

DISPLACEMENT, CLIMATE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

Climate Training



For key
concepts and
terms please
refer to Fact
Sheets 1, 2 & 3

Key messages:

- ▶ Preventing displacement from the adverse impacts of climate change and climate-related disasters involves addressing the underlying risks which make people more vulnerable to becoming displaced in the event of a hazard, and ensuring that people's rights are protected and respected.
- ▶ For the IFRC and National Societies this involves a number of inter-linking approaches around building community resilience, reducing disaster and climate risks, planned relocation, protection of vulnerable groups and advocacy.

Protection from climate-related displacement

Protecting people from displacement is described as the “primary goal” in the **Movement Policy on Internal Displacement** but often times displacement issues are only identified and addressed once displacement has already occurred.

Fortunately, there are many actions which can be taken in advance to prevent the necessity of displacement in the context of climate change and climate-related disasters.

The main approach of the IFRC and National Societies is to reduce the risks and adverse impacts of climate change and disasters, which also prevent the likelihood of people becoming displaced. This involves a number of inter-linking approaches around:

- ▶ Building community resilience.
- ▶ Reducing disaster and climate risks.
- ▶ Planned relocation.
- ▶ Protection of vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Advocacy.

Building community resilience

Building community resilience helps to address some of the underlying drivers of displacement and enables people to recover more quickly and avoid situations of protracted displacement.

Although not always targeted towards reducing the risks of climate-related displacement, the

extensive work of the IFRC and National Societies to build community resilience has a significant impact on reducing the likelihood of people becoming displaced by the adverse impacts of climate change and climate-related disasters.

What is resilience?

The IFRC defines resilience as, “the ability of individuals, communities, organizations or countries exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects.”

Source: IFRC (2014)
[Framework for Community Resilience](#)

At the centre of community resilience is enabling individuals and communities to make risk-informed decisions and take actions that improve their own well-being and development.

In the context of preventing climate-related displacement, this approach enables individuals and communities to access information about current and projected climate and disaster risks, as well as any pre-existing vulnerabilities, and determine how their health, livelihoods, shelter, local economies and other aspects of their lives may be impacted, now and in the future. Based on this information, communities are empowered to make—and advocate for support to—any necessary changes to ensure they are as resilient as possible to withstand those risks.

Building community resilience

Governments, development and humanitarian organisations and community-based networks can support these efforts through consistent investment and technical support where required.

Climate-smart disaster risk reduction

Climate-smart disaster risk reduction helps to prevent climate-related displacement by anticipating and reducing the impacts of triggering events which cause displacement such as a climate-related disaster or slow onset event.

In 2020 the IFRC launched a new **Strategy for Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction** to support the scaling up of climate-smart disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Some examples of activities which may help to prevent climate displacement include:

- ▶ Community-level risk assessments and action planning (e.g. Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment).
- ▶ Structural mitigation activities such as river-bank enhancement, strengthening bridges, safe evacuation centres, etc.
- ▶ Livelihoods support/diversification and social protection.
- ▶ Ecosystem-based DRR/nature-based solutions (e.g. protection and restoration of mangroves, reforestation of unstable slopes).
- ▶ Risk-informed shelter solutions.
- ▶ Anticipatory and risk-informed action; this includes planning for handling new extreme events such as unprecedented flood levels and heat waves.



Our strategic priorities

Vision. Vulnerable communities across the world become more resilient and better prepared for disasters and climate change impacts now and in the future

To achieve this goal, the IFRC network will deploy its worldwide network to scale up innovative and effective community-based/led disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate action programmes building on three decades of extensive experience in disaster and climate risk management and National Societies' unique mandate as auxiliary to governments.

Ambition. IFRC will mobilize a significant scale-up in climate-smart DRR activities led and managed by communities. Its activities will reach 100 million people by the end of 2020.

In 2018, IFRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies invested 207 million Swiss francs on DRR and climate change adaptation projects. Our programmes reached 52 million vulnerable people in 160 countries.

Implement, promote and enhance approaches and tools for community-based DRR and climate action.

