



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

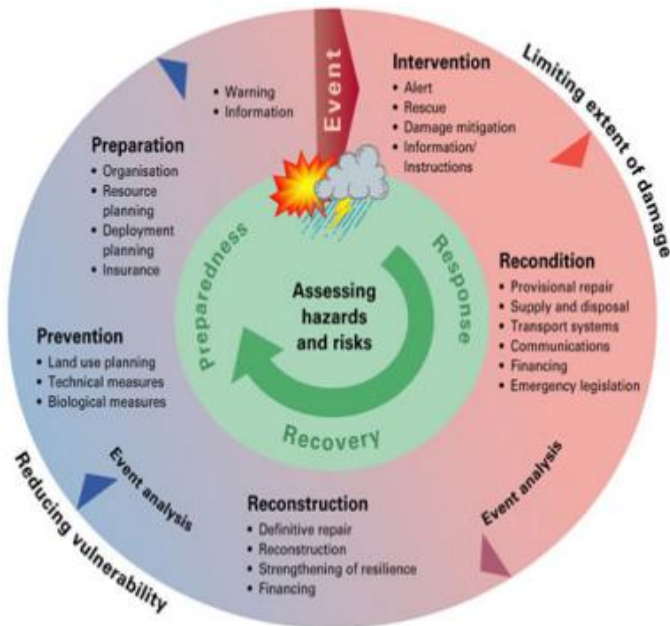
TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Across the world large populations are increasingly exposed to the risks of multiple and recurrent natural disasters that reverse decades of development work, slowing down progress towards poverty reduction. Poverty and vulnerability to disasters are closely linked: low income countries and within them the poor and disadvantaged groups are typically more vulnerable to and disproportionately affected by disasters. Poverty reduction, sustainable development and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are closely interlinked and mutually supportive objectives. Disasters occur when an external natural or technological hazard interfaces with a vulnerable human activity. Even if natural hazards can not be fully avoided, disasters to a large extent can be avoided by reducing the exposure of communities to the hazard, increasing their capacities to withstand it and/or by reducing their vulnerability.

Addressing DRR through a livelihood approach, vulnerability and capacity can be analysed through the six livelihood assets – natural, physical, social, human, financial and political. These assets together determine people's capacities. These can be very specific to the community, to households and indeed to individual women and men. Our projects demonstrate actions on several of these livelihood assets and provide the building blocks for more concerted action on mainstreaming a culture of risk reduction in all our development interventions.

INTRODUCTION

Disaster Risk Reduction is a conceptual framework that seeks to minimize vulnerability in a society by systematically avoiding (prevention) and limiting (preparedness and mitigation) the adverse impacts of hazards, working within the broad context of sustainable development (ISDR, 2009). DRR widens the focus beyond responding to disasters, to aspects of risk assessment, knowledge creation and sharing, building public commitment, supportive insitutional frameworks, better resource management and improving early warning and response capacities. The approach has evolved over the years from 'management' of disasters to a more proactive and systemic risk reduction strategy.



Source: SDC, 2011: Climate and DRR Check; Planat, 2004

THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK OF ACTION

The Hyogo Framework of Action (2005 – 2015) adopted by 168 nations at the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction, recognises 5 major challenges in ensuring systematic action on DRR (a) Governance; (b) Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning; (c) Knowledge management and education; (d) Reducing underlying risk factors and (e) Preparedness for effective response and recovery. Signatory nations periodically report progress towards achievement of the five priority areas of action identified:

- 1 Make Disaster Risk Reduction a Priority**
Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation
- 2 Know the Risks and Take Action**
Identify, assess, and monitor disaster risks - and enhance early warning
- 3 Build Understanding and Awareness**
Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels
- 4 Reduce Risk**
Reduce the underlying risk factors
- 5 Be Prepared and Ready to Act**
Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

DRR AND DEVELOPMENT

RISK REDUCTION FROM A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Traditionally Humanitarian Aid organisations focus on disaster response and relief while development agencies work on long term development activities where disasters are seen as extraordinary extreme events. There is a large area of work on preparedness, prevention and resilience that is left unaddressed. Even projects that adopt a sustainable livelihoods approach tend to focus more on building on the 'strengths' and 'opportunities' than on mitigating the risks. However as extreme events have an increasingly greater impact in terms of loss of live and property, development agencies and national governments are recognising the importance of mainstreaming DRR into development programmes. DRR bridges the gap between the traditional fields of action of humanitarian aid and development organisations.

PROJECT FOCUSING ON RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION, GUATEMALA (ASTER)

In 2006 hurricane Stan hit remote areas in the highlands of Guatemala which are predominantly inhabited by indigenous people. After a first phase of emergency aid, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation mandated Helvetas to strengthen the disaster preparedness of the people living in the area. Interventions included the elaboration of emergency plans, access to early warning systems and improved settlement planning.

