

INPUT PAPER

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Minimum Standards for local Climate-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction: informing the development of the post-2015 HFA

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Abstract

The disaster risk reduction community faces increasing pressure to take into account changing climate-related risks, to empower communities to better manage these risks, and to deliver support on a greater scale. At the same time, policymakers seek clarity and guidance from practitioners on the standards to set for local climate change adaptation efforts. Taken together, these demands call for a simplified set of criteria to guide communities and the organizations supporting them to pursue community-based climate-smart DRR programming. To address this growing demand, the *Minimum Standards for Local Climate-smart Disaster Risk Reduction* have been developed to provide a 'good enough guide' to help local community leaders, DRR practitioners and policymakers ensure DRR efforts are geared to more uncertain future risk patterns induced by a changing climate. This paper presents the *Minimum Standards for local climate-smart disaster risk reduction* and details how they can help trigger action on climate change under the post-2015 HFA framework. The first section provides an overview of the Minimum Standards and their relevance for guiding climate-smart action at the community level and at the civil society organisation (CSO) level. The second section presents experience of community level application of the Minimum Standards in the Philippines, Indonesia, and India in the context of the Partners for Resilience Program. To illustrate how the Minimum Standards have been used to strengthen civil society organizations' capacity to become climate-smart, the third section details the experience of the Vanuatu Red Cross and suggests how other local actors may replicate this approach. Finally, the Australian Red Cross' innovative approach to expanding the Minimum Standards to include gender dimensions of DRR is presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of the way forward for maximizing the opportunities to use the Minimum Standards to inform the development of the post 2015 HFA.

Introduction: The need for "Minimum Standards"

As the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) draws to an end and disaster-related loss and damage continues to increase, an important opportunity arises to shape and agree upon a successor framework that will enable management of the risks that threaten to reverse vital development gains. These risks are driven by a variety of factors (UNISDR 2013) including climate variability and change, economic and financial crises, environmental mismanagement, demographic change, rapid and unplanned urbanization, and failed governance; they disproportionately impact vulnerable and exposed low-income households around the world.

As the HFA Priority area 4 refers¹ to *disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies integrated with climate change adaptation* and lists among the "critical tasks for states" to *promote the integration of DRR with climate variability and climate change into DRR strategies and adaptation to climate change*, considerable effort has been made by agencies to work towards convergence of the DRR and the climate change adaptation agendas. However, despite the obvious overlap, these two agendas have evolved independently and in parallel (Mitchell & van Aalst 2008, Mitchell *et al.* 2010, Mercer 2010) and have faced different challenges (e.g. Schipper & Pelling 2006). In terms of practical programming, there has perhaps been some risk of "relabelling" classical DRR efforts addressing weather-related risks without consciously incorporating concerns for the *change* in risk patterns, extreme events and vulnerability partly induced by climate change. In addition, there has been a tendency to initiate stand-alone climate change adaptation (CCA) projects disregarding existing vulnerabilities, in effect "overstating" the adaptation aspects of the project rather than integrating adaptation measures into existing approaches, as recommended in the HFA.

Since the HFA in 2005 more compelling evidence about how climate change has – and continues to – influence disaster risk has emerged (including IPCC AR4 and AR5 and SREX). At the same time, many implementing agencies, in particular civil society organizations, have developed and tested various approaches and tools to integrate climate aspects in (participatory) assessments and planning (IIRR Cordaid 2013, CARE 2009, Wiggins 2012) and considerable effort has been made to bounce ideas and share knowledge across agencies about tools and methods for integrating changing climate risks into DRR through for example, the Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change Conferences, and Development & Climate Days held in the context of the annual UNFCCC Conference of Parties (Bachofen *et al* 2014, Suarez *et al* 2013). Through these iterations, some common denominators for climate-smart community programming have started to emerge.

Pilot projects across the world have shown that addressing changing climate and disaster risks at the local level is highly effective for building resilience. Strong capacities and robust institutions at the community level can maximize the impacts of climate-smart disaster risk reduction. Yet for this to happen, it is essential that communities and the organizations supporting them all know how to integrate changing risks into their activities.

While empowering communities and the local organizations that support them to become better at managing their risk, the disaster risk reduction community faces increasing

¹ In the summary chart: http://www.unisdr.org/files/8720_summaryHFP20052015.pdf

pressure to deliver on a greater scale, and help local actors steer their development trajectories upwards. At the same time, policymakers seek clarity and guidance from practitioners on the standards to set for local climate change adaptation efforts – a crucial component of national adaptation planning. Taken together, these demands call for a simplified set of criteria to ensure community-based DRR programming, as well as broader resilience-building efforts, can guide communities and the organizations supporting them.

