Part 2:
Enabling Child-Centred Agency in Disaster Risk Reduction
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Fran Seballos and Thomas Tanner
Institute of Development Studies

Children and Disasters: Understanding Differentiated Impacts and Enabling Child-Centred Agency

children in a **changing climate research**

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Executive Summary

Child-centred approaches to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) reflect the understanding that efforts to reduce risk and adapt to climate change cannot properly account for children's needs or secure their rights unless specific attention is paid to this during the design and implementation of any policy or programmatic intervention (Back *et al* 2009:7). From a child rights perspective disaster impacts effect not only a child's basic right to survival and development, but cut across their right to participate and for decisions to be made in their best interests. Child-centred approaches recognise the role and rights of children as citizens and agents of change, seeking to engage them in DRR/CCA decision-making and accountability processes and supporting child-centred community-based programmes of action.

Studies to articulate a child's capacity and agency to contribute and act within the disaster context (pre, during and after) are growing. However with this interest in child participation from the DRR field there is a need to better understand how children can become effectively engaged in articulating their needs, identifying solutions and taking action to reduce disaster risk in ways that do not expose them to increased personal risk. Drawing on the national government context for DRR and child centred policy alongside empirical studies of work led by Plan El Salvador, Plan Philippines and World Vision Philippines this report reviews child-centred DRR in both countries to unpack the elements of the enabling environment. Results point to the need for:

- ✓ inclusive programmes that foster agency and trust at multiple scales
- ✓ recognising and working with the particular cultural and social contexts of the child environment
- ✓ political realisation of child rights and agency to create the policy and governance frameworks that create space for engagement
- ✓ resources to support decentralised DRR policy and programming alongside training and capacity building for effective citizen (including children) engagement in planning and delivery

Engaging children in DRR remains constrained by lack of finance, skills and knowledge, both around the need for and processes of delivering DRR and how to enable and support child engagement in planning and decision-making. Yet children have a role to play in communicating disaster risk, sharing knowledge around the drivers of risk at the local level and engaging in planning and delivering DRR actions that reduce risk - not just for children, but for their families and communities too.

To create an enabling environment for child-centred DRR key actions can be taken across scales both in the policy arena and within child-centred DRR practice:

- ✓ National DRR frameworks should resource decentralised training and capacity building programmes across sectors to provide duty-bearers with the skills to

engage effectively with communities, including children, in risk assessment activities and DRR planning and programmes

- ✓ Decentralised duty-bearers should have access to specialist technical and scientific knowledge available at the national or regional scale to enhance programmes and plans for DRR
- ✓ At the municipal level DRR officials should identify individual champions who operate at community level but whom are part of formal institutions and can act as bridges between children and local government structures
- ✓ Schools should be enabled to go beyond 'teaching' and 'awareness raising' to act as a central catalyst for DRR action at the community level. Outreach and knowledge exchange programmes in catchment communities - working through local students - can increase the reach of DRR learning and create spaces for child-centred community-level action
- ✓ Decentralised DRR training should avoid selective processes and deliver training at the point closest to the community, bringing children and adults together in co-learning and knowledge sharing spaces
- ✓ Where possible children's groups should be integrated or developed as 'branches' of existing institutions rather than developed outside policy and practice spaces.
- ✓ The entry point for child-centred DRR should relate to the priorities of the specific community and are likely to originate in 'alternative' policy arenas e.g. health
- ✓ Children who are supported to come together need to be visible as capable agents early on in the process, to build trust in their activities and shift perceptions to value children as active agents, this means they need to be resourced, enabled and supported to be seen.

1. Introduction

This paper provides empirical data and builds on the globally available evidence base in order to move forward the debate on engaging children as active citizens in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). It aims to further debates on child agency and capacity by developing an understanding of how and why children become effectively engaged in DRR policy and practice.

The research forms part of a larger programme of work within the Children in a Changing Climate (CCC)[1] coalition which has looked at spaces where children have opportunities to influence and engage in DRR and climate change policy (Mitchell *et al* 2009, Walden *et al* 2009) and developed an evidence base from which to articulate the capacity of children as agents of change within their communities (Mitchell *et al* 2008, Tanner *et al* 2009, Tanner 2010, and Haynes *et al* 2010)

The paper uses the term **child-centred DRR** as an overarching framework that recognises children as both beneficiaries and as active citizens through a combination of:
- *Child sensitive policy and programming* which responds to the needs of children as recipients or beneficiaries. This may occur through school feeding programmes, social protection/cash transfer measures for families to reduce existing vulnerabilities, structural strengthening of school buildings, contingency plans for education and service provision etc.
- *Participatory policy and programming* where children are actively engaged in decision-making, planning and accountability processes for prevention, preparedness and response. This includes *child-led DRR* where children are supported to be active agents of change in their spheres of influence – household, school, community and beyond.

Working towards child-centred DRR may therefore involve work at community level with both adults and children, but also focus on influencing policy at international, national and sub-national levels, as well as training and capacity building with DRR actors to take children's needs and capacities into account. While it examines the policy context in country case studies, this paper focuses predominantly on the second element, recognising children as active citizens in DRR planning, programming and delivery.

Given that Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children as those who are 'under 18', in line with the 'age of majority' in many countries, the emphasis of the study is on those internationally recognised as children, although references to youth are unavoidable where the definitions overlap between the ages of 15 and 17.

The paper begins by discussing the construction of children within the dominant policy approaches and discourses of disaster, identifying that whilst the formal definition of child may be 'under 18' there are many sub-groupings reflective of age as well as culture

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[1] Key partners include: Institute of Development Studies, Plan International, Save the Children Alliance UK, UNICEF, World Vision International. For more information see: www.childreninachangingclimate.org

and socio-economic status. It explores the ways that disaster is conceptualised in today's literature, noting the complexity of interplay between hazard, vulnerability and the causes of vulnerability, including in development programmes. It reflects a wider shift in the disasters literature that calls for vulnerability to be addressed by treating individuals as active agents with capacities and knowledge (Cannon 2008). The implication is that child-centred approaches must ensure that children's specific needs are planned for and protected during emergencies, but that children are not treated only as passive victims requiring protection. An agency based approach is then explored through a focus on children and their rights, needs and capacities that underpin the call for understanding and engaging with children in the domain of DRR policy and practice.

Section three provides background and context to the case study areas where the empirical research took place. An overview of the institutional and legal frameworks for DRR and child-centred policy in the study countries is outlined, including a review of the translation of policy into practice, before providing empirical examples of the political, cultural and institutional environment underpinning child-centred DRR programmes. The concluding section draws out the common lessons learnt from both countries, and proposes a model that articulates the key elements of an enabling environment for child-centred DRR. The paper then presents key messages for policy and practice audiences for steps toward creating an enabling environment for child-centred DRR.

2. Frameworks

2.1 Children and Disasters – passive victims?

Disaster impact reporting often focuses on the immediate economic loss of the disaster event and the cost of rehabilitation and repair of major infrastructure - the immediate and long-term human dimensions of loss are not factored into these costs. Despite many critiques, this hazard-focused approach to understanding disaster impact remains widespread (Wisner *et al* 2004). This is further reflected in the dominant biophysical and structural approach taken to the understanding of climate change processes and impacts, such as under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). As such, the social and political dimensions of vulnerability and capacity often remain secondary to the biophysical determinants of hazard, exposure and sensitivity (CCD 2009).

