

Programme 2019 – 2023

“Building Bridges”



Bridge to Kahande, DR Congo (© Medair)

Annual Report of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform

Reporting period: 01.05.2019-30.04.2020

Website Version

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List of Abbreviations

CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ETH Nadel	Center for Development and Cooperation of ETH Zurich
F2F	Face to Face
GNDR	Global Network of Civil Society Organisation for Disaster Reduction
GPDRR	Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
HEKS/EPER	Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDC DRR NW	SDC DRR Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SRC	Swiss Red Cross
YPO	Yearly Plan of Operation

1. Background

This report refers to the Programme “Building Bridges” of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform, which extends over the period from 01.05.2019 to 30.04.2023. The report provides an overview of the achievements during the first programme year, i.e. from 01.05.2019-30.04.2020 and an outlook to the second programme year.

2. Achievements

In its first year of the new programme, the Platform invested considerable time and resources in the planning of its activities, events and products. The planning phase was characterised by the elaboration of the complex mandates of the six activity lines and ended in September 2019 with their subsequent adoption by the Core Group and approval by the Steering Committee.

The Covid-19 crisis impacted the Platform work as from March 2020, in particular regarding the learning events that were planned as F2F events, but also in general as resources of Platform member organisation were withdrawn in favour of the response to the virus outbreak or as a result of applying short-time work.

Considering the time spent for the planning and the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, the actual implementation period for the Platform activities was reduced to roughly six months resulting in delays of some of activities as compared to the annual planning.

2.1 DRR and CCA Mainstreaming

This activity line was not a priority in the first programme year, neither for events nor for products. However, the high quality [DRR / CCA mainstreaming guidance](#) was produced towards the end of the previous phase, so it was only in this first programme year that the Platform was able to really benefit from them.

Two events were planned: a learning event and a webinar. Unfortunately, none could be conducted. The **learning event “Didactics”** (i.e. theory and practical application of teaching and learning) had to be postponed to the second half of 2020 because of the Covid-19 crisis. The **webinar “DRR and CCA basics for mainstreaming”** is currently updated and revised in order to give due attention to the linkages between DRR and CCA and to capture the latest scientific insights. The revision took more time than initially anticipated and the webinar will now be held in the second programme year.

A roadmap for the elaboration of the **sector / context specific guidelines** including how to proceed in a piloting mode was in its first stages and about to be submitted for feedback at the end of the reporting period. This will be a focus in the second year. The ETH/NADEL is relaunching the DRR Module (5-day course) in November 2021. The role of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform in the course module on DRR is currently discussed with ETH/Nadel.

2.2 Nexus humanitarian aid – development cooperation

In order to further include field colleagues, the learning event on the humanitarian-development nexus / LRRD (held on 4 March 2019) was reshaped into a series of three **webinars** '**humanitarian-development nexus**' with different geographic focus:

- Webinar with a focus on Asia with case studies from SRC Bangladesh and Helvetas Nepal (28.02.2020)
- Webinar with a focus on Africa and MENA with case studies from Caritas Syria Crisis Response and Mali (01.04.2020)
- Webinar with a focus on Latin America with case studies from SRC El Salvador and Vivamos Mejor Guatemala (planned in May 2020)

The recorded webinar and presentation are available on the [Platform event website](#) and on the Platform's [YouTube Channel](#). It includes also a short survey amongst the webinar participants, which are interesting for the planning of the F2F.

Regarding the **F2F on the humanitarian-development nexus**, planned to take place in Spring 2021, a working group was established and a concept note of the structure and key tasks elaborated and discussed. A survey for Platform members and partners shall further shape it.

2.3 Nature-based solutions

The **practitioners exchange workshop in Haiti on NBS-WOCAT** had to be cancelled twice due to political unrest (October 2019) and the Covid-19 crisis (March 2020). However, the preparatory email exchange showed that there was a clear interest by Platform member organisations present in Haiti and further partners (UNEP, NL Red Cross, Alliance 2015) for learning and contribution. As the preparation for the workshop is complete, the Platform hopes to conclude this exchange in 2020 once the situation regarding the Covid-19 crisis allows it.

Caritas as lead organization is currently organizing the working group for the first planned outputs under the activity line planned for 2020/2021, which are linked to the valuation of nature-based solutions, field-based learning events related to WOCAT as well as preparatory work for the development of a signature approach of the Platform related to NbS.