To address this growing demand, the *Minimum Standards for Local Climate-smart Disaster Risk Reduction* (hereafter referred to as "Minimum Standards") have been developed to provide a 'good enough guide' to help local community leaders, DRR practitioners and policymakers ensure DRR efforts are geared to more uncertain future risk patterns induced by a changing climate. The Minimum Standards are meant to serve as a useful guide for planners and donors as well so they may ensure DRR programming is meeting CCA needs and that DRR actions are going beyond business as usual by truly addressing changing climate-related risks. Indeed, recognizing that the Minimum Standards are realistic and achievable, national strategies that consider them will be able to go to scale, also in facilitating the use of climate adaptation finance for local efforts to reduce the rising risk of disaster in a changing climate.

This paper presents the *Minimum Standards for local climate-smart disaster risk reduction* and details how they can help trigger action on climate change under the post-2015 HFA framework. The first section provides an overview of the Minimum Standards and their relevance for guiding climate-smart action at the community level and at the civil society organisation (CSO) level. The second section presents experience of community level application of the Minimum Standards in the Philippines, Indonesia, and India in the context of the Partners for Resilience Program². To illustrate how the Minimum Standards have been used to strengthen CSO's capacity to become climate-smart, the third section details the experience of the Vanuatu Red Cross and suggests for this approach to be replicated by other CSOs. In addition, the process by which Australian Red Cross has expanded the Minimum Standards to include gender dimensions of DRR is presented in a final case study. The paper concludes with a discussion of the way forward for maximizing the opportunities to use the Minimum Standards to inform the development of the post 2015 HFA.

Minimum Standards for integrating climate risks into disaster risk reduction

Based on the knowledge of the Red Cross Red Crescent in disaster risk management and additional experience gained by partners through pioneering programs such as Partners for Resilience, the Minimum Standards for local climate-smart DRR have been developed, tested and validated over the past few years with a view to strengthening communities' capacities as well as the institutions that support them. The Minimum Standards remain a 'live' product subject to improvement based on new and additional evidence generated on their

² Since 2011, five humanitarian, development and environment organizations (Netherlands Red Cross, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, CARE International, Cordaid, Wetlands International, and their local counterparts in nine countries), with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have been working in alliance as "Partners for Resilience" (PfR, www.partnersforresilience.nl/) to reduce the impact of hazards on vulnerable communities around the world and generate lessons on best practices for strengthening community resilience. The Partners for Resilience program involves 9 countries in 3 continents, 70 NGO partners, and over EUR 40 million, making it the largest program of its kind.

effectiveness and efficiency in making DRR interventions more climate-smart.

An initial draft of Minimum Standards was developed in 2011, based on ideas and experiences collected through a range of prior initiatives.³ This early draft was created in partnership with the Indonesian and Philippines local partners of PfR and launched at the Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR (AMCDRR) in Indonesia, October 2012. Based on feedback from civil society organizations and government representatives from around the world, a second iteration was produced and tested in policy dialogues and practical program planning within the PfR network in Asia, Africa and Central America, and most recently at the PfR Global Work Conference in September 2013. This global consultation process formed the basis on which the [current version](#) of the Minimum Standards has been (Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre 2013). Consultation has largely centred on ways to represent the key themes in the Standards so that they are applicable in multiple contexts, integrate different dimensions of climate-smart DRR, and ultimately strengthen community resilience. Notably, as a companion piece to the Minimum Standards, Wetlands International developed *Criteria for Ecosystem-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation* (van Leeuwen et al 2012) in the context of PfR as well. Using this set of criteria, policy makers and practitioners can better integrate the management of ecosystems and natural resources into their DRR work.

Table 1 provides a brief overview of the Minimum Standards that can guide communities (left column) and the CSOs that support them (right column) to become climate-smart in their DRR activities. Importantly, the Minimum Standards for CSOs are largely applicable to relevant government agencies and knowledge centres that support community processes as well. The [full document](#) includes a set of suggested actions for each Minimum Standard to help make the standards more concrete.

