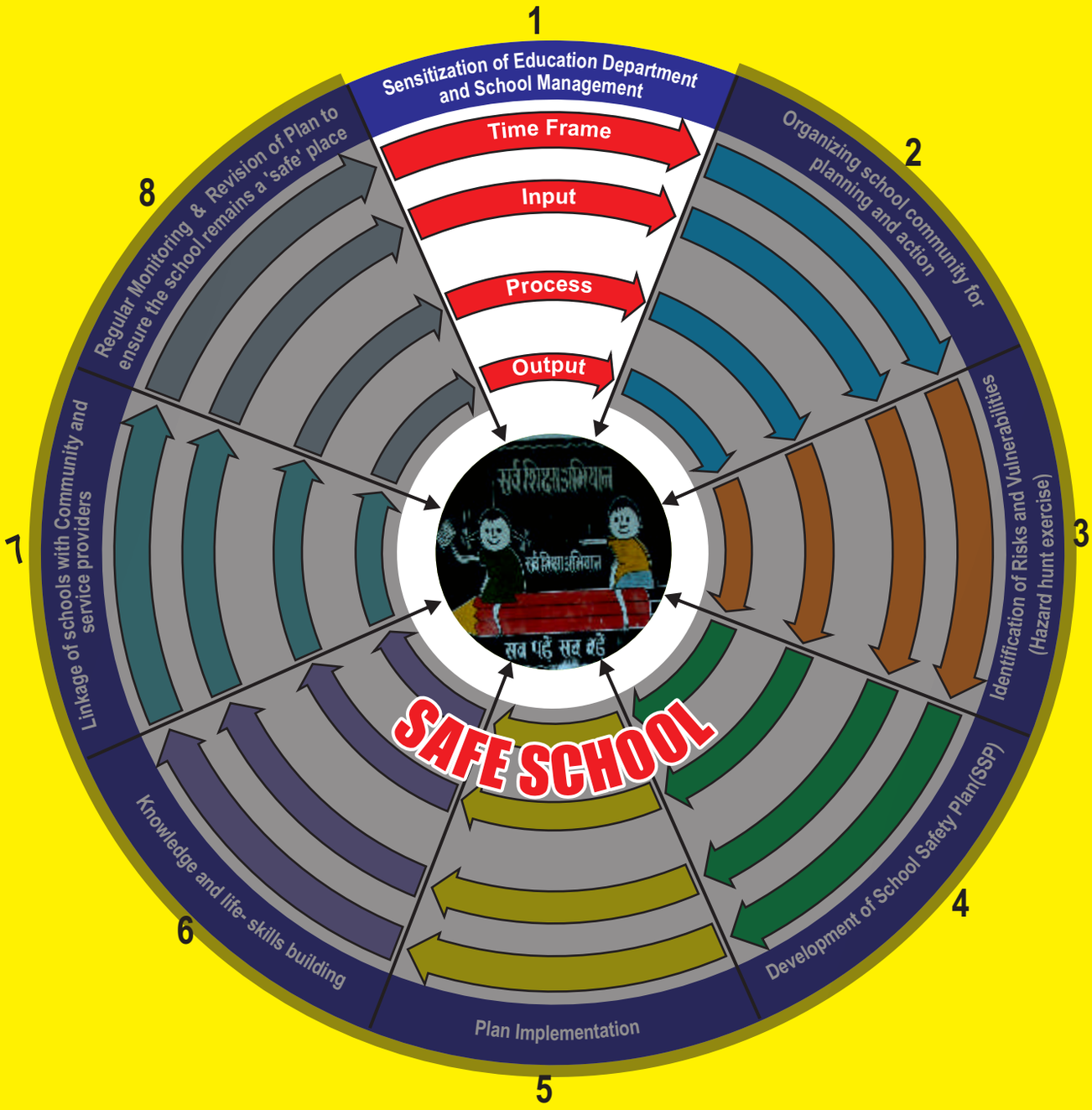

"Ensuring Safe Learning Environment for Children"

A Roadmap for District Administration

unicef

This document has been developed by **RedR India** for **UNICEF, Bihar** and is a result of learning from the works of vulnerable communities in Bihar at making their schools safer. In a sense therefore, this document is a tribute to their enthusiasm and commitment.

Our experience of the school safety programme in Bihar was facilitated by **UNICEF, Bihar** and its partner Non-Governmental Organizations: Bihar Seva Samiti, Centre for All Round Development, Grameen Development Service, Ghoghardiha Prakhand Swarajya Vikas Sangh, Integrated Development Foundation, Muzaffarpur Development Agency, Samajik Chetna Kendra, and Samajik Sodh Evam Vikas Kendra.

Between early October and late November 2012, nineteen villages and eighteen schools were visited; along the way we met students ranging from class 1-8; teachers, principals as well as VSS members. In addition, we were supported by VDMC members and their associated office bearers, task force team workers, village Mukhiya and Sarpanch; Anganwadi workers, ASHA, Gram Rozgar Sevaks and many, many more members of these communities who have helped create safer schools for their children. Their generous sharing of experiences made it possible to develop a deeper understanding of processes and innovations that helped achieve success.

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GLOSSARY

SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
BRCs	Block Resource Centers
CRCs	Cluster Resource Centers
VEC	Village Education Committees
JRY	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
PMRY,	Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MP	Members of Parliament
MLA	Members of Legislative Assembly
HFA	Hyogo Framework of Action
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Coorporation
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund
VDMC	Village Disaster Management Committee
PMGSY	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
SFPT	School Focal Point Teacher
ORS	Oral Rehydration Solution
HFL	High Flood Level
TB	Tiffin Box
NUEPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
SPD	State Project Director
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
SAC	School Action Committee
SCPCR	State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights
EMIS	Education Management Information System
DEEO	District Elementary Education Officer
DSEO	District (Secondary) Education Officer
CCE	Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation
ST	Scheduled Tribes
SC	Scheduled Caste
CWSN	Children With Special Needs
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
SDMA	State Disaster Management Authority
DDMA	District Disaster Management Authority
NBC	National Building Codes
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
IEC	Information, Education and Communication material
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institute
NDRF	National Disaster Response Force
SDRF	State Disaster Response Force
DEO	District Education Officer
SDMC	School Disaster Management Committee
Meena Manch	Adolescent Girls' forum in middle schools
Bal Sansad	Children cabinet in Schools
FPT	Focal Point Teacher
VSS	Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
DIET	District Institutes of Education and Training
RTE Act	Right to Education Act
BEO	Block Education Officer
PHED	Public Health Engineering Department
ToT	Training of Trainers

PREFACE

Access to education is a fundamental right of every child in India. Also one of the Millennium Development Goals, 'Access to Education' has been active on the agenda of the Government of India for at least the last three to four decades. While the Government makes necessary efforts to fulfil the children's right to education, a fundamental question still remains to be asked 'are children safe while studying'?

As with other infrastructure, schools are subject to damage and collapse in earthquakes, floods and cyclones. There are several instances of children losing their lives or suffering serious injuries in such situations. A fire was reported led to the death of about 200 children and as many others at a school's prize giving ceremony in Dabwali Haryana in 1995. 31 teachers died and 95 were injured, 971 students perished and 1,051 injured as per report of the Bhuj Earthquake in Gujarat in 2001. Formal education was disrupted for a long time as several school buildings had collapsed and many were declared unfit for use. Key causes for this state of affairs was lack of disaster resistant features and poor maintenance. Similarly the fire at Lord Krishna School in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, cost the lives of 94 children; soon after, thousands of students and teachers were killed, injured or otherwise affected by the 2004 South Asia tsunami.

The actual as well as potential magnitude of loss of life in these events may be debatable but the fact remains that schools are indeed spaces where children and teachers spend a large part of their day. These spaces therefore call for attention so that they can be designed, constructed and up-kept in a manner that disaster risk can be mitigated and precious lives can be saved.

This booklet aims to delineate how the agenda of school safety can be taken forward by respective District Administrations with active participation of school children, teachers, parents, school management and any other formal / informal institutions involved in promoting the well-being of children in the school : a group broadly recognized as the 'school community'. It is designed as a tool to assist them in understanding the relevance of the school safety concept and provide a glimpse of its statutory and institutional bearings. The document then lays down a possible roadmap for a school safety programme that has emerged out of the experiences of UNICEF state office in Bihar, its partners and other organizations who have undertaken similar initiatives since 2009. Primarily drawing from the experiences of the School Safety Initiative implemented by UNICEF and its partners in 155 schools of eight disaster prone districts of Bihar, the document articulates steps that can be followed and the roles that different stakeholders are expected to play in effectively pursuing school safety.

As the key duty bearers for delivering education in safe learning environments, district administration straddles the development and emergency context of education provision. At a different level, the district administration is also at the cutting edge of the provision of education infrastructure alongside the promotion of child friendly teaching and learning methods, not only for curriculum based education but overall development of the child. Thus there is a lot of responsibility entrusted with the District Administration as one of the main stakeholders to champion and guide various processes leading up to the safety of learning environments.

This document, it is hoped, will help these functionaries develop an appropriate roadmap for their efforts towards ensuring the safety of school children.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In highly disaster prone areas, safe schools attain very high importance with a view to ensuring the safety and well being of the children. Not only physically, children also suffer mental stress and trauma due to loss of immediate family, or care givers, school, learning materials and other facilities that they relate to. In such a situation, schools can be a safe haven for children that help them slowly move back to a physical, but espoecially a sense of normalcy especially mentally. Within the safe school premises, essential supplementary nutrition for children can be provided, along with safe water and sanitation facilities especially for adolescent girls and boys. Thus there is a global consensus that schools should be resumed at the earliest opportunity in the aftermath of a disaster. Even in the pre-disaster or development phase, there have been efforts to make children and teachers aware of the dangers that threaten their lives and steps that they can take to prevent, mitigate, or manage those risks.

Some agencies have shown a great deal of interest and commitment in promoting school safety. UNICEF, with its long history of working with children, has been at the forefront of promoting school safety through practice as well as policy advocacy. As part of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Project of UNICEF in Bihar, the School Safety Initiative was undertaken with the following priorities:

1. Risks faced by children and teachers in schools during disasters are identified and incorporated in to a School Safety Plan.
2. The School community is organised to work with different stakeholders for addressing the identified risks.
3. Mitigation measures are taken to address the identified structural and non- structural risks so as to create much safer and resilient conditions for children and teachers.
4. Capacity, knowledge and awareness of all children and teachers built, to address non- structural risks and the dos and don'ts in various disasters.
5. Linkage of schools with appropriate service providers established for sustained capacity building, service provision and safety audits.

1.2 Precursors of an evolving concept

"School Safety" has been defined as the creation of safe environments for children starting from their homes to their schools and back. This includes safety from large-scale 'natural' hazards of geological/climatic origin, human-made risks, pandemics, violence as well as more frequent and smaller-scale fires, road accidents and other emergencies, and environmental threats that can adversely affect the lives of children (Ahmedabad Action Agenda for School Safety, 2007). The concept has evolved over the last couple of decades as the threat to the physical well-being of children has become much more visible both globally and in India.

The agenda of school safety, as is visible in India today is preceded by the efforts of different governments in the country to promote the original constitutional mandate of providing access to free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the current flagship programme of the government designed to carry this commitment forward. The mandate of SSA goes beyond provision of education alone per se; rather it aims to provide 'useful' and 'quality' elementary education to all children in the 6 -14 age group. Besides the much desired efforts to improve the curriculum and provide the necessary training to different stakeholders involved in the process of education, about 33% funds of SSA are spent on civil works including construction of schools, additional classrooms and Block Resource Centres/ Cluster Resource Centres.

SSA actively hinges on community ownership of school based interventions by involvement of women's groups, Village Education Committee members and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and includes a community based monitoring system. The programme recognises a 'Habitation as a unit of planning' and is operationalised through the District Elementary Education Plans prepared by the district administration to indicate funds/resource available for various components under schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Act (MGNREGA), Area fund of MPs/MLAs, State Plan, foreign funding and resources generated within the NGO sector.

After the Bhuj earthquake where 971 students perished and 1,051 were injured, Disaster Management was introduced as a subject in the Central Board school curriculum, as well as several State Education Boards after 2002 and a Handbook on School Safety was developed by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2004. The Disaster Management Act of 2005 envisages the development of a Disaster Management Plan for all entities - including schools and all other educational institutes. There were other developments globally that influences the emergence of the school safety agenda in the country. The primary one among these was the adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. The HFA underlines the importance of knowledge and education as one of the five main priorities of action. It draws attention to school children and youth with the aim of making the community at large more aware of the threat of hazards and of the need to become better prepared.

In 2011, the National School Safety Programme was launched by the National Disaster Management Authority(NDMA), covering two districts in each of the 22 seismically vulnerable states of India. The Vision of the programme is "To promote a culture of disaster preparedness in the school" through policy level changes for ensuring safe school environment and sensitisation and capacity building of children and the school community and other stakeholders on disaster preparedness. The project also includes non-structural mitigation measures as well as demonstrative structural retrofitting in select schools. In parallel, several NGOs and INGOs have been working on school safety initiatives that have provided many useful lessons in developing the substantive aspects of the agenda.

The concept of school safety in its current form also includes safety issues both inside and outside the school in addition to issues of child protection that look at all forms of violence and deprivation that affect the physical and mental well-being of children. This is a result of the efforts of agencies specialising on the issues of children such as UNICEF and Save the Children. As it stands today School Safety is a concept that encompasses "the creation of safe environments for children starting from their homes to their schools and back(ibid)."

2.0 THE PROMISE OF SAFE SCHOOL: WHY PURSUE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS?

2.1 Disasters in Bihar and their effect on children

Historically, Bihar has faced a range of disasters. In all, 15.2% of the total area of Bihar lies in seismic Zone V covering seven districts of north Bihar. About 22 districts- 63.7% of the total area of the state is predominantly under zone IV. Approximately 76% of the people in North Bihar live under the recurring threat of devastating floods. Bihar is also confronted by drought, high-winds, cold waves and recurrent village fires.

