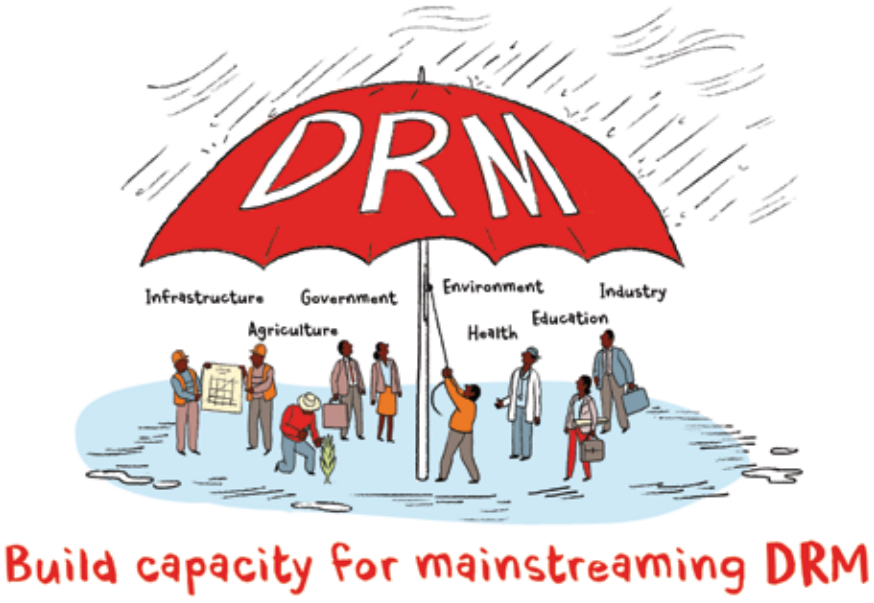
Strategic research into national and local capacity building for disaster risk management

Executive summary

In September 2013, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) contracted Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and the University of East Anglia (UEA) to conduct **Strategic research into national and local capacity building for disaster risk management.** The overarching question guiding the research activities was 'what works and why?' This report sets out the findings of the research, covering trends in capacity building for disaster risk management (DRM), providing lessons learned in relation to the process and content of DRM capacity-building interventions, and outlining recommendations for policy-makers and programme implementers.



Previously there had been little formal research conducted on capacity building for DRM, and as a result international actors lacked robust, evidence-based guidance on how capacity for DRM can be generated at national and local levels effectively. The research was designed as an initial step towards filling that knowledge and evidence gap. This included an extensive literature review which incorporated over 100 resources and was used to develop a conceptual framework for how DRM capacity can be built effectively. This conceptual framework was then tested in six country case studies, including a pilot in Ethiopia and full case studies in Pakistan, Myanmar, Philippines, Haiti and Mozambique. The research also included the study of financial data and a global survey aiming to gather information from DRM professionals on trends in capacity-building activity and views on success factors. These different elements of the research were then analysed to distil lessons and guidance on how to build DRM capacity in a range of contexts. For the purposes of the research, Walker's (2013:1) definition of DRM capacity building was adopted: 'efforts to strengthen the competencies and skills of a target organization, group or community so that the target could drive disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts, or, in a broader-sense development, in a sustainable way in the future'.

The rationale for capacity-building initiatives is that they should generate a greater sustained capability to plan for and undertake DRM (outcome) so that the risk to lives and livelihoods from disaster is reduced (impact). An effective capacity building initiative is therefore one that produces outputs that contribute to this change. The focus in this research was on investigating process, outputs and the prospects for successful outcomes. Though the researchers were not able to evaluate outcomes in terms of sustained raised capacity, sufficient signs of emerging outcomes existed such as creation of local DRM structures, integration of DRR

into development planning mechanisms, or emerging cross-sectoral partnerships to highlight the value that effective capacity building can bring to DRM and DRR.

What new ideas emerge from the research findings?

There is **currently a piecemeal approach to DRM capacity-building programming, with most initiatives being relatively small in budgetary terms.** Large (e.g., 20 million US dollars plus), DRM capacity-building programmes are rare. The largest programme studied had a budget under US$15 million, with most of the other case study programmes having budgets around the $1 million mark. Consequently, the researchers were not able to find evidence that programmes with large budgets are necessarily more effective. However, the research team's observations were that the overall system for building global DRM capacity is not strategic - instead, it is made up of lots of smaller, uncoordinated projects and programmes scattered across countries. There is therefore potential for donors and international agencies to work more closely together on coordinated programmes of system-wide, multi-scale capacity strengthening within and across countries.

