MODULE 6 : COMMUNITY DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 7

CHILD FOCUSED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, you should be able to:

✔ Discuss importance of children’s participation in DRR;

✔ Analyze case presentations featuring child-focused disaster risk reduction

Key Concepts

1. Children have specific vulnerabilities and needs which have to be addressed in risk reduction. Children possess capacities according to their stage of development which form the basis for their active participation in emergency response, preparedness and mitigation.

2. A nurturing and supportive environment helps children cope with adverse situations, and contributes to building their resilience. Parents, school teachers, government and other duty bearers have to provide these supports to children.

3. A school safety program has many benefits for linking the school to the family and community in disaster risk reduction.

Reference Material

✔ Child-Focused Disaster Risk Reduction
CHILD-FOCUSED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

“While humanitarian principles and human rights conventions ensure that, increasingly, children are given special protection in emergency situations; children’s right to participation remains largely unrecognized. Children continue to be perceived as mere victims of disasters rather than active agents of change who can make a real difference.” - Plan International, 2007

Children’s Participation in Disaster Risk Reduction

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups during a disaster. Factors such as their age affect their vulnerability and shape their ability to cope and survive in a disaster context. Children have particular needs that must be met for their healthy growth and development. Aside from physical threat to life, experiences of fear, violence, separation from parents and caregivers, exploitation and abuse are threats to their well-being and development. Aside from being killed or injured, the loss of livelihood of their families can lead to homelessness and extreme poverty. Exposure to disaster can be a traumatic experience for children, affecting future full development potential.

Recent disaster experiences highlight the vulnerability of children while attending school in times of disaster. Disasters such as the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan where over 16,000 children died in schools that collapsed, or the mudslide in Leyte Island in the Philippines in February 2006 where more than 200 school children were buried alive underline the importance of protecting children through disaster risk reduction.

While children’s participation in the development process is recognized, the recognition of children’s participation in disaster risk reduction is an emerging concern. Although much attention is given to the needs of children in emergencies, it is mostly from the point of view of adults acting on behalf and in the best interest of children. There is less focus on working with, and not working for, children in reducing their vulnerabilities and disaster risk. While much of the supports for children need to be in the context of their family, community and culture, there should be an increased focus in working with children.

The Indian Ocean tsunami was a reminder of that children play an important role in saving and protecting members of the community in times of an emergency with the experiences of Tilly, a young British school girl, and a young Indonesian boy, who both escaped the tsunami and saved the lives of hundreds of people around them.

Children and women as most vulnerable groups, Twigg 2004

Disaster management and guidelines and manuals usually start form the position that interventions to help children are best made through the ‘primary care-givers’-
i.e. parents to guardians. In the literature generally, women and children are usually discussed together as a combined category of people.

However, much of the written material on ‘women and children’ overlook any distinctiveness that there may be in the child’s position.

Other than in the area of nutrition, child-focused initiatives before disasters are rare. Preparedness and mitigation activities have tended either to be aimed at the whole community, or to concentrate on supporting mothers and carers. Usually the starting point is interventions for children, made through the primary caregivers – i.e. parents and guardians. Interventions for children are generally lumped together with women. For example, ensuring that women with children receive warning messages sufficiently early for them to move their children to safety.

**Status of participation of children and young people in Asia, Plan 2005**

Children in disasters often are the most affected segment of the population but also the most overlooked. Findings of Plan’s work in Asia are as follows:

- Children often form more than one-third of the death toll and even more the surviving population

- Children and young people often are not involved in the disaster response and rehabilitation. Their voices are not heard and reflected in the way many organizations and governments react to disasters.

- In the initial phase of a disaster, the typical societal patterns/groupings that protect children may be challenged or broken. Children can be further harmed, abused and exploited by those who take advantage of dysfunctional law and order systems after disasters and by government and aid agencies’ negligence to address these potential damages.

- After disasters, children can feel grief, anger, fear, guilt, and helplessness. However, more attention is usually paid to their physical needs than their cognitive and emotional needs

- Children’s needs to have safe physical and mental space after a disaster to help them deal with these feelings are often not considered

- The education system often becomes dysfunctional after a disaster. The need to quickly re-establish education and return children’s sense of normalcy is often overlooked.

- Children in need of special protection often are the last to receive attention

- The coping mechanisms that exist in both affected and unaffected communities within the disaster-hit communities are often overlooked and underestimated by aid agencies, creating unnecessary dependency on foreign aid
There are few examples of well-integrated disaster interventions that consider children from many directions, who have special needs but who also have special capacities to be independent, strong survivors capable of sharing knowledge and contributing to disaster relief and recovery efforts.

