



# Disaster risk reduction: a global advocacy guide

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**Cover photo: A Salvadorean Red Cross Society staff member helps a group of women map risks for their community.**

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# Introduction

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives encapsulate the growing recognition that relief is not enough in mitigating disasters and that resilient communities in fact are the key to reducing the impact and severity of natural hazards when they strike. During 2010 alone more than 208 million people were affected by natural hazards.<sup>1</sup> Equally alarming is the projection, that should current trends continue, annually 100,000 lives will be lost each year, while the costs of natural disasters will be in excess of US\$ 300 billion per year by 2050.<sup>2</sup> These vulnerabilities become even more pronounced in poorer nations where it is estimated that 97 per cent of all people killed by natural disasters each year occur in developing countries.<sup>3</sup> The challenge remains in keeping the spotlight on DRR efforts and maintaining the engagement of concerned actors including governments and donors on the issue at hand. Although relief and emergency appeals procure greater investment and garner greater global advocacy and resource mobilization, studies have indicated that investment in DRR is highly cost-effective and more importantly has a profound impact in saving lives and livelihoods when natural hazards strike. The challenge remains in mainstreaming a 'culture of preparedness' and accruing the necessary financial investment and institutional support to maintain it.

This global guide to advocacy for DRR aims to strengthen the skills, knowledge and proficiency of practitioners in advocating on DRR approaches to decision-makers, donors and policy-makers. It is designed to help National Societies meet those challenges.

## Increased disasters

In the first decade of the 21st century, an average of almost 255 million people each year were affected by natural disasters – an increase of more than 25 per cent compared with the previous decade. Even the lowest figure, in 2009, was 142 million.<sup>4</sup> These figures do not include the many other individuals who were affected by smaller disasters that went unnoticed and unrecorded. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at the University of Louvain, Belgium, warns that data is missing on people affected by one-fifth of the events that we do know about.

The scale, frequency, severity and unpredictability of extreme weather events will continue to grow in the coming years, and at an accelerating pace. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world are aware

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1 [http://cred.be/sites/default/files/Press\\_Release\\_UNISDR2011\\_03.pdf](http://cred.be/sites/default/files/Press_Release_UNISDR2011_03.pdf)

2 SEI, IUCN, IISD. *Coping with Climate Change: Environmental Strategies for Increasing Human Security*. August 2001

3 World Bank. *World Development Report*. Washington, D.C. 2000.

4 Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at the University of Louvain. *Thirty years of natural disasters 1974-2003; the numbers*. Louvain, 2004.

that disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. Between 2000 and 2009 there have been:

- 1,739 reported flood disasters
- 1,054 catastrophic windstorms
- 290 earthquakes and tsunamis that brought devastating human suffering
- 273 droughts that left people unable to feed themselves properly
- large numbers of landslides, rock falls, avalanches and fires

Due to climate change and associated events, the threat of disaster is unlikely to subside.

## Increased vulnerability

The Red Cross Red Crescent maintains that natural hazards, such as storms, floods, droughts and earthquakes do not need to become disasters. The events themselves are largely unavoidable, but they only become disasters when a population is unprepared or unable to cope with them. Vulnerability to disasters has steadily increased due to a number of factors, including worsening socio-economic conditions, urbanization, environmental degradation, inadequate infrastructure and diseases. Factors such as where and how a population lives will determine the degree to which a natural hazard becomes a disaster. Empowering vulnerable people to deal with what nature presents is critical to improving their lives.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) *Strategy 2020* stresses that in order to prevent and reduce the underlying causes of vulnerability, it is essential to change the attitudes and mind-sets that drive our ways of living. In order to promote the strategic aim of enabling communities to reduce their vulnerability to risk, the IFRC and its National Societies need to focus their work on advocacy, public education and awareness raising. The aim is to boost resilience by helping communities to prevent or reduce risks for themselves. However, communities-at-risk cannot undertake these changes alone there needs to be a concerted effort amongst all actors involved in risk reduction. Advocacy, therefore, is needed for National Societies to reach decision-makers, donors, policy-makers and practitioners.

# What is disaster risk reduction

# 2

In our rapidly changing world, we need to respond to disasters in new ways. At present, the world relies too heavily on disaster response. Aid organizations need more and more funding to meet the basic needs of the growing number of people affected by disaster, and their efforts struggle. The IFRC believes that the emphasis must be not just on managing the impact of disasters, but also on reducing risk.

DRR is about supporting local civil society, communities, households and individuals to become less vulnerable and strengthen their capacity to anticipate, resist, cope with and recover from natural hazards. The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction describes it as:

*the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.*

(UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2007)

The terminology has changed over the years, but the concept of DRR is well entrenched in the strategic plans of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. National Societies have worked in this area for many years, focusing not only on the direct risks presented by hazards themselves but also by the underlying ones, such as poor health or unsafe housing, that heighten the chances of disaster.

This work has included:

- enabling communities to prepare for earthquakes, withstand floods, weather storms and possible man-made disasters
- contributing greatly to early warning systems
- promoting health, hygiene and disease prevention
- introducing sustainable food security and livelihoods

This multi-pronged approach is encapsulated in the manner in which the Red Cross Red Crescent addresses its risk-reduction activities. Overall, risk-reduction encapsulates:

- **Preparedness** – as a component of DRR, rather than a synonym for it.
- **Warning** – based on obtaining vital information, often high-tech data from satellite images and computer models, even for remote communities.
- **Mitigation** – including education, to enable people to avoid the dangers, or physical measures to limit the impact of hazards.
- **Recovery** – not just in terms of physically restoring what there was pre-disaster, but building back better and safer.
- **Livelihoods** – securing income or food supply, diversifying sources, leaving communities less vulnerable to future disasters.

The IFRC's three risk-reduction strategies:

- Strengthening the preparedness and capacities of communities so that they are in a better position to respond when a disaster occurs.
- Promoting activities and actions that mitigate the adverse effects of hazards.
- Protecting development projects, such as health facilities, from the impact of disasters.

## What comes next?

To protect people in a world that is increasingly unsafe, we need to build on our existing work, to make even more impact. This means doing more, drawing on the existing evidence of 'what works.' It also means doing it better: enhancing and adapting existing methods as we look for opportunities to become even more effective.

National Societies already understand that building safety and resilience is a long-term, continuous process. However, the likelihood that extreme weather events will become more frequent and more severe, provides an 'early warning' in itself, showing us what we must do on the road ahead. National Societies are already integrating DRR with work on urban growth and environmental degradation and momentum is growing.

## The importance of frameworks

### Framework for Community Safety and Resilience

DRR and its implementation in multi-sectoral and multi-hazard environments contribute to making communities safer and more resilient. In order to address the implementation of a multi-sectoral approach in policies, planning and programming, in 2008 the IFRC ran a consultative process to develop its *Framework for Community Safety and Resilience*. This document provides a foundation that National Societies can use to create, develop and sustain any programmes, projects or interventions that contribute to building safe and resilient communities.

The framework has a holistic approach. It is designed to support National Societies to integrate DRR into their policies, planning and sectoral programmes, and to bring DRR considerations into disaster response and recovery. If National Societies use the right approaches in helping disaster-hit communities back on their feet, this can help work towards longer-term risk reduction. The framework supports country-specific disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation as well as advocacy, education and awareness raising.

### Hyogo Framework for Action

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) underpins all Red Cross Red Crescent DRR activities. This ten-year global plan, adopted by 168 Member States of the United Nations in 2005 at the World Disaster Reduction Conference in Kobe, Japan, aims to reduce the risk and impact of disasters.

Unless risk reduction is stepped up significantly, the international community will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The conference brought together governments, academics and humanitarian organizations – not least, the Red Cross and Red Crescent – that believed that the global challenge could only be

met by a global approach.

The HFA provides concrete guidelines for protecting lives, limiting damage and ensuring communities can recover quickly. Its main goals are to:

- make DRR a local and national priority
- improve early warning
- build a culture of safety and resilience using knowledge, innovation and education
- reduce the underlying risk factors



■ strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response

The speed with which governments implement these measures is critical. Unless risk reduction is stepped up significantly, the international community will fail to achieve the targets set by the UN's Millennium Development Goals: to decrease poverty, hunger, disease and death by 2015.

## Sustaining development

Disasters can wash away or shatter years of development in moments. It is impossible to make development gains without addressing risk factors. Homes or schools constructed on flood-prone land or unstable hillsides, and public buildings constructed without respect for building codes, do nothing to enhance a community. They simply increase the risk of disasters. Long-term risk reduction must be embedded in national development programming.

The humanitarian argument should be sufficient to change the way the world responds. However, there is also an economic argument. CRED estimates that from 2000 to 2009, damage from disasters amounted to 872.5 billion Swiss francs (971.5 billion US dollars/705.4 billion Euros). Meanwhile, during the UN's 2009 climate change conference in Copenhagen, it was estimated that during the previous 18 years, extreme events across the globe had cost 1.5 trillion Swiss francs (1.7 trillion US dollars/1.2 trillion Euros).<sup>1</sup> According to UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction estimates, if current trends continue, natural disasters could have a global cost of more than 269 billion Swiss francs (300 billion US dollars/217 billion Euros) a year by 2050.

Looking at the figures in just one continent, over the past decade Africa's estimated disaster damage has amounted to almost 11.4 billion Swiss francs (13 billion US dollars/ 9.3 billion Euros) – greater than the gross domestic product (GDP) of Uganda.<sup>2</sup> As a result, 400 million sub-Saharan people are food insecure and need external assistance to meet minimum dietary requirements.<sup>3</sup> To survive, families are often forced to divert their limited resources away from education and healthcare. This can be a painful choice that undermines wider development plans.

**Africa's estimated disaster damage has been greater than the GDP of a country such as Uganda.**

Economic impacts can also be seen within individual countries. According to a World Bank report, poor sanitation and hygiene in Indonesia cost the country



**The Viet Nam Red Cross has been actively involved in the reforestation of mangrove forests along coastal communities.**

an estimated 5.5 billion Swiss francs (6.3 billion US dollars/ 4.5 billion Euros – 2.3 per cent of GDP).<sup>4</sup> This was caused by factors such as lost productivity in public and commercial sectors and lost income from work absenteeism. In addition to the effects of illness, the poor became poorer during that year – particularly in city slums and unsanitary rural backwaters.

In Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, National Societies gather all their strength to confront issues such as this, working to mitigate the causes. What they do transforms lives and makes substantial differences. However, if we are to meet our goals, the international community needs to do better.

At present, only a very small proportion of official development assistance (ODA) is invested in proactive attempts to reduce vulnerabilities – calculated by Oxfam in 2009 at just 0.14 per cent.<sup>5</sup> With this poor level of investment, what chance of success is there for the Millennium Development Goals?

This is short-sighted because DRR is highly cost effective. Studies have shown that every dollar invested in DRR can save many more in the cost of disaster response and recovery. It is much cheaper to increase agricultural productivity, prevent disease or help people prepare for disasters than it is to run relief operations. Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes has said, “One of the most potent arguments for risk reduction is also the simplest: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

*Strategy 2020* states that we need to “do more, do better, and reach further” by building on our past achievements and on the advantages of our worldwide community presence. It argues that giving national and global voice to the concerns of vulnerable people forms a vital part of that resolve. We must, therefore, communicate this to people. We must say it loud. In other words: we must advocate for change. If we do not, then the learning and experience set out in the frameworks will never translate into adequate action.

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank. *Economic Impacts of Sanitation in Indonesia*. Jakarta, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Oxfam. *Band Aids and Beyond: Tackling disasters in Ethiopia 25 years after the famine*. London, 22 October 2009. Available at [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)

# What is advocacy

# 3

Advocacy is about persuading people to make changes, whether in policy, practice, systems or structures. For the IFRC, this means changes that improve conditions for vulnerable people. Advocacy is about speaking for others, working with others and supporting others to speak for themselves. It is a way of taking community voices to a different level of decision-making.

We may want to change the way a government, organization or business thinks, behaves or strategizes. We may want to change public attitudes, remove discrimination, nurture care or understanding, or inspire community action. We may want to change how our colleagues, managers and governance think, and the way they operate in certain areas. All of this calls for advocacy, whether external or internal.

## The roots of advocacy for the Movement

For the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, advocacy dates back to 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the 1859 battle of Solferino, in northern Italy, Henri Dunant mobilized nearby villagers to help him attend to the wounded. Dunant was involved in providing service, but he realized that service alone was not enough. He believed that people providing that service needed a set of rules to protect and assist the wounded. Using his advocacy skills, he set about persuading governments to draw up and agree to the Geneva Conventions. The Movement has been using advocacy ever since.

Advocacy can bring communities together and encourage them to respond to external threats. For the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, it goes hand-in-hand with awareness raising and education, as three cross-cutting components to strengthen its interventions. Awareness raising and education can empower communities to change and to have safer, healthier lives, while advocacy can create the conditions in which they are actually able to do so.

Advocacy and raising public awareness through the media, also contribute to humanitarian diplomacy – one of the “enabling actions” of Strategy 2020: to “prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world.” Effective humanitarian diplomacy to persuade decision-makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people has become a top priority for the IFRC and National Societies.

Advocacy occurs in many ways, and at many levels, however, it feeds into the following IFRC aims to:

- represent, promote and give visibility at the international and regional level to the work of National Societies in service delivery and advocacy
- influence the humanitarian agenda by identifying critical issues whilst developing and advocating for solutions

- position the Red Cross Red Crescent as the leading humanitarian network, thus creating the basis for more effective partnerships and for more extensive and sustained resource mobilization.

Internally, humanitarian diplomacy calls for a new mind-set to persuade others, and makes clear that advocacy is a collective responsibility. The role of National Societies as auxiliaries to governments in the humanitarian field gives them a privileged seat in decision-making forums, and the space to raise sensitive questions.

In line with the IFRC's Fundamental Principles, there is a need to speak out in support of the world's most vulnerable people, even where the message is not welcome – as is sometimes the case on issues relating to migrants, minorities and marginalized groups.

From time to time, National Societies have expressed fear that being outspoken may undermine funding by irritating donors, or may endanger relationships that have been painstakingly built over time. It is pertinent that issues be addressed with sensitivity and diplomacy, messages should be reasoned and responsible.

## Public versus private

The art of advocacy lies in persuasion, not confrontation. There are many alternatives to 'lecturing' that can be used to persuade people, whether communication is private or public, direct and indirect.

Advocacy may take the form of major public campaigns, cornering the media, espousing key messages on prime-time television news or popular breakfast radio programmes. However, it is also much broader than that, and includes complementary activities at many levels. A private conversation or confidential meeting with authorities is often the most effective way of persuading somebody to change their mind, their behaviour, or a policy.

Wherever possible, on specific issues it is always worth trying a direct, private approach before going public. For example, your local mayor will be far more likely to listen to your concerns about slums creeping into a flood plain if you first express them in private rather than in a newspaper. A calm, open discussion can then take place, and action be assessed without the mayor feeling threatened by someone pointing a finger. If your private efforts get you nowhere, you can always take your case to the media or through other channels later. In this case, your method will then be indirect – attempting to influence public opinion that, in turn, may influence the mayor.

Public advocacy can also be used alongside private approaches. For example, you can hold seminars, public meetings, interviews or media briefings, publish opinion pieces or letters to the editors of newspapers or journals. Or you can invest time, money and people in an advocacy campaign.

## The role of advocacy in DRR

Big disasters bring most of the interest – and therefore, most of the funding – for DRR. Disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, earthquakes on the scale of that of Iran in 2003, Peru in 2006, China in 2008 or Haiti in 2010, and mega-floods such as that of Mozambique in 2000 or Pakistan ten years later, open eyes and purses. These disasters present the scope for global advocacy

and resource mobilization, and DRR can gain greater visibility and relevance in the context of disaster response and recovery activities.

However, DRR should be mainstreamed, both throughout the Red Cross Red Crescent and as a local and national priority in line with the HFA, and incorporated in national development plans across disciplines. The impact of disasters can best be reduced by taking steps in advance. These must then be followed by early action. Getting this message across is the IFRC's priority.

A decade ago, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "Building a culture of prevention is not easy. While the costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, its benefits lie in a distant future. Moreover, the benefits are not tangible; they are the disasters that did NOT happen."<sup>1</sup>

Ten years later, we have begun to see the tangible benefits. One of the key challenges for advocacy is to use that evidence to show that DRR is both effective and cost efficient. No organization is better placed to do that than the largest humanitarian network: the Red Cross Red Crescent.

The Red Cross Red Crescent's greatest strength lies in its grassroots presence around the world, its community base, and the programmes that are implemented by millions of branch volunteers who operate where they live.

One of the key challenges for advocacy is to show that DRR is both effective and cost efficient.

Nearly 70 per cent of National Societies are now implementing community-based DRR programmes, including education programmes in schools and hospitals, while just over 60 per cent have a preparedness or DRR role in their national emergency plan. The knowledge acquired, the risks and the vulnerability mapped, and the success and best practices developed lie at the heart of IFRC's advocacy.

## Demonstrating the benefits of DRR

Prevention is better than cure, but accessing sufficient resources to support DRR, at the necessary scale, continues to be a challenge. Decision-makers are increasingly asking for proof that prevention is not only better, but also cheaper, than the cure.

This demand for evidence, as well as a desire by practitioners to better measure the impacts of their work, has increased the popularity of cost-benefit analysis (CBA). CBA is an assessment tool used to determine the economic efficiency of a potential or already implemented activity. If the economic returns on the work (the benefits) are more than the amount invested in it (the costs), then the activity is considered to have been worthwhile.

Practitioners often quote the calculation that for every dollar invested in DRR a corresponding number of dollars are saved in disaster response. These can provide useful arguments and indicators, except that the figures have usually been calculated for specific programmes, and can vary enormously. We know DRR saves: we have the studies to prove it. However, there is no rule of thumb as to how much it can save. A stronger case is needed.

Aside from the IFRC's commitment to strengthening community resilience, *Strategy 2020* highlights greater accountability and impact of programming.

<sup>1</sup> Annan, Kofi A. *Facing the humanitarian challenge: towards a culture of prevention*. New York, 1999.

CBA belongs in a range of decision-support tools to target maximum impact and cost-effectiveness in scaling up DRR.

Meanwhile, the very decision to use an economic measure to assess the impact of humanitarian projects raises questions. Does it mean placing a monetary value on such things as psychosocial well-being, or indeed on life itself (which would be incompatible with Red Cross Red Crescent principles and values)? And how does one quantify social impacts such as the empowerment of women?

Nevertheless, CBA has its benefits, and can be highly effective. It is used primarily at the project design phase, to help compare activities and to identify the most economically beneficial. It can also be used as a post-project evaluation tool, to understand whether a project has produced the expected benefits. Often, CBA is used simply for advocacy and communications, to show to partners and decision-makers that DRR is indeed worth the investment. It may also be used to help improve planned or on-going programming.

To test the effectiveness of the community-based DRR approach in the Red Cross Red Crescent context, the IFRC and some of its member National Societies conducted a cost-benefit analysis of three separate community-based DRR programmes in Nepal, the Philippines and Sudan between 2008 and 2010. The IFRC also produced a CBA guide titled “Cost-benefit analysis of community-based disaster risk reduction: Red Cross Red Crescent perspectives and lessons learned.”

### Case study: Applying CBA to three projects in Sudan

Red Sea State, in northeastern Sudan, suffers regular droughts that are worsening the situation of the indigenous Beja people. The crisis coping strategies that once saw this nomadic pastoralist community through the hardest times have become part of daily life, despite the fact that they are unsustainable. Life for the Beja is in crisis.

The Beja have relied on rain for their water, but rain is increasingly poor and irregular, and the time between dry spells has become shorter and shorter. Crop failure has followed, pastures have vanished, and the needs of grazing animals have led to environmental degradation and desertification. That, in turn, has impacted on livelihoods. Households have lost their herds and migrated to the outskirts of urban centres, to impoverished settlements of internally displaced people.

For more than 20 years, the Danish Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross have supported longer-term programming of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society to reduce the vulnerability of the Beja and to protect, where possible, community assets in order to build their resilience. They have focused on food security and livelihoods, health, water, education and women's development, with an integrated approach of multiple interventions within the same community.

