



Report of the South African Forum on Local Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction

*20-22 November 2006
Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa*

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List of acronyms

BYG	Backyard Gardens
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission, Malawi
CBDP	Community-Based Disaster Reduction
CRA	Community Risk Assessment
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DP/P	Disaster Prevention/Preparedness
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EWS	Early Warning System
GIS	Geographical Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PVA	Participatory Vulnerability Analysis
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme, South Africa
RVAC	Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEDRA	University Network for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa
UN/ISDR	United Nations-International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
WCDR	World Conference on Disaster Reduction
WV	World Vision

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Executive summary

This report summarizes presentations, discussions and recommendations from the Southern African Regional Forum on *Local Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction* hosted by the Regional Delegation of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies based in Harare (Zimbabwe) in partnership with the ProVention Consortium Secretariat at the Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa, on November 20-22, 2006. 29 participants from Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe representing civic /non-governmental organizations, government representatives, universities and international organizations attended the workshop.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and institutional mechanisms exist at various degrees of completeness in Southern Africa. However more reflection is needed on how these can be effectively supported and strengthened in an integrated approach that considers the accumulation and range of risks that households and communities face, including slow-onset crises, which dominate many parts of Africa. This forum was organized with precisely this goal in mind and provided the platform for organizations working at local level to explore their experiences on DRR in the region. The overall objective was to influence policy dialogue among players working in DRR in the region and to advance the African disaster risk reduction agenda through sharing of local experiences and perspectives on disaster risk reduction. This was considered particularly important in Africa where local organizations, NGOs, universities and civil society actors play pivotal roles in supporting as well as in influencing governments in disaster risk reduction activities at grassroots level.

The forum proceedings included keynote speeches by Ms. Mandisa Kalako-Williams, Senior Manager at the Department of Provincial and Local Government in South Africa, and Prof. Coleen Vogel from Witwatersrand University. Individual case study presentations were succeeded by plenary and working group discussions. The meeting ended with the formulation of findings and recommendations.

Keynote speeches focused on gender and DRR, highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming in prevention, preparedness, mitigation as well as in disaster response and secondly concentrated on disaster risks in Southern Africa and the link between DRR and climate change and the need to create "boundary organizations" linking up research with field work. Individual case study presentations were given under six thematic areas as follows:

Theme 1: Fire Prevention

- Mitigating the effects of fire: a community based approach from Nigeria

Theme 2: Flood/Cyclones/ Early Warning Systems

- Linking public risk knowledge and early warning systems to flood hazard resilience: case study of Lower Muzarabani District (Zimbabwe)
- Floods and cyclone early warning using the floods/cyclone three color system: a case study from Mozambique

Theme 3: Micro credit Schemes

- Reducing the vulnerability to income shocks: community self-help saving and loan groups

Theme 4: Food Security/HIV/AIDS/Drought

- An approach to disaster risk management in Namibia

- Backyard gardens improve food security for AIDS affected households: a case study for Swaziland
- CADECOM's Disaster Risk Management Program
- Chikwawa case study on community-based DRR initiatives (Malawi)

Theme 5: School Safety

- Disaster risk reduction through schools project in Malawi

Theme 6: Community Risk Assessment Tools

- Tools for community risk assessment and action planning
- World Vision International's focus and tools for DRR
- Learning together for renewal in community development and local organizational capacity: community emancipation through fostering innovation and local organizational capacity
- Participatory mapping and GIS

Presentations and background discussions promoted lively debate and rich exchanges of information and experiences among the participants. Conclusions and recommendations from the discussions are summarized below:

1. *Create partnership and networks in DRR*

The forum participants emphasized the need to develop linkages, partnerships and networks among all the players working in DRR. These linkages can be:

- a) At different levels (e.g. global, regional/sub-regional, national, community),
- b) Between sectors (e.g. governments, NGOs, private sector, research institutions)
 - There is a need to strengthen links between academic institutions and NGOs by identifying activities of common interest to undertake jointly (e.g. documentation of good practices, program evaluations and peer-reviews, NGOs to facilitate dissemination of research findings within communities, etc.).
 - Organize internships with NGOs for university students for them to gain experience/recognition.

2. *The Concept of DRR should be holistic, multidimensional and multi-sectoral in its definition and approach*

The participants emphasized that:

- DRR includes the reduction of vulnerability of people, their properties, infrastructure and environmental entities at risk.
- Disasters are better managed through preemptive measures by prevention, preparedness rather than managing the emergency.

3. *The effective management and application of early warning systems is essential for DRR*

- Community and indigenous early warning knowledge should be integrated into national early warning systems to enhance understanding and utilization of the systems.
- NGOs/DRR practitioners should assist communities to define risks they face.

4. DRR and Climate Change should be linked

- There is need for common terminology and to speak the same language because the two issues are closely related.
- There is a need for more communication/forums on DRR and climate change.

5. Enhance knowledge management, networking and sharing among all DRR practitioners

The forum participants reaffirmed the need for a much stronger knowledge management in DRR. They emphasized that:

- Web-based knowledge sharing has its limitations.
- There is a need to strengthen knowledge sharing at the national and regional level through existing structures when possible.
- Indigenous knowledge should be taken into consideration, but might not always be relevant when external conditions change rapidly for instance.

The recommendations from this forum are going to be added to those from two other ProVention meetings organized in West (Dakar, 2-3 November 2006) and East Africa (6-7 December 2006). They will shape the agenda and influence the debate by more than 120 experts in DRR at the ProVention Annual Forum meeting to be held in Tanzania in February 2007.

The overall impression derived from the Southern Africa forum was that for more effective disaster reduction, all sectors should be involved in DRR activities. Networking among governments, NGOs, universities, regional/international organizations, communities, and corporations is essential in achieving this holistic approach to DRR. At this forum networking opportunities also provided the participants with the time to discuss their work and learn from their peers. Most participants agreed that this regional forum helped them connect with their peers and partners and believed that the material presented at the forum would be useful to them when they got home.

Introduction

As the number of actors and initiatives concerned with disaster risk reduction increases, in particular at the international and regional level, it is important to ensure that local perspectives on risk reduction are not lost and that the views, knowledge, experiences and expertise of local risk reduction practitioners both inform and influence the regional and international policy agenda. This is particularly key in Africa where local organizations, NGOs and civil society actors at large play a vital role in supporting disaster risk reduction. However, few opportunities exist in Africa where local practitioners can come together, share knowledge, experiences and good practices and identify key priorities for the disaster risk reduction policy agenda.

Furthermore and in particular on the African continent, there is a need to more clearly define how vulnerability to natural disasters and the effect of climate change relates to that resulting from exposure to other development challenges like food and livelihood security, limited access to basic social services, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, gender and income inequality, injustice, conflict and forced migration, etc. Moreover, many organizations in Africa are often involved in risk reduction activities without labeling their projects and programs as such. More reflection is needed on how disaster risk reduction can be effectively supported and strengthened in Africa in an integrated approach that considers the accumulation and range of risks that households and communities face, including slow-onset crises which dominate many parts of Africa.

To address these and other issues and to provide an opportunity for knowledge sharing, the ProVention Consortium in partnership with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies organized a regional forum in Southern Africa which gathered regional practitioners with expertise of working with communities and local authorities on disaster risk reduction or carrying out applied research on community based disaster risk reduction.

The Southern African forum on *Local Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction* was held at the Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa on 20-22 November 2006. The forum was part of a series of three meetings the ProVention Consortium organized with partners in Africa. Two other meetings were held in West Africa (Dakar, 1-3 November 2006) and East Africa (Nairobi, 5-7 December 2006). The Southern African meeting attracted 29 people from civic organizations, government institutions, NGOs and universities. True to its theme *Local Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction*, this two-day workshop provided a forum for country case study presentations, discussions, networking and recommendations on the way forward. A key consideration for organizing the event was the view that more reflection was needed on how disaster risk reduction could be effectively supported and strengthened in Africa in an integrated approach that considered local experiences, ideas and knowledge systems to disaster risk reduction.

