



Child-Centred Risk Reduction Research-into-Action Brief:

Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)

Rebekah Yore,¹ Ilan Kelman² and Matalena Tofa³

¹University College London and Rescue Global, UK

²University College London and University of Ader, UK

³Macquarie University, Australia

Statement of purpose

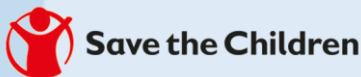
The Research-into-Action Brief series provides concise summaries of academic and grey literature on a range of topics for practitioners working in the fields of child-centred risk reduction (CCRR), climate change adaptation (CCA), and school safety. The purpose of this brief is to provide a concise review of research findings for practitioners on the topic of community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM).

Find the full Research-into-Action Brief series at:

www.gadrrres.net/resources

Produced by Save the Children and Risk Frontiers, with support from C&A Foundation and C&A

C&A Foundation



Abstract

Research shows that localised, bottom-up disaster risk management (DRM) enables communities to have a say in building appropriate resilience mechanisms. This can only be effective if CBDRM is founded on an understanding of the complexities of vulnerability, and the interdependencies of the risks that cause it. We also see how current thought on encouraging young people's participation in CBDRM has arisen from the recognition that their vulnerability can be a source of strength, able to positively impact the social, economic and institutional resilience of entire populations. Case-study analysis reveals that securing reliable, long-term support from governments in DRM remains a key challenge, as does making CBDRM a priority of both national and international policy, and maintaining momentum for DRM at community level. Analysis also shows that further work is still needed to ensure that the most excluded and critically vulnerable communities can be prioritised.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Child	Person 0 to 18 years of age
Youth	Person 18 to 24 years of age
CBDRM	A process that is led, organised and owned by local people to analyse and implement disaster risk management
Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR)	Activities that put children's needs first and include children in disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities
HVCA	Hazards, vulnerability and capacity assessment
Toolkit	A package of multiple tools that will collect a variety of data that can be used for comprehensive or integrated HVCA assessment (and ideally planning)
Framework	Guidance for research and efforts based on the current understanding of issues and concepts

Introduction

Top-down approaches – typically led by governments and NGOs – often treat disasters as isolated events and draw on external experts and expensive or inaccessible resources. This can undermine local knowledge. However, CBDRM can avoid this, as it is a way of analysing and implementing DRM that comes from, and is organised by, local communities. The rise of CBDRM has contributed to a shift towards viewing disasters as interconnected with each other and with socioeconomic challenges, and to considering pre-emptive actions that address the root causes of vulnerabilities (Cuny 1983; Lewis 1999; Wisner et al 2004). Within CBDRM, one important process is Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (HVCA). This approach considers all the potential hazards and vulnerabilities of a community and suggests ways to address them.

Children occupy a position of both unique vulnerability and capability when it comes to disasters and disaster risk. They are commonly viewed as passive victims, but many international treaties¹ recognise that children have distinct power, abilities and rights. Consequently, supporting children in CBDRM increasingly uses strategies that encourage their active participation and leadership.

Incorporating communities in DRM

Disasters highlight the prevalence of deprivation and inequality. Development agendas tackling global poverty have emphasised that CBDRM approaches are central to lifting, and keeping, populations out of poverty which prevents disasters (Cuny 1983; Lewis 1999; Wisner et al 2004). Community resilience through CBDRM is therefore important in encouraging stronger, more effective ways for individuals, families and communities to deal with disasters. CBDRM has also been recognised as a key component in countering the disproportionately negative effects of disasters on women and children (Enarson and Morrow 1998; Fordham 1999; and see the Gender and Disaster Network <http://www.gdnonline.org>).

Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (HVCAs)

The purpose of HVCAs is multi-fold: to identify groups who are vulnerable; to identify the factors that make them vulnerable and how they are affected; to assess their needs and capacities; and to ensure that projects, programs and policies address these needs. HVCA is used as a diagnostic tool, a planning tool and a tool for empowering, mobilising and listening to vulnerable populations.

