

Partnership Days



Two days of positive, partnership-powered impact

The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery's (GFDRR) Partnership Days event, which was held online from February 23 to 24, 2022, was the first of its kind. But it likely won't be the last: gathering well over 100 attendees on each day, the inaugural Partnership Days event was attended by GFDRR members, observers, partners, and World Bank staff from all over the world. The event, which kicked off with opening remarks from World Bank Group President David Malpass, was an opportunity to demonstrate the global impact of GFDRR's work through a dynamic combination of videos, live Q&A discussions, and breakout room sessions.



ON FEBRUARY 23

Resilience & Climate Change was the main theme of the day. Despite contributing the least to climate change, poor individuals whose lives are already precarious because of their limited resources are the most affected by it. This unfortunate irony is a reminder for GFDRR to continue building resilience into its disaster risk management strategy as it works with its developing country partners around the world. Resilience, after all, is particularly important as the world faces intensifying hazards exacerbated by a changing climate.

A conversation on how countries from the Caribbean to Western Africa to South Asia have put disaster risk resilience planning into practice featured representatives of GFDRR member countries and organizations involved in projects in the Caribbean as well as implementation partners from [Bhutan](#), [The Gambia](#), and [India](#). The insights from this live discussion emphasized the need to learn from other contexts while adapting these lessons to local needs.

Assistance and GFDRR co-chair, set the tone for the day in her opening remarks by stressing the urgency of the combined climate change, conflict, and COVID-19 crises and the need for an approach that takes the unique needs of marginalized groups into account.

Indeed, disasters do not affect everyone equally. Since the effects of disasters rely largely on social factors that already contribute to vulnerability, women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities — just to name some examples — are at a further disadvantage when disasters hit their homes. In FCV environments, these threats are magnified since conflict and climate change mutually reinforce each other and lead to devastating losses.

A conversation on these intersecting risks involved GFDRR government partners from [Indonesia](#), [Romania](#), and [West Bank & Gaza](#) illustrating the challenges of operating in their respective environments as well as representatives of GFDRR member countries underscoring the need for more engagement with partners in FCV contexts.

ON FEBRUARY 24

Two overarching themes underlined the reality of existing risks that are compounded by climate change: **Inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DRM) & Gender Equality** and the **Disaster Risk Management-Fragile, Conflict and Violence (DRM-FCV) Nexus**. Sarah Charles, Assistant to the Administrator of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian

Breakout room sessions, which were held toward the end of each day, focused on all [10 thematic areas under GFDRR](#) and gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about the different facets of GFDRR's work by joining the breakout rooms of their choice. Each breakout room was hosted by a group of GFDRR experts who presented an overview of their area's activities and facilitated a discussion with the attendees in the room.

On the first day, the roster was composed of [City Resilience Program](#), [Digital Earth Partnership](#), [Disaster Risk Analytics](#), [Hydromet & Early Warning Systems](#), and [Nature-Based Solutions](#). On the second day, attendees' breakout room options were [DRM-FCV Nexus](#), [Emergency Preparedness & Response](#), [Inclusive DRM & Gender Equality](#), [Resilient Infrastructure](#), and [Safer Schools](#).

In concluding each day of the event, GFDRR Practice Manager Niels Holm-Nielsen reiterated that GFDRR has been instrumental in influencing DRM and climate resilience not only at the World Bank, but around the world. This has enabled GFDRR to create a multiplier effect that has mobilized large amounts of development financing to implement disaster and climate risk management work in its partner countries representing varying contexts.



This booklet, which serves as a snapshot of the 2022 Partnership Days, highlights the following key messages and presents some of the most memorable moments from these two days of showcasing what GFDRR's collaboration with its partners has achieved.

- In this new normal of compounding risks, countries must tackle the confluence of intensifying natural and man-made hazards as well as a changing climate.
- DRM needs to be inclusive for it to be truly effective: marginalized groups should have a say in both DRM planning and implementation.
- Climate change, disasters, and conflict reinforce one another and demand an integrated response.

MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS TO ACHIEVE DISASTER RISK RESILIENCE FOR ALL

by Sarah Charles and Niels Holm-Nielsen

[The latest report](#) from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change could not have made it clearer: Climate change risks are even worse than previously estimated. While some consequences of climate change such as rising sea levels are now irreversible, there is a brief but shrinking window for humanity to curb these risks and avoid the worst possible scenario — especially in cities, where over half of the global population now lives and where the battle against climate change will largely be fought. The report, which was published while the world's eyes were glued to the news about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, was a much-needed reminder that climate change is an existential threat.

[The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery's \(GFDRR\)](#) recently concluded [Partnership Days](#) event affirmed both the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for inclusive resilience, especially as multiple risks augment one another and make lives even more precarious for people. The two-day event, which was held on February 23 to 24, opened with remarks from World Bank Group President David Malpass and showcased the impact of GFDRR's engagement with partners around the world through myriad examples of how disaster risk reduction can work for diverse populations and settings.