This report is an attempt to summarize the rich and diverse information generated by the forum. It starts by recalling the objectives of the meeting, then proceeds by providing overviews and highlights of the keynote speeches, country case study presentations under six thematic areas, and outputs of the group sessions and finally presents the forum recommendations.

It is hoped that this report can be a resource not only for those involved in disaster risk reduction, but also those interested in other fields like sustainable development, climate change and adaptation, HIV/AIDS, etc. To make this a more broadly useful and readable document, presentations have been summarized under six thematic headings. The recommendations from the discussions will form the agenda at the ProVention Annual Forum to take place in Tanzania in February 2007 where the contributions from the three forums held East, Southern and West Africa are going to be discussed by more than 120 participants.

Forum objectives

Overall objective

The overall objective of the workshop was to influence policy dialogue, improve practice and contribute to the advancement of the disaster risk reduction agenda by sharing local experiences and perspectives in DRR in Southern Africa. The forum also provided an opportunity to take stock of the current state of disaster risk reduction initiatives in individual countries in Southern Africa and to consider issues facing the disaster management sector in general.

Specific objectives

- Critically reflect on the scope of disaster risk reduction in Africa and its relationship with measures taken to reduce the impact of other crises, which are affecting the vulnerability of households and communities.
- Develop a pool of practical knowledge from participants of the forum on effective methods, approaches and practices replicable in Africa and share this knowledge with those responsible for implementing disaster reduction activities at the local (including village and community), national, regional and international level.
- Discuss risk reduction related topics, which have specific relevance to the region.
- Encourage action among local actors, such as local NGOs, civic organizations, local governments and researchers in DRR activities in Africa.
- Use the findings and recommendations of the three regional forums to shape the agenda and trigger discussions at the 2007 ProVention Annual Forum in Tanzania.

Forum structure

The forum considered six thematic areas under its agenda. The following were the focus of the forum, with a series of short presentations under each theme, followed by plenary discussions:

- Fire Prevention
- Flood/Cyclones/Early Warning Systems
- Micro-credit Schemes
- Food Security/HIV/AIDS/Drought
- School Safety
- Community Risk Assessment tools

Each of the thematic sessions began with a series of short presentations by participants followed by more in-depth interactive discussion sessions aimed at identifying issues and concerns and framing suggestions and recommendations to map the way forward.

Welcome and opening remarks

Mr. Gift Chatora, Regional Disaster Preparedness Officer at the **International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** in Harare (Zimbabwe), **Mr. Lars Bernd**, Senior Officer at the **ProVention Consortium** and **Ms. Seija Tyrninoksa**, **IFRC Representative** in South Africa welcomed participants to the workshop on behalf of the two organizations and expressed their appreciation to participants for their support in attending the event. Participants introduced themselves, their organizations and field of specialization.

After the introduction of participants Mr. Gift Chatora gave a concise overview of DRR, focusing also on recent DRR developments that have taken place in Africa. He noted that Africa's share of reported disasters has increased over the past decade, with more people affected by natural hazards, and economic losses on the increase. As a result disaster impacts have become an impediment to sustainable development in the continent. According to Gift, disaster risk reduction policies and institutional mechanisms do exist at various degrees of completeness, however their effectiveness is limited, hence the need for a strategic approach to improving and enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency by integrating the views from all stakeholders involved in DRR. He outlined some of the IFRC attempts to address DRR, starting with the 2000 Ouagadougou Declaration which set a focus on food security and the 2003 International Conference of the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement focusing on reducing the risk and impact of disasters. He also referred to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), supported by IFRC, which focuses on building the resilience of nations and communities.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies together with the ProVention Consortium see themselves as part and parcel of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system and try to promote the HFA. This forum was part of these efforts to promote a sharing of local experiences, knowledge systems and expertise in DRR which are not necessarily well known and shared at national or international level and thus have a lesser impact in the international debate. Gift also referred to a DFID-funded project, which the IFRC implements to strengthen community resilience, knowledge sharing and disaster response in Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.

Gift Chatora's brief welcome remarks were followed by Mr. Lars Bernd, a Senior Officer from the ProVention Secretariat who gave a brief overview of the Consortium and its activities in Africa. The ProVention Consortium is a global partnership of governments, international organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society dedicated to increasing the safety of vulnerable communities and to reducing the impacts of disasters in developing countries. It aims to advance disaster risk reduction in developing countries through forging partnerships and linkages, advocating amongst policy makers, demonstrating innovative approaches to the practice of risk management, and sharing knowledge and resources.

He emphasized the multi-stakeholder composition of ProVention and informed participants that the forum was one of three organized on the continent focusing on local perspectives to disaster risk reduction focusing on civic organizations, NGOs, local government, research and training institutions and the Red Cross / Red Crescent movement. The other two meetings were held in West Africa (Dakar, 2-3 November 2006) and East Africa (6-7 December 2006). These meetings were intended to give a community based perspective to disaster risk reduction with outcomes from the three forums shaping the agenda of the ProVention annual forum to take place in Tanzania in February 2007. He hoped that much of the discussions would focus on ways to maximize participation from all stakeholders to promote and implement a broad culture of prevention, preparedness and mitigation, integrating local perspectives to disaster reduction.

Ms. Seija Tyrninoksa, the IFRC Representative in South Africa, welcomed participants on behalf of the host organization. She gave a brief overview of major disasters in the region, namely droughts, floods, earthquakes, epidemics – especially HIV/AIDS and cholera, forest fires and environmental degradation. She furthermore highlighted the DRR activities of IFRC in the region

aimed at addressing those disasters. She emphasized the need for all those engaged in DRR to prepare adequately for natural disasters, which statistically are on the increase in Southern Africa. IFRC has been actively engaged in DRR activities in the region by providing technical support, capacity building in DRR and rescue and relief activities in response to the disaster outbreaks. The goal of IFRC is to reduce vulnerability to disasters of communities in the southern Africa region with the support of all stakeholders including civic society, governments, NGOs and researchers. It also supports policy integration by facilitating links and synergies between these sectors.

Keynote and opening presentations

Keynote presentation: 'Local Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction' by Mandisa Kalako-Williams, Senior Manager, Department of Provincial and Local Government, South Africa



Ms. Mandisa Kalako-Williams extended a warm welcome to all participants to South Africa and expressed hope that the outcome of the forum discussions would be fruitful to the regional and global community. She reminded the audience that the main theme for the forum was disaster risk reduction and encouraged participants to critically look at what has and what has not been achieved in order to give an honest assessment of disaster risk reduction initiatives in the region. Ms. Mandisa Kalako-Williams' keynote presentation focused on gender and DRR. She noted that women are more vulnerable to disasters because their rights and claims over productive resources, market access as well as decision making lack social legitimacy. This has effectively made them more vulnerable to disasters than their male counterparts. She noted that in Africa and specifically in South Africa where she

grew up in the rural areas "gender influences the types of hazard to which an individual is exposed and an individual's access to resources with which to build resilience to hazards and to recover from disaster". Disasters, especially floods, storms, droughts, tsunamis, earthquakes and landslides, are on the increase and continue to claim thousands of lives each year all over the world.

