



REDUCING RISKS AS EQUALS

Regional Review of Child Centered Disaster Risk Reduction in South Asia

This review was carried out by RedR India for Save the Children. The report has been co-authored by Chiranjeet Das from Save the Children Sweden and Meenakshi Thorat, Sheena Arora & Tanaji Sen from RedR India.

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Front Cover: Children from a Bal Panchayat in Araria, Bihar

FOREWORD

Disasters and conflicts strongly affect children, not just in the crisis period directly after a disaster but for long periods afterwards. Despite this children are often denied a role in emergency preparedness and response.

The Asian tsunami in 2004 triggered one of the largest humanitarian relief efforts globally. Children's participation in emergency response and their active involvement in relief and rehabilitation efforts was core to Save the Children's Tsunami response. Child Led Disaster Risk Reduction (CLDRR) in South Asia has emerged as a good practice from Save the Children's work in the aftermath of the Tsunami.

Engaging children directly in the design and delivery of DRR activities enables children to play an active role in their communities to minimize the negative impact of disasters. The objective of CLDRR is to strengthen children's skills so that children understand the risks in their communities and are enabled to take the lead in reducing the risks and impacts of potential disasters for themselves and others in their communities.

Child-led DRR is not yet a widespread practice, mainstreamed within DRR policy and practice, or indeed fully understood. This review in collaboration with RedR India seeks to change that by documenting good practice in child-focused and child-led DRR in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. The purpose of the review is to draw out trends and lessons to inform future policy and practice. The review also highlights quality risk reduction practices in the region for learning and sharing of good practice. Finally the review will increase the voice and visibility of children in disaster risk management.

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ACRONYMNS

CC CB DRR	Child Centered Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction
CCDRR	Child Centered Disaster Risk Reduction
CFS	Child Friendly Space
CG	Children's Group
CLDRR	Child Led Disaster Risk Reduction
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions
SCSD	Save the Children Sweden Denmark
SCiSL	Save the Children in Sri Lanka
TfD	Theatre for Development
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

The need to prioritize children's role, needs and requirements in disasters is increasingly being recognized and advocated for in the humanitarian sector. In South Asia, the compounding effects of inequitable economic growth patterns and population pressures increase disaster risks exponentially and children form one of the highest risk groups.¹ Children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation are compromised by natural disasters² like recurrent floods, cyclones, earthquakes and by protracted armed crises³ in the region.

Save the Children has engaged with children in different emergency situations in South Asia, using unique approaches and techniques. Country programmes in the region, such as in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka have mainstreamed children's participation in their emergency work, and have engaged children in disaster risk reduction programs. This report reviews the approaches and techniques for disaster risk reduction (DRR) with children from three countries- Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. The review seeks to showcase best practices from these programs so as to inform the effective design and implementation of child centered DRR processes in the future.

The phrase CCDRR is used to describe the general process through which the programs in each country engage with children for DRR. Country programs are referred to by their individual names – Child Led Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (CLDRR), and Child Centered Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in India (CC CB DRR).

Approach and Methodology

This report presents findings from interactions with key stakeholders in the child centered DRR projects in Bangladesh and India. Interviews, focus group discussions and key informant discussions were held with children, adult community members, local government representatives, volunteers and with emergency focal points at Save the Children and their partner staff. Engagement with communities through mock drills, skits, games, and walks; coupled with direct observation, provided deeper insights into the child centered DRR process. These findings are complemented with secondary information from country plans, strategy papers, policy literature, international conventions, web-based documents and other published and unpublished literature.

The review was conducted by a team comprised of RedR India, Save the Children and local partner organizations' staff. This exercise was conducted over a period of three weeks in September and October 2010. The review team visited⁴ project sites in Dhaka and Kurigram in Bangladesh and Araria in Bihar, India. The experiences of Sri Lanka could only be documented through secondary sources.

¹ The Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2010, UNISDR

² 75 per cent of global flood mortality risk is concentrated in only three countries: Bangladesh, China and India; 85 per cent of global cyclone deaths are in Bangladesh and India. See UNISDR *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2009*

³ Like in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and recently in Pakistan

⁴ Annexure 3 has more details of the project sites, locations and organizations visited

The processes of child centered disaster risk reduction in these contexts are analyzed through a common framework of analysis. While the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and DRR plans are used to explore dimensions of participation and protection in these programs, the Hyogo Framework for Action⁵ has been adopted as the lens for analysis and presentation of the report. People's experiences and stories have been woven into this analysis as Case Studies for deeper reflection on child-centered DRR and its key features.

The Projects Reviewed – A Background

Save the Children, India initially began their child-centered DRR work in Bihar post the Kosi Floods of 2008 with the strategic focus on 'Building Back Better'. The Child Friendly Spaces that were created during the response phase became the platform for taking DRR activities ahead through children to the adults of the communities as well as other institutions. The key components of their program included DRR campaigning, capacity building of facilitators, PVCA, forming and training task-forces, developing DRR action plans, along with livelihood support to parents, setting up grain banks, and other related activities.

Save the Children Sweden Denmark's CLDRR program in Bangladesh evolved from existing child protection and development programmes. The children's groups and clubs, initiated in the protection programme, became the nodes and hubs of risk reduction activities and measures within a community. The programmes have been initiated and implemented in urban, peri-urban, rural and post disaster situations. The key activities include VCA, life skills trainings, theatre for development, and development of action plans.

Save the Children in Sri Lanka started its CLDRR program in the context of the tsunami and a protracted armed conflict, by introducing disaster risk reducing elements (building schools/early childhood development centers and temporary shelters) in the relief/recovery package. This process was then taken forward through VCA mapping by children, making child-sensitive preparedness plans, training of teachers and emergency management personnel.

Structure of the Review Report

Chapter one of this report has focused on introducing the review process and covered the background of this review along with the need to assimilate best practices. Further, this chapter has expanded the methodology adopted, the areas covered and context in which child centered DRR programs evolved in this region. Chapter two comprises the main part of the report including the findings, supported by illustrations from the field visits. This section uses the HFA as the pivot for analysis while drawing references to other key principles, frameworks and standards. The lessons learnt section comprises chapter three and is followed by the recommendations in chapter four. Chapter five concludes with a short discussion on the way forward. Chapter six showcases children's voices from the program areas in Bangladesh and Bihar.

⁵ The Hyogo Framework, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) by 168 delegations in January 2005, is an international commitment to implement a global disaster reduction agenda, articulating a worldwide consensus that disaster risk reduction is an integral part of sustainable human development, not a side issue of limited technical interest or concern.