Table 1. The Minimum Standards for local climate-smart DRR

	Minimum Standard for communities	Minimum Standard for CSOs supporting community processes
1	Community is aware of changes in weather patterns , and recognizes that some weather-related risks in the future are likely to be different from the past	Within the CSO, knowledge on changing climate risks is used to adjust work plans and strategies
2	Community receives and understands locally available weather information , and households know appropriate actions to take when inclement weather is approaching	A core group of staff and volunteers can facilitate dialogue on how natural climate variability and climate change affects the CSO's work – and can explain the basic causes, trends, projections and impacts to communities
3	In places where credible seasonal forecasts are available ⁵ the community has a reliable relationship with an	CSO can guide communities on how to consider seasonal forecast and climate risk information in their community

³ For example, Strengthening Climate Resilience (SCR), Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management (CSDRM) initiative, the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA), and the annual International Conferences on Community-based Adaptation

	organisation that can help access and make use of the forecast	action plans and on how to define 'Early Actions' to be triggered by 'Early Warning' signals
4	Community carries out 'vulnerability and risk assessments' that note observed changes in weather, seasonality and hazard patterns and uses the information to develop local action plans	CSO is able to document community-level climate- smart interventions to influence policy and practice, where appropriate
5	Community monitors and evaluates approaches to disaster risk reduction and learns from experience in order to adjust plans to adapt to climate variability and change	CSO makes use of dialogue opportunities (e.g. meetings, national days for actions, conferences) to raise awareness of local adaptation needs, to shape local and national policies, and to ensure resource allocation reaches the most vulnerable people
6	Community advocates for its adaptation needs towards appropriate climate-related authorities and stakeholders	

How have the Minimum Standards guided action at the local level?

In Indonesia, Cordaid's local civil society partners in the Partners for Resilience (PfR) have analyzed and recorded results, challenges, and opportunities for applying the Minimum Standards as a basis to recognize the relevance and utility of the framework to their work with communities and local authorities.

In PfR India, Cordaid partners have used the Minimum Standards in flood-prone communities in Bihar State to assess the communities' current status in meeting each standard and to define the next action(s) to take in order to fully realize each Standard.

In the Philippines, CARE Nederland and local PfR CSO partners have been implementing DRR projects in the Philippines since 2007 and already have a well-developed model for community-based DRR called the ACCORD model (Dulce *et al.* 2011). Within the PfR context partners have sought to use the Minimum Standards to systematically incorporate climate change adaptation into this existing model.

The efforts to improve DRR interventions through incorporation of community level adaptation measures can be crosschecked using the Minimum Standards. Experiences of communities doing so through the application of tools, methodologies and approaches in the context of Partners for Resilience are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Practical examples of application of the Minimum Standards at the community level in three countries

Minimum Standard	PfR Indonesia ⁴	PfR India ⁵	PfR Philippines ⁶
1. Community is aware of changes in weather patterns, and recognizes that some weather-related risks in the future are likely to be different from the past	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities have reflected how changing risk patterns have impacted their agricultural activities and their lives. At the same time, the communities are not fully aware how to access relevant information on climate forecasts and what this means for weather patterns and planning over the short, medium and long-term.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>A core group within the community should be assigned to establish a link with a knowledgeable person or institution in order to better access, understand and make use of climate change information (such as observed trends as well as projections how average and extreme temperatures and rainfall are projected to change).</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>In communities there are informal groups and they discuss the climate change impacts, and make best judgements decisions – e.g. on variation in sowing season – based on their observations and available information.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>The new DRR committees will have the additional role of monitoring climate change and trends, and will seek information from relevant knowledge centres.</p> <p>The CSO will help formation of local level 'information centre' linked with a relevant climate change knowledge centre.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities are increasingly becoming aware of changes in weather patterns and realizing that risks in the future are likely to be different from/ worse than the past. The awareness, though, largely comes from personal reflection on experiences, from mass media, from supporting CSOs and to a limited extent from local authorities.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>The on-going capacity building of local disaster risk reduction and management councils (DRRMCs) would put greater emphasis on strengthening DRRMCs' public awareness and education activities on climate change. To ensure that due emphasis is given, these activities should be incorporated in annual and longer-term plans. As a requirement, PfR would also continue enhancing its capacity to effectively communicate key climate-smart DRR messages.</p>
2. Community receives and understands locally available weather information,	<p>Status</p> <p>Populations in urban centres in district capitals are able to receive and understand available weather information and 1-5 day weather forecast using radio and television broadcasts.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>The community DRR committees receive information from local newspaper, radio and reading river water levels, but these source of information's are uncertain and with</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities receive from mass media and local authorities, and understand locally available information. For those who have participated in DRR programs, where early warning systems,</p>

⁴ Based on the experience of Karina/Caritas Indonesia with Cordaid's partners (Prag *et al.* 2014); Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedesaan, Caritas Maumere and Bina Swadaya Konsultan

⁵ Based on the experience of Cordaid India.

⁶ Based on the experience of CARE Nederland in the Philippines.