In 2009, a CBA was conducted of several of these activities. These included the following three livelihood interventions, all undertaken by the Beja themselves:

- **Farming terraces** The first project involved constructing farming terraces, targeting destitute former herders forced to settle on the outskirts of Derudeib town, making use of the seasonal run-off from surrounding mountains, inlets and outlets allowing water to stream through controlled agricultural areas. The result is fruit and vegetables, providing cash income to 3,700 otherwise impoverished households. Such is their success that the participants have become a major supplier to the town, and have even begun to save money.
- **Earth embankments** The second project involved constructing earth embankments to trap and control the water of seasonal rivers. Long earth embankments were constructed along rivers to stop the water dispersing and boost mainly sorghum production.
- **Community vegetable gardens** The third project involved developing communal vegetable gardens, irrigated by pumps, to secure year-round fruit and vegetable production. These gardens, in the village of Hamisiet, are run on a rotation system, with 30 of Hamisiet's 280 households working on them at any one time. The workers retain 70 per cent of production – for household consumption or to earn income through sales – while 30 per cent goes to other community members. Sharing as a social obligation is a traditional Beja practice. The impact is considerable, allowing for the development of social capital to help the community manage during times of hardship.
- **The benefits** of the gardens spread beyond the village itself. As an important source of fruit and vegetables, Hamisiet now has a transport route to the nearest market town, providing easier access to health and public services. The villagers support neighbouring communities too, extending social capital that can be drawn on in crisis.

## Case study: Applying CBA to three projects in Sudan

### The CBA findings

By any humanitarian standard these are great investments, but donors require more than anecdotal evidence of success. So what did the CBA process make of these outcomes? (In CBA, values above 1 indicate that benefits have outstripped cost, so a ratio of 1:2 means a return is double the investment, reflecting economic efficiency.)

For these projects, the CBA revealed overwhelming benefits. The cost–benefit ratio was 1:61 for the farming terraces, 1:2.4 for the earth embankments, and for the vegetable gardens a remarkable 1:1800. As we have discussed, no price can be placed on life, but if donors are in search of value for money then a CBA can provide valuable reassurance that a project is as cost-effective as it appears.

Nevertheless, CBA does have its limitations. The IFRC concludes from the tests that the tool can capture only certain benefits, and will always deliver an incomplete picture. So it should never be used in isolation, and should not be used on all Red Cross Red Crescent programming. Instead, it should be part of a wider move towards improved project planning and monitoring to meet funding requirements, to achieve maximum impact and to ensure cost-effectiveness.

For the DRR practitioner, CBAs help meet the need for solid information on the social impact of programmes. As the Sudanese examples show, it can make for powerful advocacy.

DRR is often a long-term, low-visibility process that can be overshadowed by a high-profile, high-drama, emergency phase. Donors may be more ready to support interventions that are highly visible than long-term issues that can seem difficult to deal with. In this situation the Red Cross Red Crescent can use its influence to create change, whether among donors, decision-makers or people whose opinions can influence decisions.

At the global level, this may mean advocating for a fairer share of ODA, or persuading donor governments to remove the artificial division between humanitarian and development budgets (DRR often falls between these two categories.) At the national and local level, it may mean advocating for the enforcement of building codes to reduce the impact of earthquakes, or for better land-use management to eventually reduce the number of localized floods.

When advocating for DRR, the following key messages need to be presented:

- Vulnerable people must be the primary partners of humanitarian and development actors. Solutions that are imposed are rarely sustainable. The people themselves know the risks that they face.
- DRR is cost effective. It will cost donors less in the long-run, as well as saving lives and mitigating suffering.
- Neglecting DRR leads to more deaths and damage, and pushes more people into poverty. There is a moral obligation to prioritize risk reduction.
- Environmental damage increases people's vulnerability and the frequency and intensity of disasters. A sustainable environment protects communities.
- Climate change is unavoidable, and the risk of climate-related disasters is ever increasing. The poor, older persons and children are disproportionately vulnerable. We can prepare, and we must adapt.



### **Humanitarian diplomacy: the responsibility to persuade**

The key message of the policy is the establishment across all National Societies and the International Federation of a new mind-set – a mind-set based on the imperative of taking consistent action to persuade decision makers to act in the interests of vulnerable people. The decision to persuade is not a choice, but a fundamental responsibility. It is a responsibility that flows from the privileged access enjoyed by National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. It flows from the independence of the Red Cross Movement, from the breadth of its humanitarian activities across the globe, its millions of volunteers and the observer status at the United Nations General Assembly enjoyed by the International Federation and the ICRC. An organization of this kind, with its unique potential to exert considerable influence on decision makers across the world, has a manifest responsibility to do so.

(Humanitarian Diplomacy Policy – Explanatory Memorandum)

### **Benefits of humanitarian diplomacy**

In the vision of *Strategy 2020*, humanitarian diplomacy will bring:

- greater access to help people who are vulnerable, and earlier attention to situations and causes of vulnerability
- deeper public, governmental and partner support, and more resources for addressing vulnerabilities
- stronger recognition of community perspectives in the international humanitarian and development system and cooperation arrangements

### **Case study: Removing the threat of munitions through risk reduction**

The adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions was the result of humanitarian diplomacy involving governments, international organizations, civil societies and the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. The importance of the Convention on Cluster Munitions is extremely clear in Lao People's Democratic Republic, where the legacy of cluster bombs from the Indochina conflict is still visible three decades on. Fifty thousand civilians have already been killed or injured, and a further 300 are affected every year.

The convention, which prohibits all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions, and covers assistance to victims, clearance of contaminated areas and destruction of stockpiles, came into force in August 2010. The first meeting of state parties to the agreement was held in Vientiane, capital of Lao, three months later. Heading an IFRC delegation, Lao Red Cross president Dr Snivourast Sramany spelled out our commitment to removing the threat posed by munitions:

“Our auxiliary role to the public authorities in the humanitarian field enables us to work with governments to reduce the harm caused by these weapons at national and community levels.”

The role of the IFRC and its National Societies is clearly defined both by this convention and by the Convention on Landmines. More effort is needed to create long lasting programmes. The ability to address challenges with an integrated approach meeting local needs is key. For example the incorporation of related programmes into the well-known Red Cross Red Crescent activities such as disaster preparedness. In weapons-contaminated areas, the risk brought by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war should be taken into account during local assessments of risk and community vulnerability and capacity. Plans can then be developed accordingly with the participation of local communities bringing all stakeholders on board, with resulting activities potentially ranging from risk mapping and awareness raising to mitigation.

# 4 Advocacy in the community

Advocacy needs to be carried out both to and for vulnerable communities. Crucially, though, it must also be carried out alongside them. It is not for the Red Cross Red Crescent to decide what priority issues a community needs to advocate.

In advocacy, as in everything else, part of our brand and uniqueness is our global community presence: the grassroots base. This is reflected in our credibility and in the authority of our voice. Those who listen to us listen because what we have to say is informed, considered and insightful.

Community concerns must be articulated through the entire disaster management cycle – from local to global. We must always ensure that the voices of those we want to assist are heard: their fears, their resolve and their aspirations.

We know from experience that communities themselves want to become partners in reducing risks – in preparing and learning to respond – and are able to do so. Assessment, either through the widely used VCA or other tools, allows them to determine what they must do to build a safer environment.

This process may be straightforward. VCAs will lead to self-organization, resulting simply in people knowing what to do when a catastrophe threatens urban neighborhoods or rural villages. It may mean digging channels or building simple dykes to divert the rush of water in the rainy season. It may mean planting trees along riverbanks or roadsides as part of preparedness programmes to help check the force of flooding. It may mean securing a water supply or introducing safe sanitation.

Often, communities can do such things for themselves, without much further assistance, but at times an assessment will point to measures that are beyond their capacity. Support may be needed from local government or another stakeholder, and advocacy may be required to mobilize it.

### Case study: reducing the risks posed by our roads

Unless significant preventive action is taken, by 2020 traffic collisions on the world's roads will be the sixth biggest cause of death.

Already, a similar number of people die from road crash injuries as from tuberculosis or malaria. Road trauma is the leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29 and the second most common for those aged five to 14. Worldwide, an annual 1.3 million people are killed on our roads and as many as 50 million are injured.

The IFRC and its hosted project, the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), are advocating straightforward solutions to avoid or significantly decrease the human, social and economic consequences of urban road crashes. These include initiatives such as national road safety action policy, better road systems, first aid training, and closer partnerships with governments, the private sector and civil society.

Around the world, National Societies are rising to the challenge to advocate for change – for example, in Rwanda, where more and more deaths occur among the ever-increasing number of road accidents, with the greatest number of casualties among pedestrians and cyclists.

On the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2010, the Rwandan Red Cross put these growing risks in the spotlight by emphasizing the threat to children. With the nation's media looking on, they spent the day together with traffic police training school children on road safety.

The focus was on Nyagatare, Eastern Province, where more than 400 children, from five primary schools, took part. The children identified the daily journey to and from school as posing the highest risk. The National Society explained how to cross the road safely, what to beware of, and how to understand road signs. Where needed, the National Society established zebra crossings, repainted faded ones, and erected road safety signposts.

National Societies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are also part of the growing global response, by running public awareness, first-aid services and training. In these regions, on average one child dies on the roads every hour, and the average mortality rate is nearly four times higher than the European average. National Societies are working closely with ministries, local and international NGOs and the private sector. The National Societies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are already members of their national road safety committees.

Kathleen Elsig, Road Safety Manager for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at the GRSP, says, "National Societies are strong partners to the government on road safety in many countries around the world. Volunteers can provide crucial support to national road crash injury prevention efforts by getting messages about road safety to people in communities."

For advocacy to be effective, we need to know who we should ask to do what, where, when and how – and these can only be determined with the community. What capacities can a community offer, and what extra support do they need?

How will the intervention contribute to their longer-term aspirations?

As a matter of course and principle, we work hand-in-hand with the community.

Like any other activity, advocacy is more effective when it is planned in partnership with beneficiaries. In this way it further promotes a sense of community ownership that is critical to the success of projects.

**Our volunteers must be engaged in advocacy. We must communicate with them on the issues, train and educate them, channel their enthusiasm.**

It is also important that volunteers are mobilized. They live and work with the community, and whether our advocacy is directed to or from the beneficiaries, the volunteers must be engaged. We must communicate with them on the issues, train and educate them, and channel their enthusiasm.

The success of many campaigns has derived from the involvement of volunteers. Some projects, such as a recurring World Food Day campaign in Central Europe, are designed by Red Cross Youth. This intervention was designed to warn that undernourishment among the socially vulnerable – first in Poland, then in Albania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia – reflected a widening gap between rich and poor, and had a major impact in the early 2000s.