Human disaster figures (such as mortality, morbidity, or numbers displaced) are not usually disaggregated by gender, age, or other socio-economic factors, leaving a major gap in understanding of the differential impact of disaster within communities at the national policy level[2]. This aggregated approach to measuring disasters hampers empirical understanding of impacts on different groups, including children, women, or elderly people. Children's relative vulnerability to extreme events has been a feature in the disasters discourse, with Penrose and Takaki (2006) estimating that 66.5 million children are affected annually.   Most literature points towards higher mortality and morbidity rates among children as a result of climate stresses and extreme events (Bartlett 2008; Sanchez *et al* 2009; Telford *et al* 2006; Cutter 1995; Waterson 2006; McMicheal *et al* 2008; Costello *et al* 2009). This is especially acute in developing countries where governance is weak, education systems are poor, coping capacities are lower and where climate-sensitive health factors such as malnutrition, diarrhoea and malaria are higher (Haines *et al*, 2006; Anderson 2010).

There is a large body of literature on the psychosocial impacts of disaster on children and the short and long term physical health implications (Bunyavanich *et al* 2003; Balaban 2006; Bartlett 2008; del Ninno and Lindberg 2005; Norris *et al* 2002; Waterson 2006) which underpin the need for resources for child protection during and after disaster events (Last 1994; Bartlett 2008; Lauten and Lietz 2008; Weissbecker *et al* 2008). But for children and households with low resilience to exogenous shocks and stresses, impacts persist into the long-term, well beyond initial mortality and infrastructural damage. These include negative impacts on health, education, nutrition and morbidity, which for children can lead to lifelong impacts on well-being and achievement in their adult lives.

Studies often characterise childhood vulnerability in part due to their less developed physical and mental state and therefore differential capacities to cope with deprivation and stress in times of disaster (see Bartlett 2008; Cutter 1995, Peek 2008). A small sample of the literature attempts to understand the inherent differences that the use of the catch-all term 'children' conceals. Neumayer and Plümper's (2007) synthesis paper

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[2] See the UNISDR Desinventar databases at http://www.gar-isdr.desinventar.net and the database of major emergencies http://www.emdat.be/database

highlights the differential impact of disaster events according to gender and age. Coffman (1998) illustrates a range of needs and coping techniques utilised by different sub-groups of children; infants/toddlers, pre-school, school-age and adolescents, and research in the USA found considerable differences in impact across age groups for different types of hazard (Zahran *et al*, 2008). Despite these studies little understanding of the particular vulnerabilities and needs of children in relation to age, development, gender, ethnicity and other factors exist.

2.2 Understanding Vulnerability and Disaster

Today disasters are commonly accepted to be a result of complex interactions between hazards and vulnerability (Bankoff *et al* 2004, Schipper and Pelling 2006 Wisner *et al* 2004, Wisner 2009). While there remain some uncertainties of the relationship between extreme events and global change, it is also now widely accepted that climate change is likely to increase or change the types, frequency and severity of hazards. Changing climate hazards are likely to impact those who are already vulnerable, through their exposure to extreme events and because their ability to cope with such shocks is low (IPCC 2007). Responding to climate change and disaster events is clearly inter-related with clear overlaps and synergies between the two (see Figure 1).
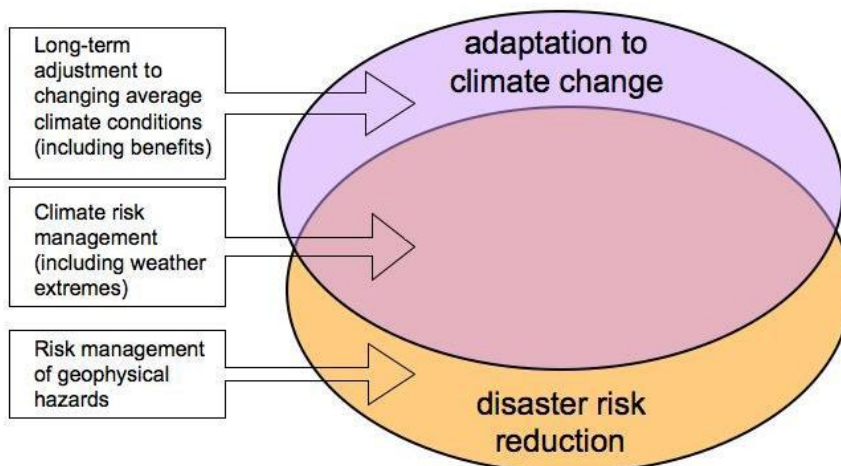
Figure 1: Overlap between DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (Mitchell and Van Aalst 2008)

Vulnerability itself is also a product of complex interactions between the social, economic, cultural and political sphere, experienced in a multiplicity of ways by a diverse range of individuals and groups (see Cannon 2008 and Gaillard 2010). This understanding exposes the nuances of culture and politics in further exacerbating vulnerability where '... years of accepted social practice and constraining premises [can] expose different groups within society to different levels of risk' (Comfort *et al* 1999, see also Kelman 2010). Thus '...human vulnerability [and its causes]...becomes an integral concern in the development and evaluation of disaster policies' (Comfort *et al* 1999).

The role of development, governance and power inequalities as causal factors of vulnerability, and thus disaster, is articulated by Gaillard (2010) who presents disasters as a result of '...development failure where the root causes of vulnerability merge with the origins of other development-related crises'. Although in many countries disaster

risk management (DRM) policy and functions remain focussed on a humanitarian and aid driven emergency response agenda, there is growing recognition of the value of disaster risk reduction (DRR) as part of '...a long term process addressing the creation and perpetuation of vulnerability' (Kelman 2010). This discourse situates DRR as central to vulnerability reduction and building resilience across scales (see Wisner *et al* 2004), firmly locating it within the broader development paradigm where an understanding of the wider institutional context is as important as understanding the local context where disasters play out.

If DRR is to mobilise a shift from emergency response to disaster prevention and preparedness through addressing 'vulnerability' and building 'resilience' rather than focusing predominantly on hazards, a firm understanding of the complex interplay of causal factors is needed. However, to begin to address these factors requires '...a move away from a concept of vulnerability involving passivity and suffering,...This means increasing capacities...and therefore fostering and enabling people's resilience' (Cannon 2008). This in turn requires engagement with communities to understand the causal factors of differentiated vulnerability, the specific nature of risk, and working with those actors to build household and community resilience to external shocks, as well as influencing the wider institutional arena.

To reduce the risk and/or impact of disasters on children and their communities there is also a need to build the capacity of the community and the household to maintain a strong asset base through integrating DRR and CCA programmes into development and livelihood strategies and through programmes that are aimed at realising basic rights and agency for both adults and children. Engaging the community, including children, in these processes can contribute to the shift from passive vulnerability to active agency.

2.3 Children and Disasters – Rights, Needs and Capacities

The Children in a Changing Climate coalition emerged through early work seeking to challenge the traditional paradigm of children as passive victims to that of children with rights, needs and capacities (see Seballos 2009). This approach is supported in the wider debate on understanding and addressing vulnerability from a DRR perspective, '...people should not be perceived as hapless victims, but as agents with the ability to cope and demonstrate resilience with their own resources' (Cannon 2008). It also echoes earlier calls for the inclusion of '...such groups as women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, the very old and the very young...in the design and implementation of recovery, prevention and mitigation activities' (Comfort *et al* 1999; Cutter 1995). Whilst there is a substantial and growing body of work around integrating gender dimensions into DRR and CCA (see Demetriades and Esplen, 2008; Fordham 1998; Enarson and Fordham 2001; Enarson and Meyreles 2004) there is far less research around the rights, needs and capacities of children in DRR and CCA.

