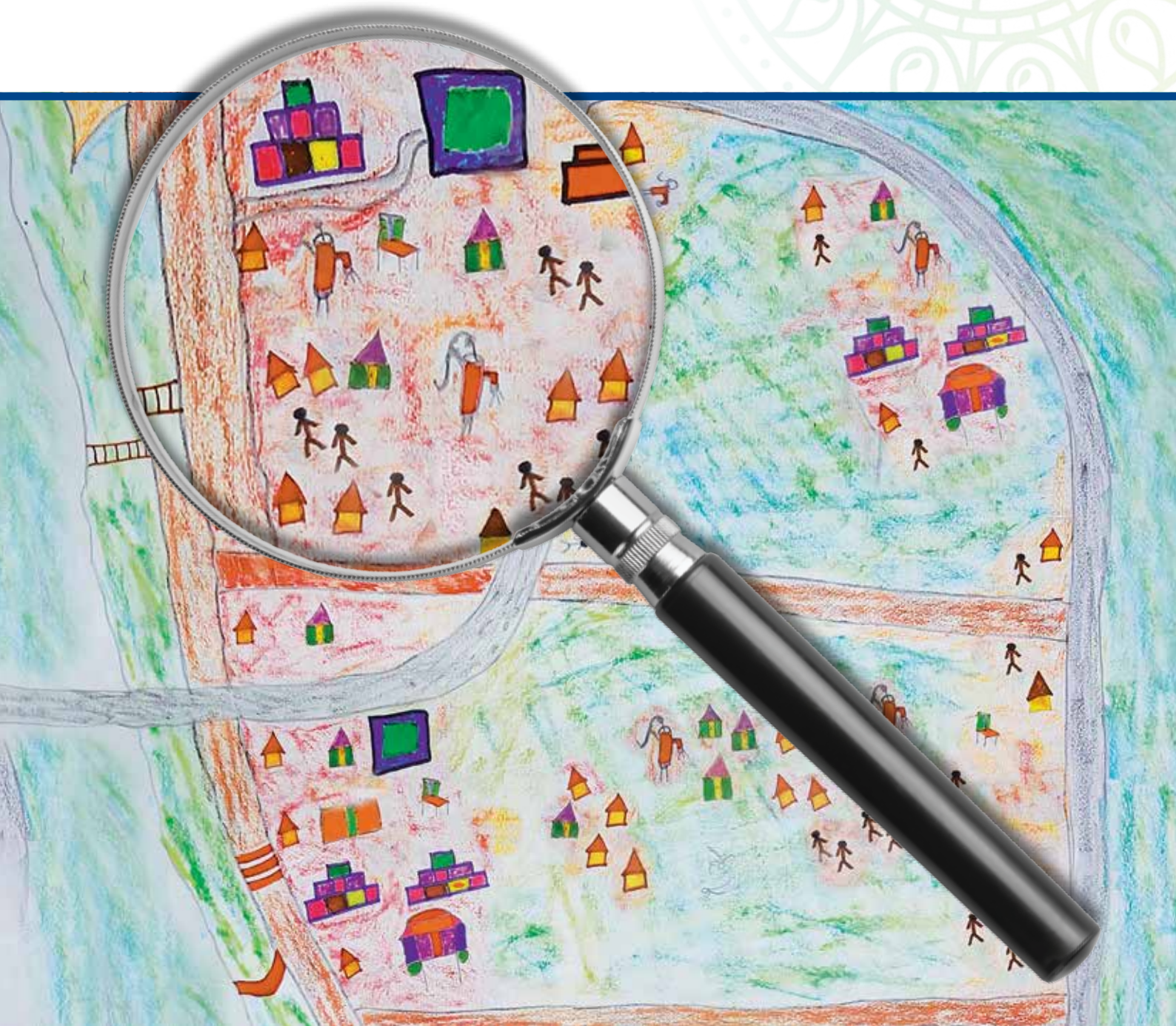
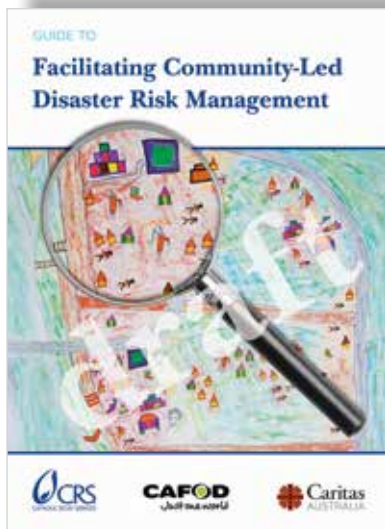


