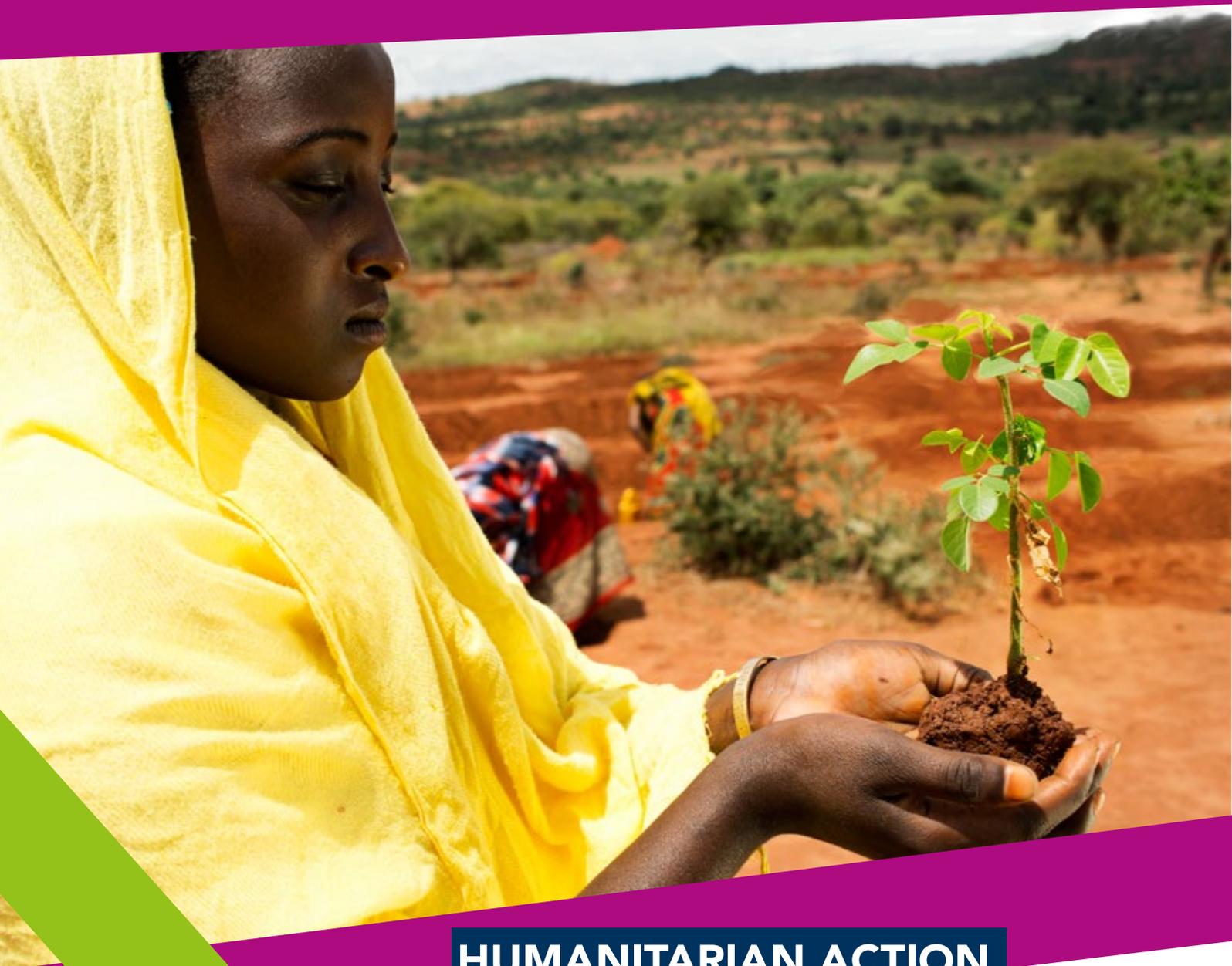


July 2020

VOICE OUT LOUD

#30



HUMANITARIAN ACTION

IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE



VOICE

European humanitarian NGOs.
Standing together.

VOICE OUT LOUD

#30

HUMANITARIAN ACTION
IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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DanChurchAid
Tree planting in Ethiopia

VOICE wishes to thank the
contributors of this issue.

Views expressed herein do
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of the VOICE network.





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Editorial



We started preparing this edition of the VOICE out loud with the aim of hearing from our members about the effects of the climate crisis on humanitarian needs and about how humanitarian NGOs are dealing with this. The Green Deal was the flagship policy of the new European Commission, and climate change had been a theme that humanitarian NGOs had increasingly sought to address. Agencies were seeking to 'go green' by ensuring their operations and policies supported a sustainable response and a responsible relationship with the environment. Climate change was also driving a growth in humanitarian needs and transforming the responses required. And then came COVID-19.

We still do not have a full picture of the impact COVID-19 will have on the many vulnerable populations that we serve. However, coming on top of a record level of humanitarian need, it will compound the challenges faced by vulnerable people and communities – and for those trying to address those needs. Finding the funding to meet these needs will be challenging, but it is essential that it happens as this crisis will drive many more people into poverty and vulnerability.

Encouragingly, what we have seen in the COVID-19 crisis is that our members and other humanitarian organisations are helping to address the impacts on the most vulnerable people, both in Europe and around the world. However, the virus has shown that it can spread far and fast if we do not mitigate it amongst those most vulnerable and most likely to be left behind – including the displaced, people living in slums, hard-to-reach communities, and less visible sections of the population.

The COVID-19 response requires new funding because of the record level of underlying needs. The UN's Global Humanitarian Overview 2020 report for April notes that 180.9 million people have humanitarian needs. In a global pandemic, it is these people, already in need, who may be most affected. We must respond to this in a way that ensures their human dignity.

At a minimum, the response requires a focus on preparing populations and on mitigating the speed of transmission of the virus because containment in many contexts may, quite simply, prove to be impossible.

The global supply and transport chains that get humanitarian goods and personnel to where they are needed have been hugely disrupted because of border closures, reductions in air traffic, restrictive measures on imports and exports, and soaring costs. We welcome the responses from the UN and the EU in establishing humanitarian air bridges to help ensure that these lifelines are maintained. But we also need the international community, the UN, the EU and their respective member states to acknowledge aid workers as essential workers and to support a diversity of humanitarian actors. Alongside health workers and essential services, civil society organisations and volunteers have been at the forefront of keeping food, clean water and medicine flowing to the people most affected and isolated by this pandemic. As humanitarian NGOs, we must also recognise that our partnership with local actors, communities and aid workers is more important than ever.

There are real concerns in terms of whether COVID-19 may trigger a deep global recession. If it does, the impact on the poorest and most at risk populations could be immeasurable. Ways must be found to address the economic and climatic challenges that face us all. They are deep, interwoven and will be difficult to resolve.

We must return to where we started though, because the climate crisis has not gone away. It continues to affect, exacerbate and add complexity to the challenges faced by the poorest and most marginalised people around the world. Floods and water shortages, soil degradation and agricultural failure, locust swarms, and increases in natural disasters all emphasise this. Humanitarians have much to learn and much to bring to the response to the climate crisis, but our experience in disaster risk reduction could be a crucial part of climate change adaptation, and our humanitarian responses can increasingly include mitigation measures that work with the natural environment.

At the European Union level, plans are in place to roll out the initiatives that will make up the European Green Deal. This is part of the thinking we need from the EU – something global, sustainable and just. To complement this, we need greater investment in humanitarian aid, DRR, resilience and community preparedness to combat the public health disaster that COVID-19 poses and the future climate change related disasters that we know are coming. For the European public, supporting efforts to address these crises reflects their solidarity with vulnerable people around the world, but is also essential in a world whose inter-connectedness has never been more evident.

