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DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT (DRM)

Climate change, the rapid spread of settlements, and limited space and natural resources all contribute to more frequent and more serious natural disasters. Large swathes of the world's population are increasingly at risk from natural hazards and related environmental and technologic disasters, which may reverse decades of development efforts. Poverty and vulnerability to disasters are interdependent phenomena, since poor and disadvantaged groups tend to be disproportionately affected by disasters. DRM is an effective contribution to sustainable development. It is the systematic use of strategies and policies, the development of capacities, and the implementation of prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures to avoid or mitigate the impact of disasters. DRM and poverty reduction have mutually reinforcing objectives, since risks can be systematically reduced by examining their causes and addressing communities' vulnerability.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation addresses disaster risks through specific DRM projects and by incorporating DRM into its development interventions.

HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

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FROM RESPONSE TO RISK MANAGEMENT

Historically, interventions related to disasters have largely focused on humanitarian relief activities after an event. Yet preparedness, mitigation/prevention and risk transfer have gradually gained in importance as an aspect of long-term development work. The concept of isolated risk reduction interventions before, during and after an event has evolved. Now, measures are systematically combined and coordinated in an integrated disaster risk management cycle.

Integrated risk management cycle (FOCP, FOEN 2001/2012)

Helvetas' DRM interventions focus on prevention and mitigation. Management and engineering measures are combined to avoid and reduce adverse effects. The promotion of early warning systems and contingency planning has increased people's preparedness. Furthermore, local insurance schemes and (in-)formal emergency funds help to transfer and share specific risks. A holistic DRM also requires that the remaining risks must be understood. Awareness-raising, advocacy and policy dialogue, institutional and personal capacity-building are key elements at all stages in a comprehensive DRM approach.

Helvetas' DRM interventions (red) based on SDC's risk staircase model

MAINSTREAMING DRM IN DEVELOPMENT

As disasters pose an increasing threat to long-term development, governments, development agencies and other actors are increasingly recognising the importance of building DRM into their development planning, as DRM links humanitarian and development action.
Helvetas' development projects focus on poverty reduction. To ensure the intervention's sustainability in the face of hazards and climate change, DRM is systematically integrated across the board into various projects and country programmes, based on a livelihood approach. Vulnerabilities and capacities are analysed through the specific local livelihood assets (natural, physical, social, human, financial and political). These local livelihood aspects form the basis for reducing the risks of disaster and for strengthening people's resilience. It is crucial to work with community-based organisations and build partners' capacities. Drawing on its long-standing experience, Helvetas has pioneered a generic approach to integrating DRM into community-based development interventions. It has developed appropriate tools that have been adapted to, and replicated in, a variety of contexts.

Generic steps for community-based DRM

1. **Capacity-building** of project staff, partners and community facilitators,
2. Elaboration/adjustment of a local **DRM mainstreaming tool,**
3. **Risk assessment** based on identified hazards and vulnerabilities,
4. Elaboration of **DRM action plans** with measures,
5. **Implementation of DRM measures** by communities,
6. Guidance and advocacy to **mainstream DRM** into development plans.

DRM is increasingly important for more recent working approaches of Helvetas projects such as market system development interventions (value chain, M4P projects). These projects require an even more integrated focus on project interventions, e.g. on value chains or market interventions to identify relevant risks and to develop business-oriented measures, which should not be considered as an additional cost, but rather as cost-effective investments to secure production. Helvetas applied this approach to value-chain projects in Bangladesh ('Shamriddhi'/'Shomoshti'), Armenia ('Markets for Meghri'), Georgia ('Market opportunities for livelihood improvement') and to develop the job market in Bosnia Herzegovina ('Market makers').

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Below the example of a specific DRM project in Bolivia.

Risk reduction and governance project in Bolivia

Awareness rising on DRM with producers in Bolivia

This DRM project, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), started in 2005 and is currently in its fourth phase (2014-16). Helvetas implements the following two main components:

1. **Resilient infrastructure investment** related to agricultural production and water supply; and

2. Good governance and participation in **risk management** related to public investments.

There are intelligent links between so-called "soft" and "hard" components related to infrastructure and governance. The project provides **support for building the institutional and personal capacities of local partners** such as municipalities, associations of municipalities, ministries, public authorities and other interest groups. The project is documented on its website (www.rrd.com.bo) and includes publications about:

- Guidance for integrating DRM into local development planning;
- Local risk insurance schemes for farmers;
- Mitigation infrastructures using local bio-engineering techniques.

