

Introduction to systemic disaster risk

Speed read

- Current approaches to disaster risk reduction are being challenged in a world of more frequent and compounding hazards.
- There is a need to shift risk assessment from focusing on specific hazards to an approach focused on systemic risks.
- Disaster and emergency management is evolving to include systemic disaster risk and resilience assessments to inform broader risk reduction efforts.

Key points

- **Systemic risks emerge** from the interactions of climate change and natural hazards, with the complex, interdependent and inter-connected networks of social, technical, environmental, and economic systems.
- **Disasters are not natural.** Disasters are the result of natural hazards interacting with complex human systems. Disasters should no longer be considered only an emergency management issue.
- **Inclusive governance and risk cultures** framed around place-based, systemic resilience and sustainable outcomes is key.
- This is a visual example of applying systemic risk thinking to food security:

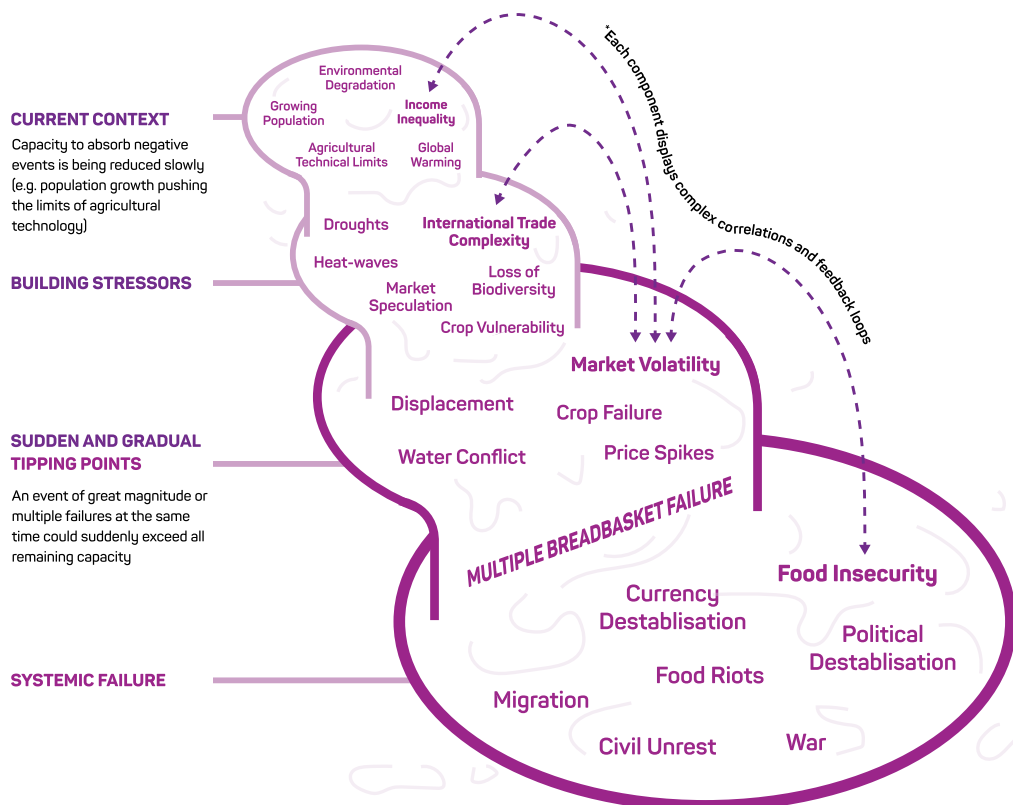


Figure 1: Multiple Breadbasket Failure: United Nations 2019 Global Assessment of Risk

Quick Guide



Australian Government
National Emergency
Management Agency



Australian Institute for
Disaster Resilience

- **Whole-of-society involvement in managing risk is vital to resilience and reducing loss and harm caused by disasters.** People and communities need to be equipped with tools, ability and knowledge that extend beyond traditional emergency management to resist, absorb, accommodate, recover, transform, and thrive in response to the effects of shocks and stresses.

Take action

- Avoid using the term ‘*natural disasters*’ - just call them disasters.
- Watch the *Systemic Disaster Risk Case Study Videos*: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-systemic-disaster-risk/#-case>
- Get a team together. Choose one or more hazards relevant to your organisation or group. Do a visual mind mapping exercise that applies systemic disaster risk thinking. Use the multiple breadbasket failure figure above as an example.

More information

- Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience 2021, Systemic Disaster Risk: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-systemic-disaster-risk>
- Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience 2020, Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement>
- UNDRR 2019, Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: www.undrr.org/publication/global-assessment-report-disaster-risk-reduction-2019