Regional Learning & Advocacy Programme for Vulnerable Dryland Communities

GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES: Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) in the drylands of the Horn of Africa[1]

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Introduction

Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) is defined as *"a process of bringing people together within the same community to enable them to collectively address common disaster risks, and pursue common disaster risk reduction measures. It is a process that mobilises a group of people in a systematic way towards achieving a safe and resilient community. It envisions a dynamic community that is cohesive in making decisions, deals with conflicts, resolves issues, manages collective and individual tasks, respects the rights of each individual, demands their rights and addresses and bounces back from hazard events"* (Binas, 2010). Cordaid has been facilitating the CMDRR approach with 20 partner organizations in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda since 2006 with considerable success. In Abdi (2011) the four essential parts (the basic minimums) of facilitating CMDRR were outlined as:

A. Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment and Analysis (PDRA&A)

B. Development of Disaster Risk Reduction measures (a development plan and a contingency plan)

C. Building strong community organizations

D. Participatory Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

In May 2011, the ECHO RDD 3 partners identified what they considered to be the core requirements for CMDRR as a whole, as well as identifying specific good practice principles for the four different parts of the CMDRR process. The list is not exhaustive however, and its enrichment from the experiences of non-ECHO partners is highly recommended.

CMDRR Core Requirements

1. Effective CMDRR involves a change of mindset

The CMDRR process involves making significant changes to the mindsets and established ways of working of the communities and the organizations/governments that serve them. Both are often more familiar with interventions that provide material relief than with projects that facilitate awareness, risk analysis and empowerment. Communities that have experienced disasters in the past, and have received relief aid, may have expectations about receiving material aid

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[1] These good practice principles were drawn up/reviewed during an ECHO DCM partners meeting in ILRI, Addis Ababa in May 2011
[2] Edited by Vanessa Tilstone, MEL Manager and Helen de Jode, Consultant, REGLAP
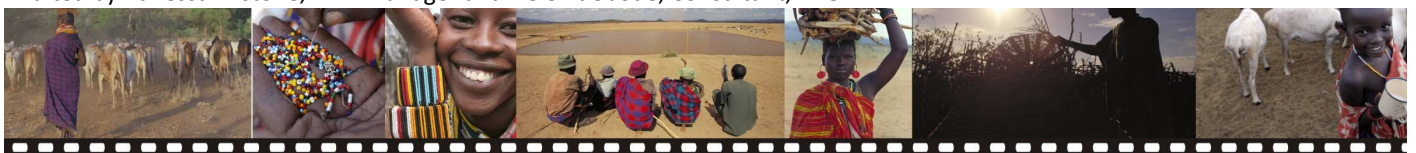
rather than analyzing their own risk and managing their own development. NGOs and their staff may also carry a 'relief mindset' and may lack the skills and experience needed to facilitate awareness and empowerment processes.

Facilitators with the right capacity for the CMDRR process can effectively mobilize communities without providing aid, but being able to offer some tangible assets often helps initiate community motivation and stimulate the participation of community members. In many ways a disaster provides a good entry, point since people will be very aware of the hazards they face and their vulnerabilities, and maybe strongly motivated to do something to increase their resilience. CMDRR aims to help communities to understand that what turns a hazard into a disaster is their incapacity to cope with the hazard, and that they themselves can take concrete actions to prevent disasters. This is a time consuming process as only when community members believe they can increase their capacity to deal with disaster risk, will they take action necessary to start building their resilience.

2. Effective CMDRR is linked to, seeks cooperation with, and involves all stakeholders—including government departments.

For the communities, building links with government (whether local, regional or national) is an important element in the CMDRR process. Government involvement and support for CMDRR can play a key role in promoting community resilience. Communities cannot bring about structural changes by themselves, and require the cooperation and support from local and national authorities. Governmental support also brings recognition of the value of CMDRR and helps legitimize it at the community and district level. In some countries governments already have a focus or a policy on DRR, but others still focus on providing relief aid, and have little or no policy, practical experience or capacity related to Disaster Risk Reduction. Cordaid's partners and communities who have participated in CMDRR are now lobbying their (local and district) governments to include CMDRR and Climate Change Adaptation within their mainstream development policies.