There also **appears to be a 'missing middle' in terms of DRM capacity,** with most capacity-building programmes focusing on either the national or the community level. Much less attention is currently being paid to building capacities at the sub-national government level. This is problematic as capacities, policies and procedures at one level ideally need to mesh with those at lower and higher levels. The fieldwork confirmed that inter-scalar working is important for improving the integration of DRM policies and processes, increasing sustainability and facilitating upward, demand-led DRM. However, building capacities for inter-scalar working is not currently prioritized in DRM capacity-building interventions. DRM capacity-building programmes should therefore give attention to how new capacities at one level can dovetail with capacities and processes at both lower and higher levels, e.g., how district plans might link with provincial budgeting processes. Programmes should also be designed to ensure that their activities maximize inter-scalar collaboration.

Although many of the communities that are most vulnerable to disasters exist in conflict-affected areas, and many donors are prioritizing aid to fragile states, the research team found evidence that **programme implementers are typically focusing their activities on non-conflict areas.** The usual problems encountered with DRM capacity-building programmes, e.g., short time-scales and high turnover, are usually accentuated in fragile and conflict-affected states. In several countries, the research found that when active conflict breaks out in an area, DRM capacity-building programmes are typically postponed or alternative locations are identified. This means that people living in areas affected by conflict are often left out of capacity building for DRM initiatives despite their increased vulnerability to disasters. It is important to note that fragile states do not necessarily have weak DRM capacity; but where there is very weak DRM capacity and infrastructure, the researchers found evidence that **small steps in improving technical capacity can be regarded as highly significant.** If this point is recognized, donors should therefore consider it both feasible and effective to work with weaker systems where capacity-building needs are perhaps highest. Governance contexts change quickly in fragile and conflict-affected states and so programme implementers should track those changes closely and adapt accordingly. Also, social cohesion and civil society are often weak in fragile and conflict-affected states, which should be factored into the design of DRM programmes.

Recent literature emphasizes that capacity building should be focused on

the development of 'functional' capacity whereas 'technical' capacity has been the emphasis historically. The research suggests that, in relation to DRM, **technical and functional capacity are so related and mutually reinforcing that in reality can be difficult to separate out.** The literature stresses that greater emphasis in capacity-building programming should be placed on moving beyond technical training to developing the functional capacity within society for effective decisions and action on DRM to be taken. Evidence of significant contributions to functional capacity emerged from the case studies, including development of DRM policies and legislation, coordination mechanisms for decision-making, and mainstreaming of DRR in development plans at different scales. However, it is not necessarily useful analytically to separate technical from functional capacity building – the two are fundamentally related and reinforcing, and elements of them both may be present in the same activity. As mentioned above, in situations where the starting point for DRM capacity is low, such as in many fragile states, it may remain important to prioritize technical capacity as a counterpart for effective functional capacity and to ensure that both are developed hand in hand.

Despite their perceived importance in the literature, capacity-building activities are not yet commonly aimed at building an 'enabling environment' for DRM. An enabling environment can be defined as a context that provides the prioritization and motivation to turn development of DRM structures and skills into effective action. DRM capacity-building programmes can contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the creation of an enabling environment through, e.g., advocacy mechanisms, strengthening academic platforms, encouraging 'champions', generating support for good practice, reducing cultural barriers and demonstrating alternatives. The concept of **an 'enabling environment' for DRM can usefully be applied at multiple levels, including the grass-roots scale,** and the research suggests that all implementers of capacity-building initiatives should think creatively and flexibly about how to strengthen this.

What new evidence is there?

Multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed as part of the research. This section summarizes some of the more distinct observations made by the research team.

Because of the historical focus of disaster-related interventions on managing emergency events, and a well-established bias in funding towards disaster response rather than DRM, it could be anticipated that preparedness would be the element of the DRM cycle that is prioritised. The research provides strong evidence of this, and highlights that **building capacity for prevention, mitigation and, especially, sustainable recovery remains overlooked.** Most of the programmes selected for in-depth study were oriented in practice most strongly towards preparedness, and few survey respondents indicated that they had been involved in DRM capacity-building programmes that focused primarily on prevention and mitigation (eight per cent) or recovery (only two per cent). There seems to be no fundamental reason why support for these aspects of DRM should not be factored into, or indeed form the prime focus of, DRM capacity-building initiatives and the international community should be encouraged to move programming in this direction.

