

**Sharing Knowledge and
Responsibility:**

How Participatory Approaches
Strengthen Security Risk
Management

In today's increasingly complex and volatile environments, organisations working in the humanitarian and development sectors face evolving risks that demand more **inclusive** and **adaptive approaches**.

Traditional top-down risk management often overlooks the lived experiences and insights of those most affected. A participatory approach offers a powerful alternative as it **shifts the focus** from centralised control to shared responsibility.

Participatory security risk management values the **diverse knowledge** and **experiences** that all stakeholders bring.

It offers an **inclusive** and **empowering** tool as it bridges across this diversity and the risk management frameworks international and local actors might already use, whether explicitly or implicitly, in their respective life and work environments.

Benefits include:

- A more accurate and complete recognition and identification of risks
- Strengthening a collective sense of ownership across all stakeholders, including partners and local communities
- Wider recognition of resources and practices available to manage risk

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- More balanced distribution of responsibilities for risk management and safety and security measures, decreasing stress and pressure on staff and teams
 - Enhanced organisational learning and knowledge sharing
 - Increased flexibility and adaptability of risk management systems

While participatory security risk management offers many benefits, there might be **limitations in implementing** it.

These can include:

- Time constraints,
- Internal hierarchies
- Cultural and language barriers
- Varying levels of stakeholder technical knowledge.

However, with **thoughtful facilitation, skill-strengthening processes** and a **commitment** to inclusive practice, such limitations can be successfully navigated.

Ultimately, a participatory approach towards security risk management flips the focus from managing risk **for**, to managing risk **with** the diversity of actors involved in humanitarian and development work.

In the face of growing threats and uncertainty, this approach offers the **depth, resilience, and adaptability** needed to respond effectively to complex challenges in the current humanitarian and development field.

At **ILS**, we believe that security is strongest when it reflects the diverse identities and experiences of those involved and is managed in collective and participatory ways.

👉 **Let's talk.** If your organisation is interested in exploring how to implement this kind of approach or is looking to strengthen internal capacity and risk management systems, we'd love to work with you.