

DRM FOCUS DAYS

Africa, Caribbean, Pacific- European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program



DRMFOCUSDAYS
28-30 September 2021



GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

ACP - EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program
Programme ACP - UE de Prévention des Risques liés aux Catastrophes Naturelles

388
registered
participants

Photo: Abidjan, Ivory Coast,
2019—Understanding Risk (UR)
West and Central Africa, drone
demonstration.

Background

[The Africa, Caribbean, Pacific-European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction \(ACP-EU NDRR\) Program](#), which was launched in October 2011, is an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the World Bank through the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Focus Days¹ are an established event series under the ACP-EU NDRR Program and co-hosted by the OACPS Secretariat, the EU and GFDRR.

To celebrate over ten years of implementation, the third edition of DRM Focus Days brought together beneficiaries and stakeholders from ACP countries, counterparts from the EU, the OACPS, and development partners, as well as from GFDRR/World Bank. The objectives were to:

- Present the overall outcomes and results of the ACP-EU NDRR Program.
- Share operational experiences across the three regions.
- Disseminate main lessons learned from the implementation of its 149 projects.
- Take stock of the progress made by four



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African regional economic communities: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development

Community (SADC), and how these RECs have strengthened their coordination capacity and advanced their respective regional DRM agendas, while learning about similar progress from the Caribbean and Pacific regional organizations.



Data collected through Open Cities Africa use the OpenStreetMap platform and a collaborative approach that provides technical and institutional advantages.

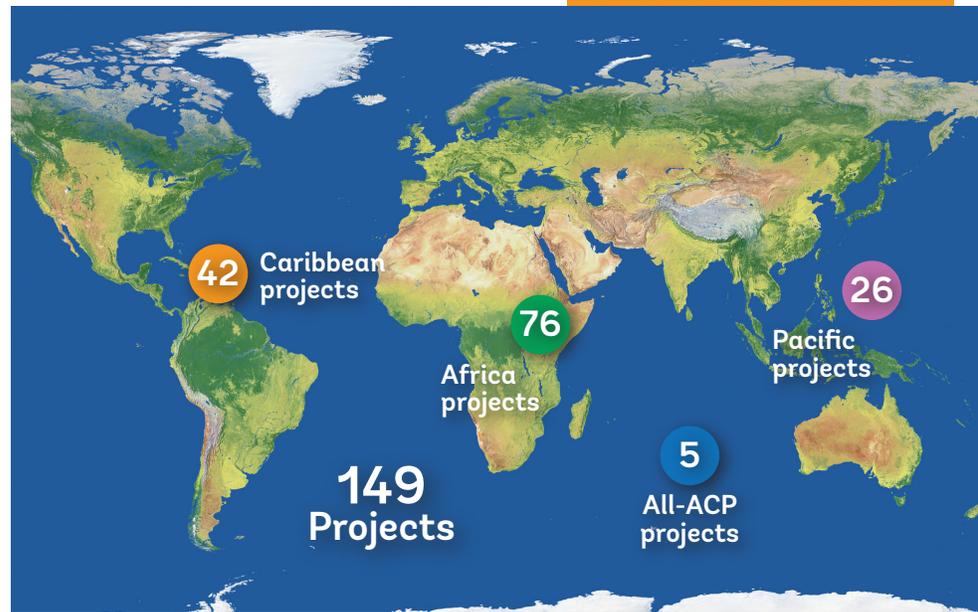
Photos: © iLab Liberia (top), © ACAGER (right)



The DRM Focus Days consisted of **three half-days** from 28-30 September 2021, and showcased **14 sessions**, including opening and closing plenaries, 5 technical talk sessions and 7 community sessions. The various sessions were attended by a total of **388 participants**. The event was fully virtual and supported through an online platform where all session recordings can still be freely accessed until December 2021 included: <https://www.drmmfocusdays.com/>, and from January 2022 on the program website at <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/publication/acp-eu-ndrr-focus-days-september-2021>.

