





MALAWI

Photo: Il Maestro e Margherita

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ORGANISATIONAL INTERNAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- Localization (Policy, 2024)
- Water and Hygiene (Guidelines, 2022)
- Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (Policy, 2019)
- Education in Emergency (Policy, 2018)
- Nutritional Security (Policy, 2017)
- Protection (Policy, 2016)
- Gender (Policy, 2015)
- Food Security and Livelihoods (Policy, 2022)
- Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (Policy, 2013)
- Childhood (Policy, 2011)
- Corporate Social Responsibility (Policy, 2011)

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Introduction



COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale is a humanitarian organization that for over 60 years has been working towards the eradication of all forms of poverty and discrimination, supporting communities affected by war, socio-economic crises and natural disasters to achieve recovery and long-term stability. Operating in 33 countries across Africa, the Middle East, and the Latin America and the Caribbean region, COOPI currently manages over 250 humanitarian projects reaching nearly 7 million people worldwide. Driven by the commitment, passion and professionalism of its staff, COOPI works relentlessly to improve the living conditions of its served communities with emergency, reconstruction and longer-term development interventions aimed at reducing the gap between the richest and the poorest, most-deprived areas of the planet.

In line with the overall organizational mandate, COOPI's Disaster Preparedness (DP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programming bridges the continuum between **emergency, recovery and reconstruction**. It encompasses the full spectrum of actions under the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) umbrella, hence looks at **prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction**, with the ultimate goal of reducing human loss and suffering, and empowering

systems, communities and individuals (particularly the most vulnerable) to recover and thrive for a better future, achieving peace, stability and resilience.

COOPI's DP/DRR efforts focus on **strengthening knowledge and enhancing capacities** at the **macro, meso and micro levels** – targeting institutions, structures, communities and individuals to better anticipate, prepare for, reduce, and withstand the impacts of disasters (particularly those caused by natural hazards) in the short-, medium- and longer-term. Based on sound **needs- and risks-assessments** and the **systematic mainstreaming of age, gender, diversity and protection** principles, COOPI's DP/DRR intervention aim at leaving no one behind, thus ensuring equal outcomes across communities including among the most vulnerable households and individuals. Strong technical skills, strategic partnerships and a focus on the use of technology and innovations, ensure COOPI's DP/DRR interventions are evidence-based and data-driven, aiming for the best possible outcomes and long-lasting impacts.

This document outlines COOPI's positioning on DP/DRR, highlights its operational strategies, and showcases key good practices from a range of country offices.

Why focusing on PD/RRD



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MALAWI

Photo: Il Maestro e Margherita

The number of recorded disasters¹ has increased fivefold over the past 50 years, at least partially driven by human-induced climate change². This trend will continue to rise³. Over the last decade, an average of 175 million people per year have been affected by disaster caused by natural hazards⁴, 26 million of which have been displaced⁵. As a matter of fact, the number of recorded natural hazards and disasters worldwide has risen from 387 in 2022 to 399 in 2023 with the number of fatalities increasing by 56,000 (30,704 in 2022 and 86,473 in 2023) in one year only.

The increasing frequency and severity of disasters is closely linked to climate change, which has been identified as a key driver in the exacerbation of

climatic (drought, extreme heat, wildfires, etc.), weather phenomena (tropical storms, cyclones, etc.) and hydrological events (floods, landslides, etc.). Disasters must be intended not only in terms of assets destruction and lives lost, but also as **critical indicators of underlying structural vulnerabilities within societies**. Many disasters are in fact rooted in inadequate regulatory frameworks, weak governance systems and poor land management practices – all requiring action to reduce future risks and build resilience. Cyclical threats and natural hazards also remain largely **un-mitigated and un-managed** – with their effects (compounded by insecurity, conflict, land degradation, rapid population growth, resource depletion and social inequalities) further exacerbating the already difficult conditions in which vulnerable people struggle to cope.

¹ UN, 2016. Official definition of disaster: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.

² WMO, 2006.

³ UNDRR, 2023.

⁴ EM-DAT.

⁵ IDMC, 2024.

Worldwide, **it is the most vulnerable populations who bear the greatest impact of natural hazards**, with the poorest countries in the global South facing disproportionate death tolls and losses. Data shows how Europe and Africa, despite suffering nearly the same number of natural hazards in 2023 (60 and 61 events respectively), experienced drastically different outcomes – the former with an overall 2.2 million affected people and a death toll of 162 individuals (0.2% of the global death impact), the latter with 12.5 million affected people and a death toll as high as 21,304 individuals (24.6% of the global death impact). The significant disparity in this example highlights the **disproportionate human cost borne by poorer countries**, which often lack the preparedness, capacity and resources to effectively mitigate disasters. It also highlights the critical importance of raising awareness, improving preparedness, and strengthening infrastructure to build resilience. In urban areas, unplanned urbanisation paired with rapid population growth and the overall lack of regulation and adequate infrastructure, significantly increase disaster-related risks, making **urban populations** (55.3% of the worldwide population in 2018, increasing to 60% by 2030), especially, the most vulnerable, more exposed and harder to protect.

The impacts of disasters are in fact closely tied to community vulnerabilities – particularly because those living in extreme poverty and vulnerability are highly reliant on natural resources for shelter, livelihoods and daily sustenance. Vulnerability is related to factors such as gender, age, disability status, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. – all playing an important role in determining a household's or an individual's ability to cope and recover. **Women, girls, elders, people living with disabilities and from minorities often face heightened risks during disasters due to structural inequalities and social disadvantages** – women and girls, for instance, are disproportionately affected due to their role in society affecting all

aspects of their lives including access to information and resources, while people living with disabilities suffer the effects of social exclusion and have limited access to disaster preparedness measures. **Displaced people** often live in unsafe environments including unfinished buildings, camps or informal settlements and experience language and cultural barriers that further limit their access to critical information on risk mitigation and preparedness.

COOPI understands the dynamic and evolving nature of global challenges and is committed to implementing relevant and adaptive programs that respond to changing contexts. **This includes a continuous strengthening of DP/DRR actions, through both standalone initiatives as well as multisectoral and integrated programming – all requiring inclusive, targeted approaches.** Drawing on its long-standing experience in environmental and land management initiatives, COOPI acknowledges the need for investing in a new, stronger DP/DRR policy – whilst a focus on risk-reduction activities remains, the new policy **emphasizes the importance of preparedness efforts, aiming to support communities and local authorities in mitigating the impacts of potential disasters.**

Over the years, the organisation has refined its intervention methodologies to address disaster-prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction across rural, urban and peri-urban contexts to increasingly target the most vulnerable communities, households and individuals. Guided by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, COOPI promotes inclusive DP/DRR processes that actively involve key stakeholders including civil society, authorities, private entities, research centres, and the media – placing communities at the heart of these efforts. **COOPI's overarching goal in DP/DRR is to promote sustainable risk management and foster good governance processes.**

Theoretical framework

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The global significance of Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction has gained considerable momentum within international policy frameworks since the 1960s, and particularly over the last decade following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These landmark agreements have underscored the urgent need for coordinated, integrated approaches to disaster risk management, positioning DP/DRR as central to governments, institutions and the aid sector as a whole to achieving sustainable development and addressing the growing risks posed by climate change, natural hazards, and other ongoing global challenges. The global community has in fact

increasingly recognized that disaster preparedness, risk reduction and resilience-building are not only **essential for reducing the impacts of disasters but also for achieving long-term sustainable development, poverty reduction and climate change adaptation.**

The adoption of these frameworks by the aid sector has accelerated the integration of DP/DRR strategies into both humanitarian and development programming, catalyzing a shift toward more proactive, risk-informed approaches to disaster management. For COOPI, this momentum has created (and continues to do so) a significant opportunity to progressively strengthen its operations by aligning its programming with global best practices and standards.

KEY DEFINITIONS

In line with the broader humanitarian community, and particularly with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), COOPI understands **disasters** as «serious disruptions to the functioning of communities or societies, involving extensive human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceed the ability of the affected community to cope with using its own resources». Disasters are therefore understood not only as isolated, acute events causing immediate suffering, but complex occurrences with widespread impacts on various aspects of life. They affect individuals, households, and communities in both the medium- and long-term, disrupting social systems, economic stability, and the environment, and are defined by the scale and severity of their impact and the challenges they pose to the affected communities' ability to respond.

