



Increasing Resilience & Strengthening Communities: DRR in practice in Brazil

Emergencies are often both an effect and a cause of poverty and social injustice. Landslides and floods wipe away people's houses, livelihoods, incomes – their future. As these hazards happen regularly in different regions of Brazil, CARE has started to help making cities and communities more resilient to the impacts of natural disasters. So they are better organized and prepared when it happens.

In the cities of Petrópolis, Teresópolis and Frigurgo in the mountainous region of the Rio de Janeiro state and in the city of Francisco Morato, in São Paulo, CARE helps to strengthen the capacity of communities and local authorities to prevent and mitigate disasters. Community leaders, students, teachers, civil servants and decision makers participate in actions that provide guidance on how to prepare and respond to future emergencies, including the dissemination of the "Making cities resilient - My city is getting ready" campaign, promoted by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), of the United Nations (UN). The campaign aims to influence public policies for the adoption of Disaster Risk Reduction programs and initiatives which also entails the monitoring of program implementation by the local communities.

Creation of Nudecs – One of the main strategies of the project is the creation of Community Civil Defense Centers (Nudecs) in vulnerable communities. These centers are formed by local leaders prepared to work in community mobilization in both the prevention and during a natural disaster. They play an aiding role in monitoring the amount of rain, guiding the population, organizing task forces and mobilizing residents. In the last rainy season, they participated effectively warning the community, evacuating residents from risk areas and coordinating local shelters. Two centers have been created in Teresópolis, reaching 5600 residents, A third one is under preparation in the city of Friburgo. The creation process of Nudecs directly involved 49 members of the centers and 446 community leaders.

Sensitization of families and training of young people - In the city of Francisco Morato, in São Paulo, the CARE has focused on building awareness of fami-

lies in vulnerable communities through theater performances. With the help of young students trained as Environmental Pedagogical Agents (APAs), the plays inform communities of socio-environmental risk and solutions to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

To date, Environmental Agents have sensitized over 300 families. They work with schools to introduce games and fun activities for pupils to learn about environmental protection. Currently, about 100 students participate in a training to become future agents for Brazil's environment.

Guidelines for Sustainability, Fight Against Poverty and Humanitarian Action

Although disasters hit communities of different social classes, poor communities are generally the ones that suffer the greatest consequences and who have more difficulties to recover from the impacts. CARE International and CARE Brasil promote the empowerment of communities in search of lasting solutions to their vulnerability and disaster risk conditions. Therefore, CARE recommends to emphasize:

- Always act in partnership with organizations, cities and local leaders aiming to strengthen the participation of residents through the creation of community groups which are aware of their reality and needs of the city;
- Appreciate and strengthen the effort of the Municipal Civil Defenses equipping these groups, contributing to their recognition and disseminating their work in different territories and its proper performance within the guidelines of the National Policy of Civil Defense and of the International Principles and Strategies of Disaster Risk Reduction;
- Encourage, strengthen and participate in social control initiatives to enable the population to monitor the resources allocated to humanitarian aid and its adequate implementation;
- Emphasize on the gender equality, strengthening the participation of women, who, when properly equipped, have the power to transform themselves, their families and entire commu-

nities. They are, along with children and older people, the most vulnerable groups in an emergency.

Project Strategies

TRAIN AND EQUIP THREE NUDECS in the mountainous region of the Rio de Janeiro state to prepare the community and prevent disasters.

QUALIFY YOUNG STUDENTS AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS in the city of Francisco Morato, in São Paulo, to act and multiply knowledge in the disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities.

QUALIFY 120 CIVIL SERVANTS of the mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro for a more efficient approach of cities and public agencies when working in emergencies and in DRR.

QUALIFY 300 OPINION LEADERS in order to expand the collective consciousness on DRR.

SENSITIZE 300 FAMILIES OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES in the city of Francisco Morato for identifying disaster risk situations and raise their awareness on the role of Civil Defense in their municipality.

EMPOWER CITIES to engage in the "Making cities resilient - My city is getting ready" campaign, of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), of the United Nations (UN).

FOSTER KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT about DRR in Brazil producing specific publications for the action of journalists, social professionals, community leaders and agents from government agencies.