'Disasters' have been defined as "a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources"(UNISDR, 2009). Children are among the most vulnerable due to a range of factors, including age, physical ability, health conditions, and other factors including social conditions. Moreover such events cause a serious disruption in their healthy growth and development as well as their overall well-being. Fear, violence; separation from parents or caregivers; exploitation and abuse, are direct risks that children face; and the loss the family's livelihood can result in homelessness and extreme poverty. Education is one of the first things to be affected in disasters and may be suspended/ disrupted for unlimited periods, often resulting in negative and permanent socio-psycho impacts on students. Of the total population of the flood prone and earthquake prone districts, a large part of the population comprises of children under the age of 18. It is estimated that about 95.15% of government schools in Bihar are located in rural areas. During the 2008 floods, 7,480 schools across Saharsa, Madhepura, Supaul and Purnia were reported to be affected; 173 reported completely damaged and 481 majorly damaged.(SEEDS, 2012)

Promoting safety in schools is therefore an imperative. At a physical level, this requires efforts to improve the performance of various components of the school facility; in other spheres, it requires modifications in the functional and pedagogical aspects of the education system. Each of the components has a vital role to play, to reduce the risk of children and teachers from natural disasters as well as sowing the seeds of the 'culture of safety' that is much needed.

2.2 Why school safety?

Investing energy and resources to ensure school safety is obligatory on the part of the government and the society at large. India being an advocate and signatory in upholding the rights of children through various regional and international instruments, makes it legally and morally binding for us to invest in school safety. Nonetheless, the justification for investing in school safety can be found in several arguments (Wisner, 2004)

1. Upholding Human Rights and Constitutional Rights of Children

The first argument is in the domain of moral obligations and rights. "The human rights argument suggests that no society should tolerate the necessity of choosing between the safety of children's lives and their education." (ibid). ***The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*** specifically aim to "[e]nsure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling." Above all, ***Right to Education*** has been enshrined in the Constitution of India as a Fundamental Right in Section 21. Article 41 of the Constitution promises the right to education which cannot be upheld in cases of "undeserved want" - including natural calamities. Thus in order that this right can be enjoyed by the Children of the country, learning institutions must be resilient and continue to function without affecting the safety of children before, during and after emergencies.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which India is a signatory, requires us to "ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child." The Convention emphasizes the right of children to the "highest attainable standard of health" (Art 24.1), and requires duty bearers to "pursue full implementation of this right" (Art 24.2). It is a legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. It also addresses Children's right to participate in disaster risk reduction which is an emerging concern.

Children's Charter on Disaster Risk Reduction is another instrument that prompts action on safety of schools so that education is not interrupted, ensuring Child protection is a priority before, during and after a disaster, meeting Children's right to participate and access information, ensuring that community infrastructure is safe, and ensuring that disaster risk reduction reaches the most vulnerable.

The SAARC Framework for Care, Protection and Participation of Children in Disasters- Principle H states that the "Governments have a responsibility to develop plans and implement measures to ensure the continuum of services to support the survival of children and the upholding of child rights, even when service delivery systems are disrupted due to a disaster." Among the "Ten Priorities for Action", laid down in the Framework, 'Education in Emergencies (EiE) and School Safety for Children' specifically lays down that "A comprehensive effort must be made to scale up disaster management education through innovative and cost-effective interventions…Formal education in schools should be supplemented by co-curricular activities which may include mock drills, first aid training, training on fire safety and other emergency response skills as appropriate. Children can serve as role models in the community and reach out to under-privileged and non-school going children to spread disaster risk reduction messages. As children spend a considerable part of their daily lives in schools and other learning centres, it is essential to make these places safe from multiple hazards…The aim of these measures is to build a culture of safety that extends to all aspects of life."(SAARC, 2011)

Priority 3 of the "***Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Communities and Nations to Disasters, 2005-2015" (HFA)*** specifically focuses on the use of "knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and reliance at all levels". ***The 2006-2007 world Campaign on Disaster Reduction by UN/ISDR on 'Disaster risk reduction begins at school***', promoted a more preventive and proactive approach to disasters through a shift in mentalities and behavioural change.

2. Multiple uses of a school facility

During disasters, schools may also serve as makeshift vaccination centres; temporary shelters, and serve as a neutral location for relief distribution, in addition to their education functions. The district administration in Bhuj even functioned out of a school campus for nearly 4-6 weeks after the earthquake in 2001. Moreover the resumption of education and other school functions has been a strategic priority for many agencies in addressing issues related to protection, basic needs, nutrition as well as psycho-social and trauma counseling of children effected by disasters.

Hence, schools are a valuable community asset, before, during and after disaster events. To accurately gauge the monetary value of those social gains would be difficult, but clearly the array of diverse functions of a school in all stages of disaster management is of immense value to any community at risk. It is therefore imperative that safety within and of school buildings and other infrastructure should be accorded the necessary priority.

3. Return on investment

There is evidence that investment in school safety yield benefits that are of an order of magnitude similar to the health benefits. Moreover, like all actions in the “mitigation” arena, i.e. those that aim to minimise the impact of disaster events on a group of people, expenditure and effort on school safety may not yield a “return on investment” in the traditional sense but is certainly an “investment” to “mitigate” the impact of disasters. Also it has been well-established that the expense on new construction increases only upto about 8% if safe construction practices are followed (UNDP cited in GUPTA, 2012); however the cost of the repair or the complete rebuilding of a school destroyed or damaged due to natural disasters is significantly higher.

A safe school and a safety aware school community, spreads the disaster safety message far beyond its own confines. There is enough evidence that when children see something new in their school, including retrofitting activities or new construction with special features, they tend to tell their relatives and neighbors who in turn tell others. Thus, by investing in DRR features in the school, seeds of a “culture of safety” are being sown. “School safety not only protects a community’s children, but educates a community to protect themselves." (Wisner et al., 2004)

Some of the key impediments reported in realizing the vision of safe schools include:

1. Inadequate orientation and training of teachers on safety issues: it has been observed that, under the current framework, teachers are not trained on disaster management at any stage of their careers.

2. Tightly planned academic calendars: the school timetable is reported to be already 'full' and children overloaded with the core curriculum. 'Low priority' sectoral subjects such as environment and DRR education are often treated as additional burdens both for the teachers as well as students.

3. Sub optional follow-up: one of the biggest issues has been the 'one-time' approach to key DRR concepts and life skills that require consistent follow up and updating. As it stands today, the SSA takes cognisance of the disaster risk to schools and children and others occupying them but the same is not incorporated in the monitoring exercises that are undertaken jointly by the different funding agencies involved (Terms of Reference, Sixteenth Joint Review Mission of SSA, July, 2012). Moreover, the 'pilot project' approach that has been followed by many agencies unfortunately reinforces the 'one-time' attitude and diminishes the overall and continued interest in the issue.

4. Lack of new and interesting teaching material & methods in the core curriculum: Disaster management text books / chapters introduced in the curriculum thus far have been reported to be heavy on theory. This situation is worsened when DRR knowledge is provided by teachers who are themselves not adequately oriented to disaster management as a subject in their own training, leading to an overall lack of effectiveness in delivery.

5. Disconnect between schemes and institutions: Despite the communication from the Ministry of Finance regarding Revision of Expenditure and Finance Committee (EFC) format to address disaster management concerns in all the programmes and schemes of the government, there is a visible disconnect between the 'non-emergency' schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and disaster response / preparedness. The Bihar Education Project Council (BEPC) that has been given the mandate of achieving Universal Elementary Education (UEE) in the state, has no institutional / policy links with the SDMA / DDMA and there have been few instances of the two institutions working together even for training of teachers and VSS to promote safety in schools. Such a disconnect is reinforced by the limitations of budget lines that are often cited by authorities as reasons for not working together.

There is a need for a strategic intervention that cuts across administrative boundaries, budget lines and timetables to ensure that school safety truly becomes 'everyone's business'.

3.0 WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHAT ARE THE GAPS?

The last decade has witnessed a keen interest from nearly all stakeholders in promoting school safety in India. While it may be premature to discuss the effectiveness of these actions, there are areas of improvement in approaches, strategies and methods that warrant attention.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the flagship programme of the Government of India promotes school education, and recognizes the need to focus on safe construction practices in school construction as well as maintenance, repair and the upgrade of school buildings. Further, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan Institutions are obliged to follow specific space norms and appropriate sizes for school classrooms in Kendriya Vidyalaya schools that are administered by the Sangathan.

For safe construction of new school building/retrofitting of existing structures, the National Building Code of India (NBC), published by Bureau of Indian Standards in 2005 serves as a Model Code for adoption by all agencies involved in school construction works. The Code attributes an 'importance factor' to different types of buildings based on the functional use of the structures, characterized by hazardous consequences of its failure, post – earthquake functional needs, historical value, or economic importance. In its section 5.3.4, the Code attributes an Importance Factor of 1.5 to Schools; higher than all other buildings indicating the importance of school buildings with regard to the above mentioned factors.

The code, in section 11.1.5 provides Weighting factors 'A' to 'E' to different types of buildings which denotes a relative degree of importance of buildings and the degree of risk they are exposed to. Schools have been given the highest weightage factor of 1.7 regarding the 'use of structure' as well as for 'Contents and Consequential effects' which not only covers material risks to goods and property but also such aspects as the disruption of a variety of essential services.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has also come out with its judgment of April13, 2009 in support of school safety, and insisted on the adherence to NBC standards in school building specifications and construction.

The two Judges Bench in Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India & Others (Writ Petition (Civil) no.483 of 2004)[5] held that "Evaluation of structural aspect of the school may be carried out periodically…the concerned engineers and officials must strictly follow the National Building Code. The safety certificate will only be issued after a proper inspection. Dereliction in duty must attract immediate disciplinary action against the concerned officials."

In addition to policy interest in addressing structural aspects of safety, there have been changes in the school curriculum as well. The SSA, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and state boards have introduced disaster education in curriculum for school education.

The most recent initiative by the government has been the National School Safety Programme being implemented by NDMA in 47 districts (including Madhubani and Araria in Bihar) of 22 states of the country. The Programme, essentially pilot in nature, has the following components:

i. Development of draft National School Safety Policy.

ii. Development of model school DM plan, including format for Mock drill;

iii. Review and approval of School DM Plans in selected schools.

iv. Development of training modules for training of state level master trainers.

v. Development of model templates for IEC material, translation and printing in vernacular

vi. Development of non-structural mitigation guidelines / checklist for Rapid Visual Survey

vii. Development of retrofitting guidelines and implementation in selected schools

Given the scale of the country, all of these developments are small and still in the nascent stages of implementation. It was much after these efforts took off that about 700 schools in Sikkim were reported damaged during the earthquake of September 2011. In the Kashmir Earthquake of 2005, 17,000 children reported to have died while studying. The condition of schools in the country and in Bihar therefore continue to need attention.

4.0 WHAT DOES SCHOOL SAFETY ENTAIL – UNICEF SCHOOL SAFETY MODEL

UNICEF's School Safety initiative in Bihar, is the result of an iterative process of learning and process innovation in the field alongside the Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Programme that was implemented in 2009, covering 255 villages in eight districts, namely, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Samastipur, East Champaran, Muzzafarpur, Patna and Supaul. In 2011, the School Safety component organically coalesced with this program to further children's participation in risk reduction and to ensure that the risks faced by them in schools are actively addressed. The programme has since evolved to engage close to 80,110 children in 155 middle schools across the 8 districts in both rural and urban contexts.

The goal of UNICEF's school safety initiative has been to save lives, prevent injuries and ensure well-being of school children, teachers and other staff before, during and after an emergency in the school and its environs Towards this end, the key strategy of the initiative has been to build upon the exiting leadership and life skills within the school community and leverage the strengths of existing institutions and government programmes to pursue a holistic view of safety covering both apparent as well as underlying risks. Thus the broad contours of the approach followed by UNICEF for promoting School Safety are:

a. Risks faced by children and teachers in schools are identified systematically and institutions to champion the cause of school safety are designated. For this to be achieved, identification of school level institutions dedicated to safety has proven to be effective. With orientation on school safety and necessary training and capacity building, existing institutions such as Vidyalaya Shisksha Samitis, Bal Sansad and Meena Manch can fulfill this role effectively. Through participatory and child friendly exercises like 'Hazard hunt', existing areas of vulnerability are mapped and developed into a 'School Safety Plan'. School Safety Focal Point Teachers (FPT) are nominated in each participating school to anchor the process.

b. Mitigation measures to address identified structural and non- structural risks are documented as a 'School Safety Plan' and are implemented. The School Safety Plan is finalised in consultation with various stakeholders such as school management committee members, teachers and students, and reviewed periodically. In a sense it captures often missing dimensions of the 'School Development Plan' required under SSA as it goes deeper into the needs of the school and its inhabitants – addressing their visible and underlying risks. The finalised plan is negotiated through the VSS and PRIs with different service providers and departments for timely implementation.

c. Building capacity, knowledge and awareness of different actors and institutions, teachers and children to address non- structural risks. Training of select students is undertaken on different aspects of disasters to promote them as peer educators. In addition, the awareness programme for children on local hazards and risk reduction with relevant knowledge and life skills through various methods of discussions, street plays, drawing competitions, quiz competitions, essay/ slogan writing and demonstrations. Peer educators conduct mock- drill exercises and follow up with other children periodically. In addition, school safety Focal Point Teachers are provided a series of trainings to support them for anchoring the school safety initiative in their school. Subjects of training programmes for students and teachers include, basic awareness on local disasters- their effects and mitigation measures, first- aid, fire safety, water quality monitoring as well as other response skills as appropriate.

d. Linkage of schools with appropriate service providers established for sustained capacity building, service provision and safety audits. Towards this end, steps to organize meetings/ consultations between schools and local service providers including police, civil defence, fire stations, medical and other emergency service providers like NDRF/SDRF. are undertaken. Exclusive initiatives are promoted among children in schools that make them leaders in risk reduction in the community such as developing child reporters who can write articles/columns on school safety for publication in print media.

