disaster Management Data Bases in Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana (partial results)
- Creation of two trilingual web-based DRR knowledge platforms (PRECIS CARIBE and CRMI)
- Training of personnel from several countries and agencies in a) the use of the MM5 model for extreme weather forecasting, b) risk mapping and development planning in coastal zones, and c) basics of disaster prevention, preparedness and response
- Provision of scholarships to pursue Masters Degrees in DRR
- Creation of 54 community based Regional Risk Management Centers (RRMC) in Cuba
- Publication of Best Practices in DRR and Climate Change Adaptation initiative
- Development of climate change models and the application of forecasting tools.
- Conducted research on Gender, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction in 5 countries. The findings were documented and presented at a regional forum, the CDM Conference. The research findings were also published for wider circulation

Appendix F: CRMI II Overview

CRMI II Project Details

Objectives and expected outputs:

1.0 Capacity for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to DRR-CCA is developed within the region is strengthened

- *South-South Risk Reduction Management Centre Initiative, with Cuba.*

2.0 Management of knowledge on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is improved

- DRR and CCA communities share best practices through COP
- Emergent themes such as seismic risk and planning for recovery.
- Gender Integration into Disaster Risk Reduction practices with national and regional actors
- CCA Best practices and data translated into information useable by policy makers, decision makers & media at regional, national and local levels

3.0 Partnerships and Resource Mobilization are enhanced.

Appendix G: Timeline for The RRMC South-South Cooperation Initiative

The active implementation period started in October 2012 and will continue until December 2013. This period includes training, implementation and identification of the lessons learned.

The key dates/steps include:

Technical Support Visit (Nov 2012 – Jan 2013): CRMI Project Manager and DRR Focal Point (Cuba) provided more detailed support to country offices and counterparts in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and the British Virgin Islands through a visit, presentation, collection of baseline data and negotiations on agreements and protocols for implementation. These missions included visits to the identified pilot RRMC territory/district to meet with local decision makers and explain the role and utility of the RRMC and assess the local needs to make the pilot a success. These visits informed the development and agenda of the sensitization workshop held in Cuba in February 2013.

Sensitization Workshop (Feb 26-28, 2013): Targeted at the local authority responsible for the pilot RRMC and his/her national counterpart, this 2-day workshop provided an overview of the model, a dialogue regarding approaches to local risk reduction and support to the process of developing an implementation plan. The workshop focused on field visits to RRMC and early warning points in different municipalities in Cuba, allowing for discussion with mayors, municipal authorities and different local actors. Lessons learned, testimonies, and recommendations from the local level counterparts in Cuba were highlighted for the attendees.

Implementation Plan: (submitted end of March 2013): National and Local authorities submitted an implementation plan, outlining how the RRMC model will be adapted to local context, cost-sharing agreements, and key activities in 2013.

Technical Training (April 8th- 18th, 2013): Targeted at the individual responsible for the pilot RRMC, this was an in-depth training on conducting vulnerability and hazard studies, risk analysis, GIS mapping, working with a multi-disciplinary group, setting up a community-based early warning system, methods for compiling key information for decision makers, and data base management.

Implementation (July – November 2013): As outlined in the approved implementation plan, each country will implement a series of activities to adapt and pilot key components of the RRMC model in a specific context.

Technical Assistance (September – October 2013): In response to identified need for more specific and targeted training, technical assistance will be available from Cuban authorities on key topics related to strengthening the RRMC and increasing risk reduction mechanisms.

Documentation of Lessons Learned (Nov 2013): The results and lessons learned through the RRMC pilot process will be documented and published, through a video highlighting the Cuban RRMC model and a toolkit for further RRMC replication. Each country will produce a case study of the pilot experience in addition to identifying lessons learned in the process.

Sharing Experience (Dec 2013): Participating pilot countries will be invited to discuss and share their experience at a regional event.