

ActionAid’s Disaster Risk Reduction through Schools (DRRS) project found that the following components were important in ensuring schools were safe.

Structurally safe

- Sound and strong facilities (this might require building, repairing, retrofitting schools, providing additional out-buildings)
- Safe areas where students and community members can seek refuge when disaster strikes

In a safe compound and location

- Fences/barriers to protect schools (including, for example, using trees as wind breakers, building dykes around schools).
- Structural work on school compounds (e.g. raising compounds to prevent water logging).
- Safe access to school (including building new access roads/bridges or strengthening existing ones).

In safe environment and community

- Improvement in infrastructure at the community level to protect the community and schools from disaster (e.g. dragging canals, planting trees along river banks to prevent flooding and erosion, creating dams).
- Increased awareness of hazards (including changing patterns of vulnerability due to climate change) leading to increased capacity to mitigate disasters and develop adaptive strategies to cope with their impacts.

Capable of responding to and recovering from disaster

- School children and their caretakers know what to do and how to behave when disasters strike (including the skills and knowledge to be able to form and mobilize teams for response and recovery).
- Availability of materials and know-how for response (e.g. distribution of disaster kits, first aid training and resources).
- Education system capable of bouncing back and restarting shortly after a disaster.

Promoting a culture of safety, capable of mobilizing people into action

- Dissemination of key information about hazards and disasters and their prevention in school and in the community (formal and informal teaching/harvesting local knowledge and practices).
- Establishment of information centres and early warning systems.
- Leading action on vulnerabilities (supporting community awareness campaigns, fostering and supporting rescue and response teams, establishing volunteer cadres of students who continue to refresh their DRR skills and train others).
- Introducing new concepts and new ways of thinking which enable people to mitigate the impacts of disasters through changed behaviour and practices, at the individual and community level (awareness of vulnerability, long-term perspective, analysis and action tools, rights and citizenship).