



## Summary: Research-into- Action Brief

Giuseppe Forino<sup>1</sup> and Jason  
Von Meding<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Newcastle,  
Newcastle, Newcastle,  
Australia

### Research-into-Action Brief series

The series provides concise summaries of academic and grey literature on a range of topics for practitioners working in the fields of child-centred risk reduction (CCRR), climate change adaptation (CCA), and school safety. This summary highlights the main messages in the full Research-into-Action Brief on achieving educational continuity after urban flood events

Find the full Research-into-Action Brief series at:

[www.gadrrres.net/resources](http://www.gadrrres.net/resources)

# Post-Disaster Educational Continuity in Urban Floods

In urban areas, children and youth often represent a large part of the vulnerable population and disproportionately face the burden of risks, including those associated with natural hazards. Floods are among the most frequent type of disaster in urban areas, and major floods are happening more often. Urban floods can have significant impacts on schools and interrupt children's education. The impacts of floods on schools and education include:

- Health and safety: deaths and injuries, diseases, trauma
- School facilities: damage to buildings, damage to roads
- Economic: financial costs for families, destruction of school property
- Educational impacts on students: schools used as shelters during and after floods, canceled classes, poor attendance after floods

Education is a right of all children, and schools should be safe and provide an enjoyable environment for study and socialisation. In urban areas that are affected by floods strategies should be used to ensure 'educational continuity' (as little disruption as possible to education and schooling).

## Working with Children and Communities

Local communities have always used their own strategies to adapt and cope during floods. These strategies often include protecting housing, property, family health, and children's schooling. The strategies used will differ in each community. It is important to remember that communities are not helpless victims; they are central actors who can support disaster risk reduction (DRR) and educational continuity in critical ways.

Understanding the abilities and interests in affected communities is crucial to developing policy, planning and actions that support DRR and educational continuity. Practitioners must work with a wide range of school stakeholders (e.g. students, teachers, staff and families) and be careful not to limit themselves to the school environment alone (Cadag et al., 2017). For example, after some floods in Zimbabwe, an affected community used local resources to construct a footbridge to link the schools with the community and to help children cross to schools in case of flooding (Mudavanhu et al., 2015). Promoting awareness, preparedness and safe behaviour in schools and among communities is relevant both in flood scenarios and in case of associated hazards.

**C&A Foundation**

 **Save the Children**



## Enablers and blockers

Factors that enable (help or improve) educational continuity include:

- Policies that promote DRR across the whole education sector – including buildings, infrastructure, governance, and school staff.
- School continuity planning that details how the school will protect its resources, reduce the length of school closure after a flood, and return to normal activities. This planning should involve children and youth.
- Good communication and co-ordination between and among schools, communities and governments – especially with local governments.

As well as working to improve educational continuity, practitioners must actively fight against factors that block or hinder progress. This often includes advocating for policies that reduce the everyday vulnerabilities of communities in terms of resource access, livelihood and living conditions. This is because flood impacts always differ according to inequalities and the everyday vulnerabilities of children and families.

## Key lessons and applications

Practitioners working in flood-prone urban areas must work with children, youth, communities, schools and governments to support educational continuity. Key lessons that can be used by practitioners include:

- Urban floods have many impacts on schools and communities. Practitioners should assess impacts using context-appropriate and proven methods to understand how to reduce the impact of floods on education.
- Affected people are not helpless and their abilities are central to educational continuity. Practitioners need to put in place strategies to support children, youth and communities in responding to floods.
- Policies and planning in schools can support and improve educational continuity. Practitioners need to help school stakeholders to understand how they can develop and use policies and planning to achieve greater educational continuity.
- Practitioners should encourage adoption of the principles of frameworks such as the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)* and *Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Framework* into national education systems and encourage stakeholders to adopt the principles.
- Everyday vulnerabilities must be reduced. Practitioners can use their position and voice to advocate for policy change to benefit the most vulnerable based on gender, class, disability and race, factors that push many children and youth into higher risk during floods.

## More information

*All the references in this Research-into-Action Brief, and many more, can be found in the Child-Centred Risk Reduction and Comprehensive School Safety Bibliography at:*

[https://www.zotero.org/groups/1857446/ccrr\\_css](https://www.zotero.org/groups/1857446/ccrr_css)

*Find all the references on this topic by using the tag “Educational Continuity.”*

## Readings

Brown, D & Dodman, D 2014, Understanding Children’s risk and agency in urban areas and their implications for child-centred urban disaster risk reduction in Asia: Insights from Dhaka, Kathmandu, Manila and Jakarta, International Institute for Environment and Development.

Cadag, J, Petal, M, Luna, E, Gaillard, JC, Pambid, L & Santos, G 2017, ‘Hidden disasters: Recurrent flooding impacts on educational continuity in the Philippines’, *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, vol. 25, pp. 72-81.

Chatterjee, S 2015, Climate change risks and resilience in urban children in Asia, synthesis report for secondary cities: Da Nang, Khulna and Malolos, International Institute for Environment and Development.

Satterthwaite, D, & Bartlett, S 2017, ‘Editorial: The full spectrum of risk in urban centres: changing perceptions, changing priorities’, *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 3-14.

Save the Children Australia 2016, *No child left behind: Education in crisis in the Asia-Pacific region*.