Disasters, after all, do not have an equal effect on everyone. One can even say that disasters, because their impact depends on social variables such as poverty and gender, are not natural at all. Children, women and girls, elderly people, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized communities — especially in lower-income countries — are often disproportionately affected by disasters.

For example, evidence suggests that [women die as a result of disasters at a higher rate than men](#) do in countries where women have a lower socioeconomic status. Meanwhile, [individuals with disabilities are often overlooked](#) in disaster recovery planning because they are not identified in household surveys in the first place.

[GFDRR has been addressing these gaps.](#) For example, in partnership with the Tamil Nadu government in India, it supported the launch of a [fish kiosk](#) that helped the widows

of Indian fishermen — whose lives were taken by disasters while working along the coastline — earn their own income and stymie the stigma of being single. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, GFDRR assisted the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in constructing schools that are accessible to students with disabilities and [establishing practices to prevent and manage gender-based violence](#), which often increases in the aftermath of a disaster.

Individuals may also have intersecting identities that make them more susceptible to the devastating impact of disasters and impose intensifying layers of discrimination when they attempt to access relief and other forms of support. Research on [the post-disaster experiences of women with disabilities in Cambodia](#) shows that a triple



burden of marginalization, poverty, and limited political agency has made them resort to short-term loans, decreased food consumption, and migration as ways to cope with the impact of disasters.

In fragile and conflict-affected settings, these risks are multiplied. Climate change complicates the conflict conundrum by [acting as a threat multiplier](#): the detrimental consequences of climate change — such as crop failure, food insecurity, and water scarcity, to name just a few — can worsen disputes over limited resources and opportunities, which in turn can aggravate tensions. Conflict also deepens interwoven inequalities: in camps for internally displaced persons in Haiti, for example, crowding and poor security contributed to an uptick of [multiple forms of gender-based violence](#).

The overlay of disasters and conflicts requires more nuanced and integrated approaches to assess, manage, and mitigate intersectional risks. [GFDRR is working with its partners](#) to design and test such approaches in an increasing number of countries. For example, together with the South Sudan



government, [it supported the technical team in conducting an in-depth analysis](#) of the challenges and opportunities to inform the development of the country's disaster risk management strategy. The analysis found that women, girls, and internally displaced populations were the most prone to the compounding risks of disasters and conflict.

As the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report has reiterated, combating climate change is an urgent undertaking: climate change is already affecting human health, livelihoods, and key infrastructure especially in urban settings. The unique challenges faced by those who have been traditionally excluded from decision making processes, however, underline that there should be no one-size-fits-all approach to climate adaptation. It is imperative that we recognize that our response to climate change can only be effective if it is truly inclusive — that is, [one that goes beyond a tick-the-box exercise and meaningfully incorporates the needs of these groups into disaster risk reduction planning and implementation](#). This is not a pipe dream: as the above examples have shown, partnerships have the power to boost resilience for all.

MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

The world has made remarkable progress in mainstreaming disaster risk management over the past decade. In 2015, the international community adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, underscoring the commitment by countries everywhere to put DRM front and center in their sustainable development strategies and approaches. In keeping with that commitment, countries have been making rapid advances in reducing risk, increasing preparedness, and building resilience.



Undoubtedly, these advances would not have been possible without the growing array of partnerships in DRM that encompass local communities, international institutions, country governments, civil society, and the private sector.

GFDRR is one of the leading global partnerships at the forefront of DRM. [David Malpass, World Bank Group President](#), highlighted the facility's role in helping governments identify resilience building investments and, at the same time, mobilize additional financing from the World Bank and other development partners. [Axel van Trotsenburg, World Bank Managing Director of Operations](#), echoed that sentiment, emphasizing the importance of GFDRR's support, particularly in areas where there is a high likelihood of mobilizing additional development financing to increase impact.

Both Malpass and van Trotsenburg stressed that DRM is at the core of the World Bank Group's mission to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity and that the institution will continue to work closely with GFDRR in advancing that mission.

Partners from the ground also shared their own perspectives about how they are mainstreaming DRM even – and especially – in the aftermath of recent disasters. For starters, the government of Tonga reflected on the country's recovery from the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha apai volcanic eruption in January 2022 and emphasized the importance of GFDRR and World Bank support, including \$8 million in emergency funding, as well as the Global Rapid Post-Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE). By providing Tonga with the estimated costs of the physical damages, the GRADE assessment is helping guide the national government's next steps toward resilient recovery.

