



Community of Practice Charter
SOUTHERN AFRICA SOCIETY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION
(SASDiR)

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Name

The name of this community of practice will be the **Southern African Society for Disaster Reduction** and will be known by the acronym: “**SASDiR**”.

Legal status

SASDiR is currently a network of like minded individuals and groups with no legal status in any SADC country.

Aim of SASDiR

The aim of SASDiR is to bring together interested parties working in the field of disaster risk reduction and related fields within the SADC region. SASDiR aims to become a network of networks which can facilitate learning, teaching, research and mentoring in and between civil society actors, governments and institutions of research and higher learning.

Objectives

The objectives of SASDiR are to:

- be a community of practice for disaster risk reduction within the SADC region;
- facilitate the interaction between disaster risk reduction role-players (individuals and institutions) in civil society, governments and institutions of higher learning and research through establishing mechanisms for internships, mentoring and sharing of expertise;
- build on the current disaster risk reduction body of knowledge for the SADC region and beyond;
- enable and empower its members towards disaster risk reduction;
- be an information sharing hub for information relating to disaster risk reduction in the SADC region through our website, publications, think tanks, seminars, colloquiums; workshops and conferences;
- share innovative disaster risk reduction practices and research amongst its members;
- contribute to standardisation of practices and baseline information on disaster risk reduction for the region;
- contribute to the formulation and strengthening of national and regional disaster risk management policies;
- design curriculum and influence policies that integrate disaster risk reduction into the formal and non-formal education system in the region.;

- assist in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction training programmes that enable action competency for improved disaster risk management practices;
- conduct research to document experiences and guide policy development and implementation of disaster risk reduction; and
- provide a platform for sharing disaster risk reduction experiences in the region.

Overview of the society

The field of disaster risk reduction has been growing exponentially world-wide in the last 20 years. Within the SADC context a number of civil society organisations, academic and research institutions and national governments have taken initiatives in making disaster risk reduction a policy priority. Since the declaration of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the Africa Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Plan of Action (ARDDRP), a number of national disaster risk reduction platforms have been established and some inter-state coordination has been taking place facilitated by the SADC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit. Yet, very little formal intra-regional linkages and cooperation exist within the SADC region which includes non-traditional and non-state actors.

The field of disaster risk reduction covers many disciplines and many professional constituencies. It is very difficult to impossible to link only one career path to disaster risk reduction. This society believes that we as Africans have the skills, knowledge and competencies to take ownership of our shared disaster risk profile and have the know how for finding workable African centred solutions to our pressing disaster risk issues. We believe that we have a wealth of disaster risk reduction knowledge in the region which is exponentially growing and which can be shared where there is a need.

The society therefore is open for any individual, organisation or government department that identifies themselves with disaster risk reduction, the HFA and the ARDDRP, and contributes to lessening the impacts of hazards on vulnerable conditions within SADC communities, which could lead to disasters.

The society recognises the fact that disaster risk reduction intervention are effective if the vulnerable affected communities play the centre role in planning and implementation. We believe that among other causes, vulnerability is exacerbated by poor policy implementation by local governments and civil society organisations which do not favour the vulnerable.

Our Value Base

In our work with communities at risk we:

- Acknowledge that the safety and protection of people, their livelihoods and the environments on which they depend are the most important;
- Believe that disaster risk reduction can eradicate the need for disaster response;
- Are committed towards achieving the objectives of the HFA and ARDDRP, within the context of our various countries;
- Strive towards inculcating a culture of safety and risk avoidance within local constraints;
- Are mindful of the fact that local (and indigenous) and scientific knowledge are equally important in finding disaster reduction solutions;
- Are mindful of traditional protocols and channels that need to be followed in order to conduct training and research in communities;
- Respect each discipline and professional sector working towards disaster risk reduction;
- Honour our commitment to our respective disciplines and professional codes;
- Acknowledge that disaster risk is a social phenomena which is gender and class based;
- Become the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalised; and
- Realise that effective disaster risk reduction interventions should aim at reducing vulnerability among the poor.

Benefits from Working as a Community of Practice

SASDiR will raise the awareness of disaster risk reduction within the SADC region by:

- Using the society as a resource for information, advice and networking;
- Linking work and practice to evidence base;
- Accessing practice based evidence;
- Using every opportunity to access and involve a wider audience and engage with and hear a wide range and variety of opinions on disaster risk reduction;
- Networking to help disaster reduction colleagues feel empowered and supported;
- Linking, as far as possible, all members' work on disaster risk reduction in the SADC region through our website (www.sasdir.org);
- Providing joint research ventures between all members to address crucial disaster risk reduction questions arising in the region;

- Providing opportunities for exchange between different members to facilitate learning and career growth;
- Sharing our work, which will prevent duplication, encourage reuse and ensure lessons learned are understood and shared;
- Seeking agreement, consensus, consistency of approaches and endorsement of practice change and development;
- Building on the existing disaster risk reduction body of knowledge for SADC;
- Helping one another solve disaster related problems;
- Keeping up with change and innovations in the field of disaster risk reduction; and
- Finding a common voice and gain influence in disaster risk reduction in the SADC region.

Benefits to the individual and organisations

Through the sharing, creation and management of knowledge around disaster risk reduction issues, the society enables individuals to:

- Continue learning and developing professionally;
- Access expertise;
- Improve communication with peers;
- Increase productivity and quality of work;
- Network to keep current in the field;
- Develop a sense of professional identity;
- Inculcate a culture of accountability;
- Enhance professional reputation;
- Broaden the global knowledge base of disaster risk reduction;
- Create a data base of disaster risk reduction role-player and best practices in the region; and
- Raise the profile of institutions beyond national boundaries.