She noted the importance of mainstreaming gender in DRR in all steps of the disaster cycle, i.e. prevention, preparedness, mitigation as well as response. According to Ms. Mandisa Kalako-Williams, the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) which took place in Kobe (Japan) from 18-22 January 2005 with the resulting Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005 – 2015 had both acknowledged and recognized the importance of gender equality in many global processes including disaster risk reduction initiatives. The WCDR stressed the need for integrating a gender perspective into all disaster management decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessments, early warning, information management, education and training. Making reference to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, she also urged participants to note that women and men are affected differently by disasters and hence the response to their needs must be taken into consideration. She highlighted the different challenges faced by women when they become targets of gender-based violence and exploitation. Women are often left out in the planning for disaster response and therefore the special needs of women and girls are not met or met only as an afterthought. Also, the special talents and skills of women are not capitalized upon, wasting a valuable resource.

Consequently, she argued that there is need to encourage all those involved in disaster management to mainstream a gender perspective in the promotion of sustainable development

processes, including disaster reduction, preparedness and response, and mitigation strategies as voiced in the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015. She noted that effective policy and practice for disaster risk reduction cannot neglect citizens' own perceptions of risk and the priorities they put on hazards that may not fit into established government departmental categories. It was important for the forum to take vulnerable communities' disaster risk reduction practices into account.

Referring to the situation in South Africa, the presenter informed that in the past 12 years the government has been undertaking massive transformation in the field of disaster management as outlined in the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). The RDP is underpinned by the vision for "A better Life for all" and contains the interrelated objectives of meeting people's basic needs, building the economy, democratizing the State and society, developing human resources and building the nation. The new local government system has blurred the boundaries between rural and urban and development impact of the RDP has been significant but urban poverty (40%) still persists. Changes to South Africa's disaster management policy and legislation unfolded during a period of massive legislative reform in post-Apartheid South Africa, underpinned by recurrent disasters such as droughts, floods and fires in Mozambique. In addition, the evolution of the country's disaster management policy was significantly influenced by international developments related to disaster management and disaster risk reduction. The mainstreaming of DRR has started in schools with DRR day focusing on school safety.

The presenter also noted with concern the fact that while global efforts to focus on disaster risk rather than disaster management may address the conceptual barriers to ongoing developmental risk reduction, their budgetary implications to resource-poor southern African governments still posed considerable constraints to implementation. For most governments because of fiscal austerity there is a general political reluctance to invest scarce resources to minimize the impacts of future 'unknowns' in favor of visible disaster relief in times of crisis because in the latter there is unchallenged justification and humanitarian need, along with the strategic opportunity to generate political capital.

Without innovative strategies that integrate development and disaster reduction imperatives, the UN Millennium Development Goals could not become a reality for southern Africa. The government of South Africa is committed to incorporating outcomes from forums such as this one into its overall disaster risk reduction processes.

With these remarks, Ms. Kalako-Williams wished the delegates fruitful discussions and declared the Southern Africa Forum on "Local Perspective on Disaster Reduction" officially open.

Discussion

A lively discussion followed the presentation, with participants raising many challenges for implementing disaster risk reduction in the region. The following are some highlights:

- How can we avoid the dropping out of school by girls? There is need to better secure the way to school for those vulnerable to all forms of abuse especially girls. Special needs of women and girls should systematically be considered in all DRR projects in the region.
- How can we effectively promote a shift from emergency/disaster management to DP/R and DRR and increase the funding base? A lot of advocacy and internal and external support is needed. What could be our roles? This can be in the form of collaboration, knowledge sharing, funding, research, etc.
- Governance component - what are the challenges at the local level to achieve DRR successes as a collaborative effort of all key stakeholders? What is needed for large-scale implementation of DRR activities (training of local administrators, media, business, CBOs...)?
- Knowledge sharing: There might be a risk of "polluting" with documents that do not reach those who could make use of them. What is needed, what could be done better (including

among the NGO community in the sub-region)? It would be helpful to reflect also on local networks and websites and their user-friendliness.

- Do we need to move from a DRR approach to a much broader risk approach? For instance, instead of “competing” with gender, HIV, climate change, and other crosscutting issues, should we move towards a 10% risk funding in all budgets?
- How do we deal with slow onset hazards and adapt to them (what else is needed in terms of data collection and advocacy)?
- There is a need to strengthen linkages between the regional and national levels. This can be achieved through regional body such as SADC.
- Develop a regional network/strengthen existing ones (e.g. OCHA, IFRC, UN/ISDR, UNDP)

Keynote presentation: “Disaster Risks in Southern Africa” by Prof. Coleen Vogel, Witwatersrand University, South Africa

This keynote presentation by Prof. Coleen Vogel entitled “Shocks, surprises and stones in our shoes” provided the participants with some reflections on the various risks affecting Southern Africa, including HIV/AIDS, conflicts, but in particular droughts and floods and their link to climate variations.

Prof. Vogel noted that a range of complex anthropogenic interactions appeared to be contributing cumulatively to accelerate the natural processes of global warming and climate change and hence potential disaster risks. As a result, the effects of global warming were contributing to the apparent increase in the frequency and intensity of weather related disasters in Southern Africa. She listed a series of shocks such as floods and droughts that had resulted in harvest failures, which were particularly virulent in 2000/2001. Again in 2006, due to drought more than 2 million tons of food aid was needed to feed starving people in the region. All this had resulted in “surprises” that included unraveling of family units, increased off farm activities, and possible increased peasants/poor in asset traps compounded by poor interventions.

She pointed out that climate change is now considered seriously in many high-profile international forums because policy-makers realize that it may in fact reverse development gains. She detailed past and current interventions posing questions like: Have we learnt anything NEW? Have we learnt from the PAST? Or are we carrying baggage and stones in our shoes? Reference was made to the Disaster Management and Vulnerability Model adapted from Prof. Ben Wisner. In this model lack of access (to such things as health services, credit and information) and lack of resources (to such things as income, assets and social support) would result in exposure to hazards and threats as well as reduced capacity to cope and recover. This exposure to hazards and reduced capacity result in increased vulnerability to disaster risks by the majority of the people in the region. To ensure the protection of human life and property there is need to evaluate vulnerabilities to climate change and long- and short-term risks of potential disasters. In Southern Africa, she pointed out that the risks of potential disaster must be properly assessed before any intervention is taken. Proper assessment of particular risks required a detailed analysis of past events, estimates of recurrence frequencies, and preparedness and planning for mitigation. She pointed out some of the current attempts to this effect such as Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and Forecasting Forums that were giving outlooks for forthcoming season in the whole region.

She bemoaned the current scenario where there is a gap between traditional science and the users of the information generated by the scientists. She called for an improvement in the interaction between users and producers of information. In this regard she called for improved multi-directional dialogue, reorientation of traditional science as well as institutional changes if the gap between traditional science and users is to be bridged. She also argued for the need to strengthen links between academic institutions and NGOs.

The presentation ended with suggestions of how to remove “stones in the shoes” and these were:

- Linking the development, DRR and climate change / climate adaptation communities together,
- Developing, where appropriate, new, hybrid knowledge products, such as drought resistant seed varieties,
- Constantly reviewing past interventions,
- Identifying activities of common interest to undertake jointly (e.g. documentation of good practices, projects evaluation and peer-reviews, NGOs facilitating dissemination of research findings within communities, etc.)

Discussion

The discussion following Professor Vogel's presentation oscillated around the following statements, observations and questions:

- In Southern Africa there is a strong emergency response but the shift to prevention and preparedness remains a challenge.
- There is a need to train students to implement new policy focusing on preparedness and prevention.
- There is still a lack of information on climate adaptation projects. Many adaptation studies have been carried out but implementation on the ground has been missing.
- A climate change center is going to be set up in Southern Africa (Botswana).
- There is need for hybrid boundary organizations to link up researchers and practitioners on the ground. An example is the Southern African Vulnerability Platform to talk about social protection.
- We need to advocate for a stronger government coordination role in DRR.
- We need to collectively mitigate the effects of climate change. But for us to do this we need to exactly know what we are supposed to do.
- Do we need to define DRR in the Southern African context to remain credible? What are the boundaries?