2.4 Climate change – fit for purpose

With regard to the systematic integration of climate change issues into the work of the platform member organisations, several working groups have formed under this activity line working on the following topics relevant for platform members: integration of climate projections into project design; weather water and climate services; climate and migration nexus. Products and events related to this topic can be expected during the next two programme years.

On 12th December 2019 a peer exchange workshop was organised on the reduction of the CO₂ and environmental footprint of platform member organisations ("walk the talk"). The exchange attracted great interest even beyond the platform member organisations and was visited by representatives of 12 different organisations and SDC. The company "Swiss Climate" was invited to give an introduction on how to go about CO₂ and sustainability management at organisational level and Helvetas presented their current CO₂ management strategy and process. The group then discussed the way forward and would like (if the Covid-19 situation allows) to organise a

follow-up event in 2020 targeted at management staff. In the aftermath of the event two organisations (which had so far not engaged in a CO2 footprint exercise) newly started to collect data to evaluate their CO2 Footprint and start discussing a CO2 management strategy.

Furthermore, in collaboration with other development organisations of the Climate Alliance, the Swiss NGO DRR Platform is involved in the organisation of an advocacy event on climate justice.

2.5 Working at scale

In collaboration with GNDR, Save the Children organised in January 2020 a **webinar on Effective Advocacy for DRR and CCA** (presentation available on the [website](#)). Helvetas elaborated a concept note with the structure, objectives and potential speakers for of the **learning event on 'Coalition building and networks'**, planned for the second quarter of 2020. Further discussion within the working group are ongoing.

2.6 Leaving no one behind

The **webinar on LNOB with a focus on disability inclusion** that was developed by cbm as a follow-up to the learning event on inclusive DRR (held in October 2017) and planned to be conducted in April 2020, had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis. The main part of the webinar would have consisted in an interview of a Union Parishad (local government) member in Bangladesh with a disability. Given the lockdown situation, a displacement from the place of residence and work to the capital, where the interview was scheduled to take place, was not possible.

The Core Group organised an **exchange with cbm to learn more about accessibility**, including the international regulatory framework, the key approach, common accessibility elements and barriers as well as to discuss key issues and aspects of accessibility that are relevant for the Platform, including accessibility at the institutional level, with respect to events, communication (website, publications) and capacity building as well as in terms of diversity among the Platform member organisations. The learning from the exchange was applied in particular for the activities regarding the website update and the Platform visibility material.

2.7 Advocacy and policy dialogue

Swiss Consultative Group

The work in the Swiss DRR consultative group focused fully on the **Global Platform DRR 2019**, held in Geneva in May 2019, co-chaired by Switzerland. The Platform was an active member at the group's management level, including the representation in the Swiss Delegation by SRC and Caritas and at the operational working group level through Helvetas. The Platform's contribution focussed on ensuring the Civil Society and NGO perspective, with a particular focus on participation and inclusiveness, where also cbm contributed actively.

The main Platform contributions in terms of activities and products refer to the preparation of GPDRR: Contribution to the Swiss Input paper to UNDRR, the Swiss Statement, shaping of the Swiss innovation booth, connecting SDC to the Stakeholder forum, participation in working session preparation teams.

GNDR

At the Global Board level, the Platform (through Nicole Stolz) was actively involved in the development of the strategy, fundraising strategy and the creation of an EU-based chapter of GNDR in the Netherlands, the latter due to Brexit. In order to strengthen collaboration among their members, particularly south-south exchange, GNDR created a community platform, for which members had to re-register. Currently, GNDR counts 1036 total member organizations in 109 countries.

With Global Board member Nicole Stolz leaving Caritas and her new employer Swissaid not (yet) being member of the Swiss NGO DRR Platform, the Platform is aware of the potential loss of connection to this important network. Two steps were taken in order to ensure regular updates and a close link between the organizations.

- As of March 2020, Jana Junghardt from Caritas has been elected National Focal Point for Switzerland. The national focal points form the Regional Advisory Group for each region.
- With GNDR (Valeria Drigo and Lucy Pearson) a virtual exchange on processes and work streams of the two Platforms was agreed to take place every 3 months. For the next exchange planned for June 2020, the Platform and GNDR will analyse their current strategies in order to identify concrete synergies.

