



## ISSUE BRIEF

### **Inclusive Disaster Risk Management – Governments, Communities and Groups Acting Together**

#### **High level multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue**

#### **I. Stock taking**

It is widely acknowledged that certain groups, including but not limited to the poor, children and youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and ethnic minorities, are disproportionately impacted by disasters. Women, who constitute half of humanity are also disproportionately affected by disasters. For example, in North Aceh 77% of deaths in the 2004 Indonesian Tsunami were female.<sup>1</sup> After Cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh in 1991, 63% of deaths were children under the age of 10.<sup>2</sup> When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans in 2005, more than 70% of those who died were aged over 60, even though this age group comprised only 15% of the local population<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, 56% of those who died during the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake were people aged 65 years and over.<sup>4</sup>

These groups have context specific and differentiated needs before, during and after a disaster, which are not taken into consideration when communities, cities and nations plan for disasters. For example, a 2013 UN survey<sup>5</sup> of over 5000 persons living with disabilities from 126 countries found that only 20% reported that they could evacuate immediately without difficulty in the event of a sudden disaster, while the remainder could only do so with a degree of difficulty. The disproportionate impact of disasters on these groups is due to a range of factors including exclusion from decision-making processes, often poor living conditions, inadequate infrastructure, income inequality or undiversified sources of income, and limited access to basic services, especially education and information.

At the same time, these individuals and groups have unique knowledge and capacities to approach the wide range of interconnected risks in the complex contexts they are situated in. They are often the first and only responders to the everyday risks they face, and have their own existing sources of resilience developed through extensive learning from real life experiences on the ground.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxfam International (2005) 'The tsunamis' impact on women'. Oxfam briefing note. Oxford: Oxfam GB; Lovell, E. and le Masson, V. (2014) Equity and Inclusion in disaster risk reduction: building resilience for all. London: Overseas Development Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Penrose, A. and Takaki, M. (2006) 'Children's rights in emergencies and disasters'. The Lancet. 367: 698-699; Lovell, E. and le Masson, V. (2014) Equity and Inclusion in disaster risk reduction: building resilience for all. London: Overseas Development Institute.

<sup>3</sup> [www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/disaster\\_planning\\_goal.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/disaster_planning_goal.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> HelpAge International (2013) Displacement and older people: the case of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/archive/35032>

For disaster risk management to be appropriate and effective for society at large, these differentiated needs must be taken into account and addressed, and the knowledge, talents and capacities of *all* stakeholders must be harnessed. This requires an **inclusive approach** to disaster risk management (DRM), characterised by policies, programmes and partnerships that:

- a) provide formal space to bring perspectives and priorities of all stakeholders, in particular persons and groups subject to more risk, into public debate and decision making;
- b) engage and foster leadership of all actors, particularly those subject to more risk, at all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring of DRM.

The need for inclusive DRM has emerged as an important lesson from the implementation of both the *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for A Safer World* and the *Hyogo Framework For Action (HFA)*. However, international, national and even local DRM initiatives have not always succeeded in providing the platforms for all segments of civil society to provide a voice or to engage.

But even as a systematic shift towards inclusive DRM has not been observed, some successful examples have emerged in various parts of the world that can be reflected on and scaled up where appropriate. For instance, in Urakawa Town, North East Japan, the local government worked with community members and in particular those individuals with psychosocial disabilities to design best-case scenarios for planning disaster response. This resulted in an effective response during the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in 2011, which saw the group of residents with psychosocial disabilities evacuated first thanks to the training they had received as part of their social skill development program and the multimedia training manuals that were designed to be accessible by all in the community.

However, such initiatives are few in number and are rarely scaled up. Representation and engagement of groups subject to more risk within DRM decision making, planning and implementation and monitoring has yet to be evenly realized. Further, limited progress towards realizing the HFA Priority for Action 4, 'Reduce underlying risk factors,' highlights that the underlying inequalities that lead to the exclusion of these groups in the first place, continue to exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

## **II. Overview**

One of the fundamental pillars of the HFA has been the call for collaborative action among various stakeholders – that is, all sections of society working together with governments to build resilience. In the last ten years, deliberations on inclusion have shifted from perceiving persons and groups subject to increased risk as passive victims towards recognizing them as proactive participants who can and must contribute alongside governments and other stakeholders in all aspects of planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of DRR and DRM.

