



SWISS NGO DRR PLATFORM

IMPLEMENTING, LEARNING, ADVOCATING

**Reducing Disaster Risks
and Adapting to Climate Change**

Cover photo:

Building water catchment, Mali. A project of Caritas Switzerland (© Andreas Schwaiger).

Small pictures from left to right:

Social mapping, Bangladesh. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (© HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation).

Planting seedlings for reforestation, Honduras. A project of the Swiss Red Cross (© Swiss Red Cross).

Disaster Simulation, Indonesia. A project of HEKS (© HEKS).

Back-Cover from left to right:

Participants of Peer Exchange in Ethiopia

Participants of Peer Exchange in Haiti

Participants of Peer Exchange in Vietnam

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FOREWORD

Dear Readers,

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risks of disaster. Historically, DRR has been an important topic for Switzerland and it still remains at the front of our planning. Its relevance is also reiterated in the latest Bill on International Co-operation of the Federal Council and is again highlighted through Switzerland hosting the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, May 2013.

No single group or organisation can address every aspect of DRR. Thus, the resilience of societies to disasters must be reached through a concerted and directed effort of all stakeholders, including governments, international agencies and NGOs, as well as civil society, academic and technical institutions and the private sector.

By promoting DRR through outreach into communities, NGOs ensure a link from policies to practical and measurable results on the ground. These results in turn feed back into stronger policies and better aligned strategies.

In order to protect development achievements and goals, sharing knowledge on DRR is crucial.

Summarised in this publication are some good practices of Swiss NGOs active in DRR, both at home and overseas. These practices were identified through a peer review, using online surveys, a review of the outcomes of some DRR programmes and peer learning workshops with local and national partners.

I am confident that the resulting experiences will provide a solid base for successful future projects and for the application of effective integrated risk management.

Through co-operation between Swiss NGOs and DEZA, the findings of this review will be carried into the field to benefit some of the most vulnerable and at-risk communities who are prone to natural and technical hazards, ultimately contributing to protecting lives and properties.

I thank the contributors to this peer review for their valuable and important work.

Ambassador Manuel Bessler

Vice-Director, Delegate for humanitarian aid and head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA)

THE SWISS NGO DRR PLATFORM

Vision

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform is a network of Swiss-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to increasing the resilience of women, men and children, communities and governments to all aspects of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA).

Its main goal is to help people and organisations prepare for and adapt to climatic trends and shocks, to more effectively mitigate risks and to enhance risk prevention in the humanitarian and development sectors. The Platform operates through specialist advisory services, by enabling and supporting policy debate and by capturing and sharing knowledge and experiences relating to DRR and CCA of Swiss NGOs and their partners.

Objectives

- Enhance the quality of DRR and CCA services of member NGOs through a mutual exchange of information.
- Contribute to shaping Swiss DRR and CCA policy by capitalising on Swiss NGO experiences.
- Position Swiss DRR and CCA expertise in international co-operation by establishing and enhancing partnerships.

This brochure highlights the range of expertise and commitment for promoting DRR and CCA measures among Platform members and outlines some of their ongoing and planned work. Real time examples of best practices are portrayed through a peer review of DRR/CCA related work in Ethiopia, Haiti and Vietnam.

An outline is also given on page 16 to 20 of how Platform members contribute to the implementation of the five actions lines of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) with recommendations on how to enhance the impact of the HFA for communities. This is followed by some reflections by Platform members on future directions in strategic frameworks, post 2015.

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INTRODUCTION

Switzerland – An Integrated Risk Management Approach

In 1997, the Swiss Federal Council established the National Platform for Natural Hazards (PLANAT), one of the first countries to take such a measure. As a consequence, the concept of assessing hazards and risks became co-ordinated and operational, with responsibility for coping with hazards being shared between federal, cantonal and municipal authorities, including land- and property-owners, civil bodies and the affected residents.

As a mountainous country, Switzerland has a long history of coping with disasters such as floods, storms, landslides, avalanches and earthquakes. Prevention and preparedness measures were introduced in the country as early as the 19th Century.¹

Switzerland's approach to forest management is an example of the country's recognition for preventive measures to reduce risks in the alpine environment. In order to cope with recurrent disasters in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a robust legislation was introduced governing forest management. Federal legislation of 1876 and 1902 prioritised the *social role* of forests over the interests of agro-pastoralism and land owners who used forest products as a source of income. The conflict of interest between the protective and social aspects of forests – as represented by the State – and the interests of mountain farmers and their co-operatives for pasture, to collect firewood or to produce charcoal had been taking place for more than 60 years and was only solved through changes in the economy of alpine cantons. By the end of the 19th century, degraded ecosystems and a growing population had made subsistence farming extremely difficult: work opportunities in the growing industrial sector promised better incomes. For instance, it is estimated that after the mega flood in

Ticino in 1868 about two per cent of the population left the canton and, from 1868 to 1930, emigration reached 20–30 per cent of the population.²

Disaster Risk Reduction in Switzerland's International Co-operation

Today, Switzerland's humanitarian and development agenda focuses explicitly on disaster risk management. Switzerland's 2013–2016 International Co-operation policy is based on five priority areas, of which the first refers to “preventing and overcoming crises, conflicts and catastrophes”. Recognition is clearly given to the importance of working in fragile and risk-affected areas – at state, regional and global levels – in order to foster and secure development.

The Role of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform

Climate change triggers new hazards and the potential scale and impacts of disasters are not always easy to calculate. Ecosystem loss, habitat degradation and the falling price of raw materials and agricultural products all lead to migration and increase peoples' exposure to risk, especially for the most vulnerable members of a community. Thus, an important question for Swiss NGOs working in international co-operation is “*How to ensure outcomes and results under increasing uncertainty and probability?*”

As a step towards answering this question, the Platform decided to conduct a peer review of some of its partners' real time experiences in order to understand what practices worked and under what conditions, and which did not work as well as had been expected and why not. Learning from past and ongoing experiences in this way is seen as an important contribution to the evolving thinking on DRR and CCA.

The resulting DRR Peer Review – which covered Ethiopia, Haiti and Vietnam – is presented below in the form of selected outcomes and lessons learned.

The three Peer Exchange locations Ethiopia, Vietnam and Haiti

1 Check dams, Ethiopia. A project of Caritas Switzerland.

2 Retrofitted house, Vietnam. A project of Caritas Switzerland.

3 Watershed management committee meeting, Haiti. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.



LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

Peer Review

Peer review and peer exchange is an effective way of reviewing a project, by learning from experiences and identifying lessons learned and by examining good practices or new lines of enquiry or approaches. It is a recognised method of knowledge and experience sharing, based on dialogue and mutual respect.

The objective of the current peer exchange was to give development and humanitarian practitioners, as well as specialists in DRR and CCA, the opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, questions and insights with other professionals working on this subject.

The Peer Exchange Method and Programme

Peer Exchange is a method based on field visits by two or more teams of people. One team starts – as the host – and calls on another team of people with experience in the respective field of activity to visit their projects and provide professional feedback.

→ Figure 1

The Peer Exchange was organised and designed according to the specific circumstances and needs identified at the three different locations. However, all exchanges were designed along the lines of the programme outlined in → Figure 2.

The Peer Exchange as Kick off for More in Depth Exchanges and Discussions

The idea of bringing different Swiss NGOs together in an open dialogue about successes and failures of their DRR and CCA projects was initially challenging. It turned out, however, to be an inspiring experience to see that in all three locations open and constructive dialogue was held and critical questions were dealt with in a professional manner. Good technical solutions were promoted in order to improve the overall impact. In order to reach the objectives of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform further similar exchanges will be necessary to further pool know-how among like-minded actors.

