

Eighth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction,
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**Concept Note for Thematic Session 1-4: Enhanced risk awareness, communication
and education for the whole of society**

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Overview of global progress made

The Midterm Review (MTR) of the Sendai Framework highlighted notable progress in risk communication and education, recognizing that investments in greater DRR

capacities must be complemented by a broader-based culture of risk awareness and prevention. There have been improvements in the use of technology for disseminating disaster risk information, with countries in 2025 increasingly leveraging community-based disaster response systems, mobile apps, cell broadcast, and location-based SMS to deliver real-time early warnings. Some countries are also making progress in visualizing disaster risk using GIS and other tools. Educational initiatives building an all-hazards approach to school safety and resilience, including integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) into school curricula, have also expanded, with over 70 countries now endorsing the Comprehensive School Safety Framework.

Despite these advancements, much remains to be done to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework and ensure comprehensive access to risk communication and awareness and safe education.

As of 2025, access to disaster risk information - and opportunities for public dialogue around risk reduction - remains uneven, particularly at the local level, where many communities still lack adequate understanding and preparedness for disaster risks, and platforms to voice their views and experiences making their involvement in risk governance processes more difficult. While new technologies and new media offer greater opportunities for communities to be connected and self-organize, most at-risk groups such as persons with disabilities, migrants and displaced persons, and indigenous communities are often excluded from risk communication efforts. When risk information is received, it does not always translate into meaningful preventive action or is accessible to all. Instead, communication still tends to be focused on disaster response rather than pre-disaster communication and building a culture of prevention. This calls for a rethink of the roles of legacy media as well as new technologies and platforms.

Disaster risk also undermines access to continuous, quality education. There are now 224 million crisis-impacted children in urgent need of quality education¹, as a result of armed conflicts, forced displacement, the climate crisis and other disasters. School closures caused by extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and heatwaves mean children in affected schools lose an average of 11 days every year², with children in low-income countries worst affected. Even when schools are open, the impacts of climate change - such as extreme heat or cold - can affect children's learning.

¹ Education Cannot Wait. *Crisis-Affected Children and Adolescents in Need of Education Support: New Global Estimates and Thematic Deep Dives*, 2023, p.2.

² Sabarwal, Shwetlena; Venegas Marin, Sergio; Spivack, Marla; Ambasz, Diego. *Choosing Our Future: Education for Climate Action*. Washington, DC: World Bank. 2024, p. 5.

The development of educational materials to inform school curricula at all levels of the school system is essential, as will also be highlighted in dedicated events at the 2025 Global Platform. Beyond the early years, the integration of DRR into higher education curricula remains limited, especially in low-middle income countries, meaning young people as well as adults are missing out on critical skills for resilience and safety.

In this scenario, non-formal education in disaster risk management holds untapped potential to promote community participation, integrate local and intergenerational knowledge, and develop adaptive strategies that enhance resilience. Its flexibility, unlike formal education, allows for the creation of context-specific solutions while valuing diverse perspectives, including those of children, to decentralize adult-centric approaches in risk management and foster whole-of-society dialogues about risk.

By fostering transformative learning, non-formal education empowers individuals and communities to rethink assumptions and practices based on new experiences, guiding meaningful future actions. This approach not only addresses immediate risks but also cultivates long-term resilience and proactive engagement, creating a foundation for sustainable, inclusive disaster preparedness and response.

Against this background, political commitment and investment in accessible to all risk communication, education activities and communications infrastructure, especially in low-income regions, remain insufficient.

Moreover, the potential of emerging technologies, like artificial intelligence and advanced geographical information systems (GIS) is often untapped and may result in unanticipated new risks if left to proceed on a default trajectory.

Finally, and importantly, lack of capacity at national and local level hinders the availability, quality, and accessibility of risk data, which in turn hinders effective risk communication.

Course corrections towards 2027 and 2030

The consultative process leading up to the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework and the 2025 Global Platform highlighted that efforts to strengthen risk awareness, communication and education globally require course correction along the following themes, which will be the focus of discussion in this technical session.

Cross-sector partnerships to foster a whole-of-society dialogue about risk: Risk communication should move away from a one-way messaging model to an all-of-society dialogue about risk (GAR 2022). Partnerships, bringing together actors in government, media, education, private sector, technology, youth groups and local

communities can foster public trust and a deeper understanding of risk across society. This inclusive dialogue about risk would also help ensure that diverse sources of data including traditional, indigenous and local sources are tapped into, and that there is public and private cooperation around data systems and interoperability, as highlighted in the Sendai Framework Midterm Review. Promoting such a shared culture of disaster prevention and resilience, along with a whole-of-society dialogue around risk communication, matters greatly. When individuals, households and communities are involved in disaster risk conversations, they have more agency to assess their risk and take action. When children learn about DRR in schools, they bring these messages home to their families. Such partnerships are important in reducing the existing challenge of fragmented and dispersed risk information among governments and other actors.

