



# A Practical Guide to **Advocacy for Disaster Risk Reduction**



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies





## building safer communities in South Asia

### **Building Safer Communities Logo**

This logo was created for the Red Cross Red Crescent's Building Safer Communities initiative in South Asia. It is representative of the eight countries in the region, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, which are covered by the programme. The logo shows that amidst diversity, communities in South Asia region work hand-in-hand, with one common objective – disaster risk reduction.



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION BY  
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2009

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# Foreword

Disasters in South Asia have increased in number, severity and type over the last ten years. The number of communities and individuals affected has also risen dramatically. In many cases we find that the assumptions of a decade ago are no longer valid leaving us with new challenges as well as opportunities to make a difference. There is a need to adapt to a wide range of emerging issues with a clear direction and innovative thinking.

The International Federation's '*Strategy 2010*' calls for intensified advocacy efforts on behalf of vulnerable communities and individuals. That means calling on key decision makers to take action and institute effective methods of reducing disaster risk. 'Disaster Risk Reduction' is a key component of our Building Safer Communities programme and we must serve as its ambassadors. Speaking with a clear and consistent voice on this issue can produce results that save lives and build stronger communities. The effects of climate change, migration, health crises and violence create urgent challenges that propel us to act. Without clarity of purpose and direction, we risk failing to achieve our objective.

The International Federation through its *Building Safer Communities* initiative has developed this personal guide to advocacy and disaster risk reduction. We are grateful for the financial support from DIPECHO and Swedish Red Cross Society which made this possible.

This guide will enhance the skills, knowledge and proficiency of the user to advocate and communicate on disaster risk reduction approaches.

AL PANICO

Head of Delegation for South Asia

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

*March 2009*

## Who are we?

- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) is the world's largest humanitarian network.
- Founded in 1919, the International Federation comprises member Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in more than 186 countries, a secretariat and field delegations.
- We are a membership-based organization whose strength lies in its unparalleled volunteer network and global presence.
- Community-based programmes in health, disaster preparedness and response, and first aid are the backbone of our humanitarian work.

## Our mission:

“Improving the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity”

## What unites us globally?

- Our commitment to the seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief
- Policies, standards, guidelines, disaster preparedness and response tools
- Mechanisms and approaches
- Community focus
- Global decision-making bodies such as the General Assembly and International Conference

# Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Introduction	ii

## Section One:

<b>Building safer communities. Working together to reduce risk, build capacity and save lives in Asia Pacific</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Introduction	2
2. The Asia Pacific context	2
3. The concept of disaster risk reduction	6
4. Disasters: A humanitarian and development issue	9
5. The Hyogo Framework for Action: Read, promote, act	12
6. Disasters are not natural or inevitable	14
7. Reducing disaster risks through recovery actions	15
8. Climate change: A regional challenge	18

## Section Two:

<b>Actively advocating for a safer Asia Pacific</b>	<b>25</b>
1. What is advocacy?	26
2. Advocacy and the Red Cross Red Crescent	27
3. Why is advocacy an important part of disaster risk reduction?	31
4. Disaster risk reduction: A moral obligation	31
5. Disaster risk reduction: It's worth the money	32
6. The roles of the advocate: Be the change	34
7. A word of caution	35
8. Steps towards effective advocacy	37
9. Learning from the health sector	38

10. A practical guide to implementing each step	39
Step 1: Identifying advocacy issues using vulnerability and capacity assessments	39
Step 2: Research: Understanding the issue and collecting evidence	41
Step 3: Identifying your target	43
a. Mapping stakeholders	43
b. Allies and opponents	45
c. Identifying a target audience	47
Step 4: Formulating an advocacy goal and objectives	48
Step 5a: Formulating an advocacy message	49
Step 5b: Pre-testing key messages	53
Step 6: Advocacy in action	54
Step 7: Putting it all together: Advocacy plans and evaluation	57
11. Develop your advocacy skills	59
12. Working with others: Disaster risk reduction is everybody's business	61
13. Communications and awareness-raising	64

### Section Three:

<b>Advocating for humanitarian values and vulnerable groups in disaster risk reduction</b>	71
1. It is about action: Advocating for humanitarian values and principles	72
2. Effective communication and humanitarian principles	74
3. Advocating for standards and codes of conduct in disaster risk reduction	77
4. Reaching out to people with disabilities: Seek, involve and invest	81
5. Advocacy and the older person: Age demands action	88
6. Advocating with young people for a safer Asia Pacific: The hope of the future	92
7. Advocacy and gender in disaster risk reduction: Engagement, experience and leadership	100
<b>Annex 1: Glossary</b>	112
<b>Annex 2: The policy background to advocacy on disaster risk reduction</b>	114

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**



Humanitarian Aid



# Introduction

This guide aims to further enhance the skills, knowledge and proficiency of disaster risk reduction practitioners to advocate and communicate on disaster risk reduction in Asia Pacific. It is important to note that this guide aims to be user friendly rather than academic in tone in order to present disaster risk reduction and advocacy concepts in a clear and accessible manner. To enhance readability and to increase relevance to organizations outside the Red Cross Red Crescent policy and strategy references are found in an annex at the end of the guide.

The book is written in three sections:

- **Section One: Building Safer Communities. Working together to reduce risk, build capacity and save lives in Asia Pacific.** The aim of this section is to provide a basic understanding of some key aspects of disaster risk reduction. Field workers have reported that disaster risk reduction concepts are often lost in technical or scientific language. This section aims to explain some key points using simple language; it does not aim to be comprehensive. It provides the basic understanding required to get the most out of the following sections, Actively advocating for a safer Asia Pacific and Advocating for humanitarian values and vulnerable groups in disaster risk reduction.
- **Section Two: Actively advocating for a safer Asia Pacific.** The aim of this section is to explore the meaning of advocacy and the role it plays in the Red Cross Red Crescent. We will learn how advocacy is both speaking for others, working with others and supporting others to speak for themselves, and the role of the disaster risk reduction practitioner in this process. We will demonstrate how advocacy occurs at different levels and in different ways and explore the role of assessment tools in the advocacy process. Finally, an outline of the steps to developing a successful advocacy initiative is presented using examples from the field materials from a wide range of organizations.
- **Section Three: Advocating for humanitarian values and vulnerable groups in disaster risk reduction. Discrimination,** violence and lack of respect for diversity are key challenges facing the global community. Together, they marginalize individuals and communities, deny their access to services and fuel mistrust, exclusion and abuse. The aim of this section is to explore these issues and provide tools to support disaster risk reduction advocacy efforts regarding people with disabilities, women, older people and children. The Red Cross Red Crescent's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values are the basis of this section.

To guide the reader the following symbols are used:



Internet sites



Practical action examples or case studies



Must read



Must watch



Tools



Tips or checklist



# Section 1

## Building Safer Communities

Working together to reduce risk,  
build capacity and save lives in Asia Pacific



*Photo: John Sparrow/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

## 1. Introduction

Welcome to section one of this guide. The aim of this chapter is to provide a basic understanding of some key aspects of disaster risk reduction so they are not lost in technical or scientific language. Effective communication is crucial in order to demystify disaster risk reduction. It is important when working with others, especially with communities and people who are new to the field of disaster management, to relate concepts and ideas in a clear, culturally appropriate and understandable way. The use of story telling and analogies are useful tools. Throughout this chapter analogies from everyday life and examples from the field are used to try to clarify key disaster risk reduction concepts and to make them more relevant and meaningful.

Participatory assessments such as vulnerability and capacity assessments are of fundamental importance to disaster risk reduction. They are explored in section two.



### Key concepts used in this section

**Risk:** *The probability of harmful consequences, or expected losses (deaths, injuries or damage to property, livelihoods, economic activity or the environment) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions.*

**Vulnerability:** *The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards.*

**Disaster risk reduction:** *The development and application of policies, strategies and practices before a disaster occurs to protect lives, limit damage and strengthen the capacity of communities and societies to recover quickly.*

## 2. The Asia Pacific context

“If we had good early warning systems, fewer people would have died in the Indian Ocean tsunami. If we had earthquake safe schools, hospitals, and housing in Northern Pakistan, tens of thousands would not have lost their lives. If we had better levies in New Orleans, those who lived in the lower lying parts of the city would not have had to see their lives devastated.

Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

While parts of the region witnessed significant improvements in achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals, others have performed poorly. Some 600 million women, men and children in the region live below the US\$ 1 per day poverty line, while 1.8 billion survive on less than US\$ 2 per day.



Dhuvaafaru Island [45 hectares in size] is now home to over 4,000 people. The reef surrounding the island forming a lagoon provides protection against tidal surges and beach erosion.

*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

The countries in South-East Asia are exposed to many different types of hydro-meteorological and geological hazards. Disasters have increased during the past decades, and many poor and vulnerable communities face severe threats to their lives and livelihoods. With the added challenges of climate change, rapid urbanization and environmental degradation affecting the resilience of communities to

natural hazards, there are fears they will become even more vulnerable in the future.



Sichuan quake survivor Guo Xiangqing at IFRC water distribution point near her camp.

*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

In East Asia, the types and frequencies of natural disasters are equally daunting. Set along numerous fault lines, the region is often hit with earthquakes, some of which have been the worst in history. In 2008, China was hit with its worst earthquake in 30 years, affecting 15 million people. Typhoons have increased, causing wide-spread flooding, destruction and death. Winter brings the risk of heavy snowfall, especially in Mongolia, which can strand whole communities and destroy livestock, crops and property. In summer, drought causes the loss of millions of hectares of crops every year, further depleting both income and food supply for the population.

South Asia is highly prone to both seismic and hydro-meteorological hazards such as floods and cyclones. Over the past decade, disasters have caused massive destruction and loss of lives and livelihoods in the affected countries as well as affecting thousands of people in neighbouring countries in

some cases. The frequency and magnitude of natural disasters in the region is increasing as a result of rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, deforestation and the effects of climate change. This often results in a disruption of progress made through long-term development and an increase in poverty levels for households affected. People already at risk become even more vulnerable.

Pacific island countries are highly vulnerable to a range of hydrological and meteorological hazards including tropical cyclones, flooding, drought, storm surges, earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis. In addition, the Pacific has limited land resources and the region's relatively small population of 8.5 million and its developing industries are concentrated mainly in low-lying coastal regions threatened by rising ocean temperatures and sea levels. The latest findings from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirm that climate change is one of the most important challenges to the social, economic and environmental well-being of Pacific countries. In many parts of the region, the impact of climate change is already being felt and is expected to worsen in the coming decades.

### **Top four Asia Pacific figures<sup>1</sup>**

Asia Pacific is the most populous region in the world, with an estimated 3,500 million people.

Asia Pacific is the most disaster-prone region in the world, with, on average, 40 per cent of the globe's disasters.

In 2007, more than 15 million people in Asia Pacific lost their lives in disasters. On average, globally, 79 per cent of people killed in disasters come from Asia Pacific. In all, 170 million people in Asia Pacific were affected by disasters in 2007.

The top five most frequent 'natural' disasters in Asia Pacific between 1998 and 2007 were:

1. Floods
2. Windstorms
3. Earthquakes and tsunamis
4. Avalanches or landslides
5. Droughts or food insecurity

The Asia Pacific region poses many new challenges and the assumptions of a decade ago are no longer true. We must adapt to a rapidly changing world, a world of increasing intolerance, polarization, complex emergencies, climate change, internal conflicts, irregular migration, urbanization, environmental degradation, large scale displacement and public health emergencies. As a result of these challenges the frequency of disasters is increasing. These challenges require a clear direction combined with new ways of working, new skills, reflection and learning. We need

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<sup>1</sup> International Federation. *World Disasters Report*, 2007.

to work together to make disaster risk reduction a global, national and local priority and to build a culture of safety across the region. It is essential to advocate for disaster risk reduction to ensure that today's hazards don't turn into tomorrow's disasters.

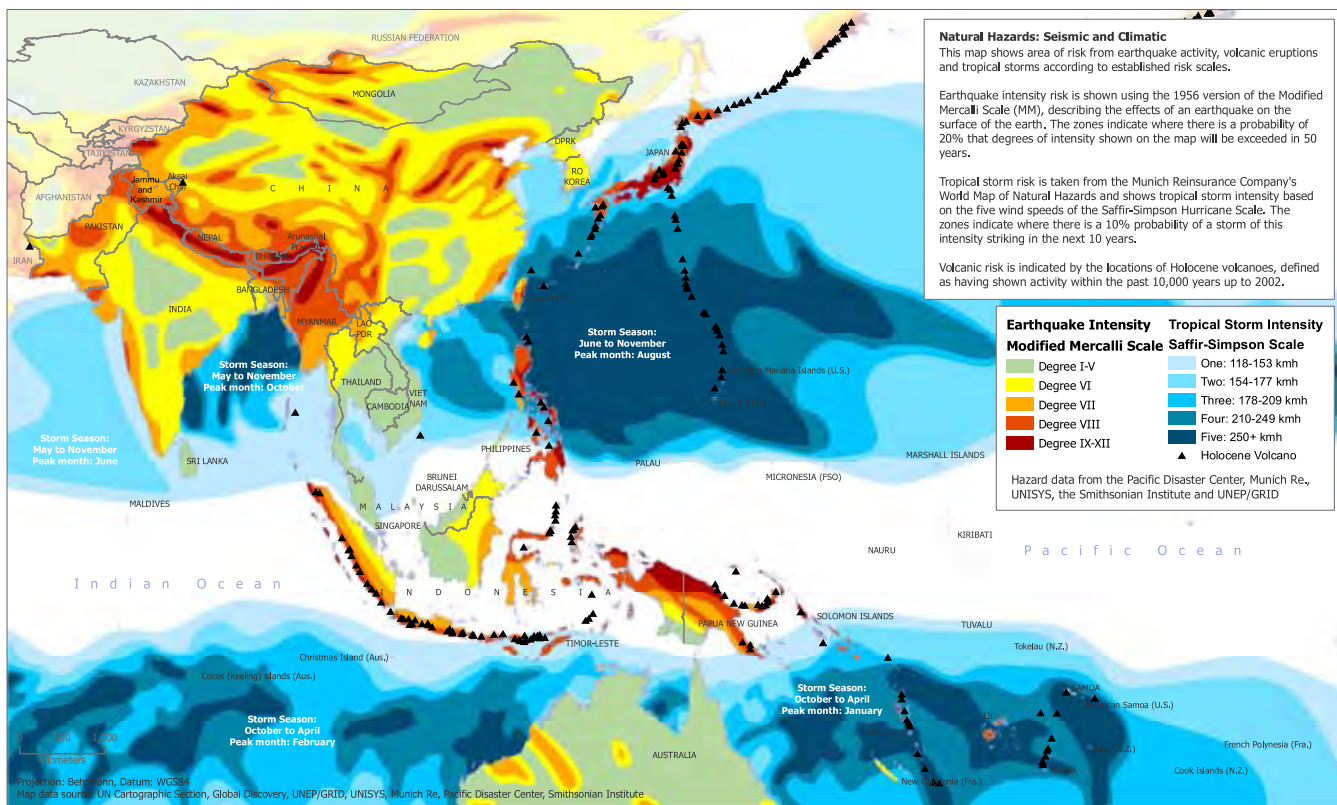


OCHA Regional Office for Asia Pacific

## Natural Hazard Risk in Asia Pacific

Issued: 8 August 2006

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The names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Map Ref: OCHA\_ROAP\_Composite\_Hazards\_v1\_060808

## A new approach to risk

For almost a century the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has provided humanitarian aid to millions affected by disasters. Our response has focused on delivering relief. We have recognised in our policies and actions on the ground that responding to disasters is essential but not enough. The increasing number and magnitude of disasters demands a new way of doing things. The reactive approach of the past is not sufficient to meet the growing challenges in Asia Pacific today. We must continue to look broadly at how to support communities in adapting to and living safely with increasing risk. When communities and households have sustainable livelihoods, awareness of hazards, good health care and access to a strong civil society, they are less vulnerable to hazards and also recover faster.

The key reasons disaster risk reduction must become a priority nationally and internationally are:



- Our mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people and our first fundamental principle is humanity. It is the most vulnerable people in society who suffer the most in disasters, which can have devastating developmental and economic effects. Disasters increase poverty and malnutrition, reduce disease resistance, prevent children from attending school, slow economic development and have other effects.
- Disaster risk reduction is effective in reducing suffering and the human and financial toll of disasters. Disaster risk reduction is a better investment in terms of cost versus benefit.
- Governments and civil society have a political interest in protecting people and implementing disaster risk reduction programmes and legislation. Failure to do so may cause political instability and unrest, costly disaster response operations, and result in a poorer, more vulnerable population.
- Environmental sustainability. People cause environmental degradation and this increases our vulnerability to hazards and increases the frequency and intensity of disasters. It is important to create behavioural change and to advocate for environmentally sustainable development.

### 3. The concept of disaster risk reduction

“Disaster Risk Reduction is both [a] strategic direction and a framework of practical measures - an emphasis on managing risk not just the impact of disasters.

Antony Spalton, Global Risk Reduction Project Manager, International Federation<sup>2</sup>



Disaster risk reduction is not one action or one project but an overall goal. It includes a whole range of actions that aim to build a safer world. These actions are prioritised in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities and are collectively known as disaster risk reduction. Disaster risk reduction is concerned with supporting local civil society, communities, households and individuals to reduce their vulnerability and strengthen their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from natural hazards.

A disaster risk reduction focus means that we actively look for opportunities to address risks and reduce vulnerability. In recovery activities we must do more than go back to the situation that existed before a disaster. Reducing disaster risk is not a separate sector but requires looking at all activities, e.g. house reconstruction, water and sanitation and livelihood support, with possible hazards in mind. For example, site planning and construction of houses must be done so that they can withstand flooding,

<sup>2</sup> Presentation at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies South Asia Regional Disaster Management Working Group, 2007.

earthquakes and other recurring hazards. Public education and advocacy about hazards should be carried out simultaneously while livelihood support helps diversify incomes and reduce risk.<sup>3</sup>



To understand that disaster risk reduction is an aim rather than one action or programme, it is useful to compare it to the aim of raising a child. To raise a child, many key activities are involved, such as feeding, education, love, shelter, play, health care, attention, environment and culture, etc. All these activities and more are required to achieve the aim of raising a happy, healthy child. Disaster risk reduction is also an aim: to build a safer world. To do this many different activities are required, such as early warning systems, alternative livelihoods, adaptation to climate change, adherence to building codes, reducing underlying risk factors, hazard awareness and advocacy. All these activities and more are required to achieve the aim of reducing disaster risk and building a safer world – we call this combination of activities disaster risk reduction.



Recovery activities are the decisions and actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring or improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community, while encouraging and facilitating necessary adjustments to reduce disaster risk. Recovery (rehabilitation and reconstruction) affords an opportunity to develop and apply disaster risk reduction measures.<sup>4</sup>



The difference between emergency assistance and disaster risk reduction strategies is rather like the difference between preparing a cricket team for one local game and preparing a team for the world cup. In disaster risk reduction work, we too need to scale up and take on the big challenges the world presents. We need to plan and work together to reduce disaster risk and to win against disasters. This involves:

- Longer term strategy and vision
- Global focus
- Collaboration with numerous and often non-traditional networks
- Knowledge sharing and review of good practice
- Addressing global challenges
- Comprehensive analysis and research
- Greater complexity
- Analysis of capacities and vulnerabilities
- A multi-hazard approach
- Advocacy and awareness-raising

<sup>3</sup> International Federation. *Responding to the Asia earthquake and tsunamis*. Regional Strategy 2, 2006-2010.

<sup>4</sup> Based on a definition by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).



### **Key actions for building nations' and communities' resilience to disasters<sup>5</sup>**

1. Raising public awareness as part of community preparedness to reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods
2. Building the capacity of volunteers and community members to be able to monitor hazards and respond after disasters
3. Diversifying livelihood systems and micro-financial services to help poor people survive disasters
4. Using traditional knowledge to inform communities on how to protect themselves
5. Including disaster knowledge in formal and informal education sectors
6. Setting up early warning systems for multi hazards and people across different time zones
7. Improving land use planning and protecting ecological systems to reduce disaster risks
8. Developing and adhering to building codes to minimize risks and losses
9. Obtaining political and public commitment to reduce the risk of disasters
10. Undertaking humanitarian and development innovations to reduce disaster risks
11. Enhancing global cooperation to detect natural hazards and manage disaster risks
12. Undertaking risk assessments at all levels, from regional to community



### **Holistic disaster management: An approach to reducing disaster risks**

An example of a holistic disaster management is the Indian government's development strategy, which laid considerable emphasis on reducing risk. India developed a comprehensive food security system and an integrated poverty reduction strategy to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. Transfer of power to the rural and urban self-governing institutions empowered local communities. India had a vibrant micro-credit movement, mostly run by self-help groups of women, which enhanced the resilience of communities. The government ran programmes in drought-prone areas and deserts, to guarantee employment and manage watersheds to mitigate the adverse impacts of natural disasters. There was a significant shift away from a reactive post-disaster relief and rehabilitation approach to a holistic, proactive pre-disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness approach.<sup>6</sup> This example illustrates the role that can be played by communities, families, school children, disaster managers, development practitioners, governments, academics, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing disaster risk reduction from a holistic point of view.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from ISDR. *Lessons for a Safer Future: Drawing on the Experience of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster*, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from statement by B. Bhattacharjee, head of the Indian delegation at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva on 5 June 2007.



The Khajura cyclone centre in Kalaparam, Bangladesh is one of the clearest examples of coordination between multiple stakeholders. Bangladesh is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries where the annual monsoon and cyclone season devastates large parts of the country and the population. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, with the support of the government, scientific centres and other partners, learnt some early lessons. In 1972, in the wake of the devastating 1970 cyclone season, which claimed half a million lives, the cyclone preparedness programme was born.

*Photo: Shehab Uddin / Drik / British Red Cross*

## 4. Disasters: A humanitarian and development issue

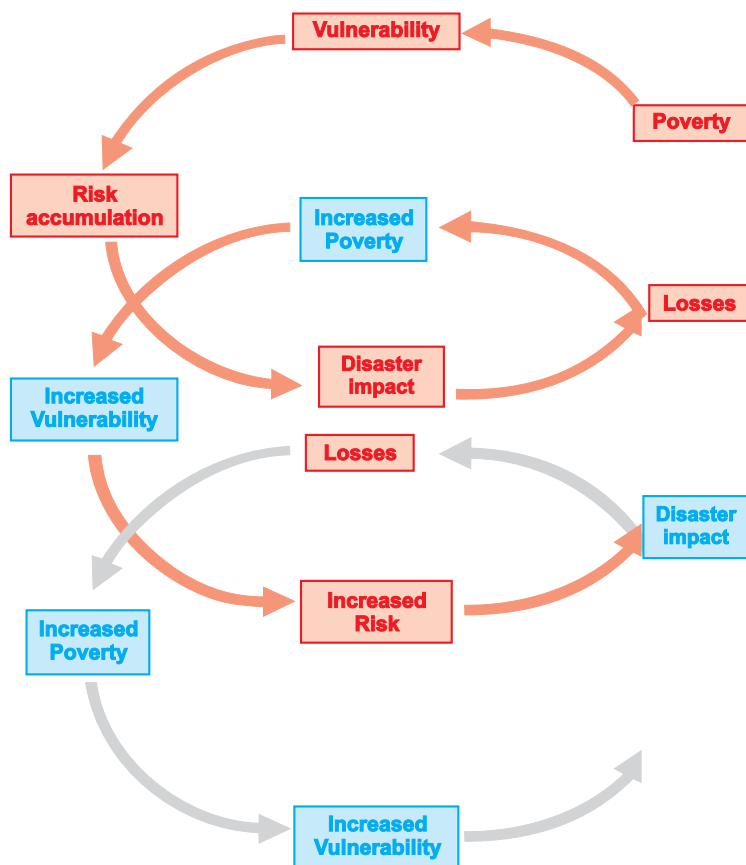
“One flood means that development goes back six steps in Assam. If you have progressed 100 per cent then the flood means you go back 600 percent.”

