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## Partners Multi Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS)

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## Integrating DRR into MAPS Partners' Programming

2008 Thematic Research Study

With Case Study from

Trócaire Central America

Final Report  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pg.
<b>DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY</b>	iii
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b>	iv
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	v
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	1
1.1 <i>The MAPS 2008 Thematic Study</i>	1
1.2 <i>Introduction to DRR</i>	3
<b>2. MAPS PARTNERS' EXPERIENCE IN INSTITUTIONALISING DRR</b>	5
2.1 <i>Why are MAPS Partners looking at DRR?</i>	5
2.2 <i>Enabling Factors for Disaster Risk Reduction</i>	5
2.3 <i>Strategies for introducing DRR at Programme Level</i>	6
2.4 <i>Strategies for introducing DRR at Institutional Level</i>	7
2.5 <i>Constraints and challenges</i>	8
<b>3. DRR IN CENTRAL AMERICA</b>	10
3.1 <i>Contextual Background</i>	10
3.2 <i>Trócaire's approach to DRR in Central America</i>	12
<b>4. KEY LEARNING FROM THE FIELD TRIP</b>	17
4.1 <i>The Importance of Analysis</i>	17
4.2 <i>The Usefulness of Participatory Approaches</i>	19
4.3 <i>DRR Links Relief, Recovery and Development Work</i>	20
4.4 <i>The Importance of Building Local Institutional Capacity</i>	23
4.5 <i>The Importance of Advocacy</i>	23
<b>5. LESSONS-LEARNED FROM THE MAPS 2008 THEMATIC STUDY PROCESS</b>	25
5.1 <i>The MAPS Thematic Study Process in Ireland</i>	25
5.2 <i>The MAPS Thematic Study Process during the Field Visit</i>	26
5.3 <i>The MAPS Thematic Study Process: Recommendations for Carrying the Process Forward</i>	27

<b>APPENDIX 1 MAPS PARTNERS ORGANISATIONAL APPROACHES TO DRR</b>	29
<i>CHRISTIAN AID IRELAND</i>	30
<i>CONCERN WORLDWIDE</i>	33
<i>GOAL</i>	36
<i>IRISH AID</i>	38
<i>SELF HELP AFRICA (SHA)</i>	41
<i>TROCAIRE</i>	45

## DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

**Disaster Risk Reduction**<sup>2</sup> is the process of minimising the risk of disaster for a given society/group through taking action to minimise their vulnerability to, and maximising their capacity to cope with, a man-made or natural hazard.

**Disaster** is a serious disruption of the functioning of a society causing human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope without external assistance.

**Hazard** is an extreme event, natural or man-made, with a destructive potential to social and economic assets and human lives. These may be "natural" (geological, hydro meteorological and biological) or "man-made" (conflict, environmental degradation and technological) hazards.

**Vulnerability** is a condition determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes which increases the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards.

**Risk** is the product of hazard and vulnerability; measured in terms of the damage expected as a result of the exposure of vulnerable people to a hazard.

**Capacity** is the combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organisation that can reduce the level of risk, or the effects of a disaster.

The interrelationship between these definitions is often defined as:

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability/Capacity}$$

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Trócaire (2008) *Disaster Risk Reduction: Learning for Livelihoods Series No.1* p.9

<sup>2</sup> Trócaire (2008) *Disaster Risk Reduction: Learning for Livelihoods Series No.1*

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASONOG	Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (Honduran NGO)
CEPREDENAC	Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central Coordinating Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America
COACOV	Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Orfilia Vásquez Orfilia Vásquez Savings and Credit Cooperative (Nicaraguan NGO)
COPECO	Comisión Permanente de Contingencias Permanent Commission for Contingencies in Honduras
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FSAR	Fundación San Alonso Rodríguez San Alonso Rodríguez Foundation (Honduran NGO)
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015
IPADE	Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Democracia Institute of Development and Democracy (Nicaraguan NGOs)
LRRD	Linking Relief, Recovery and Development
MAPS	Multi Annual Programme Scheme (Irish Aid Funding funding schemeStream)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organisations
PRA	Participative Rural Appraisals
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many of the advances made through development assistance have been eroded or lost due to the increasing frequency and recurring nature of crises. The nature and intensity of natural hazards will continue to increase as climate change generates more severe weather-related events. The world also faces new types of hazards such as soaring food and fuel prices; the threat of pandemics; and increasingly complex conflicts. The reality is that the poor and marginalised die in greater numbers and endure higher economic losses because of disasters. They are more at risk because they eke out their livelihoods in the riskiest environments: in situations of conflict; in drought prone areas; on steep slopes subject to landslides; in swamps and flood-prone riverbanks of congested urban settlements. Whether it is a natural hazard or a conflict situation, it is more cost effective to prevent and prepare for a crisis than to wait for it to happen. In these situations, addressing risk and vulnerability is not an option; it is a necessity.

There is both overlap and confusion between the concepts of vulnerability, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation. Programme staff grapple with the differences and similarities between these concepts and the practical implications of these for humanitarian and development programming.

Given this reality, the Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into Programming was the topic selected for the 2008 MAPS Thematic Study. It was decided that it would be a practitioners' study. The overall objective was to facilitate mutual learning amongst MAPS partners that will advance thinking and understanding of DRR and identify best practice in integrating DRR into humanitarian and development programmes.

The report is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides a background to the study; the methodology used; and outlines the main conceptual ideas underpinning DRR. The second chapter identifies common approaches, strategies, lessons and challenges faced by MAPS partners in introducing DRR within their organisations. The third chapter details the approach to DRR taken by Trócaire in Central America. The fourth chapter outlines main lessons identified by the participants in the thematic study. The fifth chapter then reflects on the 2008 study process and makes recommendations for carrying the process forward. Finally, appendix one outlines each MAPS Partners' Organisational approach to DRR.

### Key Findings

Although MAPS Partners use a diversity of language and approaches, all have embarked on a more systematic way to addressing DRR within their institutions. The collective experience of MAPS partners suggests the following key factors as being important to **strengthening organisational approaches to DRR:**

- **Strong leadership and champions of change:** Typically, the type of leadership required does not depend on one person but on how the 'champions of change' act together to raise the profile of DRR, identify opportunities or entry points, form strategic alliances with decision-makers, provide practical guidelines and generate energy around the issues.

- **Conceptual clarity:** It is important to clearly articulate how DRR is linked to organisational goals and objectives and provide a strategic direction for DRR. It is also important to have a shared understanding of what is meant by different concepts, how their meanings change depending on the context in which they are used while at the same time avoid getting caught up in jargon.
- **Must be backed up by resources:** DRR must be backed up by dedicated resources, both human and financial. Organisational investments in developing staff skills and expertise will pay dividends in terms of programme quality and results.
- **It is wise to take a phased approach:** Experience shows that taking a phased approach to DRR eases the management of internal challenges and also facilitates the development of a more effective approach based upon internal resources and external realities. This involves introducing/piloting the approach, demonstrating it works and then rolling it out.
- **Open to new ways of working:** The traditional institutional separation of humanitarian and development work and resultant compartmentalised ways of working has proved to be a barrier to DRR work. The objectives of DRR require coordination and a combining of efforts across all interventions and are best achieved through multidisciplinary teams.
- **Taking advantage of windows of opportunity:** For many of the MAPS partners, the formal development of policies and adoption of conceptual frameworks for DRR coincided with 'events' within organisations, such as strategic planning, broader policy development and organisational change management, processes which can provide an important entry point for building consensus around DRR.
- **Forming strategic alliances and working with allies:** Working in partnership with other like-minded organisations is critically important in order to achieve DRR objectives. This includes allies within partner Governments, donors and multi-lateral organisations as well as within civil society.
- **Documenting, disseminating and learning from experience:** Given that DRR is a relatively new concept and experience is accordingly recent, it is important that new approaches are consistently documented, disseminated and used as a learning tool.

MAPS Partners are committed to ensuring that disaster prevention/mitigation and emergency preparedness/response are an integral part of their development and humanitarian interventions. Integrating DRR into programming was explored in the context of each individual organisation's approach, Trócaire's Central America approach and discussions by the MAPS partners in Ireland and during the field trip. Key factors identified as important to **strengthening DRR with programmes were:**

- **Analysis is critical:** Risk and vulnerability are core concepts that facilitate a holistic, context specific analysis. This analysis needs to identify the links between hazards, vulnerability, and risks. Participatory approaches are useful to conduct these analyses at a community level but it is also important to have a robust technical understanding of the nature of hazards and people's vulnerabilities to them.
- **DRR is the link between Humanitarian and Development Programming:** DRR provides a framework for integrating humanitarian and development work. For poverty reduction and development strategies to be sustainable it is critical that communities can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks. DRR is thus an integrated and holistic approach for fine-tuning development processes through prevention, mitigation, and preparedness also known as risk reduction combined with disaster response activities including rehabilitation and reconstruction. Risk reduction measures should be important considerations in development programmes. Similarly, while humanitarian programmes may focus on saving lives and meeting urgent needs it is critical that they also protect livelihoods, strengthen communities' coping capacities and address the underlying causes of vulnerability to disasters. This requires a long term perspective and a deep engagement with communities during humanitarian interventions which develop into long term development programming. As such DRR is not a separate programme isolated from both emergency and development interventions but an approach to strengthen programmes in both areas.
- **Building on existing work:** DRR strategies are easier to test out and take on board where it builds on existing well-developed policies and strategies, existing relationships and contacts, and a positive history of partnership and implementation success.
- **Capacity Building is essential:** Investing in developing the technical expertise and management capacity of staff and partners in DRR is essential. Similarly supporting local institutional capacity and processes rather than creating new and parallel structures is critical. In responding to disasters it is important for international agencies to move away from leading responses to building on existing structures and processes. This capacity development requires a significant investment in time and processes.
- **Crises as Opportunity for change:** For most organisations, strategies for addressing risk and vulnerability were largely conceptualised in the context of discreet development programmes running into problems in crisis situations. These experiences provided lessons on good practice for promoting risk reduction more widely and also provided a window of opportunity where



there is political will to address the underlying causes of vulnerability.

- **Scaling up from Household to Community Level Risk Reduction:** A useful approach is to link risk reduction at the individual household level with broader community level risk reduction. For example work at making a household's livelihood more resilient to drought (such as soil and water management, diversification, etc.) can be linked to broader land use planning/watershed management and municipal planning to reduce risks.
- **Advocacy and linking work at different levels:** There is evidence that DRR is most effective when deliberate efforts are made to facilitate linkages between community, sub-national, national and regional level initiatives. Support at the local level can harness and strengthen local capacities and resources that communities can draw on to prevent, mitigate or cope with disasters. However, a strong national and/or regional policy framework is essential to support, resource and scale-up community based initiatives. Advocacy is a key tool for linking local, national and international efforts to reduce risks and was an important strategy used by the different actors.
- **Measuring and demonstrating impact:** Improving the evidence base on DRR strategies is important for on-going support and success. It is required to promote policy change, persuade governments and donors to allocate resources and build capacity to focus on disaster risk reduction. A DRR approach will be assessed in terms of measurable improvements in the lives of the target communities. At the organisational level, this requires an investment in results-based management, with strong baseline data to measure success against.

Finally, in relation to the MAPS Thematic Study Process it is recommended that a participative learning approach should be used in future. For this to be successful it involves MAPS partners committing significant time to the process, ensuring continuity in their participation and creating an open environment for mutual learning and discussion. For this reason it is essential that the proposed theme is an important issue for all partners. The field trip, based on substantial preparatory work by the participants, was seen as a key component of the process used to build a common understanding on the theme; but it is acknowledged that this is not something that every organisation may be able to facilitate.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 *The MAPS 2008 Thematic Study*

The Multi Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS) was launched by Irish Aid in 2003. The objective is to strengthen the impact of Irish NGOs' development and recovery responses, in many of the world's poorest countries, through providing longer-term, predictable programmatic funding. MAPS promotes partnership, accountability, and learning among the five participating NGOs (Christian Aid, Concern, GOAL, Self Help Africa, and Trócaire) and Irish Aid. As part of joint learning the MAPS partners choose a development topic each year to study in more detail.

In 2008, Trócaire proposed the Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into programming as the topic for MAPS Thematic Study. DRR was identified as a priority theme in Trócaire's Strategic Framework. Trócaire wanted to use this opportunity to engage in a mutual learning process with MAPS partners, to get a better understanding of the many aspects of DRR, and to share its experience. The topic was accepted by the MAPS partners and Trócaire led the thematic study.

To promote learning, an active and mutual learning process was adopted. This involved presentations and discussions by the different MAPS partners about how they approached integrating DRR into programming in their respective institutions. These meetings took place every two months between April and November 2008 and provided an opportunity to explore key concepts, strategies and approaches and learn from the different approaches. To further the learning experience, a field trip was organised to Central America during which the MAPS partners visited Trócaire projects in Honduras and Nicaragua where DRR measures have been integrated into programmes using a variety of strategies.