Cooperation can be strengthened through a public awareness programme. Awareness of a CMDRR initiative can be greatly enhanced by working creatively with the media. Workshops and other DRR activities are ideal opportunities for inviting journalists to give CMDRR positive publicity. Another strategy is to invite members from surrounding communities to visit activities and try to interest them in adopting CMDRR too. Some communities and partners have also started to cooperate with the private sector on CMDRR, although the experiences here are still quite limited and mixed. In Indonesia partners are working with businesses, linking to CMDRR to corporate social responsibility (CSR). A company can be encouraged to improve the local infrastructure as part of their CSR policy, which in turn improves community preparedness in times of disaster. In other situations the activities of a company might increase disaster risk within an area, and in such cases CMDRR can empower communities to stand up for their rights with the companies.

3. Effective CMDRR builds on indigenous knowledge & skills.

The risk reduction measures that are developed through the CMDRR process are usually based on the local and traditional activities that have been practiced and handed down from generation to generation. Building upon existing coping mechanisms and indigenous knowledge increases the understanding of the process, and gives people a sense of ownership over it. It also enhances social acceptance, makes it more cost-effective and more readily replicable.

The community's voices should be recognized and built upon. Their knowledge and expertise, such as on traditional early warning systems, are essential elements in increasing resilience against the risk of disaster. Sometimes local or traditional knowledge needs revitalizing, and in some cases linking it with new technologies can strengthen it.
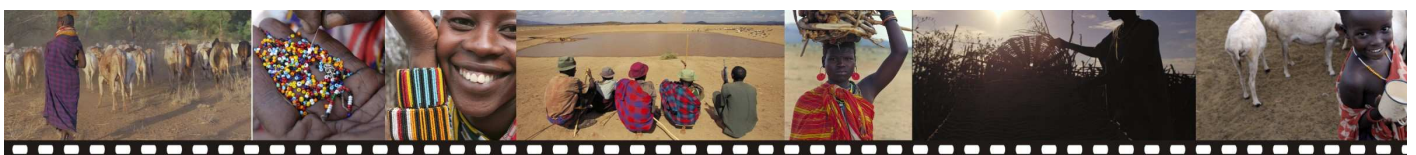
The rich traditional knowledge within communities can also be used to adapt new technologies to local realities. Skills required for community members and volunteers to activate and implement contingency measures should be identified and followed up with skills training.

4   CMDRR should be accompanied by a funding strategy—raising funds from external as well as internal sources.

When initiating CMDRR partner organizations and communities should try and link in with government and other institutions in order to mobilize funding and other resources for implementation. In South Omo, Ethiopia, communities have successfully lobbied government support for resources by sharing their community based early warning information with them. Some governments are adapting their funding procedures to make them more relevant to community needs. In Kenya for example a new decentralized system of funding is beginning to give communities more say over how government funds are spent in their areas.

Donor agencies (at both national and international levels) are probably still the most important source of funds and resources for CMDRR committees. However, this kind of funding can usually only be accessed through larger (I)NGOs, who have the capacity to successfully respond to calls for proposals and mobilize resources from this level. However a potential challenge is that this funding is normally not flexible enough to allow switching of activities from one phase of the drought cycle to another, for example from normal to alert or emergency.

Funding will be necessary for implementing both the development plan and the contingency plan. Having the contingency plan in place will allow timely requests for contingency funding: CORDAID for example always keeps a relatively modest contingency fund aside to be able to immediately support communities and partner organizations in activating their contingency plans.

Finally, CMDRR should attempt to mobilize resources from within the community, both in cash and in kind, thus enhancing ownership and sustainability. An effective CMDRR community organization might set up a Community Disaster Risk Reduction Fund to which households contribute annually.

The REGLAP Technical Brief on CMDRR provides details on the four basic minimums of implementation, and additional CMDRR references are given at the end of this document. The good practice principles for each part are given below.