Ravindranath, February 2007, Director, Rural Volunteers Centre and Oxfam partner in Dhemaji district in India which witnessed severe floods in 2001, 2003, 2004 and in 2007.<sup>7</sup>

In all disasters, it is the poor who suffer and die in the greatest numbers. People living in poverty are the hardest hit by disasters, and disasters in turn create poverty, as illustrated by Oxfam in the diagram below. This poses a significant threat to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the target of halving extreme poverty by 2015.

People living in sub-standard housing with limited access to services and livelihoods, the socially marginalized and those with poor health are less able to cope when disaster strikes. Conversely, a healthy person is more immune to disease, a person with a raised house is safer during a flood, a person with a sustainable livelihood recovers faster and a risk-aware person can be prepared.

<sup>7</sup> Oxfam. *Sink or Swim: Why Disaster Risk Reduction is central to surviving floods in South Asia*, 2007.



Oxfam's depiction of disaster impacts aggravating the vicious spiral of poverty  
 Source: Adapted from DFID

## Development and risk reduction: Hand in hand

“It is common knowledge that disasters wipe out years of development work at a single stroke. The cost to communities in human and economic terms is enormous. It is also well-known that good preparedness, including programmes based on sustainable development at the community level, does more to diminish the impact of disasters than any response work done after the event.”<sup>8</sup>

Encho Gospodinov, International Federation

Development gains are not possible without addressing risk factors in the development planning process. Examples include building a school on a flood plain, constructing a hospital without adherence to sound building codes, locating a nuclear reactor near an earthquake fault line, rebuilding on flood-

<sup>8</sup> From a speech by Encho Gospodinov, International Federation, at the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, in New York, 2006.

prone land, or livelihood programmes that don't fully consider the environmental context. Such poor planning threatens development gains that are desperately needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Reducing poverty and building safe and resilient communities go hand in hand.



### **Our experience shows that reducing risk works**

A survey in 2007 of South Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies showed that 60 per cent were proactive in disaster risk reduction and had linked response and recovery efforts with long-term disaster risk reduction programmes.

Between 2001 and 2008, the International Federation and National Societies in Bangladesh, India and Nepal were engaged in a programme supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) to improve the resilience of more than 260,000 people in 35 communities through 25 small-scale mitigation projects, livelihood promotion schemes and community awareness and training programmes. The value of the programme was tested by floods in 2007, when harm from the disaster was significantly less in communities with the programme.

For example, when small villages in the Bardiya and Banke districts of Nepal were struck by floods, community members systematically evacuated people and necessities from their villages, saved ten people from the water using a rope and inflatable tube, and gave first aid to 35 villagers. In one village, they used money from a revolving fund to pay for maternity care in a makeshift camp for displaced people.

Some key lessons from disaster risk reduction programmes in Bangladesh, India and Nepal:



- Scaling up community-based disaster risk reduction takes time and capacity; a long-term developmental approach and sustained investment is required.
- Clarification of concept of disaster risk reduction is crucial for effective awareness-raising, advocacy and programmes.
- There is a need to better capture the impact of disaster risk reduction programmes and cost/benefit data.
- Follow up is required to ensure the sustainability of the programme beyond the life of the project.
- Disaster Risk Reduction programmes should be implemented by the community to meet needs the community has identified. This approach requires a change of mindset by humanitarian organizations and the communities themselves.

## 5. The Hyogo Framework for Action: Read, promote, act

“*The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) provides concrete guidelines for reducing the effects of disaster over the next decade: such as how to protect schools and hospitals, and put in place early warning systems. If implemented, these measures will reduce the economic and social impacts of disasters, including the number of people killed and affected every year by natural hazards. That is why it is important that governments implement these measures, and do so quickly.*

Former United States President Bill Clinton,  
United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery

”

Disasters are becoming regional and global events. For example, what happens in Indonesia’s Banda Aceh has a direct impact on economies of South-East Asia; a hurricane in Louisiana affects foreign aid destined for Africa, and the unchecked industrial waste of a few nations may condemn millions to climate change and sea-level rise.<sup>9</sup> To combat this global challenge, a global framework was needed.

In 2005, governments, academics and practitioners came together at a world conference on disaster reduction in Japan to work on a global plan to limit the impacts of hazards on communities. Their aim was to design a framework, based on collective learning, for the thousands of different actors working on disaster risk reduction initiatives. The result of this conference is the Hyogo Framework for Action. This document provides a guide for protecting lives, limiting damage and strengthening the capacity of communities and societies to recover quickly.<sup>10</sup>



A **framework** is a basic conceptual structure used to solve or address complex issues. It is the base that we use to build disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and practices.

The aim of the Hyogo Framework for Action is to make disaster risk reduction a priority nationally and internationally in order to save lives and livelihoods. It is widely recognised that effective advocacy is required to do this. A forging and strengthening of relationships between institutions (government, NGOs, donors, academic community) is needed, as is awareness-raising and effective communication with communities and the public at large.

<sup>9</sup> Address at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction by UN-HABITAT Under-Secretary-General Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka in 2007.

<sup>10</sup> During the 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2003, National Societies and participating states approved the humanitarian action programme in which “the importance of risk reduction and the need to take measures to minimize their effects on vulnerable population groups” is specifically recognized.

As part of the Red Cross Red Crescent commitment under the Hyogo Framework for Action, the International Federation has developed a Framework for Community Safety and Resilience. The aim is to support National Societies in the promotion and implementation of a holistic, integrated approach to disaster risk reduction. It is an approach developed with and for communities in response to the multiple hazards they face (including those worsened by climate change) and incorporating health, environmental risks, and economic and social issues.



### **How is South Asia supporting the Hyogo Framework for Action?**

- Afghanistan Red Crescent trained 300 staff and volunteers in community-based disaster preparedness, ran a pilot project on early warning systems and established disaster response units in two cities.
- Bangladesh Red Crescent Society ran a cyclone preparedness programme with 34,000 volunteers who saved thousands of lives during Cyclone Sidr; its earthquake preparedness, response and school safety programmes ran in 20 urban communities; and it had a range of community-based disaster management programmes that include disaster preparedness, livelihoods and climate adaptation, shelter maintenance and the empowerment of women.
- Indian Red Cross Society's community-based disaster management projects included flood mitigation in Assam and Bihar, drought mitigation in Maharashtra, and disaster mitigation in Orissa, using vulnerability and capacity assessments and risk awareness-raising activities.
- Nepal Red Cross Society's community-based disaster preparedness programme built resilience in 24 districts. Other programmes included school-based risk reduction, earthquake preparedness in Kathmandu Valley, community-based first aid, community-based water and sanitation programme and community-based development. Disaster risk reduction awareness activities included a radio show, street theatre, peer education and publications.
- Pakistan Red Crescent Society's earthquake recovery programmes focussed on 'building back better', water and sanitation, community-based first aid, vulnerability and capacity assessments, long-term approaches to livelihoods and the formation of a disaster management working group.
- The Maldives relocated tsunami-affected communities to larger, higher and better resourced islands, and developed an integrated approach to disaster management including first aid, drug dengue and chikungunya awareness, water safety, tree plantations and raised earth platforms.
- Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's tsunami recovery programmes emphasized 'building back better', with long-term approaches to livelihoods, community-based disaster management, water and sanitation, risk awareness-raising and safety in schools.



### The five key priorities in the Hyogo Framework for Action are:

- i. Ensure disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation
- ii. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning
- iii. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels
- iv. Reduce the underlying risk factors
- v. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels



For further information on the Hyogo Framework for Action and a succinct manual on implementing the framework, visit [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org).

ISDR. *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 – Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster: An introduction to the Hyogo Framework for Action*.

ISDR. *HFA. Words into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework*, 2007.



***Prepare for the Worst Hope for the Best.*** This documentary was an initiative by Action Aid Bangladesh, funded by the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and produced by Action Aid Bangladesh, Handicap International, Concern Universal, Islamic Relief and Oxfam.

## 6. Disasters are not natural or inevitable



The risk of disaster is a product of hazards and the vulnerability of populations.<sup>11</sup>

We often hear the term ‘natural disaster’ but it is important to remember that disasters are not naturally inevitable. Our world is full of different hazards, for example, floods, earthquakes and droughts. However, these events are not dangerous in themselves.

<sup>11</sup> Oxfam America. *Weathering the Storm: Lessons in Risk Reduction from Cuba*. Research paper, Washington, 2004.



Before the floods, every family made sure they had dried food and a portable oven. Cattle were moved to safe areas. When we saw the well was disappearing under water, we started to store water in pots. We can be more self-reliant and don't have to wait for outside help," says Mizanur Rahman, a committee member and volunteer of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

*Photo: Shehab Uddin / Drik / British Red Cross*



Without vulnerable people, you cannot have a disaster. If a mangrove area is flooded but no one lives nearby, there is no disaster; if a typhoon destroys an uninhabited island in the middle of the ocean, there is no disaster. A disaster can only happen when a hazard is combined with the vulnerabilities of cities, communities or people. Disasters are now being recognized as unmanaged risks and unmet development needs rather than as natural events. By taking simple, cost-effective measures we can prevent losses and deaths, and we can support and protect livelihoods. By reducing vulnerability we can avert disasters.

## 7. Reducing disaster risks through recovery actions

A livelihood is the way someone makes a living. It is the means by which people generate food, income, and employment. Supporting people to obtain reliable and permanent livelihoods relates to disaster risk reduction in a number of ways:

- Helping people secure stable or diversified income that can withstand disaster threats means they have better control over their lives despite suffering endured.
- Some initiatives make communities and their environment less susceptible to disasters and protect their livelihoods at the same time.
- Participatory approaches that involve the entire community in identifying the beneficiaries reduces potential tensions between those who receive assistance and those who do not.
- A steady stream of income that translates into savings or a range of assets equals safer and more resilient families and therefore communities that are better able to withstand external threats.



Under a Red Cross of Vietnam disaster risk reduction programme, 18,434 hectares of mangroves have been planted along a 110 kilometre stretch of coastline in eight provinces

*Photo: Dang VanTao / International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*



### Doing more and doing it better

We know that reducing the impact of disasters requires a long-term approach and a different mindset from traditional, more reactive response activities. We must do much more than we have done already and that what we do must be done even better.

In 2007 the International Federation launched the ***Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction—Building Safer, Resilient Communities*** to ensure we scale up our disaster risk reduction activities in a coordinated and collaborative way. We need to build strong partnerships internally among all elements of the International Federation and externally with key stakeholders such as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the World Bank and other international organizations and NGOs. We have to systematize our efforts to become a more predictable and accountable partner, and to demonstrate measurable results.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> International Federation. *The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction: Building safer, resilient communities*, 2007.



## Growing resilience to disasters

In 2004 and 2005, a long drought and potato disease caused a severe food shortage in Timor-Leste, Asia's youngest and poorest country. The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society decided to do more than distribute food to hungry people.

The Red Cross analysed the situation in Mulo village in Ainaro district, where it also ran a participatory disaster risk reduction assessment. After discussions, the community agreed to organize four groups of farmers, of whom 20 per cent were women, and contribute labour and local materials for gardening. In return, the Red Cross trained people in gardening skills and found tools, seeds and irrigation. The resulting harvest enabled the community to eat fresh vegetables and sell the surplus. Gardening groups used high-yielding, disease resistant vegetables during the dry season to increase production. Groups of farmers spread the skills to surrounding communities. As a result, people's nutrition improved as did their resilience to disaster such as drought and crop disease.



## Terminology: Basic disaster risk reduction terms

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction created a glossary of basic definitions on disaster risk reduction to promote a common understanding by the public, authorities and practitioners. The terms are based on a broad consideration of different international sources and can be found at: <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng%20home.htm>.



## Must read

International Federation / ProVention Consortium. *Tools for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction: Guidance Notes for Development Organisations* by Charlotte Benson and John Twigg with Tiziana Rossetto 2007. This document is also available in Bahasa Indonesian and can be downloaded from: [www.proventionconsortium.org](http://www.proventionconsortium.org).

Overseas Development Institute - the Humanitarian Practice Network. *Good Practices Review- Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation and Preparedness in Development and Emergency Programming*, by John Twigg, 2004.

Tearfund. *Turning practice into policy – Linking Good Practice Community-Based Disaster Risk Management with Government Policy and Practice*, presentation, 2007.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, *Critical Guidelines on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management*, 2006.

ISDR. *Linking Disaster Risk Reduction and Poverty Reduction. Good Practices and Lessons Learned*. A publication of the Global Network of NGOs for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2008.

Tearfund. *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction: a tool for development organisations*, 2005.

## 8. Climate change: A regional challenge

“We should not address adaptation to climate change separately but by recognizing that climate change is bringing new risks and [a new] range of hazards and that we need to revise and strengthen disaster risk assessments and disaster risk reduction measures in the light of this.

From a speech by Jerry Talbot, International Federation, at the UN ECOSOC Side Event on the Human Dimension of Climate Change, in New York, in 2008.”

The global climate is changing, and people worldwide are confronting new, more severe risks. Scientists warn of an unprecedented warming of the earth leading to an increase in extreme weather events like floods and droughts, more intense hurricanes, the spread of diseases like malaria and dengue, and sea level rise. For the Red Cross Red Crescent this means that there will be more natural disasters requiring a humanitarian response. Meeting the humanitarian challenges posed by climate change requires not only strengthening capacities to respond to disasters when they occur but also investing in disaster risk reduction, that is, in making communities stronger and more resilient in the first place.

The Hyogo Framework for Action is the global plan for reducing the risk and impact of disasters. It calls for reducing underlying risk factors, one of which is climate variability and climate change. Much is being done by National Societies in the region to reduce the risk of disasters and climate change. However, there are many challenges including to:



- Raise greater awareness of the Hyogo Framework for Action and climate change within National Societies at all levels
- Widely recognize climate change as a priority issue at all levels
- Further integrate climate change adaptation into disaster risk reduction programmes increase learning and knowledge sharing with other National Societies and external organizations to increase exposure around climate change
- Advocate more proactively (internally and externally) at all levels to highlight the humanitarian implications of climate change and to promote attitudinal and behavioural changes

## Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

“In 2004, when I asked the communities the reason for flooding, they answered: it is God’s desire to punish us for our sins. Now in 2007, within this disaster risk reduction programme intervention, community members’ perception towards flooding are as follows: as a consequence of climate change, high population density and cutting down of trees.

– Nazmul Azam Khan, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.”

If climate risks are increasing, then we need to get smarter at managing them. There are many ways to incorporate climate information into disaster planning and decision making at the community, district, national, regional or global level. Such information can be used at different timescales, from early warnings relating to extreme weather events such as floods and cyclones to seasonal forecasting and to the longer term projections of climate change science.<sup>13</sup>

Climate change provides a compelling reason to cross boundaries and forge new relationships with non-traditional partners. This might include partnerships with government meteorology or environment departments and even environmental organizations in civil society. This will enable the National Society to gain valuable knowledge of who is doing what, what the trends in climate are and where the most vulnerable areas are. Experts working in the field of climate change, including scientists, can provide valuable information to enhance understanding of climate variability and change. Whatever the source, the information needs to be provided in forms that are sector specific and can be translated into practical risk reduction measures.

Many countries are developing national adaptation policies and plans. Now is the time to ensure that disaster risk reduction is incorporated into them. Disaster risk reduction provides many tried and tested tools for addressing climate risk and enhances national adaptation efforts when combined with knowledge of climate change. Climate change is a political issue because tough decisions have to be made in relation to emissions reductions. The Red Cross Red Crescent does not enter into such debates because of our principles and because this is not our area of expertise. But we can get involved in developing the adaptation agenda because it is closely linked to the work of the humanitarian sector. Knowing what the climate trends and projections are, as measured and reported on by scientists, is vital in taking appropriate action and making informed decisions. Moreover, climate change advocacy presents an opportunity to promote the fundamental principles and humanitarian values of the Red Cross Red Crescent to a much wider audience. Agreements can be formed between organizations to ensure each has a good understanding of the best use of the other’s advocacy efforts.



People who are highly dependent upon climate-sensitive resources for their livelihoods often have stories to tell about how the climate has changed. Climate change can make traditional knowledge obsolete—or in some cases even more relevant. In the context of vulnerability and capacity assessments, changes to seasonal calendars and historical profiles can be a good entry point for

<sup>13</sup> The first four paragraphs in this section are taken from *Bridging the gap: Integrating climate change and disaster risk reduction*, International Federation Case Study, 2008.

discussing climate change with communities. Sharing community anecdotes with climate change networks is an important element of advocating about the humanitarian impacts of climate change and adds a personal element to climate change projections. It also adds to a growing pool of evidence that climate change is already happening.

Although there is a strong interrelationship between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, both agendas have separate policy frameworks and mechanisms for funding and implementation at global, regional, national and local level. Just as climate change adaptation finds its basis in the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is a global treaty on reducing global warming, the global disaster risk reduction agenda is guided by the Hyogo Framework for Action.

One of the fundamental linkages between the two areas of activity is their shared objective to address vulnerability in communities affected by climate risk. The difference is that while disaster risk reduction has traditionally looked at risks that communities know and are familiar with, climate change adaptation focuses more on future scenarios as projected by climate science.

 <b>Similarities</b>	 <b>Differences</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar aims</li> <li>• Mutual benefits</li> <li>• Both promote changes in policies, laws, training and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaster risk reduction engages with a broader range of disasters</li> <li>• Different international institutions</li> <li>• Different timescales</li> </ul>



### A note from the field

While profiling the disaster risk reduction activities of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, I noticed no tangible difference between community forestation activities or raised tube wells constructed as a part of disaster risk reduction and similar activities under climate change programmes. The difference lay in how project areas were targeted, what kind of meteorological data was considered at the planning stage and the length of the project.

By Aditya V. Bahadur, International Federation, South Asia regional delegation.

There are three important messages to send to stakeholders:



- The risk of climate-related disasters is increasing.
- The poor, the elderly and the sick are disproportionately vulnerable.
- We can prepare.



## Rising tide in the Pacific

If, as predicted, sea levels continue to rise, low-lying islands in the Pacific could gradually disappear. However, efforts are being made through risk reduction and disaster preparedness to lessen the worst effects of global warming and other challenges facing the population.

Leading such initiatives is the Tuvalu Red Cross Society, aided by enthusiastic volunteers and strong partnerships with government and civil society.

Tuvalu's highest point is just 4.5 metres above sea level, so there is higher ground to flee to during a storm surge or tsunami. Apart from its vulnerability to rising sea levels, Tuvalu is also at risk of cyclones, tsunamis, house fires, drought and flooding due to high tides and storm surges. The outer islands are very isolated, making communications difficult, if not impossible at times.

In 2005, the Tuvalu became the first National Society in the Pacific to work on climate change. The Tuvalu Red Cross Society has a regular slot on national radio where it

broadcasts messages on health, the environment, climate change, disaster preparedness, and promotes its activities. During dry periods, the Red Cross reminds people to use water wisely, offers advice on boiling water and stresses the importance of hand washing. The radio show runs competitions to raise awareness of how people can protect themselves from disaster risks.

To improve communications during disasters and at normal times, the Red Cross has placed "talking briefcases" on outer islands, each case containing a satellite phone, various types of charger, and instructions on how to operate it, in a waterproof carry case. The phones increase warning times and reduce response times for climate and non-climate-related disasters.

When distributing the equipment and training people in its use, the Tuvalu Red Cross Society also works with communities to map hazards, such as storms, and find out what coping mechanisms they have that can be built on. It conducts programmes on disaster preparedness



Tuvalu Red Cross Society climate change and disaster management officer Tataua Pase trains people on Funafala Islet in using a satellite phone, often the only means of communicating with the outside world in a disaster

*Photo: Giora Dan/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

and first aid in which information on climate change is incorporated since it is such a major concern for the country. The National Society facilitates public discussions on climate change.

Staff and volunteers are also involved in disaster response. When a series of large waves struck a low-lying part of Funafuti atoll early one morning in 2007, flooding a number of houses, six families totalling over 100 people were evacuated with the assistance of trained emergency response team volunteers, who housed them temporarily at Red Cross headquarters.<sup>14</sup>

The Kiribati Red Cross Society, working with government ministries, ran climate change awareness activities in schools. Activities emphasize assisting children's interpretations and expressions of climate change, and what they could do to address it, using poetry, art, drama and song. The children's work was taken to communities to ensure far-reaching effects.

The Samoa Red Cross Society produced two documentaries on climate change in partnership with the government and aired them on national television. The society also ran a community awareness programme using puppet shows and poster competitions. Volunteers proactively targeted communities living on an unstable hillside in urban Apia who were particularly vulnerable to climate change because they fell outside village safety nets.

Other Pacific National Societies undertook the Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Centre's Preparedness for Climate Change Programme, a flexible programme with up to four steps. One of the steps is developing a plan for working with partners on climate change communication and advocacy and with communities on small-scale climate adaptation initiatives.



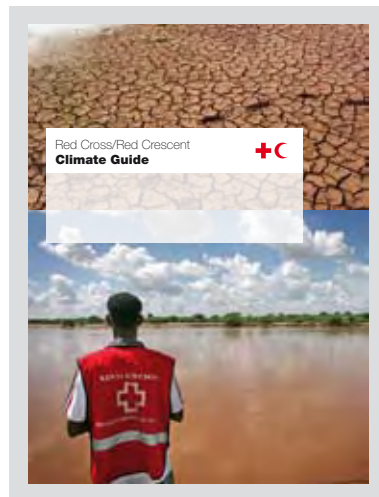
### ***The Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Guide.***

This 2007 guide represents five years of experience from more than 30 Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, in particular in

developing countries. It relates the experiences of Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers from all around the world trying to understand and address the risks of climate change.

The guide begins with the basics about climate change: the scientific consensus, the humanitarian consequences and the general implications for the Red Cross Red Crescent. This is followed by six thematic modules: getting started, dialogues, communications, disaster management, community-based disaster risk reduction and health. Each module begins with a background section with real-life Red Cross Red Crescent experiences and perspectives, followed by a "how-to" section with specific step-by-step guidance.

[www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/resources/about-disasters/climate-guide.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/resources/about-disasters/climate-guide.pdf)



<sup>14</sup> For more information, visit [www.climatecentre.org](http://www.climatecentre.org)



### **Academics meet Bangladesh Red Crescent Society field workers to discuss climate change advocacy**

In response to the need for increased advocacy efforts in the region, the South Asia regional delegation ran a course to enhance advocacy on disaster risk reduction. During this course Emma Tompkins from Leeds University and Clare Sayce from the British Red Cross facilitated a session on advocacy and climate change that demonstrated the role of presentations as a medium for advocacy. A key message from Tompkins was:

“Scientists can tell the trainees what the importance of climate change is but it will be the trainees who work with the community who will identify the best and the most effective adaptation to climate change.”

Tompkins outlined the climate changes in Bangladesh and explained to the participants the scientific predictions for the future. She highlighted the importance of creating awareness, working with others and long term planning. She asked the participants:

How do you make the community more aware of and more able to act on climate-related risks?

The participants replied:

- We can identify some climate change activities that can be incorporated into disaster risk reduction programmes.
- Students are very good ambassadors. Students can be taught to address the issue of climate change. Students can be good advocates on this issue.
- Different programmes and information, education and communication materials can be used to address climate change.
- We are aware that people are moving to the city because of floods. This can be seen by the number of people pulling rickshaws; they are increasing day by day.



### **The Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Centre**

In 2002, the Netherlands Red Cross and the International Federation established the Red Cross / Red Crescent Centre on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness. The Climate Centre supports National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and others in understanding and addressing the risks of climate change, particularly in disaster risk reduction programmes. The overall aim is to reduce the loss of life and the damage done to the livelihoods of people affected by the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.

[www.climatecentre.org](http://www.climatecentre.org)



For information and examples on how to communicate about climate change see [www.climatecentre.org](http://www.climatecentre.org). In addition, the Climate Centre sends out regular newsletters that can be subscribed to on the website. For major disasters, the Climate Centre mailing list often distributes information on connections to climate change. The International Federation has a media package on climate change, containing key messages for National Societies.



Some of the following films are available on DVD. Please contact the climate centre for information. Also visit the International Federation channel on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) where you can view many Red Cross Red Crescent films.

- Climate change: turning the tide (2007)
- The human face of climate change: testimonies from around the world (2008)
- Beyond response: Adapting to climate change at the Red Cross in Indonesia
- From peril to protection: disaster preparedness in Viet Nam and Bangladesh
- Survivor's guide: Flood alerts in Mozambique (2007)
- Antigua and Barbuda preparing for climate change (2007)
- Climate change and the Red Cross on the website of the Caribbean Red Cross.