HVCAs are designed to consider a wide range of environmental, economic, social, cultural, institutional and political pressures that create vulnerability. In practice, most HVCAs are community-wide assessments,

¹ For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (DRC), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

Purposes of HVCA

- *To identify groups who are vulnerable*
- *To identify the factors that make them vulnerable*
- *To understand how vulnerable groups are affected*
- *To assess the needs and capacities of vulnerable groups*
- *To ensure that projects, programs, policies address their needs*

HVCA is a:

- *Diagnostic tool*
- *Planning tool*
- *Tool for empowering, mobilising, and listening to vulnerable groups*

“Training and involvement in hands-on HVCA techniques builds children’s knowledge and skills...”

and are broad in scope. Furthermore, in most cases, conventional HVCA focus on assessing hazards and making recommendations, rather than how to use the HVCA to create changes. Relatively few HVCA focus on children’s vulnerabilities and abilities, and these are often not particularly well informed about issues around child support and wellbeing. A clear understanding of, and policy on children’s rights, power, and abilities should be used as a basis for effectively addressing children’s vulnerabilities and abilities in HVCA.

The following sections will consider two key issues related to effective CBDRM and HVCA: (i) engaging children and youth and (ii) adapting tools and frameworks to specific contexts.

Engaging children and youth

Child-centered risk reduction (CCRR) has gained significant traction within CBDRM and HVCA. It not only directly involves children and youth in dealing with disasters – including adapting to climate change – but also enhances the resilience of entire communities. Enabling young people to make changes in their own lives becomes more powerful when combined with initiatives that help reduce child poverty and recognise poverty as a key factor in vulnerability. Training and involvement in hands-on HVCA techniques builds children’s knowledge and skills, enabling them to assess and monitor hazards, risks, vulnerabilities and capacities in their communities (Plan International 2010). By participating in HVCA, children and youth should become involved in action and advocacy initiatives.

There is, however, a disproportionate focus on the impacts of large disasters (IIED and Plan 2013), which can overlook the impacts of smaller more frequent hazards on children and their families (UNICEF 2012). Many HVCA also tend to concentrate on risks resulting from environmental or technological hazards (e.g. flood or fire) and less on other significant and widespread social threats to children (including domestic violence, bullying and labour exploitation).

Adapting tools and frameworks

For any tool or framework to work in the best interests of children, it must examine children’s situations and see how this impacts on their rights (including the rights to survival, protection, development and participation). There are few formal HVCA guidelines focusing on children and youth, and those that do exist vary in their quality and sophistication. Plan International’s toolkit on child-centered DRR (Plan International 2010) and Save the Children’s guide to child-led DRR (Save the Children 2007) provide detailed guidance on HVCA training and application relating to children and youth. The Child Oriented Participatory Risk Assessment and Planning (COPRAP) Tool (BALAY Rehabilitation Center 2006; Luneta 2007) is an example of a child-focused tool that is currently being used.

Frameworks and toolkits need to be re-examined, but this by itself doesn’t necessarily ensure good outcomes. For example, HVCA guidance commonly identifies disability as a vulnerability factor, but this doesn’t guarantee that disability will be considered in real-life situations. Recent research shows that people with disabilities continue to be overlooked in assessments, suggesting that a fundamental challenge is

to change attitudes and perceptions within institutions and organisations. Moreover, frameworks, methods and tools cannot be considered in isolation from the organisations implementing them. Institutional and individual attitudes, skills and capacities influence how a given tool or approach is used and how subsequent findings are then acted upon.