“The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters” by Michele Cocchiglia, NGO Liaison Officer, UN/International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Michele Cocchiglia's presentation started with an overview of the global trend on disaster occurrences and frequencies. The presenter noted that disasters are not natural, but are rather the result of population's vulnerability to natural or human-induced hazards including climate change. Vulnerabilities are increased by socio-economic conditions (including poverty, unplanned urban growth, lack of awareness and institutional capacities), physical factors (including insufficient land use planning, housing and infrastructures located in hazard-prone areas) and environmental degradation (i.e., coastal, watershed and marshlands areas). Closely linked and influenced by this are the changing perception, hazards and vulnerability of communities, which are constantly shaped by dynamic and complex socio-economic and ecological processes.

In response to the challenges of an expected increased frequency and severity of disasters, ISDR is focusing on building a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Movement with the objective of reducing disaster risks worldwide. A key component of this movement is the networking of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), which play a key role in building the resilience of communities to disasters. Based on the above understanding, ISDR is currently developing a “Global Network of NGOs” for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Michele Cocchiglia further detailed some of ISDR's activities in Africa. The current focus areas in Africa include:

- Increasing governments' commitment to disaster reduction through the integration of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction into development planning, development of policies, legislation and institutional frameworks for DRR.
- Enhancing countries' capacity for disaster risk assessment.
- Enhancing access to space-based technology and information for mapping.
- Facilitating the forecasting of natural and related hazards and vulnerabilities, through the promotion of disasters risk reduction knowledge.

Some of the activities being carried out by ISDR in Africa throughout the period 2002 -2006 include:

- Advocacy and public awareness programs in a wide range of DRR-related subjects.
- Information sharing and knowledge exchange through various platforms (including the 16 National Platforms that have already been established with four more under consideration).
- Networking and partnerships building (i.e. UNEDRA University Network, Journalist and Drought networks, as well as partnerships with various regional and research institutions in developing publications).
- Awareness raising and development of an information database on DRR activities in Africa.

Discussion

In the discussion which followed Michele Cocchiglia's presentation it was noted that a number of gaps and opportunities in DRR still exist and these include the following:

- Community-based DRR processes and actions are still mostly focused on concepts, awareness and educational activities and less on mainstreaming DRR into development activities;
- NGOs sometimes work in isolation and are "competing" with each other for resources;
- Need to "scale up" successful initiatives and understand what approaches work most effectively and under what conditions;
- Better networking is needed to improve access to and exchange of information and knowledge, and support partnerships development.

Theme 1: Fire prevention

“Mitigating the effects of fire: a community based approach from Nigeria” by Badanga Ahmed Lamidi

The presenter is President of the “Fire Disaster Prevention and Safety Awareness Association of Nigeria”, a non governmental organization, which has embarked on an extensive program of imparting fire safety knowledge and education among local communities and schools in the country. This initiative is designed to assist ISDR to mainstream disaster risk reduction among local communities and urban settlements based on the organization’s vulnerability assessment in areas not covered by the Local Fire Service. The process depends largely on mass advocacy campaign programs, training, information-sharing, and traditional innovative practices, all aimed at promoting fire disaster reduction. Some of the initiatives carried out to date include a campaign launched in a remote village of Bassa on the 8th of March 2005 where local communities including local chiefs, women, and youths were mobilized and engaged in fire risk assessment and awareness campaign program.



The second campaign took place in March 2006 in a village called Dubaina-Durumi, using the experience of the first campaign to explore and improve on the result earlier achieved. This was followed by a paper presentation on “Fire Safety Awareness in Schools” at the launch of the UN/ISDR World Disaster Risk Reduction campaign on the 11th of October 2006 organized by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Nigeria with the theme “Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School”. The later resulted in the introduction of Fire Safety Clubs in schools participating in the event. To date about 3265 students have registered as full members of Fire Safety Club spreading across 25 schools in the Federal Capital Territory. Challenges however still exist in terms of program implementation mainly due to financial constraints.

Theme 2: Flood/cyclones/early warning systems

“Linking public risk knowledge and early warning systems to flood hazard resilience: case study of Lower Muzarabani District (Zimbabwe)” By Patrick Gwimbi, Zimbabwe Open University

The Zimbabwe Open University carried out a study to examine how the public knowledge of the flood hazard, based on the community’s previous experiences and understanding of associated risks shaped its resilience to floods through dissemination of early warning information. To collect the necessary data for the study, the University’s researcher documented flood disaster management experiences of communities in the flood prone areas, flood hazard mitigation activities of the Civil Protection Unit, local authorities, meteorological services and non governmental organizations operating in the area and analyzed it. The results revealed that disaster risk reduction by indigenous peoples is often associated with local



communities' experiences of previous disasters hitting their area, traditional information dissemination institutions and indicators, ancestral attachment to and knowledge of the landscape; and subsistence economies that largely rely on rain fed agriculture. Warning information from the disaster management agency came just before or during the flood event with no defined unit responsible for disseminating it at community level. Weaknesses were noted in the dissemination of warning information, with those disseminating warnings either not fully aware of landscape terrain to determine the escape routes for the vulnerable communities to follow during evacuation, or knowledgeable of traditional systems including local leadership of the area and disaster preparedness plans. More than 84% of the community members indicated that they were also not likely to take serious early warning alerts if the previous warnings did not result in a serious disaster or came from someone they did not know. It is concluded that there is a need for capacity building in information dissemination, risks associated with floods and ways of reducing them at community level. Local communities need to play an active role in flood risk reduction and this can only be enhanced by empowering them through training, information sharing, enhancing their indigenous knowledge systems on disaster risk reduction and equipping them with affordable early warning information receiving tools.

“Cyclone early warning system: a case study from Mozambique” by Eunice Mucache, Mozambique Red Cross Society

Past experiences have taught Mozambique not to take news of cyclones lightly. The destruction caused by previous floods in 2000 and 2001 following devastating torrential rains and tropical storms, is still in many people's minds. The Mozambique Red Cross is now actively involved in the setting up and promotion of a cyclone early warning system. The alert system works in phases, categories and by a three color system which provides details on the severity and likely time of impact of the storm. The first cyclone alert phase is the surveillance phase that starts with the building of the cyclone in the Indian Ocean. Once strong winds are detected the alert phase is activated with warning being released at intervals depending on the strength of the cyclone and the likely time it will reach the coast.



There are five categories of tropical cyclones, namely moderate storm with gust wind speed of 90-124 km/hour, severe tropical storm 125-165 km/hour, tropical cyclone 166-233 km/hour, intense tropical cyclone 234-299 km/hour, very intense tropical cyclone 300 km/hour and above. Each alert phase is represented by a different color emphasizing the magnitude and severity of the cyclone. Different warnings are disseminated through radios, local community disaster management committees and all other forms that local communities have access to.

The Mozambique Red Cross is actively involved in training and raising awareness of local communities as well as in lobbying government representatives on disaster reduction issues. To date it has carried out community disaster preparedness activities such as community based participatory mapping using remote sensing and GPS recordings to delineate flood risk areas setting up and training local communities in disaster management with emphasis on the specific roles for each member during the early warning information dissemination. One of the major lessons learnt from this initiative is that there is a need to develop a community-based cyclone and flood-warning system with appropriate capacity building of community based institutions and provincial and national information providers. Local people, with their own grassroots experience of disasters, have their own ways and means of responding to disasters. They trust their traditional ways of observing weather and collectively react as a community. Traditional structures of disseminating early warning information exist though undefined and properly structured. If the communities were fully engaged in early warning systems and well connected, the likelihood of having less damage and deaths within their communities would be great. Capacity building on

traditional early warning systems as well as improving the communication channels and means at community level could go a long way in developing effective early warning systems in Mozambique.

