

A CROSS CULTURAL INVESTIGATION OF CHILD-CENTRED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA



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DISASTER MANAGEMENT REMAINS DOMINATED BY PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES TARGETED AT ADULTS. THERE REMAINS AN ASSUMPTION THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PASSIVE VICTIMS WITH NO ROLE TO PLAY IN COMMUNICATING RISKS OR PARTICIPATING IN RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES.

However, research and practice in the developing world is beginning to challenge this assumption, placing **young people at the heart of disaster prevention.**

This research will seek to generate evidence for promoting, and assessing, the participation of children in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA).

The overall goal of the research is to **improve the ability of communities to understand and communicate risk** and contribute to **improved disaster risk management as part of a resilient community.** The research will take a Child-Centered DRR approach as one of the centerpieces of that effort and will seek to scientifically evaluate and validate its efficacy.

The young do not know enough to be prudent, and so they attempt the impossible, and achieve it, generation after generation.

-Pearl S. Buck-



A girl takes part in disaster risk assessment in Central Java, Indonesia (Plan, 2009)



Children speak at the Global Platform for DRR 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland (Plan, 2011)

WHY CHILDREN?

Children from all cultures and backgrounds have a **valuable and unique ability** to conceptualize and analyze risk and they also have **the right to be heard and express their views** on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Children and young people therefore represent an untapped resource in larger community-wide efforts to promote disaster risk reduction and resilience.

This thesis will assume a working hypothesis that if provided with proper support (capacity and knowledge) and resources (policies, mechanisms and tools), **children can play a vital role** in the communication, decision making and direct action to reduce the risk of disasters and impact of climate change

WHY INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA?

Indonesia is the biggest archipelagic state in the world and is highly prone to both geological (earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis) and climate related hazards (floods, landslides, and drought). As the **fourth largest population in the world** (230 million), growing industrialization and high levels of economic disparity means that large segments of society are highly vulnerable to disasters. Given that **more than one third of the population is under the age of 18 in Indonesia**, the research proposed here is of particular importance.

Like Indonesia, Australia too is prone to a range of disasters and has suffered a number of recent events. Heat waves, drought, bushfires and floods are regular occurrences and can leave whole communities devastated. Recent reports forecasted **the cost of natural disasters in Australia to rise from \$6.3 billion a year currently to around \$23 billion a year in 2050.**



A girl visited the Meteorological Office learning about typhoon in Visayas, the Philippines (Plan, 2009)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ▶ Are there fundamental differences between how **adults and children perceive risks**?
- ▶ What is the relative impact of a child's age group, gender and cultural setting on their risk perceptions and ability to communicate and take action on disaster risks?
- ▶ What opportunities exist for **children to take action and influence policy and practice** related to reducing risk of disasters within their immediate community and to higher level at sub-national governments, national governments and even at regional and global level?
- ▶ What resources and enabling environments are needed to communicate children's views to influence policy and practice at different levels?
- ▶ What are the best methods to promote **cross-cultural learning** on the role of children in participating in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation?
- ▶ What are the best methods and tools to evaluate the extent of the children's role assists in getting DRR outcomes?



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