Dominic Crowley

VOICE President

THE ISSUE: HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE



Birmingham, UK - Global Climate Strikes 2019 © Mahmuda Khatoon, Islamic Relief UK

Islamic Relief Worldwide

The Biggest Emergency: Why humanitarian thinking and processes must be transformed

Climate disrupts

Impacts of the climate emergency on agriculture and food security, increasing natural disasters, migration, urbanisation and health shocks constantly challenge Islamic Relief's efforts to eradicate poverty and suffering. Most of Islamic Relief's climate related work is developmental, equipping vulnerable people with the means to adapt to changes and build for the future. However, a great deal of the organisation's work involves responding to humanitarian emergencies such as conflict and its associated displacement of people, seasonal floods and cyclical drought that are getting more severe in many parts of the world as a result of climate breakdown.

In areas where development goals are at the centre of our work - in Pakistan, Malawi, India and Bangladesh - Islamic Relief has been called to respond to destructive floods that have displaced and endangered hundreds of thousands of people.

This often forces work to shift from long-term aid to more immediate humanitarian assistance. For instance, in the Horn of Africa, development programmes helping communities recover from conflict and displacement and adapt to changes in rainfall were transformed when long periods of drought left 21.4 million in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2017, these efforts were in turn disrupted by torrential unseasonable rains which flooded roads and made water trucking and food distribution impossible. The irony of relief for drought-affected communities being curtailed by rain was not lost on workers in the field.

Increasingly the conflicts to which Islamic Relief responds by ensuring the survival and protection of civilian populations - such as in Somalia, Mali, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen - include climate change among their causes. As one of the first aid agencies to respond to global emergencies, and with the breakdown of weather patterns, our work increasingly involves dealing with the effects of the accelerating rate of climate change. This trend will only get worse in the coming years and decades as more and more communities find themselves facing the impacts of the climate crisis.

Action responds

Policies and specific interventions can reduce these impacts. Opportunities, basic services, food and social security can be ensured by concentrating on integrated actions to enhance resilience and adaptation. To do this, inclusive and climate aware development policies that give the most vulnerable people a voice are vital. Government policies that reduce the vulnerability of poor people by addressing poverty and its causes in all its forms must be implemented urgently before climate change impacts become much larger. Meanwhile, any projects and investment that could create future vulnerabilities should be challenged. To prevent an endless cycle, development must be achieved alongside emission reductions and the international community must ensure that development is rapid, inclusive and climate informed. Disaster preparedness and humanitarian responses must also be routinely combined with climate action.



How it's done

Islamic Relief's experience is that it is at the local scale that interventions of this sort are most effective. In Bangladesh, Islamic Relief has refined a model which starts with a survey of poverty in a given area, and a transfer of up to \$800 to vulnerable individuals, especially women with families. Along with the cash, women are encouraged to organise into self-help groups. Their local knowledge is combined with training on how to start and maintain small businesses. Soon they are making enough money to set aside small amounts for savings which are used to expand the same interest-free 'micro-finance' loans to even more members of the community. Training events are included in the process of business planning, increasing awareness of risks, strengthening preparedness measures and providing people with basic but vital skills in planning for and helping those affected by a disaster. These contribute to people identifying their own risk factors and vulnerabilities and bridging gaps between communities and government structures in terms of disaster preparedness and response relevant to the specific context and situation. Deliberate efforts are made to foster practices and approaches that serve as low-cost and efficient climate adaptation models, for instance rainwater harvesting, canal re-excavation, school safety plans and even simple measures such as raising homestead plinths so families have a dry area during floods for domestic duties, improved hygiene and greater security. The model supports disaster preparedness while identifying, revitalising and diversifying livelihoods and building food and income security.

The results of the model are astonishing, with over 70 per cent of targeted families rising out of extreme poverty over six years, and less than 10 per cent still living below the poverty line. With more resources, and better organisation, the self-help groups have gone on to elected apex bodies to improve services and take up issues with local government and have allowed these communities to be better prepared and have the resources to face climate related challenges like droughts, floods, erosion and land salination.

A wider people centred nexus

Under internationally agreed standards, these local plans become part of the National Adaptation Plans and benefit from allocated resources. Disaster risk management is intrinsic to humanitarian aid and ensuring coherence between climate change adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is crucial to reducing vulnerabilities and increasing the resilience of communities. As a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risk of disaster, DRR aims to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities to disaster as well as deal with the environmental and other hazards that trigger them. Islamic Relief is committed to the Sendai Framework for DRR and particularly enhancing collaboration at the local level, enabling people to assess and disseminate disaster risk information, manage disaster risk, invest in resilience and improve preparedness.

There needs to be a complete convergence of humanitarian aid and adaptation interventions to support climate sensitive, risk informed transformative development. Humanitarian interventions offer opportunities to drive adaptation. Transformation in political and financial frameworks is needed to facilitate longer-term provision as demand moves from resource provision to technology transfer and capacity building towards adaptation and resilience. These frameworks need to take on the complexity of multiple vulnerabilities and the leadership of communities in determining their actions, utilising local and indigenous knowledge and the contribution of women and minorities.

The European Union is well placed to oversee this transformation using the European Green Deal to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies while better supporting people living in poverty in the Global South. It can dramatically scale-up financial support for mitigation, adaptation and environmental action (with strong policies to prevent harmful spending ensuring no detrimental impacts and protecting vulnerable groups). Partnerships can be fostered and renewed founded on principles of climate and environmental action and achieving Agenda 2030. Taking a human rights based approach to put communities at the heart of environmental and development efforts, and strengthening the participation of civil society, the EU can ensure the European Green Deal delivers for the climate, biodiversity and the people in its partner countries. The Sendai Framework, SDGs, humanitarian response and Paris Accord must be considered and acted upon together at every level.

A better future – changes coming for humanitarian response

Traditionally humanitarian aid responds to emergencies. As the earth heats, in many countries emergencies are running into each other leading to a constant state of crisis. Timings are uncertain, but inevitably this will extend and deepen. A clear outlook is that food insecurity combined with related social breakdown will become the norm, leading to increasing waves of migration and displacement in many parts of the world. To deal with this new normal humanitarian thinking and processes must be transformed. Every decision on humanitarian aid, as every decision on every aspect of life, must now be made with a view to how it will affect the planet. All actions must be measured by their contribution to building people's resilience. Only by paying careful attention to equity, and fully recognising the now inextricable combination of humanitarian, development and climate action and risk management, along with a willingness to transform systems and thinking can we properly respond to this, the biggest emergency of all.

Islamic Relief Worldwide



Germany - Global Climate Strikes 2019
© Mahmuda Khatoon, Islamic Relief UK

Investing in women's leadership in disasters is more urgent now than ever before



ActionAid Response to Nepal Earthquake 2015
©Prashanth Vishwanathan/ActionAid

Prioritising local women-led approaches to both disaster preparedness, response and resilience is not only the right thing to do from a rights-based perspective, evidence and experience highlight that women and women-led organisations bring valuable skills and assets to localised humanitarian action making it more effective and more efficient. Climate change is altering weather patterns and systems, and as the planet's temperature is rising, so too do the number of climate-related crises. This has led to an unprecedented scale of climate-related natural hazards, including cyclones, and floods, which is particularly concerning for the rights of women and girls – why?

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by disasters.

When disasters strike, pre-existing gender inequalities rooted in discrimination are intensified. This can expose women and girls to heightened risks of gender-based violence, limit their access to crucial life-saving services, and impact their food and livelihood security. This is even more pronounced for disabled and minority women and girls, and those in hard-to-reach areas. It is critical to understand the specific risks that women and girls face in disaster contexts, and the patriarchal structures

that uphold their exclusion. The humanitarian sector must move beyond stereotypical constructs of women as passive recipients of aid, to acknowledge their active roles as agents of change.