Discussions

It was generally agreed that some traditional early warning systems were not reliable and therefore are not sufficient on their own. Some participants strongly voiced the need for further research and documentation on the traditional early warning systems and integrate them with modern ones. Participants also highlighted the need to come up with a standard classification or coding system for traditional early warnings. To achieve this, collaboration between NGOs, governments, and research institutions such as universities as well as the affected communities was needed. It was hoped that the lessons, experiences, and insights identified in the presentations and forum discussions could be used to remind, if not inform, government officials as well as decision makers in various government agencies and non-governmental organizations about how to prepare effective warnings.

Participants also raised key points in relation to risk knowledge, such as how to learn from past experiences and change behaviors not only within communities but also within NGOs, government and the research community, improving the availability of and access to risk/losses information, and harnessing local-level risk assessment to sub-national, national and regional levels. To realize these ideals, it was strongly felt that collaboration among stakeholders such as NGOs, government, research community and organizations such as the ProVention Consortium and IFRC was crucial.

Theme 3: Micro-credit schemes

“Reducing vulnerability to income shocks: community self-help saving and loan groups” by Moges Tefera, CARE Ethiopia

Ethiopia and the large part of its rural population are highly vulnerable to a range of hazards such as drought, floods, hailstorm, market failure, HIV/AIDS and malaria. The number and impacts of these hazards are increasing, resulting in depletion in household assets, running down in natural resources, declining agricultural yields and increased vulnerability of the poor especially women who solely depend on rain-fed agriculture. Within the context of recurrent disasters, CARE has designed a community based livelihood and self help income generating and saving scheme aimed at poverty alleviation and empowerment of local communities. To date many households in the rural areas have benefited immensely from this project through community loan schemes, saving groups, link with financial institutions that have all contributed to reduction in poverty. Members are freed from exploitative moneylenders. The project has also helped to reduce the poor’s vulnerability and promoted women empowerment through awareness raising programs, assisting in setting bylaws, monitoring, capacity building and advocacy.



Theme 4: Food security/HIV/AIDS/drought

“An approach to disaster risk management in Namibia” by Mary Seely, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia

Drought and desertification have long been recognized as impacting on livelihoods of people living in dry lands. With increasing populations, demands of urbanization, changing climate and other pressures, their ability to cope with natural climatic variability and occasional extreme events is diminished. The scientific community has conducted extensive research focused on desertification, drought and livelihoods over the past century but this has had little impact on practice on the ground. Communication with local communities, service providers or policy makers who could benefit from and implement approaches identified is poor or absent. The Drought risk management program has focused on enhancing competence and capacity amongst communities, service providers and other partners to communicate and take advantage of information, to generate information, integrate and apply their knowledge to decision making concerning their own livelihoods in the dry lands. Important lessons from this program are: if the program is clear and is formed in a transparent, participatory and bottom-up fashion then local level monitoring works; if it is applied to issues of concern to the farmers (e.g. livestock) and there is a clear application of the results to enhance decision making then communication amongst all levels is possible (provided sufficient time is taken to make information understandable and its usefulness clear). To realize all this, time is required for participatory approaches; this in turn requires sustained funding for initiatives, communication must receive specific attention, particularly among people from different backgrounds, e.g. rural farmers, service providers, scientists, policy makers and formal platforms facilitating communication are an important element.

“Backyard gardens improve food security for AIDS-affected households in Swaziland” by Monica Murata, IFRC Regional Senior Food Security Officer

With a population of about 1.1 million, Swaziland has an HIV infection rate among adults of 42.6% with only 26,000 people on Anti Retro Viral (ARV) treatment and an estimated number of orphans due to AIDS of about 80,000. It is against this background that backyard gardens have been identified as a strategy in the fight against the AIDS pandemic, given the links between HIV, malnutrition and household food insecurity in developing countries. There is a particular need to ensure household food security for people living with AIDS. Backyard gardens have an established tradition and offer great potential for improving household food security and alleviating micronutrient deficiencies and they do this by direct access to a diversity of nutritionally-rich foods, increasing the purchasing power from income from sales of garden produce and providing fall-back food provision during lean periods.

The goal of this Red Cross project is to link food security to disaster mitigation and HIV prevention. The objectives of the project are to increase availability of nutritious vegetables for people living with AIDS especially those on ARVs and to improve food and nutrition security for AIDS-affected and other vulnerable households by using backyard gardens (BYG). BYG are an area around the home where different vegetables are grown throughout the year to meet family nutritional requirements. Family members provide the labor. Different varieties of vegetables are grown, including indigenous vegetables and herbs. Production is primarily for the household consumption. The system uses low cost organic inputs such as manure.

The project beneficiaries are AIDS affected households and these include those currently living with one or more adults with AIDS; those who have experienced a recent death or deaths from AIDS and those who have taken in one or more orphans from a family that experienced an AIDS-related death.

The project is implemented by the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society in partnership with IFRC, the Finnish Red Cross Society, the Swedish Red Cross Society, the Swaziland Charitable Trust, the Moya Centre (a local NGO), the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and traditional leaders. The partners are responsible for identifying beneficiaries by home-based care facilitators, orphan committees, agricultural extension and health workers and local leaders. They also provide fencing material and other garden tools; vegetable seeds for two seasons and build capacities (training of farmers in production, food preservation and use of drip irrigation kits) Drip kits have also been provided as labor-saving and water efficient technology for beneficiaries of the BYG project.

The project has been a major success with the number of BYG established rising from 40 in 2002 to 540 in 2006. Household food security has improved both in terms of quality and quantity and those taking antiretroviral therapy claimed improved diet. The BYG Project has had an impact in that it creates a sense of cooperation among family members while working together in it, the produce from the garden is an important "safety net", builds the capacity of beneficiaries as well as ensures the ecological sustainability through conservation agriculture. The project has also ensured that stigma associated with HIV and AIDS has been challenged, as many people are now more open about their status because they want to benefit from the project. A number of lessons have been learnt and the key ones are that participatory selection of project beneficiaries by all stakeholders guaranteed inclusion of project members from vulnerable households that included the affected and the infected. In conclusion it was noted that BYG are an appropriate livelihood strategy for AIDS-affected households as they offer dietary diversification and year-round food security.

“Community based disaster mitigation and preparedness in Malawi” by David Boston Kamchacha, Evangelical Association of Malawi

The Community-Based Disaster Management Project Malawi is being implemented against a background of increasing vulnerability and risk to chronic and acute food insecurity in Malawi; an increasing awareness of the impact of climate change as well as the realization that most DRR initiatives have been mostly reactive rather than proactive. This project is meant to ensure that communities in the project areas become safer and more resilient to disasters through community-based disaster mitigation and preparedness. This is achieved through capacity building and policy advocacy at all levels, empowering communities in the process so that they have the capacity to resist and recover from disaster stresses and shocks.

The project is being implemented in five of the most drought prone areas of Malawi and is targeting 23,600 vulnerable households and 50,000 school children. It is also reaching out to poor farmers through the radio. The project team is working in close collaboration with other NGOs in the sector like ActionAid and Christian Aid. The project team undertook a participatory capacity assessment to find out about previous experience on disasters and coping mechanisms. In parallel, it assessed current capacities (including latent ones), and identified who has access and control to available resources.

A number of project impacts have been noted and these include attitude change towards development work by the communities, diversification of eating habits because of the different crops produced, increased household food security as a result of small scale irrigation and winter cropping (e.g. in Chidid), improved ownership of livestock, improved cooperation between the community and the government agencies.

