

## **GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

### **Education and Safer Schools Session Workshop Report**

The workshop, organized by the Thematic Platform for Knowledge and Education and focused on Priority 3 of the Hyogo Framework for Action covering:

- Development and sharing of content and strategies for teaching disaster risk reduction to children, in and out of school.
- Schools as hubs or centers for community based disaster risk reduction initiatives.
- Physical safety of schools facilities and school disaster management.

#### **GOOD NEWS:**

- Globally we have made the Disaster Risk Reduction Begins in Schools Campaign our own. We have used "Let Our Children Teach Us" as a baseline. In the last 2 years tremendous momentum has been built through the efforts of disaster risk reduction everywhere. This is the beginning of a long and systematic effort to achieve school safety and the education needed to achieve a culture of safety.

- We have seen examples of organizational and professional commitment of time and resources that have led to significant success: comprehensive integration of drr into national curricula at all levels, ongoing teacher training, and national drills that involve every school on the same day.

- We have seen innovative practices in informal education: poster and essay competitions, camps, festivals, and cultural arts. Advocates are now involved in the intense labor of mapping existing national curricula to identify the entry points for drr education and steps are being taken to integrate drr education into standards, and toolkits.

- New and heterogenous post-secondary programs are emerging to fill new needs.

- We have gathered and we are continuing to build a substantial library of drr educational materials that will be available and searchable online

- Over the past two years, important regional have brought advocates together and led to action agenda with the goal of "Zero Mortality of Children in Schools from Preventable Disasters by the year 2015". Some nations and states are responding with a commitment to meet this goal even earlier. Similar regional workshops are planned over the next year leading to an International Conference in 2008 to continue this dialogue.

#### **WE HAVE CHALLENGES:**

- Unsafe schools are still being built with donor monies.

- We still do not know of all of the initiatives and efforts taking place at the local, district and national levels.

- We know what to do. Now we must SCALE UP. We have taught many children, but not enough teachers, and not the teacher-training institutions. We need to move from pilot projects, sustained by ngo's, to standardized materials supported by teacher training with an ongoing place in school curricula.

- We need better educational materials. They need to be active, participatory, and empowering rather than prescriptive. They need to make technical information useful to bridge knowledge and practice. We need to focus this on core competencies. And then to test our materials and learn from our shortcomings. This includes moving from single-hazard focus to multi-hazard, from risk awareness and from response to active risk *reduction*.

- \* We must make use of distance learning tools, cascading models of instruction, knowledge networks, learning circles, and listservs. And also mass media, electronic media, web-based

resources, games, YouTube and podcasts to reach out to youth and Web 2.0 tools to harness collective intelligence through open systems for review, commentary and evaluation.

- We need guidelines so that we learn the "do's" and "don'ts".
- We need to continue to work hard to integrate our efforts with humanitarian and development assistance, MDGs, and climate adaptation efforts.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- We cannot expect political will to arise from a vacuum. We are proving that our focus on education develops widespread consciousness . As children and parents learn about both risks and capacity they create consumer demand, which governments will hear and turn to political will.
- We *must create stronger multi-stakeholder networks*, partner with ministries and boards of education, disaster management authorities, teachers, IFRC National societies, ingos, regional and local ngos, and dedicated disaster risk reduction champions whose only job is to be the bridge between our communities of practice.
- We must think big! and design our solutions to the enormous SCALE needed. We need to build on the good examples of donors who are allocating a substantial proportion of humanitarian response funds to investing in cost-beneficial and sustainable disaster risk reduction education.

We have the sense that IF we could only do ONE thing, it should be to focus on partnering with school systems to educate our children in how to think critically and analytically, to draw upon old wisdom, to seek current scientific and technical knowledge, to assess vulnerability and capacity, to problem-solve and to be proactive to reduce disaster risks.