

# PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE

## 2011-2015

Community interventions and beyond



This publication is based on PfR reports, case studies and photos collected throughout the PfR programme period.

Text: Charlotte Floors

Design: Eszter Saródy

Editor: Alex Wynter

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**Community members in Rajnagar, Orissa, India where PfR has implemented its programme** / Raimond Duijsens – NLRC

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**Foreword Juriaan Lahr**

Disasters and development are at odds: disasters wipe out the development gains of individuals, households, communities and entire countries. At the same time development investments do not always take disaster risks into account, and may even increase them. The poorest and most vulnerable are hit hardest, as they are most exposed to hazards and least able to protect themselves.

Many hazards are becoming more frequent and less predictable as a result of climate change. Environmental degradation erodes nature's ability to regulate hazards and provide food and water. Hazards that turn into disasters, whether slow or sudden-onset, whether large or small, affect ever more people who are, as a result, trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, vulnerability and marginalization.

Integrating disaster risk management systematically in humanitarian assistance and development is economically essential. Disasters increase, and undermine and undo investments in poverty reduction. They strain budgets for relief and recovery; in the last ten years the number of people affected by crises has almost doubled and international humanitarian aid has tripled.

Partners for Resilience (PfR), a coalition of five humanitarian, development, climate and environmental organizations, promotes resilience as the key to reversing this trend. We combined

our experience and approaches and embarked on a joint drive to make communities better able to prevent, mitigate and respond to rising disaster risks.

Our unique approach to the strengthening of community resilience, developed with more than 60 local implementing partners, integrates climate change adaptation and ecosystem management and restoration into disaster risk reduction, which we call 'integrated risk management'. With it, we place local disaster risk in the context of changing risks across timescales and wider landscapes.

In this, the first large-scale programme of its kind, we have brought together our expertise in a truly holistic manner.

PfR is proud of its achievements over the past five years, reaching more than half a million people in nearly 600 communities in nine countries: Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Uganda.

We helped communities assess the risks they face and implement risk-reduction measures. They protected, strengthened and adapted their livelihoods, and are now better able to ward off and deal with disaster risks.

Our partner organizations applied the integrated approach to risk management in their work with communities and in their dialogue with peers and

government institutions, who now increasingly endorse the approach and provide support where possible. At the international level, we ensured that policies encourage community resilience and vice versa, and that our evidence gathered at the local level feeds into the development of policy.

Strong civil-society organizations like the ones operating within PfR play a central role in this; in the end, the local level is the point of both departure and arrival when assisting vulnerable people.

With 'resilience' increasingly recognized in international frameworks and policies as a key to achieving related goals, PfR's work has become relevant not only in the field of disaster risk reduction, but also of climate change, sustainable development and ecosystems management. The overlap between these frameworks and policies provides increasing opportunities to address disaster risks by strengthening community resilience, and reflects the bridging function that this approach brings to different domains.

This realization underlines the need for ongoing, targeted engagement with key stakeholders and decision-makers to ensure integrated risk management is incorporated in policies, investments and practices. We will continue to build on our results – stronger communities, effective networks, close collaboration with governments, intensive engagement in international forums – and expand our reach so our impact will endure.

## Introduction

Partners for Resilience (PfR) is a coalition of CARE Nederland, Cordaid, the Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC), the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, Wetlands International and their civil-society partners in the global South.

Sustainable development of families and communities depends on their ability to withstand shocks and secure their livelihoods. The poorest are most vulnerable to natural hazards, yet they often depend on nature for their livelihoods. While climate change has an effect on the frequency, intensity and predictability of hazards, the degradation of ecosystems increases vulnerability to them. Communities are trapped in another vicious circle, with little option but to make ever-greater demands on their environment, yet degraded ecosystems erode their coping capacities.

PfR foresees a future in which communities are aware of the risks they face, and are able to reduce and manage them to become more resilient in the face of climate change and environmental degradation.

PfR promotes four **BUILDING BLOCKS** for resilience: encouraging communities to *anticipate* the risks they face, *respond* when disaster strikes while maintaining basic structures and functions, *adapt* to changing risks and the inherent livelihood options, and finally *transform* risks by addressing root causes and be active partners with governments in implementing disaster risk reduction.

These building blocks apply on several **LEVELS**, from households and the communities they form to the landscape in which they are situated and with which they relate. At all levels, policy dialogue is important to create an enabling environment.

