

THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN DISASTERS: A PROGRAM OF RESEARCH



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CHILDREN REPRESENT THE MOST VULNERABLE DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP IN DISASTERS. IN DISASTERS, WHO ESTIMATES THAT 30-50% OF FATALITIES ARE CHILDREN. THEY ARE ALSO MOST VULNERABLE TO PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH ALSO INDICATES THAT THEY REPRESENT A COMMUNITY MOTIVATIONAL RESERVOIR FOR REDUCING CURRENT DISASTER RISKS AND REPRESENT THE FUTURE IN TERMS OF MITIGATING FUTURE RISKS.

Recent reviews of policy, practice and research, at both international and national levels, speaks to the role of child-centred practices, including the role of Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience (DRR&R) Education for children.

At the international level, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) speaks to the important role of both child protection and child participation in relation to disaster risk reduction (DRR). In planning for the post-2015 HFA framework, education for children is being discussed as a central focus.

At a more local level, the role of children's disaster education in managing disaster risk has been recognised as a major priority in the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (Australian Government, 2011).

This 3 year program of research has begun to elaborate a "research narrative" that speaks to building on research to date, while evaluating and solving problems not yet explored. These include issues related to the policy-practice-research nexus.



THE RESEARCH NARRATIVE

The working hypothesis of this research is that DRR&R Education and child participation in disaster Prevention and Preparedness can reduce vulnerability and increase resilience for children, their families and communities during Response and Recovery. An extension of this narrative is that children learning resiliency skills can not only reduce current disaster risk but other environmental and social risks that affect their daily lives.

Year 1 Review and Scoping: Planning and Guidance

The research team has been immersed in comprehensive reviews of policy, practice and research, as part of research planning and to provide future guidance on DRR&R Education and children's participation in community-focused DRR efforts. A five chapter compendium and condensed 'best practice' guide are due by the end of 2014.

In addition, the team has become involved in both international and national policy-practice-research initiatives, through directly assisting UNISDR in planning for the post-2015 HFA2 Framework, due for launch next March at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai City Japan.

At a national level, through one of our end users, the Australian Emergency Management Institute, the team is also involved in the Disaster Resilience Australian School Education Network (DRASEN), in promoting policy-practice-research initiatives here in Australia.

YEAR 1, 2014: PILOT RESEARCH

Research in the second half of 2014 is focused on various stakeholders, collecting data through a combination of Delphi studies and survey research.

Systematic reviews are also underway; the first focused on 35 previous studies was recently published in the *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*.

Another large scale review, commissioned by UNESCO/UNICEF for the UNISDR Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015, focuses on progress to date and challenges ahead in relation to education and training on DRR. This review follows an Input Paper and separate written consultation submitted by the team to assist in HFA2 planning.

Additional background and review work is underway, including a planned meta-analysis and future cost effectiveness analyses.

YEAR 2-3, 2015-16: MAIN PROGRAMMATIC RESEARCH

Planning is well underway for a suite of studies that speak to elements of the research narrative. Currently, between 4-6 studies, all linked to the narrative, are being planned. This includes at least two PhD studies (see other posters).

Those interested in more information are welcome to contact Prof Kevin Ronan or Dr Briony Towers:

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