

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

UNICEF

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

GENEVA 2011

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
&
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

a special focus on the countries of Central Asia and the South Caucasus

UNICEF Regional Office
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
GENEVA

2011

UNICEF
2011

Cover Photo: UNICEF/John McConnico/2011

For information, please contact:

Deepa Grover
Regional Adviser - Early Childhood Development
UNICEF Regional Office
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS)
degrover@unicef.org

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the United Nations Children's Fund. The designations employed and the presentation of the material (including maps) do not imply on the part of UNICEF the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities or the delimitations of its frontiers.

Chances are that if you were to ask a disaster risk reduction expert about early childhood development you would be met with a quizzical expression. It would be the same, if you were to mention disaster risk reduction to an early childhood development specialist. And yet, young children in the age group birth to eight years, are the ones who are likely to suffer the most from the effects of disasters because of their unique vulnerabilities and their physical and psychological dependence on their caregivers. In the last four or five years, strategies and actions for disaster risk reduction have been evolving and becoming more refined. A great deal of emphasis has been laid on ensuring that schools are built to standard in order to withstand the effects of natural calamities. Simultaneously, priority has been given to equipping school children and their teachers with the necessary information and skills to shield themselves from the consequences of sudden onset natural hazards. Similarly, adults and young people in communities have participated in preparedness training to limit damage and save lives. But on the subject of young children the disaster risk reduction discourse has been almost completely silent. This silence possibly emanates from the assumption that disaster risk reduction interventions targeting adults and communities are sufficient in and of themselves and that positive effects will automatically trickle down to young children. This assumption is erroneous.

Early childhood is a period of very rapid growth and development and early childhood development encompasses at least three distinct stages – infancy and toddlerhood (birth to 3 years), the preschool years (3 to 6 years) and the transition to school (6 to 8 years). During early childhood, the young child progresses from complete dependency to relative autonomy. This paper presents a preliminary effort to marry early childhood development and disaster risk reduction. It argues that not only do young children deserve a special focus within disaster risk reduction thinking and interventions but also that appropriate measures should reach children directly and indirectly (through their caregivers and service providers) in accordance with their unfolding capacities. The paper presents compelling arguments for why early childhood development should be incorporated into disaster risk reduction and equally compelling ones to support the incorporation of disaster risk reduction in early childhood development programming.

The impetus to develop this paper came from the recently received DIPECHO VI grant to countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The author makes several strategic recommendations to enable grant implementers to address young children's risk reduction meaningfully.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was written by Dr. Hoa Phuong Tran who has several years of experience in early childhood development, emergency preparedness and response and more recently disaster risk reduction. She approached the task of dovetailing disaster risk reduction and early childhood development both thoughtfully and creatively. The paper was considerably enriched by comments and inputs provided by Anna Smeby, Arnaud Conchon, Asim Rehman, Erin Tanner, Frederick Spielberg, Lauren Barredo, Saltanat Builasheva, and Vidur Chopra. The paper was edited by Dr. Deepa Grover, Regional Adviser, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF, RO CEECIS.

CCC	Core Commitments for Children
CBO	Community-based organisation
CEECIS	Central and Eastern Europe/the Commonwealth of Independent States
CGECCD	Consultative Group on Early Childcare and Development
DIPECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department Disaster Preparedness Programme
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECD	Early childhood development
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
ESARO	East and South Africa Regional Office (UNICEF)
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTSP	Medium-term Strategic Plan
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SWAP	Sector-wide approach
TACRO	The American and Caribbean Regional Office (UNICEF)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. CONTEXT	1
<i>Disaster risk reduction – an emerging global priority</i>	
<i>Early childhood development – a right and a development priority</i>	
II. LANDSCAPE OF UNICEF’S WORK IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS	4
<i>UNICEF’s commitment to early childhood development</i>	
<i>UNICEF’s work in early childhood development in Central Asia and South Caucasus</i>	
<i>UNICEF’s commitment to disaster risk reduction</i>	
<i>UNICEF’s work in disaster risk reduction in Central Asia and South Caucasus</i>	
III. YOUNG CHILDREN - A MISSING LINK IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION	5
<i>Defining “vulnerability” and “capacity” in young children</i>	
IV. PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT⁷ WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION	
<i>Young children are a disaster’s first victims</i>	
<i>Young children are resilient, and effective agents of change</i>	
<i>The combined potential social and economic benefits of ECD-DRR integration</i>	
<i>ECD programmes provide a strong institutional basis for the sustainability of disaster risk reduction</i>	
<i>Early childhood development – a timely thrust for community-based risk reduction</i>	
<i>Commonality of ECD and disaster risk reduction</i>	
V. INCORPORATING DRR IN ECD PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGY	11
<i>Integrating disaster risk reduction in sectoral policies is a priority under the Hyogo Framework for Action</i>	
<i>Synergy of community-based ECD and community-based disaster risk reduction</i>	
<i>Disaster risk reduction protects the investment of ECD Programmes</i>	
VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOVETAILING ECD & DRR IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS	12
<i>Areas where dovetailing of ECD and DRR can take place</i>	
<i>Institutional services</i>	
<i>Physical structures</i>	
<i>Home-based and non-formal community-based childcare</i>	
<i>Advocacy</i>	

VII.	MAINSTREAMING ECD IN DRR IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS: A PROPOSED UNICEF POSITION	15
VIII.	STRATEGIC PROGRAMME GUIDANCE FOR THE PROMOTION OF ECD WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF DRR	17
	<i>Conceptual framework for mainstreaming ECD in disaster risk reduction</i>	
	<i>Quick wins</i>	
	<i>New, low-input activities</i>	
	<i>Activities for longer-term impact</i>	
	CONCLUDING REMARKS	24
	REFERENCES	25
	ANNEXES	28
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Recommendations for the Implementation of ECD Activities Identified in the DIPECHO VI Project for Central Asia and the South Caucasus 2. Risks Children Face in a Disaster and the Consequences 	
	BOXES	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural Hazards in CEECIS 2. Some good examples of disaster risk reduction for young children 	
	TABLE	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Early Childhood in Disaster Risk Reduction 	

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A focus on the countries of Central Asia and the South Caucasus

Disasters have persistent, long-term negative impacts on human development. At a stroke, they can destroy lives and livelihoods, undoing the progress made over years of development efforts. When disaster strikes, young children are hardest hit and bear a disproportionate share of its effects. In the coming decade, an estimated 175 million children will be affected by disasters every year.¹

This paper is a preliminary attempt to explore how the critical concern for disaster risk reduction (DRR) can be integrated into early childhood development (ECD) programming. It seeks to examine how those who care for young children, those who provide services and support to young children and their families, as well as young children themselves can participate effectively in mitigating the effects of disasters on survival, growth and development in the early years.

The paper is presented in eight sections and starts with a brief general discussion of relevant DRR and ECD issues (Section I). This discussion is followed by an overview of the actions undertaken so far by UNICEF in these two areas, through its regular country programmes or pilot initiatives in partnership with other agencies (Section II). The paper then proceeds to discuss integrating ECD perspectives in the DRR discourse (Section III and IV). Given the close linkages between ECD and DRR and the benefits which ECD programmes can derive from including DRR aspects, the paper argues for integrating DRR into ECD programmes and strategies (Section V). While some of the arguments advanced in the paper may be placed in either section IV or V, they have been positioned as such in this paper to address two distinct audiences – those who work in ECD and those who work in emergency preparedness and DRR.

The arguments for dovetailing ECD and DRR are followed by a discussion of opportunities that exist in Central Asia and South Caucasus (Section VI) that could enable such a convergence. The position of UNICEF Regional Office for CEECIS on bringing together ECD and DRR is laid out in Section VII, followed by strategic programme guidance for promoting DRR within the purview of ECD and vice versa (Section VIII).

A number of strategic recommendations with respect to ECD within the implementation of the DIPECHO VI project² are suggested in Annex 1. (For DIPECHO and DRR see Annex 2.)

I. CONTEXT

Disasters are a humanitarian and a development concern. They are increasing in both frequency and intensity. Their impact is a function of their intensity and duration, and people's vulnerability and resilience. However, disasters can be mitigated and their impact minimised if people take steps to reduce risks. Disaster risk reduction is a "systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing those risks".³ By linking DRR to initiatives that support ECD, the risks for young children can be reduced significantly.

Although there are several categories of disaster risks such as industrial accidents, technological hazards and epidemics, this paper will be restricted to natural hazards – geophysical, atmospheric or hydrological events such as earthquakes, landslides, floods or drought, tsunami and windstorms. Poverty significantly exacerbates the impact of hazards, at both human and economic levels. Inappropriate land-use, weak institutional structures and low resilience of people living in poverty contribute to a country's limited capacity to mitigate the impact of catastrophes.

Countries in Central Asia and South Caucasus are exposed to most major disaster risks, particularly earthquakes, droughts, floods and landslides. In the last fifty years no country in the region has been spared the devastating effects of one disaster or another on a massive scale. In Central Asia and Caucasus, the reported 177 disasters since 1988 have caused more than 36,000 deaths.⁴ Earthquakes, the most dominant risk in the region, caused the maximum number of fatalities – over 32,000. The institutional disaster management mechanisms in place in the region have not been entirely effective in minimising the impact of disasters, as relatively less attention has been paid to risk reduction than to emergency response.

Disaster risk reduction – an emerging global priority: Concerns with risk reduction date back to the 1990s when the UN declared the first International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). In 2005, 168 countries adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)⁵ with the overarching goal to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. The international community recognises that global disaster risks are concentrated in economically poorer countries with weaker governance. As for low-middle income countries with rapid economic growth, the exposure of people and assets to natural hazards is growing at a faster rate than risk-reducing capacities are being strengthened, leading to increased risk in these countries also.⁶

Disaster risk reduction is now recognised as fundamental to development. There has been a notable increase in political will in the last few years of governments as well as civil society to address disaster risks, as seen in the creation and functioning of an estimated 56 national platforms for DRR, as well as NGO DRR networks⁷. The World Bank, UN agencies and a number of NGOs have promulgated their DRR policies and strategies and increased their capacity in this area. The World Disaster Reduction Campaign (2006-2007) spearheaded by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) under the theme *Disaster Risk*

Box 1

Natural Hazards in CEECIS

The CEECIS region is prone to natural hazards, especially earthquakes, floods, avalanches, mudslides, drought and forest fires, all of which are impacting livelihoods and social infrastructure, especially in crowded urban areas. Particularly vulnerable are Central Asia, the South Caucasus and Turkey, which lie in well-known seismic zones and thus are susceptible to major earthquakes.

In countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, an earth tremor or quake could cause dislocation and displacement of uranium wastes stored underground, thereby posing a serious health risk to the people living in those areas. The recent global economic crisis is increasing poverty and reducing access to social services, especially among vulnerable women and children in many transitional states in the region. In early 2009, Kyrgyzstan suffered an earthquake, which resulted in deaths and destroyed schools, hospitals, roads and other critical infrastructure. In Tajikistan, flooding and mudflows from the seasonal rains in April and May affected 25 districts in the country, while drought affected areas of Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Such events are predicted to increase in frequency as the pace of climate change accelerates.

Reduction Begins at School inspired a movement to take initiatives worldwide to make schools safer.

Early Childhood Development - a right and a development priority: The right of children to survival, growth, development, protection and participation is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Early childhood, from conception through age 8, is the critical stage when children develop an array of cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills. The extensive brain development that occurs during the first years of life is susceptible to environmental influences and impacts performance and achievement in schooling. Children's early experiences can either augment or inhibit their overall development, depending on access to and the quality of basic services, nutrition and health care, family and community care practices, learning opportunities, and protection from risk.⁸

In Central Asia and South Caucasus, despite overall economic growth, there are still high levels of child poverty and significant disparities in access to social services. The significance of ECD and school readiness continues to be largely overlooked, especially for the most marginalised groups. Enrolment in early childhood education programmes has fallen to an alarming level, especially in rural areas and poor households. Only 10 percent of children aged 3-5 years attend such programmes in Tajikistan and Azerbaijan,⁹ 19 % in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan,¹⁰ 20% in Uzbekistan and Armenia, and 43% in Georgia.¹¹

In recent years, the rights and vulnerabilities of young children in emergency situations have gained attention thanks to the advocacy of ECD specialists and practitioners. Guidelines and programmes have been developed accordingly. Similar efforts are yet to be made in DRR to minimise young children's risk exposure and improve their preparedness. This paper notes that discussions and action plans to integrate DRR into existing development programmes and

humanitarian support have not explicitly recognised the most vulnerable group –children under eight years old.

II. LANDSCAPE OF UNICEF’S WORK IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

UNICEF’s commitment to ECD: UNICEF has been supporting ECD in the countries around the world for decades. Underpinned by the unique rights of young children, UNICEF’s work in ECD is conducted in partnership with national governments and civil society and covers a wide range of interventions addressing children’s survival, development, protection and participation. Efforts to promote the rights of young children are grounded in scientific knowledge of children’s physical, cognitive, social and emotional development as well as evidence from fields as diverse as neurosciences and economics. In order to ensure that young children’s rights are addressed holistically, UNICEF endeavours to mainstream ECD principles in health, nutrition, education, child protection, WASH and emergency preparedness and response.¹² As part of emergency response UNICEF has been taking action to meet the specific needs of young children through providing appropriate care and support, promoting children’s involvement in their own recovery and enabling them to develop their potential.

UNICEF’s work in ECD in Central Asia and South Caucasus: UNICEF has been working with national governments to support early childhood care and development in the region since 1994 when the process of transition from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented economy started. In the last decade, programmes for young children have taken on a more defined form and cover a wide spectrum of interventions and initiatives. On the one hand is parenting education and support, delivered by a variety of agents and/or through different media and channels, which aims to help families to improve their child care and rearing practices, create an enriching learning environment and engage in positive interaction with young children. On the other, UNICEF works with national governments to improve the provision of quality early learning opportunities for children in the preschool age group. Committed to supporting the most vulnerable, UNICEF promotes community-based and home-based interventions to reach out to those who are not enrolled in state kindergartens or preschools and advocates vigorously for public provision. Recognising the crucial importance of school readiness in bolstering children’s participation and achievement in basic education school learning achievement, UNICEF promotes the provision of one to two years of structured learning prior to children’s school entry, especially for the most marginalized.

As countries in Central Asia and South Caucasus are highly disaster-prone, UNICEF has also enhanced its support for ECD in emergencies. There is a recognition of the need to expand emergency planning and response for young children beyond a focus on basic survival. UNICEF has supported training of ECD professionals and volunteers on psychosocial support and positive interaction with young children in emergencies. Of late UNICEF together with the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) has compiled and made publicly available data

bases on human, technical and institutional resources in ECD and education in the CEECIS region. Each entry has information on the resource's functional competencies in the areas of emergency preparedness and response.

UNICEF's commitment to disaster risk reduction: UNICEF's engagement in disaster reduction started in the 1990s with its support for the IDNDR and subsequently its commitment to HFA and active involvement in the ISDR system. Within its emergency support programmes, DRR forms a cross-cutting component of the recently revised UNICEF Core Commitments to Children in Emergencies, spanning preparedness to response and early recovery. Strategic planning discussions have taken place at both headquarters and field levels to integrate DRR into UNICEF's education programmes. DRR programmes, largely education-focused, have been developed at the regional level in CEECIS, ESARO and TACRO. Steps have been taken to integrate risk reduction into UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools and Life Skill Based Education programmes. In Central Asian and South Caucasus countries, initiatives are under way to promote the building of safe schools, develop emergency preparedness plans and incorporate DRR in school curricula.

UNICEF's work in disaster risk reduction in Central Asia and South Caucasus: UNICEF's involvement in DRR in the region is relatively recent. UNICEF supports DRR-related initiatives of government and in collaboration with other UN agencies, such as UNISDR and UNDP. It has developed strategic partnerships with a number of regional partners, the Netherlands Red Cross/IFRC Central Asia, and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE).¹³ Since 2008 with the funding from European Union, UNICEF has worked with national partners to strengthen the capacity of the education sector and emergency sections for disaster prevention and management and, in the most vulnerable regions, to increase teachers and school children's knowledge on DRR.¹⁴

Under the DIPECHO V project,¹⁵ child-friendly and age-specific booklets, CDs and DVDs for primary and older schoolchildren, in grades 4-5 and 6-11, were produced and guidelines for teachers on providing training on DRR to schoolchildren developed. Board games were adapted to country situations and produced in local languages. Simulation exercises were conducted in pilot schools. Overall, the project reached thousands of teachers and schoolchildren, enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills on disaster management. In addition, School Emergency Plans were developed and adapted based on experience gained from the disaster simulation exercises (e.g. earthquake and fire). In a restricted pilot undertaking, mothers and interested adolescent as volunteers were trained in preparing and facilitating activities to enhance positive interactions with children under six years old.

III. YOUNG CHILDREN - A MISSING LINK IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In general, young children are conspicuous in DRR by their absence. Most DRR programmes have so far been largely focused on students at the secondary and high school level and more

recently, on the upper grades of primary school. The critical linkage between DRR and ECD has not as yet been widely established or understood and therefore remains invisible.

That young children remain a missing link in DRR is due to a number of factors. There is evidently an insufficient understanding of the different age groups that constitute early childhood as well as young children's vulnerability and capacities in the face of disaster. All young children tend to be viewed as the extension and responsibility of families, and not a distinct group of the population. It is often assumed, wrongly, that DRR interventions targeting adults and communities are sufficient in and of themselves and that positive effects will automatically trickle down to young children.

The assumption that only children in their middle childhood years are able to understand risks and take action to reduce them continues to be widespread. As individuals and as a specific group, young children are seen as incapable of understanding and preparing for hazards. The view that all young children are dependent and have limited capacity has encouraged a perception of children's helplessness. They are consequently treated as passive victims, as opposed to competent survivors.¹⁶ The little attention given to young children in DRR implies that the scientific evidence from ECD has not been adequately communicated or understood within DRR circles.

It is important to point out that children in the ECD age group, birth to 8 years, do not belong to a homogeneous group. Their physical, socio-emotional and cognitive maturity and needs vary considerably according to their stage of development. During the infancy and toddlerhood stage, birth to 3 years, children are almost completely dependent on their caregivers – for health care, nutrition, social and emotional nurturing, and cognitive and language development. Interaction with mothers, other caregivers and family members is their only channel through which to acquire skills and learn about the world around them. Their caregivers in turn need to be supported by the community and basic service providers. From about three up to six years old - the pre-school stage - socialisation and preparation for schooling take on greater importance and the child's circle of peers and adults widens, especially if they begin to participate in preschool education. As children's dexterity and self-help skills improve, they become more independent and more aware of themselves as individuals. With increasing experience, children's analytic powers grow too. They seek information and new experiences. During the period from age 6 to 8 children transition into school and the world at large.¹⁷ They come to master more and more complex levels of thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment. As they learn new skills and concepts they become more confident to take part in activities in school and at home.

The progression of children along this development continuum can provide useful insights for DRR experts: young children can participate in DRR according to their unfolding capacities and DRR activities need to be designed based on their levels of capacity. As Boyden and Mann maintain, children possess inner resources which when combined with positive interpersonal relationships help to increase their resilience.¹⁸ In Vygotskyian theory, children are active agents in their own environment, and at the same time interpersonal relations, goal-directed behaviour and shared understandings positively influence a child's development.¹⁹

Another factor behind the omission of young children in the DRR discourse to date may be due to the insufficient awareness of existing research on how young children are affected by disaster, or their particular needs and their perspective on disaster.²⁰ The psychosocial and cognitive implications for young children suffering the impact of devastation may be particularly serious and long lasting.²¹

Defining “vulnerability” and “capacity” of young children: Young children’s higher vulnerability to disaster risk is a combination of their exposure to risk and their susceptibility to harm. Their exposure is conditioned by where and how young children live in relation to a hazard. The susceptibility of under-8 year old children to disaster-related harm is much higher than for adults and older children. It is influenced not only by their socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development but also by their families’ vulnerability. Children’s vulnerability is directly influenced by availability of family connections, food, shelter, and security. It is also increased dramatically by their own psychological stress, their caregivers’ stress, and the disruption of care and interaction with carers and other children. The toxic stress caused by extreme, prolonged adversity in the absence of a supportive network of adults, or being in contact with deeply stressed or incapacitated caregivers, can damage the architecture of the infant’s developing brain, leading to disrupted circuits and a weakened foundation for future learning and health. Young children who experience toxic stress have a greater likelihood of anti-social behaviour, lower achievement in school and at work, and poor physical and mental health – all of which society then has to address at great cost.²² As in the case of adults, children’s vulnerability can be reduced by measures to address the underlying causes. Those measures include early warning and preparedness, risk identification and mitigation in addition to the provision of quality basic social services. Children’s vulnerability can be alleviated if there are uninterrupted opportunities for interaction with caregivers – who in turn receive the necessary support from other adults - and older children, for playing and learning during and after disaster.

