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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Bangkok Office  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau  
for Education



# 9 Education and Resilience

Nine priority paths for making schools safer and societies more cohesive

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Without resilience, schools – and societies – cannot bear the weight of climate change or conflict

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## Education and resilience

There is a strong link between education and a community's ability to cope with disasters or conflict.

When a disaster strikes or a conflict erupts, schools are typically closed to provide shelter to displaced people. In situations affected by armed conflict, sometimes schools are targeted by a group with grievances. Inequitable access to quality education and the lack of culturally sensitive or context-appropriate curriculum and textbooks also may incite grievances and conflict.

Large populations of disillusioned, unengaged and unemployed youth could present a threat to societies experiencing such change in their demographics. Addressing inequalities and inequities can promote social cohesion. Involving children and youth in policy and programme development and expanding opportunities for them to promote social cohesion and comprehensive school safety are considered

essential for reducing inequalities and ultimately preventing conflict.

In today's world, environmental stresses also place countries at greater risk of political instability. Yet many countries lack the capacity to confront the challenges of conflicts, natural and human-made hazards and climate change.

Disasters can be mitigated through the promotion of safe schools and the Comprehensive School Safety Framework. Conflict can be mitigated through the promotion of social cohesion, conflict sensitive education and peace-building curricula.

Education ministries, agencies and educators in all positions can be part of a government's front line for preventing or reducing the impact of these contemporary challenges while also strengthening the resilience of children, communities and education systems.

### KEY DEFINITIONS

**Conflict sensitive education:** INEE defines conflict sensitive education as the process to 1) analyse and understand the context within which education takes place, 2) analyse and understand the complex, bi-directional interaction between education and conflict, and 3) on the basis of context and conflict analysis, take action to maximize education's contribution to peace building while minimizing education's potential to contribute to tension, grievances and conflict.

**Comprehensive school safety:** There is growing momentum in support of the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Framework and its three pillars – which include 1) safe learning facilities; 2) school disaster management; and 3) risk reduction and resilience education – to serve as a bridge between development and humanitarian actions in the education sector. The Framework has been developed cooperatively by school safety advocates working globally and is endorsed by UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, and the Coalition for Global School Safety, among others. The goals of the CSS are: 1. to protect learners and education workers from death, injury, and harm in schools; 2. to plan for educational continuity in the face of expected hazards; 3. to safeguard education sector investments; and 4. to strengthen climate-smart disaster resilience through education.

**Social cohesion:** Social cohesion has been described by the World Bank "as the glue that bonds society together, promoting harmony, a sense of community, and a degree of commitment to promoting the common good." The Council of Europe defines social cohesion as "the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization. The United Nations Development Programme describes a cohesive society as a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means."

## Nine priority paths for making schools safer and societies more cohesive

To strengthen education's resilience and role in mitigating disasters and conflict, 89 experts from 12 East Asia or Pacific governments, regional organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), universities, research organizations and community-based organizations gathered together in November 2014 to deliberate and agree on priorities and recommendations for actions across the region.<sup>1</sup>

The consensus from that meeting centred on promoting content that supports both social cohesion and school safety. The participants called for expansion of access to quality education and on curriculum and textbook reform to incorporate content that promotes both social cohesion and school safety. They also agreed on the importance of including communities and youth in education sector planning, policy formation and programme development.

The following summarizes the priorities for action from the regional consultation as well as a set of recommendations from which education sector actors can select approaches and strategies that best serve their context.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Consultation Meeting on Education and Resilience (in Quezon City, Philippines in November 2014), sponsored by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and co-organized with UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Secretariat and the SEAMEO Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology. Countries represented in the consultation were Cambodia, Indonesia, Fiji, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. The consultation was supported by a UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme, known as the Learning for Peace initiative, which is funded by the Government of the Netherlands to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in conflict-affected contexts, including countries at risk of or are experiencing and recovering from conflict. The aim is to provide a more systematic approach to addressing all risks that children face, from natural hazards as well as violent conflicts.