FINDINGS

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) represents a landmark international commitment by the world community to build resilience to disasters. Given that it is representative of the global commitment towards disaster risk reduction, the HFA is used as a lens for analyzing the findings about child centered DRR in this review, and to explore the linkages between DRR and Child Rights.

This section explores the different components of the child centered programs in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka and their role in furthering the five HFA priorities.

HFA Priority 1: Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation

CCDRR programs in the region engage not just with children, but also with different actors in the child's environment, thus creating an institutional basis for implementation of disaster risk reduction measures with a focus on child rights. Further strengthening of the channels of interaction between these actors will ensure that reducing disaster risk for children becomes a national and local priority.

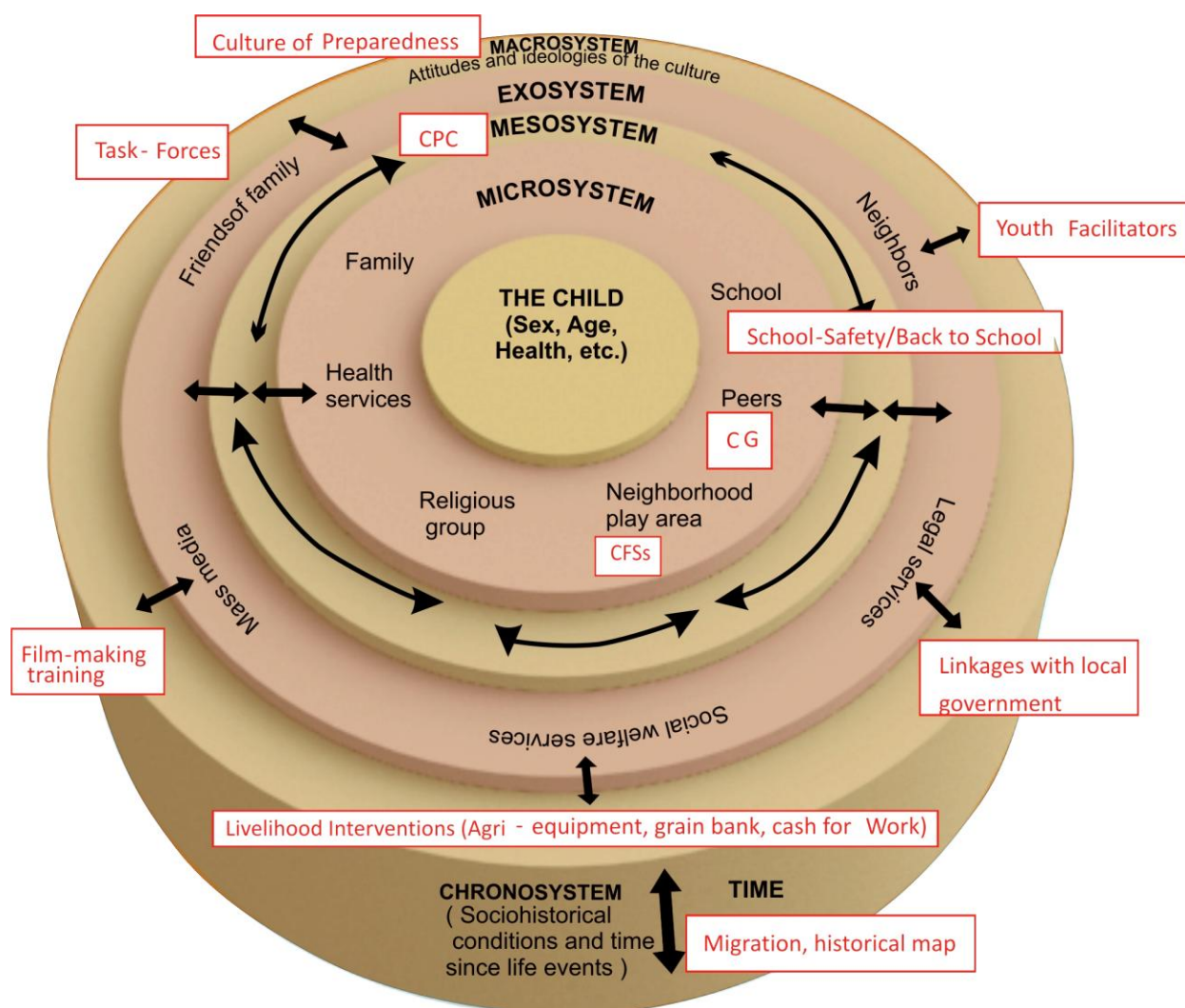
Institution-based programming in Bihar, India

By addressing different layers in the child's environment, the CC CB DRR program in Bihar recognizes the relationship between the child and her/his environment as 'mutually shaping'. The analysis of the processes underpinning such an approach and their role in fostering resilience in communities is enriched by using Urie Bronfenbrenner's⁶ Ecological Theory of Human Development for it appears that the program successfully addresses institutions at all the five layers described by Bronfenbrenner as shaping human development from infancy to adolescence.

- *Micro-system (family, school, peer group, neighbourhood and childcare)* – After the child him/herself, this forms the most immediate environment of the child. In the CC CB DRR program, children engage meaningfully with their peer group through children's groups (CGs); their families are a part of the child protection committees (CPCs); households are engaged in grain-banks and household-level preparedness measures are taken; and the school safety initiative engages with risk reduction within the school.
- *Meso-system (interactions between immediate environment)* – This layer is addressed through the CPCs which provide a forum where children and adults interact at a community level for risk reduction, and for discussing children's needs and requirements.

⁶ The psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment in his 'Ecological Systems Theory'. C.f Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974); Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood (1974). Child Development, 45, 1-5

CC CB DRR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES SITUATED IN A CHILD'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM



- *Exo-system (external environment settings – mass media, government, social welfare services)* – The program strengthens linkages of the communities with government bodies. In some villages, PRI members are a part of the CPCs whereas in others, CPCs work very closely with PRIs; in addition, 50 CC CB DRR plans have been approved by their Gram Sabhas⁷.
- *Macro-system (larger socio-political-cultural context)* – This program works with marginalized communities in Bihar, addressing problems related to livelihoods, access to essential service like education, and discrimination in communities.

⁷ Gram Sabha – This is the first level of the decentralized Governance mechanism in India. A Gram Sabha is constituted by the residents of a particular geographical area (normally a village) who elect their representatives to form the Panchayats (elected heads) who govern village affairs and implement Governmental schemes and programmes.

- *Chrono-system (temporal dimension)* – By initiating discussions of disasters in the historical context, the program addresses the chronological dimension of risk reduction. Further, an engagement with issues like seasonal migration and caste addresses risk reduction in these socio-cultural settings within local historical context.