ADVOCACY FOR DRM

The key international framework is the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015–2030 (SFDRR), which was recently renegotiated and endorsed by 187 countries. It aims to substantially reducte disaster risks and losses of life and livelihood assets by preventing new risks and limiting existing ones based on four priorities for action:

1. Understand disaster risks,

2. Strengthen governance to manage disaster risks,

3. Invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience,

4. Enhance disaster preparedness, response and reconstruction.

Helvetas is engaged in advocacy at both international and local levels. Through its projects in partner countries Helvetas campaigns for civil society's voices and needs to be taken into account. In its comprehensive DRM/ACC projects in Peru and Bolivia, Helvetas has a particularly active policy dialogue for promoting and integrating DRM into relevant development policies. As a core member of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform and representative of civil society, Helvetas participated in negotiating the new SFDRR as part of the Swiss delegation for a people-centred and action-oriented framework.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORK

The close links between natural hazards and climate change are widely recognised. These amplify extreme weather events, especially droughts and floods. Anthropogenic activities are having an increasing impact on the environment. This leads to an amplification of existing risks, or even the creation of new risks such as urban flooding or technical disasters after an earthquake. An effective DRM approach therefore has to consider the linkages and synergies with related sectors.
Helvetas' institutional structure fosters an interdisciplinary approach and synergies between DRM, Climate Change (CC) and Natural Resource Management (NRM) – all under the umbrella of environment and climate change – as the following projects illustrate:

DRM & ACC: In its projects in Bolivia ('Disaster Risk Reduction') and Peru ('Adaptation Climate Change'), Helvetas combines DRM & CC in its local mitigation measures and nationally through its policy dialogue activities.

DRM & NRM: In Haiti, where deforestation and inappropriate agricultural practices aggravate landslides and floods, NRM and DRM are combined in various livelihood projects through awareness-raising activities, bio-engineering measures, etc.

DRM & water: In Nepal, Pakistan ('Water User Management Plans') and Haiti ('Eau Potable Assainissement'), water-related disaster risks are addressed in WASH infrastructure and integrated water resources management projects.

DRM & governance: Participation and risk governance are combined in governance projects in Bangladesh ('Sharique') and Bolivia.

DRM & fragility: In Helvetas' country programmes and its projects in Afghanistan and Haiti, the implications of political fragility are integrated into the overall programme management.

FROM RISK TO RESILIENCE

Resilience is an essential new element of the post-2015 frameworks. Helvetas has a complementary approach to promoting current and future risk and resilience-building for a disaster resilient development, by which communities are helped to adapt to climate change to enable them to manage natural resources, deal with disaster risks and thereby improve their livelihoods.

Helvetas' approach to reduce risks and strengthen resilience

WORKING IN NETWORKS

The DRM stakeholder map is broad and involves governmental actors at various levels, the private sector, (international) NGOs, scientists, and so on. If these are to join forces, they must share experience, exchange knowledge and know-how, and network.

Helvetas interacts and joins forces with the following networks and communities of practitioners:

Swiss NGO DRR Platform: Helvetas is a founding and core member of this network of practitioners.

GNDR: As a member of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform, Helvetas collaborates with the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) on advocacy, resilience and other related topics.

PEDRR: Helvetas is a member of the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR) which promotes ecosystem-based DRM approaches.

SWP: Exchanges on DRM about water-related disasters and resources in the Swiss Water Partnership (SWP).

DRM at Helvetas

- **Bolivia**: www.rrd.com.bo, https://bolivia.helvetas.org (movie: https://vimeo.com/102867026)
  A targeted DRM project ('Disaster Risk Reduction – Risk Governance') documented over various years
- **Bangladesh**: https://bangladesh.helvetas.org/en/projects_bangladesh
  Mainstreaming DRM in a market development project ('Samriddhi/ Shomoshti') and a governance ('Sharique') project
- **Afghanistan**: https://afghanistan.helvetas.org/en/projects
  DRM in rural livelihoods projects ('Improving livelihoods of rural communities'/'Green Saighan')
- **Haiti**: https://haiti.helvetas.org/fr/activites
  DRM in the context of natural resource management
- **Peru**: https://peru.helvetas.org/es/proyectos_mandatos
  DRM linked to climate change ('PACC')

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Weinbergstr. 22a, PO Box 3130, CH-8021 Zurich
Maulbeerstr. 10, PO Box 6724, CH-3001 Bern
ecc@helvetas.org, www.helvetas.org