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Minimum Standard	PfR Indonesia ⁴	PfR India ⁵	PfR Philippines ⁶
and households know appropriate actions to take when inclement weather is approaching	<p>However rural communities or villages with different conditions will not receive adapted information and some do not have access to electricity.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>To address this information gap, community may consider designation of a 'core group' of individuals within the community to proactively check weather forecasts and hydrological information through media/internet or mobile phone technology.</p>	<p>uneven accuracy. In addition, the communities receive warning information quite late, which prevents timely response ("early action").</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>DRR committees will establish linkages with weather forecast department; this includes registering the DRR committee member's mobile phones to receive messages with early warnings to allow timely early action.</p>	<p>evacuation plans and contingency plans are available, these plans are activated according to the early warning system in place. In contrast, most villages in the Philippines still have no functional EWS and contingency plans.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>Where early warning systems exist, efforts to strengthen them should continue, particularly on how community responds to the warning disseminated. Good practices would be documented and disseminated so that those who have no functional EWS yet can replicate.</p>
3. In places where credible seasonal forecasts are available the community has a reliable relationship with an organisation that can help access and make use of the forecast	<p>Status</p> <p>Resource people or institutions that are able to provide seasonal forecasts in an accessible manner are not yet consistently available to communities; consequently, communities are unable to access and make use of forecast information directly.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>The local PfR partners are introducing access to relevant and accessible information on climate forecasts through direct cooperation with resource agencies to understand implications as a basis of planning and action by communities and local government.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Community has no established linkages with any organization or CSOs assisting in any form of weather forecast dissemination.</p> <p>Community flood contingency plans are prepared on the basis of past experiences of disasters (magnitude and frequency); when contingency plan gets activated selected people fulfil their assigned roles. Some critical aspects such as livelihood and agriculture are not included in the contingency plan, leading to capital and assets loss.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>The DRR committees will be linked with</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Seasonal forecasts are available from the government meteorological agency, PAGASA. Long-term climate projections are incorporated in community contingency plans and municipal contingency plans. However, seasonal forecasts available with PAGASA are not yet systematically accessed to inform livelihoods decisions, e.g. deciding whether planting calendars need to be adjusted according to seasonal forecasts.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>Local DRRMCs would be made aware of the availability of seasonal forecasts from PAGASA and how these can be accessed, and used to inform local plans, household livelihood strategies, etc. PfR will also explore with PAGASA as part of existing</p>

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Minimum Standard	PfR Indonesia ⁴	PfR India ⁵	PfR Philippines ⁶
		<p>water resource department, river dam management and river basin management and development authorities.</p> <p>On the basis of weather forecast existing contingency plan will be revised.</p>	partnership on how forecast dissemination can be enhanced.
4. Community carries out 'vulnerability and risk assessments' that note observed changes in weather, seasonality and hazard patterns and uses the information to develop local action plans	<p>Status</p> <p>With CSO support communities have mapped their risk using participatory risk assessment tools; these tools can be adjusted to include mapping hazard behaviour and impact over the past decades and the use of the seasonal calendars adjusted to take into account not only annual cycles but also change over time. Communities are able to review results as a basis for planning, action and advocacy to village government.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>In developing community action plans, community are able to work on some actions, others must be advocated to village government to be included and supported under longer term village planning. Community planning will be supported by multi-sector partnerships particularly in spatial planning approaches to climate risk proofing of environment, land and water management and structural mitigation.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Community has done the risk assessment and indentified their vulnerability and their risks.</p> <p>On the basis of their assessment the community advocate for their needs and demands action from the government; for example, one community submitted a declaration demanding assistance to reduce flood risks.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>Every year the DRR committees revise the assessment findings and revisit and update the development plan.</p> <p>In 2014 the DRR committees will give special focus to changing risk patterns (climate change) when revising the assessments. On the basis of climate risk assessment findings the development plan will be revised accordingly.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities have carried our participatory risk assessments, combining indigenous and scientific knowledge. These community risk assessments are key inputs to contingency plans and risk reduction plans. At the municipal level, risk assessments inform comprehensive development plans.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>PfR will continue monitoring and providing technical support so that application of climate information on local development planning becomes a practice that can be sustained beyond the life of the programme.</p>

Table 2: Practical examples of application of the Minimum Standards at the community level in three countries