Child-centred approaches reflect the understanding that DRR and CCA efforts cannot properly account for children's needs or secure their rights unless specific attention is paid to this during the design and implementation of any policy or programmatic intervention (Back *et al* 2009:7). They also recognise the role and rights of children as citizens and agents of change, engaging them in DRR/CCA decision-making and accountability processes and supporting child-centred community-based programmes of action.

Schools remain a focus of much of the action on children and disasters, including through teaching on environmental issues and hazard risks, disaster 'proofing' of buildings to make them safer, school safety plans and preparedness drills (Wisner, 2006; Bangay and Blum 2010). Schools are also increasingly seen as a community institution from which to undertake community-wide awareness raising. The extensive and growing range of guidance and teaching materials for school-based child-centred DRR is evidenced by the extensive collection of over 2000 items in the Preventionweb Educational Materials Collection (www.preventionweb.net/go/edu-materials).

A growing body of work emphasises the latent capacity of children to participate directly in DRR or adaptation supported by child-centred programmes. This emphasis acknowledges the unique risk perceptions and risk communication processes of children, and their capacity to act as agents of change before, during *and* after disaster events (see Back el at 2009, Peek, 2008; Tanner, 2010). Such examples demonstrate the ability to reduce risk behaviour within households and at the community scale, but also expose children's capacity to mobilise adults and external policy actors to effect change on wider determinants of risk and vulnerability (Tanner *et al* 2009; Mitchell *et al*, 2008).

When children learn and practice DRR from a young age the benefits stream is expected to integrate into their adult lives embedding changed behaviour early enough for it to be passed on to subsequent generations. Investment in child centred-DRR may therefore yield higher benefit and future-savings than when adults acquire the same skills (Back *et al* 2009). The studies imply that greater resources should be channelled towards children's agency, including enhanced efforts to incorporate children's perspectives, knowledge, and potential for action into regular community-driven development, DRR and CCA programmes (Tanner *et al* 2009).

> 'Emphasising the value of engagement with children is not to expect them to have all the answers. Rather it reinforces the case for ... policy-making to include bottom-up processes to ensure approaches are context specific and take account of the needs of marginalised groups' (CCC 2008).

If we are to reduce the risks that children and their communities face due to climate change and disasters, not only should those driving DRR policy and programming recognise the vulnerability of children and their specific needs through access to disaggregated data and the development of child-sensitive policy and programming, but those in positions of power and influence must be willing and able to engage and work with children in both policy development *and* programme implementation.

2.4 International Institutions and Governance - Children's Rights, Needs and Capacities

Much of the recent advocacy work around child agency and capacities for DRR and CCA are built on rights-based arguments. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out four main principles which reflect all the articles in the convention, these are: survival and development; non-discrimination; child participation; and the best interests of the child. Many of these underpin the need for child centred-DRR and CCA to take a protective approach to ensuring that disasters and the changing climate do not erode a child's basic right to health, shelter, food, clean water, education

and freedom from harm. However participation, as one of the four fundamental principles, is

> '...increasingly recognised as fundamental to policy making that is sensitive to children's needs and well-being, and therefore of value to wider society. It is also fundamental to children's self-esteem and a means of empowerment. Child participation is recognised as a right under Article 12, but participation is also a means to children realising their rights more generally (CCC 2008, see also Plan 2009)

Recognising a child's right to participate empowers them as individuals and members of civil society – as citizens - it gives them the opportunity to exercise their citizenship rights and to influence the actions and decisions that affect their lives.

A range of other international agreements recognise child rights and needs in their goals. The Millennium Development Goals are aimed at delivering, *inter alia,* Child Health and Survival (MDG 1, 4, 5 and 6), Education and Gender Equity (MDG 2 and 3) and Child Protection and Emergencies (MDG 7 and 8) all of which contribute to the realisation of child rights and the promotion of well-being (UNICEF, 2008). Although there is a recognised need for a cross-sector approach to DRR - the MDGs will not be able to address the need for DRR alone - there is no doubt that these goals are drivers of action for governments, donors and development agencies across the globe.

In May 2002 the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly culminated in the official adoption of its outcome document, 'A World Fit for Children' (UN 2002). It sets out an agenda for the decade based on four priorities: promoting healthy lives; providing quality education for all; protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS. The agenda reaffirms the MDGs and the UNCRC but crucially it includes as one of the 3 'necessary outcomes' in the 'Plan of Action' provision of '...ample opportunity for children and adolescents, to develop their individual capacities' it recognises the 'child's best interest' and 'right to participation' in its principles and objectives and explicitly recognises the role of children as partners in delivering the agenda and achieving the outcomes[3].

Despite these internationally supported frameworks for promoting childhood well-being and securing child rights, it is increasingly recognised that recurring disasters and the changes in climate are

> '...causing child rights to become even more difficult to safeguard, as adults, communities and governments do not fully appreciate the threats to their children's future or are increasingly powerless to fulfil their responsibilities to protect them' (Polack 2010)

Stone and Lofts (2009) identify 4 main areas where disasters and climate change will impact rights most severely; Article 3, the right for a child's best interests to be a primary consideration in all actions concerning him or her; Article 6 the right to live; Article 24 the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health; and Article 27 the right to education.

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[3] See http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/wffc/

The UN Millennium Declaration that sets out the MDGs notes the importance of reducing 'the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters' (UN 2000, in Schipper and Pelling 2006) but provides no mechanism through which to address this. Like the realisation of child rights, the achievement of the MDG's and the potential of delivering a 'World Fit for Children' is increasingly threatened by the frequency and impact of disasters in many nations.

The rise of disaster reduction approaches at the international level is a response to a more mature understanding of the links between disasters, vulnerability and development. The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 underpins risk management approaches whilst seeking to address the need to reduce risk through systematic integration of DRR efforts into '...policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction' and recognises that 'Sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually supportive objectives' (UNISDR 2005).

Where 'human' and 'community' should be understood to include children the five priority areas for action of the HFA provide great potential for child-centred DRR to become institutionalised both in DRR policy and in the implementation process. Through Children on the Frontline (Plan and World Vision 2009) – a child-centred assessment of progress towards achieving the HFA - the five priorities were given a child-focussed perspective (emphasis as in the original):

PfA1: Governance
  - Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with strong institutional basis for implementation ***promoting and supporting child rights***
PfA2: Risk Assessment, Monitoring and Warning
  - ***Involve children and young people*** to identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning
PfA3: Knowledge and Education
  - Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels, ***because children are our future***
Pf 4: Underlying Risk Factors
  - ***Involve children and young people*** to reduce underlying risk factors
PfA5: Preparedness and Response
  - Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels, ***particularly at the community level, concentrating on the wellbeing of children and young people***

The review however found that children are not satisfied with progress towards risk reduction or mitigation, they feel that they have something to contribute to benefit themselves and their communities but that currently there is very limited scope for children as stakeholders in DRR. Whilst progress against PfA3 compared favourably with other indicators, there was a lack of evidence around processes transforming knowledge to action. Children and young people lacked encouragement and technical support to apply their knowledge and skills to support progress in other priority areas.