Too often, women's crucial contributions and existing leadership in disasters go unrecognised.

Humanitarian operations and decision-making spaces remain 'gender-blind' and women's voices, ignored. There is growing evidence showcasing the valuable skills of diverse local women in humanitarian action. Yet, plans to reform the humanitarian sector still fall short of meaningfully shifting power to local women and women's rights organisations within disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. ActionAid has been working to promote and support women's leadership in humanitarian disasters for many years. Not only is this the right thing to do – women should have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives – it is also the smart thing to do. When women and girls are put in the driving seat, a more effective, inclusive and efficient humanitarian response stands in place to support the whole community. Our experience shows that women are uniquely positioned to act as first responders - bringing invaluable contextual knowledge, skills, networks, and resources during disasters.

Mobilising funds and establishing disaster management committees:

In response to the 2015 Nepal earthquakes, which affected nearly 8 million people, ActionAid set up 16 women-friendly spaces and formed women's distribution committees supporting women to play an active role in rebuilding their communities. Women also mobilised their communities by creating emergency funds and disaster management committees. These committees managed workshops on reconstruction to build temporary shelters and economic independence, directly supporting the community's recovery and resilience.

Leading disaster preparedness mechanisms and community disaster planning:

When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti in October 2016, women led the distribution of aid and held trainings on health, sanitation and protection via ActionAid's safe spaces, reaching up to 30,150 people on women's protection issues. Owing to their local expertise, women and girls managed information channels and spread information on recovery plans to more marginalised and hard-to-reach households otherwise difficult to access. Similarly, when Cyclone PAM devastated the island of Vanuatu in 2015, ActionAid supported the set-up of Women Weather Watch Networks, which acted as communication platforms to support early warning systems and recovery and evacuation exercises,

identifying community needs which would otherwise be unaccounted for. This showcases the unique contributions women hold in supporting implementing agencies to identify the most effective resilience building activities.

Promoting women's leadership in all aspects of disaster management is transformative:

It enhances humanitarian action, upholds the rights of communities and provides a powerful entry point to challenge negative power structures. Supporting women to recognise their capabilities - regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, religion, identity, age disability or social constraints – supports the community to overcome barriers and sustains long-term transformative change. But we cannot stop here. As a sector, we must continue to promote women's leadership in all aspects of disaster management as a critical entry point to shift power into the hands of those directly affected and to ensure more effective and inclusive emergency responses.

Niki Ignatiou
Humanitarian Policy Adviser

ActionAid UK



Calling for climate change action – now



Nepal: rainwater collection.
People can catch fish in the ponds
for nutritious and protein high diets.
© Jakob Dall/ DanChurchAid

DanChurchAid (DCA) recently adopted a climate policy that brings staff, partners, donors, and suppliers together on a joint agenda for change.

The risks of climate change can no longer be underestimated or neglected. In the countries where DCA works, dramatic climate change risks reversing development gains, entrenching poverty and inequalities, and halting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2019, DCA adopted an internal policy to address climate change in its programmes, engagement work in Denmark, and advocacy work and internal practices as an NGO. The policy refers to emissions related to DCA activities in Denmark and internationally, covering emissions from transport, energy use, and general office management, as well as how DCA capital is invested and how programs are designed.

The long-term aim is to eliminate all emissions and contribute to more resilient and sustainable development. A central element of the policy is to contribute to further dialogue about climate change internally among staff, as well as with partners, donors, and suppliers.

Walking the talk

DCA has been calling for climate action for many years advocating with decision-makers and the private sector to consider the effect of their actions. However, we also had to ask ourselves what can we do to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainable and climate friendly development? As a result of an internal review of practices and consultations across the organisation, DCA developed and adopted an internal climate policy. The journey was a learning experience engaging staff, management, and partners in a dialogue on changing practices. As a medium-sized international NGO with offices in 19 different countries, our carbon footprint is substantial. Likewise, our global project interventions and advocacy influence the development pathway communities and countries take. We have already noticed an increasing climate interest and concern from donors, and within a few years we will probably see new donor criteria for climate friendly activities. The transition we are going through now is voluntary, but in the future it may become a requirement for all NGOs.

Changes are needed

The new internal strategy for DCA reflects a comprehensive approach that shifts the organisation towards more climate-friendly practices. The policy includes an "ambition mechanism" where staff are asked annually to reconsider existing practice and working cultures. It is not an opportunity to scale down ambitions, but rather to scale up and document progress. The biggest effect is not likely to come from turning off individual lights or placing solar panels on the roof of an office. But hopefully, the big effect will come from DCA's contribution to the green transition, a global movement where small activities can inspire others and showcase new solutions.



Tree planting in Ethiopia.
© Mikkel Østergaard/
DanChurchAid

Climate-friendly programming and compensation

In the same spirit, DCA is also working on designing programs that promote climate resilience as well as low emission development solutions. In cooperation with other Danish NGOs, DCA has initiated the revision of existing approaches to development and humanitarian work, ensuring our efforts are sustainable, e.g. improving climate-friendly materials for construction and ensuring agricultural projects contribute to carbon sequestration.

Despite good efforts and intentions, DCA continues to contribute to global warming, especially through international flights. In addition, it is also challenging to get a good overview of all emissions related to our activities. It is easy to measure energy use in headquarters, but more difficult to map emissions from activities in the more than 100 second-hand shops in Denmark, or emissions from partner activities, supported by DCA. We are therefore compensating for our flight emissions through a tree-planting project in Uganda, ensuring that we sequester more CO₂ than our flights emit. Compensation projects are complicated, as there are many considerations to be made to ensure that actual compensation happens and is not just a paper exercise. However, our goal with the compensation projects is to ensure that low emission approaches are fully compatible with our development ambitions, and that they promote adaptation and enhance sustainable outcomes for people affected by the crisis.

We are in a situation identified by science as a point of no return as higher temperatures are likely to lead to alarming effects and threatening people and communities around the world. This means that we all must stand together and act now.

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Mattias Söderberg
senior advocacy advisor

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DanChurchAid

Cordaid

Enhancing resilience in fragile & conflict affected contexts: Cordaid's experiences in linking disaster risk reduction with conflict risk analysis & conflict risk reduction

Today, a quarter of the global population, or about 1.5 billion people, live in societies affected by fragility, conflict and violence.¹ Further, according to the Overseas Development Institute, 58% of deaths from disasters related to natural hazards (e.g. floods, cyclone, drought) take place in the top 30 fragile states, where there is lack of government capacity for Disaster Risk Management. Especially in fragile contexts, climate change has a multiplier effect on conflict.²



2018 © Cordaid

To support sustainable and inclusive development, it is of utmost importance to analyse and understand local contexts and dynamics. When working in fragile contexts organisations need to have systematic information about conflict issues as they relate to resilience activities. Consistent and comprehensive conflict risk analysis is needed to ensure a “do-no-harm” approach and to aim for deliberate conflict risk reduction through resilience / Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) interventions.

Case Study

Partners For Resilience (PfR) Kenya: The Camel Caravan Campaign

The Partners for Resilience alliance started its collaboration in 2010 and continued its work under a strategic partnership with the Dutch government in 2016. The alliance consists of over 60 CSOs- worldwide - active at grassroots, national, regional and global levels- and represented in the Netherlands by the Netherlands Red Cross, CARE Netherlands, Cordaid, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and Wetlands International. PfR is supported by,

and connected to many other stakeholders, who jointly contribute in creating safer environments for all: individuals, governments, private sector, institutions, civil society organisations, and community-based organisations (CBOs).

PfR contributes to the resilience of communities by integrating Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Ecosystem Management and Restoration (EMR) into Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). With this Integrated Risk Management (IRM) approach, communities strengthen their capacities to reduce the impact of disasters. PfR believes that a community approach is being strengthened if the institutional environment can be made more conducive to climate and ecosystem-based DRR. That's why, PfR engages with civil society and government stakeholders to apply an integrated approach.

