Community Drill in Surigao del Norte, Philippines

With almost 100% participation, old and young alike, the first community drill in Mainit, Surigao del Norte, was a great success. Government, community and volunteers actively played a role in a "real-life" scenario, which included the swelling of the lake, river flooding and landslide.

Mainit is very prone to various disasters including typhoons, landslides and massive river flooding, which are further aggravated by the destruction of the environment through rampant mining activities and illegal logging.

An important strategy in increasing communities' resilience is to better prepare and timely evacuate the community out of harm's way, to minimize, or alleviate the number of casualties caused by disasters. The drill and simulation was attended by many agencies including government agencies.

Attendants expressed their appreciation for the effective Early Warning System that was being used, and how it was fully heeded by the community: one of the team leaders went around warning people with the use of a siren, and all volunteers in all corners of the area blew their whistles, to signal the evacuation process.

Besides gratitude for the drill, community members also expressed their concern about sanitation and makeshift tents, especially for elderly, disabled or people with children. A representative from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau acknowledged the social responsibility of the corporation, and committed to help the barangay with the construction of improved evacuation centres.

The successful community drill conveyed a message to the attendants that building the capacity of the people to manage disaster will ensure resiliency and survival.

Overall, the PfR-programme will continue to ensure the preparedness and readiness of community members covered by the project. Therefore the community drill will be replicated in all 25 PfR-communities in the Philippines.

Disaster risk workshop using a regional approach, Philippines

In two of the project areas in the Philippines, PfR-partners work in communities that are situated in the same area. In Agusan del Sur, communities are situated in the Agusan river basin. In order to see linkages between these assessments at a broader landscape level, Wetlands International Malaysia facilitated a two-day “Regional Risk Assessment” workshop. In this workshop, partners conducted a joint review of individual community risk assessments to assess how they fit into the context of the broader landscape.

About twenty technical- and field officers attended the workshop. They discussed joint reviews for both the Agusan Marsh area in Mindanao and the National Capital Region. The workshop consisted out of several parts: Firstly, the implementing partners gave a presentation per municipality, containing an analysis for a larger area than the level at which the VCA’s/CRA’s were conducted. Secondly, Wetlands International explained how the ecosystems (processes, dynamics, services) work and are influenced and threatened by human activities. Finally, the group compiled a disaster profile in which hazardous events were ranked according to their impact on lives and livelihoods. Thereafter the main drivers of increased disaster risk were discerned and the group decided what would be the most effective actions to address these. Finally a stakeholder analysis was done, in which also stakeholder’s interrelationships were assessed, that helped with drafting future advocacy actions.

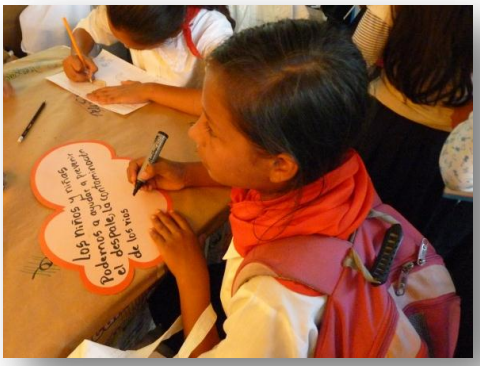
The workshop increased understanding of the bigger picture and led to some surprising outcomes. For instance, in Manila the implementing partners work mainly on flood and fire, but water pollution actually appears to be at least just as big a threat. For the Agusan river basin, despite the hesitation of the partners to address this issue, ‘Advocacy for responsible mining, logging and land use’ was voted as the most effective action.

At the end of the workshop the implementing partners concluded that they need to start developing an advocacy strategy on sustainable land-use. They realized that besides the problems they have been focusing on, like flooding, a variety of other issues - water pollution, depletion of natural resources, pests - affect people, and hence need attention too. Celso Dulce from CARE highlighted the importance of a partnership approach by stating: "If we are not convinced when we came here, by this time we should be convinced that we should be working together to solve the problems that we have identified. That is, not one organization, and not even the PfR partners working together can solve the problem."

Bonanza of a Celebration for IDDR ’12 in Somoto, Nicaragua

It was no ordinary workday in Somoto, Nicaragua on Friday, October 12. In celebration of the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR), a large event kicked off with a parade of hundreds of school children, institutions, NGOs, music and more, marching down the main streets of the city.

