



School Safety

Southeast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Each year, the continent experiences many disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes, volcanoes and floods. School-aged children are among the most vulnerable groups to the effects of these natural hazards due to the risk exposure and the lack of preparedness capacities of educational institutions. When disasters strike, it is not only students in school who are directly affected, but also the schools education-cycles are often disrupted. Thus, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Southeast Asia have worked to advance efforts to promote school safety across the region through building safer and more resilient communities.

Guided by the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) as well as the ASEAN School Safety Initiative (ASSI), a series of activities were conducted, which included:

- Identifying the hazards both inside and outside of a school
- Simulating evacuation drills
- Contingency planning and development of disaster risk management plans with parents, teachers and students
- Capacity building of individuals and institutions to manage unforeseen situations.

Teams of Red Cross Youth and Volunteers have acted as community mobilizers and role models to fellow pupils throughout the project.



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Step by step process

STEP
01

Facilitate project orientation, programme planning and workshop with key stakeholders

STEP
02

Establish Red Cross Youth and Disaster Risk Reduction Councils in targeted schools

STEP
03

Conduct baseline survey to measure initial knowledge, attitude and practices with respect to Disaster Risk Reduction

STEP
04

Conduct trainings for focal teachers and students on School Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

STEP
05

Facilitate orientation sessions for trainings, extracurricular activities, youth camps and emergency drills

STEP
06

Implement Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA) and develop action plans

STEP
07

Design and implement school-level risk mitigation measures, as well as early warning systems

STEP
08

Pupils develop Household Emergency Preparedness Plans

STEP
09

Organise school First Aid Olympics

STEP
10

Conduct endline survey to measure impact and organise lessons-learnt workshop

Building Urban Resilience in Southeast Asia

The Building Urban Resilience in Southeast Asia initiative, funded by the European Commission for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), enables Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners in Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Viet Nam to build the capacities of National Societies, local government, school teachers and children, Red Cross Youth and Volunteers through a coherent regional strategy drawing on good practice and innovation. The action emphasizes gender equity and social inclusion of poor, vulnerable people, including people with disabilities and older people.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in partnership with Finnish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Lao Red Cross, Cambodian Red Cross, Viet Nam Red Cross, and Philippine Red Cross, brings to the project extensive experience in school safety, public awareness and public education, and risk mapping, with strength in peer to peer support and learning.

Success story

“ Our previous process was very different- I can now clearly see the steps on how to disseminate and execute Disaster Risk Reduction and Management procedures. Also, we can ensure safety, security and protection in the community. Of course, we cannot prevent disasters but we can reduce their impact. As Disaster Risk Reduction focal person in the Barangay, I can say that our Barangay is now better prepared and more resilient to disasters.”

Ms. Erlinda G. Amor, 51 years old,
Community leader, Barangay Doña Imelda, Quezon City, Philippines

“ My motivation to participate in this project comes from my family, my friends, my community and myself. Being part of this process gives me a lot of experience for my future work. I am a Red Cross Youth member, a promoter and an educator to my classmates. I am very happy to be part of this project because I have more knowledge. I feel braver and more confident. I have learned how to facilitate a meeting, how to conduct awareness raising sessions or promotions, and of course how to share. Also, I have learned how to put out a fire with an extinguisher, and am equipped with first aid skills.”

Mr. Koy Sambath, 17 years old,
Red Cross Youth, Samdech Euv High School, Cambodia

“ Before the project started, our school had never conducted a school risk assessment or school risk reduction plan. I didn't know what that was. The school also had no regular arrangements to prevent traffic accidents in front of the school. We didn't have fire extinguishers or first aid kits. Now we have them and the students have received trainings and are able to perform those skills. The initiative has contributed to strengthening the school's capacity in disaster risk reduction, response and preparedness.”

Mr. Yok Inn, 35 years old,
School Advisor, Seri Soaphoan High School, Cambodia



The Philippine Red Cross and Cambodian Red Cross have contributed to all three pillars of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, which include:

- Building safe learning facilities
- Establishing school disaster management capacities
- Promoting risk reduction and resilience education in the participating schools.

In the Philippines, one of the initial project activities was to establish a Disaster Risk Reduction structure in all targeted schools which included the identification of focal teachers, Red Cross Youth and the formation of a Disaster Risk Reduction school council. This step was pivotal to the success of the project in the schools as it laid the foundation for all following activities, putting significant responsibility and ownership into the hands of students and teachers. Having a proper school Disaster Risk Reduction structure helped ensure that the school safety action was sustainable.

In Cambodia, students engaged their families in the development of Household Emergency Preparedness Plans (HEPPs). By doing so, children and youth were promoted as the agents of change in their communities, and empowered as responsible members of their families. This methodology also helped promote the integration of school safety and resilience activities within wider communities. At the end of the project, a total of 800 HEPPs were developed and validated, benefiting the same number of families (4,000 people) across the city of Serei Soaphoan.

Lessons learnt

- Having active involvement and ownership of Red Cross Youth and Volunteers ensures the sustainability of activities.
- Red Cross activities in schools should be aligned with the activities of the Department of Education.
- An integrated approach between schools and host communities generates synergies in building community resilience.
- The training and mobilization of Red Cross Youth and Volunteers allowed them to act as agents of change by taking a role in building community resilience.
- The project generated the commitment of school authorities to mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction into school management including regular updating of school risk assessments, and Disaster Risk Reduction plans.
- School risk assessments help identify structural risks in school's facilities that were previously overlooked.
- Integrating disaster preparedness with health, hygiene and sanitation, as well as accident prevention, has contributed to a comprehensive approach to school safety.

Challenges

- Limited time for both students and teachers to implement the project activities due to the inflexible school curricula.
- Difficulty aligning risk perceptions due to lack of an evidence base.
- Limited support from key stakeholders to mobilize resources to implement the school Disaster Risk Reduction plans.
- Sustainability of the Red Cross Youth requires strong commitment from education authorities at every level.
- High turnover within youth club members remains a key challenge. This requires ongoing capacity building efforts as well as simple guidelines and tools for youth to take action.

Ways forward

- Incorporate Disaster Risk Reduction in formal school educational curriculum.
- Conduct annual refresher trainings for Disaster Risk Reduction focal persons, Red Cross Youth Advisors and Volunteers
- Conduct an annual review and update of school Disaster Risk Reduction and improvement plans and evacuation maps.
- Continue promoting strong linkages and cooperation between schools, local government units, the Department of Education, and other relevant line ministries and sectors.
- Promote the full implementation of school Disaster Risk Reduction plans through active monitoring by Red Cross Youth and Volunteers.
- Continue strengthening Red Cross Youth leadership capacities and technical Disaster Risk Reduction knowledge.
- Continue promoting the role of the National Societies as key actors in school safety.



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