Every country protected — Every child resilient

An advocacy brief from UNICEF for the 7th 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2022)
Disasters and climate impacts disproportionately affect children and young people

For GP2022, UNICEF is calling for bold, urgent and inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) action for and with all children and young people to uphold their rights so they can survive and thrive.

We call for child-critical services to be more resilient to and prepared for disasters and climate impact; and for DRR and CCA investments to center on all children and young people. This includes empowering them to be educated, prepared, resilient and able to meaningfully participate in key decisions and actions. Children and young people are more than victims with limited resources to cope. They have capacity and an active role to play in reducing disaster risk as agents of change as independent leaders and in collaboration with governments and development and humanitarian partners.

GP2022 comes at a critical time for children and young people as they face immediate and long-lasting consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as from increasingly frequent and severe disasters, climate impacts and humanitarian crises — with consequences that can impact the trajectory of their entire lives.

→ **Almost every child** (>99%) is now exposed to at least one climate or environmental hazard, shock or stress, according to UNICEF’s Children’s Climate Risk Index (CCRI), with approximately one billion children at an extremely high risk from the impacts of climate change.¹

→ **1.7 million children** lose their lives every year because of avoidable environmental impacts. Millions more are being forced to leave their homes, missing out on school and suffering from disease.²

→ At the peak of the disruption to education caused by the crisis, **1.6 billion learners** experienced disruptions to learning with millions still facing school closures and further learning losses.³ In low- and middle-income countries, learning losses to school closures have left up to 70 percent of 10-year-olds unable to read or understand a simple text, up from 53 percent pre-pandemic.⁴

→ **Globally, 426 million children** and counting live in conflict zones — more children than at any time in UNICEF’s 75-year history.⁵

For children and young people, disasters and climate impacts can raise the risk of child marriage, child labour, conflict and public health emergencies; threaten their food security; and decrease their access to resilient water and sanitation services; especially for girls without adequate menstrual hygiene provisions. Such impacts can lead to death, diseases and illnesses (like diarrhea, worm infections and stunting) and adversely affect their education and development. Urgent action is required in response.
UNICEF’s role in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

UNICEF is among leading agencies in several sectors in implementation and advocacy, including making child-critical services more resilient and working for and with young people: e.g., in shock-responsive social protection, education, health, mental health and psychosocial support, nutrition, child protection and water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH). UNICEF is committed to reducing risk and building resilience, before and after disaster.

→ Since 2018, UNICEF has invested more than **$250 million USD** in DRR and recovery in more than **150 countries**.

→ In 2021, UNICEF supported more than **690,000 young people across 75 countries** to participate in or lead offline and online civic initiatives on climate, environment, energy and DRR.

→ UNICEF implements DRR and CCA programming in **157 countries** around the world, often in remote, fragile, conflict-affected and risk-prone contexts, and partners with the most marginalized and at-risk children and young people.

Young people can inspire and lead

A message from Faye Anne Tuliao Bandilla, 22, Philippines

“It is the role of the government to protect us, and because it is our safety and future that are at stake. It will be beneficial if young people are included in disaster risk reduction action because they are capable of leading and inspiring other young people — and even other vulnerable groups and community members — to take action in reducing impacts of disasters. When we involve young people, we are also building their capacity to lead.”

Photo provided by Faye Anne Bandilla and used with her permission

$250 million USD

Invested in more than 150 countries

690,000+ young people

Supported across 75 countries

157 countries

Implementing UNICEF DRR and CCA programming
UNICEF works for and with children and young people to reduce risk and build resilience from disasters, climate impacts and humanitarian crises

UNICEF and its partners are committed to integrating DRR and CCA into development and humanitarian efforts to strengthen resilience. Programmes work through a holistic vision for and with children and young people so they can gain skills, knowledge and resources to survive, grow and develop.

Building children’s and young people’s resilience and meeting the targets of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 — and those in other global agreements — is complex and urgent. Across multiple sectors, UNICEF is committed to working with partners to reduce the disproportional risks children face before and after a disaster. Leaving no child behind in increasingly frequent and severe disasters requires collaboration through strong partnerships with networks, governments, UN agencies, civil society, academia, the public and private sectors and, most critically, children and young people themselves.

