



ISSN: 0975-833X

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# POLITICAL WILL; THE COG IN THE WHEEL OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION POLICY AND GOVERNANCE IN KENYA

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2014  
Received in revised form  
10<sup>th</sup> January, 2015  
Accepted 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2015  
Published online 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2015

#### Key words:

Disaster risk reduction,  
Devolution,  
Governance,  
Political will,  
Policy.

### ABSTRACT

The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction for 2009 acknowledged the importance of good governance for sustained efforts in disaster risk reduction. Natural and manmade disasters put development gains at risk, but development choices in turn can increase disaster risks. Despite these escalating losses, more than 95% of humanitarian finance is still spent on responding to disasters and their aftermath, with less than 5% spent on reducing the risk of disasters. The challenge for the DRM community is to ensure that risk management is prioritized in these policy frameworks and fully integrated in institutional and sector practices, to help save lives, protect livelihoods and reduce economic losses. Good governance is expected to elevate disaster risk reduction into a policy priority, allocate the necessary resources to it, ensure and enforce its implementation and assign accountability for failures, as well as facilitate participation by all relevant stakeholders. Decentralization and devolution of power is seen as a means of promoting good governance and participatory development regarded as critical for achieving national goals of poverty eradication as well as the Millennium Development Goals. The New Kenyan Constitution views devolution and decentralization of power as the best means to realize Vision 2030. However, the institutional and legislative arrangements for disaster risk reduction in Kenya are weakly connected to development sectors. Despite the prevailing recognition that good governance and DRR are mutually supportive objectives, understanding of the linkage is still at a nascent stage in Kenya. Although increasingly risk management and reduction is mentioned in governmental development policies, plans and strategies it is not treated as a truly multi sectoral concern. A study was done on integration of DRR education into the education sector policy using Budalangi flood plain as a case study. This paper is advocating for a move towards a more holistic approach premised on the adoption and enforcement of new regulations, action plans, the integration of disaster management into the education system, and the maintenance of a strong institutional framework for coordination, as the main aspirations of the Government.

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## INTRODUCTION

“There is now international acknowledgement that efforts to reduce disaster risks must be systematically integrated into policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction... Sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually supportive objectives and in order to meet the challenges ahead, accelerated efforts must be made.”- Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction for 2009 acknowledged the importance of good governance for sustained efforts in disaster risk reduction (UNISDR 2009: 19). It pointed out that Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) can result in significant savings and should be regarded as an investment. Natural disasters put development gains at risk, but development choices in turn can increase disaster risks. Therefore, one should ensure that every

aspect of development contributes to reducing disaster risks rather than generating new risks. Economic losses from disasters have topped one trillion US dollars worldwide since 2000, growing at a faster rate than GDP per capita in OECD countries over the same period (UN/ISDR 2011). Despite these escalating losses, more than 95% of humanitarian finance is still spent on responding to disasters and their aftermath, with less than 5% spent on reducing the risk of disasters (Kellest and Sweeney, 2012). Without a major increase in investment to reduce current and future risks, spending on relief and reconstruction is likely to become unsustainable. Fortunately, disaster risk management (DRM) is firmly on the international policy agenda in 2012 – at the G20, Rio+20, Summit of the Americas and at the climate change negotiations – and is being voiced as a genuine concern for many governments. It was also the subject of the *Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (SREX) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which highlighted the links between disasters, climate change, poverty and weak governance (IPCC 2011).

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Now is the time to act. This rare alignment of international policy processes with national government, private sector and civil society interest is an opportunity to position DRM as a cornerstone in efforts to foster resilient and sustainable growth and development. Debate has begun on what follows the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they expire in 2015 and how DRM might be incorporated into any new framework.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been put forward in the run up to Rio+20 and will be further discussed over the coming years. DRM is a part of these discussions.
- The 'Durban Platform', agreed in December 2011, commits countries to negotiate a new climate change treaty by 2015, one with 'legal force'. The negotiations on this treaty include measures to reduce and transfer disaster risk and consider how DRM can deal with 'loss and damage' if climate change mitigation and adaptation are unsuccessful.
- The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) expires in 2015 and a process is already in place to negotiate a new global agreement on disaster risk reduction.

The challenge for the DRM community is to ensure that risk management is prioritized in these policy frameworks and fully integrated in institutional and sector practices, to help save lives, protect livelihoods and reduce economic losses. In this context, governance is increasingly recognized to be critical. Good or weak governance can be seen as one of the fundamental factors influencing disaster risk. Appropriate institutional, policy and legal frameworks are essential. Good governance is expected to elevate disaster risk reduction into a policy priority, allocate the necessary resources to it, ensure and enforce its implementation and assign accountability for failures, as well as facilitate participation by all relevant stakeholders. Supportive governance is necessary to ensure coping capacities in societies. Governance influences the way in which national and sub-national actors (including governments, parliamentarians, public servants, the media, the private sector, and civil society organizations) are willing and able to coordinate their actions to manage and reduce disaster-related risk. Sufficient public awareness to recognize and address risk, coupled with the political will to set policy and allocate appropriate resources, is key.

Equally critical is the need for processes, institutions with sufficient managerial and coordination capacity to manage and integrate the efforts of relevant sectors and account for vulnerable and poor communities. Responsive, accountable, transparent and efficient governance structures underwrite the environment where DRM can be institutionalized as an underlying principle of sustainable development. Therefore, building resilient communities in disaster-prone countries requires that: a) underlying risk factors are continuously considered in all relevant sectors; and b) risk reduction standards and measures are an integral part of the planning and delivery of core development services and processes, including education, environment, and health. Despite the prevailing recognition that good governance and DRR are mutually supportive objectives, understanding of the linkage is still at a nascent stage in Kenya. Although increasingly risk

management and reduction is mentioned in governmental development policies, plans and strategies it is not treated as a truly multi-sectoral concern. The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR, 2009) concluded that "governance arrangements for disaster risk reduction in many countries do not facilitate the integration of risk considerations into development. In general, the institutional and legislative arrangements for disaster risk reduction are weakly connected to development sectors." Many disaster-prone countries have not embraced mainstreaming DRR concerns into development practices as an underlying principle. The failure to prioritize DRR and the resulting absence of its inclusion in country development policies, planning and implementation leads to new or heightened patterns of disaster risk, and ultimately an increased risk of the loss of lives and livelihoods.

### Methodology

In order to discuss leadership, devolution, governance, political will and disaster risk reduction, several key questions have to be answered. These are;

- Is there a policy that identifies disaster risk reduction as a priority?
- To what extent does the policy promote a clear understanding to policy makers and the general public of the potential disaster risks?
- Does the administrative system promote equality, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability?
- Is it responsive to the needs of the population?
- To what extent does development planning integrate disaster risk reduction strategies?
- What structures exist for the management and coordination of disaster risk management?
- Do these structures facilitate the involvement and participation of a broad range of stakeholders?
- Does government promote participatory structures at local and community levels that focus on disaster risk reduction?
- Do decentralization structures exist at the local level with the necessary authority, capacity and resources to plan and implement disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes within a national framework?
- What mechanism exists for integrating all stakeholders at the local level in disaster risk reduction activities?
- What mechanisms exist for integrating centrally directed but locally designed and implemented programmes?
- Does a favourable political environment exist that promotes participatory practices that empower communities in decision making and give ownership over disaster risk reduction activities?
- How inclusive are these structures?
- Do they afford specific opportunities for women's involvement in decision making and implementation processes?
- How are community efforts integrated into overall governance structures and resource allocation at district, provincial and national levels?

The answers to these questions are the focus of this paper. They will give us insights into challenges and prospects of

mainstreaming DRR into all development planning and policies at all levels of government. The education sector forms the focal point for effective governance and devolution of disaster risk reduction because its first priority is knowledge base and dissemination.

### Context for Increasing Political Will

The UN's framework for 'significantly' reducing disaster risk by 2015 calls on governments, among other stakeholders, to do five things. These are the five 'priority areas' of the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) (<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/hfa.htm>):

- Ensure that disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
- Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning systems.
- Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
- Reduce the underlying risk factors.
- Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

Each of these activities requires political leaders and public servants in government administration at different levels (e.g. national, provincial, county or district, and local) to allocate their own and others' labour, time, financial and technical resources and political influence – all scarce resources. So the question must arise, why should they make the effort? This might also be called the question of political will. Five reasons stand out;

- Political leaders have a unique role in representing and communicating local concerns to national governments, and campaigning issues that affect people's daily lives and livelihoods. If parliamentarians facilitate and legislate for disaster-resilient development in constituencies, everybody wins.
- Politicians are powerful policy monitors who can influence national policies and spending through their national budget oversight roles, and through their membership of parliamentary committees for major development sectors, making disaster risk reduction an instrument for sustainable development.
- Politicians are national and county legislators who have the unique power to pass new legislation, or amend existing legislation, creating a credibly enabling environment for achieving disaster-resilient development, poverty reduction and the MDGs.
- Politicians are natural campaigners. With adequate information and knowledge on disaster risk reduction, parliamentarians can provide better advice and can tap into active expert networks on disaster risk reduction and development, to improve government knowledge on policy, procedures, training and guidelines.
- Politicians are high-level lobbyists who can even influence heads of state, as well as international organizations working with parliamentarians, to strengthen political commitment to making disaster risk reduction a pre requirement for development funding.

Once national laws are passed, the question of implementation and enforcement arises, most often, but not exclusively, within individual, county, national, or legal contexts. These laws require provisions for implementation, bylaws for local enforcement and provisions for funding. They exemplify the adage: 'the devil is in the detail'. In addition, one needs to ask; who will judge whether the government is meeting its responsibilities? Is the judiciary or relevant monitoring body independent? Is it competent to judge such matters? Are there penalties for non-implementation? Future policy frameworks need to enhance commitment to the management of risk across sectors and scales and improve implementation mechanisms. This could be achieved by adopting a human rights approach, in which states fulfill obligations to respect, protect and fulfill basic human rights including the 'right to safety' of vulnerable people exposed to hazards. Political commitment is likely to be strengthened when legal obligations are clearly defined. Although politically challenging, a legally binding commitment to DRM could be agreed, with specific goals defined and signatories held accountable for their achievement, as is the case with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol.

One major weakness of the HFA is its failure to ensure that well-crafted DRM policies are actually implemented. More attention needs to be paid to the promotion of DRM at the county level, with efforts linked across the national, regional, district and local scales. Even in countries with adequate legislation and national plans there is limited progress on the ground, especially in small, rural municipalities and informal settlements within large cities. More direct access funding streams are needed for local authorities, as well as technical support to develop appropriate legal instruments of their own, such as land-use planning regulations, to influence private sector investment (GNDR, 2011). Government departments, such as Water Resources, Health and Agriculture may already be doing a lot to reduce the impact of hazards, without labeling it DRM, but their activities are rarely coordinated and often go unnoticed. Departments are not accustomed to working together on cross-cutting issues, but can be encouraged to do so through inter-sectoral planning and budgeting for DRM and wider efforts to make development progress more resilient.

### Linking Disaster Risk Reduction and Governance

Governance refers generally to the set of instruments through which people living in a state, believing in common core values, govern themselves by the means of laws, rules and regulations enforced by the state apparatus. It denotes a system of values, policies and institutions by which society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interaction among the state, civil society and the private sector. It also denotes those processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, and meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Governance has three components: economic, political and administrative.

- Economic governance includes the decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its

relationship with other economies. This has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life.

- Political governance is the process of decision making to formulate policies, including national disaster reduction and planning. The nature of this process and the way it brings together the state, non-state and private sector actors determines the quality of the policy outcomes.
- Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation and requires the existence of well-functioning organizations at the central and local levels. In the case of disaster risk reduction, it requires functioning enforcement of building codes, land-use planning, environmental risk and human vulnerability monitoring and safety standards.

The fundamental principles of good governance include respect for human rights, political openness, participation, tolerance, administrative and bureaucratic capacity and efficiency. The rule of law, transparency, equity, consensus-orientated accountability and strategic vision are other essential elements of good governance. Each country has the sovereign responsibility to protect its people, infrastructure and economic and social assets from natural disasters. As the critical actor in development, governments can shape the destinies of their populations through economic choices they make that promote equity, poverty reduction and an appropriate political culture - policy and decision making processes that promote participation and inclusiveness, and administrative processes that promote efficiency, transparency, accountability and people-centeredness.

The principles of good governance provide the key to sustainable development and by implication to effective disaster risk reduction. Good governance creates a conducive environment for effective disaster risk reduction through mobilizing the political will and facilitating the broad participation and partnerships to ensure that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in the decision-making processes. Development is generally viewed as the achievement of economic growth and hence improved living standards achieved through the use of a society's human, natural and institutional resources. Development means simply improving society - enabling people to achieve their aspirations. Improving society includes provision of social services, acquisition of economic assets, improved productivity and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters. Low levels of development are thus closely associated with high levels of risk and vulnerability to natural disasters. The key elements of development that relate to vulnerability and disaster risk can be best summarized as follows:

- An economic component dealing with the creation of wealth and the improvement of conditions of material life equitably distributed;
- A social ingredient measured as well-being in health, education, housing and employment;
- A political dimension including values such as human rights, political freedom, enfranchisement and some form of democracy; and

- An environmental dimension: Commitment to ecologically sound and sustainable development, which ensures that the present generation, does not undermine the position of the future generation.

Economic development and improvement in the conditions of material life are closely linked with social wellbeing and are key elements in increasing the ability of individuals, communities and society in general to cope with the impact of disasters. Political freedom, enfranchisement and democracy provide society with the tools for controlling their destiny by participating in decisions that affect their daily lives, and by demanding accountability from those in power. Through participatory planning mechanisms, groups and communities can ensure that disaster risk reduction measures are factored into development programmes. The environmental dimension ensures sound sustainable development practices. Disaster risk reduction is viewed as the systematic development and application of policies, strategies and practices to minimize vulnerabilities and risks throughout a society to avoid (prevention) or limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impact of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development (ISDR 2002: 25). Disaster reduction policies should have a two-fold aim:

- To enable societies to be resilient to natural hazards;
- To ensure that development efforts do not increase vulnerability.

The focus on disaster risk reduction is based on the understanding that with proper planning of development programmes and integrating disaster risk reduction in development strategies, the negative effects of development can be reduced, while the positive effects can be enhanced through the reduction of poverty, improvement of human livelihoods and coping strategies and overall reduction of vulnerability. Disaster risk reduction strategy places great emphasis on the governance process. Disaster risk factors also provide a menu to policy makers, planners and community officials of the issues that will largely influence disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, programmes and activities at national and local levels, as these represent key development issues. Poverty, environmental degradation, isolation and remoteness and social exclusion as factors configuring risk are outcomes of failed or unsustainable development on the one hand, and on the other poor governance practices that do not heed the voices of the poor. Climate change and fluctuations in world commodity prices are dictated by decisions and development practices outside the control of developing nations.

Disaster risks associated with rural livelihood clearly call on governments to develop policies targeting poverty reduction through the improvement of infrastructure, employment and income-generating opportunities. Critically important is the existence of policy and decision-making processes that involve community participation. Disaster risk reduction requires support to local social organizations, social integration and political participation of the communities and vulnerable groups, particularly women, and the development of risk profiles that are based on the knowledge and experiences of

communities. Local plans should be linked to central institutions. Governance defined by political commitment and strong institutions is identified in the ISDR Framework as a key area for the success of effective and sustained disaster risk reduction.

Good governance will elevate disaster risk reduction as a policy priority; allocate the necessary resources for disaster risk reduction; enforce implementation of disaster risk reduction measures and assign accountability for failures; and facilitate participation from civil society. The major components of governance for disaster risk reduction are policy and planning; legal and regulatory frameworks, resources; and organization and structures. (ISDR, 2004). A good policy provides a multi-sectoral framework for disaster risk reduction and institutions for the coordination of government agencies, participation of civil society and collaboration with the private sector and all stakeholders. Risk identification and assessment is the foundation of a comprehensive disaster risk management policy. A good policy in disaster risk management should:

- demonstrate government leadership and commitment to disaster risk reduction;
- provide a clear definition of the disaster risk and an understanding among policy makers and the general public, and conveys the often severe and potentially far-reaching economic consequences of natural disasters;
- define disaster management coordination structures at national, county local and community levels;
- serve as a basis for sound organization and clear allocation of roles and responsibilities of various structures as well as accountability channels;
- provide mechanism for the participation of local communities;
- provide overall direction for ensuring optimum utilization of resources;
- ensure that disaster risk management issues are integrated within overall national development planning;
- promote awareness to ensure that these issues are applied across sectoral, ministerial and jurisdictional lines of interest or responsibility;
- be multi-disciplinary in nature and ensures that disaster risk elements are properly included in the design of major development projects across sectors; and
- provide a foundation for legislation and related regulations.

A national disaster risk management plan backed by legislation translates into programmes and activities. The plan, which needs to be updated periodically, spells out in detail the actions to be taken with a time frame, allocation of responsibilities, resource requirements, preparedness measures such as early warning, public awareness, knowledge development and management, risk and vulnerability assessment, as well as mitigation and risk reduction activities. Effective planning and maintenance of relevant plans has the following advantages for improved disaster risk management; a clear and coherent approach to disaster risk reduction; offers common reference

for sectors and all stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction; provides a basis for coordinated action; provides clear allocation of responsibilities; provides focus for training and capacity building for disaster risk reduction activities; refines a framework against which to review and evaluate current and future disaster risk management activities. Legislation provides evidence of political commitment and Government intention to provide a solid basis for the policy, sound planning and the coordination of disaster risk management measures. Legislation usually defines the institutional arrangements and roles and ensures compliance for the implementation of policy, resource allocation and a framework for enforcement regulations and building codes. It remains a critical element in ensuring effective coordination and local participation. Legislation provides a formal basis for disaster risk reduction action and supports policy, plans and organizational arrangements. It allocates roles and responsibilities in a legal form, elicits compliance and ensures that such responsibilities and roles are executed properly. Facilitates uniform national effects to ensure that all levels of disaster risk management structures receive the full benefit of its support and provides a framework for accountability and the enforcement of regulations relating to disaster risk management. While governments have acknowledged the importance of disaster legislation, few have translated policy commitments and plans into a legislative framework. South Africa's disaster management legislation is viewed as a model for the Africa region, and should provide a useful example.

An administrative structure that promotes good governance for disaster risk reduction has the following characteristics: coordinating body which promotes partnership with sufficient authority to command compliance and accountability; existence of an implementing body with necessary capacity and resources; Intra and Inter-ministerial, multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral mechanisms; local Institutions for decentralized planning decision-making and the implementation of disaster risk management programmes; and mechanisms for civil society, NGOs, private sector and community participation.

Natural disasters are now known to be intimately linked to human development and we now understand that human vulnerabilities are closely associated with specific development conditions and processes. This understanding has led to increasing shift in focus from the traditional disaster management cycle emphasizing response, preparedness and prevention/mitigation towards disaster risk reduction (UNISDR, 2004). It is recognized that effective disaster risk reduction cannot be accomplished without integrating disaster risk reduction into development planning and development processes. There is now consensus that political will is an essential element in effective disaster risk reduction at all levels of government and throughout society as a whole. While ultimate responsibility for disaster risk reduction policy and implementation lies with the highest levels of government, effective disaster risk reduction requires a broad-based approach, involving partnerships between government and international partners and, at the national level, partnership between various levels of government, the private sector, civil society and the media. This requires a commitment by the state to play a facilitator role and accept

power sharing and responsibility with various levels of government and civil society actors. Decision makers and community leaders in Kenya need to appreciate the importance and benefits of good policies and strategies and appropriate institutional and legislative systems at national and county levels as frameworks for the design of effective disaster risk reduction plans and programmes.

### DRR and Development

Development interventions that target poverty should enhance the resilience of the poor to the impact of disasters. At the same time, efforts towards disaster risk reduction can contribute to poverty reduction and development. Integrating disaster risk reduction into development and poverty reduction programmes makes a lot of sense. Disaster risk reduction therefore is a challenge for development. Meeting the MDGs will be more difficult if disaster risk is not integrated into development planning. Appropriate development policies that reduce risk can make an important contribution toward the achievement of the MDGs by reducing losses and protecting existing development gains as well as avoiding the generation of new risks. (UNDP, 2004:10);

- MDG 1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 2: Achieving universal primary education
- MDG 3: Promoting gender equality and empowering women
- MDG 4: Reducing child mortality
- MDG 5: Improving maternal health
- MDG 6: Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability
- MDG 8: Developing global partnership for development

In particular, MDGs 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 seem to provide critical opportunities for policies that help in disaster risk reduction. Many countries now endorse the close links between poverty reduction and disaster risk reduction, and in some countries in Africa disaster risk reduction is factored into national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are also viewed as frameworks for achieving the MDGs. Among the key elements of a disaster risk reduction strategy highlighted in the ISDR Framework are: Vulnerability and risk assessment; Effective early warning systems; Information sharing and public awareness; Political commitment at international, regional, national, local and community levels; Creation of multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral partnerships; Improved scientific knowledge about the causes of natural disasters as well as the effects that natural hazards and related technological and environmental factors have on society; International cooperation and partnerships; and Strengthening of disaster reduction capabilities and coordinating structures for policy and strategy development and the development of early warning.

The PRSP Framework helps to harmonize and systematize the various elements required for comprehensive disaster risk reduction. It serves both as a set of criteria for benchmarking the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction measures and a tool

for monitoring progress. In particular, the Framework serves to:

- provide a basis for political advocacy as well as practical action and implementation;
- reflect the multi-dimensional, inter-disciplinary and multi-hazard nature of disaster risk reduction;
- assist stakeholders in determining roles, responsibilities and areas of accountability;
- highlight areas where capacities need to be developed; and
- provide a basis for setting goals and targets adapted to different circumstances, against which progress can be measured and gaps identified.

### Kenyan Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction Context

Underlying all disaster risk reduction efforts is the need for partnerships of a broad range of stakeholders with a key role played by government through a web of coordinating and participatory mechanisms. Policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms should include the private sector, NGOs and civil society organizations in their structures. A study done in Budalangi flood plains to assess the extent to which DRR education has been integrated into the primary school curriculum revealed that there is no specific policy or legislation on DRR education by the Ministry of Education. Document analysis also revealed that there are intensive partnership efforts into flood management. The flood mitigation strategy is in place. The Western Kenya Community Driven Development and Flood Mitigation Project (WKCDD&FMP) employs an integrated flood management approach in addressing flooding in the Budalangi flood plains. The project focuses on the entire River Nzoia basin where various intervention activities are taking place.

The Ministry of Education in Kenya has the Education Sector Emergency Preparedness and Response plan (MOE, 2010). It also established the Education Cluster Partnership in 2008. The main purpose of these committees is to address education in emergencies and ensure and assure all persons especially children the right to quality education and safe learning environment in emergencies and post crisis recovery (RoK, 2010). The Ministry of Water and Irrigation unveiled a Flood Mitigation Strategy in June 2009. It is expected to serve as a base document to developing the national strategy and policy for flood management in Kenya. The document also provides the background, i.e. context, of physical and hydro meteorological aspects, the status of development and future development plans for six river basins in Kenya. It further describes the proposed strategy for flood management and identifies various initiatives to be implemented by the ministries and departments concerned. It also provides the co-ordination mechanism. It provides financial arrangement and an institutional mechanism. It provides an outline of the suggested flood forecasting system and proposed action plan suggesting various short, medium and long-term measures for the implementation of the strategy (MOW&I, 2009). There is also a strategy for flood management for Lake Victoria basin Kenya prepared under the Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM) in September 2004. This document outlines a proposed flood management strategy recommended

for Lake Victoria basin in Kenya. It is expected that it will serve as a base document for developing the national strategy policy for flood management in Kenya. In this document, several ministries and departments consult on flood management. These include the Ministry of Water Resources Management and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Natural Resources, Ministry of Lands and Housing, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Transport and Communication, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Kenya Meteorological Department, Department of Soil Survey and Appropriate Local Administration. The Water Act (2002, p. 15) provides for catchment management strategy for protection and control of water resources. The land use policy should address land use in the flood plain and their development but it is still in the process of formulation. There is also the national Climate Change Response Strategy (RoK, 2010) but no climate change policy yet. As adaptation measures to climate change, the NCCRS has proposed protecting flood plains through the construction of dykes and river dredging.

It has also proposed putting in place adequate hydrometric networks to monitor river flows and flood warning telemetric systems. Additionally, the NCCRS has proposed that a comprehensive policy on climate change to be formulated in line with the UNFCCS's requirement of the involved parties.

Kenya has a food policy (Sessional Paper no. 3 of 1993) and a wildlife policy (Sessional Paper no. 3 of 1975 and Sessional Paper no. 6 of 1996 on environment and development (ROK, April 2010). Along with the National Disaster Management Policy of 2009, this policy provides guidelines and principles for disaster management in Kenya. It provides frameworks for decision making and co-ordination across disaster management sectors. In 2009, the Ministry of Provincial Administration and Internal Security's National Disaster Operation Centre (NDOC) established the National Disaster Response Plan to give guidelines for coordination and response to all types of disasters in Kenya. Since DRR is a multi-sectoral discipline, it is important that a specific policy on disaster risk reduction be developed and ratified. This means that political commitment is the key ingredient in initiating, implementing and sustaining the process of integrating DRR into the curriculum. The government must provide the political will for the policy environment and institutional arrangements required. The government should identify the education sector as a priority centre in integrating DRR into the curriculum.

An enabling environment for integrating DRR education into the curriculum means focus on creating and maintaining government actions and stakeholder cooperation that stimulate and support DRR integration in the school curriculum and in education in general. This includes political commitment, legal and regulatory systems, national DRR policies and plans and institutional structures and mechanisms. The schools education committees, county education working groups and national education working groups should work with the national education cluster, with political support, to support these initiatives. The government through its various mechanisms

will emphasize partnership among its agencies and stakeholders, for example between the Ministry of Education and the National Disaster Management Office with other government agencies, stakeholders and partners.

In this study we sought to know the teachers' knowledge on DRR education policy in Kenya. Their responses are presented in the table below;

**Table 1. Teachers' Knowledge on DRR Education policy in Kenya**

S. no	Statement	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Is there legislation laws that requires mainstreaming of DRR into the primary school curriculum	2	94
2	Does the government have a national DRR policy/plan	1	95
3	Has the education Ministry issued an official policy statement on mainstreaming DRR in the schools?	1	95
4	Is the policy reflected in the internal and external documents of the Ministry?	0	0
5	Is the policy well understood and accepted across different departments/offices in the Ministry	1	96
6	Does the policy translate into allocation of resources?	0	0
7	Has the understanding of the policy resulted into practice?	0	0

From the foregoing, there is no policy or legislation on DRR education in schools. The teachers had not seen or heard of it. Document analysis reveals that the MOE, through the Education Sector Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, has policy guidelines and activities for preparedness, response and recovery to disasters and how to evaluate the efforts made (MOE, 2010). The results revealed that curriculum change stakeholders were aware of several policies legislation, mechanism strategies and advocacy on DRR education. These include: the Children's Act (2010); Education Sector Response plan (2010); Flood Mitigation Management Policy (2009); the National Disaster Management Policy (2009); the Education Cluster/Partnership (2008); Food Security Policies; Climate Change Response Strategy (2010); Flood Management Strategy (2004); the Water Act (2002)(15); Food Policy (Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1993); Wildlife Policy (Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1975) and Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1996 on environment and development. However, there is no policy or legislation on integration DRR education into the school curriculum. There is no policy addressing the plight of children, their families and teachers in disaster-prone areas, providing a flexible calendar for them to compensate for the lost contact time with their teachers when they are in IDP camps. There is no policy or legislation on giving them alternative examinations or reducing their cut off points so that there is equity in joining secondary schools. Still, there is no specific policy or legislation of training teachers, parents and school management committees on disaster risk reduction. There is no policy on disaster resistant construction standards.

### Devolution and Disaster Risk Reduction

While disaster management and response coordination requires centralized command, there is a need to decentralize disaster risk reduction. Along with the decentralization of power and

devolution of government authority, disaster risk reduction at the local level needs to be encouraged and supported. (Living with Risk, ISDR, 2004:81).

### Structure of Devolved Units

The structure of county government largely mirrors that of the national government. There are a total of 47 county governments consisting of a County Assembly and a County Executive. The membership of the County Assembly is comprised of (a) one elected member for each ward; (b) the number of special seat members necessary to ensure that no more than two thirds of the membership of the assembly are of the same gender; (c) the number of members of marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and the youth; and, (d) the speaker, who shall be an ex officio member. On the other hand, the County Executive consists of the governor, deputy governor, and a maximum 10-member County Executive Committee that is appointed by the governor and approved by the County Assembly. Like the national president, a county governor can serve only two terms of five years each, and can be removed from office for serious misconduct, or incapacity

In order to ensure that a system of checks and balances is imbedded in the emerging architecture, the County Public Service that is established operates under the County Executive with the County Assembly exercising oversight roles. However, the scope of the County Public Service shall definitely be determined by the viability of the individual counties and their abilities to perform certain functions allocated to the county level of government. The constitution (176[2]) requires the County Government to decentralize its functions and provision of its services to the extent that is efficient and practical to do so. Perhaps it was in response to this provision that the County Governments Act, 2012 proceeded to create three lower levels of governance (already referred to above) below the County level. A closer examination of the Act reveals that it is very comprehensive and provides the detail that could not find expression in the constitution; which is why the individual counties might not find it necessary to create their own entities as such. There is, however, a provision in the constitution to the effect that a County Assembly may make any laws that are necessary for, or incidental to effective performance of the functions and exercise of its powers as provided for in the Fourth Schedule of the constitution (Article 185 of the constitution). It is still too soon to know whether any County will feel the need to take advantage of the provision, but it is quite likely.

Apart from the County Assembly, the County Governments Act also provides for a village council "competitively appointed" by the village administrator subject to approval by the County Assembly. It has a small membership of three to five members with the administrator as its chairperson. The council's major role is to assist the village administrator in the governance of the village through 'legislation' and coordination of policy implementation (Section 53). Cities and municipalities have boards, with members are either appointed by the county executive or nominated by certain types of associations or organizations. Boards have management

functions including making by-laws. Sub-counties (constituencies) and wards have only administrators.

The other County- level body with deliberative function is the County Intergovernmental Forum (Section 54 of the Act) chaired by the Governor, and comprising heads of all National Government department rendering services in the county as well as County Executive Committee members. The major function of the forum is the harmonization of services rendered in the county by the Central Government and County Government as well as coordination of development activities in the county and other intergovernmental functions. The law also empowers the governor to chair such other committees and fora as might be established. In addition, he is entitled to receive regular briefings from the County Security Committee pursuant to Article 6(2), 189(2) and 239(5) of the Constitution. Indeed, the establishment of the forum is likely to go a long way in mollifying the observers who have been concerned about the possibility of the two levels of government working at cross purposes in the field. Since the County Governments have yet to 'take off' fully, whatever observation made at this point could only be tentative. Whereas the immediate environment of the County Government is critical to its success, the national one is the most critical one, as will be demonstrated in a later contribution in the series. What is important to mention here though, is that, the constitution has established a number of accountability measures which the centre can rely on to ensure that counties operate according to the stipulations in the constitution and Acts of Parliament. Some of these provisions are: On financial matters: counties operate in accordance with the provisions contained in the Public Finance Management Act, with the Treasury as the 'watchdog' (Article 190(2) of the Constitution).

The right of intervention by the Central Government where a County Government is unable to perform its functions or does not operate a financial management system that complies with the requirement prescribed by national legislation (190 [3a-b]).

Indeed, the law (Public Financial Management Act) gives the National Treasury overall responsibility for public financial management as well as sanction powers. And the County Governments Act (S. 131) says that county financial management "shall be as provided under the law relating to public finance". In a nutshell, County Treasuries are subject to the authority of the National Treasury on matters of financial policy and management. Decentralization and devolution of power is seen as a means of promoting good governance and participatory development regarded as critical for achieving national goals of poverty eradication as well as the Millennium Development Goals. The New Kenyan Constitution views devolution and decentralization of power as the best means to realize Vision 2030. Disaster risk reduction strategies and national developmental initiatives will only be successful when communities participate and have ownership as part and parcel of the decision-making, programming and implementation processes. At the community level, the primary goal must therefore be to create a favourable political environment that supports and promotes participatory practices, and offers specific opportunities for women to be involved in decision making in order to implement viable disaster reduction activities. Decentralized structures, which provide opportunities for participation and involvement of all segments



of society are critical. Involving communities effectively requires building self-reliance and a sharing of resources; building partnerships consistent with the principles of community development, with human orientation focusing on the liberation of people from the deprivation trap, participation, empowerment, ownership, learning, adaptation capability and simplicity, collective action, need orientation, objective orientation and action at grassroots level in contrast to the traditional institutional approach characterized by top-down need identification, centralized planning and top-down control. The local county governance structures which serve Kenyan communities provide an opportunity for effective disaster risk reduction measures through: more focused environment for more direct allocation of resources to risk reduction for local benefit; more precise targeting of public awareness programmes to address local needs; familiarity with local conditions and experiences of past events as resources for targeting activities; and motivation for assessing local risks and the allocation of professional and material resources to manage them. Among the benefits from integrating disaster risk reduction into local government actions supported by adequate financial and human resources are: vulnerability and risk analysis; building local knowledge and institutional capabilities; increasing public awareness and participation; and protecting critical infrastructure and cultural heritage assets.

Good governance, in this context, manifests itself through leadership roles and community relations in the planning process characterized by: definition of objectives to be achieved by involving the community; identification of areas in the planning process, where and when community should participate; identification of relevant elements on community participation; techniques to be used to obtain and facilitate community participation and information to be provided to the community. Resource mobilization and allocation is perhaps the most concrete evidence of government commitment to disaster risk reduction. Good policies and plans may be in place, but without the necessary resources for implementation these will remain hollow commitments. Resource allocation poses a real challenge in situations where so many demands compete for limited resources. Insufficient capacity and weak governance structure, corruption and a weak national resource base may undermine development of innovative mechanisms for resource mobilization and the providing of task incentives. However, if governments identify disaster risk reduction as a priority, and re-arrange their national development priorities, resources can be identified for disaster risk reduction. Poverty reduction strategies afford such an opportunity to re-order priorities (ISDR,2002). On the other hand, resource mobilization is an area where regional and international institutions can play a critical role both in advocacy on behalf of poor countries or actually facilitating resource mobilization. Governments need to plug in these networks and use these regional and international mechanisms. The Kenya government needs to allocate financial, human and material resources to disaster risk management structures.

Local communities are often more conversant with both disaster risks experienced and the necessary resources and existing opportunities to identify and manage disaster risks. Disaster risk management at local level is a key element in any

viable national disaster risk reduction strategy, and must be built on community networks and effective county and local government institutions. Communities, however, cannot implement disaster risk reduction programmes alone. Community planning and risk reduction need to be integrated into the overall governance structures and resource capabilities at the district, county, regional/provincial and national levels, with relevant levels of government assuming appropriate responsibility for elements of these programmes. Leadership plays an essential role in a number of areas:

- Securing commitment at individual and community level to accept values of change in behaviour towards a culture of prevention;
- Definition of objectives to be achieved by involving the community;
- Identification of areas in the planning process where and when the community should participate;
- Identification of relevant elements of the community whose participation is essential and techniques to be used to obtain and facilitate community participation;
- Sourcing information that is to be provided to the community;
- Building awareness of the community of the importance of risk reduction, for their wellbeing;
- Identification and imparting of essential skills to translate risk awareness into ideas and practices of sustained risk management, and developing activities that can strengthen community capabilities to identify and cope with hazards and to improve community livelihoods;
- Creating channels for the community for accessing technical and material resources;
- Providing knowledge of practical low-cost methods which address likely local hazards and which is conveyed in understandable media through a wide variety of participatory forms.

At the local level, decentralized structures, which provide opportunities for participation and involvement of all segments of society, are critical. Disaster risk management, at the local level, is a key element in any viable national disaster risk reduction strategy, and must be built on community networks and effective municipal and county government institutions. Disaster risk reduction strategies and national development initiatives will only be successful when community participation, buy in and ownership are part and parcel of decision making, programming and implementation. Communities are a rich source of knowledge and resources that need to be tapped.

### **Benefits of Good Governance for DRR Education**

Among the benefits of good governance for disaster risk reduction include:

- increased coordination of disaster risk reduction programmes at all levels;
- existence of multi-sectoral disaster risk management policies and strategies based on the broad involvement of all individuals, government, private sector and civil society institutions;

- allocation of appropriate resources at local and national levels to disaster risk reduction activities;
- greater participation of communities at risk in the design and implementation of disaster risk management programmes;
- greater sensitivity towards the poor and emphasis on poverty reduction policies and strategies;
- More effective national, regional and international partnerships;
- Greater and more effective disaster risk reduction advocacy role by sub-regional, regional and international institutions;
- Greater mobilization and availability of resources from the international community for disaster risk management activities;
- Greater benefit of globalization for low human development countries, through fair and equitable trade regimes, greater development assistance and promotion of environmentally sustainable development.

## Conclusion

Political will is the result of the confluence of a number of incentives – political, economic, legal, administrative and moral/ethical. These incentives interact, overlap, interpenetrate and reinforce each other. Social demand for DRR is a critical requirement. Political will is often volatile and DRR investment in economic terms is also volatile. Therefore, the roles of watch dog organizations are crucial to make sure that there is political will at all levels of governance to safeguard implementation. The Disaster Risk Reduction policy should depart from the reactive approach which is characterized by the urgency of emergency assistance and response in the Education Sector Emergency Response guidelines. This paper is advocating for a move towards a more holistic approach premised on the adoption and enforcement of new regulations, action plans, the integration of disaster management into the education system, and the maintenance of a strong institutional framework for coordination, as the main aspirations of the Government. As a broad policy framework for harmonization of sectoral and cross-sectoral policy objectives, the NADIMA Policy should outline a number of principles, namely land-use planning, conservation of the environment, gender integration, education, training and public awareness and public participation in disaster management.

## Recommendations

This research has shown a direct link between the political will to transform the primary school curriculum and integrate DRR education for sustainable development, poverty reduction and reduction of people's vulnerability to disasters. Political commitment drives the political process that enforces and enacts all policies, legislations, strategies and guidelines. These guidelines lead to planning the integration of DRR education into the school curriculum. Kenya has made commendable progress towards implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action as earlier mentioned but from the findings of this study, a gap still exists between policy and practice. The political will needs to drive the legislative process at the county and school levels. Since DRR is a multi-sectoral endeavour, the legislation

should ensure that DRR is mainstreamed in all policies and laws.

Apart from formulation of policies, political commitment will ensure budgetary allocation to fund the said activities. Finances make it possible for different role players to engage in disaster risk activities. This is a great enabler to the disaster risk reduction process. A cost-benefit analysis should be done leading to spending. Policies on safety of schools and the children's families will ensure risk assessments as well as vulnerability and capacity assessments and analysis. All these will provide information on the livelihood practices of the community. The risks will be identified and monitored. Rewards and punishment will follow schools to ensure the safety of the children. For disaster risk reduction to be integrated into the primary school curriculum, first and foremost there is need to have a comprehensive policy on DRR education by the Ministry of Education and her developmental partners. The policy should highlight the need for integrating DRR into the national curriculum and assign responsibility to the MOE. The National Disaster Management Committee should provide technical support to the MOE as well as provide funding for the project. The NDMC together with MOSSP should advocate for integration of DRR into the school curriculum to generate political will in initiating such integration.

The broader policy context for disaster resilient construction involves:

- A comprehensive site analysis selection to include identification of related natural hazards.
- Standard building codes relative to hazard (flood) condition.
- A transparent process for planning, design, regulation and enforcement decisions. This will include revision of school sites, school building assessment, revision of the school building designs, construction monitoring control and the participation of the community in school building, construction and monitoring.
- Higher qualification requirements for professionals engaged in engineering design and construction of school facilities.
- Independent assessment of design construction and maintenance of school facilities.
- Technical support for all places and skill training for builders where needed. Active public stand against corruption and liability for all contractors. This may include a zero tolerance policy on school construction, well published with severe penalties for offenders of the law.
- The Ministry of Education, through the Education Sector Emergency Response Plan, should ensure that disaster risk reduction education emphasizes the 3 Ps of the risk management cycle (prediction, prevention and preparedness) to flooding.
- The MOE should advocate for a legal mandate and regulation as bases for integrating DRR into the primary school curriculum. In Kenya, there is only the Education Sector Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan and the National Disaster Management Policy. These are expected to provide guidelines and provisions for integration of DRR into the primary school curriculum. The law should

declare the integration of DRR into the country's sectoral policy programmes and plans. It should state that it is the policy of the state to mainstream disaster risk reduction education and climate change adaptation into development processes such as policy formulation, socio-economic development, planning, budgeting and governance, particularly in areas of environment involving agriculture, water, energy, health education, poverty reduction, land use, public infrastructure and housing, among others. It should ensure pupils' safety in schools.

- Increase coordination and collaboration between the Kenya Meteorological Departments, Ministry of State and Special Programmes, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, NGOs working on education in emergencies, child protection and civil society through effective communication.
- Develop a legal framework and communication strategies to prevent the abuse of rights during disasters and increase awareness of sexual violence through community-based approaches.
- Emergency response plans should be developed alongside school and national contingency plans in advance. It should ensure that the coordinating committee on disaster management in the ministry of education learn and implement minimum standards of education in chronic emergencies and disasters. It should also incorporate the needs of children not yet in school, children with disabilities and girls.

A policy statement issued by the MOE should outline the strategic framework and implementation of learning based on DRR. The implementation strategy should be supported by a circular letter that should be distributed to all primary schools, county representatives and the national education working groups accompanied with the implementation manual.

**Ways to strengthen the effectiveness and political ownership of the DRR agenda so as to build domestic political will include:**

- Government respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights relevant to the safety and protection of its people;
- Setting specific time-bound targets for risk reduction, with clear individual and institutional roles, responsibilities and measurable commitments;
- Establishing methods for auditing progress toward targets with graduated sanctions for non-compliance;
- Undertaking research to demonstrate the value of DRR investments.

These conventional 'top-down' approaches could be reinforced by 'demand side' bottom-up actions such as:

- Raising critical awareness of disaster risk amongst vulnerable people and 'social demand' for risk reduction measures. Disasters can serve as a trigger which can change public perceptions of acceptable risk, helping governments to adopt policy reforms and new approaches to risk reduction;

- Increasing capability of vulnerable people to advocate on their behalf and capacity of those who work with them;
- Increasing public accountability by strengthening local-scale democracy (including decentralization of DRR-related activity);
- Establishing impartial monitoring mechanisms at the impact level with strong civil society involvement;
- Strengthening political demands for improved governmental action for DRR by joining forces among different interest groups, creating alliances among those working on issues such as social justice, poverty, environmental protection, climate change, and food security;

Building social capital and forging of partnerships between local state and non-state actors, especially creating alliances among those working on issues such as social justice, poverty, environmental protection, climate change, and food security. To do this, the Kenyan government should;

- Invest in multi-stakeholder policy platforms to build relationships between national and local actors. Governments need to provide explicit support favouring local level actors who are otherwise functionally excluded by geography, language, etc.
- Implement DRR measures from a human rights-based perspective, in consultation with the affected population, and in coordination with existing legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.
- Balance and integrate rights with duties and responsibilities to ensure that everyone understands what they are expected to do with regards to DRR.
- Pursue economic incentives for DRR within local government through financial audit reporting, system-wide performance measurement and the evaluation of political office bearers and civil servants.
- Implement deconcentration and decentralization seriously, including provision of necessary finance, staffing, training and technical support – as opposed to mere formal, name-only gestures.

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