Despite the calls to embed a holistic approach to DRR within DRM, the research found that **programmes are not typically targeting vulnerable groups, and programme implementers are preoccupied with present risks rather than building capacities to adapt to long-term changes in risk.** Although the importance of taking a holistic DRR approach has been emphasized in the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for DRR, support for DRR approaches is only now breaking into DRM capacity-building programmes, and still has some distance to go if it is to become strongly embedded as a foundational rather than an additional consideration in programme design. Evidence from the fieldwork suggests that, while targeting of vulnerable locations may take place as part of the design of DRM capacity-building interventions, explicit targeting of vulnerable groups within those vulnerable locations does not typically take place. Also, the fieldwork showed that programmes tend to focus more on present risks than on building capacities to respond to long-term changes in risk.

The research also revealed that **mainstreaming DRM is not emphasized enough in programme design,** despite being stressed in the literature and confirmed through the fieldwork as a beneficial activity. Creating capacities to mainstream DRR into development planning across sectors is not generally prioritized in capacity-building programmes related to DRM, but examples from the research suggest that, when undertaken, it was regarded as a major advance and a highly significant contribution. For mainstreaming to be successful it is essential to have an enabling environment and a demand-led process from within high levels of government. Unfortunately, the sustainability of mainstreaming efforts is still weak and much more effort and strategies need to be developed to ensure continuous change over the long term.

It is well-known that it is necessary for time-scales across all capacity-building programmes to be lengthened, but the research shows that this is even more important for DRM, given the need to teach new concepts and challenge entrenched patterns and mindsets fixed on emergency response. The international survey provided evidence that **most programmes run for one to three years, with very few being of more than five years in duration.** Lack of sufficient time-scales is a chronic challenge for DRM capacity-building programmes and is the root cause of other identified common challenges such as high turnover, a lack of appropriate assessments to inform programme design and a failure to

Foster ownership and engage political support

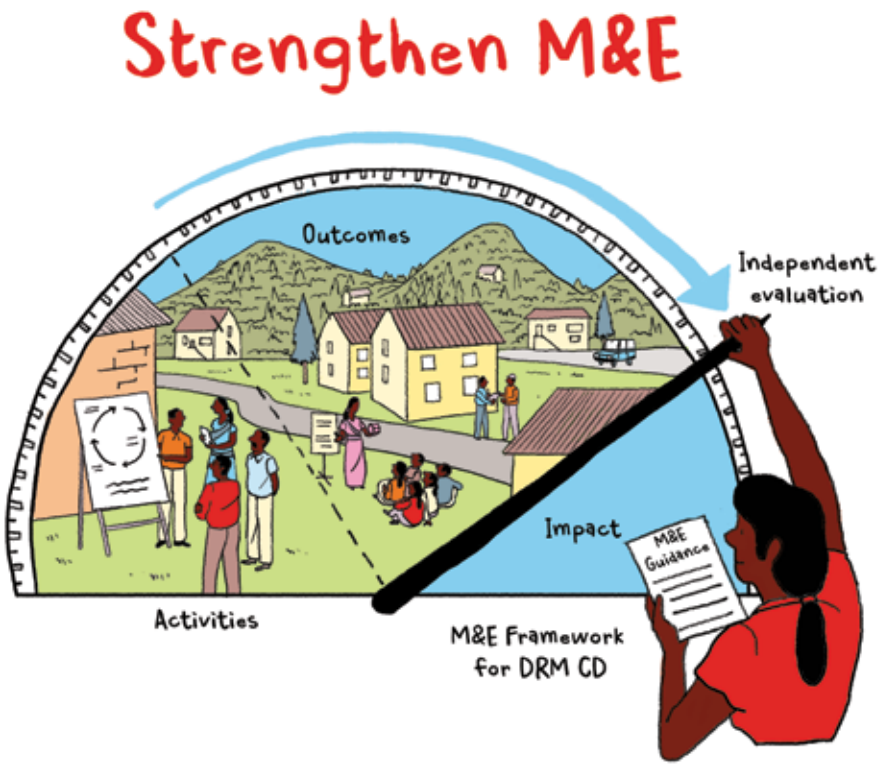
create sustainability strategies. According to the research, the typical time-scale of DRM capacity-building programmes was less than three years, and the fieldwork provided much evidence that this is too short. The longest programme that was studied in depth was five years, and evidence suggests that this contributed to the overall effectiveness of the programme. The research therefore shows that time-scales longer than the one to three-year norm can improve the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions, enabling programme stakeholders to enhance both technical and functional capacity and shift towards a more holistic DRR approach to DRM.