Despite their vulnerability, young children do have the capacity to anticipate, cope with and recover from hazard impacts. Their capacity grows with age and developmental maturity. Children’s resilience increases with their understanding about risks in the surrounding environment and knowledge of what to do when a disaster strikes. Data from the International Resilience Research Project conducted with children of specific age groups (0-3, 4-8 and 9-11) in 22 countries demonstrate that, by the age of 9 years, children can promote their own resilience at the same rate as adults and while cultural differences exist these do not prevent the promotion of resilience.²³

IV. PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children, without discrimination, have the right to live, grow, develop and participate in a secure and decent environment. Thus, from a rights perspective it is critical that DRR programmes bring into focus the needs and

realities of young children through providing support to their families and through educating children them from an early age about DRR and disaster preparedness. Arguments for promoting ECD within the purview of DRR are presented in the following.

Young children are a disaster's first victims: When a disaster strikes young children are the most vulnerable. The collapse or disruption of the basic protective systems that support resilience put children at risk and weaken their coping mechanisms. Disasters have long term detrimental consequences on young children that may not be reversible (See Annex 2 for more details on risks facing young children).

Disaster risk reduction action requires governments and civil society to partner with the *most vulnerable* people to prevent and be prepared for disasters as well as mitigate their impact.²⁴ DRR initiatives therefore need to be designed in line with the specific needs of the most vulnerable segment of the population - young children - and tailored according to their age and development level.

Young children are resilient and effective agents of change: Children from about the age of three can play a key role in building their own resilience and that of their peers.²⁵ Children's resilience to disasters can be fostered if they are properly prepared for hazard risks and, based on their capacity, are encouraged to take steps to mitigate risks.²⁶ The ability to think critically can enhance young children's coping capacity. When given the opportunity children are interested and engaged in solving their own problems with others.²⁷

It is common practice for parents to explain to even very young children the risks around them - sharp objects, stairs, the stove, the well, electricity sockets and so on. Children quickly adopt certain behaviours to deal with risks. The same behaviour can be inculcated with regard to large-scale hazards like earthquakes, floods, fire and other natural hazards. Disaster risk reduction can provide young children with a platform where they are actively engaged in addressing the major concerns in their environment and involve other children in it. Box 2 provides some examples of successful DRR initiatives targeting children under the age of 8. While successful, such initiatives are few and only involve children enrolled in structured programmes. DRR activities conducted by parents and adolescents for young children are still sorely missing.

Box 2

Some good examples of disaster risk reduction for young children

Incorporating disaster risk reduction into the curriculum: American Red Cross, working with ISDR and UNESCO, developed a curriculum called "Masters of Disasters". It helps teachers integrate DRR education into core subjects for children from age 5 to 14 and their families with disaster preparedness information, and to promote behaviour change by providing them with the knowledge, skills and tools to effectively prepare for disasters. The programme which reached over 5.2 million children in six years is now formally incorporated into the national curriculum. Its success is due to being:

1. Interactive: children are engaged in the lessons and learn by having fun, not out of fear
2. Standardised: Attention is paid to quality control and to alignment with national education standards
3. Adaptable: certain aspects of the curriculum can be adapted to be locally relevant
4. Participatory: a broad spectrum of interest groups contributed to the initiative, adding their expertise and experience

Integrating DRR into existing early childhood programmes: Plan International has introduced DRR as part of its ECD programmes in the Philippines. Children under 8 years of age learn about natural hazards, mitigation and preparedness through drama and focus group discussions. They take part in risk assessment exercises based on their evolving capacities. In disaster-exposed areas, ECD centres participate in safe school campaigns and children under 6 years old engage in psycho-social coping exercises through games.

Including young children in the wider community sensitisation drive on risk awareness: In the flood and earthquake prone region of Bukhara (Uzbekistan) the regional Department of Emergencies in the effort to increase disaster preparedness for the communities have included preschool and school children. The key activity is to train preschool children and teachers in the appropriate actions to take before, during and after emergency situations. Through participating in contests young children have shown their keen interest in learning about risks in their area. They are stimulated by the activities and exercises, and improve their disaster preparedness. Although the risk reduction work is limited to information activities, it has succeeded in attracting the attention of children at schools and kindergartens to the need for preparedness at home and at school for emergency situations.

The combined potential social and economic benefits of DRR/ECD integration: When DRR programmes start with, and target young children, they bring considerable social gains. The knowledge and skills children acquire and the actions they take at a young age are likely to be sustained through their lives and will be transferred to the next generation. When young children are well prepared for risks and take action to be safe, the pressure that would normally fall on their parents and caregivers is reduced, thus enabling the latter to focus on recovery efforts of the family and community. Children can also be influential advocates by spreading safety messages to their siblings and parents, and motivating families to take risk reduction and emergency planning measures.

There are economic arguments for integrating ECD with DRR too. First, the cost effectiveness of DRR has been demonstrated in various studies. The World Bank and the US Geological Survey estimate that an investment of \$40 billion would have prevented a global loss of \$280 billion in the 1990s.²⁸ A Red Cross study in Nepal on DRR shows that DRR initiatives yielded a cost-benefit ratio of 15:1 in averted costs.²⁹

The economic benefits of ECD have also been demonstrated. The results of the High Scope project showed that \$1 invested in quality preschool had resulted in a return of \$7 when the child reached age 27; by the age 40, the return had increased to \$17.³⁰ The benefit of investment in the early years can also be seen through the adverse impact of the *absence* of ECD investment on national development. The Lancet series on children under 5 not developing their potential estimated the economic cost to society as an average income loss of over 20% per year.

Research has not been carried out as yet on the economics of ECD-DRR integration, since the concept of linking ECD and DRR is only now emerging. It is reasonable to expect compounded benefits when activities in both ECD and DRR dovetail.

ECD programmes provide a strong institutional basis for the sustainability of disaster risk reduction: When DRR actions are conducted in ECD centres, preschools, home-based ECD initiatives and reach out to caregivers for infants and toddlers, the government builds local capacity to minimise disaster risks. DRR content can be woven into several aspects of an ECD programme: Training of health professionals and caregivers for very young children (under three years), sensitisation of parents and volunteer carers on childcare practices, promotion of children’s positive interactions with carers and other children, early learning and ensuring the safety of physical structures are some of the examples. ECD can give a concrete programmatic focus to DRR and, through the local ECD centres, provides the kind of institutional basis to ensure sustainability of DRR initiatives.

Early childhood development - a timely thrust for community-based risk reduction: Risk-prone countries worldwide are giving high priority to DRR and to moving ahead quickly in the design and adoption of policies to address risks.³¹ Emphasis is being placed on action within the community, an area where much more needs to be done.

By accounting for young children’s vulnerability as well as their capacity as agents of change, DRR programmes can effectively build community resilience. In recent years education has gained prominence as a vital cross-cutting factor in the promotion of DRR. Yet, children start learning and understanding about their environment well before they reach school-age. It is only logical that DRR needs to start with young children and that ECD principles should be woven into risk reduction activities.

UNICEF’s strategy to expand support for *community-based* ECD programmes resonates well with the global call for more and better-designed DRR programmes at the community level.³² The emphasis on community-based programmes in both DRR and ECD presents an excellent opportunity for DRR to be young child-focused and effective.

On investing in early childhood...

“On a purely economic basis, it makes a lot of sense to invest in the young...Early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success.... It is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy.”

James Heckman
Nobel Prize Winning Economist

Commonality of ECD and disaster risk reduction: ECD programmes enable children to thrive in a supportive environment and be ready for school and a productive and fulfilling life. They enable children to gradually develop problem-solving skills, self-confidence and the capacity to cooperate with others. Early childhood programmes in effect address the underlying factors of resilience. In policy terms ECD helps reduce disaster risks. As for DRR, it also seeks to reduce vulnerability, strengthen capacity to solve problems and enhance cooperation, needed for preparing for and coping with disasters.

Early childhood development and DRR programmes thus share more common aims than has been recognised hitherto. This common thread of ECD and DRR points to the gains to be had from incorporating early childhood principles in DRR. Child-focused DRR brings about a synergy of effort and results in both areas, helping to protect the rights of young children.³³

V. INCORPORATING DRR IN ECD PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGY

Section IV argues that DRR programmes must include early childhood principles if they are to be effective and have long term impact. The complementary process, the incorporation of DRR into ECD strategies and programmes, is also worth examining. Incorporation of DRR into ECD can be seen as an approach to making DRR child-centred and contributing to the goals of the whole child development:

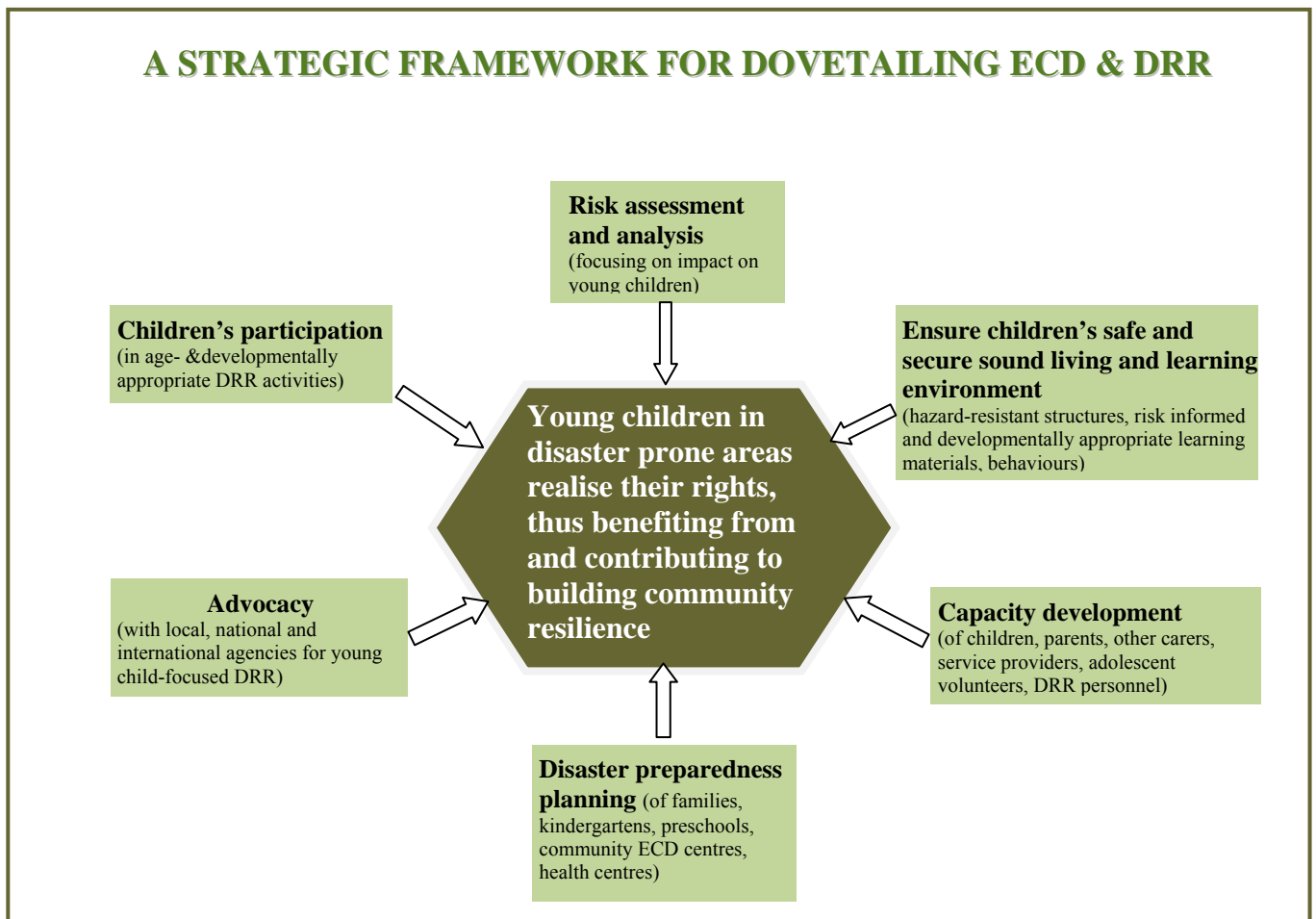
Integrating disaster risk reduction in sectoral policies is a priority under Hyogo Framework for Action: The HFA underlines the necessity to secure a strong institutional basis for DRR implementation through integrating it in sectoral policies. This was re-affirmed at the 2009 Second Global Forum on disaster reduction. To be effective, DRR needs to be incorporated in the policies of such sectors as health, education and protection. The positive results of incorporating DRR in education have been demonstrated. These need to extend to ECD as well. Young children come into contact with health and protection services through their families; if these services incorporate DRR perspectives as well as a particular understanding of the relevance of DRR in the early years, young children stand to be shielded from the disaster risks.

