

# Chapter 4

## Re-Imagining Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Towards Building Resilient Rural Communities

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Zimbabwe is prone to a variety of natural and climate-related hazards, which disproportionately affect communities. While community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) initiatives exist in the country, their effectiveness and sustainability in building resilient communities remain limited. There is a need to re-imagine CBDRR approaches in Zimbabwe to address the existing gaps and challenges and enhance community resilience. The aim of the research was to investigate innovative approaches and strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of CBDRR initiatives, particularly in rural areas that are prone to various natural hazards. The research employed a qualitative approach where primary and secondary data sources were used to gather comprehensive insights on the topic. Research findings identified gaps and challenges existing in CBDRR practices which include ineffective community-based early warning systems, centralization of disaster management, inadequate trainings, lack of preparedness, inadequate resources, reactive intervention, and policy gaps. Proposed frameworks and interventions to address these issues were establishment of trained local disaster risk management committee, education and training, preparedness, capacitation of supporting institution, funding, and proactive disaster management intervention in CBDRR efforts. Overall, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on disaster risk reduction and resilience-building, offering valuable insights and practical recommendations for improving the outcomes of*

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*community-based initiatives in rural contexts. The research provides recommendations and guidelines for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders to implement these innovative approaches and build resilient rural communities in the face of increasing disaster risks.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Disasters pose significant challenges to communities worldwide, and Zimbabwe is no exception. According to Gogo (2020), the country faces a range of natural and climate-related hazards, including droughts, floods, cyclones, and landslides, which have severe impacts on the lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure of its population. In response to these challenges, Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) has emerged as a critical approach to building resilience at the local level (Oxfam 2019). CBDRR recognizes the importance of community participation, local knowledge, and context-specific interventions in reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing disaster preparedness (Gogo, 2020).

Chatiza (2020) provided that, while CBDRR initiatives exist in Zimbabwe, there is a need to re-imagine and strengthen these approaches to effectively address the complex and evolving risks faced by communities. The re-imagining of CBDRR involves envisioning innovative strategies, policies, and practices that prioritize community empowerment, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and leverage emerging technologies and best practices. By doing this, it seeks to ensure sustainable development and protect the welfare of Zimbabwean citizens by constructing resilient communities that can endure and recover from disasters (Gogo, 2020).

The chapter explored and proposed a re-imagined CBDRR framework in Zimbabwe that is tailored to the local context and aligns with international best practices. By addressing the existing gaps and challenges in CBDRR implementation, the analysis undertaken seeks to contribute to the development of effective strategies for building resilient communities in Zimbabwe. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing CBDRR practices, policies, and programs in Zimbabwe, this chapter identified areas for improvement and propose evidence-based recommendations for enhancing community resilience.

Ultimately, this study aims to add to the conversation around CBDRR in Zimbabwe by offering useful perspectives and doable suggestions for practitioners, politicians, and community leaders. Zimbabwe can make great progress toward creating resilient communities that are more equipped, more adaptable, and able to lessen the effects of disasters on their lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure by rethinking CBDRR and bolstering its implementation.

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