Disaster Risk Reduction and Child Protection

Disaster risk is the potential loss expressed in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur in a particular community or a society due to the impact of a natural hazard.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing that risk. Specifically, the purpose of disaster risk reduction is to minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society in order to avoid (prevent) or to limit (mitigate and prepare for) the adverse impacts of natural hazards, and facilitate sustainable development.

UNICEF’s DRR goals:
1. DRR for children and women is a national and local priority
2. Different risks faced by girls, boys, adolescents and women are identified and addressed
3. Safer and more resilient conditions for girls, boys and women
4. Strengthened humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery through capacity development

Introduction to DRR and Child Protection

- Disasters can heighten the vulnerability of children in many ways and lead to an increased risk of neglect, separation, abandonment, abuse, economic exploitation, illegal adoption and multiple forms of violence.
- Strong child protection measures can play an important role in preventing or reducing the possible consequences of a natural hazard, helping to create a safer and more resilient community for women and children.
- Child protection and DRR programming needs to encompass activities aimed at preventing and responding to the protection risks for children and women in times of disaster.
- This requires an assessment of potential risks faced by women and children, as well as an analysis of what preventive measures can be developed to mitigate them in conjunction with other sectors.

Child-centred DRR requires focusing on the specific risks faced by children, as well as involving children in efforts and initiatives to reduce disaster risk.

Disasters negatively impact children’s and women’s rights, disproportionately affect poor countries and poor communities, erode development gains and set back progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With its local and national presence before, during and after disasters, and working across all key programme sectors, UNICEF is ideally placed to address disaster risk and to undertake risk reduction measures.

For further information, please refer to the DRR and Child Protection Technical Note or contact Pernille Ironside (pironside@unicef.org) and Antony Spalton (aspalton@unicef.org).

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<tr>
<th>Type of activity</th>
<th>Examples of key DRR and Child Protection actions</th>
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| Prevention/ Mitigation   | • Using data from disaster risk assessments, identify areas and groups of most vulnerable children and women for targeted activities, such as focused efforts on system building and on community-based networks.  
                          | • Support inter-agency monitoring of child protection risks in relation to hazard risks to inform programme strategies.  
                          | • Enhance capacity of communities and families to care for their children, and identify and encourage existing positive coping-mechanisms. |
| Preparedness             | • Work with national partners to ensure emergency preparedness plans for child protection, including appropriate referral services, are in place in all disaster-prone areas.  
                          | • Establish permanent ‘safe spaces’ for women and children in disasters-prone areas as part of the community-based child protection network.  
                          | • Promote measures to safeguard identification documents and teach life skills (e.g. first aid). |
| Response/ Early Recovery | • Disseminate and ensure access to information to the affected population including on availability and locations of services, for example, through mobile safe spaces.  
                          | • Mainstream child protection into other sectors’ response work to scale up protection measures.  
                          | • Increase safety of camps and evacuation centers through lighting and community warden system. |