Our eight **PRINCIPLES** for what we need to do to move beyond business as usual are these: work on *different timescales* to ensure adaptive planning; recognize the broader *geographical scales* on which the drivers of vulnerability express themselves; strengthen *institutional resilience* to changes in disaster risk, climate and ecosystems; *integrate approaches* to analysing an environment that encompasses many different risks; promote *community self-management*, boosting empowerment and creating local ownership to put communities in the driving seat of development; *stimulate learning* by combining traditional knowledge with scientific assessments to understand climate trends and data; *focus on livelihoods*, the most important element affected by disasters, and with the natural dimension at centre stage; and finally *form partnerships* among communities, government agencies and civil society organizations, traversing different sectors.

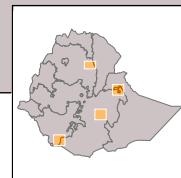
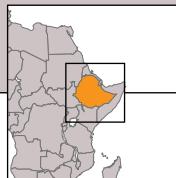
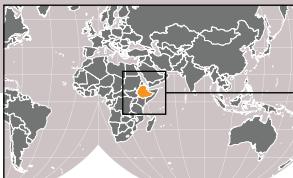
From 2011 to 2015, partners gained much practical experience in strengthening resilience. The alliance invested heavily in learning, and documented its experiences through writeshops, newsletters, websites and social media. Although this publication does not encompass all the many favourable results achieved and stories collected, it offers compelling snapshots from the nine target countries.

Partners for Resilience hope these stories will inspire practitioners to further mainstream, replicate and scale up the integrated management of risk to build communities' resilience and secure sustainable development.



**In Sunzapote in Guatemala's Zacapa district,  
a PfR staff member demonstrates a model  
of how communities in the district use ecological  
filters and re-use water** / Raimond Duijsens – NLRC

# ETHIOPIA



Locations:

**Nyangatom district in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region,**  
**Dewe district in Afar region, Ibynat district in Amhara region,**  
**Miyo, Areo and Gorogtu district in Oromiya region,**  
**Gurgura woreda in Dire Dawa region.**

Number of beneficiaries:

**106,000**

Main natural hazards:



Drought is the main hazard in project locations, threatening the food security of thousands of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists who need steady rains. In areas with high precipitation, flash floods can wash crops away.

## PfR interventions and results

- Disaster risk committees were formed and trained and play an important role in problem definition, action planning, implementation and monitoring. They also act as the collector and disseminator of early-warning information.
- Through their participation in savings and loan associations, pastoralist women were empowered to become more economically independent. Through savings, these women are able to deal with recurrent droughts, engage in additional economic activities, and keep their children in school. In other areas, women turned threats into opportunities by producing soap from aloe vera. Grass now grows better and women are empowered through additional income and social networking.
- Partners supported the rehabilitation of ecosystems through enclosures, range land management training, slope stabilization through terracing, and soil and water conservation measures. Communities noticed that already after two years, indigenous species, birds, bees, animals and spring water have come back.

Agro-pastoralists rehabilitated their environment to increase food security and reduce the risk of flash floods and erosion. By the end of 2014, nearly all of a planned 240 hectares of severely degraded environment had been rehabilitated through soil and water conservation, including nearly 500 km of hillside terraces, nearly 38,000 micro-basins, and 1.5m tree saplings from PfR-supported nurseries. Livestock and crop productivity improved and the ecosystem generated alternative livelihood options such as beekeeping.



**Women water plants intended for reforesting hillsides** / Fleur Monasso – RCCC

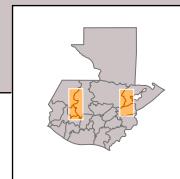
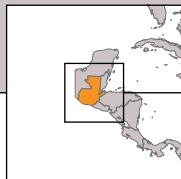
**Communities benefit from the construction of water infrastructure in Dire Dawa /**  
Charlotte Floors – NLRC



**“** During the dry season the whole family used to be displaced from our home in search of pasture for our livestock. Now that I earn a living, my children can attend school while my husband searches for pasture for our livestock. **”**

Pastoralist woman in Dwe district, Afar region

# GUATEMALA

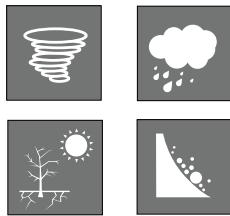


Locations:

**Departments of  
Chiquimula,  
El Estor,  
Sololá, Quiché  
and Zacapa.**

Number of beneficiaries:  
**16,000**

Main natural hazards:



The departments of Chiquimula and Zacapa are mainly affected by droughts while mountainous areas of Sololá and Quiché are prone to heavy rains, floods and landslides. Poverty and a lack of good public services make the local populations vulnerable to risks.

