

STRATEGY PAPER

BASIC EDUCATION AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

This strategy paper outlines the services provided by the sectoral projects "Education and Conflict Transformation" and "Disaster Risk Management" in linking basic education and disaster risk management. It is aimed in particular at personnel in international cooperation engaged in promoting basic education, emergency/transitional aid, disaster preventive reconstruction and disaster risk management. Disaster risk management is about preventing disasters caused by natural events such as earthquakes, floods or volcanic eruptions.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BASIC EDUCATION AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

More than 80,000 schoolchildren and 3,000 teachers in Sri Lanka were affected by the tsunami at the end of December 2004. Altogether 182 schools were destroyed. Ninety-five schools must be rebuilt at new, safe sites. Japan in contrast has already learned from earlier disasters: schools are earthquake-proof. Primary school children are already made familiar with natural hazards and learn how to prepare for natural disasters. They always have their "small disaster set" with them: a pocket torch, a whistle and a pocket radio.

These examples already illustrate the three core fields of activity for disaster risk management in the education sector: instilling a long-term risk awareness with methods of risk mitigation, training in lifesaving responses in emergencies and the construction of disaster-resistant schools.

Disaster risk management in basic education work.

Risk awareness and risk-mitigating and lifesaving responses in emergencies can be imparted in basic education through both in-school and out-of-school education on the one hand and supplementary information and educational events on the other.

A culture of safety and resilience calls for risk awareness on the part of citizens and a readiness to take preparatory measures. Education for disaster risk management instils this risk awareness. It is important here to account for and apply traditional and local knowledge in protection against natural disasters. A major challenge is making the complex causal correlations between human behaviour and environment understandable to children and youth. Education for disaster risk management can be imparted in different ways, through passing on experience in the family, education courses, information and educational events using new technologies (e.g. Internet) and media, for example.

Education in risk and hazard awareness should begin already in early childhood so as to establish it firmly and sustainably in society. Teachers, youth and children can act as multipliers for disaster risk management awareness in all social areas. There are many ways to assimilate risk management aspects in everyday life in and outside school. Teachers, children and youth must be made aware and given suitable information material for this.

Disaster risk management can be mainstreamed in in-school and out-of-school education, curriculum development and teacher training. The measures are aimed at

- a) the recognition and understanding of natural hazards and their significance for people's personal environment and for social development,
- b) the acquisition of knowledge and suitable competencies to take actions in disaster prevention and mitigation in families, schools and communities,
- c) the acquisition of knowledge on measures for response to disaster and in acute situations

Information and educational events can also contribute to raising public risk awareness beyond formal education. At the International Day for Disaster Reduction on 13 October 2004, for example, the UN/ISDR announced a writing and painting competition for children in Africa. At a ceremony in January 2005, the winners were awarded prizes for their contributions, which were then published. This kind of event helps people to appreciate how they intervene in the natural environment and actively increase the risk of natural disasters. It also publicizes measures in disaster risk management.

The need for disaster-resistant school buildings

A safe school is located in a danger-free zone or has been built to withstand an extreme natural event. School safety can be achieved through measures such as land use planning, structural reinforcement and emergency plans. In the long run, improving quality and constructing new, safe school buildings should be a component of national development planning. A safe and disaster-resistant school is important to reduce the number of victims amongst schoolchildren and teaching staff. In addition, schools are generally known refuges during and after a disaster. These so-called safe havens must therefore be taken into explicit account in disaster management.

School buildings represent a large investment for a municipality, so they should be built to last and that also means to be disaster-resistant, because building/rebuilding a school always incurs heavy costs and this places an additional burden on scarce budget funds in times of emergency.

Specific lines of action for development cooperation

Under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction - ISDR, UNESCO has undertaken to support research and development in know-how to contribute actively to a resilient society. The contribution education can make to reduce vulnerability was also stressed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005 in Kobe, Japan. Education is cited in the final declaration and specified in the plan of action for 2005-2015 as one of six major activities¹. Since the population in poor countries in particular frequently suffer from the consequences of extreme natural events, international development cooperation can make a substantial contribution here in three areas.