The literature emphasizes the need to give greater attention to fostering ownership and the research found compelling evidence that **the principle of ownership is being taken seriously by DRM practitioners and is often incorporated well** into the design and implementation of capacity-building programmes. Ownership does not emerge without effort and deliberate design. The research revealed firstly that DRM practitioners are aware of the importance of ownership for DRM capacity-building effectiveness, and secondly that programmes include steps to ensure those targeted for capacity building are centrally involved in its design and implementation. However, for all programmes studied, there was still room for improvement to make sure that those targeted have a stronger engagement and greater sense of the value of the capacity-building process and gains.

Similarly, it is established best practice to tailor development and DRM interventions to the national and local context, and the fieldwork found evidence that **programme implementers are taking the principle of adapting to the local context seriously.** Several practical steps can be taken to assist implementing agencies in tailoring their programmes to the local situation. In particular, developing an understanding of context is best achieved through building up long-term engagement and relationships in an area. At a

community scale, those involved in DRM capacity-building programmes have found that linking with target communities' everyday lives and livelihoods improves effectiveness. Several programmes revealed that people were much more engaged when livelihoods were used creatively as access points for discussing DRM.

Another method for improving the relevance of a programme to the context is the use of 'south-south' partnerships. The literature on capacity building generally is supportive of the use of 'south-south' arrangements, where consultants and expertise are taken from one low- or middle-income country and exported to another, rather than relying on expertise from high-income countries. However, this has not previously been widely analysed in relation to DRM. From case-study programmes the research indicates that **south-south cooperation can bring several benefits and should be promoted as an approach for DRM capacity-building programmes.** In particular, it is very useful if both countries have similar hazards as well as similar socio-economic situations.



There are several other areas of established best practice that are not being so well implemented on the ground. For example, **sustainability, although well emphasized in the literature, is still not being prioritized by implementers of DRM capacity-building programmes.** Formal sustainability planning - e.g., the development of exit strategies - does not generally take place. Only one of the programmes selected for in-depth study had a process in place for considering an exit strategy, whereas most others were not designed to take into account how gains would be maintained or continued after completion of the programme. Despite the emphasis in the literature then, DRM capacity building programmes are currently giving insufficient focus on securing the sustainability of capacities developed. Programme implementers have to actively design mechanisms for capacity retention or transfer, otherwise gains are undermined by staff turnover. Unfortunately sustainability can be more of a problem at the local level where there tends to be increased turnover, and funding decisions at a higher level can undermine capacity gains and retention. However, the creation of national knowledge bases, or pools of DRM expertise, can help with capacity retention.

Similarly, **monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are typically very weak on the ground,** even though they are well accepted as part of best practice, and there is a lack of tailored tools and guidance to assist with M&E of DRM and climate change adaptation programmes. The fieldwork showed that the quality and robustness of DRM capacity-building programme M&E can be substantially improved. In particular, programmes need to shift from being used to monitor activities and outputs to measuring outcomes and impact. Also, the fieldwork demonstrated that external, **independent evaluations of DRM capacity-building programmes are rare,** with none of the 15 programmes selected for in-depth study being subject to an external evaluation. However, there is

Pay more attention to sustainability

an opportunity to improve M&E because the fieldwork uncovered evidence that donor requirements act as a strong incentive for M&E best practice. M&E is usually viewed as an obligation to the donor rather than an opportunity to improve programme effectiveness. Remote M&E guidance and support from headquarters is often required and can work effectively when capacities on the ground are weak.