Case Study: Kyrgyzstan: Mobilisation through School Disaster Teams

This case study illustrates how a CBDRM approach worked with a range of stakeholders in regional Kyrgyzstan to enhance disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Key Project Information

Partnership	Christian Aid and Kyrgyz NGO Shoola
Funding	Disaster Preparedness, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (DIPECHO)
Scope	Five villages and local government representatives
Location	Eastern part of the Kyrgyz Republic
Duration	One year (January-December 2006)
Stakeholders	<p><u>Primary</u>: community and school disaster teams (100 adults + 125 children); staff of regional, district and local government; 11,301 community members in the five targeted villages</p> <p><u>Secondary</u>: 100,000 residents of Issyk-Kul Region</p>
Goals and Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To enhance disaster mitigation and preparedness among villagers 2. To support Shoola in facilitating repair and construction work using the <i>ashar</i> method (free community labour)
Goals and Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To enhance disaster mitigation and preparedness among villagers 4. To support Shoola in facilitating repair and construction work using the <i>ashar</i> method (free community labour)
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of disaster risk maps of the villages, escape routes and contingency plans 2. Undertaking environmental mitigation work (including strengthening river banks, reconstructing reservoirs, building dikes) 3. Actively engaging children in disaster challenges 4. Over 11,000 community members across the five villages benefited from the structural environmental mitigation efforts, and became more aware of early warning systems for natural hazards 5. About 100,000 residents of Issyk-Kul Region who were informed about hazards and disaster risks through a video and other material broadcast by the local TV channel

When implementing this CBDRM project, a number of challenges arose. These challenges and the responses developed are summarised below.

Challenges Identified		Good Practices Implemented
<p>Dominant top-down culture Prevalent in Central Asia at the time, government-led planning was the accepted norm. Community participation was a relatively new concept.</p>		<p>Direct connections made between local governments and communities Facilitating NGOs prioritised the joint implementation of projects in partnership with local government authorities. Children were also perceived not simply as passive community members but as valuable contributors.</p>
<p>Negative perception of civil society organisations Governments were sceptical of private, non-governmental and community-based organisations.</p>		<p>Tried and tested results Tangible results observed from community environmental mitigation activities proved the value of local NGOs to local government and encouraged greater community support.</p> <p>Cascading of training Community teams passed knowledge and practices onto other members of the community through informal communication, demonstrating the potential and benefits of reach of civil society-led DRM initiatives.</p>
<p>Continued government funding Securing sustained financial contributions from government departments was problematic.</p>		<p>Government contributions in kind Staff from local authorities contributed to planning, implementation and training elements, which worked as effective ongoing support for the project.</p>
<p>Maintaining participation momentum In a culture of top-down decision-making, it is difficult to keep community disaster teams motivated.</p>		<p>Continued local NGO involvement Shoola directly engaged in motivating the disaster teams and visiting the communities regularly to keep participation levels high throughout the project.</p> <p>Sustainability and continuity Five “duplicate” disaster teams comprising younger children were formed and trained by the original five School Disaster Teams, broadening the breadth of involvement and responsibility.</p> <p>Instilling a culture of DRM School disaster teams enabled young people to learn from an early age about the importance of community initiative in DRR.</p>
<p>Source: UNISDR (2007) ‘Rural, School “Disaster Teams” to Boost Preparedness: Mobilising Rural Communities for Disaster Preparedness in the Kyrgyz Republic’ in Building Disaster Resilient Communities [http://www.unisdr.org/files/596_10307.pdf]</p>		

This project’s activities centred on local experts and locally available materials. Repeating this approach in other communities or across larger areas would depend highly on the commitment and motivation of local and national governments. Achieving similar outcomes would not be

easy without a comparable level of commitment from the state authorities.

Practical Applications

The main lessons from applying CBDRM here are:

- The impacts of CBDRM programs among adults and children can diminish if knowledge and skills are not reviewed and practiced by community members repeatedly, especially in communities not facing regular disasters (CRS 2009; Chawla and Johnson 2004).
- To maintain habits, CBDRM should be part of people's daily lives through activities such as emergency drills. Community-based teams can continue and lead CBDRM and boost awareness regularly at community events (Ogawa et al. 2005; Ranghieri and Ishiwatari 2014).
- Bringing together a coalition of community members and local authorities supports CBDRM (Twigg 2007; UNICEF 2012) and encourages project longevity (Shaw and Okazaki 2003). Using popular media such as radio and Instagram has a similar effect.

