



# CARE Brief on the Post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

As a leading humanitarian organization CARE works in almost 90 countries around the world, in the past year, supporting almost 900 poverty-fighting development and humanitarian aid projects to reach over 70 million people in 2014.

CARE's experience has shown that vulnerability varies not only between countries, but also within countries, communities and even households. The poorest and most marginalized groups are often the ones most severely impacted by disasters and yet often have limited resources and insufficient means to escape poverty and deal with risks. Women and girls are particularly marginalized and their vulnerability to natural hazards is increased by gender inequalities.

Disaster Risk Reduction should empower people -in particular women and girls- and their communities, to address the underlying drivers of risks and inequalities. The inequitable distribution of rights, resources and power constrains women and girls and their communities in their ability to deal with disaster and to strengthen their resilience.

In this brief CARE highlights key messages in relation to the post-2015 framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, discussed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN World Conference on DRR at Sendai (Japan) from March 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 2015.

## Call for action

CARE calls upon all authorities, private sector actors, academia, civil society, citizens and other stakeholders, to cooperate, join forces and break down silos to jointly invest in integrated risk reduction, adaptation, and resilience programmes. In our experience, critical elements for impactful Disaster Risk Reduction are:

- Gender equality
- Climate change
- Livelihood Resilience

Key approaches to successful Disaster Risk Reduction under the post-2015 DRR framework are:

- Putting communities at the centre
- Integrating disciplines
- Multi-stakeholder approaches and good governance
- Alignment of post-2015 processes

All stakeholders must **commit and hold themselves and each other accountable** to the post 2015 framework on disaster risk reduction by defining clear monitoring indicators and transparency mechanisms. This requires concrete targets, monitoring the collection of data (disaggregated by gender and age), and focussed attention to the points highlighted, in order to reduce risks for all groups, including women and girls.

Within overall aid financing over 20 years, the \$ 13.5 billion spent on DRR accounts for just 0.4% of the total amount spent. Of this amount, most went to few middle income countries, meaning that most countries received very little international support. **Governments and donors must allocate funds towards disaster risk reduction and**

**climate change adaptation in both humanitarian and development sectors, at a local level (district, municipal level) and to the most-at risk populations.** Extensive risk events (small scale, highly frequent and localized slow onset events such as flash floods, fires, landslides) are often underestimated and under-reported but they nevertheless undermine local development and need to be financed to support countries affected. Disaster risk reduction is pre-requisite for resilience building and safety of the social, economic infrastructure and other forms of security. More equitable financing is not only a good investment, but also just.

## Critical elements of impactful DRR

### Gender equality |

Women, girls and boys are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster (Kristina Peterson, 2007). **The differential capacities and roles of men, women, boys and girls have a critical impact on vulnerability** to disasters, roles in disaster risk reduction, and needs in response. Therefore, meaningful inclusion and involvement of women is identified as critical to effectively managing disaster risk.

For humanitarian assistance (including preparedness, response, rehabilitation and recovery) to meet the needs of all vulnerable groups in society, **women and girls must be prioritized.** Women leadership must be promoted and women and girls must be targeted and guaranteed a role in decision-making processes for both development and humanitarian agendas, because gender inequality is a fundamental driver of poverty and vulnerability. As risks increase due to climate change, the vulnerability of people who are already marginalised due to inequalities and the denial of their rights increases further. For example, as the majority of the female labour force in developing countries works in food production, the consequences of adverse impacts of climate change, such as loss of harvests or food price increases due to weather disasters, hit women particularly hard. The fact that women often don't own land, or poorer quality land and only receive a small share of agricultural services, only serves to exacerbate the situation further. Gender inequality is a root cause of poverty. Climate change, in turn, is making poverty worse. This means that the capacities to deal with disaster risk, for many women and girls living in poverty, are threatened by a double injustice; climate change and gender inequality.