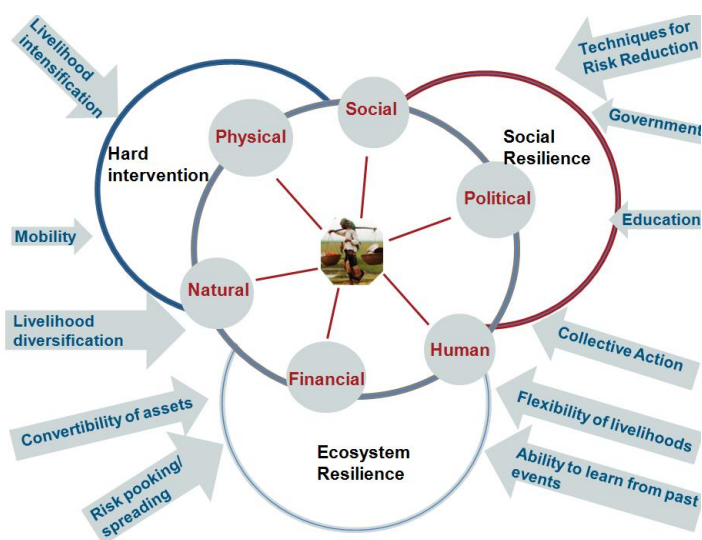
COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES

DRR initiatives may include efforts to reduce hazards (land use zonation, structural measures), reduce the vulnerability (better housing, diversified livelihoods) and/or enhance the capacity to deal with them (savings, access to credit, insurance). Non-structural measures, such as community based risk assessment, awareness building, early warning systems, livelihood diversification and strengthening are important elements of DRR. Development agencies have a key strength in this area given their approach of working with community based organisations and the emphasis on community level capacity building. However it is important that they consciously take into account a multi hazard approach and incorporate risk reduction and resilience building activities in their programmes.

COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER RISK MITIGATION AFGHANISTAN

Helvetas won the renowned Swiss-Re Resource award for its disaster risk reduction project in Afghanistan. Thirty years of war, extreme poverty and droughts have led to unsustainable use of high altitude watersheds. Heavy erosions cause floods and stone avalanches that damage houses and scarce farming land in the valley bottoms. Through participatory processes, the project aims at long-term rehabilitation of the watershed through improved pasture management, plantations, alternate energy options like community bakeries, income-generating, cultivation of niche crops and nursery raising. These are combined with structural measures to reduce flood risks.

Schematic Diagram of Livelihood Resilience:



DRR AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

DRR and adaptation to climate change (ACC) are closely interlinked. Scientific evidence indicates that the current changes in climate will not only increase the number of extreme events but that these will become more frequent and intense. This is especially true for hydro-meteorological extremes such as droughts and floods (IPCC, 2011, CRED 2008). Between 1980 and 2007 there were 8,500 natural disasters of which 90 percent were related to hydro-meteorological hazards which caused 70 percent of the casualties and 75 percent of the economic losses.

The anticipated catastrophic impact of climate change may not be felt as large apocalyptic events but more in the form of repeated climate disasters of growing intensities that result in higher risks and vulnerability of the poor. Repeated exposure to weather related disasters is one of the most common causes of chronic poverty as has been seen in the Horn of Africa in recent years. Improved DRR capacity is the first step towards adaptation to the longer term impacts of climate change.



CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECT PERU (PACC)

PACC, a project supported by SDC, works at the local, regional and national levels and is a direct response linking ACC, DRR food security and water management. It combines local participatory risk assessment and adaptation measures with regional and national level studies and institutional mechanisms to mainstream CCA and in development planning. Specific interventions address disaster risk reduction, nutrition, and development needs. Activities include adaptive agricultural practices, early childhood development, diversification of livelihoods and risk management capacity building. The comprehensive and diverse activities implemented allow addressing resilience and ensuring the sustainability of the activities.

PROGRAMME ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION BOLIVIA (PPRD)

One of the four components of the PRRD in Bolivia focuses on strengthening capacities of local and regional authorities to integrate DRR and ACC in municipal and departmental planning processes. Towards this a practical orientation guide for local stakeholders is being developed. An innovative risk transfer mechanism has been created under the 'Agriculture Risk and Mitigation Fund' which helps low-income producers deal with the adverse impacts of hazards like hail and frost.