"Disaster Reduction Begins at School": Bridging School, Home & Community

The UN/ISDR secretariat and its partners have made disaster risk education and safer school facilities the two key themes of the 2006-2007 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. The Campaign, entitled “Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School” aims to inform and mobilize Governments, communities and individuals to ensure that disaster risk reduction is fully integrated into school curricula in high risk countries and that school buildings are built or retrofitted to withstand natural hazards. The Campaign’s key partners include UNESCO, UNICEF, ActionAid International, the IFRC, and the ISDR’s thematic cluster on knowledge and education.

The International Conference on School Safety held in January 2006 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India reaffirmed both the HFA Priority for Action 3 “Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels” and the UN Millennium Development Goal 2 to “Achieve universal primary education” by year 2015. Recognizing that every child has both the right to education and the right to safe and sustainable living, set the goal to achieve “Zero Mortality of Children in Schools from Preventable Disaster by the year 2015”. The Ahmedabad Action Agenda for school safety covers:

1. Disaster Reduction Education in Schools
   
   Immediate Priority
   
   Action 1.a: Include disaster risk reduction in the formal curriculum at both primary as well as secondary levels
   
   Action 1.b: Promote disaster risk reduction through co-curricular activities in school acknowledging that children in schools need to develop “survival/life skills” first, along with ‘academic inputs”

   By 2015
   
   Action 1c: Promote exclusive initiatives among children in schools that make them leaders in risk reduction in the community
   
   Action 1d: Ensure effective partnership among schools to share risk reduction education and achieve higher levels of school safety.

2. Disaster Resistant School Infrastructure

   Immediate Priority
   
   Action 2.a: Complete risk assessment and safety measures must be undertaken to ensure zero potential damage to new school building
Action 2.b: Mandatory safety audit of all existing school buildings with respect to their location, design and quality of construction and prioritizing them for demolition, retrofit or repair.

By 2015

Action 2c: Develop, implement and enforce codes with the performance objective of making all new school buildings ready for immediate occupancy following any disaster to serve as shelters of safe havens for the community as well as to restore educational functions in the shortest possible time.

Action 2d: Implement a systematic plan to retrofit and/or repair existing schools to meet minimum standards for life safety in the event of known or expected hazards. Demolish unsafe irreparable school buildings and replace them.

Action 2e. Implement routine checks to ensure schools adhere to minimum standards and safety measures are not undermined.

3. Safe School and Community Environment

Immediate Priority

Action 3.a: Mobilize parent, student, local community and school staff to champion school safety.

By 2015

Action 3.b: Schools to prepare and implement school safety plans including measures to be taken both within school premises and in the immediate neighborhood. This must include regular safety drills.

Action 3c: Promote active dialogue and exchange between schools and local leaders including police, civil defense, fire safety, search and rescue, medical and other emergency service providers.

Action 3d: Schools children must practice safety measures in all aspects and places of their lives.


Immediate Priority

Action 4.a: A policy on school safety which would eventually be integrated with the existing policies on school education must be framed.

By 2015

Action 4.b: Enforce policy through budgetary allocation, strategic programs and effective monitoring.

Stakeholders and roles & responsibilities to implement these actions were outlined and those for children and youth are as follows:

😊 Learn principles and practices of disaster risk reduction

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

Disaster reduction for safer communities and sustainable development  www.adpc.net
Become aware of disaster risks in your community and how to reduce them

Participate in preparing and implementing school disaster plans and disaster risk reduction efforts

Participate in drills and appropriate response to early warnings available in your school and community

Participate as bridges to spread disaster risk reduction knowledge to families and communities

Some Cases from India

Children Themselves: Real Heroes, southasiadisasters.net, 2007 & The Hindu, 2006

The Indian Council started the annual National Bravery Awards for bravery in 1957 to recognize and honor children below 16 who performed outstanding deeds of bravery and selfless sacrifice.

In 2006, 24 children were honored in India with the award for their remarkable courage to save the lives in emergency and disaster situations. Their extremely encouraging behavior convinces that children have strength and can be trusted when disaster occurs.

The prestigious Sanjay Chopra Award had been given posthumously to 12-year-old Master V. Teja Sai and 13-year-old Master C.V.S. Durga Doondieswar of Andhra Pradesh who lost their lives while saving their schoolmates from drowning in the Munneru River. They saved four children among them.

The prestigious Geeta Chopra Award had been conferred on 13-year-old Vandana Yadav of Uttar Pradesh who bravely fought miscreants.

The Bapu Gayadhani Awards had been given to Asma Ayyub Khan (13) of Maharashtra, Sushila Gurjar (13) of Rajasthan and Shilpa Janbandhu (15) of Chhattisgarh. While Asma helped move around 40 children of her institution to a safe place in the floods which ravaged Mumbai in 2005, Sushila displayed extraordinary courage and resolve in revolting against the evil of child marriage. Shilpa participated in the extremely dangerous anti-Naxalite programme.

