

ASIA PACIFIC STRATEGY



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Rooted in the Jesuit mission to find God in all things and heeding the call to restore right relations with creation, the Congregation urges the active engagement of all Jesuits and partners. The Social and Education Ministries were tasked with initiating and animating the programs on the environment with the intention of engaging people in various fields.

In the Asia Pacific Region, the effort has been to identify three themes that are defining the Region. In 2010, the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP) laid out the Ecology Strategy and Action Plan towards achieving “Reconciliation with Creation.” The Conference acknowledged the need for integrating experiences among Jesuit institutes, as well as opportunities for our research and advocacy work to strategically and practically benefit our society and environment.

The Ecology Task Force of Asia Pacific met in February 2011 and finalized Our Environmental Way of Proceeding as an overarching reflection that should assist groups engage further in developing selected themes. Three basic themes were identified as the focus for the ecology strategy and action plan: Jesuit Community and Lifestyle, Youth Education for Sustainability, and Governance of Natural Resources.

JESUIT LIFESTYLE AND INSTITUTIONS

To effectively engage in broader environmental issues, it is important to establish credibility in our home institutes. The theme on Jesuit Community and Lifestyle seeks to raise awareness among Jesuits and to help deepen their understanding of ‘reconciliation with creation.’ This effort encourages Jesuits to practice environmental management in their own houses, as well as on its campuses.

I. JESUIT COMMUNITY AND LIFESTYLE

There is a growing recognition of the need to promote a lifestyle check, as well as an “internal” advocacy and conversion within our own Jesuit communities and institutions.

One strategy that is being pursued is the development of a community budget. This is being done through a participatory process. The strategy begins with collecting data from Jesuit houses on income and expenditures. This will give an idea of the costs of maintaining the community. Data from this initial survey will be forwarded to communities and used as reference in drafting a household budget.

Box A

Waste management and advocacy at home and in society

The advocacy for ecology begins, very simply, at home. The focus is on making simple changes that can have significant effect.

Today's lifestyle is one of consumption—often, of too much than we really need. The result is an increasingly heavy footprint, not only in the resources that we use, but also in terms of what we waste.

Segregation schemes are being implemented in university campuses, with a focus on changing lifestyle. For instance, cafeterias providing dinnerware that can be reused, rather than simply thrown away, and setting up waste bin systems to ensure segregation of waste at source.

Information and communication is important in these early stages of setting up waste management systems, as well as training for those who collect and dispose of the waste. Some campuses have already established Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF), where materials can be further sorted and stored, prior to final disposal. Other initiatives are in terms of composting of biodegradable materials, such as leftover food and yard waste.

II. GROWING A GREEN CAMPUS

In the last years, Catholic educators have initiated and sustained various management strategies that highlight the need for all of us to live more sustainably and leave a lighter “ecological footprint”. While governments are increasingly regulating waste management, as well as energy and resource

use, it is not necessary to wait for government policy in order to begin initiatives in this arena.

The Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) reported that awareness of the importance of environmental management is growing among Jesuit educational institutions. Jesuit institutes and partners should take the lead in implementing more integrated and sustained environmental management practices, while engaging other sectors and stakeholders in the process. Several examples can be drawn from them around Asia Pacific.

Although the Green Campus Management was previously presented as a planned five-step process, the effort is really focused on the development of a comprehensive training course for “Sustainability Officers”. At present, Politeknik Akademi Teknik Mesin Industri-Surakarta (ATMI) and Sanata Dharma University in Indonesia, and Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC) and Ateneo de Davao (AdDU) in the Philippines are collaborating on the development of a curriculum for a modular course that would train persons who would not only manage the campus’ physical environment, but also provide a proactive environmental vision relating with students and off campus engagements. Eventually, it is expected that the officer would also need to develop the capacity for carbon footprint accounting for the institute.

The course actually integrates several elements. As mentioned above, the process begins with an initial orientation using Our Environmental Way of Proceeding. As this program is fairly general, it is adaptable to a variety of applications for various participants.

Part of the curriculum focuses on establishing campus baseline environmental measures and procedures. Because of varying capacity levels across the conference, the management team of each campus will be assisted in conducting a baseline study on current housekeeping—or “ecology keeping”—factors in their campus. This will cover all areas of waste production and energy consumption. This is already being done on many campuses and checklists are already being developed (see appendix). The challenge is to get it to really work and to empower people to bring it to a greater level of impact. This focus is built in to the course.