3. Enabling Environments for Child-Centred DRR

Through case study analyses this report explores the interactions between children and young people, their socio-economic context, the informal and formal institutional environment and their access to knowledge in order to discuss the opportunities for realising children and young people's agency in DRR and CCA for the benefit of children and their communities.

This paper uses the term **child-centred DRR** as an overarching framework (see introduction) that recognises:
- ***Child sensitive policy and programming*** which responds to the needs of children as recipients or beneficiaries
- ***Participatory processes and programming*** where children are actively engaged in decision-making, planning and accountability processes for prevention, preparedness and response.

There are therefore a number of entry points for implementing child-centred DRR and a range of actors across different sectors and scales with whom to engage. This report draws lessons on the enabling environment for children as citizens and as DRR actors from programmes at community level where child participation in decision-making and planning, and child leadership in implementing DRR were evident. Many of the flagship activities of the children in the case study communities where this research took place had a focus on the prevention and preparedness aspect of DRR rather than the normative emergency response options. Most groups had participated in various 'preparedness' based trainings such as first aid and rescue training programmes as well as mapping evacuation routes and identifying safe zones.

This report does not consider the role of children as actors or beneficiaries in the 'recovery and rehabilitation' stages as the enabling environment for action in this context needs separate consideration. Nor does it explicitly set out to interrogate the role of education in DRR and CCA (see Ronan et al 2001, Wisner 2006, Anderson 2010, Bangay and Blum 2010) although it recognises the relationship between knowledge and action and therefore will refer to the formal curriculum and the role of the school where it is found to be central to the discussion.

3.1 An Overview of the Case Studies

Research took place in the Philippines (2008-09 and 2010) and in El Salvador (2008-09). The susceptibility of the Philippines to disaster is revealed through Office of Civil Defence statistical records covering the period 1997 to 2007 which show that the total cost of damages brought about by various types of disasters was P176.733 billion (over $4billion). This does not include the indirect losses nor does it factor in the loss of lives. During the same period, about 5,828 people died, 3,632 were declared missing and 8,000 injured. The World Bank (2004) estimated the cost of disaster annually to be 15 billion or 0.5% of the country's gross national product (CDP 2010a). The recent report from the Centre for Research and Epidemiology of Disasters (Vos *et al* 2010) places the Philippines as number 1 in occurrence of disasters in the world for 2009, with the 3rd highest number of deaths globally and 14.8% of the population being affected

El Salvador is also highly susceptible to disaster events due to its geographic location on tectonic boundaries and tropical storm tracks, the presence of active volcanoes,

exposure to drought events, and low levels of capacity to respond due to widespread poverty and degradation of natural ecosystems. For El Salvador in 2009 it ranked 2nd globally for relative loss in GDP, losing 4.4%, when recording deaths per 100,000 people it ranked 4th (Vos *et al* 2010)

Climate change is likely to add to the burden in both countries due to the increasing unpredictability of weather, and changes to the frequency and magnitude of extreme events including storms, drought, flooding, and heat and cold waves.

Table 1: Recent and frequent disasters: Philippines and El Salvador (note hurricane and typhoon both refer to cyclonic storm events)

El Salvador, Central America		Philippines, South East Asia	
Recent major disasters	**Frequent disaster types**	**Recent major disasters**	**Frequent disaster types**
2001 Earthquake	Earthquake	2006 Landslides (Guinsaugon) and triggered by Typhoon Durian	Storm – approx 19 typhoon grade per year
2001 Landslides	Storm		
2005 Hurricane Stan	Flooding	2008 Typhoon Fengshen	Flooding
2009 Hurricane Ida	Landslide	2009 Typhoons Parma, Ketsana and Morakot leading to fatal landslides and flooding	Landslide
2010 Tropical Storm Agatha	Drought		Earthquake (generally minor)
		2010 Drought Southern Luzon	
		2010 Typhoons Megi and Conson	

Table 2: Community sites in the Philippines and key DRR activities

Province	District*	Village**	Child – Youth Group	Flagship DRR activity
Rizal	San Mateo	Banaba	Buklod Kabataan, BK (Children Bonded Together). 9-17 years	Theatre-based advocacy
Cebu	Poro	Cross-community	Young Environmental Guardians of Poro, YEGOP. 11-16 years	Developed from the 'Little Fish Warden' group
		Teguis	Teguis Children's Association for Active Participation, TCCAP. 10 -16 years.	Mangrove rehabilitation
	Pilar	Cross-community	Kabataang Kumakalinga sa Kalikasan, KKK (Children Who Care for the Environment). 14-20 years	Mangrove planting Developed from the 'Little Fish Warden' group
		Villahermosa	Barangay Children's Association, BCA. 11-16 years	Rainforestation – tree planting in the watershed
			Sangguniang Kabataan, SK (Youth Council). 16-21 years	
		Lower Poblacion	Barangay Children's Association, BC.: 11-16 years	Joined with the KKK in Mangrove Planting
Eastern Samar	Llorente	Barobo	Sangguniang Kabataan, SK (Youth Council). 16-18 years	Tree planting
			Supreme Student Government, SSG. 13- 18 years	
		Caga-ut	Barangay Children's Association, BCA. 14-18 years	Anti-Mining Advocacy
			Sangguniang Kabataan, SK (Youth Council). 15-19 years	
Southern Leyte	St Bernard	New Guinsaugon	Sangguniang Kabataan, SK (Youth Council). 14-18 years	'Clean and Green' – tree planting and community clean-up
	Liloan	Catig	The Newly Activated Children of Catig, TNAC. 12-16 years	Coastal Clean-up and solid waste management
			Sangguniang Kabataan, SK (Youth Council). 15 -19 years	
	San Ricardo	Pinut-an	Pinut-an Young Movers Association, PYMA. 12-17 years	Coastal Cleanup
			Sangguniang Kabataan, SK (Youth Council). 14 – 18 years	River bank clean-up (also join PYMA)
			Supreme Student Government, SSG: 13 – 28 years	River bank and canal clean-up
Surigao del Norte	Mainit	San Francisco	Brgy San. Francisco Active and Progressive Children's Association. 12 – 18 years	Currently engaged in a series of DRR trainings
			Supreme Student Government, SSG	

Table 3: Community Sites in El Salvador and DRR activities

Province	District*	Village**	Child – Youth Group	Flagship DRR activity
Chalate-nango	Comalapa	El Morro (Los Guevaritas)	School Emergency Committee: 8-15 years old	Building steps and fencing the school
	Ojos de Agua	El Coyolar	School Emergency Committee: 10-20 years old	Erecting streetlamps
	Conceptión Quezal-tepeque	La Montañona	Emergency Committee: 10-21 years old	Waste collection and disposal campaign
	La Laguna	Los Prados	School Emergency Committee: 10-15 years old	Construction of retention wall in the school
	Carrizal	Potrerillos	School Emergency Committee: 10-22 years old	Construction of platform and retention wall in the school
La Libertad	Santa Tecla	Alvarez	Risk Committee: 16-18 years old	Replication of DRR training to other community members
		El Matazano 1	Youth development Association: 13-18 years old	Tree-stabilisation and planting campaign
	Panchi-malco	San Isidro	School Emergency Committee: 13-19 years old	Design and execution of the school emergency plan
San Salvador	Santo Tomás	Colonia Morán (El Ciprés II)	El Ciprés Youth Group	Clean-up, waste management and fumigation campaigns
	Rosario de Mora	Palo Grande	Vulnerability and capacity assessment committee: 12-16 years old	Improved drainage in the school

* In both El Salvador and the Philippines this is the Municipality.
** In El Salvador this is the Canton or sub-set thereof, in the Philippines this is the Barangay.