This must be addressed if we want to reduce risk at the household and community level. Analysis of the impact of gender on underlying causes of disaster risk is an essential element in risk analysis. **Data must always be disaggregated by sex and age,** interventions must be designed assessing gender considerations and gender sensitivity, and specific indicators on gender inequality reduction should be integrated in all DRR actions, including in government and donor programmes. Tools to do this are available, amongst others those developed and used by CARE.

### Climate Change |

Climate change has **massive impacts on the ability of people and societies to reduce disaster risk.** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report clearly detected a high additional risk related to extreme events due to climate change as a consequence of global average temperature increase. Climate Change and variability prolongs existing and creates new poverty traps, the latter particularly in urban areas and emerging hotspots of hunger, as food production is affected. Climate change and environmental degradation also increases the displacement of people. All of these aspects have clear relevance to the capacities and constraints for reducing disaster risks.

Climate information is key to understanding climate as a major influence on lives, livelihoods, resources, ecosystems and development. It provides a way of analysing the nature and scale of impacts due to past and current climate and the potential future impacts as the climate continues to vary and change. Actors can then make informed and appropriate decisions and plans to deal with climate-related impacts through adaptation,

risk reduction and development actions. This should be constantly integrated in DRR planning and linked to early warning system to limit impacts.

In order to achieve a comprehensive risk management approach the DRR framework needs to stress the need to act on the full spectrum of intervention from prevention and preparedness, to addressing the unavoidable loss and damage needs and limiting global warming. While CARE fully acknowledges the primary role of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), continued failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially will call into question the future DRR Framework and most likely undermine any post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Humanitarian actors must join their voice to the movement to raise public awareness and political recognition of this imperative. For an efficient DRR strategy CARE urges the international community to reduce emissions drastically, since the majority of disasters have been climate related over the past decades. There is a responsibility for those who have emitted most to assist those people, communities and countries less responsible, including through the provision of additional and scaled-up finance.

### Livelihood Resilience |

It is widely recognised that individuals, households and communities that can rely on **strong, safe, resilient and secure livelihoods** are better able to cope with disasters by preventing their occurrence, minimising their impact, and quickly recovering from their effects. It should be recognized that the poor often rely on agriculture and local production to meet **food security** needs. Communities often have limited options and are forced to use coping strategies that contribute to environmental degradation. In the rural areas where most of the world's hungry people live, women have the challenge to produce most of the food consumed locally, while 80% of this production relies on rain fed agriculture. Food production will be affected to significant degrees by climate change and variability in some parts of the developing world, thus compromising food and nutrition security for already vulnerable populations.

CARE believes that building resilient livelihoods is a critical component that needs to be included in future Disaster Risk Reduction efforts, particularly in the face of increasing incidence of drought due to climate change. Efforts that strengthen livelihoods, both pre- and post-disaster, have been demonstrated as **complementary to disaster risk reduction efforts such as diversification, saving schemes, and insurance**. Building resilient livelihoods is not only a moral imperative, but also an economic and environmental one: it protects development investments and reduces the need for additional (external) humanitarian assistance.

## Approaches towards successful DRR

### Communities at the centre |

CARE welcomes the recognition of the **indispensable role of communities**. Governments are responsible for disaster risk reduction, e.g. by including DRR into development plans or providing a first entry point for reporting and emergency response. However, in Least Developed Countries and so-called fragile states, where (local) governance is often weak, but also in middle income countries where many millions still live in poverty, in practice communities are the first to act and play a key role in preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Communities are often well aware of potential risks they are facing. Participatory community based response to large scale disasters such as the 2013 Haiyan typhoon in the Philippines, proved that when local knowledge and aspirations are integrated in effective risk management plans of which the community itself is in charge, this greatly improves risk reduction, prevention and preparedness. CARE promotes collaboration between different local stakeholders, ensuring communities have a clear role and are at the core of the analysis, in decision making processes, implementation and monitoring of disaster management measures, supported by civil society organizations and in cooperation with local government.

