POLICY BRIEF

ADVANCING COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety

This paper, jointly released by Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS)* and its partners** in advance of the Asia Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), 2-5 November 2016, in India, shows that education rights of school children to access to quality education are being disrupted because of natural and man-made disasters. It calls for countries and their humanitarian and development partners to urgently ensure children's rights to safety and security in schools, and to educational continuity in the face of emergencies are included in the Asia Regional Implementation Plans, AMCDRR declaration, national education and disaster management plans and policies, and collect better data to monitor the progress.

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* The Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS) was established in 2012. The coalition shared framework for understanding and acting to bring about Comprehensive School Safety, including the "3 pillars"; 1. Safe Learning Facilities, 2. School Disaster Management and 3. Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Education, founded on multi-hazard and child-cantered risk assessment, education sector analysis, and alignment of education and disaster management sector policies and plans. The members of APCSS are Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision, UNICEF, UNESCO, IFRC, ADPC and UNISDR.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Of the estimated 1.2 billion students enrolled in primary and secondary schools worldwide, 875 million children are enrolled in high seismic risk zones; while millions also face regular flooding, storms, landslides, and fires. These children are spending up to 50% of their waking hours in school facilities that are often neither constructed nor maintained to be disaster resilient[1]. The impacts of disaster to children and youth and to the education system are dire in Asia Pacific. The region is home to 750 million young people aged 15-24 (UNESCAP); while 25.3% of the region's population is under 14 years old. The region is also the most hazard-prone in the world, where children and youth are disproportionately affected by disasters. It is also predicted to be one of the most affected regions by the projected impacts of climate change.

Every child has a right to quality education, yet across the region many children are unable to realise this right due to the impact of disasters. Challenges in accessing education are made worse when schools are damaged or destroyed (due to poor site selection, design, or construction) or are used as evacuation centres, and because disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies are not being adequately resourced or prioritised through different levels of governments. Being unable to realise this right puts children and youth at risk of exploitation and violence, and contributes towards a lack of economic participation.[2]

The post-2015 education agenda is now defined by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and particularly for education, SDG 4 seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".[3] In addition, during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, world leaders promised to "substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030" of Sendai Framework 2015-2030. The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS), launched at previous Global Platforms is also a chance for countries to sign up as global leaders in school safety. Within these agendas there is the opportunity to continue advocating for governments to commit to school safety and education continuity to ensure children's right to education is protected. All countries should make school safety a priority.

It is clear that supporting education before, during and after a disaster saves lives, protects children and benefits whole communities and countries. Despite this, education is one of the most underfunded and under-prioritised sectors in humanitarian responses, receiving less than two percent of humanitarian aid committed through appeals. The education sector routinely receives less than half the funding it asks for to meet children's education needs.[4] This is a staggering figure considering that children are one of the largest groups affected by crises[5] and that for them continued education is a priority need. To make school safe is one of priorities of children and community resilience, because it will: 1) Protect learners and education workers from death, injury, and harm in schools, 2) Ensure plans are in place for educational continuity in the face of all expected hazards and threats, 3) Safeguard education sector investments and 4) Strengthen risk reduction and resilience through education[6], there are solutions, as this paper shows, but the world must come together and make good on its promises. We know what we have to do.

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II. CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

In 2015, Asia-Pacific continued to be the world's most disaster prone region. 160 disasters were reported in the region, accounting for 47 per cent of the world's 344 disasters.[7] Cumulative impacts of smaller but recurrent disasters also should not be neglected.[8] The region bore the brunt of large scale catastrophic disasters with over 16,000 fatalities - more than a two-fold increase since 2014. South Asia accounted for a staggering 64 per cent of total global fatalities - the majority was attributed to the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck Nepal in April which caused 8,790 deaths[9].

