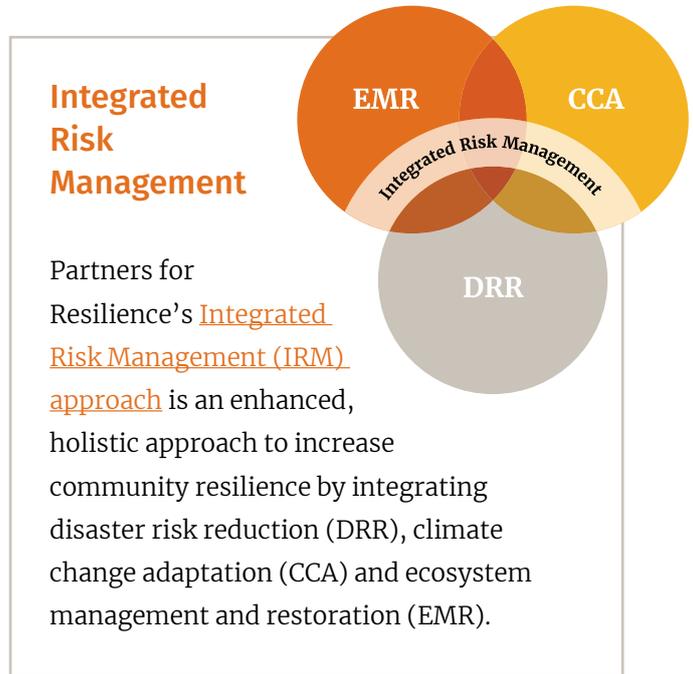


Partners for Resilience in Guatemala and Central America

For ten years, CARE has worked to strengthen community, civil society and government capacities to integrate gender, Disaster Risk Reduction, climate and ecosystems, to withstand shocks and sustain development.

- 2011–2015**
CARE and partner Asociación Vivamos Mejor worked on prevention of disasters and building resilience of communities through Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Committees, implementation of micro-projects for sustainable agriculture, clean cooking and diversification of income-generating activities.
- 2016–2020**
CARE focused on spreading the Integrated Risk Management (IRM) principles among civil society, government and universities in Guatemala and Central America. By reinforcing the lobby capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs), CARE linked IRM principles with women taking leadership roles.



CARE’s Partners for Resilience (Pfr) programme in Guatemala and Central America



816,380 community members covered by DRR, CCA, and EMR plans



7 CSOs and **155** individuals (75 women) with strengthened capacities on lobby and advocacy for IRM



1,503 community members trained and strengthened in their capacity to prepare for disasters



13 government entities and other relevant stakeholders trained in IRM



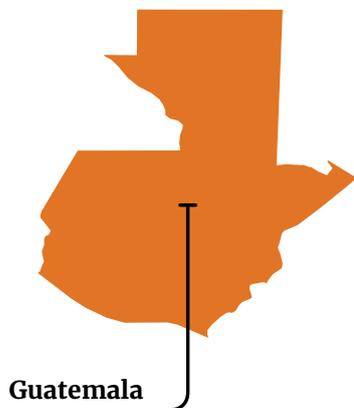
618 people trained and supported to rebuild better livelihoods and become more resilient



4 policies, guidelines and laws related to increased community resilience developed or adopted

Context

Guatemala is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual country with a population of 14.9 million, and is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events and climate change. Cycles of protracted droughts and sparse, yet torrential rains regularly batter the country, resulting in crop failure, the death of livestock and alarming levels of food insecurity. The country is highly exposed to multiple threats including severe storms, major earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, forest fires, as well as a loss of biodiversity, much of which has been exacerbated by climate change. According to the World Risk Report, Guatemala is the country in Latin America most vulnerable to natural hazards. Considering these risks, a consortium of CARE, Cordaid, The Netherlands Red Cross, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and Wetlands International implemented the [Partners for Resilience](#) for ten years, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This publication outlines CARE's main achievements.