A. Good Practice Principles in Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment and Analysis

Part 1 of CMDRR requires that a participatory disaster risk assessment (PDRA) is undertaken to help communities explore and agree on the three variables in DRR formula: hazard, vulnerability and capacity: Disaster Risk (DR)= Hazard (H) x Vulnerability (V)/Capacity (C). The PDRA has to be done in a particular village and/or community, since a hazard often affects a particular location or community. Participatory rural appraisal tools are used for effective community participation in creating the hazard assessment, vulnerability assessment, capacity assessment and the disaster risk analysis. The PDRA will need to be reviewed regularly as the context and the factors influencing the hazards, vulnerability and capacity will change. The good practice principles for this stage have been identified as:

1. Build on and improve previous assessments conducted in the community
In communities where PDRA is planned many other assessments may already have taken place. It is important to take stock of these assessments, their focus and how they might add value to the PDRA.
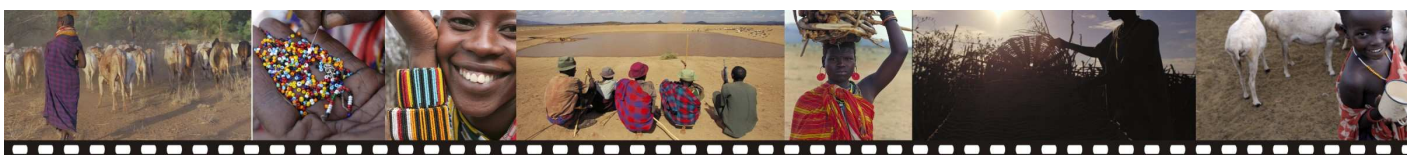
2. Establish a knowledgeable and skilled gender-balanced facilitation team
The team used in facilitating the PDRA process will determine the quality of the output and outcomes. It is desirable to have a team with gender balance, with various technical backgrounds, with knowledge and skills in the local context and culture, and that is conversant with participatory development approaches and its tools.

3. Ensure the inclusiveness of the process at community level
Communities have internal fragmentation along social, economic and political lines, and facilitators should ensure that representatives of all the groups take part in the assessment process. Facilitators should create a conducive environment for ensuring marginalized groups have their views heard and that these are reflected in the findings of the assessment.

4. Undertake a holistic assessment—accommodating, and borrowing strengths from, other frameworks
CMDRR should be seen as a broad framework that guides the disaster risk assessment and planning process. Within this the PDRA stage should accommodate and borrow strengths from other frameworks. For example, when conducting capacity assessments, the use of the livelihood framework to identify capitals/capacities has been found to be very helpful.

5. Select tools that generate baseline information in a flexible and non extractive manner
The participatory tools selected should enable the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The process should also have mechanisms to validate any data collected through triangulation and validation by the wider community. Flexibility in the timing of community engagement is also essential.

6. Collaborate with different stakeholders
It is a good practice for both governmental and non-governmental agencies to collaborate in carrying out the assessment. Where only one agency carries out the assessment it is important to share the results with other stakeholders.

## 7. Ensure systematic linkages to feed into the community disaster risk reduction plan
The assessment process has to be systematic in determining risk levels, and identifying risk reduction measures, as it will form the basis for the community disaster risk reduction plan.

B. Good Practice Principles in the Development of Disaster Risk Reduction Measures

In part 2 of the CMDRR process the community creates a Community Development Plan and a Contingency Plan as part of its disaster risk reduction measures. The following good practice principles have been identified:

The Community Development Plan process should:

1. Be multi-sectoral and involve various stakeholders outside the DRR framework; it should not be a plan in isolation.

2. Be based on consensual and prioritized community needs.

3. Integrate indigenous knowledge and newly acquired skills, and build on Climate Change Adaptation.

4. Be premised on a robust analysis of underlying causes of vulnerability and linked with the long term development strategies of the local government.
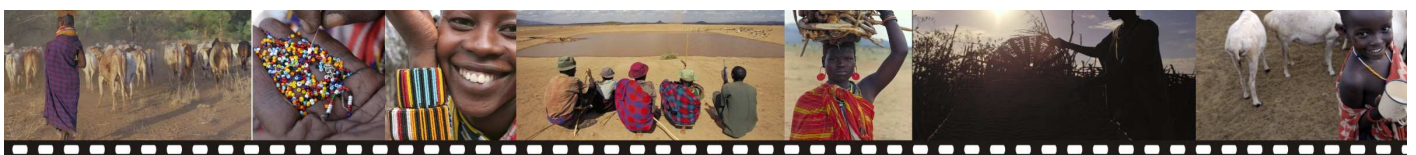
5. Ensure community ownership through participatory engagement.