Every year millions of children around the world miss out on their right to a quality education. Whether due to displacement by climate change impacts or natural or human-made hazards, there are currently 75 million children globally in desperate need of education[10]. Around 200 million children in the world per year will be impacted by disaster in the coming decades[11]. In 2015 alone, 1.1 million children were severely affected by the April 25 earthquake in Nepal; 840,000 children were affected by the Cyclone Komen in Bangladesh; approximately 560,000 children were displaced due to avalanches, floods and conflict in Afghanistan; 4.25 million children were affected by floods in Jammu and Kashmir, India; and more than 1 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition since the drought in the Sindh Province of Pakistan[12]. In South-east Asia, 14,500 schools were fully or partially damaged by earthquakes, typhoons, floods, landslides, tsunami and other hazards. In Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand, the annual swelling of the Mekong River causes more than half of the number of schools in the affected provinces to close for many days or even months.

Disaster impacts on the education system range from huge rapid onset to frequent smaller scale hazard impacts, from heavy rains and flooding, to coastal erosion and drought which have massive, and sometimes undocumented, cumulative impact on children's education. As a result of the Nepal earthquakes, many children lost months of education or in some cases may not ever return to school. In some countries where the disaster was much smaller in scale, children were generally out of school for shorter periods of time. However, countries such as Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar often experience similar disasters every year and thus children regularly lose school days, thus compounding the negative impact on their education over their whole school experience.[13] Due to lack of data being collected and shared by Ministries of Education, it is difficult to comprehend the full impact of disasters on the education system over prolonged periods of time.

Combined, Asia and the Pacific constitute the largest region in the world in terms of their share of primary enrolment, accounting for 56 per cent of total enrolment in primary education – with 390 million children in schools in 2009[14]. The vast majority of approximately 689 million children living in South Asia are now attending school. This constitutes a huge population of children who need to be protected in the event of a disaster. However, there are many recent examples of children losing their lives at school when a disaster strikes.

When education is interrupted, classrooms destroyed, educational resources stretched, and when the safety and well-being of teachers and students are endangered, children's futures are threatened. [15] For example, an estimated 3.2 million children were directly affected both physically and mentally by the Nepal earthquake in 2015. Of these, nearly 20,000 classrooms were partly or fully damaged by the disaster and 34,500 of 55,000 classrooms were assessed as unsafe for use, affecting the education of over a million children[16]. Around 870,000 children were left without permanent classrooms and an additional half a million required support to return to learning[17]. It should be noted that due to many of the unsafe and substandard school buildings, the impact of the earthquake on the lives and wellbeing of children and teachers could have been much greater had the earthquake struck on a weekday when children were in school rather than a Saturday afternoon. In 2005 Kashmir earthquake in Pakistan, over 15,000 school children were killed. And almost 1,000 students lost their lives at school in the Gujarat earthquake in India in 2001.[18]

Education plays a major role in the transformation towards disaster resilience schools and in addressing the impacts of climate change and disaster risks. The challenges to make education safe from disasters are pressing in Asia Pacific Region as a whole. However, there are opportunities that can be leveraged for creating a protective learning environment. Many countries have enacted policies on school safety and signed up to Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS). Disaster management within schools is the most important method of educating children and making them more resilient to disasters. Disaster resilience through education ties together the opportunity to save children's lives and make schools resilient, adaptable and safe locations for their students. Schools play an important role in eradicating poverty and empowering students to become change actors and inform their families and local communities on how to prepare and respond to disasters. Without schools, children are vulnerable to displacement and separation from guardians and support networks, and the increased impoverishment of already poor households further expose children to abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. Further adding to the long-term effects of disasters is the disruption of education during critical development years.

III. CRITIQUE OF POLICY OPTION(S)

Since 2007, governments of Asian countries have been assessing their progress towards the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in implementing disaster risk management (DRM) policies and activities as well as into good practices that can be used by other countries in future planning. The Sendai Framework, which was adopted at the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan on 18 March 2015, endorsed a major shift in emphasis from disaster management to disaster risk management, the global target (f) is to "substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030". To contribute for the implementation of the global targets and also contribute to the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals on Education (SDG4) and Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG9), the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools was officially launched in the World Conference on DRR in Sendai in March 2015. It is a governmental global partnership that aims at securing political commitment and fostering school safety implementation globally. The Worldwide Initiative motivates and supports Governments to develop and implement national school safety policies, plans and programs in combination with technical pillars promoted through the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Framework.[19]

In order to save children's lives and protect infrastructure and investment costs in the education sector, many countries across the Asia Pacific region have committed to regional and global frameworks and declarations which implement policy and procedural changes to increase DRR in schools and ensure educational continuity in the event of a disaster. The below is a snapshot of such initiatives bringing together countries across the region with regional and international bodies in advancing and strengthening comprehensive school safety and mitigating the negative impact of a disaster on education[20].

