



Partnering with counties to formulate disaster risks reduction policies

Location:
Kenya
(National)

Partner:
Kenya Red
Cross

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Sarah Nduku taking teams from Tana River and Kilifi counties through the need of engaging communities in DRM through the CMDRR approach.
Photo credit: KRC



Suada Ibrahim facilitating a capacity building session on IRM
Photo credit: KRC

Devolved units have been facing challenges in formulating policies that address disaster risks reduction, climate change adaptation, environmental threats owing to limitation of capacities for the technical team charged with this responsibility.

In March 2015, representatives from 187 United Nations member States gathered in Japan for the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) where the Sendai Framework on disaster (2015-2030) was adopted.

But since then and as the clock ticks towards 2030, African countries have little to show in terms of putting in place relevant policies and legislations that would cushion communities against potential disasters. One of the components of the Sendai Framework named "Target E" aims to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.

Kenya is prone to two climate change-related disasters namely drought and floods which continues to cause human deaths and property destruction every year.

The 2010 Constitution that ushered in devolved governments opened a window of opportunity for county governments to come up with policies and legislation aimed at addressing disaster risks in line with the national policy.

However, the devolved units have been facing challenges in formulating policies that address disaster risks reduction, climate change adaptation and environmental threats owing to the limitation of capacities for the technical team charged with this responsibility.

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Sarah Nduku taking MCAs from Kilifi County through the DRM policy for the county
Photo credit:KRC.

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Partners for Resilience (PfR), a global alliance of the Netherlands Red Cross, CARE Netherlands, Cordaid, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and Wetlands International have been working with county governments, national government agencies, Civil Society Organizations and the private sector towards building the resilience of businesses and the communities in the long-term.

In Kenya implementation is being done by the Kenya Red Cross Society on behalf of the Netherlands Red Cross and the International Centre for International Affairs on behalf of the Climate Centre.

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) fosters Integrated Risk Management (IRM) discourses between the key institutional stakeholders including National and County Governments, to ensure that IRM is integrated into laws, policies, plans and programmes.

To do this, KRCS has been working closely with both National and County Governments and providing technical support in formulating Disaster Risk Management laws and policies.

Once adopted, these laws and policies will be using the IRM approach to enhance a holistic approach to risk management that incorporates Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change Adaptation and Ecosystem Management and Restoration.

The KRCS has also supported the involvement of communities in DRM by strengthening the Community Managed Disaster Risk Management Committees (CMDRRs).

This was done by proposing the creation of sub-county, ward and village disaster risk management committees in these laws and policies. The laws and policies also propose the prioritization of preparedness and mitigation actions over the response by strengthening the creation and communication of early warning systems and linking them with early actions.

The laws and policies have been key in enhancing the sustainability of all these actions by proposing the creation of a DRM fund both at the National and County Level that will continue to support the implementation of the actions highlighted in the laws and policies.



“ Since disasters and their impacts can now be predicted, we need to focus on building our capacity to cope so that when a hazard strikes, we do not get overwhelmed.” Laikipia County Assembly Labour, Social Welfare and Community Services Committee Chairman George Karuiru.

KRCS through the PfR programme has been supporting five Counties, namely Tana River, Kilifi, Samburu, Laikipia and Isiolo in the development of DRM laws and policies.

“Since disasters and their impacts can now be predicted, we need to focus on building our capacity to cope so that when a hazard strikes, we do not get overwhelmed,” said the Chairman of the Laikipia County Labour, Social Welfare and Community Services Committee George Karuiru.

The Member of the County Assembly spoke during a writeshop for the DRM Bill and policy for Laikipia County that was organized by KRCS in conjunction with the County Government of Laikipia and the Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) in Isiolo Town in August 2020.

While working with Samburu County Government, County Assembly Speaker Solomon Lempere noted: “For us to effectively manage disasters and disaster risks, we must ensure that our laws set the stage for early warning, financing, community empowerment and accountability.”

These sentiments were highlighted in the DRM Policy for Samburu County that was adopted by the County Assembly in July 2020.

Through the KRCS’s support, the DRM Policy for Tana River County was adopted by the County Assembly in August 2020, with the policy being presented for adoption in September of the same year. Kilifi County Adopted a DRM Bill in 2016 and is in the final stages of the development of the DRM policy.

“To prevent losses and alleviate the impacts of disasters, we must take steps to ensure we are prepared before the disasters strike. We must shift emphasis from managing disasters to managing the risks.” Samburu County Chief Officer, Department of Special Programmes Daniel Leisagor.

KRCS has been working at the National level to support the adoption of the National DRM Bill and Policy for the Country. In the five years of implementation, KRCS has together with partners such as the UNDP, UNISDR, UN Women, World Bank, St. Johns Ambulance, Kenya Meteorological Department and others worked with the National Disaster Operations Centre and the National Drought Management Authority to support advocacy for the adoption of the national law and policy.

The DRM Bill 2020 and the DRM Policy 2020 are ready to be taken through stakeholder validation before they can be tabled before the National Assembly and the Senate for adoption.

KRCS has also been working closely with the private sector to support their ability to integrate climate and disaster risk management into their business continuity and sustainability plans. The impacts of many disasters affect the profitability of the private sector and specifically the Small to Medium-sized Enterprises.

Reducing disasters is therefore not a sole responsibility of governments and there is need for it to be factored in the business models developed by private investors.

Ms Maurine Ambani the Climate Advisor at the Kenya Red Cross/ Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre avers that: “What we need to do is manage the risks and more importantly, capitalize on the opportunities that this offers for the businesses and the livelihoods that depend and support the private sector.”