To prevent and respond to disasters and their effects, **COOPI's approach to disasters resilience encompasses DRR, DRM and DP**. UNDRR defines **DRR** as the action aimed at «preventing new risks, reducing existing risks and managing residual risks»; DRR is therefore aimed at identifying the factors that contribute to disaster risks (whether environmental, social, economic or political) and addressing them through policies, practices and strategies that reduce the potential for disaster-related harm. By focusing on strengthening resilience, DRR action ensures that communities are not only able to withstand disasters but also recover and continue to thrive in the face of adversity. DRR is applied within the broader **DRM** framework – defined by UNDRR as «the application of DRR policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk». In other words, DRM encompasses the full spectrum of actions required to manage disasters (including but not limited to DRR ones), thus looking at **disaster prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction** and «contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses». On the other hand, **DP**, while an integral component of both DRR and DRM, focuses on

ensuring that, in the event of a disaster, communities are ready to act effectively and efficiently. UNDRR defines preparedness as the «knowledge and capacities of governments, institutions, organisations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters»; DP action therefore «refers to building the capacities needed to efficiently and effectively manage all types of emergencies and achieve orderly transitions from response to sustained





recovery». The concept of **preparedness** is based on a **sound analysis of disaster risks** and good linkages with **early warning systems**, including activities such as contingency planning, the stockpiling of equipment and supplies, the development of arrangements for coordination, evacuation and public information, and associated training and field exercises which must be supported by formal institutional, legal and budgetary capacities. The related term **readiness** describes the ability to quickly and appropriately respond when required⁶.

Anticipatory Action (AA), in addition, refers to actions taken to reduce the humanitarian impacts of a forecast hazard *before* it occurs, or before its most acute impacts are felt. In the context of DRR, DRM

and DP, AA focuses on predicting and preparing for specific disaster scenarios based on forecasted or early warning information of when, where and how the event will unfold⁷. It involves identifying and addressing risks in advance, using available data to trigger pre-agreed actions that reduce vulnerability and help communities adapt to potential shocks. In other words, **AA is an integral part of DP and ensures that resources, plans, and actions are in place before a disaster happens**, rather than reacting only when the impact is already being felt.

By choosing to approach disasters through AA/DP/DRR lens, COOPI aims to **support communities** act effectively and efficiently in terms of disaster prevention, preparedness response, recovery and reconstruction.

⁶ UN, 2016.

⁷ IFRC Anticipation Hub.

KEY MILESTONES

Since the 1960s, various global initiatives have been promoted to raise awareness about climate change, its environmental impacts and the need for adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce disaster risks. Environmental civil movements in the **1960s** brought great attention to the growing environmental challenges and the importance of preserving ecosystems to ensure a sustainable future. In **1988**, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly endorsed the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to «focus precisely on social adaptation to climate change»⁸. To this date, the IPCC has been providing regular assessment reports⁹ of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts, future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation; these reports are particularly relevant for DP/DRR programming as they offer valuable insights into current climate conditions.

In **1992**, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the **Earth Summit**) held in Rio de Janeiro, emphasized sustainable development; it introduced **Agenda 21**, a comprehensive action plan promoting human health, suitable human settlements, integration of environmental considerations into development decisions, combating deforestation, and managing fragile ecosystems. This initiative laid the foundation for broader discussions on environmental degradation and the effects of climate change.

The **Kyoto Protocol**, launched in **1997** during the **COP3 Conference** of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Kyoto, represents another key milestone. It operationalized the UNFCCC by committing industrialized countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions¹⁰ based on agreed individual targets. Under the principle of «common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities», the protocol recognized that richer economies bear primary responsibility for the current high levels of GHG emissions¹¹. Sadly, no binding targets were imposed on growing economies, such as China and Brazil and some richer economies (including the United States, Canada and Russia), opted not to accept emissions targets. While the Kyoto Protocol fell short of its objectives, it marked a significant first step in global efforts to combat climate change and mitigate its effects.



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⁸ To cope with the impact of an already irreversible climate crisis means recognize “the importance of interactions between environmental change and globalization,” and the need to “incorporate the cultural dimension” to the work of adaptation to climate change impacts.

⁹ IPCC, 2023.

¹⁰ The signatory countries commit themselves to reduce the emissions of pollutants such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride in an amount not less than 5% of the emissions recorded in 1990 - considered the base year - in 2008-2012.

¹¹ During the first commitment period (2008-2012), 37 industrialized countries and economies in transition and the European Community committed to reduce GHG emissions to an average of five percent against 1990 levels. During the second commitment period, Parties committed to reduce GHG emissions by at least 18 percent below 1990 levels in the eight-year period from 2013 to 2020.

The **Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)**, which guided global disaster risk reduction efforts from 2005 to 2015, was succeeded by the **Paris Agreement**. The Paris Agreement, adopted during COP21 in 2015, aimed to «strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty». This legally binding international treaty on climate change¹², endorsed by 196 countries, seeks to limit global warming to well below 2°C, with efforts to restrict it to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. The Paris Agreement represents a landmark in multilateral climate change processes – for the first time, a binding agreement unites all nations in a shared commitment to undertake ambitious climate action and adaptation efforts. A key mechanism within the agreement is the requirement for countries to submit Nationally

Determined Contributions (NDCs)¹³, outlining their climate action plans.

Alongside the Paris Agreement and coinciding with the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), two other critical frameworks were launched in **2015**: the **Sendai Framework for DRR** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Both frameworks provide a 15-year roadmap for action (2015-2030) and are integral to advancing disaster preparedness, understanding disaster risks, and achieving sustainable development. The Sendai Framework¹⁴ for DRR, adopted on March 18th 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on DRR in Sendai City, marked a significant paradigm shift **from managing crisis to managing risks**. It outlines **7 targets** and **4 priorities for action**:

- 1 Understanding disaster risks;**
- 2 Strengthening disaster risk governance;**
- 3 Investing in DP/DRR for resilience;**
- 4 Enhancing disaster preparedness for an effective response / Build Back Better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.**

The expected outcome of the Sendai Framework is the substantial reduction of disaster risks and losses in lives, livelihoods, health, and the economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets of individuals, business, communities and countries.



¹² It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 (Conference of Parties) in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016.

¹³ Countries should communicate actions to reduce their GHG emissions and actions take to build resilience to adapt to the impacts of rising temperatures.

¹⁴ UNDRR, 2015.

In parallel with the Sendai Framework and following the conclusion of the MDGs, the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** was adopted by all United Nations member states. This introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals aimed at fostering «peace and prosperity for people and the planet, while tackling climate change and working to preserve oceans and forests». The SDGs emphasize the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development, with sustainability as their core principle. Notable goals directly relevant to DRR and climate action include:

Goal 7

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

Goal 9

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;

Goal 11

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

Goal 13

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



ETHIOPIA
Photo: Alessandro Gandolfi

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1960s**Rise of environmental civil movements**

Environmental movements highlight growing challenges such as ecosystem degradation and the need for sustainable environmental practices, setting the stage for later discussions on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

1998**Establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

The IPCC is created by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), with the endorsement of the UN General Assembly, to assess the scientific base of climate change, its impacts, risks, and adaptation strategies, offering critical insights for DP/DRR.

1992**14 Earth Summit and Agenda 21**

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro introduces Agenda 21, a comprehensive Action Plan for sustainable development, integrating environmental and disaster risk considerations.

1997**Kyoto Protocol**

The Kyoto Protocol is adopted during the COP3 Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Kyoto, committing industrialized countries to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions..

2000**The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

are established, setting targets to address global issues such as poverty, hunger, and disease by 2015..

2005**Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)**

The HFA is implemented, providing a 10-year global strategy to reduce disaster risks, emphasizing governance, preparedness, and investment in resilience-building.

2015

- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is adopted at the third UN World Conference on DRR in Sendai City. The Framework focus from managing crises to managing risks, outlining four priorities: understanding risks, governance, investment in resilience, and preparedness for effective response.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015 – 2030) is adopted by all United Nations member states, introducing a global framework for sustainability with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and specific goals addressing disaster resilience, sustainable energy, resilient infrastructure, and climate action.
- The Paris Agreement is adopted during COP21, a legally binding treaty with the aim to strengthen the global response to climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C, with efforts to restrict it to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels..

2016**The Paris Agreement**

enters into force on November 4, marking a significant milestone in international climate change efforts.