Roles and responsibilities for communities in collaborative models, whilst guaranteeing an inclusive process, and taking into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of marginalized groups such as women, children, persons with a disability, elderly, indigenous, migrants and displaced people, should be clearly articulated in the 'Post 2015 framework for DRR'.

### **Integrating disciplines: ecosystems and climate |**

CARE welcomes an **integrated approach** pursued in the goal formulated for the post-2015 framework for DRR, by aiming at economic, social, cultural and environmental measures. The recognition of the relationship between disaster risk, climate change and ecosystems is essential. The degradation of ecosystems is a major driver of risks, while at the same time, **healthy ecosystems are recognized as an important asset to reduce risks through their regulating or buffer function**. Upstream practice will have an effect on the disaster risk downstream in a watershed, and as such wider geographical scales need to be considered. Climate change exacerbates disaster risk. Climate smart risk reduction allows more focus on both past, present and future risks (across timescales), including the opportunity to finance increased levels of risk reduction in anticipation of disasters, thereby bridging the continuum of disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response. There is a need to dovetail current efforts on disaster risk reduction with the growing field of adaptation practices. Similarly, adaptation practitioners have much to learn from the existing experience in disaster risk reduction in many countries of the world.

Risk assessments at various levels, and with attention for different groups and risk drivers are an important first step of good practice. Different perspectives, timescales and geographical scales need to be better embedded to **increase understanding of the changing risks, underlying risk drivers, and the wider landscapes**. Climate and ecosystem sensitive assessment tools are available, including those developed by and used within CARE enabling an integrated approach.

### **Multi-stakeholder cooperation and good governance |**

The post-2015 framework on DRR highlights that cooperation between government and all relevant stakeholders, such as civil society, communities, businesses, academia and media, is needed to build resilience to disasters. As disaster risk involves many actors who can be part of the creation as well as reduction of disaster risk, hence **cooperation and ownership of the agenda amongst relevant stakeholders** is necessary to strengthen resilience. Active support for capacity building, awareness raising and accountability on DRR of communities and authorities are critical elements of the process in which civil society plays a key role. Involvement of relevant actors and communities in decision-making processes should be ensured through **inclusive participatory mechanisms and the promotion of a right-based approach**. Strong local structures, good governance and enhancement of local authorities' capacities are fundamental to improve planning and ensure local political commitment and effective implementation of policy frameworks. The management of conflicts and disputes (including over land and water) is crucial in this. Also, accountability and transparency of authorities towards the public, including through a complaints mechanism, is essential.

The **cooperation of different authorities and disciplines** with a role in DRR needs to be emphasised and promoted, such as disaster management, natural resource management, climate change adaptation, agriculture, infrastructure and development planning, to join forces, break down the silos in operation, and contribute to aid effectiveness. Experience also shows the importance of the involvement of the private sector with technology like telecommunication in the early warning and others can have better results for DRR. They have the resources and the efficient delivery system that can be brought into the folds of a national response to disasters in countries, and in building back better.

## Alignment of post-2015 processes |

A critical challenge in the *Hyogo Framework for Action* was that DRR was seen as a ‘humanitarian’ issue only, rather than a development issue. CARE notes with appreciation the recognition of the need to incorporate disaster risk assessment in development planning. We urge for continued efforts to ensure DRR in **Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development**, working across divisions in funding streams. The emphasis on **mainstreaming DRR** in development assistance programmes, including poverty reduction, natural resource management, urban development and adaptation to climate change is crucial.

CARE welcomes the reference to the concurrent post-2015 processes including the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) and the negotiations towards a new **climate agreement**. Coherence between these processes will be critical to ensure they do not continue to operate in silos. The emerging post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 DRR Framework for Action and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP21) Paris agreement, as well as the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Financing for Development should jointly address the root causes of vulnerability by investing in integrated risk reduction, adaptation, and resilience programmes. Future post-2015 frameworks must bridge development, disaster risk reduction and climate change policy.

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