¹ Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Building the resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. www.unisdr.org/wcdr
World Conference on Disaster Reduction 18.-22.1.2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan. Hyogo Declaration www.unisdr.org/wcdr

1. Building safe, disaster-resistant schools and educational facilities

- Safe sites are defined using a comprehensive risk analysis.
- New schools are built for disaster resistance in compliance with building regulations.
- Existing schools are assessed and brought up to regulation standards through structural reinforcement if necessary.
- Minimum standards for regionally adapted building regulations are developed and applied.
- Schools are accorded special attention in land use and development planning.

2. Introduction of disaster risk management measures in schools and educational facilities

- Schools prepare an emergency plan adapted to the prevalent natural hazard and in line with the municipal emergency plan.
- Teachers are qualified to take suitable measures in the event of a disaster.
- The children are aware of the disaster risk and heed warning signs and signals accordingly.
- The parents know that the school is a disaster-resistant refuge (safe haven) and that teachers are qualified to take appropriate measures in the event of a disaster.
- The schools are equipped in line with standards to serve as safe havens and emergency shelters.
- Regular disaster risk management training is carried out with teachers, pupils and parents.

3. Integration of disaster risk management in education measures as well as information and educational events

- Disaster risk management, including long-term prevention and disaster risk management, forms part of the curricula for school and out-of-school education as well as teacher education.
- Teachers and if necessary parents are trained in disaster risk management.
- Teaching materials for teachers and pupils required to integrate disaster risk management in relevant school subjects have been developed and are available in sufficient number.
- National education ministries and national UN platforms for disaster risk management are supported. Through best practices and contributions to dialogue events and conferences on disaster risk management (e.g. UNESCO International Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2015), the theme of education and disaster risk management is addressed in national and international decision-making processes.
- Awareness of dangers and risk perception is raised through information and education events to highlight the connection between natural hazards and a vulnerable society.

Range of services

provided by the sector projects "Disaster Risk Management" and "Education and Conflict Transformation".

1. Know-how transfer on strategies and instruments in disaster risk management, including project experience from Latin America, Africa and Asia.
2. Training for German development cooperation personnel in disaster risk management.
3. Advisory services:
 - Preparing thorough risk analyses accounting for sociocultural and socioeconomic aspects.
 - Developing teaching and learning materials for integrating disaster risk management in in-school and out-of-school education and in teacher education.
 - Mainstreaming disaster risk management in curricula of in-school and out-of-school education as well as teacher education.
 - Designing and running awareness and qualification courses for disaster risk management in teacher education.
 - Implementing disaster risk management measures.
 - Capacity building of organizations and authorities in disaster risk management.

LITERATURE:

BMZ (2004): Disaster Risk Management – Contributions by German Development Cooperation. Materialien 136. Bonn.

GTZ (2001): Disaster Risk Management – Working Concept. Eschborn.

GTZ (2004): Disaster Risk Management in rural Areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. Selected instruments. Eschborn.

GTZ (2004): Guidelines. Risk Analysis – a Basis for Disaster Risk Management. Eschborn.

INEE (2004): Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction

ISDR (2004): Living with risk (p. 236-252). Geneva.

UNESCO/UNEP: APELL-Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level.

Villacis, C. A. et al.: The UNESCO School Project: an educational component of the UNESCO cross-cutting theme initiative: Reduction of natural disasters in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

WCDR (2005): Thematic Discussion Paper Cluster 3: Knowledge, innovation and education: Building a culture of safety and resilience.

LINKS:

German Committee for Disaster Reduction: www.dkkv.org

GTZ advisory project: Disaster Risk Management in Development Cooperation: www.gtz.de/disaster-reduction

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies: www.ineesite.org

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction: www.unisdr.org

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