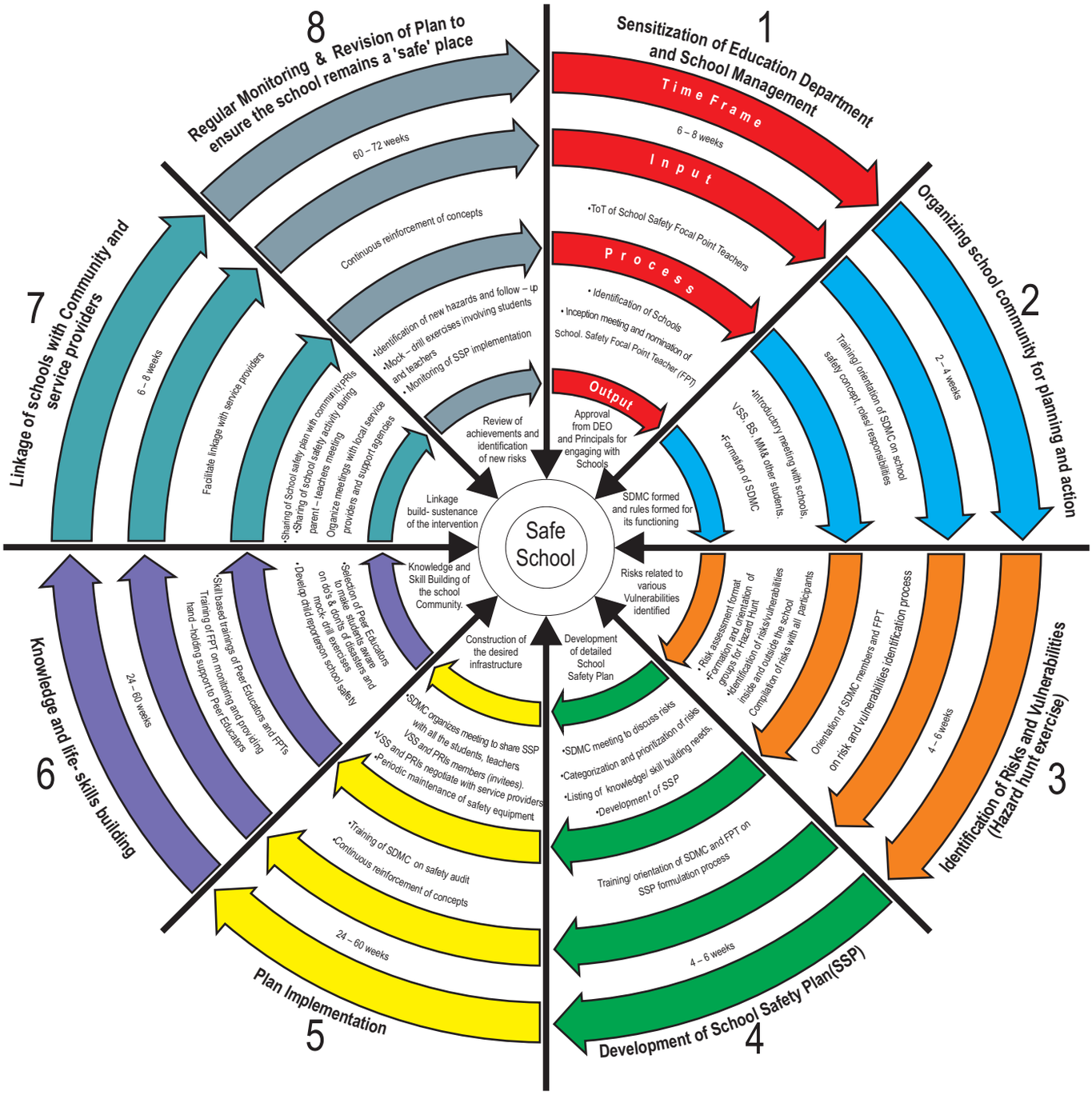
The entire process of promoting school safety can be visualised in the form of eight main milestones elaborated in the following sections. These have been summarised in the table below:

Milestone	Process	Input	Time	Result
1. Sensitization of Education Department and School Management	• Discussion with DM, DEO and BEO; brief on the need for School Safety initiative, • BEO identify schools for intervention, • DEO/ BEO issue necessary orders to schools, • Inception meeting with school Principals, • Selected schools nominate "School Safety Focal Point" teacher.	• ToT of School Safety Focal Point Teachers	6 – 8 weeks	Formal approval from DEO and school Principals for engaging with Schools.
2. Organizing school community for planning and action	• Introductory meeting with schools, participated by VSS, Bal Sansad, Meena Manch & other students. • Formation of School Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) in schools	Training/ orientation of SDMC on school safety concept, roles/ responsibilities	2 – 4 weeks	School Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) formed in schools and rules formed for its functioning

Milestone	Process	Input	Time	Result
3. Identification of Risks and Vulnerabilities (Hazard hunt exercise)	• Organise a day for conducting a Hazard Hunt exercise in the school • Development of risk assessment format. • Discussion with the school community on various hazards & risks that affect the physical wellbeing of children/school community, disruption of school, access to education, structural and non-structural risks in the school, etc. • Formation of groups for Hazard Hunt. • Identification of risks/ vulnerabilities inside and outside the school by the groups, • Each group makes a presentation about the risks identified. • Compilation of risks emerging from the presentation with consensus from all of the participants	Orientation of SDMC members and Focal point teacher on risk and vulnerabilities identification process	4 – 6 weeks	Risk related to various Vulnerabilities identified
4. Development of School Safety Plan	• Organize SDMC meeting • Discuss in more detail the compiled risks that have been identified through the Hazard Hunt exercise, • Categorization and prioritization of risks • SDMC also to discuss and list out training/ knowledge/ skill building needs, • Discuss and find appropriate measures to address the risks identified, including structural and non- structural risks • Develop School Safety Plan – Action Plan (Short term/Long term)	Training/ orientation of SDMC and Focal point teacher on school safety plan formulation process	4 – 6 weeks	Development of detailed School Safety Plan
5. Mitigation measures to address identified risks (Plan Implementation)	• SDMC to organize a meeting to share the School Safety Plan with all the students, teachers, VSS and PRIs members (invitees). • Segregation of activities – a. Activities for PRIs, b. Activities for VSS c. Activities to be taken up to BEO/ DEO level d. Activities which can be included in the School Development Plan • VSS and PRIs – apprise and negotiate with BEO/ DEO for addressing structural risks. • Fixing of falling/ blocking non-structural hazards in the school • Periodic checks and maintenance of school safety equipment. • Monitoring of implementation of School Safety Plan.	• Training of School Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) on safety audit. • Continuous reinforcement of concepts	24 – 60 weeks	Construction of the desired infrastructure;

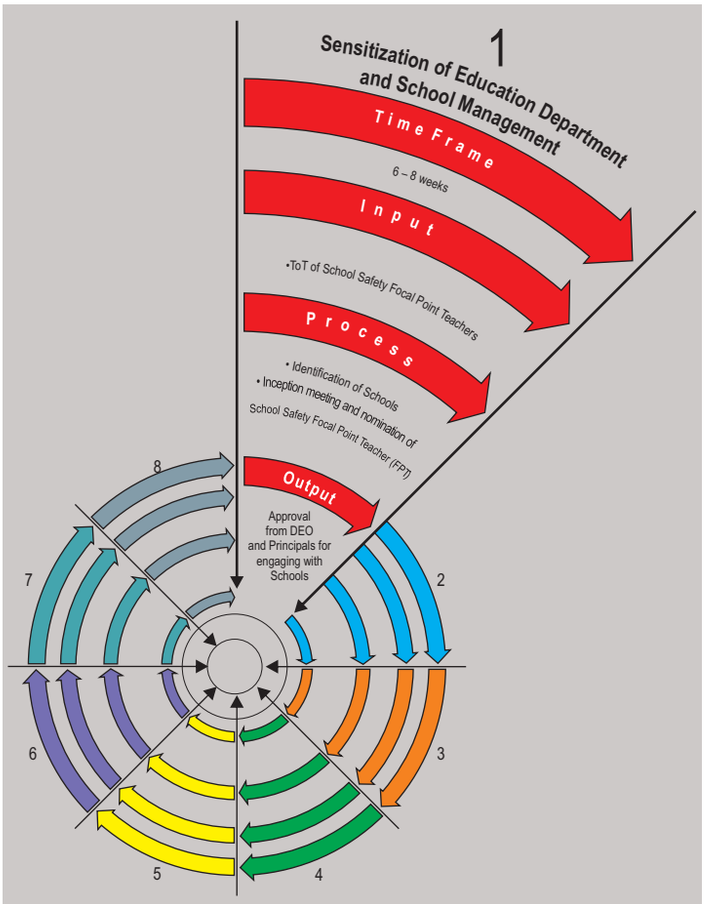
Milestone	Process	Input	Time	Result
6. Developing Knowledge and life-skills among children	• Select 2 - 3 students from each class and promote them as School Safety Peer Educators/ Monitors. • Peer Educators/ Monitors to make aware students of their classes on do's & don'ts of disasters and conduct mock- drill exercises (DUCK, COVER & HOLD and STOP, DROP & ROLL and First-aid skills) once in a week). • Awareness of children on hazards with relevant knowledge through other methods –discussions, plays, drawing/ quiz competitions, essay/ slogan writing, games and demonstration. • Develop child reporters who can write articles/columns on school safety for publication in print media.	• Hands-on training/ facilitation to Peer Educators/ Monitors • Handouts on the dos and don'ts of various disasters and life- saving skills on a routine basis. • Training of Focal Point teachers on monitoring and and the provision of support where required to Peer Educators/ Monitors. • Skill based trainings for Peer Educators and Focal Point teachers for First-aid, fire safety, water quality monitoring and other skills	24-60 weeks	Knowledge and Skill Building of the school Community.
7. Linkage of schools with Community and service providers	• Sharing of School safety plan with community and PRIs, • Sharing of school safety activity during parent – teachers meeting • Organize meetings with local service providers including police, civil defence, fire stations, Medical Officers, NDRF/SDRF.	Facilitate linkage with service providers	4 - 6 weeks	Linkage, build-sustenance of the intervention
8. Regular Monitoring of Risk and Revision of Plan	• Identification of new hazards and follow – up. • Mock – drill exercises involving students and teachers	Continuous reinforcement of concepts	60 - 72 weeks	Review of achievement and identification of new risks to ensure the school remains a 'safe' place.

Each of the eight milestones build upon the achievements of the previous one and follow a cyclic process between planning, implementation and review as school safety is revisited by the school community after each cycle of review. These milestones can be visualised as the figure given below:



5.0 PROMOTING SAFETY IN SCHOOLS – TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE ELUSIVE 200 DAYS OF SCHOOLING PER YEAR

The Right to Education (RTE) lays downs that each child in India must have access to schooling for 200-220 days in a year. A well-functioning school where children and teachers are safe becomes an essential prerequisite to meet this commitment. This section articulates a possible road map for promotion of school safety by the Education department and the district administration who are the keepers of this constitutional commitment. This road map has been developed based on the experiences of UNICEF and its partner NGOs involved in the school safety initiative as part of the CBDRR programme of UNICEF. It evolved as the initiative progressed on the ground and therefore is being shared for adaptation and use by the state and district level agencies. The steps in the possible road map are:



"SSA will ensure that children receive education in a safe and secure environment. All school buildings under SSA will provide safety features in the structural design of the school buildings in order to make the school buildings safe. Structural safety features (against natural hazards such as earthquakes) should be built into the designs of new school buildings and existing school buildings should be retrofitted...There are other natural and manmade hazards against which appropriate safety should be ensured, such as floods, cyclones, fires, etc."

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 99)

5.1 Ownership of the Initiative by the Department of Education and School Management

As one of the primary duty bearers of the Right to Education, District and Block Education Officers, along with the District Magistrate identify the schools to be taken up for school safety. While the ultimate goal would be to cover all schools at the earliest, a phased approach might be more pragmatic as greater interest is generated in other schools by way of demonstrated success of the initiative.

Once a school has been identified and official orders issued to this effect, the school Principal / Head Teacher is oriented and a School Safety Focal Pont Teacher (FPT) nominated to operationally anchor the initiative at the school level as part of their routine commitments in the School. The FTP is provided the necessary training to anchor the other steps of the process and foster action by different stakeholders that are responsible for various activities. In parallel, the mandated bodies for overseeing the development and functioning of the school, the Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti (VSS) / School Management Committee are oriented to the need for school safety and their collaboration secured. This step typically requires 6-8 weeks.

One of the strategic moves to support schools to take up responsibility for pursuing the school safety issues would be to train all teachers / designates of the school through the Block Resource Coordinators (BRC) / Cluster Resource Coordinators (CRC). As a consequent follow-up action, it would be necessary for the BRC / CRC to also monitor and review school safety indicators as part of the Quality of Life Enhancement Indicators currently being monitored.

SCERT should be entrusted with the training of Master Trainers from each District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and these would in turn impart training to BRC/ CRC of their respective districts. SCERT would need to develop interesting teaching material for teachers and students to engage them on school safety issues.

In the experience of the school safety initiative in Bihar by UNICEF, it was observed that the already tightly planned school timetable and paucity of time with the teachers was a common reason cited by many schools for not undertaking school safety actions. Limited understanding of the school safety issue of the teachers was also a key reason that school safety was not accorded due priority. Schools showed their inability to take up school safety initiative in the absence of guidance or instruction on ensuring school safety as an indicator to safe learning environment. It was then decided to engage with the Department of Education at the District and Block levels for generating interest in the issue at institutional level. Once the necessary orders were issued by the DEO / BEO, the programme could take off easily.