The Global Summit, which was foreseen for March 2020, had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis. Currently, it is foreseen to take place in September 2020. From the side of the Platform, Nicole Stolz will still participate in her function as Global Board member.

PEDRR

From May 2019 to March 2020 the Platform chaired the PEDRR network. This started with a PEDRR working meeting during GPDRR 2019. Main efforts referred to the preparation and participation in the PEDRR retreat on 21/22th November in Geneva, including an analysis of members' interest and possible contribution in order to shape the workplan 2020/21.

Since then, the Platform organized and chaired two PEDRR calls, where all members regularly exchange on ongoing activities, events for coordination and synergies.

The PEDRR co-chair position in 2018/19 together with GDNR, was also useful for the exchange and coordination with GNDR.

Climate Alliance

The Climate Alliance underwent a restructuring process and changed its statutory order to an association at the member assembly in June 2019. On 29th September 2019 the Climate Alliance organised one of the biggest manifestations in Switzerland lobbying for more progressive climate politics and transformative change. The Platform was represented at all three monthly meetings and the member assembly of the Climate Alliance in 2019, and brought in the development perspective, particularly the impacts of climate change on the global south, climate justice or issues with regard to international climate finance and the fair share of Switzerland as well as "loss and damage".

2.8 Visibility

Website update

With the new programme phase, the Core Group noted that some changes regarding the website structure and content became necessary. As Caritas was not entirely satisfied with the hosting services and as the secretariat had changed from Caritas to SRC in 2019, the Core Group decided to change the IT company supporting the website management. The aim was to update and improve the Platform website, integrating modernised features where necessary while maintaining the existing functionality, hosted and supported by a reliable partner with solid website expertise. Based on a call for offers to a shortlist of 4 potential bidders who were selected by the Core Group, Say Hello GmbH was selected and subsequently mandated by the SRC. The work was conducted from November 2019 to March 2020 and the website was successfully migrated on 01.04.2020.

Platform visibility material

The existing Platform visibility material is outdated. With the start of the new programme phase, the Platform decided to enhance its appearance. Mandated by the Platform Core Group, Zoë Environment Network produced a series of Platform products, consisting of a [flyer](#), business cards for Platform core group members and a RollUp for the use in Platform events, all ensuring coherence with the existing visual identity of the Platform.



2.9 Further activities

Events outside the frame of the activity lines

At the request of SDC, Save the Children on behalf of the Platform contributed to the **Brown bag lunch “Resilience in urban areas: from concepts to practice”** in September 2019. The BBL included presentations from Zurich, EBP (Ernst Basler + Partner) and Save the Children (on experience of working in urban slums of Bangladesh). The BBL was attended by well over 30 participants (mostly) from SDC and received good feedbacks including of having provided practical insights. The presentations are available on the [SDC DRR Network Website](#).

The Platform developed many of its products towards the end of the previous phase (2017/2018) and did not have enough time for their dissemination to a wider public. It followed up on this in December 2019 with a **webinar “presentation of key products of the Platform”**: the cost-benefit analysis evaluation report and decision tree tool, the DRR mainstreaming guidance including an overview with key tools, the packing list for an advocacy journey towards climate and disaster resilient development, the DRR and CCA indicator toolbox website and the inclusive DRR hands-on web app were presented to Platform member organisations and beyond. The presentation is available on the [Platform website](#).

The **learning event on “genetically modified organisms in agriculture”** was prepared at the request of several member organisations. The event was planned to take place in early January, but because of the unfortunate registration window during the Christmas and New Year break,

had to be postponed due to low registration numbers. Because of the Covid-19 crisis, the event was subsequently postponed to the second half of 2020.

Collaboration and exchange with further actors

In July 2019, the Platform met with a **delegation** of three professors from the **Guangdong Research Center for NGOs** (GRCN) of the University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou, China. The delegation was interested to learn about the structure and working mode of the Platform. The delegation was particularly interested in the possibility of a formal exchange model between the Platform member organisations and the students of the university, a request that pursued further.

Also, in July, the Platform had a **Skype interview** with a researcher from the **Global Public Policy Institute**, reviewing the effectiveness of the Humanitarian Aid Coordinating Committee, a network consisting of German humanitarian aid organizations and the German government. The interview was part of this review, as an exchange with representatives of other similar networks in order to get a sense of how these networks function, challenges they may have and efforts that have been undertaken to overcome these challenges and/or become more effective.

In January 2020, the Platform was invited by the **Zimbabwe Platform of Swiss NGOs** to provide an input on LRRD / Humanitarian-Development Nexus for a discussion on possible actions of Swiss NGOs in favour of their partners and beneficiaries ahead of the foreseeable food security crises in Zimbabwe.

In February 2020, the Platform elaborated a concept note and is in exchange with **FAN** (Fachleute Naturgefahren Schweiz) to co-shape an event for 2021 with a focus in DRR/CCA in the international context.

In March 2020, the Platform had a first **exchange** with a steering committee member of the **Swiss network for education and international cooperation (RECI)** on different modalities how to organise and run a network, what works and what does not and why. A lot of common issues and challenges but also some differences in arrangements and approaches were noted. It was decided to follow-up and maintain an informal exchange and sharing of experiences.

3. Organisation

3.1 Member organisations

The Swiss NGO DRR Platform was founded in 2011 by seven Swiss based NGOs. Since then, new member organisations joined the Platform almost each year. In 2019, two new member organisations joined the Platform: Foundation for sustainable development in mountain regions (FDDM) and Solidarmed. In April 2020, the Platform counted 19 member organisations.

No.	Organisation	Membership
1	Caritas Switzerland	2011
2	HEKS / EPER	2011
3	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation	2011
4	Medair	2011
5	Solidar Suisse	2011
6	Swiss Red Cross	2011
7	Terre des hommes (Lausanne)	2011
8	World Vision Switzerland	2012
	Proact Network (<i>was dissolved in 2015</i>)	2012-2015
9	Global Risk Forum Davos (GRF)	2012
10	Bread for All	2013
11	Tearfund Switzerland	2013
12	Christoffel Blinden Mission	2014
13	Save the Children Switzerland	2014
14	Innovabridge	2015
15	ADRA	2015
	Plan International (<i>left the Platform in 2016 as no more focus on DRR</i>)	2015-2016
16	Zoï Environment Network	2016
17	Vivamos mejor	2017
18	Foundation for sustainable development in mountain regions	2019
19	Solidarmed	2019



3.2 Structure and steering mechanisms

Permanent Platform Bodies

The Platform holds regular **Member Assemblies**, where all Platform member organisations are invited to select and develop internal mandates, to get organized in designated working groups and for a mutual update on the Platform's progress and context.

The **Steering Committee**, consisting of the SRC, Helvetas, and CACH, is responsible for ensuring that mission and regulations are followed and approves the mandates. The Steering Committee held several (F2F and virtual) meetings in 2019 and issued a statement on behalf of the Platform in the consultation to the International Cooperation Strategy 2021-24.

The **Core Group**, which includes the SRC, Helvetas, CACH and HEKS/EPER, carries out the ongoing operational tasks as well as quality assurance. The Core Group held monthly meetings throughout the reporting period.

The **Secretariat** is held by the SRC. The management of the website was handed over in 2020 from Caritas to the SRC.

An internal Financial **Review Commission** (consisting of Terre des hommes and Medair) is a further permanent body of the Platform. It reviewed and approved the financial report at its meeting from 3rd of June 2020.

Platform Working Groups

To implement the programme, working groups were established for the six activity lines and sub mandates. The working groups consist between 3 (activity line working at scale), to 4 (DRR and CCA Mainstreaming, Nexus, Leaving no one behind), to 8 (climate change) and on to 10 (nature-based solutions) contributing member organisations. Sub working groups with an average of 3 member organisations are responsible for the implementation of each Platform event or product.

Collaboration with SDC

SDC is closely involved in the planning, monitoring and steering, and reporting activities of the Platform. SDC and the Core Group of the Platform held three exchange meetings during the reporting period, coordinated upcoming activities and discussed further collaboration opportunities. The SDC DRR Policy Advisor was invited to a Member Assembly to present trends within SDC on DRR and provide insights on the external evaluation on DRR.

4. Resources

The total expenditure for the reporting period (01.05.2019-30.04.2020) amounted to CHF 306'109 of which CHF 186'389 consists as Platform contribution and CHF 137'885 (45%) as SDC contribution.

