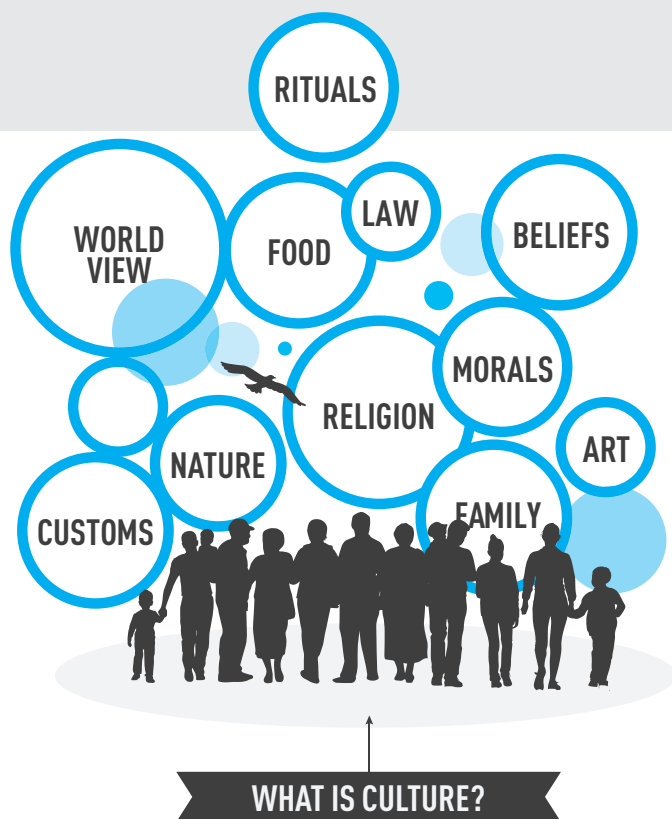


CULTURE & DRR: NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

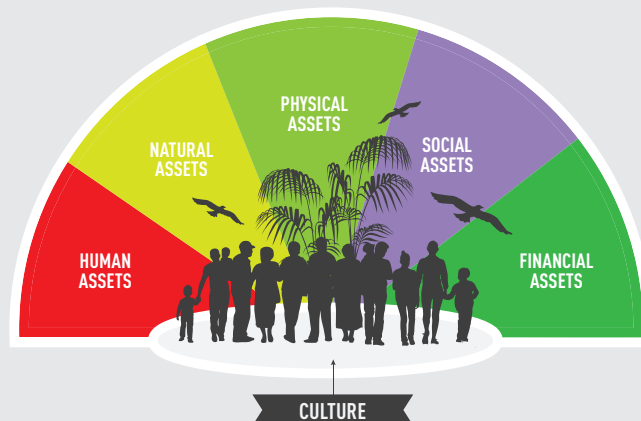
CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE = SUCCESS

CULTURE belongs at the center of designs for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policy and programs. Traditional DRR approaches focus on structural mitigation of risk and the protection of assets. These approaches have produced failures because they put systems, not people, at the center of disaster risk reduction efforts. When DRR efforts use culture as a lens, they hold the focus on people.



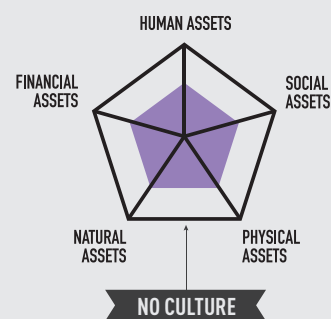
Culture permeates, shapes, and defines every element of the physical, economic, and social environment.

CULTURE-BASED DRR



Culture-based DRR focuses on the shared understandings that underlie how communities perceive and respond to risk and recover from disaster.

TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO DRR (SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS MODEL)



When an institutionalized model is applied to a local situation without taking local cultural realities into account, DRR outcomes are often ineffective.

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT CULTURE-BASED DRR?

With a culturally-based DRR approach, proven models, strategies, templates, and best practices serve as starting points that are then adapted to match the specific cultural system in a particular location.

Every aspect of DRR design, be it engineering, livelihoods, communications, or training, must accommodate specific cultural interpretations as integrated into local lifestyles.

Culture-based approaches place value on local participation, which leads to useful understandings of beliefs, behavior, and worldviews.

An inclusive approach reveals much about community coping mechanisms, cohesion, and safety nets that influence effective program design.

In pre- and post-disaster scenarios, many interests compete to be heard. Culture-based approaches help ensure that the voices of underserved and vulnerable groups are not drowned out by those of elite stakeholders. Women, those with disabilities, the elderly, children, the economically poor, and all vulnerable groups are part of the plan. No one is left behind.

CULTURE AS A SECTOR WITHIN DRR

The Culture Sector approach in DRR views culture primarily in material terms. It suggests that DRR efforts should prevent the loss of tangible cultural heritage assets; cultural sites, services, and resources; disruption of the production of goods in creative industries (arts & crafts), and the loss of intangible cultural heritage.

This approach is important, but culture is not just a sector. It is a cross-cutting force that impacts success in all sectors. Culture encompasses more than this approach suggests; it is not static, but comprises living, evolving, and emerging practices and processes through which communities function and thrive.

CURRENT VS CULTURE-BASED DRR APPROACHES

Why is culture usually insufficiently integrated in DRR programs, even while practitioners recognize its importance? Reasons include a too-narrow definition of culture, lack of time, the belief that local culture is already known, adhesion to pre-existing policies and strategies, not accounting for the impact of organizational culture on DRR work, or the perception that culture is too complex to fully understand.

Attention to culture leads to positive outcomes.

DRR practitioners can learn the methods to prioritize cultural knowledge, inclusiveness, and participatory approaches. Our Culture and Disaster Action Network seeks to partner with communities of practice to share this knowledge and to enhance DRR effectiveness.



Limitations of Current DRR Approaches:

This fishing village, rebuilt after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, today stands empty because structural and legal mitigation measures were given priority over local cultural considerations and local residents were not consulted.



Success of Culture-Based DRR Approaches

For this post-earthquake transitional shelter program in 2010 cultural information allowed accommodation of ideas of privacy and community, safety and proximity to social networks, preserving livelihoods and informal safety nets, and providing local participants a sense of ownership and dignity.



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