## PfR interventions and results

- PfR partners facilitated the mobilization and empowerment of local disaster risk reduction committees, which have been accredited by the government. Community members are now able to anticipate risks and respond promptly to emergencies.
- Communities and the environment benefit from technologies such as wood-saving stoves and eco-filters to reuse water in communities. Measures such as vegetable gardens ensure families have food security when floods prevent access to the community or when harvests fail due to prolonged drought.
- Increased dialogue and planning at municipal and national level between government authorities and civil society through climate change roundtables and an inter-institutional agenda, uniting government agencies and civil society actors to implement risk reduction measures.



**Gladys Adaly Leon,  
shows produce from her  
newly irrigated vegetable  
garden, helped by PfR  
ecological water filters /  
Claudia Zaldaña –  
PfR Pool of Trainers**

PfR in Guatemala concluded that building bridges between government agencies could promote holistic risk management. A formal "inter-institutional agenda" was agreed among different national governing entities in relation to climate, ecosystems and disasters, facilitating concrete actions in the field, such as the development and roll-out of educational modules on integrated risk management for more than 80 teachers in 2014. The agenda is unique in bringing together three government agencies at a national level to build community resilience.

**“** Children have received training and have even made risk maps. They are part of the child risk reduction committee and are trained to activate the early warning system in schools. **”**

Community member  
in Sololá department

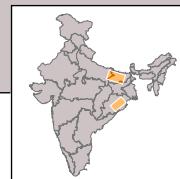
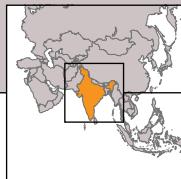


**Children receive tree saplings from a PfR supported nursery in El Estor to reforest a watershed recharge zone / Andres Galvez – Guatemalan Red Cross**



**Women in Chuiquisis,  
Santa Cruz del Quiché  
use fuel efficient cook  
stoves to ease pressure  
on the environment /  
Raimond Duijzens – NLRC**

# INDIA



Locations:

## Orissa and Bihar state

Number of beneficiaries:

**39,000**

Main natural hazards:



In the Mahanadi delta in Orissa and the Gandak Kosi flood plains in Bihar, livelihoods such as agricultural production are limited by factors such as frequent flooding and waterlogging, scarcity of water during summers and salinity in coastal areas, limiting agricultural productivity in the project area. Floods and cyclones are a constant threat to people's lives.

### PfR interventions and results

- At least 16,000 farmers in the project locations have been trained to improve their livelihoods, by introducing flood-resistant rice varieties, rehabilitating ponds, fish farming, and vegetable production. With water available for irrigation year-round and better knowledge of effective agricultural practices, communities witnessed a significant increase in yields.
- In order to promote preparedness for floods and cyclones, partners supported the construction of raised-plinth hand pumps and toilets. The measures were effective: during the flood and cyclone months, the hand pumps were the only source of clean drinking water and safe sanitation.
- In the Mahanadi delta, more than 160,000 mangrove saplings were planted in 75 acres of coastline as a natural buffer against disasters and erosion. In the Gandak-Kosi floodplain, afforestation was undertaken in 45 villages to address soil erosion and increase availability of non-timber forest produce.

**A woman in a coastal town in India's Mahanadi delta stands in front of a recently established protective tree plantation /**  
Astrid van den Berg – Cordaid



**A woman in the village  
of Rajnagar demonstrates  
a community-risk map  
compiled as part of the  
PfR programme there /**

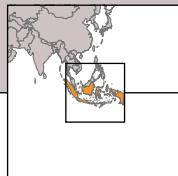
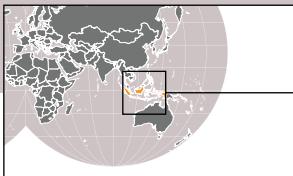
Raimond Duijsens – NLRC

The effectiveness of the community-managed risk reduction promoted by Partners for Resilience became clear during cyclone Hud Hud in 2014. PfR partners, in collaboration with district authorities in Ganjam and Puri, supported disaster response committees in disseminating early warning messages, stockpiling food, protecting important belongings and ensuring timely evacuation. The measures paid off; few casualties were reported. Communities whose crops were affected by the cyclone received assistance from agricultural centres.