Main achievements

Disaster Risk Reduction and Ecosystem Management

Disasters are becoming more frequent and less predictable due to climate change and environmental degradation, trapping people in a vicious circle of poverty, risk and vulnerability. Training sessions by CARE and Asociación Vivamos Mejor led to the creation of DRR Committees and plans.

- CARE trained communities to assess their existing hazards and response capacities through CARE's [Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis \(CVCA\)](#), promoting a participatory process which incorporated women's voice in decisions and raised awareness on risks for women and youth.
- Communities created DRR Committees ([COLRED](#)) that developed DRR plans, evacuation routes, and communication channels with responsible authorities to cover 816,380 community members. The plans encompassed drills, strategies based on recurrence and magnitude of disasters, and the construction of infrastructure such as rainwater infiltration channels.
- CARE and partner CSOs trained indigenous communities Nahualá y Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, which improved their preparedness for extreme weather events by installing meteorological stations and using satellite software.

CARE's gender focus

CARE strengthened authorities and partner CSOs to integrate gender based IRM principles. Using [CARE's gender equality framework](#), mainstreaming gender equality in IRM enabled CSOs Madre Tierra and RECMURIC to [accompany women in influencing the agenda](#) of decision-making institutions. CARE also contributed to [a five-year monitoring and evaluation system for the gender equality policy](#) of the national Disaster Reduction agency CONRED, which now includes minimum thresholds such as a gender approach in 80% of DRR coordination groups.



Climate Change Adaptation

In Guatemala, climate change increasingly threatens food security and water availability. CARE and Asociación Vivamos Mejor promoted community-based adaptation through micro-projects, and learning centres for community members. CARE trained 618 community members to rebuild better livelihoods when confronted with acute weather conditions.

- CARE assisted 10 communities in five departments in designing and implementing [30 micro-projects to strengthen community resilience](#): fuel-efficient cookstoves and reforestation strategies to reduce the impact of climate change; beekeeping to diversify income-generating activities; and multi-purpose nurseries and school gardens to disseminate climate-resilient agricultural practices.
- CARE assisted national and local governments to provide learning opportunities on the harmful impacts of climate change through 36 Learning Centres for Rural Development. These were set up in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, which also provided technical assistance. The Learning Centres helped identify tailored measures for climate change adaptation of land, infrastructures and people, by prioritising the leadership and participation of women and girls.

Strengthening capacity of civil society and government

Civil society influence in DRR-related legislation and decision-making at national and municipal levels was generally limited. To improve this, CARE trained and supported CSOs on advocacy and IRM.

- CARE strengthened capacities of CSOs to participate in decision-making on IRM at all levels, including Municipal and Community Councils for Urban and Rural Development (COMUDES and CODEDES). This was complemented by assisting governments to become more open to CSO participation.
- With the Ministry of Education, [CARE equipped schools](#) with IRM [Educational Modules](#), to develop climate resilience of Guatemalan children and youth. The modules have become a reference for the regional Central American agency for Disaster Prevention, CEPREDENAC.
- CARE supported the establishment of the [Inter-University Platform \(InterU-GRD\)](#) of 12 Guatemalan universities. This led to the introduction of PfR's integrated approach to disaster risk into the academic syllabus.
- CARE advised the Corporate Social Responsibility platform CentraRSE, formed by 125 companies, on business strategies following IRM principles. With the Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming (SEGEPLAN), CARE involved companies Cementos Progreso and FUNDAZUCAR in territorial planning, resulting in local adaptation projects financed by these companies.

Raquel Vásquez' story of resilience

Raquel Vásquez knows there is an innate connection between the Earth and women: “They both feed the world. They both give life.” Raquel leads the grassroots organisation Madre Tierra in Guatemala. Over the last 24 years, Madre Tierra has been a safe space for Raquel to become an independent woman, interact with civil society and local and national authorities, and advocate for women’s empowerment.