COOPI's take on DP/DRR: key concepts



COOPI's approach to DP/DRR is grounded in decades of global experience working with communities across diverse regions. The organization has been implementing a comprehensive range of DP/DRR interventions – spanning from DRR oriented land management, environmental conservation, anticipatory actions, early warning systems, to capacity strengthening – in both emergency and long-term development contexts in the African, Asian and Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) regions. With a strong commitment to aligning its operations with international standards, COOPI systematically integrates evolving concepts and frameworks to maximize relevance and impact of its interventions.

COOPI's vision of DP/DRR is **integrated, multisectoral and multi-level**, anchored in the DRM cycle. This comprehensive approach encompasses **prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction**, with the ultimate goal of community empowerment and resilience-building. At the core of COOPI's commitment is a **community-based approach**, ensuring that at-risk communities

play an active role in identifying and addressing their own vulnerabilities, strengthening preparedness, and leading localized risk reduction efforts.

By continuously incorporating **lessons learned from past disasters and field experiences**, COOPI places a strong emphasis on **resilience-building** as a long-term strategy to **reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen community capacities**. The ultimate goal of COOPI's DP/DRR programming is to **promote sustainability and resilience, empowering vulnerable individuals and communities to manage risks effectively and reduce exposure** to natural hazards.

To achieve this, COOPI's interventions prioritize **inclusivity and active community participation, as well as the systematic application of technical expertise and innovative tools** – ensuring interventions are context-relevant, needs-based, effective and sustainable. **Empowering existing community structures** through targeted training, simulation exercises, and capacity-building initiatives

is therefore a key organizational focus, as is **collaborating with local and national governments** to develop and implement preparedness and contingency plans, and **partnering with communities** to strengthen and operationalize EWSs. **Collaborations with research institutions** further enhance the impact of COOPI's interventions,

ensuring interventions are data-driven and evidence-based. By operating across the entire DRM cycle – from preparedness and response to recovery – COOPI **fosters coordination at multiple levels**, ensuring that local programming meaningfully contributes to global efforts in building the resilience against natural hazards.

AGE, GENDER, DIVERSITY AND PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

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COOPI recognizes that respecting and valuing individual differences is key to progress and sustainable development and is committed to promoting equality and eradicating all kinds of discrimination including those based on age, gender and disability. COOPI also acknowledges the **unique challenges and untapped potential of different groups** within disaster-affected communities – such as women, youths, children, elders and people living with disabilities. This understanding drives the systematic integration of **Age, Gender, Diversity and Protection (AGDP) principles** throughout all phases of the DRM cycle. By doing so, COOPI ensures its DP/DRR interventions are relevant, effective, impactful and sustainable and do not contribute to the perpetuation or exacerbation of tensions, conflicts, discrimination, violence and abuse.

Participatory context analyses and risk assessments guide this process, ensuring that interventions are based on a sound understanding of people's needs and are designed so as to address the challenges of all community segments and unlock their potential. **Regular, participatory monitoring of interventions** ensures the action remains inclusive, impartial and effective, capable of reaching and benefitting all people equally.

Special attention is given to typically less vocal and marginalized groups, who are intentionally and actively included in key **decision-making processes** – for instance, **children** participate in DRR activities through school-based awareness campaigns, whilst **civil society organizations** offer an opportunity for diverse groups to participate in preparedness activities. The inclusion of vulnerable groups – such as **children, youth, elderly individuals, people living with HIV/AIDS, and refugees** – further enhances participation and equity; for instance, COOPI's focus on the inclusion of at-risk adolescents in past DP/DRR interventions has led to a reduction in school drop-out and criminality rates.

By embracing the diversity and potential of all groups, COOPI's approach strengthens social cohesion and fosters long-term resilience. The active involvement of all population groups in hazard mapping, risk assessments and emergency response planning enhances inclusive decision-making and promotes sustainability. Ultimately, COOPI's commitment to AGD and protection mainstreaming ensures no one is left behind and that every group contributes to and benefits from disaster risk reduction, leading to more equitable and impactful outcomes.

RESEARCH, PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION

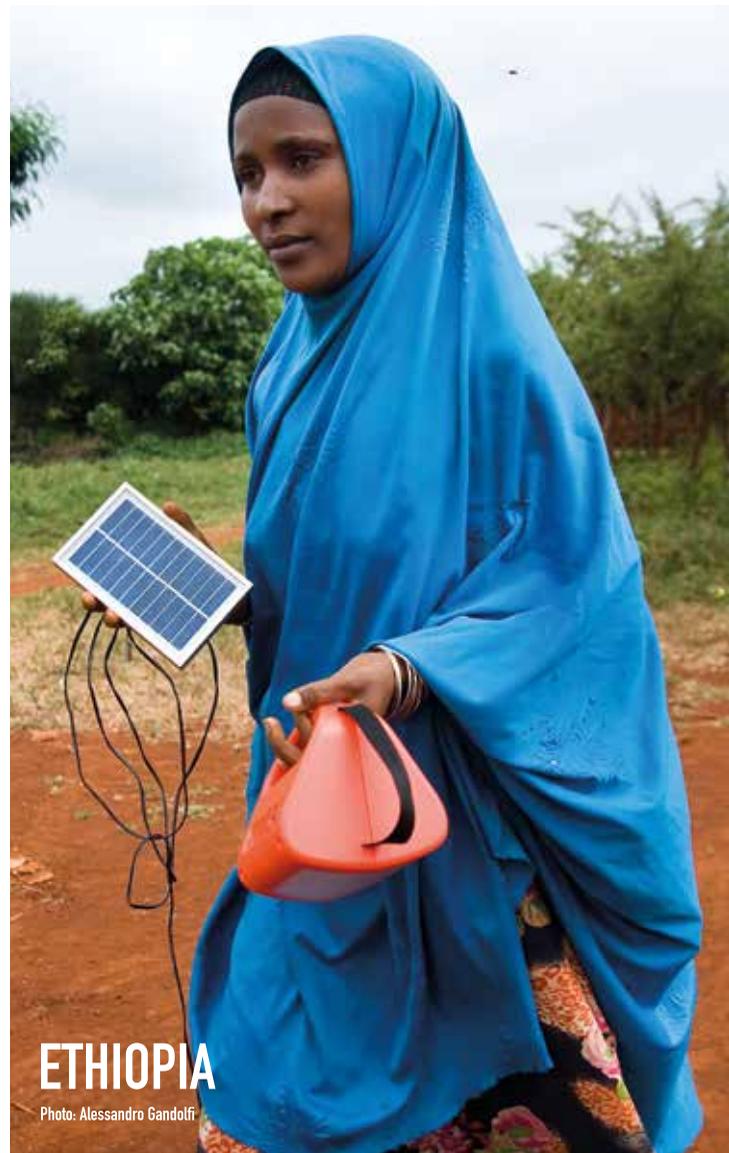
The effectiveness and relevance of DP/DRR programming are significantly enhanced by key elements such as research, partnerships, and innovation. When these aspects are integrated, they can substantially elevate programme outcomes.

Research is the cornerstone of **informed decision-making** in DP/DRR, providing the evidence-based required to assess the risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities of communities; through the analysis of historical data, field assessments, and the use of advanced technologies, research offers a comprehensive understanding of high-risk areas, revealing underlying vulnerabilities and social dynamics and supporting the development of targeted, technical measures to mitigate the impact of natural hazards. Furthermore, research enhances the accuracy of forecasts and early warning systems, improving the reliability and effectiveness of preparedness and response strategies.

Collaboration among diverse stakeholders is vital for successful DP/DRR efforts. **Effective partnerships** between government agencies, organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and local communities enable the pooling of resources, expertise, and networks, thus amplifying the impact of interventions. While partnerships across different administrative levels are essential, engaging the private sector is nowadays especially valuable for accessing additional funding, expertise, and innovative solutions.

Innovation plays a critical role in adapting to the evolving nature of disaster risks. COOPI is committed to leveraging **cutting-edge technologies and approaches** to develop sustainable and effective DP/DRR solutions. The organization uses tools such as remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and is exploring the potential of artificial intelligence to improve early warning systems, risk assessments, and response coordination. COOPI also prioritizes integrating

climate-smart DP/DRR strategies and international building standards, like “Build Back Better/Build Back Safer” to enhance long-term resilience and ensure the sustainability of infrastructure and housing solutions. By embracing innovation, COOPI aims to continually refine its approaches, ensuring they remain relevant, effective, and adaptable in the face of changing disaster risks.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability is a cornerstone of COOPI's DP/DRR programming, integrated from the design phase to ensure long-term impact. COOPI recognizes that effective disaster risk reduction depends on the **sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem preservation, and climate change adaptation**. The degradation of ecosystems, deforestation, unsustainable land use, and climate variability exacerbate disaster risks, making it essential to integrate environmentally sound practices into preparedness, mitigation, and response strategies.

