

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Policy

Version 3.3

Introduction

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction defines Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as: “the concept and practice of reducing risk associated with disasters through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters.”¹ Climate change adaptation (CCA) has been defined as: “Reducing and managing the risks associated with more frequent, severe and unpredictable extreme weather events.”² ChildFund Australia integrates DRR and CCA based on the premise that both approach risk “... as the product of exposure and vulnerability, either to hazards(s) or to effect(s) of Climate Change, or both.” The higher the level of population vulnerability and exposure, and the more severe and frequent the hazard/Climate Change effect, the greater the risk³.

Women, children, those with disabilities, older people, sexual and gender minorities, and others who are vulnerable in times of peace, are disproportionately impacted by disasters. Women, experiencing poverty and heading up female-headed households, are more likely to be landless, have more dependents, and will often not have the resources to move prior to severe hazard events. Children are highly vulnerable in post-disaster contexts given their high susceptibility to malnutrition, water-borne disease, and the extent to which they are exposed to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Together with Climate Change, in certain locations, patterns of development, population growth and environmental degradation have increased the disaster and climate risk of some populations⁴, especially in some lower income countries⁵. In these settings, the chances of a hazard becoming a disaster has increased significantly⁶.

Guided by the Sendai Framework 2015 to 2020, The Paris Agreement, and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, the ChildFund Australia approach to DRR and CCA is informed by an understanding of the vulnerability context in which communities exist. This includes the shocks, trends and seasonality that they are exposed to, the systems and processes through which they function, and the human, social, natural, physical and financial capital on which they rely. ChildFund Australia works with both governments and communities to identify the most vulnerable, to improve their resilience through building their capital, and to improve systems and processes. In this way, communities can influence government and access government services, and government can access and serve communities. Through implementing this approach, positive outcomes include, improved resilience, the sustainable use of natural resources, and increased well-being.

¹ UNISDR, available at <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

² TOWARD RESILIENCE: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. 2013. (pg. 4).

³ TOWARD RESILIENCE: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. 2013

⁴ Between 2008 and 2016, people in low to lower income countries were five times as likely to be displaced as a consequence of sudden onset weather events compared to those in high income countries. Uprooted by Climate Change. Oxfam, 2017.

⁵ The Human Cost of Natural Disasters: a global perspective. 2015.

⁶ The Human Cost of Natural Disasters: a global perspective. 2015.

Key Principles

Rights and responsibilities: ChildFund Australia regards DRR and CCA as a responsibility of the state, as a duty-bearer for the realisation and enjoyment of rights. It regards the work of other stakeholders – including civil society actors - as complimentary to and enabling of the relationship between right-holders and duty-bearers⁷. Recognising the rights of children and youth and the obligations of duty-bearers under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, through its Adolescent and Youth DRR Framework, ChildFund will work with children and youth to strengthen their voices in community groups in which DRR and CCA decisions are made and resources allocated.

Localisation: Adopting a 'local as possible, as international as necessary' approach, ChildFund Australia will work with national and sub-national government, civil society organisations and communities to strengthen local systems, processes and capacity to move DRR and CCA, disaster preparedness and disaster response decision-making closer to vulnerable communities.

Need/vulnerability: ChildFund Australia will work with government, civil society organisations and communities to identify and work with: those communities that face the highest levels of disaster and climate risk; those groups that are most vulnerable to hazards and a changing climate within these communities, particularly women, children, people with disabilities, and the aged.

Linking disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response: Acknowledging the ownership and agency of affected communities, ChildFund Australia will work with government, civil society groups and communities to strengthen their human, social, natural, physical and financial capital, and systems and processes⁸, enabling them to “anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent, or current disasters⁹”.

Policy Statement

ChildFund Australia will implement high-quality DRR/CCA projects and activities in communities¹⁰ that are exposed to high levels of disaster and climate risk in countries in which ChildFund Australia Country Offices are located¹¹, either through standalone DRR/CCA projects or through integrating DRR/CCA into its child protection, health, education and/or social and emotional learning sector projects.

Policy Commitments

ChildFund Australia will:

- ensure resources are available to develop staff DRR/CCA capacity at Sydney and/or Country Office level so as they are able to adhere to the ChildFund Australia DRR/CCA Policy and approaches;
- work in those communities that are exposed to the highest levels of disaster and climate risk;
- integrate DRR/CCA into the projects of other ChildFund Australia sectors so as disaster and climate risk: 1) is identified whenever ChildFund Australia engages with at-risk communities; 2) is mitigated to protect the development gains that have been made in these sectors;

⁷ TOWARD RESILIENCE: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

⁸ DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

⁹ UNISDR, available at <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology>

¹⁰ World Risk Index, available at <http://www.irdrinternational.org/2016/03/01/word-risk-index/>

¹¹ An exception to this would be Fiji where ChildFund is implementing the AHP Disaster Ready project despite there being no ChildFund Country Office there.

- use Social and Emotional Learning expertise to identify and work with children and youth from communities that are exposed to high levels of disaster and climate risk to develop their social, emotional and leadership skills, allowing them to *engage* with community leadership on critical issues and *contribute* to decision-making that relates to community based DRR/CCA initiatives;
- work with government, civil society organisations and communities to strengthen DRR/CCA systems, processes and capacity, in accordance with national government policy and procedures, the Sendai Framework 2015 to 2030, the Paris Agreement, and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific;
- include gender, disability and age considerations when determining disaster and climate risk, acknowledging that community members are affected differently and at times disproportionately and that community members have different knowledge, skills, and resources to reduce individual and community disaster and climate risk.

Guidance Notes

Consult the International Program Team for support documents, such as templates, resources and checklists, to assist with the implementation of this policy.

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