Shri. Ramadhar, Principal, inspecting the morning assembly in *Jitwaria* Middle School

Shri. Ramadhar Rai is the Principal of *Jitwaria* Middle school, *Kalyanpur, Samastipur* has been truly leading his team from the front! Ramadhar who has been active in social development within his community for many decades, acknowledges that a 'safety' perspective for school development is the need for the schools in flood prone areas of Bihar.

He says *"prerna bahut zaroori hota hai…Hum isi gaon ke hain, 2004 aur 2007 ki badhdekhi, magar vidyalya ke vikas aur suraksha ka sambandh ab banapaye hain… is nayee soch se hamare kaam ko bal mila hai….humne pichhle ek saal mein bacchon mein bahut badlav dekha hai…ab bacche school mein niyamit taur par mock-drill karte hain aur unko barh, bhukamp, aag mein kya Karen-kya na Karen uski poori jankari hai. Ab bacche vyaktigat swachhta ka bahut dhyan rakhne lage hain……."*

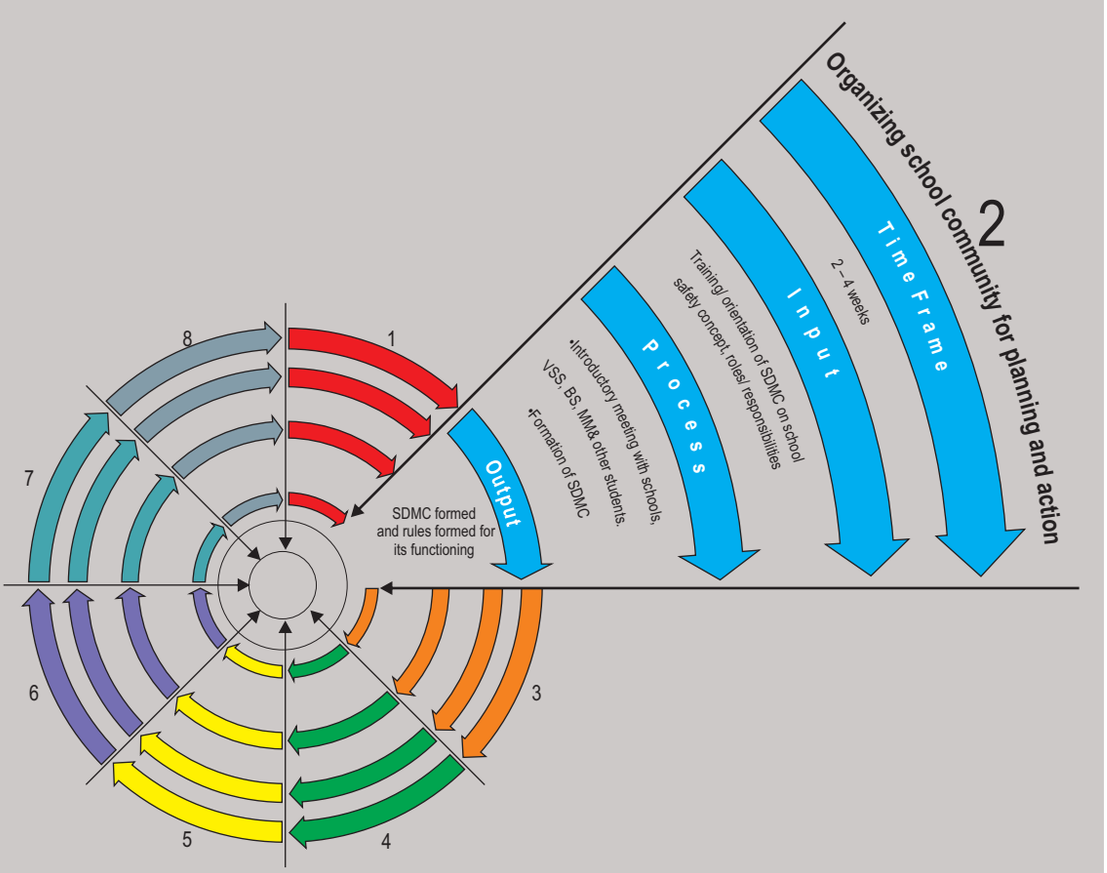
(Everyone needs an inspiration…I belong to this village only and have seen the flooding of 2004 and 2007. However it is only now that we have been able to systematically integrate safety issues with school development agenda…this new approach has lent succour to our efforts…we have seen a lot of change in our children in the last one year…now children regularly practice mock-drill, are well aware of dos and don'ts of floods, earthquake, fire; and issues on personal hygiene)

5.2 Organizing the School Community for Planning and Action

The school community broadly includes children, school teachers, the principal and parents. These are the primary stakeholders of the school affairs. It is imperative that existing institutions at the school level are strengthened, and their potential adequately tapped for ensuring the well-being of children and teachers.

The following institutions that have been fostered under SSA for effective functioning of schools can play a key role in promoting school safety:

a. Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti (VSS): The VSS has been designated under SSA as the body responsible for managing the affairs of the school in a transparent and "bottom – up" participatory manner. The VSS is headed by the Ward member of the ward in which the school is located and also includes parents of children doing very well academically. The presence of the Ward Member as the head of the VSS provides an opportunity to build strong linkage of the schools with the community and especially in leveraging funds from plans/ schemes of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for the development of the school and its precincts.



SSA envisages decentralised, need based and participatory planning in a bottom – up approach. Planning for UEE would inter alia focus on planning for universal access, equity, participation and quality.

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 137)

b. Bal Sansad (BS): The objective of the Bal Sansad (BS) is to develop leadership skills in children so that they can effectively participate in to the development of their schools. As part of the Bal Sansad, in addition to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, ten other ministers are elected to manage a given aspect of the school. The portfolios include key issues such as education, cultural affairs, library, sports, health and hygiene. The entire effort is geared towards engendering life and leadership skills in children. Although not formally included in the School Management Committee constituted under SSA, it has been observed that the BS children have emerged as active and willing stakeholders in school development when included in the decision making processes. They have tremendous potential in terms of highlighting the pressing issues of concern to children as well as taking the necessary initiative from the end of the students to promote safety. Given their leadership qualities, the BS children have demonstrated tremendous potential as peer educators / trainers for transferring and the follow up of specific knowledge and skills to other children regarding safety issues.

c. Meena Manch: This is a platform for adolescent girls to express themselves and develop critical leadership and collaborative skills to address the needs of adolescence from the perspective of girls. Experience indicates that Meena Manch as a forum, has a strong potential for correctly identifying and seeking solutions to practical issues of girls.

In order to ensure that school safety issues are truly identified and responsibilities shouldered jointly a strong potential exists within the existing institutions. The existing SMC / VSS created may be expanded to include BS and MM children. Alternately, a School Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) can be formed with representatives from VSS, BS and MM who can take the school safety agenda forward. By involving these institutions, not only are we leveraging on their strengths but also empowering them further.

Learning From One's Own Experiences

Evolution of the School Disaster Management Committee in Jatwa Gani Md. Rajkiya Middle School (Urdu) is situated in Jatwa Village, Banjariya Block, East Champaran District of Bihar at a distance of 500 m from Sikarana River. This school has total of 800 students and 11 teachers. Surrounded by the river on all of its four sides, the school often closes for a period of at least 15-20 days every year during the floods. Of the eight classrooms in the school, three rooms are secure from flooding; the only hand pump and toilet in the school get submerged during the floods.

The school identified the following priorities :

1. Problems related to toilets.
2. Problems related to drinking water
3. Submerging of hand-pumps during floods.
4. Water stagnation in the school compound during floods.
5. Possibility of accidents due to damaged buildings.
6. Training students and teachers in hazard prevention

In order to spearhead all of these actions, a School Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) was formed. In its first round of constitution, it comprised of mostly senior students who could easily grasp DRR concepts and lead different processes of DRR sensitization among children. Within a year of its inception these senior students moved out of the school as they got promoted to grade 9. The SDMC formulation was re - strategized to include an adequate number of junior students as a way to ensure that the process continues and the institutional memory is remembered within the SDMC.

In the experience of the UNICEF School Safety Initiative in Bihar, the SDMC must include: President of the Vidhyalay Shikshha Samiti (VSS) i.e. the ward member of the concerned school, School Safety Focal point teacher officially designated by the Principal, six ministers from BalSansad, Meena and Sahayak Meena as well other active children from different classes.

Keeping in mind the tremendous role of the SDMC in pursuing school safety on a sustained basis, it is important that a shadow SDMC is formed, comprising of additional children who can take over once the senior students in the existing SDMC move out of the school.

Once the SDMC is formed, the School Safety Focal point teachers and SDMC members need to be oriented on School Safety Intervention so that they can lead the process in their respective schools. This can be done through specific training programmes by the Department of Education through BRC/CRC. This step typically requires 2-4 weeks.

Suggested Byelaws for SDMC

Purpose of the Committee	• To serve the school community to ensure their safety in the face of any kind of risks that threaten their physical well-being and access to education. • To spearhead all the activities related to disaster risk reduction in the school. • To support others in the school to play an active role in promoting the safety of everyone.
Essential Principles of Constitution	Remain a neutral, apolitical and secular body of representatives of the school community that will act in a non-partisan manner in the interest of the safety and of the school community.
Constitution	• The SDMC should have 15-20 Members nominated from within the school community. • Members should also be co-opted from VSS, Bal Sansad and Meena Manch. • 6 ministers from Bal sansad. • Meena & Sahayak Meena should be included as members of SDMC. • Focal point teacher of the school to be nominated by the Principal. • Ward member/President of VSS could be nominated as the head of the SDMC. • Representation from all the classes should ensure that at least two students from each class will be selected for SDMC.
Working of the SDMC	• The SDMC should meet twice a month to review the status of planned activities as well as identify new and emerging issues in relation to the safety of children and teachers. • The meetings of the SDMC will be convened by the Focal Point Teacher. • The proceedings/minutes of meetings should be documented in a separate register. • The SDMC should coordinate with the PRIs and the Village Disaster Management Committee to ensure that all the activities and tasks planned for safety are executed in a planned manner.

5.3 Identification of Risks and Vulnerabilities

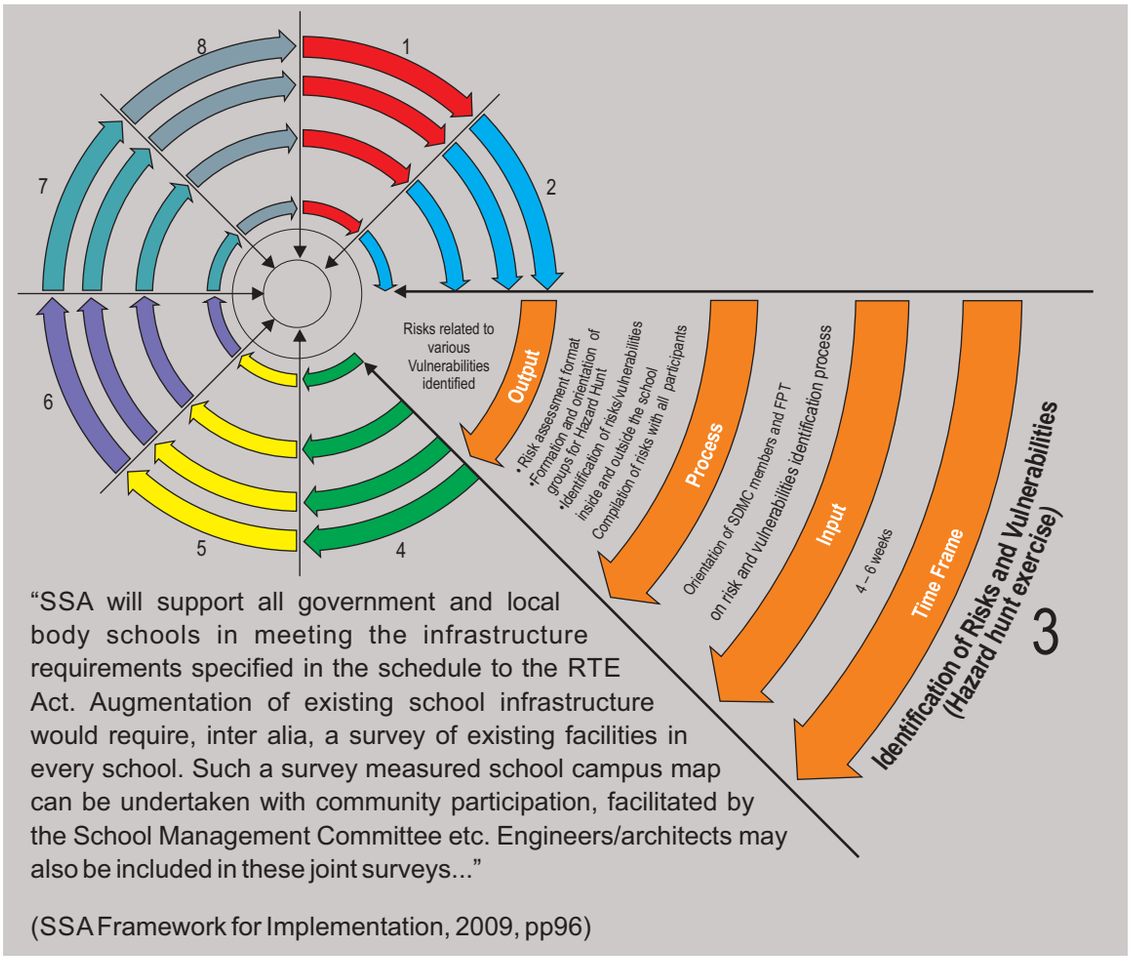
The SDMC members, children and teachers being the primary users of the school are in the best position to identify hazards and risk that may threaten their safety. Once the SDMC has been formed and oriented a trained and dedicated group of individuals is available to lead the process of identifying risks and vulnerabilities.

