



Key messages from the Partners for Resilience

A recipe for resilience

#recipe4resilience
#partnersforresilience

at WCDRR, Sendai, March 2015



'To reduce risks for everyone, we call on governments, civil society, the private sector and all stakeholders to fully live up to the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction, in both letter and spirit.'

– Partners for Resilience

Gladys Adaly Leon, from a drought-affected community in Guatemala, with produce from her newly irrigated vegetable garden, helped by PFR ecological water filters. These also assist the reuse of waste water and roll back climate impacts. The PFR project there is implemented by Wetlands International and Cordaid's Guatemalan partner, Caritas Zacapa. (Photo: Claudia Zaldaña/PfR Pool of Trainers)

Introduction

The Partners for Resilience (PFR) alliance has been working since 2011 to reduce the impact of natural hazards on vulnerable people in nine countries: Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Uganda.

We are the Netherlands Red Cross, CARE Nederland, Cordaid, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, Wetlands International and our many local partners.



Our unique approach to the building of resilience, developed with more than 40 local implementing partner agencies, integrates climate change adaptation and ecosystem management and restoration into disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Our experience over the past four years of evidence-based, holistic risk reduction can contribute meaningfully to the collective commitment to a post-2015 framework. Our key messages and 'calls to action' at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) at Sendai, Japan, are presented here.

Ethiopia: mitigating risk through savings

Ethiopian pastoralists in Afar region depend for their livelihoods on a fragile environment in which drought increasingly puts them under extreme pressure. To create alternative sources of income, PfR have helped set up savings and loan groups allowing people – women in particular – to invest in small-scale economic activities like retailing or goat breeding.

PfR has helped women in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, produce fuel-saving cook stoves, easing deforestation and improving their health.
(Photo: Charlotte Floors/NLRC)

1. Ensure community participation. The post-2015 DRR framework will centre closely on the role in DRR planning of communities, especially vulnerable groups. We believe this is pivotal.

Even though the core of responsibility for DRR lies with governments, communities know best what risks they face, and are inevitably the first to respond when disaster strikes, especially in least developed countries and failed or fragile states.

'We call on governments to recognize the different capacities, needs and vulnerabilities of community groups, and enable their full participation in decision-making.'

2. Mainstream ecosystem approaches and climate information. Current hazards are likely to increase under changing climatic conditions; ecosystem degradation is intensifying existing risks and creating new ones, while urbanization heightens risk still further.

Combining community- and landscape-level risk assessments will help us understand how risk manifests itself on all spatial scales, and how human interventions in one area affect communities elsewhere in the landscape.



Science and traditional knowledge about changing risk patterns on short, medium and long timescales can enhance humanitarian decision-making and financing. Early warning through timely climate information and then early action can save lives and livelihoods.

'We call on governments and stakeholders to mainstream ecosystem-based approaches and climate information into risk analysis and DRR policy, practice and investment.'

3. Foster collaboration among stakeholders.

Cooperation and joint ownership of the DRR agenda by all stakeholders is the best way to enhance resilience. Support for capacity building, awareness raising and accountability are key elements of a post-2015 framework underpinned by meaningful collaboration, including a full spectrum of monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning.

'We call on government and private-sector stakeholders with a role in DRR to develop collaborative approaches, ensuring communities can contribute to planning and access know-how and resources.'

Guatemala: a new institutional agenda

PfR in Guatemala concluded that building bridges between government agencies could promote holistic risk management. A formal 'inter-institutional agenda' was agreed among different national governing entities in relation to climate, ecosystems and disasters, facilitating concrete actions in the field, such as contextualized joint DRR measures and educational modules for schools to build resilient communities.

A woman in San Jose de Cusmapa, Nicaragua, demonstrates a community-risk map compiled as part of the PfR programme there. (Photo: Raimond Duijsens/NLRC)



4. Open up access to early warning and information. Information on early warning and climate is equally important in short- and long-term risk reduction and needs to be tailored to culture, language, and local priorities. Local civil society will help disseminate information on disaster risk to the most vulnerable.

'We call for timely, open access to early warning and better information on longer-term disaster risk.'

5. Strengthen livelihoods. Deaths from disasters have fallen in recent years but economic losses have risen substantially. Strengthening livelihoods before disaster strikes through diversification, adaptation, savings schemes, and insurance enables communities to withstand disasters and recover faster when required.

India: village clusters

In 2012 hundreds of people from several villages together cleared silt from the clogged mouth of the River Devi, substantially reducing flood risk. PfR's new 'cluster approach' for villages enables communities to team up and work with government in addressing the root causes of disaster risk, like environmental degradation, potentially warding off disaster altogether.

Resilient livelihoods will preserve development gains and reduce the need for relief after disasters.

'We call for policy and practice to include a range of approaches that strengthen livelihoods and provide solutions in risk reduction and adaptation.'

Philippine children playing an educational PfR-provided board game on climate and ecosystem issues in Mainit, Surigao del Norte.
(Photo: Charlotte Floors/NLRC)



Conclusion

The Partners for Resilience – with their uniquely integrated model of ecosystem-based and climate-smart DRR – are a proven mechanism for linking work on all timescales (from emergency relief to long-term development) and levels (local, national, regional).

Global: tools for integration

PfR have developed tools to help stakeholders integrate climate and ecosystem factors into all phases of DRR work, drawing on successful past experience. These tools include new ecosystem criteria, minimum standards for climate-smart DRR, the Climate Training Kit, a toolbox for integrated community risk assessment, and a new protocol for micro-projects.

Our programmes encourage *local* people to stimulate demand from *local* government for adapted policies, and unlock funding from higher levels that is often provided but not necessarily deployed properly.

At the global level, the need remains – by aligning institutional targets and timelines – to fully integrate the objectives being pursued at Sendai with the coming round of UN climate talks in Paris (COP 21), the future Sustainable Development Goals, and next year's World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

In order to reduce risks for all, but especially the very young and the elderly, women, the disabled, minorities, and displaced and indigenous people, we are calling on governments, civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders to live up to agreements on a post-2015 framework being agreed in Japan.

A Malian villager in Noga, in the Inner Niger Delta, tends a PfR-supported vegetable garden run by local women that also generates a small surplus for sale. (Photo: Raimond Duijsens/NLRC)