For a selection of methods used with the children and youth groups see Molina et al 2009. Some of these methods were replicated with select adult groups in the communities (e.g. village and/or district councils and church groups) and data from all these sessions were supplemented by household interviews in each community and Key Informant Interviews with leaders in the community, school, district government and both state and non-state actors in child welfare and DRR/M at the provincial and national level.

3.2 Case Studies: Governance Overview

3.2a Philippines

Institutional framework for DRR and Children[4]
Administratively the Philippines is organised into 17 regions through which to manage the 80 provinces and 1,512 municipalities and 122 cities. In 2010 the outgoing president

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[4] This section draws on http://gfdrr.org/ctrydrmnotes/Philippines.pdf and the two background reports prepared by CDP for this research (CDP 2010a and 2010b)

Gloria Arroyo Macapagal signed the 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act' into law, now known as Republic Act 10121; a law based on the right to life and property. The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) through the Office of Civil Defence (OCD) is responsible for the design of the new Implementation Rules and Regulations (IRR) and the development of a national framework for delivery. The NDCC is to become the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) with provincial, city, and municipal units of government each setting up local DRRMC's to replace the Disaster Coordinating Councils (DCC). At the village level, the DCC will cease to exist and responsibility for DRR will be integrated into the remit of the Village Development Council.

The current NDCC is an inter-agency council responsible for disaster preparedness, prevention and mitigation chaired by the Secretary of National Defence with the heads of all 18 government departments as members. Policy is operationalised at the sub-national level through the Disaster Coordinating Councils (DCC)'s who have responsibility for planning, implementing, funding and carrying out specific activities related to DRM and mandated through the Local Government code in 1991. The code allocated 5% of income to be ring fenced as a 'local calamity fund'; in 2003 the fund was approved for use for disaster prevention and preparedness activities. The NDCC has only the National Calamity Fund, 2% of the countries annual budget at its disposal.

Early steps towards integration of DRR in Philippine legislative and planning systems came in 2008 when the National Economic Development Agency (NEDA) issued 'Guidelines for Mainstreaming DRR in Subnational and Land Use/Physical Planning'. Municipal government units are responsible for producing Comprehensive Land Use Plans on which basis Zoning Ordinance can be issued and legally enforced, thus the DRR mandate is also decentralised. A 'road map' developed to institutionalise DRR in the country through integration into a range of sectors and the establishment of Disaster Risk Management Offices at the regional level was developed in response to the signing of the HFA. The full Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP 2009-2019), officially adopted in December 2009, explicitly recognises the role of DRR as consistent with the goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development and contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.

The SNAP allocates responsibilities to each government department and further directs a*ll* government agencies to 'integrate DRR into policies, plans and programmes and to incorporate such programmes into their budget lines; to participate in the 18 identified projects and programmes; to cooperate with national/international NGO and the private sector towards safer and more resilient communities'.

Opportunities for child-centred DRR are framed by a policy arena that is proactive in recognising child rights and supporting participation and voice on the one hand and seeking to protect them on the other. In 1991 the Local Government Code replaced the youth organisations established in the 1970's with the Katipunan ng Kabataan (KK) and the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK). The SKs (Youth Councils) are the governing bodies of the KKs, and youth representation through the SK is federated at municipal, provincial, regional and national levels.

Through the SK the youth are given a direct hand in governance and decision-making at the village level. The SK is formally represented on the Village Council by their leader

and receives a mandatory 10% allocation of the Village Council budget for SK-led projects and programs. SK Councillors prepare project proposals for approval from the Village Council; however 40% of the SK budget is mandated to the delivery of specific programmes.

The National Youth Commission (NYC)[5] was established in 1995 as a national government agency attached to the Office of the President. The NYC initiates and formulates national policies on the youth; establishes consultative mechanisms to facilitate government-youth engagement; coordinates and assists agencies and institutions in the implementation of all laws, policies, and programs on youth development; and registers and establishes youth and youth-serving organizations.

The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC)[6] was created in 1975 by a Presidential Decree to ensure protection of children against all forms of abuse and exploitation, to defend children's rights, promote their welfare and development, and ensure that they are given priority attention at all levels both by government and civil society. In 2000 the CWC formulated Child 21 (2000-2025), a national framework for the development of children in the Philippines. One of the seven principles of the vision for a child-friendly society is that "Children are able to genuinely engage and actively participate in decision-making processes and governance".

Within the school system the Department of Education (DepEd) mandated for the existence of the Supreme Student Government (SSG)[7]. The SSG, a body of elected students, provides a venue for students to improve their leadership abilities and support the achievement of quality education and academic excellence. It also seeks to train students to become better members of society with the ideals and principle of participative democracy.

In addition to the major child-centred institutions described there are a range of child-centred laws in place to protect children from risk ranging from RA 7658 prohibiting employment of children under 15, to the Executive Order 56 s. 2001 adopting the Comprehensive Framework for Children in Armed Conflict Situations. In the Department of Health a large proportion of programmes focus on children in response to the MDG to decrease mortality rate. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) delivers the 'children in emergencies' policy to protect the child in disaster situations, also adopting the child-friendly spaces approach popularised globally by World Vision.

DRR and Child-Centred Practice
Interviews at the national and provincial levels suggest that the new Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRM Act) provides a strong push towards greater investment and institutionalisation of risk reduction activities and provides for a much greater recognition of the role of citizens and communities in DRR activities. The

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[5] http://www.youth.net.ph/

[6] http://www.cwc.gov.ph/index.php

[7] http://www.deped.gov.ph/cpanel/uploads/issuanceImg/DO%20No.%2034,%20s.%202008.pdf

Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhils)[8], which includes a number of child-centred agencies, is sustaining its lobbying during the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the DRRM and this provides opportunities for creating DRR policy spaces that account for the role and perspective of children.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has already integrated DRR topics into Science and Social Studies subjects through the development of a module for First Year High School students and teachers. In addition through a Memo Order issued by the Secretary of the Department of Education, all key personnel in both public and private schools were instructed to prioritize the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and management in the school system and to ensure the implementation of programs and projects related to DRR. Mainstreaming of the curriculum based approach is mandated through the SNAP and the DRRM Act.

Interviews from the provincial, municipal and village level (2009) show that many local DCC's although mandated and existing on paper became functional only in the last 3 -10 years – often in the wake of a disaster. Whilst some areas are highly organised and proficient in emergency response activities, others rely on more ad hoc structures. There are some notable exceptions[9], and in a handful of Provinces a Disaster Risk Management Office has been formally established by the proactive provincial Governor to focus on both DRR and DRM.

Interviews demonstrate a common feeling that 'people do not react until they have 'felt' a disaster' and are not prepared, despite a long standing policy environment. In Capiz province, Panay Island, where DRR/DRM is now a key activity, interviewees reflected on the weak response to Typhoon Fengshen in 2008 as a result of lack of preparation that resulted in them becoming rapidly over whelmed. These observations reflect those made by other studies of disaster management (see Pearce 2003).

