

Concept Note: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) 2024 ***'Empowering the next generation for a resilient future'***

Introduction

Increasing disasters, many of them driven and exacerbated by climate change, threaten the well-being of children and youth. According to UNICEF, approximately one billion children worldwide are at extremely high risk due to climate impacts, including climate-related disasters.¹ In 2022, the number of children affected by flooding in Chad, Gambia, Pakistan and Bangladesh was the highest in over 30 years². Beyond the risk of death and injury, children in the aftermath of a disaster face cascading impacts such as disruptions in schooling, nutrition, and healthcare and protection issues.

To protect children from disasters, countries must consider their vulnerabilities and needs when designing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies. It is equally important that children and youth be empowered and provided "the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction," as called for in the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. This also aligns with the calls to action of the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework, which called for "the full, equal, meaningful and inclusive participation" of youth and the promotion of "a culture of disaster prevention."

Empowering children, especially through education, can enable them to protect themselves and to become agents of change in their families and communities by sharing what they learned. This is particularly relevant in the context of the global push to expand early warning systems under the UN Secretary-General's [Early Warnings for All](#) initiative.

The 2024 theme

To achieve the goal of the Sendai Framework of reducing global disaster risks and losses, the theme of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) 2024, which falls on 13 October, will be on the **role of education in protecting and empowering youth for a disaster-free future**. The theme is aligned with the upcoming [Summit of the Future](#), planned for September 2024, where 'youth and future generations' will be one of its five priorities.

Call to action

The International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2024 calls on countries to harness the education sector to reduce the disaster risks of school-aged children, especially by investing in two key areas:

1. **Protect children and youth through safe schools and education facilities:** children are entitled to be safe in their schools and this starts with ensuring schools are disaster-resilient and are part of disaster early warning systems.

¹ [Disaster risk reduction and recovery | UNICEF](#)

² [Over 27 million children at risk as devastating floods set records across the world \(unicef.org\)](#)

2. **Empower children and youth to be safe** through age-appropriate education to understand and act on the risks they face. This includes building their preparedness to take early action in response to early warnings. Empowered children become agents of change for more resilient communities.
3. **Endorse and implement** the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030](#)³, developed by the [Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector \(GADRRRES\)](#), which is chaired by UNESCO and UNICEF.

Social media campaign

Partners are encouraged to publish and share success stories around the calls to action. Examples include:

- Publicizing national endorsements of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework.
- The retrofitting or construction of schools to be resilient to disasters.
- Insertion of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in school curricula.
- School-organized disaster evacuation drills.
- Creation of engaging learning materials and activities, such as cartoons, comics, competitions, songs or films, aimed at educating children about disaster risks.
- Teacher-led demonstrations of the UNDRR-created '[Stop Disasters](#)' video game.

When promoting these examples, partners are encouraged to use the International Day's hashtags [TBC]:

- #DRRDay
- #SafeChildrenSafeSchools

Key messages

"Young people must be equipped with skills and knowledge to shape a cleaner, greener, more climate resilient future," António Guterres, UN Secretary-General.⁴

"Decisions made today shape the disasters of tomorrow. We owe it to future generations to empower them to reduce their disaster risks," Paola Albrito, Acting SRSG and Director of UNDRR.

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- ³ The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) is structured around enabling systems and policies, and three intersecting pillars:
 1. Safer School Facilities,
 2. School Safety and Educational Continuity Management,
 3. Risk Reduction and Resilience Education.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2023-08-12/secretary-generals-message-international-youth-day-scroll-down-for-french-version>

"Young people are not just passive victims. They have an active role to play as leaders, collaborating and co-creating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation solutions," Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director.⁵

- Disasters are growing and impact the well-being of children and youth
- Every child and youth deserves to be protected from disasters, especially at school.
- Schools have a critical role in promoting a culture of disaster prevention and empowering young people to understand and act on the risks they face.
- Early warning systems should be accessible to children and youth so that no one is left behind
- Building the preparedness of children and youth can help protect entire families and communities.
- Countries need child-centred DRR policies. This means integrating the needs, vulnerabilities and ideas of children into disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation plans, with resources dedicated to their implementation.
- Child-centred DRR is grounded in the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Schools should be safe learning spaces, where children and staff are protected from all risks
- The Comprehensive School Safety Framework offers governments a way to protect children and schools from all risks and hazards in the education sector
- Children and youth have the right to protection in schools, not to have their education interrupted, and to participate in decisions that affect their future.
- Over 1 billion children have had their lives disrupted by disasters since 2000, with over 80,000 schools damaged or destroyed. Child rights must be protected for #safechildrensafeschools.
- We're calling on governments and partners to act now to commit to implementing the Comprehensive School Safety Framework to protect children, educators, staff, & schools - we need a multi-hazard approach to school safety.

Additional resources

- [Words into Action on Engaging Children and Youth in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building](#) (2020).
- [The Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030 \(2022\)](#)
- [The Global Children and Youth Statement on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (2022).
- [Committing to Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (2015).
- [The Children's Charter for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (2011).
[Sendai Framework for Children](#) (2015).

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/unicef-executive-director-catherine-russells-remarks-2022-global-platform-disaster>