

SDC, CC&E and DRR Networks

Mainstreaming Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction – How to walk the talk?

Swiss thematic event of the CC&E and DRR networks of SDC

Key messages from 12th September 2017



1. Background

For many years now, development cooperation actors have been struggling on how to best integrate climate change, environmental issues and disaster risk reduction into their planning and operations. Many mainstreaming toolkits, guidelines and manuals have been developed by various agencies - including SDC. But what are the results and impacts of all these so-called 'mainstreaming' efforts? What is required to make sure that the term 'mainstreaming' doesn't remain just a buzzword? The thematic event of SDC's CC&E and DRR networks took place on September 12th 2017 at the University of Fribourg and aimed to shed light into such challenging questions and explore possible answers or pathways to better 'walk the talk'. The presentations can be found on the websites of the CC&E Network (<https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Climate-Change-and-Environment/network-services/events>) and the [DRR Network](#).

2. Key messages and learnings

2.1. Actors' perspective on mainstreaming CC, E & DRR

Challenges for mainstreaming in different institutions

- **Mainstreaming as a pro forma exercise:** Especially in the context of development cooperation, action does not only come from the top down (governments) but also and especially from bottom up, through the pure need for action and awareness. Imposing mainstreaming of CC, E and DRR through a top down mechanism bears the danger to reduce the task to 'ticking the box' and just tagging certain interventions without proper integration.
- **Overdelegation:** There is a danger of dilution and loss of importance, if responsibilities are delegated to too many persons.
- **Mainstreaming as a request on top:** The involved sectors often lack resources and time and mainstreaming CC, E or DRR is often regarded as an 'add on' or an additional request on top of many others (e.g. gender mainstreaming). This can trigger a feeling of being overwhelmed.
- **Old habits:** There is a lack of willingness to collaborate with different ministries and to address cross-sectoral issues. Old habits in managing e.g. water as a stand-alone technical and sectoral problem often prevail.

Success factors and promising approaches for mainstreaming

- **Institutional support as a precondition:** Mainstreaming needs full support from the top management or from the institutions above. If there is little or no understanding, effective and comprehensive mainstreaming becomes difficult as there might be no or insufficient time and human and financial resources allocated for the required efforts ('What doesn't get paid doesn't get done').
- **Interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach:** Mainstreaming has a lot to do with governance. Horizontal and vertical coordination (both formal and informal) are key but very often not well established. Successful mainstreaming hence requires an interdisciplinary and cooperative approach in order to bring all relevant sectors on board and to create ownership on a consultative base.
- **Raising awareness and convincing people:** Incentives – and not only financial ones – have to be created to engage different sectors and actors. A promising way to create incentives is to find trusted ambassadors for change, who are sensitized about the CC, E and DRR and advocate for the need of mainstreaming. To motivate and convince others to mainstream CC, E and DRR, they need to see the added value of doing so ('What's in for me?'). It is crucial to identify appropriate entry points, common interests and concerns and to communicate to the sectors that CC, E or DRR can help to advance their sectoral goals

(co-benefits of mainstreaming). A positive communication focusing on resilience than an e.g. disasters is more promising to convince people working in other sectors as typical affected sectors.

- **Solid information as a pre-requisite for mainstreaming:** It is important that solid data (e.g. on vulnerability) are available to base on and that in-depth stakeholder analysis are being conducted.
- **Dual approach:** To strengthen CC, E and DRR elements in development cooperation, it can be appropriate to combine targeted CC, E and DRR projects with mainstreaming initiatives. Mainstreaming does not preclude the need for specific targeted interventions. This dual approach also implies a combination of different kind of expertise (generalists and specialists).
- **Transforming vulnerable into agents of change:** Some countries have undergone a paradigm shift from emergency responses towards a development perspective of DRR. In a people centered approach the vulnerable are not considered as victims but as agents of change who are involved in implementation of DRR initiatives.
- **Providing hands-on support:** It's necessary to be present and pro-active in the field by providing concrete and tangible support to the different target groups. This allows for hands-on learning and increases the credibility and perception of the usefulness of contributions to the regions. Hands-on mainstreaming tools are helpful, but don't let the tools manage you.
- **Including all stakeholders:** All stakeholders shall be incorporated in the development of the mainstreaming strategies/planning. The private sector is also bearing the costs of mainstreaming: they should be fully involved to come up with a realistic planning that they can implement.
- **Combining short- and long-term perspective:** Advocate for a long-term perspective and for the cost benefit over a life cycle of projects rather than short-term perspective offered by political cycles of 4-5 years where results have to be demonstrate rapidly.
- **Extreme events as windows of opportunity:** The trigger to act and getting engaged is often caused by an extreme event which gets high media attention. But people also tend to forget fast which makes it difficult to keep responsible people engaged. Especially at the municipality level, extreme events must be seen as windows of opportunity for mainstreaming CC, E and DRR during the recovery phase.

2.2. Mainstreaming in sectors

Experiences and learnings in the health and WASH sectors

In these sectors, it is very common to address vulnerability issues; the actors are used to address underlying vulnerabilities to improve health or sanitation. What was new in mainstreaming initiatives, was the integration of the hazard and the risk perspective in people's life. The examples presented show, that simple, pragmatic and practical mainstreaming efforts within existing health/WASH projects can be successful, even if those elements are integrated at a later stage. At local level, a combination of awareness raising (promoting DRR/CC sensitivity in different institutions), action planning (defining additional measures for preparedness such as emergency health plans) and construction (e.g. rain water harvesting system) can lead to a better consideration of DRR elements in health/WASH projects. In many ways, these projects are 'just' good health or WASH projects. They are not doing things in a totally different but in a more systematic manner. In terms of knowledge sharing of good practices, it was felt that it was difficult to transfer good experiences from one area to another given the differences in institutional set-up in different regions. For sectoral experts, it is often not evident why they should use mainstreaming tools such as CEDRIG. Furthermore, one shall build on existing coping capacities and see what kind of negative coping capacities should be put aside. The challenges for mainstreaming are mainly institutional rather than technical and financial.