The strengthened focus on mutual learning was reflected in how the study was undertaken. While the previous MAPS Thematic Study had used consultants to prepare a paper on lessons-learned, based on the consultants' research, the 2008 Study looked for a facilitator to promote and document mutual learning between the participants.

The field trip to Central America took place from the 8 to 13 December 2008. It included field visits to different projects that Trócaire is implementing in collaboration with local partners in Nicaragua and Honduras. These included:

- A visit to the work of Fundación San Alonso Rodríguez (FSAR), who is supporting the reconstruction of communities after the latest hurricane in 2005 using a participatory framework aimed at securing livelihoods. FSAR works in 25 communities in the north of Honduras, one of the most hurricane and flood prone areas in the region. The activities explored were early warning systems, community based preparedness, raising awareness on disaster risk, and land use planning using participatory approaches.
- A visit to the work of IPADE, Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Democracia, in Northern Nicaragua. IPADE focuses on awareness raising and

strengthening of local organisations to promote a culture of disaster risk management; particularly within poor communities. This involves strengthening participation and democracy at all levels. In this context, IPADE has developed special programmes to empower local leaders and communities, including small agricultural producers to participate in local and national policy formulation based on participatory risk analysis and response planning.

- A visit to the work of COACOV, Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Orfilia Vásquez, in Northern Nicaragua. COACOV are strengthening families' capacities, with an emphasis on strengthening the role of women, to deal with drought through income generation and introduction of low cost hazard resistant technologies.

Moreover, the field trip included presentations, discussions and exchange of experience with other Trócaire partners. These included COPECO, the national entity responsible for disaster risk management, and ASONOG, a national NGO network supporting advocacy processes at local, sub-national, and national levels on topics related to right-based issues, including inclusive development, risk management, and food security. Trócaire is collaborating with ASONOG on a number of advocacy issues; for instance a legal initiative on mining practices in the context of DRR as well as a new law for a National System for Disaster Risk Management in Honduras.

In the lead up to the field trip the MAPS Partners identified eight focus areas to guide their learning. Different participants took responsibility for the development of key questions around each focus area and identify lessons during the field trip. These focus areas were:

- Integrating DRR in Livelihood Activities
- Integrating DRR in Emergency Response Activities
- Linking DRR in Emergency and Development Activities
- Applying Participatory Approaches in DRR activities
- Targeting the most Vulnerable in DRR activities
- Organisational and Institutional Processes for DRR
- Advocacy
- Learning
- Concepts and Terminology

These focus areas allowed further joint analysis based on concrete observations during the field trip and were used to identify key lessons.

The visits to the project areas included discussions with local partners and the communities participating in the project activities, thus allowing a better understanding of the complexity of introducing DRR in poor communities which are under constant pressure from a number of stressors and where immediate needs often seem to overshadow the need for longer-term investment. Moreover, the relatively weak institutional environment with limited support from local and national authorities further challenges the perspective for integrated and sustainable disaster risk management.

Following the field trip, the participants prepared this final report to capture the key lessons for strengthening organisational and programmatic approaches to DRR. The report also reflects on the learning process of the MAPS Thematic Study and provides recommendations for future joint learning exercises.

## **1.2 Introduction to DRR**

While natural hazards such as earthquakes, typhoons, floods, landslides, volcanoes, droughts, and wildfires are an inherent part of human life, there is a growing understanding that effective risk management can reduce the number of hazards turning into disasters and reduce the social and economic costs of disasters when they happen.

The international attention to proactively promote disaster risk reduction (DRR) through preparedness and prevention as an integral part of longer term development processes was strongly expressed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe in Japan in January 2005. At the conference the 10-year Hyogo Framework for Action was adopted by 168 countries, which was a clear commitment to promoting a DRR culture at all levels and a move away from the fatalistic position that death and destruction are the unavoidable result of natural hazards.

The language and terms used in the field of DRR (sometimes called Disaster Risk Management) are often applied in different ways by different organisations and are used to mean slightly different things depending on the context. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) provides a useful reference point for DRR terminology and aims to promote a common understanding and common usage of disaster risk reduction concepts. For the purpose of this report the term DRR will be used throughout and will be taken to mean:

***Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>3</sup>***: *The process of minimising the risk of disaster for a given society/group through taking action to minimise their vulnerability to, and maximising their capacity to cope with, a man-made or natural hazard.*

DRR (also known as risk reduction) is thus an integrated and holistic approach for fine-tuning development processes through prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, combined with emergency response activities including rehabilitation and reconstruction. The basic idea is to ensure that risk reduction and direct response activities take place at all levels continuously and in a harmonised and coordinated manner that links development and humanitarian programming.

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<sup>3</sup> Trócaire (2008) *Disaster Risk Reduction: Learning for Livelihoods Series No.1*

### **Box 1 Definitions and Terminology<sup>4</sup>**

- **Disaster** is a serious disruption of the functioning of a society causing human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope without external assistance.
- **Hazard** is an extreme event with a destructive potential to social and economic assets and human lives. These may be “natural” (geological, hydro meteorological and biological) or “man-made” (conflict, environmental degradation and technological) hazards.
- **Vulnerability** is the condition determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes which increases the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards.
- **Risk** is the product of hazard and vulnerability; measured in terms of the damage expected as a result of the exposure of vulnerable people to a hazard.
- **Capacity** is the combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organisation that can reduce the level of risk, or the effects of a disaster.

The interrelationship between these definitions is often defined as:

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability/Capacity}$$

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Trócaire (2008) *Disaster Risk Reduction: Learning for Livelihoods Series No.1* p.9

## **2. MAPS PARTNERS' EXPERIENCE IN INSTITUTIONALISING DRR**

### **2.1 Why are MAPS Partners looking at DRR?**

Many of the advances made through development assistance have been eroded or lost due to the increasing frequency and recurring nature of crises. The number of disasters will continue to increase as climate change and global warming generate more severe weather-related events. The world also faces new types of hazards such as soaring food and fuel prices and the threat of pandemics. The reality is that the poor and marginalised die in greater numbers and endure higher economic losses during disasters. They are more at risk because they eke out their livelihoods in the riskiest environments: in situations of conflict; in drought prone areas; on steep slopes subject to landslides; in swamps and flood-prone riverbanks of congested urban settlements, etc. In these situations, addressing risk and vulnerability is not an option; it is a necessity. Without it, development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), will not be met. Whether it is a natural hazard or a conflict situation, it is more cost effective to prevent and prepare for a crisis than to respond to it when it happens.

Given this reality, all MAPS partners are fully committed to ensuring that disaster prevention/mitigation and emergency preparedness/response are an integral part of their development and humanitarian interventions. Although using a diversity of language and approaches, all partners have embarked on a more systematic approach to addressing risk and vulnerability in their work. Given that disaster risk reduction is a relatively new and evolving process, MAPS partners decided to document and share existing experience during the course of the study. This chapter seeks to draw on the collective experience of MAPS partners in addressing risk reduction in order to offer lessons for good practice and suggest recommendations for strengthening organisational approaches to disaster risk reduction in the future. Each individual organisational approach is summarised in the Aide Memoirs in Appendix 1.

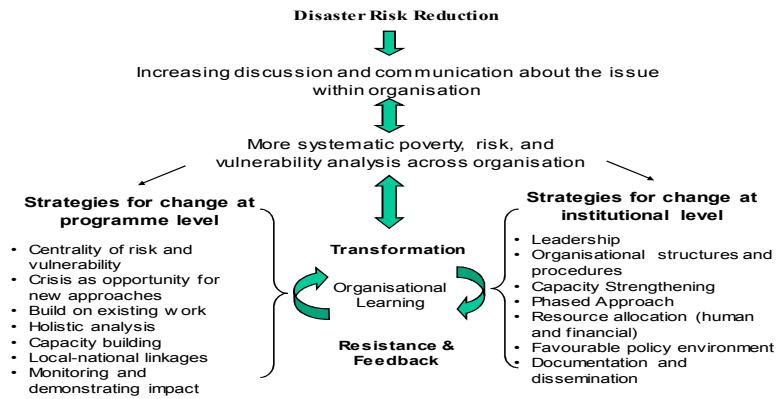
### **2.2 Enabling Factors for Disaster Risk Reduction**

Addressing risk and vulnerability and taking a more systematic approach to disaster risk reduction, is a complex process and it is clear that practices and conceptual frameworks differ across MAPS partners. Some organisations have been focussed on the issue for some time and have taken a formal approach, adopting an organisation policy or strategic commitment. Other organisations have not adopted an explicit DRR strategy but nevertheless their development and humanitarian work implicitly addresses risk and vulnerability and seeks to build resilient communities able to withstand hazards and crises. There is an agreement among partners that DRR is a process, and not a once off event. There is no blueprint for DRR and the strategy may look different in each organisation and even in different parts of the same organisation.

While the status of implementation of DRR strategies varies across MAPS partners, a number of common enabling factors or key steps for integrating DRR considerations

in a more systematic way into programme and policy work can be identified. These are illustrated graphically in Figure One below and elaborated on in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

**Figure 1: Lessons for integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into core work**



### 2.3 Strategies for introducing DRR at Programme Level:

**Risk and vulnerability are core concepts:** These concepts are central to undertaking a holistic analysis. Although using slightly varying definitions, interpretations and response strategies, the concepts of risk and vulnerability are central to developing DRR strategies. Disasters deepen poverty and increase vulnerability. All organisations recognise that the main potential to reduce the risk of disasters lies in addressing the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability in both humanitarian and development interventions.

**Crises as Opportunity for change:** For most organisations, strategies for addressing risk and vulnerability were largely conceptualised in the context of discreet development programmes running into problems in crisis situations. Most of these crises are telling us something – that climate change is a reality; that social marginalisation and discrimination keep people poor; that rapid urbanisation, persistent conflict, and the HIV and AIDS pandemic continues to stall development. We need to heed these crises and, of course, we need to respond. For MAPS partners, the key events that triggered a more considered response to addressing risk and vulnerability include: the Southern Africa Food Crisis in 2002, the recurrent Food Crises in the Horn of Africa, protracted conflict in partner countries in Africa and Asia, Hurricane Mitch in Central America, and the response to the Tsunami in 2004. In most cases, programme level experience provided lessons on good practice for promoting risk reduction more widely.

**Well-informed, robust analysis is critical:** All organisations recognised the need for holistic, context specific analysis, built on an understanding of risk and vulnerability. This is necessary to both appreciate and be able to facilitate increased understanding of the links between risk, vulnerability, humanitarian crises, poverty reduction and economic growth. Developing effective DRR policies and strategies in humanitarian and development interventions requires an understanding of the multiple factors causing poverty and vulnerability.

**Building on existing work:** DRR strategies are easier to test out and take on board where they build on existing well-developed policies and strategies, existing relationships and contacts, and a positive history of partnership and implementation success.

**Support for Capacity Building is essential:** Investing in developing the technical expertise and management capacity of staff and partners in DRR is essential. It contributes to staff and partner ownership of the DRR agenda and ensures it is implemented.

**Working at different levels:** There is evidence that DRR is most effective when deliberate efforts are made to facilitate linkages between community, sub-national, national and regional level initiatives. Support at the local level can harness and strengthen local capacities and resources that communities can draw on to prevent, mitigate or cope with disasters. However, a strong national and/or regional policy framework is essential to support, resource and scale-up community based initiatives.

**Measuring and demonstrating impact:** Improving the evidence base on DRR strategies is important for on-going support and success. It is required to promote policy change, persuade governments and donors to allocate resources and build capacity to focus on disaster risk reduction. A DRR approach will be assessed in terms of measurable improvements in the lives of the target communities. At the organisational level, this requires an investment in results-based management, with strong baseline data to measure success against.

## **2.4 Strategies for introducing DRR at Institutional Level**

**Commitment from Leadership and Champions of Change:** Strong commitment from leadership on DRR within an organisation is key to success. Typically, the type of leadership required does not depend on one person but on how the 'champions of change' act together to raise the profile of DRR, identify opportunities or entry points, form strategic alliances with decision-makers, provide practical guidelines and generate energy around the issues. It is important that DRR is championed as an integral part of existing work and not as a separate body of work.

**Conceptual clarity:** DRR strategies will be more successful across the organisation if there is a clear articulation of how DRR is linked to the organisational goals and objectives. This provides the organisation with a strategic direction for DRR. It also provides the basis for outlining operational plans and performance targets for DRR at organisational, programme and individual level. Within an organisation it is also important to have a shared understanding of what is meant by different concepts, how their meanings change depending on the context in which they are used while at the same time avoid getting caught up in jargon.

**Must be backed up by resources:** DRR goals or strategies must be backed up by dedicated resources, both human and financial. Otherwise, DRR is likely to be lost amongst other competing priorities that people feel are important or which they are more likely to be judged on. Organisational investments in developing staff skills and expertise and giving staff space and time to design and implement DRR will pay



dividends in terms of programme quality and results.

***It is wise to take a phased approach:*** Adopting and institutionalising new ideas and methodologies can be a daunting task, as fear of change can challenge the formalisation of new practices. Experience shows that taking a phased approach to DRR eases the management of internal challenges and also facilitates the development of a more effective approach based upon internal resources and external realities. This involves introducing/piloting the approach, demonstrating it works and then rolling it out.