Institutional engagement for DRR and child rights

In Bangladesh: The Bangladesh CLDRR program works closely with employers of child laborers, parents, local governments and the media for collective action on child centered risk reduction. The Code of Conduct is one such initiative whereby children and their employers create a list of do's and don'ts for workplaces which is also ratified by the local government representative. As a result of this process, different actors work together for moving children from hazardous to safe working conditions. Similarly, Children's Groups engage with their Ward Disaster Management Committees with the findings of their VCA and future plans of action.

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS FOR REDUCING RISK AT WORKPLACES

10 years old Alamin has been working in a CNG motor garage for the last three years. His father works in *Karchupi* (cloth stitching). He has two brothers and one sister, who also work with their father. Alamin could not attend school due to lack of resources, and started working at a garage to support his family. In the beginning of his employment, the garage owner did not give wages, or breaks between the long working hours; and on days that he was late he didn't even get time for lunch. He says "It was very terrible for me to open the hot engine of vehicles".

When SCSD's partner, CPD, in Dhaka city started engaging Alamin and his employer in their program, he attended workshops and interactions about risks and safety. In addition to this, Alamin has been regularly involved in activities at CPD where he discusses his own roles and rights in the society, and ways to achieve the same. He says that the garage owner now "...gives opportunity for recreation, and even approves leaves. He does the heavy work himself or makes adults do it..." Alamin wants to be a good mechanic in future.

In Sri Lanka: Save the Children in Sri Lanka made a deliberate choice to plan and implement its DRR programme within the framework of the Sri Lankan National Disaster Management Strategy, and works closely with parents, school teachers, government bodies and disaster management professionals.

HFA Priority 2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

The CCDRR programs recognize and nurture children's potential in identifying, assessing and monitoring risks. By ensuring that children and adults work together to make decisions about the risks in their communities, the programs reach the highest level of participation and also create spaces where existent social orders may be challenged.

Collective creation of knowledge about the community

Recognizing that children can creatively identify and analyse risks, all the child centered DRR programs were structured such that the VCA process was largely carried out by children. It was also ensured that children work closely with adults in this process, especially through activities like Historical Mapping.



R: Risk and Resource Map prepared by a CG in Bangladesh

Through this process, community members collectively create knowledge about their community's resources, vulnerabilities, capacities, socio-political systems, are able to identify risks, and distinguish between risky and safe places, with a special focus on children. Critically, cultural barriers to children's participation are broken down through such a program where children are provided the opportunity to present their potential for risk-analysis and problem-solving for greater good of the community. This process then translates into the creation of preparedness plans for communities. In Sri Lanka, children clubs in schools, in safe play areas and in IDP camps prepared Child Led School Disaster Risk Reduction Plans.

Equity and Non-discrimination

Collective assessment of existent vulnerabilities in communities was seen to create spaces for challenging existing social orders that perpetrate the existence of those vulnerabilities. Children engaged in child centered DRR processes were seen to challenge discrimination based on gender or class during and after the program in all the programs. Girls from conservative backgrounds have emerged as strong and vocal members of children's groups, and have been influential in encouraging women to participate in CPCs as well.

Monitoring and Accountability

Children ensure stakeholder accountability through monitoring

It was found that child centered DRR programs empower children for monitoring risks and demanding accountability from stakeholders. The 'Code of Conduct' for children's work-places, the 'Information Box', and the Monitoring Form are some of the innovative mechanisms developed in Save the Children's programs in Bangladesh. The Code of Conduct for employers and children at workplaces has been created in collaboration with children, parents and employers and has been put up at the workplaces. Similarly, an Information Box has been put

REDUCING DISASTER RISK AS EQUALS

Sanju Kumari remembers being very afraid at the time of the Kosi flood, that affected her village Barhara (Arraria, Bihar) in 2008. Remembering the time before the Child Friendly Space was set up as, "a very frightening time", she says, "our parents started sending us to the CFSs, and there we were encouraged to talk to each other and express ourselves".

The children from the CFS in her village were engaged in the CCCBDRR program where they formed a *Bal Panchayat*. Sanju Kumari is one of the most vocal members of her group today. She says, "Earlier we weren't allowed to interact with the boys of our village, but now we work with them on important issues of our village... we regularly check the water levels in the river, listen to the radio to check if there has been a breach of the dam; we are now also able to question the adults if we think something is wrong, for example we stopped a child marriage in our village because we felt it wasn't right".



Sanju, in a CPC members gathering in her village

at children's workplaces for children to share suggestions, grievances and points of appreciation about their workplaces.

Children monitor disaster risks

In Bihar, community members' capacities to monitor disaster risks and provide early warning have been increased, both in terms of skills and equipment. The early warning task forces have been trained to monitor warning signals from different sources and disseminate the information. It was found that children are particularly active in these task forces, regularly monitoring water levels and reporting to the village elders.

HFA Priority 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

The CCDRR programs demonstrated that when children are engaged in innovative ways with risk reduction activities, they emerge as creative communicators of this knowledge; and that this knowledge is embedded in their conscious experience, through thought and action, as life-skills. This use of innovation and education is especially notable for the programs that engage children who don't have access to formal education, and tap social networks for building a culture of safety and resilience.

DRR through Life-Skills in Bangladesh

The CLDRR program in Bangladesh engages children's groups in life-skills trainings, thus sharpening their ability to express themselves, understand situations, work in teams, take decisions and to convert stressful life situations into creative solutions. Communication, interpersonal and

"Our children showed us that we can work as teams and create stretchers with cots to save lives in floods. We would have never known that such resources exist in our village itself, if our children hadn't told us."
Parents group in Bhurungamari, Kurigram, Bangladesh

problem-solving life skills are anchored to critical life-saving skills like first-aid. As a result, children are not only mentally prepared but are also confident in responding to any incident by way of their practical skills.

While it is evident that skills like first-aid or the ability to negotiate help children in handling situations on a daily basis, it also appears that these skills contribute towards building a culture of safety and resilience. Child Laborers in Dhaka city reduce risk by negotiating safer work places with their employers, while those in Kurigram district use their

knowledge of blood groups/first-aid to create safer working environments. Moreover, children were seen to transfer their knowledge to the adults of the community by their actions.



DRR as life-skills in Bihar

The experience with task-forces in the CC CBDRR program in Bihar exemplifies how risk reduction skills translate to life-long skills, applicable in diverse situations. Adults and children, who have been trained as members of five

OUR RISKS, OUR RIGHTS, OUR ACTION

Renu is 12 years old and lives with her parents and three other siblings in Bihar. Their livelihood is dependent on a small piece of farm land and work as farm laborers on other farms. Her marriage was fixed last year by her family who also presented token valuables to the groom as *shagun*. Renu immediately shared this news and her unwillingness to get married, to her peers in the child group, who had also become her support system.

