

# Knowledge Resources for Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction in India


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Photo: AIDMI.

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

According to the Census of 2011, there are 444 million children in India, constituting 37% of the country's population. This number of children in India is actually greater than the population of entire North America (USA, Mexico and Canada) put together. In fact, every fifth child in the world is Indian. However, a majority of the country's children lead precarious lives exposed to the risk of multiple hazards. Perhaps the state of India's children is at best reflected in the fact that it has the highest number of stunted children due to malnutrition-42 million along with the highest number of child labourers-31 million.

Exposure to natural hazards and ensuing disasters add another dimension of distress and deprivation to the already precarious lives of the children in India. Due to their physical, mental and social condition, Children bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of disasters. Some of the adverse impacts of disasters on children include death, injury, disruption of education, separation from parents and caregivers, psychological trauma, trafficking, violence, trafficking and sexual abuse.

This issue of *Southasiadisasters.net* is titled "Knowledge Resources for Child Centered Disaster Risk Reduction". It is a veritable compilation of enshrined practices, lessons learnt and innovations that have taken place in India and in South Asia on the issue of protecting children from disasters. ■

- Kshitij Gupta

# Region Knowledge Networking and CCDRR

Knowledge is perhaps the most important drivers of risk reduction and South Asia has such knowledge in abundance.

Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) is one such area where knowledge content that can be easily shared across South Asia.

South Asia is leading in a wide range of CCDRR initiatives by UNICEF, Plan International, and Save the Children, to name a few, as well as a wide range of local authorities and organisations.

India is about to connect its National Knowledge Network (NKN) with its neighbouring countries. NKN is a multi-gigabit pan-India network which facilitates the development of India's communications infrastructure, stimulates research and creates next generation applications and services. It enables collaboration among researchers from different educational networks such as TEIN4, GARUDA, CERN and Internet2. It also enables sharing of scientific databases and remote access to advanced research facilities. Data and research in addition to CCDRR case studies can be added into NKN content.

A state-of-the-art management centre and Network Operations Centre will also be set up to run the NKN network in South Asia. Multiple connections between multiple South Asian cities are being conceived. In each of these cities there are important CCDRR initiatives from which knowledge can be extracted for sharing.

The connection from Afghanistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka to India would be through a submarine cable for international connectivity.

With its multi-gigabit capability, NKN aims to connect all universities, research institutions, libraries, laboratories, healthcare and agricultural institutions across the country. The leading mission oriented agencies in the fields of nuclear, space and defence research are also part of NKN. To strengthen research facility in various critical and emerging areas for NKN community, the network has established its international points of presence (PoP) in Geneva, Amsterdam and Singapore, and plans to soon establish a PoP in New York. All 4PoP house key donors and UN bodies that deal with CCDRR in a substantive manner.

Knowledge can play a key role in reducing disasters. The 2016 South Asia Disaster Report by Duryog Nivaran with Global Network for Disaster Risk Reduction (GNDR) avers the same.

The NKN with its potential for transforming the paradigm of knowledge management can be leveraged by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of UN (UNISDR), which actively promotes such innovations in the risk reduction space.

Since 1995, the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) has been publishing "*Southasiadisasters.net*" which captures risk reduction knowledge and voices from local communities in South Asia. The demand for such knowledge in South Asia is quite high as evidenced from the 163 issues of this publication that have highlighted the knowledge of over 600 contributors from over 400 institutions. Such initiatives need to be added in NKN when it is connected with South Asia. ■

- AIDMI Team

# Disaster Risk Reduction in Pune – Children Play a Key Role

**W**hat have drawing lessons got to do with DRR? How can an illiterate person carry out a risk analysis? The RISK Award Project in Pune, India, provides us with answers to these questions.

It has been two years since the All India Institute for Local Self-Government (AIILSG) won the RISK Award, endowed with € 100,000. The NGO is implementing an ambitious programme to prove that the risks for slum residents ensuing from disasters can be dramatically reduced - with simple methods and means. Munich Re Foundation, the donor, joined AIILSG for a field trip and evaluated the project's progress.