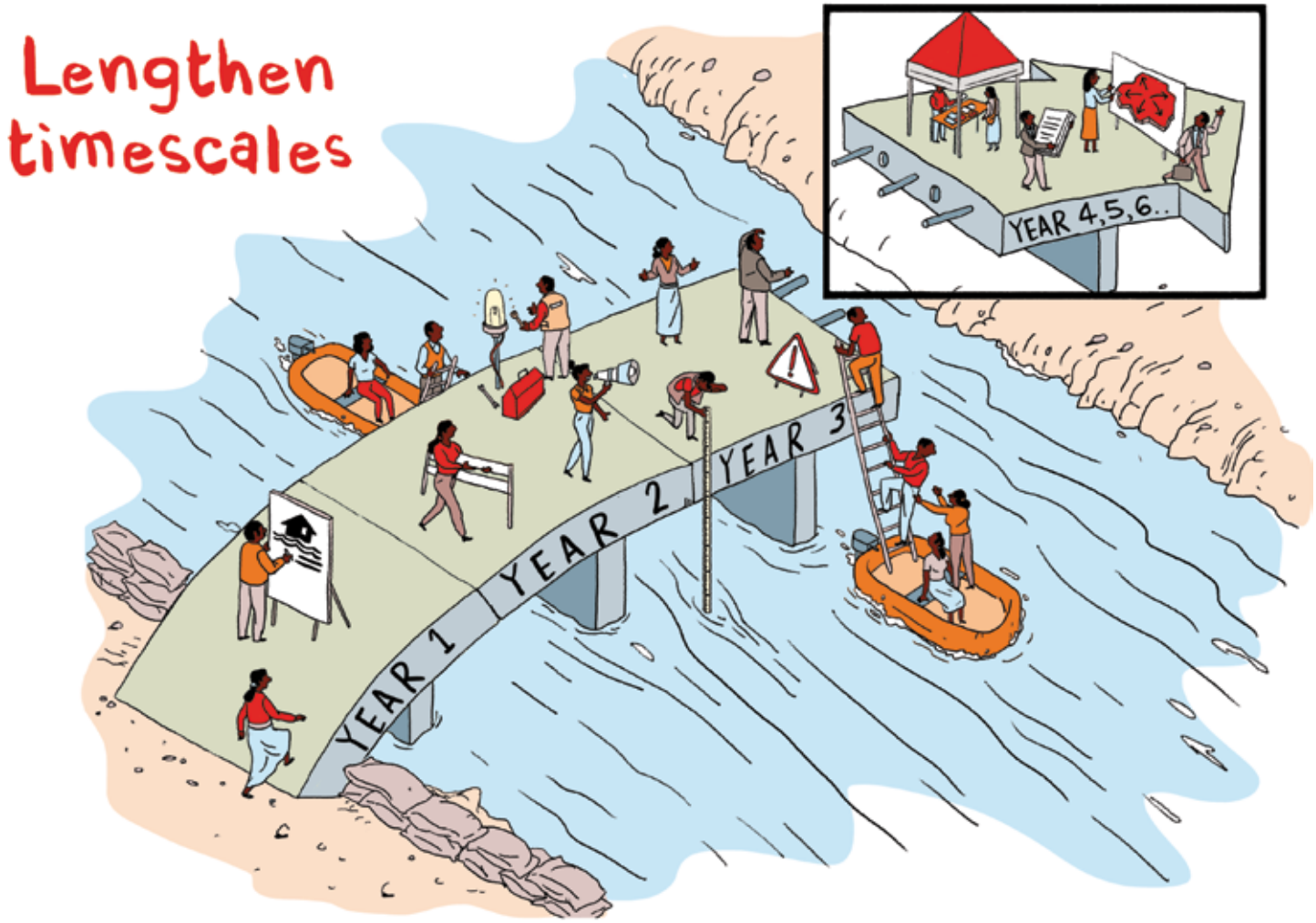
Several other areas of best practice in relation to programme design are also typically overlooked. In particular, the research provides evidence that **gender dimensions are not well integrated into programme design.** Gender considerations in capacity building for DRM programmes are often neglected, other than sometimes ensuring quotas for female participation. Project implementers typically show a willingness to incorporate gender issues, but commonly misunderstand what gender mainstreaming means. They show little knowledge of how to orient their programmes to take into account differential disaster vulnerabilities, perceptions of hazards and risks, access to resources, roles, skills and decision-making power. Also, **capacity needs assessments are often not carried out or not completed early enough.** The research suggests that those involved in many DRM capacity-building interventions are not conducting systematic capacity needs assessments to inform the design of programmes; yet there was evidence that when needs assessments are undertaken late or are rushed it can ultimately lead to programme delays and reduce effectiveness. In contrast, when capacity assessments are conducted before the launch of a programme, the implementers are able to design programmes more fit for purpose, with more realistic time-frames from the outset.

The literature on capacity building generally is critical of a perceived over-reliance on training as the predominant activity, arguing that it is often unsustainable. However, the research found that more **sustainable and innovative approaches to training are being used, with favourable results.** Training is still the primary

activity in most DRM capacity-building initiatives but diversified methods are being used to generate improved results. For example, 'training of trainers' approaches appear to be widely used and can be very effective if coupled with careful selection procedures and rigorous mentoring of new trainers. On-the-job training and the use of secondments can be effective forms of capacity building for DRM also, if there is an environment of co-working and mutual trust. All training should be interactive, contextualized and based on an attitude of mutual learning. Carefully designed and well-implemented training programmes can therefore contribute to the creation of sustainable functional capacity, particularly from the perspective of the DRM system as a whole.