Figure 1: Peer Exchange Methodology

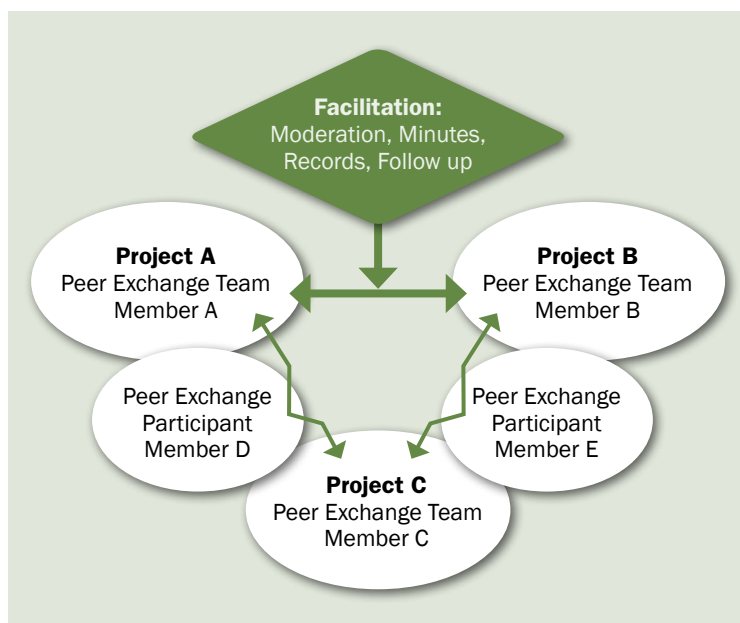
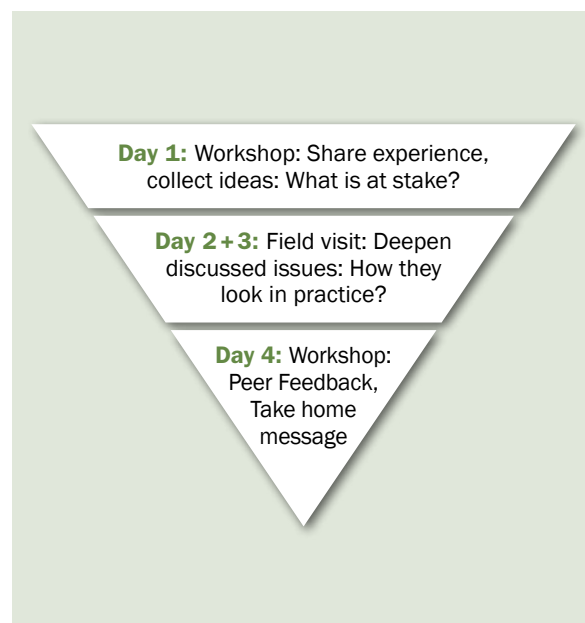


Figure 2: The Peer Exchange Programme





4 Working on the Six Sector Diagram, used in all three peer exchanges, Vietnam.



5 Exchanging experiences among platform members, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, participants were also members of the Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium. NGO partners included Caritas Switzerland and its partner ADCS, Fambidzanai and Christian Care, HEKS and its partner OSHO, Solidar, the Swiss Red Cross and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. A broad spectrum of knowledge was found within this group with practical experiences from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Switzerland and Zimbabwe. Their main skills related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and people were primarily interested in learning how to mainstream DRR within WASH projects.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, peer exchange participants represented HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Caritas Switzerland and the Swiss Red Cross as well as local implementing partners Challenge-to-Change, the Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, the Cao Bang Community Development Centre and the Vietnam Red Cross. Projects presented had a strong DRR focus, either as stand-alone (mitigation and preparedness) initiatives or as a component of build back better reconstruction programmes. The main hazards addressed included cyclones, floods, land erosion and saline intrusion.

Haiti

Participants in Haiti were representatives of member organisations of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform working in development projects, as well as reconstruction and humanitarian aid. Caritas Switzerland hosted the exchange in Pétion-Ville and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, MEDAIR and HEKS invited participants to visit their projects and share lessons learned and practices relating to reconstruction of earthquake- and cyclone-safe houses, as well as watershed management activities in Petit Goave and Cote de Fer. Terre des hommes, Caritas Switzerland, the Swiss Red Cross, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and HEKS, as well as a representative of the SDC, participated at the event.

LESSONS TO SHARE

How to Deal with Good Practices in Complex Systems

Work on DRR and CCA can be very context specific, which is a challenge when it comes to learning lessons and applying good practices elsewhere. Project realities also often evolve in complex situations, where outcomes sometimes cannot be fully predicted.

At the same time, small-scale interventions, which function in a certain place, and procedural best practices are identified quite easily, but how they can be transferred to other places?

The methodology used to present lessons from these peer reviews is based on a combination of Mc Gray's³ differentiation between impact and vulnerability and a separation recently proposed by an Indian NGO, WOTR⁴ → Figures 3, 4 and 5. The Mc Gray axis differentiates between the vulnerability focus addressing poverty or livelihood aspects and the impact focus which directly disasters or climate change. WOTR, on the other hand, differentiates between simple and complex realities and proposes to identify standardised best practices for simple contexts, good practices which can be scaled up in a same context and to provide "safe fail" recommendations for the more complex and challenging situations.

Challenges and recommendations or practices that need to be designed in a "safe fail" manner are presented on page 14.

Ethiopia

The two projects reviewed from the Tigray region by Caritas Switzerland and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation illustrated the use of different responses to natural hazards.

Hazards include recurrent droughts, flash floods and hail storms which lead to crop damage and loss of livestock and therefore increase vulnerability. In dry years, severe food insecurity can affect up to 40 per cent of the population. Bad hygiene practices and difficult access to clean water increase the risk of malnutrition, especially among children.

Global climate scenarios for this region predict a slight increase of precipitation and a moderate warming, while local experience already mentions that rainfall is now heavier, more localised and less predictable in both time and duration.

Despite regular food insecurity – and even famine – large-scale land grabbing is taking place in Ethiopia. According to the Land Matrix Partnership⁵, Ethiopia, through 56 agreements, has given almost two million hectares of some of its most fertile land to foreign governments or corporations – an area half the size of Switzerland. Agricultural crops are now grown on this land for export to, for example, Saudi Arabia, or are planted with crops for biofuel. This ongoing and worrying trend further endangers food security in the country.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's natural resource management project includes activities such as community institutional development, participatory watershed management, the intensification of farming systems and building resilience to climate

