Building a Culture of Resilience

The final report of the evaluation of capacity development in, and its impact on institutionalisation of, emergency preparedness and response (EPR) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the education sector in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR)

In late 2011/early 2012, the UNICEF Regional Office (ESARO) conducted an evaluation of the capacity building training and institutionalisation programme undertaken in the Eastern and Southern Africa region since 2009 with its partner organization, Save the Children (SC). The national capacity development was a component of the global Education in Emergencies and Post-crisis Transition (EEPCT) Programme funded by the Government of the Netherlands and the European Commission. Field evaluations of the capacity building strategy were conducted in five countries in ESAR - Burundi, Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, and Rwanda. Through a mixed-methods evaluation strategy that included a desk review of open source documents, academic literature, and reports provided by UNICEF ESARO and country offices, in addition to interviews, focus group discussions, observations in the field, and an online survey, this evaluation sought to assess the knowledge and practices of the training participants in order to provide a comprehensive account of the impact of the UNICEF/SC capacity building strategy. It also explored the level of institutionalisation of EPR/DRR practices into education sector policy and planning at the national and sub-national levels. Finally, capacity gaps and challenges to institutionalisation efforts were identified, principal lessons learned were outlined, and corresponding mitigating actions were recommended. Key elements for future capacity development strategies, as well as a logical framework and a road map for the way forward, were also included in this report.

The study found that progress towards improving training participants' knowledge and practices, and efforts to include EPR/DRR into education sector policy and planning have been made at national level. However, the field research in three out of five country case studies showed that the knowledge and skills conveyed in the capacity development training has not yet reached the grassroots level. Conversely, in Comoros and Madagascar, actors at the regional/district level have transformed their knowledge into practice but the only context in which training has reached the level of children to a meaningful degree is Madagascar. The consultants had the chance to witness the level of preparedness on the ground in Madagascar when cyclone Giovanna struck, as they were conducting their field visit in February 2012:

"We saw how the [trained] school teachers told children how to prepare for the cyclone. They had some very simple, but important messages like, 'Weigh down the roofs with sandbags, reinforce the walls, put important belongings in plastic bags, and store water'. When people don't have this knowledge they will sit and wait for the disaster to come, and afterwards they'll wait for help to arrive," Dr. Sean Deely, Field Researcher


The evaluation findings and recommendations will inform the future EPR/DRR capacity development strategy for education in ESAR using the ten key elements for future strategy, the roadmap and the logical framework outlined in the report. Additional resources will be needed to roll out the EPR/DRR capacity development training and to build a culture of resilience, targeting sub-national and local actors in all ESAR countries, particularly those that face high risks and lack capacities. In order to make full use of the report and to assist high risk countries in the region to develop the next phase of their capacity development and institutionalisation strategy in the education sector, UNICEF ESARO plans to organise a regional workshop for key stakeholders including Ministries of Education Emergency Focal Points. For more information on the report and the proposed way forward you can contact
Benoit d’Ansembourg, Education Specialist (Emergency and DRR), UNICEF ESARO (bdansembourg@unicef.org).