The ACP-EU NDRR Program stems from a solid partnership. The [opening plenary](#) was an opportunity for **Ms. Cristelle Pratt**, Assistant Secretary General in charge of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate at the Secretariat of the OACPS, **Ms. Carla Montesi**, Director for Green Deal and Digital Agenda within the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), and **Mr. Sameh Wahba**, Global Director for Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land at the World Bank to remind the audience of the important partnership among their respective organizations, which was crucial for the successful implementation of the ACP-EU NDRR Program.

One of the ACP-EU Program's successes has been the emergence of a significant paradigm shift in ACP countries from managing and responding to disasters to proactive preparation and prevention by integrating DRM and climate change adaptation (CCA) into national development agendas. The [technical talk on the highlights of results of the Program](#) outlined some of its key achievements, including the support to **over 70 ACP countries** to reduce the impacts of natural hazards, the training of over **36,100 people** on DRM and post-disaster assessments through over **860 training events**, and the development of over **550 DRM knowledge**



products. Importantly, technical assistance provided through the Program contributed to **mobilizing over \$4 billion** in additional investments from the World Bank and other international partners. These results supported the Program's overall objective of integrating resilience to disasters and climate change into policy and development planning, and encouraging countries to adopt a holistic, multisectoral approach to DRM. The session also showcased a video production which highlighted the Program's achievements and interviewed representatives from the OACPS, EU, GFDRR, and national DRM experts on its beneficial impacts. This video can be viewed [here](#).

At the regional level, the Program has been a driving force to enhance cooperation on DRM and CCA. A specific session provided an [overview of the results achieved through sub-regional organizations](#) by four African regional economic communities (ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC), as well as in the Caribbean through the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and in the Pacific through the Pacific Community (SPC). Representatives from each region shared their experiences and takeaways from the Program, such as improved coordination and partnerships

Figure: ACP-EU NDRR projects across 3 regions.

The ACP-EU NDRR Program in a nutshell

2011-2021
10+ years
of implementation

70+
ACP countries
supported

DRM Partners
UNDP, IFRC, IOM,
UNICEF, Oxfam,
World Vision

Mobilizing of over
\$4 billion



Photos (clockwise top to bottom) Still from the "Disaster Fighters" music video. Source: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency; Haitian musical artist Tafa Mi Soleil (born Evenie Rose Thafa Ina Saint Louis) is one of the contributors to the "Disaster Fighters" video. Source: [Disaster Risk Management Focus Days](#); Port Vila, Vanuatu, 2018; Understanding Risk Finance Pacific representatives sharing their experiences. .

between international organizations, governments, civil society, the private sector, and academia, and reiterated the importance of placing local expertise and considerations at the forefront of resilience planning.

Supporting countries on hydrometeorological (hydromet) services and early warning systems has been key to developing a proactive approach to emergency response. Through a session on [hydromet services and early warning](#)

[systems](#), concrete examples were provided on how the Program supported countries to tackle more extreme and more frequently occurring weather and climate events, especially in **countries in the Eastern, Western, Central, and Southern sub-regions of Africa**. Another session focused on similar efforts that the Program prompted [in the Pacific region](#), particularly in **Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu**. This session also touched upon the EU's upcoming priorities in the Pacific on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The Program has carried out regional, national, and local activities to strengthen coastal resilience in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific with significant successes.

A session therefore provided a reflection on some of these initiatives, with [a specific lens on the coastal resilience aspects of the Program](#). It specifically focused on representative successes in Africa as one of the regions with the largest coastal growth globally and that is facing substantial challenges, with examples from **Senegal, The Gambia and The Seychelles**.

The Program's focus on emergency preparedness and post-disaster activities has been critical to assisting ACP countries in tackling the effects of natural hazards.