## Self-dependent Risk Analysis

The Institute has developed an innovative instrument for risk analysis that enables the community authorities in slums to take independent action - even without a scientific background. Instead of using complicated questionnaires reflecting the diverse disaster scenarios, self-explanatory pictograms and a sign language have been developed on the basis of emoticons, e.g. smileys. The slum residents now have a simple method of assessing their situation themselves and informing the project partners accordingly. Even though they might not be able to write. The instrument is called "Self-Assessment and Planning Tool (SAP Tool)".

## Women's Self-help Groups Strengthen the Community

Analyses carried out by the United Nations show that women are disproportionately impacted by disasters. The reasons are many and varied. They often have less access to education, they often take care of the household, and consequently are sometimes less mobile than men. Women are therefore often



*Dhage Deepa looks over the Janata Vasahat slum on the Parvati Hills. It is located on a steep slope. Each monsoon season triggers grave landslides that often sweep whole houses away.*

Photo: © Christian Barthelt, MRF.

underrepresented in risk planning measures of the communities. We aim to change this and integrate women into the measures from the very start. In self-help groups they learn how to prepare for different risks. This can include simple things such as safe handling of gas canisters, the use of a fire-extinguisher or participation in First Aid courses. The measures also extend to complex evacuation drills in the event of a landslide or earthquake. What is important is that responsibility is gradually transferred to the women and that they can independently qualify other women in the slums to become trainers. "This not only strengthens the resilience of the entire community but also the status of the women themselves", emphasises Shweta Gupta from AIILSG.

## Children are Key

When disaster risk reduction is at stake, we must think in long-term categories to ensure sustainable success. It is not enough to conduct one training exercise and then believe that everything is safe and well. Following the correct and efficient procedures in a dangerous situation must become an automatic response. This is the only way to save as many

people as possible when disasters strike. DRM-Training must begin as early as possible. Already primary school children must be included. Different kinds of media are used in Pune to make classes interesting and playful. Street plays are one possibility, along with puppet shows, drawing competitions and drills in the community centres. At first glance, the training measures appear to be a bundle of fun for the children. However, they are also a playful way of bringing the messages across successfully. If the children go home and see, for example, that a gas canister is not stored correctly, that an uninsulated cable is running next to a water tap, or that hazardous waste is simply being disposed of, they raise voices of warning in their own homes. These kids become agents of change. ■

- Christian Barthelt, Senior Project Manager, Munich Re Foundation, Germany

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# Brazil's Experience in Data Management and Data Sharing for Monitoring and Early Warning for Natural Disasters

Natural disaster events occur routinely in Brazil. However, in recent years we have seen an increase thereof. The causes of this increase are attributed in part to climate change and the increased population density in critical areas. The growth of the cities ignored the geological and hydrological characteristics. The non-recognition of fluvial geomorphology, erosion, slope inclination and sedimentation processes in river basins, combined with the increase in extreme weather events resulted in symbolic natural disasters. According to National Center for Risk and Disaster Management the occurrence of natural disasters has increased 268% in the 2000s compared to the 10 previous years.

The National Center for Monitoring and Early Warning of Natural Disasters (CEMADEN) was created in 2011 with the aim to reducing the impact of natural disasters on social, environmental and economic sectors. The Cemaden is a component of the National Plan for Risk and Disaster Management. This plan determines actions on all fronts, from the mapping of areas to the assembly of a monitoring and warning system, improving the capacity in response actions of national, state and local civil defense. The role of CEMADEN in this plan, it is to bring all the technical and scientific knowledge of disaster risk management to underpin and support the national plan in the best possible way.

In order to fulfill its mission, CEMADEN's multidisciplinary team needs quick access to all sorts of relevant geographical data sets



involved in the forecasting, detection and analysis of the incidents. In order to become an information hub for its analysts, CEMADEN created a HW/SW platform, named SALVAR. This platform receive information from all Brazilian institutions that have its own monitoring system as ANA, INMET, CPRM, INPE, SIPAM among others. This set of information comprise meteorological measurements, hydrological shape files with drainage basins datasets, fluvial datasets and real-time pluvial measurements, visible and infrared satellite images and precipitation images from meteorological radars. In addition, CEMADEN is gradually expanding its own network of pluviometers and other information sources.