When those subject to more risk have their say and the opportunity to work in partnership with others, resilience can be built in more long-lasting and effective ways. For example:

- In Ecuador, the Technical Secretariat for Disabilities of the Vice-presidency has developed an Inclusive Risk Management Strategy that that is being implemented.

The strategy contemplates the need to give higher visibility to persons with disabilities, include their needs in emergency preparedness plans, develop inclusive family emergency plans, and tools for emergency assistance for persons with disabilities. In addition, geographically referenced information is available at the country level surrounding each individual with disabilities and disaggregated by gender. This system allows for rapid identification of people with disabilities that may be in need of assistance during an emergency situation.<sup>6</sup>

- In Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, groups of teachers, community leaders, local governments, academia and NGOs have worked together to empower school girls to act as “leaders and resource persons” in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. School girls have received training at local universities in how to test the quality of water supplies, and have gone on to test for contamination in flood-prone slum areas in order to report back to community members. Further, the girls have been members of Community Disaster Committees and lead disaster preparedness groups in their schools to share information with their peers. This has led to increased awareness of locally relevant issues surrounding disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and better integration of vulnerable and marginalized populations, especially adolescent girls, into local and national disaster risk management frameworks.<sup>7</sup>
- In Indonesia, some local governments are currently linking with Yakkum Emergency Unit to utilise local level participatory risk profiling methodology, Frontline<sup>8</sup>, to better understand community risk. But using the outcomes of this participatory process, they are harnessing the everyday knowledge of entire communities to inform the development of more appropriate plans and projects at different scales.
- The Community Resilience Fund (CRF), currently operational in 12 countries, has emerged as a mechanism for channelling resources to grassroots organizations, enabling them to analyse risks, prioritize actions and demonstrate resilience practices in collaboration with local governments. The use of CRF has led to the building of capacities of grassroots women’s organizations in urban and rural areas and collaborations with government institutions<sup>9</sup> to access local budgets and technical assistance. Through the CRF, grassroots organizations are contributing and leading the enhancement of food security, sustainable agriculture, and conservation of natural resources and upgrading of housing and infrastructure, whilst claiming institutional recognition as leaders.<sup>10</sup>
- In Australia, the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience highlights the benefits of a cross-sectoral approach to disaster resilience that engages stakeholders across government, communities, business and the non-profit sphere. The Attorney-General’s Department is working to enhance inclusive community engagement in particular through its Resilient Communities Program. Entering its fourth year, the Program has facilitated research and knowledge sharing between the government and

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.setedis.gob.ec/?cat=7&scat=42&desc=gesti%C3%B3n-inclusiva-del-riesgo>

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see <http://acds.co.za/>

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see [www.gndr.org](http://www.gndr.org)

<sup>9</sup> Government institutions partnering with grassroots organizations include municipalities, local governments, national and provincial ministries for agriculture, and government research and training institutions.

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see [www.huairou.org](http://www.huairou.org)

various culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to foster understanding and coordination in a disaster resilience context. In conjunction with the Program, the Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI) of the Department coordinated an open national email network to share relevant learning on social aspects of disaster resilience. In 2012, for instance, AEMI consulted with Pacific Islander and Bhutanese communities in Australia to better understand the inherent strengths that undergird their disaster resilience capability and found that a strengths-based engagement approach that harnessed cultural social capital and inclusive local practice was essential to activating these strengths. AEMI commissioned consultations in 2011 among young people from refugee and migrants backgrounds. The Attorney-General's Department has published the award-winning Pictorial Community Safety Action Guides to assist communities to understand and prepare for a range of risks associated with natural hazards and the first ever special edition of the Australian Journal of Emergency Management focused on the topic of Gender in Disaster<sup>11</sup>.

More and more focus on resilience has led to increased initiatives that aim to address the underlying drivers of risk, including the inequalities that lead to the exacerbated vulnerabilities of particular groups. This has been a positive step towards more inclusive DRM initiatives.