The parade ended at Parque Central where an educational fair was set up by the municipal disaster management and food security committees to promote IDDR, embracing this year's theme of "*Women and Girls: the [in]Visible Force of Resilience.*" Activities covered a broad range of topics, including: board games, drawing pictures about disaster reduction, group challenges by the Hygiene Promoters with their mascot "Jabonoso", and a hilarious on stage skit drama group explaining the risks caused by deforestation. Attendees visited each informational stand and received a stamp, to receive a reusable shopping bag when their card was complete.



The IDDR event concluded late into the evening with the showing of a documentary called "*Desastres anunciados*" ("Foreseen Disasters") that was presented to event organizers and municipal officials and committees—with a teleconference at the conclusion that included the documentary producer and a panel of experts discussing the documentary and answering questions.

IDDR 2012 was a major success for the PfR-programme in Nicaragua with the attendance of over 1000 children and adults being educated and empowered to reduce their disaster risks, adapt to a changing climate and live in better harmony with the environment.

Minimum Standards for local climate-smart Disaster Risk Reduction

At the Asia Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Climate Centre launched a wide consultation on the - by PfR developed- Minimum Standards for local climate-smart Disaster Risk Reduction.

Climate change is increasing the risk of extreme events and disasters. Many national climate change adaptation plans stress the need to address the rising risk of extreme events and disasters and also acknowledge the essential role of local communities in addressing these changing risks. Yet in many cases, opportunities for reducing the risk of extreme events and adapting to climate change are missed.

The Minimum Standards for climate-smart Disaster Risk Reduction serve as an essential bridge between national climate policy and local capacities for DRR. The standards are practical approaches to implement climate-smart DRR activities in a way that is achievable by many communities with relatively limited external support. If the Minimum Standards are met, local DRR actions are climate smart and contribute to climate change adaptation. What is more, the national strategies that consider these standards will be able to go to scale, knowing that they are realistic and achievable.

The minimum standards are based on ample local experience and consultation, including lessons learned during the first years of the PfR-programme. Wetlands International is developing a parallel set of Minimum Standards with the aim to include ecosystem aspects into local DRR.
Please note that the standards are a living document. The Climate Centre intends to discuss, test, revise and validate these with PfR-partners throughout 2013, and hopefully beyond. We hope that they will be used in many other PfR-countries, and look forward to your feedback.

For more information, please visit www.climatecentre.org/minimumstandards

Training of villagers in Mapti, Mali

In August, PfR facilitated the fruitful exchanges of meteorological climate information between specialists and villagers. With the technical support of Mali-Meteo, forty villagers were trained to manage the use of rain gauges, which are very useful in the formulation of weather forecasting and warnings against floods and landslides.

Mali-Meteo is one of the leading agencies when it comes to the production of information on food crisis prevention and the fight against poverty in Mali. It undertakes concrete support meteorological actions to agriculture by providing direct information, guidance and advice to farmers for agro-meteorological planning in order to conduct their farming activities.

In the training the villagers received, attention was given to the improvement of knowledge on the management of rain gauges and familiarisation with the use of agro-meteorological information. Next to that, participants where trained to know how to analyse and use collected data for the purpose of using this information in the planning and execution of agriculture activities.

The presence of a large number of rural producers, and the gratefulness of participants to have learned new skills, which will provide socio-economic benefits concerning the conduct of agricultural activities, demonstrates the value of adapting populations to the adverse effects of climate variability and climate change.

Realisation of two participatory videos, Mali

Wetlands International, CARE International Mali and their partners have produced two participatory videos on the integration of disaster risk reduction, climate change and ecosystem management. Both participatory videos were made in the villages Noga and Foussi.
The objective set for the making of the participatory video is, to share good practices concerning disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and ecosystems management and restoration.

In Noga, community reforestation was identified as the theme of their participatory video. People are planting trees in the south-eastern part of the village. These trees will form a windbreak in future years, as the degraded site will be restored. As for the community Foussi, the committee identified gardening as an activity to strengthen the resilience of women while meanwhile mitigating the adverse effect of climate change. Both videos have a duration of about ten minutes. The participatory video as a tool to raise awareness among local authorities was a great success in both villages, as it has mobilized at least 300 people in each village.

IRI/Climate Centre seasonal forecast for March is out

Please find the latest seasonal forecast from the Climate Centre here.

Outcome Mapping training, Ethiopia

To enhance effectiveness and efficiency of programme implementation, PfR partners in Ethiopia and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction Regional Office organised the Outcome Mapping (OM) Training for their partner staffs, from 27 February till 2 March 2012.