6. Be embedded in the institutional environment of the community and within a legal framework to support it.

7. Be based on a comprehensive risk and vulnerability assessment and mapping, as well as an environmental impact assessment, which are preconditions to the development of the plan.

8. Include a funding strategy that should be linked to district and national plans.

The Community Contingency Plan should:

1. Fill the capacity gaps identified in the VCR assessment.

2. Be based on a realistic vision and the capacity of the community.

3. Be split into different stakeholder types (village, CBOs, LGAs) – dividing roles and responsibilities. Good coordination will be required.

4. Feed into and relate to regional plans and coordination mechanisms.

5. Maintain community ownership as its point of departure.

6. Be implementable within a short period of time, with an updated contractor list who can be mobilized quickly.

7. Be made up of many specific actions.

8. Emphasize proactive community participation and leadership to identify locally relevant hazards, coping mechanisms and solutions to their own problems.

9. Integrate indigenous knowledge and newly acquired skills and knowledge.

10. Be such that the process of contingency planning is more important than the final product, with contingency planning done in a participatory and consultative manner involving all relevant stakeholders.

11. Incorporate the context/trend in the past of the target community so as to develop possible scenarios for a timely response.

12. Facilitate meaningful engagement of stakeholders (community, GO, NGOs).

13. Be shared and made available to all community members, including its translation into local languages so that all can be aware.

14. Identify community volunteers and the training needs of the community, including making use of periodical drills and rehearsals.

15. Be linked to a good community based early warning system.

Note on having an effective Early Warning System.

The timely activation of the Contingency Plan will be based on it having an effective Early Warning System. Early warning should lead to early action, with the action to be taken described and planned for in the Contingency Plan. Early warning
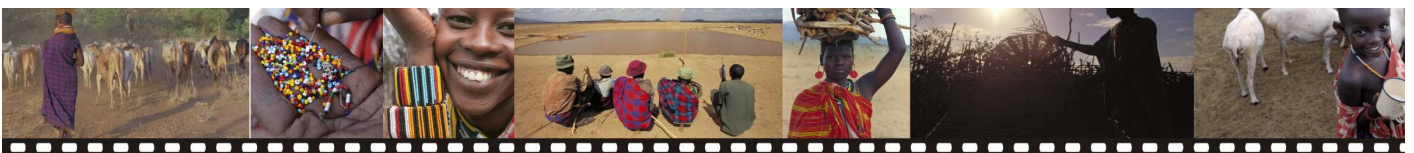
information should be collected from different sources and different levels, including the community level. In the case of drought, information disseminated from external resources and more global levels may help in anticipating and preparing for the hazard to strike. Over a longer period of time, information collected and made available at more local and community levels will help in deciding when and to what extent to activate the community contingency plan. For example it was widely known by the end of 2010 that La Nina would most likely result in a drought in 2011. This information triggered preparation and reviews of contingency plans by Cordaid partner organizations and communities in Ethiopia and Kenya. As the drought began to become a reality locally, communities began to activate their contingency measures - like early offtake of livestock and the opening of enclosed pasture.

C. Good Practice Principles in Strengthening Community Organizations

The third part of the CMDRR process requires that an effective community organization take responsibility for the management of all the DRR interventions. The effective implementation of DRR programmes/interventions and sustaining risk reduction efforts in the long run will depend on it being a strong community organization. The organization will also be essential for mobilizing local resources and for acting as a link between the community and external partners. A strong community organization can also be a good vehicle for advocating for desirable policy change to local governments and other non-governmental actors. The ECHO RDD3 partners identified the following as good practices in facilitating the development of a strong community organization:

1. **Understand existing community institutions, their relationships and their role in DRR, and as much as possible strengthen existing organization(s) rather than form new ones.**
There are no communities that completely lack institutions, but most traditional informal institutions may require some transformation to effectively coordinate development or DRR work—alongside their existing roles and responsibilities. Hence it is important to map all existing community institutions and identify the most appropriate ones, and then build their capacity as the DRR organization as well, or involve them in the creation of a new separate DRR organization.

2. **Form an inclusive and legitimate group from local leaders and incorporate vulnerable groups**
It is important for all members of the community to own an organization that implements development and DRR programmes on its behalf. For this to happen the membership should be open to all, and even more so for the vulnerable and marginalized groups whose representatives should be incorporated into the management.