Experiences and learnings in urban planning

A long-term involvement is needed for a successful integrated urban planning. However, this long-term perspective at the municipal level is often missing. Hence, capacity building is a top priority, especially at the

municipal level. Awareness on hazards and risks needs to be raised among communities but also among representatives of local governments. It was felt that the tools (e.g. CEDRIG and others) are more directed to the rural context. However, in the urban context, the social component is more important, which is to some extent lacking in the different tools. Successful mainstreaming may be done via the implementation of sub-national platforms for CC/E/DRR or the set-up of such local departments which usually only exist at the national level. With this, all concerned bodies are on board and both social and political needs are being considered. For an inclusive urban planning, it is key to involve both civil society and public actors. A powerful way of mainstreaming is to integrate CC, E and DRR into the curricula of universities (urban planning, architecture degrees) as well as to implement a strong law enforcement which is often lacking. In this context, corruption has been identified as a big problem (illegal building under the eye of the government).

Experiences and learnings in education

Using education for mainstreaming CC, E and DRR holds a big potential through the 'children centered approach' where youth is seen as a powerful agent of change. Mainstreaming CC, E and DRR in education serves primarily two purposes: Firstly, to secure continued education i.e. avoid interruption of teaching in cases of extreme events and secondly, to teach a comprehensive understanding of the causes, implications and mitigation measures to manage CC, environmental degradation and disasters in a given context. In many instances, schools in SDC partner countries apparently suffer from repeated and long-term interruption of schooling / teaching due e.g. to flooding causing in addition both losses in equipment and damaging infrastructure. The request for a continued teaching during different types of crisis (including humanitarian / refugee crisis) is one of the first priorities by parents having children at school age.

Experiences and learnings in the water and energy sectors

In the water/energy sector, the knowledge exchange between Switzerland and developing/emerging countries has a great potential for climate-smart long-term planning of hydroelectric power plants. Through innovative collaboration mechanisms, partner countries can benefit from Switzerland's experience and avoid planning errors. A close collaboration with academia (climate scenarios and change of precipitation patterns) and the private sector (technical and operational know-how) is a prerequisite for successful mainstreaming in the water/energy sector. Meanwhile, the experience shows that mainstreaming CC, E, and DRR should not be limited to a purely technical and engineering approach. Understanding local communities and their water needs, and engaging with them in participatory processes can help mitigate the climate-enhanced risk of water conflicts. Equally, conducive policy frameworks and market designs at the national level are important. If they fail to provide appropriate incentives for long-term planning and inclusion of local communities, they can represent important barriers for climate-informed planning.

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Mainstreaming CC, E & DRR - How to walk the talk? **Integrating climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk reduction into development cooperation**

Joint Swiss thematic event of the Climate Change and Environment (CC&E) & Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) networks of SDC

12th September 2017, University of Fribourg, Fribourg
Avenue de l'Europe 20, Auditoire MIS03 - 3115

Programme

The event was moderated by Daniel Maselli (Climate Change & Environment Network Focal Point) and Nadia Benani (Disaster Risk Reduction Network Focal Point)

08.30 Meet, greet and talk/registration

09.00 Opening & welcoming remarks by **Philippe Besson**, Head of Multilateral Affairs Humanitarian Aid, SDC

09.30 Session 1: Actors' perspective on mainstreaming CC, E & DRR

09.30 Risk proofing in the Western Balkans: Empowering People to Prevent Disasters by **Irina Kulenovic**, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Bosnia and Herzegovina

10.15 Mainstreaming in different institutions: Break-out groups (including coffee break in the groups)

Group 1: The SME perspective: Assessing climate risks in market systems, hands-on experience from Nepal by **Nicole Clot**, Helvetas

Group 2: Mainstreaming in your own institution: challenges and opportunities, case of mainstreaming DRR in SDC East Asia by **Alain Pasche**, SDC

Group 3: Mainstreaming in small municipalities, cases from Bolivia by **Sergio Pérez**, SDC

Group 4: Mainstreaming at state level. Integrating climate change adaptation into Swiss sectoral strategies by **Thomas Probst**, Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)

11.30 Session 2: How to avoid mainstreaming fatigue: fishbowl-roundtable

Guests: **Alain Pasche**, SDC; **Anton Jöhr**, Swiss Red Cross; **Roland Hohmann**, Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)

12.30 Lunch

14.00 Session 3: Mainstreaming in a sectoral perspective

14.00 Efficient water management contributing to food security and good governance by **Ali Jawad**, Helvetas Pakistan

14.45 Mainstreaming in key sectors: Break-out groups

Group 1: Health/WASH. Input by **Anton Jöhr**, Swiss Red Cross

Group 2: Urban Planning. Input by **Alex Angermaier**, Caritas

Group 3: Education. Input by **Sabina Handschin**, SDC

Group 4: Energy/Water. Inputs by **Marco Cortesi**, Alpiq and **Holger Frey**, University of Zurich

16.00 Presentation of the [freshwater project](#) - Photographer Michel Roggo

16.30 Final remarks by **Yuka Greiler**, Head Global Programme Climate Change and Environment, SDC

16.45 Apéro