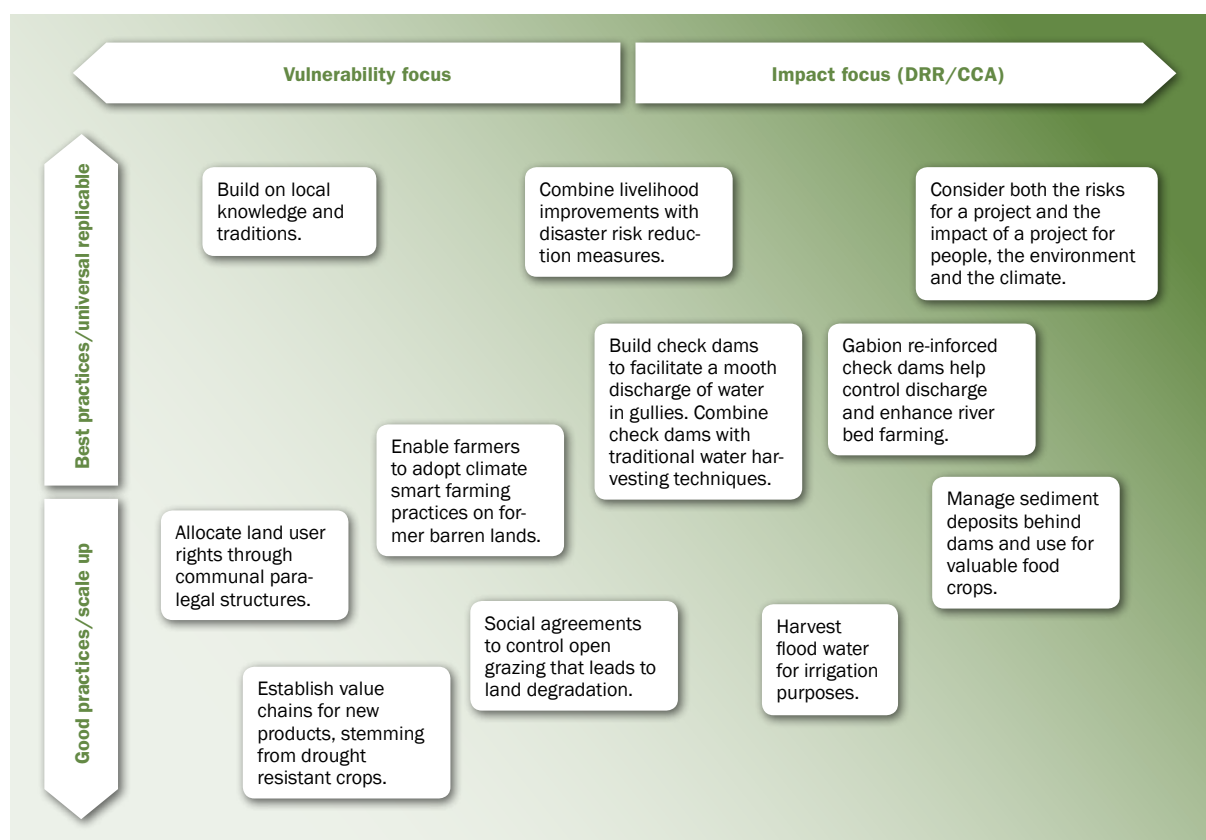
⁶ Greener land thanks to the Assabol Dam, Ethiopia. A project of Caritas Switzerland.

⁷ Cactus fruits (Beles), Ethiopia. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (© Pia Zanetti).

⁸ A place to go during floods thanks to an elevated gallery, Vietnam. A project of Caritas Switzerland.



Figure 3: Good Practices Ethiopia



change. The project has introduced drought resistant crops – such as cactus, which are also used for erosion control – and established value chains for new products. The approach concentrates on behaviour and practice change among the population, introducing a new diet for people (cactus products) and animals (fodder based on mixed cactus and salt bush feed), which can be sustained at a sufficient level even in years of drought.

In contrast, the Caritas project has a technical and engineering approach and harvests flood water from a concrete dam, collects and stores large amounts of water and has introduced irrigated gardening. High value fruit and vegetables are brought to the market and cash income is created.

Both projects work in watersheds, strive to enhance land ownership by poor families and restore degraded ecosystems in the upper watersheds by constructing check dams and promoting the use of traditional water harvesting techniques. → Figure 3

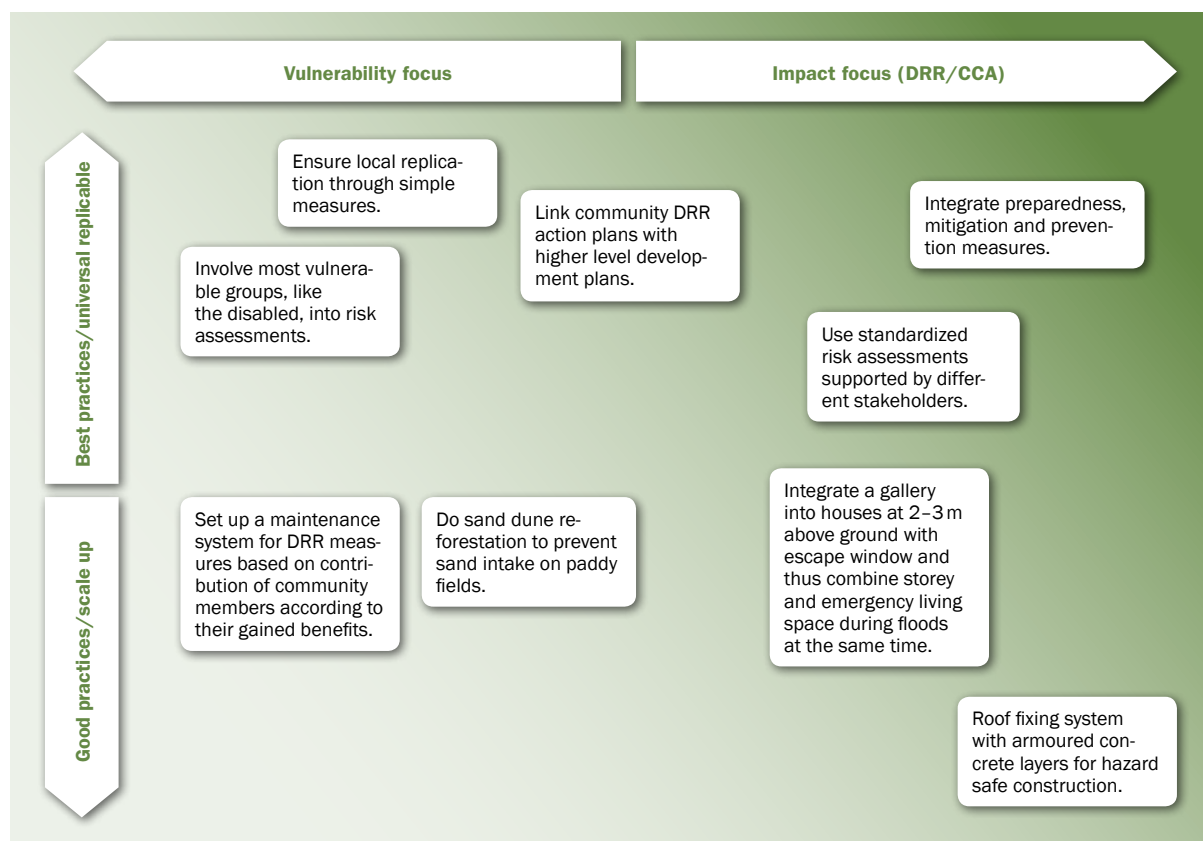
Vietnam

In Vietnam, the peer exchange examined the Rehabilitation and Disaster Reduction Project in Quang Binh Province, following Typhoon Ketsana. This initiative is supported by Caritas and its local partner Challenge-to-Change, the Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and the community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) project of the Vietnam Red Cross.

Vietnam is prone to cyclones, flash floods and droughts – increasingly so due to the effects of climate change. In the longer term it is predicted that other climate change effects will be felt even more. Already, salinisation of groundwater has contaminated drinking water resources and saltwater intrusions are damaging crop yields.