***Open to new ways of working:*** The traditional institutional separation of humanitarian and development work and resultant compartmentalised ways of working has proved to be a barrier to DRR work. The objective of DRR facilitates a more 'joined-up' approach: lateral planning, coordination and a combining of efforts across all interventions. In addition, DRR is best achieved through multidisciplinary teams who can identify the relevance of risk and vulnerability, taking them into account, not only in the design of specific interventions, but in setting priorities and entry points across the organisation's work. A team approach is an effective way to manage these types of processes.

***Taking advantage of windows of opportunity:*** For many of the MAPS partners, the formal development of policies and adoption of conceptual frameworks for DRR, coincided with 'events' within organisations, such as strategic planning, broader policy development, organisational change management, etc. Internationally, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), which provides the global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts, can provide an important entry point for building consensus around DRR.

***Forming strategic alliances and working with allies:*** Working in partnership with other like-minded organisations is critically important in order to achieve DRR objectives. This includes allies within partner Governments, donors, multi-lateral organisations as well as within civil society.

***Documenting, disseminating and learning from experience:*** Given that DRR is a relatively new concept and experience is accordingly recent, it is important that new approaches are consistently documented, disseminated and used as a learning tool.

## **2.5 Constraints and challenges**

A review of the experience from MAPS partners suggests that the following key constraints and challenges were encountered in adopting a strategic and institution-wide approach to DRR.

***Limited technical capacity for DRR:*** Staff found it was easier in some contexts than others to identify opportunities for promoting DRR. According to the MAPS partners, it was easiest in situations of weather-related disasters for instance, post hurricane and flooding, where language such as hazards, risk and vulnerability were common. It proved more challenging in situations of protracted crisis such as chronic food insecurity.

**Resistance to new concepts and ways of working:** DRR is perceived in some organisations as the responsibility of emergency staff and programmes. There are strong vested interests for the perpetuation of divisions between emergency and development wings within organisations and DRR approaches challenge these conceptual and institutional divides.

**Competing priorities:** All organisations have a number of core objectives and cross-cutting themes. The introduction of DRR was sometimes perceived as competing for time and prioritisation and therefore met with some resistance. Sometimes, there were problems with staff not seeing DRR as their responsibility or feeling that introducing DRR detracts from the main organisation objectives.

**Information and knowledge gaps:** Efforts to promote DRR have been constrained by lack of adequate information and analysis. At macro-economic level, DRR is not a priority for development policy and planning and this makes it more difficult for organisations to identify and address the challenges relating to DRR.

**Relatively weak national allies and resources:** In many cases, DRR is not seen as a national priority but as a donor-imposed agenda. Even in cases where official political commitment to DRR exists, in practice partner government institutions responsible for promoting this outcome are generally weak with poor resources and capacity. In the absence of strong national allies, it is more difficult for organisations to promote DRR.

## 3 DRR IN CENTRAL AMERICA

### 3.1 Contextual Background

Central America has a **long history** stretching back to the colonial era of disasters caused by hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, drought, landslides and forest fires. Major events over the past 40 years include: the Managua earthquake in 1972; hurricane Fifi in Honduras in 1974; the Guatemala City earthquake in 1976; the El Salvador earthquake of 1986; hurricane Mitch in Honduras and Nicaragua in 1998; the regional drought of 2001; the El Salvador earthquakes in January and February 2001; and tropical storm and hurricane Stan in Guatemala and El Salvador in 2005. Over the past twenty years there has been marked tendency for lower intensity events to be ever more destructive, so that damage levels caused by tropical depressions or storms over the past five years are similar to those caused by major hurricanes such as Mitch. There has been an increased frequency and intensity of disasters in the region over the past decade, a phenomenon no doubt exacerbated by changing weather patterns linked to global climate change.

The **causes** of the region's vulnerability to natural hazards are closely related to the development model implemented over past decades which has resulted in poor natural resource management, uncontrolled urban expansion, deficient social and productive infrastructure, inappropriate land use, weak regulatory systems and ever increasing social inequality. The vast majority of the population living in high disaster risk areas lives below the poverty line and are therefore struggling to survive on a daily basis. Large families, frequently headed by a single mother, living in substandard housing conditions, dependent on subsistence agriculture, temporary migration and employment in the informal sector of the economy, lacking in basic services and with low education levels are therefore poorly equipped to withstand and recover from a disaster. Prior to hurricane Mitch in 1998 no attention was paid by any Central American government to reducing vulnerabilities as part of a coherent strategy for disaster risk prevention and mitigation.

The severity of the destruction caused by hurricane **Mitch** marked a turning point in terms of raising awareness of the need to invest in disaster risk reduction (DRR) in all four of the Central America countries. Mitch ruthlessly exposed latent social and environmental vulnerabilities as well as the incapacity of the national emergency systems to deal with a disaster on that scale. Civil society actors and the international donor community were also caught unawares. As a result, national emergency systems were overhauled in all four countries and funds were made available through both government and non government channels to strengthen emergency preparedness capacities at national, municipal and community levels. Significant efforts were also made to undertake the far greater and more complex task of introducing DRR into development planning through improving land use planning and natural resource management. The impacts of these collective efforts are more noticeable in the area of emergency preparedness. In recent years, but particularly from 2005 onwards, there has been a noticeable improvement in disaster risk management at all levels in the region, particularly in Honduras.

**Picture 1: Flooding in Northern Honduras during Mitch 1998**



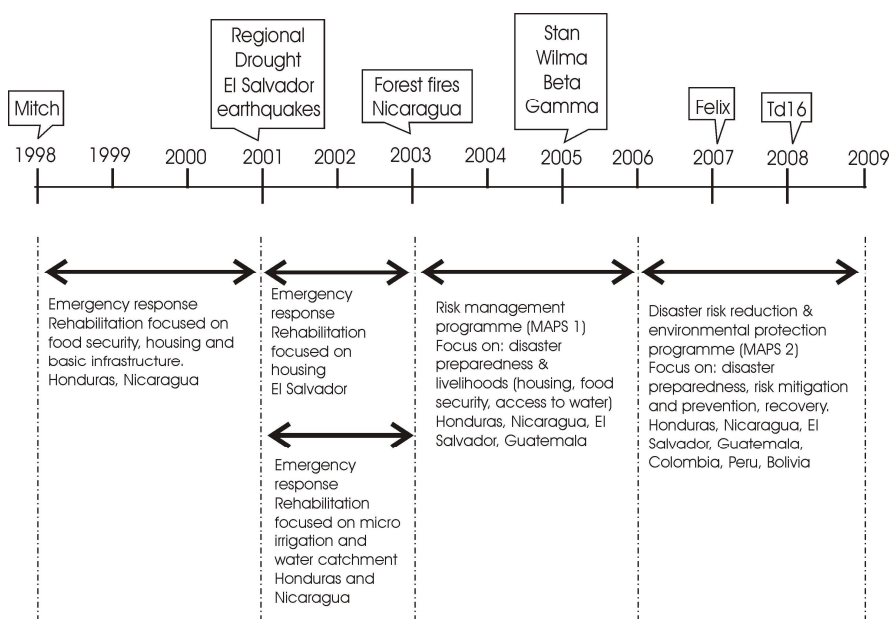
Despite these improvements, significant **challenges** remain. DRR remains a relatively low priority on governments' agendas and national emergency systems still operate on shoestring budgets. With the exception of Guatemala, the lack of a centralised government development planning system means that DRR is fragmented between different government ministries that struggle to coordinate between themselves. DRR is also compartmentalised in national legislations, which are frequently confusing, sometimes contradictory and seldom enforced. At the local level government lacks the financial resources and technical capacity to incorporate DRR into municipal development planning, while frequent government staff turnover at all levels impedes capacity building initiatives. The efforts of both multi and bilateral donors to invest in DRR activities have been frequently frustrated by the lack of government will and capacity. At a regional level CEPREDENAC (Coordinating Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America) has undertaken two major DRR planning initiatives, but neither has had significant impact at national or local level. Generally speaking, DRR is still seen primarily as a humanitarian rather than a development issue in Central America.

**Civil society** in the region is diverse, vibrant, fragmented and conflictive but has been responsible for many of the important advances in DRR since 1998. Many of the models and processes validated over the years, and which are now accepted as standard practice, were originally developed and piloted by civil society organisations. While the primary focus of these organisations has been at the local and municipal level, national and regional level DRR networks do exist which have played (and continue to play in some cases) an important advocacy role in pressing for greater government action on DRR. As has been the case with national governments, civil society organisations have made greater advances in the area of emergency preparedness and are still struggling to make meaningful inroads with regard to the incorporation of DRR into development planning (although some good examples of this work do exist).

### 3.2 Trócaire's approach to DRR in Central America

Trócaire's DRR work in Central America developed initially out of its emergency responses to hurricane Mitch in 1998 (Honduras and Nicaragua), the El Salvador earthquakes in 2001, and the regional drought of 2001 (Honduras and Nicaragua). The following diagram shows the evolution of the programme over time:

**Figure 2 Integration of DRR into Programming 1998-2009**



As is common in the region, Trócaire's work has been conceptually based on the equation:

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Hazards} \times \text{Vulnerability/Capacity}$$

Trócaire strives to adhere to an integral analysis of risk which is understood to be complex, heterogeneous and dynamic. Although significant progress has been made in the field of risk analysis, weakness and difficulties persist in the identification and measurement of vulnerabilities. In Central America Trócaire also divides DRR into two distinct areas of work depending on the return period for hazard events in any given area. Emergency preparedness is prioritised in areas struck by frequent hazards (over two major events in a five year period) while in other areas risk reduction and prevention is given greater weight. This does not mean supporting either one or the other area, it simply defines the relative weight given to each area as per the specific context. Finally, DRR interventions are designed to address individual rights and needs in the first instance and then broaden out over time to embrace the community and its surrounding environment.

There have been **four key elements** underlying Trócaire's approach to DRR in Central America:

- i. A primary focus on strengthening local (community and municipal) level capacities for emergency preparedness and disaster risk prevention and mitigation;

- ii. Link these local level initiatives to sub national, national and regional level networks undertaking advocacy initiatives on key themes such as reform of national emergencies systems, introduction of DRR into school curriculums and changes to legislation related to natural resource management;
- iii. Strengthening of partners' technical DRR capacities;
- iv. The promotion of participatory processes based on local knowledge and experience acquired by communities over decades of living with risk and responding to crisis. Trócaire's Participatory Risk Management Methodology (published with Irish Aid funding) is a good example of this approach.

The programme has over time come to focus on certain geographical areas within the four countries. In **Honduras**, the flood risk reduction initiatives are focused on the lower areas of the Ulúa, Aguán and Sico Paulaya watersheds on the north Honduran coast, while drought risk reduction interventions are centred in dry areas of the river Nacaome and Negro watersheds in the south of the country. In **Nicaragua** the majority of projects are drought risk reduction interventions located in the upper reaches of the river Coco watershed in the department of Nueva Segovia in the north of the country. Work in **Guatemala** centres on landslide and flood risk reduction in the Lake Atitlán region in the department of Sololá which was one of the areas hardest hit by tropical storm and hurricane Stan in 2005. In **El Salvador** the programme has had a broader geographical spread given that both earthquake and drought hazards affect the majority of the country.

Over time the programme has developed **six core competencies** in the following areas:

- i. Emergency Preparedness
- ii. Housing
- iii. Water Management
- iv. Alternative Energy
- v. Drought Mitigation
- vi. Advocacy on DRR issues

These competencies have not been developed in all projects across the programme, but rather individual projects have piloted advances in certain areas which have then, in some cases, been transferred to other partners. The clearest examples of this process can be found in the areas of emergency preparedness, housing and drought mitigation where the number of expert partners has increased significantly over the past 5 years.

**Emergency preparedness** work has focused on the following themes: organisation and training of community and municipal emergency committees; specialist training in first aid, search and rescue techniques, emergency communications, shelter management and damage and needs assessments; participatory risk analysis and mapping; development of skills in the use of geographical information systems (GIS) for risk mapping; installation of emergency communication systems; installation of flood early warning systems; training of school children in risk analysis and emergency preparedness measures; construction or rehabilitation of emergency shelters and facilities; provision of emergency equipment such as megaphones, motor launches and rescue equipment; construction of key disaster mitigation projects such as small drainage systems, river bank protection and bridges on

important access routes, including projects implemented by government authorities as a result of advocacy initiatives carried out by community emergency committees.

Trócaire's work on **housing** has confirmed the importance of housing location and quality in terms of a family's level of disaster risk. Trócaire has worked on the relocation of families and communities from high risk areas, as well as the implementation of hazard resistant housing techniques in areas prone to earthquakes and floods. Housing interventions have also been used as a means to link relief, rehabilitation and development initiatives. Done correctly housing interventions can create dynamic communities which subsequently drive long term development processes. Both in post Mitch (Honduras) and post 2001 earthquakes (El Salvador) projects, houses were given on a part credit, part donation basis, and community groups were trained to manage credit funds. These groups were responsible for the recovery of housing credits, which could then be loaned to community members for farming, education, health or other needs. In one project in Honduras (El Progreso), some 15 community groups were managing over USD 50,000 in recovered housing loans in 2005. Trócaire has also piloted initiatives to reduce environmental contamination through the construction of houses and water tanks with discarded plastic bottles.

