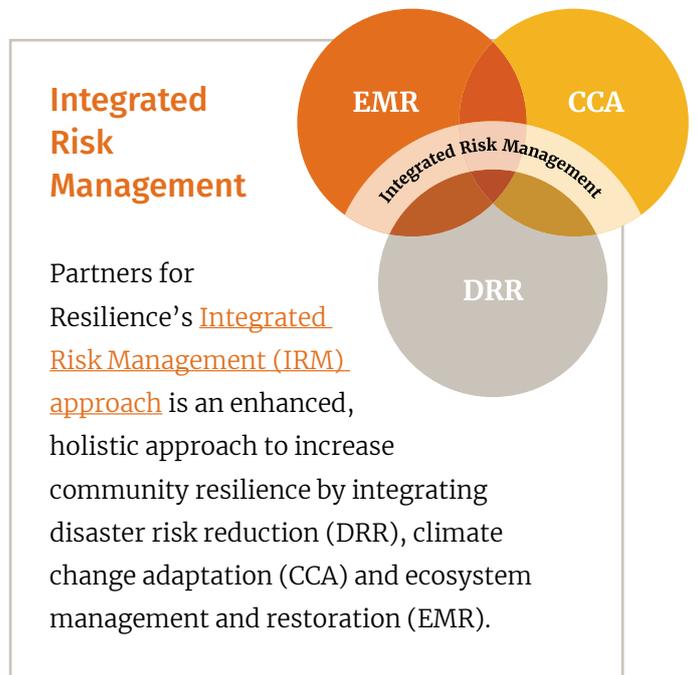


Partners for Resilience in Mali

For ten years, CARE has supported communities in the inner Niger Delta by strengthening resilience, unifying their efforts and interests, to engage the government for inclusive DRR, integrating climate and ecosystems.

- 2011–2015**
 CARE and partner GRAT (Groupe de Recherche et d'Application technique) supported rural communities in 8 villages in Konna & Borondogou (inner Niger Delta) in implementing IRM, including diversification of livelihoods, access to meteorological information, and contingency planning.
- 2016–2020**
 In the province of Mopti, CARE facilitated the reorganisation of existing community groups into coalitions at different administrative levels, with a focus on women participation. These coalitions lobbied and advocated for access to land, integration of IRM in municipal planning and in national DRR law.



CARE's Partners for Resilience (PFR) programme in Mali



2,029,052 community members covered by DRR, CCA, and EMR plans



71 CSOs with strengthened capacities on lobby and advocacy for IRM



1,839 community members trained and strengthened in their capacity to prepare for disasters



102 government entities and other relevant stakeholders trained in IRM



9 Village Savings and Loans Associations established



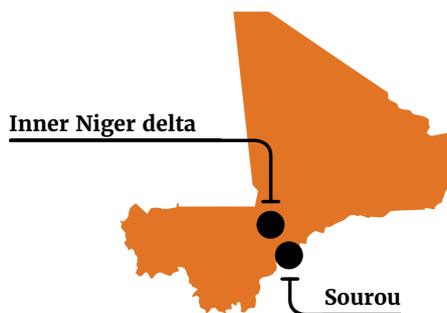
5 policies, guidelines and laws related to increased community resilience developed or adopted



2 Disaster Management Plans developed following IRM principles

Context

Mali is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with environmental degradation as one of the main drivers of disaster risk. In recent years, the intensity of floods and droughts has increased, threatening economic development and livelihoods. This is worsened by increasing insecurity through presence of terrorists and self-defence groups and the proliferation of small arms. In the Niger, Sourou and Senegal river basins, rural communities are often hit hardest by floods and droughts. Women, children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to increased levels of poverty. Different resource needs can lead to conflicts over land use. Abundant grassroots organisations represent farmers, pastoralists and fishers' diverging interests, lobbying the same decision-makers. In this rapidly changing context, a consortium of CARE, The Netherlands Red Cross, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and Wetlands International implemented the [Partners for Resilience](#) programme for ten years, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This publication outlines CARE's main achievements.