By the end of this century, millions of people will be forced to move from the country's long, flat coastline and from within the Mekong delta. Vietnam's topography, including that of Quang Binh province, is characteristic for a combination of different risks

Figure 4: Good Practices Vietnam



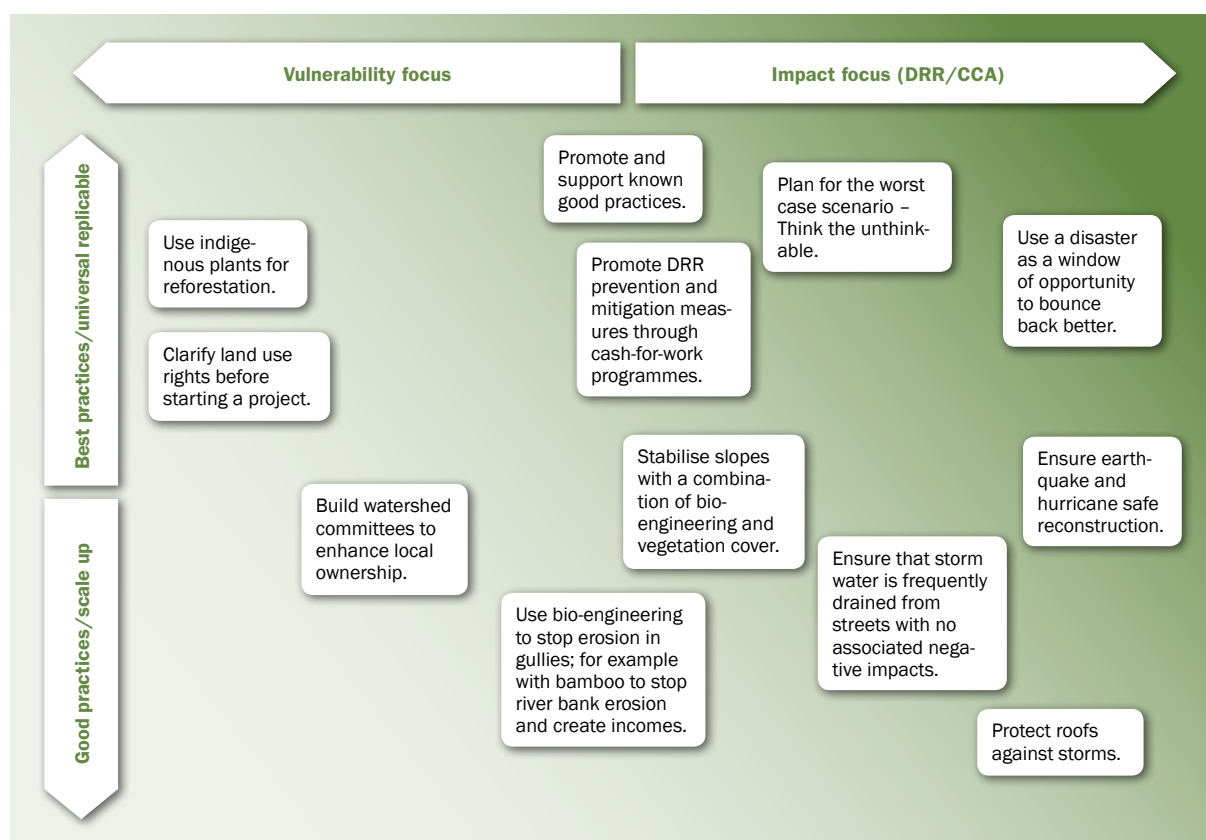
to happen, including typhoons, flash floods from the mountains, rising sea levels and even drought. The government is aware of what is at stake and is generally responsive, e.g. it enabled the use of a standard approach to assess risk and vulnerability – the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA)⁶ – which was developed by the Vietnam Red Cross. Efforts are still, however, needed to reach out further to marginalised communities, ethnic minorities and disabled people.

The CBDRM project comprises disaster preparedness – community organisation and early warning systems, for example – as well as risk mitigation measures to support the livelihoods of people, for example by using wind fences on dunes and earth dams to harvest and retain water.

⁹ Constructing drainage systems by cash for work, Haiti. A project of Medair.

¹⁰ Soil conservation, Haiti. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (© Rothenberger).

Figure 5: Good Practices Haiti



Caritas' DRR activities started in the humanitarian phase after typhoon Ketsana to promote and implement its build back better approach by retrofitting existing roofs and equipping houses to be better prepared for the next flood. Communal infrastructure is also being constructed in a seismic and cyclone proof way and disabled people are being supported to ensure their needs too are integrated into the VCA. → Figure 4

Haiti

Poor governance and lack of political stability and investment have made Haiti the poorest country in the western hemisphere. The January 2010 earthquake killed some 222,570 people and affected 3.7 million more.⁷ Today, some 200,000 people still live in tents or temporary shelters.

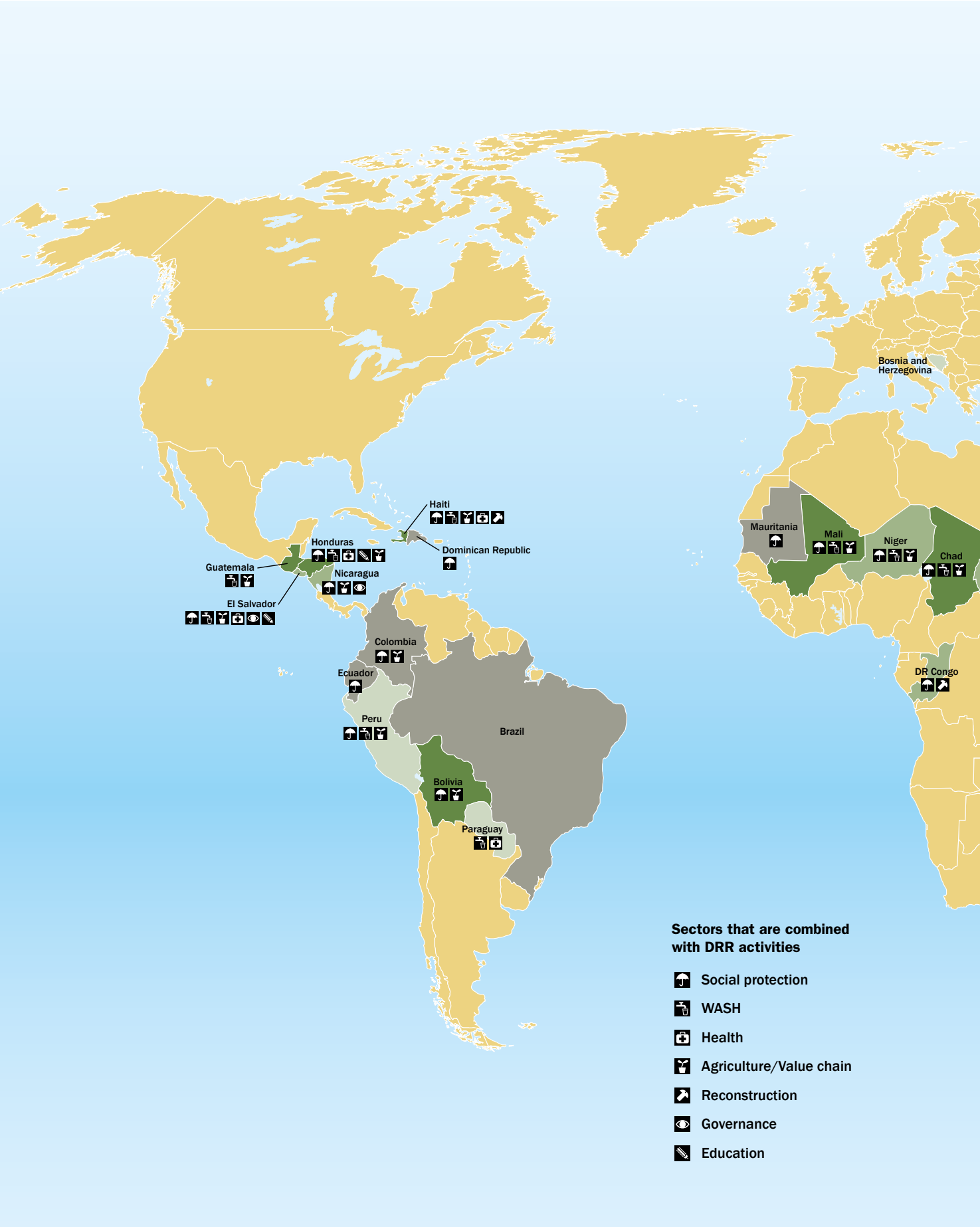
More recently, in 2012, hurricanes Sandy and Isaac caused considerable damage to forests and crops, while torrential rain and flooding again destroyed thousands of houses and killed 50 people. As a result, an estimated 1.5 million people were rendered food insecure.

