**Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices**

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

   Education Safe From Disaster Project

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

   Philippines

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

   ☑ Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools

   ☐ Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development

   ☐ Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

   ☑ Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation

   ☐ Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Lead: Department of Education - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS),
Information Communications and Technology Service (ICTS)
Partners: Save the Children and Prudence Foundation

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims,
modalities, target groups etc. *

The project aims to transform national systems, strengthen capacity of various DepEd personnel,
and empower learners to reduce the number of school days lost due to the impact of disasters
and/or emergencies arising from natural and human-induced hazards.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The Philippines Department of Education, Save the Children and Prudence Foundation are
working in partnership to leverage innovation, technology, and collaboration to ensure children
in the Philippines can be kept safe at school and get the best start in life through building
greater resilience to disasters and other emergencies. Aside from maximizing learners'
engagement and participation, the project provides accurate and timely data and information as
basis for immediate and necessary decision making of officials, as well as in formulation of
policies, plans, and programs. We are building an evidence base of this work to enable the
approach to be adapted and delivered across Asia and other geographies to protect even more
children's education.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)
   This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:
   i) Which population was affected?
   ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
   iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

The Philippines Disaster Risk Reduction and Management is guided by the Republic Act 10121. All government agencies, including the Department of Education (DepEd) align their DRRM efforts to this law. The DepEd through the DRRM office created in 2011 and elevated into a DRRM Service (DRRMS) in 2015 lead the implementation of DRRM in the basic education sector. In addition, DepEd serves as the lead of the education sector in the National DRRM Council. Through the DRRMS, relevant national policies and framework on DRRM, information and data management protocols and mechanisms in the basic education were put in place. Despite established national policies, the availability of numerous DRRM material,s and DepEd's proactive engagement of different stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs) to facilitate the realisation of Comprehensive School Safety (CSS), there are still gaps in developing the capacity of its systems and human resource to reach every last child in school and ensure that they are protected from the risks of disasters and/or emergencies arising from natural and human-induced hazards.

There is a gap in systematically monitoring the implementation of various DRRM initiatives across all levels of DepEd and collecting data and information. The data mining is always geared towards National or Central Office consolidation. This has disempowered schools and divisions in analysing relative data sets through evidence driven decision making and prioritisation in any planning processes.

The Education Safe from Disasters (CSS Ecosystem) project envisions to ensure boys and girls in the Philippines are safer and consistently learning as the result of an effective ecosystem for Comprehensive School Safety. This is being implemented through the following approach:
- Using technology to develop a disaster risk management information system (DRM) to enable comprehensive and effective data collection, annually and post-disaster needs assessment.
- Increasing DepEd officials', teachers' and pupils' knowledge and ability in risk reduction, resilience, and school safety.
- Generating and amplifying evidence and research to engage people across society to encourage them to play an active role in risk management and school safety.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

i) What are the main activities carried out?

ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?

iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?

iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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The project started in 2018 and is still ongoing. One of the key components of the Ecosystem was the development of the DRRM information system (DRRMIS) and its tools for pre- and post-disaster data and information gathering. These tools created opportunities for wider stakeholder engagement and provide useful feedback to schools. The DRRMIS will address the need for efficient access to data for planning, decision-making, and action at all levels of DepEd – from the national office, down to the schools, and across the different units within the Department. The information will help decision-makers to act on existing risks and help mitigate the impacts of future disasters. This approach offers a shift in the use of information, from an extractive or centralized application of information, to a school-centered analysis and application. Assessment results and analysis of data collected can then serve as an evidence base the School Based Management, School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans, and School Improvement Plans.

The building blocks of the DRRMIS, which leverages existing tools and mechanisms already developed and institutionalised by DepEd, are the following :

1) A student-led school watching checklist/ School Watching Application - a tool meant to raise the awareness and engagement of children on DRRM [the 'crowd-sourced' tool']

2) A CSS monitoring checklist/ CSS Monitoring Application – a tool developed for schools and divisions to monitor the presence and implementation of school safety initiatives [the 'school-based self-assessment tool']

3) A Rapid Assessment of Damages Report (RADaR) App – a school-level reporting mechanism after an emergency or disaster to provide rapid information on schools' situation and needs [the 'post-disaster damage and needs assessment tool']

The creation of a DRRMIS is being complemented by capacity-building of stakeholders. Online self-study modules and/or self-instruction videos for DepEd personnel at all levels are being developed to ensure consistency in the transfer of knowledge regarding school safety key topics and the use of the DRRM Information Management System tools. The online self-study modules were designed to be used stand-alone or as part of blended training programs.

The ecosystem approach also highlighted meaningful children's participation in governance by capacitating them to hold government and duty-bearers accountable. This is done through orientations and trainings on children's rights, DRR-CCA concepts, and child-centered social accountability and engagement with community stakeholders.

By transforming national systems, improving capacity building mechanisms, strengthening children's participation, and implementing evidence-based practices, we can reduce children's risks to disasters and save their lives through the CSS Ecosystems Approach.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)
   To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:
   i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
   ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
   iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

The Education Safe from Disasters Project of the Department of Education, in partnership with Save the Children Philippines and Prudence Foundation, is vital in the development and usage of digital systems and tools that helps improve the quality, relevance, accuracy, and inclusivity of data analysis across more than 47,000 schools in the Philippines.