Around the world, UNICEF and its partners are:

- Setting up systems and capacities for shock-responsive social protection (global), including cash transfer mechanisms (Mongolia);
- Helping to develop school disaster risk reduction (Armenia) and evacuation protocols and recovery plans (Brazil) that align with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework;
- Sharing guidance and lessons for risk-informed education programming for resilience (global) and child-centered DRR (Nepal);
- Gathering and sharing age- and gender-disaggregated data on disaster risk (Honduras), climate risk (global) and gender-responsive disaster risk management (Eastern and Southern Africa);
- Providing families with Covid-19 mental health support (Ecuador);
- Brokering public-private partnerships to keep children safe during Covid-19 (Indonesia); and many more.

Water rises in Beira, Mozambique, in early 2021 as a cyclone threatens a community still recovering from the devastation caused by Cyclone Idai in March 2019. The category 4 storm claimed hundreds of lives and adversely impacted 3 million people across Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

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Children and young people are critical partners to achieve the Sendai Framework targets

Having to face disasters, climate impacts and public health emergencies themselves, children and young people have critical skills, experiences and ideas needed for safer and more sustainable societies everywhere. They are already playing a key role in DRR and CCA by exercising their views, opinions and concerns; identifying and working on solutions; and promoting environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

**Around the world, children and young people are:**

- Applying innovative ideas to disaster risk reduction and management (Indonesia); risk assessments (Pacific Islands); child-centred DRR (Nepal); early warning systems (Tajikistan); waste management (Bhutan); and climate change (India);
- Advocating for their rights in local to international DRR, environmental & climate policies (global) and offering peer-to-peer DRR knowledge sharing (Peru) and climate change toolkits (Latin America & Caribbean region);
- Promoting solutions that benefit their peers equally (Uganda), aligning action towards achieving broader social change and gender equality; and
- Learning and implementing green skills (Iraq) to mitigate climate-related disasters and for a more sustainable world.

Students in Fiji unload UNICEF WASH Kits as part of disaster recovery after Category five, Tropical Cyclone Yasa made landfall in December 2020. More than 2,700 WASH Kits reached over 15,000 people.

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Reducing disaster risk and building resilience requires children, young people, governments, UN agencies, networks, departments of disaster management, civil society, the public and private sector, donors, media, academia and communities working together.

UNICEF works closely with young people and supports organizations like the Sendai Stakeholders Children and Youth Group (the DRR working group of the Major Group for Children and Youth) (SSCYG/MGCY), Children in a Changing Climate, YOUNGO, the Youth Sustainable Energy Hub, U-Inspire and the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) on comprehensive school safety.

We also work closely with regional inter-governmental partnerships such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC); and we are collaborating with industry and UN partners like the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), the Connecting Business initiative (CBI), the ARISE Global Network and the United Nations Senior Leadership Group on DRR for Resilience.

To meet the targets of the Sendai Framework by 2030, UNICEF urgently calls on all member states, donors, civil society organizations, UN entities and other stakeholders to:

- **Ensure child-critical services are more inclusive, and resilient to and prepared for disasters**, including social protection; education; health; mental health and psychosocial support; nutrition; child protection; and water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH);

- **Scale up and accelerate investment and resources** in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures centered on children and young people, including promoting public and private sector partnerships for resilience.

- **Empower all children and young people** to be educated, prepared for and resilient to disasters and climate impacts, and able to meaningfully participate in key disaster- and climate-related decisions and actions;

- **Integrate child-specific interventions into national and local DRR and climate change policies and actions**, ensuring that the risks to their survival, well-being and development are systematically considered and addressed; and

- **Strengthen the capacities of governments and other stakeholders** on child-centered DRR and CCA by maximizing partnerships, supporting age- and gender-disaggregated and localized data collection and sharing technical expertise to inform, shape and influence DRR and CCA actions for and with children and young people.
“Building back better means putting children and young people at the heart of the global COVID-19 response and recovery plans. They should also be at the center of our efforts to reduce risk and build resilience from disasters, climate impacts and humanitarian crises. And these efforts must be both for children and young people and with them.

Young people are not just passive victims. They have an active role to play as leaders; collaborating and co-creating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation solutions — based on their lived experiences.”

Please join us in urgent action for every country to be protected; every child to be resilient

Find UNICEF DRR resources at www.corecommitments.unicef.org/drr