The following presentation is also useful:

- Climate change and the work of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, by Pablo Suarez

# Section 2

## Actively advocating for a safer Asia Pacific



*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

No one should pretend that advocacy is an easy subject or a short-term commitment. If a case must be pleaded for, then someone somewhere disagrees with it or at least does not understand the point. In the modern world, it is self-evident that prisoners of war should not be killed and that civilians should not be attacked; but it is still necessary to forcefully put the point. It is easy to see why humanitarian advocates must sharpen their arguments so they will be heard, and so those who hear will listen and then act.

The aim of this section is to explore the meaning of advocacy and the role it plays in disaster risk reduction. We will learn how advocacy is about speaking for others, working with others and supporting others to speak for themselves, and the role of the disaster risk reduction practitioner in this process. We will explore:

- How advocacy happens at different levels and in different ways
- The role of assessment tools in the advocacy process
- Basic steps that are used in planning all advocacy initiatives
- Key steps in the advocacy process, which will be highlighted using examples from the field

Finally, a range of advocacy manuals and resources from a range of organizations is listed as a resource for further information and training.

Remember that disaster risk reduction practitioners are not alone in their efforts to advocate on behalf of the vulnerable or to increase the visibility of the Red Cross Red Crescent with key stakeholders. Professional communicators throughout Asia and Pacific are engaged in this work every day and are eager to support the information and advocacy priorities of their colleagues. Contact these colleagues early in the process of designing advocacy strategies. If collaboration is sustained throughout the advocacy process, all involved can see their objectives realized.

Collaboration with communications colleagues can often help to clarify the audiences that need to be reached, the actions that need to be taken by those audiences and the tools that will inspire those actions. Communications professionals can also help to design measurement tools to ensure that the impact of advocacy efforts is clearly understood.

## 1. What is advocacy?

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An advocate is a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy; a person who pleads a case on someone else's behalf. Advocacy is persuading other people or groups to act differently, to change in some way their policy or approach to a particular humanitarian issue.

The meaning of the word advocacy is not always clear. Different organizations have different definitions and styles of advocacy. Some consider advocacy to be strictly about changing and

influencing government policy while others use the term more broadly to include awareness raising activities. Common themes in different definitions of advocacy conclude that it is:

- A form of communication aimed at influencing decision-making for the resolution of a problem
- A set of strategies that aim to influence, persuade, lobby, defend, inform, motivate, move to action and attract attention to an issue
- A way of taking communities' voices to a different level of decision making

Advocacy initiatives can be:

- Direct, such as meeting a policy maker and presenting a case on why they should take action; or indirect, such as trying to influence public opinion through the media
- Private, such a closed door meeting or conversation held amongst trusted parties to discuss the issues. This is very often an effective way of persuading people to change their minds, a policy, or their behaviour.

## 2. Advocacy and the Red Cross Red Crescent

*“ I DREAM OF A  
RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT  
THAT HAS A GLOBAL MORAL AUTHORITY  
AND CAN CALL THE ATTENTION OF THE  
WORLD TO HUMANITARIAN ISSUES OF CONCERN.  
A MOVEMENT, WHICH INDEPENDENTLY CHOOSES  
WHICH ISSUES TO FOCUS ON.”<sup>15</sup>*



Advocacy is nothing new for the Red Cross Red Crescent. Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross Red Crescent, was involved in both service delivery and advocacy. After the battle of Solferino in northern Italy, he mobilized the women of the village to work with him in helping the wounded; they provided a service to those in need. However, he realized service delivery alone was not enough and he needed to persuade governments to create a set of rules to protect and assist the wounded in times of war. Using advocacy skills, he persuaded governments to draw up and agree to the Geneva Convention. If Henry Dunant had not been an effective advocate, we would not have the Red Cross Red Crescent today.

<sup>15</sup> Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, 2001

In the Red Cross Red Crescent, we have two ways of achieving our goals. The first, and the one we are most familiar with, is through the services that we provide ourselves. However, there are some issues that we are concerned about but which we cannot deal with on our own. We need to influence others to do something about them.<sup>16</sup> If we as the Red Cross Red Crescent want to be true to our fundamental principles, we must speak out in favour of the most vulnerable, whether they are victims of disaster or disease, even if there might be a short-term cost to us.<sup>17</sup>

The advocacy aims of the International Federation are to:<sup>18</sup>

- Represent, promote and give visibility at the international level to the work of National Societies in service delivery and advocacy
- Influence the humanitarian agenda by identifying critical issues whilst developing and advocating for solutions
- Position the Red Cross Red Crescent as the leading humanitarian network, thus creating the basis for more effective partnerships and for more extensive and sustained resource mobilization

The importance of advocacy and awareness raising was noted at the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2007 where a large number of countries emphasized the



### Advocacy role on the international stage

As convenor of the global Emergency Shelter Cluster, the International Federation's role is to support better global preparedness in emergency shelter, scale up capacity and coordinate emergency shelter after disasters. The International Federation's role also enables it to take on a robust advocacy role on the international stage. In April 2008, a group of international aid agencies warned that hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi families remained exposed to the risks of the looming monsoon, just months after Cyclone Sidr swept over the country, killing 4,000 and destroying nearly 1.5 million homes. Speaking on behalf of the cluster and the agencies working on shelter in Bangladesh, the International Federation's head of shelter, Graham Saunders, warned only flimsy shelters cobbled together from plastic sheeting and tarpaulins stood between families and the annual rains. Oxfam and CARE International, other members of the cluster, backed up his call to action.

<sup>16</sup> See Annex 2 for more on *Strategy 2010*.

<sup>17</sup> International Federation. *Working paper of the International Federation Governing Board Working Group on Advocacy*, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> International Federation. *The Protocol Handbook. A manual to facilitate the Federation's work in diplomacy and the international field*, 2005.

need for advocacy on disaster risk reduction and stated that the benefits of implementing disaster risk reduction policies, including the economic benefits, should be publicized in order to increase political support.<sup>19</sup>

The International Federation's *Strategy 2010* calls for intensified advocacy efforts. Increasing effective advocacy to address disaster risk reduction and to influence the actions of key decision-makers and communities is a key component of building safer communities. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have recognized obligations and responsibilities to assist in, advise on and advocate for disaster impact reduction, deriving from their privileged position as auxiliaries to their own governments.

It is our responsibility as members of the Red Cross Red Crescent to work with others to call for the scaling up of disaster risk reduction activities, at all levels: community, national, regional and international. While continuing to promote disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation, the International Federation's global disaster risk reduction programme uses advocacy, alliance building, awareness raising and knowledge sharing to advance its work in disaster risk reduction. A key priority of the International Federation is to renew advocacy on priority humanitarian issues, especially on fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination, and promoting disaster risk reduction.



### Disaster risk reduction ambassador

The UN appointed Philippines senator Loren Legarda as regional champion for disaster risk reduction and climate change in 2008. The job focused on strengthening efforts to address disasters and climate change in Asia-Pacific.

"It entails asking parliamentarians and governments to give political commitment to integrate into their development plans and legislation disaster risk and climate change agenda... meaning let's prepare for disasters and enact laws to prevent vulnerability," Legarda said.

This meant also changing the mindset of governments in addressing climate change. Legarda appealed to world legislators to immediately implement effective policies on climate change to "reduce the damage and casualties caused by natural disasters".

"Parliamentarians around the world especially in countries vulnerable to disasters should take a pro-active role in advancing disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in order to protect lives and livelihood," Legarda said. She said disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation should be woven together to protect people from disasters.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Proceedings of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Geneva, 5-7 June 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Mendez, C. 'Loren named UN regional champion for disaster risk reduction', Philippine *Star* online 28 November 2008.



### **Taking community voices to a different level of decision-making**

Following major natural disasters, the World Bank often works with the governments of affected countries to calculate the total cost of the disaster to the national economy and to estimate the funds required for recovery and reconstruction. The methodology normally used to collect and analyze the information does not include a strong focus on feedback from affected communities or from local NGOs, international NGOs or Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies working with them. The World Bank, the International Federation and the ProVention Consortium are testing methodology that captures this important input.



### **Legislative advocacy: Legal preparedness for disaster**

For years, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been advocating with their governments to overcome common legal barriers to international disaster response. At the request of the Red Cross Red Crescent's Council of Delegates and later the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the International Federation established its International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL) programme to lead research and advocacy, improve legal preparedness and better facilitate and regulate international assistance in non-conflict disasters.

Several Asia Pacific National Societies have advocated the adoption of IDRL Guidelines that would ease the movement of experts and relief following disaster. For example, the Nepal Red Cross Society reviewed existing legislation and highlighted key areas for reform. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society documented the legal challenges faced by the Sri Lankan government and international agencies following the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. It found laws that slowed relief and humanitarian agencies' lack of accountability to minimum standards and principles.

The IDRL Guidelines provide recommendations to governments on removing legal and administrative obstacles delivery, and enhancing the quality and accountability of international assistance in disaster.

For more information, see [www.ifrc.org/idrl](http://www.ifrc.org/idrl)

or Red Cross Red Crescent members can see <https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw41845.asp>.

### 3. Why is advocacy an important part of disaster risk reduction?

“*Building a culture of prevention is not easy. While the costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, its benefits lie in a distant future. Moreover, the benefits are not tangible; they are the disasters that did NOT happen.*

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, 1999.”

We are starting to see the benefits of interventions and policies that aim to reduce disaster risk. However, despite good results, disaster risk reduction is a long-term, low visibility process that can be neglected compared to the high profile, high drama, emergency phase. For donors, an emergency response is highly visible and warmly praised. For other stakeholders, it can be easier and cheaper to wait for others to appeal for funds and come to the rescue than to invest limited funds in reducing risk. Long term issues can be seen as difficult to deal with when decision makers are faced with so many immediate issues. Therefore we need to work together to increase our advocacy efforts to raise the visibility of disaster risk reduction and make it a priority for action and funding. Three reasons that are useful to keep in mind when advocating for disaster risk reduction are:

- Our moral obligation
- Financial benefits
- Environmental protection or sustainability

### 4. Disaster risk reduction: A moral obligation

“*A destructive combination of earthquakes, floods, droughts and other hazards make South Asia the world's most disaster-prone region. The effects are aggravated by climate change, unsuitable social and development policies and environmental degradation. The effect is to slow or block development and keep millions trapped in poverty. It does not have to be this way. Our experience shows that successful disaster risk reduction policies, integrated into development work, save lives and money, making vulnerable communities more resilient and protecting development gains.*

From *Re-thinking Disasters: Why Death and Destruction is not Nature's Fault but Human Failure*, Oxfam, 2008.”

Working together, we can do a lot to identify and reduce our vulnerability to hazards and learn to live safely. Risk reduction is so effective in saving lives, reducing damage to livelihoods, and reducing the impact of hazards on communities, that we have a moral responsibility to ensure risk reduction becomes a priority at every level of society. Neglecting disaster risk reduction leads to more deaths and damage, and pushes more people into poverty.



When a baby starts to crawl and walk, a normal house suddenly contains a multitude of hazards. Parents identify the many dangers that common household items pose to the toddler. Items such as knives matches and stairs are not dangerous in themselves. They only become dangerous when combined with the vulnerabilities of a small child. Parents become risk aware and look at their house in a new way and make changes to make it safe for the child. They might put objects out of reach, place a gate at the top of the stairs and begin to teach the child how to live safely to reduce their vulnerability. Parents do what they can to avoid, limit and prepare for the potential hazards faced by the newly mobile child.

Reducing risk is a wise investment. One would say that the wise parent of a small child identifies hazards in the home, works to mitigate against these hazards, and aims to reduce the small child's vulnerability through teaching and awareness. There is a moral responsibility to do this rather than responding to a child's potentially fatal accident.

In the same way parents make changes in the house to make it safe for the child, communities have the power to create a safer Asia Pacific. When communities, governments, international organizations, academia and families work together, we can reduce our vulnerability to hazards and learn to live safely with risk.

## 5. Disaster risk reduction: It's worth the money

“One of the most potent arguments for risk reduction is also the simplest: ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’. A recent expert study in the United States showed that one dollar invested today in disaster risk reduction saved four dollars in the future cost of relief and rehabilitation - a bargain by any standard.

John Holmes, chair of the ISDR, 2007.”



A stitch in time saves nine. The old saying is true. Not only does risk reduction save lives and reduce suffering but it is also a good investment. Many studies have indicated that disaster risk reduction is highly cost-effective: a dollar invested in disaster risk reduction can save two to ten dollars in disaster response and recovery costs.<sup>21</sup>

Decision makers use financial information to make decisions about how to spend money. When deciding to fund disaster risk reduction they want to know what the costs of a project are in relation to the proven benefits. Decision-makers need this information to decide the best ways to spend limited funds considering many competing priorities. Without this information, policy-makers might be reluctant to give significant funding to disaster risk reduction programmes.

<sup>21</sup> International Federation. *The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction. Building safer, resilient communities*, 2007.

Information on costs is readily available but information on benefits (both economic and social) is generally scarce. We need to collect more information in the monitoring and evaluation phases of disaster risk reduction projects. In addition, a cost-benefit analysis is a useful tool in advocacy as it provides a strong basis for key messages and for formulating a persuasive case.

**Cost benefit analysis** is an economic tool used to compare the benefits against the costs of a given project or activity.

There are a number of things that you as a disaster risk reduction practitioner can do to make a strong case:



- Collect and record the number of communities or people affected by your project (with demographic data, e.g. age, sex.)
- Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation to record the social impacts of the project.
- Feed information collected during a vulnerability and capacity assessment or monitoring and evaluation into a cost-benefit analysis .
- Form a partnership with local universities who might be able to provide research support.



### **Strong cost-benefit ratio in Nepal**

The Nepal Red Cross Society conducted a cost-benefit analysis to provide evidence of the benefits of community-based disaster risk reduction and to develop skills with cost-benefit analysis to determine its usefulness as a tool for decision-making. A cost-benefit analysis can:

- Give a monetary analysis of programme impacts
- Demonstrate the economic benefits of work to internal and external stakeholders
- Help make decisions about programmes and provide a strong advocacy and fund-raising tool for increasing disaster risk reduction work

The Nepal Red Cross found:

- The cost-benefit ratio was strong so there was a good economic justification for continuing and replicating the programme.
- Long-term vision and support was vital. The cost-benefit ratio changes over time, with benefits doubling in 10 or 15 years for minimal extra funding to maintain first aid kits and water wells, and check dams.
- The cost-benefit analysis fitted with existing Nepal Red Cross processes, such as vulnerability and capacity assessments or monitoring and evaluation. As such, it would be relatively straightforward to integrate it into existing processes.
- Cost-benefit analyses must be transparent and clear on all assumptions so others could gauge for themselves how reliable the findings were.



### ***From risk to resilience: Benefits and costs of disaster risk reduction***

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the benefits and costs of disaster risk reduction in India, Nepal and Pakistan in 2008.

Visit: [www.proventionconsortium.org](http://www.proventionconsortium.org).



### **Our environment can trigger disasters or protect us**

People damage the environment and this increases our vulnerability to hazards and increases the frequency and intensity of disasters. We are damaging the environment in many ways which make us vulnerable to disasters. It is a simple equation of cause and effect, e.g., deforestation and inappropriate agricultural practices result in decreased vegetative cover, which leads to soil erosion, run-off and siltation. The effects are flooding, flash floods and mudslides.

We can protect our communities by supporting the environment. Planting mangroves, for example, can reduce vulnerability to tidal surges. In our disaster risk reduction work we need to work to create behavioural change and to advocate for environmentally sustainable development.

“*The earth has enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed.*

Mahatma Gandhi”



### **Cyclone Nargis**

In Myanmar, the conversion of a mangrove delta ecosystem into commercial rice cultivation provided an important contribution to national gross domestic product. However, it also created vulnerability leading to disaster. The unsustainable development of the Irrawaddy Delta manifested itself during Cyclone Nargis in many ways. The loss of a natural buffer increased exposure to coastal storms, while persistent poverty and inadequate provision of basic needs created a vulnerable population. In addition, the absence of effective local, regional and national early warning systems, public shelters and evacuation planning meant that disaster risk had not been mitigated.<sup>22</sup>

## **6. The roles of the advocate: Be the change**

An advocate can play a number of different roles depending on the context. Sometimes an advocate may be required to offer background support to community members to empower them to represent themselves, or they might represent an issue on behalf of community members, or provide a link between the community and those who can help to provide a solution to the issue. The following chart<sup>23</sup> is useful in analyzing the different roles of an advocate.

<sup>22</sup> From the 2008 ProVention Forum whose theme was From Grassroots to Global: People-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction.

<sup>23</sup> Tearfund. *Understanding Advocacy Toolkit*, 2002



Possible  
advocate roles

ROLE	CHARACTERISTIC	
Represent	Speak for people	
Accompany	Speak with people	
Empower	Enable people to speak for themselves	
Mediate	Facilitate communication between people	
Model	Demonstrate the practice to people or policy makers	
Negotiate	Bargain for something	
Network	Build coalitions	

Key

advocate

targets/those  
in power

those affected  
by a situation

## 7. A word of caution

Humanitarian organisations are normally very clear about their role – to save lives and to provide relief in the aftermath of a disaster. But they can also play other important roles, including as advocates for reducing the vulnerability of populations, which lies at the root of disasters.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> ISDR. *Lessons for a Safer Future: Drawing on the Experience of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster*, 2006.

While it is important to advocate enthusiastically for humanitarian issues, as members of the Red Cross Red Crescent we must ensure that our advocacy activities are in line with our fundamental principles. Here are three key points to keep in mind when considering advocacy initiatives.

- First, advocacy initiatives have to be in accordance with our mission to improve the lives of vulnerable people. We should not advocate on subjects outside our mission and experience.
- Second, we will speak with a consistent voice if we base our advocacy efforts on the fundamental principles.
- Third, in order to be credible we must base our advocacy on practical experience and evidence from working in the field. All advocacy efforts should be closely allied and complementary to our field activities.



For example, advocacy work aimed at saving whales from extinction would NOT be conducted by the Red Cross Red Crescent because this issue is outside our mission and experience. Advocacy issues must be carefully chosen and based on our Fundamental principles.

There can be costs to advocacy, particularly if we do not do it well. A poorly-researched advocacy initiative, not based on our own experience, facts or evidence, without a consistent message can be dangerous. It can undermine our credibility.<sup>25</sup> This is why we must carefully define and focus our advocacy activities, to ensure they are based on genuine humanitarian concerns and consistent with our mission and the fundamental principles. Advocacy requires that you have credibility both with policy makers and with the affected community. Credibility means that other people trust and value what we have to say. Your knowledge from the field is a critical starting point for advocacy, and paves the way for your credibility in advocacy.<sup>26</sup>



#### **Keep in mind the three Cs:**

- Credibility (based on fact and experience)
- Consistency (maintain the same message)
- Co-ordination (work with others for maximum impact)

<sup>25</sup> Advocacy - A Working Paper of the Federation Governing Board Working Group on Advocacy, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> CARE Advocacy Tools and Guidelines. Promoting Policy Change. A Resource Manual for CARE Program Managers. 2001.



### Policy change and implementation can save lives

Many children died as schools collapsed in the 2004 South Asia earthquake. But buildings become safer as a result of a government decision to train home owners in safe rebuilding. The building code was enforced very strictly in disaster areas, all designs including public sector buildings had to be vetted and approved by the government.

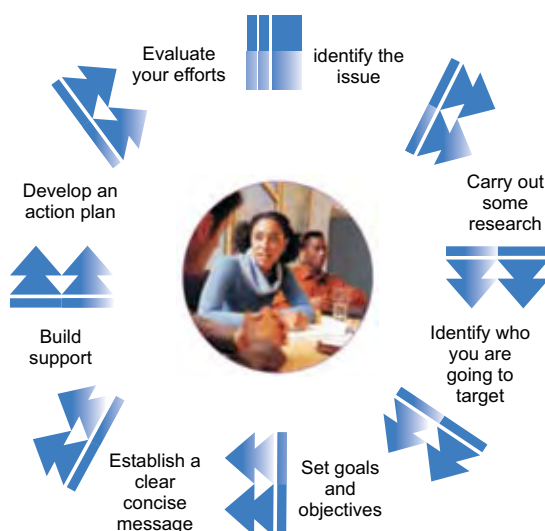
By Muhammad Ilyas Khan, Pakistan Red Crescent Society.

## 8. Steps towards effective advocacy

Advocacy occurs at the local, national and international levels. While different approaches and methods are used, this section discusses the basic steps that are used in planning all advocacy initiatives.

National Societies in Asia Pacific use vulnerability and capacity assessments to work with communities to identify their capacities, the risks they face and the actions that are required to build a safer community. At times, issues are identified that are beyond the capacity of the community to solve alone. Advocacy skills are needed to raise awareness and to engage local government and other stakeholders to take action.

Effective advocacy is like any other disaster risk reduction activity. You need an assessment, a plan, activities, resources and monitoring and evaluation — or you can add an advocacy component to a current disaster risk reduction programme. The advocacy cycle below<sup>27</sup> outlines the broad steps in designing an advocacy initiative.



<sup>27</sup> Advocates for Action and Students Partnership Worldwide. *Advocacy Toolkit*, 2007.

## 9. Learning from the health sector

When designing your advocacy initiative it is useful to keep this cycle in mind. The health sector has been working on advocacy and awareness activities for many years and has developed a wealth of advocacy training materials and examples. It can be useful to work with health sector colleagues as they can offer guidance and information at the different stages of the advocacy cycle. You might find synergies where you can work together on certain issues. Working together with other sectors will increase the effectiveness of your programming and advocacy initiatives.



Nepal Red Cross Action Team volunteer Nina Khadgi (22) holds Nisha Rai (2) while waiting for her parents to come to motivate them to have Nisha vaccinated against measles on Thursday December 18, 2008. Earlier in December the second phase of a Measles Follow up Campaign started with the aim of covering four million children aged 9 months to 5 years old all over Nepal.

*Photo: Tom Van Cakenberghe/OnAsia/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*



### Indian Red Cross keeps the promise

A focus of the Red Cross Red Crescent's advocacy work is addressing stigma and discrimination. As part of this, the Indian Red Cross national headquarters ran a painting competition and seminar on the theme "HIV / AIDS prevention – keep the promise" to coincide with World AIDS Day. Staff also showed their solidarity with people living with HIV by wearing red ribbons. At the state level, competitions, public rallies and get-togethers for children and adults living with HIV were organized. The advocacy work is part of a global campaign to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination wherever it occurs.



### Red Cross plays key role in Sri Lanka measles campaign

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society participated in a huge campaign to help wipe out measles. National Society volunteers were among the 30,000 people mobilized to assist the government's drive to immunize all 16-to-20-year-olds, amounting to two million people. The Sri Lanka Red Cross worked with the Ministry of Health to mobilize people to be vaccinated. As well as involving volunteers, the National Society produced and distributed 800,000 leaflets, 35,000 stickers, 32,000 volunteer booklets, 2.4 million immunization cards, 8,000 banners for display at vaccination centres and publicity material for the media. The immunization was conducted over a single weekend in more than 10,000 immunization centres across the island. More than 75 per cent of the target population was immunized.



### **Pakistan Red Crescent volunteers go door-to-door**

In a polio eradication campaign, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society worked with the World Health Organization, UNHCR, UNICEF and the government of Pakistan to create awareness amongst the target population.

The National Society prepared banners, posters, badges and caps to be worn by campaign workers and volunteers. Specially designed flyers were distributed in through local mosques. A door-to-door motivation campaign was also held just before immunization days, which was effective in many cases.

“Convincing people in the urban areas is easy enough. It is the reaching the immigrant and the tribal populations which is the biggest challenge. They have all kinds of misconceptions about the disease and the vaccination, so several visits are often needed before they agree to have their children vaccinated,” said Mir Alam, Pakistan Red Crescent polio campaign officer.