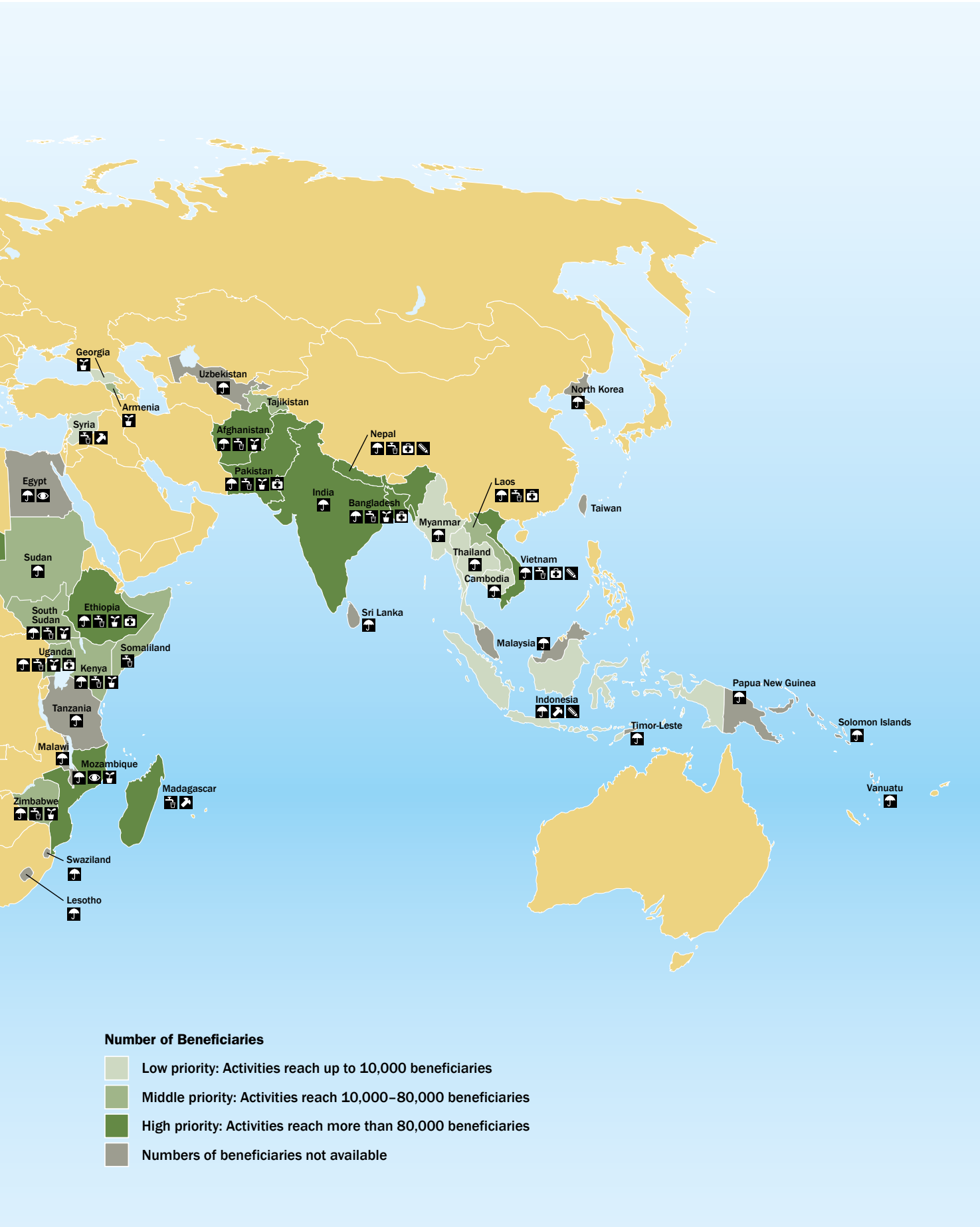
The high degree of poverty in Haiti has led to increasing pressure on natural resources in many watersheds. Cutting trees to make charcoal for the local market and inappropriate cultivation on the steepest slopes are often the only options for people to make a living. Degradation of water catchments now means increased and immediate risks for the downstream population but it also undermines longer term options and opportunities for sustainable management and livelihood recovery.

The projects of HEKS and Medair in Haiti respond to those mega-disasters through the reconstruction of earthquake- and hurricane-safe housing and cash-for-work programmes for food insecure people in affected areas. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, through their watershed management project, addresses landslides and small-scale flash floods.

The goal of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's project is to stop the spiral of increasing poverty – which is leading to higher pressure on natural resources and higher exposure and vulnerability – and reverse it to create more resilient and adapted agricultural practices and natural resource management systems. → Figure 5

DRR FOCUS COUNTRIES OF SWISS NGOs





CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following challenges and recommendations are some of the most relevant aspects revealed through the peer exchanges. As such, they highlight aspects that need to be considered when designing interventions in complex situations in a “safe-fail” manner, i.e. if a failure occurs, hazards and vulnerability are not increased.

Ensure Adequate Funding for Ecosystem Services

Interventions such as greening watersheds or stabilising slopes or dunes through reforestation bring direct and immediate environmental benefits to a region or community. They also, however, benefit downstream communities who may be affected by flash floods or who rely on ground water extraction during dry periods. The benefits of such ecosystem services are often, however, not compensated by those who may benefit from them. In order to ensure adequate funding for such services, new and more sustainable financing mechanisms need to be developed and made available and accessible to local communities.

Develop Applications which Can be Replicated with Peoples' Own Resources

Bounce back better is an important principle applied by the Swiss NGO community in the reconstruction of earthquake- and hurricane/typhoon-safe housing. Using norms and standards defined at international and national levels helps guarantee an improved housing standard, preventing loss of life and assets in future events. However, while NGOs put effort into transferring technical know-how for better planning and implementation, the lack of financial resources will often only allow a certain portion of a community to benefit. A challenge is thus to develop multi-hazard resistant houses, that can be replicated with limited financial resources.

11 Farmer explaining how to produce animal fodder from saltbushes, Ethiopia. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

12 Reforestation on sand dunes, Vietnam. A project of Vietnamese Red Cross.

13 Irrigated gardens thanks to the Assabol dam, Ethiopia. A project of Caritas Switzerland.

14 Impact of land ownership on deforestation, Haiti.



Scale-up Tested and Proven Experiences through Enhanced Co-ordination

Many good practices and technical solutions are applied in projects but they often remain at a micro-scale. Good practices are not being replicated at scale. More strategic partnerships and co-ordination with state or multilateral organisations with more leverage would ensure better scaling-up of effective measures. Locally owned practices, good documentation and co-ordination efforts are preconditions for scaling-up.