The inconsistent development and functionality of existing disaster coordinating councils across the country reflects a combination of factors including budgetary issues, political climate and will and lack of recognition of the vulnerabilities and risks of the area. The devolution of the DRM function to the Local Government Units in 1991 is in some places considered to have deepened problems as many provinces and municipalities lacked awareness of their mandated functions and their institutional capabilities were weak. Much of the capacity building at the provincial and municipal level has been facilitated through partnerships with external agencies e.g. Citizens Disaster Response Centre, Plan International, World Vision, Oxfam.

The role of decentralisation is central to DRR delivery as it is at the municipal and village level where isolated policies come together. At the village level the Council includes village health workers, village 'police' and councillors appointed to a range of standing committees including the Development Committee, Committee on Education, and

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[8] DRRNetPhils is an umbrella organization of NGOs, POs, academe members and some government agencies such as the OCD (Office of Civil Defense) and the DAP (Development Academy of the Philippines)

[9] The province of Albay was recently named the first-ever Disaster Response Champion in the July 2010 Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Shanghai, China organised by UNISDR, ICLEI and UN-HABITAT

Committee for the Protection of Children (CPC). Village councils have responsibility for developing community plans, they can access resources for programmes to benefit the community and have the right to propose, approve and implement ordinance within the village that serve to reduce risks to the community and protect children. The delivery of a range of national campaigns and policies at the local level provide a strong enabling environment for delivering child-centred DRR.

3.2b El Salvador

Institutional framework for DRR and Children

Administratively the Republic of El Salvador is divided into 14 departments and 262 municipalities. Disaster risk reduction policy is framed by the concept of civil protection, defined as the physical protection of the people and assets in situation of serious collective risk, public calamity or catastrophe, in which the security and lives of the people may be in danger. This is enshrined through the Constitution of the Republic in stating the obligation of the State to guarantee the safety and peace of its citizens. The legal basis for DRR is the Law of Civil Protection, Prevention and Mitigation of Disasters of 2005, which replaced the Civil Defence law of 1976 and the Procedures for declaring a National Emergency law of 1988. With technical and economic control from the Ministry of the Interior, the Law sets out the different levels of coordination and functioning for DRR in the country.

Under this law, the National Commission of Civil Protection is responsible for institutional integration, national policy design, emergency response measures, issuing alerts and proposing states of emergency, and coordination of the departmental, municipal and community commissions. These sub-national commissions prepare their own work plans in line with general guidelines set out in the National Plan of Civil Protection. The Fund of Civil Protection, Prevention and Mitigation of Disasters provides resources for the prevention of disasters or emergency response[10].

The Environment Act of 1998 also underpins a State duty to take measures to prevent and control environmental disasters the regulation of contingencies, emergencies and environmental disasters, with specific objectives to implement measures to prevent, mitigate and control the deterioration of natural resources and environment. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) is also currently developing a national climate change policy. MARN is responsible for the National Service of Territorial Studies (SNET), who provide research, data, early warning and tools and methodologies on social and natural systems to support prevention and disaster risk reduction. The Code of Health clarifies that the Ministry of Health and Welfare should coordinate actions for the comprehensive care of post-disaster effects, adopt and develop measures to prevent epidemics, and monitor the efficient implementation of its disaster plans.

In enacting DRR at decentralised level, the Municipal Code of 2000 is the key legal instrument governing the organization, operation and performance of autonomous powers of the municipalities. This states that municipal authorities are responsible for the preparation, approval and implementation of plans for urban and rural development in

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[10] Fund of Civil protection, prevention and mitigation of disasters. DL. 778, DO.160. tomo 368, publicado 31 de agosto de 2005

the locality; for planning, implementation and maintenance of public works; and the promotion and financing of public housing or urban renewal.

Child-centred DRR is framed by the national cultural and legislative framing of childhood. The traditional concept of the Salvadorian society is that childhood is a formative stage, where the children are learning progressively to become an adult. They play an important role in domestic tasks, as well as in productive situations. This is pronounced in rural areas, where the old structure of agricultural production remains and where traditionally children were not entitled to their own opinion or to contradict the will of their parents.

The new legal framework for children and childhood was created in 2009 by the Law for the Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence[11] in order to guarantee the rights and facilitate the accomplishment of responsibilities for all children and adolescents in El Salvador. It created the National System for Integral Protection of Childhood and Adolescence, and is supported by the Salvadoran Institute for Integral Development of Childhood and Adolescence (INSA)[12], who execute and monitor the implementation of the National Policy to Attend Minors and provide integral protection to children based on Child Rights established in the Constitution and the UN Convention on Children Rights. Clause 36, recognises the right to have a healthy environment, ecologically sustainable and adequate for their development.

DRR and Child-Centred Practice
However, while the official legal structures are in place, in reality the functioning and coordination of DRR remains weak and can be critiqued on a number of fronts. Firstly, the focus remains primarily on systems of emergency response and relief, rather than on prevention and preparedness. Second, only in 2009 were any financial resources allocated from the central government's national budget to enact the Civil Protection laws, and this move by the executive is under dispute according to interviews carried out for this research.

Third, coordination around relief itself remains poor. A recent assessment report by the *United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination* (*UNDAC*) argued that El Salvador requires a more comprehensive legal framework to facilitate and coordinate relief, including internally across arms of government, and externally across international humanitarian actors (IFRC 2010).

Fourth, there is little coordination across and between sectors and arms of government that may have vital roles in effective DRR, such as water and sanitation, education or environmental protection. For example, the Law of Civil Protection, Prevention and Mitigation of Disasters refers to the Environmental Law, but the connection between both laws is not clarified. The Environment Ministry (MARN) is cited as part of the National Commission and Consultant Committee of the National System of Civil Protection, but there is no definition of institutional roles, despite the involvement of SNET in data

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[11] Ley de de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia, DL. N° 839, DO N° 68, tomo 383, de fecha 16 de abril de 2009.

[12] Ley de creación del Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia DL. 482, DO. 63, tomo 318, publicado el 31 de marzo de 1993.

generation and disaster impacts monitoring. Finally, the UNDAC assessment of 2010 identified the need to harmonise the national DRR legislative framework with international conventions ratified by the country, including the Hyogo Framework of Action (IFRC 2010).

The orientation of the broader policy environment as outlined above plays an important role in influencing community level DRR not only in establishing legislative frameworks and implementation mechanisms, but also in directing the wider culture of risk management. As such, policy approaches based either on hazard management or on vulnerability reduction at national level will play out at community level through the approaches and attitudes adopted by actors and officials at regional and local scales. Similarly, the national policy balance between prevention, mitigation, preparedness, relief and rehabilitation sets a framework for the culture across scales.

While some national bodies representing DRR such as SNET have their basis in science-based approaches, interviews undertaken with key actors relating to DRR at local regional level in the study areas revealed an approach focused primarily on understanding and tackling the human causes of disaster events rather than hazard management. Most respondents stressed underlying causes of vulnerability based on the levels of socio-economic development and human behavioural factors influenced by cultural tradition. The poverty and livelihoods context of the case study communities were therefore seen as the dominant entry points for improving risk reduction by the majority of regional and local DRR actors.