The Children's Group requested her parents to rethink this decision but in vain. A letter was drafted by the CG for the CPC. The CPC approached the parents explaining them that many a times the girl returns back to her maternal home or is mistreated by the in-laws. Her mother, Gyanirishi Devi, asked them if they are willing to take the responsibility of the girl until she comes of age and she does not run away with another boy. The CPC accepted the responsibility and the marriage was called-off. Renu is now studying in school and carries her own dreams for the future.

Renu, with her parents



taskforces- Early Warning, Search and Rescue, Psychological Care, First Aid and Relief Management- use these skills in handling demands and challenges of everyday life. It was noted that building these capacities instills confidence in the children, nurtures team-working skills and helps them cope with their fear of disasters. Children were seen to take keen interest in other risk reduction activities like the Grain Bank, learning the value of 'saving' from this process. Further, activities like children's drawing competition on Safe Villages and use of IEC material for safe practices continue to reinforce the importance of safety as a desired value in children.

Children communicate risks and risk reduction mechanisms to their communities

Children are able to communicate messages of risk and risk reduction in their homes so that these values can be shared by family members. Children's groups in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bihar used street plays, composed songs and prepared posters to share information with their communities. Theatre for Development is used by children to raise issues and express their opinions to their communities. Parents in the Mohammadpur area of Dhaka city have described how their children informed them of potential fire hazards in their area and the evacuation routes for the same.

The experience in Sri Lanka demonstrates how communicating risks can also be a therapeutic experience for children. Children in IDP camps and schools communicate risks through paintings of their past experiences of violent conflict and the tsunami. This exercise helps them express their shared traumas and further support each other in the recovery experience.

Children become advocates, influencing decisions at community level

In Bihar, representatives from the CGs were aware of their rights and lobbied with the Panchayats, as members of the Child Protection Committee (CPC) for their own rights. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, children used theatre (eg. TFD), meetings and written communication – flyers, posters, and newsletters for advocating for their rights, taking action against the violation of their rights and influencing decisions in this regard. Children's action against Child Marriages in Bihar and Bangladesh is particularly notable in this regard.

Tapping social networks for risk reduction

Interactions between children's groups: In Bangladesh, child clubs network with other children's groups for collective action on issues and for organizing events. These networks are potential spheres of influence for engagement and advocacy at different levels. Similarly, training provided by children's groups to peers in schools further expands the social network of those informed about risks and their reduction.

Expanding base of knowledge across all community members: In Bihar, the CC CB DRR program included the training of young people from every village in the program area as youth facilitators in the areas of DRR, first-aid, early warning and psychosocial support. The children have formed close relationships with the youth facilitators who act as their role models and as systems of support, and as essential links between the children and adults for the transfer of skills. The trainings have had a snowballing effect. An idea emerging from the communities themselves, a simple shift of training venue from capital city to the villages has built the capacity of 7000 people at the grassroots level. In Sri Lanka, 507 teachers were trained on child care and child protection in disaster and developing child-sensitive preparedness plans and 491 disaster management professionals were trained on child care and child protection.

HFA Priority 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors

The child centered disaster risk reduction programs reviewed not only address unsafe conditions that create disaster risk for children, but also the underlying risk factors in the child's environment; thus addressing the complex vulnerabilities in the communities at large.

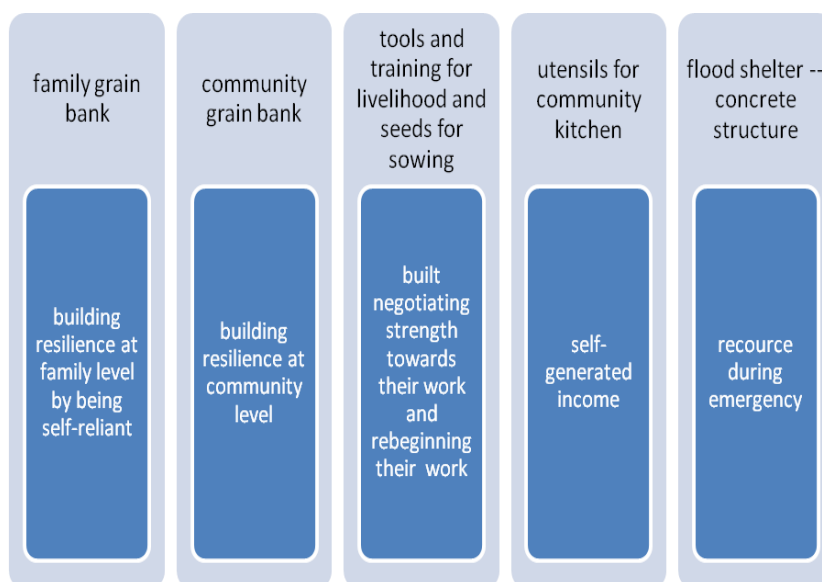
Addressing the complexity of vulnerabilities in a community

By being strongly embedded in the social context of the children's lives, child centered DRR programs in Bangladesh and Bihar attempt to address the root causes and pressures that give rise to risky conditions. It appears that the programs take cognizance of the building consensus⁸ that communities are exposed to progression of vulnerabilities from 'Unsafe Conditions' (fragile physical environment or local economy) to 'Dynamic Pressures' (lack of local institutions, health care, markets, education, population expansion, urbanization etc.) to 'Underlying Causes' (limited access to power structures or resource, economic systems, armed conflict etc.).

⁸ See Disaster Crunch Model, c.f. Blaikie, Piers et al. At Risk. London: Routledge, 1994

Components of the CLDRR program in Bangladesh that deal with the issues of Child Labor, Child Trafficking, School Enrolment, Non-formal Education and marginalization of *Char*⁹ communities address the 'Dynamic Pressures' that make societies vulnerable and the 'Underlying Causes' arising out of the political power structures and economic systems.

Similarly in Bihar, the program addresses economic concerns by providing agricultural equipments and seeds to farmers, working with migrants, facilitating grain banks; addresses educational issues through its back to school campaign; and addresses socio-political inequalities by working with *Musahar* communities. Save the Children in Sri Lanka has developed its strategy such that DRR is integrated in all four thematic areas of its programme - child protection, education, RCR (Realization Child Right) and high zone economic security.