1.1 What new tools have been developed?

The evidence presented above creates a picture of DRM capacity building globally which shows that, despite some good progress, there is still much to be done to improve practice on the ground. Although more work is needed, the research team developed a framework for effective DRM capacity building and an M&E framework, both of which are presented below.



A framework: key principles for effective DRM capacity building

Six principles were tested and revised during the research and can be confirmed as important for securing the effectiveness of DRM capacity-building programmes. The research team hopes that international agencies and NGOs will adopt these principles as a guiding philosophy for DRM capacity-building activities, and use the conceptual framework for developing both the process and the content of programmes.

Table 1: Key principles for effective DRM capacity building

Key principle	Definition
Flexibility and adaptability	The need to approach capacity-building interventions flexibly, so that the design of the programme is appropriate to context and responsive to needs (rather than applied as an externally-imposed 'blueprint'). It includes undertaking careful assessment of capacity needs, and working with and reinforcing existing skills, strategies, systems and capacities. It also includes understanding and accounting for the political and power dimensions that can undermine or strengthen capacity building.
Comprehensive planning	The need to carefully design interventions so that they can meet their objectives and are likely to be sustainable. It includes appropriate scheduling of interventions so that pressure to show visible results does not undermine capacity building. Also critical is planning for the long-term sustainability of capacity gains after the withdrawal of interventions. Comprehensive planning includes a robust system for monitoring and evaluation.
Ownership and partnership	The need to ensure that those targeted for capacity building have a clear and significant role in the design and implementation of initiatives (which will again help to ensure they are appropriate, effective and sustainable). Ownership is likely to rest on active participation, clear statements of responsibilities, engagement of leaders, and alignment with existing DRM and DRR strategies.
Attention to functional capacity	The need to focus on 'functional' capacity building. This means doing more than improving technical skills and resources. It means developing the ability of stakeholders and organizations to take effective decisions and actions on DRM. It includes aspects such as improving coordination, and developing policies and plans. It also includes creating an enabling environment for effective decisions and actions, such as developing incentives for good staff performance, and building support among stakeholders to see DRM as a priority issue.
Integration of actors and scales	The need to build capacity to coordinate across scales and to work with other stakeholders. Capacity building can act to bridge capacity and communication gaps that commonly exist between national and local levels. Initiatives can focus on building capacity of networks of stakeholders, and on building local people's capacity to interact with other stakeholders.
Contribution to disaster risk reduction	The need for a more holistic DRR-influenced approach to DRM capacity. This includes attention to: understanding and planning for long-term changes in risk; moving beyond a focus on short-term emergency management to capacity in disaster prevention, mitigation and long-term recovery; prioritizing the reduction of vulnerability; targeting the needs of vulnerable groups; and addressing gender inequalities in both vulnerability and capacity.

M&E framework

The fieldwork highlighted that practitioners of DRM capacity-building programmes generally need help to develop and implement more robust M&E systems and, in particular, to shift their focus from monitoring activities and outputs to measuring outcomes and, ultimately, impacts. For this purpose, an M&E framework has been developed which can be used in DRM capacity-building programmes for monitoring and measuring progress against selected outcomes. The research found that M&E frameworks and tools work best when they are flexible and the programme implementer has scope for tailoring them to the intervention required. Therefore, a flexible framework has been designed which can be adapted, with the use of some accompanying guidance notes, to all DRM capacity-building interventions. The proposed outcomes and sub-outcomes to be monitored are set out in the table below, and are explained further in the accompanying guidance notes (Annex B), along with example indicators for each sub-outcome.

Table 2: Proposed M&E outcome areas

Outcome	Sub-outcome
1. The ability of actors to use knowledge, innovation, education, communication and technology for DRM has been enhanced.	1.1 Individuals and communities at risk of disaster are able to use enhanced DRM skills and knowledge as a result of the capacity-building programme.
	1.2 Actors engaged in policy-making, planning and/or implementation of DRM at national, regional, district and/or community level are using enhanced skills built by the capacity-building programme.
2. The institutional framework for DRM has been strengthened.	2.1 The capacity-building programme has led to the improvement of DRM policies, strategies and procedures.
	2.2 The capacity-building programme has led to the inclusion of a wider range of stakeholders in developing new DRM planning and operational processes.
3. Motivation to achieve effective DRM has been improved.	3.1 Political support for DRM has been strengthened at national, regional, district and/or community level by the capacity-building programme.
	3.2 The capacity-building programme has strengthened the motivation of communities and individuals to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

1.2 Recommendations

The research findings point to a number of changes that should be made to the way in which DRM capacity-building programmes are conceived, designed and implemented. For easy reference, these are presented in Table 3 below, divided into recommendations targeted at policy-makers and recommendations more relevant for use by those DRM practitioners implementing capacity-building programmes.