**“** Trees were planted to strengthen the embankment. Now, it has withstood its first contact with water and is still rock solid. **”**

Success story on PfR  
Bihar blogspot

# INDONESIA



Locations:

**Nusa Tenggara Timur  
(NTT) provincial districts  
of Ende, Sikka, Kupang,  
Lembata and Timor  
Tengah Selatan; Banten  
provincial districts  
of Kota Serang, Kota  
Cilegon, Kabupaten  
Serang and Kabupaten  
Tangerang.**

Number of beneficiaries:  
**69,000**

Main natural hazards:



Communities in project locations are mainly fishermen and farmers, but the coastal waters and agricultural areas on which they depend are at high risk of degradation, rising sea levels, drought, floods, and general environmental degradation.

## PfR interventions and results

- Communities diversified and strengthened their livelihoods and food security through soil conservation measures, nurseries, pest control, organic fertilizers, crop rotation, crop storage and animal husbandry.
- Local partners have been working with the Department of Development Planning in the Sikka district of NTT province on catchment planning, and a model has been generated, engaging communities, civil society, local government and other stakeholders, in preparing an integrated ten-year plan.
- Communities in three watershed areas on Flores island were brought together to perform a disaster risk analysis, and enhance early warning early action along the river in cooperation with the meteorological office . A warning system was developed for communication between and within communities along the river to act promptly in case of floods.

In the villages on Timor island, landslides pose a substantial risk to the communities. Agriculture, the main livelihood of the community, is practised on steep slopes. Farming techniques used to decrease soil fertility and left communities along the slopes particularly vulnerable. To address this risk, community groups were trained to implement measures to protect slopes and increase soil fertility by mulching and water retention.



**Partners use sediment trapping for coastal protection in Talibura, Flores island /**  
WI Indonesia Programme – Eko Budi Priyanto

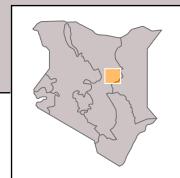
“ As a result of PfR I get forecasts by text from the meteorological institute that help me judge when to sow and what. ”

Community member in Nunsan, Kupang

**A community member in Maumere, Flores Island indicates how floods regularly affect the communities in the area / Raimond Duijsens – NLRC**



# KENYA



Location:

## Isiolo county

Number of beneficiaries:

**38,000**

Main natural hazards:



The Ewaso Nyiro river in north-east Kenya has been a lifeline, but it's shrinking rapidly because of prolonged drought and diversion of its waters. This has left communities already long-dependent on food aid very vulnerable. But PfR helped transform their situation through enhanced community organization and adoption of alternative livelihoods.

### PfR interventions and results

- Communities in the area changed their mindset from relief to self-reliance. It helped them to get organized, make action and contingency plans in case of a disaster or emergency, and get back to normality as quickly as possible.
- PfR supported the establishment of the Waso River Users Empowerment Platform (WRUEP), bringing together at least 40 civil-society groups from along the river. Through this platform, communities are now able to collectively voice their concerns to the authorities.
- In 2013 and 2014, PfR partners and WRUEP organized a "camel caravan" community trek along the Ewaso Nyiro river to raise awareness of the degraded ecosystem, climate change and the impact of a proposed dam, which will deprive downstream communities of water supplies.

Communities in Isiolo county, who have been long dependent on food aid, started fish-farming as an alternative livelihood. While initially reluctant, they are now convinced of the benefits. Already 40 households are able to meet their needs for food, clothing, medical care, school fees and shelter with the increased income.