Minimum Standard	PfR Indonesia ⁴	PfR India ⁵	PfR Philippines ⁶
5. Community monitors and evaluates approaches to disaster risk reduction and learns from experience in order to adjust plans to adapt to climate variability and change	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities are already adapting to hazard risks, adapting their local practices to fit with the conditions they face, for example adapting to new livelihoods options following relocation. Practices have evolved over time building upon traditional practices and experiences.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>Communities will be supported to apply technically sound environment, land and water management interventions collectively in groups of households to give greater impact and assure local ownership. Potential for new partnerships are currently being explored across a limited number of water catchments in Flores.</p> <p>Capture practises that ensure continuous transfer of capacities to future generations for sustainability. Improve accessibility of climate forecast information in a systematic and relevant manner, in line with local observation, so communities can better evaluate and review planning and action. For communities evaluation must be in the form of evidence and impact, which will enable them to use findings as a basis of planning and advocacy.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>The communities gather information on the basis of their traditional and indigenous methods. This information is not yet compared with the scientific data; communities and DRR Committees do not possess the skills for doing so.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>Support and capacity building of the DRR committees on how to relate and compare traditional indigenous knowledge with scientific information. While revising the risk assessment both level of information will be used for assessing impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Based on the outcome of the analysis the DRR committees will revise the contingency plan and development plan.</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Contingency and risk reduction plans are annually reviewed to take into account new information available. The practice of communities in accessing scientific information is uneven, and largely influenced by proximity to knowledge centres. Communities and local government units in the national capital are able to better access scientific knowledge compared to communities in rural and remote locations.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>PfR will sustain community-level learning activities such as annual “community audits”, with the repetitive process contributing to increased quality of outcome. With enhanced public awareness and education activities and strengthened access to scientific information, this will result in better incorporation of climate change factors into local plans.</p>
6. Community advocates for its adaptation needs towards appropriate climate-related authorities and	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities understand that they must apply approaches that have a broader impact than at the household or village level and that they cannot work alone. Some communities lack specific hazard management policies and have weak enforcement systems and low compliance of regulations – and communities in general note that risk</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Communities have advocated the issues related to Disaster Risk Reduction and also succeeded in addressing some of the issues.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>The DRR committees will include the needs</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>Engaging local authorities in dialogue, and representation in local disaster risk reduction and management councils, have facilitated community linkage with specific external actors for support to long-term adaptation. Advocacy, however, has been identified as one area where communities and civil</p>

Table 2: Practical examples of application of the Minimum Standards at the community level in three countries

Minimum Standard	PfR Indonesia⁴	PfR India⁵	PfR Philippines⁶
stakeholders	<p>management and compliance is needed.</p> <p><i>Next steps</i></p> <p>Communities will be supported to collect data on climate hazard risks and impact to better enable them to advocate to village or sub-regional government. CSOs will support communities to develop networking strategies to support their advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Where climate information is used as a basis of risk proofing and integrated within sub-regional government planning CSOs will assist communities in advocating for their safety in relation to climate-amplified risks. Where communities do not have a role to influence local planning there is a need that government plays a key role. CSOs assist advocating for mainstreaming climate risk proofing in national and sub-regional development planning.</p>	<p>for climate change adaption with relevant Government departments.</p>	<p>society organizations need support.</p> <p><i>Next steps</i></p> <p>CARE will support capacity building of its partners in the Philippines on advocacy. PfR will support in the next two years the capacity building of communities in advocacy work.</p>

Reflections on the application of the Minimum Standards at the local level

As evidenced in Table 2, the first Minimum Standard – *Community is aware of changes in weather patterns, and that some weather-related risks in the future are likely to be different from the past* – is largely met in the PfR communities. However, it appears more challenging for communities and the supporting CSOs to live up to the second and third Standards: Communities are not fully aware how to access relevant information on climate forecasts and what this means for weather patterns and planning over the short, medium and long-term. Likewise, resource people or institutions that are able to provide seasonal forecasts in an accessible manner are not yet consistently available, at least to many of the PfR communities in India and Indonesia. It remains challenging for a community to communicate directly with sub-regional government officials to access information on climate and weather – and there is an important role for CSOs to play in disseminating information while at the same time facilitating the linking of communities and the weather and climate forecast agencies.

Considering the fourth Minimum Standard – *Community carries out 'vulnerability and risk assessments' that note observed changes in weather, seasonality and hazard patterns and uses the information to develop local action plans* – PfR partners have attempted to incorporate adaptation into all phases of a project, from analysis, to design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (Dulce *et al.* 2011). A key step in this process has been the inclusion of climate change factors into risk assessment tools in all PfR countries (e.g. PfR 2011, 2013, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, forthcoming).

Indeed, community (or participatory) risk assessments, adjusted to incorporate climate factors, have informed all DRR activities in the PfR context in which the Minimum Standards were applied: training, public awareness and education; contingency planning; community-based early warning systems; risk reduction planning; mainstreaming in local development plans; and mainstreaming in plans of civil society organizations. As an example, to facilitate the incorporation or mainstreaming process in the Philippines, CARE Nederland, working with local partner ACCORD Inc., updated its training module to include climate change adaptation and ecosystem management and restoration (Anon 2011) and drafted a manual on mainstreaming climate factors into local development plans applying the project cycle management approach (Broekhuijsen 2011).