Synergy of community-based ECD and community-based disaster risk reduction: There is a natural link between community-based DRR and ECD. According to the Hyogo Framework for Action a non-formal learning forum can be a conduit for DRR at the community level. Such non-formal learning fora are abundant in ECD programmes. Community based activities and groupings, e.g. early learning and adult literacy programmes, parenting education groups, village health committees, village education committees, micro-credit groups, and so on. DRR can be an engaging theme for discussions and activities among children, between children and their siblings and parents, as well as for youth and adult groups, including teachers and other service providers.

Disaster risk reduction protects the investment of ECD programmes: Disaster risk reduction interventions help early childhood programmes to achieve their objectives of promoting

children’s rights to survival, growth, development, participation and protection. Disaster risk reduction adds value to ECD work by helping to protect investment of the latter.

In sum, ECD and DRR are closely inter-linked. When actions in ECD and DRR are integrated the cumulative benefits are multi-fold and effectively contribute to achieving the goals of whole child development as well as building the resilience of communities and nations.



VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOVETAILING ECD & DRR IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

Much has been happening in ECD in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Initial efforts have already been made to promote DRR in education. There is potential for the linking of ECD and DRR activities in the region too. The convergence of action can take place in pre-schools, ECD centres, primary healthcare posts or in the home.

Areas where fusion of ECD and DRR can take place

Institutional services: Institutional services for early childhood are provided in health posts, ECD centres, kindergartens, preschools and infant homes/orphanages (for children without parental care). ECD-DRR dovetailing can take place in the capacity development of personnel working in these institutions so that they can improve families’ and children’s preparedness.

Activities in kindergartens and preschools can be designed to convey messages about different types of risk and inculcate in children appropriate conduct before, during and after a disaster. Age-appropriate play, arts, group activities and discussions are some examples. Earthquake drills, first-aid techniques, basic safety procedures to safeguard oneself from hazards around the home and learning to plant trees are other examples. For children under three, key DRR messages and skills are to be transmitted through carers and parents and included in the process of family disaster preparedness planning. Even with limited resources, appropriately designed and sustained measures are effective in protecting children and their carers from hazards.³⁴

Physical structures: Action can be taken to integrate ECD and DRR by making hazard-resistant structures where children and caregivers congregate.³⁵ Construction standards for preschools, ECD centres, health posts and orphanages exist in most countries, and they can be revised to take into account predominant local hazards and local conditions. The areas where risk-informed action can be taken concern the structure itself, its geographical location and the surroundings. In addition, safety inside the structure can also be better ensured when there is an appropriate arrangement of furniture and materials, an evacuation plan, pre-determined emergency shelters and availability of basics for emergencies - first-aid kits, ladders, equipment for search and rescue, evacuation maps, etc. Standards for young children's physical environment in kindergartens, preschools or wherever young children come together as a group should be a part and parcel of quality standards for child friendly early education.

Home-based and non-formal community-based childcare: In present day Central Asia and South Caucasus, only a small minority of young children have the opportunity to attend preschool. Most children, especially those from poor, rural families stay at home under their parents' care. Home-based care is also the only practical type of care for children under three years old. Parenting programmes, caregiver education, home-based/community-based childcare activities and family disaster preparedness offer excellent opportunities for introducing DRR concepts and concrete actions.

Advocacy: Advocacy is central to conveying messages in both ECD and DRR. There is potential and indeed a necessity to include DRR aspects when advocating on ECD and *vice versa*, so that DRR efforts reach all young children. Overall the concept and practice of DRR are still relatively new to the general public. Hitherto most DRR activities have been limited to selected localities and pilot schools. Advocacy is therefore essential to draw the attention of decision makers and the public to the crucial role of risk reduction for children under the age of 8.

Upstream advocacy can be in such areas as incorporating DRR in the ECD policy framework, in pre-service and in-service training of health, education and welfare service providers and in early learning and development standards. Downstream advocacy focuses on improving childcare methods and parental sensitisation or increasing young children's participation. UNICEF's Communication for Development (C4D) approach may be can be harnessed to bring

about changes in the mindsets and behaviour of decision makers, parents, caregivers and community members so that all possible action is taken to reduce risks that can threaten young children's survival or development.

The preceding paragraphs have discussed possible areas for linking DRR and ECD. The paragraphs that follow focus on the specific context of Central Asia and South Caucasus, where an enabling environment for DRR expansion is taking shape and holding promise for successful DRR-ECD fusion.

Most countries in the region have developed national strategies on disaster response/civil defence as well as action plans with the goals of providing timely warning to the public of the threat of natural and man-made disasters, curbing human and material losses from disasters and improving disaster preparedness. DRR has been included as part of the current UNDAF of Uzbekistan, Georgia and Armenia, and the Armenian Government is committed to institutional reform of the DRR system. In Kyrgyzstan, the on-going revision of the National Policy and Strategy on preparedness and response to emergencies provides a valuable opportunity to incorporate ECD issues. The experience gained from the DIPECHO V project and the activities envisaged in the current DIPECHO VI project can help expand the outreach of DRR to young children.

Prospects for successful DRR-ECD dovetailing exist also in the ECD arena. Through promoting ECD for many years UNICEF has accumulated a wealth of expertise and experience which can inform DRR for young children. UNICEF's support for young children in emergencies offers unique opportunities for addressing risk reduction initiatives that are young-child focused, in both development and humanitarian contexts. In Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, UNICEF's strategy for expanded home-based and community-based ECD to address low preschool attendance provides additional opportunities for community-based DRR programmes to be tuned in to the needs and realities of young children.

Within the region there are significant developments in early childhood sphere that hold promises for DRR-ECD fusion. Armenia has adopted the 2008-2015 Pre-School Strategy and the Act on Alternative Pre-school Services. Early learning and development standards (ELDS) will be included in its ECD national strategy and can provide possibilities to incorporate DRR aspects. In Kazakhstan there is a realisation of the importance to develop training courses on DRR for young children and parents, in formal and non-formal curricular activities. Its Law on Emergency Situations stipulates that DRR education is to be implemented in preschools, thus laying the legal basis for accelerating action towards young child-focused DRR. Georgia has put ECD on the Government agenda and the National Alliance on Early Childhood Development has developed a comprehensive strategic framework for the system-wide integration of all elements of ECD in the Health and Education services. Kyrgyzstan has recently adopted its Preschool Law regulating the sub-sector and outlining key aspects related to children's safety and the learning of safe behaviour patterns. The approved State Standard on Preschool Education and Care contains some important aspects with regard to DRR (building safety, safe

behaviour skills, etc.). All this creates a positive environment for action in DRR and ECD to be intertwined.

VII. MAINSTREAMING ECD IN DRR IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS: A PROPOSED UNICEF POSITION

Disaster risk reduction is a priority for the governments and civil society in Central Asia and South Caucasus, a region prone to frequent earthquakes, landslides, floods and other natural hazards. Disaster risk reduction will be more effective when it takes into account the specificities of young children who are the most vulnerable group in society. UNICEF's proposed position is to embed risk reduction strategies and approaches into development programmes. Mainstreaming ECD within the purview of DRR is grounded in the rights of children and the different specificities of children under the age of 8. Recognising the critical importance of DRR that is young child-focused, UNICEF urges governments, civil society and the international community to make every effort to mainstream ECD in DRR. UNICEF is committed to take all possible action in this regard and promote risk reduction through ECD initiatives which themselves need to be significantly expanded to reach the most vulnerable.

Disaster risk reduction needs to start with young children and be young child-friendly. Children typically represent 50-60% of those affected by disaster. They are much more susceptible to conditions causing high mortality and serious injury. Young children are especially vulnerable to the health risks from injuries and from diseases related to malnutrition, poor water and sanitation that usually follow a disaster. Psychological stress exacerbated by disruption of care and education, makes them more vulnerable. Suffering is considerably more acute among the very young. Disaster risk reduction is therefore more effective when it starts with young children, takes into account their specificities and alerts and educates caregivers and service providers in this respect. Young child-friendly DRR measures help the most vulnerable to realise their inalienable rights to survival, growth, development, participation and protection.

Disaster risk reduction needs to be seen and conducted through the lens of young children. The appropriate approach to all DRR action is to assess the hazards and the response through the lens of young children. This calls for systematic assessment of the exposure and susceptibility to hazards of different age sub-groups,³⁶ attention to designing developmentally appropriate activities and to the channels through which risk reduction activities are conducted. Disaster risk reduction initiatives need to dovetail with the ongoing work to support young children's survival, development, protection and participation as well as with plans to expand and improve services for young children and their families.

