

GRC Disaster Risk Reduction – Analysing hazards, reducing risks, preparing people to respond

Making the people in developing countries more resilient against the consequences of natural hazards, crises and conflicts is one of the main tasks of the GRC International Cooperation. The international Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) projects of the GRC aim to reduce existing vulnerabilities while building the self-help capacities of communities and strengthening the preparedness for response capacities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at all levels.



To limit the human suffering because of natural hazards, it is crucial to invest into long-term risk reduction. This is why the GRC and its Sister National Societies are supporting vulnerable communities to expand their knowledge about natural hazards, for identifying disaster risks and developing contingency plans. In particular disaster prone communities, small scale disaster mitigation infrastructure measures are implemented, local committees and networks for early warning are strengthened and schools are supported to train their teachers and students on natural hazards and preparedness.

In the context of DRR the GRC operated in three main areas: **Risk Analysis Disaster Prevention & Mitigation and Disaster Preparedness**

1. Risk analysis

In the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement DRR starts with a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) on site, by identifying and assessing the existing natural or man-made hazards, the vulnerabilities and the response capacities of a community. The GRC is using VCAs as a tool to empower local communities to independently assess their environment with its natural hazards and disaster risks.

A VCA takes into account local knowledge of hazards, the frequency of disasters and any pre-established structures such as evacuation routes. Functioning community committees are involved in the process. Hazard maps are used to identify the high-risk zones and the safe places in each targeted community. This assessment supports local

communities and the GRC to work out the key risks. A VCA will also provide information on the capacities available to cope with these risks.

At the end of the assessment, communities agree on a joint action plan to reduce disaster risks. As this plan of action will serve as an orientation on the respective priorities for DRR even beyond the period of projects, the communities are supported in coordinating with the relevant government authorities in charge of disaster management.

2. Disaster Prevention & Mitigation

Disaster prevention and mitigation as undertaken by the GRC focuses on structural and non-structural activities implemented within a community-based approach and by supporting the National Societies of disaster-prone countries.

Structural activities are often related to the construction of hazard resistant community infrastructure, such as storm-proof community centres, flood channels and flood-proof bridges or fixing slopes prone to landslides by sustainable reforestation. Non-structural measures refer mainly to awareness raising activities, for instance by sharing technical knowledge on natural hazards and DRR with school students and teachers, and to the production of supporting educational material. Awareness of natural hazards is one of the most important prerequisite for successfully DRR projects.

3. Disaster Preparedness

Disaster preparedness is the key sector of GRC action for DRR and again with a double focus on community-based approaches and capacity-building for the National Societies. The GRC enables them to respond more effectively to disasters and crises and to be able to coordinate more swiftly with the government authorities in charge of disaster management.

GRC supports the formation and training of first aid brigades and search and rescue teams at local and regional levels. It encourages communities to work out evacuation plans and to organise evacuation drills at regular intervals. Such preparations can save lives during earthquakes, tsunamis, floods or tropical storms. The GRC pays particular attention to the participation of women in these activities.

Setting up local early warning systems is crucial in this context. Early warning will effectively contribute to DRR only if it reaches the communities at risk in time and if they accept the message and have previously practised their response. Ensuring uninterrupted and fast communication chains that reach out even to remote communities is therefore paramount.

The GRC acknowledges the important role of the international Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted during the World Conference on

Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai (Japan) in March 2015 (LINK:
<http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>)

Find more information on international disaster preparedness by the Red Cross:

[Broschuere_DRK_Katastrophenvorsorge__Klimaanpassung.pdf](#)
2 MB

[GRC_Disaster_Risk_Reduction__Climate_Chance_Adaption.pdf](#)
2 MB

Brochure for disaster preparedness - the example of Bangladesh in November 2012:

[Staerken_fuer_die_Zukunft._Katastrophenvorsorge__die_passt.pdf](#)
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