**Picture 2. Flood Resistant Housing Supported by Trócaire in Northern Honduras**



In the **water management** component, Trócaire has focused on promoting the protection of existing water sources and the search for alternative water sources in dry areas. Activities have included the construction of family and community water storage facilities, the protection of water sources and surface catchments, and the installation of roof rainwater harvesting systems. Of particular note have been the impacts of these activities on women who no longer have to travel such long distances and invest considerable amounts of time in water collection. By providing alternative water sources that can be used during times of scarcity, pressure is taken off existing drinking water sources which has helped to increase the availability of drinking water in communities throughout the year.

The **alternative energy** component is one of the least developed areas of the programme, but interesting pilot experiences have been implemented in the use of

hydroelectric plants, methane gas generation for cooking and lighting, and the use of fuel efficient household cookers. Studies in northern Honduras showed that such cookers used one eighth of the wood required by traditional stoves. When used in the context of a wider natural resource management process, such techniques provide real alternatives to reduce dependence on wood for fuel and, therefore, have a positive impact on deforestation rates.

**Drought mitigation** has centred on efforts to guarantee and improve agricultural production in dry conditions. Techniques piloted and validated over the last five years have included: implementation of soil and water conservation techniques; recycling of water using filters for irrigation purposes; installation of small drip irrigation systems; use of hydroponics; promotion of drought resistant crops and the use of low cost simple technologies such as “EMAS”<sup>5</sup> pumps and homemade drip lines. In areas with greatest water scarcity these techniques have helped farmers to save their staple crops when dry periods occur during the rainy season. In other areas with greater water availability farmers have used these techniques to increase the number of crop cycles they produce, growing on the margins of the rainy season or, in some cases, growing during the dry season. This has enabled farmers to take advantage of higher market prices for produce due to their ability to produce in periods of relative scarcity.

**Advocacy** initiatives have attempted to use models piloted at the local level as the basis for the construction of proposals presented to local and national government authorities. Honduran partner ICADE's advocacy initiatives to press for a government social housing programme were based on their own experience in housing construction using solidarity groups and credit schemes. This experience coupled with similar experiences supported by Trócaire through other local organisations also helped ICADE to count on mass support for protest marches aimed at placing greater pressure on the government to accept a social housing programme based on this model (rather than the traditional model of channelling funds through the private banking system). Trócaire partners have also been closely involved in advocacy initiatives linked to the reform of the national emergencies systems in Honduras and El Salvador, as well as reforms to the legal framework government water and forest management in both countries.

The **key lessons** learnt by Trócaire over the past five years are as follows:

- (i) A lack of clarity persists in understanding of DRR at all levels and within almost all organisations, government and non government, which impedes the definition of clear and coherent DRR strategies;
- (ii) DRR must be approached as part of an integrated livelihoods approach from the perspective of working to better protect lives and assets of poor and vulnerable families;
- (iii) Housing interventions which foster dynamic communities should be promoted as a core part of any DRR strategy;
- (iv) The strengthening of community organisation, and the construction of alliances between communities and with external actors, both governmental

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<sup>5</sup> The EMAS pump is a very cheap PVC piston pump for family use, which can both pump water from a well and pump it to an elevated point.



and nongovernmental, are essential preconditions for being able to broaden DRR focus and impact;

- (v) Land use planning is a key element for both DRR and natural resource management that is not currently being adequately addressed;
- (vi) New DRR technologies introduced into communities must be low cost, based on local materials and sustained by local resources if they are to achieve impact over time;
- (vii) Emergency preparedness activities cannot be successfully undertaken within the short term framework promoted by some programmes (e.g. DIPECHO) but require the same kind of longer term approach that would be taken in the integration of DRR into livelihoods

## 4. KEY LEARNING FROM THE FIELD TRIP

In the lead up to the field trip the participants identified focus areas to guide their learning (see list on page 8 above). Participants took on the responsibility to develop key questions around each focus area. Using this methodology a number of key lessons were identified. These include:

- i. The Importance of Analysis
- ii. The Usefulness of Participatory Approaches
- iii. Using DRR to Link Relief, Recovery and Development Work
- iv. The Importance of Building Local Institutional Capacity
- v. The Importance of Advocacy

### 4.1 ***Comprehensive Analysis Based on an Understanding of Risks, Hazards and Vulnerability is Central to Programming***

A comprehensive analysis that includes a thorough understanding of hazards and vulnerability is central to effective development and humanitarian interventions, if programmes are to contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and development. It is the underlying vulnerability of people and communities to hazards which creates disasters. Reaching the poorest, most vulnerable people, for service delivery and for specific disaster risk reduction measures is a serious challenge. The major issue relates to understanding who the poor, most vulnerable, and marginalised are and the structural barriers they face.

#### ***Picture 3. Understanding Risks, Hazards and Vulnerability Leads to Better Solutions!***



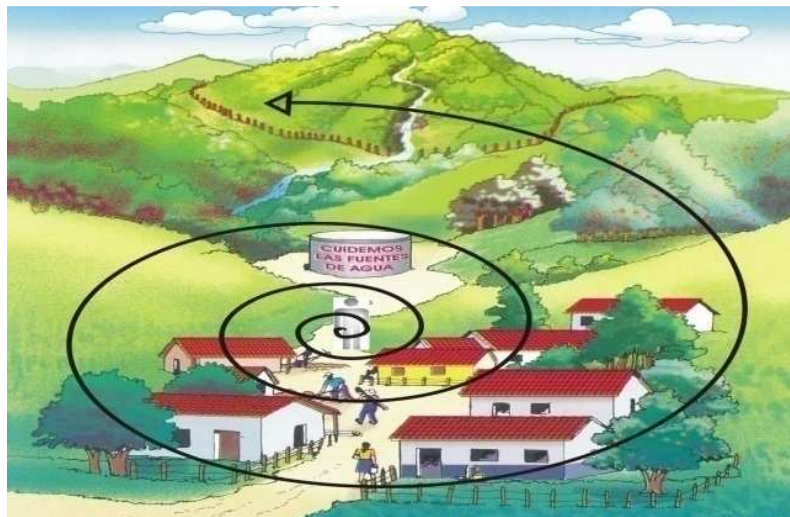
Two broad approaches to analysis were identified as important. One is a technical understanding of the nature of hazards and physical vulnerability to these. The other involves understanding the social aspects of vulnerability, and taking a systematic approach to identifying and targeting the poorest and most vulnerable. During the field trip examples of how to address both aspects of analysis were seen. These included developing three dimensional land use models and geo-referenced hazard, vulnerability and risk maps. Participative approaches were used effectively both to make technical information on the nature of hazards and vulnerabilities

more accessible to the communities; as well as developing an understanding of social vulnerability.

Humanitarian programming is often such that the amount of time available for initial analysis is limited. Undertaking as comprehensive an analysis as possible is, however, important for ensuring that interventions address the immediate task of saving lives, while protecting livelihoods and addressing the underlying causes of social vulnerability. Having a bank of PRA/PLA tools available which can quickly be adapted to the local context can help to overcome this obstacle and engage communities in designing responses. Also, it is important to note that analysis is most usefully viewed as a process and not an event. During the field trip it was seen that level of analysis undertaken with the communities was deepened over time.

Incorporating risk reduction into development programming does not imply a different/parallel set of tools and approaches but rather ensuring that vulnerability and hazard analyses are included within a holistic analysis. This seeks to ensure that risk reduction measures are included in development interventions. One approach is to link risk reduction in livelihood strategies at the individual household level with broader community level interventions. For example, work at making a household's livelihoods more resilient to drought (such as soil and water management, diversification, etc.) was linked to broader land use planning/watershed management and municipal planning to reduce risks (such as environmental protection, early warning systems, improved physical infrastructure). This approach of addressing individual rights and needs in the first instance and then broadening out over time to embrace the community and its surrounding environment is represented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Linking Risk Reduction at Household Level to Risk Reduction at the Community Level**



## **4.2 Participatory Approaches are Useful Tools for Incorporating Risk Reduction into Programmes**

It is widely acknowledged that community and stakeholder participation in all aspects of programming is critical on a number of levels. These include ensuring programmes are appropriate, relevant and sustainable. Time invested in this process leads to quality programming. For many years participatory approaches have been widely used by humanitarian and development actors in their contextual analysis, programme design, implementation, and evaluation. Development and humanitarian programmes that seek to reduce risks should be no different, particularly in terms of incorporating traditional community risk management mechanisms.

It was seen that participative methodologies were useful for (i) supporting communities to identify and analyse their own hazards and vulnerabilities; and (ii) for identifying and targeting the poorest and most vulnerable. While there is no blueprint as to what participative methodologies should be employed a number of observations were made:

- Participative Rural Appraisals (PRAs) were seen as useful entry points for addressing DRR with communities. Many organisations and communities already use PRA methodologies so it often only requires adapting existing approaches to include an analysis of hazards, vulnerabilities and risks.
- Participatory processes facilitate a very high degree of community involvement and address the difficult task of defining terms such as vulnerability so as to ensure a common understanding between all stakeholders.
- Participatory processes are important for building up a comprehensive understanding of communities which are comprised of different groups with different levels of exposure to various hazards. This exposure or vulnerability is directly related to issues such as equality, gender and poverty/marginalisation. Good facilitation is necessary to ensure these elements are addressed both in the participatory process and in programme analysis, design, implementation and evaluation.
- Participatory approaches should be seen as a process and context specific depending on factors such as the time, resources, capacities, and political will of the different partners involved. It is important to have a bank of PRA tools that can be adapted to different contexts. Conditions during emergencies may constrain the depth of initial participation but viewing participation as a process rather than an event allows for participation to be progressively deepened over time. Also, developing trust over time with the community was seen as critical for the successful application of participatory approaches.

It is also critical that technical input on the nature of hazards and community vulnerability is considered and used to build on community knowledge and traditional risk management processes. Some communities visited illustrated that the risks associated with regular, serious flooding remain a major obstacle to long term

sustainable development. A technical understanding of the changing weather patterns might indicate that these risks may require more radical decisions in relation to relocation, or more major infrastructure construction. However, participatory processes may support communities in dealing with these difficult issues.

### **Box 2 Using Three Dimensional Land Use Modelling Used with the Community (FSAR)**

FSAR supports community members to construct the maps using simple tools and materials. The end product is a scale model of the community area detailing land use patterns, geographical features and the location of villages. The process does not require literacy skills. The process allows communities to discuss and agree on hazards and how they relate to their surroundings, and can be used to disaggregate how hazards might affect different people within a community. As a tool it facilitates the development of appropriate programme activities to address the hazards and vulnerabilities related to the elements presented in the map. The process also allows stakeholders to review where the capacities and resources to bring about change exist, and to inform broader advocacy activities/strategies. An example of the latter was where a community risk map illustrated the hazards to a community of a nearby commercial plantation.



### **4.3 DRR Links Relief, Recovery and Development (LRRD)**

DRR provides a framework for integrating humanitarian and development work. For poverty reduction and development strategies to be sustainable it is critical that communities can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks. DRR is thus an integrated and holistic approach for fine-tuning development processes through prevention, mitigation, and preparedness (also known as risk reduction) combined with disaster response activities including rehabilitation and reconstruction. Risk reduction measures should be important considerations in development programmes. Similarly, while humanitarian programmes may focus on saving lives and meeting urgent needs it is critical that they also protect livelihoods, strengthen

communities' coping capacities and address the underlying causes of vulnerability to hazards. DRR is not a separate programme isolated from both emergency and development interventions but an approach to strengthen programmes in both areas.

Approaching development programming using a risk reduction perspective offered a number of insights into how programmes can be improved. During the field trip a number of practical risk reduction and prevention measures were seen which showed that simple measures can be very effective in reducing risks. These included alternative productive activities that are resilient to common natural hazards. In drought prone areas, for instance, rural households were supported to use more resilient livelihood strategies such as diversifying agricultural production, to include drought resistant crops, vegetable gardens, orchards, a variety of small animals and employing soil and water conservation techniques. Relatively simple infrastructures to address drought were also supported. The infrastructure toolbox included water tankers, small reservoirs, micro-irrigation, rainwater harvesting, re-use of water and greenhouses.

Looking at development programming from a risk perspective also identified new issues to be addressed. Ensuring the preparedness and response capacity of households and communities was seen to be a critical element in protecting lives, livelihoods and development advances in high hazard environments. Also, an increased awareness of risk highlighted for communities the weaknesses in economic development models, whereby logging and mining were identified as increasing risks, and thus raised as advocacy issues.