As described by Pinho et. al (2013) "the main components of the GIS solution adopted by CEMADEN to build the SALVAR consists of components in 3 tiers. The lower tier represents the data sources that feed multiple types of information to the

system. The middle tier contains the backend components that combine and transform data, store the data in convenient formats and provide the services for accessing the information remotely. The upper tier is the presentation tier, which contains the components required to filter, visualize, enter data and register new information sources". The data come from different sources and have most different formats as table datasets in text files, satellite raster images with metadata, pluviometer datasets. One of the design goals of CEMADEN was to line the SALVAR with standard open source software as much as possible. ■

- **Oswaldo L. Moraes**, National Centre for Monitoring and Early Warning of Natural Disasters São José dos Campos, Brazil

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# National School Safety Program: Reflections

**S**afer Schools are one of the top ten ways to ensure that National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) launched in June 2016 achieves success in making India reduce risk and build resilience.

The "National School Safety Programme (NSSP) – A Demonstration Project" approved by Government of India in June, 2011 with a total cost outlay of Rs. 48.47 Crore was a 100% Centrally Sponsored Demonstrative Project. It was implemented by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and in partnership with the State and UT Governments within an initial time frame of 24 months.

NSSP was a holistic project to promote the culture of Safety in Schools and is covered 200 schools in each of the selected 43 districts spread over 22 States/UTs of the country falling in seismic zone IV & V.

The highlights of the NSSP:

- NSSP was designed to cover both the Structural and Non-Structural measures, especially to reduce the risk from Earth Quake and Fire Hazards in the School.
- Since its inception, NSSP built a good partnership between Local Governments and Civil Society.
- Appropriate and innovative approaches were undertaken in this process.
- The ICT/IEC tools were developed at National Level and shared among the

implementing partners to outreach the targeted schools and school students.

- NSSP initiated mainstreaming the process with Ministry of Human Resources Development and Education Departments at National and State level respectively.
- The NSSP focused on Development of School DM Plan, DM kit for each of the selected schools, Training of schools staffs, trainers and engineers in various aspect of school safety. Mock drills are regular affair and developing a training manual for teachers and management and students is a way ahead.

The communication tools were developed at the National Level embedding all the best practices and products collected from a varied number of expert agencies/organisations and shared among the implementing partners to outreach the targeted schools and school students.



Dialogues and debates started at National and State level to mainstream the process with Ministry of Human Resources and Education Departments at National and State level respectively. Several states such as Assam and Odisha, Gujarat and Bihar have taken innovative steps.

The partnership needs to be built up or further strengthened with the Ministry of Human Resources and Education Departments, those who can really make some differences in terms of structural, non-structural measures and behaviour change among the students and the peers and it has happened in a few states.

The experience of those states may be replicated among others and convince them to take lead for Safer Schools, while investing for the infrastructural development and innovative methods of pedagogy. This is because, in our country, if we are trying to cover the most vulnerable schools then it can be only those schools in rural areas having minimum or no infrastructural facilities and being covered under various National/State programmes of Education Department for their improvements.

The number of such schools in rural India is very high as compared to the public schools in urban areas having good infrastructural facilities and strong awareness on Safety Measures.

A time has come to mount a national effort for making schools safe and secure in India. ■

- AIDMI Team

# Char Areas in Assam: Risk Assessment Tools for Women and Children

In India, *Char* areas are most commonly found in the states of Assam and West Bengal. These areas can be described as tracts of land surrounded by the waters of an ocean, sea, lake, or stream; it usually means, any accretion in a river course or estuary. These areas emerge and submerge in large river beds such as those of the Brahmaputra in Assam are uniquely vulnerable to disasters such as floods and cyclones.

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) works in Assam to

make local plans in the districts and holds mock drills in the towns. This work has indicated a special need for capturing what women and children in *Char* areas want in terms of safety and security. How best to capture what women and children want?

The following is a table of tools that are required to be applied, modified, and revised to make women and children of *Char* areas in Assam central to reducing risk and building resilience.



Photo: AIDMI.

