

Climate Change and Child Participation

Vietnam

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Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region is among the most vulnerable to climate change and disasters. Vulnerabilities to climate change-related disasters increase as people move to the high risk areas in large number, pushed by urbanization, migration, population growth and land use change. The most common disasters are floods and storms¹. Viet Nam is consistently ranked within the top 20 countries most at risk from climate change. The 2012 Climate Vulnerability Monitor identifies Viet Nam as a global 'climate hotspot'^a facing acute challenges². The Maplecroft index on climate risk has consistently highlighted Viet Nam in the top 20 most at risk countries³, and recent research by the Center for Global Development ranked Viet Nam as the 5th country most at risk in terms of exposure to extreme weather events⁴. Climate change and disaster risk clearly present an urgent challenge for people's lives, especially for children today and in the future. Increasingly erratic and variable rainfall, higher temperatures, more intense

Quick facts

Zone	National Territory
Theme	Climate Change and Children
Implementing Agency	UNICEF

^a A 'hotspot' is defined as a country estimated to experience the largest total impacts of any country²

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extreme weather events like landslides, flash floods, typhoons and droughts, as well as rising seawater level all have significant impacts across sectors, regions, and income groups, and particularly on livelihood security of the poorest rural people. As the impacts of climate change and vulnerabilities increase (for example through rapid urbanization), children are facing many risks, which are impacting on the realization of their rights.

Justification

In recognition of the importance of child participation in the context of resilience, UNICEF plans to promote the role of children in climate change through reflecting their views and experiences on climate change and disaster risk, as well as to empower children to become effective partners and agents of change in addressing the issues at national, subnational and international level. Getting children involved and raising their voice on the topic of resilience is necessary in the process of the protection of children in a climate change context in Viet Nam. The adaptation and disaster risk reduction approaches that can be faced by children should be included in future plans during the identification of a solution to the issue. Importantly, these solutions or resilience strategies will need to be informed by children, and take on board their views in order to fully address their real need, including directly listening to their risks and challenges as well solutions they want to be implemented.

Implementation

The overall objective of this UNICEF plan is the promotion of children in becoming effective partners and agents of change in addressing climate change, through the participation of children in legal/policy reforms. UNICEF also aims to support the building of the resilience of children in the climate change context. To this end, several activities have been executed to facilitate the participation of children in the monitoring of the implementation of the National Target Program on Climate and the National Program on Community-based Disaster and Risk Management, in a way that benefits

the children of Viet Nam. The outcome of this was the development of the two year draft (2015-2016), which included the consultation of children by several organizations, on climate change and disaster risk issues.

With reference to the overall objectives mentioned above, in early 2014, consultations with children were organized for “documentation of children’s views and experiences on climate change and disaster risks” in three selected provinces, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan and Ho Chi Minh City. 321 children, girls and boys, participated in the consultation sessions. Participating children represented different groups – rural, urban, minorities, migrating, and school and out-of-schools children – in high vulnerability areas with different climate change characteristics⁵.

Although subject to both strengths and challenges, the consultation activities were successfully completed with very important key findings and recommendations. According to a report generated by the technical team, the main key findings of these consultations revealed that children in different provinces and regions in Viet Nam are suffering from different patterns of weather change and climate disasters, which are having a remarkable impact on the lives of children themselves, their families and communities. In addition, the report also showed that the current responses to climate change and disaster risks seems fragmented and does not clearly address the children needs for protection, support and participation. The report also provided recommendations at both a national and sub national level, with a focus on raising awareness and capacity for the individual; family and community, as well as improvement of the legal environment for responding to child friendly climate change adaption and disaster risks.

Plan of key activities for 2015-2016

UNICEF is working with different relevant stakeholders who are active in the area of climate change, including other UN agencies, NGOs, International organization and Government Ministries at a national

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and sub national level, to ensure that children's participation is fully aligned with greatest contribution to the national and sub national response to the climate change issues. The following activities are tentatively planned as:

- Capacity building to strengthen children's ability to act as climate change agents through the organization of training workshops on filming and communication skills, for members of provincial JRC in disaster prone provinces;
- Policy advocacy promotion through organizations of different dialogue events with children, policy makers, leaders at both national and sub national levels on the implementation of National Target Program on Climate and National Program on Community based Disaster and Risk Management in disaster prone provinces; and
- Promotion of communication for development on climate change and resilience through the organization of TV talk shows and discussion sessions using innovative social media methods.

References

- [1] Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific (2011). Turning Resource Constraints and the Climate Crises into Economic Growth Opportunities
 - [2] Dara ' Climate Vulnerability Monitor (2012). Available at: <http://daraint.org/climate-vulnerability-monitor/climate-vulnerability-monitor-2012/worldmap/>
 - [3] <http://maplecroft.com/themes/cc/> (2010,2011, 2012, 2013)
 - [4] <http://international.cgdev.org/page/mapping-impacts-climate-change>
 - [5] UNICEF Viet Nam (2014). Consultation with Children on Climate Change and Disaster Issues.
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