

# Advocacy Event - For Provincial Education Department to Integrate Disaster Risk Management and School Safety Preparedness into the Curricula



23 December 2020

## **Background**

Education is the strategic source for social transformation. Growing frequency of natural disasters in Pakistan demands to explore and address the issue from diversified perspectives. Going explosive and unruly, nature exposes itself in more than one form. Unprecedented flooding, massive earthquakes, cyclones and avalanches, droughts and dry spells are being experienced in country regularly. Therefore, it is best to make our children learn it today for a safer tomorrow. Being younger and inexperienced, children are a high-risk category in the wake of a disaster. Therefore, disaster management knowledge is not only important for them but eventually for the entire nation. Physically fragile and located in a high-risk zone, it is a matter of life and death for Pakistan to impart at least basic understanding of disaster risk response or reduction (DRR), preparation and mitigation skills to its children. Education can prove a primary and prime instrument for that. Fundamental skills, attitudes and responses could be learnt from start to confront and co-opt such occurrences, so long as they become predictable and controlled.

Integrating DRM and school safety preparedness into formal education and curricular has been suggested as one strategy to help increase knowledge and understanding of disaster risks. While there has been some initial progress in initiating DRR integration into the school curriculum, this is mostly limited to the national level. In order to integrate the DRM and school safety preparedness in education curriculum will require advocacy with the provincial education departments in consultation with provincial / state disaster management authorities. The disaster profile for each province and region is also different therefore the curriculum requirements would be as such that they address the DRR needs of that particular region.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is one of the most disaster prone region of the country. The region has been frequently hit by multiple disaster including Earthquake, Landslide, Flash Floods, GLOF and Avalanches. The multi hazard vulnerability risk assessment (MHVRA) study conducted by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has placed most areas of AJK in the maximum vulnerability rating of Very High(VH) therefore, it was decided to engage the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) and Education department of AJK to advocate for the inclusion of DRM and school safety preparedness in education curriculum.

### **Meeting with Director General State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA)**

An initial meeting with Director General SDMA Syed Shahid Mohyiddin Qadri was conducted on 23 December 2020 at SDMA office Muzaffarabad. Mr. Qadri was briefed about the objectives of the initiative.

Brig. Sajid Naeem - Country Representative ADPC and Muhammad Hamayun - Secondary Focal person Pakistan Resilience Partnership, Mr. Saeed Qureshi - Director SDMA were part of the meeting. Mr. Sajid Naeem briefed the participants about the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and the “Strengthen the capacity of at risk-communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters through locally-led actions in selected high-risk countries of Asia” project being implemented in Pakistan and other regional countries.

The participants were briefed about the importance of DRM in early age learning and its impacts on overall resilience of the community. Following objectives can be achieved by integrating DRM into educational system:

- Prevention begins with information.
- Awareness is the first step toward action.

- Awareness can trigger interest, interest can lead to attention, and attention can prompt action.
- As schools are the best venue for sowing collective values, school students and teachers can serve as vehicles for building a culture of Prevention in the schools and in the community.

The DG SDMA agreed to the importance of inclusion of DRM and school safety into the education curriculum. He was grateful to ADPC for raising this important aspect of DRM. He informed that we have planned to initiate this process with the education department and this initiative of ADPC has coincided timely. He shared that

- The requirements for each level of students is different therefore the DRM lessons should be designed as per the learning needs of the target age group.
- The volume of these lessons should not be high and should only be included as one or two chapters per class.
- It should be avoided to overburden the students with introducing a separate subject rather the lessons should be integrated into the already taught subjects such as social subjects.
- The disaster profile of each region and province is different therefore the curriculum should be contextualized according to the local disaster profile of the region.

#### **Procedural Requirements Discussion with SDMA Team.**

Further discussions on procedural requirements were conducted with SDMA team which included Director Operations Mr. Saeed Ahmed Qureshi and Deputy Director Administration, Raja Noman Shafiq. Following actions were agreed after a detail discussion:

- Mapping of key partners/departments and identifying focal persons for future correspondence.
- Notifying the steering committee for proposed initiative by ensuring presence of all partners/departments.
- Develop a road map with all concerned partners/departments.
- Ensure that road map shall enable all partners understanding of the process involved and the responsibilities of each department.
- Agreeing on deadlines with key actions and responsible persons/departments.
- Action follow ups and achievements against road map.
- Curricula finalization and notification.
- Briefing meeting/event with AJK school's representatives and formally adoption of curricula in the region.