- **The Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS)** actively advocates governments, particularly Ministry of Education of countries, to adopt and implement the Comprehensive School Safety Framework. The goal of APCSS by 2018 is "learners and education workers in the Asia Pacific Region are more protected from death, injury and harm in schools, and their right to educational continuity better-protected, education sector investments better protected, and to strengthen risk reduction and resilience through increased number of countries that adopt and implement approaches consistent with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework".

- **The Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)** endorsed the Comprehensive School Safety Framework in 2012. Under SEAMEO's 2015–2035 work plan "Resiliency in the Face of Emergencies" has been identified as one of seven strategic priorities. Its objective is: "Preparing schools leaders, teachers, students, and local communities in managing and maintaining the delivery of education services during emergencies such as conflicts, extreme weather, and natural disasters."

- **The ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative (ASSI)** is a regional cooperation on a common safe school framework to ensure that children in ASEAN countries are more resilient to disasters and have a safe and secure learning environment. The legally-binding ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Program for 2016-2020 has eight priority programs. ASSI is embedded within Priority 2, "Build Safely: Scaled-up ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative". Intended outputs are to identify schools using the ASSI common indicators for school safety, develop capacity and expertise to retrofit schools, and showcase models of ASEAN safe schools.

- **The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** has been proactive in identifying school safety as a significant issue for cooperation. SAARC has developed guidance on rapid structural and non-structural seismic assessment of school buildings. SAARC has approved policy framework for Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction while the Comprehensive School Safety Framework is one of pillars. [21]

- **The Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School Safety** is currently working on advocacy goals to maintain and develop the regional strategic conversation on school safety.

Throughout Asia and the Pacific, despite progress over the last decade, systematic approaches to incorporating disaster risk reduction and management into the ongoing mechanisms and procedures for education sector management are still lacking. Access to national and sub-national level risk information; school-based assessment of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities; planning and implementation of risk reduction measures; learning and practicing of safety measures for emergencies and disasters; and planning for educational continuity, are not taking place on a systematic basis. The impact of disasters on schooling and on education sector investments is not yet being documented sufficiently, nor are mitigation and preparedness measures being monitored and evaluated. Looking back at past disaster highlights that an increased focus on these areas is needed to ensure children are able to continue their education, even when disasters strike.

The differing levels of both policy commitments and actual implementation of DRR in the education sector at all levels, and the limited resources available to ensure the construction of safe schools, made a significant difference to the negative impact the disasters had on educational continuity across the countries in Asia Pacific. Countries such as Indonesia and Myanmar that experience small-scale flooding each year struggle to receive sufficient funding to ensure wide-spread

safe school construction; capacity building of teachers, local government staff and community members in DRR; and resilience education of students to ensure that they have greater awareness of the risks and potential impacts of disasters coupled with basic training on what to do during a disaster prior to a disaster occurring. Whereas a positive example of DRR in education reducing the impact of disasters on education was with Typhoon Koppu in the Philippines where fewer children were forced out of school for substantial periods due to the emphasis on integrating DRR into education from the national level all the way to the school and community level[22].

The example shows that the national and sub-national governments have critical roles in the planning and development of Comprehensive School Safety Policies and DRR related strategies and plans in the education sector. Safeguarding education requires a thorough analysis of known and expected hazards and risks, action to reduce these, and planning for educational continuity. The consistent provision of safe and quality education is vital to the success of sustainable development objectives, and significantly speeds recovery from shocks and stresses. Moreover, public involvement is critical in all aspects of DRR in Education from central to local governments and to community levels, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, academia and private sectors also have an important part to play. Children and youth have been identified as a major stakeholder in disaster risk reduction policy making as well as important agents in planning for and building resilience education.