Ensure Infrastructure Maintenance through Ownership

Maintaining DRR intended assets such as dams or water drainage systems seldom rank as a priority for governments or, sometimes, even communities. Poorly maintained infrastructure, however, only serves to increase risk as people start to feel more secure if they are “protected” by a concrete wall or buffer. Ensuring ownership and having a long-term commitment to such facilities by a community-based organisation or skilled partner is a must.

Don't Overburden Marginalised People by Adding New Tasks

Involving vulnerable and marginalised people in labour intensive activities is often challenging. Beneficiary selection is often guided by targeting the most vulnerable households. But single headed households with small children, widows with no family support and disabled people face extreme challenges to survive in countries with poor social protection services. New labour intensive livelihood opportunities may in such instances be a false promise, as time and the skills needed to realise opportunities cannot be mobilised. Marginalised households may have no alternative but to replace income poverty by time poverty, but this in turn translates into reduced care for the sick, the elderly and children. This cannot be a goal of development projects.

Don't Experiment with the Most Vulnerable

Marginalised and vulnerable people are often risk adverse in their strategic choices of where to invest their private resources. Such people will likely need guidance and support with following already tested and successful interventions. They cannot and should not be expected to contribute to new ideas to the same degree as other community members.



THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Recommendations for Better Impact of Hyogo Framework for Action at the Community Level

At the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in January 2005, 168 governments adopted a 10-year plan – the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) – to make the world safer from natural hazards.

The Conference provided a unique opportunity to promote a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities and risks to hazards. It underscored the need for, and identified ways of, building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

The HFA's main achievement has been that many governments have now placed disaster reduction on their political and developmental agendas. Nevertheless, the impact at the community level remains rather limited and the world's poorest people remain at high risk, with little support.

Discussion on reforming the HFA has already started. Poor performance at the grassroots level is recognised by UNISDR who have called for more action on the ground. Greater effort and funding is necessary to reach out to marginalised urban and rural communities and target the most vulnerable. Although the topic is receiving growing attention, between 2000 and 2010 only about 1 per cent of official development assistance was invested in reducing disaster risks.⁸

The following sections follow the five HFA priority actions and show how members of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform contribute to its implementation. For each priority action, recommendations are formulated to the DRR community in order to enhance impact on the ground, based on experiences made during the peer exchanges.

HFA 1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation

Countries that develop policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction and that are able to develop and track progress through specific and measurable indicators, have greater capacity to manage risks and to achieve widespread consensus for engagement in and compliance with disaster risk reduction measures across all sectors of society.

As a member of the worldwide Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, the **Swiss Red Cross** contributes to HFA 1 by supporting National Red Cross Societies to advocate for and contribute to better integration of DRR into legislation and implementation. The Nepal Red Cross Society, for example, is a proactive and important actor in Nepal's DRR platforms and committees, at national, regional and local levels. In Vietnam, national authorities adopted a Community Based Disaster Risk Management model based on a vulnerability and capacity assessment partly developed by the Vietnam Red Cross, with support of other participating national societies.

Solidar Suisse contributes to the HFA 1 priority action by supporting partner organisations in nine rural districts in central Mozambique, to include DRR in participatory planning and budgeting. Central Mozambique is a disaster prone region, thus prevention and mitigation at the local level have become more and more important. District Development Councils and Community Disaster Management Committees have discussed DRR mechanisms – early warning systems, zoning of flood prone areas and resettlement – which were then budgeted for and implemented by the district authorities, increasing awareness and improving resilience of the population.

Recommendation HFA 1:

Ensure that funding reaches governments from national to local level and that self-organisation of communities is supported, especially in fragile contexts where state institutions fail to provide basic services.



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- 15** Earthquake and cyclone proof school building, Myanmar. A project of Caritas Switzerland (© Andreas Schwaiger).
16 Skills-Training "Search and Rescue and First Aid", Nepal. A project of Swiss Red Cross.
17 Construction of a water pan, Kenya. A project of TearFund Switzerland.
18 Training on principles of site selection, Madagascar. A project of Medair (© Fidy Rasambainarivo).



19



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21

19 Early maturing rice harvest after a flash flood, Bangladesh. A project of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

20 Preparedness training session, El Salvador. A project of Solidar Suisse.

21 GPS training as mean for better hazard mapping, Indonesia. A project of HEKS.

HFA 2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

The starting point for reducing disaster risk and for promoting a culture of disaster resilience lies in the knowledge of the hazards and the physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities to disasters that most societies face, and of the ways in which hazards and vulnerabilities are changing in the short- and long- term, followed by action taken on the basis of that knowledge.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somaliland and South Sudan, **Medair** has built the capacity of national health workers to implement early warning systems for disease outbreaks, using solutions such as reporting by mobile phone, SMS or radio from remote locations.

World Vision Switzerland contributes to the HFA 2 priority action by co-facilitating training of Lesotho-based staff on community-based early warning systems.

Through the development of a risk assessment tool in Kulyab region, Tajikistan, **Caritas Switzerland** together with the local government, Mission East and Oxfam GB, contributes to HFA 2. The participatory, community-based risk assessment tool allows a comparison of hazard and vulnerability of different communities and hence to focus support on high risk places. The tool has also been adopted by the government and used in other regions to select and prioritise interventions in risk-affected communities.

The understanding and analysis of risks is at the core of all interventions of **HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation**. Besides having developed and contributed to various climate risk management tools (e.g. CRIS-TAL⁹) the organisation is active in strengthening DRR/CCA capacities by supporting their partners in conducting risk assessments and identifying sound DRR/CCA measures. Today, DRR and CCA have become cross-cutting topics in projects like value chain, Making Markets Work for the Poor, WASH and governance. Elaboration of a guide on how to integrate DRR and CCA in the planning process at the municipal and district levels in Bolivia is a concrete outcome of the DRR programme and contributes to strengthening local capacities and eventually to creating a preventive culture in 29 communities in Bolivia.¹⁰

Recommendations HFA 2:

Provide support to and consider indigenous and local monitoring on climate change. Ensure that knowledge is generated and disseminated at the local level, where it is needed most.

HFA 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

Disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed and motivated towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, which in turn requires the collection, compilation and dissemination of relevant knowledge and information on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.

TearFund Switzerland in collaboration with the diocese of Mbale in Uganda, contributes to HFA 3 in terms of building the capacity of youth on DRR and CCA, through non-formal trainings – training of trainers. The three districts within this diocese are largely mountainous and vulnerable to soil erosion and landslides.

The **Swiss Red Cross** contributes to HFA 3 by combining indigenous and scientific knowledge. For example, in Honduras, risk maps that had been elaborated in the process of vulnerability and capacity assessments were subsequently complemented with scientific data, based on commissioned risk studies. Being of a substantially higher quality, the resulting maps are used by the communities to advocate for integrating DRR measures. The community maps were further processed into a risk map at municipal level, providing the authorities with a valuable land use planning tool as well as a means for allocating resources at higher levels.

Through community-based and institutional (government and NGOs) assessments, **ProAct Network** supports actions towards HFA 3 through tailored training and capacity building on DRR and CCA, including risk and vulnerability assessments and promoting ecosystem-based management as a win-win option for building and strengthening resilience. ProAct has been instrumental in supporting the fledgling Sudanese Climate Change Network as well as a number of community-based interventions in other countries which relate to DRR/CCA.

The Risk Academy forms the knowledge sharing and know-how transfer instrument of the **Global Risk Forum**. The Academy's primary focus is to enable know-how transfer from science to practice as well as to the public. The Risk Academy will help bridge this gap by organising events, education courses, training and workshops.