## **10. A practical guide to implementing each step**

### **Step 1: Identifying advocacy issues using vulnerability and capacity assessments**

Throughout the rest of this chapter, vulnerability and capacity assessments will be referred to as a starting point from which to plan local-level disaster risk reduction advocacy initiatives. Vulnerability and capacity assessments will be used because they are a widely used and understood participatory tool in the Red Cross Red Crescent. However, there are a whole range of similar, effective assessment tools, such as participatory vulnerability assessments, participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments, participatory rural appraisals and hazard vulnerability capacity assessment so please refer to the tool you are accustomed to throughout the rest of this chapter.

Whatever participatory tools you use, it is important to follow up your participatory assessment with advocacy, awareness-raising and knowledge sharing efforts. The following are some key areas of focus where vulnerability and capacity assessments can be used to link community voices and concerns to decision-making and resources at the local or national level:

- Linking vulnerability and capacity assessments or risk assessments to disaster risk reduction knowledge-sharing and wider perspectives
- Using the results to persuade relevant stakeholders of the need for disaster risk reduction interventions
- Taking community voices (captured in the assessment process) to a different level of decision-making

- Using areas of intervention identified in the vulnerability and capacity assessment as a basis to engage local partners and other organizations to work together using information gained through the process to build persuasive advocacy messages
- Conducting vulnerability and capacity assessments with different agencies to learn about advocacy issues together, build relationships and share skills to improve effectiveness

The vulnerability and capacity assessment process is also a good tool for identifying the root causes of poverty and vulnerability. Many of these root causes can only be addressed by government policies or persuading others to change behaviour, or a combination of both; for example, the design and implementation of building codes, land-use and urban planning or embankment maintenance. Such issues require advocacy, awareness raising and greater networking with other actors.

When the Red Cross Red Crescent does not have the resources or capacity to support communities on certain priority issues identified through a vulnerability and capacity assessment, it is important that we coordinate with other actors, share assessment findings, and advocate for others to take action. In this way trust with communities is maintained and expectations that are naturally raised through the assessment process can be met.



***What is VCA: An Introduction to Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment,***

International Federation, 2006. This booklet forms part of a set of publications that support the assessment process for National Societies: The others are: ***How to do VCA; VCA Toolkit;*** and ***VCA training.***

[www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/resources/publications.asp#vca](http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/resources/publications.asp#vca)



To strengthen the vulnerability and capacity assessment process, and in response to a number of evaluations and reviews, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society ran a disaster risk reduction and advocacy training course. Based on vulnerability and capacity assessments, participants chose to develop advocacy plans for improving community access to government livestock services, sensitizing communities about the risks of removing soil from riverbanks, persuading local government to enforce river erosion polices, raising awareness about the importance of safe shelters and persuading stakeholders to invest in constructing more shelters. Participants decided to pursue advocacy initiatives aimed at creating awareness about vulnerable groups that were often most adversely affected by disasters.



### Examples of advocacy in disaster risk reduction<sup>28</sup>

Advocacy can be thought of as a means of favourably influencing the wider political, economic, social and environmental context where these factors contribute to the vulnerability of a community (or are one of the underlying causes of hazards). For example:

- Encouraging the authorities in the Indian Punjab to share information with counterparts in the Pakistan Punjab about the release of flood waters in dams, a contributing factor to floods in Pakistan
- Advocating for the establishment and enforcement of building codes to mitigate against the impact of earthquakes
- Advocating for better land-use management in Afghanistan which could, in the longer term, reduce the number of localized floods, gully formations and land degradation
- Advocating against inappropriate designs and location of infrastructure such as bridges and roads where they have contributed to flooding in Orissa

Advocacy can also be employed to encourage other bodies to become involved in reducing identified risks.

## Step 2: Research: Understanding the issue and collecting evidence

Good advocacy is based on good information. It is important to thoroughly understand the issue you plan to advocate on. The following questions are helpful in organizing your information.



- What is the problem?
- How big and how serious is the problem?
- What are the root causes?
- What are the adverse effects of doing nothing?
- What do you want changed?

Once you have researched the issue, you can start to organize it into messages that help you communicate clearly. The following example shows how important evidence is to building a persuasive argument.

<sup>28</sup> Concern, *Approaches to Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2005.



## Understanding the issue: Cyclone preparedness in Bangladesh

- **How big is the issue and or how serious is the problem?**

In 1970, 500,000 people died during a cyclone where winds reached 220 kilometres per hour. During the 1990s, Bangladesh was lashed by five enormous cyclones. Up to 140,000 people died, most of them during one storm in 1991. But over 2.5 million people were evacuated – and their lives almost certainly saved. Now, as a result of climate change, weather conditions are expected to become more erratic.

- **What are the adverse affects of doing nothing and what is the solution?**

Cyclones threaten lives and livelihoods. Cyclones are a major threat to development, and specifically to the development of the poorest and most marginalized people in Bangladesh. The poor are usually hardest hit by cyclones as they often live in dangerous and less desirable locations, such as flood plains and river banks. Statistics show survival rates in past cyclones increased dramatically as a result of building cyclone shelters. But the network of shelters is incomplete.

- **What do you want changed?**

Now, more than ever, we need to increase our preparedness measures. We must build more shelters to save lives.

It is important to be aware of all aspects of the issue so that you are a trustworthy and accurate source of information. Advocacy messages based on experience and information gathered from the field is essential in forming a persuasive advocacy message. Vulnerability and capacity assessment reports are key sources for gathering evidence to support disaster risk reduction issues. In addition to information collected during the assessment process, try to collect information such as statistics and policies from government ministries, colleagues, other organizations, international declarations and academic institutions.



### World Disasters Report

This annual report is a good source of information for advocacy. Published by the International Federation, it brings together the latest trends, facts and analysis of current crises. It can be downloaded from:

[www.ifrc.org/publications](http://www.ifrc.org/publications)



## Step 3: Identifying your target

### a. Mapping stakeholders

**Stakeholder:** A stakeholder is a person, group, organization or system who affects or can be affected by the issue you wish to advocate on.

There are no hard or fast rules to tell us whom to involve in your advocacy activities and how. What we know is that stakeholder involvement is context-specific; what works in one situation may not be appropriate in another. Trusting and using one's judgment, therefore, may be the best advice. A good way to identify appropriate stakeholders is to start by asking questions. The following questions are not an exhaustive list but are they are a guide.<sup>29</sup> Some of the questions can be answered by through the vulnerability and capacity assessment process.



- Who are the “voiceless” with whom special efforts may have to be made to include or convince?
- Who are the representatives of those affected by the issue?
- Who is responsible for providing services related to this issue?
- Who is likely to mobilize for or against the issue?
- Who can make the advocacy effort more effective through their participation or less effective by their non-participation or outright opposition?
- Who can contribute financial and technical resources to your advocacy activities?

Once you have identified stakeholders related to your issue, it is important to map the advocacy environment (in other words, to find out who is doing what) on disaster risk reduction and advocacy at the level you plan to target your advocacy initiative. This enables you to find out who the major players are, and identify key relationships, issues, opportunities and approaches. In doing this you will also avoid duplicating efforts and may find partners or key people to support your initiative. This process is the simplest at the local level where there are generally a much smaller number of actors. These local actors are also likely to be those responsible for action.

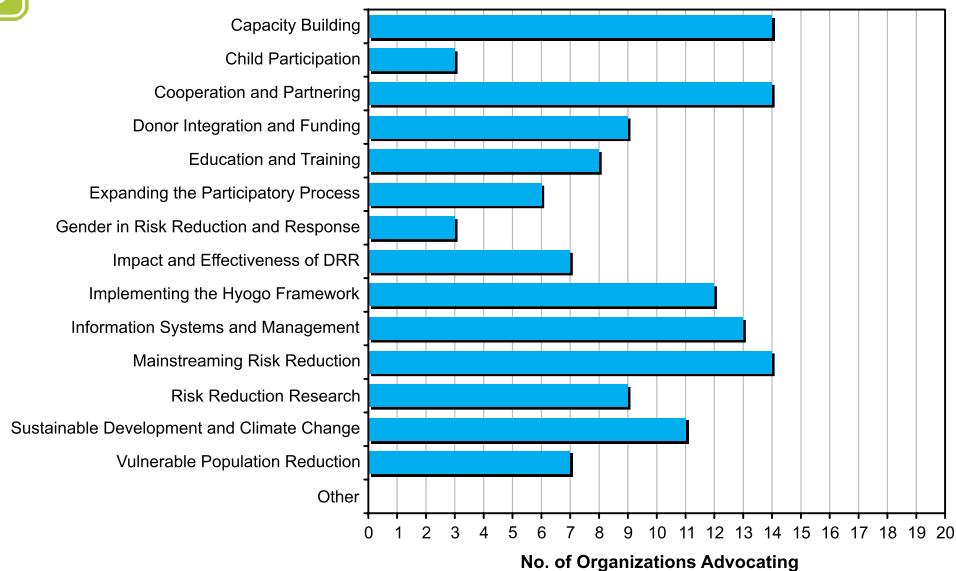
An example of mapping the advocacy environment at the international level is research conducted by CARE USA. As part of this research, CARE visited more than 100 websites and

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from *The World Bank Participation Sourcebook*, 1996.

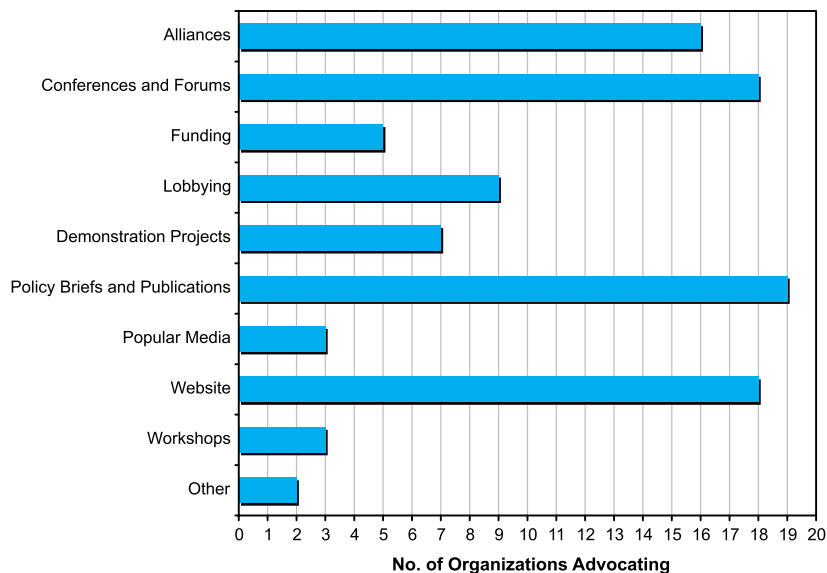
held interviews with various disaster risk reduction actors. The graphs below illustrate the key advocacy issues and methods used by a wide range of actors working in disaster risk reduction.



### Key advocacy issues<sup>30</sup>



### Key advocacy vehicles<sup>31</sup>



<sup>30</sup> CARE USA and the Centre for Public Policy Research at the College of William and Mary. *Disaster Risk Reduction: Mapping the Advocacy Landscape*, presentation, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> CARE USA and the Centre for Public Policy Research at the College of William and Mary. *Disaster Risk Reduction: Mapping the Advocacy Landscape*, presentation, 2006.

### **b. Allies and opponents<sup>32</sup>**

Using the results of your research (stakeholder mapping) you now need to determine potential allies and opponents. The following questions are helpful in analysing who can support your advocacy initiative and who may oppose it.

An **ally** is a person or organization cooperating with you for mutual benefit.

The following points are useful in helping to identify allies.



- Look for other organizations, groups and individuals working on similar advocacy issues.
- Do alliances exist or do they need to be established?
- How can you contribute to the efforts of other organizations?
- What role do these organizations want your organization to play and what contribution do they expect from you?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of forming alliances or coalitions with each of them?
- Do other organizations see yours as a value-adding partner or ally to their efforts?

An **opponent** is a person or organization who is against, disapproves or resists what you are advocating for.

The following questions are useful in identifying opponents:



- Are there any organizations, groups or individuals that oppose the proposed policy or change?
- What threats do these organizations, groups and individuals pose to the success of your advocacy initiative?
- What can you do to reduce the influence of opponents?

<sup>32</sup> Marie Stopes International. *Advocacy in Action: A Step-by-Step Guide to Designing and Implementing Advocacy Initiatives in Developing Countries*, 2002.

### ***Managing opponents***<sup>33</sup>

Although you may be fully committed and understand the disaster risk reduction change you are advocating for, others may take time to appreciate your idea or your position. There are common reasons why people stall when a new concept is proposed:

*More work.* People may perceive your proposal as increasing their workload and therefore as a burden. Try to highlight how your proposal will actually reduce future work loads.

*Not their idea.* People may reject your proposal simply because they didn't think of it first. This is especially true for those who are more senior than you.

*Unmet interests.* Your idea may not include one of the other person's basic interests (e.g., to be seen to be in charge or to feel valuable) or may be outside their usual way of working or areas of work.

*Fear of losing face.* People may feel that accepting your proposal, even if it is a good one, may cause them to look bad, to lose face.

*Too much too fast.* If your idea seems too big, wide-ranging, or complicated it may be simpler for people to just say "no".

Frustrated by people's resistance, you may be tempted to push, persuade or insist. But pushing may make it more difficult for others to agree. It points out that the proposal is your idea. It fails to address their unmet interests. It makes it harder to accept without the appearance of giving in to pressure. Instead of pushing the person toward agreement, draw them in the direction you want them to go. Build them a bridge across the chasm between you and them:

- Involve your opponents.
- Ask for and build on their ideas.
- Ask for feedback.
- Offer them a choice.
- Do not dismiss them as irrational.
- Help them save face.
- Go slow to get there in the end.

If reaching agreement on the whole proposal seems unlikely at first, break it into steps, and agree on one at a time. This approach will make the unthinkable gradually seem possible. Start with the issue that is the easiest for people to agree on.

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<sup>33</sup> Fox, Paul G. *Don't Push: Build Them a Bridge*, Fox Performance Training, 1998.

### c. Identifying a target audience

Once you have information about your issue, identified stakeholders and can speak confidently and accurately about the issue, you need to ask who has the power to bring about the change you are advocating for. This is your target audience.



*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

**Target audience:** The person (or group of people) who can help bring about the change you hope to achieve.

There are two groups within the target audience: the primary audience (the decision makers with the authority to directly bring about the necessary change ) and the secondary audience who can influence decisions of the primary audience.



The following target audiences were identified by a group working on reducing river erosion:

**Primary audience:** Local chairman, local administration, local police department, land office, local member of parliament, local NGOs and local soil contractors.

**Secondary audience:** Community members, community leaders, local religious leaders, the media and local school teachers.

It is important you understand the audience well and are able to see the issue from their perspective. The advocate must think about what will motivate a target audience to support a cause. The greatest challenge is the ability to put yourself in your audience's shoes and see how they will benefit from supporting your cause. As well, we should think of the potential risks and rewards your target audience will face by joining forces with you. You should be able to list the benefits or interests related to the issue from the audience's perspective.

Field workers often have considerable insight into the characteristics of the different local target audiences and how decisions are made by those in authority. Some key factors to keep in mind when thinking about how to influence your target audience are:



- The size, age, location and gender of the audiences
- The audience's knowledge about the advocacy issue
- Who supports change, maintaining the status quo or is neutral?
- People who are neutral but might be persuaded to support the change
- Who does the target audience get information or advice from? How is information communicated?
- Who is willing to speak in support of change?
- Who has the power to influence change?
- What might people opposing change say; how can you respond?
- How are decisions made and how can you to influence decision-makers?
- What policy is available and how it is implemented?
- Does the target audience know my organization and network?

#### Step 4: Formulating an advocacy goal and objectives

A first step is to define the purpose of your advocacy effort and to determine what you want to achieve. It is important to have defined goals and objectives that are within your field of experience and capacity to achieve.

**A goal:** This is the purpose of your advocacy effort; it is your vision for long-term change.

**An objective:** This is a step towards your goal. The timeframe for an objective is less than the goal.



All advocacy objectives should be SMART. This means they should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.



**Goal:** To improve the standard of living of a community through better access to government agricultural services.

**Objective:** Seventy per cent of vulnerable and marginalized farmers have access to local livestock department services by the end of 2012.

**Goal:** To enhance the economic status of the fisherwomen in a community to increase their coping capacity.

**Objective:** To persuade other stakeholders (NGOs, government and others) to commit to funding an alternative livelihoods programme for 100 fisherwomen in alternative livelihood options within two years.

**Goal:** To enhance safe shelter in a community.

**Objective:** A community becomes aware of the importance of adopting safe shelter measures and the government constructs 100 more shelters or safe schools by 2013.

**Goal:** To reduce river erosion as a result of soil removal.

**Objective:** Sixty percent of community people are sensitized about the risks associated with losing soil and the local government implements river erosion policies by 2014.

## Step 5a: Formulating an advocacy message

A message is a statement that is designed to persuade others of your position or point of view. A message explains what you are proposing, why it is worth doing, and the positive impacts of your proposal. Use the See + Action formula below to inform, motivate, persuade and move the target audience into action. The vulnerability and capacity assessment process and analysis is a good source of information on which to base advocacy messages.



## See + Action Formula

*Statement:* Write a simple statement.

*Evidence:* Give evidence.

*Example:* Use an example or personal story from your own experience.

*Action:* Now put your message into action.



Removing soil from river banks for sale increases river erosion. In turn, this reduces the amount of land available for cultivation, causes villages to collapse into the river leading to displacement and increases the risk of flooding as the river becomes increasingly shallow.

*Photo: Adesh Tripathy / International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*



**The following message was developed to reduce soil removal and erosion on a riverbank in Bangladesh.**

*Simple statement:* “If we can stop soil cutting [removal] we can save our villages.”

*Evidence* (from the vulnerability and capacity assessment): In 1984, the people of Hatya community were displaced due to river erosion after illegal soil removal from river banks. One hundred families lost their houses and all cultivatable land. They took shelter on a river embankment. Approximately 80 per cent of people were forced to change their professions but due to limited livelihood options most still live under the poverty line.

*Example:* A displaced woman said: “How can we survive, how can we live without roots, without land? I thought I was poor before our land was lost to the river but today we have nothing. My children’s hunger reminds me everyday of what I have lost.”.

*Action:* Call for authorities to enforce laws on soil removal



**The following is an example from Oxfam<sup>34</sup>**

*Simple statement:* People living in poverty are the hardest hit by disasters.

*Evidence:* The mud houses of the poor are the first to be washed away. Lower income groups invariably suffer the most from Bangladesh's annual floods. It is no coincidence that the flood-affected Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and Terai region of Nepal, which lie at the bottom of the pile in terms of poverty indicators, struggled the most to cope.

*Example:* Parboti Rani, a woman in the affected area, said: "We have been homeless five times due to river erosion and floods. Flood washed away my home and all household resources. During the floods we took shelter in the embankment and were hungry for days."

*Action:* Advocate for investment in livelihoods programmes to improve the resilience of the most vulnerable people.

“You have to make sure people don't misunderstand you. You need to do some ground-work. You need to prepare [people] according to their background.”

Nazmul Azam Khan, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

It is important to adapt your advocacy messages to each audience and to consider the best approach (e.g., through meeting, media, letters) and the best time to approach the target audience. Audience analysis provides a basis for message development. It is helpful to map out the characteristics of your target audience and understand the way they make decisions. When you know your audience you can decide what sort of key messages and communication styles would be most effective in order to inform, persuade and motivate them into action. It is important to be able to change your message, messenger, language and timing according to whom you are trying to influence.



For example, if you are talking to a farmer about the risks associated with climate change and the benefits of raised shelter, you would present your message differently than if you were discussing the same issue with a scientist. You need to think about the best way to communicate with each audience.

<sup>34</sup> Oxfam. *Sink or Swim – Why Disaster Risk Reduction is central to surviving floods in South Asia*, 2007.

## Using slogans

**A slogan:** A few words that sum up the message.

Sometimes it is useful to use a slogan to capture the essence of the advocacy theme. For example, one year the International Federation's *World Disasters Report* started with the phrase "Disasters don't discriminate. People do". This is a challenging and thought-provoking statement, and was used to get the attention of audiences. Alternatively the International Federation slogan "Together for humanity" shows how the Red Cross Red Crescent works collaboratively to alleviate human suffering. Some National Societies added their own slogan or extended the Federation slogan, e.g., "Together for humanity. Stop discrimination" or "Discrimination thrives in the shadows. Together we must chase these shadows away".



**The following are examples of slogans from the International Day for Disaster Reduction, which is held every year in October to create global awareness of disaster risk reduction:<sup>35</sup>**

2003            Turning the Tide on Disasters - Towards Sustainable Development

2004            Learning from Today's Disasters for Tomorrow's Hazards

2006-2007    Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School



The launch of the *World Disasters Report* each year can be a good platform from which to launch an advocacy activity. The report comes with a media pack to help support you in preparing key messages. It is most effective if you link a topic in the report to what is happening in your local context.

<sup>35</sup> [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

## Step 5b: Pretesting key messages

“When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.

Confucius”



Bangladesh Red Crescent Society course participants give feedback on each others' key messages and offer suggestions on how to adjust the messages for greater impact.

*Photo: Adesh Tripatte, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, South Asia Regional Delegation*

Disaster risk reduction advocacy messages must be clearly understood and appeal to the target audience. Messages must be simple, yet powerful. It is important to pre-test the key messages that you have designed. In the field this pre-testing phase would involve community members, other disaster risk reduction practitioners and if possible a small sample of members of the target audience.



**Good messages are:**<sup>36</sup>

- Targeted to a specific group
- Focused on a specific problem
- Action-oriented
- Simple – using local languages and common terms
- Attractive and interesting
- Prominently visible
- Repetitive

<sup>36</sup> Association for Christian Communication. *Mission Possible: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit*, available in English, French and Spanish, 2008.

## Step 6: Advocacy in action

There is a range of different ways to deliver your advocacy message, for example, face-to-face meetings, a presentation, TV or radio announcements. There are different types of advocacy that you might want to consider such as:

- **Private advocacy** is a private meeting or conversation held among trusted parties to discuss the issues. This can be effective if the issue is particularly sensitive. It is also a non-threatening environment where the person will be more open to listening and sharing information.
- **Internal Advocacy.** Sometimes it is necessary to advocate for policy change within the organization you belong to. As the vulnerabilities, capacities and context of community change, organizations must also develop to meet new challenges and to adopt new knowledge, practice and policies. You may find you need to advocate for changes to organizational policy. It is a good idea to build support within other levels of the organization before going to the leadership and have solid information on the issue you wish to raise.



In a training course, it is possible to simulate putting advocacy into practice and building skills in making presentations, working with the media, community meetings and meetings with government officials. Participants can role-play:

- Face-to-face meetings with local government authorities
- Meeting a community group
- Meeting media
- Internal advocacy with Red Cross Red Crescent leadership

Role-playing gives participants an opportunity to put themselves in someone else's shoes, and try to understand how people may think and feel about an issue. Participants can take different positions on the issues: strongly opposed, neutral and strongly in favour. Through this process the participants come to understand the value of seeing things from a different point of view and that different people have different ways of responding to an issue.



Role-playing can bring theoretical lessons alive for disaster risk reduction practitioners.

*Photos: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, South Asia Regional Delegation*

### Feedback from role-plays

Participants in role-playing developed the following tips for advocacy in meetings: Throughout the meeting, keep your advocacy objectives in mind. Create interest in and understanding of them.

- Highlight the negative effects of doing nothing and the positive aspects of action or change.
- Build support for your advocacy theme and remember to allow time to present the solution; people do not want to hear only problems.
- You want to influence decision-making, so clarify the purpose of the meeting from the beginning but be relaxed and friendly in your approach and manner.
- Keep discussions on track; know what you are willing to compromise on and what you are not willing to compromise on.
- Raise your most important point first so that you do not run out of time before addressing the most important issue.
- After the meeting, think about how well you met your objectives and how you could make your presentation better for the next meeting.
- It is a big job keeping all this in mind during a meeting, but with practice you can do it

Follow up<sup>37</sup>



- If you meet your target audience in person, give them a one-page summary of your proposal. After your meeting, send the summary again, with a letter of thanks and a summary of any points agreed on during the meeting.
- If you are asked about specific facts and figures, be sure to provide them. Take the opportunity to restate your key points.
- Arrange for an ally to contact the target audience with a similar message to yours.
- If your target audience has specific concerns, arrange for them to meet an expert who can address those concerns



## Case Study

### Empowering marginalized people through advocacy

NGO Green Hill realize that without improvements in governance from local institutions and other relevant actors, development interventions would not generate sustainable impacts in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. Appropriate advocacy tools and techniques could improve local governance in the hill tracts. The wider scope of their advocacy was to empower marginalized communities to secure their basic human rights. At the same time, Green Hill wanted to help local government and other institutions to address community rights more effectively, transparently and accountably. To achieve these aims, Green Hill organized five training programmes in three hill districts.