COOPI promotes **disaster risk reduction-oriented land use planning**, soil conservation measures, and waste management interventions to minimize environmental degradation and enhance community resilience. Climate change adaptation is another critical pillar, with interventions aimed at optimizing resource use, promoting drought-resistant agriculture, and integrating eco-innovations such as renewable energy solutions into DRR strategies. COOPI also engages in **advocacy and awareness-raising** activities to foster a deeper understanding of the relationship between environmental sustainability and disaster preparedness, empowering communities to adopt practices that reduce long-term vulnerabilities.

While environmental sustainability is inherently linked to DP/DRR, it is also strictly interconnected with social and economic sustainability. In COOPI's interventions, **social sustainability** is sought through inclusive participation, ensuring equitable access to environmental resources, and fostering communal social cohesion in disaster risk management, while addressing vulnerabilities within communities. **Economic sustainability** is strengthened by supporting sustainable livelihoods, reducing economic dependence on environmentally harmful practices, and enhancing financial resilience to withstand future shocks.

Environmental sustainability is also **inherently linked to resilience** – the capacity of individuals and communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from shocks. While resilience is complex and multifaceted, COOPI focuses on strengthening it by addressing the root causes of crises and mitigating their effects, hence aiming to stabilize communities, enhance their ability to adapt to future risks, and promote sustainable development. This approach ensures that communities are not only better equipped to handle current environmental challenges but are also prepared for emerging risks in the future.

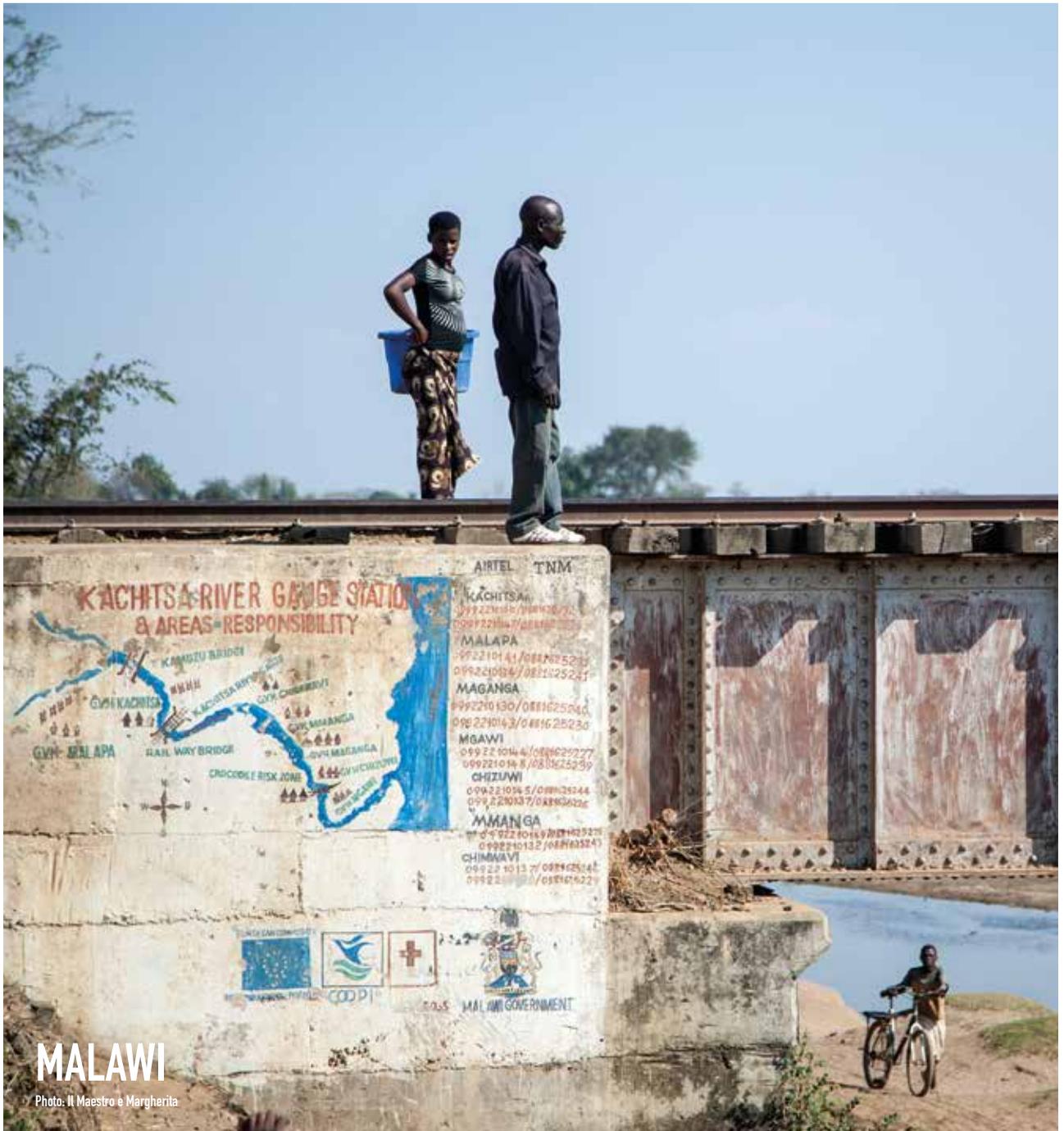
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COOPI in action

Building on key DP/DRR concepts, COOPI operates through diverse operational approaches in disaster-prone regions worldwide. The following

sections outline these approaches and highlight good practices drawn from COOPI's projects and programs.



MALAWI

Photo: Il Maestro e Margherita

FROM PREVENTION TO RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION, THROUGH PREPAREDNESS, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE

COOPI's approach to DP/DRR encompasses all phases of the DRM cycle – namely prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction, aiming to support communities prevent and respond to disasters and their immediate and longer-term effects.

Prevention focuses on activities and strategies aimed at **avoiding existing and potential disaster risks**. While not all risks can be eliminated, the objective is to reduce vulnerabilities and exposure to minimize the likelihood of disasters occurring¹⁵. COOPI promotes preventive land management by identifying critical resources, assessing their vulnerabilities, and working closely with local authorities, community leaders and civil society to design land use plans and implement specific DRR legislation. This includes initiatives such as advocating for anti-seismic laws, developing river monitoring systems, and demarcating high-risk zones. Building on vulnerability studies, COOPI also leads preventive actions, such as reforestation projects and the construction of protective embankments, to mitigate risks before events even occur.

Preparedness involves **developing the necessary knowledge and capacities to anticipate, respond to, and recover from likely or imminent disasters**.

This phase is embedded within the DRM cycle, aiming to build robust systems that enable seamless transitions from response to long-term recovery¹⁶. COOPI strengthens preparedness by enhancing community and institutional capacities through activities such as capacity building, supporting the development of contingency plans, establishing local EWS, mapping vulnerable areas, and improving crisis management tools. Additionally, COOPI works to ensure readiness for emergency responses by collaborating with existing coordination systems and supporting stockpiling of essential non-food items for rapid deployment.

Although the effects of hazards cannot always be entirely prevented (in particular natural hazards) their scale or severity can be significantly reduced through well-planned strategies. **Mitigation** refers specifically to **minimizing the adverse impacts of hazardous events**¹⁷ through a mix of (engineering- and nature-based) infrastructure solutions and improved environmental and social policies (e.g. hazard-resistant constructions); these strategies are usually integrated with public awareness campaigns to ensure communities are informed and prepared. Recognizing the **overlap between mitigation and prevention**, COOPI employs an integrated approach that often combines these actions – e.g. nature-based solutions, such as reforestation and watershed management are implemented alongside structural measures to minimize risks.

Response comprises the **immediate actions taken before, during, or after a disaster** to save lives, protect public health and public safety, and meet the **immediate needs** of affected populations; in other words, the disaster-response activities focusing on immediate and short-term needs which are often



¹⁵ UNDRR Disaster Risk Reduction Terminology.

