Module 2c: Community resilience and climate

What is in this module?

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Photo: Climate Centre

Introduction

Communities in many parts of the world are already noticing changes to climate patterns or what the might call “funny weather” – unusual temperatures and unpredictable rainfall, particularly people who depend, for example, on rain-fed, agriculture.

With many National Societies engaged in community-based risk reduction, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (“the Movement”) has a tremendous opportunity to support practical climate change adaptation.

Discussing with communities during assessments about the changes they experience inspires strategies to deal with changes expected to continue and incorporate risk reduction developed through community risk-assessment into planning tools, such as Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments.

In addition, risk patterns are also affected by the way the environment is managed: land, soil and forest management; irrigation; water for livestock and people; and the management of the entire watersheds (river catchments) or coastal areas. This includes de- and reforestation, land use, industry, and infrastructure.

Possible “ecosystem services” include:

- Forests helping to control rainwater run-off and preventing flash floods, storing water in the soil.
- Trees holding the soil in place and reducing erosion, inhibiting landslides.
- Rivers providing water for all purposes and carrying nutrients to farm land.

How watersheds are managed affects hazards in many ways and is part of planning for risk management and resilience.

Urban and rural communities are affected by many factors, and holistic planning in relation to disaster risks means considering the effects of climate change and weather extremes along with adaptation and ecosystem management. This is “integrated risk management” (IRM), the basic operating model of the Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme.

This module, closely linked with *Module 2a: Disaster Management and Early Action*, provides insights on how to apply IRM within community assessments and resilience planning.

(See modules 1a and 1b, however, for more on the impacts on communities of changing weather, and climate and environmental management.)

Objective

The module aims to provide a clear understanding of how climate change and ecosystems can be incorporated into tools and planning for community-based risk management.

Products

1. PowerPoint presentations with explanatory notes

The PowerPoint presentation here includes a summary slide on helping communities translate assessment results, including scientific information, into a climate-smart plan to enhance resilience; it could double as a printed handout.

2. Games and exercises

In this section you will find four very different exercises to stimulate discussions:

- A group exercise on how to identify and review secondary data on climate and the environment prior to conducting the field assessment with communities. Note that the first part is identical to the exercise in Module 1a.
- An exercise in considering landscape elements in resilience programming.
- An exercise on the synergies and overlaps between disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation (CCA) and ecosystems management and restoration (EMR) – in relation to the practical actions in a community resilience plan. The exercise also explains overlaps with climate change mitigation.
- A real-life case study about how to consider community information and weather records and projections in a community resilience plan; this exercise includes a PowerPoint for the facilitator and some printout material.

The Ready! game in this module is a funny, energizing and effective discussion starter to help get started on preparing a community contingency plan for a key hazard. It helps participants brainstorm on preparedness priorities.

The game can easily be tailored to different contexts and it has add-ons for marginalized groups; the debrief can include early warnings and ways to upgrade the contingency plan so it is climate smart and geared to handle new extreme events.

3. Recommended films

In this section you will find two films – including '*Prepared communities are safer communities*' – on how the Red Cross Red Crescent prepares itself and vulnerable communities to step up disaster preparedness and adapt to extreme weather events.

In addition, there are short films from PfR on how to *integrate climate and environmental aspects in the community assessments*, and an introduction to the *Minimum Standards for local climate-smart disaster risk reduction*.

4. Experience from Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies

The main case studies are summarized in the 2018 IFRC publication *Case Studies: Red Cross Red Crescent Disaster Risk Reduction in Action – What Works at Local Level*, supplemented with, from 2016, *The IFRC and community resilience – Communication*

guidance for National Societies.

Three other case studies are included on combating drought in Syria, addressing climate change by the Tuvalu Red Cross, and incorporating rising sea-levels rise in community risk reduction plans in the Solomon Islands.

5. Frequently asked questions

The FAQ sheet for this module includes issues related to community DRR and CCA, as well as disaster management more broadly.

6. Relevant reading

This includes:

- A range of IFRC guidance documents, including
  - Framework for community resilience
  - Roadmap to community resilience
  - Community Early Warning System: Guiding Principles
- The Minimum standards for local climate-smart disaster risk reduction.
- Wetlands International's Criteria for Ecosystem-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
- The Community Risk Reduction chapter of the Climate Centre's Climate Guide
- Two documents from Partners for Resilience
  - Care's Integrated Risk Management explained
  - Care and Wetland International's A Landscape Approach for Disaster Risk Reduction.