In 2018, Cordaid used the CMDRR approach to conduct participatory disaster risk analysis in the communities, whilst also looking at conflict risks. Through lobby & advocacy, Cordaid promotes traditional conflict mechanisms between conflicting groups, such as facilitating dialogues on peace, (re)establishing peace building committees, and performing

1. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/05/1-5-billion-people-live-in-fragile-societies-we-all-have-a-responsibility-to-help-them/>

2. <https://www.odi.org/projects/2913-when-disasters-and-conflict-collide-uncovering-truth>

peace rituals. Specific advocacy campaigns are done in several areas, targeting decision makers in the drought and conflict affected Counties.

For example, in Ewaso Nyiro River basin, Isiolo county, the proposed construction of the Crocodile Jaws mega dam would impact the lives, livelihoods and ecosystems in the region. The Government provided insufficient information and conducted only limited consultation forums with the affected communities - even though they would be directly affected by threats such as decreased water flow, displacement, loss of communal land, and increased resource-based conflicts amongst pastoral communities. Cordaid and local partners, with support from the Partners for Resilience programme, conducted several community meetings and held campaigns to raise awareness on the potential impacts of the dam. A camel caravan travelled through affected areas sharing information on the proposed developments. This led to the work on the dam being halted with a full, more inclusive review of the Environmental Impact Assessment report. An MoU with the Government was also developed, outlining key areas for collaboration to enhance the resilience of the communities.

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR)

Cordaid aims to enhance community resilience in disaster-prone and fragile / conflict affected areas through a Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction approach. CMDRR brings together multiple stakeholders, to jointly analyse and address disaster risks, starting from the community's knowledge on different hazard events and possible solutions. Cordaid trains local staff and partner organisations on how to facilitate the CMDRR process.

Development of a Conflict (Risk) Analysis & Conflict (Risk) Reduction Tool

Cordaid's toolkit focusses on conducting a conflict (risk) analysis at a local level, by partner organisations and communities. The conflict (risk) analysis will then be used for context specific resilience programming, which can be differentiated in supporting conflict sensitive resilience projects and/or conflict risk reduction activities. This will enable organisations to increase their understanding of the contexts of conflict and fragility in which they work, and to reduce conflicts or conflict risks.

Conflict Sensitive DRR versus Conflict Risk Reduction

Conflict sensitivity refers to the ability of an organisation³ to :

1. Understand the conflict dynamics in the context in which they operate, particularly with respect to intergroup relations;
2. Understand the interaction between the (resilience) intervention and the conflict dynamics in the specific context;
3. Act upon this understanding in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of the (resilience) intervention (on the conflict dynamics).

To work on Conflict Risk Reduction, a fourth ability needs to be added:

4. Make deliberate efforts to address drivers of conflict and to contribute to peace & stability / conflict risk reduction.

The six steps in 'CMDRR and Conflict Risk Reduction'

Step 1:

Conduct a conflict (risk) analysis. When doing this step, ensure that you consider in your analysis: Conflict Profile (incl. type of conflict, level of conflict – e.g. local, national); Conflict Causes (environmental, political, economic, socio-cultural); Conflict Actors (stakeholders involved, power relations, role in conflict); Conflict Dynamics (analysing trends, risks, opportunities); Summary of data, and analysis (high – medium – low conflict risk).

Step 2.a:

Determine the scope and focus of the project (part of planning phase). Discuss what is appropriate in the context. Work on a conflict sensitive resilience/DRR project, or on conflict risk reduction.

Step 2.b:

Community Action Planning for the Resilience project in a context or area affected by conflict, considering conflict risk and disaster risk (including climate change).

Step 3:

Establish or strengthen community structures for the resilience project. This may include existing development, DRR, or other committees at a community level, and/or specific peace committees.

Step 4:

Implementation of resilience measures, to address disaster risks and/or conflict risks. A focus on livelihood security in this stage is important.

Step 5:

Monitoring and Documentation of the outputs and outcomes of the resilience project (including collecting stories of change).

Step 6:

Advocacy & Fundraising for upscaling the work done, to further enhance people's resilience.

3. https://conflictsensitivity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/6602_HowToGuide_CSF_WEB_3.pdf

Recommendations to enhance resilience in fragile and conflict affected areas

In 2019 Cordaid started piloting the use of the Conflict (Risk) Analysis Tool in different fragile and conflict affected areas and will document and share outcomes on how the use of the tool can further enhance community resilience in these areas. So far, based on our experience, we have the following recommendations for working on DRR in fragile and conflict affected areas:

- There is a need for risk analysis regarding both natural hazards and (possible) conflicts – including climate related conflicts.
- Add a conflict (risk) analysis to the 'usual' DRR work: assess the level of conflict, causes of conflict, conflict actors, conflict dynamics; analyse results; work on conflict sensitive DRR or add a conflict risk reduction (peace) component to DRR work.
- Use a multi-stakeholder approach: involve CSOs, Governments, the private sector, research institutes when working on projects related to climate and conflict.
- Work in an inclusive manner: involve different groups (farmers & pastoralists; IDPs & residents; youth & elderly; men & women, different ethnic and religious groups).
- Develop a knowledge base on how to work best on resilience in fragile and conflict affected areas.
- Advocate for enhanced capacity and financial resources at Government and CSO levels when working on resilience in fragile and conflict affected areas, whilst addressing both disaster and conflict risks.

For more information, please read [Cordaid's full report on Community Managed DRR in fragile and conflict affected areas.](#)

Margot Loof

Expert on Resilience/ Disaster Risk Reduction

Kimberley Ogonda

Lobby and Advocacy Expert Cordaid

[Cordaid](#)



Camel Caravan 2018 © Cordaid

Project North Darfur

Strengthening Local Communities' Resilience to Climate Change



Vegetables growing at an irrigation site MellitB © COOPI

A CBNRM Committee member presenting community action © COOPI

Over 80% of North Darfur's population practice agropastoralism thus directly rely on natural resources, like forests, rangelands, soil and water. However, years of conflict and reliance of human and livestock population on natural resources is increasing environmental degradation.

Climate change related risks and challenges as manifested by rising temperatures, decreasing and variable rainfall patterns, presence of more dust storms and sand dunes movements, reduced productivity of farmlands and rangelands, and increased the frequency of bush fires.

COOPI – Cooperazione Internazionale, the Sudanese Environmental Conservation Society (SECS) and North Darfur Ministry of Agriculture and Water Corporation are implementing the project 'Strengthening Local Communities

resilience to climate change in North Darfur', funded by the European Union.

The project targets 108,000 people in the 4 localities of Malha, Mellit, Um Keddada and Um Baru and it is hinged on 12 community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) committees formed in each of the project villages. The CBNRM committee are composed of 12 members selected by the community among livestock breeders, farmers, women, youth, elders and adults, people with disabilities and local authorities.

The project is helping communities in areas of North Darfur to solve part of environmental challenges by locally assessing climate risks, prioritising and implementing community action plans. It also builds resilience by supporting restoration of community forests, shelterbelts and rangelands, rehabilitating surface water, harvesting structures like earth dams and haffirs, and providing income generation opportunities and access to small-scale loans. Finally, it focuses on alternative cooking solutions and small-scale solar powered irrigation systems, promoting environmental conservation by taking off pressure on existing natural resources.

A midterm evaluation (December 2019) revealed that anchoring the project on CBNRM committees improved its relevance and increased the chances of sustainability as priorities were defined and implemented by the local communities whose livelihoods are directly affected by climate change.