The society benefits organisations by:

- Reducing time/cost to retrieve information;
- Reducing learning curves;
- Improving knowledge sharing and distribution;
- Enhancing coordination, standardisation, and synergies across organisational units;

- Reducing rework and reinvention;
- Enabling innovation;
- Benchmarking against influencing standards;
- Building alliances; and
- Creating a database as a hub of disaster risk reduction.

Ground rules for being a member

- Members are willing to share challenges, and lessons learned as well as successes.
- Members strive to create an environment of trust and to foster insightful, non-threatening discussion of ideas and experiences.
- Members distribute leadership responsibilities and collectively share in the management of the society.
- Membership and topics reflect disaster risk reduction issues and organisations.
- Members advance their personal and professional goals through participation in the society.
- Members are practitioners, academics, researchers and civil society contributing to the society through their experiences, skills, and time.
- Members agree to be respectful and use appropriate language in group discussions and to listen and respond to each other with open and constructive minds.
- Members will not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks - focus on ideas.
- Members will participate to the fullest extent possible - society growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Members commit to search for opportunities for consensus or compromise and for creative solutions.
- Members will contribute to an atmosphere of problem solving rather than stating positions.
- Members agree to speak from their own experiences instead of generalising ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Members will attempt to build on each member's strengths, and help each other improve areas in need of further development in the field of disaster risk reduction.
- Members will be free to leave the society after giving notice.

- All members undertake to abide by the regulations of this charter

Membership types

- Individual membership
 - Members (professionals)
 - Students/community
- Organisation membership
 - International/regional organisations
 - Government
 - Civil society (including academia)
- Corporate: Private sector companies and sponsors/supporters

Assumptions

The following assumptions were taken into consideration in the development of this society. If any of these assumptions prove to be invalid then the society could face a possible risk.

- There is an interest among individuals and organisations working in disaster risk reduction in forming informal and formal connections.
- There will be members who take increasing responsibility for stewarding the success of the society.
- Sponsors will support the time investment for their staff to participate in the society.
- That by bringing different sectors involved in DRM training, research and practice together we could help bridge skill and human resources gaps at different levels within SADC

Constraints

The following constraints were taken into consideration in the development of this society.

- The availability of members to participate collectively at a single unique time may limit the number of participants.
- Possible legislative and bureaucratic arrangements.
- Access to financial resources for operations of the society.

Management of the Society

- The founding members of the society will be the **council** of SASDiR. They include:
 - University of Namibia (Multi-disciplinary Research Centre) - Namibia
 - Mulungushi University (Disaster Management Training Centre) - Zambia
 - North-West University (African Centre for Disaster Studies) - South Africa
 - Christian International (NGO) - Swaziland
 - MetroGIS (private GIS company working on DRR) - South Africa
 - Lund University (Lund University Centre for Risk Analysis and Management) - Sweden
 - Environmental Care Lesotho Association (NGO) - Lesotho
 - Technical University of Mozambique - Mozambique
 - Mzuzu University - Malawi
 - Sustainable Rural Growth and Development Initiative (NGO) - Malawi
 - Jasiri CC (private sector) - South Africa
 - Robbie Musakuzi (private consultant in disaster risk reduction and PhD student) - Zambia
 - Prof. Coleen Vogel (private consultant in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation) - South Africa
 - Wilfred Lunga (private consultant in disaster risk reduction and PhD student) - Zimbabwe
 - Mr. Mmaphaka Tau (disaster risk reduction professional and PhD student) - South Africa
 - Action 24 - Zimbabwe
 - National University of Science and Technology (Institute of Development Studies) - Zimbabwe
 - Botswana Red Cross Society - Botswana
- The council comprises of the following portfolios:
 1. Governance, Finance and Sponsorship
 2. Knowledge and Information
 - a. Research
 - b. Advocacy
 - c. Jàmbá: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies
 3. Networks and Communication
 - a. Website
 4. Programmes and Projects
 5. Capacity Development
 - a. Training
 - b. Mentorships
 - c. Internships
- The society will be managed by a **facilitator** elected by the council.
- The council will elect an **assistant facilitator**.

- The elected coordinator of each portfolio becomes a de facto member of the executive committee.
- The institution/organisation of the facilitator must be able act as the *secretariat* of the society until end of 2014.

Duties of the facilitator and assistant facilitator (2012-2014)

The duties of the facilitator and assistant facilitator are to:

- Draft a work plan for the first two-years of the society;
- Implement the work plan through cooperation of portfolio holders;
- Coordinate the duties of the portfolio holders.
- Perform administrative duties including coordination among members of the council and the region.

Duties of the council

The duties of the council is to:

- Provide overall guidance on the focus and duties of the society;
- Annually review the charter of the Society;
- Market the society in their respective countries to encourage membership;
- Assist in the planning and organisation of the biennial conference; and
- Act as the coordination office in member countries

Resources of the society

- Jàmbá: Journal for Disaster Risk Studies
- Biennial conference
- Professional body documents
- Position papers
- Guidelines /standards
- Website (www.sasdir.org)
- Colleagues
- Communities at risk
- HFA, ARDRRS, national policies and legislation
- Existing education and training programmes in the region
- Literature – books and journals
- Existing disaster risk reduction networks