Thematic Risk Area	Main Risk Components	Risk Reduction Tools
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and Planning</li> <li>• Legal and Regulatory System</li> <li>• Resource And Capacities</li> <li>• Integration with Development</li> <li>• Institutional Mechanism, Capacities and Structures</li> <li>• Political Commitment</li> <li>• Accountability and Participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Guidelines Development</li> <li>• Joint Codes and Standards Tasks</li> <li>• Building Byelaws Review by Women</li> </ul>
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazard/Risk Data and Analysis</li> <li>• Vulnerability and Impact Data/Indicators</li> <li>• Early Warning System</li> <li>• Scientific and Technical Innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Based Early Warning System Audit</li> <li>• Land-use Planning Review by Children</li> <li>• Hazard Micro Zonation by Women</li> <li>• Risk Mapping by Children in Schools</li> </ul>
Knowledge And Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Management and Sharing</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Public Awareness</li> <li>• Learning and Research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on Women Safety and Hygiene During Disasters</li> <li>• Mock-drills on Flood and Cyclone Evacuation</li> <li>• Skits/Drama on Safety Awareness</li> <li>• School Curriculum on Disaster Management</li> <li>• Social Media for Women Safety</li> </ul>
Risk management and Vulnerability Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and Natural Resource Management; Climate Change Adaptation</li> <li>• Sustainable Livelihoods</li> <li>• Social Protection</li> <li>• Financial Instruments</li> <li>• Structural and Technical Measures</li> <li>• Planning Regimes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Transfer Assessment for Women</li> <li>• Environmental Impact Assessment Tool for Children</li> <li>• Retrofitting Audit by Children of Vulnerable Schools and Houses</li> </ul>
Disaster Preparedness And Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational Capacity and Coordination</li> <li>• Preparedness and Contingency Planning</li> <li>• Emergency Response Mechanism</li> <li>• Participation and Voluntarism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Planning for Women</li> <li>• Disaster Management Plans Review by Children and Women</li> <li>• Standard Operating Procedures for Schools</li> <li>• Engagement Methods for Women's SHGs</li> </ul>

Sources: Adapted from UN/ISDR, Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015, Geneva: United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2005 as adapted by Rishi Garhwal, AIDMI, Ahmedabad on 30 Nov, 2017.

# Youth Leadership: Source of Energy for Building Community Resilience

## Context

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) has always embraced the idea of youth leadership in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR). Since 1987, AIDMI has been consistently inviting students (from 33 countries) and fresh graduates to work on local aspects of DRR across all levels of key action. Till date, 121 students have worked with AIDMI as interns or team members. By working with the policy makers, practitioners, partners and critics involved in the DRR sector of South Asia, these interns have promoted youth leadership in the changing landscape of humanitarian action in the region. They offer fresh and new ideas and pick up work that often seems insurmountable.

AIDMI invests in youth and their leadership as against buildings and campus facilities. The returns of this investment to the society and the DRR sector are enormous.

The following document the experiences of AIDMI interns during their periods, how the experiences enrich their knowledge in DRR, enhance their professional working skills, as well as understanding of context in India. Later, many of which have applied to their work field and future career.

## Musings on AIDMI Internship

Working in AIDMI enabled me to understand very aspects of being successful in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR). The first thing I realized was that communication is usually an essential aspect to success in this field. It is also important for an individual to have the ability of

multi-tasking during the working hours and as a Disaster Manager we don't have a fixed working hour, we should be willing to work whenever risk wants us to. Risk keeps no working hours.

Working at AIDMI helped me to understand the importance of asking the right questions at the right time. On the other hand, I also realized that it is important to maintain punctuality in order to be successful.

Risks are not punctual. Risks strike any time. We can address this situation by making our risk reduction efforts punctual.

Another key to effective work in the DRR entails that an individual has to have a professional attitude in order to fit in. At the same time, one should have the ability to network with people in the chosen professional field. Both are important and a balance has to be gained. This balance I experienced at AIDMI.

All the team members were really supportive. What I am taking back from this internship is the infinite amount of experience in the field of Disaster Management which will make me a responsible and a successful citizen in future, to continue as a professional in this field and help India to overcome from any disaster risk.

- Russi Singh

From the day I started working with AIDMI, I found the AIDMI team very cooperative. They helped us everywhere whenever we needed them. I learned about so many

things in class but at AIDMI I actually saw how DRR works. I learned about key aspects of Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction. AIDMI has so much going on and it is upto us to understand, reflect, and make use of the experience. AIDMI gave me a platform where I learned so many new things about risk and how to move to resilience building. With this, I would like to thank Mr. Mihir Bhatt and the entire team of AIDMI for giving me such learning environment.

