



## 6. Conduct a disability inclusive disaster risk assessment

CBID staff from CBM partner CODAS CARITAS speak to Bouba (centre), leader of a local association of persons with disabilities, during a home visit. ©CBM

It is not only necessary to identify a hazard, but also to assess the extent of risk of a disaster happening.

A disaster risk assessment (DRA) is an effective tool to identify and evaluate the types, intensities, and probabilities of natural hazard events happening and how they will impact different people, communities and assets. More simply, a DRA provides the means to analyse potential hazards and evaluate different levels of vulnerabilities that could pose a potential threat to people, property, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend.

While DRAs can be focused on single and multiple types of hazards, it has become increasingly common to perform multi-hazard risk assessments as countries increasingly face a range of natural hazards in combination. These often combine both quantitative and qualitative information on risk, including the physical, social, economic and environmental factors.

So why is a DRA beneficial?

- It can help contribute to risk-informed planning and decision making where reducing disaster risk becomes solidly mainstreamed in planning and operations.
- In this regard, a DRA can help inform and direct community development to areas that need greater investment and reorientation in project design to better manage disaster risk.
- It also provides community development practitioners with key information that can be used for advocacy with communities and governments to work towards prioritising DRR, to build up resilience, and to inform the design of disaster risk management (DRM) strategies and actions.

### Elements, which when combined, increase or decrease disaster risk

+ **Exposure:** to earthquakes, cyclones, floods, drought, and rising sea levels

+ **Susceptibility:** depending on infrastructure, food supply, and economic framework conditions

+ **Coping capacities:** depending on governance, health care, social and material security

+ **Adaptive capacities:** related to upcoming natural events, climate change, and other challenges.

*Source: Aleksandrova et al. (2021)<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Aleksandrova et al. (2021) WorldRiskReport 2021.

So, as an example, a potential earthquake can pose a greater disaster risk when it is intense and meets systems and communities that are highly exposed, susceptible and that have low capacities to adapt, cope and respond.

The figure below illustrates the WorldRiskIndex adopted in the WorldRiskReport to calculate disaster risk. This is one of various approaches to the calculation of risk.