Meanwhile, [H.E. Lamin B. Dibba, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources for the Republic of The Gambia](#), spoke about how the country is working hand in hand with GFDRR and the World Bank on a range of initiatives aimed at building coastal resilience. For example, the government is taking big steps to combat coastal erosion in the greater Banjul area – an effort informed by analytical work that has helped identify some of the most at-risk areas.

As countries like Tonga and the Gambia strive for a more resilient future, Japan offers a promising example of what's possible. Facing its fair share of disaster risks, the country has since drawn on that experience to become a global leader in mainstreaming DRM. [Mr. Kentaro Ogata, Japan's Deputy Vice Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Finance](#), elaborated on how Japan is now helping countries everywhere chart their own path to resilience. In particular, he highlighted the role played by the Japan-World Bank Program for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management in Developing Countries in mainstreaming DRM and sharing relevant Japanese knowledge in Bank-financed projects around the world.

RESILIENCE & CLIMATE CHANGE

While the progress on mainstreaming DRM is cause for optimism, the path to resilience for many countries will be made more difficult by the impacts of a changing climate. According to the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, from 1970 to 2019, climate and weather-related disasters accounted for 50 percent of all disasters, 45 percent of all reported deaths and 74 percent of all reported economic losses. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that climate change and environmental degradation will likely increase the rate and scale of disasters in the future.

Accordingly, development partners like GFDRR and the World Bank have made climate action the topmost priority in their efforts to help build a more resilient world. As [Juergen Voegelé, Vice President for Sustainable Development of the World Bank Group](#), emphasized, the [Bank's climate actions](#) are aligned with many of GFDRR's global thematic areas, such as resilient infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and resilient cities. For example, the Bank's new [Country Climate and Development Reports](#) will provide a blueprint for countries to deliver on their climate and development objectives in an integrated way.

[Sameh Wahba, Global Director for the World Bank's Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice](#), added that GFDRR has played a key role in shaping and scaling up the climate resilience agenda, including the increasing emphasis on the importance of tackling compound risks. He noted that each dollar entrusted to GFDRR influences at least 100 dollars in climate-resilient development impact.



While the Caribbean is among those hardest hit by climate change, it is also emerging as an example of building resilience in a changing climate. A range of development partners working in the region shared progress from the ground. [Anna Wellenstein, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Bank's Sustainable Development Practice Group](#), highlighted the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, which enables Caribbean governments to cost-effectively mobilize post-disaster financing.

Meanwhile, [Luis Maia, Head of Cooperation for the EU Delegation to Barbados, Eastern Caribbean States, OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM](#), and [Christian DaSilva, Head of Cooperation for Global Affairs Canada in Jamaica](#), shared how the EU and Canada respectively have partnered with countries across the region to deliver climate solutions.

Ultimately, a key takeaway from the session is that while development partners have a role to play in climate action, it is communities on the ground that will take the lead in driving transformative change. For starters, [Karma Dupchu, Director](#)



[of the National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology of Bhutan](#), shared a few insights on how the South Asian country is strengthening its hydrological and meteorological (hydromet) services for a more climate resilient future. A major accomplishment for Bhutan is that it has made [steady progress](#) in modernizing its hydromet infrastructure, with the support of the World Bank and GFDRR, including at Paro International Airport, Bhutan's sole international gateway.

Meanwhile, [Dr. KM Abraham, Chief Principal Secretary to Chief Minister of Kerala and Sarada Muraleedharan, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala](#), spoke about the deepening resilience building partnership between the state of Kerala and the World Bank and GFDRR. He emphasized that Bank and GFDRR support for a post-disaster assessment in the aftermath of the devastating 2018 floods and landslides has since blossomed into a more [comprehensive and deep-seated level of engagement](#) with the state of Kerala.

[Clarence Samuel, Director of the Climate Change Directorate for the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Marshall Islands](#), then elaborated on the small island state's climate adaptation plan called the "Survival Plan," the development of which was supported by the World Bank and GFDRR. He emphasized the national government is committed to implementing that plan through a community-led process that gives local people the opportunity to shape the country's path to climate resilience.

INCLUSIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT & GENDER EQUALITY

The impacts of disasters do not affect all people equally. Resilience-building efforts can have a positive, durable impact only if they are responsive to the heightened vulnerability of certain groups, such as women, girls, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic and racial minorities, and other marginalized communities.

The World Bank, GFDRR, and partners around the world recognize that locally driven initiatives are the way forward. [Louise Cord, Global Director for Social Sustainability and Inclusion in the World Bank's Sustainable Development Practice Group](#), spoke about how, when it comes to resilience-building, communities can bring their own knowledge and help drive innovative solutions that are responsive to communities' needs.

Meanwhile, two government partners from Bucharest District 6 City Hall – [City Manager Paul Moldovan](#) and [Executive Director of the External Funds Department Juliana Leca](#) – shared insights from the Romanian capital of Bucharest's efforts to build safer and more inclusive schools, with the support of the World Bank and GFDRR. One lesson they highlighted is that safer and inclusive schools require a multi-faceted approach that addresses challenges in resilient infrastructure, access to public utilities, and the learning environment for children.