Continuity in children's groups in Bangladesh

Children's groups that had been formed for ensuring child protection as a development initiative were later engaged in the CLDRR process. Though the program officially ended, the CGs continued to function. The children of the CG are willing to carry forward the activities even with minimum support such a meeting room and space in the school to carry out activities like theatre for development. In an aid industry that places premium on measurable results per project, the continuity of work with children's groups through different programs emerges as a good practice. The practice looks at change as 'emergent' rather than linear, which becomes especially relevant when working with children.

HFA Priority 5: Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

The child centered DRR programs reviewed strengthened disaster preparedness for children and adults alike through mock-drills and by providing structural support for risk reduction. There is a scope for strengthening disaster preparedness at all levels by strengthening linkages of children's groups with governance bodies.

⁹ Small, flat, low-lying islands within rivers in Bangladesh

Children's participation for effective response



First Aid mock drill for a CG in Bihar, India

The trainings provided to children in child centered DRR programs coupled with the mock drills ensure that children are prepared as first responders. This approach recognizes children's capabilities in providing early warning, retaining and communicating knowledge of evacuation routes, providing first aid, participating in relief management and providing psychosocial care. Other activities with children, for example those regarding setting up Child Friendly Spaces, further ensure the strengthen preparedness for an effective (child-centered) response.

Advocacy for preparedness at all levels

Save the Children in Sri Lanka engaged with the Disaster Management Committees at both the national and district levels through meetings and workshops and succeeded to include School Children Awareness programmes in the National Disaster Risk Reduction strategy. Provisions for child care and children's protection through recreational activities and their continued access to education in the district response plans in Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara and Matara have been incorporated because of advocacy efforts.

Structural Support and Investments

Efforts towards creating deep-rooted (yet intangible) changes are complemented with structural risk reduction efforts in the forms of Child Friendly Flood Shelters, Shelter flood-proofing, and identification for land for CFSs in Bihar. Structural interventions help in reducing risk by creating safe conditions, but it is also notable how structures also become a medium for addressing underlying inequalities in communities.

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN – THE CFFS

The recently constructed Child Friendly Flood Shelter in Purvi Thatha village in Khagariya district, Bihar is the first concrete building of the community. Located on the lower side of an embankment, this village is exposed to water inundation almost every monsoon season. For this reason, it was selected as one of the 11 villages to have a CFFS. Having been built to accommodate 1000 people, to provide water, sanitation and first aid facilities, and to face multi-hazard risks, this structure would be inclusive in providing for the needs of children, the disabled and the elderly.

The community members have mobilized themselves to form a CFFS-committee of people who manage the use of this space and ensure its appropriate maintenance in the future. Systems are also being put in place for renting this space for private functions to generate revenue for its maintenance.

The people of Purvi Thatha finally have a safe space to take shelter from the recurrent floods. But what they also have is a structure for their personal needs, a place for women's self help groups to meet, a space for children's group to discuss, and a place they can truly call their own.



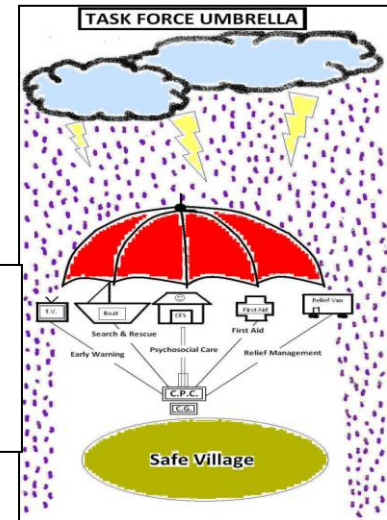
Child Friendly Flood Shelter, Khagariya,

In Sri Lanka, children participate in school reconstruction committees for sharing decision making on designing multi-hazard child-friendly schools. This enables children to understand their physical environment through a DRR lens.

Culture of Preparedness in Bihar

The creation of five Task Forces, their selection and training process, provision of equipment and regular mock drills ensures preparedness for disasters. This process is further creating a culture of preparedness in communities as these skills are being used in peace-time by people who are not members of the task-forces.

Right: Save the Children India's partner in Araria, Bihar explains the functions of different task forces to communities through a 'Task Force Umbrella'. Different task forces work together to create 'Safe Villages'



BEING PREPARED FOR ALL RISKS

Jagat Narayan Singh's (Mukhiya, Bhagwat Tola) village has recently averted a personal loss due to their recently acquired skill. When one of the village members fell ill with a very high fever and loss of breath in the middle of the night, they quickly assembled their 'bicycle-ambulance' to take him to the nearest health center. They had recently witnessed the Search and Rescue Task Force members practice making this make-shift ambulance and were able to reassemble and use it in time of dire need. Jagat Narayan Singh says that children are also picking up such skills by watching their elders. Emphasizing the importance of working with children, he says, "when you work for our fields or our huts, then you undertake a one year project; but when you work with our children, you undertake a generational project. And this is the investment that is valuable to our community"



LESSONS LEARNT

The findings chapter explored different components of the regional child centered disaster risk reduction programs through a discussion of their role in furthering the HFA priorities. This exercise has elicited insights about the process, approach and potential impact of disaster risk reduction with a focus on children. Six key lessons learnt through this review are presented below. Finally, this section concludes with unique features of child centered disaster risk reduction.

1. DRR NURTURES LIFE-SKILLS



A BAL Panchayat president in Araria, Bihar leads a meeting, as the younger children and elders look on.

In child centered DRR, risk reduction activities and life skills go hand in hand, one often translating into the other. The programs reviewed have demonstrated that building children's capacity for risk reduction not only strengthens their preparedness for response, but also nurtures the development of essential life skills. Engaging with children for risk assessment, as members of task forces – including training and mock drills, and for activities of the children's groups fosters decision making and critical thinking skills, coping and self-management skills and communication and interpersonal skills.

DRR with children empowers them to face many different challenging situations in their lives, and not just disasters.

This learning becomes especially relevant in light of the fact that the importance of life-skills education for children is highlighted directly and indirectly in a number of international recommendations, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Conference on Population and Development, and Education for All.¹⁰

2. WORKING WITH INSTITUTIONS ADDRESSES UNDERLYING RISK FACTORS

The programs reviewed have delineated that engaging with institutions in the child's environment is important for dealing with children's risks in disasters. It is widely accepted¹¹ by child development theorists and practitioners alike that the relationship between a child and her/his environment is mutually shaping. This understanding entails that successfully reducing disaster risk for children involve the active engagement with a child's environment.