### Lessons learnt<sup>38</sup>

- In training, selection of the right participants is crucial. If you run a training of trainers course on advocacy for participants who have received previous training, they can build on previous knowledge and be part of a training pool that passes on the training they receive to other grassroots groups.
- Organize training programmes on advocacy at the grassroots level; a needs-based modular course of three to five days can be effective, with sufficient time for discussion and presentations on important topics.
- Develop case studies relevant to the advocacy issue. Short videos with relevant case studies, role playing and games are more effective for learning than purely theoretical discussions.
- Develop a network or forum and take on joint advocacy initiatives with network partners.

<sup>37</sup> CARE. *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines. Promoting Policy Change. A Resource Manual for CARE Program Managers*. 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Dewan, Jatan Kumar. 'Empowering Marginalized People of the Chittagong Hill Tracts through Advocacy' in *International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development*, Vol. 52, Spring 2007

## Step 7: Putting it all together: Advocacy plans and evaluation

A plan provides a road map to guide the advocacy initiative. When you have identified your goals, objectives and target audience, and drafted your advocacy activities, it does not take long to put it all together in a table like the example below<sup>39</sup> that you could then share with others:

Example layout for an advocacy action plan						
Objectives	Activities	Target	Indicators	Timing	People responsible	Review planned
Objective 1	1.a.	1.a.	1.a.	1.a.	1.a.	xx/yy/zz
	1.b.	1.b.	1.b.	1.b.	1.b.	
	1.c.	1.c.	1.c.	1.c.	1.c.	
Objective 2	2.a.	2.a.	2.a.	2.a.	2.a.	aa/bb/cc
	2.b.	2.b.	2.b.	2.b.	2.b.	
Remember that advocacy work can be slow and time-consuming, and so needs a long-term commitment if you are to achieve real change. Your Action Plan should reflect this.						

“Keep in mind that **the best way to learn advocacy is by doing it!** Whatever you learn in one initiative will likely be helpful in planning the next, even if the issues are different. We hope you will discover that advocacy can help improve your programming and be professionally rewarding, all at the same time.

CARE, Advocacy Tools and Guidelines”

Monitoring and evaluation is an effective learning tool. Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of advocacy activities helps identify and correct errors, and highlight good practice. Monitoring and evaluation is a tool that can help determine how close you are to meeting your goals and objectives.

Advocacy, which can include public campaigning and awareness-raising or more private strategies of lobbying, research and documentation and policy influence, is more difficult to assess than other more traditional development interventions.<sup>40</sup> However, asking the following simple questions is a good start:



- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- How can we make it better?
- What do we need to make it better?

<sup>39</sup> WaterAid. *Advocacy. What's it all about? A Guide to Advocacy Work in the Water and Sanitation Sector*, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Roche C. *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning to Value Change*, Oxford, Oxfam, 1999.



### How well did you do?<sup>41</sup>

Advocacy Activity	What worked well	The evidence	The bits that didn't work so well	Changes for the future of the campaign
Meeting with an MP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made all the points we wanted to make</li> <li>Got her agreement that the problem needed government action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managed to structure the discussion according to our plan</li> <li>Verbal agreement to follow up with PM's Office by letter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failed to gain her signature on our petition calling for specific action</li> <li>Forgot to bring campaign pack for her</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needed to focus on getting public support from her</li> <li>Must follow up meeting with campaign pack and thank you letter</li> </ul>

It is important to record how much you are doing, how much you have done and how much you have still to do. The following are some examples of questions that are useful to help track your progress:



#### Process

- How many meetings have your team attended to advocate on the issue?
- What kind of awareness-raising material has been produced?
- How much of it has been distributed?
- How many allies are you working with?
- Do you have an information pack to give when meeting authorities?
- Do you have a one-page summary outlining your advocacy issue?



#### Outcomes

- Has awareness of your issue among leaders, the media or the public increased?
- Have any policies changed as a result of your advocacy?
- Are the voices of vulnerable people being heard by those with authority?



#### Impact

- Has sustainable change been achieved?
- Are vulnerable people empowered to advocate effectively for themselves?
- Has a change in behaviour occurred?

<sup>41</sup> Advocates for Action and Students Partnership Worldwide. *Advocacy Toolkit*, 2007.



### **Toolkits – A Practical Guide to Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact**

**Assessment**, Save the Children, 2003. This book systematically takes readers through the whole process of planning, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment, and looks at key questions, such as who to involve, how to avoid

discrimination and what methods to use.

## 11. Developing your advocacy skills

Advocacy initiatives may be as small as reminding your colleagues of the role and importance of the Sphere Project's minimum standards for humanitarian relief; they might involve pushing for a change in the design of latrines in emergency shelters to accommodate people with disabilities; they might involve planning an advocacy initiative aimed at local government based on an issue arising from a vulnerability and capacity assessment' or they might be a national campaign on safer building. Whatever the issue or the size of your advocacy initiative, developing the following skills will be helpful.

Anyone concerned with disaster risk reduction advocacy may require not only a set of technical skills but also inter-personal skills in order to be effective in contributing to making the issue a priority. Essentially, these are skills for working with people to build individual and institutional understanding and support for disaster risk reduction initiatives. Try to find a mentor or advocate you respect. Do not be worried by the following list.<sup>42</sup> Practice makes perfect so challenge yourself and give advocacy a go.

- **Basic communication:** Listening and questioning skills play an important role in effective inter-personal communication.
- **Decision-making:** Making good decisions involves a broad range of skills, such as analysis, research, communication and an ability to work collaboratively.
- **Working in meetings:** Much of the work of promoting disaster risk reduction takes place in meetings. Disaster risk reduction practitioners need skills to work effectively in meetings, including making presentations, facilitating group discussions, brainstorming with a group and summarizing meetings.
- **Being assertive:** Advocates require assertiveness skills to help them overcome individual and institutional resistance.
- **Dealing with resistance:** In addition to assertiveness skills, disaster risk reduction focal points can also anticipate specific forms of resistance that they may encounter and develop strategies to overcome it.
- **Ability to persuade:** An advocate needs to be able to present a persuasive argument in a convincing fashion.

<sup>42</sup> UNDP. *Learning and Information Pack. Gender in Development Programme, Process and Advocacy Skills for Gender Mainstreaming*, 2001.



## Elizabeth's Advocacy Recipe

**Serves:** Millions

**Temperature:** Turn up heat as required

**Ingredients:**

- Enthusiastic disaster risk reduction practitioners
- Vulnerability and capacity assessment findings
- Confidence
- Good communication skills
- Good information
- Networks and alliances
- Credibility
- Consistency
- Organization's mission
- Principles and values
- Humanitarian standards
- Hyogo Framework for Action
- Resources
- Persistence

**Always remember to include vulnerable groups**

**Method:** Take one enthusiastic Red Cross Red Crescent worker or volunteer, combine with training in communications and advocacy skills. Mix various sources of information including liberal amounts from vulnerability and capacity assessment reports. Boil down information and identify an issue. Now add a list of people and organizations who are involved with this issue. Sift through stakeholders and find those who have the power to bring about change. Roll out your vision and sprinkle with objectives and activities. Finely chop up information into messages and serve with a slogan. Taste to check for consistency and appeal. Repeat until absorbed. Deliver your message lightly greased, stirring gently or vigorously – use your judgement. Always remember to garnish with a smile but do not be afraid to grill. Take out your biggest kitchen knife and cut through obstacles. Meanwhile, mix all ingredients together and separate out into a plan. Remember the proof of the pudding is in the eating; the true value of your disaster risk reduction advocacy activities can only be judged when put to use, tried and evaluated.

Share the recipe with others and together we can make disaster risk reduction a priority.

## 12. Working with others: Disaster risk reduction is everybody's business

“Motivating communities to participate is a vital component for the sustainability of disaster risk reduction projects. To build safer communities we need to talk about how to involve them and build sustainable networks. We are not alone. We need to build partnerships with others.

Sanjeev Kumar Kafle, Nepal Red Cross Society”



The strength of the International Federation lies in the network and collective actions of its 186 member National Societies. Each National Society develops its external relations capacity to promote its own work and advocate issues of concern in its own country and abroad, with its government and other stakeholders. However, no one government or organization has the capacity to cover the world's humanitarian issues alone. There is so much inter-linkage between the issues and vulnerability that only effective partnerships will build the pool of expertise and institutional strength necessary to make an impact on the needs of the most vulnerable.<sup>43</sup>

The slogan, “together for humanity” reflects the understanding that we need to take a holistic approach and work with communities and with other actors. We must act together now to save lives tomorrow by:

- Increasing public awareness of hazards, vulnerability and disaster risk reduction
- Promoting the commitment of public authorities to disaster risk reduction
- Expanding partnerships and risk reduction networks
- Advocating with vulnerable groups on disaster risk reduction issues of concern identified through vulnerability and capacity assessments
- Advocating for effective long-term solutions to the root causes of vulnerability

<sup>43</sup> International Federation. *The Protocol Handbook - A manual to facilitate the Federation's work in diplomacy and the international field*, 2005.

“Disasters can affect everyone, and are therefore everybody’s business. Disaster risk reduction should be part of every-day decision making: how people farm, where and how people build their homes and health centres, how people education children and professionals, and how people plan cities. Each decision can make us either more vulnerable or more resilient.”<sup>44</sup>

Effective advocacy involves a range of different actors, e.g.,

- Persuasive individuals who believe in the cause
- Stakeholders who can speak from personal experience
- Community leaders, women’s groups and local groups involved in public action
- People who can speak with recognized authority
- Others who might support the cause on behalf of the affected community
- People with special leverage with policy-making institutions
- Alliances between professional bodies, NGOs and international donors at local, national, regional and international levels
- Government officials at national and local levels
- Media, public and community communicators
- Educators and other institutional actors



### **Avoid protocol blunders**

If you are meeting people in high positions it is important to take account of protocol when approaching them with your advocacy messages. Help is available. Please refer to the International Federation’s manual, *The Protocol Handbook - A Manual to Facilitate the Federation’s Work in Diplomacy and the International Field*, 2005.

Since 2000 and the Millennium Declaration, there has been much more emphasis on partnerships, which are a prerequisite for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The *Protocol Handbook* provides a guide to behavioural and procedural practices that help the Red Cross Red Crescent build partnerships on the basis of trust and mutual respect.

<sup>44</sup> ISDR Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster: An introduction to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

At the community level, it is important to liaise with different local NGOs and disaster risk reduction actors. This is especially beneficial to the vulnerability and capacity assessment process and follow-up advocacy initiatives. Cooperation, sharing information and encouraging involvement with different actors should be fostered:

- Before commencing the vulnerability and capacity assessment
- During the implementation of the assessment
- When sharing the results



### **Come together and advocate together**

In housing reconstruction programmes in the Maldives after the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Red Cross Red Crescent developed 17 criteria for choosing beneficiaries according to the fundamental principles, in a transparent and accountable way, based on community input and feedback. . The Red Cross Red Crescent consulted with the government on implementation. Working together strengthened the negotiating process. One set of criteria also reduced confusion and ensured that components of the Red Cross Red Crescent allocated houses to beneficiaries in a standard, understandable and fair manner.



The International Federation's recovery officer engages on a group of women from the IDP community on Meedhoo Island.

*Photo: Safwan Amjad/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

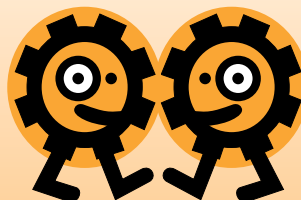
### Events: Be in the know

Meetings, conferences and courses can be a good place to meet others and build relationships. Networking at events like this can help you learn more about issues and build alliances on certain issues. Reports, proceedings or training materials from these events, often available on the internet, are also good to have as they can help you get up to date on new ideas and trends in the field of disaster risk reduction.



The International Federation's database of all events with humanitarian concern worldwide, with location, topic and the Federation focal point.

**Two heads are better than one**  
except when they don't share information



[www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org](http://www.disasterpreparedness.icimod.org)  
Improve your knowledge on Disaster Preparedness



45

## 13. Communications and awareness-raising

“*In a world that surprises us daily with a complex mixture of traditional disasters and new challenges, it is essential that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement speak with a strong, distinctive and clear voice.*

Encho Gospodinov, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

”

In communication, we make connections between people using a wide array of tools: from person-to-person to mass communication to millions. It is at the heart of humanitarian work, where people are brought together, better informed and rendered less vulnerable by the open exchange of information. Raising awareness through communications is a key part of advocacy. Lack of understanding and information about your issue is a major barrier to overcome. People must know your organization, who you are, what you stand for and why they should support your advocacy initiative.

Raising awareness refers to alerting the target audience (often the wider public) that a certain issue exists and should be addressed. Awareness-raising is considered a powerful component of advocacy. The more people are aware of an issue, the easier it becomes to persuade them to change a policy or behaviour. When embarking on awareness raising it is important to consider:

<sup>45</sup> International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. *Disaster Preparedness in the Himalayan Region*.



- What must be communicated
- Why it must be communicated
- To whom it should be communicated
- How and when it should be communicated
- Who should communicate

There are many ways to draw attention to an issue such as:

### **Direct interaction**

- Meetings (including committee meetings)
- Seminars and workshops
- Conference calls (audio/visual)
- Conferences
- Presentations

### **Printed material**

- Official or policy documents
- Newsletters or leaflets
- Books or pamphlets
- Guidelines or advisories
- Press releases, press articles or supplements
- Posters and brochures
- Case studies

### **Electronic or digital media**

The potential application of visual media in fostering disaster risk reduction efforts should not be underestimated. This media has an enormous capacity to develop local learning and advocacy strategies at a community level and beyond, through the use of testimony to hold decision makers to account.<sup>46</sup> It includes:

- e-mail and file transfer
- Bulletin boards

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<sup>46</sup> From the 2008 ProVention Forum whose theme was From Grassroots to Global: People-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction.

- Internet pages
- CD-ROMs
- DVDs
- TV and radio broadcasts

Media attention is an important means of reaching the general public, generating public debate and obtaining support for ideas and actions. Governments, the UN, donor agencies and development NGOs recognize that the media can assist in reducing disaster risks. The media plays an important role in providing analysis on disaster risks and vulnerabilities, facilitating communication amongst multiple stakeholders, highlighting the need for longer term actions to reduce risks and particularly, increasing awareness in the at-risk communities of disaster preparedness. Thus the media can perform a very important function of facilitating communication among the different stakeholders in general, as well as raising awareness of the at-risk communities.<sup>47</sup>



### The International Federation's Media Centre

				
Media contacts	Press releases	News stories	Images & logos	Speeches
				
Opinion pieces	Key documents	Federation overview	FAQs	Photo galleries

[www.ifrc.org/news/media/index.asp](http://www.ifrc.org/news/media/index.asp)

Communication is the Red Cross Red Crescent's most powerful tool for changing attitudes and inspiring action that brings about positive change in the lives of vulnerable people in crisis by:<sup>48</sup>

- Empowering people to support and become involved in humanitarian action
- Recruiting, inspiring and motivating our staff and volunteers
- Promoting a positive image that allows fundraising and resource mobilization to flourish

<sup>47</sup> ADPC. Media kit. *Community-based Disaster Management and the Media*, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> International Federation's Global Communication Forum in Washington DC. Final statement: "Unleashing the power of communications within the Red Cross Red Crescent. A call to action to our leadership," 2008.

- Advocating on behalf of our beneficiaries and influencing policy makers and opinion leaders
- Helping protect the emblems and ensuring understanding of the fundamental principles
- Promoting and protecting our reputation, building trust, understanding, support and respect for our work
- Demonstrating our transparency and accountability to donors, the media and the communities we serve
- Sharing our knowledge and best practices to provide greater benefit to the vulnerable people we support



Bangladesh Red Crescent actors listen to a cyclone radio alert during the drama “Jago Manush” (be aware). Through this communication channel, more than 8 million people living in high-risk coastal areas can be alerted. The warning system relies on Asia’s biggest radio network, linking the capital, Dhaka, with 143 radio stations. Alerts are then relayed to 33,000 village-based volunteers, who pass on the warning by megaphone to their village communities. The system has now been widened to include other hazards, and is augmented with year-round awareness-raising and education activities including regular drills to ensure that the system works when needed.

*Photo: Shehab Uddin/Drik/ British Red Cross*



### Raising awareness of risk through radio in Afghanistan

Following research and consultation, Tearfund signed a contract with the BBC World Service Trust to integrate disaster risk reduction messages into the storylines of a popular Afghan radio soap opera, “New Home, New Life”. Research for the disaster risk reduction-related radio programming was conducted in several provinces, covering multiple hazards. To maximize impact, New Home New Life based its messages on community-level research and broadcast its shows in two languages at hours of the day that suited women as well as men.

Lessons learned:

- Messages need to be integrated into an entertaining drama. In depth analyses of issues were not always possible.
- The opportunity to get community social networks or mobilizing structures to discuss the messages needs to be nurtured. Tearfund hoped the soap opera would help trigger debate.
- Tearfund needed to work closely with the BBC to ensure that its staff understood the basic concepts of disaster risk reduction. This would help script writers communicate the messages effectively in a culturally relevant way.



### You Tube

The International Federation uploads short videos to the YouTube website, which is a useful awareness-raising tool and resource site. You can find Red Cross Red Crescent news and videos on a range of subjects at:

[www.youtube.com/ifrc](http://www.youtube.com/ifrc)



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- ♦ All the latest Red Cross Red Crescent news
- ♦ Ongoing operations



## Building a global media network for Disaster Risk Reduction

As part of its advocacy and awareness-raising roles, the UN's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat attaches great importance to increasing the media's contribution to disaster risk reduction. The secretariat believes closer working relations between disaster managers or experts and journalists help convey disaster risk reduction messages better to communities and policy and decision-makers.

As a result, the Strategy secretariat developed a global media network for disaster risk reduction to promote a new approach to disaster reporting worldwide that emphasizes disaster risk reduction.



The International Federation signed an agreement with global news service Reuters to exchange photos. Under the agreement, Reuters can use photos taken by Red Cross Red Crescent photographers from emergency operations

and other humanitarian activities. Images are used on the Reuters pictures wire, which is searched by newspapers and magazines around the globe. This allows greater access to pictures featuring Red Cross Red Crescent work. Additionally, the International Federation has free access to images from the Reuters Pictures Archive. Reuters can also send photographers to Red Cross Red Crescent operations in crisis areas.



DP-Net is hosted by the Nepal Red Cross Society. It is a mutually beneficial, service-oriented sharing platform, resource and information centre and focal point for agencies and individuals involved in disaster management activities. DP-Net promotes and advocates to development institutions and individual practitioners the importance of linking

disaster to development for sustainability. This link should also reduce the negative impact of disasters on countries like Nepal. In addition, it should ensure the participation of the people who are the subject of development.



***A Good Place to Start - The Institute of Development Studies Knowledge Services*** guide to finding development information online is available at

[www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)

If you're interested in international development, there are thousands of websites you could go to, but what if you only have time to visit five? Would you know where to go?

Drawing on the collective expertise and experience of the institute's staff, the guide highlights websites that are a good place to start searching for information on more than 30 development themes.



## Advocacy manuals

For further information on advocacy techniques please refer to the following range of advocacy training materials:

International Federation. *The Protocol Handbook - A Manual to Facilitate the Federation's Work in Diplomacy and the International Field*, 2005.

Voluntary Service Overseas. *START. Simple Toolkit for Advocacy Research Techniques*, 2005.

CARE. *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines – Promoting Policy Change A Resource Manual for CARE Program Managers*, 2001.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre. *Guidebook on Advocacy: Integrating CBDRM into Local Government Policy and Programming*, 2006.

Tearfund. *Advocacy Toolkit. An Introduction to Advocacy, Understanding Advocacy and Practical Action in Advocacy*, 2002.

HelpAge. *Advocacy with older people: Some practical suggestions - Advocacy by older people, with older people and for older people*, 2007.

University of Kansas. *The Community Tool Box – Part I. Organizing for Effective Advocacy*, 2007.

WaterAid. *Advocacy. What's it all about? A Guide to Advocacy Work in the Water and Sanitation Sector*, 2001.

Marie Stopes International. *Advocacy in Action: A Step-by-Step Guide to Designing and Implementing Advocacy Initiatives in Developing Countries*, 2002.

Advocates for Action and Students Partnership Worldwide. *Advocacy Toolkit*, 2007.

Association for Christian Communication. *Mission Possible: A Gender and Media Advocacy Toolkit, available in English, French and Spanish*, 2008.

UNDP. *Learning and Information Pack, Gender in Development Programme, Process and Advocacy Skills for Gender Mainstreaming*, 2001.

Oxfam. *Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide*, Oxfam/Advocacy Institute, Kumarian Press, 2001.

# Section 3

**Advocating for humanitarian values and vulnerable groups in disaster risk reduction**



*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

The aim of this final section is to provide information, practical examples and tools to support your advocacy for humanitarian values and vulnerable groups in disaster risk reduction. We need to advocate for the targeting of resources to those countries, communities and individuals where the needs are greatest — particularly the needs of women, children, people with disabilities, minorities and older people.

Many high-risk, poor communities still suffer from a basic lack of information, awareness and understanding of disaster risk reduction. It is important to build the time into your project plan to seek out, listen to and recognize the contributions of the less vocal or visible members of a community and advocate with these vulnerable groups to ensure they are included in disaster risk reduction activities and decisions. When acquiring resources to do this work, remember that many donors support proposals that specifically address the needs of vulnerable groups.

We must be strategic in our advocacy in order to bring about a lasting change. Advocacy efforts sometimes temporarily draw money and attention but when money runs out or interest declines the old situation returns. It takes time to make a lasting change: old attitudes do not change overnight. Successful advocacy requires persistence and commitment

## 1. It is about action: Advocating for humanitarian values and principles

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The values which shape humanitarian action include values based on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, which include the protection of life, health and human dignity, respect for others and the acceptance of responsibility to help others without discrimination based on nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. From the International Federation's Strategy 2010.

Discrimination, violence and the lack of respect for diversity are key challenges facing our humanitarian work. Together, these problems marginalize individuals and communities, deny people access to services, and create mistrust, exclusion and abuse. To address these challenges and to ensure that our work reaches the most vulnerable, members of the Red Cross Red Crescent signed a pledge of non-discrimination and respect for diversity. In addition, the International Federation's Strategy 2010 focused on humanitarian values. This demonstrates our commitment to initiatives that meet the needs of marginalized people and to reduce discrimination and violence.

The International Federation's Strategy 2010 defines humanitarian values in the following ways:

- The protection of life, health and human dignity
- Respect for the human being
- Non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class or political opinions
- Mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all people

The main purpose of promoting humanitarian values is to influence behaviour. The three main target groups are: those working in Red Cross Red Crescent societies, public and private authorities, and members of the communities with whom we work. Humanitarian values are about ensuring that people—staff or volunteers, public or private authorities, or the community in general—understand our principles and what it means to be a humanitarian. This involves awareness-raising and advocacy to reduce racism and discrimination and increase tolerance and diversity. In our disaster risk reduction activities we must work to do the following<sup>49</sup> :

- Develop public dialogue and advocacy, promote tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity at national and international level
- Develop partnerships, promote dialogue and support programmes with governments and international and national organizations, with a special emphasis on youth in peer and non-formal education ensure openness and diversity within the Red Cross Red Crescent by increasing diversity among staff and volunteers; and monitor progress and take further steps to implement the International Federation's gender policy, which was adopted in 1999
- Contribute to the development of knowledge on best practice within National Societies and the further development of positions and guidelines on tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity
- Monitor work in this area and develop further tools to measure the impact of work based on the pledge to respect diversity



### Promoting humanitarian values

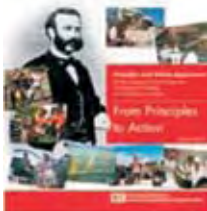
The Nepal Red Cross Society is committed to promoting humanitarian values. During 2006-2007 members and selected community members were trained on humanitarian values and encouraged to fight against discrimination to bring changes in behaviour. A total of 2,500 Red Cross members and community leaders were trained on humanitarian values (HV) and the fundamental principles to fight against discrimination.