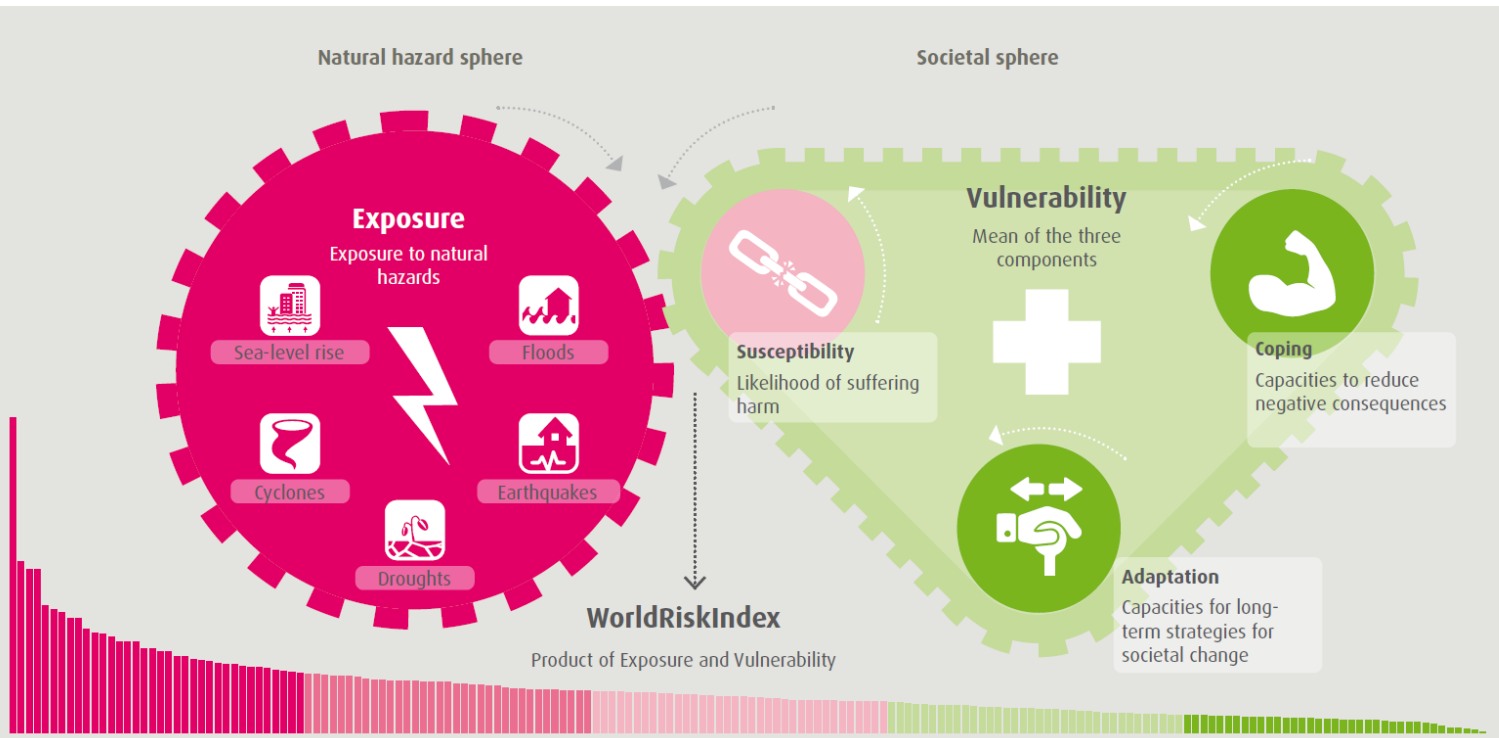


Figure 1: Components of the WorldRiskIndex. Source: Aleksandrova et al. (2021)<sup>11</sup>

In simplified form, the process of conducting a DRA can be broken down into:

1. Identify the hazard(s) and level of exposure
2. See who or what might be harmed or damaged and how
3. Evaluate the risks of this happening and decide on precautions
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Check your assessment and account for any changes and updates necessary

<sup>11</sup> ibid. (2021)

There are different methods and tools that can be used for a DRA, and this depends on the various factors including the amount of data and resources available, notably time, expertise and funds. However, it is important to note that in most cases, DRAs do not have to be complex or time consuming and can be conducted as part of regular work.

One thing to remember is that a DRA is not a one-off activity. Instead, it is a continuous process, because risks change, meaning that one needs to continuously generate information. This allows for a better understanding of risks and to take corresponding action in programmes and to work with others to build resilience.

So, let's get thinking on some questions to get the process moving:

- Where, geographically, are the hazards likely to be a threat?
- What populations are there in these locations, including persons with disabilities?
- How serious is their exposure to hazards?
- What are the specific vulnerabilities of different people?
- In what areas do these vulnerabilities manifest themselves? (e.g. livelihoods, education, the economy, society, infrastructure, the natural environment etc.).
- What capacities and resources are available to address the effects of hazards and minimise the risks?

### **Making this assessment disability inclusive! How can persons with disabilities be impacted?**

It is important to conduct a disability inclusive disaster risk assessment because the situations confronted by persons with disabilities (e.g. poverty, inequality and discrimination) dramatically impact their vulnerability and their capacity to cope when exposed to a hazard. This means that the equation can be adapted to account for disability:

**Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk= Hazard x Vulnerability / Coping capacity of different persons with disabilities**

Now is the time to reflect back on some of the points above on the situation of persons with disabilities and that make them vulnerable. It is also important to be alert to intersectional areas, for example race, ethnicity, indigeneity, class, and gender to understand how different persons with disabilities are differently at risk.