Despite the challenges and need for quick action the field trip highlighted that emergencies and major disasters can also present an opportunity for designing more sustainable long term programmes that reduce risks. Important underlying factors of social vulnerability are exposed by disasters and can be accompanied by an increased political will to focus on the underlying issues creating an opportunity to raise the importance of DRR both in the wider community and with development actors and institutions. To take advantage of this window of opportunity, emergency responses need to manage the longer term perspective of the affected community in conjunction with the immediate focus of saving lives and responding to immediate needs. In this way emergency interventions, such as cash and food for work, can be designed not only to respond to immediate needs but also lower a community's future vulnerability. As such, it is important that long-term development activities will not be halted during an emergency. Likewise, development activities and their overall goals should be designed to allow for adaptation and adjustment to new needs emerging in a post-disaster situation.

During the field visit it was seen how emergency responses were progressively built upon over time to address underlying development issues. This was achieved through working with and building local institutional capacities; be it local community based organisations, local and national NGOs, local and national government.

A key learning was the potential of the DRR framework to support holistic programming across humanitarian and development boundaries. This poses the

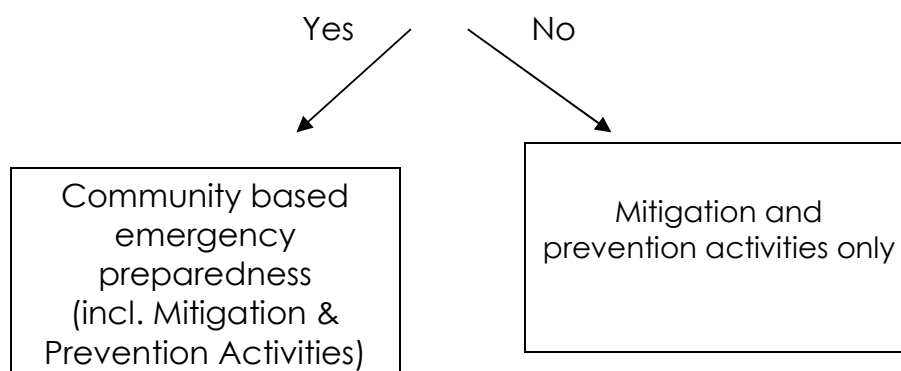
challenge for development agencies and staff to think outside their respective area of expertise in terms of programming and finance.

**Box 3: Deciding when to emphasise community based emergency preparedness in Central America**

DRR is a concept that promotes a holistic and long term perspective of development that seeks to reduce people's risks and vulnerabilities. It acknowledges that much can be done to proactively reduce risk and vulnerabilities. Disaster risk reduction at a practical level is implemented through preparedness, mitigation and prevention measures. The nature and relative importance of different measures may differ according to context and the nature of hazards faced by communities. For example, community based emergency preparedness may need to be emphasised in areas which face frequent sudden onset hazards (e.g. hurricanes, flooding) while in other situations (e.g. drought linked to chronic food insecurity), it would be given lower weight.

As a general rule Trócaire in Central America decided to work in community based emergency preparedness in areas where at least two major events happen within 5 year period. It also works in mitigation and prevention in these areas. In areas where the return period is longer, Trócaire decided to work exclusively in mitigation and prevention activities.

Return period > 2 major hazards/events within 5 years period?



Within organisations humanitarian and development staff can bring different competencies to programming. Humanitarian staff may have experience and developed considerable expertise on preparedness while development staff may have experience and expertise in the areas of mitigation and prevention. Sometimes this can lead to staff from different backgrounds referring to DRR measures as their particular area of expertise. However, what is important in integrating DRR into programmes is to use the different expertise that the different programmes offer to enhance humanitarian and development programming.

#### **4.4 The Importance of Building Local Institutional Capacity**

The importance of supporting local institutional capacity and processes rather than creating new and parallel structures was highlighted. It was seen that in responding to disasters it is important for international agencies to move away from leading responses to building on existing structures and processes, no matter how weak. Various examples of building local capacity were looked at during the trip. These ranged from local community groups, local government, local and national level NGOs, to national government disaster management commission. The field trip highlighted a number of points:

Much can be achieved by supporting local capacity to effectively integrate risk reduction measures. The visits to community groups, local government and local NGOs demonstrated examples of how risk reduction changed work practises. These ranged from new livelihood strategies, Community Based Preparedness, Early Warning Systems, Local Infrastructural improvements, Environmental Protection and Land Use Planning etc.. The field trip reinforced the need to work on risk reduction in a holistic, contiguous basis across humanitarian and development programmes. This challenges development agencies and donors to develop and support flexible long term programmes that are adapted to local needs. It in turn challenges development agencies and donors to overcome obstacles linked to administrative classifications of programmes or the restricted nature of funding. Furthermore, to effectively support local institutional development requires a harmonisation and coordination of approaches amongst donors and development partners.

The field trip highlighted the importance of a national framework headed by a National Level Disaster Risk Agency with local level structures and representation, which incorporates civil society. The effectiveness of a National Disaster Risk Agency is strongly linked to their legal authority, internal management structures and capacity, and relationships and communication with other statutory bodies and line ministries.

The experience from Honduras' COPECO (The National Contingency Commission) highlights the importance of integrating DRR across all sectors. DRR needs to be incorporated as a component of the portfolios of each line ministry. Therefore it is necessary to have light structures that ensure coordination and harmonisation across government structures and that have the necessary authority and political will. It was noted that political support for emergency preparedness and response is easier to get than a political commitment to integrate disaster risk reduction across all sections of government. Also, the need to increase governments' technical capacity to understand the nature of different hazards such as climate change, geological risks etc. were highlighted.

#### **4.5 The Importance of Advocacy**

Advocacy is a key tool for linking local, national and international efforts to reduce risks and was an important strategy used by the different actors. Effective Disaster Risk Reduction is dependent on a number of stakeholders coming together. Government, private sector, communities and NGOs all have a role to play in



reducing disaster risk. Governments do not often see it as a priority and investment in prevention and/or protecting the poor does not generally get the attention it requires. Disaster Risk Reduction, therefore, is not just a technical issue, but fundamentally a political one. Identifying high risk areas and responding to the needs of people living in these areas requires political will and leadership at the local, national and international level. Advocacy is necessary to achieve this political commitment.

At a local level, participatory approaches were used effectively for advocacy. Risk mapping, for instance, proved to be a powerful advocacy tool when used with local political decision-makers. The maps clearly identified what the authorities do, can do, and cannot do. Moreover, the risk maps often identify conflicting stakeholder interests.

The visit also illustrated the potential for National NGOs to link work at local level to national policy frameworks. National Level NGOs were involved in both supporting local and national government structures/frameworks to deliver on the risk reduction agenda, as well as challenging them where they fell short. In both Honduras and Nicaragua, NGOs were supporting local government and the national disasters management commissions with training on community based preparedness, integrating risk reduction measures into development plans and mobilising and sensitising communities. Simultaneously, they also challenged the government to improve national policy frameworks for risk reduction and critiqued development models and weak environmental management which has led to greater vulnerability.

The experience has shown that it is important to work with the authorities (e.g. identifying champions within the government) and to fully exploit on-going processes and structures such as Poverty Reduction Strategies, National Development Planning Processes, Regional Agreements and legal frameworks to advance a risk reduction agenda. As a political issue, DRR also needs to be linked to debates and action on Climate Change Adaptation, Natural Resource Management, Trade Agreements and Debt Cancellation. In relation to issues with an international perspective, Northern NGOs have a role to play in ensuring their decision makers are familiar with Southern Perspectives.

## **5. LESSONS-LEARNED FROM THE MAPS 2008 THEMATIC STUDY PROCESS**

The MAPS 2008 Thematic Study was the second year of undertaking a thematic study (The 2007 Thematic Study focussed on Decentralisation and was led by Concern). Building on the experience of the first year a number of changes were made to the thematic study process. It was agreed that the 2008 MAPS Thematic Study would take a participative learning approach. This involved two distinct phases: (i) in Ireland regular meetings were held where MAPS Organisations presented their organisation's approach to DRR which was discussed/debated by the group and; (ii) a field trip to Central America to explore how DRR is integrated into programming. Opting for a participative learning process led to a number of different changes in the management of the process which included:

- Participation in the MAPS Thematic Study Steering Group was expanded to include programme staff, with the relevant technical expertise, and more than one representative per organisation.
- The nature of participation in the steering group was changed from an administrative role to also assuming responsibility for learning.
- The nature of the consultancy changed from documenting best practice to facilitating learning amongst the steering group members.

The steering group reflected on the process in Ireland and on the field trip and identified strengths of the process and areas for improvement. The group also identified ideas and suggestions for management of future thematic studies.

### **5.1 The MAPS Thematic Study Process in Ireland**

Factors that were identified as being important in the learning process in Ireland included:

- The topic was relevant for all organisations which motivated active participation by all participants. As DRR is a priority area for Trócaire, the study was an important aspect in meeting internal organisational objectives which facilitated the investment of time and organisational resources in the process.
- Each organisation's active input into the learning process promoted joint ownership. The phased and participative nature of the process facilitated the development of common expectations from the study. Also the length of time and depth of each organisation's participation in the process in Ireland ensured collective ownership of the learning process during the field trip.
- There was a positive dynamic amongst the group and an atmosphere that facilitated the open and honest sharing of experience and critical

engagement in discussions. Factors that contributed to this were: (i) the horizontal relationship with Irish Aid and its engagement as an equal partner in learning (ii) continuity of representation by organisations on the group and (iii) organisations' openness about the difficulties and challenges they were facing in relation to the theme.

- Administratively the process was well organised

Improvements identified for the process in Ireland:

- Participation in the process involved a significant amount of time which was difficult for some organisations. Work progressed well during meetings while collaboration via e-mail was difficult. In some cases, the lack of continuity of representation also weakened the dynamic of the process.
- Striking the balance between taking advantage of the expertise within the group and incorporating external expertise to challenge the group proved difficult. The expertise that the consultancy was expected to bring to the process did not live up to expectations nor did it capture the learning that took place within Ireland. The group assumed the responsibility for documenting this learning.

## **5.2 The MAPS Thematic Study Process during the Field Visit**

Factors that were identified as being important in the learning process during the field visit included:

- The field visit added to and enhanced the learning that took place in Ireland. It enabled a richer discussion on the topic and was key in deepening the understanding of the topic and different approaches taken to it. Some participants identified it as an essential component of the process.
- The preparation and organisation of the project and partner visits was excellent. The selection of partners and projects demonstrated a variety of approaches and measures used at different levels (community, municipal and national) and in different contexts (rapid onset and slow onset hazards).
- The methodology used during the field visit worked well. This included a mixture of action and reflection, pre-visit briefings and post visit discussions.
- There was very enthusiastic and active participation by all participants. Projects and organisations visited were open, gave generously of their time and engaged in frank and reflective discussions.

Improvements identified for the field visit:

- There was a very full meeting and travel agenda which meant that meetings and time spent in some locations was shorter than the group

would have liked.

- Not everybody who participated in the process in Ireland was able to participate in the field trip.
- The consultancy did bring structure and direction to the topics that participants were to focus on during the field trip but didn't live up to expectations in relation to facilitating or documenting the process. The group subsequently assumed this role.

### **5.3 The MAPS Thematic Study Process Recommendations for Carrying the Process Forward**

The group recommends that future MAPS Thematic Studies should also take a participative learning approach. This involves MAPS partners committing time to the process, ensuring continuity in their participation and creating an open environment for mutual learning and discussion. Undertaking a participative learning process also involves considerable investment in time by the lead agency. For this reason it is essential that the proposed theme is a priority to the lead agency and an important theme for the other agencies involved. Also the possibility of joint collaboration between agencies could be explored.

The field visit was seen as a very important component of the process but it is acknowledged that this is not something that every organisation may be able to facilitate. The possibility of joint collaboration between agencies could be considered to overcome this.

The consultancy for the thematic study has proved difficult with the consultants not meeting the expectations of the MAPS' agencies. A recommendation from this is that if a participative learning process is to be pursued then the consultancy to support the thematic study would emphasise the facilitation of learning with agencies themselves documenting this. As such resources used on consultancy may be better employed in supporting learning activities such as a field trip.

In relation to taking advantage of the learning from the current thematic study the following challenges were identified (i) How do we bring the learning from the group into our own organisations? (ii) How can the learning be shared with a wider audience of development actors in Ireland? (iii) How can we build on the work already done to ensure continuous learning? (iv) How do we advance the DRR Agenda as a group?

Ideas that have been identified to address these challenges include:

- There are a number of forums and opportunities to bring the learning from the study to a wider audience of development actors. These include the Dochas Food Security and Humanitarian Working Groups, The MAPS Joint Learning Forum and the MAPS Mid-Term Review.
- As a group there is a desire to have an ongoing process of mutual support, experience and resource sharing on DRR and it has been

decided to continue as a group. To advance this it was decided to have a planning day and to develop a plan of action for the coming year for the group.

