



GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

GADR'S APPROACH AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

General Principles

The Global Alliance for Disaster Reduction collaborates with over 100 cooperating organizations throughout the world and over 500 professional members distributed in 75 countries to accomplish its goals and objectives. Examples of the cooperating organizations include: United Nations organizations (e.g., UNESCO, UN-ISDR, UNDP, AND WMO), World Bank (e.g., the ProVention Program), Professional Organizations) e.g., Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, American Society of Civil Engineers), universities, and NGO's.

Education is an interactive process of mutual learning among the people and institutions involved in it. Education for creating a culture of disaster resilience encompasses far more than formal education at schools. It should penetrate every aspect of life in a concerted effort to overcome the universal barriers of ignorance, apathy, disciplinary boundaries, and lack of political will in every community. It includes the development of indigenous knowledge for coping with the threats from droughts, floods, severe windstorms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, landslides, and wildfires. Usage of delivery mechanisms is also included, encompassing new and emerging technology, staff training, partnerships with the electronic and print media and many other innovative actions to facilitate management and transfer of knowledge and public information to citizens, professionals, organizations, and community stake holders and policymakers for a specific purpose.

The right to education and disaster resilience should not be in mutual conflict. For example, many communities around the world are located in hazard-prone areas and can have vulnerable built environments. Often, such areas are marginal lands which when coupled with poor construction, lead to high tolls in loss of lives and property during hydrological and geologic events. Also, in many communities of many countries, the youngest citizens are spending their days in school buildings that may be at high risk. Some affluent communities and built-up arrears are also prone to disasters if preventive systems are not implemented.

Educational and planning activities should be balanced at the regional, national, and community levels in order to empower and engage as many professionals and policymakers as possible in forming policies and creating programs to benefit their communities and nations. Global and regional forums should be used for information and technology sharing and development of local opportunities for building a culture of disaster resilience. Communities in less developed regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, parts of Asia, some Eastern European countries, and some island nations in the Caribbean and Pacific, should be assigned the highest priority for outside resources to increase enlightenment and empowerment in their efforts to build a culture of disaster resilience.

Action Areas for Emphasis (2005-2014)

Four action areas require increased emphasis by GADR during the period 2005-2014 in order to accelerate the kinds of changes within the framework of existing baseline educational programs that are needed to improve the protection of people and their livelihoods and foster disaster resilience in their communities. They are: resources, delivery mechanisms, targets of opportunity, and metrics for measuring change.

1. Resources (Regional Alliances, community professionals, institutions and networks)

Regional Alliances for Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction in each of the seven geographic regions of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Pacific, Mediterranean, Europe, Asia, and North America, are the way forward for marshaling the intellectual and fiscal resources needed for advancing knowledge management and education to protect people and their livelihoods and communities. In areas of strategic and tactical interaction, the local and regional organizations are the foundation of the social, technical, educational, economic, and political groups that set the local and regional spirit and tone for building a culture of disaster resilience. Community policy makers and stakeholders are influenced by the spirit and tone of regional groups, which are the key to institutionalizing knowledge management and education on community and national scales.

Young, emerging, and mature professionals are a vital resource that must be cultivated, engaged, and sustained during the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development and beyond. When engaged in new networks such as Regional Alliances for Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction that have transparent disciplinary boundaries, professionals will be empowered to join in and provide leadership for marshaling the technical and political constituencies needed to build a culture of disaster resilience in their communities..

Many different institutions and networks are available as global resources today, and it is important to promote cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration among them to make them seamless with transparent boundaries. Examples include:

- 181 Members of the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies
- UNICEF
- UNESCO
- Professional-based networks such as the Global Alliance for Disaster Reduction
- University-based networks, and regional and country-specific centers
- Professional organizations (e.g. Earthquake Engineering Research Institute)
- GROOTS community network

Intellectual resources are available in the largest communities of every country in each geographic region to develop new curricula, to be known as Blueprints for Change on Knowledge Management and Education, and to apply them. The Blueprints for Change should integrate theory and best practices, taking care to balance the social, technical, administrative, political, legal, and economic factors of each community. Through such a process, the universal barriers of ignorance, apathy, professional disciplinary boundaries, and lack of political will can be overcome through educational processes that increase enlightenment, empowerment, enrichment, and enablement. GADR has developed draft editions of the Blueprints for Change. Regional Vice-Presidents should develop structures to take advantage of these documents. They should reach out to organizations in their jurisdiction for collaboration.