The other recipients of the awards are Deepa Kumari, Sudhir Jhakhar, Pavan Kumar Parashar and Rajender Kumar from Rajasthan; Manoj Chohan (posthumous) and Anita Singh Lodh from Madhya Pradesh; David Kino from Arunachal Pradesh; Michael N. George and Joel Salim Jacob from Kerala; Parth S. Sutaria, Antara Raju Srivastava and Ankita Ashok Bhosale from Maharashtra; Pushpa, Sourabh Rajwade from Chhattisgarh; Kashika Singh from Punjab; Paonam Babyrose Devi from Manipur; Pooja Kabadwal from Uttarakhand and Rahul Chourasia from Uttar Pradesh.
Growing School Safety Initiatives in India, southasiadisasters.net, 2007

1. **Initiatives by Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) & SEEDs**

During the Gujarat Earthquake 931 students died. The GSDMA and SEEDs, an NGO took on the Gujarat School Safety Initiative. The project addresses 2 issues:

- Awareness and preparedness among school children, teachers and parents to reduce disaster risk in schools and to be prepared to act appropriately in an emergency;
- Disaster management appreciation amongst teachers so that they are able to impart disaster education to children more effectively. Direct implementation of school based preparedness activities in 175 schools and teachers’ training in 25 districts.

The project aimed to:

- Promote a culture of disaster safety in schools
- Reduce disaster risk in schools through structural and non-structural corrections
- Prepare School Disaster Management Plans
- Establish school safety clubs and task forces in schools and provide training to them
- Prepare tools like manuals, games and activity kits for training school teachers and students in disaster management
- Train teachers for creating a culture of safety in schools, and institutionalize the program through training of trainers.

The project has directly benefited about 105,000 students across 175 schools. The teacher training component has raised 100 teachers and has directly trained over 9,000 teachers.

2. **The Right to Safer Schools Campaign by All India Disaster Mitigation Institute**

The Right to Safer Schools Campaign aims to mitigate the impact of hazards on school children, teachers, administrators and infrastructure and to foster a culture of disaster prevention and mitigation through schools. The project encompassed the following activities:

a. **Fire Safety Equipment Demonstration and Installation.** A technical expert led in the demonstration on use of fire extinguishers with supported groups. Then, school staff and students were encouraged to demonstrate the same. The size of a school and the number of classrooms and students determined the number of fire extinguishers to be installed.

b. **First Aid Kits:** Along with the installation of fire equipments, first aid kits were also handed over to the supported schools.
c. **Insurance Policies.** Accident insurance for school children, teachers and administrative staff of the supported schools have been insured against accidents of any kind, even outside the school hours.

d. **Awareness Materials.** The supported schools have been provided with displays, pocket books and relevant publication of AIDMI.

e. **Training on School Safety.** Disaster Preparedness for School Safety training program were conducted for school teachers and administrative staff. Training with children involved mock drills and scientific knowledge on disaster occurrence.

f. **Supports needed by the schools.** Based on need, drinking water facilities, repair work for safety, and construction work for kitchen, walls, toilet and monsoon preparedness were supported.

g. **Economic support to needy students.** Students and parents from poor families, struggling in recovery from disaster were provided financial and livelihood support.

h. **Research activities.** To guide future work on school safety among various groups. Learning from the research is shared with concerned stakeholders through publication.

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**Some Cases from the Philippines**

1. **Students lead a school relocation,** in UNISDR 2007

   Plan International promotes child-centered disaster risk reduction, supporting children to claim their rights to safety and become active participants in emergency response, preparedness and mitigation.

   In the Philippines, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) conducted a risk assessment of landslide for the Southern Leyte region in 2006, determining that, within the Municipality of San Francisco, 8 barangays (villages) were at high risk. These included Sta. Paz Sur and Sta. Paz Norte, which housed a high school and an elementary school, respectively. Actions by the students brought about a prompt relocation of the high school highlighting the power of children as drivers for change.

   Following debates about whether and how to relocate the high school, the headmaster opened the decision to a community-wide referendum to include a vote each for the children of the school. Broadly the students were in favor of the relocation and their parents against it, because the parents were concerned about the children having to travel to school in a different community and the loss of livelihoods with the relocation of a school (e.g. loss of lunch business for local shops). In addition, different political affiliations of the leadership in the 2 barangays led to confusion over the exact risk communications of the MGB. Student organizations in the high school embarked on an education campaign about the physical processes of landslides, and a great many students wrote to...
the School Division Superintendent expressing their desire to relocate. The student’s proposal won the vote by 101 to 49.

The students and their parents helped construct a temporary tent school over one weekend. The tents, water supply and toilets were provided by the international development agency Plan Philippines, along with a scholarship program helping poorer students with uniforms and school supplies. The children reported feelings of excitement about the whole process and did not express any regret about the decisions to move, though they did report some difficult conditions in the temporary school. A permanent new school is now being constructed nearby, with co-financing from Plan. The permanent school will include earthquake mitigation measures such as steel ties on the roof. Toilets are also being built in each classroom in preparation for its use as an evacuations shelter.


