

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Joining the dots

- 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 for reducing disaster risk worldwide including via the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May. 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 third of a series of six providing an introduction to key discussions around Disaster Risk Reduction. Here we explore how Disaster Risk Reduction fits with other development concerns including climate change adaptation, poverty reduction and resilience, why a more joined up approach is important, and how it might be achieved.



Why do we need a more coordinated approach to DRR?

Donors and policy makers have often dealt with Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and sustainable development via separate policy frameworks and funding channels. However, separate policy approaches can lead to duplication of efforts and inefficient use of funds. Most importantly, disaster risk reduction could be more effective in protecting lives and livelihoods if it were better coordinated with other sectors.

At a community level, many of the challenges that these policy areas seek to address are the same; for example food insecurity linked to changing weather patterns, or economic vulnerability due to loss of assets in flood-prone areas. The everyday risks that an individual or household experience cannot be given separate labels of 'climate change adaptation', 'poverty reduction' etc.

Disaster risk reduction requires a long-term approach and is relevant throughout the whole aid and development cycle. Sometimes targeted projects are required to reduce specific risks (e.g. river bank reinforcement to prevent flooding). However, mainstreaming of a DRR perspective is also required in poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and other development initiatives, in order to ensure best prospects of sustainability in the face of possible shocks and hazards.

"Above all, donors need to change mindsets - ensuring development staff and partners are aware of why risk reduction is important, providing the tools to implement the often very simple and common-sense measures to reduce risks, and investing in risk training for key staff."

OECD (2012) *Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship - 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*

DRR and Climate Change Adaptation

The recent IPCC² *Special Report Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (SREX) confirms that most of the DRR measures currently applied to manage current and future risks also have benefits in managing climate change. Such DRR actions are noted as being “low-regret” measures, in other words, a good investment in their own right which makes a positive contribution to a range of future climate scenarios.



What are the barriers to a more joined-up approach?

The governance arrangements for disaster risk reduction in many countries do not support the integration of risk considerations into development. Institutional and legislative arrangements for disaster risk reduction are in general weakly connected to development sectors. Similarly, policy and institutional frameworks for climate change adaptation and poverty reduction have poor connections with disaster risk reduction policies and strategies, at both the national and international levels.

Within governments, academia and civil society, ‘disaster’ experts still work in too much isolation. Individuals working on both disaster response and disaster risk reduction are often in separate departments from colleagues working on ‘poverty reduction’, or ‘development’. Special efforts need to be made to improve exchange between these areas. Over recent years, there has been some improvement in linkages between climate change and DRR sectors, but more collaboration is still needed.

At an international level, the links between development frameworks, such as the Millennium Development Goals, international climate agreements, and the Hyogo Framework for Action¹ are also weak, reinforcing the separation between approaches. Reviews of the Hyogo Framework to date have shown that progress in DRR strategies at regional or national levels has not yet been matched by adequate progress at local levels.



Where does resilience fit in?

The concept of resilience can be useful to support discussion on more coordinated approaches. It can provide multiple stakeholders with a common focus on building long-term capacity to cope with hazards in a way that transcends labels of ‘relief’, ‘early recovery’ and ‘development’. Disaster Risk Reduction is not replaced by this concept, but rather forms a fundamental element of building community resilience to a variety of hazards.



Ways forward for a more effective coordinated approach

Reducing risk requires a long-term approach which is not confined to one particular aid ‘sector’; DRR therefore needs to be systematically integrated into development strategies and programmes. The role of civil society is essential in ensuring a ‘bottom up’ approach that targets context-specific risks and takes into account local capacities and constraints.

Planning and funding approaches that support LRRD (Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development) will enable better risk reduction. LRRD should ensure that development programmes are better able to support capacity building and risk reduction measures over a long-term and should enable DRR measures initiated during humanitarian interventions to be effectively carried through into development programmes.

DRR practitioners have started to refer to ‘climate smart’ approaches. A clearer focus on risk, in development strategies would support context specific ‘DRR-smart’ development planning. It can also provide a basis for other important areas of collaboration - for example linking environment policy and ecosystem management to livelihood issues.

The international discussions on post-2015 frameworks also provides an opportunity for exchanging expertise and building connections between policy areas. A joined up approach also means more attention should also be paid to connections between local, national and international level; it is particularly necessary to ensure that national strategies can be translated into improved local capacity for risk management.

¹ Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: A ten year plan to reduce natural hazard risk signed by 168 countries

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

CASE STUDY



Jane Beesley/Oxfam

Pastoralists in Kenya are particularly vulnerable to climate change

Supporting adaptation of pastoralists in Kenya

This case study from Kenya is an example of a disaster risk reduction programme aimed at ensuring more secure livelihoods in the context of a changing environment caused by climate change.

CONTEXT

Pastoralism is the main economic activity in the arid environment of the Turkana district in north-western Kenya. The size and diversity of herds has decreased over the last decade, and poverty levels increased as droughts have become more frequent. In 2006 the problems caused by drought were compounded by an outbreak of disease in local goat herds. Oxfam began a project to support both the livestock sector and livelihood diversification.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

The project took a joined-up approach to working with different actors, including pastoralists, local authorities, and local Livestock Marketing Associations to develop ways of dealing with the current and future crises. In order to improve flexibility of economic opportunities for the herders for the long-term, one programme element involved building new livestock markets in remote areas to ensure that livestock could be sold more easily. Work across different levels with district structures and veterinary offices was necessary to make sure these market places were linked with the appropriate institutions and with larger markets. The livestock markets helped many pastoralists to sell animals at decent market prices, even in times of drought.

Livelihood diversification activities targeted women in particular. Women's groups were supported with business training and start-up grants. Women were

able to develop non-livestock market activities such as small shops and trading, which were important for building resilience to economic shocks and reducing household food insecurity.

Recognising that climate change will be likely to present the pastoralist population with increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, Oxfam laid an emphasis on building local capacity to react quickly and effectively to future crises. This included early warning monitoring systems for disease and drought within Turkana district to support decision-making. The Livestock Marketing Associations gained credibility by running emergency vaccination campaigns, which supported the development of organisational skills and relationships with government departments and other agencies.

The specific challenges of a difficult environment and changing climate in Turkana are particularly intense for the pastoralists. But an emphasis on developing local capacity for flexible and diversified livelihoods has contributed to improving this population's ability to deal with the climate-related risks ahead.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Location: Kaikor, Kaaleng, Lokitaung and Loarengak in Turkana County, Kenya

Population: 350,000 people (60,000 families)

Duration: 2 years

Cost: 270,000 euros

Key messages

- To translate the commitment to resilience into an operational reality, policy makers need to make sure that Disaster Risk Reduction is mainstreamed into development programming.
- Governmental institutions, academia and civil society need to work further on improving interconnectedness between policy areas for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and development.
- A LRRD approach which includes flexible funding between 'humanitarian' and 'development' actions will be important for supporting DRR, especially in protracted crises.

FURTHER READING

- VOICE position paper (2012) *Disaster Risk Reduction - a fundamental element of building resilience*
- Plan International (2010) *Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management*
- World Vision and Save the Children (2012) *Ending the Everyday Emergency: Resilience and Children in the Sahel*
- VOICE-CONCORD (2012) position paper *Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD): Towards a more joined up approach enhancing resilience and impact*
- CARE, URD, Wageningen University (2012) *Reaching Resilience*

*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.

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