

- When citizens and their institutions gain a deeper **awareness and understanding** of risks and hazards;
- When **citizens mobilize for common action** on disaster;
- When they can **induce institutions to work** efficiently with them;



## **Threats and vulnerabilities can be tackled.**

Concrete benefits in the lives of vulnerable people (eg. better education, improved livelihoods) can also be achieved as a result.

### **Complex emergencies require complex prevention**

If disasters are complex, DRR should be too. Our approach:

- accepts that DRR is complex, and cannot happen through quick-fix solutions;
- builds on thorough analysis of root causes (informed by the experience of people living with threats, and complemented by information from external actors);
- brings together many stakeholders, at multiple levels, in recognition of the fact that no one actor alone can tackle all root causes of hazards.

### **The importance of “soft approaches”**

So-called “soft” interventions, including community-led analysis and planning and development of local institutions/systems around DRR, are critical. DRR work needs to address both hard and soft components, and root them in a culture of prevention.

### **Investment in DRR is worthwhile**

DRR should be a priority investment for international donors, as well as national governments. From a donor perspective, DRR models based on strengthening local awareness and institutional capacities rather than investing directly in infrastructure can help magnify the impact of DRR programmes by prompting direct government investment.

### **Disasters are not “natural”: the link with social justice...**

People living in poverty are the most exposed to the impacts of disasters, be they “natural” or “man-made”. DRR initiatives need to acknowledge that vulnerability is often linked to injustice, and address poverty and marginalization as one of the key root causes of disaster.

### **... and the link with better governance**

The poverty keeping people trapped in a cycle of recurrent disasters is not only monetary poverty, it also links closely with poor governance around DRR issues. The Hyogo Framework for Action calls for a decentralized model of governance, ensuring full participation of communities. DRR work requires institutional commitment and strong governance to ensure inclusive, participative, transparent and accountable decision-making processes.

### **Putting communities at the centre**

DRR strategies must build on the wealth of experience that vulnerable communities already possess on mitigation, adaptation and response mechanisms. Communities must be placed at the centre of all DRR interventions.

### **Reassessing roles and responsibilities around disaster**

Good governance and decision-making on DRR requires a reassessment of the roles and responsibilities of the actors driving the process. DRR involves many actors. NGOs can help to facilitate the involvement of multiple stakeholders at different levels.

### **Working through schools: creating a sense of urgency around DRR**

The most vulnerable communities might have other immediate priorities than engaging in DRR initiatives. Using schools as the starting point for DRR work can prompt communities to focus on protecting children and their future, thus creating a sense of urgency around the need to build a culture of prevention.

### **“Vulnerability” as a tool for thinking and action**

The concept of “vulnerability” is often a new one for communities, and can be challenging to introduce. But it can also unlock new ways of thinking and action. The quantum leap is to help people to realise that vulnerability is not only dependent on the existence of external threats, but that they themselves can intervene on the cause-effect mechanisms at play. DRR should provoke a shift in the way communities and institutions think and act about disaster, leading people from acceptance to action.

### **DRR should be integrated into existing commitments**

In a context where too often interventions are split across “development” and “humanitarian”, DRR sits uncomfortably on the fence. DRR should be integrated into existing development and relief work as opposed to being treated as a specialist side issue.