Two youth camps on non-discrimination were organized for 51 youths. The participants of the camp performed a total of 30 street dramas, and up to 50 orientation classes were run for college students and the general public on anti-discrimination and working with people living with HIV/AIDS, reaching approximately 40,000 people.

There was significant progress in integrating HV with other programmes. Key examples include the community development project (CDP) policy and strategy, the operational plan of HIV/AIDS and international friendship and first aid projects. It has been included in the training materials for CDP, first aid, CBDP and the HIV/AIDS projects. The community development and disaster management projects have allocated separate budgets for humanitarian values promotion.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Non-discrimination and respect for diversity pledge by the International Federation.

<sup>50</sup> Nepal Red Cross Society. *Project 1: Humanitarian Values Promotion 2006-2007*.



The CD ROM, *From Principles to Action*, helps you to learn more about the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's structure, function, guiding principles and policies. It also includes many self learning exercises and all the material needed to organise **From Principles to Action workshops**. It is available by emailing [principles@ifrc.org](mailto:principles@ifrc.org).

## 2. Effective communication and humanitarian principles



Effective communication is central to any relationship. It is central to building trust, managing expectations, reducing tension, mitigating conflict, and educating and promoting behavioural change. By actively involving affected people in decision-making, the Red Cross Red Crescent can help ensure interventions do no harm. We can also monitor and act on changing patterns, and enhance the image and effectiveness of the Red Cross Red Crescent in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Adequate communication can rectify misunderstandings or biased perceptions; it also enables us to identify and advocate for excluded groups who cannot access assistance and are often invisible. Communication can demonstrate values such as respect and dignity in our work with vulnerable people.



### An ear to listen

The air is full of dust as energetic Sri Lanka Red Cross Society volunteers carry tsunami debris from a destroyed house. Every day, ten houses in Beruwala are cleaned up by Red Cross and community volunteers. Their work includes identifying basic needs and immediate solutions, which speeds up the mental and physical recovery of the affected communities.

The needs and challenges faced by people are numerous. Identity cards and birth certificates were washed away, some people lack a mattress, others need milk or a school uniform, or have health problems. Widows have no money and have children to be taken care of.

While plenty of assistance is available, in the wake of the 2005 tsunami some people simply don't have the energy to start rebuilding their lives. The Sri Lanka Red Cross and community volunteers are providing a vital service establishing the link between needs and resources. They are a friendly ear for affected people, helping them regain momentum in their lives.

"People are mentally down when it is dirty everywhere. We help them clean up and we also listen," says Red Cross volunteer T.D. Buddika Saman Kumara. "There are physical needs, but people also want to talk about their experiences, nightmares and feelings of insecurity."

To advocate effectively for marginalized groups, we need to understand how well we are communicating and demonstrating our principles and values. The following basic monitoring tool was developed during a disaster to collect information for programming and advocacy. In emergency relief, such tools need to be simple and short to be effective. Similar tools can be developed for long-term programmes.



### Relief operation<sup>51</sup>

#### MONITORING SHEET PART 2 – COMMUNICATION & HUMANITARIAN VALUES

Date:

District:

Location:

Distribution Point:

No. of Beneficiaries Planned

Category	Description	Level				Remarks
		1	2	3	4	
Communication	Relief does not exacerbate tensions among the affected population					
	Beneficiaries are well informed about the relief programmes					
	Ways are found to involve beneficiaries in the management of relief aid and feedback is sought from beneficiaries					
	Staff and volunteers understand, follow and communicate the principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent					
	Number of volunteers at distribution (number of males; number of females)					
	Number of people not entitled to relief at the distribution point					

Comments about the concerns or questions of affected people, their perception of the relief process (both beneficiaries and people not entitled to relief)

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1 Very poor    2 Poor    3 Normal    4 Good

<sup>51</sup> Developed by Elizabeth McNaughton, International Federation, during Cyclone Sidr.

## MONITORING KEY

### Relief does not exacerbate tensions amongst the affected population

1. There are many angry people who are not entitled to relief around the distribution point; volunteers feel unsafe when they visit communities; police or armed forces with weapons (sticks, etc) are actively involved in distribution.
2. There are many people who are not entitled to relief around the distribution point waiting in a reasonable manner; volunteers feel somewhat unsafe; police or armed forces with weapons (sticks, etc) are actively involved in distribution.
3. There are some people who are not entitled to relief around the distribution point waiting calmly; volunteers feel safe and work with beneficiaries to keep the lines orderly; police or armed forces are not actively involved in distributions and keep a low profile.
4. There are some people who are not entitled to relief around the distribution point waiting in a calm manner; volunteers and colleagues have spent time listening to their concerns and have informed them of the beneficiary selection criteria, that there will be no leftover relief items and of the limitations of the distribution. Police or armed forces have no active role in the distribution and keep a low profile.

### Beneficiaries are well informed about the relief programmes

1. There is no Red Cross Red Crescent banner at the distribution point; volunteers and staff are not wearing visibility items; beneficiaries are not aware of the relief they will receive; there is no interaction between volunteers and beneficiaries.
2. There is a Red Cross Red Crescent banner; volunteers and staff are wearing visibility items; beneficiaries are not aware of the relief they will receive; there is no communication between beneficiaries and volunteers or staff.
3. There is a Red Cross Red Crescent banner; volunteers and staff are wearing visibility items; beneficiaries are aware of the relief they will receive; there is communication between beneficiaries and volunteers and staff; beneficiaries are informed about the distribution by volunteers, the selection criteria are clearly explained.
4. There is a Red Cross Red Crescent banner; volunteers and staff are wearing visibility items; beneficiaries are aware of the relief they will receive; there is regular or systemized communication between beneficiaries and volunteers and staff; information regarding the relief is given by staff or volunteers; Red Cross Red Crescent awareness posters are available; the selection criteria are clearly explained and understood; beneficiaries' questions are addressed.

### Ways are found to involve beneficiaries in the management of relief aid and feedback is sought from beneficiaries

1. Beneficiaries are passive and have no involvement in relief activities. Their comments and concerns are ignored.

2. Beneficiaries generally passive but have some limited involvement in relief activities. Occasionally some beneficiaries' comments and concerns are heard but not communicated.
3. Beneficiaries are involved in the distribution process and their feedback (concerns, questions, ideas) is actively sought and communicated to decision-makers.
4. Beneficiaries are involved in the distribution and are encouraged to comment at all stages of the relief programme. Women and men of all ages from the disaster-affected local populations, including vulnerable groups, receive information about the relief programme and are given the opportunity to comment regarding the process. Beneficiaries are listened to and their concerns and major challenges are communicated to decision-makers

### **Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers understand, follow and communicate the principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent**

1. Staff and volunteers do not understand the principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent. They may be able to name the principles but can not explain their meaning.
2. Some staff and volunteers understand (or explain the meaning of) some of the principles but are not sure how to apply them in their work.
3. Most staff and volunteers understand the principles and actively work to apply them in their work. The principles are actively communicated through volunteers and communication materials (e.g. posters).
4. All staff and volunteers understand the principles and actively work to apply them in their work. The principles are actively communicated through volunteers and communication materials (e.g. posters) and are respected by stakeholders.

## **3. Advocating for standards and codes of conduct in disaster risk reduction**

“We need to keep our humanity at the centre of humanitarian action. In our rush to provide aid quickly and efficiently, we must not neglect the power of presence – the act of human solidarity in the midst of suffering. The first thing people in crisis need to know about humanitarianism is that we will treat them as human beings, with dignity and respect

- Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General  
for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Ethical humanitarian work is not only about what we intend to do but how well we do it and to whom we are responsible<sup>52</sup>. We have standards to ensure that the way we do our work is acceptable and supports the values and fundamental principles.

<sup>52</sup> International Federation. *World Disasters Report*, 2003.

A **standard**: An average or normal requirement that has been recognized as acceptable in terms of quality, quantity, level or grade, or morals, ethics or habits.

All major organizations and industries have standards. For example, if you buy a new car, work with an accountant or see a doctor you expect the goods and services will reach minimum industry standards. In the humanitarian field, we also have a number of standards and codes of conduct<sup>53</sup>. These standards are to ensure that the needs of affected people come first in our work.

The minimum standards in disaster response are outlined in the Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Humanitarian Response*. These standards were developed in response to concerns about the quality and impact of humanitarian assistance. Thousands of people from more than 400 organizations representing 80 countries participated in various aspects of the Sphere Project.

Sphere standards were designed for use in disaster response but they are also useful in disaster preparedness and humanitarian advocacy. They are applicable in a range of situations where relief is required, including natural disasters and armed conflict. They are designed to be used in slow or rapid onset situations, in rural or urban environments, and in developing or developed countries, anywhere in the world. The emphasis throughout is on meeting the urgent survival needs of people affected by disaster, while asserting their basic human right to life with dignity.



International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief. We are committed to meeting the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

In addition, International Federation staff are expected to be advocates for and champions of vulnerable people everywhere and to act in accordance with the fundamental principles and with the staff code of conduct. The staff code of conduct sets out rules of conduct to ensure that staff and associated people conduct themselves in an ethical manner according to the values and principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent.

<sup>53</sup> Standards, indicators and policies include the Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures, the *Sphere Humanitarian Charter*, the *Code of Conduct*, the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief, the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the International Federation's disaster management policies, guidelines for well-prepared National Societies, the Better Programming Initiative, Gender in Disasters and Good Humanitarian donorship.

## Advocacy using Sphere standards



The Sphere handbook provides agencies with an important tool to advocate on behalf of affected populations. Although this is likely to be a process that takes time and persistence, the Sphere minimum standards provide an objective yardstick that can be used by all agencies.<sup>54</sup>

Advocacy using Sphere standards has met with success. It can be valuable in raising the awareness of government officials and donors of the rights of disaster-affected populations.

Organizations report that they are confident in using Sphere as a basis for advocacy given the legitimacy that it has achieved through wide consultation and consensus. In debates on applying Sphere in lobbying and advocacy, some agencies suggest that national NGOs can make a greater impact at local level, while international NGOs may be more effective at national and international levels.

Organizations in various countries reported that it is essential for NGOs to share Sphere with government agencies to create a favourable policy framework for implementation. It is important to advocate for the implementation of these standards. Meeting these standards can also provide an opportunity from which to advocate for more funds.<sup>55</sup>

The following websites are helpful to learn more about standards and codes of conduct to support them and advocate for their use.



A nine-minute introductory video to the Sphere Project. Available at:  
[www.sphereproject.org](http://www.sphereproject.org)



The Humanitarian Practice Network is a forum for improving humanitarian action.  
[www.odihpn.org/about/hpn.asp](http://www.odihpn.org/about/hpn.asp)

The Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in*

*Disaster Response*. The handbook provides a set of universal minimum standards for disaster response. It can be downloaded from:

[www.sphereproject.org](http://www.sphereproject.org).

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership is a group of agencies, launched in 2003, that share a commitment to making humanitarian action accountable to its intended beneficiaries.

[www.hapinternational.org/en](http://www.hapinternational.org/en)

<sup>54</sup> Using Sphere for advocacy for latrine standards in Sierra Leone - <http://www.sphereproject.org/content/view/154/83/lang,English/>

<sup>55</sup> Brown, M. Buzard, N. Lowrie, S. and Neves, J. "Institutionalising Sphere 2000 – 2002" in Humanitarian Exchange issue 2, November 2002.

## Ask, listen and empower: The role of advocacy and marginalized groups in disaster risk reduction activities

Vulnerable people — the poor, the older person, people with disabilities, the sick and the young—are most exposed to risk. They must be central in our planning. We have a special responsibility to reach them.

National disaster management plans need to reach these people but often their interests are not well articulated. The Red Cross Red Crescent is the organization in every country, as an auxiliary to its government, that must prioritize work with these communities, represent their interests and, ultimately, provide the safety net when disasters strike. We need to ensure there is good dialogue among governments, the Red Cross Red Crescent and civil society organizations to hear the voices of vulnerable people when drawing up disaster management plans.<sup>56</sup>

Advocacy with the humanitarian aid community, governments, local authorities and the public helps them to understand that older people, people with disabilities, minority groups, women and children are particularly vulnerable groups who have specific needs but also capacities that can contribute greatly to building safer communities. In theory, disaster risk reduction should be inclusive – helping all people at risk. In reality, it can be the poorest and most vulnerable who are not included in disaster risk reduction activities. This exclusion happens when people are marginalised.

**Marginalization.** To be marginalized means to be in a position of marginal (outer or lower limits) of importance, influence, or power. People who are marginalized are generally remote from power and do not have access to information or the confidence to speak up. Others often make assumptions about their needs.



### Tips on advocating with marginalized people

- Start small. When supporting marginalized groups in advocacy activities it is important to start small. Small can be beautiful, especially as small successes encourage people to tackle larger issues.
- Create links among the group you are working with, local authorities and people of influence. Spread information, raise awareness and find allies.
- Build the skills of the group so they can address their own needs and develop a voice that can be heard so that they can advocate for themselves.

<sup>56</sup> From a speech by Jerry Talbot, International Federation, at the UN ECOSOC Side Event on the Human Dimension of Climate Change, in New York, in 2008.

A key to reducing social, economic and political marginalization is for marginalized people to participate in decision-making. Advocacy is a way to make this happen. Advocating with marginalized groups means empowering them to speak, establishing access to those who hold important positions, providing access to information, supporting them in negotiating access to services, supporting them in getting their message across so their voices are heard and action is taken, and developing skills, confidence or access so they can be active in making decisions.



### Advocating through traditional means

Maintaining an effective line of communication with project beneficiaries works best when done through a framework that takes the social, cultural and political context into proper consideration. In the Maldives, after the Indian Ocean tsunami, this generally meant reaching the beneficiaries through local staff from the beneficiary community, and other key members of the community who could act as informants or channels of communication. This allowed beneficiaries to enquire about project activities in an informal environment through people they were already familiar and comfortable with, which built a greater level of trust between the Red Cross Red Crescent and communities. Furthermore, having key informants in the community increased the level of field presence without the need for national staff to constantly travel to different locations. It allowed beneficiaries to take the necessary time to discuss proposed activities without the need to rush. A positive relationship was vital, given the rapidly changing political situation in the Maldives, along with the fact that an NGO-sector was almost non-existent prior to the tsunami.

By Zayyan Moosa, former community mobilization officer, Red Cross Red Crescent

## 4. Reaching out to people with disabilities: Seek, involve and invest



Disabled children are among Afghanistan's most vulnerable citizens. The country has experienced more than two decades of conflict, and, according to the Afghanistan Red Crescent's president, Fatima Gailani, women and children are often the first victims of war. Here, a child is assisted by volunteers from the Red Crescent.

*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

“*Respect for dignity, autonomy and full inclusion in society is a principle which is basic to the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Equally, respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity is fundamental. So is the vital importance of respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.*”<sup>57</sup>

Asia Pacific is home to a majority of the world’s people living with disability. We know through experience that many of these people are not included in disaster risk reduction activities and face additional barriers in emergency situations. If humanitarians are to remain true to our mission of serving the most vulnerable, we must learn more about how to better meet the needs of people with disabilities and to involve them at all stages of the disaster management cycle.

- In general, the needs of people with disabilities are often overlooked by disaster planners and they have little or no input into disaster risk reduction planning.
- People with disabilities encounter many problems before, during and after disasters and emergencies that are not necessarily due solely to their impairment but also to the inadequacy of disaster risk reduction and response systems in meeting their particular needs.
- People with disabilities are doubly vulnerable to disasters, both on account of impairments and poverty. Yet they are often ignored or excluded at all levels of disaster preparedness, mitigation and intervention.
- They are particularly at risk of marginalization and discrimination in disasters due to exclusionary policies and practices by communities and the agencies involved in providing humanitarian aid and intervention.<sup>58</sup>

Advocacy is required to make disaster risk reduction practitioners and policy-makers aware of their obligations to people with disabilities. We need to reach out and listen to people with disabilities, and adjust our policies and disaster risk reduction activities based on their expressed needs (not what we think their needs are but what they tell us their needs are). We must ensure that people with disabilities are involved in our disaster risk reduction activities. For example, when conducting a vulnerability and capacity assessment we must encourage people with disabilities to participate in the process. We must listen to them and act on their contributions. People with disabilities are often invisible. We can help change this. In our humanitarian values work, we need to focus on changing attitudes, raising awareness and advocating with people who have disabilities.

Both the reach and resources of disability organizations is small compared to mainstream development agencies. Humanitarian aid for all people can only be achieved when governments

<sup>57</sup> From a statement by Michael Schulz, the International Federation’s deputy permanent observer to the UN, in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, New York, in 2007.

<sup>58</sup> International Federation. *World Disasters Report*, 2007.

and mainstream organizations like the Red Cross Red Crescent work along side people with disabilities and disability specialists to advocate for:

- Additional resources
- Including people with disabilities in disaster risk reduction policy and programmes
- Speaking out on disability issues and policy development and implementation

We can all make a difference to the lives of people with disabilities by listening, including them and working with them so that they too are safer from risks and supported in emergencies.

“ *Advocacy is a continuous effort. There are many steps, but no one is ever complete. You cannot take action until you understand the situation, but you never stop educating yourself or analyzing the situation in your country. Even if you achieve one of your goals, for example the creation of improved laws or services for people with disabilities, you still need to monitor the implementation of the law or the continued quality of the service. Strategies need to be continually evaluated and adapted to fit changing situations.*

Disability Rights Advocacy Workbook, 2007 ”



### **Re-building for access: Good for everyone**

In Sri Lanka, following the Indian Ocean tsunami in Sri Lanka, efforts were made by a small number of international organizations to influence re-building codes and reconstruction so as to enable better physical accessibility in the future for people with disabilities. International NGO Practical Action rapidly produced and disseminated simple, practical building guidelines that did not cost much to implement; other organizations joined official planning and coordination groups at national and local levels in an effort to leverage influence in having codes adopted and then applied. A key selling point was that in making public buildings and even private homes disability accessible, many others in the community would benefit: older people would find facilities easier to negotiate, as would pregnant women, and it would be safer for children. Remember, older people are invariably less mobile. Think about how you would manage going to the toilet, having a wash, getting to the temple or a community meeting in old age. Building shelters and places that people with disabilities can access benefits everyone.

By Nancy Rushford and Kerry Thomas



The Bonn Declaration on Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Emergency Situations provides ideas for action. It outlines recommendations for the inclusion of people with disabilities at all stages of the disaster management cycle. This is a good document to give direction on making disaster risk reduction activities accessible and inclusive. The following recommendations are those that apply specifically to advocacy and awareness activities:

- Raise sensitivity and awareness that people with disabilities have basic and special needs that require specific attention in an emergency.
- Build alliances with other vulnerable groups, because what you do for one group (people with disabilities) is often also valuable for others (older people, pregnant or nursing mothers, mothers with many children, etc);
- Negotiate and cooperate with local government to link relief and immediate rehabilitation activities with long-term rehabilitation and development. Allocate sufficient time for sensitization, awareness-raising, negotiation and cooperation with key, local stakeholders, such as affected communities, people with disabilities and their families, organizations of people with disabilities, local authorities (at the community and national levels), professionals (e.g., architects, engineers), etc.
- Lobby for government policies and minimum standards for barrier-free reconstruction, including reconstruction of infrastructure and public facilities (refer to article nine of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
- Raise awareness for the cost-efficiency of barrier-free reconstruction from the very beginning as compared to the cost of subsequent technical adjustments.

For the Bonn declaration and recommendations visit:

[wecando.wordpress.com/2008/04/08/bonn-declaration-on-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-emergency-situations/](http://wecando.wordpress.com/2008/04/08/bonn-declaration-on-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-emergency-situations/)



As a basis for a change of mindsets as well as for concrete action, the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in December 2006, is the crucial instrument of international law to claim and reinforce equality and full participation of people with disabilities. Article 11 calls for states to undertake “all measures to ensure protection and safety for persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters”. You can check if your country has signed or ratified the convention. If they have, this can be used as leverage in your advocacy efforts.



### **Inclusive community-based disaster risk reduction: A checklist**

Internal advocacy within your organization can be very effective in changing an approach to a particular group or issue. At times, an organization may exclude the needs of a particular group

through lack of information or neglect rather than through active discrimination. Gathering information to present a case to decision-makers in your organization is the first step in changing an approach or policy to be more inclusive. Checklists can be useful to ensure that you are meeting the needs of a particular group. The results of the checklist can help you target your internal advocacy efforts and also serve to raise awareness on the issue. The checklist below <sup>59</sup> follows the steps in community-based disaster risk reduction programmes and can be adapted to include vulnerable groups more broadly.

Community-based disaster risk reduction steps	KEY QUESTIONS
1. <b>Selecting the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you considered vulnerable groups as one of your criteria?</li> </ul>
2. <b>Building rapport and understanding the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are vulnerable people adequately engaged in rapport building and community profiling?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have you made an active effort to locate and approach vulnerable groups?</li> <li>– Have you made any necessary adjustments to ensure vulnerable groups can participate in activities or assessments (e.g., physical accessibility, proximity of the service or activities and your ways of communicating and conducting activities)?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. <b>Participatory community risk assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the vulnerability and capacity assessment include vulnerable groups?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have you included representatives from disability groups in your assessment exercises (e.g. mapping, baseline data, interviews., etc)?</li> <li>– Have you spoken directly to representatives from all types of disability groups?</li> <li>– Can you conduct assessments or activities with alternative means of communication if need be (using drawings, symbols, body language or simple language, using support people if necessary)?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4. <b>Participatory risk reduction planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are vulnerable groups involved in planning and how are their needs addressed in the plan?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Early warning systems</li> <li>– Search and rescue</li> <li>– Shelter management</li> <li>– Livelihoods programmes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

*Contd...*

<sup>59</sup> Checklist developed by Nancy Rushford and Kerry Thomas in collaboration with Handicap International - India.

<b>5. Community-managed implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the needs of vulnerable groups being met?</li> <li>• How are vulnerable groups involved in the management and implementation of plans and shelters?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Are they appropriately represented on management committees?</li> <li>– Can they get to meetings, implementation activities? Are they listened to?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>6. Participatory monitoring and evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does monitoring and evaluation address the needs and capacities of vulnerable groups?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Are representatives from each vulnerable group included in monitoring and evaluation activities?</li> <li>– How is the community learning about how to make disaster risk reduction inclusive of vulnerable groups?</li> <li>– How will you know if your programme or project meets the needs of vulnerable groups?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



### Including people with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and response

While there is increasing recognition of the importance of incorporating the needs of people with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and response programmes, as underpinned by several international legal instruments, recent experience in emergencies across the globe indicates that knowledge is not translating into action. On analysis, Handicap International and other disability concerned organizations are aware that the barrier to disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and response relates to organizations, governments and people not knowing how to make this a reality. Advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and response as a human right, on its own, rarely provides sufficient knowledge or adequate skills and confidence to enable meaningful action to be taken. Advocacy in this context is now supported by multi-pronged approaches to enhance the capacities of stakeholders to act. Special training programmes, manuals, guidebooks such as this one, and partnerships through which specialist disability organizations are assisting the inclusion of disability into mainstream disaster risk reduction training and policy development, are all ways through which advocacy is occurring and being nurtured into application.

By Nancy Rushford and Kerry Thomas



To learn more about how to advocate for disability issues and the importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities read: ***Disability Rights Advocacy Workbook***, 2007, published by Survivor Corps, formerly Landmine Survivors Network, a global network of people who survived war and now help other survivors rebuild their communities.



Further information and documents on inclusive disaster preparedness and response are available at: [www.bezev.de](http://www.bezev.de).

Find out if your country has signed or ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at [www.un.org/disabilities/countries.asp](http://www.un.org/disabilities/countries.asp).

The UN's Enable site provides information on disability issues. Go to: [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities).