- Ashish Dangar

During my internship at AIDMI, I got an opportunity to learn a lot of things about disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and how both can be integrated at local level. It was my first experience of working on a local planning project with local authorities. This experience helped me to understand how the government departments work and strive to reduce risks. Perhaps the most important thing that I learnt during my internship was the different perception of disasters among different people. Risk has many faces and many incarnations. The difference in the way risks are perceived by different departments also dictates how they prepare for them. I am grateful to Brijbhai for giving me this opportunity to explore many ways of learning about risks citizens of India face.

- Renuka Poonia

The experience of working with AIDMI for the preparation of District Disaster Management Plan (DDMP) was very satisfying. The wide range of tasks which I was asked to lead added to my professional skills and understanding. Particularly working

in rural areas of Chhattisgarh was completely different from my experience of working in rural areas of Maharashtra. How often we overlook our tribal citizens. Apart from community consultations, working in office was a learning experience. It certainly provided an environment for enhancing professionalism. As the DDMP was made with the support of UNICEF, it gave an idea of how do NGOs work in collaboration with other agencies as well as the administration. Meeting the deadlines and having the pressure of deadlines helped in understanding the vast significance of punctuality. Moreover, the experience improved my knowledge of ground dynamics of risks and disaster management sector, theoretical as well as practical. Documentations, photo quotations, interactions with various line departments, guidance from Vandanaben and Vipulbhai greatly added to my awesome journey with AIDMI!

- Suresh L. Borkar

Working with the AIDMI has helped me in honing the skills required to be a successful disaster manager. A healthy blend of professionalism and empathy along with deep respect for the local community was central to my AIDMI experience. People are in the centre of any DRR activities at AIDMI. The documentation of the details gathered through the hazard and vulnerability analysis from the communities and authorities was remarkable and helped me in understanding various risks to which a community is exposed to. I also learned how to coordinate and collaborate with government departments and other non-government agencies to achieve common objectives. Risk cannot be understood from only one point of view. Most importantly, the mentoring and guidance I received

"After the local community leaders and authority officials the youth at AIDMI has been my sustained source of energy".

- Mihir R. Bhatt

from Vipulbhai and Brijbhai at AIDMI was critical in making my internship experience fulfilling and rewarding.

- Akshay W.

The best thing about AIDMI is that, it has never given the youth a feeling of being interns at any time. We represented AIDMI whenever we went to meet higher authorities or to the last person in the community. The guidance and support received by the field team and seniors for food and accommodations, field visits and documentations and what to focus on has helped us to groom and learn a lot. The forty days helped us to gain professional skills of documentation, drafting of letters, presentations, data analysis and extracting of data and information from the readings, photo and quotes helped me in understanding the different aspects of risk reduction.

- Vaibhav Naresh Raut

The internship has helped me in building professional networks among DRR experts and improving upon my risk communication skills at a professional level, which I feel would be a great asset in building stronger relationships (at a personal as well as professional level) with whom I would be working with in the near future. During our day-to-day conversations with our mentors, I also came to know from Vandanaben about certain approaches of advancing in this field of disaster management, owing to its novelty yet growing significance

in the contemporary world. Concrete work speaks volumes in this fast growing DRR sector. The working environment in the field as well as in office proved to be quite challenging due to the deliverables that were to be met on everyday basis in order to complete the plans within the specified time. Risks do not wait. So, risk reduction plans cannot wait. However, this rush got balanced with the friendly, cordial and supportive nature of our mentors. It was with their experience and guidance that the deliverables could be completed on time. On a personal note, I believe that this sort of balanced environment is necessary for every employer as well as for any task to be completed within a specified time limit.

- Jyotirmoy Deb Goswami

#### Way Ahead

AIDMI is inviting youth to work on areas of risk and culture; uncertainty in risk reduction; why some DRR projects make poor worse off; and who is best suited to reduce risk at the lowest level of the economy.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of these youth leaders to AIDMI has been their novel perspectives on risk reduction and climate adaptation which are totally unencumbered with existing narrative. One such intern is now a young ambassador of a leading Asian country. The other intern shapes the UN thinking on DRR in Geneva. A fresh graduate has moved on to lead response operations for a leading international NGO based in UK, while another youth has moved on to work with a leading management consulting firm. Their idealism, sincerity and dedication are infectious and inspiring in equal measure. AIDMI has been fortunate to work with such youth leaders from all across the world and reiterates its commitment to do so in future as well. ■

- Kshitij Gupta of AIDMI.