A community plan was developed and is made up of various facets such as a warning system including an evacuation plan; plans to manage the embankment area; a feeding plan; forestation; water harvesting; building small scale dams; conservation farming; small scale irrigation; livestock among others. All these measures are aimed at mitigating potential disasters identified by the community members themselves. Despite the plan having a lot of facets the implementation of

the plan has currently focused on community water point rehabilitation; conservation farming; livestock; manure making; small scale irrigation and winter cropping.

“CADECOM’s Disaster Risk Management Program” - by Rexa Nomsa Chakakala, CADECOM, Malawi

Malawi is entering into a period of chronic food insecurity in which improved weather alone will not help households and communities recover from shocks. Disaster risk increased by silent but intensifying conditions of political, socio-economic and environmental vulnerability threaten to trigger widespread suffering of people thereby increasing their vulnerability and undermining their resilience to natural and/or other shocks at the household- and community-levels. A series of analyses have been carried out in an attempt to fully understand the food crisis in Malawi with results revealing little recognition of the importance of communities to fully understand the various threats and risks to which they are exposed. Studies and linkages have been analyzed without the participation of those affected. Many rural communities do not have a common understanding of what their vulnerabilities are and what preventative measures they could be taking to reduce the risks to which they are exposed.

In response to these challenges, in 2003/04, CADECOM designed a disaster management project with assistance from the Dutch NGO Cordaid aimed at institutionalizing the concept of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the organization of local communities in the country. The training focused on the concept of DRM and the terms used in the program as well as elements that contribute to vulnerability, hazard and risk. Frameworks used in relation to DRM, livelihood analysis, mitigation plans as well as community monitoring of project activities were some of the topics covered. CADECOM is currently in the process of establishing a data bank of DRM initiatives and the communities involved at national level as a monitoring tool for decision making in future programs. A user-friendly training manual is being developed to ensure that capacity of staff is enhanced as they take the program to other areas. Using this approach communities are empowered to design their own projects that are reflecting their issues as we ‘peel the onion’.

Theme 5: School safety

“Disaster risk reduction through schools project in Malawi” - by Julie Juma, ActionAid International Malawi

The Hyogo Framework for Action aims to assist the efforts of nations and communities to become more resilient to natural hazards. Action Aid Malawi has been very active in advocating for better DRR policies and practices at both national and community levels. Its main goal is to reduce people’s vulnerability to natural disasters by institutionalizing the implementation of the Hyogo Framework within the education system by making schools in high risk disaster areas safer and enabling them to act as locus for disaster risk reduction. The main activities include the holding of workshops at district and national level, training and research to assess flood damage in particular communities and schools, engaging in policy and advocacy on DRR and capacity building in DRR.

Some of the activities Action Aid has been actively involved in are the rehabilitation of school infrastructure, mainly classrooms and sanitary facilities, that have been destroyed by floods in four schools, the repair of road networks and crossings, the formation of natural resources clubs in schools, the development of training manuals on emergencies and education as well as on water harvesting and drip irrigation.

Action Aid Malawi has first proceeded by running a Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA), the NGO’s tool for assessing vulnerability, in the project area, with results showing that most people

are vulnerable to droughts, floods and diseases like cholera, malaria and HIV/AIDS. Women and children are the most affected, with children dropping out of school after hazardous events because of various reasons including the flood impacts jeopardizing their livelihoods. Girls are the worst affected, being married off when there is food shortage for the family, or being sent to look for food and become thus absent from school.

Some of the visible benefits realized from this project in local communities include the dredging of River Thangadzi to control flooding, forestation along the riverbanks, construction of the Kaombe primary school and reclaiming of arable land taken by the government for veterinary services.

Theme 6: Community risk assessment tools

“Tools for community risk assessment and action planning” by Maya Schaerer, ProVention Consortium Secretariat

Community risk assessment (CRA) was recognized at the Hyogo World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005 as critical in identifying, assessing and monitoring risk at a community level, with the purpose of informing and designing locally appropriate risk reduction programs and assisting in the monitoring and surveillance of risk at a community level. ProVention initiated the CRA Toolkit project, which aims to document and analyse existing hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment methods and applications and thereby improve current CRA practice and inform decision making on risk reduction at the national and sub-national levels. The toolkit, available at www.proventionconsortium.org/CRA_toolkit, is a register of community risk assessment methods and a compendium of case studies, supported by guidance notes. It contains various methodologies aimed at promoting the participation of local people in identifying potential risks in their localities, conduct action planning, study, design and implement risk reduction activities as well as monitor and reflect on outcomes to build disaster resilient communities.

The range of methods used in CRA includes hazard mapping, hazard vulnerability and capacity assessment, resilience and vulnerability assessment, livelihood analysis, participatory vulnerability assessment, gender division of labor, and the use of hazard risk vulnerability assessment. The CRA Toolkit is designed to assist international NGOs and their partner organizations, local government staff, risk researchers and community based organizations, active in developmental and/or humanitarian work.

“Learning together for renewal in community development and local organizational capacity: Community emancipation through fostering innovation and local organizational capacity” by Kudakwashe Murwira

Kudakwashe Murwira’ presentation can be summarized as follows: good practices in community-based development projects and initiatives highlight key success cases in applying best practice methodologies and tools of community based development, based on respecting traditional organizational structures, planning and strengthening local organizational capacity, initiating change through involvement, searching for new ways, experimenting and implementing actions and monitoring progress as well as reflecting on lessons learnt and re-planning.



To achieve all this, there is need to build trust, identify with local communities and always communicate, share ideas as well as incorporate traditional innovations and innovators. This will,

in the process of searching for new ways, create a sense of ownership and identity by the communities.

“World Vision international focus on DRR” by Francis Battal

World Vision International is a Christian humanitarian organisation working for the well-being of poor and vulnerable people especially children through sustainable development, disaster prevention and relief, raising public awareness and advocating for justice. Francis Battal, the World Vision International Southern Africa Region Humanitarian & Emergency Affairs team leader, presented an overview of disaster prevalence cases in Southern Africa. He noted that disasters have been increasing, while capacity to anticipate, avoid, mitigate or transfer risk have been lagging behind. He gave the example of economic losses, which averaged at US\$75.5 billion in the 1960s, US\$138.4 billion in the 1970s, US\$ 213.9 billion in the 1980s, and US\$659 billion in the 1990s. These disaster losses aggravated pre-existing poverty, creating a downward spiral of vulnerability, and rolled back development gains. He also noted that epidemics such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, and scabies had high potential of occurring in Southern Africa.

World Vision's current programs and activities aim at enhancing staff and communities' knowledge and skills in DRR. In Mozambique, World Vision has been experiencing with a tool to assess vulnerabilities and capacities called GERANDO. This tool is used in parallel to Participatory Rural Assessments (PRA) at community level and allows registering information and classifying hazards, vulnerabilities and related risks. PRA employs participatory rapid appraisal techniques like seasonal calendars, actor mappings, problem trees and rankings, vulnerability and capacity analyses, semi-structured interviews and participatory observations. Community orientation and sensitization is followed by exercises with specific PRA tools basically focusing on vulnerability mapping and capacity assessment followed by a Community Based Development Plan (CBDP) plan for each village. Emergency response units are formed focusing on early warning, search and rescue, first aid, evacuation, shelter management and water and sanitation. Mock drills are conducted to give hands-on experience to the target communities. World Vision also distributes leaflets in local languages to villagers depicting the major disasters that happen in the area, listing the major “Dos and Don'ts”.