John Bosco Wale
Project leader



Multipurpose trees growing in Umhemaron Mellit © COOPI

COOPI – Cooperazione Internazionale

Climate change, urbanisation and humanitarian action



International Rescue Committee

Conflict, economic insecurity, and sudden and slow onset effects of climate change all factor into forced and voluntary migration. While these drivers vary, what's common is that cities are the primary destinations of mixed migration inflows for migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) suffering the effects of climate change.

This often leads to the expansion of informal neighbourhoods with pre-existing socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities. Managing increasing levels of urban populations at risk can be particularly challenging for city administrations in fragile countries who are already struggling to provide services.

Urban migration must be viewed within the broader context of global urbanisation. For example, while Kampala, Uganda is now home to approximately 100,000 refugees – many of whom have resided in the city for over a decade - it is also facing an unprecedented rate of urbanisation and is expected to become a megacity of [21 million people by 2040](#). This means international humanitarian actors should re-examine traditional responses in favour of a more localised and long-standing approach that suits the needs of the city and of its most vulnerable inhabitants.

To respond to this new reality of urban displacement, the IRC has been promoting self-reliance and strengthening urban resilience, both in partnership with city governments, as core components of our work.

Self-reliance, i.e. the social and economic ability to meet essential needs in a sustainable manner, is crucial as urban displaced are forced to compete for resources, job opportunities, and housing. While urban poor and displaced populations face many of the same social and economic challenges, refugees and IDPs must also surmount unique obstacles, such as constrained opportunities to obtain formal work, access financial and public services, or choose where

to live. [The IRC notes](#) that refugee women face additional barriers including a heightened threat of Gender Based Violence, economic exploitation, discriminatory social norms and particularly onerous regulatory barriers. At the same time, [IRC research](#) shows that urban areas present opportunities for self-reliance that do not exist in other contexts. The maturity of urban market economies increases economic resilience, and the diversity of skill sets provides opportunities for a wider range of job-seekers. The IRC and Citi Foundation's '[Rescuing Futures](#)' partnership leverages these opportunities to provide young people with business training and start-up grants in cities in Greece, Jordan and northeast Nigeria and expanding to Germany, Lebanon and Cameroon.

Urban resilience in the face of climate change, urban displacement, and urbanisation requires the institutionalisation of humanitarian values and practices in long-term city resilience plans, which may not always account for the needs and preference of refugees and internally displaced. [IRC research](#) finds that the cities hosting the most refugees and IDPs are doing so with the fewest resources and therefore need additional support. To meet this need, the IRC ensures that our presence in cities extends beyond traditional service delivery. Since 2015, we have directly supported over 10 city governments on their plans, policies, and programmes related to the intersection of urban displacement and urban resilience while ensuring that economic programming— both basic needs and livelihoods support— is a core component of any urban humanitarian response. The [Amman Resilience Strategy](#) is one example.



Alia stands proudly in her shop in Khanqin, central Iraq.
© Elena Heatherwick/IRC.



Increased risks and vulnerabilities arising from climate change in both rural and urban contexts require humanitarian and development donors to support appropriate programming. In particular, they should finance programmes that:

- **Enhance urban and rural resilience** — including disaster risk reduction and climate-smart adaptations — to mitigate impacts of climate change on the livelihoods of vulnerable rural populations and prevent increased forced displacement; while strengthening environmental preparedness and enhancing inclusive natural resource management to protect new and existing vulnerable populations in cities.
- **Enhance urban self-reliance** for refugees and IDPs by addressing barriers to livelihoods opportunities, while taking into account the needs of host populations; and by collaborating with municipal, community-based, and private sector actors to increase opportunities for sustainable livelihoods while encouraging inclusive planning for urban growth.
- **Partner with city governments** to link humanitarian interventions for IDPs and refugees with urban development goals, and to strengthen their ability to serve all urban residents and address urban growth through investment, technical support, and collaboration. These may include co-investing in affordable housing and clean energy in low-income and informal neighbourhoods, contributing to city resilience planning, or strengthening the rural-urban linkages to encourage resilience practices across locations.

The EU's Green Deal includes a welcome commitment to working with partners worldwide to increase climate resilience. In its implementation, the EU should consider both rural and urban resilience, and increase levels of funding for programming that builds resilience, self-reliance and city government partnerships in the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument.

Katja Starc Card
Research and Ethics Coordinator

Tara Clerkin
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Samer Saliba
Technical Adviser, Governance

International Rescue Committee

A Philippine community's holistic approach to climate change, disasters, and ecosystem degradation

To better face interconnected risks and address specific needs, CARE is working to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities, with a particular focus on women. Our experience in the Philippines with our partner Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development (ACCORD) shows that resilience and development work can also make emergency response and humanitarian efforts easier to implement, and in ways that are responsive to the communities' needs.

The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries. A confluence of vulnerabilities—such as lack of financial and job security, safe housing, access to basic services, and opportunities for political participation—make its vulnerable communities highly susceptible to the shocks and stresses caused by natural and human-induced hazards as well as climate change. The Barangay Potrero community, living in flood-prone Malabon City (in metropolitan Manila), with a sizable urban poor population, is one of them.

CARE has extensive experience in using gender transformative and integrated approaches in the region that is hit hard by the impacts of climate change. In the Philippines, with our partner ACCORD, we have been working to strengthen community resilience and preparedness in the face of disasters and climate impacts. Two fundamental principles underpin our programmes:

1. there is an inherent link between climate change, disaster risk, and ecosystem degradation
2. reducing risk entails reducing vulnerabilities and increasing communities' capacities.

A holistic, participatory approach to reducing and managing risk

With support from the Dutch-funded Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme, CARE and ACCORD provided Barangay Potrero with trainings, workshops, and assistance on risk assessments and the development of contingency plans for specific hazards. PfR put a particular emphasis on supporting the community's participation in resilience-building and strengthened local organisational capacities to influence plans and policies. A healthy culture of volunteerism and the proactive leadership of Potrero's local chief executives and people like Maridel Barbin, head of the women's group, were key. The community also benefitted from the ECHO-funded urban project MOVE UP which fostered



Maridel Barbin facilitates a Waste Warrior meeting.
© CARE

resilience strategies, including the formation of community savings groups, promotion of resilient livelihoods, and provisions for alternative temporary shelters.

Waste management was one of the key measures the community identified to mitigate the serious and recurrent flooding affecting Malabon City. The local government mobilised members of the community –such as women from poor households and workers in the informal waste sector– as “Waste Warriors” to collect and monitor waste. They required all households to properly segregate waste, made collection more regular and efficient, and established a materials recovery facility (MRF) to sort and correctly handle different types of waste. In their MRF, they built a small urban garden to compost biodegradable waste and supply the community with fresh fruits and vegetables. Waste management was also designed to supplement the livelihoods of the Waste Warriors, many of whom are women and mothers contributing to their respective household incomes.

Using existing systems and capacities for COVID-19

These efforts highlight Potrero’s holistic, long-term approaches to risk. Barbin believes her community, thanks to trainings and experience with hazards, now understands that a clean environment reduces disaster risk and helps mitigate climate change impacts.

These systems and capacities are now proving useful during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Waste Warriors take extra precaution when handling used face masks, gloves, and other medical waste. They are also helping to distribute relief goods to families during the enhanced community quarantine because they know the area well. Resilience work in Potrero focused on integrated disaster preparedness and risk reduction, organising and building vulnerable groups’ capacities. In the face of hazards, emergency response and humanitarian efforts were then easier to implement, in ways that are responsive to the community needs. This experience demonstrates the importance of flexible multi-year funding and focusing on capacity-building and community-based response, with a particular emphasis on including women, to deliver both life-saving support and lasting benefits to affected communities.