# Disasters and the Displacement of Children: A View

It is well known that disasters lead to drastic economic costs and widespread human suffering. Perhaps one of the most detrimental impacts of disasters is displacement. Disasters have been known to displace millions of Indian citizens from their homes and work. Children too suffer from this disaster induced displacement.

But what is the nature and extent of such displacement? And what are the trends? This is a short note on disasters and displacement in India. The note draws from AIDMI's safer schools work in Assam, Kashmir, Bihar, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh with UNICEF and State Disaster Management Authorities. The observations are of AIDMI. The following are a few insights that may help to tame the harmful impact of disaster related displacement.

- **Scales and Onset:** The scale at which displacement is taking place is not clear or visible, but it seems that the pace of displacement in India has picked up in the recent decade and multiple displacements take place in a shorter time of 5 to 7 years.
- **Role of Media:** The media, especially the electronic media

pays much more attention to disaster events than to disaster induced displacement. Even more neglected is the issue of the displacement of children due to disasters. Moreover, the media reporting is primarily focused on the loss and damage resulting from such displacement and not on how children and their families cope and recover from its impacts.

- **Skewed Gender Visibility:** The girl child is especially at risk of abuse, exploitation and violence – physical, social, emotional – due to disaster related displacement. Not only is her safety at stake but also her normal growth – health, education, work – is at stake.
- **Increased Migration to Urban Areas:** Cities and towns offer added attraction to disaster victims for work and safety and now victims do not move to cities or towns on their own leaving behind women and children but take their women and children with them to the small and large cities. As a result, more and more disaster affected families are now making their way from the countryside to the urban centres of India.

- **Loss of Cultural Heritage:** The culture of a particular area is strongly rooted in its geography. Displacement from that area is inevitably bound to sever an individual from his or her cultural heritage. Perhaps one of the most insidious impacts of disaster induced displacement is the loss of identity and cultural heritage for displaced children growing up in newer cities and towns.
- **Harmonising with Humanitarian Action:** There is limited focus of humanitarian action on children and even less focus is on how disaster induced displacement could be better handled to reduce the adverse impact on children. Relief codes do not specify children.
- **Dearth of Field Notes:** There are no field notes available on the impact of disaster related displacement on children in India. As a result evidence is not available for policy making.

The above seven areas need more work in terms of data collection and analysis by researchers and students in India. ■

- Brij Chauhan with  
Kshitij Gupta, AIDMI



Photo: AIDMI

# School as a Key to Reducing People Affected by Disasters by 2030

The schools are considered to be central in reducing the number of affected people by disasters by 2030 in South Asia.

International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) began in 1989, after a call by the UN General Assembly for a day to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction. Held every 13th of October, the day celebrates how people and communities around the world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness. The 2017 edition continues as part of the 'Sendai Seven' campaign. This year the focus was on Target B - substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015.

The AIDMI celebrated the IDDR 2017 by capturing lessons from the last 12 months actions with 1471 schools to promote and strengthen safe education that saves lives and reduces the number of affected people by any disasters (including local and climate related risks - accident, heat waves, or heavy rains in the case of schools).

During the IDDR 2016 celebration, AIDMI announced to link each school safety training with the preparation of School Disaster Management Plan (SDMP) by trained educators. The commitment resulted into 915 SDMPs that were prepared by educators themselves based on the training lessons. Various agencies joined this year-long action - state and district disaster management authorities; UN agencies, city municipal corporation; and 1471 schools. The SDMP is becoming a tool to prepare a plan at school level as well as connecting



From concept to action: 915 SDMPs prepared by educators between IDDR 2016 and IDRR 2017.

school communities to come closer and join efforts that are raising awareness and preparing against local hazards among young generation. *"Our joint efforts must result into equipping school teachers and students with the knowledge and skills that may potentially save their lives as well as avoid emergency situation to happen in school"* said by Mr. Kaustav Talukdar, Kamrup Metro District Disaster Management Authority Officer, India.

