Disaster prevention
and resilience
Protecting people at risk

10 years

Munich Re
Foundation
From Knowledge
to Action

Disaster prevention and resilience
Our vision
Our projects

Background

The number and intensity of natural catastrophes is increasing in many regions of the world – with devastating consequences. Disaster prevention is more important than ever. This is why the Munich Re Foundation is funding the set-up and deployment of warning systems specially tailored to the needs of the people at risk. By doing so, we want to improve the resilience of people and communities.

Resilience is the ability of individuals, groups, communities and institutions to cope with shock, stress or chronic burdens due to fragile situations, crises, violent conflicts or natural events. As a result of climate change, environmental risks are increasing in many regions of the world. Resilient people can recover more quickly and adapt appropriately, thus improving their prospects in the medium and long term.

Our topics

Putting people first

People at risk are at the centre of our work. We look to find solutions with the people actually affected. Local knowledge and traditional adaptation and prevention strategies can deliver valuable ideas for effective disaster management.

Linking bottom-up and top-down approaches

Successful solutions can only be achieved through participative processes with local people. At the same time, however, these bottom-up actions have to be linked to top-down instructions of institutions such as the United Nations and countries' political directives.

Education is key

Technical early-warning systems are not useful if people do not understand them. They have to learn how to use the equipment provided and how to react in an emergency situation. Education and creating capacity is an essential component of good disaster management.

Sustainable solutions and ownership

We must find sustainable solutions to avert long-term damage by disasters. This also includes supporting projects until responsibility is assumed locally and ownership is established.

More information:

www.munichre-foundation.org/home/DisasterPrevention

Our projects

Gibika: Improving livelihoods

In communities in Bangladesh exposed to powerful natural hazards, the aim is to demonstrate how the resilience of the population can be strengthened. Flood and drought warning systems can save lives and protect harvests. The aim of the project, which we are developing together with UNU-EHS (Bonn) and the ICCCAD Institute (Dhaka), is to strengthen and safeguard people's means of subsidence in Bangladesh and other countries in the long term.
Project time-frame: 2012 – 2017

RISK Award 2015: Women and children in slums

The All India Institute of Local Self Government is providing support to task forces in slums in Pune, an Indian city with a population of several millions. The objective is to provide residents with a defence strategy against natural disasters, primarily landslides, earthquakes and fire hazards, and to devise ways in which risks in slums can be minimised. Women and children in particular are involved in this project.
Project time-frame: 2015 – 2017

Research – Resilience Academy

Every year together with the UN University (UNU-EHS) and the ICCCAD Institute in Dhaka we organise a Resilience Academy. Senior experts train young scientists and field workers. Dialogue between science, politics and communities is fostered during a week of intensive training and workshops on the issue of resilience. The participants write publications and briefings designed to aid political decision-making.
Project time-frame: 2012 – 2017

RISK Award 2014: Inclusive risk management

ONG Inclusiva is an NGO in Peñaflor, a city south of Santiago de Chile, where earthquakes and landslides pose a risk to the local population. Carlos Kaiser, the founder of ONG Inclusiva, wants people in the city to be given plenty of advance warning in the future so that they can leave the hazard areas quickly. This is especially important for the handicapped.
Project time-frame: 2014 – 2015

RISK Award 2012: Flood warning system for Beira

A strikingly simple flood warning system, developed by IP Consult, has been set up in the slums of Beira, the second largest city in Mozambique. Tube rods in which conductive sensors float form the basis for the technical solution. A rise in water levels (occurring often at night) triggers an alarm. Appointed helpers from the community sound the warning and evacuate the local population.
Project time-frame: 2012 – 2013

RANET: Warning system for Tonga

We set up our early-warning system in Tonga between 2006 and 2008. It warns people of tropical storms and floods – often afflicting the scattered islands of the archipelago state. Previous systems frequently failed because the satellite systems deployed often did not work in conditions of bad weather fronts. The new communication network is based on high-frequency wireless data and permits more accurate forecasting and reliable relaying of warnings.

Mozambique flood warning systems

Floods are a common occurrence in Mozambique. People who have precious little often lose everything they have. Between 2006 and 2012, together with GIZ, we set up warning systems on multiple rivers in Central Mozambique. In communities within the catchment area, those responsible from the villages measure rainfall and water levels, and report them to a control centre. If measurements indicating heavy rainfall are recorded, a warning is issued and critical buildings are cleared in an orderly fashion.