**NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS: SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES FOR HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES**

**FEBA-PEDRR-EHAN Working Group on Nature-based Solutions in Humanitarian Contexts**

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**WHY NbS IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS?**

- The environment is often overlooked in humanitarian crises.
- Yet the degradation of ecosystems and their services exacerbate peoples’ risk from the impacts of disasters and conflict and undermines humanitarian and development gains:
  - A degraded environment can trigger or worsen a humanitarian crisis.
  - Humanitarian operations can damage the environment further, exacerbating risk.
- Integrating NbS in humanitarian contexts – **before**, **during**, and **after** disasters and crises – can:
  - Reduce vulnerability, exposure, and impact of natural hazards.
  - Increase the resilience of communities.
- When developed together with crisis-affected peoples, NbS:
  - Provide benefits to humanitarian outcomes, including **public** and environmental health, **food** and water security, and **protective** functions against shocks and stresses.
  - Contribute **cost-effective**, **novel**, and **durable** solutions and contribute to building **immediate** and **long-term** resilience.
- Advance the humanitarian imperative of **preventing** and **alleviating** human suffering arising out of disasters and conflicts.

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**ABOUT THE NbS IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS WORKING GROUP**

The **NbS in Humanitarian Contexts Working Group** convenes stakeholders across the Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEBA), Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), and Environment and Humanitarian Action Network (EHAN) networks.

Together, we are advancing research, learning, and advocacy to transform how humanitarian aid and development is done, to better consider NbS as a core component and strategy.

This includes developing practical guidance, policy recommendations, and advocacy messaging. For example, see our Key Messages released in advance of UNFCCC COP26 and endorsed by 19 organizations.

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**APPLYING NbS IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS: EXAMPLES**

In humanitarian contexts there are opportunities to look at both large and small-scale integrations of nature that benefit both human well-being and biodiversity. For example:

- Large-scale hillside stabilization can reduce risk of landslides around refugee camps, such as through the replanting of native species to replicate and restore the ecosystem that was there prior. Using a terraced planting system which includes spaces for household gardens also offers co-benefits of increasing food security and enhancing human well-being.
- Smaller-scale opportunities such as planting of different types of aquatic vegetation in waterways or ditches in refugee or Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camps can help reduce erosion and improve water quality.
- Integration of nature can also provide social and psychological benefits, such as aiding in conflict resolution, promotion of health and well-being, and individual and community healing.

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**THE SPHERE NbS UNPACKED GUIDE: INNOVATIVE GUIDANCE FOR COMPLEX CHALLENGES**

In 2022, we are developing guidance that outlines how integrating NbS can shift aid interventions towards sustainable, longer-term approaches that integrate nature, climate, risk reduction, and affected peoples. It will:

- Be aligned with Sphere, the most commonly used set of humanitarian standards.
- Introduce NbS and its applicability for humanitarian aid to practitioners.
- Provide an overview of the principles and approaches that the Sphere Standards and NbS approaches share.
- Offer practical suggestions on how to integrate NbS into the technical sectors of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Food Security and Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, and Health.
- Link to resources practitioners can use in the field to help them infuse NbS into their work.

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**AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

There are many ways to get involved:

- Becoming a member of the Working Group.
- Sharing working group publications with your networks, such as the Key Messages or upcoming guidance.
- Contributing to technical chapters of the Sphere Unpacked Guide.
- Piloting the guidance with your organization, network or learning community.

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