- The group will also look at opportunities for advocating for DRR both within their own organisations and collectively as a group. Some opportunities for advocating for DRR include the development of Irish Aid's Humanitarian Policy, the MAPS Mid-Term Review and the implementation of the Hunger Task Force Report.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MAPS Partners Organisational Approaches to DRR**

## **CHRISTIAN AID IRELAND**

### **How DRR started in the organisation**

Christian Aid is the official development and relief agency of over 40 churches representing most denominations in UK and Ireland. It works in over 45 countries in the world where need is greatest, regardless of race, creed or religion. Christian Aid implements programmes through partners, which alleviate poverty and help poor people find their own solutions.

Within Christian Aid, DRR started as Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness (DMP). A focus on DMP was initiated based on learning through humanitarian response programmes. It emerged from interventions in areas where disasters were frequent, that there was a need to move away from repeated relief towards mitigating against the worst affects of hazards and reducing community's vulnerability to such hazards.

The DMP focus was reviewed and changed to a more holistic DRR focus based on learning emerging from interventions where a DMP focus was integrated. This shift to DRR took place during 2005-06.

Since then, the DRR approach within Christian Aid has been evolving and broadening in scope. This has changed to incorporate a greater focus on governance, advocacy, climate change adaptation and livelihoods focus. Christian Aid plans this process of change to culminate into a successful integration with the sustainable development approach promoted within the organisation.

At present, Christian Aid has implemented pilot programmes in countries across the globe focusing on this holistic interpretation of DRR. These pilot programmes addressing both natural hazards and economic shocks are centred around the concept of 'resilience'. The pilot programmes have generated a thorough body of knowledge, skills and learning which are being constantly used to strengthen our work

Besides these pilot programmes, the process of integrating DRR into humanitarian and development programmes has been initiated.

### **The organisational set up for DRR**

At present, the DRR team is part of the Humanitarian division. This is mainly due to the fact that DMP focus was pioneered within the humanitarian division which has since evolved to DRR. Within Christian Aid, there has been a debate on whether such a placing is suitable given strong roots that DRR approach has with development as opposed to being limited to humanitarian response. There has therefore been a debate whether the team should be placed within Livelihoods or Sustainable Development programmes.

In order to overcome the danger of DRR becoming boxed in solely with the humanitarian division, strong intra-divisional links have been established between the DRR team and other teams in the organisation. This includes livelihoods, sustainable development and advocacy teams.

In some country programmes, in country DRR teams have been fully integrated with the development teams, e.g. in Malawi and East/Horn of Africa.

DRR is taken forward by a team of 4 fully dedicated persons who are based in the Humanitarian Practice, Accountability and Advocacy Unit of the Humanitarian Division. Besides this, dedicated DRR officers are located within some country teams while in other country, the issue is taken forward by programme officers/emergency officers.

## Focus areas for DRR

The Christian Aid DRR policy has 2 main lines of action:

Self-protection: uses participatory methods to develop community action plans where people at risk, local NGOs and the local government come together to prevent disasters associated to natural hazards and to work collectively for reduction of their vulnerability towards disasters. Community-based and community-led plans are at the centre of such interventions.

Social protection: mostly advocacy work at national level to ensure there are appropriate social safety nets, civil protection systems, micro-insurance for the poor or similar social protection mechanisms to protect people from the risk of being trapped into poverty because of the effects of disaster events. These social protection mechanisms can be based in public services (as a Emergency Response system that acts whenever a disaster happens), market-based (as insurance against drought available to smallholder farmers) or civil society based (as an NGO-friendly laws or the encouragement of cooperatives and self-help groups)

The following sectors are critical for Christian Aid's DRR work:

- Ø Water
- Ø Food Security
- Ø Agriculture
- Ø Natural Resource Management
- Ø Sustainable Development
- Ø Disasters associated to natural hazards
- Ø Poverty reduction,
- Ø Working in slums and other urban areas.

The Christian Aid Ireland MAPS programme is supporting the DRR approach through the secure livelihoods objective, entry points for introducing and taking forward this approach differ depending on context, for example, the Afghanistan programme is responding to chronic drought and therefore introducing DRR in terms of mitigation against a predictable disaster. In other MAPS country programmes the entry point has been climate change adaptation.

## Lessons to date

- Emergency preparedness and management had traditionally been analysed and addressed in a segmented manner through separate interventions related to emergency response, physical security, social protection, food security, livelihoods or political advocacy. The holistic concept of DRR has incorporated all those areas in a way that has reinforced each stage and ultimately increased the effectiveness of the combination as a whole.
- The use of PVCA (Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment) introduced a true participatory approach securing broad inclusion of the village members, motivating community engagement and encouraged local ownership. In using PVCA the partners were able to separate out vulnerability to natural hazards as the focus of analysis, while at the same time identifying and clarifying how vulnerability is an integral aspect of livelihoods security. It is now suggested that all Christian Aid livelihoods programmes use PVCA in early design and planning stages to complement baselines, strengthen



participatory approaches and optimise relevance through ensuring a focus on risk and capacities that will mainstream DRR into livelihoods.

- Small pilot projects along with small infrastructure/mitigation works had benefited the community, embedded the vulnerability analysis among them and served as an important tool for mobilising community for collective action.
- The fact that Christian Aid managed the pilot projects in a flexible manner ensured that the broad concept of DRR could be contextualised to the realities of the community. These pilot projects have also allowed us to undertake or commission a significant amount of research which will support policy influencing and advocacy, as well as programming. Much of this research looks at the governance systems and processes needed for delivering risk reduction and climate change adaptation on the ground. Some examples of the breadth of work can be accessed at [www.climategovernance.org](http://www.climategovernance.org) (a joint initiative with the Institute of Development Studies.)
- Promoting sustainable livelihoods served to reinforce household ability to manage risk and reduce vulnerability
- Advocacy, governance issues and accountability have emerged as key aspects which need to be included in a programme to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.

### **Challenges and future plans**

- The introduction of a new conceptual approach has been challenging as it needed Christian Aid teams as well as partners to be adequately supported for developing an understanding, planning, implementation as well as strengthening governance and accountability.
- Such processes require a longer time frame. This is a challenge also with respect to back donor support which may not always be for a sufficient period of time.
- The process of induction and support to teams and partners needs to be more methodologically tailored to different audiences and for different levels and stages of programme cycle.
- More emphasis on capturing of learning from the processes and its sharing needs to be developed. This can be a challenge given the different capacity levels along with geographic and programmatic focus of each country programme. Implementation of a fully holistic plan will be a challenge on a large scale. Self replication models need to be explored more.
- The interface between bottom-up participatory learning approach and top down technology transfer is often not a comfortable one. The challenge is to use a rolling or modular participatory process to bridge the differences between the two at the community level.

## CONCERN WORLDWIDE

### How DRR started in the organisation

Evidence at the field level began to show that risk, in its broadest sense, needed to be incorporated holistically into all programmes: Concern's programme countries were particularly prone to disasters many of them cyclical or occurring regularly. Disasters were disproportionately affecting our target communities, and negating or at times reversing the impact of our programmes. The logical conclusion to this was that development could only be sustained by sound understanding of and response to the negative impact of disasters. Many country programmes were also (and still are) either in conflict or post conflict contexts, and where development can also be hindered by a range of other factors including poor governance, an absent or inappropriate policy environment, agricultural/livestock hazards (crop pests/diseases) and health hazards (HIV and malaria). This led Concern to view DRR more broadly beyond natural hazards.

It should be noted that components of DRR had long formed part of programming particularly in livelihoods programmes, where country programmes tried to address vulnerability and mitigate the impact of shocks as part of sound, long term development projects. The mitigation of shocks as a strategy to reduce vulnerability was a component of the 2001 strategic plan. Concern conceived DRR as sitting within its sustainable livelihoods framework, with a strong focus on the protection of assets and livelihoods options.

The Emergency Unit have strongly advocated for DRR to become more central to Concern's development and emergency programming. They have largely been responsible for distilling Concern's field level experience and thinking on DRR. These are described in Concern's 'Approaches to Disaster Risk Reduction' paper 2005.

### Organisational Set-Up for DRR

DRR was included as a central cross cutting issue to be mainstreamed in all development and emergency context programmes in the current organisational strategic plan which began in 2006.

Responsibility for leading on thinking, developing strategy, providing technical support on DRR lies in the Emergency Unit. Within the unit the DRR advisor is focused full time on DRR but is also supported by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

All training activities related to DRR are budgeted for at the organisational level by the Emergency Unit, but also funded by country programme budgets through the staff training allocation.

### Focus areas for DRR

In order to further staff understanding of DRR the Emergency Unit has undertaken training workshops at country programme level in all but two country programmes. The training focuses on the theory and principles behind DRR, and provides staff with the skills and framework necessary to carry out a risk and vulnerability analysis in any given context. Central to the training is that DRR comprises three key responses – mitigation, preparedness and advocacy. An internal review of the training and awareness has been completed. The reviewed showed that there is a good level of understanding, and acceptance of the importance of DRR for Concern's work. However, not all country programmes are

systematically translating the knowledge into practice.

The DRR training review resulted in Concern launching the DRR lead country programme<sup>6</sup> in early 2008 in order to ensure that DRR practice should be more central and consistently applied. The lead country process also aims to develop models of effective DRR work and share lessons learned throughout the organisation. Through the lead country process each country committed to making risk and vulnerability analysis central to their strategic planning and programming work; developing Concern and partner capacity to respond to emergencies through developing a PEER (preparing for effective emergency response) paper and action plan and implementing that plan; having at least 2 focal people with time and resources to focus on DRR; and ensure they document, monitor, and learn from engagement to disseminate to other fields.

The contexts in which Concern works are becoming increasingly violent mainly due to political circumstances (Pakistan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone) and economic factors (Haiti). The link between security and programming in terms of scale, approach and relevance, as well as Concern's understanding of and respect for the nature and implications of a humanitarian identity all impact on the level of security at field level. For this reason the Emergency Unit continues to emphasise risk analysis as central to the choice and design of programme interventions, which should also incorporate security analysis as a fundamental component.

The Emergency Unit's remit also includes humanitarian protection, which is a further form of risk understanding and management. Humanitarian protection is a widely acknowledged as a huge issue in all of the countries where Concern works and particularly given that our target group is comprised of the poorest and most vulnerable and marginalised.

The process of developing an understanding of risk has led the Emergency Unit to advocate within Concern the importance of the analysis and response to risk in contextual analysis and programme design. Reasons for this include that an understanding of risk links closely with other Concern cross cutting issues (Equality, GBV, HIV and AIDS).

### **Lessonsto date**

It was acknowledged that developing a sound understanding and good skills in DRR theory and application would not be achieved by the DRR training workshops alone. The review has demonstrated that to achieve practical application requires sustained support over a long timeframe.

The importance of technical quality, particular in mitigation structures, has been highlighted in a number of country programmes. Ensuring proper engineering support is vital. This highlights the need to negotiate a good balance between community participation, technical quality/input and cost. Depending on the risks having a good community participatory process is not sufficient to mitigate risk on its own.

The food price crisis which began in 2008 highlighted the fact that the context in the countries where we work can change very rapidly, very quickly. For example, the programming in Haiti has always incorporated an understanding of the hurricane risk, but was relatively slow to realise the full implications of the rising food prices. To reduce the risk to very poor people necessitates a constant review of the risk environment (natural, economic, political, social) as it does not remain static.

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<sup>6</sup> Pakistan, Bangladesh, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Burundi, Nepal

### ***Challenges and Future Plans***

While responsibility for DRR lies in the Emergency Unit, Concern sees DRR more broadly as a cross cutting approach to all programmes along with Equality, HIV and AIDS, Rights Based Approaches and Partnership. Ensuring that all of these are included in contextual analysis, project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation remains a profound challenge for the organisation. Concern has been developing a contextual analysis framework in order to support country programmes understand their environment. How to design appropriate interventions, and the roll of DRR in informing programming choices remain ongoing areas of debate.

As mentioned above the lead country process will continue for three years. In 2008 it was hindered by a number of emergency responses. The lead country process is the main plan for the near future in order to develop evidence of good practice and disseminate learning.

# GOAL

## **How DRR started in the organisation**

GOAL is a not-for-profit, non-denominational relief and development organisation which pursues objectives independent of any military, religious or political interests. Since its inception in 1977, GOAL has responded to a significant proportion of natural and man-made hazards and has spent well in excess of half a billion Euro on humanitarian program in 50 different countries.

While GOAL does not have an explicit DRR policy, the components of it have been incorporated into its country programs and at head office level. At the country level, GOAL has been developing a DRR / DRM model, which in principle includes disaster response, recovery, risk identification, mitigation, risk transfer, prevention, and emergency preparedness. Currently GOAL is not implementing the whole model as such but rather specific areas in specific countries, particularly in Honduras and Malawi. While GOAL's work is predominantly development, the agency has also a lot of disaster response and recovery expertise and maintains contingency plans and procedures to rapidly respond to sudden onset emergencies. Increasing focus is given to longer-term activities such as prevention and mitigation within a livelihood approach.