Learn how you can become involved with the global campaign to promote ratification of the UN convention in your country and elsewhere at <http://ratifynow.org/get-involved>.

Handicap International is an international solidarity organization specializing in the field of disability. Visit: [www.handicap-international.be](http://www.handicap-international.be).



### ***Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities***

This handbook explains in practical terms the rationale and objectives of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. It also delves into the ways parliaments can translate the rights and principles at the core of the convention into tangible action on the home front. The handbook is a joint publication of the international organization of parliaments or IPU, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is available at: [www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm](http://www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm)



### ***World Disasters Report 2007***

**The theme of the 2007 edition of the *World Disasters Report* was disability.** Chapter four focused on disability in disasters. An excerpt:

“Persons with disabilities are frequently and systematically marginalized in everyday life. At times of emergency, this marginalization is heightened. Someone who is blind or deaf may not be aware of any evacuation plan; someone who is immobile may not be able to flee danger; someone with learning difficulties may find themselves pushed to the back of the queue for food. And it is the very disabilities that make them vulnerable which mean they are more likely to be hidden—stigmatized by their families and communities. This is why the views of people with disabilities must be sought out, listened to and acted upon in disaster planning and response. This is possible only if they are accessible, and this means changing attitudes, opening minds, raising awareness and building inclusiveness.”

The whole report is available at: [www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2007](http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2007)

## 5. Advocacy and the older person: Age demands action<sup>60</sup>

Everyone should participate in society according to their needs, desires and capacities. At the same time they should be provided with adequate protection, security and care when they require assistance.<sup>61</sup> The Red Cross Red Crescent advocates for older people being involved and consulted on the delivery of aid not just in emergencies but also in longer-term development programmes. They have a productive role to play in many humanitarian crises.

As the older person is often highly respected in the family structure, humanitarian workers often make an assumption that the family will look after them. However, we have learnt through many emergency and recovery operations that the needs and capacities of older people are often neglected in the face of disaster. The aim of our advocacy is to secure a sufficient level of social inclusion and welfare for older people, to guarantee their active role in society, to ensure that they live independently as long as possible and to prevent social inequalities based on age.<sup>62</sup>

There are some key reasons why disaster risk reduction practitioners need to advocate for the needs of the older people.

- The needs of the older person are generally overlooked in disaster risk reduction initiatives and emergencies.
- The global population is getting older. Between 2005 and 2050, the global population aged 60 or above will triple from 673 million to more than 2 billion, while the number of children under 14 will remain largely static at about 1.8 billion.<sup>63</sup>
- The number of disasters is increasing and the number of older people affected by disasters or displaced by crises is often measurably higher than their proportion in the general population.<sup>64</sup>
- There are very few international or local NGOs working to raise the profile of the aging and the needs of the older person.<sup>65</sup>
- Older people may be holders of traditional knowledge that can be used as a risk reduction measure.
- Older people often do not speak out about their needs as they do not want to burden others.



Photo: Elizabeth McNaughton/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent

<sup>60</sup> Age Demands Action was the theme of a UN International Day of Older Persons, which called for older people to be included in development policies.

<sup>61</sup> World Health Organization. *Active Ageing. A Policy Framework*. Madrid, Spain, 2002.

<sup>62</sup> European Red Cross Working Group on Elderly. *Improving the lives of older people*, a position paper, 2007.

<sup>63</sup> UN. *World Population Prospects*, UN, 2006.

<sup>64</sup> International Federation. *World Disasters Report*, 2007.

<sup>65</sup> HelpAge. *Strong and Fragile: Learning from older people in emergencies*, November 2007

There are two key documents that can help organizations in their advocacy efforts. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provides a bold agenda for addressing the challenges and the opportunities associated with ageing issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, made up of leading UN and NGO humanitarian aid agencies, has endorsed recommendations to improve the humanitarian community's current policies and practice relating to the needs of the older person in disasters.<sup>66</sup> Both the Madrid plan and the recommendations endorsed by the standing committee can be used to support your advocacy efforts.



### **Recommendations<sup>67</sup>**

The following are helpful ways to reduce the neglect of older people in crises:

- Collect data on emergency-affected populations, broken down by age and gender, to show the numbers, location and situation of older men and women.
- Ensure equal access to services for older people by targeting them for humanitarian aid programmes and consulting with them at all stages of response.
- Lobby other service providers to mainstream older people into their humanitarian aid programmes.
- Provide technical support and assistance where special services are required, e.g. psychosocial support or treatment for chronic health conditions.
- Recognize and promote the contributions older people make as carers or as income providers, rather than viewing them as passive dependants.



### **Older people change a local policy<sup>68</sup>**

In a slum in the Philippines capital, Manila, the president of an older people's group sought a location for a local medicinal herb garden. The garden was part of the group's larger health programme. The only available land was in front of a warehouse owned by someone from outside the community. When the president of the group requested use of the land, the owner refused. In a new strategy, the entire older people's group (more than 50 members) publicly requested use of the land, with much of the community looking on. They also offered to ensure the security of the warehouse in addition to using the land for their herb garden. The owner realised that he had much more to lose than to gain by refusing, so an agreement was easily reached. A herb garden was planted and is now maintained by the group. The older people gained access to the resource they needed, the community is aware of and supports this project, and the owner of the warehouse is now linked into a community activity.

<sup>66</sup> HelpAge. Strong and Fragile: Learning from older people in emergencies, November 2007.

<sup>67</sup> Wells, Jo. "Practical issues in ageing and development" in *Ageways*, Issue 66, 2005.

<sup>68</sup> HelpAge. Advocacy with older people: Some practical suggestions - Advocacy by older people, with older people and for older people, 2007.



Social inclusion of older people means that they have adequate resources to live with dignity. Social inclusion also requires that older people play an active role in policy processes. The following points are helpful to consider in your advocacy efforts with policymakers, government leaders and key decision-makers (including donors)<sup>69</sup>:

- Target them with general information (your information for the public) so they become more aware of older people and their contributions and issues.
- Invite them to your events and include them in your distribution of materials. It is also helpful to approach them with specific projects or policy ideas.
- It is important to understand the existing rights and entitlements of older men and women. You can do this by reviewing the policies and commitments donors, governments and service providers you are working with have made relating to older people and vulnerable groups in general, e.g., national poverty reduction processes, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and local and national health and social protection policies.
- NGOs and service providers that are well-informed and interested in issues of older people will, in turn, advocate with other groups and empower older people to participate in policy processes. Another goal of awareness-raising with NGOs and service providers is to share information and resources whenever possible to avoid replication and increase the impact of messages. These links can ultimately result in networks or coalitions. What groups do you already work with? How could you involve them in your advocacy efforts?



### Healing pilgrimage in Sri Lanka

HelpAge Sri Lanka and the two local partners, distributed non-food relief items to the most vulnerable families after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami after a needs assessment that focused on older people's material needs. However, it became clear that older people's needs were not only material. Four months after the tsunami, some older people who had lost their families were in a worse state psychologically than immediately after the disaster. In response to discussions with older people, the head of another local organization, arranged for two groups of older men and women from affected communities in Batticaloa District to go on a pilgrimage to a sacred place. The pilgrimage helped them to reflect on their experiences and regain some spiritual strength to face what had seemed a hopeless situation. Many said it was an important aspect of their personal recovery. As HelpAge Sri Lanka moved to longer-term reconstruction, it has left the survey results with the local partners. Evidence of older people's needs can be used to influence other agencies and the local government to understand and respond to their needs, rights and capabilities.

By Bill Gray, emergencies manager, HelpAge International

<sup>69</sup> HelpAge. *Advocacy with older people: Some practical suggestions - Advocacy by older people, with older people and for older people*, 2007.



Use a checklist such as the one below<sup>70</sup> to gather information to present a case to decision-makers in your organization and help target your efforts:

### Relief service checklist

#### Demographic data

Is demographic data, broken down by age and gender, available? Yes No

If not, could it be included in data collection? Yes No

What is the number of unaccompanied older people?

What is the number of children being cared for by older people?

How many older-headed households are there?

How many housebound older people are there?

#### Health

Are there special clinic days for older people? Yes No

Are there outreach health services for housebound older people? Yes No

Are drugs available to treat common health problems in older people? Yes No

What are the main disabilities of older people?

Is there a record of these in the camp? Yes No

Are mobility aids available? Yes No

#### Nutrition

Is the ration suitable for older people? Yes No

Have older people been screened to enter feeding programmes? Yes No

#### Distributions

Are there special provisions to avoid older people queuing for a long time? Yes No

Are there special provisions to help older people carry loads back from distribution points? Yes No

Are non-food items (e.g. clothes, blankets) appropriate for older people? Yes No

#### Inclusion

Are older people represented on committees (e.g. health, water, women's)? Yes No

Has an older people's committee been established? Yes No

Are older people active participants in camp activities, e.g. literacy projects, life skills, agriculture? Yes No

Are older people represented as a vulnerable group at camp management level? Yes No

#### Social support

Do older people receive support from their family or neighbors? Yes No

Who is collecting fuel and water for older people?

Have older people been separated from their families? Yes No

## World Disasters Report 2007

The 2007 edition of the *World Disasters Report*, which focused on discrimination, devoted a chapter to the plight of older people in crises. An excerpt:

“Few question why it is often the young and fit who join the queues for food and other essentials; they are there because they are young and fit, and capable of taking the aid to their extended families. However, there is a pervasive and dangerous assumption that family ties and community structures will ensure that older people's needs are met at times of emergency. Yet, for many older people, this is not always the case. The economic migration of their families, their deteriorating mobility and health, their lower productivity and the global community's focus on the younger members of society – these are all realities that contribute to their invisibility when disaster strikes.”

The whole report is available at: [www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2007](http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2007)

<sup>70</sup> Wells, Jo. “Practical issues in ageing and development” in *Ageways*, Issue 66, 2005.



The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, commits governments to recognizing that older people can make a positive contribution in emergencies and calls for equal access to services during and after emergencies. The plan can be downloaded from: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/madrid\\_intlplanaction.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/madrid_intlplanaction.html).

**Older people in disasters and humanitarian crises: guidelines for best practice.** Based on HelpAge International's research and experience in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, these guidelines aim to help relief agencies meet the special needs of older people during and after an emergency. The guidelines are also available in Bangla and can be downloaded from: [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org).

**Older People's Associations in Community Disaster Risk Reduction.** This resource book highlights good practice in utilizing older persons' associations for community-based disaster risk reduction. It was published by HelpAge International in 2007 and can be downloaded from: [www.helpage.org/Resources/Manuals](http://www.helpage.org/Resources/Manuals).

**Advocacy With Older People.** This manual offers practical suggestions for advocacy by older people, with older people and for older people. Published by HelpAge in 2007, it can be downloaded from: [www.helpage.org/Resources/Manuals](http://www.helpage.org/Resources/Manuals)

## 6. Advocating with young people for a safer Asia Pacific: The hope of the future



A Red cross health worker prepares to vaccinate a young boy in the village of Thalus in the Allai Valley, North western Pakistan which is still recovering from the effects of the earthquake in October 2005

Photo : David Bebbler/The Times

Disaster risk education and safe school buildings are two key priority areas for action outlined in the Hyogo Framework for Action. When disaster strikes, children are among the most vulnerable population group, especially those attending school in times of disaster. A UNICEF climate change study found that children are more likely than adults to perish during natural disasters or to succumb to malnutrition, injuries or disease in the aftermath of these emergencies- and almost half of the world's population is now under 25 years of age. Disasters such as the October 2005 earthquake in South Asia, where over 16,000 children died in schools that collapsed or the mudslide on Leyte Island in the Philippines in 2006, where more than 200 school children were buried alive are just two tragic examples of why more needs to be done to protect children before disasters strike.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> ISDR. "Risk Reduction Begins at School". World Disaster Risk Reduction Campaign 2006 -2007.

The work children undertake on community assessment, education campaigns and identification of potential mitigation actions needs to be factored into existing community and local authority plans.<sup>72</sup> Integrating disaster risk education into national curricula and building safe school facilities are two priorities that contribute to a country's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The International Federation recognizes that today's young volunteers will become tomorrow's leaders and that young people can bring fresh ideas and an innovative approach to our humanitarian activities.

There are millions of Red Cross Red Crescent youth aged between 10 and 28 years around the world. They comprise an estimated 41 per cent of the total number of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers. These volunteers are well positioned to be advocates on a range of humanitarian issues. For example, youth can play a crucial role by educating others about what climate change may mean for communities and for the work of the Red Cross Red Crescent, by becoming engaged in disaster preparedness and risk reduction programmes, telling friends and schoolmates about this problem and mobilizing new volunteers.<sup>73</sup>



Some key points relating to young people and disaster risk reduction advocacy are:

- Schools are an excellent entry point for disaster risk reduction awareness and education.
- Children are good educators.
- We can familiarize youth with Red Cross Red Crescent activities to develop future volunteers and leaders.
- Teachers and students enjoy disaster risk reduction training.



For successful advocacy with children, identify:

- Child-related advocacy issues through analysis and programme experience
- Relevant stakeholders and advocate for inclusion of children's issues and rights into preparedness and response planning. Where possible, let children's voices be heard in this advocacy
- Existing gaps in policy and legislation on disaster risk reduction regarding children. Use this as a basis to plan for advocacy; identify what should be included and how you will demonstrate this and to whom

<sup>72</sup> Save the Children. *Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction: A Practical Guide*, 2007.

<sup>73</sup> Helmer, Madeleen. In the youth newsletter of the Red Cross Red Crescent, November 2007.

“The harsh reality is that children’s rights are being consistently violated in every country. These violations are compounded by ignorance, discrimination and the abuse of power.

Susan Johnson, International Federation<sup>74</sup>



Nearly 3,000 young Afghans are active Red Crescent volunteers, helping in their communities, delivering first-aid services to their school peers, and teaching English, basic health and sanitation to their neighbours.

*Photo : International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

Plan, an international NGO, works with children and disaster risk reduction. The following points highlight why advocacy is important to Plan and some tips on how to reach audiences.



Why is advocacy important for Plan’s disaster risk reduction programme?

- Plan needs to raise awareness of what works and what does not work.
- Plan can only reach a limited number of communities in its work. Plan needs to convince others to scale up programmes.
- The current focus on disaster risk reduction activities is on adults. Plan needs to convince others that focus should also be on children and the positive role they play in disaster risk reduction.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Johnson, International Federation, at the Commemorative High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, in New York, 2007.



How does Plan reach audiences?

- Develop the best materials for presenting evidence and making demands.
- Hold meetings with local and central government officials after identifying the right departments or officials to influence.
- Analyse children's role in advocacy.
- Work with partners; form or join coalitions.
- Use the media and other ways of raising awareness.

“Working with children and youth in communities leads to sustainability; adults have certain taboos and will accommodate disasters, but children are more prepared to change and develop a culture of prevention and mitigation.

Humanitarian worker, (from a Plan publication)



### **Working together to advocate for greater participation of children in disaster risk reduction<sup>75</sup>**

Plan International works in collaboration with many other development and humanitarian agencies, academics and media partners. Internationally, they work with the Climate Change and Disasters Unit at the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University; the Centre for Disaster Preparedness in the Philippines, and the International Federation's regional office.. With other NGOs (Action Aid, Tearfund, British Red Cross, Christian Aid and Practical Action), Plan seeks to turn Hyogo Framework promises into action, developing indicators for effective community-based disaster risk reduction to address the questions of “What is a resilient community?” and “What must governments do to support and sustain this resilience?”. Plan produced a series of TV documentaries for BBC World TV about children and disasters. They highlighted to a wide audience the importance of ensuring greater participation of children in disaster risk reduction. Plan is also actively engaged in the UNISDR/UNESCO Platform and campaign on education and disasters.

<sup>75</sup> Plan International. *Children and Young People at the Centre of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2006.



### UNICEF promotes child advocates

Young people's knowledge of water, the environment and health is a largely untapped resource. They are the next generation of water users and environmental stewards in households and communities. The capacity of these young people to live in harmony with nature and to effectively manage and maintain water, air and land resources is vital.

Community-based monitoring and advocacy activities in selected countries have begun to create opportunities for young people to help reduce of water-related disease and deforestation, as well as clean up degraded community environments and watershed areas to improve living conditions for themselves and their families. Children's participation in these activities has succeeded in raising awareness about their role as agents of change. But experience tells us that more must be done to influence the opinion of adults so they regard children as partners in a shared mission.

But increasing children's and young people's environmental awareness is not enough. For them to become effective agents of change, avenues must exist for their knowledge to be translated into advocacy and action. Programmes that promote children's participation in local environmental initiatives that strengthen children's clubs and networks, and that provide a voice for children in local, national and global development processes are ways to help realize the potential of children to shape their own world.<sup>76</sup>



### Sri Lanka Red Cross Youth Advocates

After the tsunami hit Sri Lanka in December 2004, it became clear to the youth group of the Colombo City branch of the Sri Lanka Red Cross that there was potential for much more and better youth volunteer work. In order to better help the vulnerable people in their communities, efforts began to strengthen the capacity of the youth through training as well as practical volunteer work.

Through training in dissemination, health, disaster preparedness and strategic planning, the youth group aims to improve health and living conditions in the poor communities. Dissemination and advocacy is used to raise awareness of the problems in the communities, while the disaster preparedness is improved through strengthening of the emergency team. The youth are not only trained in health and care, and disaster response, but also learn how to deal with the psychological aspects of emergencies.



<sup>76</sup> UNICEF. *Climate Change and Children* 2007.



### Advocating for child-friendly spaces and emergency shelters

In Bangladesh, Save the Children, UNICEF and 20 national NGOs implemented the child-friendly space initiative. This project focused on creating safe spaces to be used as emergency shelters during flooding. Save the Children and UNICEF provided technical support to the national NGOs, who were the implementing partners. This approach of partnerships with national NGOs allowed for widespread coverage while capitalizing on the local knowledge of the national NGOs. Valuable information was gathered and used to advocate for the recognition of child protection issues and ways to address them in the construction and the management of emergency shelters.<sup>77</sup>



### Pathways to influencing disaster risk reduction

Plan International's child-centred disaster risk reduction programmes have been effective in building children's confidence to articulate risk and participate in disaster risk reduction interventions in several ways. Research has helped to understand the formal and informal channels children use when articulating risk, fears, ideas, and their perceived spheres of influence. For instance, children are more likely to discuss concerns with their mothers than with their fathers and to feel they have more influence over the people closest to them. Children also benefit from access to communication channels such as theatre or the media.<sup>78</sup>



To increase youth participation in Indian Red Cross Society activities, strengthen the National Society's junior and youth Red Cross and promote humanitarian values among youth, a youth workshop was organized in Punjab branch. Fifty youth volunteers, aged 18 to 25 participated in the three-day workshop and learned more about the Red Cross Red Crescent, youth volunteering, humanitarian values, leadership and communication. Sessions on various types of Red Cross work, such as HIV prevention and disaster management, were also arranged.

<sup>77</sup> Save the Children. *Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction: A Practical Guide*. 2007.

<sup>78</sup> Institute of Development Studies. Research and Analysis from the Institute of Development Studies, Issue 2, Climate Change Adaptation, November 2007.



## Stop disasters!

Education is the key to reducing children's vulnerability to disasters. Children are one of the most vulnerable groups when disasters occur. If we teach them from the early age about the risks posed by natural hazards, they will have a better chance of surviving disasters. This UN/ISDR on-line game aims to teach children how to build safer villages and cities. Through playing, children learn how the location and the construction materials of houses can make a difference when disasters strike and how early warning systems, evacuation plans and education can save lives.

Children are the future architects, mayors, doctors and parents of the world. If they know what to do to reduce the impact of disasters, they will create a safer world.

<http://www.stopdisastersgame.org/en/isdr.html>



## Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction

Save the Children have produced a DVD entitled: *Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction Pilot Project in Thailand - Process and Lessons Learnt* by Save the Children Sweden and UK



The Child Rights Information Network, is a strong and effective disseminator of information on many issues relating to children and disability. [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)

Children in a Changing Climate is a global collaborative action-research, advocacy and learning programme that aims to secure children's influence in preventing and adapting to climate change at every level from their families and communities to the UN climate change negotiations.

[www.childreninachangingclimate.org](http://www.childreninachangingclimate.org)



*Climate Change and Children* is a publication that examines the effects of climate change on children. It also

asks examines how climate change has evolved from an environmental issue into one that requires collective expertise in sustainable development, energy security, and the health and well-being of children. Young people speak directly through comments and letters collected by child delegates to a 2007 UN children's conference on the environment and the 2007 World Scout Jamboree.

[www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_42166.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_42166.html)





## Red Cross taps musical talent in road safety drive

Young lives and talent are far too precious to be wasted in avoidable traffic accidents. That is the message from an ensemble of teenagers gives a performance of superb vocal and instrumental skill. The students at Okjon Middle School in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are at the front of a Red Cross road safety campaign aimed at their fellow pupils in other schools. The theme: road safety is no accident.

According to regular visitors to the DPRK, the traffic has increased over recent years. Pak Un Suk, the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of Korea's disaster management officer said the programme focused on young road users, who were at greatest risk from potentially careless behaviour – both by themselves and others.

The activity fits into the Red Cross society's broader disaster management work, which is centred on community-based disaster prevention to reduce the risk of floods, landslides and other emergencies. The Red Cross donated 200 fluorescent jackets to traffic police and run training courses on road safety.

Pak Un Suk said the focus was on preventing accidents. Awareness-raising is at the heart of the challenge.



Students at Ojkon Secondary School in South Phyongan Province, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, giving a performance to spread the message of road safety. The show is called "Road Safety is No Accident"; and the girls have already performed in several other schools as part of a road safety campaign by the DPRK Red Cross Society.

*Photo : International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

## 7. Advocacy and gender in disaster risk reduction: Engagement, experience and leadership

“There is some progress, however, there is a long way to go – when it comes to disasters, women’s knowledge and skills are a force we need to recognize. It is important to provide space for more women’s active engagement and leadership.”<sup>79</sup>

Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu,  
UN/ISDR Secretariat

Disasters disproportionately impact women. It is therefore important that disaster risk reduction activities are designed to take issues of gender equality into account: to ensure that the needs of women are met and that their voices are heard. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, 60 per cent of all deaths were women; in many cases, men were left to take care of children alone. Relief and recovery efforts must be flexible enough to adapt the gender focus to fit the situation. For example, programmes for children should not target only women, but also include single fathers.<sup>80</sup>

Men and women have different vulnerabilities, needs and capacities in disasters. The Red Cross Red Crescent recognizes that disaster risk reduction disaster risk reduction initiatives in can only succeed when women’s capacities, knowledge and skills, beside those of men, are recognized and used at each stage of the disaster management cycle.

Globally, women have comparatively less access to education, resources, and income-generating opportunities but shoulder heavy economic and social burdens. This is the root cause of women’s increased vulnerability in disasters. A gender-aware approach with the full and equal participation



Saeeda Bibi is a 25-year-old wife and mother of two, who lives in Old Sanghar village near Balakot in Pakistan. On 8 October 2005, she was planting garlic in a nearby field when the ground began to shake. “I thought to myself, ‘everything is finished’,” she said. Thanks to the disaster preparedness training she received from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society just three weeks before the South Asia earthquake, she helped save the lives of 40 of her fellow villagers by pulling them from the rubble, providing them with water and going in search of help from the Red Crescent office in Balakot. Saeeda Bibi is a shining example of the difference disaster preparedness training makes at a local level and how the power of communities can be harnessed when disaster strikes.

*Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

<sup>79</sup> Presentation at the International Federation South Asia Regional Disaster Management Working Group, 2007.

<sup>80</sup> International Federation. “Gender Equity in Tsunami Recovery”, Indian Ocean Tsunami Fact Sheet 28, February 2007.

of men and women is required to mitigate hazards, reduce social vulnerabilities and build disaster resilient communities.

The International Federation works to create an enabling environment that will provide women with the support, skills, and information needed to build social, economic and community assets.<sup>81</sup> Integrating a gender perspective into Red Cross Red Crescent disaster risk reduction programming is an important strategy towards the fulfilment of the International Federation's humanitarian mission of improving the lives of the most vulnerable. However, more active advocacy is required to draw attention and action to the role of women in disaster risk reduction. Gender mainstreaming efforts and successes are not made sufficiently visible in project documentation. A cause for concern is the lack of data broken down into the numbers of men and women involved in disaster risk reduction activities. This represents both a problem for reporting, but also a missed opportunity for advocacy and awareness-raising among stakeholders.