As the first step in this process, a broader engagement with the larger school is useful. This can be initiated through meetings and child friendly exercises such as drawing competitions, plays. As the next step, a 'Hazard Hunt' exercise is a tested method to identify risks, both inside and outside the school precincts that may threaten the safety of the school community.

A Hazard Hunt exercise involves identifying all kinds of hazards including those that can cause physical harm such as deep potholes, a lack of boundary wall; hazards that can affect the health of children, such as contaminated water sources, the absence of toilets and hand-washing facilities; as well those factors that are outside the school such as fast moving traffic on the road outside, or open water sources like ponds.

Hazards include both structural and non- structural in nature, examples of which are:

Structural :	Dilapidated structures, poorly designed structures, faulty construction, loose building elements.
Non-Structural :	Loosely hung heavy objects such as almirahs; infestation of the campus by snakes; damaged or absent boundary walls or no boundary walls; uneven surfaces, blocked evacuation routes; poorly designed and placed furniture that may cause an accidents causing injury, or inadequate sources of water.



"SSA will support all government and local body schools in meeting the infrastructure requirements specified in the schedule to the RTE Act. Augmentation of existing school infrastructure would require, inter alia, a survey of existing facilities in every school. Such a survey measured school campus map can be undertaken with community participation, facilitated by the School Management Committee etc. Engineers/architects may also be included in these joint surveys..."

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp96)

The hand washing facility in the school has multiple outlets now, thanks to the hazard hunt exercise!

Hazard Hunt Exercise in School Helps Identify Underlying, Invisible Risks Too!!

The middle school in Jitwaria Panchayat in Kalyanpur Block of Samastipur district has 382 children of which, 309 are girls who are in their adolescence. The school is a 'model' school in government parlance given the expectations in terms of the school facilities and students performance. It also functions as the BRC of Kalyanpur Block. To make the school truly a 'model', the SDMC committed itself to addressing the various Risks and Hazards existing in the school that threatened the safety of children. After the students were oriented on the fundamental understanding of a 'hazard' as something that affects their physical, mental and emotional well being that can interfere with their education. In smaller groups of 5-6, the children went about looking for 'hazards'. The hand washing facility in the school has multiple outlets now, thanks to the hazard hunt exercise!

Equipped with pen and a paper, the children made a note of the smallest factors and features that qualify as a hazard. These included inadequate toilet facilities for boys and girls alike that has the potential to affect their health and therefore education. Similarly, space for hand washing; space for serving of the mid- day meal; the low lying hand-pump that gets submerged during monsoons were also highlighted; the students could articulate the impact of these issues on their health as well as education. Some children also included in their list, an old pile of stones where snakes had been seen, while another group identified the risk of getting locked in the school at upon leaving time at the end of the day. Some children also reported that is a serious risk of getting hit by fast moving vehicles outside the school at the time of disbursal.

"This was an eye-opener for us... we could finally see risks and vulnerabilities form a child's perspective...we have even staggered the disbursal timings of different classes so that each child can leave safely. Our teachers also take turns to help students cross the road just outside the school as they leave for the day... " shares, Shiv Chandra Ram, the Focal Point Teacher for School safety. This exercise also allowed the children to express their personal expectations too from the school environment, "... the boys wanted more space to play and some of the girls wanted a mirror and basin for keeping themselves well-groomed..." adds Neetu Kumari who is also the 'Meena' of the school. Other well discussed hazards such as the risk of flooding of low lying areas in the school, earthquakes that could affect the building and the safety of the inhabitants were also highlighted by the students.

The suggested Process of Hazard Hunt Exercise includes the following steps:

i. Orientation of SDMC members and Focal point teachers on definition of risk and vulnerabilities the SDMC members and FPT are oriented to the perception of risk from the perspective of children and trained on the risk identification process.
ii. Discussion with the school community on various hazards and risks that affect the physical wellbeing of children and school community- this includes discussions on the disruption caused experienced schools, access to education and structural and non-structural risks in the school.
iii. Organization of the group into smaller groups for Hazard Hunt– on the agreed date for the hazard hunt exercise, children are divided into smaller groups of 5-7 and asked to walk around / inside the school and make a list of hazards that they see / fear on to a sheet of paper given to them.
iv. Identification of risks and vulnerabilities inside and outside the school by separate groups;
v. Presentation by the groups: each group documents their findings on a chart and presents them to the larger group, including the Focal point teacher. The suggested format for documentation of a Hazard Hunt exercise is :

S.No.	List of Vulnerabilities that exist inside or outside of the school	Risks involved	Probable Extent of Severity	Any past incident(s) relating to this risk / vulnerability

vi. Compilation of risks: the findings are finally consolidated from the presentations through a discussion with everyone present.

"We Don't Fear Anything Anymore…"

Rakhi (on the right) giving skill training to her classmates

Rakhi Kumari, an active student member of the SDMC at Hiropatti school in Bisfi Block of Madhubani district; speaks about the various risks they identified within their school premises as part of the Hazard Hunt exercise in June 2011. She recalls that in different groups, she and her friends walked inside and outside the school to make a list of risks and hazards, essentially things they "feared". The old dilapidated building in the school campus that was now the home of snakes and scorpions was listed as was the low lying area adjacent to the school where water would collect several weeks during the monsoons; they feared drowning in the water logging and thus did not attend school for days on end. One group also enlisted the risk of falling ill as they did not have adequate water for everyone to wash their hands before the mid- day meal.

All of these were included in the school safety plan and through the Mukhiya, PHED and other sources, all of these have since been addressed "..One risk that was identified recently was that the fast moving traffic on the access road to the school since it was classified as a state highway. We have had a few incidents where students have been hurt" says Rakhi. Rakhi and her fellow members of the SDMC informed their focal teacher, Meena Devi about the risks they faced; together with the help of the other teachers, Meena Devi came up with a temporary solution. "... During school hours, we cannot keep an eye on each and every child and they run out of school and onto the road, which puts them in danger. We have started locking the gates when school begins...in the mornings, teachers stand on either side of the road and manage traffic while the students walk across in a line. We repeat this again after school hours to ensure that students cross the road without getting hurt. We also tell the children to cross the road carefully, looking out for passing vehicles."

5.4 Development of the School Safety Plan

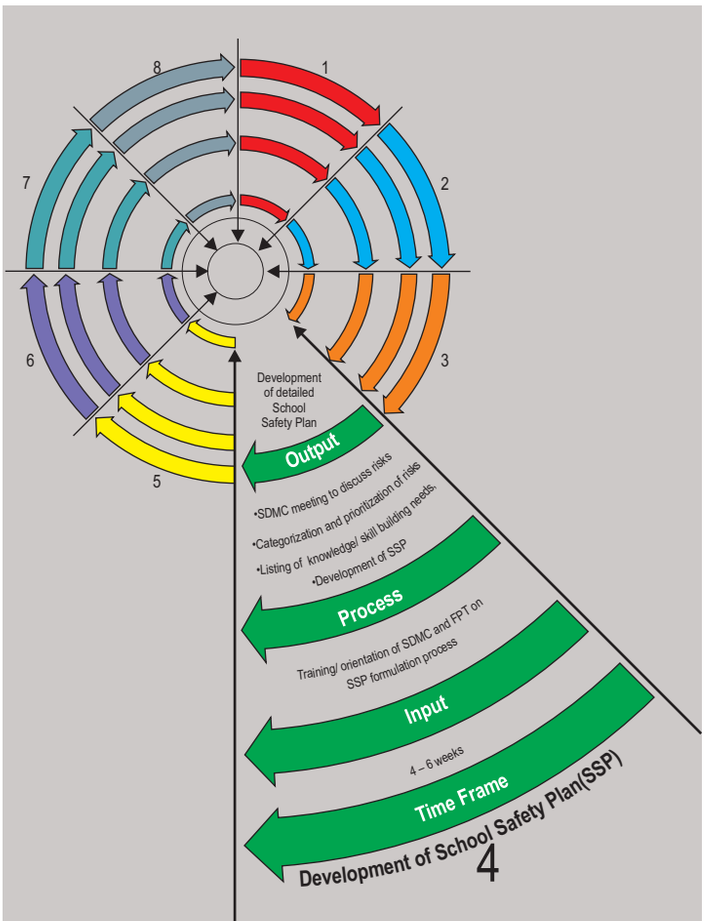
Once hazards have been identified and prioritised by the school, the SDMC developes a detailed "School Safety Plan" (SSP) including measures to be taken both within school premises and in the immediate neighbourhood. The list of risks and vulnerabilities identified is reorganised to identify areas of priority based on potential risk and damage. The minimum benchmark followed under the UNICEF and partners School Safety initiative has been the inclusion of at least one flood resilient hand-pump and flood protected toilets in addition to ensuring that all existing hand-pumps and toilets in the school are functional and maintained properly. In addition, prepositioning of Emergency Education Materials in the schools is also pursued.

School safety plan consists of:

1. Short term: Non-structural and structural activities
2. Long- term: Non-structural and structural activities
3. Training plan: For students and teachers
4. Knowledge building plan: weekly plan for each class (including mock-drill)

In the plan, a tenetative estimate of the cost of works and an indication of the possible sources of funding are listed.

Against each item, the responsibility of 'follow-up' is assigned amongst the SDMC members.



".. School Development Plan should emerge from a process of micro planning undertaken in a participatory manner..The preparation of the School Development Plan may be undertaken by a core team, led by an SMC member from the village/habitation, and comprising selected community leaders, NGO representatives, Head Teacher, selected teachers and parents, especially parents of children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections, and children with special needs... and would include, inter alia .. preparation of a proposal for improved education facilities .."

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 137)

This exercise is followed by meetings with VSS to get the action plan whetted; the plan is also submitted to the school management for incorporating in to the School Development Plan. In parallel, the plan is also presented to the village Panchayat under the leadership of the Ward member who heads the VSS and is also a member of the SDMC.

This step typically requires 4-6 weeks.

The format used by UNICEF and partner NGOs is available as Annexure for reference.

The New Disaster Resilient School Under Construction Beside The Existing School Building

Under construction, the new disaster resilient school next to the old one.

The school safety plan was jointly prepared by students and teachers in Ramnagra village, Runni Saidpur block of Sitamarhi district. On the decided date, students and teachers gathered for an open discussion on school safety guided by the Focal Point Teacher. Based on various school documents (such as the attendance register and school development plan) and physical observation, important data was collected regarding the number of students and teachers, the number of classrooms under construction does the new building overlook the school toilets; availability of drinking water facilities; mid-day meal, cooking and serving facilities. Alongside, a sketch plan of the school was prepared by students that captured this information. On this map, all the key assets and strengths of the school as well as risks and problem areas were identified.

To structure the discussion, all the problems and their solutions were organised in order of priority based on the potential impact of the risk or problem on the safety of students and teachers.

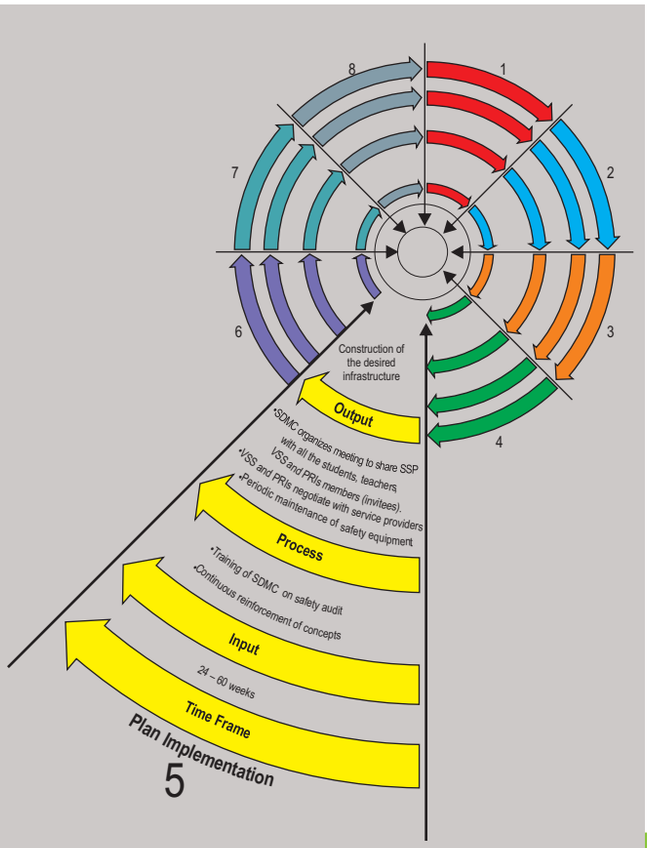
Against each of these, details of the solutions in terms of the number of installations where relevant, estimated expense, support requirements, assignment of responsible persons from the school / SDMC, estimated time required were also detailed out. As part of this entire exercise the building of the middle school that was lying incomplete between 1993-94 was identified as a major threat. The school building itself was constructed at a very low plinth level, hence the school remained closed during monsoons due to water logging. The issue was listed in the school safety plan and taken to the VDMC and the Mukhiya. Despite the fact that the incomplete building was a threat as it was slowly collapsing and also housed a number of snakes and scorpions, it was indeed a common asset created with public money. Hence to demolish it or not was a matter of stiff debate and no government officials were willing to pass the necessary orders.

The Mukhiya decided to convene Gram Sabhaon on 13th November 2011, in which the proposal to demolish the incomplete building was unanimously accepted. Gram Panchayat nominated a committee including the school principal to take up this issue with the District Education Officer (DEO). The DEO accepted the proposal saying, “If Gram Panchayat has passed the proposal for demolition of old building and construction of new building, then it can be demolished and new building proposal can be sanctioned.” As a result of these efforts, a new double story school building is being constructed in the village.

5.5 Plan Implementation – mitigation measures to address identified structural and non-structural risks undertaken

The SDMP can be taken forward when detailed out as a micro plan that enlists possible sources of funding for different components of school safety including SSA, BRGF, MNREGA, PHED etc.