GUIDE TO

Facilitating Community-Led Disaster Risk Management





The need for effective disaster risk management is greater than ever and demands a change in the way we work. We have to go beyond preparedness and response, so that people do not remain in a vicious cycle of poverty and disasters. Cover: Detail of a community risk and resources map, Bangladesh. Photo by CRS staff

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Acronyms

AGRHIMET	Centre Regional de Formation et d'Application en Agrométéorologie et Hydrologie Opérationnelle
CAFOD	Catholic Agency For Overseas Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CBO	community-based organization
CFW	cash for work
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CI	Caritas Internationalis
CILSS	Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel
CLDRM	community-led disaster risk management
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	civil society organization
DGPC	Direction Générale de la Protection Civile
DRM	disaster risk management
DRR	disaster risk reduction
EWS	early warning system
FEWS-NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGD	focus group discussion
GPS	global positioning system
HOA	homeowners' association
HOCAI	Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment Instrument
INGO	international nongovernmental organization
KII	key informant interview
KMSS	Karuna Myanmar Social Services
MEAL	monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
NCPDP	National Centre for People's Action in Disaster Preparedness
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRM	natural resource management
PILAR	Pacific Innovation & Leadership Award for Resilience
PWD	people with disabilities
RWSS	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Services
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Communities
SMS	short message service
SWAD	Society for Welfare, Animation and Development
ULCBP	Unité de Construction de Logements et de Bâtiments Publics
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WCDDR	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction



Community members of all ages help map their village in Bangladesh in preparation for creating a disaster risk action plan. *Photo by CRS staff*

Introduction

Disaster risk is increasing. Pressures on our climate and natural resources continue to grow. Climate change is increasing the risk of heavy rains, strong storms, rising sea levels, higher temperatures and extreme droughts. Unplanned urbanization is forcing the poorest and most vulnerable to live in hazardous locations. Environmental degradation is exacerbating existing risk and creating new risk.

The need for effective disaster risk management is greater than ever and demands a change in the way we work. As agreed in the [Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction 2015-2030](#), we must go beyond preparedness and response, so that people do not remain in a vicious cycle of poverty and disaster. We must be inclusive and prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable. We must empower communities to plan and drive change, and reinforce governments' responsibility to provide their people with a protective and enabling environment. And, we must do all we can to promote sustainability, from the social, environmental and funding perspectives.

This guide will support you as you promote a community-led, inclusive and accountable approach to managing disaster risk, whether you are working on a development program, a disaster recovery intervention or on a specific disaster risk management project. Its step-by-step instructions, examples, tips and lessons learned by experienced community mobilizers and facilitators are relevant for both urban and rural communities, and to addressing risks created by slow- and rapid-onset hazards.

The guide starts by outlining the **principles** of community-led DRM, namely leadership by the community, inclusion and accountability. Three **stages** follow, each comprised of a number participatory **processes**, as shown in *Figure 1: Stages and processes in community-led disaster risk management*.

Stage 1 describes how to decide where to work, how to set up a system to engage all groups in the selected communities, and how to involve all relevant stakeholders, from local authorities to NGOs and private entities. It also helps you to set up the **participation mechanism** that will ensure that the DRM planning and implementation is indeed inclusive and accountable.

Stage 2 guides you through facilitation of the **community risk-assessment process**, to the point where the community is able to decide which risks to address as a matter of priority, and to explore options for reducing and managing them.

Stage 3 enables you to support the community to identify and agree on the most feasible and appropriate solutions that will help them to reduce their disaster risks, and to develop a **plan of action** that they can implement and monitor at both the community and household levels.

We must empower communities to plan and drive change, and reinforce governments' responsibility to provide their people with a protective and enabling environment.

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At the back of the guide you will find a **resources** section containing additional information, checklists, templates, sample materials and further reading to support you through each of the 10 processes.

A **Resource A** provides an overview of all the stages and processes in this guide.

You can either use the guide from start to finish, or adapt it to the community's needs and the dynamics of an ongoing or new program. For example, if a participatory risk analysis has already been carried out, you may wish to deepen understanding of the problem and possible solutions using *Process 7*, or proceed to *Stage 3*. In both cases you will need to recruit, develop and support excellent facilitators.

B **Resource B** provides guidance for managers on recruiting facilitators with the right skills for CLDRM.

C **Resource C** provides guidance from experienced CLDRM facilitators on good facilitation practices.

