

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

## Working together - Partnerships for DRR

- VOICE is a European network of 82 humanitarian NGOs. Improving policy and practice of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in developing countries has been a priority issue for the network over many years. 2013 is a key year in the development of the next international framework to follow the Hyogo Framework for Action which comes to an end in 2015. The EU as a global player and major donor has an important role in this discussion. While progress has been made in integrating DRR in humanitarian action, now the development community has a crucial role to play in raising awareness and practice of disaster risk reduction to protect lives and livelihoods in the global south.
- This paper is the sixth in a series providing an introduction to key discussions around Disaster Risk Reduction. Here we explore the need for diverse partnerships for effective risk reduction.

*"Collaboration and cooperation are crucial to disaster risk reduction: states, regional organisations and institutions, and international organisations all have a role to play. Civil society, including volunteers and community-based organisations, the scientific community, the media, and the private sector, are all vital stakeholders."*

UNISDR Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 - brochure



### Joining forces for Disaster Risk Reduction

To make a real difference to the capacities of communities to manage disaster risk, DRR needs to be integrated in a wide variety of sectors; agriculture, health, urban planning, ecosystem management to name but a few. This requires cooperation between many different actors, yet such cooperation does not always come easily or naturally. However, a commitment to collaborative action for Disaster Risk Reduction can generate learning and improved practice for all stakeholders concerned.



### Sharing a culture of risk reduction

As progress is made in understanding many types of hazards and how to deal with them, the responsibility for action must be shared. Governments, civil society, media and the private sector all have roles to play in ensuring that a culture of risk reduction informs public and private sector decision-making. Disaster risk reduction must be integrated into development policies, planning and investments. This can only be achieved by working together in order to a) raise public awareness to ensure that DRR is a recognised priority and b) develop appropriate DRR strategies and actions. Governments of disaster-prone countries, donors and development actors should take the lead in ensuring that DRR is prioritised in planning and investments.

Similarly, it is important to make sure that a post-2015 international sustainable development framework is underpinned by sufficient risk reduction efforts. For this a broad network of many stakeholders with a common understanding of the importance of DRR will be required.

*“There are greater incentives for Disaster Risk Management when instruments simultaneously address the needs of a number of stakeholders and competing priorities.”*

*UNISDR (2011) Global Assessment Report- Revealing Risk, Redefining Development*



## Developing new approaches for addressing risk

In the years to come partnerships with new actors will be required to deal with the changing conditions of need. For example, disaster risk reduction strategies will need to take into account vastly increased urban populations, and specific approaches will be required for dealing with reduction of risk in protracted crises and fragile contexts. Growing strain on land and water resources points to a more urgent need to link disaster risk approaches with ecosystem management. And more partnerships which involve the private sector could contribute to promoting sustainable business practice, safer construction standards, and environmentally friendly industry. New media approaches can assist in awareness-raising, and in holding people and institutions to account. Informed Parliamentarians have a key role to play in ensuring strengthened legislative frameworks and bridging the gap between local issues and national strategy.



## Cooperation - horizontal and vertical

Risk reduction measures need to be specific to the risk profile of a particular location or community. Dialogue between experts from different disciplines and a high level of community involvement is required, in order to tackle both the hazards that can lead to disaster and the underlying factors which make some people more disaster-vulnerable. Communities cannot bring about structural changes by themselves and often require the cooperation of and support from local and national authorities. Central government needs to ensure adequate resource flows to enable local action. Cooperation also needs to be ensured between stakeholders at different levels from local to national and beyond. This includes coordination of DRR priorities and approaches between different departments of government, and with non-state actors. National and regional platforms for DRR are important fora for such collaboration and exchange.



## Approaching partnerships with open eyes

Different types of organisation or institution have different ways of working, and may not share all the same interests. The terminology they use may be very different and there will be inequalities in the resources they can contribute to joint work. Time and lots of dialogue is needed to understand each other's ideas, objectives and ways of working. However, the prospect of safeguarding lives and assets by concerted action on disaster risk reduction can be a powerful motivation. Public, private and third sector actors should be prepared to push themselves beyond their comfort zone. NGO participation in innovative partnership approaches is best supported by predictable funding frameworks that accommodate the level of effort, flexibility and time needed for multi-stakeholder work.