The mudslide in Guinsaugon on February 17, 2006 buried an entire village 30 feet under the grounded and ended more than a thousand lives.

To ensure that care for children would be a priority following the tragedy, World Vision Development Foundation (WVDF) included in its emergency response the establishment of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) in 2 evacuation centers. A total of 286 directly-affected families stayed at Cristo Rey Regional High School and 218 families from 4 neighboring villages declared as high risk areas were housed at the Catmon Elementary School in St. Bernard.

Through the CFS, WVDF aimed to provide psychosocial care and a sense of safety to the children. The creative activities allowed children to share their ideas and feelings were designed to help children cope and deal with their negative emotions caused by their tragic experience. By creating opportunities for children to play, express themselves, and interact with other children in the CFS, children could regain a sense of normalcy.

It’s important to include the wider community, especially community leaders, and to get them enthusiastic about providing a safe place for children. The CFS provides an opportunity for the community to unite for a common purpose.

A CFS is an open area where children and youth can come from home and meet other children, learn some age appropriate competencies that help them deal with the risk they face, be involved in expressive and some educational activities and relax in a safe place, which is focused on them. It is both a protective environment and one that enables children’s health physical, psychosocial, moral, and spiritual development. CFS give children the sense of safety, structure, and continuity that provide support amidst overwhelming experiences. A CFS can be
created in a school, a community center, a tent(s), or an open space either in a camp or in a community. It must be a place where girls and boys feel safe.

*Description of the CFS Tent in Saint Bernard:* Orange-colored, with floors made of plywoods, temporary and easy to assemble, spacious, with a visible World Vision logo and child rights banner, a structure near other tents where school children have classes, and tent floor is muddy when it rains.

*What do we bring with us to the CFS Tent?* Story books, drawing/coloring books. Radio cassettes and tapes, musical instruments, coloring book, board games, mats, coloring pens, skipping rope, pencils, crayons, assorted toys, plyboards as makeshift floor; biscuit/snack items, chairs/desks, brooms and trash bags, drawing paper, dolls, slides and ladders, badminton and other sports equipment, TD curriculum facilitators’ guide, puppets, coloring pens/crayons, scissors, baby diapers.

What we found needed? Audiovisual equipment and brochures/information materials about World Vision and CFS, activity materials for mothers so they can do something while staying at the CFS tent with their children.

3. Participatory research to develop Child Oriented Participatory Risk Assessment and Planning (COPRAP Tools)

Mayfourth Luneta of the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP, Philippines) using the Applied Research Grants for Disaster Risk Reduction of the Research of the ProVention Consortium developed a process and toolkit for risk assessment and action planning with children in a flood prone community. The development of the COPRAP toolkit was conducted in Barangay (village) Banaba, San Mateo, Rizal in partnership with Buklod Tao (People Bonded Together, an environmental people’s organization), the Center for Positive Future (a local high school), and the local government unit. The research drew from an earlier project of CDP, Balay Rehabilitation and Save the Children-UK to pilot a child-rights responsive CBDRM in conflict situation involving duty bearers in 7 barangays in Pikit,, North Cotabato.

Working with a core group of 14 community researchers in the development of the research plan and its implementation, COPRAP involved at least 140 children in hazard vulnerability capacity assessment in the 7 puroks (zones) of community. Discussions with children on disaster risk, including community problems and solutions, were facilitated by drawing and clay modeling and by addressing key concerns: the identification of safe and unsafe locations, appropriate behaviors, before, during and after a disaster as well as other dangers and concerns. There were also discussions with the adults in the community on flooding, landslide hazards and socio-economic problems using hazard map and focused group discussions.
The risk reduction action plan drawn up using risk assessment results included facilitation of disaster preparedness planning with the barangay; mothers producing live vests for the children, combining safety of children and livelihood opportunities; swimming drill with the children to test the life vests; putting up a tarpaulin with disaster preparedness messages in each of the 7 puroks.

Sources

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The Hindu, November 15, 2007

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Plan Asia, 2005. Little Green Disaster Book


http://www.seedsindia.org/schoolsafety/


Twigg, John, 2004. Good Practice Review No. 9 Disaster risk reduction: Mitigation and preparedness in development and emergency programming

UNISDR, 2007. HFA Words into Action

For Further Reading


Plan International, “Children and Young People at the Center of Disaster Risk Reduction” for the Global Platform First Session in Geneva, June 2007
**Note**

• Boys and girls have different perceptions and needs. In risk assessment and action planning activities with children and youth, consider having groups for girls and boys separately.

**New Learning and Action Points**

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