



48TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION Inclusive Education: The way of the Future

SIDE-EVENT 3 REPORT

Date	Wednesday, 26 th November 2008
Side-Event Title	SIDE-EVENT 3 Policy Dialogue on “Disaster Risk Reduction: An Essential Contribution to Inclusive Education”
Organisers	UNESCO, UNICEF and UNISDR
Speakers	The Policy Dialogue was moderated by Dermot Carty , Deputy Director, Emergency Operational Services (EMOPS), UNICEF

Panel representatives included H.E. **Dr. Ishenkul Boldzhurova**, Minister of Education and Science, Republic of Kyrgyzstan; H.E. **Professor Arslan Abdussamet**, Deputy Undersecretary of National Education of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. **Mr Alireza Ali-Ahmadi**, Minister of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, **Mr. Sadayuki Tsuchiya**, Deputy Director-General for Policy Evaluation, Ministry of Education, Culture Sports, Science and Technology, Japan; **Mr. Sálvano Briceño**, Director, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), Geneva, **Mr. Badaoui Roubhan**, Director, Section for Disaster Reduction, UNESCO, Paris; **Mr. Rajib Shaw**, Kyoto University, Japan; and **Ms. Marla Petal**, Interim Co-Director, Coalition for Global School Safety and Disaster Prevention Education (COGSS-DPE).

The Director of UNISDR also presented the “Risk Reduction of Critical Infrastructure” initiative on behalf of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) of the World Bank.

Documentation The Side-event was supported by: 1) a detailed policy document entitled “Disaster Prevention for Schools: Guidance for Education Decision-Makers” which highlights the relevance of disaster prevention education for Ministers of Education's mandate and provides concrete recommendations to implement disaster prevention education, 2) the Hyogo Framework for Action which clearly highlights Education and Knowledge as its Priority 3, and 3) a compilation of good practices on integrating disaster risk reduction into school curricula and school safety programmes worldwide entitled “Towards a Culture of Prevention: Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School - Good practices and Lessons Learnt 2007”.

A valuable publication on Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction jointly produced by Kyoto University and the UNISDR was also warmly welcome by participants.

Objectives The Policy Dialogue aimed at sharing the successful experiences and good practices of Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Japan and Iran as well as selected key technical partners in integrating disaster risk reduction into school curricula and in building disaster-resilient school infrastructures so as to help define strategic recommendations and tools to Ministers of Education to facilitate the implementation of disaster risk reduction within the Education sector, towards a more Inclusive Education.

Outcomes The Policy Dialogue recognized that natural disasters represent a major cause of children's exclusion from the education system. By destroying their school infrastructures and taking away the lives of teachers, children indeed suffer from a severe disruption of the educational system and are denied access to one of the most fundamental basic human rights: the right to education. Disabled children, low-income and ethnic minorities living in disaster-prone areas, as well as children displaced as a result of a disaster, were recognized as highly vulnerable and, as part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, should be entitled to an equitable access to education.

The discussions clearly highlighted that Governments have the moral imperative to provide all children with the necessary knowledge about disasters, risks and vulnerabilities to disasters and to build specific skills to empower them in taking well-informed decisions and actions at times of disasters. Awareness-raising and training initiatives such as the series of children handbooks and Internet course materials developed by Turkey for classrooms use, the national disaster drills organized in Japanese schools, country-wide safety drills and painting competitions, songs or dances as practiced in Iran and other

parts of Asia, were acknowledged as valuable tools to bring an increased understanding and reflection process on disasters, risks and vulnerability reduction whilst developing useful "survival" skills among children. In this context, the discussions highlighted the importance to build on local indigenous knowledge and practices which traditionally encompass a wealth of expertise and long-standing experience in coping with disasters, which could serve as a good basis to support the formal education process on disaster risk reduction and thus should be integrated into school curricula. Turkey and Japan were particularly commended for their successful efforts in integrating such awareness-raising programmes as part of school curricula, in particular a children storybook on tsunami disaster prevention (Japan) and Turkey's Disaster Awareness and Emergency Preparedness for seismic safety which trained 1.2 million school children, 66,000 teachers and 15,000 school-based basic disaster awareness instructors, and reached out to 5 million school children in the most disaster-affected provinces.