[Astriana Harjanti from Indonesia's Ministry of Public Works and Housing](#) then spoke about how, with the support of the World Bank and GFDRR, the province of Central Sulawesi has charted a path toward inclusive resilience in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2018. The need to incorporate gender-inclusive planning and gender-based violence risk mitigation at the outset of post-disaster recovery and reconstruction is a priority she emphasized.

Inclusive DRM, however, should have a systematic approach. [Olivia Forsberg, Programme Manager for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience of the Unit for Global Cooperation on Environment at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#), made the case for the need for greater accountability in ensuring that development partners meet their commitments to inclusive DRM.





DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT-FRAGILITY, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE NEXUS

In these uncertain times, climate change, disasters, and conflict are unfortunately some of the few certainties, especially in the near future. In 2020, which tied with 2016 as the warmest year on record, conflicts as well as extreme weather events and natural disasters triggered over 40 million new internal displacements worldwide – the highest annual figure in 10 years. There is therefore a need for an integrated strategy that treats these variables as interrelated factors.

GFDRR recognizes that climate change disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable communities, especially those living in conflict-affected environments, making these compounded risks even more urgent. [Bernice Van Bronkhorst, Global Director for Climate Change at the World Bank Group](#), spoke about how the disaster-conflict nexus warrants serious attention through both technical assistance and analytical work. The new GFDRR Strategy and the World Bank 2020 FCV Strategy, she noted, are informing GFDRR's disaster risk management efforts in these settings.

One of these is Timor-Leste, a relatively young state whose post-conflict economic and social recovery has been hampered by its vulnerability to disasters. For example, in April 2021, Tropical Cyclone Seroja wrought havoc in

the country and affected almost 30,000 households, killed 44 people, and caused \$245 million worth of damages to agriculture, housing, and infrastructure. These somber statistics were shared by [Antonio Freitas, Timor-Leste's Vice Finance Minister](#), who illustrated how the impact assessment supported by GFDRR has helped to estimate the extent of the economic damage.

Still, there is much more to be done to support countries and communities that are bearing the brunt of both conflict and climate change. [Christiane Amari, Deputy Head of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's Peace, Security and Disaster Risk Management Division](#), shared that, while 80 percent of people affected by disasters live in fragile contexts, engagement in disaster prevention in these places remains almost negligible: for every \$100 spent on disaster response in fragile states, only \$1.3 is spent on prevention. She reiterated that there is a need to systematically address the causes of fragility and disasters, adopt an approach of operational flexibility, and allocate more funding toward these states.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

City Resilience Program (CRP)



This session showed how the City Resilience Program, a multi-donor GFDRR initiative focused on increasing financing for urban resilience, has been catalyzing a shift toward longer term, more comprehensive multi-disciplinary packages of technical and financial services, building the pipeline for viable projects at the city level that, in turn, boost resilience.

Digital Earth Partnership



This session featured World Bank case studies highlighting the power of combined Earth observation and local capacity building for development through the partnership between GFDRR's new Digital Earth Partnership and the European Space Agency's Global Development Assistance Program.

Disaster Risk Analytics



This session highlighted the paradigm shifting methods, tools, and applications that governments rely on for rapid and reliable post-disaster damage estimates in order to take swift action.

Hydromet & Early Warning Systems



This session illustrated how the theory of change works in the context of the hydromet thematic area and highlighted its partnerships with organizations and initiatives such as the World Meteorological Organization, the Climate Risk Early Warning Systems Initiative, the Alliance for Hydromet Development, the Systematic Observations Financing Facility, and the Global Weather Enterprise.

Nature-Based Solutions



This session showcased two examples of nature-based solutions being implemented by governments in Sri Lanka and Rwanda with support from GFDRR as well as innovative analytical work that supports successful NBS strategies in Suriname, Panama, and Indonesia.

DRM-FCV Nexus



This session focused on identifying the critical policy and resource gaps in the institutional responses to the nexus between DRM and FCV.

Emergency Preparedness & Response



This session emphasized that early interventions are vital to saving countless lives and improving development outcomes for those living in the most vulnerable and challenging environments — especially in a context of increasingly compound risks.

Inclusive DRM & Gender Equality



This session presented how GFDRR's Conceptual Framework is being used to identify gender gaps in the context of disaster risk and resilience in Ethiopia and Senegal.

Resilient Infrastructure



This session showed how the World Bank Group, through GFDRR, is mainstreaming disaster risk management principles and practices into its infrastructure investments.

Safer Schools



This session presented the importance of school infrastructure safety and resilience through examples based on project experience from over 25 countries.



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GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



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