The length of funding for emergency activities varies but can be relatively long-term. As such, GOAL is still active in a number of acute emergencies such as Darfur while in Burma for example the activities only lasted for 9 weeks, due to limited access to the beneficiary population beyond the agencies control. In attempting to mainstream DRR into emergency activities, GOAL has faced some resistance which has since been addressed through the development of solid preparedness and mitigation strategies. The different experiences over the last couple of years, have stressed the need for further adaptation of the DRR message. GOAL has therefore also decided that the promotion of a DRR agenda in the organisation's work should be gradual. The organisation is currently piloting a new 'lessons learned and review process' starting at country level focusing on five key areas and it is expected that DRR mainstreaming will be integrated into this process.

## **The Organisational set-up for DRR**

Overall, there is a general consensus within GOAL that while we carry out DRR activities within almost all programmes, there is a need for the organisation to develop greater DRR thinking and planning which will in turn become a core component of what we do.

Currently, DRR strategies are integrated into both emergency and development programmes which are jointly managed by GOAL's Operations Manager and Emergency Coordinator with support from GOAL's 15 member technical and rapid response team.

GOAL's board members are actively involved in the agency's strategic direction and these members periodically visit programmes on an individual basis to inform these strategic decisions. The board meetings have regular presentations on specific programmes by head of the departments, which in principle could also include a presentation on DRR / DRM.

## **Focus Areas for DRR**

Most of GOAL's work is implemented through a community approach which focus on its four key sectors (Health, Livelihoods, Education and HIV/AIDS). GOAL implements its programmes

through a mixed approach of partnerships and direct implementation as the situation dictates and according to the availability of suitable local capacities. GOAL still maintains a large locally recruited staff in the 12 programme countries where the agency is currently active (with approximately 2,300 national staff and 150 internationals). GOAL has a principle of always collaborating and coordinating with government or another local coordinating bodies. Delegation of authority and decision making at field level is a major strength of GOAL's work and policy development is led from the bottom up (GOAL has a technical team which supports this function). At HQ level, the organisation is structured into operations and support functions, where support includes technical development and emergency response with DRR focal points placed in both these divisions.

GOAL's DRR approach can be divided into four distinct categories: Preparedness, Mitigation; Response; and Recovery with a fifth areas, risk identification, requiring future development and focus within all our programmes.

GOAL encourages training of all staff members at all levels and ensures that a certain amount of field staff's time is set aside for this. Moreover, the organisation has a R&D budget that can be used for instance for general capacity building and concept development. All GOAL staff are encouraged to apply for a training and the organisation has created a Best Practice Website and a Discussion Forum aimed at improving organisational effectiveness and efficiency. The internet is also used for in-house on-line training courses. Finally, it should be noted that organisational capacity building includes exchange visits of country teams.

### **Lessons to date**

GOAL acknowledges that it is imperative that we systematically review all our operations both during and post implementation in order that mistakes made and lessons learnt are incorporated into future programme planning decisions. For this reason, GOAL's 'lessons learned and review process' was developed to ensure that we maximise the effectiveness of our work.

### **Challenges and Future Plans**

Areas which are currently being developed within GOAL to improve its DRR approach include the systematic multi-hazard identification and vulnerability analysis in all our countries of operation, how to ensure we focus on communities existing coping strategies, dissemination of information to all field offices on DRR in GOAL and the development of a practical guide on 'how to do DRR' which will enhance all our operations. A practical focused and achievable means of doing this is important for GOAL as an organisation.

## IRISH AID

### ***How DRR started in the organisation***

Irish Aid's programme countries have been particularly prone to an increasing number and frequency of crises and disasters (e.g. food crisis in Southern Africa; conflict in Uganda/Sudan; recurrent food crisis in the Horn of Africa). Within these countries it is the poorest men, women and children who have suffered the most significant human and economic losses. These disasters and chronic crises are increasing pressure on Irish Aid's development programmes, disrupting programming and diverting budgets away from development to disaster relief.

Responding to the repeated need for humanitarian interventions in countries where Irish Aid has made significant development investments, stimulated a process in Irish Aid on identifying how best to improve the links between relief and development. What has emerged is a greater appreciation of the need for better coherence between these traditionally separate areas of work. Simultaneously, the need to focus on risk and vulnerability has emerged as a priority for more effective aid delivery. Over the past number of years, Irish Aid has undertaken a body of work on Vulnerability and Linking Relief, Recovery and Development and from this DRR has emerged as a key policy and programming issue.

### ***The organisational set-up for DRR***

Poverty reduction, to reduce vulnerability and increase opportunity is the overarching objective of Irish Aid as stated in the White Paper (2006). In focussing on vulnerability as a key poverty reduction priority, the White Paper recognises that poverty is multidimensional and changes over time. It commits Irish Aid to maintaining a strong focus on the immediate well-being of the poorest, as well as addressing the structural factors that cause and perpetuate their poverty. This includes actions which contribute to the reducing the risk of disasters – encompassing all stages from prevention, preparation, immediate response and recovery.

While recognising the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction in the White paper, Irish Aid is still at an early stage in developing a systematic, institution-wide approach to integrating DRR across all areas of work. There are a number of examples of good practice models across the organisation in Irish Aid's direct engagement at country level, in our work with partners, and at international policy level. Currently, responsibility for leading on policy, technical support and strategy development lies in the Emergency and Recovery Section of Irish Aid.

### ***Focus Areas for DRR***

Interventions that prevent or reduce the risk and impact of disaster, along with those that enable recovery, form an essential part of Irish Aid's humanitarian and development work. Key areas of action for DRR work include:

- a) **Good practice models in Programme Countries:** At a programming level the Country Strategic Planning process has presented Irish Aid with an important entry point and opportunity for addressing risk and vulnerability in a more planned and systematic way. A number of countries (in particular Ethiopia, Zambia, Malawi and Uganda) have adopted a 'vulnerabilities approach' to the country programme, enabling the Irish Aid programme to better plan, prepare for and mitigate the impacts of crises.
- b) **Dedicated Budget and Partnership Funding:** Funding is provided to disaster risk reduction activities from the Emergency Preparedness, Post-Emergency and Recovery Assistance (EPPR) Budget managed by Emergency and Recovery Section.

This supports pilots and innovative work being undertaken in this area by Irish Aid partners. Funding for DRR for MAPS partners is provided through the MAPS funding and these partners play an important role in reducing risk and building local capacity to respond to disasters.

- c) **Partnerships and Policy Engagement:** Internationally, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), to which Ireland is a signatory, provides the global blueprint for disaster risk reduction efforts. Irish Aid is active in a number of policy fora at the international level in advocating for a more systematic approach to Disaster Risk Reduction and ensuring linkages with the Climate Change Adaptation agenda. Important policy fora include: the EU Disaster Risk Reduction working group; the OECD DAC network on poverty reduction (POVNET); the OECD DAC network on environment (ENVIRONET); the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- d) **Institutional Strengthening:** A number of initiatives within Irish Aid have focussed on developing enhanced competencies and a better institutional understanding of Linking Relief, Recovery and Development, risk and vulnerability reduction. These include: supporting staff training/workshops to introduce the key concepts; technical support for incorporating vulnerability and risk reduction into Country Strategic Plans; commissioned analytical work to document Irish Aid programme experience to date and to learn from the experience of other organisations. Political commitment to DRR is reflected in the White Paper, which includes specific recommendations on responding to vulnerability; exploring how we can contribute to social protection programmes<sup>7</sup> and in particular, developing a coherent approach to food insecurity through the establishment of the Hunger Task Force.

### **Lessons to date**

Experience from within the Irish Aid programme suggests that there are key factors critical to the success of an adopting a DRR approach.

- a) **Understand the situation** – This involves poverty and vulnerability assessment and an analysis of risks including conflict. Data does not need to be collected from scratch – existing resources can be used to build up a picture of the country context.
- b) **Adopt a whole of programme approach** – This means involving everybody and not just specific sectors. Fragmented, sectoral approaches confine thinking on DRR to sections working on emergency and recovery and food security. The approach is only effective if applied across the programme in all sectors and in all partnerships.
- c) **Develop effective structures** to facilitate communication and a whole of programme approach – Rethinking the structures in a donor agency or embassy can help to facilitate a DRR approach by facilitating communication between relief and development specialists and identifying opportunities for joint work.
- d) **Make DRR part of development activities** – DRR needs to be part of all development activities to be effective.
- e) **Core capacity** – Certain specialist capacities are required to make DRR effective. Development specialists cannot be expected to adopt a DRR approach without input from specialists in humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention and climate change adaptation.

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<sup>7</sup> While social protection programmes are increasingly being recognised as a workable approach to addressing the problem of protracted vulnerability, they do not represent the only way to approach the challenge



- f) **Leadership and collective commitment** – Strong leadership and buy in at all levels is critical for DRR. DRR involves bringing expertise from different parts of the organisation together and this requires collective conviction and commitment to be successful.
- g) **Effective monitoring** – Disaster Risk Reduction will not happen overnight. Expertise, information and commitment need to be established and programmes will need to be flexible to allow the approach to develop and mature over time. An effective monitoring system is a vital part of this process.

### **Challenges and Future Plans**

The following key constraints or challenges have been encountered in adopting a more strategic approach to DRR:

- 1) **Compartmentalisation:** A compartmentalised, sectoral approach to programming makes it difficult to carry out broad poverty analysis as issues are analysed on a sectoral basis. In addition, the separation of relief and development has resulted in the issues of relief and development being dealt with separately in Irish Aid and initial problems with staff seeing DRR as the sole responsibility of the Emergency and Recovery Section.
- 2) **Capacity:** Efforts to promote DRR can be constrained by lack of adequate expertise and understanding of key concepts. It is important to invest in staff (internal and partners) to ensure sustained capacity to engage with these issues. Capacity building contributes to ownership of the DRR agenda.
- 3) **Government as a catalyst:** In practice partner government institutions responsible for promoting DRR are generally weak with poor resources and capacity. Irish Aid should look to support strengthening partner government leadership and institutional structures aimed at reducing risk in hazard-prone developing countries.

Irish Aid is still at an early stage in developing a systematic approach to integrating DRR throughout the organisation. In terms of next steps Irish Aid has made a commitment to develop a Recovery Policy, which will include a focus on vulnerability and risk reduction and Linking Relief Recovery and Development. This will provide a framework to begin the roll out of an institutional understanding of DRR across the work of organisation.

## **SELF HELP AFRICA (SHA)**

### **How DRR started in the organisation**

Self Help Africa's goal to sustainably improve livelihoods in rural Africa is, in many ways, already working towards a reduction in the impact of disruption to people's lives when affected by natural hazards. By reducing poverty and improving access to food and livelihood security, while assisting communities to protect or repair their local environments, SHA programmes are empowering people to recover from disaster in less time.

In addition, focusing on rural economic development and on partnerships gives an additional safety net to communities and allows them to plan for and respond to disasters in a coordinated and effective way. However, SHA must continue to build resilience in rural communities by integrating new and innovative DRR ideas across programmes, while remaining flexible in project implementation, in order to respond to new threats from climate change. SHA must remain resourceful in planning for and reacting to regular hazards which affect communities across Africa, both natural and man-made.

African smallholder farmers are facing enormous environmental challenges and these have to be central concerns across Self help Africa's programmes. SHA has to claim and emphasise its important role in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The projections are for arid and semi-arid areas to suffer even more erratic rains. Given the evidence of climate change already coming from many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, DRR will need to include climate change adaptation measures. SHA need to emphasise its existing DRR value and adaptation to climate change in programmes, while exploring how to improve in this area.

### **Organisational set-up for DRR**

Self Help Africa's programme countries are Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. SHA is currently undergoing an organisational restructuring as part of a merger between SHDI and Harvest Help/UK. While DRR was not an explicit theme of the merger discussions, related issues such as mainstreaming of climate change and environment were. The moment is thus seen as particularly good for introducing the DRR concept.

The rationale behind the merger was that both organisations had very similar histories and ethos and shared a common vision and focus on sustainable agriculture, food and livelihood security and both concentrate on practical support to rural communities in Africa. While SHDI traditionally was involved in direct implementation in partnership with local government and communities, Harvest Help had always worked through local NGO partners. Within the integrated organisation, there is scope to develop the partnership approach further, to include agencies involved in disaster mitigation and response.

Self Help Africa recognises that to make a significant impact, it is critical that the model of practical support is underpinned by continuing research and learning so that it can contribute to and influence policy development in support of smallholder farmers. We believe that by combining and sharing our experiences and learning from other organisations we will achieve greater impact in all our areas of operation.

### **Focus areas for DRR**

SHA's goal is to sustainably improve food and livelihood security in rural Africa, through integrated area-based programs, focusing on crop and livestock production, rural economic development, capacity building and natural resource management. SHA work through both Area Based Programmes, implemented directly by SHA staff and through local partnerships, with many programmes targeting semi-arid and drought and flood prone areas. SHA does not have experience in emergency responses per se but see it as important to build a capacity for understanding of relief interventions among local staff and partners, including capacity to identify needs and training in undertaking rapid assessments. SHA plan to work

with funding agencies to ensure that the funding is sufficiently flexible to allow for instant use for rapid assessments in their programme areas when an emergency strikes.