A strong call was made to Ministers of Education to make disaster risk reduction a priority as part of national Education agendas, and to include school safety as part of their regular mandate so that required investment be made to protect education assets, ie school buildings, teachers and children as well as educational and training materials against the impact of disasters. The Policy Dialogue acknowledged that a good number of valuable school safety initiatives and guidance documents on building disaster/resilient school infrastructure have been developed over the past decade but clearly highlighted the significant gap in ensuring existing schools' safety. A few successful initiatives in this area were identified during the discussions as possible models for replication and sources for inspiration. This is the case of Turkey's 2006 code for analysis and retrofitting of older buildings and the vast and costly programme of seismic retrofitting that is underway in Japan. Turkey's special focus in its retrofitting efforts on strengthening the resilience of dormitory schools due their higher vulnerability caused by students' full time presence, was also highlighted as an interesting approach. In view of the vital and central role schools play as knowledge heaven but also as community shelters at times of emergencies, Governments have a primary responsibility to ensure their resilience to disasters as well as the effective protection of school children during schooling time. They were requested, to that end, to take the leadership at the national level in securing the construction of disaster-resilient school infrastructures and the enforcement of building codes for schools.

Legal actions have been taken in the above countries and others worldwide to ensure infrastructures resilience. Iran has however

developed a specific legal framework to promote specifically disaster-resilient school infrastructures through the "School safety Act" which was encouraged for replication. Innovative measures were also identified through the discussions, such as the Public Private Partnership initiative developed in Turkey towards building safer schools and communities. The "Risk Reduction of Critical Infrastructure" of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) of the World Bank also promotes the construction of new schools and other critical infrastructures (such as hospitals), to higher standards of disaster resilience as countries accelerate their efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Technical assistance includes support for mapping and vulnerability analysis, the development of guidelines for disaster-resilient construction, assistance in creating regulatory frameworks, technical skills and capacity building for teachers.

Finally, building a collective and coordinated approach to promote education and knowledge on disaster prevention was recognized as a crucial element to impact positively and effectively on vulnerable communities' livelihood and survival at times of disasters. The UN Thematic Platform on Knowledge and Education (TPKE) emerged from the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (January 2005, Kobe, Japan) and grouped together international organizations, civil society representatives, technical experts in disaster risk reduction and from the education sector, community networks and selected government partners to advocate for and promote the integration of disaster risk reduction in the education agenda of Governments. The integration of Disaster Risk Reduction Education as part of the International Conference on Education (ICE)'s agenda is, for instance, a direct result of the Platform's efforts. Among these community networks, the Coalition for Global School Safety and Disaster Prevention Education (COGSS-DPE) works closely with TPKE in the development of a new information system, the Disaster Risk Reduction Educational Material Collection (DREAM Collection) which will make a thousand of highly valuable documents such as publications, handbooks and guidelines, among others, to Governments to serve as possible models and better guide them in implementing disaster risk reduction education and school safety programmes.

As a result of the above, and with the support of interventions from the floor, a strong call was made for an enhanced political commitment of Ministers of Education to recognize school safety and disaster prevention education as part of their regular mandate and national education agenda, as well as as a pre-requisite for inclusive education, in order to meet the objectives of UNESCO's "Education for All" initiative of sending ALL children to school by 2015, the Hyogo Framework for Action

(HFA)'s Global Culture of Resilience and Safety by 2015 and the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Education. It was also recommended to adopt a child-right based approach and to create school safety commissions that would link to UNESCO National Commissions and National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, where they exist, to advocate for disaster risk reduction education and safe school facilities with Ministries of Education.

Links and implications for the 48th Session of the ICE

The Policy Dialogue discussions built on the official recognition of Disaster Prevention Education as a priority policy issue for Inclusive Education at the ICE Regional Preparatory Conference for Asia Pacific (May 2008, Bali, Indonesia). On that occasion, Asian Governments expressed the importance to further discuss Disaster Prevention Education in the overall framework of ICE's discussions on Inclusive Education. As such, the discussions of the Policy Dialogue were highly relevant to the 48th session of the ICE.

The interest demonstrated by Education experts within and outside the Policy Dialogue in the issue of Disaster Prevention Education and School Safety as well as the various requests for guidance on how to integrate this subject as part of the Education sector clearly shows a gradual recognition of the relevance of Disaster Prevention Education to Ministries of Education's mandate in promoting a more inclusive and equitable education.

The 48th Session of ICE was a first opportunity for direct interaction between Ministers of Education, Education sector representatives and disaster risk reduction experts from around the world. This awareness-raising and high-level advocacy exercise allowed Education decision-makers to better understand the issue of disaster prevention education and school safety, and served as a valuable basis for a deeper reflection process on its contribution to Inclusive Education and to facilitate the task of Ministers of Education in achieving the world objectives of an Education for All and Universal Education.

The richness of the debate would certainly have benefited to all Ministers of Education present at ICE in the context of a broader discussion in a plenary session. In order not to lose the wealth of expertise, experiences and valuable recommendations shared during the Policy Dialogue, it would be highly recommended to pursue the discussion on Disaster Prevention Education and School Safety in future ICEs and insert it as part of Plenary session's agenda. The UN Thematic Platform on Knowledge and Education and partner members will remain at IBE's disposal to organize such discussions, as appropriate.