Build community resilience from the perspective of the rights of young children. UNICEF is committed to achieving the goal of the Hyogo Framework for Action: building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters through DRR. Harnessing the capacity to maintain safety and resilience is at the core of DRR. Resilience comes from the ability to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of hazards in a timely and efficient manner,

including through the preservation and restoration of essential basic structures and functions³⁷. From the perspective of the Rights of the Child, there is an additional prerequisite to achieving resilience: a community can become resilient only when children themselves, generally above age 3, and caregivers for those under age 3, are encouraged to be part of risk reduction efforts. Young children can play an important role in reinforcing DRR messages within their immediate environments: within the family, in the home, at school and kindergarten, in the park or playground, etc. Thus they are not just recipients of and participants in DRR messaging, they can also be inventors and disseminators of some basic messages about risk avoidance, mitigation and reduction,

Make the best use of available knowledge in ECD. The wealth of knowledge and experience that UNICEF and other organisations have accumulated in childhood matters provides unique opportunities to make DRR young child-focused. It can guide DRR initiatives to fit in with children's needs along their developmental continuum. It helps create and maintain an environment where children are at the centre of all DRR actions.

Explore all possibilities for blending ECD-DRR efforts. Mainstreaming ECD in the purview of DRR is a two-way process where all possibilities of embedding one into the other need to be explored. DRR needs to include a young child-focus, while ECD programmes need to include elements that can enhance children's capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities. Emergency preparedness plans of kindergartens, preschools and community health centres must be integrated into local disaster risk management plans.

Recognising infants and toddlers' dependence on caregivers, and taking into account that the majority of young children in the region receive care through home-based or community-based interventions, UNICEF promotes young child-focused DRR not only in kindergartens and pre-schools, but also through non-formal and informal activities within the family or through carers.

Ensure the synergy of bottom-up and top-down interventions for ECD-DRR fusion. Mainstreaming ECD in DRR necessitates a combination of bottom-up and top-down interventions. Bottom-up interventions encompass a variety of DRR activities in preschools and the community, with the participation of parents, caregivers, community members - and children. They may include, for example, raising the concerns of young children and caregivers, putting forward community perspectives in programme design, or communicating knowledge about the local environment and good practices.

Top-down interventions ensure that ECD principles are incorporated in government policy for DRR, in the associated institutions and in all DRR related capacity building programmes. A centralised information system on hazards which is readily accessible to the public would facilitate planning at all levels.

Work through networks and partnerships. UNICEF should network and build partnerships with national and local structures and other development organisations that promote DRR and

ECD. It should endeavour to highlight the issues concerning young children in both the discourse and action for DRR at the local, national and international levels. It should encourage the use of existing materials and resources, respect and build on relevant local DRR practices as well as the lessons and experience from other organisations.

Advocacy is a key strategy. By advocating for the integration of the rights and particular needs of young children in DRR, and for the inclusion of DRR aspects in ECD, a convergence of aspirations and coherence of programmes will be achieved. Experience gained from initiatives to mainstream ECD in the purview of DRR will form a body of knowledge and evidence for sustained advocacy to promote child-friendly DRR. Special attention should be placed on the documentation and dissemination of good practices. UNICEF should also facilitate the development of relevant tools and models for mainstreaming ECD in DRR.

Use a three-pillar approach to capacity development. Capacity development is central to reducing disaster risks for young children. Efforts to strengthen capacities will target the governmental systems and structures at different levels responsible for the care, development and protection of children. The second pillar is the capacity development of young children themselves, to help them develop the necessary skills. The third pillar is the parents and carers for children who are not enrolled in any structured programmes. The three-pillar approach to capacity building will enhance children's empowerment and improve their participation, while effectively engaging caregivers in the design and implementation of DRR measures and implicating government agencies as key duty bearers.

VIII. STRATEGIC PROGRAMME GUIDANCE FOR THE PROMOTION OF ECD WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF DRR

In UNICEF a systematic approach to identify, assess and reduce risks is at the heart of DRR. This is to minimise the vulnerability and increase the resilience and capacity to cope with disasters at the individual, family and national levels. It has to be planned for, and explicit measures to which people are held to account put in place. Disaster risk reduction should concentrate not only on emergency preparedness - which has been the key aim of UNICEF's global preparedness efforts - but also on mitigation and prevention components in their development programmes³⁸.

The momentum is building up within UNICEF to make DRR a priority of its work. It has been recognised that DRR should be integrated in sectoral development programmes. It is therefore essential to sharpen the programmatic focuses of DRR in line with the needs and characteristics of young children. It is also necessary to recognise that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The needs of infants and toddlers are different from those of the 3-5 age group, the capacities of 3-5 year olds differ from 6-8 year olds; and the needs of the pre-natal group are addressed through parent-targeting programmes. The emphasis on certain entry points - whether mainly centre-based ECD, or home-based or a combination of them – may vary among countries depending on the country context.

The key thrusts for mainstreaming early childhood in DRR are to influence national policies in both DRR and ECD, to intensify partnerships with national and local government, with international and NGO partners, as well as to sustain evidence-based advocacy for young children in DRR.

Recently UNICEF has developed a conceptual framework for DRR with the goal to enhance the rights of vulnerable children and women in hazard prone communities. **Since young children are the most vulnerable community members, promoting their rights and strengthening their resilience will directly contribute to the increased resilience of the whole community and the enhancement of their rights.** Putting young children at the centre of DRR is paramount.

Based on the above, this paper proposes a Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Early Childhood in Disaster Risk Reduction. It builds on the strategic directions and priority actions recommended in the UNICEF Concept Note on DRR, while at the same time framing them through the lens of young children and their best interests.

Table 1

Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Early Childhood in Disaster Risk Reduction

GOAL: The rights of young children in hazard prone communities are realised through reduction of risks that jeopardise their survival and development.

Strategic Direction	Priority Action	Outcome	Links to critical Key Result Areas (KRAs) under MSTP Focus Areas (FA)
1. Identify and assess disaster risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with national and local partners to establish a sound knowledge base on disaster risks and their effects on young children of different age subgroups. Identify possible action that caregivers and young children can take to understand, mitigate and prevent particular risks Identify priority areas and communities to integrate early childhood issues in DRR and develop capacities of key actors in risk assessment with focus on young children and care givers. Promote and advocate for the inclusion of young children's perspectives of disaster risk, of their vulnerabilities and evolving capacities in the development of local and national development plans/strategies (incl. in EPRP, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) and UNDAFs). Promote early childhood programme planning that is informed by disaster risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared knowledge base on disaster risk with a focus on young children. Risk informed national and sub-national development plans/strategies 	<p>Increased national capacity to reduce gender disparities (FA2)</p> <p>Improved policy & regulations re: child protection & rights (FA4)</p> <p>Improved child health, nutrition, maternal care and increased access to sustainable water and sanitation (FA1)</p>
2. Promote community resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the voice and participation of young girls and boys and their caregivers in analysing risks and planning processes at the local level for preventing, mitigating and addressing disaster risks. Create and strengthen strategic partnerships to build community resilience, defining results, roles and responsibilities of key actors, as well as performance monitoring, with a focus on the impact on young children. Collaborate with partners at all levels in advocacy, knowledge sharing and resource development to advance positive DRR outcomes for young children. Promote community-led and age-appropriate, child-led DRR activities Ensure UNICEF programmes in health, WASH, education, nutrition and protection \for young children contribute to a reduction of risk in disaster prone contexts Promote risk informed family disaster planning, structured learning and age-appropriate group activities for young children in DRR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowered children, caregivers and community members to participate in, influence and act on reducing disaster risks. Safer and more resilient communities and systems. Safety of young children maintained including in disasters 	<p>Better protection of child from impacts of natural disasters (FA4)</p> <p>Enhanced participation by children & young people (FA5).</p> <p>Prevention of violence, exploitation, abuse, unnecessary separation for all children (FA1, 4).</p> <p>Improved access and educational quality (FA2).</p> <p>Every child is covered with life saving interventions -CCCs (FA1).</p>
3. Strengthen humanitarian preparedness and response & early recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the capacity development of national and sub-national partners in young child-focused emergency preparedness, response and early recovery. Collaborate with UN agencies, NGO and other partners to enhance national, regional and international mechanisms and capacities in preparedness (including early warning), response & early recovery with a focus on young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective response to the humanitarian needs and to the rights of children in disasters 	<p>Restore education after emergencies (FA2).</p>

The above proposed framework provides a general basis for the programmatic guidance to make young children visible in the DRR agenda. As discussed in the following paragraphs, many initiatives can be undertaken with a view to mainstreaming ECD in DRR. Some can be inserted into existing activities, thus strengthening them and bringing about ‘quick wins’. Others may be new activities that require only modest inputs yet achieve considerable results. And some will be of larger scope and have more long-term impact. Activities are to be designed and implemented based on the specific needs and characteristics of young children along their developmental continuum (described in section III).

Quick wins

Some DRR activities are under way with the support of UNICEF or its national partners or NGOs. With minimal extra effort they can be reinforced to bring better results in terms of reducing risks and protecting young children’s well-being. Some such ‘quick win’ possibilities are discussed below.

Inclusion of young children’s issues in hazard mapping and educational materials: In the context of disaster management many countries have been conducting hazard mapping and capacity and vulnerability mapping. This opens up a channel for highlighting young children in those undertakings, such as the varied needs of children in different age subgroups and their evolving capacity according to their developmental level. Depending on the local context, the hazard mapping can also be done as a separate process focusing exclusively on children of 0-8 years old with the participation of caregivers, preschool and primary school teachers and DRR specialists.

Educational materials which have already been developed to convey DRR messages to school children can be adapted for children above age 3. Such adaptation of materials needs to take into account the fact that they are to be used not only in preschools but also in the non-formal settings of home-based programmes. Materials for primary and preschool teachers can be adapted for caregivers of children under three years old. Primary school teachers are encouraged to work closely with preschool teachers and caregivers to ensure the continuity of children’s risk-informed behaviour.

Provide risk informed basic supplies to ECD centres: ECD initiatives often provide basic supplies to kindergartens and preschools, especially in very poor areas. Apart from toys and other preschool supplies, they can also include tools that enhance the disaster preparedness of young children, such as first aid kits, safety-related instruments and pictorial brochures about risks and how to address them.

In addition and depending on the local context and traditions, a range of materials can be developed or enhanced to include DRR aspects, such as games, puzzles, cartoons, songs, dances, skits, nature trips, drawing and poster competitions, etc. Art has been proven time and

again to be an effective method of young children's learning. It needs to be used extensively for DRR promotion.