Nevertheless, the HFA progress review and self-assessments by countries reveal that while there is an increasing proportion of countries stating a full acknowledgement of an inclusive approach, application is not fully implemented across policy and practice. During 2007-2013, only 48% of country reports indicate significant and on-going reliance on a DRR approach that effectively strengthens community engagement and their capacities<sup>12</sup>. A number of factors could be holding back inclusive DRM:

- The knowledge and capacities of groups subject to more risk are not well acknowledged. By the same token, the threats of not building upon these knowledge and capacities are not well acknowledged.
- Existing coordination mechanisms do not facilitate local level actors and information inputting into national decision making.
- A lack of readily available disaggregated data at the local level has limited how progress can be accounted for.
- Institutional incentives for engaging those groups subject to more risk do not exist for the most part.
- Where good practices are underway, marginalized groups do not have access to resources to take these to scale.

The Third UN World Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai will provide an opportunity for implementers to share good practices, which have been scaled up or have the potential to be scaled up, and emerging learning on collaborative approaches to risk management that facilitate the participation of all stakeholders, particularly those subject to more risk. This will lead to:

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<sup>11</sup> The guides and publication are available at [www.em.gov.au](http://www.em.gov.au) under the Community Awareness Publications tab

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.unisdr.org/files/32916\\_implementationofthehyogoframeworkfo.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/32916_implementationofthehyogoframeworkfo.pdf)

- Recognition of the differentiated impact of disasters on particular groups and acknowledgment of the risks associated with not addressing these.
- Acknowledgment of the unique and complimentary added value of all stakeholders, particularly those subject to more risk, in effective DRM and the benefits of building on these.
- Identification of critical success factors for participatory, equitable and inclusive DRM at all levels in the implementation of the Post-2015 DRR Framework
- Promotion of the adoption of voluntary stakeholder commitments towards inclusive DRM.

## I. Way forward

The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction is well-placed to provide a revitalised policy framework for inclusive DRM. A number of enabling factors would strengthen the implementation of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction vis-à-vis inclusion:

- **Accountability and transparency:** It will be necessary to institutionalise methods to ensure governments, both national and local, are held accountable for inclusive design and implementation of DRM. This should include the delineation of roles and responsibilities for all actors and an accompanying set of minimum standards for performance, and redress mechanisms if these are not met. Critically, local level participatory monitoring of progress that disaggregates data across those groups subject to more risk is also needed to ensure inclusive DRM.
- **Partnerships and institutional arrangements which recognize capacities and contributions of at-risk groups:** Innovative institutional arrangements are necessary to allow for multi-stakeholder, inclusive partnerships. This should entail the development and implementation by donors of an inclusivity marker for DRM programmes and projects that works to accurately measure the inclusivity of DRM political space at different levels<sup>13</sup>. It should also include the strengthening of local level DRR platforms that engage actors from all sectors as partners.
- **Capacity development:** National and local level capacity development is essential to achieve this vision. This should include trainings of local preparedness and response actors on the needs of those subject to more risk. Trainers should include representatives of at-risk groups and practical trainings within community settings for translation of knowledge into practical skills. Leadership capacity development is also needed to help empower community actors to contribute in multi-stakeholder DRR platforms.
- **Understanding Risk:** Use of participatory local level risk profiling methodologies and integrated context analyses that differentiate data across those groups subject to more risk will be essential to better analyse and understand that contexts that different groups experience and hence build the basis for effective planning, design and programming.
- **Learning:** Documenting good practices and facilitating sharing or transfer of good practices, will be critical for rapidly scaling up existing knowledge and good practice among all actors, including those groups subject to more risk.

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<sup>13</sup> This could draw on and compliment the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) Resilience Marker (<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience>) and Gender-Age Marker (<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/what/humanitarian-aid/policy-guidelines>)

- **Funding mechanisms:** It will be essential to create funding mechanisms for communities to access resources for them to lead DRM initiatives. This should include reaching a global agreement and creating mechanisms for a target percentage of DRR funds to be allocated for locally led community action and an accompanying nationally set target percentage of local authority budget designated for community led projects.