Meanwhile, a landmark video has shown what communities themselves can achieve. As part of its communications work in support of the *World Disasters Report 2010 – Focus on Urban Risk*, the IFRC presented a community video produced entirely by residents of Kibera – one of the world’s largest informal settlements, in Nairobi, Kenya. The video provided a platform for people who live every day with the challenges of rapid urbanization to share their stories

**A Red Cross worker pays a visit to a farmer in Nejiang**



and concerns directly with a wider audience.

The ten-minute film was produced without any editorial guidance from the IFRC. “It is our desire to enable people to have their voices heard without being filtered by external organizations,” said former media and external communications manager Paul Conneally. “It is our intention to increasingly put vulnerable people at the centre of our communications.”

### Case study: Putting video in the picture

Information provided at the community-level needs to be in a form that is accessible. Videos may help if they are combined with participatory approaches. Audio-visual tools are increasingly affordable, and can help communities to communicate scientifically complex issues, such as climate change, in simple ways, with accuracy, using aesthetic approaches that can inspire and motivate – sometimes in surprising ways.

In Mozambique, following a workshop on flooding and climate change with local farmers, participants watched a four-minute video from a similar workshop held in a flood-prone Argentinean informal settlement. Having watched the film on a laptop screen, a female farmer said to the workshop facilitator:

*“I had followed your explanations of global warming, but didn’t fully believe you. Like everybody else, I thought it was God punishing us, or that the ancestors were angry, and that we can’t do much about it. But now in the film I see that white women the other end of the world have the same problem we have! So maybe it is true that the global rainfall is changing, and if I can do something about it I will.”*

The video had motivated her to consider changing crops to adapt to different climatic conditions.

# 5 Advocacy roles of the DRR practitioner

Advocacy specialists are present in every region, and they will be keen to help you with advocacy challenges. If you intend to design a strategy, contact them early, and collaborate with them throughout the process. They can help with activities such as setting clear objectives, identifying your target audiences, defining what it is you want from the audiences, the tools you need to achieve that, and what needs to be done later to show your actions have been both effective and efficient.

They want to collaborate for another reason, too. This is that DRR is important not only in the context of a community, a district, or even a region, country or zone. The success, knowledge acquired and lessons learned in one situation can feed into what we do elsewhere and strengthen our arguments, campaigns and impact – as long as it is done well and we know about it.

Communicators can help compile case studies – an invaluable tool for advocacy, of which globally, for DRR, there is far too little at present.

As the world's largest, and probably best-known, humanitarian network, the Red Cross Red Crescent aspires to be the leading source of impartial and neutral humanitarian information. We have a network of listening posts in every region of the world. We must do more to enhance the flow of information from these posts – from grassroots to branch, to region to National Society headquarters, to country and regional delegations, and onwards: an information flow that is managed and utilized every step of the way. DRR practitioners can contribute greatly to this process.

## Being the change

Depending on the context, advocates may have many roles. Sometimes they may provide a link between the community and those who can help to provide a solution to the issues. They may negotiate, bargain for something, or network, to build coalitions. Sometimes an advocate may demonstrate DRR practice to people or policy-makers.

Whichever of these roles you fulfil, it is important to ensure that the activity is based on our mandate, and reflects our policies and principles. Our actions must be:

- consistent with our mission to improve the lives of vulnerable people
- in line with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent and established policies
- credible by basing advocacy on practical experience from working in the field

We consider each of these in turn.

## **Consistency with our mission to improve the lives of vulnerable people**

We should not advocate outside our mission and experience. For example, we would not campaign against overfishing by foreign factory ships looting the waters of developing countries. However, we would campaign for measures to address the humanitarian consequences of depleted fish stocks (in which factory ships might be a factor) along with the warming of the oceans through climate change. Our focus might be on the loss of livelihoods for local fishermen, the resulting poverty, and the declining health and growing nutritional problems suffered by their communities.

Our evidence and arguments might indirectly strengthen the efforts of a Greenpeace or a World Wide Fund for Nature campaign to stop factory fishing. Or they might complement a warning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stating that as the oceans warm, corals and their delicate ecosystems are dying, and the fish living, breeding and feeding there are disappearing. There might well be inter-agency consultation, cooperation, and even coordination, but our focus would be on the humanitarian challenges.

We have the community reach to uncover these issues, and the expertise to analyze and deal with them, but we are not environmentalists. Our concern is the people who are in harm's way, or are likely to be tomorrow, and putting measures in place to mitigate that harm. Long-term environmental issues are for others to pursue.

## **Working in line with the Fundamental Principles and established policies**

These principles emphasize the importance of speaking with a consistent voice. Key messages exist for all our focus areas. Become familiar with them, and build them into your advocacy.

## **Ensuring credibility by basing advocacy on practical experience**

All advocacy efforts should be closely aligned with our field activities, and should complement what we are doing there.

Successful advocacy takes into account the three pillars mentioned earlier: credibility, consistency and coordination, sometimes known as 'the three Cs.'

Credibility means that people trust and value what you say. It is something that needs to be earned, and that can be undermined by poorly researched, inaccurate arguments without a consistent message. Advocacy without credibility is worthless.

This is why we must carefully define and focus our advocacy plans and messages; to be sure they are based on genuine humanitarian concerns and are consistent with our mandate and principles. In order to make an impact, we need to gain the trust of policy-makers and affected communities. This starts with our knowledge of the field. We need to speak of what we know first-hand – not of conclusions that come from the findings of others.

The third pillar – coordination – is about identifying allies and coordinating action with them. No organization can expect to achieve maximum impact working alone: success requires cooperation. We need cooperation within National Societies, of course, but also between different National Societies,

and between National Societies and other organizations, including humanitarian agencies, scientific institutions, knowledge centres and government departments.

The IFRC recognizes that community safety and resilience can only be built on a foundation of strong working partnerships between all stakeholders – from the communities themselves to local and national governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Similarly, effective advocacy can involve interaction between a whole range of actors.

Stakeholders who can speak from personal experience may work alongside a range of others, including community leaders, women’s groups and local activists. There may be persuasive figures who believe in the cause or others who can speak with authority, including educators, people with influence over policy-makers, and individuals from relevant professional bodies, NGOs and donors, as well as the media and local and national government.

However, their presence and respected status within the community, and a strong auxiliary relationship with every level of authority, set National Societies apart from the other key players. No organization is better placed to network, or to encourage government focus on community safety and resilience in the face of disaster risk. No one is better placed to encourage governments to develop and implement laws, policies and plans that promote DRR at the community-level.



# How to deliver effective advocacy



We have seen the importance advocacy plays in encouraging and persuading others to help reduce the risk of disaster. *Strategy 2020* and the obligation of humanitarian diplomacy remind us that we have a collective responsibility to persuade. This chapter looks at what you can do to incorporate advocacy in your own work.

As we have seen, advocacy takes place in many ways and at many levels, through various approaches and methods. However, the basic steps are common to all advocacy whether it is at the national, district or local level.

As with any other DRR activity, advocacy requires an assessment, a plan and activities that are monitored and evaluated. You will also need resources. The simplest and wisest thing to do is to include an advocacy component in all of your DRR programmes and budget it in. Advocacy should never be an afterthought – something added on when you think you need it. It is an essential supportive element of your toolkit, and your programme needs a budget line for it.

This chapter takes you through the advocacy process in a series of stages:

- identifying advocacy issues
- understanding the issues and collecting evidence
- identifying your targets
- clarifying your vision
- tailoring the message for the target audience
- delivering your message
- monitoring and evaluation

Each of these is described in turn.

## Step 1: Identifying advocacy issues

VCAs are widely used and understood within the Red Cross Red Crescent. Other effective assessment tools include participatory vulnerability assessments, participatory rural appraisals and hazard vulnerability capacity assessments.

Any of these tools can provide a starting point for advocacy, awareness raising and knowledge-sharing efforts, and can link community voices and concerns to decision-making and resources at the local or national level.

You can use the results to persuade stakeholders of the need for DRR interventions and bring local partners and other organizations together to build persuasive advocacy messages. You can conduct VCAs jointly with other agencies, building relationships and sharing skills to improve effectiveness.

The VCA process is also a good tool for identifying the root causes of poverty and vulnerability. Many of these causes (for example, poor design and

implementation of building codes, land use and urban planning, or embankment maintenance) can be addressed only through government policies or by persuading others to change their behavior. Such issues require advocacy, awareness raising and greater networking with other actors.

### Useful resources

For information on VCAs, go to: [www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/resources/publications.asp#vca](http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/resources/publications.asp#vca)

This link provides a set of resources including *What is a VCA: An Introduction to Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment* (IFRC 2006).

When the Red Cross Red Crescent does not have the resources or capacity to support communities on priority issues identified by a VCA, it is important to coordinate with other actors, share assessment findings and advocate for others to take action. This helps maintain trust with communities and meet expectations that are naturally raised through the assessment process.

**An El Mozote woman identifies available resources and capacities in case of a disaster**



### Case study: Using assessment to reveal complex dangers

For the people of Aceh, Indonesia – the region hardest hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami – it felt that nothing could be worse than the 2004 catastrophe. Yet in 2007 a Red Cross Red Crescent analysis of 63 villages in this province showed that residents were threatened by further disaster due to a range of factors.

Through a VCA process guided by the Indonesian Red Cross Society, community self-assessments identified a litany of hazards in villages at the tip of Sumatra, and on the neighboring island of Nias, including:

- Illegal logging and irresponsible quarrying increased the risk of landslides.
- Poorly constructed buildings, weak infrastructure, ignorance and a lack of coastal protection and embankments left communities wide open to earthquakes, tsunamis and shoreline erosion. An absence of shelters and escape routes aggravated these dangers.
- High tides and obstructed rivers worsened flooding.
- Limited sources of potable water, scant irrigation for rice fields, and diminishing forests made the seasons longer and dryer and the droughts harsher.
- A lack of medical services and low community understanding exacerbated malaria, diarrhoea, skin diseases and tuberculosis.

The analysis confirmed the enormity of a long-term Aceh challenge, and underlined the IFRC's insistence that long-term risk reduction must be part of global development programming. As the National Society launched the first phase of an Aceh-wide early-warning system to provide vulnerable communities with government warnings through a Red Cross radio network, it emphasized that that alone would not protect the province. Far-reaching community change was needed.