This detailed plan is shared with all the students, teachers, VSS and PRIs members as special (invitees). Activities are segregated based on the responsibilities of different stakeholders / proposed source of funding. Thus activities that need to be taken up by PRIs and VSS are separately listed as are those ones that need to be taken up with the DEO / BEO and those that need to be included in the School Development Plan.



"..Following the micro-planning exercise, the blocks and districts should undertake an exercise to see which requirements can be fulfilled either by redeployment /rationalisation of existing resources or through other schemes of the Central/State Governments. The SDP may be appraised by the Cluster level units, in consultation with the Block teams. The District unit will appraise the Block level plans which will form the basis of the district plan..."

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 138)

The Virtuous Cycle of Knowledge, Commitment and Action!

Kamal Kamat, showing where the plinth of their school would have been if the SDMC / VDMC had not intervened.

An upgraded middle school building was sanctioned in April, 2010 for Khor *Madanpur* Village in *Madhepur* Block of *Madhubani* district. Wall construction began immediately after laying the foundation as per the school construction norm in January of the following year. The SDMC and VDMC members asked the contractor to raise the plinth level of the school building with regard to the highest flood level, to which the contractor declined and the work was stopped. SDMC members met with head Master and insisted on plinth raising and inclusion of earthquake resistant features in the construction. The Principal discussed these issues with the contractor but he declined again, citing budgetary constraints. Then the VDMC and the SDMC called a joint meeting with the school Principal and VSS decided to take the issue to the Block Education Officer (BEO). The BEO too cited other obstacles and asked them to meet District Education Officer (DEO). Finally the DEO agreed and instructed the contractor to raise the plinth level as per the HFL and compensate this by reducing the ceiling height, since additional funds could not be provided once sanctioned. The plinth level of the school building has been raised and construction is in progress. VDMC's awareness of DRR issues, timely action and persistence has seen this new school building acquire flood resilent features.

The VSS apprise and negotiate with BEO/ DEO for addressing structural risks. Non-structural risks such as the relocation of preacriously stored objects; the clearing of evacuation routes have been taken up by the school simultaneously, in addition to the regular maintenance of safety equipment like fire extinguishers.

Some components of the SSP are also shared with the Panchayat for inclusion in their plans. These are then followed up by the PRIs and VSS with the relevant departments so that they are executed effiiciently and to a high standard of quality, with the focus on children and safety. Typically lasting 24-60 weeks, this is the longest phase of the process as energies and resources from different quarters converge in the pursuit of school safety. This is also the phase where a continuous reinforcement of concepts to children and teachers becomes necessary while the desired infrastructure is being constructed.

Access- Ability to School: 200 Days Achieved!!

Jaideo Patti village in *Ghanshyampur* Block of *Darbhanga* district had a middle School without a boundary wall for many years. There was no access road to the school and the problem of flooding worsened due to the presence of a pond next to the school. All of these factors; instead the pond, absence of a boundary wall and no access road resulted in the school being shut down for several weeks during the monsoons.

The pond adjoining the school was a major hazard in the absence of a boundary wall.

The Students and SDMC members identified these problems during the Hazard Hunt in their school in March, 2009, and incorporated these risks in to the school safety plan.

The students also recalled two incidences in where two students died due to drowning. Hence, they identified that the school urgently needed a boundary wall as it's absence posed a great risk to the children's lives.

In addition, the lack of an access road was identified as an important requirement so that children can continue to reach the school safely throughout the year.

The SDMC members presented the school safety plan to the VSS and raised these issues very strongly. Mr. Vaidyanath Mishra, School Principal took it as a challenge and promised to resolve this problem at the earliest.

The access road to the school has been constructed under PMGSY

The school is now accessbile for students all through the year

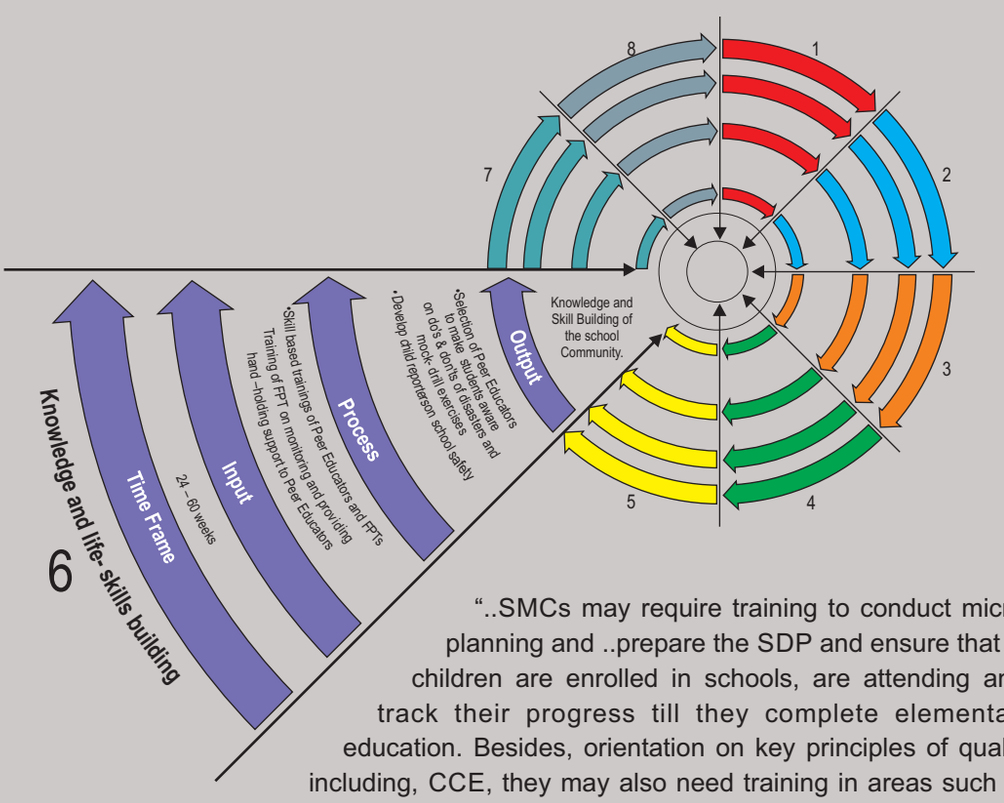
The School Principal raised this issue with DEO in district education planning meeting at *Darbhanga* and also shared the initiative of SDMC. The DEO instructed the BEO to get an estimate of the cost of constructing a boundary wall. The grant for construction was released by the DEO in Feb. 2009. In the meantime, through the Gram Panchayat, a proposal for road construction was also submitted to the *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana*. The school now has a boundary wall and an access road with a "*Vidayala* (school ahead)" signage has been put in place and now students feel safe in and around the school premises.

5.6 Knowledge and Life-skill building

As the suggested road map progresses, there is a need to continuously develop the capacities of different stakeholders for various stages of the process and beyond. Awareness programmes for children on local hazards and risk reduction with relevant knowledge and life skills through various methods of discussions, street plays, drawing competitions, quiz competitions, essay/ slogan writing and demonstrations are proven ways of meaningfully involving children. Trainings and regular practice through mock-drill exercises involving teachers, together with children are critical for sustaining the impact of safety initiatives.

In addition, the SDMC needs to be trained on safety audits which is to be followed through rigorously. This includes periodic checks to ensure school's facilities and resources are maintained first aid kits, fire extinguishers and other safety equipment.

The strategy of Peer-to-Peer education has been successfully applied in the UNICEF School Safety initiative in Bihar, in transferring knowledge and skills to cover school children. Since it is important that each and every child is aware of and practices the dos and don'ts of various disasters and techniques for saving lives. This strategy has been devised as a quicker and more effective alternative to the direct, one-to-one, transfer of knowledge and skills that is not always possible given the large number of children being targeted. Moreover, often the child-to-child method is more of an appropriate form of skill-transfer. Hence, Peer Educator approach has a strong potential for building the capacity of a large number of children and through them, their families and the larger community, on safety issues.



"..SMCs may require training to conduct micro-planning and ..prepare the SDP and ensure that all children are enrolled in schools, are attending and, track their progress till they complete elementary education. Besides, orientation on key principles of quality including, CCE, they may also need training in areas such as systematic development and maintenance of school infrastructure, so that the school meets the RTE requirements within three years of commencement of the Act. Also, capacities at State and local authority levels need to be strengthened for such holistic and convergent planning..."

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 138)

Suggested steps for Peer-to-Peer education on school safety are given below:

a. Select 2 - 3 students from each class and promote them as School Safety Peer Educators or Monitors

b. Provide School Safety Peer Educators/ Monitors hands-on training/ facilitation, demonstrations and handouts on safety issues. This can be best done by School Safety Focal Point teachers with support from NGOs where required on a routine basis. Issues that may be included are: the Dos and don'ts of various disasters, road safety and other safety issues; School Safety issues - location of evacuation routes, crowd control during the mid-day meal; organised entry & exit of children in school; water, sanitation and hygiene; life-skill sets, first-aid, CPR, child protection related issues; understanding of safety equipment used for different disasters, and health and nutrition.

c. School Safety Peer Educators/ Monitors make other students aware of the do's & don'ts of disasters and conduct mock-drill exercises (Duck, Cover & Hold And Stop, Drop & Roll and first-aid skills) once a week , preferably during cultural activity class every Saturday.

d. Childrens' awareness on hazards with relevant knowledge and life skills through other methods –focussed group discussions, plays, drawing/ quiz competitions, essay/ slogan writing, games and demonstrations at least once a month.

e. Promote initiatives among children that make them leaders in risk reduction in the community, for example; the child reporters who can write articles/ columns on school safety for publication in the print media.

Students of *Jatwa* Middle School Make Their Mark at the District level

Jatwa Middle School in *East Champaran* has been involved in the school safety initiative of UNICEF and partners for the last two years. As part of the initiative, students, SDMC and the FPT have been meeting the District Magistrate on various occasions. These occasions also provided them the opportunity to share with them the different life skills that children have acquired to save themselves and people around them from the impacts of disasters. Seeing the depth of the knowledge of these children and their confidence, they were invited to put on a play and road show on Disaster Risk Resilience as part of the republic day parade at the district headquarter on the 26th January 2011. The students were encouraged by the DM; giving them a cash reward of INR 15000 in appreciation of their enthusiasm and ability to effectively share their life skills with the larger population of the district.

Students performing at the Road Show at the District Headquarter, *East Champaran*

A broad list of capacity building inputs during different stages is as under:

S.N.	Training title	Contents	Participants	Responsibility	Stage
1	ToT of School Safety Focal Point Teacher (SFPT)	• Hazards, Risks (with focus on children of various age groups) & Vulnerability. • DM ACT and Policy, institutional Framework • Safe school, safe learning environment and quality education • Structural & non-Structural safety in schools. • Hazard hunt • Preparation of school safety plan • Integration of disaster preparedness measures in curricular and co-curricular activities • Mock Drills for various hazards	School Safety Focal Point Teachers (SFPT)	BRC / CRC with external Resource Persons if required	During initial phase
2	Training of SDMC	• School safety concept • Functioning of SDMC and their roles and responsibilities, • Orientation on school safety planning	SDMC members	SFPT with external Resource Persons	After SDMC formation in schools
3	Training of Peer Educators	• Facilitating lifesaving skills in the class • Do's & Don'ts during an earthquake (Duck-Cover & Hold), fire (Stop-Drop & Roll), floods, road safety. • Preparation of ORS (Diarrhoea management) • First-Aid skills • Water Quality Monitoring and disinfection	Selected students from each class	SFPT with external Resource Persons if required	3-4 months after SDMC formation
4	Training on First Aid and Life-saving skills in School	• First- Aid for common injuries, snake bite, CPR • Carrying wounded persons • Diarrhoea management • Making rope ladders	SDMC members, SFTP, peer educators	SDMA / NDRF, St. John Ambulance	6-8 months after SDMC formation

It is also important to ensure that appropriate techniques are used in the process of skills building. Use of songs, skits/ puppet shows, street plays, drawing competitions, quiz competitions, essay/ slogan writing and demonstrations) are proven ways to enhance understanding and practice of DRR in an integrated manner throughout the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. IEC materials used in the UNICEF programme are provided as Annexure.