Table 3: Policy and programme recommendations

Theme	Policy recommendation	Programme recommendation
Overall	Create strategic platforms for donors and agencies to work together within countries and regions on coordinated programmes of system-wide, multi-scale capacity strengthening oriented to building functional and enabling capacity for DRR.	
Improving capacity needs assessments	Adapt funding and procurement processes to enable robust and continuous needs assessments to inform capacity-building programmes. Support implementing partners to conduct capacity needs assessments prior to programme design.	Carefully plan and conduct capacity assessments before programme design and conduct continuous assessments to inform and adapt capacity-building programmes.
Fostering ownership	Ensure that capacity-building initiatives align to national and local policies, strategies and procedures and that a wide range of governmental and other stakeholders are significantly involved in shaping the objectives and approach.	Prioritize active engagement of the stakeholders targeted for capacity strengthening in programme design and implementation. If appropriate, include representatives from the national disaster management authority in the programme, e.g., as implementers or as members of the steering committee.
Considering sustainability	Much greater emphasis needs to be placed on creating the tools, and ensuring they are applied, to improve thinking around and planning for sustainability at the programme and national level. Policy-makers should consider the establishment of national or regional pools of DRM specialists so that expertise can be retained and shared across organizations.	Programme developers should formalize and systematize planning to ensure their interventions are as sustainable as possible, even if future funding is uncertain, as this process is likely to ensure improved capacity retention. Implementing agencies should expect and therefore plan for turnover of their staff and DRM stakeholders.
Accommodating longer time-scales	Improve stability and sustainability of capacity building for DRM by extending programme lengths to 5-10 years.	Lobby for lengthened DRM capacity-building funding and employ strategies to minimize the impact of gaps between funding.
Strengthening M&E	Donor agencies should encourage the improvement of M&E systems, particularly through the incorporation of outcome and impact-level M&E and the inclusion of external evaluations.	Implementing agencies should consider using the M&E framework included in this report and invest in training for staff involved in programme management.

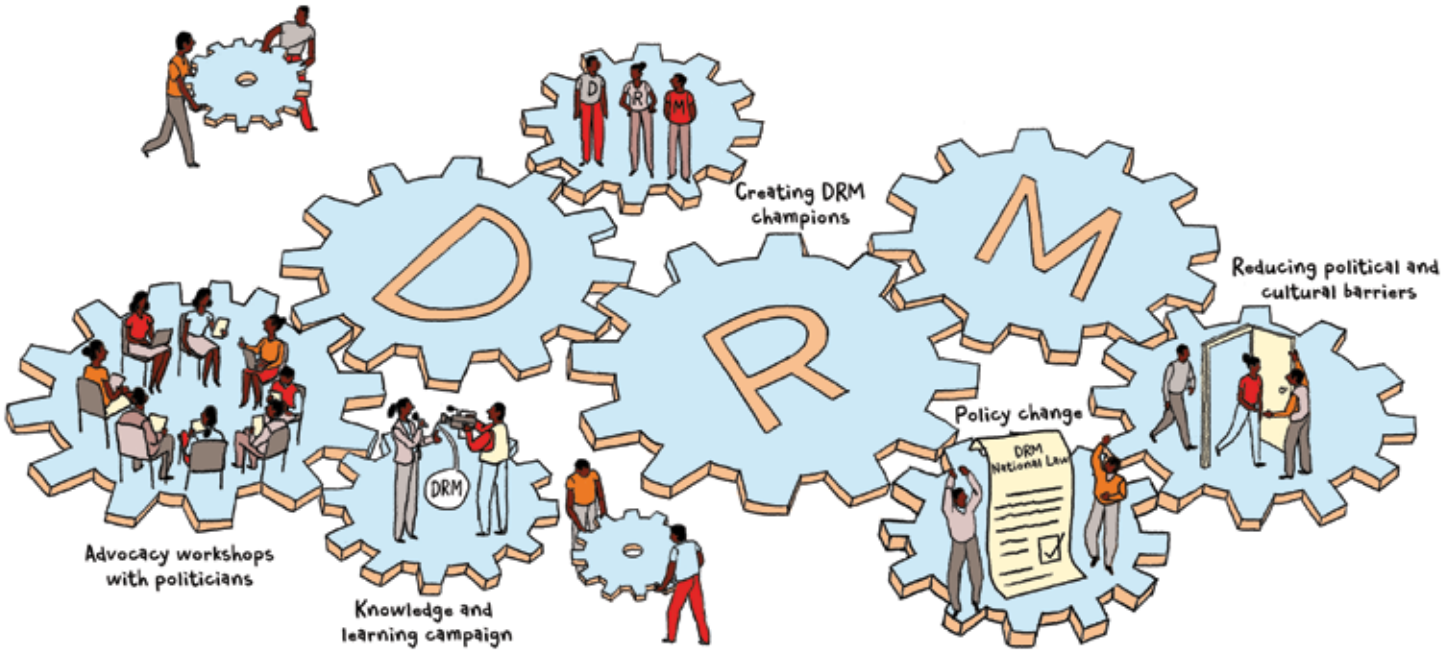
Table 3: Policy and programme recommendations (followed)