The National Society spoke about what it knew first hand. In Aceh (as elsewhere in the country) it had put a community-based risk reduction programme in place, and DRR and disaster preparedness were at the core of its tsunami recovery operations. It had a credible voice, and what it had to say on this matter only enhanced its credibility.

Based on the findings, it developed a plan of action. Measures included village contingency plans, community action teams and the development of escape routes and safe havens. A school programme was high on the agenda, not only to make schools themselves safer, but also to teach children to become disaster guides in their families.

## Step 2: Understanding the issues and collecting evidence

Good advocacy is based on strong information, so it is important that you thoroughly understand the issue you plan to advocate on. This involves asking questions such as:

- What is the problem, and how big is it?
- What are the root causes?
- What will happen if nothing is done?
- What is it precisely that we need to change?

Once you have researched the issue, you can start to organize it into messages that help you communicate clearly.

It is crucial to be aware of all aspects of the issue so that you are an accurate source of information. Make the issue 'yours.' Leave no stone unturned, and make sure there are no ambiguous issues or grey areas. Thoroughness makes you convincing and – most importantly – will ensure that you are a trustworthy advocate in the eyes of those you wish to persuade.

When forming persuasive messages, first-hand experience and information gathered from the field are essential. VCAs are key sources of evidence. As well as assessment findings, you need to present information that places the issue in context and strengthens your argument – for example, statistics, surveys of trends, policies and analysis from government ministries, colleagues, other organizations, international bodies and academic institutions.

### Case study: Providing perspective on food security

When the Lesotho Red Cross Society set out to bring sustainable food security practices to some of the most deprived corners of a country with persistent food crisis, it stated that such interventions would only work if communities were actively involved, and if other inter-related and pressing issues were addressed, such as HIV and AIDS and DRR.

About 80 per cent of the 2.1 million people living in Lesotho work in agriculture. However, the sector accounts for only 16 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Lesotho has to import 70 per cent of its food – and is affected by rising global food and fuel prices.

The problem is that Lesotho is mountainous. Only 10 per cent of its land is arable, so the country cannot support a dependence on subsistence farming. Other factors exacerbate the situation, including periodic droughts and crop failures, excessive soil erosion, deteriorating pasture, chronic poverty and the effects of HIV on the labor force. An estimated 70 people die each day from AIDS-related illnesses, and the pandemic has diminished agricultural output and seriously weakened farming communities.

In the past, food security interventions (including those supported by national and international organizations) often failed to deliver sustainable solutions. This was largely because they had not considered the wider picture. The aim of this project was to promote community-based food security through income generation, sustainable farming and training on how to preserve food, integrating these with underlying issues. The intended outcome was to enhance community resilience and coping strategies, both to recurrent droughts and to the impact of HIV.

The project was based on the findings of community self-assessment through a VCA, and included household gardening, fruit tree management and small-scale pig raising for income generation. DRR and home-based care were introduced as part of the package.

After two years, beneficiary households were able to produce 75 per cent of their fresh vegetable needs. As a result, shops dropped their prices, helping the general population. Even people below the poverty line could now eat vegetables on a daily basis. Beneficiaries noticed improvements in health, and vegetable sales increased household income by an average of five per cent.

Healthcare and living conditions improved for people living with HIV, too. Vegetable sales enabled them to pay for medical consultations, transport costs, basic school expenses and daily family needs. The burden of collecting water from remote and distant sources was also alleviated through roof tanks that harvested rain.

This approach makes a compelling case for replication elsewhere, and has led to considerable advocacy. Regular exchange and knowledge sharing takes place with government institutions, donors and other stakeholders.

## Step 3: Identifying your targets

When it comes to knowing who to involve in advocacy, and how, there are no hard and fast rules. It is always important to start by mapping the stakeholders – in other words, the people, groups, organizations or systems – that are affected by the issue or that affect it.

Stakeholder involvement depends on the circumstances. What works in one situation may not be appropriate in another, so trusting one's own judgement may be the best course of action.

In Lesotho crop diversification has been adopted by the communities.



A good way to identify appropriate stakeholders is to start by asking questions such as those listed below (adapted from *The World Bank Participation Sourcebook*, 1996):

- Are there people affected whose voice is not heard? If so, what must we do to include them, or to convince them to participate?
- Who are the representatives of those affected?
- Who is responsible for providing services related to this issue?
- Who is likely to mobilize for, and against, our proposals?
- Who can make the advocacy effort more effective through participating, or less effective through not participating or outright opposition?
- Who can contribute financial and technical resources to our advocacy activities?

Some of these could be answered through the VCA process.

Once you have identified stakeholders, you need to map the advocacy environment and find out who is doing and saying what – both on DRR, and at the level you plan to target your initiative. You need to discover who the major players are and to identify key relationships, issues, opportunities and approaches.

This will help you avoid duplicating efforts, and you may find partners or key people to support your initiative. This is simplest to do at the local level, where there are generally far fewer actors and where the people you meet are more likely to be those responsible for action.

### **Who is with you? Who is against you?**

Not everyone will be on your side. If they were, there would be no need for advocacy in the first place. So the next step is to identify who is a potentially ally, and who is not.

Those who stand with you are most likely to be found among organizations and individuals who advocate on similar issues. Others will be friends from

before. You may be able to make use of existing alliances. If not, perhaps you need to create some new ones. However, choose your friends with care. Your National Society will already have credibility, which makes you a useful ally. So, you will certainly add value to your partners – but will they add value to your efforts? What are they hoping to gain from the alliance?

The bottom line is always this: the hallmark of the Red Cross Red Crescent must always be principled humanitarian action based on a neutral, impartial and independent approach. So your advocacy activities must in no way compromise the Fundamental Principles – and nor should your alliances with partners.

Having gathered your allies, consider those stakeholders who oppose your stance or resist the approach you are promoting. Get to know them, and make sure that they are well informed of the details of your proposals. Then, look for common ground on which you can build bridges.

### The target audience

Once you have identified the stakeholders, you need to ask who can bring about the changes you are advocating for – in other words, who has the power? The answer to that question will reveal your target audience.

Your target audience will be comprised of two groups:

- **the primary audience** – decision-makers who have the authority to bring about change directly. They may include government ministers, agencies and departments, senior figures in national or local administrations, members of parliament, donors and their governments
- **the secondary audience** – those who can influence the decisions of the primary one. They include the media, community members and leaders, teachers, multilateral organizations, NGOs, research institutes, professional bodies, any source you know which advises or informs decision-makers.

Whoever your audience is made up of, make sure you understand their perspectives and priorities, look at the issue from their point of view, and consider what might encourage them to support you. In other words, what is in it for them?

### **Case study: Working with scientists to boost humanitarian action**

The experience of the Sahel region provides a prime example of how science can benefit humanitarian action. The big disaster challenges in the Sahel region are climate related. Either climate unleashes them – as in the case of regular floods – or it creates the conditions in which they occur. Dialogue with scientists has helped us reduce suffering, and has strengthened our arguments for investment in risk reduction.

Working to improve flood management and strengthen disaster preparedness, in 2008 the IFRC consulted with meteorological organizations and climate scientists, and for the first time ever launched an emergency appeal based on seasonal climate forecasts.

Today, partnership with such authorities as the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at New York's Columbia University and the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development is paying dividends. Every May, seasonal forecasts inform the IFRC's regional office in Dakar, Senegal, of what to expect in the July–September rainy season. Combining the forecasts with the expertise of hydrologists, the office can map flood risk, develop strategies for action, pre-position relief stocks and help develop contingency plans.

The information is shared with partners and stakeholders, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their networks of branches and local volunteers, who are trained to warn and prepare communities. Updates, shorter-term forecasts and alerts then follow.

Since we deal with the consequences of things that climatologists and meteorologists study, there is clearly a need to bridge the gap between scientists and humanitarians. The opportunities are there to link disaster response to risk reduction.



### Case study: Using games to communicate the climate message

Scientific forecasts often use technical language that not everyone understands. This can present challenges in translating them into concrete actions for disaster management. Strange as it may sound, a game of cards can help.

#### Before the storm

'Before the storm' is a game focusing on early warning or early action decision-making that introduces weather forecasts and possible responses to them. Cards that specify time and forecast scenarios are dealt to participants. Then the participants play 'action cards' to meet the challenges.

The game was devised at a workshop run by the Senegalese Red Cross Society and its partners in St. Louis, Senegal – one of the African cities most threatened by climate change. The game was designed to bridge the communication gap between the climate scientists, Red Cross staff and vulnerable community members present. It produced a host of new ideas for disaster preparedness.

The participants later took the game to the island community of Doune Baba Dieye, where storms that are entirely predictable regularly cause death and suffering. After playing the game, villagers voted on what they considered to be the most appropriate responses to a flood. The game alone will not save Doune Baba Dieye – but it does have a role to play.

#### Weather or not

Another card game of forecasts and action is called 'Weather or not.' This one was designed to create the experience of taking action both with and without scientific forecast information, and to give players the experience of making decisions and seeing the consequences of acting and not acting. Cards drawn provide the variables of the decision-making.

For details of these and other games and exercises, go to [www.climatecentre.org/site/games-exercises](http://www.climatecentre.org/site/games-exercises)

## Step 4: Clarifying your vision

By this stage in the process you will have identified the issue and your target audience. The next step is to ensure that your vision is clearly defined, and to identify precisely what must be accomplished along the way if you are to realize that vision. This means formulating goals and objectives. The goal is your wider vision for long-term change, while the objectives are the specific outcomes that need to be completed in order to bring that change about.

Before you put together your advocacy strategy, you need answers to the following questions:

- **Who** will you ask to do things?
- **What** will you ask them to do?
- **Which** specific goals will you want them to achieve?
- **When** must these goals be completed?

Your goal could be, for example, to halt and then reverse the increasing incidence of diarrhoeal disease in a particularly flood-prone community. The objectives to help you achieve that might be to introduce a secure and sustainable supply of clean water by the end of 2011, and secure hygienic sanitation for all within six months after that.

The advocacy that you would then undertake needs to have SMART objectives – in other words, objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. This is a golden rule of any advocacy strategy that directly supports programme activity.

#### **Case study: Reducing China's rural risk**

The flood season in China is often a harsh reminder of how vulnerable the rural population is to disaster, poverty and gruesome threats to health. Beside loss of life and livelihood, many people in rural areas face enormous health hazards due to poor sanitation and unsafe and unprotected water supplies. The situation is particularly severe during flooding, when effluent washes down from village latrines to contaminate surface and ground water.

