

## Theme: Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

# Inclusion and empowerment for transformative DRR: Children and youth

### 1. Rationale

As disaster and climate risks continue to increase, progress in achieving the goal and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) in Asia needs to accelerate. In recent years there have been many important innovations in technology, infrastructure and disaster management systems to reduce risks and impacts. However, a significant challenge remains; how to make DRR, climate change and sustainable development decision-making processes more inclusive, participatory and empowering.

The Sendai Framework calls for full engagement from ‘all of society’, but many social, political and cultural barriers exist that prevent the meaningful participation of marginalized groups in Asia. Women, children and youth, people living in poverty, the elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, Indigenous Peoples, non-normative genders and sexualities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other), and *all* disaster-affected or -displaced people have important knowledge to inform decision-making, but can lack the means and support for empowerment that would enable them to challenge dominant narratives and the status quo in DRR processes. Efforts should target the underlying causes of vulnerabilities, yet dominant narratives have often focused on addressing economic and infrastructural risks. A transformation from principles of inclusion and participation to meaningful and empowering decision-making processes is long overdue in Asia, and international human rights law clearly supports such an approach and process.<sup>1</sup>

Children (aged under 14 years) and Youth (aged between 15 and 24 years) are recognized as a key group for the long-term progress and sustainability of transformative DRR.<sup>2</sup> Young people have unique experiences, perspectives and forms of knowledge that have unbound potential to reduce risks and build resilience for both current and future generations. They are also the key actors who will be affected by climate change, and who will be responsible for transforming our systems as they enter the age to vote. Over 60 per cent of the world’s youth live in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>3</sup> There is therefore a great urgency to focus on education, capacity-building and creating professional opportunities for young people in the region that are sustainable, and can provide individual and societal well-being.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information see the work of the UN Special Rapporteur of human rights and environment - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/SREnvironment/Pages/SREnvironmentIndex.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Age definition for children and youth according to the UN - <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/youth-0/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-regional-escap.pdf>

## 2. Description

We invite submissions of concept notes for action-oriented regional events in Asia and the Pacific, that **centrally** explore approaches for strengthening inclusion and empowerment of children and youth in DRR action. We are looking for events that may focus on one or more of the following areas:

- Child- and youth-centred DRR approaches
- Safe Schools/school safety initiatives
- Mobilizing youth and young professionals studying or working in DRR-relevant fields

If possible, proposed events should link with relevant policy processes in the region, for example, the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2020, which will have a cross-cutting theme of 'local and inclusive action'.

## 3. Expected results

We expect proposed events to generate new insights and connect with initiatives that are working towards transformative DRR action through the engagement of children and youth, for example the work of United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR),<sup>4</sup> and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY).<sup>5</sup>

The proposed event should also connect with research and policy agendas in Asia and the Pacific to ensure that event outcomes are relevant and disseminated to a wider audience. The event will be held in partnership with the International Centre of Excellence on Transforming Development and Disaster Risk (ICoE-TDDR), which is hosted by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and supported by Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR).

## 4. Theme-specific criteria

We would like to see the following aspects clearly articulated in all proposals:

- A blended approach to **engage science, policy and practice** actors working on DRR
- Participation and **engagement of children and/or youth** from Asia and the Pacific
- Consideration of **how youth intersects** with gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, poverty and other socioeconomic characteristics to determine risks, vulnerabilities and resilience
- A clear intention to build a **longer-term partnership** with SEI and ICoE-TDDR

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unisdr.org/partners/children-youth>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unmgcy.org/drr>