



Workshop

Tuesday, 28 March

14:00-15:00

Room E

Education for Disaster Risk Reduction & School Protection

Summary challenges and actions based on a larger desk-study for the ISDR System's cluster on Knowledge and Education for Disaster Risk Reduction.

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DRAFT

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction represents the essential guide for implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in the coming years and it constitutes an unprecedented conceptual shift that takes account of the complexity of action in disaster risk reduction and the large variety of actors whose inputs are required in the pursuit of this objective.

Knowledge and Education represent one of the Hyogo Framework priorities for action and during the 12th International Strategy for Disaster Reduction's Inter-Agency Task Force Meeting (IATF/DR) it was agreed that a cluster approach would best combine IATF/DR and partners efforts and achievements on the issue. The work of the cluster has been organized through a phased approach, focusing on identifying the priority themes, sectors and initiatives and critical gaps in relevant areas of the Hyogo Framework.

The Knowledge and Education cluster, commissioned a desk study on knowledge and education and disaster risk reduction, with the aim of identifying good practice that can be replicated and that can be served as a baseline for future impact assessment, especially at country level. The study also aims to identify how good and innovative practice can be scaled up. The following issues have been examined: a bottom-up approach, delivery/benefice and appropriateness of initiatives to the people living in poverty and an analysis of respective roles, responsibilities and contributions of local and national governments was undertaken, including consideration of the roles of civil society, especially of teachers unions.

Some of the findings of the desk-study are reproduced below in this short summary document and are intended essentially to provoke discussion and thought. Comments are particularly welcome at

this stage of the study. Please refer at the end of the document to the Knowledge and Education cluster's website details, where comments can be posted.

Education for Disaster Risk Reduction & School Protection

WHAT NATIONS CAN DO

No 1 Of nations reporting to the ISDR before the World Conference in Kobe, only 33 of 82 claimed to have national efforts to teach disaster-related subjects in primary and/ or secondary school.

All nations should commit to teacher training and curriculum development to support large-scale teaching of disaster risk reduction.

No 2 At least 17,000 school children died when 6,700 schools were destroyed in North-West Frontier Province and 1,300 in Pakistan-administered Kashmir as children attended morning classes. By one estimate, if Education for All initiatives are successful in the 20 countries that have registered the most deadly earthquakes during the 20th Century, but no special attention is paid to the seismic safety of school buildings, it is possible that at least another 34 million children will be placed at risk to earthquakes while they are attending school.

All nations should review the seismic safety of their schools.

Low cost, effective technology exists for strengthening them and for building new, safe schools at little additional cost. While earthquake hazard to schools has received some attention, very little has focused on other hazards. These include meteorological phenomena such as high wind, storm surge, tornado, lightning strike, wild fire and flood. Many geophysical phenomena also threaten schools in addition to earthquake: landslide, mudslides, and avalanches, effects of volcanic eruptions and later lava flow, and tsunamis.

Nations should develop a comprehensive policy toward school safety taking all locally relevant hazards into account and using location of schools as well as maintenance of buildings as risk reduction tools as well as design and construction methods.

WHAT THE UN & INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS CAN DO

No 3 They can work with professionals, educators, communities, children and youth to ***develop a short list of “quick win” actions that can rapidly increase the safety of schools and raise risk awareness among all those at or concerned with schools.***

“Quick wins” are actions in support of the MDGs that are almost certain to bring big benefits quickly. The Millennium Project's list already includes ending user fees in primary schools and expansion of school meal programs in support of Education for All, as well as actions to support

other MDGs including free mass distribution of malaria bed-nets and massive replenishment of soil nutrients.

No 4 They can *dynamize coalitions and partnerships, facilitate the creation of knowledge networks including all-important South-South exchange, build capacity and guide others to existing resources for training.*

WHAT DONORS CAN DO

No 5 They can *link these issues to all MDGs not just the education MDG.* Previously some thought of “disaster reduction” as a separate agenda that would siphon resources away from the core mission of development. Now the two are seen as one. Similarly, there are many potential synergies among education, disaster reduction, and the other MDGs. These, in turn, link to more integral strategies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs (PRSPs). If the school becomes a center from which emanates into community methods for participatory risk assessment. A community mobilized in this way is more likely to find local solutions to other MDG related development problems.