CARE’s Partners for Resilience programme supported Madre Tierra by sharing knowledge about the consequences of climate change and how to adapt. Women and girls are more likely to suffer when the land, forest and water resources on which their livelihoods depend are heavily impacted. In Raquel’s community, climate change was first felt in the form of water scarcity. For Raquel, one thing is clear: without women, there will be no solutions. “Considering that the destruction of the Earth is caused by human beings, the solution is in our hands.”

Influencing laws and policies

In Guatemala, authorities did no proper consultation with local actors on policies that refer to IRM, resilience or sustainable development. CARE changed this situation by creating the conditions for CSOs to work together with 13 government entities and other relevant stakeholders.

- CARE facilitated the creation of the [Interagency Strategic Agenda \(ISA\)](#). The ISA is a space for dialogue for different government entities to articulate public policies, strengthen capacities and mobilise resources on risk reduction. With Disaster Risk Management (DRM) agency CONRED, CARE also introduced the ISA at territorial level, bringing in the private sector, civil society and academia. The regional Coordination Centre for Disaster Prevention in Central America CEPREDENAC has recognised the ISA as a model for intergovernmental dialogue to address the IRM approach in Central America.
- The Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming (SEGEPLAN) updated the [Guidelines for the Preparation of Municipal Development and Land-Use Plans](#) in Guatemala, with CARE and partners providing input and technical assistance on the IRM approach. By 2020, the new guidelines were rolled out in 257 out of 360 municipalities, with growing adoption of IRM actions by local governments.
- CARE participated in developing the national [Methodological Guide for Risk Management, Vulnerability Reduction and Improvement of Climate Change Capacity](#). National institutions are now making use of this for risk management in sectors of Health, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Biodiversity and Protected Areas and the Coastal Marine Zone, approved by the National Council of Climate Change of Guatemala.

Sustaining the PFR programme

CARE and partners worked with key institutions such as the Ministry of Education, the Presidential Secretariat for Planning SEGEPLAN, the national DRM agency CONRED, to embed IRM in tools used by the government. CARE strengthened the capacity of CSO partners including Asociación Vivamos Mejor, Madre Tierra, TECHO and the regional platform CRGR to continue engaging on IRM. The creation of the Inter-University Platform InterU-GRD ensures integration of IRM into higher education.

Lessons & recommendations

- Of all interventions, communities rated the disaster preparedness training as most important. Even taking into account the direct benefits from micro-projects, communities considered the training to provide more lasting benefits when disasters struck.
- A multi-stakeholder approach involving government, CSOs and academia in developing and promoting PFR tools and products was key to accomplish long-term results – with key materials and tools being used to date.
- A common inter-agency agenda with explicit targets, defined with government actors, guaranteed implementation of actions. This framework proved valuable at national and local levels, enabling exchange of specialised knowledge and an integrated approach.
- Support from local authorities was fundamental to address technical topics with communities. This support facilitated the integration of IRM in planning and interventions, and increased access and commitment of communities.
- The private sector can play a key role in the approval of IRM-related policies and laws. Private sector involvement in training processes and platforms such as CentraRSE, has shown to influence decision-making. Companies' positions and interests should be considered in planning on territorial ordering and land use.

Key publications & tools

- [Methodological Guides for Risk Management, Vulnerability Reduction and Improvement of Climate Change Capacity](#) (ES) – guidelines to assess and reduce risks and strengthen adaptation to climate change in agriculture, biodiversity, infrastructure, coastal zones and health.
- [Educational Modules for communities on CCA, EMR, DRR, resilience](#) (UK, ES) – guide and activities to help children and youth reflect and reinforce their knowledge on resilience.
- [Igualdad Casa Adentro. Strategic Political Framework for CARE's Gender Equality Programme and its Toolbox](#) (ES) – a set of tools and methodologies to understand the role of gender in various areas including DRR and CCA.
- [Methodological guide for the elaboration of the Municipal Development and Territorial Land Use Plan](#) (ES) – IRM-sensitive guidelines for local development planning.

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PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE
Working together on disasters, climate, ecosystems