Children in Bangladesh discussing their institutional Venn diagram

¹⁰ UNICEF, See http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_bigpicture.html

¹¹ See for example, Dede Paquette & John Ryan. (2001). *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory*

What is critical about institutional engagement in child centered DRR is that it addresses complex vulnerabilities of the entire community. Activities that create linkages with the local governance systems, which address economic issues of families and engage with social mores of communities, reach out to the progression of vulnerabilities that give rise to risky conditions. This not only addresses risk reduction at multiple levels, it also facilitates the creation of a child protective environment, thus, contributing towards creating deep-rooted resilience in communities.

3. CCDRR INCREASES CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

When spaces are created for children and adults to carry out the VCA processes of their communities, cultural barriers to children's participation are reduced. The process of knowledge creation is an empowering one, and child centered DRR presents the opportunity for communities to create knowledge about the vulnerabilities, capacities, and risks to their communities as equals.

The review further revealed that children play a vital role in the risk reduction process by:

- a. communicating risks and risk reduction mechanisms in their communities;
- b. monitoring risks and ensuring accountability from stakeholders;
- c. advocating for their own rights; and
- d. influencing decisions at community level



Children of a CG teaching first-aid to the younger children in Araria, Bihar

4. INTEGRATING RISK REDUCTION IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE MAKES CHILDREN SAFER FOR THE FUTURE



A child looks out of the 'CFS Centre' in his village in Bangladesh

While CFSs are spaces for providing safe and protected environments to children immediately after disasters, they are also spaces for children to recover, express, create and start their engagement with the process of risk reduction.

The programs reviewed demonstrated that the response phase in the aftermath of a disaster can be used as an entry point for initiating child centered disaster risk reduction. Child Protection Committees and children's groups can be formed as soon as possible after the disaster – after survival needs have been met- to engage the community with monitoring the situation of children in displacement settings. These groups can then evolve from here on to become active agents of risk reduction in their communities.

5. STRUCTURAL SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT FOR CREATING A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Complementing capacity building activities with structural support helps the communities to effectively reduce risk for disasters and strengthen child protection mechanisms. Mitigation measures like building Child Friendly Flood Shelters, hazard-proofing residential and educational buildings, identifying and reclaiming spaces for child friendly shelters, securing water-sources address major structural vulnerabilities of communities. More importantly, these initiatives become the means for addressing social and attitudinal vulnerabilities that increase risks for children.

6. CHILDREN'S GROUPS SUSTAIN DRR, AND ARE CRITICAL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE



The group in Dhaka City continues to meet on a monthly basis, even though the CLDRR project has officially ended. They requested Save the Children Sweden Denmark's partner NGO to provide them with meeting space and guidance to continue their activities.

Child centered disaster risk reduction is more likely to be effective with continued engagement with children's groups, often extending beyond project cycles. Interactions with children revealed that the component of the programs that they value the most is their 'children's group'. The group offers a space for children talk about their shared experiences, to challenge status quo in a protected environment, to experiment with their ideas and to act with collective support. These groups are also spaces for emergent change.

When existing children's groups are engaged for child centered risk reduction, and the engagement is sustained over a period of time, transformational change is more evident.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT CHILD CENTERED DRR?

DRR with a focus on children ensures that resilience is created at all levels because:

- Focus on a child ensures focus on different actors in her/his ecological context
- Children are not only creative but also just and committed actors in the process, who are able to advocate for and influence decisions on social/attitudinal vulnerabilities
- Children facilitate inter-generational transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will explore recommendations that emerge from this review. These recommendations seek to assimilate findings so as to inform the programming of future child centered DRR programs. The first section of this chapter discusses the salient features of a child centered disaster risk reduction program, as they emerged from this review. The second section explores the way forward and concludes.

The salient components of any child centered disaster risk reduction program include:

I. DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ON DRR AS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS



Children's group in Bihar discussing the seasonal map prepared by them

A child centered DRR program should ensure that children's knowledge about vulnerabilities, capacities, risks and rights should be expanded whereby children are able to place their past experiences in new knowledge, build on existent knowledge and create new knowledge.

While the school is often a focal point for knowledge building components of a program, non-formal educational spaces have the ability to reach out to marginalized groups. It is recommended that these components are chosen with recognition of the fact that the highest level of participation is reached when children and adults work together to create knowledge about their communities. Finally, the program may be structured in such a way that this knowledge is spread across

communities through a snowballing effect.

II. WORKING WITH INSTITUTIONS IN A CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT

The program must reach out to underlying risk factors of children in their communities by ensuring institutional engagement, in addition to working directly with children.

This may be done by mapping all the institutions in the child's environment in a particular context. Components of the program should be designed to reach to institutions and systems¹² in the environment and develop inter-linkages between them. This may include addressing socio-economic issues at the household and community levels, engaging families and teachers in trainings, working with young adolescents of the community, working closely with religious



PRI members are actively engaged in the CC CB DRR program in Bihar

¹² Micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, macro-system, and chrono-system, as discussed in the Findings chapter

and political bodies, especially those appointed for Disaster Management and addressing socio-historical conditions in the children's life-events.

III. PROVIDING STRUCTURAL SUPPORT



It is recommended that a child centered DRR program should ensure that physical spaces are created for children to experience, learn, express, and create freely in a safe and protected environment.

Components of the program should be designed to address physical and structural vulnerabilities of children in a particular context. For example, a safe space may be identified and earmarked to become the Child Friendly Space, Child Friendly Shelters may be constructed, or children's houses may be constructed or hazard-proofed depending on the contextual requirement.

IV. SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S GROUPS OVER THE LONG-TERM

It is recommended that the vision of child centered disaster risk reduction be reflected as a process in programmatic design as a process. Children's groups should be created as institutions for emergent change, not as organizations for linear change. While some activities with children's groups, like creating safe school plans, may show visible results; others, like acceptance and recognition of children's participation in governance processes, may not be achieved within programmatic bounds. Thus, continued engagement with children's groups, regardless of the nature of programme and beyond project frameworks and timeline should be ensured for building deep rooted resilience.

WAY FORWARD

Child centered programs in the South Asian region have been reviewed here through an exploration of the processes, visible outcomes and the relationships between them. A need for deeper investigation of the impact of child centered DRR, particularly in relation to DRR programs, has been identified through this review. The need for cost-benefit analysis of CCDRR interventions has already been emphasized in previous documentation¹³.

While we know now that CCDRR and child rights can complement each other, the exact relationships between CCDRR and attainment of the rights of children – like school enrollment, child survival, child protection- merit more systematic analyses for practice. It has been highlighted here that CCDRR can be integrated with early recovery; it, then, needs to be explored if there are implications of this integration on children's individual resilience in the aftermath of a disaster and in the ensuing longer term rehabilitation process. Finally, the outcomes and impact of child centered DRR need to be studied, not just with respect to children but also the communities that the children are a part of. Perhaps, therein lies the way forward for the ultimate quest of building resilient communities.