# 9

## PRIORITY PATHS

for making schools safer and societies more cohesive

1

Analyse the risk of conflict and disasters



2

Include conflict and disaster risk reduction in the education sector's planning and budgeting



3

Incorporate the Comprehensive School Safety Framework into education sector planning



4

Carry out comprehensive reform of curriculum and textbooks that is geared towards social cohesion and school safety



Improve children's and safe education

Comprehensive

5

Ensure equitable access to



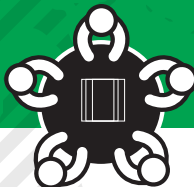
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Monitor and evaluate progress of initiatives for reducing conflict and disaster risks



7

Strengthen coordination and networks



8

Strengthen education governance and local participation



9

Strengthen capacity development in conflict and disaster risk reduction



## 1

## Analyse the risk of conflict and disasters

By involving an inclusive and representative group of education actors at all levels, assess what risks and vulnerabilities associated with conflict, natural hazards and climate change exist and how they are likely to affect the education system. The findings will be crucial to develop and implement risk-informed education-sector planning and programmes.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**
  - Establish an inclusive assessment process
  - Map vulnerabilities
  - Allocate a budget to gather local input
  - Analyse disparities.
- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**
  - Provide technical assistance for conducting risk assessments and conflict analysis
  - Provide funding and other resources.
- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**
  - Participate in assessments
  - Map education facilities
  - Analyse policies
  - Analyse the vulnerabilities within the population.

## 2

## Include conflict and disaster risk reduction in the education sector's planning and budgeting

Education ministries should engage with organizations and communities in an inclusive sector-planning process to decide and articulate preparedness and response interventions that reduce the risk of conflict and the impact of disasters to make education systems (and thus countries) more resilient.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**
  - Coordinate planning processes, both horizontally and vertically
  - Review policies
  - Analyse costs
  - Develop targets and indicators
  - Integrate indigenous knowledge and tools for resolving conflicts and reducing disaster risks.
- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**
  - Provide technical assistance and tools for integrating initiatives on conflict and disaster risk reduction into sector planning through a consultative and participatory approach
  - Align and coordinate support strategies and provide resources and funding and other assistance as needed.
- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**
  - Provide indigenous knowledge, values and local wisdom and skills as inputs into initiatives on conflict and disaster risk reduction
  - Involve youth in the processes to input local values and knowledge
  - Coordinate social cohesion and comprehensive school safety strategies.



## 3

## Incorporate the Comprehensive School Safety Framework into education sector planning

Elements of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework and the Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict can provide ideas on appropriate responses for safeguarding all learning facilities.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**

- Commit to implementing comprehensive school safety measures
- Establish national and subnational contingency plans
- Enact building code and retrofitting policies
- Support national and local coordination
- Incorporate the monitoring of safe facilities into the emergency management information system
- Prevent the military from using schools
- Promote a culture of safety and resilience.

- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**

- Provide training, tools and funding support
- Advocate for educational continuity
- Provide technical support to strengthen disaster preparedness
- Advocate for the prevention of the military use of schools by translating and distributing the Lucens

Guidelines and by providing information on children's rights and international humanitarian law

- Advocate for the horizontal coordination of school safety.

- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**

- Become involved in and contribute towards school-based management
- Build a culture of safety and resilience through curricular and co-curricular activities
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures and early warning early action procedures
- Incorporate the needs of pre-school and out-of-school children and children with disabilities
- Practise, evaluate and improve school-wide and community-linked simulation drills
- Promote parent–teacher–community cooperation
- Develop local strategies to protect schools from military use.



## 4

## Carry out comprehensive reform of curriculum and textbooks that is geared towards social cohesion and school safety

To reflect the historical narratives and cultures of diverse groups in your context, gaps in curriculum content should be assessed and filled with emphasis on education for disaster risk reduction, climate change education for sustainable development, mother tongue-based multilingual education, and conflict-sensitive textbook revision.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**

- Establish an inclusive process for mainstreaming curricula that promote social cohesion and comprehensive school safety
- Conduct reviews and reform of curricula and textbooks
- Develop scope and sequence for risk reduction in curricula
- Set up an inclusive advisory commission to implement mother tongue-based multilingual education
- Train teachers.

- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**

- Disseminate good practices and lessons learned
- Advocate for inclusive, relevant and conflict-sensitive curriculum reform
- Provide support for generating resources for long-term curricula-reform processes.

- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**

- Participate in curriculum reviews and reform processes
- Generate community buy-in and demand more relevant curriculum that responds to the local context and needs.



## 5

## Improve all children's equitable and safe access to education

Address the inequities and disparities confronting children who are poor, disabled, risk affected and from minority, ethnic and migrant groups by finding specific solutions for specific problems. Equitable access to education must include secondary education and must ensure that rural and underserved marginalized groups have increased access to quality education. Develop policies and plans at both the national and local levels to better protect education from threats of violence, conflict or disasters.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**

- Conduct disparity analyses
- Plan and allocate resources for how children can equitably access education
- Enact funding policies to increase children's access to an education
- Establish standard operating procedures for education continuity in a crisis
- Strengthen education alternatives and education in remote areas
- Provide incentives that will increase school enrolment.

- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**

- Advocate for increased investment in education
- Provide technical support for programmes, tools

and resources that promote safe and equitable access to education

- Encourage public-private partnerships for generating resources to fund crucial education initiatives.

- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**

- Advocate for increased investment in education continuity in emergencies
- Develop local standard operating procedures for education continuity in a crisis
- Identify and promote successful programmes for reducing violence in schools
- Support incentives that will increase minority enrolment in schools
- Promote and implement stay-in-school strategies.



## 6

## Monitor and evaluate progress of initiatives for reducing conflict and disaster risks

Through an inclusive process, develop a system for the close monitoring of new policies and programmes and the tracking of work on reducing risks (associated with conflicts and disasters), in addition to developing risk-reduction indicators.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**
  - Integrate conflict and disaster risk reduction indicators and monitoring tools into the monitoring and evaluation approach, according to the specific hazards and vulnerabilities affecting the education system
  - Ensure that conflict and disaster risk reduction indicators and a process for collecting data are included in the education management and information system (emis)
  - Determine all monitoring and evaluation responsibilities
  - Support capacity development for monitoring and evaluation.
- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**
  - Provide technical assistance, expertise, funding assistance and the piloting of scalable monitoring and evaluation models.
- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**
  - Conduct school mapping to assess disaster resilience, risks and access during a crisis
  - Collect conflict- and disaster risk reduction-related information through the annual school survey for inclusion in the national emergency management information system
  - Include pilot testing, revision and capacity development in the implementation of monitoring and evaluation.



## 7

## Strengthen coordination and networks

Coordination among education sector actors at all levels and across UN agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations with the national disaster management agency is frequently espoused but not widely achieved. Coordination needs to be institutionalized.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**

- Strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination
- Establish a secretariat within the education ministry and create dedicated positions within it that focus on reducing the threat of and impact from conflict and disasters
- Support and ensure education sector coordination as well as regional coordination by working with the association for southeast asian nations, the pacific islands forum secretariat and the secretariat of the pacific community.

- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**

- Create coherence with ongoing efforts, including the post-2015 agenda, the sendai framework for disaster risk reduction 2015–2030, the asean

safe school initiative and the global citizenship education initiative, and work with communities on developing contextual programmes and initiatives on reducing conflict and natural disaster risks

- Develop guidelines for research and knowledge management
- Strengthen regional networks and access to resources.

- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**

- Participate in policy development and its implementation at the local level
- Ensure the participation of diverse groups to include indigenous knowledge in the development of policies and programmes
- Enable youth to fill a role as ‘champions’ in linking different agendas.