For the sixth Minimum Standard – *Community advocates for its adaptation needs towards appropriate climate- related authorities and stakeholders* – the Partners for Resilience programme has not yet gained much experience in actually influencing climate change adaptation policies or resource allocation. However, the ongoing policy dialogue on more conventional DRR issues is now beginning to adopt climate change aspects – partly as an outcome of PfR efforts to enhance awareness on impacts of climate change on risk patterns. This applies to the policy dialogue activities by PfR partners at local community and sub-regional levels in Indonesia and Philippines, and also to national level in India.

While the country examples show progress in applying the Minimum Standards, it is important to note that the Standards also offer value as a tool to complement monitoring, evaluation and learning processes that seek to analyze a community's progress towards adapting to changing climate risks and to reducing local disaster risk. As monitoring and

evaluation (M&E) support tools, the Minimum Standards can help determine how the community's ability to be climate-smart has improved compared to baseline studies. Hence, the Minimum Standards – in their current or in revised shape – can help inform the "Enhanced Monitoring System" proposed for the HFA2.

The Minimum Standards can also be useful at the project design stage if used to help define baselines, and project objectives, as well as during later stages of a project, if they are used to analyze how specific project activities are supporting (or not) a community in becoming climate-smart. As such, the effects of these actions guided by the Minimum Standards can go a long way towards informing future policy, program and project designs.

How have the Minimum Standards strengthened capacities of civil society organizations?

Of course for CSOs to be well prepared to support communities become climate-smart, their own internal capacities should be able to take into account changing climate-related risks. To this end, the Minimum Standards offer CSOs a concise guide and metric to continually monitor progress towards strengthening their technical capacities. What is more, this function extends to local government authorities and knowledge centres as the Minimum Standards for CSOs can be equally relevant to such entities seeking to understand the ways in which they can best integrate climate change and DRR in their guidance, planning and decision-making activities.

As for the community level, the Minimum Standards for the CSO level offer value as M&E tools for assessing how climate-smart an organization is and how its activities and organizational strategy may need to be adjusted to better consider changing climate risks. For example, during the project design stage the Minimum Standards suggest sufficient resources are to be allocated to support lead and partner organizations become climate-smart wherever possible. This is indeed the first Minimum Standard – *Within the CSO, knowledge on changing climate risks is used to adjust work plans and strategies* – and lends itself to support organizational M&E and learning processes.

To illustrate this process, the Vanuatu Red Cross (VRC), with support from the French Red Cross and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre has applied the Minimum Standards and has since undertaken key activities towards realizing each Standard. Table 3 provides examples of these actions agreed upon by VRC staff upon evaluation of the current status of their activities against the Minimum Standards.

Table 3. Application of Minimum Standards for CSO level, by Vanuatu Red Cross

	Minimum Standard for CSOs supporting community processes	Vanuatu Red Cross Actions taken to meet Minimum Standard
1	Within the CSO, knowledge on changing climate risks is used to adjust work plans and strategies	National trainings have taken place for staff, including branch officers and volunteers about integrating climate risks into communication plans, community action plans, and low and no cost activities at the branch level
2	A core group of staff and volunteers can facilitate dialogue on how natural climate variability and climate change affects the CSO's work – and can explain the basic causes, trends, projections and impacts to communities	<p>Creation, distribution and use of the 'Kload Nasara'⁷ animation film which seeks to explain El Nino and La Nina events and actions that can be taken to prepare when warnings are given.</p> <p>National trainings have taken place for staff, including branch officers and volunteers, which cover the basics about weather, climate and climate change and their impacts on communities. Creation of a handbook for these staff and volunteers in collaboration with the national meteorological office, endorsed by the government's National Advisory Board on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.</p> <p>Distribution of booklet 'Communicating climate change for risk reduction in Pacific communities' to all branches</p>
3	CSO can guide communities on how to consider seasonal forecast and climate risk information in their community action plans and on how to define 'Early Actions' to be triggered by 'Early Warning' signals	<p>At the field level, Vanuatu Red Cross branch staff are beginning to collaborate with the Vanuatu Meteorological Services' rainfall collectors to improve community understanding of weather and climate and inform EWEA plans. The government is simultaneously building the capacity of its rainfall collectors to work in collaboration with Red Cross.</p> <p>The Kload Nasara toolkit includes discussion of actions communities can take based on EL Niño alerts for example. Simulation activities are undertaken with communities based on the climate and weather hazards they face.</p>
4	CSO is able to document community- level climate- smart interventions to influence policy and practice, where appropriate	<p>Vulnerability and risk assessments include questions and tools related to changes people may be observing and these additions are now mainstreamed into the Vanuatu Red Cross disaster risk reduction methodology.</p> <p>A case study on the work of VRC has been used to influence further practise⁸.</p>
5	CSO makes use of dialogue opportunities (e.g. meetings, national days for actions, conferences) to raise awareness of local adaptation needs, to shape local and national policies, and to ensure resource allocation reaches the most vulnerable people	<p>An MOU has been signed for Vanuatu Red Cross to work in collaboration with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, GIZ and the Meteorological Office on piloting the use of verified traditional indicators to communicate forecasts.</p> <p>The Vanuatu Red Cross has brought in the expertise of NGOs and government departments for those communities that identify climate and weather related problems as priority areas for action. Examples include engaging the Farm Support Association to assist subsistence farmers with more resilient crops.</p>