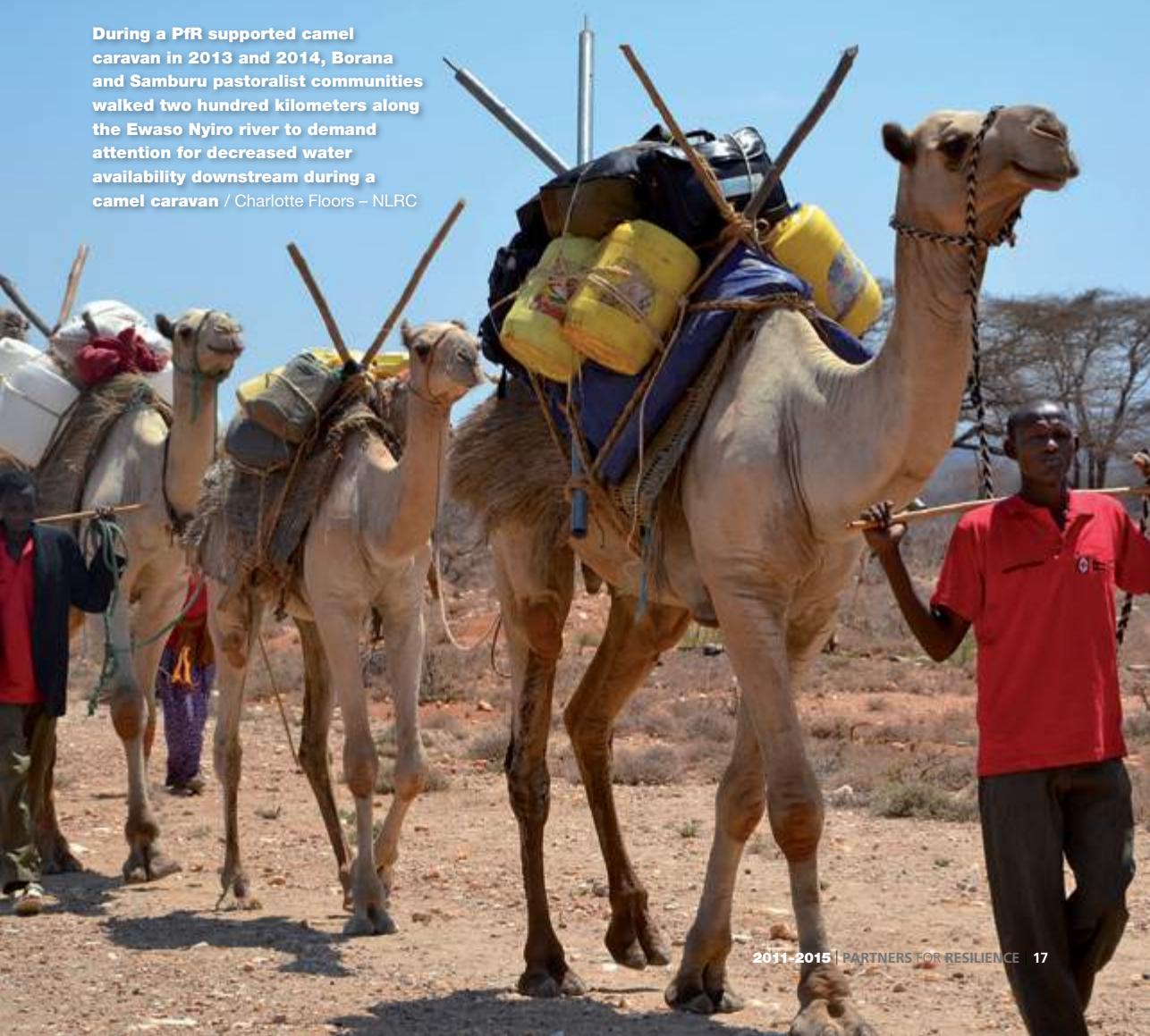
**“** Before we did not have the skills for proposal writing or financial management. Now we reach out to the county government and even take part in their meetings. So even when PfR ends, we can stay with the local community and with the county government. And they all know us. **”**

Executive committee member,  
Waso River Empowerment Platform

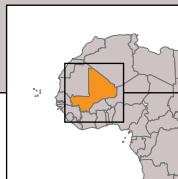


**A woman in Burat shows her plot of land with drought-resistant crops /**  
Charlotte Floors – NLRC

**During a PfR supported camel caravan in 2013 and 2014, Borana and Samburu pastoralist communities walked two hundred kilometers along the Ewaso Nyiro river to demand attention for decreased water availability downstream during a camel caravan /** Charlotte Floors – NLRC



# MALI



Locations:

**Borondougou, Konna,  
Deboye, Dailloube,  
Konna and Youwarou  
districts in Mopti region**

The Inner Niger Delta, a vast flood plain of about 30,000 square kilometres where PfR partners work, is one of Mali's most productive areas, but also one of the poorest. Communities live with the annual floods that make the land fertile and recurring droughts. Increasingly they are faced with climate extremes and upstream infrastructure development that affects their lives and livelihoods.