Celso Dulce, Ansherina Talavera, Rya Ducusin
CARE Philippines

Tanya Mariano, Ma. Bernadette Uy
ACCORD

Supported by
Sabrina Marquant, Julie Capelle
CARE Netherlands

CARE International

The Waste Warriors sort the day’s haul in a materials recovery facility. As of 2020, around 70-80% of the barangay’s waste is either recycled or composted, the rest is sent to proper facilities.

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Polish Humanitarian Action

Project South Kenya

Livelihoods improvements through integrated and environmental friendly employment development

Polish Humanitarian Action, together with a local partner, Africa Sand Dam Foundation, has been implementing projects focused on improvement of livelihoods through integrated and environmental friendly employment development in South Kenya.

Co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the projects respond to the needs of the local community, living in a dry equatorial climate zone. The region is characterised by a high rainfall variability, with most of its rivers being seasonal. The economic and social growth of the community rests on rainfed agriculture, but up to 80% of rainwater is lost due to poor water collection and conservation methods. The above factors combined with the negative effects of climate change and a rapid increase in population result in an impeded access to safe water, proper hygiene and sanitation, lack of food security and environmental degradation.

Project activities constitute a complex response to these problems. They are aimed at increasing access to water, improving sanitary conditions and raising awareness of methods for protecting the water source against the negative effects of atmospheric changes. Lastly, the projects increase the capacities of communities to improve their livelihoods.

First group of activities focuses on ensuring access to water, achieved by building sand dams, water retention and solar water distribution systems. Project participants receive trainings in waste management and proper hygiene, including menstrual hygiene. Other group of activities aims at environmental protection and counteracting the effects of climate change. By using water resources for commercial and agricultural purposes and by increasing knowledge of farming techniques suitable for the local climate, the activities increase the agricultural efficiency, contribute to local entrepreneurship and increase the chances for women in business and social life. To enhance the community's resilience to climate change, the projects introduce Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction, which includes mapping of environmental hazards, trainings on counteracting the negative effects of climate change and preparing community action plans.

Since 2018, farmers from seven self-help groups were provided with skills and knowledge to increase their agriculture efficiency and earning opportunities. New dams and shallow wells provided access to water for more than 11,000 people. Additionally, project activities supported six schools with trainings and new water and sanitation infrastructure.



The Kasunguni Frontline Farmers, the local community and Africa Sand Dam Foundation together to improve the sustainability of food production. © Jan Wierzejski, PAH

Ludwika Klejnowska
Institutional donor relations specialist programmes

Polish Humanitarian Action

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

Addressing the humanitarian consequences of those on the move between Venezuela and Colombia

The humanitarian consequences when people are “on the move” are key concerns for the humanitarian sector. While much humanitarian response turned to Syria and its neighbouring countries, international attention to the Mediterranean, and policy circles focused on the final negotiations of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, another migration crisis started to unfold between Venezuela and its neighbouring countries.

In Venezuela, people and communities have faced a complex social, economic and political crisis since 2015. As a result, at its peak in 2019, a large majority of the population had tremendous challenges in accessing food, water, medical services or education. An estimated seven million people in Venezuela are in need and require some form of assistance or protection. Based on increasing needs and fearful about the rate of violence, the number of people leaving Venezuela started to increase sharply at the end of 2018. While people migrated to different countries in the neighbourhood, most of them, around 4.8 million Venezuelans, moved to Colombia.

The situation quickly became challenging both for those who fled and the host population in Colombia. The regions in Colombia which received the most people from Venezuela are already strongly shaped by the structural lack of functioning governmental services, infrastructure and economical possibilities after years of civil war and ongoing violence and insecurity. Many of the migrants have difficulty settling their presence in the country through a legal status (half of them still lack it today), without which they cannot access formal employment or the healthcare system except for medical emergencies. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH), in partnership with local partner organisations, addresses food security, health and nutrition, protection and capacity development in its activities. With support from ECHO, DKH and Cooperación Infancia e Desarrollo (CID) provide protection programmes and assistance to migrants and the host communities in Colombia, in the districts on the border with Venezuela. The protection component includes legal counselling, sexual and gender-based violence (SGV) protection, and components to address xenophobia in schools. Assistance focuses here on health care through counselling and Cash-Transfer-Programming.

Three elements are particularly interesting when looking at the humanitarian response around this migration crisis. First of all, the strong instrumentalisation of potential aid on both sides in early 2019 was an obvious example of how the provision of relief can be used in a political struggle, at a time, when the



Cali/Valle del Cauca, Project Day-Care-Centers with Partner Tierra de Pa © Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

Venezuelan population faced dire shortages of urgently needed medical items, food and other essential goods. The political rival to President Maduro, Juan Guaidó, and his international supporters used a humanitarian claim to gain the loyalty of the people and the control over the security services. To that end, they made strong demands and moves for the access of prepositioned USAID relief items from Colombia into Venezuela, something categorically refused by the government, bringing the country close to a breaking-point into widespread violence. VOICE members came out with strong statements to underline the value of the humanitarian principles in order to access people that urgently needed assistance and protection. As the political situation became somewhat more stable, and while challenges in terms of principled approaches remain, the United Nations (UN) negotiated to increase their activities and install a presence that is now supporting the coordination of assistance and protection efforts being provided. Secondly, this crisis demonstrated the huge importance of national civil society in providing support in Venezuela. Besides the presence of the UN and a handful of international NGOs registered in the country, the assistance provided is implemented to a large extent by local actors. Thirdly, the adaptation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework as a regional programme under the facilitation of UNHCR and IOM, appeared to undermine the existing humanitarian coordination structures in Colombia, and was challenging for the participation of civil society which was not organised regionally but nationally.

And now COVID-19. While the medical implications of a wider spread of this new virus to the people in the region can only be estimated, the socio-economic impact of the closure of the border on 14 March and movement restrictions in place already have very strong effects on the livelihood, food security and common medical needs of the people. It is a striking example of the present challenge to maintain a response to existing humanitarian needs, while having to deal with the effects of the collapsing coping mechanisms of the people and communities, under the dramatic prognosis of an evolving medical, social and economic tragedy.

Christian M. Huber

Referent für Humanitäre Hilfe und
HVR/Advisor for Humanitarian Policy and IHL

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

Interview with Ester Asin Martinez

Director of WWF European Policy Office

1. WWF has the mission to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth. What are your most pressing campaigns now? Have you modified your priorities and campaigns following the Coronavirus outbreak?

We are working for instance on the [post-crisis recovery plans](#) to ensure they will be just and green. We have adapted some of our campaigns after the outbreak. Now we are looking into the origins of the outbreak as there are links with deforestation, the destruction of natural habitats and wildlife trafficking. In Asia we are starting a [new campaign against wildlife trafficking](#). This is an area where we work extensively in our global network, but we have certainly stepped up. Additionally, we have revised our big mobilisations. On March 28th for Earth Hour we invited people and public buildings to switch off their lights for one hour. This time it all had to be done virtually. We had one of the most successful mobilisations and we were pleased to see that, despite the difficult situation, people were taking the time to reflect on how to better protect the environment.

This November's UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) has been postponed so we had to adapt. A campaign on deforestation is to be launched in autumn, which we will go ahead with, although it will depend on the EU institutions' calendar - our work on the European Green Deal or on sustainable finance is even more relevant now.

All in all, we stay true to our priorities, but adapting, as many other organisations, to the Covid and post Covid world.

2. Last year new movements like Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion were able to engage young activists and citizens in worldwide grassroots mobilisations. What relationship does WWF have with these new emerging movements?

It is important that these movements remain spontaneous and organise themselves, they are grassroots and, as WWF, we do not intervene. We continue our more traditional advocacy, but we are open to dialogue and can support or advice if needed.