CARE's gender focus

CARE focused on [supporting participation of women's groups and individual women](#) in the unions and coalitions, where women now occupy important positions. CARE used tools such as CARE's [Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis](#) and the [Gender Marker](#) to identify gendered needs and capacities, and to avoid the overburdening of women. 50% of the IRM champions in the IRM coalitions are women, who will continue to advocate for the specific needs of women in terms of access to agricultural land, fishing grounds and vegetable gardening.

Main achievements

Disaster Risk Reduction and Ecosystem Management

CARE's approach included the implementation of integrated DRR measures, using meteorological information to prevent disasters and sustainable agriculture to prevent ecosystem degradation.

- With the support of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Committees, communities assessed local vulnerabilities using [CARE's Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis](#), and designed actions to ensure better preparedness and maintenance of physical infrastructure. DRM committees developed a clear road map that included gender and training for community members to build and improve infrastructure, such as dike construction and sand dune fixation.
- Communities developed contingency plans to face various risks, with a high degree of commitment to IRM principles from communities and authorities.
- 540 women in 4 villages were trained on DRR and EMR and established market gardens. Training included developing organic manure through composting systems. Water pumps on solar energy were installed. As a result, and with the support and participation of DRM committees, women produced their own agricultural resources which improved crops during droughts.



Climate Change Adaptation

CARE and GRAT's work on adaptation included livelihoods diversification, access to climate information and awareness raising (watch the [video](#)).

- Communities diversified [livelihoods](#) through training on climate-resilient crops and agro-forestry, introducing grafted Ziziphus, and defined a sustainable strategy to take care of seedlings.
- Communities learned to access and use agricultural, meteorological and hydrological data, disseminated through formal meteorological services. CARE created WhatsApp groups to share agro-hydrological information, to ease access and reach scale. The local IRM coalition, the municipality of Bankass and the manager of the agro-climatology station of Bankass signed a partnership.
- CARE and GRAT supported communities to establish 9 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) that involved 1,185 people to build a buffer to cope with crop failure or extreme weather events. VSLAs fostered social cohesion between women and raised awareness on the effects of climate change on food security, and better practices for water management and sanitation. The VSLAs have continued to function despite increasing insecurity, with many members part of civil society groups, and some running for office in local politics.

Strengthening capacity of civil society and government

CARE initiated [collaboration](#) between different land use groups to face the shared problems of floods, droughts and the increasing conflicts around land and water.

- At village level, CARE supported 357 user groups to organise in 15 formal user associations or *unions* (fishing, farming, livestock, forestry and gender). These associations formed 3 [municipal IRM coalitions](#). These coalitions engage with municipal authorities on issues such as secure access to land and water. [The IRM coalitions also promote good practices](#), including respect for fishing regulations, designated logging areas and cattle corridors, and provide early warning and early action advice.
- At district level, municipal coalitions organised into district coalitions like the Sourou Nieta de Bankass district IRM coalition. This coalition developed an inclusive vision of land use to influence the district administration. The training of IRM champions to raise awareness with non-members was key.
- The Bankass, Djenné and Mopti district IRM coalitions formed the provincial (*region*) Mopti IRM Coalition (comprised of 13 people – including 6 women). This broad movement of CSOs connected with members of parliament at national level in 2019 and 2020.

Her land, her future

Fanta Bocoum's story of resilience

Fanta Bocoum is a mother of four living in Ouenkoro in the district of Bankass. When Fanta became a widow, she was forced to abandon her land. This made her vulnerable, in a context where land is the main means of production. Through CARE's Partners for Resilience programme, Fanta got involved in a women's union and a municipal coalition that were trained to better organise and advocate for land tenure systems.