The training was designed as part of the monitoring and evaluation thematic joint activities. The training aimed to enable partners to appropriately plan, monitor, inform and reinforce programmatic actions. As such, staff was trained to better suit the complex environment of the local context. Therefore focus was on conducting baseline surveys, and pass on the same training to other stakeholders, in order to enhance their capacity.

During the training, participants went through the various outcome mapping concepts and how they could support the project's implementation in capturing impacts over time, and attain behavioural change. The partners developed the project's vision and mission, and designated boundary partners for the three strategy areas in detail. A useful source for more information on the methodology is the following website.

Based on the knowledge gained from the OM training, indicators and baseline tools have been developed in order to measure the changes brought about by the implementation of the PfR-programme periodically.

Also partners from Guatemala and Nicaragua have been familiarized with the methodology. Local partners are piloting the bio-rights approach in Sololá, Guatemala and specifically apply the approach and capture changes along the project implementation through participatory video monitoring. For an impression of the workshop, look here.

Climate Centre organized the 'Development and Climate (D&C) Days

Last year's 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Qatar also marks the tenth anniversary of the accompanying Development and Climate Days – a COP fringe event initiated by Saleemul Huq of the International Institute for Environment and Development in New Delhi.
Over the past ten years, the D&C Days have gathered policy-makers, scientists and development practitioners to discuss climate change adaptation, and how to mainstream it into policies and programmes in all sectors. Two days of intensely participatory learning, dialogue and networking at the 10th (D&C) Days held on the fringe of the COP meetings.

The theme selected for these days was ***innovative approaches, incisive dialogue on climate-smart development***. In partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre facilitated a programme to bridge policy, knowledge and practice in development and climate issues. For more information, please visit: http://www.climatecentre.org/site/development-and-climate-days

Economic and ecologic incentives to the fishpond, Indonesia

In September, a group of PfR-delegates visited the Sawah Luhur fishpond in Banten, Indonesia. In this area, plants and trees were virtually absent, however nowadays this fishpond is covered with mangroves. Farmers are meanwhile busy digging soil to plant new mangroves, repairing water channels, and cleaning the fishpond.

The population of the village consists of farmers, fishermen and ojeks (motorbike taxi drivers). Farmers who do not own a plot of land, rely on the fishpond for their livelihoods. Villagers are given the opportunity to be smallholder of a plot, which means the yields will be divided between farmer and the owner of the fishpond.
One of the farmers, Safrudin (50) explained he started planting mangroves two years ago, in 2010. He was asked by his friend to get involved in the project assisted by the Wetlands

International Indonesia Program (WIIP). Without knowing much about the usage and function of mangroves, he decided to participate.
During the process of planting and gaining knowledge and expertise, he discovered the benefits of growing mangroves: his production of fish and shrimp is increasing. He explains that mangroves create a perfect habitat for fish and shrimp. During the discussion related to his fishpond production, Safrudin indicated that his income is getting better to meet the needs of his family. He is even trying to convince his friends to plant mangroves in their respective fishponds.

Saving the Apwot Wetland, Uganda

To enhance partners' capacities for engaging with key decision-makers at both local and National level on the integration of CCA, DRR and EMR, Caritas Uganda facilitated a six days training on lobby and advocacy in July 2012.

The training focused on enabling participants to engage with policy makers and influence the creation, reforming, and implementation of policies. Several advocacy strategies were discussed, including delivering massages through the media, strengthening the ability of local groups to advocate for themselves and the possibility of discussing problems directly with policy makers.

To practically understand the concepts in the training, participants carried out a case study on the Apwot Wetland. In 1956 the ecosystem had all the biodiversity providing a productive habitat for wild life, fish species, papyrus, water for human and livestock, pastures and herbal medicine. Currently almost all of this wetland has been encroached with cultivation (rice growing), brick making, sand mining, overgrazing and human settlement resulting in the narrowing of water channels, loss of soil fertility, and decreased water levels. The degradation of the ecosystem clearly indicated the need for restoration.

Apwot is a clear example of ecosystems and diversity being depleted by human activity, which leads to an increase of people's vulnerability. During a meeting with the sub-county chief, the participants emphasized a need to raise community awareness and multi-sectoral interventions that enable the people to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner.

It was also noted that despite emerging concerns on climate change, there is a local leadership gap regarding multi-sectoral actions to stop the adverse effects of climate change, and reduce the impact of human activity on the environment. There is no capacity to meet the challenges of climate change holistically at the sub-county level. Therefore the mishaps of

climate change and variability have been largely unattended to, and the subtle responses that are made are uncoordinated, often resulting in untimely and transient solutions.