Theme	Policy recommendation	Programme recommendation
Balancing technical and functional capacity building	Ensure that support for capacity building recognizes the importance of strengthening functional capacity as a primary objective.	Design interventions so that capacity support can translate directly or indirectly into functional capacity gains. Recognize that support for technical and functional capacities generally need to work hand in hand.
Creating an enabling environment for DRM	Capacity-strengthening programmes should incorporate activities and elements that specifically aim to build motivation for prioritizing DRM in society.	More consciously build an 'enabling environment' for DRM – future capacity-building efforts should look closely at the mechanisms through which programmes deliberately seek to foster enabling environments, in ways that might not conventionally be conceived as capacity-building activities. Community and local level initiatives should consider how their programmes can contribute to an enabling environment for DRM.
Improving the impact of training	Ensure that support for training continues with emphasis on more sustainable and diverse training mechanisms.	Consider how to incorporate the development of functional capacity within training activities. Consider the use of a training of trainers' approach, on-the-job training or secondments. Ensure that all training is interactive, contextualized and based on an attitude of mutual learning.
Supporting the shift to DRR	Orient capacity building toward a wider DRR approach that includes mechanisms for identifying and adapting to long-term changes in risk.	Actively target capacity strengthening at grassroots levels toward highly vulnerable social groups within communities.
Targeting prevention, mitigation and recovery	Broaden the focus of capacity-building support to all aspects of DRM, in order to strengthen capacities in prevention, mitigation and recovery.	Seek to incorporate elements of recovery, mitigation and prevention into capacity building programmes.
Building capacity to mainstream DRM	To ensure sustainable development and vulnerability reduction, donors, governments and policy-makers should promote and invest in capacity-building interventions to mainstream DRR.	Consider how capacities to mainstream DRM can be integrated into capacity buildving for DRM programmes as an action that can significantly boost the shift to DRR.

Table 3: Policy and programme recommendations (followed)

Theme	Policy recommendation	Programme recommendation
Integrating gender considerations	Donors should, as in other development activities, require the inclusion of gender-sensitive and comprehensive approaches to capacity building for DRM. Further work is required to provide and promote uptake of clear guidelines and tools for programmes on how to create gender-sensitive programming that moves beyond quotas for female participation.	Incorporate gender analysis from the early stages of programme design and consider using a gender specialist to both train the implementation team and identify opportunities for the programme to be more gender aware.
Linking to the context	Use south-south cooperation in DRM capacity-building programmes, ensuring that the two countries have similar hazards as well as similar levels of development.	Take time to consider creative and innovative ways to tailor activities and approaches to the context, rather than applying a standardized approach.
Building DRM capacity in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS)	For capacity building for DRM in insecure environments, it is critical to build sufficient time into programming from the outset to consider how (and whether) the multiple structural barriers can be overcome, what incentives need to change, and what organizations should be involved in that process.	Conduct continuous assessment of the context and adapt programmes to changing needs in fragile states and within the areas of conflict.
Linking up the levels	Ensure that the sub-national level is not overlooked and that resources are made available for building capacities at the provincial and district levels.	Ensure that capacity built at one level can dovetail with capacities and processes operating at both lower and higher levels. Deliberately integrate inter-scalar coordination into capacity-building interventions, e.g., through mixing scales at training events, and build capacities for inter-scalar interaction.

This research project was conducted with funding from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).



Create an enabling environment for DRM

Notes

Who we are

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. Together with our 189 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we reach 97 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes as well as 85 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to 'saving lives and changing minds'.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

For further information, please contact:

Josephine Shields Recass
Research Project coordinator
International Federation of Red Cross and
Red Crescent Societies

Telephone: +41 (0)22 730 4652
Email: josephine.shieldsrecass@ifrc.org

Follow us:

1299000 10/2015 E Illustrations by Scriberia