

Key Advocacy Messages

Mobility and Disaster Risk Reduction



On an average day, millions of people move, within their country or abroad, in search of a better life.

Depending on how, where and why they move, the process can make them more resilient or more vulnerable.

Mobility can save lives, enhance resilience and reduce risk.

- According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, between 2008 and 2012 more than 140 million people were displaced by disasters: for many of them, moving was life-saving.
- Data from the Gallup Survey for the 2013 World Migration Report shows that people migrating for economic and social reasons generally earn more and have better access to health, education and other public services than people staying behind.
- Remittances can be invested in insurance, a safer house, or fixing damages after a disaster and fuelling recovery.

Additional resources

IOM DRR page and Compendium: www.iom.int/cms/drr
World Migration Report 2013: www.iom.int/cms/wmr2013
post-HFA process: www.preventionweb.net/posthfa
post-2015 sustainable development agenda:
www.worldwewant2015.org
IDMC: www.internal-displacement.org

But mobility can also make people more vulnerable and expose them to new risks.

- Newcomers to fast growing cities often have to settle in hazard-prone, poorly planned areas, where they have limited access to basic services. When disasters strike, they are among the worst affected.
- Migrants can have difficulties in accessing humanitarian assistance in a disaster, due to language, legal and other barriers.
- People displaced, especially over longer periods of time, can end up facing:
 - reduced personal security in cramped camps (in particular exposure to sexual and gender-based violence);
 - lack of adequate food security in isolated areas;
 - tension with host communities over limited resources and services;
 - de-skilling and lost or reduced access to livelihood opportunities.



The Hyogo Framework for Action gave limited recognition to human mobility as a driver of risk. The post-2015 agreement on DRR (HFA2) must adequately recognize mobility as a global dynamic that can increase risk but will also be central to building resilience.

- With one person out of seven in the world on the move, recognizing the relationship between mobility, risk and resilience is a necessity for the success of the new international agreement on Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA2) but also for the wider post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

- Adequate mobility management policies are essential not only to address the needs of people affected by disasters, but also to make communities more prepared, expedite recovery after disasters, reduce the human and economic costs of displacement and make populations at risk safer.

Better understanding and management of mobility in global, regional, national and local policies will help prevent the creation of new risks and support investments in resilience.

- Risk assessments should take into account both the specific vulnerability of people on the move and their capacity to contribute to the well-being and resilience of their host and home communities.

- Urban development policies in areas expected to receive population flows must be informed by appropriate understanding of local hazard exposure and vulnerability factors.

- Looking at long-term environmental and climate changes when developing disaster risk reduction and mobility management plans is essential to enhance human well-being in a sustainable manner.

IOM's approach brings together disaster risk reduction and mobility management practices to improve people's livelihoods and well-being. The result is a set of actions to build the resilience of communities through improved attention to mobile populations.

- Reducing hazard exposure and vulnerability to prevent displacement:

- Improved land-use planning and building standards can reduce the risk of displacement from natural hazards;
- Smart support to people's livelihoods (e.g. protecting the traditional routes of pastoralist communities or diversifying rural incomes) can enhance their capacity to cope with disasters and prevent displacement situations;
- Safer houses and more reliable infrastructures (e.g. water supply and sanitation systems, health facilities) can improve the resilience of communities at risk.

- Facilitating mobility as a preventive measure and as a response strategy:

- Evacuation planning and early warning systems as part of preparedness can protect communities at risk;
- Capacity building of communities and authorities to better respond to emergencies and provide essential goods and services in crises can help reduce the immediate and long-term costs of disasters;
- Well managed and participatory planned relocations can significantly improve resilience of at-risk communities, whenever in-situ measures are not sufficient, as in some low-elevation coastal zones and Small Island Developing States;
- Empowering and protecting people in a gender sensitive manner can help reduce their vulnerability before and during disasters, and in particular in displacement situations.
- Reduced cost of remittances, especially in disaster situations, can help families to better mitigate risks and recover faster from disasters.

- Ending displacement situations in a sustainable manner:

- Identifying and addressing land and property issues such as by clarifying ownership status can help achieve durable solutions and facilitate the recovery process;
- Assistance to communities receiving displaced population, for instance by developing infrastructure, supporting service providers and diversifying income opportunities, can promote peaceful cohabitation after a crisis.



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