

# The added value of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies **in the development of National Adaptation Plans**



In 2016 representatives from the National Societies of Armenia, Georgia, Kenya, Malawi and Nepal gathered in Marrakech alongside the UN COP 22 climate talks for a writeshop convened by the IFRC and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre to share experience and generate case studies showing their involvement with their countries' National Adaptation Plans. This collection of papers, gathered with the support of the Danish Red Cross, is the fruit of that collaboration.

**The Nepal Red Cross Society developed information, education and communication materials and a poster and distributed them in the communities to raise awareness of people about climate risk and adaptation.** (Photo: NRCS)

---

# The added value of National Societies in the development of National Adaptation Plans

## **Armenia, Georgia, Kenya, Malawi and Nepal**

**This edition of the work done by National Societies of Kenya, Malawi, Georgia, Armenia and Nepal in implementing the project “Addressing the needs of the vulnerable people in national and global policy dialogue” in their countries is intended to showcase how Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are better placed and considering their auxiliary role to bring forward the voices of the local communities to the frontline decision-making processes.**

Since 2015, the Danish Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre have together provided support to the National Societies of Armenia, Georgia, Kenya, Malawi and Nepal, aimed at strengthening their capacity to support governments in elaborating their National Adaptation Plans (NAP), and specifically to help ensure the adaptation needs of the most vulnerable people are duly considered in national planning and policies.

### **The Red Cross Movement together with governments during the 2007 International Conference have committed to:**

- Raising awareness on climate change
- Providing humanitarian assistance
- Improving capacities to respond
- Reducing vulnerability of communities most strongly affected
- Integrating climate risk management into plans and policies
- Mobilising human and financial resources, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, the reference centre of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement on climate change issues, also helps the work of National Societies by providing tools and important connections linking science, policy and practice in responding to the humanitarian consequences of climate change and extreme weather events.

The IFRC also provided technical support and tools to National Societies and distributed guidance on how to engage with NAP globally.

NAPs outline the medium- to long-term adaptation priorities of a country. The NAP process is a flexible one, building on the existing adaptation interventions and further integrating climate change into decision-making as agreed by the parties to the UNFCCC in 2011 in Durban, and later decided at the 2012 with technical guidelines for developing countries.

The NAPs were seen as an entry point to influencing national and global policy trajectories in favour of local adaptation, following the increasing vulnerability in the face of climate risks and the growing need to further support adaptation of local communities to uncertainty, including unpredictable and hostile weather conditions as acknowledged in the international climate change negotiations since 2007.

A wealth of information, including the latest IPCC reports, showed the impacts of climate change as being felt across the globe, partly as increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events further undermining livelihoods of the most vulnerable people and communities.

This project was therefore developed to follow the development of NAPs as an entry point in bringing forward experiences of the local and most at risk communities' adaptation needs to influence policy and planning using the experiences from the five pilot National Societies of Armenia, Georgia, Kenya, Malawi and Nepal.

Efforts over the last two years have showed how National Societies are better placed to mobilise civil society voices for policy dialogue purposes as these case studies demonstrate.

Tools for strengthening the capacity of volunteers and staff on how to conduct humanitarian diplomacy on climate vulnerability and adaptation needs have been developed for further integration in ongoing work of the National Societies. They have engaged their governments and other civil society partners in understanding further the local adaptation requirements, and how to consider them in planning and policy formulation at various levels. National Societies have also interacted with their governments at various opportunities including at the annual UN climate talks.

The Danish Red Cross supports National Societies in risk-prone countries through short-term relief when crises develop as well as long-term community-based resilience interventions that further look at strengthening the capacities of local partners. The National Societies have also implemented vulnerability and capacity assessments that make them well aware of challenges to adaptation, including possible ways to respond to the prevailing climate risks.

The project targeted the decision-makers at various levels, but mainly national and sub-national levels, assisting them in promoting the safety and resilience of the most vulnerable people.

As the case studies below reveals, the five pilot National Societies have worked hard within their specific contexts to bring their knowledge on local vulnerability to the attention of policy makers and engage in the national adaptation planning processes:

- **In Armenia**, while remote areas continue to suffer flood impacts, the Armenian Red Cross Society has facilitated dialogues on adaptation planning and also followed the formulation and implementation of the nationally determined contributions.
- **In Georgia**, communities continue to face more extreme heatwaves and extended dry spells including uneven precipitation changes, the National Society has engaged in local adaptation planning. The NAP project has been funded by a grant to Danish Red Cross from the Danish Climate and Environment Fund managed by 'Civil Society in Development', CISU.
- **In Kenya**, communities continue to face devastating consequences with droughts and flooding and the Kenya Red Cross has successfully mobilized other civil society voices to engage in adaptation planning and advocate for directing adaptation finances towards vulnerability reduction.
- **In Malawi**, while communities living in flood plains and lower shire areas are particularly vulnerable to droughts and flooding, the Malawi Red Cross Society has worked hard in mobilizing civil society and disseminating the possible impacts to influence adaptation planning.
- **In Nepal**, while communities continue to suffer from increased soil erosion, landslides, flash flooding and droughts, the Nepalese Red Cross has influenced the development of the NAP to ensure focus on reducing possible impacts of erratic weather.

# Bridging the divide

## The Armenian Red Cross as a convener for climate change adaptation



Armenia is considered one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. As a landlocked country with six different climate zones within its territory (ranging from semi-desert to alpine), it is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many communities living in mountainous regions and in remote areas are already severely impacted by climate change, as they are dependent on agriculture and affected by changing water quality and flow.

Final workshop on the development of a local adaptation plan of action, July 2016, in Gyumri. (Photo: ARCS)



Recent floods in Gegharquniq and Shirak demonstrated the acute vulnerability of communities in remote areas.<sup>1</sup> As the largest humanitarian organization in Armenia working alongside the most vulnerable communities for many years, the Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS)<sup>2</sup> has recognized the humanitarian consequences of climate change, and since 2013 became intensely involved in climate adaptation issues and implementing various projects.

Although ARCS work in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has long been recognized by the Ministry of Emergency Situations, ARCS

1 Relief Web updates, at <http://updates58288.rssing.com/channel/54562273/latest.php#item1>.

2 The Armenian Red Cross Society is a non-governmental organization in Armenia with 11 regional and 52 community branches. It implements various programmes including disaster risk management, first aid and health, and social and youth-related work.

working relationships with the Ministry of Nature Protection have been established relatively recently. Nevertheless, within just three years, ARCS has become recognized for being a convener in the area of climate change – bridging the divide among vulnerable communities, non-governmental organizations (NGO), local and national governments and international actors. Through performing this facilitative role, the ARCS has been able to secure engagement in the current National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process run by the Ministry of Nature Protection. In turn, this will ensure the needs and voices of the most at-risk communities are considered in national and international decision-making and policy-making processes.

Work on the sub-granting process, ARCS headquarters, July 2016. (Photo: ARCS)



The aim of this case study is to demonstrate how the ARCS has been able to perform this convening role on climate change and facilitate engagement of civil society actors within climate change adaptation. In addition to keeping regular communication with NGOs, international organizations and the government, the ARCS took a number of concrete steps. These steps included mapping of relevant organizations working in the field of climate change, establishing the Armenian Climate Forum, bringing the perspectives of vulnerable communities to the attention of policy-makers, capacity building of staff and other stakeholders, participating in global policy dialogue, and engaging NGOs in sub-granting process.

## 1. Conducting an organizational mapping and establishing the Armenian Climate Forum

The ARCS started by conducting an organizational mapping in order to determine relevant NGOs working in the field and inviting them to take part in the newly established Armenian Climate Forum. At least 16 organizations from different areas and regions responded to the invitation and became members of the forum by signing an MOU institutionalizing their engagement, and a further six are currently awaiting registration. The ARCS has taken responsibility for running this forum, ensuring regular communication with its members to inspire and stimulate their active participation in the forum.

## 2. Bringing community perspectives to the attention of policy-makers

While developing a local plan of action for adaptation for three pilot vulnerable communities, ARCS organized an observation visit for Armenian Climate Forum member organizations, relevant state and international organizations' representatives including the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS), the UNFCCC<sup>3</sup> focal point and other stakeholders. The aim of this visit was to bring to their attention the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable people. It also strengthened the role of the ARCS in implementing small-scale adaptation projects for vulnerable communities, with the National Society now continually receiving requests from other communities and regional municipalities to include them in its ongoing project activities.

Thus this initiative of engaging the communities themselves increased the level of interest and attention toward vulnerable people in Armenia, and at the same time increased the credibility of the ARCS as an organization that can help connect community-level voices and needs to national and regional decision-making and planning. The ARCS will continue to support the development of local adaptation plan and ensure their incorporation into community plans including by arranging further visits for government officials.

“The climate of the planet is drastically changing causing negative impact on vulnerable people, particularly those from remote areas, so that only professional approach in covering CCA issues in regard to the vulnerable people might ensure effective outcome by truly addressing their conditions and voices,” said Kristine Sahakyan, a local journalist currently running her own NGO.

## 3. Capacity building of ARCS staff and other stakeholders

Further demonstrating its active role in the field, the ARCS initiated a joint seminar for journalists with the Clima East project implemented by UNDP.<sup>4</sup> The event sought to increase the awareness of journalists of possible climate change stories in the media. As a result, print and social media, together with TV and radio has broadly covered the event and some important issues discussed including devastating impact of climate change on vulnerable communities.

At around the same time, the Khazer NGO, with the support of ARCS has organized a conference entitled ‘Toward Paris: Armenia on the threshold of the 21st Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC’, with the OSCE,<sup>5</sup> UNDP and the

3 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

4 United Nations Development Programme.

5 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

French embassy as co-organizers. During the conference, a project called 'Addressing the needs of most vulnerable people in the national and global policy dialogue through the Red Cross network' was presented to 120 participants representing NGOs, community authorities from the regions, international organizations, government institutions and media. Hasmik Hovhannisyanyan, a representative of the NGO Shushan stressed that "one of the most important messages was prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable people and ensuring the attention of the many high-level participants is paid to that issue".

After the success of this conference, ARCS organized similar conference entitled 'Toward Marrakech' to discuss urgent issues regarding current state of Paris Agreement in Armenia, and challenges and opportunities. This led to increased interest from the participants in ARCS experience in conducting awareness-raising activities on climate change in schools and among youth.

Moreover, ARCS will organize the first introduction/awareness raising seminar on the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for relevant stakeholders from local and international organizations, universities and the government. This event is of particular importance as it will specifically cover issues related to IPCC and UNFCCC linkages and also the ongoing and planned SHS activities within IPCC.

Lastly, training on negotiation has been arranged by the ARCS for its own staff and the Armenian Climate Forum member organizations within the framework of the Danish-supported NAP project<sup>6</sup> to increase their capacity in the regions and in the Armenian Climate Forum. The main purpose is to improve negotiation skills to allow them to successfully engage with governmental and local and international organizations on adaptation.

#### 4. Contributing to global policy dialogue

The participation of ARCS in global policy dialogue has also been instrumental in positioning the society within the field of climate change. Meeting with officials in Lima and Paris, talking about the issues and bringing the attention of government toward the most vulnerable, has all allowed the ARCS to position itself at a high level in communication with government and non-governmental organizations.

Moreover, taking part in annual UN climate meetings enabled the ARCS to discuss climate issues directly with government officials. The ability to harmonize our voice on climate change with the wider Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has also helped to increase the National Society's reputation as a credible player in the climate change field. It allows it to be perceived as a reliable partner to the government in this field and implement its activities according the Red Cross Red Crescent mandate.

This was demonstrated by the invitation the ARCS received to participate in a workshop organized by the Ministry of Nature Protection to discuss Armenia's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution in 2015. After the workshop the ARCS developed 11 recommendations, in cooperation with IFRC and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre experts and presented them to the relevant ministry. The ARCS will continue to follow up on their recommendations through the NAP process.

<sup>6</sup> Here the Red Cross NAP project referred to "addressing the needs of vulnerable people in the national and global policy dialogue through the Red Cross network".

## 5. Supporting the work of local civil society partners

Starting from 2015 the Austrian Red Cross and ARCS began an initiative to provide small grants for local NGOs who are members of the Armenian Climate Forum, in order to increase the capacity of the platform and NGOs to contribute to national and local policy-making processes, public awareness and education on climate change and environmental governance.

Currently five grants – for the preparation of awareness raising materials, health and climate change, policy analysis, and the development of the local plan of action – have been provided and the relevant projects completed. The ARCS takes responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and reporting, meaning that NGOs are closely working with the National Society to reach the highest level of efficiency.

Edmon Azaryan, the Head of ARCS Disaster Management and Population Movement Department notes that the ARCS has been able to adopt this oversight role because of its long-standing experience and reputation as a reliable partner. The strong relationship ARCS has with the DRR national platform and hydrometeorological service, complemented by its information-sharing and efforts to ensure wide stakeholder engagement have ensured the effective implementation of the different projects.

**Damage to houses after the mudslide in Artik city, June 2016, Shirak region. (Photo: ARCS)**



## 6. Participating in the NAP process

As a result of the active role taken by ARCS on climate change issues over the past year and a half, the ARCS was invited by the Clima East project to take part in an National Adaptation Policy discussions in August 2016. It is worth to note that ARCS is now considered to be an organization that continuously promotes issues centering on the needs of most vulnerable. While being engaged in the NAP development process, the ARCS will continue its efforts toward bringing the voices of most vulnerable to a higher level while highlighting their needs in adaptation policy documents. It's worth noting that during this workshop the National Society was invited for the first time to participate on discussions over the 'Fourth National Communication' to be held later in 2016.

## Conclusion

By facilitating the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in climate change issues in Armenia, providing a platform for discussion, and seeking to bring the voices and needs of the most vulnerable to the forefront of the discussion, the ARCS has been able to position itself as a strong and reliable partner in work on climate change adaptation in Armenia. Its strong relationship with the DRR National Platform and the SHS services was particularly important in that respect, allowing the society to both reach out to different partners and ensure their work was connected and based on primary data and science on climate change in Armenia.

Furthermore, the opportunity to provide small grants to other local partners helped to ensure sustained engagement of the forum members, the institutionalization of members' work, and the promotion of NGO engagement in longer term adaptation processes.

The ARCS will continue to play this role as convener in the NAP processes, maintaining regular communication with interested partners, sharing information, and supporting capacity building, in order to ensure the needs of those most vulnerable are prioritized in the NAP process in Armenia.

Contact: [www.redcross.am](http://www.redcross.am)

# Georgia Red Cross Society

## in joint action for climate change adaptation



### Introduction: the case for prioritizing climate change adaptation in Georgia

The aim of the present case study is to give the general overview of the successful cooperation and coordination among different stakeholders working on climate change issues in Georgia over the last few years. It examines the specific impacts that were achieved to reduce the vulnerability of the population, while listing key steps taken to achieve this result. A guiding thread throughout this experience has been the close involvement of multiple partners at every level, including local stakeholders, civil society organisations (CSOs), government representatives and international organisations.

The Republic of Georgia is characterized by a great diversity of climatic conditions, due to its mountainous geography. Likhi Ridge, cutting through the centre of the country, divides the territory into two regions with dramatically differing climate – humid subtropical west Georgia and its eastern part, primarily dry subtropics. Each of these climatic regions has specific hazards, with the number of disasters following worrying trends. For instance, while high precipitation in some parts of the country increasingly leads to landslides and floods, heat waves causing forest fires and droughts affect other parts of the country. During the last 25 years, average annual temperature in West Georgia increased by 0.3°C, and in East Georgia the increase has been of 0.4- 0.5°C.<sup>1</sup>

The need for the strong cooperation and coordination on climate adaptation between the government and the Red Cross became only too clear during the June 2015 Tbilisi Floods. The floods, unusual in their suddenness and unpredictability, took 23 lives and 2 people went missing. While no one expected such a major disaster in the centre of the capital city, it was obvious that no actions had been taken over the last few years to mitigate the impact such catastrophic hazards.

### [The National Adaptation Plan process and the contribution of the National Society](#)

The National Adaptation Plan process is the primary statement of national adaptation needs and priorities related to climate change in Georgia. The process has allowed for a central national adaptation programme led by Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection. This ministry is responsible to

<sup>1</sup> Source: Georgia's third national communication to the UNFCCC.

formulate plans, implement them and monitor progress, in order to inform further actions. The national coordinating mechanism in Georgia defines the modalities for the country approach and coordinates incoming efforts to ensure a sustainable adaptation approach in line with the national vision for climate-resilient development.

The Georgia Red Cross Society (GRCS) has been one of the main organisations assisting vulnerable groups to cope with the effects of these recent extreme weather events and other socio-economic crises, through a network of 39 local branches. Its role proved critical to the national discussion around climate change adaptation in Georgia, particularly around two topics: firstly, the Red Cross helped ensure that the local adaptation perspectives that emanate from the local assessments are included in the district and national plans and policies; and secondly, the inclusion of a variety of stakeholders ensured that there would be a balance between national interests and local interests in national adaptation plans.

GRCS is now working closely with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection on the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). This plan aims to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience and to facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation, in a coherent manner. GRCS has a particular role in this process as it is the only non-state actor included in the Civil Security National Plan (# 508 resolution of the Prime Minister, 2015) with clearly defined functions. As part of that role, the GRCS chairs regular meetings with NGOs active in the field of disaster management, together with the Emergency Management Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

However, this engagement in the NAP process stems from an earlier commitment to climate change issues. Since 2012, GRCS has committed to tackle both the causes and the effects of climate change as one of its institutional priorities. It has been implementing the Climate Forum East II project, which aims to increase the capacity of national CSO Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) networks and individual CSO network members to contribute to national and local policy making processes, public awareness raising, and education on Climate Change and environmental governance. As part of that project, a CSO network was established with 20 organizations; 5 sub-grants were awarded to the members for the development of local action plans, small scale adaptation projects (e.g. energy saving stoves), the development of case studies, the analysis of current national policies around climate change and public health, as well as a national media campaign. The CSOs signed a joint MoU on the cooperation in the Climate Change field.

Also starting in 2012, the “Building Safe and Resilient Communities” project became an opportunity to elaborate a roadmap for a Heat Wave Action Plan (HAP). The document was developed in close cooperation with National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC). It aims to give an overview of climate change in Georgia, looking at heat waves and the influence of climate change influence on health. It also includes general recommendations for the most vulnerable population during the Heat waves and the plan of action according to the Heat Waves phases (Green, Yellow, Orange and Red). The document was submitted to the Ministry of Labour, Social and Health Affairs to include HAP in the country plan.

At local level, within its ongoing DRR projects, the GRCS developed in 2016 a Holistic Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) approach, which includes Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation measures. Holistic VCA will be implemented in 15 branches/municipalities and it will give wider picture of the vulnerable community. This approach would be used as a basis for raising their voices in Adaptation plans and policies.

At national level, the GRCS is supporting the government to design new and existing policies, programmes and activities, in particular development planning processes and strategies, within all relevant sectors and with partners at different levels, including CSOs, international organizations and the Government.

In June 2016, within the NAP project, training was provided to facilitate NAP stakeholder discussions with their government and other organizations/ stakeholders. This was aimed at promoting Humanitarian diplomacy efforts on Climate Change, with the NAP as an entry point. The workshop helped expand the skills of the participants in understanding climate change and taking concrete actions. This became an opportunity for the National Society to reflect the local population's adaptation needs throughout the adaptation planning discussions. Previous climate trainings organised by the GRCS have previously had unexpected results, as in the case of the Kvareli branch in 2015 (see *box*).

Participants all recognised that the risks facing the world are serious, especially to those who are the most vulnerable. The main lesson from the project – that everyone, each at their own level, needs to start to do something today to decrease the impact from the climate change tomorrow – was clearly put in practice on that day.

## **BOX**

### **The story of a climate change adaptation idea**

One day, a Georgia Red Cross volunteer, 23-year-old Lasha Shashiashvili, came to his local Kvareli Branch office with a clear suggestion for an environment project, which in turn would be beneficial for the wider community. His idea was to make the surrounding areas and living spaces greener through reforestation efforts.

The idea was generated after he attended a training on Climate Change Adaptation. The training clearly highlighted the current negative impacts of climate change for nature and humankind. The training presented data and explained the dramatic situation facing the world, convincing Lasha to take concrete actions that could be carried out in everyday life.

The management of the local Red Cross branch supported his suggestions and organised meetings with relevant services. The forest department of Kvareli Municipality agreed to provide seedlings of linden trees for free. Local authorities provided the location for planting the seedlings. The Kvareli branch mobilised 30 volunteers to participate in the event.

On the 15th of March 2015, Red Cross Volunteers, representatives of local authorities, local forest service, community members and other public services gathered to plant 1,200 linden trees alongside with the Telavi-Kvareli main road. The motivation of volunteers and participants was very high and the event proved to be fun as well. During the planting the trees, volunteers decided on an ad hoc basis to clean the area from the garbage and waste.

## Conclusion

The participatory approach described in this case study, involving multiple stakeholders such as the Red Cross and Governmental structures, has already had positive results, leading to the consensus that climate change events should be organised more often. Drafting joint documents, holding policy level meetings and conducting concrete activities all contribute to the implementation of the National Adaption Plan process in an inclusive manner. For the Red Cross itself, this process has proved to be a very good model for cooperation with different governmental entities and departments to achieve the common goal of joint actions towards Climate Change Adaptation.

Contact: [www.redcross.ge/en/contact](http://www.redcross.ge/en/contact)

---

# Influencing National Adaptation Plans

## The experience of the Kenya Red Cross



### Introduction

Drought was experienced in Kenya between 2008-2011 resulting to 3.7 million people in need of food assistance, clean water and basic sanitation and creating an economic loss of 12 billion dollars (Post Disaster Needs Assessment, 2011). Subsequently the Government of Kenya declared drought in 2014 (IFRC drought appeal 2014) and reports in 2016 indicate of an impending drought (FEWSNET, 2016). The frequency of floods has increased with flooding being experienced almost on an annual basis (KRCS emergency operations centre). 2015/2016 saw an increase in flash flooding mainly in the urban areas (KRCS El Niño monitoring reports 2016). The intensity and frequency of these events is expected to continue as global climate continues to change.

To minimize the impacts of climate change requires adaptation. More so at the local level where the impacts of climate change are felt. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process as a way to facilitate adaptation planning in least developed countries (LDCs) and other developing countries. Kenya has developed a National Adaptation Plan that integrates climate change adaptation into the medium term plans for Kenya Vision 2030 and also mainstream adaptation into county integrated development plans. The Medium term plans are 5 year plans to implement Flagship Projects identified under Kenya Vision 2030 document as well as other key policies and programmes. Climate finance is a critical factor in supporting adaptation plans in order to strengthen community resilience.

This case study describes how the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) advocates for vulnerable communities to be represented in the National Adaptation Plan and how KRCS promotes local adaptation through mobilizing global climate finances (funding) such as the UNFCC Adaptation fund.

### Understanding community needs at local level

The Kenya Red Cross Society has been at the forefront in response of disasters in Kenya through its network of 64 branches and 70,000 volunteers across the country. Parallel to the initiation of the National Adaptation planning process in Kenya, KRCS has over time realized that there is need to invest in long term interventions to empower communities through

measures such as disaster risk reduction rather than responding by giving relief aid and services when disasters have occurred. This has been informed by increasing frequency of disasters resulting in high costs of response and also leaving little time for communities to recover thereby making them more vulnerable.

In addition, KRCS conducted several community vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCAs) that showed the need to address underlying causes of disasters. Some of the underlying causes include poverty, lack of awareness or risk perception, lack of essential services such as health and lack of policy on disaster risk management. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation have been integrated into KRCS programming as part of its strategy 2020 in strengthening community resilience.

The vulnerability and capacity assessments conducted by KRCS have created a better understanding of community needs and assisted in planning processes at the local level. As a consequence KRCS has implemented a number of integrated projects with focus on food security, water and sanitation and health and nutrition to strengthen resilience of vulnerable communities. A community action plan is developed by the community based on the findings of the VCA outlining the activities for risk reduction. The VCAs have shown that there is a need to engage with government and other stakeholders to inform planning processes in order for the adaptation needs raised by the vulnerable communities to be met. In order to engage with government and other stakeholders to inform planning processes KRCS has been working closely with government and civil society at national level by participating in national platform for disaster risk reduction and at county level by participating in county steering groups, both forums where key planning for risk reduction and adaptation are taking place. KRCS also has an ongoing Memorandum of Understanding with IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) and Kenya Meteorological Department on dissemination of climate information to communities in order to enhance early action..KRCS has leveraged on the experiences of VCAs and early warning systems to influence the national adaptation plan.

### [KRCS engagement in National Adaptation Planning](#)

Through a project supported by the Danish Red Cross, IFRC and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, KRCS has strengthened the capacity of its staff around humanitarian diplomacy to enable KRCS staff to better engage with and influence policy makers in ongoing processes such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Disaster Risk Management Bill and County level Disaster policies.

In Kenya, a thematic working group on adaptation made up of government line ministries was formed to take lead in the development of the National Adaptation Plan. The Climate Change Secretariat in Kenya under the Ministry of Environment (MoE) rolled out the National Adaptation Planning process with consultations being held across county level and across government line ministries. These consultations looked at key activities on adaptation in the short, medium and long term under different sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, and environment.

Through its close partnership with the Ministry of Environment, KRCS hosted a meeting where stakeholders from civil society and government reviewed the

National Adaptation Plan with the main focus being that disaster risk reduction is not left out as part of adaptation and the plan also focus on the local level where the impacts of climate are felt. The vulnerability and capacity assessments conducted by KRCS were seen as key to inform local adaptation planning and were included in the NAP document. This workshop then led to a larger workshop organized by the Ministry of Environment for stakeholders from national and county level, where the Kenya NAP was validated. KRCS also participated in the validation process of the document.

## BOX

*In 2015, early warning messages on the El Nino were shared by KRCS on a SMS platform through 2 service providers (Safaricom and Airtel) with a total of 11 million messages being sent out to selected regions in the country. Overwhelming feedback from the affected and displaced populations was received.*

As part of the follow up on the finalization of the NAP process, KRCS partnered with the MoE to conduct a presentation of the final NAP document and also used the same opportunity to discuss the national climate change law with key stakeholders. These sessions brought out remarks such as *'this is an eye opener to the work of the Red Cross'* from participants seeing that Red Cross was engaging in such aspects as climate change. The NAP document was finalized and the published document has been shared with stakeholders such as government line ministries and civil society organizations.

The next steps for the NAP include the development of implementation plans at the national and local level to roll out the planned interventions. KRCS will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Environment in and county governments in the development of county level implementation plans ensuring community priorities are reflected.

### Taking concrete action locally: adaptation funding

The KRCS partnership with the government on climate change adaptation created awareness within KRCS on available climate adaptation funds such as the Adaptation fund and Green Climate Fund .The objective of the funds are to support adaptation for developing countries. So when the National Environment Management Authority in Kenya was accredited to receive adaptation funding by UNFCC and launched a call for proposal to government line ministries, civil society and community based organizations, KRCS applied. Approximately 100 concepts notes were received out of which 11 were successful. KRCS was one of the successful organizations in the concept phase. This was then followed by the development of a full proposal by the successful parties and the proposals were then consolidated and used to apply for funding to the Adaptation Board.

KRCS obtained the funding and was through this process able to secure adaptation funds from UNFCC to support the community in Marsabit County to adapt to climate change. The ongoing 3 year adaptation programme commenced in 2016 benefitting 3,600 beneficiaries. The project supports suitable farming practices and methods to improve both livestock and crop based production within households. Specific activities include: irrigable agriculture through efficient water utilization such as open drip irrigation systems, small holder irrigation infrastructure; alternative livelihood sources such as fruit trees, high value seedlings, efficient food utilization through value chain approach such as marketing strategies, value addition and food preservation/storage, savings and credit cooperatives and the development of business plans. In addition the

project will look into solarisation of water systems in the area to enhance sustainability and also install and maintain an automatic weather station in collaboration with Kenya Meteorological Department to monitor climate variability.

### Lessons learned

KRCS long engagement within disaster management and specifically disaster risk reduction has been used as an entry point for KRCS to engage in adaptation planning processes at the national and local level.

Continuous capacity building of KRCS staff on humanitarian diplomacy and climate change adaptation is enabling KRCS to better engage in policies and planning processes on the national level and provide capacity building and technical knowledge to help communities address adaptation on the local level.

Through KRCS' increased capacity to understand community needs better through VCA processes, promote local climate adaptation, engage with government and key stakeholders and mobilize climate funds, KRCS has changed the narrative of being seen mainly as a disaster response organization to also being seen as a key player within climate change adaptation.

Contact: [www.kenyaredcross.org](http://www.kenyaredcross.org)

---

# Malawi Red Cross Society engages partners

## **in promoting local voices in climate adaptation planning**



Authors:

Patrick Duncan Phiri,  
Taonga Nyekanyeka

### **Introduction**

Malawi, located in the southern part of Africa, faces a number of changing climate patterns, namely: heavy rains, less predictable rains, changes in growing and planting seasons, heat waves and extended dry seasons (Eurostat Statistics, 2016). There are also several other non-climate related drivers of risk, notably deforestation and land degradation. This is being aggravated by growing population, infrastructure development and poor agricultural practices. Wood based fuels (charcoal and firewood) are major drivers of deforestation in Malawi and represent over 90% of Malawi's aggregate energy demand.

As prime forest areas dwindle, the landscape grows more vulnerable to floods and climatic extremes. One outcome of this is more erosion, more flash floods, and greater siltation during flooding episodes. For example, the floods of 2014/15 caused unprecedented damage. About 230,000 people were displaced, 106 killed and 172 were reportedly missing. The impact of the more frequent extreme weather events calls for swift national policies and adaptation plans to be developed to respond to the increase of climate-related hazards.

This case study describes how Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) advocates for vulnerable communities to be represented in the National Adaptation Plans and how MRCS is in a good position to do this based on its profound knowledge about the impact of extreme weather events on the vulnerable communities which they have gained through their work with Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs).

### [The NAP process in Malawi](#)

The Malawi government commenced the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process in 2014 and embraced efforts to support urgent, immediate, short and long term climate adaptation actions. The NAP was seen as an opportunity for Malawi to create its own nationally appropriate climate change adaptation plans, while establishing the necessary institutional mechanisms to integrate climate change adaptation priorities into broader development and economic planning. To commence the NAP

process, the Malawi government conducted a series of kick-off workshops across the country in 2014, including a target timeline for the different processes (Malawi NAP stocktaking report, Feb 2016).