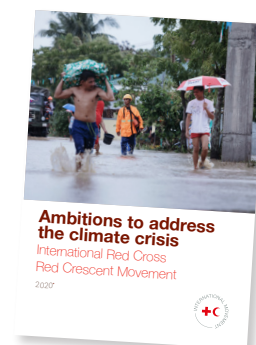
Leverage new technologies for community-based DRR and climate action.

Catalyse and capitalize on the IFRC network and volunteer base to scale up community-based DRR and climate action.

Enhance DRR and climate advocacy and partnerships.

The Movement's **Ambitions to address the climate crisis** also identifies the ways in which climate-related displacement can be addressed including:

- ▶ Enhancing the understanding of displacement, migration and planned relocation triggered by the effects of climate change and extreme weather events.
- ▶ Investing in initiatives that address the drivers of disaster-induced/climate change related mobility, including through more targeted DRR and CCA strategies that aim to prevent the conditions of displacement.
- ▶ Focusing on climate-induced displacement in and to urban contexts.



Planned relocation

Planned relocation

Planned relocation can be an important and life-saving climate change adaptation measure, but it must be done through a participatory and consultative process with affected communities.

IFRC Strategy 2030 places 'climate change and environmental crises' at the top of the five global challenges to be addressed, predicting they will make some regions uninhabitable, forcing large numbers of people to move.

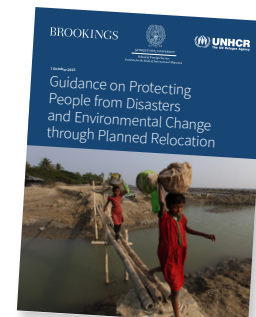
What is planned relocation?

Planned relocation is defined as: a planned process in which persons or groups of persons move or are assisted to move away from their homes or places of temporary residence, are settled in a new location, and provided with the conditions for rebuilding their lives. Planned relocation is carried out under the authority of the State, takes place within national borders, and is undertaken to protect people from risks and impacts related to disasters and environmental change, including the effects of climate change. Such planned relocation may be carried out at the individual, household, and/or community levels.

Source: [Guidance on Planned Relocation](#) (2015)

The [Guidance on Planned Relocation](#) (2015) sets out general principles to assist States and other actors to undertake planned relocations, with the aim of protecting people from disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change. It includes a number of key principles relating to the conditions and criteria under which planned relocations should be conducted. These include:

- ▶ That the relocation is for the benefit of relocated persons, which protects their rights and dignity.
- ▶ The need for compelling evidence-based reasons for the relocation and a sound legal basis for decision-making.
- ▶ The primary responsibility of States to prevent and remediate human rights violations, including through reducing disaster risk and the negative impacts of climate change.
- ▶ That people may request or challenge planned relocation before a court of law.
- ▶ That relocated people and host populations can maintain or improve their living standards.
- ▶ That planned relocation should be carried out in a manner which respects family unity, social cohesion and special attachment to land.



Planned relocation in Asia Pacific

Planned relocations are increasing in the Asia Pacific region and are being undertaken both before and after a sudden-onset or slow-onset hazard or disaster. For example, in Vietnam, the 'Living with Floods' programme is one of the largest planned relocation programmes in the world to date. The scheme relocated 200,000 households, comprising more than one million people, living in the permanently flooded areas of the Mekong delta, to more than 1,000 resettlement clusters.

Also, widely reported as one of the first pre-emptive community relocations due to climate change, in 2014, the village of Vunidogoloa in Fiji moved 2 km inland to a new site named Kenani. The relocation occurred after the construction of seawalls failed to prevent inundation and salt water intrusion onto community gardens occurring due to the combined effects of heavy rain and high tides.

Source: IFRC (2018) [Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate: The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies](#)

Planned relocation

It also includes more detailed guidance on some of the practical aspects of planned relocations including:

- ▶ Planning.
- ▶ Information, consultation, and participation.
- ▶ Measures pending and during physical relocation.
- ▶ Providing conditions for rebuilding lives through livelihood restoration and other services.
- ▶ Land and compensation.
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation.

The guidance also calls on States to adopt a comprehensive legal and policy framework for planned relocation, which is consistent with international law. The IFRC has also developed guidance on strengthening national legal frameworks regarding planned relocation (see further below).