¹⁶ UNDRR Disaster Risk Reduction Terminology.

¹⁷ Idibem.

referred to as **'disaster relief'**¹⁸. Effective response depends on well-established preparedness measures and risk-informed systems, which COOPI supports through its multi-sectoral response efforts, including **food security, nutrition, WASH, education and protection**. Central to COOPI's approach is the coordination with local, national, and international stakeholders to ensure an efficient, timely, and unified response that meets the immediate needs of the affected communities.

Recovery focuses on **restoring or improving livelihoods, health and the economic, physical,**

social, cultural and environmental assets and systems of disaster-affected communities in line with sustainable development principles. Central to recovery is the **"build back better"** concept, seeking not just to restore what was lost but to enhance resilience and reduce future risks¹⁹.

Reconstruction, a critical component of recovery, involves rebuilding essential infrastructure, services, and housing with a focus on sustainability²⁰. COOPI's approach is rooted in community-driven recovery, working closely with local authorities and populations to rebuild more resilient systems.



¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.



SYRIA

Photo: COOPI Archive

GOOD PRACTICES

INCLUSIVE RECOVERY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT-INTENSIVE RECONSTRUCTION

In 2023, through the implementation of the project *“To support in job creation activities and rebuilding of infrastructures”*, COOPI played a key role in recovery and reconstruction efforts in Syria, particularly in Aleppo, following the devastating earthquake that year. Through a tailored intervention designed to minimize health risks and improve safety conditions in the most affected neighborhoods, COOPI applied employment-intensive approaches to create immediate, decent job opportunities for affected community members. These

efforts not only addressed urgent infrastructure rehabilitation but also supported economic recovery by actively engaging the local workforce. COOPI’s work in Aleppo – encompassing the rehabilitation of schools, infrastructure, and essential community services – reflects its commitment to inclusive, community-driven recovery. By integrating the principles of “build back better”, COOPI ensured that reconstruction efforts enhanced resilience and sustainability in the long term.

STAND-ALONE AND MAINSTREAMED, INTEGRATED AND MULTI-SECTORIAL

COOPI views DP/DRR as both one of its main sectors of intervention – delivered through standalone, multisectoral, or integrated initiatives – and a key mainstreaming approach to be applied across its broader programming. On one hand, COOPI’s DP/DRR programming prioritises the **integration of key sectors, including food security and livelihoods (FSL), nutrition, WASH, and protection, within the DRM cycle.**

On the other hand, COOPI’s DP/DRR approach seeks to **integrate prevention, mitigation, and preparedness initiatives** into its other sectors of intervention, by mainstreaming the DRM approach throughout all phases of the project cycle. These combined efforts contribute to safeguarding communities, individuals, assets, and social structures, ultimately enhancing sustainability and resilience across COOPI’s programming.

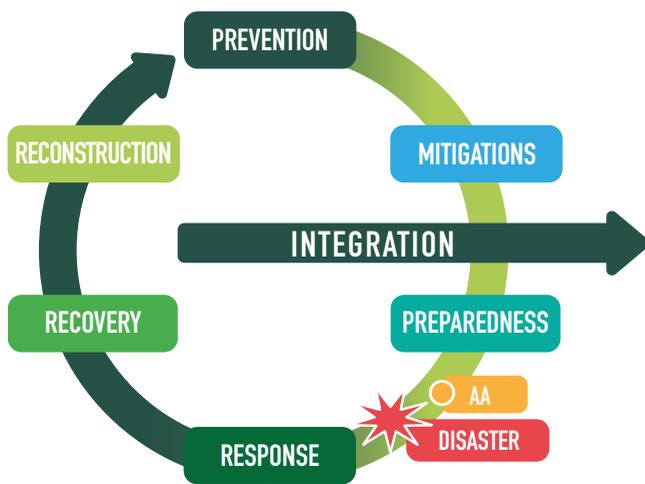


Figure 1 Disaster Risk Management Cycle



Figure 2 Humanitarian Programme Cycle - OCHA

COOPI prioritizes the integration of DP/DRR principles throughout every stage of the project and programme cycle. This begins with **comprehensive needs and vulnerability assessments** that assess both the potential exposure to disasters in a given location, and the structural gaps within local governance and community systems. By identifying key vulnerabilities and governance weaknesses,

COOPI anticipates the compounded impacts of predicted disasters. These assessments form the **basis for targeted, context-specific interventions** that address both the exposure to risks and the intrinsic vulnerabilities of the community, ensuring more effective and sustainable programming (e.g. integrating multi-hazard risk evaluations with population vulnerability and capacity assessments).

COOPI's **DP/DRR programming is often multisectoral for maximised impact.** In practice, this approach tailors responses to specific risks, such as in drought-prone regions, where water-harvesting initiatives are paired with food security and nutritional support; in flood-prone areas, on the other hand, COOPI integrates structural mitigation measures (such as enhanced drainage systems and flood barriers) with public health interventions, including hygiene promotion and disease prevention programs like malaria control in endemic regions. This multi-sectoral integration builds the capacity of communities and individuals to better withstand shocks and enhances their preparedness for future hazards, reducing potential economic losses during disasters.

By prioritizing DP/DRR as integrated, long-term strategies, COOPI's interventions unlock significant opportunities for sustainable development. This

approach facilitates a **seamless transition between emergency response and recovery efforts**, ensuring that humanitarian aid has a lasting impact and promotes long-term resilience. Key benefits include strengthening **community resilience** by empowering them to anticipate, respond to, and recover from disasters, thus building their capacity to withstand future shocks. Proactive measures such as EWSs, infrastructure improvements and community-based preparedness plans help **mitigate disaster impacts** and reduce the need for large-scale humanitarian interventions. Well-prepared communities are also better equipped to **recover faster and more effectively**, accelerating livelihoods and infrastructure rebuilding. Lastly, integrating DP/DRR into development planning fosters sustainable, resilient communities that are better positioned to **adapt to climate change** and other long-term challenges.

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PERU

Photo: Yofre Morales

**CHAD**

Photo: Abdoulaye Barry

GOOD PRACTICES

INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND DRR

Between 2021 and 2022, COOPI implemented the “*Supporting access to water, hygiene education and respect for the environment. A DRR approach*” project. The intervention, carried out in Chad and Cameroon, focused on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities facing the ongoing humanitarian and environmental challenges of the Lake Chad crisis. The organization focused on improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, while integrating disaster risk reduction strategies. By linking water access with food

security and nutrition, COOPI created synergies that strengthened community resilience to climate-related risks, such as droughts and floods. COOPI also prioritized inclusive practices, ensuring that marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, were involved in the project’s design and implementation. This focus on inclusivity, alongside capacity-building initiatives, empowered local communities to manage resources sustainably and respond to health risks, ensuring long-term resilience and sustainability.



SOMALIA

Photo: COOPI Archive

GOOD PRACTICES

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA'S BORDER REGIONS

Between 2021 and 2023, COOPI implemented the project *“Integrated Initiative to Strengthen the Resilience and Improve the Health, Nutrition, WASH and DRR Conditions of Vulnerable Populations and Internally Displaced Persons in Ethiopia’s Neighbouring Areas with Kenya and Somalia.”* This initiative aimed to enhance resilience in climate shock- and conflict-affected border areas of Ethiopia’s Somali Region through a triple nexus development-emergency-peace approach. By strengthening disaster risk management capacities in the Liben (Dolo Odo) and Afder (Dolobay) zones, the project addressed environmental and humanitarian challenges while fostering durable solutions for internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities. COOPI improved access to WASH services for both displaced and host populations,

ensuring that essential resources were available to those in need. The intervention also promoted food security by introducing sustainable agriculture and bagged horticulture techniques, strengthening community resilience against climate-induced food shortages. In parallel, the project enhanced local disaster preparedness through capacity-building activities, enabling communities and local authorities to implement effective risk management strategies. Additionally, access to healthcare was improved, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. Through this holistic and integrated approach, COOPI contributed to long-term resilience by linking DRR, climate adaptation, and social protection mechanisms, ensuring sustainable solutions for the affected populations.