## Sharing information and learning

A partnership approach offers an opportunity to think more widely and to learn from different expertise and varying perspectives. It can also expose the need for more information on certain issues. To make the progress we need on reducing disaster risk, it is important to collect and share information openly between many stakeholders. In particular, in order to improve local action on DRR, better data collection on local losses and analysis should be supported. These should be connected to national monitoring systems so that comprehensive loss accounting can underpin prevention and preparedness measures.

## CASE STUDY



Alex Winter/IFRC

*Improved agricultural technique is linked to risk reduction, climate change adaptation and ecosystem management.*

## An innovative Partnership for Resilience

*This case study from the Netherlands is an example of a multi-stakeholder partnership aimed at supporting climate-smart disaster risk reduction in 9 countries.*

### CONTEXT

The risk of disasters wiping out hard-won gains in poverty reduction and basic service provision is increasingly recognised. Degradation and loss of ecosystems have also intensified hazards which, when combined with vulnerability, cause disasters for many communities. Five Netherlands-based humanitarian, development and environmental organisations decided to take a more coordinated approach to reduce the impact of hazards on vulnerable communities.

### PROJECT EXAMPLE

The "Partners for Resilience" (PfR) alliance, works together in 9 countries to combine disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) with ecosystem management and restoration (EMR). Involving many local partner organisations, the project works with communities to determine the main disaster risks they face and take action accordingly. In addition to improving disaster resilience of housing and water-supply, livelihoods, agricultural and pastoral techniques are addressed. Importantly, the resilience of local landscapes is also a key feature in the project. This includes protecting vulnerable coastal areas via mangrove belts, ensuring sustainable use of river and marsh water in dry regions, and managing forests and wetlands to prevent flooding.

Working both in the countryside and in urban slum areas, the project focuses on three key areas: (i) strengthening community resilience, by household-level measures and ecosystem management and restoration (ii) empowering civil society organisations

working on DRR, and strengthening cooperation between government, knowledge centres and non-governmental actors, (iii) policy dialogue, to create a policy context which is more conducive to DRR, CCA and EMR at the local, national and international level.

The new partnership is proving challenging. To work as a partnership takes patience and planning. It requires discussions on key topics and approaches as well as joint decisions on strategies, objectives, methodologies, focus countries and funds. Organisations working on DRR, CCA and/or EMR use different tools; these have to be shared.

However, the PfR partnership brings together different strengths in an innovative manner. The different organisations have pooled their expertise in emergency planning, community-based development, ecosystem management and climate risk assessment to develop comprehensive local approaches. The emphasis on promoting dialogue and solutions involving government, civil society, the private sector and knowledge centres is expected to make a lasting difference to planning and risk management.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Mali, Guatemala, Nicaragua, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Partners: Netherlands Red Cross, CARE Netherlands, Cordaid, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, and Wetlands International.

Duration: 5 years (2011-2015)



## Key messages

- Effective Disaster Risk Reduction requires investment in multi-level partnerships between governments, private sector and civil society.
- Development actors, donors and governments of disaster-prone countries should take the lead to ensure disaster risk reduction is prioritised in planning and investments.
- Political commitment to resilience and reducing disaster risk needs to be translated into cross-disciplinary cooperation, which supports local action with national and regional coordination.
- Broad stakeholder involvement in national strategies and predictable funding frameworks are important for multi-party collaboration on risk reduction.
- Improved collection and sharing of data on disaster losses is essential for awareness-raising, analysis and joint action.

### FURTHER READING

- VOICE position paper (2012) *Disaster Risk Reduction – a fundamental element of building resilience*
- Partners for Resilience (2011-2015) [www.partnersforresilience.nl](http://www.partnersforresilience.nl)
- UN Task Team on Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2013) – *Building Resilience to Disasters Through Partnerships- Lessons from the Hyogo Framework for Action*

*This paper was prepared by the **VOICE Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**. Established in March 2007, the group brings together 25 European NGOs with the goal of contributing to and improving EU policy and practice on DRR, with particular reference to the Hyogo Framework for Action. In 2012 the DRR Working Group supported the development of the abovementioned VOICE position paper.*



*This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Commission through its Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department.*

*The views expressed herein should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.*

### VOICE

VOICE stands for 'Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies'. It is a network representing 82 European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster risk reduction. As a European network, it represents and promotes the values and specificities of humanitarian NGOs, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors.

VOICE

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