Approach of the Movement

A particular area of concern for National Societies are requests from government to support planned relocations of communities due to the impact of climate change and disasters. Planned relocations must be approached with caution because they are not always well-managed and can result in a number of challenges, including:

- ▶ A lack of engagement with both relocating and host communities, which can lead to social tension.
- ▶ Loss of livelihoods, income and cultural heritage.
- ▶ A lack of resources to support effective relocation, leading to increased vulnerability.
- ▶ Issues concerning property ownership, kinship and customary beliefs and values.

The approach of the Movement is that:

- ▶ Evacuation and permanent relocation must be used as measures of last resort predicated on absolute necessity, imminent threat to life, physical integrity and health. They should be taken in keeping with international humanitarian law and human rights.

- ▶ Before taking part in any return or relocation programme, we must first make sure that the displaced persons concerned are informed of the details of the programme, in particular the living conditions and risks. Components of the Movement must also seek to obtain adequate knowledge of the situation in the place of return or relocation so as to avoid supporting any steps that might harm the persons concerned during and after their return.

Source: Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (2009)

[Policy on Internal Displacement](#)



Case study: Post-Tsunami relocation in the Maldives

In the Maldives, the IFRC and National Societies supported the Government of the Maldives to respond to the displacement caused by the 2004 Tsunami. One response included the planned permanent relocation of some 4,000 people, comprising the entire population of Kandholhudhoo, to neighbouring Dhuvaafaru, a previously uninhabited, but safer island. With the destruction of their home island, the population of Kandholhudhoo was displaced to over five separate islands, living with host families for four years while their new community was built. The new community comprised some 600 houses together with schools, a health centre, roads, water and sewage systems and an independent electricity supply.

Source: IFRC (2018) [Asia Pacific Report on Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate](#)

Image: Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

Planned relocation

Useful tools

As with all IFRC and National Society interventions in the context of displacement, community engagement and accountability (CEA) must be at the centre. CEA is the process of and commitment to providing timely, relevant and actionable information to communities. In particular the following tools are recommended:

- ▶ [Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability \(CEA\): Improving Communication, Engagement and Accountability in all we do](#)
- ▶ [IFRC Community Engagement and Accountability Toolkit](#)

Protection of vulnerable groups

Lack of protection for fundamental human rights is recognised as an important driver for displacement, and combined with other risks such as disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change, can increase the likelihood of people becoming displaced.

Protection is a key concept underpinning the **Movement Policy on Internal Displacement**, which recognises the connection between assistance and protection and the imperative to identify people whose “specific needs and rights must be promptly responded to.”

What is protection?

Protection is defined as “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. Human Rights law, IHL, refugee law).”

Source: ICRC. (2008). ICRC Protection Policy. International Review of the Red Cross. Vol. 90, No. 871, September 2008, since adopted by the IASC.

The IFRC and National Societies have always been engaged in protection in different ways and there are an array of tools and guidance on protection issues to support National Societies.

IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues

provides specific, strategic direction to the IFRC to ensure that its actions are non-discriminatory towards people of all ages and to promote gender equality and respect for diversity throughout all of its work. Outcome 3 aims to reduce gender- and diversity-based inequality, discrimination and violence through the active promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.

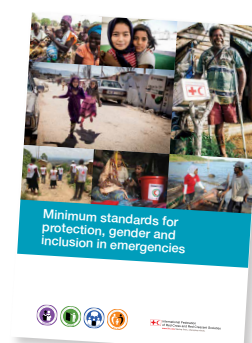
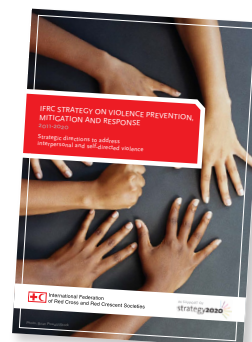
IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention

Mitigation and Response provides specific strategic directions for addressing self-directed and interpersonal violence, including urban violence (excluding armed conflict and internal strife). The strategy acknowledges the particular risks posed by climate change:

- ▶ Climate change threatens sustainable development, potentially deepening children's poverty and increasing their vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and displacement.
- ▶ Alarming increases in the rates of child abuse and family violence have been reported after disasters in various parts of the world.
- ▶ Violence is likely to be as a consequence of climate change, leading to increasingly scarce resources and environmental degradation.

Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies

provide practical guidance on activities linked to the concepts of dignity, access, participation and safety for all people affected by disaster and crises. In particular this identifies marginalised groups which have specific needs and vulnerabilities or are at risk of exclusion. This includes: older people, children (including adolescents), persons with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities, persons with mental health disabilities, survivors of SGBV, victims of trafficking and people living with HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses. Further details are included in Fact Sheet 9 of this series.



Protection of vulnerable groups

Minimum Protection Approach was finalized by the Advisory Board of the Protection Community of Practice in June 2019. It is intended to support National Societies confronted by protection problems that they themselves are not able to address. The key elements of this approach are: a) Establishing internal escalation pathways and protection focal points; b) Referring individual cases and issues to a relevant protection actor ensuring informed consent of the individual(s) concerned; c) Dialogue and advocacy with authorities on individual or systemic protection concerns where possible and appropriate; d) Directly meeting individuals' needs arising from protection concerns through service provision.

A **Movement Framework on Protection** is currently under development, which seeks to capture and reflect the different mandates and capacities of the component of the Movement.

Advocacy

Principle 5 of the Movement Policy on Internal Displacement specifically affirms the Movement's commitment to advocacy and empowering individuals and communities by "helping them to exercise their rights." The commentary to the policy draws attention to four groups of relevant rights:

- ▶ Rights relating to physical safety and integrity (eg. right to life, freedom from torture, assault and rape).
- ▶ Rights to basic necessities (eg. food, water, health care, shelter).
- ▶ Other economic, social and cultural rights (eg. right to work and education, compensation for loss of property).
- ▶ Other civil and political rights (eg. to obtain personal documentation, political participation, non-discrimination).

Advocacy includes for example public or targeted awareness campaigns and public statements about rights and protection issues. The IFRC supports National Societies to undertake these roles through the provision of training and advisory support when requested and raising key issues for the attention of the international community.

Legal advocacy on protection and climate displacement

The IFRC Disaster Law Program has been leading internal and global efforts to advocate for legislative improvements and reform on a range of issues relevant to protection, as well as specific issues for the prevention of climate-related displacement and planned relocation. In particular it has developed a set of Legal Checklists to further support this process and conducted global research on effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters.



Clockwise from top left: The Checklist on Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response; The Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction; Global Study: Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters; Climate and Disaster Displacement: The Importance of Disaster Law and Policy (2020).

Recommendations

IFRC recommendations for national laws and/or policies:

Protection

- ▶ Include gender considerations and the special needs of particularly vulnerable categories of persons; and adequate mechanisms to ensure that responsibilities are fulfilled, and rights are protected.
- ▶ Include measures to address common problems that arise in the context of shelter assistance in relation to housing, land and property (HLP) rights.
- ▶ Ensure that vulnerable groups are included in, and protected by, disaster preparedness and response activities.

Preventing disaster and climate-related displacement

- ▶ Address the reduction of the risk of disaster and climate-related displacement.
- ▶ Include provisions on persons displaced by disasters and the effects of climate change.
- ▶ Mandate contingency planning for internal displacement caused by disasters and the effects of climate change.
- ▶ Include the identification, entry, stay and entitlements of cross-border disaster-displaced persons in a way which is consistent with human rights law.
- ▶ Provide for cross-border disaster-displaced persons, including vulnerable displaced groups, to receive protection and assistance to meet their basic needs during their stay.
- ▶ Establish criteria for determining when and under which circumstances cross-border disaster displaced persons may be returned, which are consistent with international human rights law and/or develop law or policy regulating durable solutions for cross-border disaster displaced persons.

Planned relocation

- ▶ Establish a comprehensive framework for undertaking planned relocations.
- ▶ Ensure the framework includes the following provisions:
 - establish that planned relocation should be used as a measure of last resort and be conducted in accordance with relevant human rights;
 - entitle potentially relocated persons to legally challenge a planned relocation;
 - mandate a participatory approach to planned relocation involving all affected persons, including relocated persons and host populations;
 - require that planned relocations improve, or maintain, the livelihood opportunities and living standards of relocated persons and host populations; and
 - require that planned relocation mitigates adverse impacts on persons who live in close proximity to the areas from which persons are relocated.



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