LAND ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

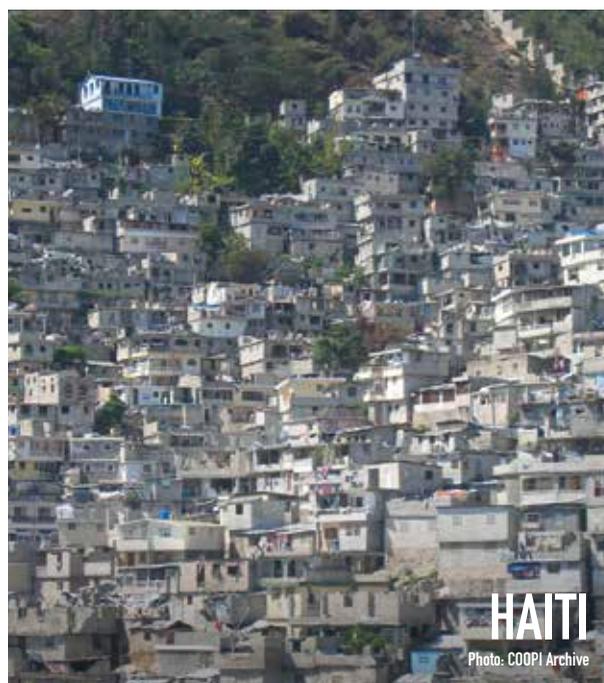
Land analysis and information system play a crucial role in disaster risk reduction, serving as the foundation for informed decision-making and sustainable land management.

COOPI's approach integrates **comprehensive resource mapping, vulnerability assessments, and territorial analysis** to create a georeferenced information system that supports crisis management and risk mitigation. Key activities include **land analysis, hazard exposure assessments, and the development of cartographic tools** such as GIS-based risk maps and zoning plans. These tools help pinpoint high-risk areas while also identifying safer zones for potential temporary relocation in the event of disasters. The organization works in close collaboration with key stakeholders – including land managers, government institutions (such as Civil Protection agencies), academic bodies, and local communities – to ensure that data collection, analysis, and planning are inclusive and participatory. This **participatory approach** enhances sustainability and encourages the integration of DRR-oriented land use planning into governance practices. COOPI has successfully applied this methodology in several cities across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa over the years, with notable interventions in Quito, Lima, La Paz, and Port-au-Prince.

In **urban settings**, this approach is particularly relevant, as it contributes to improving quality of life and promoting sustainable development. COOPI's involvement in urban areas dates back to 2001, when it began collaborating with the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)²¹. The organization's urban interventions have prioritized not only the analysis of natural hazards but also the **territorial and anthropic dimensions of risk**, ensuring a holistic understanding of vulnerabilities that impact population welfare, urban development, and crisis management. By combining ground observations

with GIS-based datasets, COOPI produces user-friendly tools and mapping systems that enhance local capacity for disaster preparedness and urban planning.

Beyond technical assessments, COOPI is committed to **making land analysis findings accessible and actionable**. The organization actively works to “vulgarize” technical research – translating complex scientific data into practical, community-friendly formats – to ensure meaningful engagement of local communities in land management decisions. By fostering collaboration between institutions, private actors, and grassroots organizations, COOPI strengthens advocacy efforts and promotes risk-informed governance. Ultimately, the organization's land management approach serves as a powerful tool for disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, contributing to long-term resilience and sustainable development.



²¹ The IRD is a French research organism that has been intervening for more than 65 years in developing countries. Its research and training activities are intended to contribute to the social, economic and cultural development of southern countries. The IRD deals with vulnerability and risk issues in the Andean countries (Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia) within the PACIVUR (Programa Andino de Capacitación y de Investigación sobre la Vulnerabilidad y los Riesgos en medio urbano) program framework.



ETHIOPIA

Photo: Coralie Maneri

GOOD PRACTICES

TRANSBOUNDARY PASTORAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Between 2007 and 2013, COOPI implemented the “*Mapping of grazing corridors for the Garre and Degodia clans in Wajir and Mandera Counties in Northern Kenya and Moyale, Dolo Ado, Filtu, and Hudet Woredas in Southern Ethiopia*” project. The project aimed to strengthen community resilience among pastoral and agro-pastoral communities affected by drought. Using a DP/DRR approach, the mapping of migration corridors for the two clans facilitated an in-depth analysis of pastoral dynamics (needs and capacities) and enabled the development of sustainable methodologies to prevent conflicts and prepare for drought scenarios. High levels of beneficiary participation ensured accurate needs identification and fostered community involvement in project dynamics. The project’s regional and transboundary approach was crucial, given the historical presence of the

two Somali pastoral clans, Garre and Degodia, who have long competed for grazing lands in this vast desert area. Transhumance, a traditional pastoral activity and a key *coping strategy* during water and vegetation shortages, required coordination across borders between Kenya and Ethiopia. Preparedness activities – such as water harvesting, strengthening health services, raising awareness, and building local capacities – mitigated drought impacts. COOPI also created or reinforced infrastructure, improving the resilience of pastoral groups and supporting transhumance. These efforts indirectly contributed to conflict reduction by ensuring equitable resource allocation based on land analysis and beneficiary needs. The field staff’s deep knowledge of the area and local culture enabled the effective use of participatory methods, significantly reducing conflicts in the area.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DRR ORIENTED LAND MANAGEMENT

Natural resource management, closely linked to **environmental conservation**, plays a crucial role in COOPI's DP/DRR approach. The organization recognizes the importance of conserving natural resources to sustain the production processes that communities rely on, while also emphasizing the need for sound management practices to ensure their long-term sustainability. Together, these aspects form the foundation for resilience and sustainable development in vulnerable contexts.

In highly vulnerable areas, the availability of critical resources such as water, forests, and grasslands is essential for the livelihoods of local communities, and is closely tied to their ability to preserve and manage the land they depend on. It should be noted that environmental sustainability is a key concept when linking emergency response with recovery efforts, as highlighted in **SDG Target 15**: «Protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss».

COOPI's DP/DRR programming adopts a **holistic approach to environmental conservation, promoting ecosystem preservation as a bridge between emergency response and long-term development**. For example, in regions facing chronic drought, such as the Horn of Africa and the Chaco, COOPI focuses not only on ensuring the availability and accessibility of water, but also on its sustainable management. These actions support agriculture and livestock-dependent communities, helping them cope with the increasing frequency and severity of droughts. This approach involves a thorough analysis of local resources, usage patterns, and the cultural and social dynamics of affected populations. By understanding these factors, COOPI ensures that resource management and conservation efforts are both effective and culturally appropriate, enabling communities to protect their environment and sustain their livelihoods²².

COOPI's interventions in natural resource conservation and DRR-oriented land management focus on:

1. **Mitigating desertification and flooding risks through the protection of water sources, forest conservation, and reforestation initiatives;**
2. **Preventing soil erosion using natural engineering solutions, which also serve to reduce landslide and river flooding risks;**
3. **Strengthening community livelihoods in drought-prone areas and regions affected by recurring climate phenomena (such as El Niño and La Niña), particularly where agriculture and livestock farming are primary economic activities;**
4. **Supporting DRR-oriented land management and urban requalification efforts in degraded and high-risk contexts;**
5. **Developing water systems, pumps, and structures for rainwater collection, both in communal facilities and at the household level;**
6. **Reducing fire risks through improved land use planning and fire prevention strategies;**
7. **Conserving biodiversity by protecting native and endangered plant species and preserving traditional ecological knowledge associated with them.**

Additionally, in **urban settings** where unregulated land use and rapid settlement expansion exacerbate disaster risks, COOPI emphasizes sustainable land planning to enhance resilience. For instance, in informal settlements in Nairobi, Lima, and Port-au-Prince, COOPI has implemented interventions addressing land tenure, infrastructure safety, and community-led disaster preparedness measures. These efforts ensure that urban populations have access to safer living conditions and sustainable resource management strategies, reducing their exposure to environmental hazards.

²² In case of multiple tribes, communities or population groups sharing the same resources, it is paramount to analyse the situation and include elements of conflict sensitivity in the programming.



PARAGUAY

Photo: Andrea Ruffini

GOOD PRACTICES

INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION IN THE GRAN CHACO

Between 2018 and 2022, COOPI implemented the project *“For Our Great Sustainable Chaco: Active Participation in Territorial Management Models for Environmental Conservation Integrated with Sustainable Production”*. This initiative focused on preserving the environmental functions and ecosystem services of the Gran Chaco, a region highly vulnerable to deforestation, water scarcity, and unsustainable land use. The project developed territorial management and sustainable production models that integrated conservation efforts with climate change adaptation strategies. A key component was the promotion of inclusive mechanisms and tools for ecosystem conservation,

with a particular focus on preserving water and forest resources. Community-based approaches ensured that local populations, including women and Indigenous groups, played an active role in governance and decision-making processes related to resource management. Additionally, COOPI identified and disseminated sustainable community and family-based production models that incorporated ecosystem-based adaptation and climate change mitigation strategies. These models emphasized the importance of valuing local knowledge and best practices, ensuring that environmental conservation efforts were both effective and culturally appropriate.