Through the workshop, partners got a better understanding how to engage with (local) decision makers to address complex problems like those in the Apwat wetland.

Obstacles and opportunities for an integrated approach, Uganda

Cordaid PfR-partner Caritas Uganda carried out an assessment study on the key obstacles and opportunities for integrating CCA, DRR and EMR into local and national development plans. A qualitative approach was applied to gather and analyse data for the assessment that included a review of relevant literature, data extraction, in-depth participatory interviews, focus group discussions, field excursions and online questionnaires. The aim of this was to identify and prioritize issues and actions for lobby and advocacy based on facts.

The study revealed that a set of key issues is hindering the realization of resilience in Teso-Karamoja region. These include appalling budget allocation to sectors, programmes and designated offices facilitating CCA/DRR/EMR integration; the indiscriminate cutting of trees, extensive bush clearing, cultivation in wetlands, and unregulated extraction of minerals and other natural resources; uncoordinated actions and approaches among CSOs; absence of due ecosystem approaches and inter-district coordination; low levels of community awareness on causes and effects of climate change and ecosystem degradation as well as uninformed response actions.

Caritas Uganda in partnership with local partners have developed a lobby and advocacy strategy to engage key decision-makers to respond to the key issues identified in the assessment study. This was done by the involvement of local government officials from Amuria, Katakwi, Napak, Nakapiripirit districts and national NGOs and networks. The views of actors were incorporated into the strategy, which created a critical platform for advocacy. Key advocacy issues have been prioritized and advocacy objectives and activities were developed to advocate for integration of CCA, DRR, and EMR at the local and national level. It is envisaged that this strategy will enable partners to effectively lobby and advocate for climate proof and resilience in Teso-Karamoja region.

Harmonising VCA and PDRA, Kenya

Some of the key aspects of the partnership in PfR is to encourage learning within and outside the partnership, support each other in the process of planning and implementation and being innovative in realizing the expected goals and outcomes of the programme. So far different efforts were made by PfR in Kenya to encourage and promote internal learning and innovation. Some achievements have already been made in this regard, one of them being the harmonization of the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) and Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment (PDRA). While the Red Cross Movement uses VCA, Cordaid and its implementing

partners are using PRDA to analyse disaster risks and planning risk reduction measures. Despite a growing collaboration between the implementing partners at the field level, mutual support has sometimes been constrained by the use of different approaches. There are instances when this has led to confusion and weakening the sprite of collaboration.
The CMDRR training was conducted from 27 February till 2 March 2012 to enhance the awareness of PDRA and VCA processes among the implementing partners, and to come up with a better approach which considers the strengths of the VCA and the PDRA. A harmonized approach was designed, which compiles a more simple and comprehensive risk assessment and planning process with relevant tools.

Water Trapping for Vegetable Fields in a Dry Land in Nynsaen, Indonesia

Makhlon Bait is a farmer in Nunsaen Village, Kupang District, who has successfully conducted a trial on water trapping in a dry land for a vegetable field. Makhlon Bait gained information on how to trap and collect water in a dry land in a local workshop, after which he put this information successfully into practice. Since the application of the idea, he has harvested his vegetables four times. By selling yields he generates an income, enough to cover his daily expenses. The other five farmers in his village have followed his practice.

At this moment, Mr. Makhlon Bait gets up at around four in the morning everyday to go to his plot. He makes time at around eight in the evening for his social life. He remembers strongly what the facilitator at the workshop mentioned: “The farmers’ office is his field”. He applies this by working longer shifts and more devotedly on his field.

Local CARE partner PIKUL is trying to promote this technique of trapping and reserving water for future use, in order to change the hydrological situation locally and to let this area serve as a central vegetable production area.

Mr. Makhlon is planning to expand the current area and use intercropping with chillies, peanuts and tomatoes.

National Forum in Antigua, Guatemala for a holistic DRR approach

PfR partners in Guatemala organized a national forum for dialogue with national and regional governing bodies, NGO’s and other key stakeholders in order to promote the integration of ecosystems and climate in disaster risk reduction, amongst others the Ministry of Environment and

Natural Resources (MARN), the national coordinator for disaster risk reduction (CONRED), universities , NGO's and municipalities.
The main goal for organizing the forum was to identify priorities and opportunities for collaboration between PfR partners and other relevant stakeholders at different levels.

