



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Office, Jakarta Flagship Programme

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# Fostering Safer and Resilient Communities:

## A Natural Disaster Preparedness and Climate Change Education Program

### Region:

Asia and the Pacific

### Partners:

National and local governments; inter-governmental agencies; universities and research institutions; NGOs; communities

### General Objective:

To build self reliance communities in the Asia and the Pacific based on knowledge, awareness, preparedness, and mitigation to manage the hazard and the vulnerability toward natural disaster and climate change

### Duration:

4+ years starting 2010

### Estimated budget:

6,000,000 USD

### For more information, please contact:

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## BACKGROUND

The Asia and the Pacific region is vulnerable to many natural disaster and expected impacts from climate change. In 2006, 74% of people killed by natural disasters were in Asia, with Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam among the countries most badly affected. Natural disasters such as windstorms, floods, droughts, earthquakes in combination with human-induced conditions such as deforestation, pollution, soil erosion collectively contribute to serious challenges for communities and governments.

Climate change impacts are imminent and inevitable. The consensus among natural and social scientists, economists, and policy-makers is that climate change is the most important challenge that this planet faces. It is pervasive, touching on every facet of the environment and human life including the environment, economy, transportation, communication, food production, and health. The temporal and geographic scale is wide. The projected economic, health, and societal costs put forth by experts are extraordinary. For example, the total economic cost of climate change threats could be an annual loss of 6-7% of Southeast Asian countries' GDP by the end of the century, and the Pacific sub-region will see a sea-level rise of 0.19-0.58 meter by 2100 severely changing the lives of more than 50% of the people that live within 1.5 km of the shoreline leading to relocation, water and power shortages, and submerged infrastructure. Climate change impacts in Asia and the Pacific is particularly serious because of the fact that: 1) over 60% of the global population reside in Asia and the Pacific; 2) it has the most extensive coastline of any geographic region; and, 3) many of the world's largest cities are located along Asian coasts.



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The impact of climate change in sea level rise would impact small island states such as the Maldives and Kiribati, and many of Asia's largest coastal cities, such as Jakarta, Bangkok, Manila, Shanghai, and Ho Chi Minh City. Tens of millions of people in Asia may have to be resettled. Further, the expected greater intensity of cyclones and typhoons could have a larger impact than before on Bangladesh, China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines, whose coastal areas already encounter among the world's worst weather-related disasters year after year. Parts of many countries in Asia, including Northwestern India, Western China, and almost all of Pakistan, are already suffering from shortages of water, as well as land degradation and desertification, which will be further exacerbated by climate change.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in January 2005 in Kobe, Japan, adopted the Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (referred as the "Hyogo Framework for Action" – HFA). The framework emphasizes the need to understand the linkages between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and that stakeholders work toward reducing disaster vulnerabilities of communities by helping them build their capacity to deal with disasters.

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## UNESCO'S DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROGRAMME AND HOW IT CAN HELP

UNESCO has been increasingly active in disaster preparedness over the past years. UNESCO Office, Jakarta has developed assessment tools for community preparedness of different hazards, develop schools and it's community disaster preparedness in several pilot area, develop guideline for disaster risk reduction strategy for city and districts, and develop disaster preparedness and awareness tools such as posters, comic book, awareness and training video, among others. Our efforts focus on three main priorities for actions:

- Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning;
- Use knowledge, information and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels through inclusion of DRR into school curricula, formal and informal education;
- Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels through disaster management capacities, policy, technical and institutional capacities.

Building Safer and Resilient Communities is an initiative focused on building communities resilience that promotes disaster and climate change readiness through:

- Awareness of the risk through risk assessment and mapping; and
- Preparedness to reduce vulnerability and increase the capacity of the communities;
- short-term adaptation and long term mitigation efforts.

In partnership with national and local governments, university and other research agencies, national and local disaster management offices, schools and training institutions, and local commu-

nities, UNESCO will use its set of unique knowledge and skills in the sciences (environmental, hydrology, basic, social), education, culture, and communication and information to improve the conditions of the communities against recurring disasters and the possible impact of climate change.

The implementation will use existing disaster risk reduction tools that have proven to be effective in dealing with natural disaster and climate-related events. These include, but not limited to, vulnerability and risk assessments, early warning systems, land-use planning and building code regulation, and institutional and legal capacities. The program will also ensure that adaptation measures to climate change and disaster risk reduction is integrated into in all sectors, especially education and community development planning.



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## POTENTIAL IMPACTS

This program has the potential to empower the communities to be self-reliant in preparing for natural disasters including climate change impacts including:

- Positive impacts in community planning, and creating standards for communities to become better prepared for natural disasters and climate change impacts;
- Positive economic impacts on communities by preventing losses in livelihoods from natural disasters and climate change impacts;
- Positive education and awareness impacts through dual – formal and informal – approaches that target all segments of the population;
- Positive environmental impacts by promoting sustainable development principles and practices that will help to reduce human-induced disturbances that add to natural disaster problems (e.g., landslides from deforestation and storms) and mitigate against climate change developments; and
- Positive community impacts by promoting communal learning and practices that prepare communities for natural disasters and climate change.