AHMEDABAD ACTION AGENDA
FOR
SCHOOL SAFETY

Adopted at

International Conference on School Safety
18th – 20th January, 2007
Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

PREAMBLE

The International Conference on School Safety[1] was held from 18th to 20th January, 2006 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. Reaffirming The **Priority for Action 3 of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015**, to Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels, the **UN Millennium Development Goal** (Goal 2) to **Achieve Universal Primary Education** by the year 2015, the participants and other advocates of School Safety recognize that every child has both the right to education and the right to safe and sustainable living, hereby set themselves the goal of achieving in solidarity

"Zero Mortality of Children in Schools from Preventable Disaster by the year 2015"

To achieve the above goal the participants adopted the following action agenda for school safety. (here after referred as Ahmedabad Action Agenda). The actions are outlined under immediate priority and long term accomplishments (i.e. by 2015)

1. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Immediate Priority

Action 1.a: Include disaster risk reduction in the formal curriculum at both primary as well as secondary levels.

Education must address an understanding of root causes that lead to disasters[2] and environmental problems that are intimately connected to our daily lives. Education must inculcate a sense of responsibility for effecting a positive change on both local and global scale.

Action 1.b: Promote disaster risk reduction through co-curricular activities in schools acknowledging that children in schools[3] need to develop "survival/ life skills" first, along with "academic inputs".

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1. "School Safety" refers to 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 fire, transportation and other emergencies, and environmental threats that adversely affect the lives of children.
2. 'Disasters': 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. ISDR terminology.
3. "Children in schools" refers to children while they are in school premises, as well as on their way to or back from school.

Co-curricular activities must include basic disaster awareness and disaster risk reduction, mock drills, first aid training, training on fire safety and other response skills as appropriate (eg. light search and rescue, swimming, evacuation and emergency shelter creation).

By 2015

Action 1.c: Promote exclusive initiatives among children in schools that make them leaders in risk reduction in the community.

Children must serve as role models in the community and provide exposure on responsible practices and behavior in the community. Children in schools must reach out to those under privileged and non-school going children.

Action 1.d: Ensure effective partnership among schools to share risk reduction education and achieve higher levels of school safety.

Local, Regional, National, Global coalitions/school networks must be encouraged to sharing and learn good practices on school safety.

2. DISASTER RESISTANT SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE.

Immediate Priority

Action 2.a: Complete risk assessment and safety measures must be undertaken to ensure zero potential damage to new school buildings.

Minimum standards must be established for school construction, considering schools as critical infrastructure. Building codes are expected to be in place, promulgated, and enforced by national, regional and local governments. All new school buildings must adhere to minimum international standards.

Public Authorities need to reach out to communities who self-build schools, to promulgate these standards and provide technical assistance, including, if necessary, engineering guidance and construction-worker training for disaster resistant construction.

Action #2.b: Mandatory safety audit of all existing school buildings with respect to their location, design and quality of construction and prioritizing them for demolition, retrofit or repair.

Safety audits must adhere to minimum standards established. Both knowledge and physical resource to ensure audits and repair must be made easily accessible to school community. Audits must be recognized and encouraged by local government/ education department.

By 2015

Action #2.c: Develop, implement and enforce codes with the performance objective of making all new school buildings ready for immediate occupancy following any disaster to serve as shelters or safe havens for the community as well as to restore educational functions in the shortest possible time.

Since schools are important post-disaster shelters, safe havens, emergency operations centers, and needed for educational continuity, "immediate occupancy" should be the performance standard of choice, and school buildings should serve as models of disaster-resistant construction.

Action #2.d: Implement a systematic plan to retrofit and/or repair existing schools to meet minimum standards for life safety in the event of known or expected hazards. Demolish unsafe irreparable school buildings and replace them.

To prevent avoidable deaths and injuries of children in schools, as well as to ensure that school buildings serve as post disaster shelter buildings that can be retrofitted or repaired must be brought up to life safety standards as an urgent priority. Unsafe buildings must be demolished and replaced with safe new buildings.

Action #2.e Implement routine checks to ensure schools adhere to minimum standards and safety measures are not undermined.

Maintenance of school facilities and resources must be done periodically. Physical resources like fire safety equipments, first aid kits must be regularly updated. Similarly non structural mitigation of equipments and furniture, evacuation plans, building survey, hazard mapping must be reviewed periodically. This ensures effective response during any contingency.

3. SAFE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS

Immediate Priority

Action 3.a: Mobilize parent, student, local community and school staff to champion school safety.

Encourage parents, students, local community and staff to actively engage in discussions and action planning for school safety with school administrators, authorities and governments.

By 2015

Action 3.b: Schools to prepare and implement school safety plans including measures to be taken both within school premises and in the immediate neighbourhood. This must include regular safety drills.

Schools shall recognize risks both within their own premises and in their immediate neighbourhoods, identifying and assessing resources available for meeting emergency needs, preparing short term plans for preparedness and outlining measures for disaster risk reduction. Safety drills include fire safety, evacuation process, earthquake drills (Duck, Cover n Hold), drills for flood safety, and learning early warning signs and communication systems for storms and other hazards.

Action 3.c: Promote active dialogue and exchange between schools and local leaders including police, civil defense, fire safety, search and rescue, medical and other emergency service providers.

Recognizing that school communities must be prepared to meet their own disaster response needs for a period of time, active dialogue and exchange helps to prioritize and co-ordinate assistance by emergency services,. Advance planning optimize the need for expert resource and also make the school community resilient.