Recommendation HFA 3:

Ensure that climate change and disaster information is systematically integrated into school curricula and vocational training in order to raise awareness and enhance a sense of ownership and responsibility. Disseminate local actions and good practices to motivate change.

HFA 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors

Disaster risks related to changing social, economic, environmental conditions and land use, and the impact of hazards associated with geological events, weather, water, climate variability and climate change, are addressed in sector development planning and programs as well as in post-disaster situations.

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation works at the local, sub-national and national levels in most countries where it is present. It supports different sectors and ministries to integrate a hazard risk management approach in their plans and operations. In Peru, for example, it supports regional governments to integrate climate risk management in their development plans, incorporating lessons from jointly implemented pilot activities in the areas of water resource management, agriculture and food security.

In Bangladesh, in partnership with the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, it contributes to HFA 4 through the introduction of early maturing rice varieties (BRRI Dhan 45) in the *haor* region (areas almost permanently submerged), in Sunamganj. In a region where the window of agricultural activities is very limited (November to April), this variety is life-saving as it can be harvested before the arrival of early flash floods. The variety has been replicated in other *haor* districts and has become a widely used local preventive measure to cope with flash floods. Mainstreaming systematic risk assessment and incorporation of risk reduction measures in sectoral plans is becoming increasingly important in HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's work.¹¹

Through garden interventions in Bangladesh, **Terre des hommes** has successfully piloted a project that aims at reducing the underlying causes of food and nutritional insecurity of flood and cyclone prone vulnerable communities. Considering its success, scaling-up the project is under discussion not only for other parts of Bangladesh but in India as well.

Recommendation HFA 4:

In each area of activity, identify and name the most important risk drivers, focus on those having most leverage and tackle the underlying power relations.

HFA 5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

At times of disaster, impacts and losses can be substantially reduced if authorities, individuals and communities in hazard-prone areas are well prepared and ready to act and are equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management.

In Indonesia, **HEKS** contributes to the HFA 5 priority action by offering in-depth training in disaster preparedness and response to NGOs working in Sumatra and by linking the NGOs via the "Local Emergency Assessment and Response Network – LEARN". Training enables LEARN members to integrate measures of prevention/mitigation into their projects and to enhance the disaster preparedness of local communities. In several recent disaster situations, LEARN members proved their position as important actors in the field of DDR, closing the gap between governmental disaster risk management entities and communities.

Caritas Switzerland is working with communities in northern Bihar, India, to help them prepare for emergencies – especially floods – saving lives and peoples' goods and reducing vulnerability, especially among the most exposed households. Activities include the preparation of emergency food packs (dry and healthy food), the provision of health kits, and enabling access to safe water supplies, fodder storage and repair to houses before the rainy season. As the floods may last for more than two months, portable ovens and firewood are being set aside for an emergency. Awareness raising has helped adults and children know the most exposed places to avoid, while task forces have been established for early warning, evacuation, maintenance of infrastructure and other functions. At the village level, seed banks and emergency funds have been introduced, maximum use is made of local resources, and marginalised households now receive additional support through the government's labour programme. In co-operation with the government, flood protection measures are being realised through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, while emergency plans are likewise elaborated with the government at the block and district levels. Experience from these interventions shows a tremendous change on the part of villagers now being able to take appropriate actions before and during emergencies.

Recommendation HFA 5:

Ensure that communities and local institutions are not only strengthened before a disaster hits, but also take over a leading role in the co-ordination of disaster management.

POST 2015 – A CHANCE FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE

Integrate DRR into all Strategic Frameworks

In addition to ongoing debates with regards post-HFA, several other major policy frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also currently under review. At the 2012 UN Climate Change Conference in Doha, it was also decided to set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015, which will come into effect in 2020.

The challenge for the DRR community is to ensure that disaster risk reduction is mainstreamed and prioritised in all these policy frameworks and agreements, and fully integrated into institutional and sectoral practices to help save lives, protect livelihoods and reduce economic losses. Failure to do so could undermine progress and squander investments, since safety and security are one basic requirement for any kind of sustainable development.

Integrating DRR within these frameworks will require clear targets, a stronger evidence base, greater political commitment and new efforts across policy areas – from health and education to economic and fiscal planning.

Bring the Different Communities Together

Within the DRR NGO community there is a strong consensus to promote *a more integrated approach*, i.e. to bring the different communities of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction together and integrate these domains to ultimately *strengthen the resilience* of families, communities and nations.

Focus More on Community Level and Vulnerable People

Disasters concern everyone, but affect the vulnerable most. Taking this into account, the post-HFA framework needs to put women, men and children at the centre of attention and action, with a special focus on strengthening the resilience of people living in informal settlements and those communities in fragile and conflict-affected situations. To be more effective, the post-HFA framework needs to find ways how to more closely co-operate with civil society and their representatives to address the major shortcomings of the current system and to lead to a more bottom-up approach.

Set Clear Targets and Measurable Indicators

Thus far, implementation of the HFA could not reduce losses and people are increasingly being exposed to more frequent disasters. This trend cannot be reversed without further commitments. A post-HFA has therefore to guide and trigger *effective implementation*, using clear targets and measurable indicators that are able to integrate data from informal settlements while also being sensitive to small-scale disasters. Self-reporting has to be complemented by external monitoring of civil society organisations.

Identify Risk Drivers and Connect them with Power Relations

Knowing the risk – by assessing hazards and vulnerabilities – allows for more active risk management but may not be good enough to tackle the underlying causes for ever increasing risks. Identifying risk drivers and connecting them with power relations, for example in unplanned urbanisation or degraded ecosystems by power holders contributes to further marginalisation and exposure of vulnerable households.

Find New Financing Mechanisms

New financing mechanisms need to be developed in order to increase impact and action. Among others, compensation mechanisms need to be put in place that reward sustainable natural resource management and stop the externalisation of costs by increasing risks through the redistribution of benefits from ecosystem services. Examples include deforestation for agricultural purpose or the destruction of mangroves to create shrimp ponds.

FACTS AND FIGURES OF THE SWISS NGO DRR PLATFORM

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform was founded on 9 September 2011 by the following partners: Medair, Swiss Solidar, HEKS, Terre des hommes, the Swiss Red Cross, Caritas and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. The three latter organisations form the core group of the Platform. In following years, ProAct Network, Tearfund, the Global Risk Forum and World Vision Switzerland joined the Platform.

The variety of its members is seen as a particular strength of the Platform as it enables members to profit from a broad variety of experience and knowledge gained in different fields of action. While smallest members may implement around 10 projects each year, the larger may have almost 240 ongoing projects. The number of projects where DRR is explicitly considered also varies widely and is not in relation to the size of the respective NGO, as shown in → Figure 6.