The SDMP is also supporting schools to address climate related risk like school announcements based on heat waves alerts by authorities during summer and heavy rain alerts during monsoon. *"The culture of disaster management needs to be imbibed in a society for which the motto of "catch them young" sounds prudent as a whole new generation's becoming the flag bearers of DRR and trained in preparedness, response, mitigation, including climatic sensitization towards sustainable community."* - said Vrindhanath M C, with Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation, City Coordinator, UNDP, India.

The schools are key platform for local implementation of the Sendai

framework, especially achieving targets - B, and D. As not every hazard has devastating consequences, a combination of natural, cultural, social and political factors contributes to disasters. The school is the key platform to address these local situations effectively. During the 2005-2015 HFA period, India as well as many other countries generated evidence on how schools can be safe as well as how safe schools can contribute to safer community.

The knowledge exchange platform is playing a very important role in school safety as AIDMI's support to institutions in Maldives and Myanmar in South Asia resulted into institutionalization of safe education component.

AIDMI based on the 2001 Gujarat earthquake initiated safer schools campaign that expanded from Gujarat state to 12 states of India and neighbouring countries of South Asia. AIDMI along with government institutions, UN agencies, universities and networks is taking various actions with schools emphasizing on local implementation of India's National Disaster Management Plan. ■

- Vishal Pathak, AIDMI

# Migratory Crossroads in Africa: The Story of Joy

At the crossroad of the central Mediterranean route, the Government of Niger, with support of the UN Migration agency is stepping up efforts in order to provide assistance to vulnerable migrants stranded in Niger and those returning from Algeria and Libya.

Migrants end up in Niger from all over West Africa as Niger has borders with Algeria and Libya, two destinations for migrants either looking to work there or to cross the Mediterranean to get to Europe. Migrants like Joy\*, who grew up in Liberia hearing stories about people going to other countries to find work and send money back. When her childhood friend told her she was going to go, Joy saved up enough money to join her.

Joy left Liberia and had been told to head for Niger. She's been told she can find work in neighbouring Algeria or Libya, and from there try and get to Europe. Joy is one of many thousands of West African



migrants who leave their homes, travel hundreds of miles, crossing borders, deserts and seas to find a place where they can find work.

However, Joy and others are almost certainly going to face exploitation, human rights abuses, physical violence or detention like many migrants before them while travelling this way. Cross border movements within the ECOWAS

region are legal for people with proper documentation but many migrants travel through hidden networks and don't have information available to them about safe migration. Without adequate information on their rights, migrants remain vulnerable to exploitation on a daily basis.

When Joy reached Niger, after passing through Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso, she spent a month in a ghetto in Arlit. The ghetto owner told Joy that every woman that took this road had to sleep with him if she wanted to reach Europe. Joy protested that she had already paid for her transportation. When telling her story, she explains how because she has asthma, she would fake an asthma attack every time this man tried to approach her so he left her alone. He persisted in telling her that the only way she would make it to Europe was by going into prostitution. While Joy refused and was made to sleep outside for this refusal, others accepted and were subject to rape in front of the other migrants.



When her driver arrived to take her to Algeria, he drove them in the desert and after telling them they had reached their destination, made them get out in the middle of nowhere. Joy says "We walked for the next two days straight. We had no idea in what direction to walk anymore. We had no food or water, and were completely exhausted. The others wanted to stop and rest, but I refused. I left my daughter behind and committed to this journey – what was the point in stopping?"

Joy was found by IOM's periodic search and rescue operations that take place in this area to rescue migrants stranded in these situations. The UN Migration agency in Niger supported by the European Union, and several EU member states such as The Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy, is implementing multifaceted programs in Niger that aim at protecting and providing direct assistance to migrants. By helping stranded migrants with voluntarily, informed and dignified return and their reintegration in the countries of origins as well as promoting safe migration and alternatives to irregular migration by raising awareness, IOM has been



able to directly assist over 8 000 migrants in 2017 alone.

Instability in Mali, Libya and Nigeria as well as internal conflicts in parts of Niger, extreme natural events such as flooding and drought exacerbated by climate change are shaping migration patterns in the region. Indeed, based on the information gathered by IOM more than 98 migrants reported the desire to improve their living conditions and the search for better economic opportunities as the main reasons

for their decision to migrate. As they continue to migrate, international actors and governments need to keep developing safe pathways and mechanisms to provide protection to all migrants requiring support. ■

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*Disclaimer:* The content of this article does not necessarily reflect the official position of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) unless specifically stated.

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