## 8

## Strengthen education governance and local participation

Greater transparency and devolution can result in positive outcomes for education quality. Building up trust and cooperation through school-based organizations and engaging communities and children and youth in the development of national policies and programmes can rectify grievances over lack of participation and improve relationships.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**
  - Reform education governance to increase transparency
  - Decentralize education governance and empower local education officials and communities
  - Ensure local participation in national policy development
  - Use quantitative criteria for allocating resources equitably.
- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**
  - Provide technical support through resources, tools, pilot programmes, best practices and funding that support reforms in education governance, quality and access.
- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**
  - Set up school management committees to ensure transparency in funding
  - Strengthen local coordination on social cohesion and school safety
  - Strengthen local leadership
  - Advocate for and ensure local support of children as agents of change.



# 9

## Strengthen capacity development in conflict and disaster risk reduction

The integration of conflict and disaster risk reduction and comprehensive school safety into education planning and programmes requires new understanding and skills among education sector actors at all levels – from planners to curriculum developers to district officials to teachers. Long-term strategic reform of the teacher-development system, including pre-service and in-service, is required.

### Prioritized actions

- **Government:**

- Ensure that conflict and disaster risk reduction approaches are embedded within teacher education
- Support teacher training in pedagogy that promotes curriculum reform efforts in conflict contexts
- Provide teacher training on social cohesion and implement long-term, strategic reforms of teacher education that promotes peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive education
- Advocate with education leaders and head teachers to change mind sets and create political will for transforming teacher education and training
- Develop distance-learning self-study materials and visual/video training materials that demonstrate standard operating procedures, school drills and good teaching practices in disaster risk reduction

- Reflect requirements on competency in conflict and disaster risk reduction in teacher recruitment and promotion policies
- Give social recognition and awards for champion teachers and ensure that disaster risk reduction is viewed as part of teachers' current work.

- **UN agencies, NGOs and IFRC:**

- Create mechanisms for regional organizations, such as asean, pifs, sopac, seameo, unicef and unesco, to provide technical expertise to countries
- Support the scaling up of capacity development.

- **Communities, schools and community-based organizations:**

- Participate in the monitoring of teacher performance
- Support and participate in training on conflict sensitivity and diversity.

**For more information on the Regional Consultation Meeting on Education and Resilience, including the detailed guidance document, please go to: [www.educationandresilience.org](http://www.educationandresilience.org).**

# BUILDING RESILIENCE :

# 5

**challenges**  
for the education  
sector and  
**suggestions**  
for what can be done

## Lack of access to quality education and safe schools

Establish regulations to promote inclusion and reintegration of children affected by conflict and disasters

Conduct community-based school mapping of risks and hazards

Review and revise existing building codes and create enforcement mechanisms

Set up contingency planning and standard operating procedures on education continuity during emergencies

Partner with other government agencies and sectors in funding and planning

## Lack of capacity to integrate conflict and disaster risk reduction into the education sector

Advocate with education and finance ministries/departments and donors

Promote collaboration between education sector and national disaster management agency

Use inclusive process to conduct multi-hazard assessment

Support government in its monitoring framework

Partner with other government agencies and sectors in funding and planning

Ensure balance in policy and programmes between scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge and skills



## Lack of coordination with and participation of local community and schools

Help local government and communities develop contextualized policies, programmes and initiatives

Strengthen vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms

Make risk assessment compulsory for all schools

Advocate for involvement in national sector planning process for conflict resolution and disaster risk reduction

Advocate with communities to see and engage children and youth as agents of change

## Lack of appropriate curriculum and textbooks

Draw upon civil society to incorporate conflict-sensitive content, reform of teaching of historical narratives and education for climate change and sustainable development

Include all stakeholders as well as indigenous knowledge, values and skills in curriculum reform process

Integrate life skills, human rights and civic education into curriculum and teacher training

Implement mother-tongue education in early childhood development and up to grade 3 education

## Inadequate capacity development

Initiate long-term strategic reform of teacher education to promote peace-building, conflict resolution and disaster risk reduction

Expand the capacity of education officials

Recruit ethnic minority teachers for mother-tongue language support and indigenous knowledge transmission

Set up monitoring framework for teacher performance in conflict sensitivity and diversity

Train engineers, contractors and construction workers in national building codes



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The education sector can better prepare tomorrow's schools and communities to avoid adverse impact of crises and better cope with disasters and conflicts

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