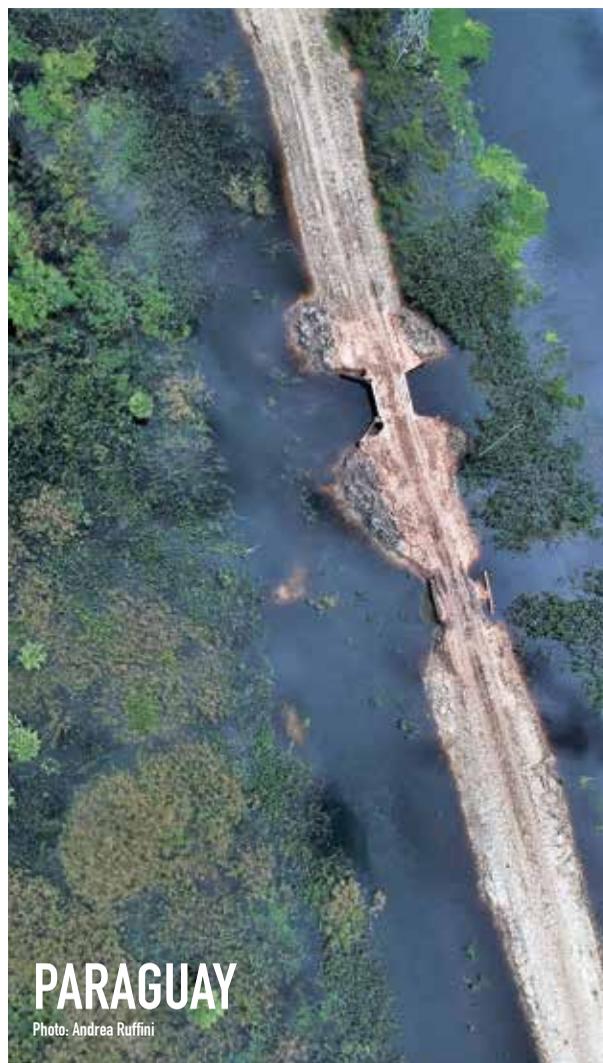
ANTICIPATING AND REDUCING RISKS OF NATURAL MULTI-HAZARDS

COOPI implements proactive measures to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of disasters across multiple sectors. Its approach strengthens the resilience of essential services, infrastructure, and livelihoods, ensuring they remain functional in the face of environmental crises. This includes strengthening food security through climate-smart agriculture practices (CSA), such as promoting drought-resistant crops, soil conservation techniques, and efficient irrigation systems. Additionally, COOPI collaborates with local actors to develop contingency plans for critical sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and livestock, incorporating risk-informed planning and nature-based solutions to safeguard livelihoods.

Anticipatory action is a key focus of this approach, allowing for **early detection** and **rapid response to slow- and sudden-onset extreme events**. COOPI supports risk forecasting through enhanced **Early Warning Systems**²³ that integrate multi-source data, including hydro-meteorological monitoring, seasonal forecasting, and community-based risk assessments. These systems track indicators such as rainfall patterns, river levels, crop production trends, and market fluctuations to trigger timely interventions. By triangulating this information, COOPI ensures that decision-makers and communities receive accurate, real-time alerts to activate pre-planned preparedness and response measures.

COOPI also strengthens local disaster governance by equipping authorities and community-based organizations with the tools and knowledge to act rapidly when thresholds for risk are exceeded. This includes pre-positioning emergency supplies, reinforcing safe evacuation procedures, and promoting risk-informed social protection mechanisms such as anticipatory cash transfers. By collaborating with meteorological institutions, NGOs, local associations, and community leaders,

COOPI enhances coordination mechanisms that enable faster, data-driven responses. Strengthening disaster-related information management ensures that trigger events activate efficient early action, reducing the loss of lives and livelihoods. These partnerships enable COOPI to monitor at-risk situations continuously, integrating into an international network where the exchange of critical information is essential for detecting emerging risks and crafting rapid, effective responses.



²³ UNDRR Disaster Risk Reduction Terminology. EWS: integrated system of hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction, disaster risk assessment, communication and preparedness activities systems and processes that enables individuals, communities, governments, businesses and others to take timely action to reduce disaster risks in advance of hazardous events.

GOOD PRACTICES

ENHANCING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Between 2019 and 2021, COOPI implemented the project “*Strengthening resilience to disasters in urban and rural Malawi*”, aiming to reduce the impact of disasters through improved preparedness and response capacities at the national, community, and school levels. One of the key successes of this intervention was the enhancement of Early Warning Systems, which played a pivotal role in strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities. The project focused on improving the existing Malawi Disaster Management Portal, integrating hydro-meteorological information to provide more accurate predictions and forecasts, especially concerning floods. By incorporating layers of early warning-related data, COOPI and its partners, including Salzburg University, contributed to creating a more responsive and reliable platform that could deliver timely alerts to communities.

This integration allowed for better vulnerability analysis based on predictive data, which was crucial for guiding both immediate actions and long-term planning for risk reduction. A major achievement of the project was the collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), which helped ensure the sustainability of the EWS by improving national data management capacity and organizing specialized training for staff from the Malawi Red Cross Society and other key disaster response actors. The project’s approach also included community-level capacity building through targeted interventions in Group Village Headman (GVH) areas and schools, which increased local awareness and preparedness for disasters. Through workshops, data sharing, and the use of satellite imagery and topological data, COOPI helped build a more robust framework for disaster response and preparedness in Malawi.

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BOLIVIA

Photo: Andrea Ruffini

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GOOD PRACTICES

INCLUSIVE RISK MANAGEMENT AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The project “*Building resilience in disaster risk management in Bolivia (La Paz, Potosi, Oruro, Pando and Chuquisaca Departments)*”, implemented between 2015 and 2016, aimed at improving emergency response capacities and promoting an inclusive culture of risk management. The intervention focused on creating territorial guidelines anchored in Bolivia’s Law of Risk Management, ensuring that local government bodies and civil society actors in La Paz, Potosi, Oruro, Pando, and Chuquisaca were actively involved in developing these frameworks. One of the project’s key

achievements was the creation and dissemination of inclusive Early Warning Systems guidelines, which were adopted by Autonomous Territorial Institutions. The Municipality of El Alto also strengthened its capacity to develop inclusive risk management strategies, launching a citizenship culture campaign to engage urban communities in disaster preparedness. This initiative successfully promoted inclusive disaster risk management practices across multiple levels, empowering both local governments and communities to better respond to and manage disaster risks.

MULTILEVEL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

COOPI recognizes that effective DP/DRR interventions require capacity building at multiple levels, strengthening the ability of **communities and local institutions** to anticipate, manage, and recover from disasters. COOPI operates at the **micro, meso, and macro levels**, ensuring that interventions are community-driven while also involving local and national structures for greater sustainability and impact.

At the **micro level**, COOPI prioritizes social protection activities and community empowerment, actively engaging local populations in identifying risks, developing preparedness strategies, and strengthening early warning and anticipatory action mechanisms. Through **awareness-raising, training, and technical support**, COOPI ensures that communities actively participate in risk reduction, reinforcing their ability to manage crises autonomously. This participatory approach not only enhances **local ownership** but also ensures that solutions are tailored to the specific vulnerabilities and capacities of each community. A key element of this approach is linking DP/DRR efforts with existing social safety nets, strengthening community structures and protection networks to better identify vulnerabilities, enhance evacuation procedures, and promote inclusive risk governance. COOPI also collaborates with educational institutions to foster a culture of disaster preparedness through targeted training and the strategic use of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. By supporting schools in creating risk maps, developing contingency plans, and conducting crisis management simulations, COOPI ensures that disaster preparedness is integrated into educational curricula. These efforts not only raise awareness but also equip future generations with the skills needed to respond effectively to disasters.