5. Outlook

The second programme year will continue to be impacted by the Covid-19 crisis; to what extent is still unclear. A lot depends on the (mainly human) resources that the individual member organisations will be able to allocate for the Platform work. The programme foresees Covid-19 adjustments in relation to the content: The Platform will include one or a series of events focussing on DRR/CCA in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. The topic will be included in the annual F2F event on the humanitarian-development nexus and integrated as case study, example, practice etc. in learning events and webinars wherever appropriate.

Covid-19 adjustments with regard to the working mode: The 1-day learning events which are organised as F2F events are planned as from September 2020, and in a relatively high frequency in order to include the events from the first year that had to be postponed. It might be that not all events can be conducted as planned. The annual F2F event, planned for November 2020, will be postponed to March 2021. The field practitioners' workshops might be conducted through virtual means but still based on interactive methods. On the other hand, the webinars and the work on products can be initiated or continued with a slightly adapted working mode.

Milestones of the second programme year:

- **Activity line 1 – DRR and CCA mainstreaming:** Learning event 'Didactics', webinars 'Basics for DRR and CCA mainstreaming' and 'Risk assessment', field practitioners' workshops on 'Risk screening/assessments in sector programmes' in Asia and Latin America, Swiss-based practitioners' workshops on 'Monitoring' and 'Evaluation of DRR and CCA mainstreaming'; many of the events will be used as input for the F2F event on 'Mainstreaming' planned for the programme year 2020-2021. Preparation of the ETH NADEL DRR module (providing that NADEL decides to conduct the module in 2021), development of 2 or 3 sector specific mainstreaming guidelines in a pilot approach.
- **Activity line 2 – LRRD / Nexus humanitarian aid – development cooperation:** F2F-event (incl. partial remote participation) on nexus to enhance the capacities of practitioners to improve the Nexus between humanitarian aid and development contexts. Its objective will be to get a common understanding of "the nexus" (its diversity according to contexts), mix and link development and humanitarian practitioners, their experience and tools and to explore the potential (and limits) of DRR as a key linking element for "the Nexus approach". The goal of the 2-day F2F workshop is to work towards a F2F product / outcome, e.g. recommendation of humanitarians for development practitioners and vice versa. (pledges to policy makers), still to be defined.
- **Activity line 3 – Nature-based solutions:** While the practitioners exchange workshop in Haiti on NBS-WOCAT had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Platform hopes to conclude this exchange in 2020 once the situation allows it. Further field-based, WOCAT-related learning events are planned, which could be transformed into webinars if the situation does not allow F2F-exchanges. The second year will see the initial steps for the development of a signature approach undertaken and be kicked-off by a practitioners' workshop. Further, further visualizations for WOCAT case studies and methodology are to be developed that help illustrate the approach for the planned field-level learning events.
- **Activity line 4 – Climate Change – Fit for purpose:** If the situation allows, a follow-up event on CO2/Environmental Footprint and Management in organisations for management staff will be organised towards the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021. Furthermore, it is planned to organise a peer exchange on the experiences from platform members engaging with the big climate funds (GCF, AF, GEF, etc.). Three individual working groups formed

during the first programme year will continue their work on the topics: integration of climate projections into project design; weather water and climate services; climate and migration nexus. For climate and migration nexus, a compilation of approaches and good practices is planned. An awareness raising event on climate justice, for which the “Facing Climate Change” videos produced in 2018 will be relaunched into a dubbed German version under the title “Dem Klima die Stirn bieten”, is planned to be held at the end of October 2020. Given the progress in the working groups on climate projections and climate – migration nexus, learning events on these topics might be organised towards the end of the second programme year or the beginning of the third programme year.

- **Activity line 5 – Working at scale:** A webinar on advocacy with a focus on the Platform experience (organised by Caritas) and a webinar working at scale through urban DRR (organised by SRC with inputs by Save the Children) will be conducted. The other previously planned activities such as a learning event on coalition building and networks and a practitioners’ workshop on risk governance as well as a possible guidance including the dissemination are currently on hold due to the Covid-19 crisis, but are taken up again after summer 2020.
- **Activity line 6 – LNOB:** 3 events are planned, a learning event on Gender, the webinar on LNOB with a focus on disability inclusion that had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 crisis and a webinar on the links between LNOB and DRR/CCA.

The budget for the second programme year amounts to CHF 830'000.