

# Disaster Risk Reduction

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY An Imperative for Education Policy-makers

It is better to  
act one day  
early than to  
express regret  
one day too late



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Bangkok Office  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau  
for Education



Save the Children

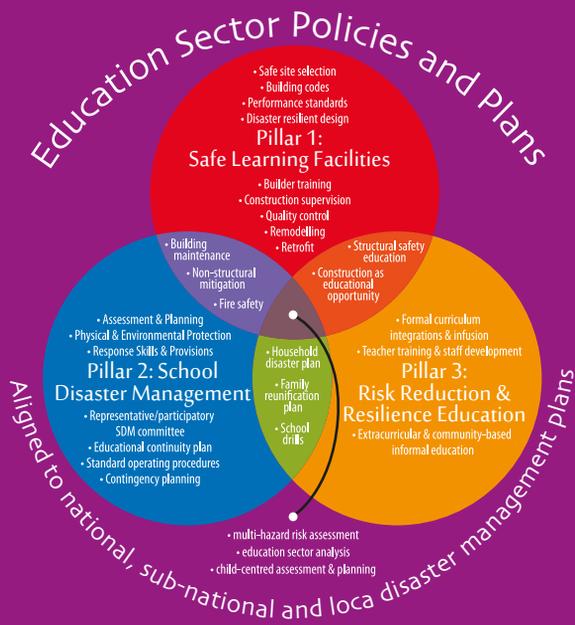
# HAZARDS ARE NATURAL DISASTERS ARE NOT

Hazards such as floods and earthquakes become disasters when society lacks the ability to cope with them.



Children have the right to be both safe and secure in school, and to be assured of educational continuity, even in the face of disasters and emergencies.

Disasters are occurring at alarming frequency and with increased severity in Asia-Pacific. Along with climate change related crises, disasters create humanitarian and development challenges. The education sector has a key role to play in addressing these challenges and in preventing hazards from becoming disasters. This role is best fulfilled through a comprehensive approach to school safety.



# What is Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in education?

A comprehensive approach to DRR in education addresses:

- Safe Learning Facilities
- School Disaster Management
- Risk Reduction and Resilience Education

The goals of comprehensive school safety should be:

- To protect learners and education workers from death, injury, and harm in schools
- To plan for educational continuity in the face of expected hazards
- To safeguard education sector investments
- To strengthen climate-smart disaster resilience through education

When education systems do not acknowledge the known hazards that can affect them, do not take measures to ensure the safety of learners and workers, and do not plan for educational continuity in the face of these hazards then the investments made are wasted, lives are lost, and for too many, the promise of education is lost forever.

Schools are widely respected community hubs, and are central to ongoing education and development as well as to rapid recovery from hazard impacts. Schools are also often relied upon for short-term shelter. It does not good to not plan for this, while keeping schools primary role in educating children at the top of the list. It is crucial to ensure that schooling continues after a hazard strikes, and to limit damages to the education sector investments. Preparing the education system includes multi-hazard risk assessment at national, sub-national and school levels, to find out what threats exist schools, participatory planning and policies to address those threats, and implementing those plans sustainably.

# Why invest in DRR in education?



## Investing 1, saves 7

Every dollar invested in risk reduction saves seven dollars in recovery efforts.<sup>1</sup>



## Half a million deaths & 40 million homeless

The number of lives lost and people left homeless after major disasters in the Asia-Pacific since 2004: the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), the Kashmir earthquake (2005), the Sichuan earthquake (2007), Cyclone Nargis (2008), and the Pakistan floods (2010); Fukushima earthquake (2011); Cyclone Mahasen (2013); Typhoon Haiyan (2013).



## 175 million children affected

The number of children likely to be affected each year by climate-related disasters over the next decade.<sup>2</sup>



## Safeguarding development

Extensive disasters are causing even more impacts than intensive disasters. The impacts we have measured are from the major disasters like cyclones and earthquakes. But most researchers observe that smaller and regular hazards like urban flooding and coastal erosion have even greater impacts on enrollment and drop-out rates. Investing in DRR in education will safeguard and sustain gains made towards development goals such as EFA and the MDGs.

- Notes:
1. World Bank. 2004. "Natural Disasters: Counting the Cost." Press release, March 2, 2004. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)
  2. Save the Children UK. "Legacy of Disaster: The Impact of Climate Change on Children." 2007.
  3. UN. Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011, p. 46.



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## How can education policy-makers contribute?

Education policy-makers are in a position to influence, amend, and highlight priorities in a country's education policy.

They can:

- Set policies and agendas to ensure the adoption and successful integration of DRR into the education sector.
- Allocate and shift resources to achieve that aim.
- Link education sector and disaster management sector policies and plans at every level.
- Make sure that the impacts of both intensive and extensive disasters on schools are monitored and understood.

