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protected —
Every child
resilient

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An Advocacy Brief for Disaster Risk Reduction

UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and Pacific

Disasters and climate impacts disproportionately affect children and young people



For the APMCDRR 2022, UNICEF is calling for bold, urgent and inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) action for and with all children and young people, to uphold their rights so they can survive and thrive.

We call for child-critical services to be more resilient to and prepared for disasters and climate impact; and for DRR and CCA investments to centre on all children and young people. This includes empowering them to be educated, prepared, resilient, and able to meaningfully participate in key decisions and actions. Children and young people are more than victims with limited resources to cope. They have capacity and an active role to play in reducing disaster risk as agents of change as independent leaders and in collaboration with governments and development and humanitarian partners.

The APMCDRR comes at a critical time for children and young people as they face immediate and long-lasting consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as from increasingly frequent and severe disasters, climate impacts and humanitarian crises – with consequences that can impact the trajectory of their entire lives.

- Disasters have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable children and families – threatening food security, increasing water scarcity, forcing people from their homes and increasing the risk of conflict and public health emergencies.
- Over 580 million children across the East Asia and Pacific region are vulnerable to the global environmental crisis¹.
- Recent reports from children and youth consultations in 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region shows that 77% of children and youth have noticed more climate-related disasters locally in the last two years; 23% reported experiencing extreme temperatures, while 30% experienced floods or more severe rainfall.²
- COVID-19-related school closures continue to disrupt access to education of 270 million children in East Asia and Pacific region, with 150 million children in psychosocial distress due to COVID-19.³
- When excluded from resilience-building efforts, participatory planning and DRR decision making on disaster risk reduction, children and young people remain unheard, and their potential overlooked.

For children and young people, disasters and climate impacts can raise the risk of child marriage, child labour, conflict and public health emergencies; threaten their food security; and decrease their access to resilient water and sanitation services, especially for girls without adequate menstrual hygiene provisions. Such impacts can lead to death, diseases and illnesses (like diarrhea, worm infections and stunting) and adversely affect their education and development. Urgent action is required.

UNICEF's role in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

In East Asia and Pacific, UNICEF is among the leading agencies in several sectors in implementation and advocacy, including making child-critical services more resilient and working for and with young people: e.g., in shock-responsive social protection, education, health, mental health and psychosocial support, nutrition, child protection and water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH). UNICEF is committed to reducing risk and building resilience, before and after disaster.

- Since 2018, UNICEF has invested more than **7 million USD** in disaster risk reduction across the region, including Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.
- In 2021, UNICEF supported close to **300,000 young people** across the region to participate in or lead offline and online civic initiatives on climate, environment, energy and DRR.
- UNICEF implements DRR and CCA programming in **eight countries** across the region, including in remote, fragile and risk-prone contexts, and partners with the most marginalized and at-risk children and young people.



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On 21 February 2021, Cello D'jo, 3, and her mother Selly stand in front of a river that overflowed and inundated their home in East Jakarta, Indonesia. Hours of heavy rain over the three previous days caused the river to surge and send floodwaters as high as 1.8 metres (six feet) into their neighbourhood, forcing Cello and Selly to flee to the second floor of their home. The remains of the mud and water that entered their house are still visible on the floor and furniture.

UNICEF works for and with children and young people to reduce risk and build resilience from disasters, climate impacts and humanitarian crises

UNICEF and its partners are committed to integrating DRR and CCA into development and humanitarian efforts to strengthen resilience. Programmes work through a holistic vision for and with children and young people so they can gain skills, knowledge and resources to survive, grow and develop.

Building children’s and young people’s resilience and meeting the targets of the *Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030* — and those in other global agreements — is complex and urgent. Across multiple sectors, UNICEF is committed to working with partners to reduce the disproportional risks children face before and after a disaster.

Leaving no child behind in increasingly frequent and severe disasters requires collaboration through strong partnerships with networks, governments, UN agencies, civil society, academia, the public and private sectors and, most critically, children and young people themselves.



Across the East Asia and Pacific region, UNICEF and its partners are:

- Setting up systems and capacities for [shock-responsive social protection](#) (global), including [cash transfer mechanisms](#) (Mongolia);
- Helping to develop [child-centred disaster risk reduction resources](#) (Philippines) that align with the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#);
- Sharing guidance and lessons for [risk-informed education programming for resilience](#) (global) and [engaging adolescents and youth in DRR](#) (Indonesia);
- Providing [Covid-19 mental health support](#) through multi-stakeholder and adaptive approaches (East Asia and the Pacific Region);
- Brokering [public-private partnerships to keep children safe during Covid-19](#) (Indonesia); and many more.

