



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education
Department of Education



Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection

Position Paper (March, 2016) Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CC-DRR) Consortium- DIPECHO VIII Promoting and Strengthening School Safety

“Make Every School a Safe School” Safe School, Safe Future, Safe Nation

Introduction to School Safety

Children spend a large proportion of their time at school and therefore it must be a place where children feel safe and protected from potential risks. However, many schools in Nepal cannot achieve this fundamental aim and requires further support from the Government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and I/NGOs.

Children in Nepal are very much at risk by a number of disasters including earthquakes, floods, landslides, and avalanches, with an average of 900 natural hazards causing loss of life and damaged livelihoods every year. The Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CC-DRR) Consortium¹ aims to ensure Nepali children are protected against disasters and other risks through

adopting the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF)². This approach ensures that hard and soft components are equally addressed in implementing school safety interventions.

Impact of April 2015 Earthquake

Nepal’s massive earthquake on 25th April 2015 dealt devastating blows to children and families across a vast mountainous region surrounding the capital of Kathmandu. The 7.9 magnitude earthquake – the worst disaster in Nepal in over 80 years – and a severe second earthquake on 12th May 2015 killed over 8,800 people, including nearly 2,300 children, and damaged or destroyed over 875,000 homes, as well as schools, health facilities and infrastructure. The powerful aftershocks also created even greater emotional distress among the millions of children and adults who were still coming to grips with the profound destruction around them.



- 584 students (571 studying in school and 13 in higher education) lost their lives
- 49 teachers from schools and colleges were killed
- Over 35,000 classrooms destroyed or damaged
- 1 million children left without permanent classrooms and another 500,000 children continue to require support to return to learning.
- The cost of education recovery is estimated at almost \$415m USD³

¹ The Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction Consortium consists of Plan International Nepal, Save the Children International Nepal and World Vision International Nepal along with UNICEF and UNHABITAT as strategic members. The consortium along with its local partners is implementing a school safety project under the DIPECHO VIII action plan for South Asia, co-funded by European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (DG ECHO). The Department of Education (DoE) is the lead Government body for this project. The project is working very closely with National Centre for Education Development (NCED) for technical aspects.

² A global framework in support of The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector and The Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools

³ Source: Post Disaster Needs Assessment, Government of Nepal, 2015

“ I am scared to come to school during flood because we have river near by the school and this area is not safe.” (Shree Durga Bhawani Madyamik Vidyalaya, Class 6-8 (Kachanapur VDC)

Impact of disasters on the education system

When access to education fails to be quickly provided after a disaster:

- Children are quickly drawn into taking on adult roles and responsibilities
- Many children never return to school again; they may never learn to read, write, be numerate or develop an enquiring mind
- Children's cognitive and developmental needs are neglected, leaving them with less support to cope with the distressing impact of the disaster
- Children out of school and without a supervising adult are more vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups, labour exploitation, trafficking and drug abuse, black marketing.

Diagnosis of the Problem

The earthquake has highlighted issues in the education sector, especially with regard to reducing risks and being better prepared to respond to disasters quickly and effectively.

- There is a lack of common understanding of school safety at the national level which is cascaded to the local level. There is a misconception that school safety is only concerned with hardware components and emphasis is given only to construction, neglecting soft components such as community engagement and ownership, school safety planning, standard operating procedures etc. are equally important in ensuring schools are adequately prepared for disasters.
- The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) do not adequately incorporate DRR aspects.
- There is a lack of resources and funding being allocated to effectively implement the DRR and SIP at the school/local level.
- Integrating school-based DRR and community-based DRR is challenging as this has not been given enough support or attention.
- There is no person responsible or an accountability mechanism for implementing DRR activities at the school level causing inadequate DRR integration into school activities.
- There are no options for DRR modules in head teacher and teacher training modules.
- The current curriculum of different grades does not adequately integrate DRR topics.
- There is a lack of clear job descriptions at the local government level to ensure DRR is a priority in the education system.

“ The newly constructed stairs collapsed once, it almost killed one student. They later reconstructed it, but there are still bare iron rods exposed and there is no railings or handles. I don't know why they are not concerned to make it appropriate for children.”