Advocacy and awareness-raising for disaster risk reduction: Advocacy for DRR is on-going in the region. It can be adapted to take young children into account. Adults need messages that help them to understand several crucial points: young children are the most vulnerable to hazards; caregivers for children under three years old need to participate just as much as preschool teachers in DRR; children from the age of three have an increasing capacity to participate as risk reduction actors. The knowledge of young children's development and their coping mechanisms should be used to frame advocacy messages. While some of such advocacy can start immediately, it should be sustained in order to have longer-term effects.

Make community-led disaster risk reduction child-centred: There is now a greater understanding of the critical role of community-led DRR in strengthening community resilience.³⁹ More community-based DRR activities are being implemented. On their part, ECD programmes also enhance parents' knowledge and skills in childcare. As community members participate in both activities, there is scope for incorporating DRR in ECD interventions and vice versa. Doing so requires a low level of effort, yet can bring discernible changes in the mindset and behaviour of the community.

Adapt capacity building programmes: The on-going capacity building programmes for preschool teachers and administrators, health professionals, parents and childcare volunteers can be enriched with disaster risk reduction aspects, including preparing for emergency action. Programme contents should be developed according to the particularities of children's different age groups. As appropriate, programme design should incorporate the participation families, young children or both, through actions customized to young children's developmental stages.

New, low-input activities

Conduct drills: Certain low-input activities can substantially minimize the vulnerability of young children. One example is the introduction in all kindergartens and preschools in disaster-prone areas of simple, age-appropriate drills for the hazards that have a high likelihood of happening. Basic safety rules on personal conduct before, during and after an emergency, as well as the arrangement of instruments and toys, tables and chairs inside the facilities, can be taught in preschools and community early learning centres. Along with being their right, play is the work of young children and their coping mechanism in stressful situations. DRR should be conducted as much as possible through play, games and group interactions. For infants and toddlers, the safety rules and drills will be provided through training parents and caregivers. Designating a special day for Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction in hospitals, preschools as well as in the communities/families can help to maintain the focus on young children.

Database on young children: An information base on children under the age of 8 in disaster-prone areas is an essential starting point. This does not mean an entirely new database is to be set up, as most countries already have systems and mechanisms for information collection and

update. The issue is to make sure the existing database contains relevant information about young children and the carers of the very young ones which can be used for risk assessment, preparedness planning and establishment of child protection mechanism and networks. The database should also provide a picture on the situation of health centres and preschools – for example, their location, the level of risk posed by their geographical position and physical state, available alternative safe shelters, the number of structures that need to be retrofitted, etc. The enhancement of the database can be done with inputs from specialists in emergency management and early childhood as well as community members.

In addition, it is also important to conduct assessments in disaster prone areas of children's vulnerability and capacity according to their age groups. It will help ECD and DRR actors in developing their action plans. It also provides a basis for these actors to frame advocacy messages with authorities and enhance the visibility of young children in risk reduction and emergency management.

Pre-arrangement of shelters and pre-positioning materials and supplies: Safe shelters need to be designated for young children, especially for infants and toddlers, and their carers must be made aware of their location. Prior to the pre-positioning of necessary supplies essential for young children's development to continue unhindered, an assessment of existing and required materials is needed. ECD specialists are urged to seek the cooperation of the disaster management authorities to ensure the pre-positioning of basic supplies and their access.

Activities for longer-term impact

Integrate early childhood principles in DRR planning at all levels: Disaster risk reduction is intimately connected to processes of human development. As development options may increase or reduce risk, steps can be taken to make development choices that contribute towards risk reduction.

To protect the rights of young children in all circumstances, ECD programming must be an integral part of pre-emergency and post-disaster recovery planning both at the national level and in the communities. It needs to be part of the region's overall strategy for DRR and a focus of the work of the national and international platforms on DRR.

Ensure safety of structures: Making all structures safe is largely a long term process and may require substantial investments. But a key lesson learned from numerous disasters is that poorly constructed structures have caused most deaths, and that disaster-resistant buildings are a *sine qua non*. The incremental costs (from 4-12%) of building a hazard-resistant school are well below the costs of replacing them. The construction of buildings frequented by young children must be guided by hazard-resistant standards. This calls for the development and enforcement of building codes and construction guidelines for multi-hazard resistant structures.

Sustain capacity development efforts: Capacity development should be sustained in targeted locations as well as extended to all disaster prone areas. They must be directed at key drivers. The drivers are representatives of different levels of authorities in charge of emergency

management and early childhood, professionals working in these fields, parents and carers. Children themselves from around the age of three can be active drivers. Capacity development initiatives need to focus on enhancing skills to assess risks and their effects on children of varied age groups and to design risk reduction measures accordingly.

With regard to health, education and welfare service providers who reach young children, capacity development needs to be done through both pre-service and in-service and training. Training materials should incorporate risk reduction aspects which have direct relevance to improved disaster preparedness of young children. Parental education, family disaster planning and community-based DRR initiatives need to be sustained so that children who are not enrolled in structured ECD programmes are properly prepared. As regards DRR professionals, they will need information about young children's issues which ECD specialists are in a position to provide. DRR specialists need to be aware of the different needs and capacity levels of children in different subgroups in order to design effective programmes.

Work in partnership: No single organisation can effectively address all the issues related to aligning DRR with young children. To make DRR work for young children necessitates working and networking with national and international partners, with civil society organisations. At the regional and national levels, mainstreaming ECD will require ECD professionals to collaborate closely with the institutions in charge of disaster management and preparedness planning. Similar partnerships at the local level need to be strongly encouraged too.

Sustain advocacy for young child-focused DRR. At the national level, advocacy should be accelerated with the national platforms on DRR and with ministries responsible for emergency situations and ministries of education and health. Advocacy should be for an appropriate national policy framework, with a budget and human resources to enable the fusion of the ECD in DRR and vice versa. Advocacy needs to be grounded in children's rights and their linkage to building a resilient community.

Campaigns for child-focused DRR, periodic thematic events and a special day every year dedicated to promoting DRR-ECD integration are some options. "Disaster risk reduction starts with young children" needs to be made an integral part of the country programmes within the UN Development Assistance Framework. Putting young children at the centre of DRR is not a one-time process but requires long term commitment.

Advocating for the inclusion of early childhood issues can also be done through networks, in both early childhood and DRR, many of which already exist in the region. The mainstreaming of early childhood within the purview of DRR is a new concept in UNICEF's programming. The process will offer lessons that can be learned and shared among countries. Documenting good practices and exchanging cross-country experience will be essential so as to build up an empirical evidence for advocacy for young children's rights in risk reduction and disaster preparedness.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E). An effective way to mainstream ECD in DRR is to include different aspects related to children's survival, growth, development, participation and protection in the monitoring and evaluation of DRR programmes. DRR initiatives need to be evaluated from the point of view of how they contribute towards reducing risks and mitigating disaster impact on young children. ECD programmes need to be evaluated against the extent to which they successfully create and maintain a safe and risk-minimised environment for children, and the acquired skills that foster children's resilience. DRR-related aspects can be included in the M&E framework for ECD. Monitoring and evaluation can also be included in the capacity development programmes. Close collaboration between DRR and ECD professionals is again essential.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Until 2005, the value of DRR was under-appreciated, notwithstanding its important linkage to sustainable development. Governments and the international community were directing their concerns principally at disaster response. Nowadays with an increasingly rich mosaic of risk reduction activities ongoing, the landscape has changed. Not only has DRR become a priority for UN member states and agencies, it has also opened up new thinking on risk reduction that should, and could, make a difference to those who need it most - children in their early childhood.

Young children have typically not been a priority topic in DRR circles, even though they are the most affected in a disaster. In fact, they have been invisible as compared with other interest groups. Yet DRR efforts will be at best 'second best' in their effectiveness if they neglect young children. In the long run, ignoring young children is costly for governments and donors alike. Moreover, it is morally unacceptable. On the other hand, putting a young-child face on DRR efforts brings immediate and long term benefits to children as well as to their country.

UNICEF is resolved to advocate for changes in the status quo. Disaster risk reduction must start with young children.

- Anagnosti, S. (2008) *UNICEF CEECIS RO and UN ISDR Cooperation in the Area of Disaster Risk Reduction and Education in the CEECIS Region*
- Back, C., C. Cameron & T. Tanner (2009) *Children and Disaster Risk Reduction: Taking Stock and moving forward.*
- Bracken, P. (1998). Hidden agendas: Deconstructing post traumatic stress disorder. In P. Bracken & C. Petty (Eds.), *Rethinking the trauma of war* (pp. 38–59). London: Save the Children Fund UK and Free Association Press.
- Beristain, C., Valdoseda, M., and Paez (1996) *Coping with fear and loss at an individual and collective level: Political repression in Guatemalan Indigenous communities.* Paul Haupt Publishers.
- Boyden, J. & G. Mann (2005) "Children's risk, resilience and coping in extreme situations" in Michael Ungar (ed.) *Pathways to resilience.* Sage Publications
- Cairns, E. (1996) *Children and Political Violence.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Consultative Group on ECCD. www.ecdgroup.com
- Deering, C. G. (2000). "A cognitive developmental approach to understanding how children cope with disasters." *Journal of Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing* 13(1): 7-16.
- DFID (2004) *Disaster risk reduction: a development concern.* A scoping study on links between disaster risk reduction, poverty and development.
- DIPECHO VI Central Asia Proposal. Version March 15, 2010
- DIPECHO VI South Caucasus Consolidated Proposal- Final, March 2010
- Dubrow, N.F., and Garbarino, J. (1989) *Living in the war zone: mothers and young children in a public housing development*
- ECHO/ISDR/UNICEF (2009) *Compendium of Good Practices and Tools on Disaster Risk Reduction in Education in Central Asia.*
- Ekşi, A., K. L. Braun, et al. (2007). "Risk factors for the development of PTSD and depression among child and adolescent victims following a 7.4 magnitude earthquake." *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice* 11(3): 190-199
- Engle, P., Black, M.M., Behrman, J.R., Cabral de Mello, M., Gertler, P.J., Kapiriri, L., Martorell, R., Young, M.E. (2007). "Strategies to avoid the loss of developmental potential in more than 200 million children in the developing world". *The Lancet*, 369: 229-242
- ERM (2006) *Natural Disasters and DRR measures- a desk review of costs and benefits*
- Grotberg, E. H. (2001). "Resilience programs for children in disaster." *Ambulatory Child Health* 7(2)
- Heckman, J.(2000). "Policies to foster human capital". *Research in Economics*, 54

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study to Age 40 (2005). Available on line at:
<http://www.highscope.org/Research/Perryproject>

ISDR (2007) *Words Into Action: A Guide for Implementing the Hyogo Framework*.