OUR PROJECTS THAT ADDRESS DRR IN A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

Several of our projects and programmes address DRR at a local, regional or national levels. They have gained valuable experiences and have developed tools, approaches and capitalisation documents that can be used elsewhere. A list of such projects and programmes is provided below:

- Livelihood Programme, Pakistan
- Samridhi: A programme for livelihood promotion, Bangladesh
- Sharique: A programme for local governance, Bangladesh
- Community-based Disaster Risk Management, Afghanistan
- PRRD: Programme on Disaster Risk Reduction, Bolivia
- PACC: Programme on Adaptation to Climate Change with a DRR component, Peru
- Markets for Meghri: A horticulture M4P project with DRR as transversal issue, Armenia
- Markets development project in the Kakheti region, Georgia
- Proyecto de Asistencia Technica a la Reconstruccion y rehabilitacion ASTER, Guatemala
- Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change, India

DRR AS A TRANSVERSAL THEME IN M4P PROJECT, ARMENIA

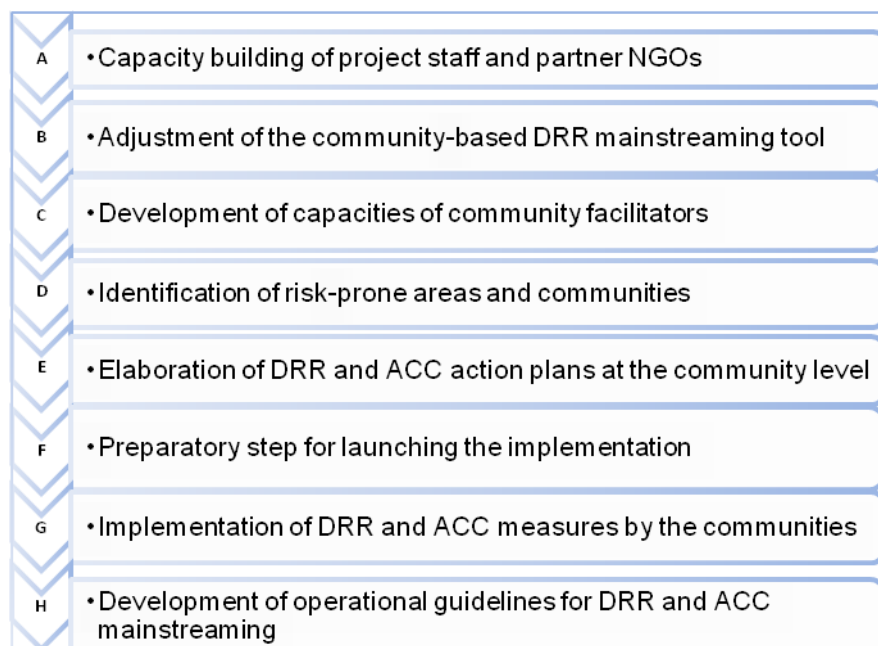
The horticulture project in Meghri is located in a hazard-prone area where recurrent natural hazards are a constant set-back to development efforts. DRR is a transversal theme in this SDC supported project. Disaster risk assessments have led to a better understanding of hazard risks and to identification of measures that strengthen the resilience of the communities and the sustainability of project activities.



MAINSTREAMING DRR IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

While development projects and programmes of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation have been effective in reducing poverty, there is an increasing awareness that in many of the contexts in which we work, a systematic DRR approach is needed to secure the development gains made and to avoid set-backs. When confronted with a natural disaster, projects have taken pragmatic steps to address immediate needs of communities and have worked in coordination with humanitarian agencies. However, with the sharpening of links between disasters and development, as also extreme weather events and climate change, some of our country programmes are in the process of mainstreaming DRR as a transversal theme across all their development interventions.

The generic steps to mainstream DRR, derived from the experiences of the Livelihood, Empowerment and Agro-forestry (LEAF/Samriddhi) programme in Bangladesh are summarised below. Given our basis approach of working with community based organisations and partner capacity building, this approach can be easily replicated in other contexts. An important step in the process is the adaptation of the community based DRR mainstreaming tool to the local context. This, and several other useful resources, are indicated in the reference list.



FROM PILOTING TO MAINSTREAMING DRR IN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, BANGLADESH

SAMRIDDHI, A PROGRAMME FOR LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION, BANGLADESH

"DRR interventions are our first priority at the moment. If we do not focus on this our project activities are in danger" (CBO member, October 2009).

We support communities to prioritise their own actions that help them deal with natural disasters. The livelihood programme in Bangladesh (LEAF/Samriddhi) developed simple but comprehensive instruments that empower communities with tools for analysis and prioritisation of option sets that improved preparedness and reduce risks.

Improved indigenous techniques that help communities withstand floods were introduced. The community led construction process built skills and reduced dependency on external actors. They were complemented by non-structural measures like awareness raising, capacity building, functional early warning systems and measures that build coping capacities, such as school boats that enabled

INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS: REFERENCE LIST

For further information please contact the "Environment and Climate Change" Team at ecc@helvetas.org

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Tool, Adaptation & Livelihoods <http://www.iisd.org/cristaltool/>

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