The European policy office has supported groups of students linked to Fridays for Future (FFF). The students wanted advice on which MEPs to contact or on how to prepare a press release. We have exchanged on policy positions too, and invited them to our events. WWF Belgium office offered a virtual platform for FFF where people could put forward ideas and vote. These ideas became a manifesto targeting Belgian politicians before the May 2019 elections. WWF only provided the technical support and expertise as it is important that FFF keep their own structure and culture.

3. For many years humanitarian NGOs have been aware of the issues related to climate change. Many of them have new policies in place, inserting climate change adaptation (CCA) and mitigation together with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in their programmes while trying to curb the carbon footprint of their missions. How do you see the role of humanitarian actors in tackling the climate crisis?

There are organisations already working towards that goal. My former organisation CARE, for example, is a pioneer in CCA and mitigation; VOICE also has quite extensive experience working on DRR. The humanitarian and development sectors have been carrying out their missions more environmentally consciously, both in planning and execution. Can we do more? For instance, the use of renewable sources of energy in refugee camps is worth exploring. A great number of organisations, including humanitarian organisations, rely on local procurement and supply chains to avoid a large transport footprint. Although challenging, the humanitarian sector needs to think about the long term impact of the resources and energy that are used in programmes. And then there is reducing travel: NGOs should address it by making bold policy choices and consequently reduce their carbon footprint by relying on virtual alternatives and local staff. My own office has set ambitious emission reduction targets. In my opinion this is the way forward and a lot remains to be done.

4. You have worked for many years in humanitarian organisations like CARE and Save the Children. How does this experience contribute to your current role at WWF?

Since we are now witnessing more sudden natural emergencies like fires in the Amazon or bushfires in Australia in the world, WWF has recently started to develop an emergency preparedness framework that never existed before. It is still work in progress. Thanks to my experience with Save the Children and CARE I am able to support WWF in this new challenge with the different things you need to consider when responding to an emergency: the structures, the functions, the fundraising, communications and advocacy.

Another aspect I brought in from CARE and Save the Children is my understanding of the role of people and nature thriving together: this is our present and future agenda. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. People's role in the work we do is very important and has been changing over the years. Working towards this rights-based approach to conservation work, what we call inclusive conservation, in my view is going to be really important in the coming years.

5. The need for humanitarian assistance has been growing in an unprecedented manner. Climate change and natural resource degradation are, together with conflict, the primary causes of humanitarian crises. Environmental NGOs and humanitarian NGOs are active in different ways to minimise the effects of this crisis. Do you foresee more collaboration between these two sectors? What would be more effective? Are there opportunities at EU level for the two sectors to learn from each other and work together?

There are already some partnerships at field level: In 2008, CARE and WWF launched an alliance to address the root causes of poverty and environmental degradation. [Through](#)



[this partnership](#), we aim at strengthening climate-resilient communities and landscapes in countries. Projects include helping communities in Mozambique to sustainably manage fisheries, improving financial literacy and access to credit for women in Tanzania, and educating women in Nepal to manage forests in the face of climate change.

In my current role focussing on policies I definitely see the possibility to collaborate more. It is about exchanging knowledge and strategies and knowing better where we come from. Environmental NGOs need to understand the humanitarian imperative, the need to respond to crisis, the humanitarian principles, and humanitarian NGOs need to know how to politically support the call for climate neutrality. Save the Children is now drafting an environmental and climate policy so we started a conversation with them.

At EU level we should definitely break the silos especially when tackling the root causes of crises. The SDGs are the framework for achieving this. Development and conservation go hand in hand. It does not mean that we will become humanitarians and VOICE members will become environmental NGOs, but we need to start partnerships at global level and support each other both on our political and operational agendas. In Australia, for instance, during the bushfires, WWF worked with some humanitarian organisations in coordinating the response. We will see these collaborations increasing in the future as crises become more complex.

6. As the director of the WWF EU office, do you see a different mind-set in today's politicians especially at EU level regarding the climate crisis? Are you concerned that after the COVID-19 period, Member States and EU institutions will focus less on investing in a sustainable economy?

At WWF, my colleagues who have been working there for more than 10 years believe last year was a wake-up call for politicians, perhaps because of the mobilisation of youth movements and because we felt the direct consequences of climate change and environmental degradation, like forest fires, air pollution and heat waves.

Many politicians have ignored science for a long time. The fact that the European Green Deal is now one of the top priorities of the current Commission is a strong signal. If we don't reduce emissions now, we are set to reach 3 degrees or more of global warming. Politically there is recognition that "we need to act now" and the next 10 years will be the critical ones. Will the COVID-19 crisis derail this? I am optimistic it will not. Climate change aggravates the effects of some of these pandemics. There are now studies on the impact of pollution in some of the areas with the highest infection rates, the destruction of natural habitats is likely at the origin of the current pandemic. Statements from the Commission leadership reconfirm their commitment to the European Green Deal. I am confident that it will be part of the recovery-response and the post crisis framework even if the pandemic has delayed some initiatives.

Now there is also the opportunity to make a greener and more equal future. With the huge economic slowdown following the pandemic many people are already losing their jobs. This green agenda can provide a response in terms of green and high quality jobs and more fairness in society. Of course, what I call the "dark forces" – the companies, sectors or even governments that don't want to change- could use the economic crisis as

an excuse to push back on the climate ambitions; blackmailing us with the jobs being lost but we are prepared for debunking these myths, which are designed to install fear to derail the much needed transition. In addition to our policy work on the post crisis recovery plans, together with WeMove and the Green 10, we have launched a petition supported by 100 organisations, which has now reached nearly 250.000 (as of 8 May), calling for a green and just transition.

7. How do you rate the European Green New Deal as a response to climate change so far?

There were different responses to the Green Deal among environmental NGOs. WWF's response is balanced. It is the first time the EC presented such a proposal and it is a huge political shift. There is uncertainty on the delivery of the much needed systemic changes but there are a lot of promising initiatives; the Climate Law is one of them, and our organisation will be assessing them as they are delivered. The initial proposal for the EU climate law was a bit disappointing. Considering climate neutrality (zero carbon emission) WWF is asking this to happen in 2040, based on scientific studies, but the EU is aiming at 2050, which is too late. Our organisation is working to improve these proposals, by engaging with the European Parliament and through national advocacy in capitals.

Thanks to the awareness and mobilisation of young people, we have seen the positive results in some EU Member States and in the EP elections. We need to take this opportunity, stay positive but vigilant and mobilised, to make sure the actions are delivered timely.

8. The COVID-19 pandemic which we are currently facing is something unexpected that is affecting the EU and the developing world. What do you think we can learn from the current situation?

First, there are [studies linking the destruction of natural habitats, illegal wildlife trade and climate change to an increased vulnerability to pandemics](#) and we need to look at the root causes of it. Secondly, healthy ecosystems are essential for human health and wellbeing.

It's a bit early to draw conclusions but I believe we need to invest in strong public health systems to be able to cope with response to future crisis, and to better protect the environment to prevent future outbreaks. This crisis has also highlighted the importance of collaboration and multilateral cooperation; as with climate change, no single country can tackle this on its own. Foremost, we need to build societies that are more resilient both economically and socially as the current situation is exacerbating inequalities in access to resources, education and health, but also destroying the nature on which we depend.

Interviewed by

Roberta Fadda and Celia Cranfield
8 April 2020.

VOICE at Work

COVID 19: Supporting NGO members and their life-saving work

Humanitarian NGOs are present and active in most protracted and sudden onset crises supporting affected people and during the COVID-19 pandemic their commitment has remained the same. With their flexibility and capacity to adapt, VOICE members and humanitarian organisations are crucial in this fight in Europe and abroad. But the pandemic has brought exceptional new challenges in delivering humanitarian aid and in being able to move within and between countries. The network has linked with governments and donors to ensure their support in this delicate situation informing them about the impact the pandemic was having on field operations.