“Participatory mapping and GIS” by Mike McCall, ITC

Participatory Geographical Information Systems (PGIS) is the result of a merger of participatory learning and action methods with Geographic Information Systems to compose peoples' spatial knowledge in the forms of maps used as interactive vehicles for discussion, information exchange, analysis and as support in advocacy, decision making and action taking. Its practice is usually geared towards community empowerment through measured, demand-driven, user-friendly and integrated applications of GIS tools, where maps become a major conduit in the process.

Participatory mapping practices, methods, methodologies and tools play an important role in community driven advocacy, spatial planning and disaster risk reduction. By correlating disaster information to its distribution over space and performing spatial analysis by establishing relationships between different layers of information GIS can be very useful in managing disasters.

Participants were shown the principles and practice of PGIS by mapping crime spots, using a combination of field methods and computer-based tools.

Reflections of day 1

The second day of the workshop was opened with a review of reflections of Day 1, which provided more food for thought and allowed to pin down some findings thus far. Some of the aspects have been addressed in recommendations.

Risk management

- How helpful are documents on good practice?
- How do we create real partnership (competition between NGOs)?
- Can we have a centralised Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) data collection, analysis and dissemination of information?
- Can we learn from other organisations' tools?
- How can data collected be shared with other organisations?
- Do we need to advocate for a stronger government coordination role?
- What do we need to do collectively to mitigate the effects of climate change?

Livelihoods, food security, climate change in the Southern African context

- Can we do relief differently to reduce future risk (e.g. avoid creating crippling dependency)?
- In the Southern Africa context, is livelihood security synonymous with DRR?
- Livelihood security is not a panacea to reduce disaster risk.
- Do we need to define DRR in the Southern Africa context to remain credible? Should there be boundaries?
- What are the hazards in this chronic context (e.g. market failure)?
- How appropriate are our DRR interventions in a drought context if they are to be overtaken by the impact of climate change?
- How is DRR in the region positioned with regard to climate change and adaptation?
- How can we better replicate and scale up good practice?
- Do we have any common understanding of local level indicators for DRR? Should we have in the case of drought and HIV/AIDS?
- Could we do more together on advocacy?

Floods

- How do we learn from past experiences and change behaviors within communities but also within NGOs?
- How do we improve the availability of and access to risk/losses information, and how do we harness local-level risk assessment to sub-national, national and regional levels?
- There is a need to incorporate indigenous knowledge (e.g. "when a dog barks, someone is going to die"). However there is also a need for communities to adapt to changing environments and for knowledge to evolve to remain relevant.
- Collaboration with other countries is necessary in some cases (e.g. nuclear plant risk, dams).
- Increased collaboration between NGOs, government representatives, universities, etc. is desirable.
- What is the scope of DRR, where are the boundaries?

Early warning systems

- How can we use both modern and traditional EWS?
- What are the challenges, advantages and inconvenients of resettlement (temporary or long term)?
- Can we have standard classification/coding systems
- How can we make EWS more effective?
- Can EWS work without communities' involvement?

Disaster risk reduction definitions, governance, knowledge sharing

- How can we effectively promote a shift from emergency/disaster management to DP/DRR and increase the funding base? A lot of advocacy and internal and external mainstreaming is needed. What could be our roles in this area?
- What are the challenges at the local level to achieve DRR successes in collaboration with all key stakeholders? What is needed (e.g. training of local administrators, media, business, CBOs)?
- Knowledge sharing efforts can “pollute” partners with emissions that don't reach those, who could make use of it. What is needed, what shall be done better (including among the NGO community in the sub-region)? It would be helpful to reflect also on local networks and websites and their user-friendliness (SAHIMS, etc.)
- Do we need to move from a DRR approach to a much broader risk approach? For instance, in order to avoid competition for funds with other key issues such as gender, HIV, climate change, etc., we could suggest to move towards a 10% risk funding in all budgets which could be used to meet local needs as needed.
- To some extent challenging the previous comment: how do we deal with slow onset hazards and adapt to them? What else is needed than data collection and advocacy?

Group sessions



The results of the brainstorming session were clustered into four thematic areas namely:

- Setting up effective and efficient partnerships / linkages at different levels between DRR and academics / practitioners,
- Clarifying the terminology / definition of DRR and its boundaries in Southern Africa,
- Setting up effective early warning systems and integrating climate change and climate adaptation and slow-onset risks,
- Establishing what needs to be done on knowledge sharing and/or management.

Participants split into four groups to further discuss these thematic areas. Each group gave a short presentation of the issues they discussed and all the views were debated in plenary.

The overall impression that can be derived from discussions at the forum is that for more effective disaster reduction, all sectors should be involved in the activities to fill in the gaps in the disaster reduction cycle. Networking among governments, NGOs, regional/international organizations, communities, and corporations is essential in achieving a holistic approach to DRR. Networking can facilitate investment and also information sharing and best practices. Networking also results in the optimal utilization of expertise, volunteers and critical resources for disaster reduction activities such as an early warning system, flood control and relief operations.

For successful cooperation among all the sectors, the following factors are essential:

- Multi-sectoral coordination at all the phases and among all the sectors and partnerships; involvement of corporations and local communities in disaster reduction and response;
- A legal framework for coordination within the government structures, NGOs and communities; clear definition of the roles of the government and NGOs;
- A broader risk reduction/management agenda;
- Strong political will and better coordination and recognition of NGOs' work are required in order to sustain the partnership among NGOs, governments, academic institutions and regional/international organizations.

The significant contribution that local communities can make to DRR was strongly highlighted and recommendations were made to engage governments and ensure ownership of the above action plan by communities. The discussions regarding the need to integrate disaster risk reduction into development planning and into school curricula as well as to set up a national coordinating mechanism for DRR were positively echoed by participants. The forum also emphasized the critical roles of NGOs and multi-sectoral coordination for disaster reduction activities.

Several findings concerned knowledge management. Partners pointed out that:

- International partners have to acknowledge that web based knowledge sharing has limitations. (Related to this participants asked, whether we can use existing fora to share - such as NEMA in Nigeria - and channel through them information to disaster risk reduction practitioners?)
- ISDR in principle should play a role in knowledge sharing but who can provide a regional and national knowledge focal point?
- National platforms are well placed to facilitate knowledge sharing but what if these do not yet exist? Can UNDP play that role? Can we identify other actors to facilitate knowledge management on disaster risk reduction at regional and national levels? How about Red Cross/Red Crescent or a function hosted?
- Would donors support a proposal that does bridge the divide and hence ensure the DRR material does not only benefits policy makers?
- What are ISDR plans to cover all regions? Could other bodies fill the gap? Body would need to be credible, accepted by all and neutral. (e.g. C-SAFE).
- How to get good practices into global databases?



Specifically regarding indigenous knowledge, participants asked:

- How relevant is indigenous knowledge as external conditions change so rapidly?
- It is valid, but it is still open to question and needs to be disproved if we believe it is a myth.
- CIKARD in the Netherlands is a good place to start. They could document simple case studies. Could we fund a special disaster risk reduction issue of their magazine?
- Most countries have a centre of indigenous knowledge.

Recommendations

Workshop participants were asked to critically assess the two-day forum and come up with recommendations on the way forward. Recommendations have been clustered into four categories, namely: the need to develop partnerships and networks through linkages at different levels; the need to define DRR terminology; linking DRR and climate change; knowledge management:

1. Create partnerships and networks in DRR at:

a) Different levels (e.g. global, regional/sub-regional, national, community)

- Strengthen linkages between the different players working in DRR at the international, regional and national levels;
- Develop regional networks and strengthen existing ones (OCHA, IFRC, UN/ISDR, UNDP) and involve motivated individuals to play a facilitating role at the regional level;
- Build on existing networks (ISDR's Global Network of NGOs, ProVention Consortium's networks, University of Cape Town) to strengthen information exchange/dissemination as well as documentation of good practices.

b) Between sectors (e.g. government, NGOs, private sector, research institutions)

- Strengthen links between academic institutions and NGOs by identifying activities of common interest to undertake jointly (e.g. documentation of good practices, program evaluations and peer-reviews, NGOs to facilitate dissemination of research findings within communities, etc.);
- Organize internships with NGOs for university students for them to gain experience/recognition;
- Develop common campaigns for DRR involving NGOs, academics, private sector & governments;
- Organize media tours;
- Involve policy makers in the design and implementation of programs.