Beyond the baseline study, a manual and auditing system for environmental measures and procedures is being developed. This helps campuses move

towards more integrated, accurate, and proactive environmental accounting and management, with sustained monitoring and evaluation.

A basic ecology is evident through out the program, particularly in understanding campus biodiversity, dumpsites and watershed management. An Ecology Formation course is being developed to provide the scientific basis and foundation needed to properly understand ecology, as well as related issues, including climate change. It also integrates spirituality, social experience, and reflection and is initially intended for Jesuit scholastic formation. This is discussed in a succeeding section.

Recently, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) in Asia Pacific also adopted the JCAP Green Campus Management program as part of its agenda in the region.

III. FLIGHTS FOR FORESTS

Initially a proposal made to the Major Superiors, Flights for Forests is a carbon offset scheme to assist rural communities in Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines in forest renewal activities.

The program seeks to develop primarily the understanding and attitude that expresses our care for the environment, as well as the need to take responsibility for the impact that we have on it. The focus of Flights for Forests is on offsetting carbon emissions generated by air travels in the Conference, Provinces, and institutions. Air travel produces greenhouse gas emissions, mainly carbon dioxide, estimated at 30-100 grams of CO₂ per passenger kilometer. Purchasing carbon offsets has become a popular strategy in the business and corporate circles for mitigating the impact of air travel and motor vehicle use. However, it must be noted that emission trading is not our expertise, and it is not the intention of this proposed activity.

In proposing Flights for Forests, the objective is to make the connection with Creation and to awaken our sense of responsibility for the impact we have. For every flight taken by participants from the Conference, Province, or other institutions, a contribution of US\$5 will be collected and pooled into a fund. The pooled fund will be used to support identified forest renewal activities undertaken by rural youth groups in Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The scheme will be implemented on a voluntary basis, and will

be managed by a member of staff in the Conference. The appointed staff will record the flights booked and note the agreed budget line charges.

The Conference's offset scheme will focus specifically on assisting reforestation (as an alternative to reforestation) to support youth groups engaged in assisted natural regeneration and agroforestry-related activities. Although this effort is minimal, it is part of a comprehensive response in tackling global climate change concerns.

Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) is an alternative approach to reforestation. Reforestation has come to mean simply "tree planting" to many people. However, there is much more to reforestation—and to environmental rehabilitation—than simply tree planting. Before embarking on any tree planting activities, it is important to ask where to plant and what species will be used. Perhaps ever more critical are the questions as to who will be responsible for planting the trees, who will help them grow, and who will benefit once they are grown?

ANR utilizes natural regeneration of forest trees, such as wildlings, natural seedlings, and sprouts. ANR "assists" natural regeneration by preventing fire, pressing imperata, and helping trees grow faster in other ways. By using naturally occurring trees, problems of matching tree species to the site are avoided; by encouraging the growth of native species, we can help restore a diverse, natural forest.

Box B

Assisting Forests in Bendum: The Pulangiyeen approach

Bendum was identified as a potential site for the "Flights for Forests" program. The Pulangiyeen in Bendum are restoring their forests through a mixture of activities related to their basic needs for water and livelihood. Around 12 hectares along the forest edge are under various forms of utilization that assist natural regeneration.

The Flights for Forests fund can help the indigenous youth association in Bendum share its ANR practices with other Pulangiyeen villages along the Upper Pulangi Watershed. The US\$5 contribution can cover:

- One roundtrip ride for one youth to a neighboring village
- Costs of growing 1 native tree seedling
- Snacks for morning's work of 15 youth

YOUTH EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

There are many youth programs in the Conference seeking exposure and growth in reflection and action. Jesuits in the Conference are encouraged to collaborate and facilitate the programs on Youth Education for Sustainability to engage the youth in environmental concerns through strengthening their capacity for observation, analysis and reflection.

I. SCHOLASTICS AND LAY PARTNERS' FORMATION

In the Philippines, efforts are being made for course integration in the Loyola School of Theology. In Indonesia, there is progress in the development of a draft program for the Green Education for the Youth, Eco-Education Seminar 2012. This document was a result of the “train the trainers” program that was presented during the Mekong experiential workshop on “Reconciliation with Creation”.

