

The role of DRR in the Humanitarian-Development Nexus – linking concepts, connecting stakeholders, strengthening resilience

Virtual practitioners' workshop and public event, 29-31 March and 8 April 2021

Background

The nature of conflicts, crises and humanitarian settings has seen an increase in duration and in complexity. Crises have become more protracted, with an average duration of a decade¹. Likewise, displacement is on the rise, both in sheer numbers as well as duration. Over 140 million people worldwide were displaced in 2019, an unprecedented and alarming figure. The reasons for uprooting are manifold and disasters triggered by natural hazards as well as climate change often overlap with fragile contexts or armed conflicts.

“Climate-fuelled disasters were the number one driver of internal displacement over the last decade – forcing an estimated 20 million people a year from their homes.[...] In the decade between 2004 and 2014, nearly 60% of global disaster-related deaths occurred in the 30 most fragile states. There are clear overlaps between disaster risks and protracted humanitarian crisis, yet few humanitarian appeals include DRR or climate adaptation efforts.”² This makes the space and modes for intervention much more complex and challenging. It also implies that impacts of development are at increased risk of being annihilated through recurring disasters, conflicts and protracted crises.

Just how vulnerable and unprepared the world's nations are with regard to unexpected crises was shown by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 with devastating effects in both high-income and low-income countries, a crisis that is still ongoing as these lines are written and will change the way we look at disaster risk governance, systemic risks and global interconnectedness.

At the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, policy makers and practitioners urged the world to abandon their silos and finally ensure the long-demanded improved connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts, also considering the dimension of peace-building.

Five years down the line, how have the promises and pledges made influenced programming and funding as well as operations on the ground? And how are the recent initiatives embedded and connected with the working context of the DRR-community, which works towards resilience building for decades already? As the Swiss NGO DRR Platform, those questions are addressing the very heart of our work and we would like to discuss them with you in our upcoming virtual F2F event on the Humanitarian-Development nexus and its linkages to disaster risk reduction.

Stay tuned and hope to see you in March 2021!

More info on: www.drrplatform.org/events

¹ UN OCHA UN OCHA <https://www.unocha.org/story/us219-billion-needed-2019-average-length-humanitarian-crisis-climbs#:~:text=Protracted%20needs,command%20the%20majority%20of%20resources.>

² Mami Mizutori in opening speech of Global Consultative Group on Upscaling DRR, <https://www.undrr.org/news/scaling-drr-humanitarian/development-contexts>

Which issues will be addressed in the workshop ?

March 29, 2021

Block I : Setting the scene and understanding the contexts

For quite some time, the international community has come to the conclusion that humanitarian response and development cooperation are not existing in isolation from each other and that more integrated approaches (“the double nexus”), working modalities and funding streams would be needed to accommodate for the growing needs .

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the approach of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) gave a prominent bridging role to disaster risk reduction. The approach recognized that phases of humanitarian response overlap with development and that those are not necessarily a continuum but rather a contiguum. Substantial structural reforms were not implemented though.

The debate has been given the deserved international stage during the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, where a third dimension was added: Peace, making it “the triple nexus”.

As DRR-community, we acknowledge the need to challenge our traditional knowledge and comfort zone and incorporate conflict sensitivity into our work, as more and more we deal with scarce natural resources and in situations of urgency and complexity. We should take into account that other risks beyond the ones triggered by natural hazards, are gaining ground in the contexts that we work in. We should be aware what this means for us as a DRR community and strengthen our work on multi-hazard/risk and multi-stakeholder approaches. DRR is placed in-between, one leg in Humanitarian Aid, one leg in Development Cooperation – can it thus also contribute to shaping the new nexus debate and add more flesh to the bone? What lessons learned can we draw from three decades of explicit disaster risk reduction work? And what can the DRR community learn from the nexus in order to improve its own practice, identifying blind spots that have so far hampered recognition of its relevance for sustainable development and appropriate funding?