The following should be considered for HVCA and CBDRM projects:

- CBDRM needs to be a part of people's daily lives to ensure that their knowledge and skills are maintained.
- Community members and local authorities need to be actively engaged in HVCA and CBDRM.
- Children and youth should be actively involved in assessments (e.g. HVCA), CBDRM action and CBDRM advocacy.
- Tools and frameworks for HVCA and CBDRM should be adapted to support the active participation of children, young people and marginalised groups.

Challenges remain where communities are unrecognised by governments, such as informal settlements or minority groups. DRM activities can still be conducted directly with such communities, but projects benefit from additional advocacy for rights and recognition at least at the local government level (CRS 2009). Where participatory tools do not always guarantee social inclusivity, research suggests that putting the most vulnerable community members in positions of leadership or prominence will help their otherwise marginalised voices to be heard.

Conclusions

The key for successful CBDRM, including CCDRR, lies in maintaining consciousness of and momentum for good practices at the community level, and incorporating CBDRM approaches at the national policy level. An overriding challenge remains in safeguarding ongoing funding and support from local governments. Building CBDRM projects into local budgets must go beyond simply creating a "wish list" of resources which, alone, can place extra burdens on communities to sustain their projects (Luna 2004).

Recommendations for effective CBDRM and HVCA projects:

- *CBDRM needs to be a part of people's daily lives*
- *Community members and local authorities need to be actively engaged*
- *Children and youth should be actively involved in HVCA, CBDRM action and CBDRM advocacy*
- *Tools and frameworks for HVCA and CBDRM should be adapted to support the active participation of children, young people and marginalised groups*

Challenges to children actively participating do not come from children, but from adults. Adults must understand that children should be provided with both the opportunity and right to express their views and ideas without fearing adverse reactions or consequences.

Universal models for successful CBDRM, and CCDRR in particular, do not exist. Research has shown how adult and child participation can be adapted for specific contexts, according to community dynamics, institutional cultures, livelihoods and the hazard burdens being faced, with varying measures of success (Peek 2008). Greater understanding of the interconnecting risks that exist in addressing community vulnerability is essential.

Follow-up Questions

1. Why should DRM strategies interlink with development policies, such as those targeting poverty? Why is climate change adaptation a subset of DRM?
2. What roles can local NGOs play to make them key stakeholders in CBDRM programs?
3. At whom should school-based DRM training be aimed?
4. In your experience, how can culture influence the way communities perceive the value of children as risk communicators? Are they considered reliable sources of information?
5. How might you apply some of the lessons learned here to your own practice, especially to ensure the sustainability of CCDRR?

Readings

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (2011), *School-based Disaster Risk Reduction: Making Education Safer* (analysis and case studies), Ahmedabad, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, <http://bit.ly/2uhMX0z>.

Back, E., Cameron, C. & Tanner, T. (2009), *Children and Disaster Risk Reduction: Taking stock and moving forward* (analysis and case studies), New York, UNICEF, http://www.preventionweb.net/files/12085_ChildLedDRRTakingStock1.pdf.

Gill, S., Gulsvig, L. & Peek, L. (2009), Children and Disasters Annotated Resource List, *Children, Youth and Environments*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 485-510, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.18.1.0485>.

Shaw, R. (ed.) (2012), *Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction, Community, Environment and Disaster Risk Management*, vol. 10, Emerald Group Publishing, Bingley.

“Challenges to children actively participating do not come from children, but from adults”

Wisner, B. (2006), Let our children teach us! A review of the role of education and knowledge in disaster risk reduction, Geneva, UNISDR, http://www.crin.org/en/docs/ISDR_let_teach.pdf.

Bibliography

All the references cited in this Research-into-Action Brief, can be found in the CCRR and CSS Bibliography at:

https://www.zotero.org/groups/1857446/ccrr_css

Suggested citation: Yore, R., Kelman, I., & Tofa, M. (2018). *Child-Centred Research-into-Action Brief: Community-based disaster risk management*, GADRRRES.

© 2018 Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector
The complete series of case studies can be found at <http://www.gadrrres.net/resources>