

## REPORT ON INDIVIDUAL EVENT

Date of event:  Your name:

Event type (tick the box):

- Pre-session  
 High-level panel  
 Round Table  
 Informal Plenary  
 Special Event  
 Other

Event name (write the name below):

Children for Change – For Local Resilience

Number of participants -

Total: 100

### 1) Key questions or issues raised, main challenges or constraints identified (say, max 5):

*If possible, record who raised these.*

1. Involving children means we are more likely to achieve Hyogo framework goals. How can you justify this statement?
2. What do you mean by 'children'? The answer is anyone under 18 – according to the definition adopted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
3. Is DRR too difficult for children to understand?
4. Don't you find that the older people in the community are resentful of the children and what happens if you believe that children are being manipulated by adults or even being bribed to come up with certain points of view?
5. I can understand children being involved in DRR locally in their own neighborhoods, but is it appropriate for children to be part of international dialogues such as this?
6. What is the special added value of using children as agents of change – they are more open-minded as adults and more imaginative

Good examples:

- a. Students in Philippines teaching younger children how to prepare risk maps and organize disaster drills and information campaigns for preparedness
- b. Students in Bolivia advise authorities on how to prepare themselves for natural disasters

### 2) Principal proposed solutions, messages or recommendations:

*If possible, record who offered these.*

1. Involving children makes the effort sustainable; it is a down-payment on future effort. Effective DRR means that every household should to change its behavior to reduce the risk of disaster. Children are key promoting change at household level. Involving children addresses intergenerational poverty and the child-centre MDGs. If children are convinced now, they will contribute to a climate smart future. If children are organized and mobilized they can be very influential. They know what is happening within communities and help to hold government to account for the delivery of Hyogo framework. Even very young children should learn about risks and hazards – childhood is all about being exposed to and learning to understand and cope with risk. Children tend to understand more quickly than older

people what is at stake, especially as many of them have had access to more education than their parents. (Nick Hall – Plan International).

4. Obviously, this depends on the people involved and the reasons why they are upset. However,

a) Elders in the community tend to be less antagonistic to children than young adults, because most children are living at home and are therefore within the adults charge. They are proud of what their children are achieving.

b) Children begin talking to their families about their ideas and what they are learning and so the ideas are already in the families before they reach a wider forum

c) As for children being manipulated or bribed, again, this is a vitally important question and something which must be monitored. However:

e) Any project is as good as it is structured and carried through.

f) As with adults, the larger the number of children involved, the less likelihood of corruption and misuse of funds. Children will police themselves to a large extent, if the adults organizing the project have probity and status.

g) It is important that the adults support the children in their decision-making and that there are checks and balances to make sure that everyone is involved, not only a self-interested minority.

5. Local participation of children is important because if children are taken seriously, they are likely to see working in the community as an exciting partnership. They will have confidence in themselves as agents for change. This will tend to avoid the risks a few years later of frustration and sometimes violent attempts at change – or fatalism, that their input will make no difference. Similarly, their involvement either directly or indirectly in international debates is equally important. Obviously, at global events, we are talking about teenagers not toddlers. But at local level, even the youngest children should be educated about risk and be expected and encouraged to get involved. That's why relatively few Japanese children die in earthquakes. Children offer innovative, unadulterated ideas.

They are often 'invoked' by adults during intense international negotiations "our children's future depends on a sensible decision..." to break deadlocks in negotiations. So, since children have a right to participate in decisions that affect them, if they are to be invoked, they should also be included and involved, especially as they have sensible ideas to offer.

UNICEF Philippines:

Saving lives starts with teaching, educating, training, empowering, enabling and trusting us

Ms. Tina Salisbury: World Vision International:

Progress is more imaginative and effective when children and young people are involved

Mr. Aseem Save the Children:

Reducing risks must involve all levels and sectors of government

UNICEF Indonesia:

Two approaches to raise political awareness; structural approach and cultural approach, which includes women and religious institutions

Recommendations from Plenary:

Spaces should be created for children to participate as well as scientists do, as we have scientific committees, we should also have children committees

John Abuya, Action Aid:

How do children overcome the challenge of making adults listen to them?

=> children empower themselves, take the right of expressing themselves

Dialogue between children and adults is important, communication should never be one sided: process of knowledge creation assuming that everybody can be right and everybody can be wrong...

### **3) Conclusions by the Chair of the event:**

The event provoked both enthusiasm, and some controversy. Controversy, because some in the audience were skeptical, believing that children should be protected from 'affairs of state'. However, the children who hosted the event were impressively confident and clearly knowledgeable about the complex interplay between risk, exposure and hazard that generates disasters. Children and young people can be effective leaders of change. They are not as fatalistic about disasters as adults. They challenge complacency by speaking their minds, producing fresh ways of thinking and a new enthusiasm. To quote: "Children see things we adults don't see and say things we won't say". They are often better educated than their parents and more open to new ideas. They become ambassadors for positive change in the home and global communities in which they live, learn, play and socialize. Focusing investment on children and young people helps us achieve local and global development goals, from the MDGs to Kyoto targets and particularly the Hyogo priorities that are being discussed at the GP.

Ultimately, achieving Hyogo goals is a matter of improved governance, locally, nationally and internationally. The GAR shows that we are not on track and that change has to take place at every level. Prioritizing the involvement and agency of young people is an essential feature in any society's capacity to manage risk and develop sustainability.

The threats that climate change brings emphasize the need to recognize the wide range of risks inherent in development. It is not about 'mainstreaming risk into' development but rather recognizing that development is risk management. Good development is about unpacking that risk, making it visible and transparent, and ensuring that all households, and all societies, especially their children, have sufficient information to take decisions on how much risk they will accept and how they will manage it. Informed and motivated citizens will ensure good governance for managing risks, and good governance will thrive on the input of proactive citizens, including children.

Helping children to learn and also be able to use knowledge about risks and disasters is an effective and predictable low-risk route to a safer tomorrow.

Children organizations as experienced by international organizations working with them are often trust-worthy, which will achieve a lot when given the opportunity

#### **4) Your additional thoughts on the event:**

*(E.g. on tone and success of event, unresolved issues, commitments made by participants, etc.)*

The world's 4 largest children's agencies came together for this event in recognition of the potential crisis facing the world thanks to the increasing impact of disasters and the threat that climate change brings. It is essential not only that children learn about DRR; they must also be encouraged and expected to be involved in community level, local, national and global debates. Plan International, UNICEF, Save the Children and World Vision jointly endorse this statement. Although prioritizing education is a good investment, the best returns only appear when we combine education with programmes that support the active citizenship of young people.