## PfR interventions and results

- At least 4,600 community members improved their livelihoods through restoration of degraded land and introducing drought-tolerant seeds and rain gauges to help farmers decide when to sow. Other communities followed when they saw how successful this was.
- The partners are helping villagers become more resilient to climate extremes by digging channels that take excess water to wetlands and ponds, fixing sand dunes, improving their use of water supplies, and constructing and stabilizing dykes.
- PfR helped communities develop contingency plans that were validated by municipal councils. These and other PfR activities have been taken up in local development plans by five rural districts in Mopti.

Number of beneficiaries:

**49,000**

Main natural hazards:



A community member of Simina in Konné, demonstrates a pluviometer. The meteorological office uses the rainfall data to improve its communication on rainfall patterns /  
Raimond Duijsens –| NLRC





**In Mali PfR supported the establishment of women groups. In Noga, in the Inner Niger Delta, the women collectively run vegetable gardens, providing them with a nutritional status of their families and adds to their income** / Raimond Duijsens – NLRC

Vegetable gardens are one very successful intervention in the Mali programme, especially important for women who traditionally do not own land. Almost every village involved in the project either has one or is interested in getting one. Women collectively work on plots and manage their finances. The vegetable gardens provide for families' food security and medicine especially; they give women new income, raising their status in their villages.

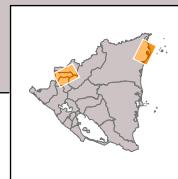
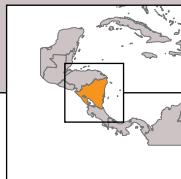
**“** We think climate change is a reality. We see it ourselves and we decided we should be prepared. **”**

Samba Touré, village leader



**Participatory video training in Mali /**  
Mamadou Marikou –  
Wetlands International

# NICARAGUA



Locations:

**Madriz department,  
Northern Caribbean Coast  
Autonomous Region**

Nicaragua is increasingly facing extremes in the form of hurricanes, rainfall and droughts, exacerbated by environmental degradation caused by deforestation and poor agricultural practices. In Madriz, precipitation trends indicate the likelihood of droughts at least once every three years, while the northern Caribbean coast is facing more frequent and intense floods and hurricanes.

Number of beneficiaries:  
**16.000**

Main natural hazards:



## PfR interventions and results

- Partners facilitated the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan, including the training of watershed management committees, in collaboration with municipalities and universities, to mitigate hazards such as droughts and floods in the Inalí and Tapacalí river basins.
- Through the strengthening of community risk-management committees, 28 communities now have the skills to respond to disasters and reduce their effects.
- Thirty-three community-level initiatives such as the protection of water recharge areas, agroforestry systems and backyard gardens improved communities' livelihoods and productivity.
- Partners supported the implementation of a regional climate strategy in the northern Caribbean coast by disseminating the strategy in all eight municipalities, and supporting pilot micro-projects in communities to adapt to climate change.



In collaboration with universities in Madriz and as part of a watershed management plan, academic courses were organized for 60 local professionals and decision-makers from governmental and non-governmental organizations, and 30 community leaders from the Tapacalí and Inálí watersheds. Through the diploma, community leaders gained insight into the risks they face and the actions they can take to protect water resources and forests, adapt their livelihoods to more irregular rains and increasing temperatures, and improve the safety and well-being of their communities.

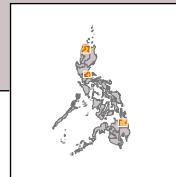
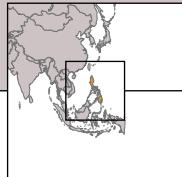
**“** We can see changing attitudes, a change in mind-set. The communities have changed, they are protecting their water sources, are reforesting and they are investing in alternative agriculture. **”**

Local official, Las Sabanas municipality, Madriz department

**A woman of El Castillito in Madriz shows the result of flower production, replacing strawberry production that is decreasing the forest cover and increasing the risk of landslides / Raimond Duijsens – NLRC**



# PHILIPPINES



Locations:

**Mountain Province, Benguet, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Norte provinces, Metro Manila (Malabon and Valenzuela).**

The Philippines are affected by a multitude of hazards such as typhoons, floods, droughts and landslides. Communities in the Cordilleras and Caraga regions mainly rely on agriculture and fishing, both highly susceptible to natural hazards such as droughts and floods. Environmental degradation and climate change are exacerbating the impacts. In Manila people have to deal with increasing floods, disrupting their lives for months.