The Children's group in Kurigram, Bangladesh is collecting money to be able to build their own space in the village for their meetings. They hope to start building next year.

¹³ Back, E, Cameron, C, Tanner, T. (2009) "Children and Disaster Risk Reduction: Taking stock and moving forward". Children in a Changing Climate Research and UNICEF
 Cameron, C and Norrington-Davies, G. (2010) "Children and Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and the Pacific : A Way Forward"

CHILDREN'S VOICES

"The biggest change I see after being a part of this group is in the confidence of our guardians towards us. When we had just begun, we used to get questioned a lot. Some people would comment on our activities and call them waste of time. But once we got a chance to show them that we are working for our communities, they trusted us and now encourage us to do more"

Member of Youth Group, Mohammadpur, Dhaka City



"When adults ask for their rights themselves, why should we depend on anyone else to ask for ours? I like working in the *Bal Panchayat* because I can demand my own rights myself."

Ranjit Kumar, Pariyavarman Mantri,
Bal Panchayat,
Indravati, Musahar Tola
Araria, Bihar

"We are now aware of our strength, it lies in our togetherness. Now whenever there is a possibility of cyclone or high winds, we are able to quickly organize and ensure the safety of each person from our communities."

Children's Group, Kurigram, Bangladesh



“We would like to know about what other children’s groups are doing for their communities, and learn from their experiences...we are especially interested in knowing about early warning systems, like if there is one for earthquakes?”

Youth Group, Dhaka City, Bangladesh



“We have trained children in other schools about disasters in this area. We think that if we talk about it with our friends then they talk to other friends about it and the message spreads. We have had this experience and now we have this knowledge – but we’ll grow up and start work and move on with our lives. Our main concern for the future is that our younger siblings get the same knowledge as well”

Children’s Group, Kurigram, Bangladesh

“Roti, khel, padhai, pyaar, bachhon ka hain adhikar”
(Nutrition, play, education and love are children’s rights)



Rinki Raj, Sanju Kumari, Dilkhush Kumar Raj and Pintu Kumar,
Bal Panchayat Members, Bihar

“We feel that we can present our views to the elders in the village. In fact, if the adults are wrong, we even stop them. We have sent 15 children in our village to school; we have complained against the *khichdi* given at school for lunch and ensure that mock drills

Dilkhush Kumar
(picture above)



“We have so many questions about the future. What will happen to this village if the floods keep coming every year? Our crops keeps getting destroyed every year”

Sanju Singh

“There is a girl of 12-13years in our group. One day we noticed that there were guests in their house to fix the marriage of this girl with a boy. We went and spoke to the girl and her family. When things didn’t work out, we went to the Child Protection Committee and got the marriage postponed till the girl and the boy are much older.”

Rinki Raj



“We realize that we are a group, but also that to take our actions further we need resources. We often discuss in our group where the resources will come from”

Members of Children’s Group,
Bangladesh



“The thing we like most about this process is that the ideas are ours, and then we approach Solidarity (*Save the Children’s partner NGO*) and get the support we need for our ideas...Our strength lies in the fact that we are one united group for the same cause; also, that our group is accepted in the community”

Members of Children’s Group, Bangladesh

“Earlier, we girls would never speak to boys. All we did was the household chores. I was too shy. Now I participate in the child clubs and am able to interact with persons like you whom I do not even know”

Members of Children’s Group, Bangladesh



“The Child Friendly Shelters were also spaces for us to discover the potential of the children in our communities and to do something for our community. We formed such a deep connection with the children in the CFSs that we continued to work with them even after the CFSs were closed.

Lallan Kumar, Youth Volunteer, Bihar

“We have done many skits, and speak to our parents about the consequences of child marriage...we have been able to stop child marriage but we are still trying to convince our parents about not giving dowry – we haven’t been able to accomplish this yet. We wonder how long it will take”

Children’s Group, Bhurungamari, Bangladesh



“The work we have sought to do will take very long – we have just begun, there are so many villages, then so many wards...it will take a lot of work and time...but we’ll keep trying...”

Children’s Group, Kurigram, Bangladesh

ANNEXURE 1: Review Checklist

PARTICIPATION

- Children and adults share decision making
- children initiate and lead action
- adult initiated shared decisions with children
- children consulted or informed
- children tokenized

DRR IMPACT

- Program addresses specific disaster-vulnerabilities of children in this region
- Visible risk reduction measures – active task-forces , awareness campaigns, structural mitigation efforts, children's engagement with climate change issues related to their communities
- Program has created a comprehensive DRR curriculum which may be adopted for other settings
- Program is furthering HFA goals

IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY

- Program instrumental in addressing cultural barriers to children's participation
- Has created spaces where children can learn, experience, express, create
- Instrumental in reducing information gap in CP issues
- Children and adults interact and make decisions on important issues
- The program creates an enabling environment by holistically addressing the physical, social, and economic empowerment of children

CHILDREN'S ROLES IN DRR

- Children are able to analyze risk in their areas, and have an understanding of hazard, risk and vulnerabilities
- Children design and implement DRR activities
- Children mobilize resources and people for their efforts
- Children communicate risks to each other and their community
- Children are able to influence decisions at community and policy levels

PROGRAM-RELATED BEST PRACTICES

- Program uses unique ways of engaging with children, activities/media are well-suited for the context
- Children's disaster experiences are well-documented
- Children share program-related decision making roles
- Real time monitoring enables creative changes in the program according to identified needs

SUSTAINABILITY

- Program addresses disaster-development linkages
- Children continue activities even after the program period
- There is inter-generational relay of information/activities
- Long-term impacts – children's engagement with adults is resulting in a culture of preparedness in the community

OTHER IMPACTS ON CHILDREN

- Noted/felt improvements in nutritional/health status
- Education – enrolment and retention
- Psychological impacts = increased confidence, voice, decision-making, problem solving abilities

MISCELLANEOUS

- Program brings different stakeholders (civil society, local government, parents etc.) together for children's well-being
- Program is gender-inclusive, and addresses this cross-cutting issue in the process
- Program creates a safe and enabling environment for CP
- Hurdles in planning and implementation of the program were overcome in unique ways, which may be replicated in similar projects

ANNEXURE 2: Semi-Structured Questionnaire

STC team at Country Office

1. Since when is the project implemented; how has the journey been so far?
2. How were the location, children and partners identified?
3. How is the CLDRR process undertaken (organo-gram until the level of the child)?
 - a. How do you initiate work in a community/area? Is it issue based? What approach do you adopt?
 - b. What considerations are taken into account before planning an entry? Similarly how do you plan the exit? Do you work on the exit strategy?
4. What parameters determine their sustainability?
5. Does some hand-holding support continue after your withdrawal?