⁷ See: www.pacificclimatechangescience.org/animations/cloudnasara/

⁸ See: www.climatecentre.org/downloads/File/Case%20studies/CC_vanuatu_A4_4pages12-web.pdf

Interestingly, the Australian Red Cross has taken an innovative approach to applying the Minimum Standards so they may ensure they support not only climate-smart but also gender-sensitive activities. While a large amount of literature has been produced by development organizations on the topic of integrating climate change and gender considerations, Australian Red Cross realized there was no guidance tailored specifically for the Red Cross Red Crescent context. Recognizing that vulnerability to climate change was socially differentiated and that Red Cross Red Crescent DRR programs that addressed gender dimensions *and* climate change would respond better to men and women's needs, the Minimum Standards were considered an ideal basis for adding a needed gender dimension to guide project design and programming. The Australian Red Cross expanded the Minimum Standards to include examples of what would be climate-smart *and* gender-sensitive approaches to DRR at the community and at the CSO level.

National Society staff considered examples of how practitioners might consider gender when designing and implementing their climate-smart programs. Table 4 provides an overview of how National Societies may be both gender-sensitive and climate-smart in their DRR interventions. The first column lists the Minimum Standards at the CSO level and the second column provides a specific example to guide activities. Programs guided by these examples can go further towards recognizing the differential impacts of climate change on men and women, and towards identifying how the issues and structures that can result in women's disempowerment and be addressed and perhaps even transformed. The expansion of the Minimum Standards has been included in the Australian Red Cross Gender Briefing Papers (Red Cross Australia 2013) and is being tested, validated and improved based on growing experience pursuing these approaches.

Table 4. Expanding Minimum Standards to include gender-sensitive approaches to DRR, by Australian Red Cross and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre

	Minimum Standard for CSOs supporting community processes	Examples of gender sensitive approaches
1	Within the National Society, knowledge on changing climate risks is used to adjust work plans and strategies	When planning, consider the implications of climate change for various groups in society, including men and boys, women and girls.
2	A core group of staff and volunteers can facilitate dialogue on how natural climate variability and climate change affects the National Society's work – and can explain the basic causes, trends, projections and impacts to communities	Recruit men and women as staff and volunteers. Gender mainstreaming responsibilities should be included in the position descriptions of all team members Develop an understanding of gender specific aspects of climate change - the IFRC gender training pack provides useful case studies to build upon Consider using an experienced gender trainer to develop a tailored program/ or to modify existing training materials or to present a session at climate change training events

3	National Society can guide communities on how to consider seasonal forecast and climate risk information in their community action plans and on how to define 'Early Actions' to be triggered by 'Early Warning' signals	<p>Ensure that women and men's access to and understanding of early warning information is considered – remember that women are often more risk averse than men and may take action sooner rather than later in an impending disaster</p> <p>Ensure that both women and men are linked to disaster preparedness measures that are associated with these early warnings</p>
4	National Society is able to document community- level climate- smart interventions to influence policy and practice, where appropriate	<p>When documenting the humanitarian implications of climate change for reports, ensure participation and representation of both men and women. In addition, consider the implications of climate change for various groups in society, including men and boys, women and girls.</p>
5	National Society makes use of dialogue opportunities (e.g. meetings, national days for actions, conferences) to raise awareness of local adaptation needs, to shape local and national policies, and to ensure resource allocation reaches the most vulnerable people	<p>You can use information collected about gender specific impacts to highlight the humanitarian consequences of climate change. Remember to not only highlight men and women's vulnerabilities – but also their capacities to adapt.</p> <p>Women can and should be involved in humanitarian diplomacy surrounding climate change to ensure the needs and concerns of both women and men are met.</p> <p>In discussions with agencies responsible for creation and distribution of early warnings consider the different needs and accessibility of men and women in relation to the improvement of weather and climate information formats/communication</p>

Reflections on the application of the Minimum Standards at the CSO level

Initial feedback on the value of the Minimum Standards to guide the two National Societies' activities has been positive. Anchoring the process of reflecting on the current status and potential next steps in a clear, simple and concise document was appreciated by those involved. Because the Minimum Standards are in fact *minimum*, the actions are achievable and genuinely assist staff understand what additional components they could consider taking in their work to ensure they are working towards integration of climate change adaptation into their activities.