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Asia Pacific Coalition on School Safety (APCSS) calls upon the national governments, particularly education ministers, and their humanitarian and development partners to invest in disaster resilient education systems and the participants of the *Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in India to support for the below key elements to be included in the AMCDRR declarations:*

- Countries in Asia region to become Safe School Leaders through signing up to the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools.
- National governments to ensure the enabling plans, policies, guidelines and legal frameworks are in place at the national and sub-national level to support the implementation of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework and ensure the education continuity in face of emergencies and disasters.
- By 2020, national governments to commit to develop a plan to effectively allocate adequate budget for the integration of comprehensive school safety implementation with multi-hazard approaches including conflict, and ensuring the education continuity, into the national DRR and education sector plans.
- National governments to commit to build capacity of children and youth to become agents of behaviour change and school safety champions, and to create enabling environment for children and youth to participate in decision-making processes on how schools can be made safer for themselves.
- National governments to give greater attention and protection to children with disabilities in schools, before, during and after disasters and to ensure that schools provide safe facilities to cater to the needs of children with disabilities so that they would be able to survive during disasters.
- National governments to ensure the safer infrastructures should come with investments in school disaster management and the integration of DRR in school curriculum to have a holistic approach to school safety.
- Ministries of Education collect data on children's attendance following disasters, especially those who cannot attend school for prolonged periods of time or completely drop out of school
- Governments to continue fostering partnerships with all stakeholders, including national and local civil society organizations to collectively implement the Comprehensive School Safety Framework.

For the Asia Regional Plan, *APCSS* would like to call upon the participants of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2016 in India to include Disaster Risk Reduction in Education in the Asia Regional Implementation Plan as follow:

Priority for Action	Targets and Indicators for the Education Sector
Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk	**Public** • Actors in the education sector know the importance of and how to conduct child-centred risk assessments: a) National/sub-national/school-level staff have the capacity to assess hazards and risks b) There is guidance available to all levels to ensure consistent understanding and availability to information **c)** There is a system in place to ensure this information is transferred from the sub-national level to national level for analysis and planning d) Education authorities have consulted engineering teams to create a plan for assessing and retrofitting unsafe schools. **Private** • The private sector is complying with the school assessment and retrofitting plan and is ensuring building codes are followed. **Local** • Build the knowledge and capacity of local government officials, sectoral agency officials including Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health etc., civil society, school principals, teachers, children, communities and volunteers to monitor hazards, exposure, and risks • Support the relevant local government office to collect age, gender and disability-disaggregated data to monitor social vulnerabilities and ensure specific, relevant interventions before and after disasters • Enable the public and private partnership and media engagement to support public awareness of school safety.
Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk	**Public** • Education ministers recognise their responsibility to ensure the safety of school children and staff and the continued access to quality education. • Enabling policies and legal frameworks are in place at national and/or sub-national levels to address key elements of DRR in the education sector. • Organizational arrangements, leadership, and coordination for DRR in Education is established and includes designated focal points responsible at all levels. **Local** • Safe school site selection, design and construction are monitored for compliance/enforcement by appropriate authorities • Schools annually review school disaster risk reduction and management measures (e.g. as part of school-based management and/or school improvement including, but not limited to, ensuring plans for preventing and responding to attacks on education are in place; guidance and plans for conducting school-based hazard drills and evacuation plans are in place, etc.)
Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	**Public** • Support the education sector in developing key policies, guidelines or mechanisms for a common approach to school disaster management. This common approach focuses on conducting ongoing participatory risk assessments and planning, risk reduction interventions, preparing for disaster responses, and educational continuity planning at all levels. • Engage with the Ministry of Finance to find ways of increasing/continuing funding for safe school activities • Responsible in assessing all schools and that they are retrofitted accordingly and new school buildings follow correct building codes • Education authorities promote routine maintenance and non-structural mitigation for increased safety and protection of investments in public schools. **Private & Public** • Contribute to ensure every school (both new and existing) is a safe school from known hazards which include safe school site selection, safe design and safe construction of new school and unsafe building upgraded to the safe school.