3.3 Community Analysis

3.3a the Philippines

Policy environment for children's agency
The mandatory presence of the SK (youth council) imbues them with visibility in both the public and policy domain, and furnishes them with a degree of authority, resources and voice. The role of the SK is widely recognised and where formal Government programmes seek to engage with youth, the SK are targeted as partners of the Village Councils, often overlooking other child or youth groups. The policy structures focus on the SK as the 'next generation' and thus they are targeted by government agencies to participate in training alongside adult officials, equipping them with the skills they need to be future leaders.

The Supreme Student Government (SSG) also has a visible and somewhat authoritative role within the school environment thanks to its formal mandate. Whilst the SSG, at its most basic, is a channel between the Department of Education (DepEd) and the student body, there is evidence from the research to show that where support exists the SSG can play a bigger role in the school community and beyond.

Although the policy environment provides spaces within which school children and village youth can be proactive in realising their agency, achieving the potential of these mandated and formal groups is in part a reflection of the attitudes and culture of the community and/or school within which they are found.

For the children's groups established outside the formal policy context a range of relationships were encountered; from the TCAAP in Teguis who regularly exchange with

the village council to Caga-ut where the village council is largely unaware of the children's association, preferring to focus on their strong partnership with the SK.

At the local government level - provincial, municipal and village councils - the policy focus is 'family' centred. The family is considered as a unit with policy primarily focusing on the role of the parents as the providers, managers and decision-makers in the household and thus taking responsibility for the protection and welfare of the children. The primary focus on children in disaster management policy is to ensure that children have safe spaces and places to go after disasters occur and that their parents are capable of reducing the family exposure to disaster through good decision-making in relation to health, education and livelihood activities.

Perceptions of child agency
It is clear from interviews that the perception of child capacity and agency within the household is age related and thus connected to the 'expected' developmental stage of the child. Although most children above 8 or 9 years old take on domestic and other chores household interviews demonstrate that parents do not attribute responsibility or agency to the younger child in household decision-making processes. They do exchange with high school children (11 upwards) on their needs and projects for school, and are willing to discuss the family economic situation with those who have the potential to support the family income through external employment - in the Philippines this is roughly 13/14 upwards (sometimes younger for boys). However ultimately the parental decision will override child input. Child agency and responsibility within the household can be seen to evolve with age leading to greater trust and credibility through the developmental stages.

As a reflection of this the children themselves often expressed concern over their physical capacity to act on behalf of the community due to their multiple commitments to the school and the family. In some cases household interviews revealed that schooling and family duties had to be completed prior to extra activities with youth groups. This was particularly evident in the more remote rural villages visited.

Amongst some community officials and households there is a perception that the elected individuals who hold positions in the village and municipal council are solely responsible for fulfilling development work – sometimes including the SK. There is mixed sentiment amongst the adults in the community towards the SK. In places they are considered to be 'too busy playing' and 'entertaining themselves' due to their focus on sports activities that often other programmes of action are gone unnoticed. In contrast most of the elected officials are supportive of the SK and alternative views on the role of sport and competitions are presented, e.g. as a constructive role in diverting youth energy away from potential vices such as gambling and drugs.

Research shows that it is more likely to be children who believe that they are perceived as incapable community actors because of their young age and limited experience. The resulting lack of confidence amongst children in expressing their concerns and ideas, and in approaching those in 'positions of authority' impacts on their agency as DRR actors. Where children have been seen to be active in the community, carrying out activities that reduce vulnerability and disaster risk and improve the welfare of the community as a whole there is wide support for their engagement in community affairs. Much of this support was predicated on the knowledge that the children's groups were

receiving guidance and advice from adults and thus there was a significant and common perception that the realisation of the potential of children is necessarily a guided and supported process.

Amongst officials at the municipal and provincial level the dominant view follows that of Jose Rizal (1861-1896), a Philippine national hero, who is famously quoted as saying 'the youth is the hope of our future'. The officials consistently depicted children as the 'inheritors of the future' and the 'leaders of tomorrow', but in need of both protection and guidance today.

Officials expressed support for engaging and working with children and youth in DRR, viewing them as strong communicators of messages and as educators for those within the community who may be older, but less educated. On occasion, it was recognised that they had capacity to undertake situational analysis, identify risk and engage in pre-disaster preparedness activities - such as monitoring the rainfall gauge – but very rarely were children conceived as having agency beyond their community. The potential of children as leaders in DRR and as stakeholders in planning and decision-making was not clearly articulated at any scale. Where it was considered, it was clearly a 'nice idea' more than potential policy; in part a reflection of the lack of skills and capacity of the officials to facilitate children's participation.

Alongside the SK, the high school and thus the SSG were commonly identified as a key channel for promoting youth/child responsibility. Although children down to elementary school age are expected to join in earthquake drills, below the SK age, i.e. under 15's, children are more widely perceived as being vulnerable to disasters, in need of protection and therefore without a role in disaster reduction or response activities.

Motivations for agency

Children described a range of motivations for engaging in DRR and community development programmes. Whilst a personal desire to overcome poverty often lay at the heart of child motivations, being role models to other children, investing in improving their own future, learning new skills and the opportunity to exchange with others and have fun were key too. In San Francisco the children engaged in child-centred DRR also recognise the influence of God in implementing DRR practices for the good of the community and environment. Whilst this is not a focus for discussion in this paper the role of religion in relation to both the understanding and conceptualisation of disaster and child agency is an important factor to be considered when planning child-centred DRR programmes[13].

It was clear that the exposure of children to others who engaged in community activities or public service was a strong influence on their participation in programmes. Many of the child and youth leaders had parents or siblings who held duty-bearer or leadership roles within the community, from local 'purok' (internal village division) leader to village health worker or community police. The social capital of the children and the support for the child's activities within the domestic environment enables and motivates them to

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[13] A separate study in Indonesia working in both Christian and Muslim communities has begun to explore this (see Haynes et al 2010).

become competent actors in the community sphere. However this tendency raises issues around who participates and whose voice is heard.

Networks
Although children's activities and agency tended to be focussed at the village scale, it was clear that exchanging knowledge, experience and ideas with other children's groups is not only invaluable in terms of expanding their capacity for action but also in terms of boosting their agency through feeling part of a larger movement of children and youth. Exchanges are usually fostered either by a facilitating agency operating across the municipality or by a supportive municipal government who organise activities for federated groups. In Poro, Camotes and San Ricardo, Southern Leyte, the children's associations were federated and benefited from planning and decision-making at the district scale. Plans are agreed across the district and implementation is replicated by village based groups – this sense of cohesion and partnership with their peers increases their belief in themselves as agents of change.

In Banaba (BK) and in Teguis (TCAAP) much of the children's groups' success in achieving their goals and sustaining the organisation came through the strong affiliation with an adult group. Key to these bonds in both groups was the biological bond between parent and child members, a further reflection of the influence of the family on childhood agency. In Teguis the influence of the 'mother' group membership is strong; many of them are also elected members of the Village Council where TCAAP attend the annual community development planning process and is represented alongside, but independent of, the SK on the Child Protection Committee. It's recognition within the village council is in contrast with many children's associations who are not engaged in the formal sphere, although some are nominally written into structures at the behest of external agencies.

It was commonly found that the stronger child and youth groups have support from a strong and enabling (nurturing) relationship with an adult group. Within the formal structures of governance the SK related closely to the village council, and the SSG worked closely with the Parent Teacher Association or the School Governing Council.