Interaction with the DRR and resilience quality management teams and technical advisors of the implementing agency is necessary at all stages and, in all situations, is vital to ensuring the approach is community-led, inclusive of the most vulnerable and promotes accountability.

Use the guide from start to finish, or select the parts that best meet the needs of your work in communities.

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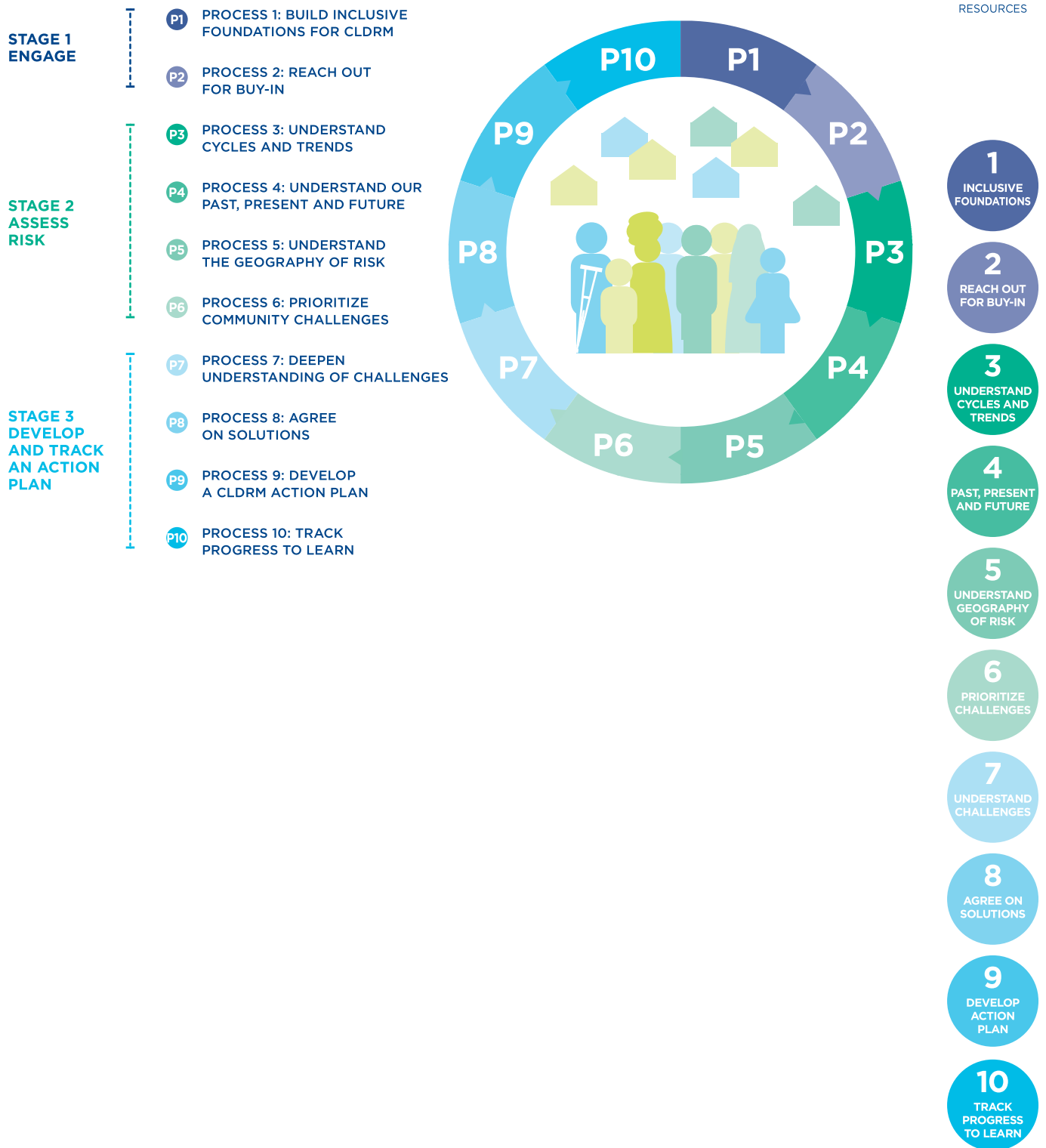
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Figure 1: Stages and processes in community-led disaster risk management



Principles of Community-Led Disaster Risk Management

In this section, you will find the principles that underpin our approach to community-led disaster risk management. These are:

1. Inclusion of all social groups in the community
2. Leadership of the process by the community
3. Promotion of accountability by all involved

These principles not only reflect our commitment to humanitarian values and priorities; we know from experience that they also generate impacts beyond risk reduction. The approach leads to a process and results that are owned by the community and that are likely to be sustained and contribute to equality and equity.