To understand these issues in practice, we will work along three case studies that are representative of different contexts in which nexus work is most relevant:

- 1) Contexts prone to sudden-onset hazards of high magnitude social risks also present, (e.g. Nepal earthquake, Bangladesh floods)
- 2) Contexts of protracted crises where conflicts and complex emergencies demand a diverse and tailored approach to the needs of the population (e.g. Syria crisis, Mali/Burkina Faso)
- 3) Contexts of slow-onset hazards, climate change, unresolved and lingering conflicts and challenges for basic human development (e.g. Ethiopia)

We do acknowledge that all contexts are complex and that no single case study can pay all complexities tribute. As our aim for this workshop also is to identify successful strategies as well as major pitfalls on working on the nexus in different contexts, we are convinced that identifying exemplary contexts can be beneficial for the scope of the workshop.

Case studies will be presented in plenary and discussed in small break-out groups.

March 30, 2021

Block II : Adapting funding and making use of evidence : Anticipatory Humanitarian Action

Anticipatory Humanitarian Action lies at the centre of the Humanitarian-Development nexus. It is an innovative approach characterised by systematically linking early warning with early action, i.e. activities designed to protect people, assets and livelihoods ahead of a hazardous event. Successful anticipatory humanitarian action can potentially reduce human suffering and the financial costs of disaster response.

Forecasting coupled with innovative financing are crucial elements of anticipatory humanitarian action. Forecasting technologies have improved and expanded rapidly in the last decade, and various initiatives from UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent and

governments have begun to capitalize on the use of data to anticipate crises. More than 30 countries are developing early warning and early action systems that aim to enable governments and humanitarian actors to act early before a disaster strikes based on reliable hazard and impact forecast.

We will discuss the concept and current landscape of anticipatory mechanisms like Forecast-based Financing or Impact-based Forecasting. Representatives of organizations that are pioneering anticipatory action and forecast-based financing will share their experiences. What are the lessons learned from existing initiatives? What are the opportunities and challenges? What is the role of donors and vulnerable countries in designing and validating anticipatory action and financing mechanisms? How do we make anticipation “business as usual”?

March 31, 2021

Block III : Institutional preparedness

The localisation agenda, an important result of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, has the ambition of “making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary”. Institutional preparedness should “build on local capacities and complements local response mechanisms, contributing to preparedness for possible future disasters and strengthening long-term resilience.”

Connections between Institutional Preparedness and Anticipatory Humanitarian Action

The feasibility of implementing early actions in the short time window between a trigger and the impact of the event is highly dependent on the operational and administrative capacity of the disaster management system with a specific focus at the local level. We will look at questions such as:

- What are the links and how can DRR programmes integrate such actions?
- What needs to be in place to timely start Anticipatory Humanitarian Action?

Epidemic preparedness and response

As we are witnessing with the COVID-19 pandemic, infectious disease outbreaks that turn into epidemics or pandemics can also cause massive loss of life and huge economic disruption, threatening health for all. Re-emerging and new high-threat infectious diseases and the explosion of non-communicable diseases are threatening to overturn the gains of the last decades, especially for the billion people without access to basic healthcare, clean water and sanitation. As disaster response operations factor in outbreak mitigation measures, broader socio-economic vulnerability of affected populations and increasingly working in fragile contexts all disaster and crisis risk management needs to be viewed as multi-hazard. More than ever, humanitarian and development interventions have become intricately interconnected.

- What are the learnings from COVID-19 preparedness initiatives?
- Case studies, best practice

April 8, 2021

Virtual public event : How to move towards sustainable humanitarian impact and resilient development? The role of DRR in the humanitarian-development nexus

One week after the practitioners’ workshop, we are gathering again for the presentation of the workshop essentials followed by a panel discussion that caters to the broader interested audience.

Representatives from development and humanitarian aid organisations, the Swiss Federal government, NGOs and scientific representatives will discuss the current and future contribution of disaster risk reduction to bring the nexus agenda forward in a pandemic-stricken, at-risk world.