Successful implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action requires the full, active and balanced participation of women and men, girls and boys. Yet, gender issues have been long overlooked. They have received little attention because of poor understanding of gendered vulnerabilities and risks to disasters. Serious action needs to be taken and more effort needs to be made to promote gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction.<sup>82</sup>

“*In South Asia, women are particularly vulnerable. In the 1991 Bangladesh cyclone, four times more women died than men. After the 1998 floods in Bangladesh, there was a perceptible increase in chronic energy deficiency as an indicator of malnutrition among women. When women are displaced and live in densely-populated camps surrounded by water, defecation and personal hygiene are a challenge. Relief efforts, often targeting the head of the household have a blind-spot in recognising women's roles as fishers or farmers.*”<sup>83</sup>

## Advocating for gender in disaster risk reduction

Disaster management in Asia Pacific, especially at levels of leadership and decision making is predominantly a male environment. It takes commitment and effective internal and external advocacy to ensure the voices of women are heard and to build their capacity in disaster management. There are a number of common excuses a gender advocate might hear in the field when trying to work with women and in supporting the needs and capacities they express in disaster risk reduction activities, for example:

- “We are in the middle of a response; there is no time to worry about gender now.”

<sup>81</sup> See the policy annex for more information on the International Federation's Global Agenda.

<sup>82</sup> ISDR. *Gender Perspective: Working Together for Disaster Risk Reduction – Good Practices and Lessons Learned*, 2007.

<sup>83</sup> Oxfam. *Sink or Swim – Why Disaster Risk Reduction is Central to Surviving Floods in South Asia*, 2007.

- “Changing the relief packages (for example, to include cloth traditionally used for menstruation) is a logistical nightmare - even if it is agreed to it will take weeks to change.”
- “Women have heavy domestic responsibilities, they do not have time to be involved in community-based disaster management training — and anyway they are not interested.”
- “If we put money and time into training women staff in disaster management they leave the organization to get married. It is a waste of resources.”
- “Oh, so you are the gender person. Sorry, we don’t have space for this issue during this meeting - perhaps at the next meeting.”
- “That has been tried with women before and it didn’t work.”

To counter this kind of resistance and lack of understanding it is helpful to have prepared some key arguments of your own, for example:

- Ask how effective a response will be if it does not adequately meet the needs of 50 per cent of the population. Use evidence from other response operations that were able to quickly obtain information from women that proved to be valuable to the community at large.
- Keep notes and keep the issue alive with your branch, headquarters or International Federation office. If you are not able to change action in this emergency response, you need to work the issue into contingency planning for the next emergency. If you are employed for a short time, make sure the issue is well understood by the National Society and by an International Federation country, regional, zonal or Geneva focal person.
- Talk to the logistics team and find out exactly what is possible and what is not. Focus questions on local procurement. If you have listened to the needs of women in the emergency context and are seeking an adjustment to the way relief is conducted or goods are distributed, it helps to seek internal political support for your proposed solution as early as possible.
- Often training times are based around the roles and responsibilities of men. This can exclude women’s participation. Analyse the roles and responsibilities of the women you want to involve in training and be flexible in the time and location of training. If the training is proposed in a non-threatening way by a well respected and trusted person, women will show interest.
- Investing in women’s skills in disaster risk reduction is never a waste of resources. Women, like men, share information and skills with their children and others in their community. Also, women may return to work at different stages of their lives or continue work in other capacities such as voluntary service. It is also important to remind managers that men who are trained by the organization often leave to work for another organization. Following the same logic, this could also be seen as a waste of resources.
- When seeking opportunities to present gender analysis or gender focused topics at organizational meetings you may meet a gatekeeper with a response such as: “Oh no, not the gender person again”. To avoid this and to ensure access, find an ally, generally someone in a

position of authority who can present a case for inclusion of a gender perspective or analysis in the meeting. Another approach is to integrate a gender perspective in everything you present. So, for example, a standard topic such as Sphere humanitarian standards can be presented in a way that highlights the guidance notes that apply to gender and vulnerable groups. With this approach, you can include gender in all aspects of disaster management but do not create opposition before you begin to present your message. You might also want to include a guest speaker from another organization to make a presentation with you, or an academic who has conducted research that supports the change you are proposing. In this way, your message is perceived as more credible by your audience.

- Find out if the gender initiative you are proposing has been tried before. If so, analyse its successes and failures and learn from them. Adjust your proposal, acknowledging what you have learned and highlight the changes you propose as a consequence.

“ *Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.*

Maori proverb from New Zealand ”



### **Advocacy tips**

- Know your audience and analyse who is the best person to present the messages. You might need to find a person in authority, who is known, respected and the same gender as the majority of the audience.
- Work with other organizations, share information and support each other in advocacy efforts. There are many women's organizations that are experienced and well positioned to support your advocacy efforts.
- Refer to organizational gender policies, values, principles and pledges to remind leaders of their commitments as part of the Red Cross Red Crescent.
- Stay positive and focused. Change takes time. Remember that when people oppose your message and resist change, it is the change you represent that they oppose, not you personally. Do not take negativity to heart.
- If you are not confident to advocate on gender issues personally, offer your support to those in your organization who are, and let them know you believe what they are doing.
- Celebrate small successes and build on them. A lot of small successes over time create sustainable change.



Remember, safer communities can only be built with active decision-making and involvement of both women and men. There are three key questions to keep asking yourself in all your disaster risk reduction work:

- Have women and men been consulted equally?
- How many women compared with men are involved in decision-making processes?
- What is the likely impact of the decision or activity on women and men?

The answers to these questions will help to make sure that disaster risk reduction activities benefit both women and men. They will help target your advocacy efforts.



### **Tireless advocate for disaster preparedness**

Over the years, Padmabati Nayak has seen it all—the death, misery and pain that recurring cyclones have brought to people living along the eastern coast of India, in Orissa State. Yet, at 56 years, she still has the strength and courage to help others and to advocate for disaster preparedness. Trying circumstances have failed to dampen her spirit. Working as a grassroots volunteer for the Indian Red Cross Orissa State branch, Padmabati Nayak played a key role in mobilizing local communities to get involved in the disaster mitigation programme. In coastal villages, she highlighted the benefits of life-saving structures, such as cyclone shelters, and of community ownership of these structures. Her efforts resulted in large numbers of village women participating in the programme. In times of crisis, she displayed her leadership and diplomatic qualities to find solutions time and again. Her key achievement as a Red Cross volunteer was the construction of a shelter in Uhad.



Being a woman and coming from a remote village has not made things easy for her but she wants to make sure the next generation is spared suffering of from recurring disasters. In recognition of her efforts in raising awareness of disaster management, she was given a Red Cross volunteer award.



Fatima Gailani, president of the Afghanistan Red Crescent: Humanitarian, volunteer and champion of women's rights.<sup>84</sup>

***What are your plans for the Afghanistan Red Crescent? Do you wish to bring more women into the National Society?***

Yes, we need to bring more women into the Red Crescent. We have started recruiting girls, and training them in the basic knowledge of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, while improving their language and organizational skills. If this scheme is successful, we will take on even more girls. By the end of my term, it would be great to have a good percentage of women working in this National Society.

I'm not sure our team will ever be completely gender balanced or if it needs to be. The percentage of educated girls in Afghanistan is lower than educated boys so if you create an artificial work environment, with a 50-to-50 male to female ratio, I am not sure it will work or be sustainable. If we did this, we would also be dismissing some eligible male candidates just for the sake of only recruiting women. The bottom line is that we have to recruit capable people, the best people for the job.

***What challenges do women, including yourself, face in the work place and in Afghan society today?***

In most parts of this country, women face the exact same discrimination they faced five years ago. This discrimination does not come from the government... it comes from their own families.

Personally, I never think about my gender, whether I am in the Red Crescent or when I was recently working on the new constitution. I had to go from village to village to speak to different people, sitting in the mosque talking to a congregation of men. I think when you reach certain level of education, people will respect you. But the dilemma is how to encourage fathers, brothers and families to give this chance to their daughters.

Whenever I get compliments from men from various tribes, I reply to them by saying, "If you want your daughter to be like me, then you have to give her the same opportunities that my father gave me".

***You have achieved a level of success that few women in Afghanistan have managed to attain.***

***What would you say to young women in your country, who aspire to accomplish as much as you?***

What I have accomplished in my life is not only exceptional in this country but around the world. Here, the role of the family is extremely important. If men within the family give girls the opportunity to be educated, and take their education to a higher level, then the situation will change for the better for women. Families must also support girls in putting into practice what they have learned.

I am the product of democracy under the former king of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, whose 40-year rule ended in a coup in 1973. What was achieved by women at that time is still considered a high standard today. We had women in the senate, parliament and cabinet. We lost it all overnight, but the memory of those honourable women is still with us. So we know the importance of leaving a good record and being a good example. We achieved it once, we will achieve it again.

<sup>84</sup> Interview by Ali Hakimi, International Federation, published to mark International Women's Day, on 8 March, 2007.



### Women leaders show the way

Narbadha Sharma has given 32 years of service to the Nepal Red Cross Society. In several governance and management roles, her achievements include the overall management of the district chapter, facilitating decision-making processes, volunteer mobilization and the overall coordination of women's development activities. While acknowledging the role of the women's development section at Nepal Red Cross headquarters as a step forward, she refers to a male mindset within the Red Cross Red Crescent and the challenges of contesting for senior leadership positions because many people try to discourage women's participation. Narbadha Sharma is an advocate for increasing the number of women in leadership positions. Her ideas to improve gender balance are to:



- Concentrate efforts at the sub-chapter level
- Reduce women's dependency by working on self-help initiatives such as livelihood programmes
- Charge women less expensive membership fees and improve their income generation skills
- Generate women members—but also train them in leadership and management
- Include women at the branch level for better access to opportunities
- Mentor and coach women to make a significant difference
- Ensure better representation at National Society general assemblies
- Create an environment that encourages women to participate in elections



### Must read

***Gender Dimensions in Disaster Management – A Guide for South Asia*** by Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu and Maithree Wickramasinghe, 2005 (India edition). This guide is published by Zubaan Books with support from the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP and DFID. This book is an excellent guide to gender in disaster and includes a comprehensive glossary, recommended reading, guidelines for policy makers and internet resources section.

## Being Assertive:



### Message<sup>85</sup>

- Be clear.
- Repeat.
- Rephrase.



### Delivery

- Listen to resistance.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Speak with conviction.
- Keep calm.



### Strategies

- Identify allies.
- Return to the issues.
- Anticipate resistance



## Effective meeting behaviour<sup>86</sup>

This section refers to behaviour that may not be considered polite or appropriate for women, in some settings. Nevertheless the principal message remains valid. Visibility and effectiveness at meetings requires a posture and body language that conveys confidence and competence, in ways that are appropriate to the cultural context.

To enhance your effectiveness in meetings. Try the following:

- Do your homework. If a meeting agenda is given in advance, study it, then anticipate and reflect on ways you can contribute.

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<sup>85</sup> UNDP Learning and Information Pack, Gender in Development Programme, Process & Advocacy Skills for Gender Mainstreaming, 2001.

<sup>86</sup> Adapted “No Longer Invisible: A Woman’s Effectiveness in Meetings”, by Clairifications Leadership Consulting, Kitimat, British Columbia, Claire Roberts-Liberman,

- Take only what is necessary into a meeting. Try to limit your items to a pen and notebook. If it is necessary to take a handbag or briefcase, put it on the floor next to your chair, not on the meeting table.
- Take notes only for the purpose of noting something that is crucial.
- Sit tall and preferably on the edge of a chair while remaining close to the table. Hold your chin high and shoulders straight.
- When someone else is speaking, turn not only your head and eyes to the speaker but turn your upper body toward them slightly as well.
- Explore appropriate ways to disagree with someone that do not accelerate conflict. Try statements that begin with phrases such as “Another perspective on this is.....” or “I’d like to share a concern I have with that approach.”
- When making a statement, keep it brief and clear. Make sure that when speaking you make eye contact with every single person in the meeting. If you feel at anytime that you are not being heard, ask for feedback at the end of a statement. For example, you could say, “I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on my idea”. This puts you forth as an open minded, effective communicator who welcomes dialogue.
- Never leave a meeting without having said something.



*Broken Bodies Broken Dreams: Violence Against Women Exposed.* This training CD accompanies a book of the same name that uses photographs, individual case studies and test to explore different types of gender-based violence. The CD has summaries of the book’s chapters, photographs and documentary film. Produced by IRIN, which is part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2005.

*Facing Disasters Making Decisions: Gender Dimensions in Disaster Management.* Produced by NGO Practical Action, this 2005 video highlights the importance of gender issues after the Indian Ocean tsunami.



***Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings***

***Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies.*** The purpose of these guidelines is to enable communities, governments and humanitarian organizations to establish and coordinate a set of minimum interventions to prevent and respond to sexual violence during the early phase of an emergency.

International Federation. *Training Pack on Gender Issues.* CD-ROM. Geneva, 2002.

UNDP. *Learning and Information Pack, Gender in Development Programme, Process and Advocacy Skills for Gender Mainstreaming,* 2001.

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*I was so obsessed with the fear of an earthquake that I forced my uncles who were about to construct houses to build them according to the earthquake safety measures. My insistence did prove fruitful when they contacted the National Society for Earthquake Technology and built houses according to the specifications. This incident gave me a lot of satisfaction as I could see my learning having an impact on not only myself but my family members also.*



Indira Paudel, a participant in a community-based earthquake preparedness initiative of the Nepal Red Cross Society

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### **Promoting, protecting women's and girls' rights among disaster survivors<sup>87</sup>**

Following the 2005 earthquake in South Asia, problems related to legal rights emerged in Pakistan, including women's and girls' rights surrounding compensation, victim assistance, litigation on inheritance and property ownership. The Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy designed a project aimed at sensitizing and educating communities on their legal rights, with a particular focus on the rights of women and girls.

As many families lost male income earners in the earthquake, women left behind were often destitute because they were not culturally ready, properly educated or encouraged to work to support themselves. Additionally, many women, especially widows and single women, found themselves competing with male relatives for relief items and property rights. Potohar Organization concentrated on the plight of women who were left without a means to provide for themselves and their children.

Potohar identified and brought together groups of youth and women, training them in human rights and women's issues. The groups evolved into a women's rights network. Additionally, Potohar partnered with local support and service networks to address women's needs that it could not directly respond to. It also partnered with local radio stations to air human rights programmes.

By making information available from the outset, women and girls felt more empowered to become directly involved in the implementation. An innovative factor that helped throughout the process was the linkage between the participants and other networks of women and gender-minded professionals. Networking is crucial to any social group or movement working for gender equity. Not only was it a success that more women and girls were able to access humanitarian and legal aid, the larger participation of women and girls in promoting and protecting their rights was also a notable achievement.

Another key lesson is the importance of making information available, understandable, relevant and timely to women and vulnerable youth from the beginning. The early dissemination of information and an awareness-raising strategy, combined with women's focused networks, help address women's needs immediately after the disaster rather than as an afterthought.

<sup>87</sup> ISDR, Empowering Communities to Promote and Protect ISDR, Gender Perspective: Working Together for Disaster Risk Reduction – Good Practices and Lessons Learned Geneva, 2007.



## World Disasters Report 2006

In 2006, the World Disasters Report had neglected crises as its theme. Chapter six dealt with gender in emergencies. An excerpt:

“

*In a disaster, gender concerns might seem a luxury that can wait while more urgent matters are addressed. Yet the failure to address gender-based inequalities immediately after disaster and throughout the response can condemn women and girls to less aid, fewer life opportunities, ill-*



*health, violence and even death. To reduce future suffering during disasters, aid organizations must ensure full respect for women's and girls' human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the prevention and prosecution of gender-based violence.*”

Summaries of each chapter of the **World Disasters Report** can be downloaded from:

[www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2006/summaries.asp](http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2006/summaries.asp).



UNIFEM is the women's fund at the UN. It provides financial and technical assistance to programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

[www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

The Gender and Disaster Network is an educational project initiated by women and men interested in gender relations in disasters. The network has an extensive collection of resource materials on gender, disaster and other themes. [www.gdnonline.org](http://www.gdnonline.org)



## World Disasters Report 2007

The 2007 edition of the World Disasters Report focussed on discrimination, with chapter five examining how to end discrimination against women in emergencies. An excerpt:

“Women and girls have long been the victims of discrimination in its many forms. It is these various layers of discrimination that put women in particular danger during times of emergency. Early warning systems may not take into account the fact that many girls are kept away from school and cannot read. Poor, single and elderly women, young girls and disabled girls are at greatest risk because they often have no protection from sexual and other forms of violence. Pregnant women may not have access to reproductive healthcare. Shelters may not keep them separate and safe. Their voices are often not heard and they are allowed no input in decision-making. This is why women need to be involved, empowered and enabled to challenge discrimination in all its forms.”



The whole report can be downloaded from:

[www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/wdr2007/WDR2007-English.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/wdr2007/WDR2007-English.pdf).

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UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/index.htm>

Women Watch has information and resources on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

[www.un.org/womenwatch/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/)

The UN Development Programme page for women's empowerment is [www.undp.org/women/](http://www.undp.org/women/).

The Association for Women's Rights in Development offers news, in-depth analysis, practical tools and announcements on women's rights and gender and development at: [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org).

## Annex 1: Glossary<sup>88</sup>

*Adaptation:* this includes initiatives and measures to reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems against actual or expected climate change effects. Various types of adaptation exist, e.g. anticipatory and reactive, private and public, and autonomous and planned. Examples are raising river or coastal dikes, the substitution of more temperature-shock resistant plants for sensitive crops.<sup>89</sup>

*Advocacy:* This is persuading other people or groups to act differently, to change in some way their policy or approach to a particular humanitarian issue. It can be a form of communication aimed at influencing decision-making for the resolution of a problem; a set of strategies that aim to influence, persuade, lobby, defend, inform, motivate, move to action and attract attention to an issue; a way of taking communities' voices to a different level of decision making.

The meaning of the word advocacy is not always clear. Different organizations have different definitions and styles of advocacy. Some consider advocacy to be strictly about changing and influencing government policy while others use the term more broadly to include awareness raising activities. Common themes in different definitions of advocacy conclude that it is:

- A form of communication aimed at influencing decision-making for the resolution of a problem
- A set of strategies that aim to influence, persuade, lobby, defend, inform, motivate, move to action and attract attention to an issue
- A way of taking communities' voices to a different level of decision making
- Advocate: A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy; a person who pleads a case on someone else's behalf. Advocacy is persuading other people or groups to act differently, to change in some way their policy or approach to a particular humanitarian issue.

*Cost-benefit analysis:* An economic tool used to compare the benefits against the costs of a given project or activity.

*Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR):* A process of disaster risk management in which at-risk communities are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks in order to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their capacities.

This means that people are at the heart of decision making and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Involves activities, measures, projects and programmes to reduce disaster risks which are designed and implemented by people living in at-risk communities with the goal of building safe, liveable, disaster resilient and developed communities.

<sup>88</sup> Many definitions draw on a glossary of terminology at [www.unisdr.org/eng/terminology/terminology-2009-eng.html](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/terminology/terminology-2009-eng.html)

<sup>89</sup> [www.ipcc.ch/pdf/glossary/ar4-wg3.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/glossary/ar4-wg3.pdf)

The involvement of the most vulnerable is paramount and the support of the less vulnerable is necessary. Since the community cannot reduce disaster risks and address vulnerable conditions on its own, the support of local and national government, nongovernmental organisations, the academe, scientists, technology experts, the private sector, etc. are important

*Disaster management:* The organization and management of resources and responsibilities to deal with humanitarian aspects of emergencies to lessen their impact.

*Disaster Preparedness:* The readiness of communities and institutions to predict, and where possible, prevent disasters, reduce their impact as well as respond to and cope with their consequences.

*Disaster prevention:* Activities taken to avoid the impact of natural and man made hazards.

*Disaster relief:* The provision of assistance during or immediately after a disaster to preserve life and provide basic subsistence needs.

*Disaster risk reduction:* The development and application of policies, strategies and practices before a disaster occurs to protect lives, limit damage and strengthen the capacity of communities and society to recover quickly.

*Disaster recovery:* Recovery activities are the decisions and actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring or improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community, while encouraging and facilitating necessary adjustments to reduce disaster risk. Recovery (rehabilitation and reconstruction) affords an opportunity to develop and apply disaster risk reduction measures.

*Disaster response:* Provision of relief and recovery assistance to meet the needs of those people affected.

*Disaster risk reduction practitioner:* Anyone who works to reduce the risks of disasters.

*Early warning:* Timely information enabling people to take steps to reduce impact of hazards.

*Risk:* The probability of harmful consequences, or expected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions.

*Support to livelihoods:* Projects that strengthen or diversify livelihoods that enable individuals or households to develop strategies to reduce risk.

*Vulnerability:* The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes that increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards.

*Vulnerability and capacity assessment:* Collecting, analysing and systematizing information on a given community's vulnerability to hazards in a structured and meaningful way. This information is then used to diagnose the key risks and existing capacities of the community, ultimately leading to activities aimed at reducing people's vulnerability to potential disasters and increasing their capacity to survive them and resume their lives.

## Annex 2: The policy background to advocacy on disaster risk reduction

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### 1. The importance of advocacy

#### **Strategy 2010**

**Strategic direction three of Strategy 2010 states:**

The Red Cross Red Crescent and its supporters work together effectively, through programme cooperation, long-term partnerships and funding, as well as more active advocacy.

Read more at: [www.ifrc.org/publicat/s2010](http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/s2010).

#### **Strategy for the Movement**

The Strategy for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement discussed advocacy in point 13, highlighting Resolution 6 of the 1997 Council of Delegates to encourage Movement components to pursue advocacy initiatives aimed at creating awareness of the conditions of victims of armed conflict and disaster and vulnerable people.

Read more at: [www.redcross.int/en/standcom/index.asp](http://www.redcross.int/en/standcom/index.asp).

#### **Global Agenda**

Three of the four priorities in the International Federation's Global Agenda relate to disasters and all require advocacy. The fourth priority explicitly highlights advocacy. The three priorities are:

- Improving our local, regional and international capacity to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.
- Scaling up our actions with vulnerable communities in health promotion, disease prevention and disaster risk reduction.
- Renewing our advocacy on priority humanitarian issues, especially fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination, and promoting disaster risk reduction.

Read more at [www.ifrc.org/what/index.asp](http://www.ifrc.org/what/index.asp).

#### **Federation of the Future**

Federation of the Future contains ten areas for improvement, the first three of which, under the heading of setting a shared vision and direction for the future, are:

- Shared vision, values and organizational culture for the International Federation
- Effective, empowered leadership, governance and management
- A global communications and advocacy strategy to position the Federation

Read more at: [www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/who/fof-en.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/who/fof-en.pdf).

## 2. Disaster risk reduction

The importance of disaster risk reduction is reflected in the Agenda for Humanitarian Action adopted by the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2003. At this conference, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and the states party to the Geneva Conventions committed to a plan of action that aims to reduce vulnerability to the risk and impact of natural disasters.

This commitment has since been reiterated in the International Federation's Global Agenda (2006–2010), which explicitly calls for increased action with vulnerable communities to reduce disaster risk.

The International Federation also fully supports the conclusions of the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in January 2005 and continues to work through its member National Societies and in partnership with the UN, governments, donors and civil society to meet the objectives of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, which was the key outcome of that conference.

In 2007, the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent committed to addressing the humanitarian consequences of climate change. More information is available at [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)



# The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

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## **Humanity**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

## **Impartiality**

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

## **Neutrality**

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## **Independence**

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

## **Voluntary service**

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

## **Unity**

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## **Universality**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



**"Child's perception of drought"**

Painted by : S.M. Priyadarshini, Sri Lanka. South Asia Regional award winner of school level competition.  
Judgement Panelists : Mr. Jatin Das, Internationally Renowned artist, Dr. PK. Champati Ray, SAARC DM Centre,  
Mr. Jibok Chatterjee, UNICEF and Ms. Paula Alvarado, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



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