Action 3.d: School children must practice safety measures in all aspects and places of their lives.

This focus on school safety is intended to build momentum for a culture of safety that extends to all parts of life, and to become as natural to daily life as health, hygiene and environmental concerns. Safety practices must be internalized to bring in tangible changes.

STAKEHOLDERS AND ROLES & RESPONSIBILTY

To implement the Actions outlined above, every parent, school principal, teacher, child, government policy maker, pedagogic/scientific/technical expert, non-governmental organization, intergovernmental organization, private sector, mass media should consider himself or herself to be a stakeholder and hence a "Champion of School Safety" bearing the following responsibilities.

National / State-Province / Local Education Authorities:
- ☐ Accept responsibility for ensuring the safety of school children.
- ☐ Include disaster risk reduction training/education elements in educational curriculum throughout all grades/classes.
- ☐ Establish and implement strategies, policies and regulations for safe school facilities
- ☐ Allocate resources for construction/retrofitting of safe schools and training
- ☐ Promote, facilitate and incorporate disaster risk reduction in teacher-training programme across institutes/colleges/universities.

School Community (School Administrators and Teachers)
- ☐ Ensure teachers and non-teaching staff receive the opportunity for training in disaster risk reduction.
- ☐ Be accountable for applying proscribed safety norms and regulations in their own schools.
- ☐ Ensure active participation of school community, including children and parents, in preparing and implementing school disaster plans and disaster risk reduction efforts.
- ☐ Be prepared to respond to emergencies.
- ☐ Encourage and support children to participate in spreading disaster risk reduction knowledge, acting as bridges to families and communities.

National/State-Province / Local Disaster Management Authorities:
- ☐ Collaborate with and involve education authorities in planning policies, minimum standards and regulation for ensuring school safety.
- ☐ Promote effective methodologies for active learning, integration of disaster risk reduction education in formal curriculum of schools.

Inter-governmental Organizations, Development Banks, and Donors
- ☐ Mainstream disaster risk reduction in schools through appropriate line item allocation of funds and standard operating procedures.
- ☐ Integrate safety and disaster risk reduction into policy and strategic planning for schools and education sector.
- ☐ Leadership to educate larger donor group policy-makers in longer-term issues of school safety and disaster risk reduction.

☐ Develop monitoring tools and set-up independent auditing processes to evaluate school and education sector projects from a disaster risk reduction perspective and in adherence with the established standards.

Non-Governmental Organizations (local, regional and international)

☐ Establish ongoing links with academic/scientific/research institutions and experts for development of training programs, delivery of training programs, and research on impacts and outcomes.

☐ Initiate coalitions for school safety at every level, local, district, state, national, regional and global levels.

☐ Integrate disaster risk reduction into mainstream development and aid activities, including adoption of standards and standard operating procedures that ensure physical safety of school buildings.

☐ Mainstream disaster risk reduction in schools through appropriate advocacy and communication to common citizens.

United Nations

☐ Allocate resources to develop focal points for knowledge sharing at regional and global level.

☐ Promote use of Hyogo Framework for Action as a reference for actions on the Education for Disaster Risk Management

☐ UNISDR take lead UN role in advocacy and education of national governments, decision-makers for strategic policy intervention for disaster risk reduction.

☐ UN agencies collaborate to develop and promote good practices in school structural safety and disaster risk reduction education in all forms.

☐ Coordinate comprehensive library and online catalogue of disaster risk reduction educational materials and tools. (UNESCO/ISDR)

☐ Reach out to include all school safety efforts in Education Platform worldwide, reflecting local activities as part of larger objectives. (UNISDR)

Children and Youth

☐ Learn principles and practices of disaster risk reduction

☐ Become aware of disaster risks in your own community and how to reduce them

☐ Participate in preparing and implementing school disaster plans and disaster risk reduction efforts

☐ Participate in drills and appropriate response to early warnings available in your school or community

☐ Participate as bridges to spread disaster risk reduction knowledge to families and communities.

Mass Media and Social Marketers
- ☐ Participate in training to learn background on hazard, risk and risk reduction information
- ☐ Participate in the development, refinement and implementation of code of conduct for disaster reporting, especially with respect to children and schools
- ☐ Engage as responsible partners in creating awareness and encouraging action for disaster risk reduction and school safety.

Pedagogic/Scientific/Technical Experts
- ☐ Adopt and incorporate a children's rights approach to school safety.
- ☐ Develop and disseminate training modules for awareness, assessment and planning, physical protection and response capacity skills and provisioning.
- ☐ Provide technical assistance and guidance in refining and improving educational materials and learning aids for disaster risk reduction.
- ☐ Involve all stakeholders in participatory development of training resources and research.

Private Sector
- ☐ Engage as local community stakeholder and partner with other stakeholders in school safety
- ☐ Promote in-kind, material and financial support to promote disaster risk reduction and school safety activities.
- ☐ Link private schools to public school safety and disaster risk reduction efforts at all levels.
- ☐ Insure schools against physical losses in disaster.

Coalition for Global School Safety
- ☐ Serve as an independent umbrella to link school safety advocates globally for the long-term tasks of both school disaster risk reduction, and disaster risk reduction education through schools.
- ☐ Advocate at all levels to keep school safety a priority until it is achieved
- ☐ Share advocacy materials, and good practices to support school advocates globally.
- ☐ Nurture and support school safety leadership and champions at all levels.
- ☐ Encourage formal and informal groups and individuals to affiliate for the purposes of mutual support in creating the momentum needed to accomplish these goals