In the experience of UNICEF, possible capacity development input at the school level can be: Weekly Knowledge Building Plan

Monsoon

Week	July	August	Sept	October
1	• Pre- flood family preparedness checklist • Do's & Don'ts during flooding	Diarrhoea prevention/ control: • Water contamination • Water testing &HP chlorination • ORS preparation	• Sharing of pre- flood family preparedness by children • Do's & Don'ts during flooding	• Road safety • Organised entry & exit of children in school
2	Water: • Safe keeping/ handling of drinking water • Water purification	• Sharing of pre- flood family preparedness by children • Do's & Don'ts during flooding	• Child protection issues during floods	• Do's & Don'ts - earthquakes
3	Personal hygiene: • Hand washing • Nail checking/ cutting	Sanitation: • Safe disposal of excreta • Campus/ classroom cleanin	• First-aid and life-saving skills • CPR	• Non- structural safety in schools & homes • Family preparedness checklist for earthquakes
4	• Drawing/ quiz competitions	• Games/ demonstrations and the identifications and use of safety equipment	• Games/ demonstrations and the identifications and use of safety equipment	• Personal hygiene • Mock-drill: Stop-drop & roll and Duck-cover & hold

Winter

Week	November	Dec	January	February
1	• Do's & Don'ts during fire emergencies • Fire safety plan	• Do's & Don'ts – severe cold • Prepare checklist for winter	Water: • Safe handling of drinking water • Water purification	• Road safety • Organized entry & exit of children in school
2	• Do's & Don'ts - earthquakes	• Essay/ slogan writing	Cold diarrhoea prevention/ control: • ORS preparation	• Health and nutrition issues
3	• First-aid and life-saving skills	• First-aid and life- saving skills	• Non- structural safety in schools & homes • Family preparedness for earthquakes	• First-aid and life-saving skills
4	• Evacuation mock-drill in case of fire	• Personal hygiene • Mock-drill: Stop-drop & roll and Duck-cover & hold	• Games/ demonstrations and the use of safety equipment	• Drawing/ quiz competitions

Summer

Week	March	April	May
1	• Do's & Don'ts of fire • Fire safety plan checklist	• Do's & Don'ts of fire • Fire safety plan checklist	• Pre- flood family preparedness checklist • Do's & Don'ts during flood
2	Water: • Safe keeping/handling of drinking water • Water purification	Sanitation: • Safe disposal of excreta • Campus/ classroom cleaning	• Health and nutrition issues
3	Sanitation: • Safe disposal of excreta • Campus/ classroom cleaning	• First-aid and life- saving skills • CPR	• Non- structural safety in schools & homes • Family preparedness checklist for earthquakes
4	• Personal hygiene • Mock-drill: Stop-drop & roll and Duck-cover & hold	• Games/ demonstrations and use of equipment	• Personal hygiene • Mock-drill: Stop-drop & roll and Duck-cover & hold

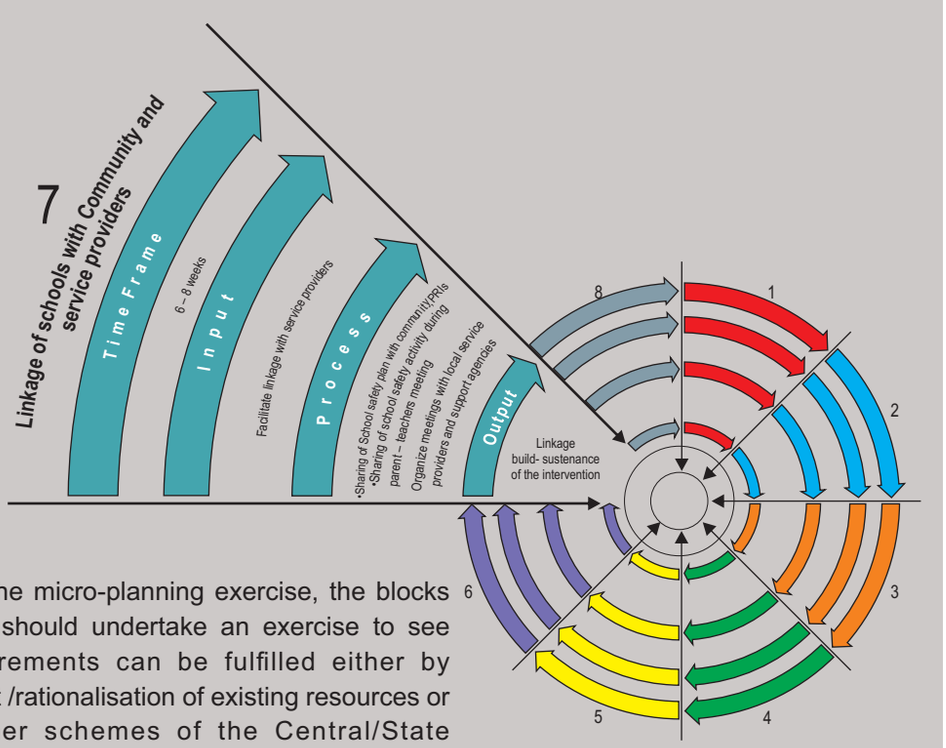
5.7 Linkage of schools with community and service providers

The safety of children and teachers cannot be ensured by the efforts of the school alone. The broader institutional context of the school has a vital role to play in ensuring their safety, since the school precincts and facilities are provided through different schemes and programmes that are most commonly disconnected from the school's affairs and the special needs of children.

Therefore, it is necessary that a strong working relationship should be fostered with these different institutions and actors.

In the UNICEF experience, periodic meetings and consultations between schools and local service providers, including the police, civil defence, fire stations, medical and other emergency service providers like the NDRF, have proved to be effective not only in service delivery but also for taking the safety agenda forward.

In addition, relationships between the schools, BRC / CRC and the nodal departments, i.e. education department have a valuable role to play in terms of motivating children and developing their capacity of self-help. A possible strategy could be to promote exclusive initiatives among children in schools that make them leaders in risk reduction in the community, for example; the development of child reporters who can write articles/ columns on school safety for publication in the print media.



"..Following the micro-planning exercise, the blocks and districts should undertake an exercise to see which requirements can be fulfilled either by redeployment /rationalisation of existing resources or through other schemes of the Central/State Governments. The SDP may be appraised by the Cluster level units, in consultation with the Block teams. The District unit will appraise the Block level plans which will form the basis of the district plan..."

(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 138)

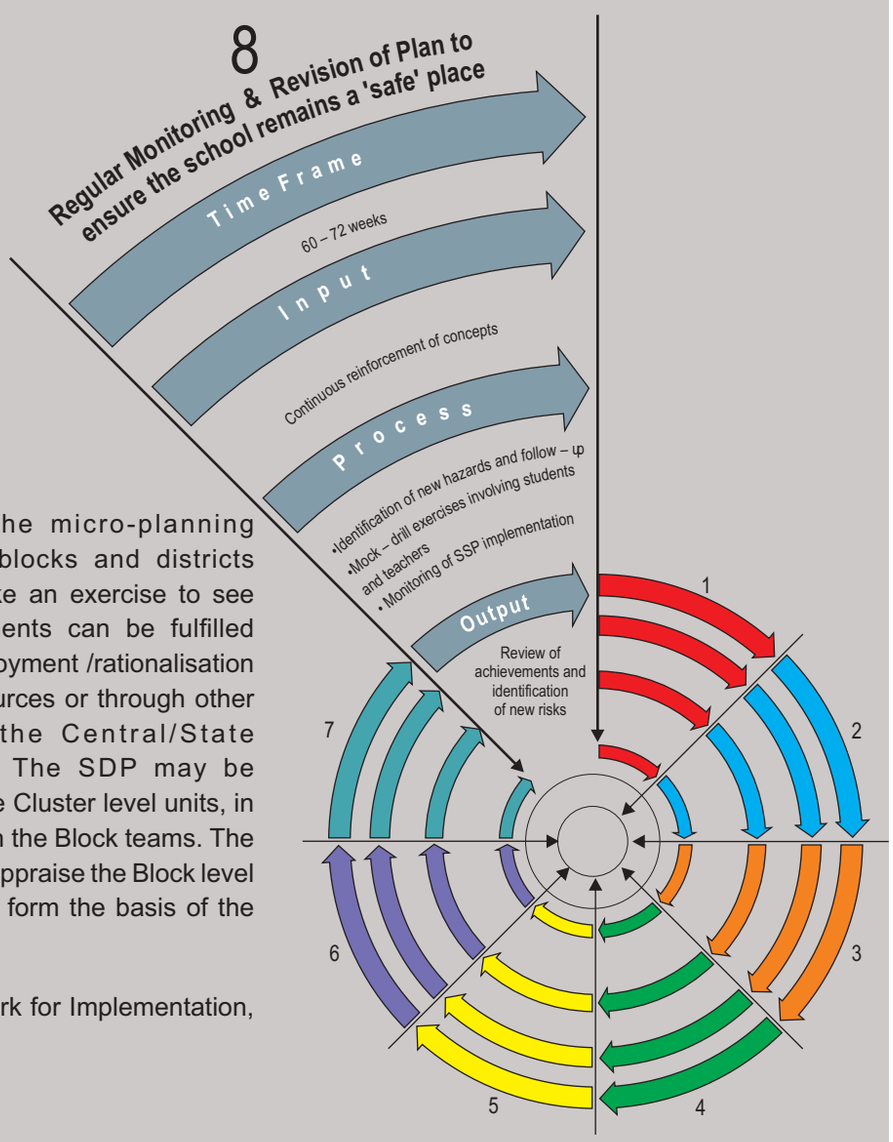
The Sanitation Connection...

Upgraded Middle School, Banilipatti, Bhagwanpur and Parmanandpur of Supaul district used to have one thing in common, they all lacked toilets. Being middle schools, they all have a sizable population of adolescent girls, who suffer the most due to a lack of toilets. Thus, the lack of toilet facilities was identified as one of the major risks by the SDMC of the three schools in each of their School Safety Plans. The three SDMCs jointly met the District Education Officer and presented their School Safety plans on 28th March, 2012, at DEO office and this issue was discussed in detail. The DEO took these problems seriously and issued official orders to school authorities and PHED to construct toilets at the earliest. Toilets were constructed within two months in all the three schools, with separate units for boys and girls.

5.8 Regular Monitoring of Risk and revision of Plan

To ensure that schools indeed remain 'safe' for the students and the teachers, it is important that the SDMPs are updated regularly by the SDMC through the identification of new hazards and the follow-up on activities that could not be completed as originally planned.

There could be cases of unaddressed hazards and additional new hazards that emerge in the course of the implementation of the SDMP. These will be integrated into the SDMP through the process of review, and updated accordingly. In addition, there may be risks that have to be monitored periodically to safeguard the health and well-being of children, such as the cleanliness of toilets and the quality of drinking water.



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(SSA Framework for Implementation, 2009, pp 138)

Children Monitor Water Sources in Their School..

Kumar and his friends in *Hajipur Basant* School of *Runni Saidpur* Block in *Sitamarhi* are water safety warriors in the school and their village. Ranjan proudly shares his, Do-It-Yourself, way of testing water for the presence of iron that is a widely prevalent contaminant in many water sources in Bihar. He takes some water from the source that has to be tested in a clear, transparent tumbler and adds some crushed guava leaves to the water. Iron contaminated water when it comes in contact with crushed guava leaves, turns black when the tanin in the leaves reacts with the iron. The colour of the water remains unchanged if there is no contamination. This knowledge was given to them by their teacher after he came back from one of the trainings on school safety.

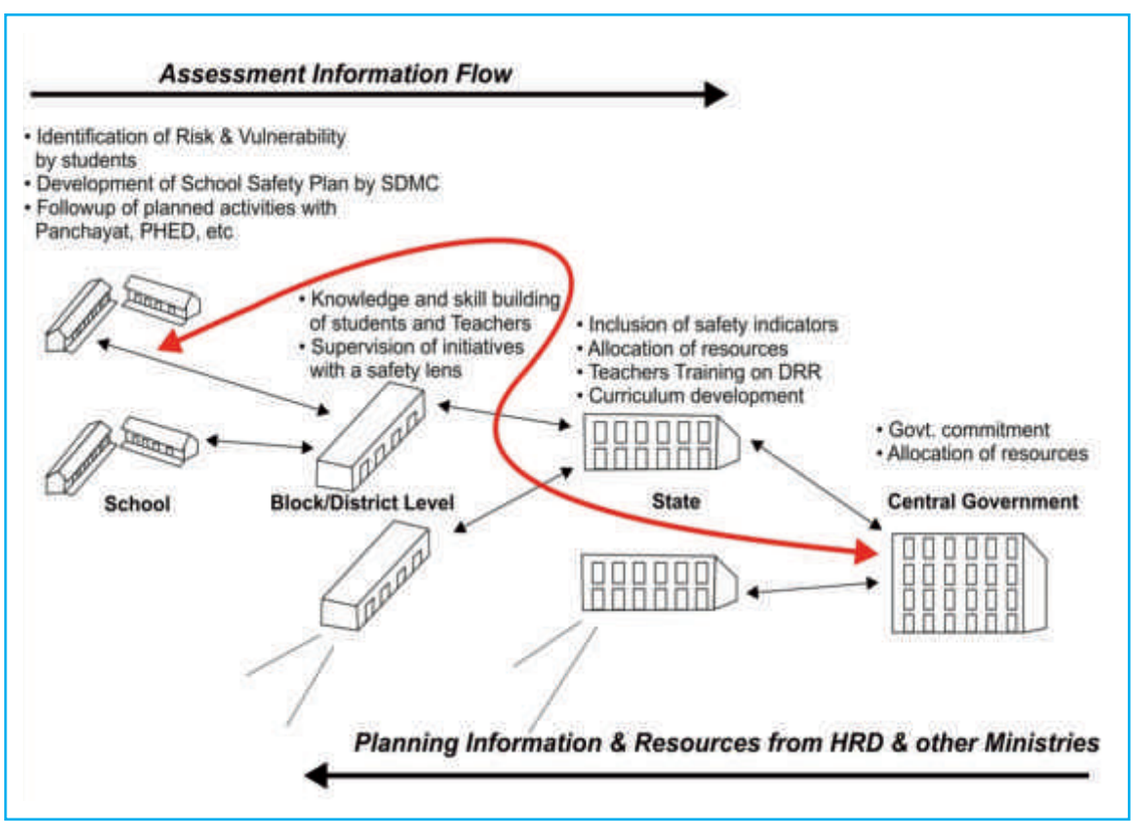
Kiran Kumari and Gunja Kumari, students of Teerapurvi Middle school, Kalyanpur block of Samastipur district have learnt about water quality testing using H2S vials. The VSS members bring H2S vials from PHED that are used by children to test water. If the water is found to be contaminated, they carry out chlorination of hand pumps.

After they gained this knowledge, they tested all the water sources in their village and the ones that were contaminated have now been painted red to inform people that they should not be used for drinking water. This knowledge and the process of water testing around the village has given them a new identity amongst their peers and the community in general.

6.0 WHO NEEDS TO DO WHAT – ROLES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

The experience of the School Safety Programme in Bihar has highlighted the potential of the school community to evolve a DRR language of their own that goes beyond the distinction between primary (floods, earthquake) and underlying risks (vulnerabilities) that singularly defines 'safety' as a well-being issue. Communities understand and stand for convergent action for their well-being and feel disconnected with the traditional sectorial and programmatic mandates that distinguish different departments.