When mainstreaming these activities into organisational work plans and strategies, it is important to consider their sustainability. In this respect, their institutionalization is an important consideration. For example it is essential to ensure that not only one-off community assessments, awareness raising and DRR projects consider changing risks; the tools that are used by the National Society need to be revised to comprehensively incorporate consideration of the integrated approach along each step of the project cycle. This takes considerably more investment of resources and ongoing commitment of the organization and its supporters. Mainstreaming of climate change adaptation is therefore never a specific activity, but rather part of an ongoing process.

Looking Ahead – options for informing the HFA 2

Since the HFA 2005, the need for better integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation has become increasingly evident. A growing number of national climate change adaptation plans highlight the need to address the rising risk of extreme events and disasters and also acknowledge the essential role of local communities in addressing the changing risks that often hit the most vulnerable people.

With the preparatory work towards agreeing on a post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction ("HFA[2][Plus]" UNISDR 2013), integration is strongly promoted towards a harmonized paradigm wherein climate change adaptation and climate risk management are seen as part of broader risk management strategies, principles, strategic goals and priorities for action to achieve sustainable development goals.

UNISDR (2013, section 35) notes that "*the priority areas of the post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction needs to be defined in terms of critical public policies that ... regulate or provide incentives for actions by households, communities, businesses and individuals. In these different domains, the priority areas should include public policies in prospective and anticipatory risk management (risk prevention), corrective risk management (risk reduction) and actions to strengthen resilience.*" It recognizes the importance of viewing disasters as manifestations of underlying risk drivers that are inherent to development policies and practices, which in turn, generate and accumulate disaster risks. To support practical implementation of these "*public policies*", practical community level activities will still need concrete guidance on how to combine risk reduction, climate change adaptation and other elements required for enhancing resilience. The Minimum Standards are a useful tool in helping communities, organizations and governments transform development and manage risks through policies and programs. When we are guided by standards on how DRR can be climate-smart, we can easily mainstream climate change adaptation into development policies and programs and hopefully, more effectively reduce existing risks, prevent the accumulation of new risks, strengthen resilience, and ensure sustainable development.

Climate-smart DRR has already permeated many community risk assessment practices, early warning systems, contingency planning and risk reduction planning. As illustrated in the cases presented, many communities and local authorities have already demonstrated the value of these EWS and contingency plans, which are regularly updated. Climate change factors are also being given importance in livelihoods, including livelihood recovery following disasters. Yet support to these community level activities would be more successful if external support such as is provided CSOs were to practice climate-smart DRR in a comprehensive manner, i.e. in all projects or programs, and in all project phases.

The Minimum Standards help to fill this niche: they define the minimum actions that community-level disaster risk reduction programs need to consider in order to integrate changing climate-related risk into local DRR interventions and truly go beyond business as usual. Though defined as *minimum*, they offer a *comprehensive starting point* and enable local communities and the CSOs that support them to take 'ownership' of the Minimum Standards by identifying locally relevant actions to take to meet each of them. As such the Minimum Standards enable a variety of actors – including policy-makers, knowledge centres

and planners – to better understand how to support communities increasingly at risk from disasters.

Initial experiences from developing and applying the Minimum Standards at the community level and within CSOs are laying the foundations for informing national DRR and climate policies. The Partners for Resilience program continues to provide an ideal 'testing ground' for the Minimum Standards and a next step will be to package the evidence on practical actions to help policy-makers and planners better understand how to support communities increasingly at risk from disasters.

The Minimum Standards offer simple, practical guidelines that, if adopted in the HFA2 monitoring framework, can enhance its efficacy and impact and help orient concrete action for bridging the divide between CCA and DRR communities of practice – between local level action and national level policy and programming, in the end also enabling the use of national and international climate finance for local disaster risk reduction. Consideration of the Minimum Standards can offer a significant contribution to a harmonized post-2015 global agenda, which facilitates management of risks related to climate change while promoting sustainable development.

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