



Navigating fragility, conflict and violence to strengthen community resilience

A handbook for disaster risk reduction practitioners

Communities in settings of fragility, conflict and violence (FCV) are disproportionately affected by disasters, as their resilience, disaster risk management and coping capacities are weakened. Effective and sustainable disaster risk reduction (DRR) in these settings is pivotal to save lives and ensure we leave no one behind amidst political and social turmoil and insecurity. But how do we make it work?

This new handbook helps to navigate the challenges and uncertainties of FCV settings, assisting DRR practitioners in avoiding common shortcomings and increasing the chances of effectively reduced disaster risk. The handbook is jointly developed by IFRC, ICRC, the German Red Cross and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. The primary focus and target audience is the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, though the handbook is equally relevant to any DRR practitioner working in FCV settings. Based on the Movement's experience, the handbook contributes to the Sendai Framework targets and the Paris Agreement commitments in FCV contexts.

Access the handbook [here](#) or via the QR code on the right.

For any questions, to share practical experiences or bring the handbook's key messages to another event, please reach out to Liesa Sauerhammer (L.Sauerhammer@drk.de) and Juliane Schillinger (schillinger@climatecentre.org).



KEY TOPICS COVERED IN THE HANDBOOK

The handbook follows IFRC's Road Map to Community Resilience, highlighting relevant FCV considerations along the way. A thorough understanding of the operating context and sensitivity to conflict dynamics builds the foundation for effective DRR programming in FCV settings. Key handbook contents include:

- **Conflict analysis**, outlining different patterns of conflict and violence and introducing various context analysis tools
- **Safety and security**, building on ICRC's Safer Access Framework
- **Community engagement**, including inclusive and tailored approaches to strengthening local preparedness and self-help capacities and engaging communities in the development of local action plans
- **Conflict sensitivity and do no harm**, including approaches that not only minimize the risk of negative side effects of DRR programming, but also contribute to social cohesion
- **Comprehensive risk assessment in multi-risk settings**, with an introduction to compound risk analysis and practical tools to consider compounding effects in participatory risk assessment processes
- **Institutional preparedness**, building on IFRC's Preparedness for Effective Response framework and focusing on institutional capacities to manage the risks of FCV settings



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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN PRACTICE: BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH EDUCATION IN LEBANON

One of the handbook's case studies features the work of the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), which has been operating in a context of fragmentation, sectarianism and active conflict for decades. LRC is a key player in promoting school-based DRR in conflict-affected areas of the country, building resilience among school children and creating a safer and more secure learning environment.

The *"Safe to Learn, Safe to Play"* project in Tripoli focused on strengthening school resilience in the face of armed conflict and other potential hazards like earthquakes and fires. Activities included the rehabilitation of school buildings, teacher and student training on DRR measures, emergency planning and the provision of safety equipment. As a result, school attendance rates increased, and students reported feeling safer.

In another area of Tripoli, projects had previously been conducted separately between conflicting communities. LRC applied conflict-sensitive approaches to working with teachers and students from both communities, to understand and learn from past experiences, understand their specific needs and foster collaboration. An informal early warning system was established and in coordination with the Lebanese Army, students could safely evacuate from the conflict zones. Transparent communication with both communities and local civil society organizations was crucial to the success of this project and to LRC's safe access to the communities.

Next to Lebanon, the handbook contains extensive case studies from Bangladesh, Colombia and South Sudan, alongside a diverse set of shorter examples from across the Movement.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND DONORS

Building on the practical guidance to DRR practitioners, the handbook makes a number of key recommendations to the wider DRR community and donors, to create an enabling environment for DRR and community resilience in FCV settings:

Invest in communities for resilience: The Movement holds that the most effective scale for reducing risk and building resilience in FCV settings is with communities, and data and resources at this level are needed. Communities must be empowered to set resilience agendas and to achieve them in partnership with the Movement. Funding mechanisms must be flexible and adaptable to support resilience in FCV contexts, accounting for heightened uncertainty and costs for safety and security, and to provide a longer timeframe for learning.

Invest in integrated risk assessment frameworks: DRR practitioners are increasingly aware of the need to consider complex risk interactions, including cascading and compound risks. This can be supported through the development and implementation of risk assessment frameworks integrating natural and FCV-related risks that identify how these risks intersect.

Invest in holistic approaches to address multi-risk environments: Effective DRR in FCV contexts requires a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of risk. Cross-sectoral partnerships are needed beyond *do no harm* and conflict-sensitive approaches, including a workable humanitarian-development-peace nexus and disaster, climate and humanitarian diplomacy.

Invest in the protection of civilian populations in FCV settings: Armed conflicts and other types of FCV settings increasingly feature an ever-growing number of actors organized in overlapping webs of alliances, proxies and other types of support relationships. This can lead to a diffusion of responsibility with heightened risks to civilians and others not fighting, especially before, during and after disaster impact. Those who provide support to parties of armed conflicts should identify opportunities to influence these parties to enhance protection of civilians and promote respect for international humanitarian law.