These principles generate impacts beyond risk reduction.

PRINCIPLE 1: INCLUSION OF ALL SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY

By “inclusion” in community-led DRM, we mean equitable access by all members of a community—regardless of their social group—to information, resources and decision-making opportunities about how to strengthen their resilience.

In practice, this means ensuring that the most marginalized and vulnerable are fully involved, either through direct participation or accountable representation, because the same barriers that cause their marginalization and vulnerability in society may stand in the way of their participation in DRM. These barriers may range from not knowing that the process is happening, or not feeling welcome due to exclusion from community governance structures, to not being able to afford to take time out from their livelihood activities, or not being physically able to attend meetings.

In every society, there are power dynamics, and groups that may experience exclusion, making them more vulnerable to hazards and other threats. However, when all social groups are included, there are clear benefits for the individual, the household and the entire community.

D **Resource D** summarizes how the exclusion or inclusion of frequently marginalized social groups affects disaster risk.

Throughout this guide you will find guidance on how to ensure the involvement of people from all social groups. When we enquire about vulnerable and marginalized groups, and demonstrate an inclusive approach to facilitate their participation in the process, we are encouraging attitudes and actions that will ensure that DRM benefits the most vulnerable and lays the foundation for greater inclusion in other aspects of community life.

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PRINCIPLE 2: LEADERSHIP BY THE COMMUNITY

The men, women and children in communities that frequently experience disasters should be the ones who decide what changes, if any, to make in their community, households and lives, to reduce disaster risk.

Our approach, when facilitating any process in the community, should be to listen, learn and support the community members to achieve the changes *they* want. We respect the community members' knowledge, culture and preferences, and enable them to take the lead rather than trying to direct the action ourselves. This means encouraging the community members who are willing to manage the activities and processes described in this guide, and providing our inputs sensitively and flexibly, to help them develop their own capacities. It also means sharing successful DRM practices from other communities to stimulate discussion and innovation.

Throughout this guide you will find guidance such as “explain”, “ask”, “encourage” and “support”, because our role is to enable and empower with knowledge, skills and tools, not to lecture or control. Even the term “explain” can be empowering if you ask the participant to suggest an explanation, rather than reinforcing your role as “expert”. Often, they will explain in terms even easier for other participants to relate to. The information, analysis and decisions must be the community's, not ours. By taking this approach, you will facilitate a community-led process and sustainable change, not just a community-based project that ends when the funding source ends.

PRINCIPLE 3: PROMOTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY BY ALL INVOLVED

Accountability means upholding the responsibilities and commitments we have to each other, whether they are moral or legal or both.

In community-led disaster risk management, we aim to fulfil our commitment to being transparent and responsive to the community, and seeking their opinions and contributions through a formal system. We follow accountability standards: the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Disaster Response, and the Core Humanitarian Standard. In doing so we embrace our responsibility to include the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the community in all phases of CLDRM, and we help ensure that the community commits to being transparent, accountable and inclusive.

We also understand that the State has the primary responsibility to protect and assist its people, so we respect and facilitate the relationship between the community and their government.

Our approach, when facilitating any process in the community, should be to listen, learn and support the community members to achieve the changes *they* want.

We aim to fulfil our commitment to being transparent and responsive to the community, and seeking their opinions and contributions through a formal system.

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In the steps and facilitation tips for all the processes, you will find ways to put our commitment to accountability into practice.

E **Resource E** has a checklist you can use to help ensure you are putting into practice the principles of community-led, inclusive and accountable DRM.

S **Resource S** contains a list of selected documents, including tools, frameworks, manuals and other literature—from internal and external sources—that provide more information and guidance on some of the topics covered in this guide.

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Inclusion of all community members in DRM cash-for-work activities

When Cyclone Sidr caused extensive storm damage to the crops and fishing boats of about 45,000 people in coastal communities of Patuakhali District, Bangladesh, in 2007, Caritas obtained funding for a cash-for-work livelihoods restoration project. The community decided that the project should focus on reconstructing and raising damaged embankments and roads, and constructing a ring dam to protect against regular high tides and tidal surges.

The community leaders organized the cash-for-work activities in ways that enabled everyone to benefit from the project, including those with specific needs. They identified damaged roads that were closer to the community, and included on-site childcare facilities to enable nursing mothers and those with young children to participate. The elderly were offered service jobs such as providing drinking water to the workers, and people with limited mobility were offered tasks such as soil compaction. The leaders agreed with Caritas Bangladesh that men and women would be paid the same, instead of calculating wages in relation to the amount of soil moved, thus valuing all tasks equally.