Most of the people who are severely affected by floods are struggling as subsistence farmers, and do not have any savings to help them recover from disasters. Many are also left facing disease, thus compounding the crisis.

According to China's Ministry of Water Resources, more than 320 million people (roughly a quarter of China's population) lack access to safe drinking water, and 96 per cent of rural communities lack sewage or waste-water treatment systems. Unsafe water is blamed for the spread of as many as 50 different diseases, and water-borne and sanitation-related illness accounts for more than 70 per cent of China's infectious disease.

In many rural homes hygiene practices are poor, with pigs, buffalo and chickens sharing the same housing space as people. Surveys have shown that almost 60 per cent of rural families lack latrines, using fields and open spaces instead. The latrines that do exist often comprise a simple pit with a couple of planks placed across it. As a consequence, diarrhoeal illness and viral hepatitis – both associated with faecal pollution – are China's leading infectious diseases.

The Red Cross Society of China argues that all this can change. With the support of Red Cross Red Crescent partners, the National Society has undertaken ground-breaking work over the past decade to reduce community vulnerability. Activities have included providing good sanitation, improving water supplies, and offering health and hygiene education. Community-based disaster preparedness has been part of the package; with self-assessment encouraging communities to develop their own disaster preparedness plans.

If China is to reduce its losses to natural disaster, widespread community vulnerability reduction programmes are essential. The National Society has been at the forefront of this work. Its public awareness-raising and public education activities have inspired action within communities, and the word is spreading to an ever-larger number of people who are beginning to consider the issues.

Advocacy towards the authorities has developed strong partnerships. Some local authorities have matched the funds provided by donors. Meanwhile, donor support has been strengthened through success stories.

## Step 5: Tailoring the message for the target audience

Once the message and audience have been identified, you need to think about how to convey that message. Most importantly, you need to keep it clear and straightforward but make it powerful. Your message needs to explain what you are proposing, why it is worth doing, and how it will improve the situation

you are concerned about. It must inform, persuade and motivate your audience to take action.

Asia Pacific zone's comprehensive manual *Practical Guide to Advocacy for Disaster Risk Reduction* offers the 'see + action' formula, as follows:

1. Write a simple statement.
2. Present the evidence.
3. Use a personal story as an example, illustrating your case with a human element.
4. Putt your message into action.

This approach is illustrated below, applying the formula to a Malawi case study.

If you followed Step 3 in this chapter, you should already know each section of your audience well, understanding the way they make decisions and knowing their priorities. You now need to adapt your message, and your methods, to whichever one you choose to address. Targeting communities requires a different approach to targeting government agencies. The language needs to change, too. How you speak to a farmer or a fisherman about droughts and floods or declining catches will be different to how you address a meteorologist or the head of the national disaster management agency.

How you deliver your message (see Step 6) has to be tailored to the audience as well. Would it be best to organize a meeting, or to mail briefing materials and letters that outline your position or case? Would it be best to deliver your message through local or national media, or through an event?

So, this step is all about finding out about the people, adapting the language accordingly and deciding how to introduce what you want to do, by tailoring the message to the circumstances.

#### Applying the 'see + action' formula

**1. Simple statement** – Boosting smallholder farming can ease hunger and reduce poverty at the household level.

**2. Evidence** – Pervasive drought once meant that millions went hungry in Malawi. Today, progress is being made. The Malawi Red Cross Society plants seeds of hope at the community-level, turning lives around through simple, sustainable irrigation and improved planting. However, droughts and floods still threaten many people who have limited means to recover quickly. Women, who head more than 30 per cent of rural households in sub-Saharan Africa, face particular challenges.

**3. Example** – Single mother Chrissy Ali, 33, is one of the farmers who the Red Cross has helped. She says, "Three years ago I was dependent on food aid. Today, I feed my children myself – and sell a little surplus to pay for other things."

**4. Action** – Advocate for the continuation of start-up investment to sustain the still-precarious rural recovery.

## Step 6: Delivering your message

In Chapter 3 we introduced the concepts of private and public advocacy, and direct and indirect advocacy. For example, if we are concerned that a particular

approach is needed for a specific government department, often the most effective action is to go and talk to them in a private meeting, or to write to them expressing your concerns. Public advocacy, on the other hand, inevitably involves the media – the primary platform through which the Red Cross Red Crescent can reach wide audiences.

Also in Chapter 3, we touched on internal advocacy. Sometimes it is necessary to advocate for change within our own organizations in order to meet new challenges and adopt new practices and policies. Whichever form your advocacy takes, many different tools are available to help you deliver your message effectively.

It is important to remember that people are bombarded with messages competing for their attention – from government information about forthcoming elections to marketing campaigns selling soap. Your message will be easy to forget or ignore unless it captures the hearts and minds in your target audience. So, be creative. Try to attract people's attention through innovative approaches – perhaps through humor, aesthetics, or by using surprising tools to illustrate key concepts.

Some of the most brilliant and effective advocacy ever conducted by the Red Cross Red Crescent has been in art exhibitions and music events where our Fundamental Principles have been communicated through cultural expression. National Society public awareness and education programmes for DRR excel in the use of performing arts. Drama, puppet shows, song and dance have long been changing minds and saving lives by captivating audiences on every continent, and there is a growing interest in video and other digital forms of communications. If you are considering options, draw on the know-how and experience that already exists within your organizations.

Media relations remain a key component of any public advocacy programme, and media can exert influence both on the primary audience and within at-risk communities. Try to identify journalists with special interest in DRR, and be aware that the number of specialists is increasing – particularly because of climate change. Alongside radio, TV and print, opportunity continues to grow rapidly among the internet-based new media.

Other means of delivering messages include:

- direct interaction with target audiences, including conferences, presentations, seminars and workshops
- printed material, including newsletters, leaflets, posters, brochures and case studies
- electronic or digital media, including websites, CD-ROMs and DVDs

### Case study: Using role play to prepare for disaster

What would you do if an explosion tore apart your town center, if a public transport disaster occurred, if floods overwhelmed a riverside district, or if an earthquake happened? At first, the authorities in Serbia and Montenegro resented their Red Cross National Societies asking questions such as these. So, the National Societies came up with a solution. They would run simulations of likely disasters in order to come up with the answers.

The authorities quickly realized the value of this approach. For fire brigades, police forces, ambulance services, hospitals, municipal departments and other community actors, playing out their roles in public disaster simulations has proved enlightening. The approach revealed strengths but also weaknesses, including unforeseen challenges and gaps in emergency planning. As a result of the activity, the authorities have been able to plug those gaps and prepare for those unforeseen circumstances.

The scheme has already made a difference. Near the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica, a deadly bus accident was simulated just two months before a real-life rail disaster occurred. The authorities reported that their response to the train was faster and more efficient because of the simulation. In Serbia, a similar story unfolded, when a few months after the simulation of an urban explosion, a real explosion took place.

Simulations are playing a vital role in strengthening preparedness, but they are also raising awareness. Wherever the process exposes vulnerability, the authorities are now able to reduce the risks to areas that would be affected.

## Step 7: Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can help tell how close you are to meeting your goals and objectives. It can reveal what worked well, what did not work so well, how things could be improved, and what is needed for that improvement to take place. It is also an effective learning tool. Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of advocacy efforts helps identify and correct errors, and highlights good practice.

### Following protocol

When you approach people in high places with advocacy messages, protocol can be important. For useful guidance, see *The Protocol Handbook – A Manual to Facilitate the Federation's Work in Diplomacy and the International Field* (IFRC, 2005). The manual also gives advice on behavioral and procedural practices that help the Red Cross Red Crescent build partnerships on the basis of trust and mutual respect.

# 7 Advocacy and legal preparedness

Good laws and legal frameworks are essential for reducing the risks of disaster and for preparing for and responding to events. Presidents and parliaments cannot order the atmosphere to cool down, or the earth to stay still, but they can do a great deal to reduce the human suffering that the growing disasters bring.

Since 2001, the Red Cross Red Crescent has been studying the way in which regulatory frameworks – international disaster response laws, rules and principles (IDRL) – can help or hinder efficient international relief. Following consultations with more than 140 governments and 180 relief agencies, in 2007 we developed a new set of voluntary guidelines, the *Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance* (also known as the *IDRL Guidelines*). These set out how governments can prepare their disaster laws and plans in order to overcome common legal problems that arise in international operations. They also advise on minimum quality standards for humanitarian assistance, and recommend how states should facilitate the work of aid providers to greatest effect.

So far, more than 12 governments have begun collaborating with their respective National Societies to use these guidelines.

IDRL itself is essentially about response and initial recovery assistance. However, law can do more than simply smoothing the path of rescue services, easing the passage of humanitarian aid, avoiding bureaucratic bottlenecks and ensuring that operations are coordinated. Good legislation also has the power to help communities become less vulnerable and to strengthen their ability to deal with the hazards they face. By ensuring that community and civil society is integrated into disaster management, it can help empower communities to follow the core intention of DRR: enhancing their own safety and resilience. So, law can ensure community action.

This is another reason why encouraging disaster legislation that is stronger, more inclusive and fairer is so important to the IFRC, and why it should be pursued through National Society advocacy. As independent auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Societies are responsible for advising governments – but this new legislation-related advocacy role is also presenting itself.

In order for proposals for new legislation to make impact, people need to understand its potential benefits. Mind-sets have to change – both with local authorities and within communities. Some governments have already stated that the community reach of their Red Cross or Red Crescent partner – and the opportunity for advocacy that this creates – can be a significant factor in the efficient implementation of disaster-related legislation.

### Case study: Strengthening resolve for new law

In September and October 2009, the Philippines witnessed a series of deadly storms. The worst, Tropical Storm Ketsana, overwhelmed Manila and northern parts of the country, bringing the worst flooding for more than 40 years. The storm had arrived during the monsoon rain, and more rain fell in six hours than would typically fall in a month. The population – braced for high winds but not for inundation – was caught totally unprepared.

The issues of climate change and the need for greater preparedness and DRR were not new, but Ketsana drove home their importance. The Philippines Red Cross had been pushing for greater support for community-level action for some time, and the authorities had known they had to reform the country's approach to calamity, but fresh legislation had been bogged down in parliamentary debate. However, now the talking was over. Supported by the Red Cross and partner organizations, in 2010 a bill to create an act strengthening the Philippine DRR and management system made fast passage through the legislature.