The following sectors were identified as being the most likely to be affected by climate change; agriculture, energy, water, health, forestry, fisheries, wildlife, infrastructure, gender and education. The NAP process therefore sought to strengthen in-country climate change science generation capacity, align the NAP process with medium and long-term planning, improve coordination between different actors working on climate change and identify a sustainable funding mechanism for adaptation programs in Malawi.

### MRCS using VCAs as entry point for engagement with NAP

MRCS had an interest to engage in the National Adaptation Plan process since they already had experience with Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs) conducted in 2008, which had shown the impacts of extreme weather events on the local communities. The assessments showed that with an increase in extreme weather events, humanitarian needs were rising. This finding led to the recommendation that climate change adaptation should be mainstreamed through all MRCS programs, in particular to help build adaptive capacities of communities within all sectors. The assessments also highlighted the need to do advocacy for climate change mitigation and adaptation planning at both national and local level to address the increasing humanitarian needs. In the MRCS strategic plan (2015-2019), it is mentioned that humanitarian diplomacy should be used to engage with decision makers and opinion leaders to act all times in the best interest of the vulnerable communities. So with the knowledge MRCS had from the VCAs, and with their capacity within humanitarian diplomacy, they have contributed to the NAP stocktaking and the development of policy directions and local adaptation planning through their membership of the Civil Society Network for Climate Change (CISONECC). Furthermore, MRCS has been advocating for the needs of the most vulnerable communities to be addressed in the formulation of by-laws on environmental protection, for the increase in budget allocations towards research and alternative sources of energy, and for the establishment of evacuation routes and sites in vulnerable districts.

MRCS has strengthened their capacity within humanitarian diplomacy and climate change adaptation through a project supported by the Danish Red Cross, IFRC and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center. Using these skills, they have been able to empower the communities with knowledge on climate adaptation related issues, thus creating a platform for the vulnerable groups to engage with decision makers and opinion leaders through dialogue. An important part of this process is to strengthen the understanding of communities of the advantages and shortcomings of the national policies affecting them.

In 2016, MRCS conducted a dissemination workshop on the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which highlights the implications of extreme weather variability to the different parts of the globe and in particular Africa. The information sharing session was aimed at strengthening understanding of the implications of extreme weather events to Malawi as a country. Stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to discuss, understand and identify implications for Malawi. The session also resulted in concrete

suggestions for ways forward, including strengthening coordination amongst partners through regular meetings, sharing weather and other related information through WhatsApp, email and other communication channels.

The collaboration MRCS has had with the Department of Climate Change and Metrological Services under the Ministry of Environmental Affairs has also resulted in the dissemination of localized weather forecast information and efforts to raise awareness on localized adaptation strategies. A Chikwawa resident, Mr Goche, observed that *“For the first time in many years we have this year received weather forecast that we should expect normal to above normal rains between December and March. With this information I am able to plan accordingly.”*

## **BOX**

### **Local community adaptation planning**

Recognising that Malawi's dependency on wood based fuel has driven deforestation which has consequently increased susceptibility to floods, the MRCS is engaging communities, young people in particular, in local adaptation planning to find alternative sources of energy to minimize deforestation and land degradation. One such source is the use of briquettes made from materials that cost little or no money to obtain. Some of the most commonly used materials for making briquettes are shredded newspaper, small woodchips and sawdust.

MRCS, through the NAP Project, has supported Mitundu Youth Club in capacity building and how to link with relevant government departments and well-wishers and how to search for market opportunities. Mitundu Youth Club is capable of producing 600 briquettes a day (depending on the availability of raw materials) for selling, which helps generating income for the youth club. According to Chimwemwe Phiri, chairman of the group who is also a youth volunteer, briquettes are currently selling at about 0.02 EUR. It takes two briquettes to cook a meal of nsima from maize flour, or maize porridge, the staple food of Malawian rural families.

The NAP Project supported the youth club to exhibit their products at the 2015 National Climate Change Conference in Lilongwe. The exhibition provided Mitundu Youth Club with a wide range of networking opportunities, and it continues to be supported by the MRCS local branch in the area, the NAP Project focal manager and other MRCS officers. The use of briquettes as an alternative source of energy will reduce our over reliance on firewood and charcoal which means that Malawi can retain its natural beauty at the same time generate income and livelihood for the youth club members. MRCS will continue to advocate for the use of briquettes and other climate friendly technologies such as energy saving stoves, cultivation of vertiva grass and planting of trees to curb deforestation in local adaptation planning, with an emphasis on young people.

## Conclusion

The future vision of MRCS is to see communities exercising ownership in their own local climate adaptation planning. MRCS will continue its engagement in the national NAP process to ensure follow up and momentum on the issues it has driven forward, particularly in terms of representing community perspectives. MRCS will furthermore strengthen its existing relationships with the government and other relevant stakeholders. MRCS will continue engaging the policy bearers in addressing some of the gaps and needs, notably; information on weather variability, influence on the NAP, coordination with civil society organizations, and the low capacity of the communities in local climate adaptation. To formalize its ongoing role in the process, MRCS is considering entering into a cooperation agreement with the government concerning its support to the implementation of the NAP and its role in dissemination of local adaptation information.

Contact: [mracs@redcross.mw](mailto:mracs@redcross.mw)

---

# Nepal Red Cross Society engagement

## in climate adaptation implementation and planning



### Introduction: the NRCS, climate change and the 6th Strategic Development Plan

THE HUMANITARIAN impact of climate change is very clear in Nepal, and like elsewhere in the world is worsened because the most vulnerable and poorest people are hardest hit – even though their communities are the least responsible for human-induced global climate change. More frequent and intense floods, droughts and extremes in local temperatures are observed, resulting in loss and damage for the poor and vulnerable.

It is a major issue for all humanitarian organizations in Nepal and it directly bears on the mandate of the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS), which in response has had to scale up its capacity to address the issue of climate change; efforts have been made, at least since 2010, to do this.

In that year, the National Society's 6th Strategic Development Plan explicitly referred to climate impacts and provided for a 'climate-smart' element in all programme planning, including vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA).

**The NRCS developed information, education and communication materials and a poster and distributed them in the communities to raise awareness of people about climate risk and adaptation.** (Photo: NRCS)



The four-year-old Danish Red Cross-supported community resilience programme, for example, run by the NRCS, now covers 90 communities around Nepal and includes climate-smart elements. People are now trained and equipped for community-based emergency response, including rescue and evacuation, and general awareness of climate hazards and adaptation.

In one of them, a riverside community partly dependent on subsistence agriculture, where residents built a gabion wall as protection against floods (see box), it was the newly developed, more 'climate-smart' VCA revealed in 2012 that flash floods are now more common than they were 30 years ago, making this investment truly worthwhile.

More recently, the NRCS in 2016 developed 'information, education and communication' materials and poster and distributed them in the communities to raise awareness of people about climate risk and adaptation. This includes three types of information: what is climate risk? what are the impacts? and what are the adaptation measures?

Also this year, more than 10,000 trees and shrubs were planted in areas vulnerable to landslides and soil erosion from increased rainfall linked to climate change.

## **BOX**

### **The community of Hile Bazar**

*"We now feel safe and can sleep well in the night, we don't have to be scared that the flood will enter the community when we are asleep" -- Padam Bahadur Ghale*

*After the gabion wall construction, feeling safe – Kali Tamang.*

Hile Bazar, under the Bansar Village Development Committee, lies beside a river that originates from Baudha Mountain, where summer flash-floods caused by snow melt have been linked to climate change. It was a small community 25 years ago and has grown over time; it serves as a market hub for other highland villages.

It's one of 90 communities around Nepal the includes climate-smart elements in a Danish Red Cross-supported resilience programme begun in 2012 and was guided by the 2010 NRCS development plan. This provided for a disaster-management committee to implement it and covered more than 150 households or some 500 people.

Based on the findings of a VCA, the community identified the need to adapt to the longer-term changing context of an increase in flash floods, and designed mitigation measures centred on reforestation and reinforcing unstable river banks. The community built 1.5-metre gabion wall (*photo 3*), and local people raised 60 per cent of the funds themselves.

The committee also set up a fund to maintain the wall and the new shrubs, and during the monsoon it disseminates early warnings.

The programme is regarded as having helped the community and restored livelihoods, to the extent of reducing outward migration of the community people. More people are returning to the land to farm or and are opening shops and other small businesses.

## The NAP process

With the start of National Adaptation Process (NAP), the National Society has moved to position itself as a crucial partner with various government-level actors in the country. The Ministry of the Environment and Science assigned a role to the NRCS on disaster risk reduction (DRR) – one of nine thematic areas of government priority within the NAP; an MOU to establish the detail of this is currently in development.

The NRCS has been regularly involved in NAP meetings with the government and other stakeholders, and the society has convened meetings involving NAP stakeholders, opening a window of opportunity for the Red Cross to advocate about the importance of including humanitarian actors in the process.

The NAP process has helped clarify the role of NRCS as “strengthening community resilience to climate risk by supporting communities at risk to design and implement integrated community disaster risk management plans,” said one National Society stakeholder. It has helped make NRCS programmes more “climate-risk adaptive” by integrating risks into activities planned as part of routine DRR work, such as safe drinking water and sanitation and promoting alternative sources of energy.

The NRCS has also been involved in climate outside the area of disaster management, but above all the NAP process and the move toward ‘climate-smart’ community VCAs has helped the National Society see community problems through the climate-change lens.

**Based on the findings of a VCA, the community identified the need to adapt to the longer-term changing context of an increase in flash floods, and designed mitigation centred on reforestation and reinforcing unstable river banks. (Photo: NRCS)**



## Conclusion

The process of revising the VCA in favour of climate-smart considerations and looking at problems with a climate-change perspective, culminating in the direct involvement with the NAP process, has helped the NRCS support communities in identifying climate-related problems and finding appropriate adaptation measures.

Community initiatives with local fund-raising and committees for early warning and response has given them confidence, and both boosted their long-term adaption profile and planning for their response to specific potential disasters.

The NAP process has helped the NRCS to engage with the issue at all levels, ensuring adequate advocacy from communities to government, and the National Society has been engaged in identifying potential risk and ways of adapting to them.

Contact: [www.nrccs.org/contact](http://www.nrccs.org/contact)



The Netherlands  Red Cross