# Recommended actions for policy-makers

The following recommended actions can help ensure the success and sustainability of DRR in education initiatives:

1

## Provide safe school facilities

First and foremost, make sure that schools themselves are safe for students and teachers. Policy-makers have a responsibility to ensure that students are safe in and on the way to school. Policy-makers can establish standards on safe school facilities by:

- Enacting policies and procedures to ensure that every new school is a safe school.
- Identifying and prioritizing unsafe schools for retrofit or replacement.
- Guiding and funding school maintenance for disaster risk reduction.
- Incorporating safety upgrades into all school remodelling and school greening programmes.
- Establishing guidelines to minimize non-structural and infrastructural risks
- Ensure that schools are planned as temporary community shelters, not just used as a last resort.
- Incorporate safe facilities monitoring into Education Management Information Systems.

2

## Mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction into education policy and planning and education into disaster risk reduction and response planning

Ad hoc DRR in education interventions are not sustainable as disasters recur in most countries. Disaster risks should be considered in the Education Sector Development Plans/National Action Plans situational analyses and programmes. And educational, continuity planning should be considered in disaster management plans at all levels. This helps ensure that DRR measures are considered in a country's educational priorities.

Establish Disaster Management Offices within national and sub-national education authorities, identify DRR focal points and develop Disaster Management and Educational Continuity Plans at all levels of the education system.



Policy-makers can encourage and spearhead education sector disaster risk reduction and management and educational continuity planning, to encompass risk assessment, risk reduction, response-preparedness, and educational continuity planning activities.

An essential building block for the plan is multi-hazard risk assessment at the national, sub-national and school levels in collaboration with disaster management authorities and mechanisms. These risks should be incorporated into the EMIS, and monitored at each level.

### Key elements of an Education Sector Disaster Management include:

- Having policies, guidance at sub-national and school-site levels for ongoing site-based assessment and planning, risk reduction, and response preparedness as part of normal school management and improvement.
- Developing, training, institutionalizing, monitoring and evaluating school-site committees, empowered to lead identification of hazards and community and action-planning for ongoing disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities.
- Adapting standard operating procedures as needed, for hazards with and without warnings,



including: drop cover and hold, building evacuation, evacuation to safe haven, shelter-in-place and lockdown, and safe family reunification.

- Engaging schools in making early warning and early action systems meaningful and effective.
- Incorporate the needs of pre-school and out-of-school children, children with disabilities, and both girls and boys.
- Practicing, critically evaluating, and improving on response preparedness, with regular school-wide and community-linked simulation drills. Adapt standard operating procedures to specific context of each school.

### Key elements in planning for educational continuity include:

- Developing guidelines to limit the use of schools as temporary shelters.
- Identifying alternate locations for temporary schools and alternate modes of instruction.
- Establishing national and sub-national contingency plans, based on Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards (2010), to support educational continuity, including plans and criteria to limit the use of schools as temporary shelters.
- Preparing for full local engagement in rapid needs assessment to determine impact on the education system.
- Being ready to develop an agile response plan to include establishment of temporary learning facilities, and provision of psychosocial support services.
- Having systems for back-up of student educational records.

## 3

### Promote DRR in teaching and learning

Teaching and learning about DRR is the key approach for increasing individuals' and community's knowledge and information about hazards, including what to do when a hazard strikes. Policy-makers can mandate mainstreaming of DRR in teaching and learning, linking this as necessary to the Education Sector Disaster Management and Contingency Plan and Education Sector Development Plans. Key elements of mainstreaming DRR in teaching and learning involve:

- Infusing DRR into the curriculum and school-wide activities, starting from the primary level, based on scope and sequence of skills and competencies in disaster risk reduction.



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- Identifying consensus-based key messages for reducing household and community vulnerabilities, and for preparing for and responding to hazard impacts as a foundation for formal and non-formal education.
- Investing in high quality teaching and learning materials for students and teachers.
- Prioritizing capacity development in teacher training institutes to teach future generations of teachers.
- Supporting community-led programmes and community engagement in DRR teaching and learning.
- Developing strategies to scale-up teacher in-service training through self-study programmes.
- Supporting research into DRR and education.
- Encouraging children and youth to be champions and leaders in DRR.

Invest in DRR in education



## Further Resources about DRR in education:

UNISDR. Disaster Prevention for Schools: Guidance for Education Sector Decision Makers. <http://preventionweb.net/go/7556>

UNISDR. Guidance Notes on School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness. <http://preventionweb.net/go/15655>

Guidance Notes on School Emergency and Disaster Preparedness. Kyoto University. 1-2-3 of Disaster Education. <http://preventionweb.net/go/12088>

Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management. Integrating DRR into School Curriculum. <http://preventionweb.net/go/4006>

INEE. Guidance Notes on Safer School Construction. <http://preventionweb.net/go/10478>

IFC - World Bank. Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Guidance for Schools <http://preventionweb.net/go/13989>

Comprehensive School Safety Framework and Toolkit  
<http://preventionweb.net/go/31059>  
<http://preventionweb.net/go/29491>

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