At the **meso level**, COOPI collaborates with local governments, municipalities, and coordination

structures, supporting them in integrating DP/DRR principles into planning and policy frameworks. Strengthening the capacity of local institutions ensures that risk reduction strategies are better coordinated, context-specific, and aligned with broader resilience-building efforts, while ensuring they are inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups. COOPI also invests in **training local authorities and humanitarian actors**, facilitating the **exchange of knowledge and best practices** between stakeholders, supporting local actors in aligning preparedness measures with existing social protection mechanisms to enhance disaster resilience.

At the **macro level**, COOPI engages with national and international institutions, advocating for the **systematic integration of DRR into policies, development plans, and humanitarian responses**. Through its involvement in global disaster risk reduction initiatives, COOPI ensures that its interventions contribute to scalable, long-term solutions that benefit vulnerable populations. Capacity building is not only about community strengthening but also about ensuring that local knowledge, skills, and resources are recognized and utilized. By promoting inclusive, community-led dialogue on disaster risk reduction, COOPI fosters the co-creation of innovative, practical solutions, whether in agriculture, water management, shelter, or emergency response. Through this comprehensive, **multi-level capacity-building approach**, COOPI strengthens resilience from the ground up, ensuring that both communities and institutions are equipped to anticipate and respond effectively to disaster risks.

GOOD PRACTICES

COMMUNITY-BASED DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND SCHOOL SAFETY IN NORTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

Between 2021 and 2024, COOPI implemented the “*Improved Early Warning Systems and Social Safety Nets for rapid disaster response in North West Nigeria*” project, aimed at improving disaster preparedness, the timeliness and quality of risk information, and response actions across multiple natural hazards, including flooding. As part of the initiative, in 2023 COOPI included a school safety component across all targeted project locations. Following the UNDRR’s Comprehensive School Safety framework, the project was structured around three pillars: P1 safe learning facilities, P2 school disaster management, and P3 DRR and resilience education. In partnership with Christian Aid, COOPI developed a customized manual tailored to the Nigerian context to train teachers and students. The manual provided practical guidelines for creating safer school environments, such as securing student

records, eliminating fire hazards, and ensuring accessible sanitation facilities. It also advocated for the monitoring and maintenance of school infrastructure and the integration of climate-smart interventions like rainwater harvesting and school gardens. Additionally, the project focused on building capacity for disaster management at the school level, including the creation of disaster management committees, the establishment of school-based DRR focal points, and the implementation of standard operating procedures for disaster preparedness. Teachers and students were trained to integrate DRR topics into the curriculum and engage in real-life disaster management activities. COOPI and Christian Aid are also working and advocating for the adaptation of this manual at the state level to ensure that all schools receive dedicated materials on DRR to include in their educational programs.



**NIGER**

Photo: Giacomo Zandonini

GOOD PRACTICES

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR MULTI-HAZARD PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Between 2021 and 2025, COOPI implemented the “*Strengthening preparedness, warning and response to multi-hazard shocks in fragile areas to ensure the fastest possible local response in Niger*” project, working with local authorities and communities to enhance local preparedness and response capacities to multi-risk shocks, including conflict and environmental disasters. Through a multi-level approach, the project strengthened local governance structures by building immediate response capacities in four communes and transferring technical skills and logistical resources to local authorities. The intervention aimed to

improve basic services, foster collaboration between neighboring communes, and ensure a multisectoral response, particularly for vulnerable displaced populations. This initiative also focused on enhancing the humanitarian-development nexus by integrating risk reduction and protection measures into long-term local strategies. Accountability and protection of the most vulnerable populations were central to the intervention, as activities were designed to increase preparedness, protect displaced, refugee, and indigenous populations, and address the urgent multisectoral needs such as water, health, nutrition, and education.

PARTNERSHIPS, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND KNOW-HOW TRANSFER

COOPI recognizes that advancing disaster preparedness and risk reduction requires strong partnerships with research institutions, technical experts, and specialized organizations. Over the years, COOPI has built strategic collaborations with leading academic and scientific centers, leveraging their expertise to enhance methodologies, tools, and technologies for risk assessment, hazard monitoring, and community-based interventions.

Partnerships with institutions such as the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), the University of Salzburg, and the Geophysical Institute of Peru have played a crucial role in improving vulnerability mapping, microzoning studies, and the development of innovative methodologies for hazard identification. A significant collaboration has been with the CIMA Research Foundation, which has strengthened the effectiveness and adoption of DRR interventions by integrating scientific research with community-level actions. This partnership has allowed for a multi-scale, multi-sectoral approach – linking national and local efforts while combining technological advancements with practical field implementation in vulnerable areas.

In addition to **research partnerships**, COOPI actively engages in **international coordination mechanisms**, insitutional partnerhsips and coordination platforms, ensuring that its interventions align with global standards and best practices. Its active participation in coordination mechanisms, international networks, and regional DRR platforms enables knowledge-sharing, joint planning, and harmonized response strategies. By maintaining a presence in global clusters and working alongside specialized UN agencies, government institutions, and humanitarian actors, COOPI contributes to shaping policies and frameworks that enhance disaster resilience at local and national levels.

Furthermore, COOPI facilitates the creation and use of GIS platforms for regional coordination, participates in

international symposia to disseminate best practices, and organizes events that contextualize and promote global humanitarian standards such as the Sphere Minimum Standards and Humanitarian Charter. Through these combined efforts, COOPI strengthens institutional collaboration and ensures that scientific knowledge translates into actionable solutions for disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction.



GOOD PRACTICES

COMMUNITY-LED DRR AND RESILIENCE BUILDING

Between 2019 and 2023, COOPI implemented the “*Mayo Up: Resilience of vulnerable populations in the open areas of Mayo*” project in Sudan, with the objective of strengthening the resilience of at-risk communities through an integrated approach. The project focused on reinforcing community-based disaster risk management and social safety nets, with a particular emphasis on supporting women and youth. Amidst challenges posed by climate change and resource conflicts, COOPI’s intervention prioritized capacity building and vocational training. Key activities included forming and establishing disaster risk reduction

groups, developing community action plans through participatory processes, and fostering income-generating opportunities, especially for women-led initiatives. This approach empowered beneficiaries and local stakeholders by transferring essential skills, thereby improving community cooperation and resilience against environmental, social, and economic shocks. As part of the project, CIMA Research Foundation provided technical assistance to evaluate solutions for risk reduction related to heavy rainfall in the Mayo-Angola district, contributing to the development of evidence-based strategies to mitigate flood risks and enhance local preparedness.





PERU

Photo: COOPI Archive

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GOOD PRACTICES

STRENGTHENING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AND RISK GOVERNANCE FOR HYDRO-METEOROLOGICAL HAZARDS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Between 2018 and 2019, COOPI implemented the project *“Wirwina: building community resilience to face hydro-meteorological hazards in South America (Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay), improving monitoring network and early warning tools”*. This initiative aimed to improve risk governance and strengthen resilience in highly vulnerable rural and peri-urban areas frequently exposed to floods and droughts. By reinforcing Early Warning Systems and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) mechanisms at both national and local levels, the project sought to enhance forecasting capacities and ensure that warnings reached authorities and communities in a timely and effective manner. COOPI worked closely with national meteorological services – SENAMHI Peru and SENAMHI Bolivia – providing technical training on the use and maintenance of

open-hardware monitoring stations to improve real-time data collection and hazard prediction. In collaboration with the CIMA Research Foundation, the project facilitated knowledge exchange and strengthened coordination mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness and uptake of DRR interventions across different governance levels. At the community level, COOPI supported local authorities and residents in organizing drills aligned with national protocols and platforms, such as Simex e-learning, to improve preparedness and response capacities. Through this multi-level approach, the project not only enhanced scientific and technological tools for risk monitoring but also reinforced local governance structures, fostering sustainable and community-driven disaster resilience.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Anticipatory Action
AGDP	Age, Gender, Diversity, Protection
BBB	Build Back Better
CDMP	Community Disaster Management Platform
COP	Conference of Parties
CPC	Civil Protection Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
DP/DRR	Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EWS	Early Warning System
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GAR	Global Assessment Report
GHG	Greenhouses Gas Emission
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRD	Institute de Recherche pour le Développement
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LEMC	Local Emergency Management Committee
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMHS	National Meteorological and Hydrological Services
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SIISE	Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales de Ecuador
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
UNDRR	United Nation Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISRD	United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WMO	World Meteorological Organization



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