Number of beneficiaries:  
**189,000**

Main natural hazards:



## PfR interventions and results

- Forty-four communities formed contingency, preparedness and risk reduction plans. Well-attended drills to test the effectiveness of the contingency plans in emergencies such as floods have been carried out successfully in schools and communities.
- Communities have strengthened and diversified their livelihoods through the production of coffee, fruit, peanuts, vegetables and trees for food and fuel. Partners also constructed floating gardens in flood-prone areas.
- Risks of landslide and erosion decreased through PfR-supported mitigation measures such as strengthening breakwaters and canals, reforestation of slopes and riverbanks, improving drainage canals, and building retaining walls.

**Philippine children use PfR-provided educational materials on disaster risk reduction in Mainit, Surigao del Norte** / Charlotte Floors – NLRC



**Floating gardens provide an alternative for communities living in the Agusan Marsh during times of flooding** / Charlotte Floors – NLRC

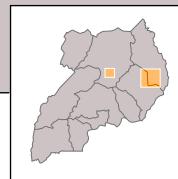
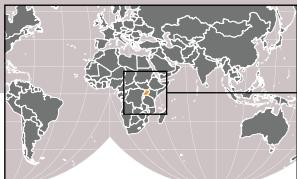


The Tullahan river crosses a number of barangays in northern Metro Manila, including PfR programme areas. A major cause of floods in these barangays is poor coordination among the barrages and dams along the river system, especially the La Mesa dam. Now PfR are working with other stakeholders to promote better coordination and transmission of flood warnings downstream, allowing for evacuation of people and safeguarding of property. These stakeholders include local officials, the Philippine Meteorological Department, and dam and barrage staff.

**“** PfR made people aware of how they can do more with what they already know. After PfR, it became systematic. Malanday was always relying on relief – PfR made us learn to be on our own. **”**

Malanday community member

# UGANDA



Locations:

**Amuria, Apac, Katakwi,  
Napak, Nakapiripirit  
and Otuken districts.**

Floods and drought are common in the project locations in Uganda. Farmers are increasingly faced by climate variability, making it hard for small-holder farmers to plan their seasons and for pastoralists to manage their animals. Ecosystem degradation is exacerbating the impacts of floods and droughts.

## PfR interventions and results

- Partners supported diversification of livelihoods, including seeds that resist drought and mature early, bee-keeping, vegetable production and goats for the most vulnerable households. In order to reverse ecosystem degradation by charcoal burning and bush burning, partners introduced measures such as energy-saving stoves and tree nurseries.
- Village savings and loan associations have been supported in 93 communities, providing households with a safety net during and after disasters. This enables communities, for example, to procure new seeds for planting, purchase food, and invest in alternative and sustainable livelihoods such as bee-keeping.
- PfR partners and communities have been actively involved in the development of policy that contributes to more sustainable use of the environment. By-laws have been developed on environmental conservation, charcoal burning, tree cutting, and wetlands utilization, and their implementation has been followed up with community and government departments.

Number of beneficiaries:

**69.000**

Main natural hazards:



**Women from a village loan association in a meeting /**  
Dennis Mwaka – CARE Uganda

**“** The 2013 harvest coincided with the birth of our new baby and we needed funds to clear the hospital bill. With my previous income, my wife and baby would have been detained at the hospital for failure to clear the medical bill. The cash from honey provided a way out for us. **”**

John Nangiro, bee-keeper,  
Napak district

PfR facilitated dissemination of climate information to communities, who had not been getting information or guidance on how to interpret it. Partners linked meteorological offices, district governments and communities and supported the construction of weather stations and climate information centres. It was the first time in the history of the district that information was shared in a timely and in accessible way, allowing communities to apply forecast information to enable early action.



**Community members in Otuke district benefit from trainings in beekeeping to diversify their income** / Bob Justin – ECO Uganda