2. Definition of DRR terminology: What is DRR in the Southern African context? What are the boundaries?

- The concept of DRR should be holistic, multidimensional and multisectoral in its definition and approach;
- Keep internationally accepted terms for DRR, but better explain what is meant by a disaster;
- There is a risk that the term disaster management does not bring out enough of the DRR component. Would it have been better to call the South African "Disaster Management Act", "DRR Act" to stress both components of Disaster Management: Emergency Response and DRR?);
- The DRR framework should be made more responsive to local needs;
- Definitions of risk should be left open, as it is a multidimensional, multisectoral and evolving context. In the Southern Africa context, it has been mostly about food security/drought – now this is broadening and talk about multiple risks;
- DRR is very much linked to community development, therefore communities/households have to define what the risks are. It should be open to include non-traditional aspects like market failure;
- There is a need to keep a flexible view on what the risks are, since it is an evolving context;

- Chronic vulnerability has to be considered instead of immediate shocks only (a paradigm shift is taking place).

3. The role of NGO/DRR practitioners and local communities and early warning systems

- NGOs/DRR practitioners should assist communities to define risks they face;
- When talking about risk, the “community” in its diverse composition needs to be considered and data must be disaggregated and support systems adapted to individuals and groups (e.g. avoid to get trapped by only focusing on the outspoken members of the community);
- Engage to overcome the separation between humanitarian and development community;
- Example: Early Warning Systems (EWS) – Use a livelihood monitoring system and livelihood indicators for development interventions and not only for humanitarian work to intervene when things go wrong;
- EWS need to concentrate both on acute and chronic hazards and risks;
- The indicator basis needs to be enlarged: crop production is used as an indicator for EWS, but other aspects may be forgotten like access to food (market prices, governance issues, etc.).

4. Linking DRR and climate change

- There is need for commitment to combining the two fields;
- There is a need to explore the comparative advantage of DRR, as it is more on the ground and deals with underlying causes while climate change is more academic and difficult to assess by communities;
- Efforts should be made to arrive at a common terminology, since there is a need to speak the same language;
- Academic knowledge needs to be more user-friendly;
- There is a need to sit down together and initiate more communication/forums;
- There is a need to use so-called “hybrids of knowledge” that includes insights from both fields practice and research. “Boundary organizations” could allow for exchange between both communities;
- Use drought tolerant crops (sensitizing communities);
- Plant trees/reforest but people should be wary of what they plant;
- Consistently integrate the issue of climate change into interventions;
- Construct more water harvesting structures;
- Do advocacy.

5. Knowledge management (tools & methodologies, best practice sharing and replication/transferability, translation and adaptation of tools & methodologies, training, indigenous knowledge)

- Continue organizing regional forums on good practice with a yearly rotation;
- Go and see DRR activities and adapt them to our context. Cd-roms and other digital tools have limited value. Need to see with our own eyes;
- Don't waste too much time on web-based information but allow direct exposure and exchange visits;
- Identify regional champions for knowledge management making information easily accessible;
- Improve joint research or cooperation between agencies for better knowledge management;

- Journalists could be recruited as consultants to travel and objectively document a variety of good practices;
- ProVention (or other partners) should continue with its CRA toolkit and keep the catalogue of tools & methodologies updated.

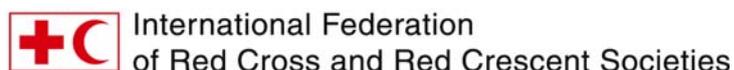
Training

- Survey and review who is doing what in disaster risk reduction training;
- Advocate for DRR to become a certified subject in universities.

Indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge for early warning systems

- Sort out what is and what isn't appropriate;
- Assess indigenous knowledge by creating links with African universities;
- Include communities in research and validate indigenous systems;
- Need to document all indigenous knowledge systems;
- Need for effective communication between donors, communities and practitioners with a view to improve relations;
- Indigenous + scientific = local knowledge.

Appendix 1: Agenda



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Southern Africa Forum on “Local Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction”

November 20-22, 2006, Birchwood (Johannesburg), South Africa

Monday, 20 November 2006

1830 2000	Welcome Cocktail and Opening of the Poster Fair on DRR activities	Gift Chatora & Maya Schaerer
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Tuesday, 21 November 2006

Time	Session Description	Resource person
0830 0900	Introductions & Forum objectives	Gift Chatora & Lars Bernd
0900 0930	Official Opening - Mrs. Mandisa, Kalako-Williams	Seija Tyrninoksa
0930 1030	ISDR DRR initiatives + Discussion	Michele Cocchiglia
1030 1100	TEA BREAK	
1100 1120	Mitigating the effects of fire – A community based approach from Nigeria	Ahmed Lamindi Badanga
1120 1140	Novafrica DRR initiatives	Kudakwashe Murwira
1140 1200	World Vision DRR initiatives in Southern Africa	Francis Battal
1220 1300	Plenary discussion on three presentations & key decisions	
1300 1400	LUNCH	
1400 1425	Linking public risk knowledge and early warning systems to flood hazard resilience: Case Study of Lower Muzarabani District (Zimbabwe)	Patrick Gwimbi
1425 1450	Floods and Cyclone early warning using the floods/cyclone three color system: A case study from Mozambique	Eunice Mucache
1450 1530	Plenary discussion on the floods presentations & Key decisions	
1530 1550	Mitigating the risk of income shocks through community self-help and savings groups in Ethiopia	Moges Tefera Abebe
1550 1610	TEA BREAK	
1610 1635	Backyard gardens improve food security for AIDS affected households: A case study for Swaziland	Monica Murata
1635 1700	Chikwawa case study on community-based DRR initiatives (Malawi)	Rexa Chakakala
1700 1720	Use of community-based forums for integrated resource management to enhance drought risk management	Mary Seely
1720 1800	Plenary discussion on the food security-related presentations & Key decisions	
1800 1830	Using participatory mapping & GIS for community risk assessment and disaster preparedness	Michael McCall
1830 1845	Evaluation of Day 1	Dolphina Truter

**Southern Africa Forum on
“Local Perspectives on
Disaster Risk Reduction”**

November 20-22, 2006, Birchwood (Johannesburg), South Africa

Wednesday 22 November 2006

Time	Session Description	Resource person
0830 0900	Reflections of day 1	Farid Aiywar
0930 1030	Key note speech: Reflections on Risks in Southern Africa	Prof. Coleen Vogel
1030 1100	TEA BREAK	
1100 1300	How to reduce disaster risk in Southern Africa/ local perspectives – Working groups to draft recommendations and action planning	
1300 1400	LUNCH	
1400 1530	Working groups (continued)	
1530 1600	TEA BREAK	
1600 1700	Presentation of working groups results and discussion	
1700 1800	Formulation of Forum recommendations and action plan	
1800	Closing and thanks and evaluation	

Appendix 2: List of Participants

Name	Title	Organization and address	Contact numbers	e-mail address
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The Provention Consortium is a global coalition of international organisations, governments, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations dedicated to reducing the risk and social, economic and environmental impacts of natural hazards on vulnerable populations in developing countries.