Partners/Field Staff

Process-based

1. How are the children included in the CLDRR process? (age group, gender)
2. What activities entail the entry-level initiation with the children? How do you engage the interest of the children?
3. What are the approaches (both activities and media) for engaging with the children; how are they selected; what kinds of materials are used?
 - a. What awareness-raising and education activities are used?
 - b. What risk assessment and planning processes are used? What tools are used, how are they validated?
4. What are the hazards addressed through these activities?
5. Have the children organized themselves into groups/organizations? How do they operate, especially in relation to adult organizations (panchayat/ user-groups/ SHGs etc.) in the area?
6. Specific problems that you/children find difficult to overcome; what are some of the project management difficulties are encountered by you?
7. Are children's disaster experiences documented through this program?

Impact-based

1. How is this project monitored and evaluated?

2. Has there been a disaster in this area since the inception of your program? Was the response impacted by your program?
3. What have been the impacts of this program on the children and the community?
 - a. How does it address specific vulnerabilities of children of this region?
4. How has this program reduced disaster-related risks in this area – preparedness, mitigation, prevention?
5. Do the children continue to be associated with the program – after it is formally over? Are there ways for engagement with youth through this program?

Children

1. How long have you been associated with this program? What are the activities you do here?
2. Have you been involved in a situation assessment activity (risk assessment for home or natural hazards, problem tree analysis)?
3. What are the risks you face from nature as well as your surroundings? How can they be reduced?
4. Are you a part of a group or campaign?
5. How does it feel to be associated with such a program?
6. Do you feel any changes in yourself after being involved in this program?

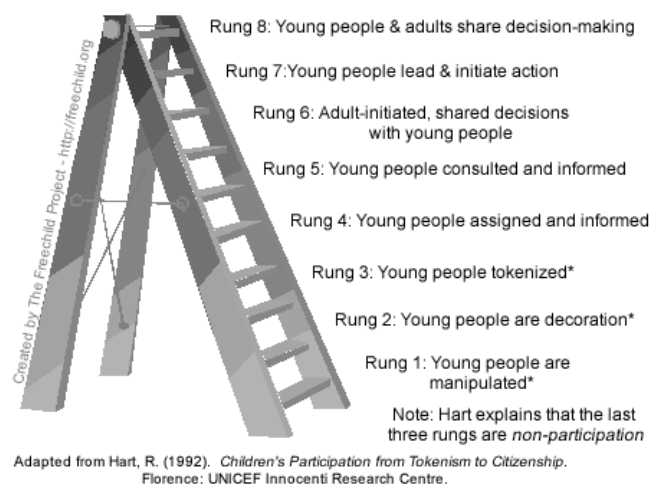
Community members/Parents

1. What are your feelings/opinions about the program that your child attends?
2. How has it impacted your household/community?
3. What, in your opinion, is the role of children in reducing disaster risk?

Questions for the review team to consider

1. What is the level of participation of the children in the project? (Ref to diagram below)
2. Does the program address specific vulnerabilities of the children in this region?
3. Does the program provide the children with a platform for expressing voice? How is this manifested?

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



4. Is the program
 - a. ...instrumental in addressing the information gap on child protection issues in the region?
 - b. ...addressing cultural barriers to child participation?
 - c. ...instrumental in the realization of children's rights and respect for the best interests of the child?
5. What are the DRR impacts of this program?
 - a. Preparedness – social behavioral changes in the community/children's groups? Children's role in relaying/reaffirming important messages in the communities.
 - b. Visible mitigation efforts undertaken in the community?
 - c. Economic impact assessment carried out – cost-benefit analysis been carried out? – benchmarking for future
 - d. How is the program furthering the HFA goals?
 - e. Prevention – climate change awareness?
6. Is this a sustainable model – addresses disaster-development linkages, there is inter-generational relay of information/activities?
7. What are the development/long-term impacts of this program?
 - a. Specifically in education/health/child protection?
 - b. Does the program create spaces for interaction between children and adults of the community? Consensus in community about children as valuable actors?
 - c. Transfer within the community at large – children -- young adults --- adults.
 - d. Furthering the CRC tenets?
8. Are there observable attitudinal/emotional/behavioral impacts of this program on the children – confidence, voice, decision-making, vision for future, problem solving abilities etc.?
9. Benchmarks will be developed by the medium of case studies which will present:
 - a. Children's issues, thoughts and feelings through their voices;
 - b. Successful activities that can be replicable models;
 - c. Examples of positive impact on the children and the community (in health and hygiene, protection and freedom, opinions and voices amongst others)

ANNEXURE 3: Review Schedule

Bangladesh

19 Sep '10	Save the Children in Bangladesh, Dhaka Meeting with Program Staff
20 Sep '10	Partner 1- Community Participation and Development, Dhaka City Meeting with Youth Group Meeting with Partner Staff Meeting with Community Members Meeting with Employers of Child Laborers Meeting with Children's Group Partner 2- Uddipan, Dhaka City/Pirozpur Meeting with Partner Staff Partner 3- SOLIDARITY, Kurigram Meeting with Partner Staff Meeting with Children's Group 1 Meeting with Parents of CG 1 Meeting with Meeting with Children's Group 2 Meeting with Union Chairperson
21 -23 Sep '10	
24 Sep '10	Partner2- Uddipan Meeting with Project Staff from Pirozpur Save the Children in Bangladesh Meeting with Emergency Focal Point

India

30 Sep '10	Bal Raksha, Save the Children country office, New Delhi Meeting with Emergency Focal Point
1 Oct '10	Partner 1 – Vikas Vihar, Arraria, Bihar Meeting with Programme Staff
2 Oct '10	Village 1 –Indravati Musahar Tola, Arraria District Meeting with Youth Facilitators' Group Meeting with Children's Group Meeting with Task Forces Individual interviews with children
3 Oct '10	Village 2 – Bhagwat Tola, Arraria District Meeting with Children's Group Meeting with Parents Meeting with Parents Mock-drill exercise Meeting with Village Mukhiya Meeting with parents who have received livelihood support Village 3- Barhara, Arraria District Skit by children Meeting with Children's Group and CPC members Mock Drill Meeting with women's SHG, grain bank members Meeting with Mukhiya Transect walk with children
4 Oct '10	Village 4 – Purvi Thatha, Khagariya District Meeting with CG and CPC Visit to Child Friendly Flood Shelter Save the Children State Office, Patna Meeting with Programme Staff

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