

# resilience



## QARU VILLAGE, TANZANIA

Nine-year-old Juliana Mikaeli walks alongside a rain-carved ravine on her daily trek to fetch water. Due to soil erosion, rains rushed down these ravines and flooded her house during heavy rains. Contour bunds built by the community now prevent the flooding.

Photo by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION GLOSSARY

**Risk:** The probability of harmful consequences or losses resulting from the interaction between natural hazards and the vulnerable conditions of people and property (UNISDR)

**Disaster:** A serious disruption to the functioning of a community involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community to cope using its own resources (UNISDR)

**Resilience:** The ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth (USAID)

# Helping local communities to reduce disaster risk

From flooding to drought, East Africa has been hit hard by natural disasters in recent years. Catholic Relief Services is responding by undertaking a wide range of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience activities. These initiatives help communities to take the lead in averting crises by increasing their capacity to prepare for and withstand the impacts of hazards.



## BISHAN BEHE, ETHIOPIA

Women collect water from a spring by a river that used to flood their farms during the rainy season. Walls constructed by CRS, our local partner and the community now prevent the flooding and reduce soil erosion.

Photo by David Snyder for CRS

## Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CM-DRR)

As disasters increase in frequency and intensity, communities across East Africa face greater peril. CRS is helping to reduce this risk by implementing Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CM-DRR) initiatives. These community-driven programs help make men, women, girls and boys less vulnerable to disasters over time, paving the way for sustainable long-term development.

With the guidance of a trained facilitator, community members representing both genders, all ages, and diverse social groups identify the greatest local hazards. They then develop action plans to mitigate the impact of these hazards and build their own capacity to respond. The result is increased resilience, enabling communities to create brighter futures.

## CM-DRR Learning Alliance

In April 2012, CRS launched the CM-DRR Learning Alliance. This three-year regional initiative aims to increase the CM-DRR skills of staff members and partners working in drought-affected areas in the Horn of Africa. By sharing field experiences and other learning, staff can learn new approaches, apply best practices, and better assist communities in identifying their DRR needs and developing disaster management plans. The alliance has also conducted community and partner trainings in five countries and developed a facilitator's guide to support local CM-DRR efforts.







## THE FOUR CM-DRR STANDARDS

Four key components lead to success in CM-DRR. These are commonly referred to as the 'four minimums,' with community members driving their implementation:

1. Participatory disaster risk assessment and analysis
2. Risk reduction measures
3. Building strong community organizations
4. Participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning

## Horn of Africa Drought Response and Preparedness

The consecutive failure of two rainy seasons in the eastern Horn of Africa in 2011 created the region's worst drought in 60 years. As famine was declared in Somalia and more than 10 million people in East Africa faced severe food and water shortages, CRS took action by implementing a five-year drought response and preparedness strategy.

The initiative provides drought-related emergency assistance and is now implementing a preparedness strategy for building long-term resilience in drought-prone communities in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Interventions include DRR, climate-smart agriculture, climate change adaptation and building strong livelihoods.

Affected families are now rebuilding their lives thanks to reliable water points, new seeds and livestock, and more diversified sources of income. These increased assets will enable them to survive future failed rains and recover more quickly when crises do occur. Ultimately, the goal is to help more people to break out of the cycle of poverty.

## Innovative Programming

Beyond drought response and preparedness, CRS is implementing a number of high-impact resilience and DRR initiatives. By looking to community members to identify the best measures to implement, CRS is contributing substantively to decreasing the risk of disasters in East Africa. Here are a few program highlights:

### Ethiopia

Over the last decade, Ethiopian communities have been turning deserts into oases with CRS' help by protecting their natural resources through integrated water resources management (IWRM) initiatives. These successes led to the spread of IWRM projects across all seven East African countries served by CRS.

### Kenya

In northeastern Kenya, communities opted to focus on livestock disease to reduce losses during droughts. Livestock fairs enabled families to obtain new goats and strengthen market linkages, while community-based animal health worker trainings continue to help keep livestock healthy.

Numerous climate change and CM-DRR activities in Mbeere—including tree planting for carbon credit payments and the introduction of drought-resistant legumes—also helped residents of this eastern county to build resilience to recurrent drought.

### South Sudan

A USAID-funded CM-DRR project now prevents flooding thanks to the creation of a community-led DRR committee that monitors water levels and mobilizes youth to construct diversion canals and restore dykes where needed.

### Tanzania

An IWRM project in Karatu enabled residents to reduce soil erosion, which was causing siltation in a primary dam. By building contour bunds and trenches, community members put an end to the rushing torrents of water during heavy rains that often separated them from their farmlands, redirecting the water to underground aquifers.

## LEARN MORE

CRS' guide to facilitating CM-DRR gives staff from local community-based organizations the tools needed to lead communities through CM-DRR activities.

Download the manual at: <http://www.crsprogramquality.org/publications/2013/5/13/building-resilience-a-guide-to-facilitating-community-manage.html>

Learn more about building resilience from this CRS publication: <http://www.crsprogramquality.org/publications/2013/2/12/toward-resilience-a-guide-to-disaster-risk-reduction-and-cli.html>

### NORTHEASTERN KENYA

By distributing goats and teaching water conservation and improved agricultural techniques, CRS helped drought-affected Kenyans to increase their resilience.

Photo by David Snyder for CRS

### ADI-DAERO, ETHIOPIA

The Adi-Daero Watershed Development Program provides irrigation for 2,800 households, enabling families to grow food abundantly.

Photo by Debbie DeVoe/CRS



## CONTACT US

Please contact the East Africa Disaster Risk Reduction team at the following email address  
[Earo\\_Pq\\_Info@crs.org](mailto:Earo_Pq_Info@crs.org)