(Shree Durga Bhawani Madyamik Vidyalaya, Class 9-10 (Kachanapur VDC)

What is the government and CC-DRR Consortium doing together to address the problem?

Combined, these issues lead children, their families and school staff to have a low awareness of DRR concepts and thus poor preparedness. Therefore, the CC-DRR Consortium is working with the government to address these issues to help increase preparedness and awareness levels in schools and associated stakeholders. The Consortium is focusing on improving soft components of school safety activities which have received less attention than the hardware activities. As such, the Consortium is working under the leadership of the Government of Nepal, primarily the Ministry of Education (Department of Education and the National Centre for Education Development) to integrate DRR into education related plans (nationally and locally), teacher-training modules, and the curriculum. The following highlights some of the key achievements already accomplished by the Consortium, Education authorities and key stakeholders.

“ If there is any disaster then I will not be able to run because the school ground is full of stones and has many stairs. I might fall and injure myself”

-Bhishma Raj Bhatta(differently abled), class-10, Kalibhairab Ma. Vi, Doti





Children undergoing risk mapping at their school

Achievements

School Sector Development Plan (SSDP): The government has acknowledged the importance of integrating CSSF into the SSDP. The consortium and Association of INGOs in Nepal (AIN) have worked together with the technical group to write the DRR chapter of SSDP which includes all three pillars of the CSSF.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) Guidebook: The supplementary training manual for annual SIP updating now incorporate DRR. Training and orientation are being held for education officials at different level. This training will be cascaded down to the school level. This process was led by the 'Support for Improvement of School Management' (SISM-2) project of the Department of Education and JICA. The Consortium has been collaborating with them to make technical contribution.

Head teacher training: NCED has included school safety issues into existing Head Teacher Training. One day module was developed; and trainers from Education Training Centres (ETC) have been trained and they will be cascading down to Head teachers.

Teacher's Professional Development (TPD): NCED is also working with the consortium to develop one module on school safety for teachers. Once it is finalized then the module will be cascaded up to school level through NCED channel.

“ Being a child club and eco-club active member, I have never received trainings about safety measures. We do different programs and recreational activities in school but about disaster, we don't have any programs to make other fellow students aware of safety and preparedness.”

(Shree Durga Bhawani Madyamik Vidyalaya, class 9-10, Kachanapur VDC, Banke.)



Children expressing what they want a change in their school within 1 year

What are we calling for?

The consortium has taken many steps in institutionalising School Safety and made many achievements. It is essential that School Safety is continued to be prioritised in the long-term by government and donors to ensure the sustainability of this approach. We are calling on the government and donors to implement the following recommendations through support from the consortium and other I/NGOs to ensure all Nepali schools and stakeholders are prepared for future disasters.

1. **DRR and School Safety components remain in the SSDP final document and adequate resources (both hard and soft components) and funding are allocated from the government and donors to implement the plan.**
 - The post-disaster reconstruction framework aligns with the SSDP (with DRR and School Safety components).
2. **SIP guidebook (which now includes DRR) is implemented in all schools in all districts in Nepal.**
 - The school supervisor at the district level and the Department of Education at the national level monitor quality and implementation.

3. **Teachers from all school attend DRR modules as part of the TPD.**
 - The government develop a directive that prescribes all schools to have at least one teacher to be trained as a technical DRR advisor and act as DRR focal point for the school.
4. **The curriculum is reviewed and includes modules or aspects of DRR in current modules.**
 - Through sensitization of key stakeholders, the need for DRR to be included in the national curriculum is realised and a long-term plan developed on how to achieve this.
5. **A government directive is issued to update the job descriptions of District Education Officials to include DRR role**
 - Following the pilot testing of updating roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in 6 project districts, consolidate the findings in a report for the Department of Education who can roll-out nationally.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!!

The earthquake caused devastating impacts but can also serve as an opportunity to ensure children are protected against future disasters. The earthquake has raised awareness of the importance of preparedness. Join us in preparing (7,488,248)* children, (144,000)** teachers, (34,806)* schools and communities to increase their resilience to potential disaster risks.

Source:
* Flash 1 2071
**DOE, 2071

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Save the Children



NCE NEPAL