For this, all participants were familiarized with approaches, management tools and regional/national efforts on the integration of CCA and EMR aspects in DRR. Furthermore, a shared framework for institutions and organizations working on these three themes was promoted. Participants identified and agreed priorities and opportunities for action and prepared a draft plan of action to integrate commitments and responsibilities of authorities, institutions and organizations present.
Organizing the forum was a joint effort from all partners and a successful example to further advance the goals under the third strategic direction within the programme.

Restoring river and sea connectivity to reduce rising disasters risks in India

Villages located on confluence of River Devi with the Bay of Bengal are almost routinely submerged by floods, leading to loss in crops and assets. The river is embanked on one side making communities vulnerable to floods from the unbanked portion. Furthermore, since the construction of the embankments, water logging has become a common feature.

When the PfR India team first visited these villages in September 2011, they were contemplating constructing embankments all around the village as a means of reducing risk of flooding. However, carrying out risk assessments made the communities aware of the hydrological set up of the area.
During the floods in July 2012, the communities abandoned the plan of constructing embankments, but instead took to decongesting the river mouth by removing silt and allowing river water to flush to the sea. Further, to improve water management at village level, water user associations/Pani Panchayats were strengthened through PfR partners at Tanadahara and Keutajanga villages, Astaranga in Puri. PfR will continue to work in these villages through village level disaster resilience committees and Pani Panchayats towards better water management and thereby reduce disaster risk.

Similarly, the Rushikulya estuary in Ganjam district was facing decline in fish catch due to loss of connectivity with the sea. The fishers downstream of river were facing problems venturing the sea due to siltation of mouth. KISSAN, one of the partners of NetCoast along with the VLDRC of Podompeta village, mobilised 300 fishers from 5 downstream villages (Gokharkuda, Podampeta, Purunabandha, Damodarpur and Nolia Nuagoan) to restore the river and sea connectivity by manually desilting the mouth.

Formation of a watershed management plan in Nicaragua.

In June 2013, the alliance partners in Nicaragua supported the formation of two committees for the sub basin Tripartito of the Tapacalí river, comprising of the municipalities San Lucas, Las Sabanas and San José de Cusmapa, and the sub basin of the Inalí river comprising of municipalities San Lucas and Las Sabanas.

The committees consist of representatives from the economic sector, water users, the ministry of health and the municipalities.

The persons in the committees were elected democratically and took on their positions for a year through swearing in a joint meeting. These persons have the main responsibility of the protection, management and sustainable use of the hydro-graphic sub basins.

Through formation of the committees, partners aim to apply a landscape approach to mitigate disaster risks and enhance integration of different interests through the involvement of several stakeholders along the watershed.

A video report on the swearing of the committees can be found here.

Updates from the Climate Centre

A detailed new IFRC guidance for Red Cross National Society staff and volunteers stresses the importance of following up humanitarian early-warning of hazards with early action across different timescales. Read more on the new IFRC early-warning guidance.

The 2012 'Understanding Risk Forum' – now relive it online - A full multimedia gallery of content, including video, generated by last July's Understanding Risk Forum in Cape Town, South Africa, was this week made available online. Detailed sessions on 15 major topics were held during the forum, which was entitled "Mapping Global Risk" and included two Red Cross-led presentations: "Community-Based Risk Assessment", chaired by Dr. James Kisia, deputy secretary-general of the Kenya Red Cross, and "Assessing Risk in a Changing Climate", chaired by Climate Centre Director Dr. Maarten Van Aalst together with the African Development Bank.

'Cloud Nasara' animations will communicate climate in the Pacific: Cloud Nasara is an innovative collaboration involving the Australian, German and Vanuatu governments, local Red Cross societies, and the Climate Centre. It aims to raise awareness of climate variability in the Pacific and stimulate discussion on how communities can access forecast information, prepare for future El Niño and La Niña events, and adapt to climate change. Read more in the online article

Is the global heatwave danger increasing? Measurements from around the world suggest monthly temperature extremes have become much more frequent, according to a new report from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and the Complutense University of Madrid. There are now five times as many record-breaking hot months on average worldwide than could be expected without long-term global warming, the study adds. Read more in the online article

Climate Centre highlights ocean acidification... and what can be done about it - Over the past 200 years, the acidity of the oceans has increased by almost 30 per cent and is likely to have increased 100–120 per cent by the end of the century, threatening marine ecosystems. Now a review by the Climate Centre explores how this degradation of marine ecosystems is affecting people, threatening food security and increasing disaster risk; billions rely on the oceans and the plants and animals they sustain.

IRIN - Building resilience: A series of articles exploring what resilience means for vulnerable communities, and its impact on the architecture of aid. Giving communities a voice in resilience