ISDR (2007) *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*

ISDR (2009) *Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*. Outcome Document: Chair's Summary of the Second Session Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

ISDR (2009) *Chair's Summary, Global Platform*. National Progress Reports on the Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

ISDR/ World Bank/ CAREC. (2009). Central Asia and Caucasus Disaster Risk Management Initiative. Risk Assessment for Central Asia and Caucasus Desk Study Review.

Jones, L. (2008). "Responding to the needs of children in crisis." *International Review of Psychiatry* 20(3): 291-303.

Kamel, H. (2006) *Early childhood care and education in emergency situations*. Background paper prepared for the 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

Krishna Kumar K.C & Daniel Kull (2009), at the Global Platform for DRR (on cost benefit)

La Trobe, S. & I. Davis (2005) *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction. A tool for development organisation*. Tearfund.

Mercuri, A. and H. L. Angelique (2004). "Children's responses to natural, technological, and na-tech disasters." *Community Mental Health Journal* 40(2): 167-175.

Myers, R. (1995) *The Twelve Who Survive: Strengthening programmes of Early childhood Development in the Third World*. Ypsilanti, Mich.: High/Scope Press.

Prinstein, M. J. and A. M. La Greca (1996). "Children's coping assistance: How parents, teachers, and friends help children cope after a natural disaster." *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology* 25(4): 463.

Save the Children UK (2007) *Legacy of Disasters*

Shonkoff, J. (2009). "Preventing Toxic Stress in Children". Project Syndicate.
<http://www.project-syndicate.org>

Smilan, C. (2009). "Building resiliency to childhood trauma through arts-based learning.(report)." *Childhood Education* 85(6): 380(5).

Swenson, C. C., C. F. Saylor, et al. (1996). "Impact of a natural disaster on preschool children: Adjustment 14 months after a hurricane." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 66(1): 122-130.

UNESCO (2007) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*

UNICEF (2005) *All Rights for All Children: UNICEF in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. UNICEF CEECIS Regional Office

UNICEF (2006) *Programming Experiences in Early Child Development*

UNICEF (2007) *Towards the development of a Disaster Risk Reduction strategy for UNICEF*. Report of the UNICEF Global Consultation on Disaster Risk Reduction and Education.

UNICEF (2008a) *Early Childhood Development in the CEECIS Region. Situation and Guidance*

UNICEF (2008b) *Emerging challenges for children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – Focus on disparities*

UNICEF (2009a) *Draft Good Practices*

UNICEF (2009b) “Summary Report on UNICEF South Caucasus Workshop on Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction in Education”

UNICEF (2009c) “Report of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Education workshop”

UNICEF (2009d) *Concept Note. Disaster Risk Reduction in UNICEF. Towards safer and resilient communities for children*

United Nations (2009) *2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Risk and poverty in a changing climate. Invest today for a safer tomorrow.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981). *The development of higher forms of attention in childhood*.

Waller, D. (2006). "Art therapy for children: How it leads to change." *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 11(2): 271-282.

Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*. (p. 134–143). Armonk, NY: Sharpe

Wisner, B; P. Blaikie; T. Cannon; I. Davis (2004). *At Risk: natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters*. Routledge, London and New York.

Zafeirakou, A. (2009) *Country profiles on emergency preparedness* (Draft) for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECD ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE DIPECHO VI PROJECT FOR CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS

1. Outreach to young children not having access to preschools. The DIPECHO VI project has identified a number of activities targeting children who are enrolled in preschools. This is encouraging as it points to an evolution in the approach towards DRR by bringing into focus the necessity to start DRR with young children. At the same time it should be noted that the proposed DRR activities for young children are limited to preschools, which means that only those who are enrolled will have direct exposure to and benefit from them.

The principle objective of the DIPECHO VI project is to “support strategies to enable communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond to disasters and build a safe environment for children”. To achieve this objective it is insufficient to focus only on preschools. A safe environment for children implies that **all** children living in that environment must be part of the DRR initiative, and not only those who have the opportunity to enrol. It will be important to aim at extending the project’s outreach to non-formal settings, through for example:

- Teaching young children about basic disaster preparedness and mitigation by maximising the use of different mass media: radio and TV programmes; through special TV spots using cartoon characters that are familiar to young children; through community loudspeakers to transmit messages; The use of these media enables the transmission of important messages far beyond the walls of preschools and reaches out to all children. The animated TV programme for young children in Kyrgyzstan called Keremet Koch (Magic Journey) and conveying messages about children's behaviour during earthquakes is a good example.
- Opting for a variety of activities to convey DRR messages and which can be conducted both in preschools and in the community: group work; informal discussions in nature; use of drawing books, dances, songs, puzzles and games; organising drawing competition for all children in the community; community-walks; tell-my-parents. These low-cost solutions designed with account of young children’s psychology, based on their developmental level are as effective for those children enrolled in preschools as for those who lack such opportunity.
- Encouraging the child-to-child approach so that preschool children can convey DRR information to their younger siblings and other toddlers in the neighbourhood.

2. Combine expertise in both disaster risk reduction and ECD. In most countries DRR has been addressed largely through mechanisms for emergency management. To achieve the

objective of integrating a child-focused DRR into existing policies and legislations, the involvement and inputs of ECD professionals should be enhanced in DRR platforms.

Policy and advocacy briefs on young children in emergencies and the role of DRR in ensuring children's security and development will need to be developed, using the combined expertise of professionals in these two fields. Used effectively, they are valuable tools to inform and influence policies. Similarly, the inputs of DRR specialists need to be sought in the discourse on national education policies and strategies and in the review of the national education curriculum. In short, a new partnership needs to be nurtured between ECD and DRR professionals at local, regional and national levels with the aim to mainstream young child-focused DRR.

3. **Invest in systematic capacity building.** DRR with a focus on young children should be incorporated into both pre-service and in-service training programmes for health, education and welfare service providers in order to have long term effects. Given the distinct nature of each type of training with regard to its length and participants' background, it would be advisable to design separate modules about young children and DRR. To the extent that the project budget permits, for each type of training there would be modules which reflect the needs of distinct age-groups of children.

4. **Emphasise the family connection.** Currently the DIPECHO VI project focuses mainly on the activities that will take place within the boundaries of selected preschools. Its linkage with parents and families is not yet featured. However, such a link is important in the chain of DRR efforts. The information children receive in preschools needs to be reinforced at home by parents and family members so that it shapes their behaviour and action. Children can also be effective transmitters of information they receive at preschool to their parents and younger siblings. Therefore the family connection will need to be highlighted when activities are implemented. As far as possible, parents need to be called upon to be involved in the activities, as providers of care and support, as active participants in the design of activities and as a source of encouragement to children. Their involvement in this process will help both parents and children to be better informed about risk.

5. **Highlight young children's vulnerability.** All stakeholders need to have a good understanding of young children's rights, their susceptibility to disaster risk based on their age and development level, and their particular needs in emergencies. Several kinds of activities can be conducted to highlight young children's issues. The project's planned public awareness-raising campaigns on DRR will be one of the effective channels to build up this understanding. Another channel will be the training for current and future preschools teachers, child care volunteers, NGOs, CBOs and decision-makers at different levels. Accordingly, consistent messages adapted to different target groups and calling for concrete action have to be conveyed. In addition, young children's vulnerability and their evolving capacity based on their developmental level should be underlined in the training manuals and guides that the project will develop/improve for preschool teachers and sector managers.

6. Define criteria for a safe pre-school and community based child care centre.

Ensuring the security of preschools is one of the key objectives of DRR for young children. In this regard, the project envisages providing basic disaster preparedness and mitigation equipment to preschools and organising simulations. However, before these steps can be taken, criteria for children's safety and their development need to be defined. There are aspects relating to the structure itself, including the location (in a safe area where there is low likelihood of hazards), its physical state (some may need to be retrofitted, repaired or rebuilt), its surroundings and the interior arrangement of furniture and supplies. In addition, there are non-structural aspects such as safety procedures and equipment, early warning mechanism and first-aid.

7. Develop criteria for good practices. Disaster risk reduction targeting children birth-8 years old is a new area both in ECD and DRR. The documentation of good practices and lessons learned which is recognised as essential to inform national policy on DRR in education, is one of the activities planned in the DIPECHO projects. Lessons learned and good practices in this area will also have critical influence on the implementation of future projects and for scaling up. It would therefore be important to first develop a set of criteria for a "good practice". The criteria, on the one hand, will facilitate the selection of good practices and, on the other, can immediately guide the implementation of current activities.

8. Promote participation and coordination at implementation level. At the community level, focus needs to be placed on a strategy to promote participation of parents and caregivers as well as young children themselves. This may be achieved through heightening parents' interest in having access to better quality services. The participation and support of the health system is also crucial and should not be neglected as it is often the only system that comes into contact with very young children (under 3 years) and their families. In addition to delivering basic health care services, the health system can provide invaluable information on health and nutrition related safety as well as counselling to families. Local level coordination should also be strengthened for more effective implementation of the project activities. At the same time, collaboration with alliances that work to promote ECD and DRR in the region should be sought. They would be the allies which can provide support to enhance project implementation.⁴⁰

DIPECHO & Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster preparedness contributes to saving lives, speeds up recovery and reduces the impact of future hazards. Disaster preparedness is proof that people are far from helpless when facing hazards with the appropriate local knowledge, practice and response mechanisms.

Why prioritize disaster preparedness?

Every year millions of people are affected by droughts, floods, landslides, cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, wild land fires, and other hazards. Increased population densities, growing mega-cities, environmental degradation, and the impact of Climate Change adding to poverty, make the impact of natural hazards worse. In the past few years, natural disasters have struck with significant impact in all parts of the world, from the Indian Ocean tsunami to earthquakes in Iran and South Asia, from cyclones in Burma, the Caribbean and the Pacific to heavy flooding, mudflows and landslides in several parts of Asia and Latin America. Hundreds of thousands of people lose their lives and millions their livelihood, due to disasters caused by natural hazards. Billions worth of homes, livestock and investments are destroyed every year in such crises.

An estimated 97% of natural disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries and these countries bear the heaviest the burden in terms of livelihoods lost. In addition, it is often the poorest communities that suffer the most as they tend to live in greater density in badly-built housing on land at risk. They possess limited resources to deal with the risks they face.

Most hazards are sudden-onset events and take people by surprise. Although it is impossible to prevent hazards, the impact of the disasters can be limited through the preparedness of the populations and investing in effective response-mechanisms at local, regional and national level.