The Green Education for the Youth program also includes Our Environmental Way of Proceeding as an initial reflection. It also incorporates components of community engagement, critical analysis, theological reflection, and capacity building.

As mentioned above, an Ecology Formation course is being developed, to give both a basis in science and ecology, as well as foundations in spirituality, social experience, and reflection. Although the Jesuit scholastics are initially seen as a primary audience, the course is being developed with an eye towards offering it to institutions for both Jesuit and lay participation.

The course will help to strengthen the institutional vision and build scientific, social, and spiritual capacity within the institution for Reconciliation with Creation. It will draw on existing courses and could be done in a rotation, with different emphasis, over a set number of years and with different institutes.

II. ASIAN LEADERS PROGRAM

Another development is the international studies for Asian leaders program, with a focus on environmental security, sustainable development, and peace. This program is currently being offered to the University for Peace students, and will also be opened to Arrupe scholastics in Manila as a credit course.

Indigenous Peoples

Who are Indigenous Peoples? They are tribals and minorities of old for whom society has learned the basics of politically correct language. They are usually self-identified and locally rooted, with different degrees of connectivity to mainstream politico-economic society. They consider themselves indigenous to the land, not that others are or were not, but this is something deeply valued in their sense of belonging to the land. The different cultures form different peoples, each sharing a language, not simply a dialect, meaning they have integral systems of relation. These systems reflect another aspect of their identity and now - within the context of a nation – are acknowledged as having certain self-governing rights, and so “Peoples” is capitalized.

There are many things to learn - or relearn - from Indigenous Peoples; first is their local knowledge and uniqueness of identity. Second is their sense of belonging to the land. Society generally dismisses the former given the premium on scientific knowledge and use of technology, and undervalues the latter given the promotion of urban lifestyles and global connectivity. Jesuits who live with Indigenous Peoples work in the light of such contradictions and learn much about the meaning of life.

The mission to the Indigenous Peoples of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus and Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific is strong, even though few are dedicated to the life. It continues because of the responsibility to sustain operations, willingness to learn, and the desire to see a sustainable way forward for the Indigenous Peoples.

Culture and Ecology Centres

The Ecology and Culture Centre is a concept perhaps best understood as a focused learning environment for groups visiting ecosystems, engaging with the community and the youth, and learning about education and environmental management in the context of an indigenous culture.

A centre facilitates a continuous flow of engagement and learning, not only about ecology, but also of the integrated knowledge systems of indigenous communities. It also builds bridges for youth or interns working in the center who bring the message into new areas and ministries.

There are efforts to organize more structured learning opportunities for partners in a centre-based environment. An emerging idea is that of setting up an integrated learning centre for the different programs organized for groups across Mindanao, with some focused engagement from Asia and Europe.

The Asian leaders program includes an Introduction to Environmental Security and Sustainable Development. This course explores these concepts and their links to earlier courses on human rights, human security, human development and gender. The program also offers a course on Operationalizing Environmental Security and Sustainable Development. This course provides practical tools and shares actual case studies that highlight the dynamics and challenges in the pursuit of environmental security and sustainable development. Finally, the program incorporates field engagement activities, in order to allow for interaction with a community facing environmental insecurity and striving for peace.

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Human society today has demonstrated its capacity to exhaust and over exploit certain resources. As a result, we have put the world at great risk. We need to ask the question of “what is a good life?—not a better one—and what such a life requires in terms of resources. It is difficult to speak of what the universal human good is today with the increasingly apparent social and economic disparities.

The theme of transformative education is growing in importance as it becomes clear that conventional training and study does not always provide either the personal reflection or integrated knowledge that is necessary. A serious level of behavioural change is needed in adjusting to today’s world where resources are limited, and where exploitation can lead to further exploitation, not only of those working, but also of the future generations of a country. A comprehensive understanding of what is needed for implementation in a given context with community, for example, is frequently missing and development is jarring. As a result, the technical and academic responses have serious limitations. Transformative education recognizes the need to go beyond academic boundaries in order to improve the capacity to integrate knowledge at many levels and develop a greater understanding of the range of issues at play on the ground.

There is a current effort to develop courses to train local government, staff and faculty of universities, and the communities, who are often the most vulnerable and most affected. These courses are not simply a matter of accumulating the required number of academic credits. Rather, these courses seek to change people’s perspectives, and as a result, to change their response.