The shortcoming of the former law was that it was reactive, not proactive. Catherine Marie Martin, director of disaster management services at the Philippines Red Cross, explains: "It provided calamity funds to which you had access only after disaster. You needed an official state of calamity before there was money for preparedness. The consequence was that far too little was done at community level."

The law did not stop the Red Cross and others from working – they acquired funding from elsewhere. However, it did limit their accomplishments. Catherine Martin explains: "We've worked on risk reduction since 1994, through integrated community disaster preparedness programmes. But until now, our main challenge has been the absence of specific local government funds to ensure sustainability."

More frustrating still, although the money for disaster management was there, it often went unused. All local governments allocated 5 per cent of their annual state income to the National Calamity Fund, but if no disaster occurred in the course of the year, the old law allowed them to dispense the money to staff, as bonuses and incentives.

Under the new act, unspent money remains in the fund, and the National Society and other actors have support to promote risk reduction and disaster preparedness before catastrophe happens. More communities can assess and address the hazards they face, map the dangers, analyse why they are vulnerable to them, and then develop action plans.

Meanwhile, preparedness, prevention and recovery are focus areas, climate change has entered the statute books, and the act paves the way for greatly improved early warning. Risk reduction is now mandatory in schools too, and the input of civil society is spelled out in the new legislation. Finally, NGOs have four seats in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council – an unmistakable opportunity for stronger grassroots advocacy.

# 8 Advocacy and cross-cutting issues

Disasters impact on a range of cross-cutting issues, including gender, livelihoods, food security and urbanization. It is vital that advocacy for DRR takes them into account. This chapter explains how this should be done, addressing each of these issues in turn.

## Gender

Women do more, and suffer more, than any other group in disasters. However, their experiences are not always recorded, as the *World Disasters Report 2007* explains:

Although it is widely accepted that women face violence and other forms of discrimination in emergency situations, statistics and data gathered during and after natural disaster rarely reflect these problems. For instance, when trying to analyse the interventions taken in response to Hurricane Mitch, a study conducted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean found that... “the majority of the agencies interviewed indicated that they do not consider gender explicitly and that they do not disaggregate their data according to sex or analyse their results from a gender perspective.” Sadly, these problems are also common all over the world.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that often, far more women die in disasters than men – even if it is they who provide the first local response. Reports from the Indian Ocean tsunami said that male survivors outnumbered females by three to one in Aceh,<sup>1</sup> and another study found that in Sri Lanka more than 65 per cent of the dead were women.<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for such a high death toll among women are associated with all manner of factors, ranging from traditional clothing slowing women down as they flee a disaster to taboos on women learning to swim. Often women are victims of their role as carers of children, older persons and disabled. While men run for their lives, many women flee only when they have rounded up those who are dependent on them. Many of the challenges that women face in disasters are cultural. Women often have little or no say in who has a right to what, and who should benefit from aid.

### Taking gender into account in DRR

Taking gender into account is essential in DRR, as in other areas of disaster management. Women have other capacities, needs and vulnerabilities to men. Men and women alike have important roles to play throughout the disaster management cycle. It is not possible to mitigate hazards, reduce social

1 Oxfam. *The tsunami's impact on women*. London, March 2005. Available at [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)

2 United Nations. *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*. New York, 2010.



vulnerabilities and build safe and resilient communities unless men and women have full and equal participation.

This view is firmly held across the Red Cross Red Crescent. Striving for equality across our organization and ensuring that there is no gender-based or other discrimination in our policies and practices is a long-standing tenet underlined forcibly in *Strategy 2020*. We need to advocate more strongly on this – internally and externally – and heighten the profile of our gender mainstreaming efforts.

As always, there is no better form of advocacy than the presentation of evidence gained first-hand from the field. Of course, it is wise to prepare your arguments for those who are reluctant to consider gender. For example, you might ask how effective an intervention can be if it fails to involve or meet the needs of half the population. Showing what women have achieved, and how their insights and inputs have strengthened the general community, is often the most persuasive strategy.

This is one reason why it is so important to document our success stories and share them within the Red Cross Red Crescent and with other stakeholders. These stories present a golden opportunity to support advocacy.

#### **Useful resources: Gender case studies**

*Gender Perspective: Working Together for Disaster Risk Reduction – Good Practices and Lessons Learned* (UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction 2007) is a collection of case studies that records diverse roles played by women from disaster-prone communities. Examples include constructing disaster-resistant housing, improving community access to services, upgrading livelihoods, increasing food security, collecting and disseminating information, and negotiating claims to rights and resources.

A single common thread binds the cases together. “Each practice is an effort to shift the identity of women from beneficiaries to that of key actors in building, shaping and sustaining resilient communities,” it explains. “It is evident that in undertaking these multiple roles on behalf of their communities, women are being empowered not only to strengthen community capacities to cope with disaster but also to build an active citizenry that addresses development priorities, which are inextricably linked to reducing vulnerabilities.”

The result is a series of insights into how DRR can be promoted by strengthening, scaling-up and empowering grassroots women to build resilient communities.

### Case study: Boosting women's lives through mothers' clubs

Since 1996, the Togolese Red Cross has brought women together through mothers' clubs aimed at improving their living conditions and providing a model for the community. These groups promote community health and hygiene by raising women's awareness and encouraging socio-economic development.

The clubs have had a significant impact on behavior within the villages. Changes have included an increased use of pre-soaked mosquito nets, and growing numbers of women visiting health centres, taking children to the doctor without asking their husbands' permission, and using vaccination record books.

The clubs also support start-ups of micro-companies that sell food, cereals and drinks, so that women can generate income to meet the family expenses. Monthly dues are paid into solidarity funds that provide health insurance.

Through the mothers' clubs a women's rural civil society has emerged, with a renewed emphasis on the importance of the female role in strengthening their communities.

## Livelihoods and food security

An East African Red Cross coordinator once described food aid in withering terms, saying: "All that food aid leaves behind are full latrines." In fewer than ten words, this powerful statement captured the essence of a critical theme of DRR – the need for sustainability in any intervention. It is challenging, thought provoking and memorable.

Of course, the coordinator was not proposing it as a campaign slogan. He was merely expressing an opinion, providing a journalist with an excellent quote around which a persuasive argument for DRR could be built. If you want a quick reminder of what is required for effective messaging, the sentence ticks a lot of right boxes – if not the one for decorum.

Indeed, some would argue that there is far too much decorum around the situation to which the coordinator was referring: the 400 million sub-Saharan Africans who are food insecure and need external assistance to meet minimum dietary requirements. The impact goes far beyond empty stomachs. To survive, families are often forced to divert their limited resources away from education and healthcare – a painful choice that undermines development on a macro-level.

In this situation, many communities live on the brink of crisis. They slip in and out of it periodically, and on occasion they collapse into emergency. To minimize future human suffering, we must do more than simply addressing short-term needs. Of course, this is not to say that funding to procure and distribute food should be redirected. Food aid saves lives. Whole communities depend on it – and without it, many more would die. Indeed, as needs are growing faster than funding, more support for food aid is necessary.

However, with better foresight, many could have been spared their present situation. So, one of our priorities must be to strengthen the livelihoods of those who are affected so they will be better able cope with the adverse conditions they will inevitably face tomorrow.

Livelihoods-based support can have short-term and longer-term impacts: addressing people's immediate needs while also building their resilience to future crisis. Activities that support a family's means of income, their coping

strategies and their natural resource base (including water, watershed, pasture and farmland), their productive assets and their basic services or infrastructure can have a big impact on food security.

This is one example of a brief for advocacy for which there are Red Cross Red Crescent success stories from Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific and the Middle East to back up the arguments. Are your own successes documented, and have you shared with others?

The following case study provides a powerful argument for linking the emergency phase to development in countries that are frequently affected by food insecurity.

### Case study: Supporting communities to develop food security

Sprawled between the vast expanses of the Sahara and the Sahelian plains, Mali is one of the world's poorest countries. In UNDP's *Human Development Index 2009* it was ranked at 178 out of 182 – fifth from bottom among countries of low human development. Only half the population has access to clean drinking water, and infant and maternal mortality rates are 120 per 1,000 and 580 per 100,000 live births, respectively.

In the north of the country, the Goundam Circle in the region of Timbutu is one of the country's poorest areas, with a hot, dry climate and a sparse population spread over 92,000 sq km. Once it was Mali's granary, blessed by the many lakes fed by the flooding Niger River. However, in the past three decades severe droughts and scant rainfall have changed all that. Water shortages and desertification have ruined the farming and put an end to many livelihoods dependent on raising animals. A conflict worsened the situation further.

Increasingly during the lean period (every May–September) cereal stocks would dwindle, and households had to cope with many difficulties, including a lack of watering points, poor medical infrastructure and unaffordable healthcare. Life in the Goundam Circle had become precarious.

Things came to a head in 2005, when a combination of seasonal and structural factors, aggravated by a locust invasion and a pronounced lack of rainfall, triggered an unprecedented crisis throughout the country. As part of its efforts to combat food insecurity, the government assigned the Mali Red Cross four especially vulnerable communes on the shores of the now almost-dry Lake Faguibine. For four months, backed by the Swiss Red Cross, the National Society provided food assistance to 43,000 people.

However, the Mali Red Cross decided that this was not enough. With a view to linking emergency and development, and reducing vulnerability to food insecurity, it brought stakeholders together in a strategic planning workshop. It persuaded representatives from the communities to attend too, along with the authorities' technical services such as health, farming, animal husbandry, hydraulic energy and administration. The aim was to bring about a lasting improvement in the living conditions of the four communes.

Through a participative approach based on a VCA, the workshop identified the people's top needs. These were:

- to improve community health by building awareness
- to improve access to water – a crucial problem for desert dwellers
- to replenish food stocks and make them more accessible through market gardening and the establishment of cereal banks, village cooperatives that buy, store and sell basic food grains

The priorities were developed into project activities that targeted the 40 most vulnerable villages, focusing on pregnant women, children between the ages of six months and five years, women heads of households, people living with HIV and AIDS, and older persons.

The communities themselves identified and recruited village volunteers to raise awareness of health and hygiene issues, including HIV and AIDS. Trained by the Red Cross and the state technical services, they learned how to inform and educate, make people aware of best practice, and bring about change of behavior. The National Society developed awareness-building tools specially designed for them.

