

PREPARING FOR ENHANCED PROTECTION IN DISASTERS (PrEPD)

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY TO INTEGRATE PROTECTION IN DISASTER RESPONSE



Community leader Rowena Bohol presents the results of community resource mapping as part of a typhoon recovery program in the Philippines. Photo by Ronald Guinn for CRS

Overview

When humanitarian teams respond to disasters, mainstreaming protection in preparedness and response plans is a critical element. Yet, many humanitarian and disaster risk reduction (DRR) organizations do not design and implement responses that ensure access, dignity and safety for the most marginalized people.

Why is this so important? We know that people who are already vulnerable face heightened risks during crises, exacerbating existing inequalities and compounding their vulnerabilities. Marginalized individuals and groups—including women, children, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, and minority religious or ethnic groups—often face barriers to accessing support, or to being able to safely communicate or provide feedback when a humanitarian response is ineffective or inappropriate.

It is vital that disaster management and humanitarian responders have the capacity and expertise to incorporate protection needs into the design and implementation of a program response, especially as protection risks may vary greatly across contexts—from remote rural communities to densely populated urban areas.

We must be committed to addressing the unique needs of those who might be marginalized or already vulnerable in a time of crisis. It is not only *what* assistance we provide, but *how* we provide it, that upholds our mission to assist the most vulnerable.

PrEPD project

Catholic Relief Services has launched the 18-month global PrEPD project to strengthen local capacity to integrate protection in disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response. Supported by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, the project will deliver a comprehensive toolkit to guide humanitarian and DRR actors to mainstream protection and accountability in disaster preparedness.

Goal

Global DRR and humanitarian actors and coordination mechanisms reduce and manage protection risks, and enhance accountability to disaster-affected people and communities. CRS proposes piloting the PrEPD intervention in the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Uganda—three countries in which CRS is or has been engaged in DRR and resilience programming.

The project will engage:

Directly:

- Six organizations (one representative from each) that specialize in DRR, protection and humanitarian response.

Indirectly:

- Philippines: 30,000 people/5 DRR actors
- Uganda: 9,000 people/3 DRR actors
- Sierra Leone: 6,400 people/2 DRR actors

Objectives

- 1. Community level:** Local humanitarian and DRR actors will consult vulnerable, affected communities and document protection priorities that emerge during natural disasters. This will empower these actors to identify protection concerns and capacities to integrate into their preparedness and response plans. The actors will also ensure their communications strategies are relevant and responsive to community needs. The consultations will inform the development of a toolkit, which will provide a methodology for disaster management and humanitarian actors to integrate protection concerns into preparedness and response work.
- 2. Organizational level:** Tools will be adapted and tested to build the capacity of DRR and humanitarian actors on protection mainstreaming in DRR; identify entry points for the integration of protection in DRR; and improve linkages between DRR, humanitarian and protection actors before and during disasters. Community-led protection analyses and communication preferences will support these activities. The process and tools will be documented to inform the PrEPD guidance and toolkit.
- 3. Systems level:** CRS and our partners will develop a methodology to enable local protection and accountability systems to be more shock-responsive and functional when disasters occur, and pilot this approach. Systems will be based on the protection and disaster analyses conducted at the community and institutional levels, and community communication preferences, to ensure the model promotes local ownership and is driven by local priorities. CRS will include the approach, tools and lessons learned in the guidance and toolkit.
- 4. Global reach:** CRS and our partners will support the dissemination of the toolkit across multiple platforms, targeting disaster management, humanitarian and protection actors.

What is protection mainstreaming?

Protection mainstreaming is the process of incorporating protection principles into all humanitarian activities by promoting meaningful access, prioritizing safety and dignity in humanitarian aid and avoiding causing harm, and being accountable to project participants. To turn these principles into action, CRS partnered with three members of the Caritas Network to develop the Protection Mainstreaming Framework that consists of the following eight core components:

- Analysis
- Targeting and diversity of need
- Information sharing
- Community engagement and participation
- Feedback and complaints mechanisms
- Staff conduct
- Mapping and referral
- Coordination and advocacy

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A roadmap and recommendations to mainstream protection in DRR

CRS will develop a roadmap of best practices for protection and accountability in DRR, incorporating recommendations of how to support and engage various stakeholders. The roadmap will incorporate lessons learned throughout implementation, as well as key challenges and barriers, and potential strategies to overcome them. We will work with local and global DRR and humanitarian actors, as well as crisis-affected communities, to gather this data to inform diverse case studies and the development of tools and guidance that can apply to multiple geographies and demographics.

The ultimate goal of PrEPD is that local and global organizations supporting humanitarian response efforts and disaster preparedness can benefit from the CRS guidance and toolkit to help reduce protection risks, improve protection mainstreaming, and strengthen our collective accountability to the people they serve.