“Exposure” programs have to become more “engagement” programs, and the intellectual discussions have to be brought to ground with more integration of heart-felt experiences, accountability and participation. There have to be clearer value systems integrated in student forums and seminars. Again, this calls for significant investigation of the limits of the concepts of development and a more rigorous search for what human development calls for.

GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Globalization is putting greater pressure on our natural resources with the depletion of forests, growing scarcity of potable water, and the adverse effects of global warming and climate change.

The Conference seeks to engage in the new structures of Jesuit governance in order to integrate advocacy, discernment, and planning in broader management of resources through the Governance of Natural Resources programs. Through the programs, the Conference seeks to develop: (1) local adaptation and management strategies on disaster; (2) mechanisms that deal with government, community, and industry; (3) sustainable livelihood practices for resource management; and (4) venue for sharing and developing information, communication, training, and capacity building.

DISASTER RESILIENCE

Given the very different contexts of disasters in the region and often the lack of or incompleteness of government response there is a great deal that the local community and any local institution, including the Church, can play.

The disaster of Aceh saw a strategic response from Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) in the region. Jesuits operations also played a coordinative role, sometimes in the local church, sometimes more broadly, in the disasters that have struck: the massive flooding in Burma wrought by Cyclone Nargis, the eruption of Mt. Merapi in Java, the flooding in Thailand due to heavy monsoon, and most recently, Typhoon Washi in Northern Mindanao, Philippines.

These experiences in initial disaster relief has resulted in significant knowledge, now being gathered into emerging protocols for: immediate rescue and response, collecting and distributing basic supplies, organizing

fund-raising campaigns, establishing critical communication channels in disaster areas, and other immediate response activities.

There are however moves to go beyond disaster relief in order to address the critical needs of disaster risk reduction through preparedness and adaptation. Patterns of improper land use and management and indiscriminate development in marginal areas have resulted in the creation of communities living in high-risk conditions. Building from previous experience in assisting local governments in priority land use planning, there are emerging initiatives to begin seriously addressing risk reduction activities. Disaster risk reduction requires a multi-level approach, as well as significant networking and partnership. Therefore the work will not only draw in the capacity of local institutions for training local government planning offices, but also the communities themselves, who will need to learn how to monitor climate events and develop early warning systems and evacuation procedures.

There is an effort to begin drawing in the necessary science, whether in hydrological measurements or geomorphological analysis, and to begin applying the science to the planning process. As these activities emerge, it is hoped that a broader Asian network will be established, allowing communities, government at the local and national level, and broader civil society to learn from experiences across the region.

A key role in this is potentially provided by our educational institutions, not only in terms of awareness but also in specific areas of capacity development. Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines has several activities dealing with post-flood resettlement, and the longer-term risk reduction program. Drawing on the capacities within the units and departments in the university, Xavier is interested in further developing its capacity not only for disaster response, but to build a Center for Risk Reduction for northern Mindanao. This is a collaborative effort with ESSC and responds to local government's needs. The focus will continue to be on capacitating local government and communities in coping with disasters, through improved planning and disaster preparedness programs.

MINING

Mining activities are expanding globally—reaching marginal areas from the Arctic to the deserts and most distant tropical mountains. The Asia

Pacific region is of course spotlighted for economic development and mineral exploitation and investment speculation are driving a further round of initiatives. The drive to capture special minerals for example is highly unregulated and dubious as to its speculative intent. There is a lack of global monitoring and accountability of the world's major corporations and their mining activities. There is also concern over extensive small-scale operations, which often go unmonitored and which can have significant impact, not only on the environment but also on the health and safety and of those involved.

Even the recent history of mining disaster highlights the inadequacy of Third World countries to understand how to ascertain the possible risks, let alone monitor and evaluate ongoing mining operations. A further challenge for developing countries dealing with mining is in the formulation and implementation of adequate national laws to prevent corporate override.

In the world today there is a clear demand for minerals, but again there is little evaluation of consumption and speciation. The market rules not sustainability or need. Whatever people want to buy sells, and in many aspects, there is no reflection of need or concern for the inequalities it creates in society. There is inadequate means of social and corporate accountability in our society to manage global movements. There is a need for far greater social and economic evaluation of the long-term costs involved in mining operations, as well as in the necessary rehabilitation and maintenance of mines long after they are closed.

