

## Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction

**In the past decade**, the frequency and magnitude of hazards that trigger disasters have increased globally. While Africa may not be the most disaster-prone continent, it is the worst affected by hazards that cause a greater impact on the lives and livelihoods of people. Inadequately-prepared African governments and their development partners tend to focus more on emergency relief. While this addresses the short-term needs of populations affected by disasters, it fails to enable them to build resilience and adapt to climate change. The emergency relief approach heightens the aid-dependency syndrome and impedes the ability of local communities and organizations to release their own potential to manage disasters.

IIRR Africa's regional DRR strategy identifies the most effective way to reduce the risk following disaster is to work with local people to identify and analyze their vulnerabilities and capacities and to develop an action plan that will be effective and sustainable in their context.

### The Project

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) is a multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction, which brings communities to the center of hazard identification and analysis, risk assessment and managing disaster when it occurs. In addition, it aims to mainstream disaster risk reduction in sectors such as health, food security and climate change adaptation. At a more practical level, CMDRR is about how communities can cope with a given hazard to reduce fatal damage to lives and livelihoods. In the event of drought, it supports innovative initiatives to bring water nearer to their villages and reduce the burden on women and girls. In health, it is about communities managing the impact of HIV/AIDS or malaria and reducing the suffering of women and children.



To attain the above, CMDRR addresses four interrelated objectives:

- Improve governance structures by promoting increased participation of civil society and vulnerable communities in the decision making process to mainstream DRR
- Broaden the influence of vulnerable communities and organizations by working with them in policy formulation and legislation by effectively lobbying and advocating at local and national levels
- Promote the culture of disaster risk awareness, preparedness and prevention among members of vulnerable groups in pilot communities in the region
- Enhance the technical and managerial capacity of local organizations and local communities to analyze the causes and consequences of hazards, climate change factors, and to design effective interventions and adaptation strategies

## The Approach

CMDRR is based on principles of people-centered community empowerment processes where community members are the prime movers. It employs a learning-by-doing approach where action research, documentation and local capacity building are the centerpieces. Further, the approach employs broad partnership where local actors, such as CBOs, NGOs and local governments, act as facilitators while IIRR provides overall capacity development support through structured trainings, documentation and mentoring. As such, IIRR works with 20 CBOs, local government units and international NGOs. The implementation and piloting is done by community organizations. Documentation of best practices and using these lessons for training and policy advocacy are integral components of the approach. Trainings on aspects of CMDRR, documentation, lobbying and advocacy have enhanced the capacity of local organizations.



## Early Outcomes

In Uganda, formerly warring communities have formed a group called Karamoja CMDRR Consortium. Through this consortium, the partners have amplified their voices and attained recognition from the government, UN agencies and their communities as legitimate players in disaster risk reduction. Taking advantage of their unity, they are now using outputs of their community disaster risk assessments to inform district development plans.

## Future Plans

The pastoralist communities in the three countries who are most affected by serious hazards like drought, conflicts, flash floods and malaria live in vast regions and are often widely dispersed. The program aims to reach the majority of these communities, but IIRR and its partners must first consolidate gains made so far.

In the project areas, IIRR and partners plan to bring on board new partners in different locations of the three countries. Thereafter, the program will expand to other countries in eastern and southern Africa such as South Sudan, Tanzania, Malawi and Somaliland. This will take advantage of the available learning opportunities in each of these countries. The program also intends to deepen interaction with the government at regional and national levels to influence policy formulation through documented results.



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