The community leaders organized the cash-for-work activities in ways that enabled everyone to benefit from the project, including those with specific needs.

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Setting up the participation mechanism through clusters in a diverse community

Caritas Bangladesh implemented the disaster risk reduction project Amra-O-Pari (We too can!) between 2011 and 2013, in the coastal area of Kalapara, Patuakhali District, which had been repeatedly affected by cyclones and flooding, including Cyclone Sidr in 2007. After presenting the community-led disaster risk management initiative to the community leaders, local authorities and other key stakeholders in the project location, Caritas Bangladesh facilitators for the project (one man and one woman) organized community-level meetings. They publicized the times and locations of the meetings as widely as possible by distributing leaflets and announcing them in the streets using a megaphone. Thanks to these efforts, more than half of the adults in the community attended at least one of the launch meetings.

At the start of the CLDRM planning, the community members agreed to organize themselves into clusters of about 50 households each. These were defined by location: the fishing community lived close to the sea, and therefore formed one cluster, and those on each side of the canal that cut through the community formed separate clusters. As the clusters were quite far from each other, the facilitators carried out each process separately for each cluster, and then brought the results together in consensus meetings. If there were any contradictions or important differences, they were responsible for ensuring that each cluster had the opportunity to explain its position, and to ask and answer questions until they understood each other better and could reach agreement.

Within each cluster, one or more people agreed to be responsible for ensuring that all members of all households could participate in the processes. They organized subgroup meetings for men and women, helped people with disabilities to attend or to contribute via representatives, and publicly communicated the results of each meeting to the whole cluster.

In this way, the community was able to draw up a community-led disaster risk management plan that combined the inputs, priorities and solutions of the majority of households from all clusters.

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COMMUNITY-LED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE



Accountable government in early warning and evacuation for storms and floods

Coastal communities of Quang Nam Province in Vietnam were accustomed to periodic storms and flooding, but water levels were rising faster than in the past, partly because a recently built dam and hydroelectric power plants upstream released water during heavy rains.

Through their participation in disaster preparedness training held by CRS, the National Centre for People's Action in Disaster Preparedness (NCPDP) and the local authorities were aware of their responsibility to reduce disaster risk. They invited CRS to work with them and the communities to develop an appropriate early warning system and evacuation procedures. The NCPDP used rainfall data and discharge information from the dam and hydropower plant to develop flood scenarios for which early warnings would be broadcast. The community and local authorities, with support from CRS, used participatory processes to identify the households most at risk in each scenario, and possible evacuation routes and sites. These inputs were combined to develop a map and an evacuation plan for 34 communities.

The planning process encouraged all stakeholders to discuss the scenarios for the first time and agree on how they should respond to each alert level. Government-run drills enabled the community to practice evacuations and identify the need for additional support for elderly people and those with disabilities.

The maps and evacuation plans were displayed in public places in all at-risk villages of the five communes of Thang Binh and Dien Ban districts. The maps were used and then updated by all stakeholders after each flood event. Villages then conducted drills to help households practice following evacuation routes and procedures.

The community and local authorities, with support from CRS, used participatory processes to identify the households most at risk in each scenario, and possible evacuation routes and sites.

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COMMUNITY-LED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE



Child-centered disaster risk management through songs and games

During participatory risk assessments in the Solomon Islands, community representatives identified a wide range of hazards that affected their communities, including cyclones, floods, earthquakes and tsunamis. With support from Caritas facilitators, they analyzed ways in which men, women and children were vulnerable to the hazards, and decided that reducing risk to their children’s lives was a priority.

Further consultation with children, parents, teachers, people of all ages in the communities, and the National Disaster Management Office helped the community to develop the idea of making disaster risk reduction fun and educational for children. For kindergarten and primary school students, they adapted traditional nursery rhymes and playground games to incorporate life-saving messages about what to do during an emergency. With funding from Caritas Australia, the rhymes and games were made into a teachers’ handbook called *Singing our way to safety*.

The resources were improved and expanded through use by more than 1,000 children, teachers and leaders, and the project received the United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) inaugural Pacific Innovation & Leadership Award for Resilience (PILAR) to ensure the program continues to grow.



The community adapted traditional nursery rhymes and playground games to incorporate life-saving messages about what to do during an emergency.

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A teacher helps her class write a rhyme with a life-saving evacuation message to help them remember what to do in case of a disaster. Photo courtesy of Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia