



Capacity strengthening of Forus members in the coordination of **disaster risk reduction** and post-emergency response actions through the **sharing of good practices**.

APRIL 2022

Feedback to Forus members following the peer-sharing webinar organized on March 9th, 2022.



Researching the role of CSO platforms in coordinating disaster risk reduction and post-emergency response.



Since 2020, Forus had developed thematic **activities on “Disaster Risk Reduction” (DRR)**. Most national platforms don’t have an explicit focus on disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. Our first aim was therefore to research this role and understand how CSO platforms could play a role in coordinating DRR and post-emergency response. With the support of a steering group **gathering Forus members, the French donor “Fondation de France” and other international networks or NGO with a focus on DRR (Global Network of CSOs for Disaster Reduction, Save the Children), a group of experts surveyed and interviewed Forus and GNDR members** and gathered rich learning from their work.

They also produced a series of case studies illustrating diverse contexts in relation to disasters and highlighting challenges of securing civil society role and participation, the value of partnerships, coordination and collaboration, and the importance of basing action and advocacy on local knowledge, needs and priorities. See the report abstract & findings in the annexes.

An underlying theme of the research is that, while many platforms do not see themselves as involved in Disaster Risk Reduction, they can play a significant role in advocating (and developing capacities) for integrated approaches to development, underpinning work in DRR, sustainable development and climate change adaptation. They can play a significant role in ensuring that civil society and local communities develop increased resilience towards shocks and future crises. The findings, case studies and recommendations can be found on a [microsite](#) in English, French and Spanish.

In May-June 2021 Forus organized a [campaign](#) to disseminate this toolkit and raise awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction among Forus members and other CSOs.

Supporting local capacity strengthening programs focusing on Disaster Risk Reduction



In 2020, Forus provided support to projects identified by its members with a focus on disaster risk reduction and post-emergency. This support benefited 2 projects. **NFN, the national platform from Nepal**, led a dialogue from the local to the national level on accountability for disaster risk reduction and response. **FCOSS, the national platform from Fiji**, strengthened its institutional response capacities for disaster risk reduction and community-driven resilience actions.

Supporting the adaptation and the strengthening of national platforms with their work around risk reduction and crisis mitigation

Following the dissemination of the DRR toolkit (microsite) in 2021, Forus had the opportunity to support the adaptation and strengthening of national platforms on their strategic work around Disaster Risk Reduction. The overall objective was for Forus member platforms to become more agile in coordinating actors locally and contributing to resilience building among CSOs and communities. Forus commissioned the **Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) of the University of Wolverhampton** to support national platforms interested in strengthening their strategic planning and strategy implementation around DRR, **with a geographical focus on members from Africa**, as previous studies indicated specific challenges around strategic adaptation to crises on the African continent.

The three platforms supported in this process were able to carry out a mapping of existing knowledge and practice, and consulted their own members to develop an action plan for integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into their strategy.

A webinar was organised by Forus on 9 March 2022, to share lessons learned from this support work. Given the lack of funding and the need for professionalisation, a clear need to develop resource mobilisation capacities at the platform level and to focus on advocacy and awareness raising of CSOs, media and local authorities on DRR concepts was identified. See CIDT slides in annex.



Peer-to-peer learning & sharing on the work of national platforms around risk reduction and crisis mitigation



As a conclusion to the DRR-focused activities carried out by Forus since 2020, a **peer-to-peer dialogue was organised on 9 March 2022**.

Following an introduction by the CIDT, **the platforms from Mali, Togo and Mauritius** presented the activities implemented to develop an action plan and the lessons learned from these processes.

The Malian context is marked by repeated catastrophic climatic events and armed conflict. Timothée Coulibaly (**FECONG**) observed that civil society is poorly prepared, lacks information and has no adequate resources. After consulting its members, FECONG developed an action plan focused on capacity-building for local CSOs, media awareness, advocacy (joining national multi-stakeholder consultation spaces) and resource mobilisation. FECONG also plans to build a digital platform that will serve as an early warning system, and disseminate key weather information to local CSOs.

The Togolese context, explained Pierre Sougbe Konlani (**FONGTO**), is relatively advanced in terms of DRR, with a dedicated and efficient national steering mechanism. FONGTO conducted an internal consultation and established an action plan to better monitor and strengthen members' capacity on DRR issues, to help mobilise resources and to document and disseminate good practices. In terms of response, FONGTO envisages advocacy for the strengthening of sanitation facilities with high DRR impact and for psychological care for disaster victims.





Mauritius is an Island State and is therefore highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, explained Suraj Ray (**MACOSS**). The country has several official bodies/mechanisms responsible for DRR, where CSOs are underrepresented. MACOSS conducted the same process of consultation with its members in order to develop an appropriate action plan. This plan has a clear focus on capacity building of CSOs or media, advocacy, resource mobilization, but also on peer sharing and networking (multi-stakeholder committee, focal points across the Island). MACOSS could also consider supporting responses through the provision of protective equipment.

Following these presentations of strategic planning processes on DRR, platforms from other continents shared their experiences and recommendations. Speakers included: **CODE-NGO (Philippines)**, **CCONG (Colombia)** and **POJOAJU (Paraguay)**.

Deanie Lyn Ocampo (**CODE-NGO**) described the national & regional CSO DRR coordination hubs they've set up in the Philippines after the 2013 Super typhoon Haiyan and explained that the DRR approach cannot be separated from development, humanitarian work, and peacebuilding.

As such, it is important for a CSO platform to have good internal governance to demonstrate accountability and then advocate to local and national governments to adopt or fund the platform's agenda. In a context of limited resources, professionalisation of volunteers is needed at all levels. Responsible companies can also be approached, and community resource generation initiatives can be in-depth investigated, replicated or scaled up.

Liliana Rodríguez Burgos (**CCONG**) presented the contributions made by the Colombian Confederation of NGOs over more than 30 years in response to disasters caused by the 1999 earthquake and the 2011 rainy season in Colombia. CCONG's DRR strategy includes capacity building of local public actors and CSOs, and advocacy on local and national public policies. What is fundamental, Liliana insisted, is territorial planning, recognising local actors and their knowledge and skills in order to build and implement actions aimed at care, prevention, communication and advocacy. One of the roles of CSOs is social control of DRR-allocated resources and in this sense, Liliana indicated, public policy in Colombia created local funds for disaster risk management; CSOs in other countries could develop social control over the execution of the funds created for disaster response.



As regards resource mobilization, Liliane pointed out, it is important to promote and strengthen the DRR value offer of CSOs and to value the different contributions (social, information, human capacity, in-kind) made by all actors, including social organisations.

POJOAJU, the Paraguayan platform, aims at strengthening DRR in its strategic planning, which is an ongoing process. Platform members are developing experiences in this area, such as the national-level consortium initiative presented by Mónica Centrón. A project that aims at community participation, media awareness raising, training of all sectors (CSOs, public authorities and private sector), advocacy on national policy, research and dissemination of good practices. The funding available for DRR in Paraguay comes mainly from international organisations or bilateral agencies. The challenge, Mónica emphasised, is coordination with local communities and focusing on prevention.

[See all the slides in annex.](#)

These presentations were followed by a Q&A session and a peer-sharing discussion. Among the topics raised or addressed:

- Approaching the private sector through corporate social responsibility angle: companies usually help after disasters and should be challenged to engage on disaster prevention and climate change adaptation.
- Creating partnerships with governments, advocating for civil society to be consulted (example of West Africa) and requesting governments to mobilize resources through CSOs.
- Challenge of managing community-based groups dynamic.
- DRR-related income generating activities (example in the Philippines).
- Importance of CSO capacity building in the absence of direct government funding.
- Forus support strategy to DRR-related activities implemented by national platforms.
- Further peer-sharing spaces on best practices in the Forus network.

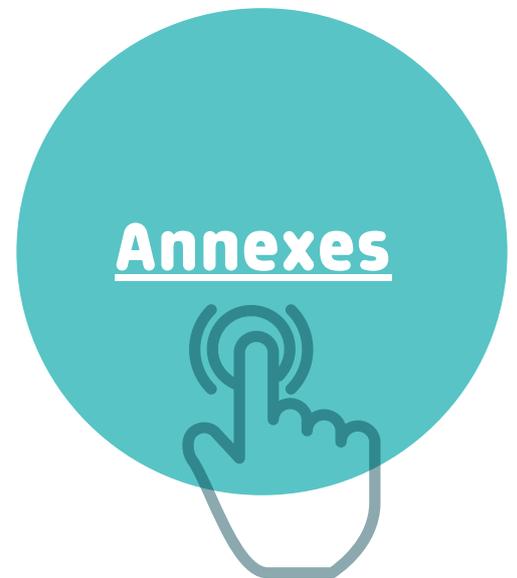


Perspectives of member-to-member and member-led DRR sharing and support mechanisms

Webinar participants were very positive about the rich content of the event, while stressing the need for more space for dialogue on Disaster Risk Reduction. Indeed, the webinar showed that Forus members have many common challenges in developing DRR-related actions. One of the main challenges highlighted is certainly the lack of resources and knowledge to work with the different actors and develop a sustainable approach on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Forus currently has no funding to help members implement DRR-related strategies or actions. It is therefore proposed to address this challenge collectively and collaboratively by supporting member-to-member and member-led DRR sharing and support mechanisms.

Thank you
Forus secretariat



Share your ideas on the future of DRR-related activities in the Forus network