Fanta lobbied elected officials, traditional chiefs and landowners for changes to land tenure and the allocation of land to women. "The land is everything to us. Without it, we cannot live," she proclaimed. The mayor, traditional landowner and the sub-prefect in her district listened and signed an agreement to transfer property to Fanta and other women in Ouenkoro. Now Fanta is an inspiration to many and is determined to continue her efforts in local politics. "I'm using my voice, and it's working," she said. In Fanta's community, resilience means that women have rightful ownership of land.

Influencing laws and policies

IRM coalitions at district and provincial level boosted advocacy from local to national level. These coalitions developed IRM advocacy plans taking up interests of all sectors/land users with attention for women, girls and youth.

- [Municipal IRM coalitions' advocacy successes](#) include access of women and young people to land: the women's coalition of Ouenkoro acquired a grant and a certified local title deed for a market garden plot, which was significant as women are traditionally not allowed to own land. Additional successes were the [reduction of conflicts over the use of land, fodder and water](#), and increasing integration of [IRM in local development plans \(PDSEC\)](#).
- The municipality of Mopti integrated priorities of the provincial IRM coalition in municipal plans. Under the leadership of CARE, Pfr Mali initiated a provincial forum with Mopti Members of Parliament, chaired by the Governor. Members of Parliament agreed to a road map to promote district and provincial IRM interests in the Malian parliament. As a result, Parliament integrated IRM principles in the National DRR strategy.
- In Bankass, Mayors, councils and customary authorities and the IRM coalitions came together to elaborate local fisheries management agreements. These agreements resulted in designated fish multiplication grounds, safeguarding of fishing as a means of subsistence and secured access to land for women and youth from the fishing community. This replicates the success of partner Wetlands International in the Djenné district.

Sustaining the PfR programme through unions and coalitions

The user associations and IRM coalitions formed the backbone of the PfR programme in Mali. The district IRM coalitions have mobilised funds and started the process of formal registration to have a legal basis for advocacy. The Mopti IRM coalition is member of the national farmers union and the West African union ROGIR, and the coalition has a partnership with a network of journalists and relates to like-minded umbrella CSOs. Unions and coalitions also form part of other CARE programming.

Lessons & recommendations

- The coalition model has shown to be effective in [reducing conflicts over resources](#) and ensuring that voices of fishers, pastoralists and farmers are considered. In the coalitions, the user groups collaborated for the first time. This represents a successful approach worth replicating.
- Working in partnership, across different levels and programmes was key to advocacy successes and sustainability. PfR engaged from the local to the provincial and national level, learning from each partner and aligning with the decentralisation policy as enabling environment. The programme also benefitted from synergies with other projects like PADIN-2 which focused on technical and infrastructural support in food security.
- IRM champions in each coalition brought about interaction with users that were not part of associations and with the public at large, fostering support from local and national authorities who were not direct targets of the programme.
- Involving women groups in the unions and coalitions was a successful way to overcome prevailing discriminatory norms and bring women to leadership positions. 50% of the IRM champions are women, and empowered women gained management positions up to the municipal level.
- During the 2020 crisis that hit the country, including a military coup, civil unrest and conflicts with rebels in the region of Mopti as well as COVID-19, the coalitions proved their value and IRM champions became vectors of information and needs.

Key publications & tools

- [Manual for Capacity Strengthening of Grassroots Actors on the Coalition in Relation to Policy Influencing and Citizenship regarding Integrated Risk Management](#) (FR) – manual explaining the process of creating an IRM Coalition.
- [Manual for the Integration of Integrated Risk Management into Local Development Plans in Mali](#) (FR) – manual explaining how to integrate DRR, climate and ecosystems into PDSECs in Mali.
- [Promotion of gender](#) (FR) – case study on women empowerment in the PfR programme in Mali.
- [Prevention and resolution of conflict in Mali](#) (FR) – case study on the role of IRM coalitions in conflict prevention and resolution.
- [Strengthening community resilience in conflict: learnings from the Partners for Resilience programme](#) (UK) – study by the Institute of Social Studies on how PfR programming has affected conflict and vice versa.

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PARTNERS FOR RESILIENCE
Working together on disasters, climate, ecosystems