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OUR EXPERTISE

# Inclusive disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation



## Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation at a glance:

Over the last two decades, 218 million people each year have been affected by disasters; at an annual cost to the global economy in excess of \$300 billion.<sup>1</sup> Disasters are likely to become more frequent. Indeed, climate change increases the intensity and frequency of weather events in some areas, especially in the coastal areas which are home to the majority of the world's population. When disaster strikes, the most at-risk populations, including people with disabilities, are disproportionately affected. For example, according to the UN, only 1 person with disabilities in 5 worldwide is capable of evacuating without difficulty in the event of a disaster.<sup>2</sup> Disasters usually means higher mortality for women than men, young people and the elderly make up a large proportion of those affected. For instance, following the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka, mortality among children under five was double that of adults over 50 years old.<sup>3</sup> Fully aware of this situation, HI has been active in implementing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for the last 15 years. Its interventions expanded in the mid-2000s in Asia and are now also deployed in more than 15 countries mainly in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the years, HI has learned from its experience, using different intervention methods, all of which have contributed to strengthening our strategy of inclusive DRR and furthering climate change adaptation.

# Disaster Risk Reduction: what are we talking about?

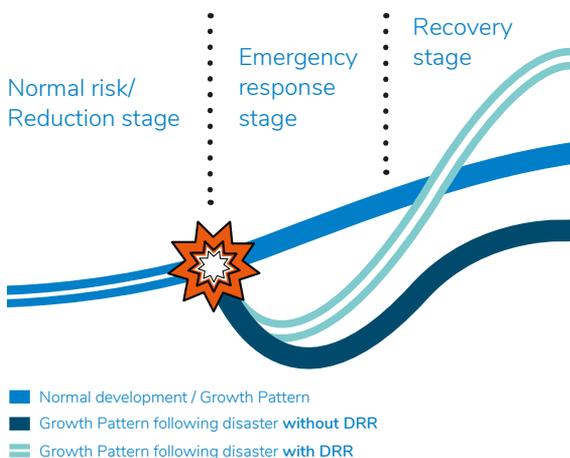
Hazards may be inevitable, but disasters can be prevented and their negative impact reduced. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) consists of analysing and managing the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lower levels of vulnerability and poverty, intelligent management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events<sup>4</sup>.

**“We need to be proactive, by managing the risks, not just disasters”**

In this sense, risk is only considered as a probability of harmful consequences (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human induced hazards, the vulnerability conditions and the capacities of the group concerned. The objective of anticipating and reducing the potential impact of hazards relies on a global process to build the resilience of people and communities, involving at least three stages: risk reduction, emergency response and recovery.

## The effective disaster risk reduction diagram

Adapted from: Chris Piper, TorqAid: The Effectiveness DRR Diagram, 2010



<sup>1</sup> World Humanitarian Summit, Synthesis of the consultation process, 2016

<sup>2</sup> “Disability gender & age are universal determinants that interact and have an impact on the realisation of rights: they generate differences in people’s needs, exposure to risk, capacities, powers and capabilities, whatever the contexts and crises” (HI “Introduction to Disability, Gender and Age Policy”, November 2018).

<sup>4</sup>Source: UNISDR

# Why does HI intervene in inclusive DRR?

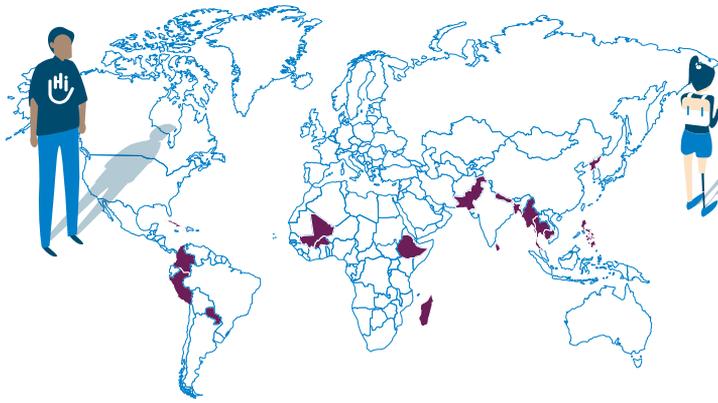
Disasters occur where hazard, vulnerability and capacity combine. Vulnerability is therefore a key concept in DRR, which goes beyond mere exposure to a hazard, to include physical, social, economic and environmental factors. Worldwide, some countries tend to be disproportionately impacted by disasters, and the same applies at regional and community level.

Indeed, faced with the same hazard, some individuals will be affected by more loss, injury or death. They will have a lower capacity to anticipate, cope with, and recover from the impact. And at the time of disaster, they tend to be invisible in the emergency registration systems and excluded from disaster management efforts. A 2013 global survey of 5,450 respondents with disabilities from 126 countries demonstrated that only 20% of respondents could evacuate immediately without difficulty.

# How does HI intervene in inclusive DRR?

Over the past 15 years, HI has become an inclusive DRR practitioner, directly implementing inclusive DRR projects and building the capacities of DRR actors, against the backdrop of climate change.

HI proposes two main intervention methods: the first consists of providing technical assistance to the other DRR stakeholders (NGOs, governmental agencies or donors), to improve their capacity to propose inclusive risk reduction solutions and ensure the full participation of the most at risk populations (notably persons with disabilities, women, young people and elderly people) throughout the disaster risk reduction process.<sup>5</sup> HI’s second DRR intervention method requires the organisation to intervene directly at community level, in line with civil protection services, as a DRR actor and expert. This method is used exclusively to implement specific inclusive DRR activities (through prevention, mitigation and disaster preparedness activities), based on an integrated approach, making good use of other sectors of intervention to promote resilience at every step of the risk management process.



16 COUNTRIES  
20 PROJECTS

SEE MAP SHOWN

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## Directly implementing inclusive DRR projects in the most-at risk geographical areas

### EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

Since 2016, in Pakistan, HI has been working to strengthen the resilience of communities in the province of Sindh who are among the most vulnerable to natural hazards.

With support from our organisation and its partners, the communities involved in this project have been able to adapt their economic activities (agriculture, fishing and livestock) to climate change. They are monitoring natural hazards and are better informed in the event of an alert. Local committees sound the alarm, evacuate and rescue all the families. These safety protocols have been accompanied by the pre-positioning of emergency equipment. Community shelters have been rehabilitated and retrofitted to ensure their accessibility<sup>1</sup>.

Since 2014, in Haiti, HI has been providing risk management capacity building to local actors in order to better serve vulnerable individuals, including people with disabilities in the south-east and north-west regions of the country.

The project is developing a multi-scale approach that consists of improving people's understanding of natural disaster risks (broadcasting radio ads, information tools etc.); strengthening the capacities of farmers, herdsmen and fishermen to cope with cyclones and floods; and finally, preparing communities and departmental actors for emergency risk management. The development of family contingency plans is supported with warning and monitoring equipment allocations and shelter renovations<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> BMZ Funding

## Building the capacities of DRR stakeholders to be more inclusive of the most vulnerable populations

### EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

Since 2017, in Madagascar, HI has been supporting CARE to reinforce the community resilience of the most vulnerable populations in the eastern and western regions of the country, which are prone to annual cyclones and floods.

With the financial support of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), both partners work alongside a number of municipalities, communities and civil protection entities to better assess the natural risks of disasters and to develop local action plans to reduce the potential impacts of such hazards on communities. Early warning systems have been reinforced and the local teams equipped, even in schools, to better manage alerts, evacuations and emergency situations. In this project, HI's role involves providing technical assistance to CARE, to improve our partner's capacity to propose inclusive DRR solutions at every step of the project, especially for persons with reduced mobility.

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