No 6 Donors should *pick a dozen “fast track” countries* that have considerable numbers of schools in dangerous locations or otherwise at risk and show *the potential for rapid scaling up of school protection.* These countries should receive a large increase of assistance to push such programs forward.

No 7 In Highly Indebted Poor Countries, countries that have many schools at risk and do not show “fast track” potential, *assistance is also required, but perhaps could be combined with “debt for safety” swapping in order to stretch donor country resources.*

WHAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN DO

No 8 Included in the private sector are the *many private schools in the world.* Where they are parts of national or even international networks and associations – such as the Montessori schools, schools accredited by the International Baccalaureate Organization,¹ as well faith based schools (e.g. Aga Khan schools,² Catholic schools, Yeshivas) their *apex organizations can provide guidance and resources so that their students also study safety and their schools are also safe.* In some cases, *private schools can twin* with public sector schools, helping them achieve standards of structural safety perhaps greater than that mandated by national standards and enriching their curricula and teaching resources (libraries, computer or internet access, etc.).

A special opportunity awaits the abbots of Buddhist monasteries that routinely educate young boys (and some girls) for a period of their childhoods. These children too have a right to safe school

¹ International Baccalaureate Organization <http://www.ibo.org/> .

² Aga Khan Educational Services <http://www.akdn.org/agency/akescountry.html> .

buildings, and in addition to the Dharma they learn, these children could be taught elements of community risk reduction so that their lives back in the world can be marked by mindful and compassionate action. This opportunity has already been taken up by many Buddhist leaders as regards conservation of the environment.³

No 9 Professional organizations involved with schools and building *should work with national governments to establish and enforce strict codes of conduct so that high standards are met in school construction.*

A new culture of respect for codes of conduct within professional bodies involved with building schools should be established.

WHAT EDUCATORS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS CAN DO

No 10 Professionals are working hard to enrich education with knowledge important to sustainable human development, peace, justice, and safety. Nevertheless, there are ways that their efforts can *focus more clearly on natural hazards without detracting from the work they do in other important areas.* Considering the loss of life, injury, and disruption of education and normal child and adolescent development caused by natural hazards, one would think that more professionals would seek out more direct and rapid ways of communicating with parents, policy makers, community leaders, and the children and youth themselves. Professionals such as educators, teachers' unions, researchers, engineers, and journalists might be the first point of contact.

WHAT COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS CAN DO

No 11 There is no need to wait for the necessary changes to cascade “from the top down.” Spontaneous initiatives from “the bottom up” are vital for several reasons:

- A school where children or youth are active investigating local hazards can be a catalyst for more general community risk assessment and action planning.
- Spontaneous school based activity can also help to mobilize and focus community energy on the lobbying and networking required to shift government policy and find necessary resources.
- A school active in its own self-defense and that of the surrounding community may well attract the attention of socially-minded corporate supporters and donors.
- Where the risks are high, there is no time to lose in countering them at the level of the school and community.
- Even where the risks are not acute, work on school safety and safety/ hazards teaching in the school can be used to build awareness and project bridges to issues surrounding the other

³ See, for example, the *Harvard University Forum on Religion and Ecology* <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/> and, in particular, the section on Buddhism <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion/buddhism/index.html> .

MDGs such as health and child survival, housing and environmental quality in slums, hunger, and gender equality.

Schools can therefore start right now with the addition of some teaching about safety and natural hazards. It is as easy as taking an hour a week to lead your class out the door and to begin to look with a critical eye at the geographical surroundings of the school building and compound. Paper and pencil is all that is required for teachers and students to begin to map these possible hazards. Even where there are large classes, few resources, or the pressure to “teach to exams,” an hour a week spent in this way can repay enormously in terms of lives saved and the risk awareness of the future generation.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

No 12 Parents who have lost children in school disasters can join together as a community based organization to do whatever they can to prevent other parents from feeling the pain and grief they know so well. In a similar way, just as one example, parents of children who have suffered sudden heart attacks in the UK have formed a group to work on this issue.⁴

No 13 Parent Teacher Associations exist in various forms in many countries. These can become the forum for discussions of what their children and youth learn about safety and hazards and how schools can be protected.

Ben Wisner
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For further information and for welcomed comments, consult the ISDR website at: www.unisdr.org/knowledge-education or contact Ben Wisner at: bwisner@igc.org

⁴ See: *Cardiac Risk in the Young (C-R-Y)* <http://www.c-r-y.org.uk/aims.htm> ;