The projects improved water sources by rehabilitating existing wells and sinking new ones, providing supplies for human consumption, for animals, and for small-scale agriculture. To replenish food supplies, the Red Cross focused on establishing women's market gardening groups and cereal banks. As well as contributing to food and nutritional security, the gardens produce income that boosts support for the household while also helping to empower women.

The intervention has not been without difficulties, but overcoming them has increased Red Cross knowledge. Ultimately, by improving the availability, accessibility and consumption of their own produce, the inhabitants of Goundam have substantially strengthened their food security. Today, the National Society is advocating for the projects to be duplicated elsewhere.

## Urbanization

Another cross-cutting issue is that of urbanization. Some 2.57 billion urban dwellers living in low and middle-income nations are exposed to unacceptable levels of risk fuelled by rapid urbanization, poor local governance, population growth, poor health services and, in many instances, the rising tide of urban violence. Much of this urban population is also particularly exposed to risks related to climate change.

The stark warning is contained in the IFRC's *World Disasters Report 2010*. For the first time in human history, more than half the planet's population now lives in cities and towns, more people than ever before live in slums, and the signs of our vulnerability to urban risk are everywhere.

A key finding in 2010 is that between one-third and half of the population of most cities in low and middle-income nations live in informal settlements. Local authorities commonly refuse to extend to these communities the necessary infrastructure and essential services to reduce disaster risk.

The report urges governments and NGOs to address the urban risk divide that exists between cities that are well-governed and well-resourced and those that are not: those struggling with a lack of means, knowledge and will to ensure a well-functioning urban environment.

The main reason that so many people are affected by urban disasters is that a billion people live in poor-quality homes on dangerous sites with no hazard-reducing infrastructure and no services. In any given year, more than 50,000 people may die as a result of earthquakes, and 100 million can be affected by floods. Of these, the worst affected are often vulnerable city dwellers.

The report criticizes existing measures of risk and vulnerability. It argues that the impact of disaster losses on slum dwellers is undervalued, with preference given to measuring the impact on large economies and major infrastructure, where loss of life may be minimal but economic damage is considerable.

One line from the report provides the thought-provoking slogan: “A disaster-prone future can be avoided. Trend is not destiny.”

### **Useful resources: The World Disasters Report**

Published annually since 1993, the *World Disasters Report* brings together the latest trends, facts and analysis of contemporary crises, and provides the Red Cross Red Crescent with a much-respected launching pad for advocacy. The report itself is accompanied by a communications and media pack of key messages, press releases, an opinion piece and video to support National Society advocacy.

The report is a valuable tool to use when planning Red Cross Red Crescent advocacy. Its annual launch is a major event, covered widely by national and international media. Alongside World Red Cross Red Crescent Day and the International Day for Disaster Reduction, it should be underlined on your calendar.

As well as a global launch, there are zonal, regional and national events. National Societies sometimes prepare their own launch or tie into a wider one, and the nature of the report allows launches to be spread beyond the day of the global event itself. In 2010, more than 100 events were organized by National Societies and the IFRC around the world.

The secret of using the report is to link it into a relevant local issue. The report addresses such a wealth of material that there is a wide choice of topics. Even if your country does not feature in the report, some of the topics it raises will relate to challenges you face. You can then develop your own materials that place local issues in the spotlight, and link them to the broader focus of a report. Examples of recent themes include urban risk in 2010, ‘early warning, early action’ in 2009, HIV and AIDS in 2008, discrimination in disasters in 2007, neglected crises in 2006. If you need support, the IFRC can help.

The report can also be used for follow-up seminars, workshops and discussion groups involving other stakeholders. It has often been a useful tool for bringing people together, starting dialogue and developing contacts with national and local authorities, knowledge centres, universities, and risk-reduction practitioners.

## Advocacy and climate change



Climate change is a political issue because governments need to adopt tough decisions with regard to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which are the cause of human induced global warming. Strategy 2020 explicitly recognises the importance for National Societies to focus on mitigation and environmental degradation (including climate change adaptation), it is therefore important that we call on all governments to address this issue.

Furthermore, the Red Cross Red Crescent has been actively involved in developing the climate change adaptation agenda to deal with the effects of climate change. Adaptation is closely linked to humanitarian work and aligned closely DRR, community-based disaster preparedness, food security and livelihoods. Advocacy on climate change is also a chance to promote our principles and values among a much wider audience.

Communicating on climate change is crucial for DRR. No matter what international steps are taken to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and no matter how successful they are future climate change is irreversible. We are already experiencing increased climate variability, in particular with regard to increased intensity and frequency of hydro-meteorological or climate-related events such as droughts and floods. This is bound to continue for the coming few decades.

From the Red Cross Red Crescent perspective, there are three important messages that need to be conveyed:

- The risk of climate-related disasters is increasing.
- Address increased vulnerability and heightened new patterns of marginalization, impoverishment and insecurity.
- We can prepare.

At the 2010 UN Conference of the Parties on climate change (COP 17) that was held in Cancun, Mexico, the IFRC presented the following arguments:

- Climate change is increasing disaster risk for millions of the world's most vulnerable people. It is not a future threat, but a key driver of disasters now. With the increasing frequency and intensity of floods, storms and droughts, the average number of people affected by climate-related natural disasters is estimated at 217 million per year. Scientific evidence indicates that this trend will continue at an accelerated pace. Those suffering most from this growing uncertainty are the poorest and most vulnerable: those who lack the resources to adapt to, or cope with, the rapidly changing climate patterns, and thus stand to lose what little socio-economic development they have achieved. Strengthening resilience and preparedness is the first line of defense, and enhanced action on adaptation is needed to help avert or reduce the worst humanitarian consequences.

- Local action is the key to adaptation. If adaptation to climate change is to be efficient, humanitarian organizations must focus on supporting local community strategies. Red Cross Red Crescent data clearly indicates that most disasters are small and confined to relatively small geographic areas. With their outreach and network at grassroots level, our National Societies are already working with communities to address this challenge.
- We have solutions – and the ability to implement them. Evidence suggests that adaptation efforts need to be linked to broader development progress. Climate change is an additional strain that exacerbates other risk factors affecting development progress, such as environmental degradation, urbanization, and access to water and sanitation. Adaptation needs to build on solutions that have already been developed to address these challenges. For example, cyclone preparedness programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique have already saved hundreds of thousands of lives. These can be expanded to address the increased risk of heavy storms and floods.

### Linking climate change adaptation to risk reduction

Adaptation to climate change does not alter the nature of risk-reduction activities. Whether the measures taken are designed to reduce the consequences of hydro-meteorological disasters or geophysical ones is immaterial. Action to contain an older menace can help contain new or increasing ones for which extreme weather or warming is responsible. We do not need new programmes: we need climate change to be mainstreamed into disaster management, community risk reduction, community preparedness, food security and livelihoods, health and care, and other weather-sensitive areas of work, so that the new threats can be dealt with and the unpredictable prepared for.

Advocacy can contribute to this process. When you speak for climate change adaptation, you often speak for DRR – and vice versa. However, climate change action also requires specific advocacy tools, and individuals may need to make separate approaches to different parts of government. So, although climate change adaptation has to be part of overall risk reduction, and one is entwined in the other, one might describe their relationship as ‘living apart, together.’

The reason that they may need to be treated differently is that at every level, DRR and climate change adaptation are housed in different policy frameworks, and are subject to different funding mechanisms. At the global level, climate change adaptation is anchored in the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This international treaty, to which 192 countries are party, was agreed at a climate summit Copenhagen in 2009 to set general goals and rules for tackling climate change. The DRR agenda, in contrast, stems from the HFA. It should be noted that at the national level the mandate often resides with the environmental focal point/department, which is not a traditional Red Cross Red Crescent stakeholder. Thus, increasing the scope and breadth of target audiences to be reached.

Climate change adaptation programmes and policies have already been set in motion in many developing countries, often supported by UN agencies, bilateral donors or the World Bank. One of the few achievements of the Copenhagen climate summit was a commitment by industrialized nations to support developing countries during 2010–2012, with 26.7 billion Swiss francs (30 billion US dollars/21.8 billion Euros) to be divided between mitigation and adaptation. By 2020, 89 billion Swiss francs (100 billion US dollars/72.6 billion Euros) should be mobilized annually. Additionally, COP 16 in Cancun saw the adoption of the



Cancun agreement, an ambitious work programme for the next 1-2 years, and the role of the UNFCCC was strengthened again. Notably, 'fast start finance' commitments of 26.4 billion Swiss francs (30 billion US dollars/21.7 billion Euros), to be spent from 2010-2012, were reconfirmed by developed countries to finance both adaptation and mitigation in developing countries. Furthermore, the establishment of the Climate Green Fund is expected to mobilize by 2020 88.3 billion Swiss francs (100 billion US dollars /72.5 billion Euros) annually for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries.

Will the funds be spent justly? Will sufficient funding benefit the most vulnerable people – those who have contributed least to the problem but will suffer most from it? Will sufficient resources be allocated to bolstering the resilience of those communities most at risk? On this issue, in particular, the Red Cross Red Crescent must speak out.

Will sufficient resources be allocated to bolstering the resilience of communities most at risk? The Red Cross Red Crescent must speak out.

### Working in partnership

When it comes to climate change, partnership work is more important than ever. As National Societies around the world are increasingly mainstreaming climate change into their programmes, they have sought dialogue with governments, local authorities, meteorological offices, universities and other centres of knowledge, NGOs and civil society. By reaching out to others, they have extended their networks, identified gaps between knowledge and community action, and begun to contribute to the implementation of national adaptation policies.

#### Useful resources: The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre

Establishing the first steps of a dialogue on climate change policy with experts or governments can be challenging. In response to requests from National Societies and IFRC staff worldwide, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre has compiled a range of materials on how to go about this.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre was established in 2002. It is designed to help the Movement and others to understand and address the humanitarian consequences of climate change. A valuable tool produced by the centre is the *Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Guide* – a publication that synthesizes the experiences of more than 30 National Societies.

The guide begins with the basics about climate change: the scientific consensus, the humanitarian consequences, and the general implications for the Red Cross Red Crescent. This is followed by six thematic modules: getting started, dialogues, communications, disaster management, community risk reduction, and health and care. Each module begins with a background section citing real-life Red Cross Red Crescent experiences and perspectives, followed by a 'how-to' section with specific step-by-step guidance.



# The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** / The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** / It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** / In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** / The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** / It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** / There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** / The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



International Federation  
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