	• A prioritization plan for upgrading of existing unsafe schools is being resourced and implemented • Funding is in place to reduce education sector risks • Country has quality and quantity of RRR Education materials for implementation of risk reduction and resilience education at scale. **Local** • Promote informal education on disaster risk reduction and enhance the implementation of comprehensive school safety. • Incentivize best practices and safe school champions and expertise at all levels (students/teachers/schools/national government officials) in the region • Monitoring and Evaluation for CSS is underway at school level.
Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response	**Public** • Education authorities have national and sub-national plans for education sector disaster preparedness for effect response, with focus on safety and security, educational continuity, and protection of education sector investments. • Education authority has established and guides relevant simulation drills, held annually at all levels, to practice response preparedness and to review and adapt response plans as needed. **Private** • Framework agreements are in place to support rapid school reconstruction, and re-supply. **Local** • Organize regular hazard-specific evacuation drills at the school-level to practice response preparedness, review response plans and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and ensure students and teachers know what to do following a disaster (e.g. family reunification. • Provide teachers and children with appropriate life skills (such as First Aid) to be better prepared and equipped for safety and security • Education authorities support schools in developing plans to ensure education continuity, such as how children can continue to learn at home, plans to ensure children are protected and have access to education if the school is used as an evacuation centre.

ENDNOTES

Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety

[1] UNISDR, INEE, GFDRR. 2009. The Guidance Notes on Safer School Construction

[2] Disaster impacts on education in the Asia Pacific region in 2015, Save the Children report

[3] 2015, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, retrieved 22 March 2016, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300.

[4] Save the Children 2015. More and Better: Global Action to Improve Funding, Support and Collaboration for Education in Emergencies, page 8.

[5] It is estimated that 403 million school-aged children live in 35 crisis affected countries – one-third of the 1.5 billion people who live in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. The proportion of children living in crisis is likely to be much higher though if we consider that children make up 50% of populations in 17 of the world's developing countries and that 51% of the 19.5 million refugees worldwide are under 18 years old.

[6] The goal of comprehensive school safety framework. This Comprehensive School Safety Frame Work is evolving in order to be locally tailored and adopted to cover different local aspects.

[7] Unless noted otherwise, data on natural disasters in this paper is from EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database. Available from http://www.emdat.be (Accessed 23 February 2016)

[8] UNESCP, Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2015 – Disasters Without Boarders: Regional Resilience for Sustainable Development for Sustainable Development. Available from http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/APDR2015%20Full%20Report.pdf (accessed 14 October).

[9] Fatality and economic damage data on the 2015 Nepal earthquake in this paper is from Nepal (2015). Nepal Earthquake PDNA.

[10] UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/media/media_91132.html

[11] http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5440_2015_drr-at-sendai.html

[12] Till August, 2015. Sources include UNICEF, humanitarian Action for Children: Afghanistan chapter, 2015; UNICEF, Nepal Earthquake Humanitarian Situation Report; Sphere India, J&K Joint Rapid Needs Assessment of Jammu and Kashmir Floods; government of Pakistan, National Nutrition Survey.

[13] Disaster impacts on education in the Asia Pacific region in 2015, Save the Children report

[14] Asia Pacific-Universal Primary Education, UNICEF and UNESCO

[15] http://www.globalpartnership.org/focus-areas/conflict-affected-and-fragile-countries

[16] Page 56, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf

[17] Nepal Education Cluster 2015, Education, Humanitarian Response: Nepal, retrieved 22 March 2015, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/nepal/education.

[18] SAARC Child Centered DRR framework

[19] WISS leaflet by UNISDR and GADRRRES

[20] Disaster impacts on education in the Asia Pacific region in 2015, Save the Children report

[21] South Asia Regional Policy Framework for Child-Centered DRR-UNICEF and SAARC

[22] Good example was also observed in other earthquake prone countries in the South and Central Asia (Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan), school and community resilience project has been initiated to create necessary links between the school and the community living around the schools to ensure the safety of school's buildings and their non-structural elements against potential earthquake, and education continuity to school staffs and students.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL · World Vision · Save the Children · UNISDR The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

adpc · International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies · unicef · UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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