

**United Nations Children Fund funded project: Protecting Children in emergencies by Strengthening the Capacity of School and Surrounding Communities to respond to Disasters – Phase 2.**

Lessons learnt in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan in 2004 (and the use of schools as shelters), led to the initiation of a joint project of ODPEM / MOEY and UNICEF 2005/06 to strengthen the capacities of communities through the schools to respond in the event of a natural / man made slow / fast onset emergency including civil unrest / conflict . Thirty schools were nominated by the Ministry of Education and Youth because it was felt that they were most vulnerable to flooding, landslides or sporadic outbreaks of conflict within the surrounding communities. The consequent 29 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans increased the capacities of the 29 schools and the school communities to better protect approximately 30,000 children.

This project highlighted the following:

- That of the 30 schools targeted communities none had previously designed an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan although there was a general consensus and recognition that a Plan should have been in place. The lack of resources and technical support were cited as the main challenges to the development of the Plans.
- During a natural disaster, the majority of schools had no contingency plans in place to facilitate communication between themselves and emergency responders including the police, fire brigade and notably the Ministry of Education and Youth.
- Schools did not have the telephone numbers of front line responders available or visible to be used during / after a fast onset emergency. The majority of the schools were unaware of local police and fire station telephone numbers.
- Children were not regularly exposed to information on how to prepare or respond to an emergency situation other than annual earthquake day activities or the information available via radio announcements during the annual hurricane season. Children were poorly equipped to respond to fast /slow onset emergencies i.e. vulnerability assessments, hazard identification, precautionary actions / responses to fire, flooding, earthquakes and civil unrest.
- No emergency management or response initiatives are in place or standardized to care for children with disabilities in schools (although there is a general recognition that these children are even more vulnerable during emergencies) or children living in child care institutions.
- The availability and access to basic psycho-social support to children and caregivers following an emergency can substantially aide recovery processes and reduce the impact of post traumatic stress syndrome on caregivers and children.

- The use of a standardized tool for the development of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (developed during the project 2005/2006) greatly facilitated the development of thorough and quality Plans.
- Communication protocols /communication mechanisms were established in partnership with the schools targeted / MOEY and ODPEM. Schools receiving radios in the previous project are now included in ODPEM's weekly radio checks (a cost effective mechanism to provide on-going support / monitoring)

The ODPEM and the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOE&Y) have recognized the need to expand on the initial pilot project implemented in 2005/2006 and build on the lessons learnt to further strengthen the capacities of schools and child care institutions to respond during / after / before emergencies to better protect their child population and the children within the surrounding communities. This expansion of the work initiated in 2005 will further inform the streamlining of the development of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans through schools and child care institutions by preparing and presenting a learnt guide to the how to. Further it is anticipated that budgetary allocations by the Ministry of Education and Youth and the Child Development Agency post 2008 will consider the costs of rolling out the development of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans in the remaining schools and child care institutions.

The proposal will be for two years and will be implemented in close collaboration with the following agencies: The Jamaica Red Cross, the Ministry of Education and Youth including the Department of Special Education, the Child Development Agency, the Jamaica Association of the Deaf, the Randolph Lopez School of Hope and the Jamaica Society for the Blind. This collaboration will serve to improve the protection of children in emergencies but as a process will clarify and formalize institutional and national standard norms for child protection.

The project will therefore target 12,000 children between the ages of 6 -18 years old in 50 children institutions island-wide over a two year period. The numbers will be broken down as follows:

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Total</b>
Child care institutions	8	8	16
Public and Government schools Infant / High	12	12	24
Schools for children with disabilities	5	5	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>

The following institutions were identified for training under the project:

**Child care institutions:**

1. Homestead Place of Safety
2. City of Refuge
3. SOS Children Village
4. National Children's Home
5. Alpha Boy's Home
6. Yadel Home for Girls
7. Granville Place of Safety
8. Mannings Boy's Home
9. Summerfield Boy's Home
10. SWIFT Purscell Children's Home
11. Reddies Place of Safety
12. St. Monica's
13. My Father's House
14. Pringle Children's Home
15. Our Lady of Hope
16. Maxfield Park Children's Home

**Government Schools:**

1. Half-Way-Tree Primary
2. Seaward Primary and Junior High
3. Edith Dalton James High
4. Yallahs Primary
5. Hope Bay All Age
6. Buff Bay High
7. St. Mary High
8. Clapham All Age
9. St. Ann's Bay Primary
10. Holland High
11. Maldon Primary
12. Somerton All Age and Infant
13. Esher Primary
14. Chester Castle All Age
15. Little London Primary
16. Grange Hill Primary
17. Holland Primary
18. Mayfield All Age
19. Mandeville Primary and Junior High
20. Porus Primary
21. Chapleton All Age
22. Frankfield Primary and Infant
23. Greater Portmore Primary
24. Ascot High
25. Polyground Primary

**School for Children with Disabilities:**

1. Danny Williams School for the Deaf and Preschool
2. Hope Valley Experimental
3. Randolph Lopez School of Hope
4. Llandilo School of Special Education
5. Woodlawn School of Special Education
6. Salvation Army School for the Blind
7. Windsor School of Special Education
8. Lister Mair Gilby High School for the Deaf
9. Carberry Court Special School
10. Windsor Lodge Home

In the development of the 50 Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans the following will be considered:

- The roles and responsibilities of the MOEY, targeted schools and child care institutions in the event of *any* disaster / emergency situation to care for and protect children
- Assess the vulnerability of the institution to hazards and the identification of alternate locations and a re-location plan if deemed necessary.
- Provide a clear description of the institutions vulnerability to hazards and hazard mitigation strategies to be implemented to reduce vulnerabilities to hazards, fast / slow onset emergencies.
- Detail and document a comprehensive communication strategy with agreed and understood procedures for early and urgent emergency warning and alert systems incl. the activation of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans
- Guidelines to inform operations prior to, during and after a disaster. These guidelines will also outline the how and when to return to normal operations following a disaster or use of an institution as a shelter
- Outline and document the regular scheduling of drills, simulations and safety checks of equipment esp. the inspection of institutions identified as shelters that serve the wider community.
- Clear guidelines on ‘child-friendly responses’ in an emergency situation and the appropriate care of children before, during and after a disaster situation.
- The Plan will establish the role of the institution in the larger community response structures and parish based initiatives
- The Plan will outline the management response structure for the Plans implementation (including the role that children will play).

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans will ultimately be the end product of a series of activities that will enhance the capacities of caregivers and children (school / child care institutions) to internalize, understand and be able to operationalize the Plan. The Plan will be a reflection of the processes used to enhance the capacities of caring professionals and children to prepare for and respond to an emergency situation.

Therefore the following activities will be implemented over the two year period:

- 1) Training of 200 school/ institution / community representatives in emergency preparedness and disaster management incl. shelter management, vulnerability and capacity assessment, basic disaster management and how to develop and use a hazard map. This training will be complemented by the Guidelines for Child-Friendly Disaster Management and Response.
- 2) The procurement and distribution of 50 sets of communication equipment (radios) and 30,000 communication sheets listing the telephone contact numbers of first line responders distributed to all child care institutions and all schools island-wide (0-18) to further strengthen an emergency communication network. The distribution of communication equipment to target schools and child care institutions will be complemented with training in the use and maintenance of equipment.
- 3) Training by the Jamaica Red Cross of 150 school / institution / community representatives from the target schools and child care institutions in Psychosocial Support for Children Faced with Disasters.