Many countries are declaring no-go zones, but the pressures to conform to the global might of economic exploitation clearly prevail over the local right to a more participative and sustainable human development. Frequently a call for a moratorium on mining is heard for lack of coherence, monitoring, due process, abuses, division in communities and armed encounters.

In the Philippines a new round of civil society engagements focused on mining is emerging, and the Church is playing a strong role in this. In Indonesia, it is certainly a major concern, from Nusa Tenggara to Papua and Papua New Guinea. Many countries are seeing the need to take up many of the questions that mining is raising, with respect to its impact on the environment, communities, and the development of countries, both economic and social. Greater exchange would be of value as countries seek to learn how best to cope with difficult circumstances and address the issues as they surface.

There are many Jesuits aware of and involved in the national agenda of their country, or specific communities exposed to the industry. The Jesuits are challenged to show solidarity in a globalized world and seek a deeper engagement. This also calls for us in our institutions to double-check on any investments we may have and to be transparent as to our involvement. These questions are being raised in several countries throughout the region, and also at the level of the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network. This should help us understand that we are part of this exploitation of resources, and remind us of the urgent need to look at the social and environmental costs, immediate and long-term.

Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

Disaster Risk Reduction and Response - A Protocol for Collaborative and Responsive Action within JCAP

This document outlines practical steps to be taken by Jesuits within the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific in response to disasters that impact the lives of people and communities in this part of the world. Our responses to these catastrophic events are collaborative in nature, joining local efforts and guiding important international support.

Introduction

Asia Pacific is four times more likely to experience 'natural hazards' than Africa, and 25 times more likely than Europe or North America. These disasters have local and international impact, not only on the affected communities but also on the imagination and compassion of people across the world.

In recent years, many countries in Asia Pacific have had to cope with an unprecedented number of natural hazards that turned into disasters. The region has seen increasing earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and extreme weather conditions that have devastated many communities. These include the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, the 2008 Cyclone Nargis and flooding in Myanmar, 2009 typhoon Morakot in Taiwan and southern China. Back-to-back typhoons Ketsana (Ondoy) and Parma (Pepeng) triggered floods in Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in September and October 2009.

2011 saw one natural disaster after another strike in Asia Pacific. In the first quarter, an earthquake struck Christchurch in New Zealand, wildfires then floods engulfed large tracts of Australia, and Japan experienced an earthquake and tsunami that led the country to the brink of nuclear disaster. Later in the year, several Southeast Asian countries experienced severe flooding, with Thailand, particularly Bangkok, being the worst hit by the unprecedented monsoonal flooding. At the end of the year, Typhoon Sendong claimed over 1,400 lives from Cagayan de Oro to Iligan, Philippines.

According to Sanjay Srivastava, UN regional advisor for disaster risk reduction, 90 percent of the global US\$270 billion of economic losses due to natural disasters in 2011 were in Asia.

The poor are often the most at risk and vulnerable to the impacts of these disasters, and the ones who struggle the hardest to recover from the loss of family and friends, home and livelihoods.

In addition, Asia Pacific is experiencing the first impact of rising sea levels which, combined with growing populations, have resulted in enormous challenges for Pacific atolls and islands in retaining fresh water and disposing of waste. Planned migration appears to be the only solution for some island peoples, in the face of the potential disappearance of Pacific countries and thus the emergence of a totally new category of stateless persons.

Guiding principles for JCAP's response

In his letter "The service of the Society of Jesus in times of disaster", dated 12 March 2012, Fr General Nicolás spells out some operational principles and assumptions on which our service is based. He says, "Moved by the love of God that we ourselves have experienced, we are invited to collaborate with others in order to contribute what we can to alleviate the sufferings of people affected by these calamities. Already so many Jesuits and our collaborators are doing this..."

The Fr General gives a number of guidelines under the following headings:

1. Be present
2. Serve spiritually and practically
3. Collaborate
4. Share information
5. Show welcome and international solidarity
6. Be transparent
7. Think long term

Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific – a plan of action

Immediate



Long term



Phase I: the first two or three days – information, consultation, communication

The Province or his delegate should gather information and communicate it to Province members, to JCAP and to supporters. In disaster prone countries, a person or institution will be permanently delegated for this task. Those who should always be consulted include the local Jesuit community and institutions in the affected area; the national and regional JRS directors and possibly the International Director (JRS is obliged by its mandate to consider their possible response in all situations of forced displacement of people); the local Church, in particular Caritas; government and possibly non-government bodies. In particular, the Conference President should be kept informed and consulted on how the Society's network will be informed (i.e. through the JCAP office or the Province communications instruments or both). Even a major superior with few resources and limited experience should follow these steps.