3. **Invest sufficient time in the capacity development of the group in managing the entire cycle of the DRR programme**
The effectiveness of the community organization has a strong positive correlation with the effectiveness of its community DRR plan. Hence the capacity development needs of the organization should be guided by the development of an organizational development plan. Capacity development should include, among other things, leadership, conflict management, inclusive decision-making and accountability to community members.

4. **Legalize the existence of the group through registration to help in resource mobilization and to formalise linkages**
Legalizing the group will make it easier for it to relate to external stakeholders. Most countries have rules guiding formation and registration of community groups. Registered groups can also access services from financial institutions e.g. operate a bank account where funds collected from the community can be saved as well as donations from outsiders. It is also easier for registered groups to formulate and enforce by laws on usage of community assets and resources e.g. water points, enclosed rangeland etc. However a structure that is not ready should not be formalized.

The fourth part of in CMDRR involves establishing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and learning. The good practice principles here involve:

1. Ensuring that the voices of all the groups in the community (especially the most at risk and vulnerable) are incorporated in the planning, monitoring and evaluation processes.

2. Updating the risk and vulnerability maps constantly, based on regularly reviews and reflection sessions at the community level.

3. Facilitating the community to develop a baseline, preferably in visual forms, to form a basis of monitoring and evaluating the results of its risk reduction efforts. For example Care International with the help of FAO Kenya supported communities in Mandera to develop a resource map showing the status of rangeland and strategic water points. The map is used to guide DRR interventions as well as assess the impact of the activities in reducing drought risk.

4. Encouraging the community organization to reflect frequently on the DRR plan and to draw up lessons for application. For example DRR committees in Care International supported cross border communities in Mandera West and Moyale region 4 of Ethiopia to meet monthly, and organize quarterly reflection sessions with their communities. Since the session is run by the community organization it is cost effective. Reports are shared with Care and other stakeholders.

5. Linking organizational MEL with community monitoring systems. Care International has supported cross border communities and project staff to use the outcomes of community review meetings to monitor progress. They also check on the application of lessons by communities to improve DRR project performance.

6. Working with community organizations to use M&E processes to document lessons and inform advocacy. For example the communities in Mandera central and west districts used the impact of controlled grazing on degraded rangeland around trading centers (10 km radius) to lobby for support of the provincial administration to help the DRR committees enforce the community by-laws — especially on imposition of fines on external offenders.   The documentation of the impact of rangeland rehabilitation in Sololo district by Cordaid partner CIFA was also used by Moyale *deeddha* council to convince the Ministry of Livestock Development to allocate resources for rangeland rehabilitation i.e. bush thinning targeting invasive species.

Suggestions for further enriching the good practice principles

1.   It is suggested that partner organizations and practitioners carry out an evaluation/reflection and/or audit of their CMDRR practice, including the learning by the community, against these principles of good practice. During the self-assessment, the good and 'not so good' practices and hindering factors should be identified. For 2011 it will be especially relevant to assess whether the contingency plans in place have been timely and effectively activated and funded.

2.   Partner organizations should also plan for learning from each other by means of exchange visits and discussions around challenges and solutions.

3.   The results of the assessments should be brought together and shared, and input provided to enrich the good practice principles of Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction.
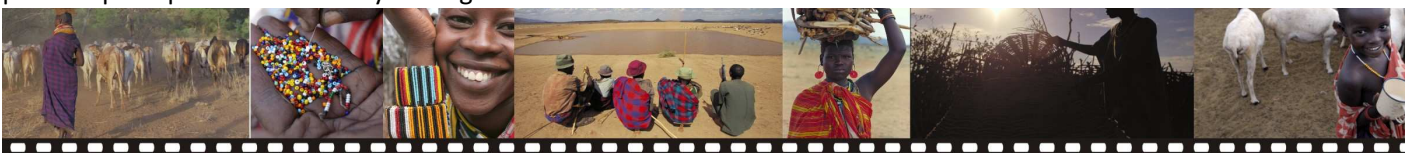
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

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Copies of these principles and the technical brief on CMDRR can be accessed at:

http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/east-central-africa/reglap