### **Lessons to date**

Being an organization without emergency response capacity, SHA has taken advantage of various collaborative opportunities, including with other Irish NGOs. In 2007, for instance, SHA partnered with Goal among others for relief assistance in Kenya, following the post election violence in Rift Valley, with SHA providing the support of staff with local knowledge while Goal provided emergency relief items. SHA has integrated DRR thinking into its strategic plan and will continue to seek to build partnerships with organizations with relief experience and capacity. It is considered important to ensure that the relationships will be well established before emergencies emerge.

Risk analysis is seen as particularly important in SHA's planning. As part of the DRR focus, SHA considers not only natural hazards but also other stressors such as civil unrest, water shortage and land degradation etc, which are closely linked to vulnerability and coping capacity and should therefore not be separated from integrated risk and vulnerability analyses. As part of SHA's work in Eastern Africa, conflict resolutions training for local farmer associations has been provided in cooperation with local partners, incl. Baraka Agricultural College.

Due to the wide geographical coverage of SHA programmes, we face a number of different challenges when it comes to DRR. In the past 2 years, SHA programmes and their beneficiaries have been affected by floods, drought, increases in food and fuel costs and displacement due to political violence. SHA has therefore recognised the need to fully integrate DRR thinking into its long term strategy.

### **Challenges & future plans**

Throughout 2008, there has been a growing consciousness of a world food crisis with food prices reaching record highs and with an estimated additional 75m people falling below the poverty line facing hunger and malnutrition. This global food crisis is not the result of a sudden emergency but is linked to long term trends and exacerbated by factors such as climate disruptions and changing land-use patterns. Lack of investment in agriculture and underinvestment in rural infrastructure compound the problem while failures of past policies have resulted in low levels of global food stocks and a weakened and uncompetitive agricultural sector in many developing countries.

As population continues to increase where soils are fragile and water scarce, poorly managed farming intensification is resulting in soil erosion, loss of soil fertility and a growing scarcity and competition for water resources. The stress on natural resources is compounded by climate change. Risks in agriculture have always been associated with climate, but recent evidence on climate change indicates that between 75 million and 250 million people in Africa are projected to be exposed to increased water stress. The area suitable for agriculture is expected to decrease, in particular along the margins of semi-arid and arid areas, and in some countries yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50%.

In 2009, SHA is planning the most appropriate method for introduction of DRR thinking into its programming. Learning from its experience with other mainstreaming activities, such as gender, HIV/AIDS and NRM, SHA know that the integration will take time and calls for constant support. SHA is therefore planning a staged approach for the DRR introduction. A gradual introduction will take place in the coming years, beginning with staff training and the regular preparation of country and programme risk analyses, which will complement the ongoing activities with DRR impacts.

It is recognised that while there will be need for continuous training of SHA staff members, there is also a special need in the beginning to train resource persons. Attached is an extract from SHA's DRR policy which forms the basis for the introduction of DRR thinking across the organisation.

## SHA DRR Policy [Extracts]

SHA's **policy** is to integrate DRR thinking and planning into all aspects of programming. The **strategy** involves an ongoing process to incrementally build community resilience to disaster.

### Objectives

- To integrate country risk analyses into quarterly and annual reporting, in order to identify vulnerabilities and hazards, with emphasis on environmental impact from climate change.
- Assess and improve SHA team capacities to deal with disruptions to programmes.
- Improve project design and implementation strategies in order to incorporate the development of community resilience to natural and man-made hazards.
- Identify and develop local capacities to respond to crisis through coordination with other agencies and local partnership networks.
- Together with local communities and partners, advocate at higher levels for disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness strategies to be put in place.

### Methodology

The following mitigation and preparedness techniques are built into each SHA programme.

#### Mitigation

Building capacity to anticipate, resist, cope with and recover from the impact of hazards

<b>Aims</b>	<b>Means</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Identify, assess and reduce risk	-Conduct regular risk analyses. -Prepare reports & lessons learned on previous project disruptions	-Task CDs with reflection and assessment of recent national and local disruptions. -Task Project Managers with village level case studies of recent disruptions, their effects and response from local and outside actors.
Adopt a Risk Management Approach to programmes	-Incorporate risk analyses into programme planning and implementation. -Incorporate flexibility into project plans, allowing for response to local disruptions.	-Train CDs and Programme Managers in Risk Analysis. -Ensure thorough Risks and Assumptions discussion in all proposals. -Discuss programme and budget flexibility with donors. -Build relationships and networks with emergency agencies in-country and prepare plans for coordinated responses to disasters. -Build capacity of staff in emergency response
Build community resilience by reducing vulnerability to hazards	-Ongoing process to minimise the impact of potential hazards or disasters on communities.	-Local capacity development -Developing sustainable livelihoods -Introducing diversity of income -Building local partnerships -Spreading gender awareness -Improving access to health & education -Advocacy, networking, coordination on DRR issues -Learning and sharing best practice

**Preparedness**

Minimise destructive and disruptive effects of hazards

Minimise Destructive Effects through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Natural Resource Management</li><li>-Reforestation</li><li>-Irrigation and drainage</li><li>-Asset management (protecting resources)</li></ul>
Minimise Disruptive Effects through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Diversified income generation</li><li>-Secure food and livelihood</li><li>-Rural economic development (Saving &amp; Credit -Schemes, Agricultural Coops, Seed &amp; Grain Banks)</li><li>-Access to social services (health posts &amp; schools)</li></ul>

## TROCAIRE

### ***How DRR started in the organisation***

The concept of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was introduced into Trócaire in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Similar to global advances on thinking on disaster risk reduction, Trócaire's own experience of living in a world of increasing risk drove the necessity to incorporate a DRR approach within our programmes. Key events that raised the profile of DRR within the organisation were Hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998; the Southern Africa Food Crisis in 2002; the recurrent Food Crises in the Horn of Africa; and The Tsunami in 2004. As a result programmes and interventions in these countries and regions began to articulate a DRR approach.

It is important to note that the concept of DRR was introduced into the organisation by country and regional programmes and not by driven initially by headquarters. Central America, East and Southern Africa and Trócaire's Tsunami response supported staff and partner capacity development in understanding the concepts of DRR. Over time Central America developed a body of work on participative risk analysis and mapping, community preparedness and reducing vulnerability through housing, environmental protection and drought resistant agriculture. East and Southern Africa focused on reducing risks, especially drought, in agricultural production systems as well as identifying particularly vulnerable groups to be targeted. The Tsunami response incorporated a significant body of work on community based awareness, producing an emergency preparedness video, and developing local organisation's capacities to respond to humanitarian crises. These experiences illustrated to the organisation that there was a significant opportunity to do more work to reduce people's risks and there was a significant experience within country and regional programmes that the organisation could benefit from. What was not need was a systematic approach to promote the integration of DRR within programmes throughout the organisation.

### ***The Organisational Set-up for DRR***

While Trócaire's Strategic Plan of 2002-2005 acknowledged the importance of DRR it did not provide the resources/mechanisms to incorporate and disseminate the learning from our own experience throughout the organisation in a systematic way. This commitment to prioritising DRR within the organisation was made in Strategic Framework of 2006-2016. It established DRR as a priority theme in two of the six organisational programmes; the Livelihoods and Humanitarian programmes. The new strategic plan and the structure that accompanies it significantly increased the capacity of Trócaire to integrate a DRR approach within its programmes. In Maynooth, the positions of DRR Programme Officers were created in the Humanitarian and Livelihoods programmes<sup>8</sup> in 2008 to drive DRR forward as a priority theme and build an organisational understanding of the issue from both the livelihoods and the humanitarian perspectives.

Simultaneously, the new decentralised structure considerably increased technical capacity at the country and regional level. This included the creation of 6 Regional Humanitarian Officer Position and new livelihoods programme officers based in country. This has provided Trócaire with an unprecedented level of human resource capacity to drive the organisation's strategic framework, its programme objectives and priorities.

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<sup>8</sup> Originally there was a debate whether or not there should be a Livelihood's Programme Officer with a remit for DRR. It was decided that it was important to identify DRR within the livelihoods programme to ensure long term prevention and mitigation strategies are identified within livelihood programmes, to promote a broad understanding of DRR from the prevention, preparedness and mitigation aspect, and to reinforce coherence between the humanitarian and livelihood programmes.

## Focus Areas for DRR

At the institutional level Trócaire began developing a systematic approach to DRR beginning in 2008. Work at promoting a DRR approach is focused on 2 of Trócaire's 6 organisational programmes; the livelihoods and humanitarian programmes. It challenges us to proactively reduce risk and vulnerabilities in programmes by improving our analysis and incorporating prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures. At this stage increasing technical capacity is a necessary condition for advancing the integration of DRR within individual country and regional programmes but poses a number of challenges such as (i) developing a common language and understanding of what DRR means for Trócaire (ii) building out technical expertise in this area while (iii) retaining our focus on the underlying structural causes of vulnerability.

Initiatives at developing an understanding of DRR have included supporting staff training and publishing resources to introduce the concepts of DRR and participative tools that can be used with communities to work on DRR. A number of staff have been trained on the participative risk mapping methodology used in Central America and on Disaster Risk Reduction in the University of Cape Town. Resources on DRR have been published and distributed throughout the organisation. These include *Overview Document on Disaster Risk Reduction* and a *Manual on the Participative Risk Mapping Methodologies* used in Central America. In addition partners have been supported to develop specific resources including *Tales of Disasters* DVD for Emergency Preparedness and *Disaster Risk Management Training Manual and Documentary* by CADECOM in Malawi. At a programming level opportunities for integrating DRR are being identified in the development of regional and country strategies; regional humanitarian strategies and in new programme development.

The year 2008 also marked the beginning of a number of institutional initiatives on DRR and Climate Change Adaptation. A cross organisational working group, called the **Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Steering Group** was established to oversee the development of an organisational understanding of these issues. The livelihoods and humanitarian teams and four overseas countries are represented on the steering groups. This group identified 4 organisational initiatives to explore further the themes of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. These organisational initiatives are (1) Adaptation & Mitigation Pilot Technologies (**ADMIT**), (2) **The MAPS Thematic Study** (3) **Impact of Climate Change on Households Research**, and (4) **the DRR Cross-Organisational Working Group**. The **Admit** Pilot Projects have been identified in Mozambique, Malawi, Honduras and Brazil and are currently being implemented. These projects seek to identify best practice and measure the impact of adaptation and mitigation activities; explore the potential for replication and the suitability of projects for the voluntary carbon offset market. This pilot will continue throughout 2009. The **MAPS Thematic Study in 2008** held a series of meetings where MAPS Agencies partners presented and discussed their organisations' approaches to DRR and included a learning trip to Trócaire's Central America's DRR work. The **Impact of Climate Change on Household Research** is at the formative stage and the research questions and methodology are currently being developed with the support of Institute of Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Sussex. The **DRR Working Group** is made up of Programme Staff from Livelihoods and Humanitarian Programmes from the different regions has been launched and has a programme of work up until June 2009. The purpose of this working group is to develop technical capacity at regional and programme level on DRR and share experiences across the region.

## Lessons to Date

At an institutional level the following lessons have been identified:

- To advance the DRR agenda needs resources and commitment. While DRR had been acknowledged in the previous Strategic Plan it has only been with the strong

commitment in the current plan, supported by additional human and financial resources that the agenda has advanced.

- Assigning responsibility for DRR in both the Livelihoods and Humanitarian Programme provided an opportunity to foster greater linkages between the two programmes and to benefit from different areas of expertise related to DRR (Humanitarian's focus on preparedness and response measures and Livelihood's focus on prevention and mitigation measures)
- Organisational initiatives and pilots can be useful for profiling and highlighting an area of work. Committing to lead the MAPS Thematic Study on DRR helped provide a valuable learning opportunity at institutional level while the Pilot Projects provide an opportunity to focus on and document measures within a climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction framework.
- There is also a need to move slowly when integrating new approaches to programmes as there is a risk that priority themes can lead to separate and parallel bodies of work such as "Stand Alone DRR Programmes" when the purpose of adopting a DRR approach is to strengthen existing programmes. As such it is important to be flexible in the use of DRR concepts and language so that they are related to and build on existing work.

### **Challenges and future plans**

Trócaire is still at an early stage in developing a systematic approach to integrating DRR throughout its programmes. Regions which introduced DRR to the organisation have progressed in developing their DRR approach and an institutional understanding of what DRR means for Trócaire has considerably advanced in the past year. At programme level there is still a degree of uncertainty as to what DRR is, and a tendency to establish DRR programmes to address the priority given to the theme as opposed to adjusting existing programmes. The priority now is to roll out the institutional understanding developed of DRR across the organisation and promote greater linkages/sharing of experience across regions on DRR. The current work of the DRR Working Group is seen as important to addressing this challenge, charting further areas of work, as well as disseminating the learning from the Admit Pilot Projects, the MAPS Thematic Study and the Impact of Climate Change of Household Research.