Central to its implementation, it uses a network of processes that involve multiple information systems and research that is bound to the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, that is, Safe Learning Environment and Facilities, School Disaster Risk Management, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Education. This allows for a more efficient and effective school-based management that involves the participation of teaching and non-teaching personnel, as well as the learners, in championing a culture of safety within their schools. This in turn impacts school improvement plans that enable a more sustainable allocation of budget for the school's programs, projects, and activities that revolve around Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, and Peacebuilding. Likewise, this has allowed the national government to enhance the acquisition of and access to relevant response and rehabilitation and recovery-related datasets from schools to be able provide timely and accurate interventions that lessen the impacts of disasters, both to the learners and the educational investments.

The project thus far has managed to acquire data from 44,980 schools, equivalent to 95% of all the schools nationwide. This has enabled the Department of Education's Central Office to gather information from an average of 60% completion to an improved average of 90-100% during response phase. This also allows better decision-making capacities across all levels of governance to provide an enabling environment that fosters community engagement and child-centered social accountability.

The first component of the disaster risk management information system that has been rolled out across the Philippines is the Rapid Assessment of Damages Report (RADaR) Mobile App, a reporting mechanism which assesses the damages and needs of the schools, personnel and learners incurred after a disaster/ emergency. This has been utilized in ten hazard events from July to December 2021, covering 21,103 schools.

The CSS Monitoring Application was developed to align with DepEd's latest ten-year Basic Education Plan to run until 2030. This is a self-assessment tool to assess the preparedness of schools from disasters. Coordination with Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) was also conducted to maximize CSS maps using the HazardHunterPH of the government in identifying hazards each school is exposed to, and to ensure interoperability of the system with other government agencies.

The School Watching Application (SWApp) is now being used by pilot schools since the COVID-19 restrictions relaxed which allows students to use the application in an actual school setting to identify hazards and risks based on the checklist from DepEd. DepEd's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) and the Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS) facilitated the project that began in 20 schools divisions of Region 3 (Central Luzon). Both were part of tools launched by DepEd as part of the National DRRM Information System (DRRMIS) this June 20,2022 that would reach more schools in the country.

Researches are being done to generate evidence on the effectivity of the ecosystem approach to Comprehensive School Safety. The main researches include a Safe Schools Context Analysis, Process Documentation and Toolkit, the CSS Child-Centered Social Accountability, and the project's Impact Evaluation.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)
    To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:
    i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
    ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
    iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

    • In the development of DRRM Information system, aside from the technical and technological aspects, other equally important factors that need to be mapped out include existing policies, researches, plans, and the readiness and priorities of the Department of Education. This ensures that innovation interventions will be aligned to the overall direction. This also involves expanding discussions with other key offices and stakeholders within the Department (i.e. Policy, Planning and Research Division and Public Affairs Service) to ensure alignment of project deliverables with the directions of DepEd. This is evident by the creation of the DRRMIS/comprehensive school systems included in DepEd's Digital Rise Programme, which details the department's goal to digitize its operations.
    • During pandemic, continuous involvement of key partners in all aspects of implementation is critical despite the challenge of face to face communication so as not to sacrifice valuable inputs from program partners. Explore other means that will maximize the participation of stakeholders through online platforms.
    • Governance: The establishment of a Project Steering Committee (PSC), as the senior governing body of this tripartite partnership, served as the vehicle for high level engagement in the project. The establishment of the Project Management Team (PMT) has led in the strategizing, designing and decision making for project implementation involving all stakeholders

11. Conclusions (250 words)
    Please describe why may this intervention be considered a "best practice".
    What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the
    documented "best practice" or how can it help people working on the same
    issue(s)? *

    The Education Safe from Disasters utilizes an "Ecosystems Approach" that not only allow a top-down implementation of the Department of Education's policies to the schools, but also a bottom-up data gathering that enables the learners to be engaged in the actualization of their safety. This rights-based approach utilizes a two-way flow of data across the trifecta of people, processes, and technologies to provide an environment that considers the relevant needs of each level of governance of the Department.

    The Ecosystems approach also not only strengthens the lateral relationship between the Department of Education and other National Government Agencies in providing services to the learners, but it also galvanizes the role of the private sector to do more to reduce the risks of disasters across the country. Likewise, this project extends its processes to engage community leaders in keeping the safety and security of our learners within and around their schools and homes. This tripartite partnership between the Philippines' Department of Education, Save the Children Philippines, and Prudence Foundation has designed a well-thought strategy that is dedicated in developing a strong evidence base for a proof-of-concept model that can be scaled-up not only in the country, but also across Southeast Asia and globally. This has proven that multiple and complex systems may be linked and untangled through proper collaboration among different stakeholders across different age groups. Likewise, it is also evident that children must always be involved in the creation of an enabling environment and the actualization of their own safety.

12. Further reading
    Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional
    information on the "best practice" for those who may be interested in knowing
    how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

    Link to the materials/Press Releases:
    https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gIS9urRxBqPtKZYCZ-WYhsKUWOj3dT5A?usp=sharing
    - Press Releases, DRRM Information System Pilot-testing approval, RADaR National Roll-out
    Memo and press release, RADaR Utilization Update and Quality Gate Sign-off
    DRRM Information System
    (1) RADaR Video-- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-nZ26SaK3AKcvl9JWnX8Qdjp-Btz_KlI/view?usp=sharing
    (2) School Watching Application
    a. Web- https://drive.google.com/file/d/10gYXifAuFNnYKe8C4y3NY-Kznbkv5A1-/view?usp=sharing
    b. Mobile App- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oKx88TDR1T6rqOPdQEZeCrMx0v5ehhdK/view?usp=sharing
    (3) CSS Animated Video- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZvPgRsQOoGyM-DPvEsO4VJPo5GjgAeTK/view?usp=sharing