Children and young people are critical partners to achieve the Sendai Framework targets

Having to face disasters, climate impacts and public health emergencies themselves, children and young people have critical skills, experiences and ideas needed for safer and more sustainable societies everywhere. They are already playing a key role in DRR and CCA by exercising their views, opinions and concerns; identifying and working on solutions; and promoting environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

In East Asia and Pacific region, children and youth are:

- Applying innovative ideas to engage adolescents and young people in [disaster risk reduction and management](#) (Indonesia)
- Supporting evidence generation and analysis, including [impact studies](#) (Mongolia) and [risk assessments](#) (Pacific Islands);
- Advocating for their rights in local to international [DRR, environmental & climate policies](#) (global); and [child-centered DRR knowledge and experience sharing](#) (Philippines);
- Helping to develop [school disaster risk reduction](#) (Indonesia) and align with the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#);
- Leading [climate and environmental action](#) (Malaysia) to mitigate climate-related disasters and for a more sustainable world.



Young people can inspire and lead:

A message from Lovelen G. Cadagdagan, 22, Philippines

“Including young people in disaster risk reduction provides us not only space for participation but it also increases our capacities to be more prepared. If we are capacitated enough, I do believe that we have the power to raise awareness in our respective communities to know better how to respond in various emergencies.”

Reaching the Sendai Framework targets requires a team effort

Reducing disaster risk and building resilience requires many groups, including children, youth, governments, UN agencies, networks, departments of disaster management, civil society, the public and private sector, donors, media, academia and communities, to work together.

UNICEF works closely with young people and supports organizations like the [Sendai Stakeholders Children and Youth Group](#) (the DRR working group of the Major Group for Children and Youth) (SSCYG/ MGCY), [Children in a Changing Climate](#), [YOUNGO](#), [the Youth Sustainable Energy Hub](#), [U-Inspire](#) and the [Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector \(GADRRRES\)](#) as well as supports DRR learning initiatives such as [COPE](#).

We also work closely with regional inter-governmental partnerships such the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#) (ASEAN) and the [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation](#) (SAARC); inter-agency partnership networks such as the [Asia-Pacific Coalition for School Safety](#) (APCSS) and we are collaborating with industry and UN partners like the [Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative](#) (CADRI), the [Connecting Business initiative](#) (CBI), the [ARISE Global Network](#) and the [United Nations Issue-Based Coalition on Building Resilience](#).

To meet the targets of the Sendai Framework by 2030, UNICEF urgently calls on all member states, donors, civil society organizations, UN entities and other stakeholders to:

- **Strengthen partnerships with and capacities of governments, private sectors, and other stakeholders on child-centred DRR and CCA** on child-centred DRR and CCA by maximizing cooperation, supporting age-, gender- and disabilities-disaggregated and localized data collection and sharing technical expertise to inform, shape and influence DRR and CCA policies for children and young people.
- **Empower all children and young people** to increase their knowledge and skills to be better prepared for and resilient to disasters and climate impacts and able to meaningfully participate in key disaster- and climate-related decisions and actions. This includes building the capacity of adult stakeholders to work with and for children and young people, thereby promoting an enabling environment for their meaningful engagement.
- **Integrate child-specific concerns into national and local DRR and climate change policies and actions**, ensuring that the risks to their survival, wellbeing and development are systematically considered and addressed. Apply innovative and technological solutions to address disaster and climate impacts.
- **Ensure child-critical services are more resilient to and prepared for disasters**, including social protection; education; health; nutrition; child protection and WASH (water, sanitation & hygiene). This includes promoting multisectoral and sectoral approaches to DRR and resilience building.



From risk to resilience:

A message from
Debora Comini,

UNICEF's Regional Director
for the East Asia and Pacific
region

"If we truly want a transformed region that turns risk into resilience, children and young people must be prioritized. When children can cope, communities are more secure; when children are protected, all of society is safer. When all children are engaged, we can build back better not only from the ever-increasing disaster and climate impacts, but for the future.

Achieving a more disaster resilient Asia and Pacific means putting children and young people at the centre of regional disaster management and climate action plans. And this means involving them meaningfully in our efforts."

Please join us in urgent action for every country to be protected; every child to be resilient

UNICEF DRR resources from
East Asia and Pacific can be found at
[https://knowledge.unasiapacific.org/
UNICEF-EAP-DRR](https://knowledge.unasiapacific.org/UNICEF-EAP-DRR)



SCAN ME

- 1 Legal Empowerment to Advance Climate and Environmental Justice for Children in East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF EAPRO
- 2 Guardians of the Planet: Asia Pacific Children and Youth Voices on Climate Crisis and Disaster Risk Reduction. Access at <https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/guardians-planet>
- 3 Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 - East Asia and the Pacific. Access at <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/eap>



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