Please find here

[VOICE key messages on the COVID-19](#) crisis asking for:

- Additional funding for humanitarian aid in order to respond to the additional needs brought by the pandemic.
- Support in maintaining a functioning global supply chain as the delivery of essential drugs, medical equipment, food assistance, hygiene kits etc. may need additional transport systems such as humanitarian hubs and flights.
- Reduction of the administrative burden linked to implementation and adaptation of grants!

A people-centred approach in the triple Nexus

The report '[NGO perspectives on the EU's humanitarian development-peace nexus: challenges and opportunities](#)', published at the end of 2019, is an important and timely NGO contribution helping to shape the ongoing debates at EU and national level on the triple Nexus. The report highlights nine case studies from our NGO members and documents the current enablers and barriers to working in a nexus approach in different contexts. The main recommendations drawn from the report are:

- Ensure principled humanitarian assistance
- Build on NGOs experiences and learn lessons
- Adapt financial frameworks
- Actors involved need a cultural shift

The VOICE Secretariat has been disseminating and presenting the nexus report and continues to foster discussion with the EU institutions and Member States throughout 2020 and follow-up on its recommendations.

The impact of EU sanctions and counter-terrorism legislation for NGOs working in humanitarian aid: VOICE report is out.

The impact of sanctions and restrictive measures on humanitarian aid is of great concern among VOICE members as it could affect the delivery of life-saving aid to affected communities. Effective humanitarian aid delivery relies in fact on the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality and these principles could be at risk if some areas are not accessible.

As it is a highly complex and technical issue, VOICE organised a two-day workshop gathering NGOs, external experts, European Member States and EU institutions' representatives to discuss the evolving approach in the EU to sanctions and restrictive measures, and their unintended impact on the delivery of humanitarian aid.

[The report of the workshop](#) is now available with key recommendations for NGOs and donors!

Continuous engagement in the long term EU budget (MFF)– for a sufficient, flexible and predictable EU long-term budget

The European Union is among the major humanitarian aid donors and with less than 1% of the EU budget contributes to save many lives and restore human dignity. After several delays the Commission finally unveiled the new proposal for the MFF in May 2020. In this new proposal, funds under the MFF humanitarian aid instrument would remain unchanged (increased from the current MFF). However, attempts to secure a € 5 billion reinforcement from the 'Next Generation EU' were not accepted by the Member States. The timeline left for the European Parliament to influence the outcome and consent to the long-term budget is short. The next months will be crucial.

To influence the outcome of the next EU long-term budget for 2021-2027 the network adopted the policy resolution '[Post COVID-19: EU humanitarian aid in the next Multiannual Financial Framework](#)'. In a situation where, on top of the already dire humanitarian need, we have the additional crises

and needs arising from the pandemic and responses to it, it is vital that the EU takes into account our recommendations to support crisis-affected people worldwide.

The Grand Bargain: Fostering NGOs and front-line responders' engagement

VOICE has been very active in the past years in its efforts to strengthen the engagement of frontline responders and NGOs in the Grand Bargain (GB) process. In 2019 with three additional workshops in Somalia, Lebanon and DRC the network continued bringing the GB process to the field making sure the aid workers' perspectives were reflected in the process. The COVID crisis has shown once again the relevance of some of the Grand Bargain commitments, including the essential role of local and community-based actors, the importance of flexible funding and the need for a simplified and harmonised approach to reporting. It demonstrates the need for humanitarian donors, UN agencies, Red Cross movement and NGOs to continue and step up their efforts to make humanitarian aid more effective and efficient, in order to get more protection and assistance into the hands of people in need.

Click [here](#) to find VOICE [dedicated website](#) gathering Grand Bargain initiatives and resources



MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS

[NGO members response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

On this page you will find a collection of statements, news, and other documents showing some examples of our members' work related to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

[The world's most neglected displacement crises in 2019](#)

Each year, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) publishes the list of the ten most neglected displacement crises in the world, to shine a spotlight on these forgotten emergencies. This is the list for 2019.

[The Response of CARE to the High Level Pledging Conference on Yemen](#)

Yemen receives an unsatisfactory 1.35 billion USD in pledges – water, sanitation and hygiene are the highest priorities amidst COVID-19 crisis, explains CARE in this statement

[New resources to save lives and to reduce suffering of people affected by the Venezuelan Crisis](#)

A reaction by INGOs to the Venezuela Pledging Conference held on 26 May 2020. Signatories are CARE, NRC, IPPF/RHO, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children, and World Vision International.

VOICE MEMBERS 2020

AUSTRIA

-  CARE Österreich
-  CARITAS Österreich
-  SOS Kinderdorf International

BELGIUM

-  Caritas International Belgium
-  Médecins du Monde (MDM) Belgium
-  Oxfam Solidarité - Solidariteit
-  Plan Belgium

CZECH REPUBLIC

-  ADRA Czech Republic
-  People in Need (PIN)

DENMARK

-  ADRA Denmark Nødhjælp og udvikling
-  Dansk Folkehjælp Danish People's Aid
-  DanChurchAid (DCA)
-  Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
-  Mission East Mission Øst
-  Save the Children Denmark

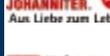
FRANCE

-  Action Contre la Faim
-  ACTED - Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement
-  CARE France
-  Handicap International Humanity and Inclusion
-  La Chaîne de l'Espoir
-  Médecins du Monde (MDM) France
-  Secours Catholique - Réseau Mondial CARITAS
-  Secours Islamique France
-  Secours Populaire Français
-  Solidarités International
-  Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF)

FINLAND

-  Fida International
-  Finn Church Aid
-  World Vision Finland

GERMANY

-  ADRA Deutschland
-  Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) Deutschland
-  CARE Deutschland-Luxemburg
-  Deutscher Caritasverband Caritas Germany
-  Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
-  International Rescue Committee Germany
-  Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe
-  Malteser International
-  Medico International
-  Plan International Germany
-  Welthungerhilfe
-  World Vision Germany

GREECE

-  Médecins du Monde Greece

IRELAND

-  Concern Worldwide
-  GOAL Global
-  Trócaire

ITALY

-  Caritas Italiana
-  CESVI - Cooperazione e Sviluppo
-  COOPI
-  INTERSOS Organizzazione Umanitaria Onlus
-  WeWorld-GVC Onlus

LUXEMBOURG

-  Caritas Luxembourg

THE NETHERLANDS

-  CARE Nederland
-  Cordaid
-  ICCO - Dutch Interchurch Aid
-  Oxfam Novib
-  Save the Children Netherlands
-  War Child
-  ZOA

NORWAY

-  Norwegian Church Aid
-  Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
-  Save the Children - Redd Barna

POLAND

-  Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH)

SLOVAKIA

-  Habitat for Humanity International

SPAIN

-  Acción Contra el Hambre
-  Caritas Española
-  EDUCO
-  Médicos del Mundo
-  Oxfam Intermón

SWEDEN

-  Läkarmissionen/ International Aid Services (IAS)
-  PMU Interlife
-  Svenska kyrkan - Church of Sweden

SWITZERLAND

-  Lutheran World Federation
-  Medair
-  Terre des Hommes Switzerland

UNITED KINGDOM

-  Action Against Hunger
-  ActionAid
-  CAFOD
-  CARE International UK
-  Christian Aid
-  International Medical Corps UK
-  International Rescue Committee (IRC-UK)
-  Islamic Relief Worldwide
-  Mercy Corps UK
-  OXFAM GB
-  Plan International UK
-  Save the Children UK
-  Tearfund
-  World Vision UK

88 members
19 countries

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HUMANITARIAN ACTION
IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE



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VOICE is the network of 88 European NGOs promoting principled and people-centred humanitarian aid. Collectively, VOICE aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the European Union and its Member States' humanitarian aid. The network promotes the added value of NGOs as key humanitarian actors.



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