ECHO's approach

The European Commission's humanitarian aid department (ECHO) provides rapid and effective support to the victims of disasters beyond the European Union's borders. On average, approximately 16% of ECHO humanitarian relief is a response to sudden-onset natural disasters. The importance of disaster preparedness is clearly recognised in ECHO's mandate and in the [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#) adopted in 2007. In 1996 ECHO launched a specific programme, DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO) dedicated to disaster preparedness. Disaster preparedness also has a central place in the 23 principles for Good Humanitarian Donorship agreed in 2003 in Stockholm by leading humanitarian donors, including ECHO.

ECHO's humanitarian mandate prescribes a focus on saving lives, providing relief and thus assisting the most vulnerable groups. ECHO therefore prioritizes 'people-oriented' preparedness measures.

The main component of ECHO's contribution to the global Disaster Risk Reduction efforts remains the DIPECHO programme which now covers 7 disaster-prone regions. The DIPECHO programme therefore targets highly vulnerable communities living in some of the most disaster-prone regions of the world. This is what we term our 'community-based approach'.

The DIPECHO programme

Since the launch of the DIPECHO programme in 1996, ECHO has invested more than €180 million in disaster preparedness.

The DIPECHO programme had been expanded over the years and now covers seven disaster prone regions: the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia and South East Africa and South West Indian Ocean. The projects funded by the programme include simple and inexpensive preparatory measures, often implemented by the communities themselves. They have proven extremely effective in limiting damage and saving lives when hazards suddenly strike. DIPECHO-projects will typically emphasize training, capacity-building, awareness-raising, establishment or improvement of local early-warning systems and

contingency-planning. There are numerous examples that these simple and community-owned preparedness measures enable communities at risk to save their own lives and livelihoods when disaster strikes. As any other relief provided by ECHO, DIPECHO projects are carried out by European-based aid agencies and UN agencies in close cooperation with local NGOs and authorities.

The best results are only achieved when there is effective co-operation between citizens, civil society groups and local, regional and national authorities. ECHO has found that in most cases, community organisations and municipalities are enthusiastic and actively contribute to DIPECHO activities. In 2008 alone, ECHO has allocated €32.3 million for disaster preparedness in the [Central Asia, South East Asia, Central America and South East Africa and South West Indian Ocean](#).

Integrating disaster preparedness in relief operations

ECHO's contribution to disaster preparedness goes well beyond the DIPECHO programme as many of ECHO's major humanitarian financing decisions include disaster preparedness or mitigation of disaster impacts as an objective. Even post-disaster emergency responses often have a risk reduction element. Examples of such activities include livestock shelters built after extreme cold snaps to protect against further losses of depleted herds (Peru); training and equipping of community-based fire brigades in forest fire risk zones (Indonesia); cholera preparedness and health information (Malawi); and anti-rust measures to prevent water pollution and protect pipes from the effects of volcanic ash (Ecuador).

These activities are undertaken as an integral part of the ECHO relief operations in areas affected by ongoing humanitarian crises. The establishment of suitable crisis information, alert and rapid damage-assessment systems for the humanitarian community can also be considered as mainstreaming.

In recent years, ECHO has commissioned an [evaluation on DRR mainstreaming](#) and launched humanitarian decisions with significant preparedness components such as the 2007 Sahel Global Plan, the 2008 and 2009 decisions on regional drought preparedness in the Great Horn of Africa, or the 2008 Ad hoc decision on Myanmar following cyclone Nargis.

Advocacy towards mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development cooperation

The DIPECHO programme has been designed to demonstrate measures and initiatives at community-level and can serve as components of integrated disaster risk reduction strategies for a municipality, district or even at national level. However, Disaster Risk Reduction is a long-term development effort and ECHO is therefore encouraging other stakeholders that can provide longer-term financing to systematically integrate disaster risk reduction in their strategies. ECHO has actively participated to the development of the [EU Strategy supporting Disaster Risk Reduction](#) in developing countries, adopted in February 2009. This Strategy commits the EU to integrate DRR considerations more effectively into EU development and humanitarian policies. An implementation plan is currently under preparation to turn this strategy into action.

ECHO intends to continue its advocacy work towards development services of the European Commission (DG RELEX and DG Development), the European Union Member States, national governments, international financial institutions and other development partners. As show-cased in the website section with eye-witness accounts, DIPECHO projects have made a real difference to vulnerable communities. The challenge ahead is to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes an integral part of sustainable development policy – in particular in countries at high risk.

Contribution to international Disaster Risk Reduction efforts – the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015

ECHO strongly supports all international efforts, including those coordinated by the United Nations, to increase disaster risk reduction worldwide.

ECHO therefore actively supported the [World Conference for Disaster Reduction](#) held in Kobe, Japan in January 2005 following the Tsunami. This conference was one of the milestone events that led to the formulation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the international commitment to strengthen the International System for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) established within the auspices of UN OCHA. During the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in 2007, ECHO shared its strategy and experience in a panel on Strengthening Preparedness in Disaster Risk Reduction. Once again, ECHO is actively supporting the 2nd session of the Global Platform (June 2009) during which the EU Strategy supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in developing countries will be presented to government representatives, specialised UN agencies, lead donors, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, scientific and regional experts, and civil society representatives.

From http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/dipecho_en.htm

RISKS CHILDREN FACE IN A DISASTER AND SOME CONSEQUENCES

Risks facing children	Consequences
Loss of life, serious injuries, illness	Injured children have low chance of survival and growth, especially when medical and other support services break down after disaster
Death, injury or distress of parents and carers	Loss of provision for children's basic survival needs and care, disruption of children's face to face interaction with caregivers, discontinued attendance of kindergartens and preschools, increased children's physical and mental health problems
Destruction of children's home and neighbourhood	Separation from family, low probability of survival, enforced adoption, violence, abuse or (in some cultures) early marriage
Loss of materials for play, interactions and early learning	Cognitive and emotional development is hindered
Overwhelming stress of children and their carers	Children are at risk of developing a variety of cognitive, behavioural and emotional difficulties. If exposed to toxic stress (caused by extreme, prolonged adversity in the absence of a supportive network of adults to help the child adapt) children may not be able to cope. The lasting, neurobiological effect on young children experiencing toxic stress leads to a high likelihood of anti-social behaviour, lower achievement in school and at work, and poor physical and mental health
Destroyed or damaged hospitals, community healthcare centres, kindergartens and preschools	Children are deprived of basic health and education services making it more difficult for them to build resilience and resume normalcy

¹ Save the Children UK (2007)

² The activities of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (DG ECHO) in the field of Disaster Preparedness aims to increase resilience and to reduce vulnerability of local communities and institutions through support to strategies that enable them to better prepare for, mitigate and respond to natural disasters. After several DIPECHO action plans in which the community based approach in each country was successfully tested along with the reinforcement or the establishment of some key institutions operating in disaster risk reduction, it was considered time to scale up and initiate operations that address mainstreaming of DRR in government and development policies and regional networking of common interest institutions and activities, to better take into account climate change adaptation in DRR interventions and to hand over operations initiated by the DIPECHO programmes to local authorities and communities or to development cooperation actions. The European Commission adopted the Humanitarian Aid Decision to provide a grant to further DRR work in Central Asia and South Caucasus countries under DIPECHO VI. The specific objective of this DIPECHO Action Plan is "To increase resilience and reduce vulnerability of local communities and institutions through support to strategies that enable them to better prepare for, mitigate and respond to natural disasters".

³ UNICEF (2009d)

⁴ ISDR/ World Bank/ CAREC (2009)

⁵ The HFA was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in 2005

⁶ United Nations (2009)

⁷ The Global Network of Civil Society Organisation for Disaster Reduction is an example

⁸ CG ECCD, Engle et al. (2007)

⁹ Azerbaijan Demographic and Health Survey (2006)

¹⁰ UNICEF in Kazakhstan reports that in 2009 there was a boost in the number of pre-schools re-opening (each region reported on opening 10-15 new kindergartens for children of pre-school age, aiming to cater to 74,000 children in 2010). The Government's decision was to increase pre-school enrolment from 30% in 2009 to 40% in 2010.

¹¹ UNICEF (2008b), data of Azerbaijan excepted

¹² UNICEF (2008a)

¹³ DIPECHO South Caucasus revised proposal 1 March 2010, Section 3.1.

¹⁴ Op.cit.

¹⁵ In October 2008, UNICEF CEECIS received a grant for a sub-regional project "Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction amongst Vulnerable Communities in Central Asia" from the DIPECHO V Action Plans. The grant was aimed at implementing disaster risk reduction activities with a particular focus on the education sector in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

¹⁶ Bracken and Petty (1998)

¹⁷ This period is referred to as the 'early primary school' by the CG ECCD. N.B: The age grouping mentioned in this paper is to indicate approximate benchmarks and does not intend to provide a defining classification

¹⁸ Boyden and Mann (2005), quoted from Kamel (2006)

¹⁹ Vigotsky (1981)

²⁰ For more information about these aspects see Printein & La Greca (1996), Swenson et al (1996), Deering (2000), Grotberg (2001), Mercuri & Angelic (2004), Frost (2005), Jones (2008)

²¹ Dubrow, N.F., and Garbarino, J. (1989), quoted from Kamel (2006)

²² Shonkoff, J. (2009)

²³ Grotberg, E. H. (2001)

²⁴ UNICEF (2009d)

²⁵ Children who try to resolve the problems they face, regulate their emotions, protect their self-esteem and manage their social interactions are likely to be more resilient than children who passively accept their fate, especially in the long run (Cairns 1996, Beristain, Valdoseda & Paez 1996, Gabarino 1999 – from Kamel 2006)

²⁶ Wisner (2006)

²⁷ This is demonstrated in the recent experience with DRR for preschool children in Uzbekistan (ECHO/ ISDR/ UNICEF 2009)

²⁸ ERM (2006) Natural Disasters and DRR measures- a desk review of costs and benefits, quoted from Back, E. Cameron, C. & Tanner, T. (2009)

²⁹ Krishna Kumar K.C and Daniel Kull (2009)

³⁰ The High Scope longitudinal study (2005) finds that quality preschools bring benefits in improved school readiness and completion, reduced use of health and social systems, increased earnings and reduced crime rates

<http://www.highscope.org/Research/Perryproject>

³¹ ISDR (2009)

³² ISDR (2009)

³³ This is also in line with UNICEF's goal to promote the "whole child" development and the protection of young children in emergency and post-emergency situations

³⁴ UNICEF (2009a)

-
- ³⁵ This is an area where least progress has been made, according to the 2009 Global Assessment Report on DRR
- ³⁶ The age group classification of INEE is 0-2, 3-5 and 6-8
- ³⁷ Based on ISDR definition of resilience
- ³⁸ UNICEF (2009d)
- ³⁹ ISDR (2009), Global Platform, 2009
- ⁴⁰ The ECD Alliance in Georgia is an example