The experience in Bihar also highlights the need for a more meaningful space to engage with children in identifying their own risks and to facilitate leadership in schools, neighbouring communities and local bodies in order for them to be addressed. The essential capacities required by teachers to play this role effectively are fundamental to this entire process that would indeed hinge on the interest and the initiative of the school's teachers and principals. A vision for this process and its components is illustrated in the figure below and elaborated in detail in this section.



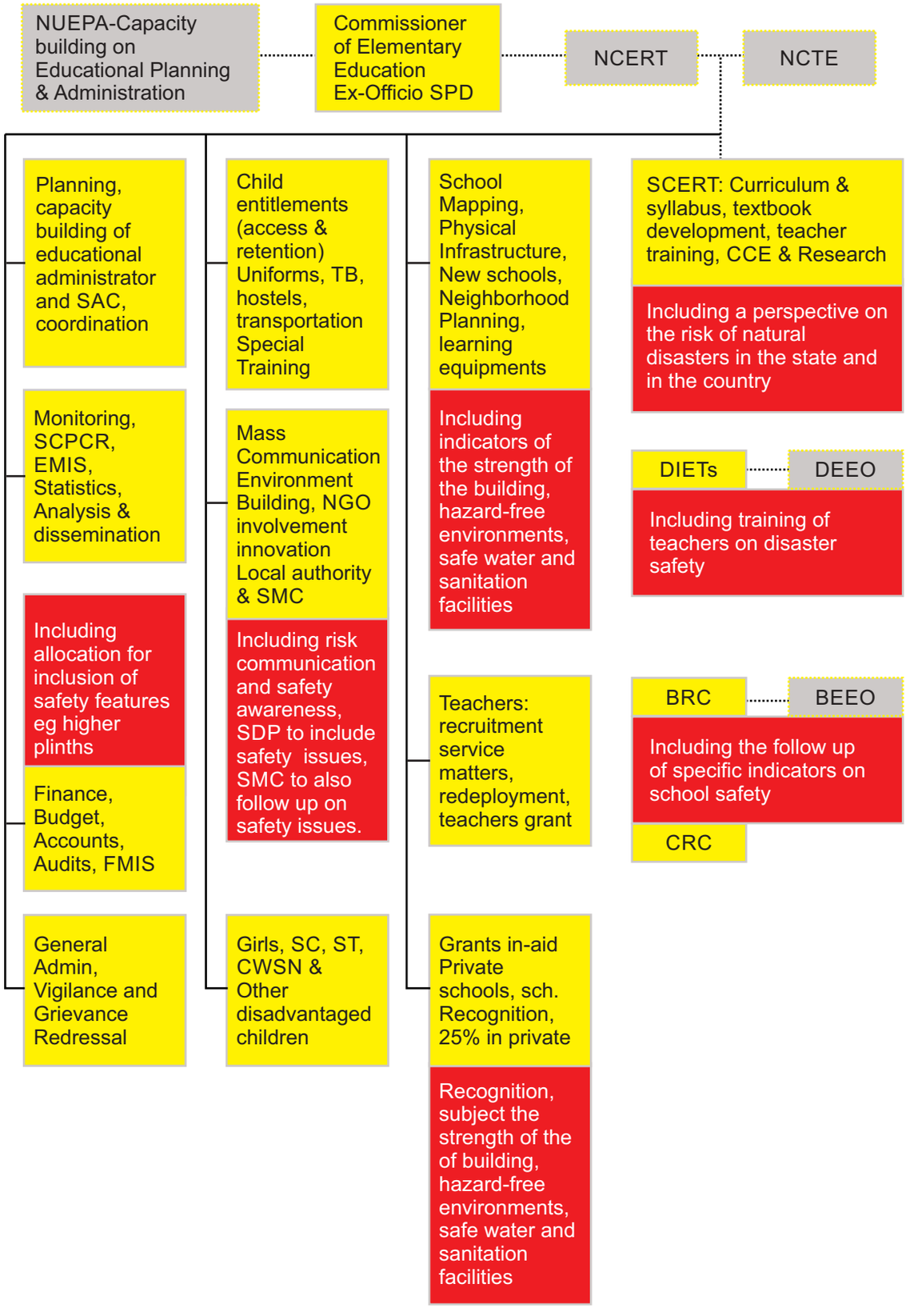
(source : Adapted from UNICEF, 2010)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan through a School Safety Lens

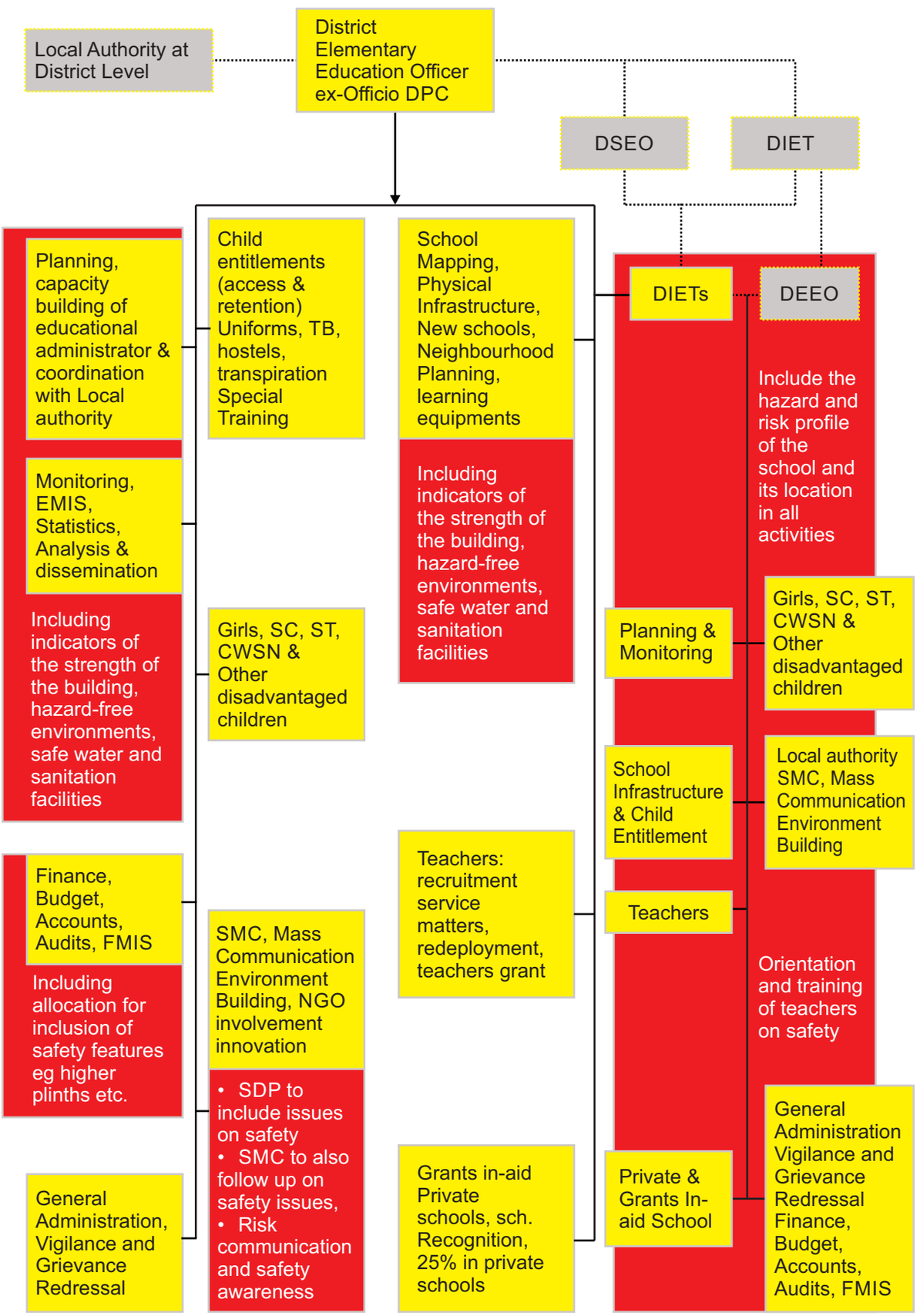
SSA has been a path breaking initiative in the way it has evolved to further the Right to Education in the country. The Programme has taken progressive measures for creating institutional mechanisms as well as funding for specific actions in relation to children's access to quality education. However, in many states in the country, uninterrupted access to education for many children is limited by natural hazards such as floods that occur annually and also by underlying risks that impact childrens' health due to preventable causes, for instance; unsafe water and sanitation facilities in the school and / or at home. Viewing the existing institutional mechanisms and actions under SSA through a school safety lens highlights the possibility of strengthening access to education by promoting safety of children and the school community at large.

The figure below demonstrates how this integration can be ensured.

State Level Integrated Structures for SSA and RTE through a school safety lens



District Level Integrated Structures for SSA and RTE through a School Safety Lens



Specific actions by different stakeholders that can help in promoting school safety are given below:

State/District and Block level Education Authorities need to:

- Accept responsibility for ensuring safety of school children.
- Establish the responsibility of school management to take prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response actions with regard to safety of children and teachers.
- Develope and implement strategies, policies and regulations for ensuring that all new schools/ classrooms being constructed are disaster resilient and child friendly.
- Allocate resources for the retrofitting of schools to make them disaster risk resilient and child friendly.
- Incorporate disaster risk reduction in teacher training programmes across institutes and universities.
- Instruct NCERT / SCERT to meaningfully educate children not only on issues of disaster but of overall 'safety'.
- Instruct DIET to include school safety training in the curriculum for the training of teachers, BRC and CRC.
- Include indicators related to 'school safety' in the monitoring formats of all schemes and programmes like Learning Enhancement programme (e.g. Samjhe Sikhe in Bihar).
- Expand the scope of the existing 'School Development Plans' to include safety issues. The plan may be suitably renamed.
- Work with other ministries and departments to ensure that their resources that when applied in and around educational institutions they are designed with a 'safety' a lens in mind.
- Facilitate and orient CRC / BRC on issues of school safety.
- Conduct Training of Master Trainers from each District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) through SCERT using stimulating educational material for teachers and students to engage with school safety issues; master trainers of each DIET would in turn impart training to BRC/ CRC of their respective districts.

Cluster and Block level Resource Centres need to:

- Orient teachers and Principals on issues of school safety.
- Ensure that the school authorities create space in the school curriculum and timetable for disaster risk reduction training and education in all the classes.
- Ensure that schools allocate time for follow up actions on school safety at least once a week.
- Incorporate disaster risk reduction in the teacher training programme.
- Include indicators on safety as part of routine monitoring.
- Support schools to prepare School Safety Plans as part of their annual development plan exercise.
- Promote cross-learning between schools with regard to their initiatives for promoting safety.

School administration/ VSS and teachers need to:

- Allocate time for weekly knowledge and life-skill building activities.
- Incorporate measures to be taken to ensure that school safety is incorporated in to the school development plan.
- Ensure that teachers and non-teaching staff receive appropriate training in disaster risk reduction.
- Involve PRIs and line departments in school safety planning exercises.
- Ensure that relevant norms and standards for school safety are applied in their own school buildings and functions.
- Ensure active and equitable participation of the school community, including children and elected representatives for preparing and implementing SDMPs.
- Deploy 'out-of-the classroom' strategies to orient children and build their capacities on safety.
- Deploy appropriate strategies to encourage and support children to participate in spreading disaster risk reduction knowledge to families and communities.

PRIs and Line departments need to:

- Effectively participate in the school safety planning exercises.
- Ensure that all infrastructure and installations routed through them for schools and even outside are resilient to local disasters.

Children need to:

- Enthusiastically participate in and learn DRR principles and practices being taught in school and outside.
- Take cognizance of disaster risks in their community and actively seek solutions to reduce them.
- Participate in preparing and implementing SDMPs.
- Participate in mock-drills and appropriate response strategies available in their school or community.
- Actively spread the knowledge on DRR acquired in school to their families and communities

National/State/District Disaster Management Authorities need to:

- Collaborate with and involve education authorities in DM planning policies, and processes for developing minimum standards and regulations for school safety before, during and after emergencies.
- Collaborate with and provide training inputs to the Department of Education for the formal integration of DRR education in to the school curriculum.
- Collaborate with and provide training inputs to the Department of Education for training of School Safety Focal point teachers and SDMC members to lead school safety efforts in their respective schools.
- Facilitate specialised training in schools for teachers and peer educators.

Non-Governmental Organizations (local, regional and international) need to:

- Sensitize policy makers on the need for school safety and advocate for a systemic commitment to safety.
- Facilitate and provide training to School Safety Focal point teachers and SDMC members on School Safety Intervention so that they can effectively participate in school safety efforts.
- Collaborate with academic, scientific, research institutions and experts for the development and the delivery of training programs and associated research on new and innovative approaches.
- Participate in coalitions and collaborative platforms for school safety at the local, district, state, national and global level and bring acquired knowledge and understanding to their constituencies.
- Advocate the integration of disaster risk reduction into mainstream development activities, particularly school education.

International Funding Agencies and United Nations

- Allocate resources to develop and share knowledge on strategic approaches and solutions for school safety in various kinds of risk contexts.
- Collaborate in the development and the promotion of good practices in school structural safety and disaster risk reduction education.
- Coordinate the consolidation of knowledge, and the dissemination of DRR educational materials and tools.
- Undertake the responsibility of orienting and educating the larger donor community and policy-makers on issues of school safety and disaster risk reduction.
- Facilitate the development of monitoring tools, to assess the effectiveness of education sector projects from a disaster risk reduction perspective.

Media needs to:

- Participate in training on DRR issues and approaches
- Take a lead in building the necessary momentum on school safety through adequate coverage of issue and solutions. Print media can publish articles on school safety in weekly editions for kids e.g. Bal Jagran by Dainik Jagran, Tele kids by Telegraph.
- Develope and follow of agreed code of conduct for disaster reporting, especially with respect to children and schools.

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