It is important to mention that in several Swiss organisations, DRR is treated as a transversal topic, which is not reflected in → Figure 6. Of interest also is that the financial volume spent on DRR activities is uniformly increasing. There is also a common

agreement among members that DRR activities will increase in the coming years. This, however, will require:

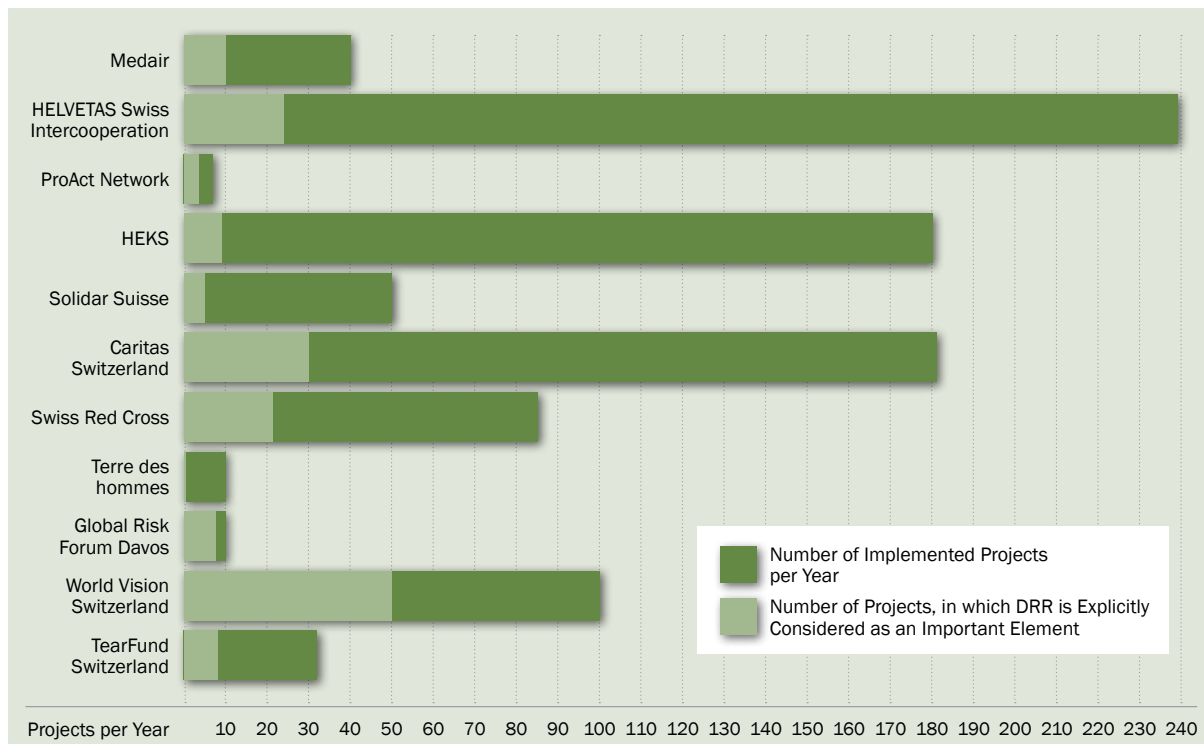
- capacity development of staff;
- more partnerships – institutional and local – and strengthened collaborations for learning;
- more DRR specific funding; and
- better integration of DRR in development activities as well as management.

Different Profiles

One of the reasons explaining the number of projects where DRR is explicitly considered as an important element lies in the difference between the members themselves. While the majority of the members are active implementing organisations, ProAct Network provides specialist guidance and capacity building to partners; the Global Risk Forum is a platform for knowledge sharing and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation co-ordinates development projects and at the same time offers advisory services to government and NGOs.

Other members like the Swiss Red Cross and Caritas Switzerland are themselves members of large international structures – Caritas Internationalis and the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent

Figure 6: Number of Implemented Projects in 2012



Organisations. World Vision Switzerland has no operational project but acts as a fundraising office for their international sister organisations. Tearfund Switzerland and HEKS are both members of the national co-ordination structure of the evangelical NGO Coordination Bread for All.

Different members co-operate with various research institutions and with a few actors from the private sector. Concerning the latter, co-operation with different consulting companies also exists, while co-operation with research institutions is broader. Such institutions encompass a variety of national research bodies at the country level, e.g. universities in Central America, Sudan, China, Singapore, Nigeria and the USA. In Switzerland collaboration exists with different universities, the école polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and the Centre for Development and Environment (cde) at University of Berne, as well as with Meteo Suisse, Agroscope and the Institut für Schnee- und Lawinenforschung (SLF). Direct collaborations also take place with CIRAD and the Centre for International Forestry Research, which provide information on agricultural and forestry issues.

Most members implement projects abroad and many have their own established structures in partner countries and work closely with local organisations. Thus, contacts and networks not only exist in Switzerland but also overseas. Links are also established with the private sector, e.g. with mobile phone providers.

Mainstreaming DRR

A review of the level of DRR mainstreaming by Platform members is shown in → Figure 7.

Concerning the key area of *strategy* most members are aware of the need for a strategic approach to risk reduction across their organisation. Several have developed their own policies and DRR concepts in order to enhance mainstreaming of DRR and CCA.

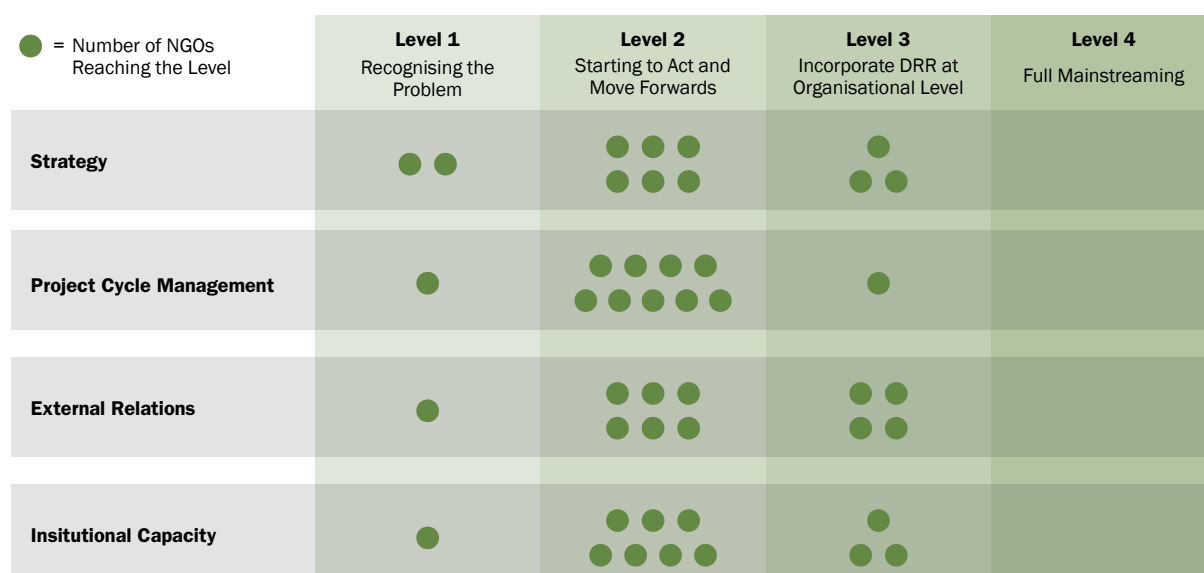
Most members are also aware that DRR needs to be taken into account in all phases of the *project cycle management*. Some have again developed their own DRR planning and assessment tools, while others are incorporating specific DRR indicators into existing tools.

An important moment to strengthen DRR in the project cycle is to compile lessons learned in order to improve DRR activities. Awareness is growing that a risk assessment – besides risks affecting projects – has to include an impact assessment to minimise risks accruing from implemented project activities.

Looking at *external relations*, recognition that one organisation cannot act alone in the field of DRR is an important aspect and was one of the reasons why this Platform was established. Most members have already recognised and made progress towards achieving this.

Organisations are clear that more resources have to be allocated to *institutional capacity* in order to enhance mainstreaming of DRR. This encompasses the need to further strengthen staff capacity – both at the headquarter level but also on the ground – and, in parallel, to mobilise more funding for DRR projects and activities.

Figure 7: Mainstreaming DRR



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