Phase II: within the first week – an initial plan

The local Provincial, after consultation, will indicate the approach to be taken: whether support will be channelled to Caritas (as was the case in Fukushima, Japan 2011); whether a local Jesuit organisation will be active (as was the case following typhoon Sendong, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines when both Xavier University and Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan swung into action); whether JRS will be directly engaged (as in the

Bangkok floods); or a new Jesuit operation will be mounted (as in the Myanmar Relief Initiative following Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar) with international support.

Phase III: As soon as possible – action

The decisions taken should be followed up without delay, following the assumptions and approach outlined in Fr General's letter. Care should be taken that any volunteers sent to this work are well selected. JRS can advise on qualities needed. All actions should be geared to building the capacity of the local community. All actions should be collaborative, open to working in partnerships. Our actions should be human, pastoral, pedagogical, and practical.

Phase IV: After two or three weeks - reflect, review, revise

After some weeks it should be clear who the main groups engaged in emergency response are, and how well they are doing. Even if other groups undertake the major relief efforts, the pastoral accompaniment offered by Jesuits and companions is invariably welcome. The initial action plan should be reviewed and, if necessary, reformulated to outline the services that can be offered at local, national and international levels. The revised plan should look to immediate needs (short term) and to long-term provisions. Recovery, rehabilitation, adaptation and relocation are all options that should not be overlooked once the immediate threat of disaster has passed.

Phase V: Every few weeks – report and update

If funds have been received, there should be transparent, accurate accounting and reporting on the use of these to the donors, as stated in Fr General's letter. Such accountability will also help with securing donations funding for long-term provisions. Clear categories for donations should be set from the earliest days. Long term resettlement and return to normalcy will require new strategies, but often funding is missing in this stage. Communication is key to securing additional funding and information should go out about the lives of the people affected by the disaster, provide an account of the initiatives being taken, and make clear the recovery and rehabilitation needs required in the long term. At the minimum, this should go out through JCAP and Province communications channels.

Phase VI: Long term - looking back, looking forward, advocacy

Any plan for disaster response must extend into the long-term. It must be planned carefully in order to maximise resources and prevent unnecessary strain on local

institutions that might have to bear additional burdens. Long-term recovery, rehabilitation and adaptation have to be planned in a strategic manner, and institutions have to take responsibility for implementing these plans within a timeframe.

Soon after the immediate threats have passed, questions should be asked about whether the human impact of this disaster could have been avoided by better planning and preparation. Jesuits and Jesuit institutions may not be directly involved in long-term assistance, but they should encourage this study and advocate for better preparations lest new natural hazards turn again into natural disasters.

Phase VII: Long term – risk reduction, disaster resilience

Our close accompaniment with the people affected by any traumatic event alerts us to focus on risk reduction, on strengthening community response, and on advocating for reducing the potential impact of natural hazards on vulnerable communities. Risk assessment should be undertaken, early warning mechanisms and evacuation plans put in place and rehearsed. Government preparedness in these areas, and our capacity to influence national policies and practices differ markedly across Asia Pacific. But we should endeavour to make these become national and local priorities, with institutions adequately resourced for the tasks. Our desire to advocate for just and timely policies is a natural offshoot of our concern for vulnerable individuals and communities.

Putting this plan into practice

The response of Jesuits and our collaborators to disasters has been sometimes heroic, sometimes less focused. Much has depended on leadership, individual initiative and available resources. This protocol envisages a more coherent, consistent and prepared response in the future. Each province will have different capacities and opportunities - capacity of local government institutions, policies and preparations, the availability and experience of the local JRS, the strength of Caritas or other natural partners. As such, each province should put in place its own version of this protocol without delay and clarify for itself and for the Conference the procedures it will normally follow. Each province should appoint the persons who will be responsible for action and for communications. Each province should communicate its version of this protocol and provide the contact details for the persons responsible for action and communications to JCAP and all the other Provinces.