This materialized with the development of **28 post-disaster assessments** led by national governments and supported by the Program in coordination with the EU and UN partners in most cases, and the **training of thousands of government officials** across the three regions on post-disaster needs assessment and disaster recovery frameworks. During the Focus Days, this was showcased during the session on [country experiences with disaster impact evaluations and resilient recovery planning](#), which shared examples from across Sub-Saharan Africa, including **South Sudan** and the **Gambia**. The Program also adapted to the evolution in the way governments handle post-disaster response, which was highlighted in the session on [preparedness and response and government continuity](#), touching upon what governments need to do to operationalize emergency services and ensure continuity of decision-making, communications, and supply chains.

The ACP-EU NDRR Program has been an enabler of innovative activities and

initiatives. Technological advances have provided an opportunity to tackle different aspects of DRM, and the Program has continued to foster activities that promote the **use of innovative technologies** to help regional, national and local stakeholders overcome challenges posed by climate change and disaster risks. During the Focus Days, the use of disruptive technologies for DRM was highlighted in a two-part session (here are the respective links to the [first](#) and [second](#) sessions), with specific examples from **Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania** and the **Pacific region**. These two sessions showcased how the Program enabled community-based mapping, the collection and use of open information and data for urban resilience and the use of drones through its activities.

Another stream of activities supported by the Program focused on enabling stakeholders across ACP regions to improve risk communication. During the technical talk entitled [Music, Sports and Crypto - Actionable Communication!](#), the

Community mapping, Open Cities Africa (left). Teacher and students in Zanzibar, Tanzania (right).
Photo: zeljkosantrac.

The ACP-EU NDRR Program in a nutshell

36,100+
people trained
860+
training events

550+
knowledge products

28
post-disaster assessments

audience discovered how risk messaging is not usually effective and needs to rely on more **effective storytelling and messengers**. This session focused on how DRM practitioners can better understand that risk perception is above all a psychological reaction, and that emotions drive decision-making and actions, and thus have an influence on making rational versus irrational decisions. By highlighting positive emotions such as those on display in the [Disaster Fighters video](#)², an initiative that was supported by the Program, stakeholders can perceive themselves as having more positive outcomes. Another session entitled [Regional Data Platform to Support Disaster Risk Management](#) focused on how the Program helped Caribbean countries improve disaster risk information, especially through the launch of the new Geospatial Caribbean Risk information System (Geo-CRIS)³ managed by the CDEMA, which ensures that Caribbean countries have access to data on DRM.

The ACP-EU NDRR Program has also implemented disaster risk financing activities. Over the years, the Program has supported ACP countries facing increased fiscal pressure in funding adequate disaster preparedness, resilience, and response, helping these countries strengthen their financial resilience to natural hazards. This was showcased during the Focus Days through the technical talk entitled [Hurricane Hurry - the Game for Building Consensus around Caribbean DRF Strategies](#). Through an intensely interactive game, the audience was confronted with the first-hand individual and collective challenges of balancing investments in disaster risk management and financing.



It is fundamental to continue investing in DRM, DRR and CCA. In the [closing plenary](#), **Ms. Cristelle Pratt**, **Mr. Jose Carlos Edo Monfort**, Program Manager at the EU's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, and **Mr. Sameh Wahba** reflected on the achievements of the Program showcased throughout the Focus Days, and looked towards the future. It was reiterated that sustained investments are essential to continue to respond to complex and overlapping emergencies, and to protect the most risk-exposed and vulnerable communities as effectively as possible. The OACPS, EU and World Bank/GFDRR reiterated their commitment to continue mainstreaming DRM into all levels and areas of development planning and to support partner countries to assess exposures to hazards, and to promote comprehensive, multi-sectoral approaches to addressing disaster risks.

Photo: 2019, UR Caribbean Conference, Barbados.

Endnotes

- 1 More information about the first Focus Day can be found at <https://bit.ly/2YxbpgJ> and the second Focus Day at <https://bit.ly/3leciFM>.
- 2 More information on this initiative can be found at <http://www.disaster-fighters.org/>.
- 3 The CRIS platform can be accessed at <https://geocris2.cdema.org/>.



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