Understanding audiences to ensure that risk communication is accessible and relevant: Effective risk communication and education must draw on a deep understanding of target audiences, including their needs and preferences, especially among at-risk populations. Risk information should be accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and populations with limited connectivity and enable people to communicate their own experiences, questions and suggestions. This means progressing toward an understanding of risk communication as more than just an informative activity, but as a process in which different actors participate not only as audiences of the messages. Communication that is accessible, relevant, actionable, responsive to individual perceptions, social contexts, and traditional knowledge, can help bridge the knowledge to action gap and bolster efforts in numerous other areas of DRR including multi-hazard early warning.

The role of technology and addressing mis- and disinformation: Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), GIS applications, mobile apps, cell broadcast, location-based SMS and social media platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for enhancing risk communication by delivering real-time, personalized early warnings and empowering communities to self-organize and become agents in risk reduction and management. Technology can strengthen the informal learning process that brings the notion of risk closer to people. There are also numerous opportunities to leverage technology for risk education, including remote learning, gamification, and virtual and augmented reality, while being mindful of the global 'digital divide'. However, alongside these advancements, the spread of misinformation and disinformation presents a growing challenge. Building public trust and fostering media literacy can help mitigate these risks.

Implementing and investing in **multi-sectoral & multi-domain training, education, and school safety**: Comprehensive risk education is a cornerstone in understanding and addressing disaster risk and its drivers. Investment in developing and applying educational materials to inform curricula at various levels (primary to tertiary) and domains is paramount, as is supporting an all-hazards approach to education resilience. Promoting awareness among the many stakeholders involved in the education system is also important for these approaches to be successful and sustained over time. This can be facilitated through the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, a proven model to strengthen the resilience of education systems, support education continuity and provide children with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to prepare for and respond to all shocks and stresses. Greater availability of university-level and professional courses on disaster risk reduction can help train dedicated DRR technical specialists and decision-makers. Beyond traditional educational settings, informal learning models can also strengthen community and intergenerational learning about risk, drawing on local knowledge. These interventions require engaging and building the capacity of actors and robust investment beyond those 'conventionally' engaged in DRR activities.

Measuring effectiveness: In disaster risk communication and education, measuring effectiveness is a continuous, circular process that involves learning, feedback, and improvement at every stage. This iterative approach ensures that communication strategies are dynamic, adapting to new information, shifting risk perceptions, and evolving community needs. Effectiveness must be measured not only by the reach of communication and education initiatives, but also by the tangible actions taken by communities in response to early warnings and risk information. This requires two-way communication and an inclusive process that sets clear, measurable goals and indicators that evaluate both immediate responses and long-term resilience-building.

Expected Outcomes

- Share good practices and lessons identified to ensure that risk information is locally relevant, accessible, and is understood by those who are most-at-risk.
- Identify what policy and practice changes are necessary to improve risk communication and resilient education initiatives and to measure their effectiveness.
- Showcase how the use of digital platforms such as social media and mobile apps and technology such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence can support effective and inclusive risk communication and education.

- Identify, document and develop a translate-to-action roadmap for commitments for both public and private actors to enhance risk communication and education.

Additionally, this session will incorporate key insights from the Ministerial Session on Safe Schools, with designated speakers sharing critical reflections and recommendations that emerged.

Guiding Questions

- How can we better understand and respond to the needs of marginalized audiences and most at-risk groups to ensure that risk communication and education reaches and engages the last/first mile, while also incorporating local and traditional knowledge?
- What role can contemporary media and technology, such as artificial intelligence, mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality, video games, and damage prediction systems play in enhancing multi-hazard early warning systems, risk communication, and education initiatives, especially for at-risk populations, while also managing the challenges associated with such technologies?
- How can the role of legacy media evolve to become more effective in risk communication?
- Who are the relevant and yet untapped actors/partners that could be involved in strengthening risk communication and education initiatives?
- How can we address the challenges of mis- and disinformation in disaster risk communication and build public trust in multi-hazards early warning systems and preparedness messages?
- How can we measure the effectiveness of risk communication and education initiatives?
- What are the best practices, tools and lessons learned in measuring the effectiveness of risk communication?

Reference documents

- UNDRR (2022). *Global Assessment Report (GAR) on Disaster Risk Reduction. Our World At Risk*. Available at <https://www.undrr.org/gar/gar2022-our-world-risk-gar>

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- Early warnings for All Implementation Toolkit. Available at <https://earlywarningsforall.org/site/early-warnings-all/early-warnings-all-programmatic-framework-country-level-implementation/implementation-toolkit>