2. Delivery Mechanisms (Regional Alliances, training, technology)

Regional Alliances for Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction offer the best way forward for delivering the Blueprints for Change to communities for usage in specific educational processes designed to protect people and their livelihoods and communities. Such applications will lead to a culture of disaster resilience. Education creates understanding and training develops capabilities to

apply that knowledge to a specific task such as analysis of disaster threats and vulnerabilities, planning and management for disaster reduction and environmental management, focusing first on the developing countries and especially Africa.

Technology is a vital tool in knowledge management and education needed for creating a culture of disaster resilience on community and regional scales. To be relevant across the geographically, culturally, and technically diverse communities comprising each geographic region of the world, both low- and high-tech techniques must be integrated and tailored for specific community applications. Applications in the developing world demand simpler, less technical but more essential capabilities. To focus on IT systems for some underdeveloped parts of the world at present is unrealistic; they will come in time, but not before the simpler and currently more important needs have been met. All applications should facilitate connecting "Top down" and "Bottom up" initiatives, and range from one-on-one mentoring and skill enrichment endeavors on the ground (e.g., E-training) to specific community initiatives ranging from organization-to-organization and public-private partnerships (e.g. vulnerability reduction programs). The possibilities are infinite; they include joint initiatives with the electronic and print media, community staff training, workshops for community policy makers and stakeholders, community exercises, creation of web sites, development of distance learning systems, and ongoing programs of public awareness and professional enlightenment. This is an area in which GADR's regional groups should develop detailed proposals for submission to continental and global organizations for support.

3. Targets of Opportunity (post-disaster audits)

Regional Alliances for Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction offer the best way forward for identifying targets of opportunity for protecting the people and livelihoods of each community on the basis of post-disaster audits. The post-disaster environment can be the turning point when the people and policy makers are in agreement on changing community policies and practices. Global experience has shown that the post-disaster environment provides the best opportunities to increase the awareness of people, improve the safety of community safe havens (e.g., schools and hospitals), and increase the reliability of community infrastructure. Thus, it is important that at the regional level, policy-makers that have direct responsibility for planning at the community, regional and national levels be engaged. Indeed, GADR Vice-Presidencies can partner with governments to secure support from international agencies or use allocated resources to implement cost-effective programs.

4. Metrics for Measuring Change (closing gaps in knowledge and implementation)

Regional Alliances for Sustainable Development and Disaster Reduction offer the best way forward for measuring change as a result of targeted applications to protect people and their livelihoods and communities. To overcome ignorance, apathy, professional boundaries, and lack of political will and to close gaps in knowledge and implementation, all communities must improve their knowledge management and educational and training systems to diffuse that knowledge for practical usage in specific opportunities thought to represent the best way forward in building a culture of disaster resilience. Metrics for measuring change are most relevant if they are based on the outputs of an ongoing dialogue to find solutions to specific topics and challenges, such as those below:

- Enlistment of young, emerging, and mature professionals and engaging them in networks of cooperating organizations. The challenge is how to do this effectively.

- Improving the curricula for application should focus on integrating theory and best practices in social science, physical sciences, engineering sciences, and health care to build the core competencies needed to accomplish the primary elements of sustainable development and disaster resilience. The challenge is how to do this most effectively.
- Identifying the tools available today; tools under development; and new tools that are needed now. The challenge is how to identify and use these tools most efficiently?
- Existing or planned partnerships/initiatives on disaster resilience. The challenge is determining what can be gained by specific kinds of changes and how to cause these changes in a way that will institutionalize disaster resilience in every community.
- Partnerships seeking the highest level of cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration should be the norm, avoiding competition in the work of specialized organizations on risk reduction. The challenge is how to do this most effectively?

Draft Strategy Developed by

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