For the child groups where no obvious adult 'mother' group exists, a strong partnership with the SK is often seen as an enabling factor. By working closely with the SK, a recognised body, they become validated and gain credibility, often working in partnership with them and channelling their concerns to those in authority through the SK's close relationship with the village council.

The desire to establish relationships with formal institutions, primarily the SK, the Village Council and the Municipal Council, as an important part of increasing the impact of their work was repeated widely amongst children's groups. The children identify them as the most effective partners for enabling change or delivering action as they have authority and power as well as reach and networks beyond the community. In addition the children recognise that establishing relationships with those in authority legitimises their activities and as such improves their ability to act, to mobilise others and be heard.

Where the municipal or the provincial government have established relationships with the facilitating agency, buy-in is fostered through direct advocacy and engagement and the officers and councillors are often willing and able to engage with children as capable

agents. In the Camotes Islands, where Plan has long established programmes, municipal officials and Councillors act as trainers and provide technical input to programmes, as well as supporting the delivery of programmes and projects. At both municipal and provincial levels officials engage in initiatives that have outcomes of benefit municipal/provincial wide, but operating at this scale can limit the potential for child engagement to. At the forefront are those with access (physical and financial) to the district/provincial centres; those who have established trust and support for their activities in the domestic environment; and those who have the confidence/capacity to engage with officials with whom they are not familiar.

The experience of BK demonstrates the value of a close partnership despite formal mandates. In Banaba the 'mother' group (Buklod Tao) stands apart from the village council thus the network of partners that the BK are plugged into are dominantly independent of state institutions. These relationships arise through the Buklod Tao and the Centre for Disaster Preparedness, the supporting NGO. The networks that these organisations connect with tend to be those who reflect their own situation, those with an independent and self developed mandate. As a result the BK identified a greater range of organisations with whom they engage beyond the village and municipality.

Champions
When the child/youth groups receive support, whether it's material, financial, technical, social or emotional, they are encouraged to continue in their activities. This support is seen as important across scales, from the household to beyond the community.

The support of families, in particular parents, is seen as a crucial enabling factor not only for providing permission for individual children/youths to participate in community activities but also because the child seeks and gains approval on a very personal level. Within the community the participation of both parents and other community adults, particularly officials, in child/youth-led activities is not only an enabling human resource but is also a sign of support and validation of the activity within the community and the child/youth role in its implementation.

Fostering key relationships with particular champions at all scales, not only of child agency, but also for DRR, can open doors for the child and youth groups, increasing their visibility and potential to access resources and spread their DRR messages within and beyond their own community. School officials, health workers, and day care workers are regularly targeted by the children for the provision of accessible guidance and support. In Caga-ut, where the children's association had a very low profile, they regularly approached the elementary school teachers based in their village for guidance. In San Francisco the children described their teachers as 'second parents' from whom they sought advice and support. These examples mirror the policy approach where teachers are cast as the primary champion of childhood participation and engagement at the community scale.

These figures are known and trusted by children, but importantly they are also sensitised to child welfare and the welfare of the community as a whole. For the children being able to access the kind of support or advice they need - when they need it - is important to sustain the momentum and desire to take action. An accessible champion within the community is key to the sustainability and self-organisation of the groups. This was clearly evident in the newly formed groups in the Camotes where children often asked

those who they were familiar with to open up discussions with the external catalyst organisation.

Self-organisation
In the Philippines the majority of the children's associations exhibit a high degree of dependency on their catalyst organisation for accessing different forms of capital with which to empower them to act. The facilitating agency increases their knowledge and skills base through 'extra-curricular' and targeted training, develops active spaces within the communities and at municipal level for child participation and leadership in DRR and provides financial support. For the TCCAP in Teguis and BK in Banaba the established relationships with adult groups in their communities provide the additional social capital at community level that empowers them as active agents for DRR.

The formal bodies, the SK and SSG, whilst dependent on their key institutional partners for support and guidance, have greater access to formal spaces for dialogue and decision-making, and the resources with which to implement projects and programmes. The annual elections for the SSG bring in new leaders every year and require sustained programmes of training and capacity building. For the SK, where officials are elected for 3 years, the opportunities provided through college in the municipal or provincial centres during this time often leaves them little time to coordinate action or attend training that would further their knowledge and skills. It is therefore important to ensure that child-centred DRR programmes are proactively seeking to engage the wider pool of children at village level.

Sources of and access to knowledge
Children's knowledge is limited by their social and lived experiences and exchanges. In most of the communities studied this was dominated by the parameters of the community, occasionally extending to other villages situated within the high school catchment area and more remotely the municipal centre. This is a reflection of geographical location, socio-economic status and investment in both transport and communications infrastructure. In Barobo, cut off from the road by a river, there is a single 'community TV' and no mobile network signal which limits access to informal learning processes, whereas in the Camotes Islands there is a high level of TV ownership within the homes but an internet connection which is unreliable and therefore ineffective as a source of knowledge. In the urban community of Banaba, where TVs are common and internet cafes populate the street corners there is a greater opportunity for informal learning. Its location and transport networks between neighbouring centres and even Metro Manila connects the village community with the nation and the BK are visibly proactive in seeking opportunities to access information and communicate with domains beyond their community.

In the rural areas knowledge is predominantly gathered through the formal process of schooling, through informal exchanges and storytelling of family and community members, and through community-based campaigns. The focus of the groups on programmes and activities within their communities reflects their particular realm of experiential and lived knowledge and this often constrains their confidence in intervening beyond these areas.

The influence of formal learning received in the school environment on children's awareness and understanding of disaster and climate change was apparent. Children commonly identified science as a key source of knowledge on global warming and climate change, through Technology and Livelihoods Education (TLE) they sourced knowledge on proper environmental management and disaster risk and through Values Education they are encouraged to act as citizens within their communities. The SSG's in Pinut-an and Estela (for Catig) reported that older students conducted risk reduction activities as part of their Citizen Army Training (CAT) in school. Outside the structured curriculum the school is often utilised by decision-makers as the appropriate channel for imparting knowledge and mobilising children to take action. National DepEd campaigns delivered through the SSG, or seminars in response to municipal and provincial directives, support the actions and awareness of the children and young people. Children often displayed a greater understanding of the interplay between the social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to disaster risk than both parents and village officials.

Whilst much knowledge is sourced from mainstream school activities the participation of children in organised groups enables them to access additional training opportunities, predominantly through their affiliation with a facilitating agency. Developing understanding of the multiple benefits of activities generates momentum and agency for action. For example where children are expected to plant a tree and some vegetables as part of the livelihood curriculum, children who also understand that through planting trees they can contribute to watershed management or hillside stabilisation and soil stability and thus reduce the risk of disasters are increasingly motivated to carry out such actions.

Knowledge to action processes
Access to information and support outside the traditional learning environment of the school is considered to be one of the factors with most influence over the identification and prioritisation of group activities. It not only increases the awareness and understanding of the individual it acts as a stimulus to group action, generating the agency for children to act together. The ability to transform training and knowledge into action is lost without the support of others with common and shared knowledge and agency.

It is as important however that the adults and officials in the villages are not only sensitised to children's agency and capacity, but to the goals they are trying to achieve. The Teguis study shows the significant impact a knowledgeable adult group can have in enabling child-centred DRR. Where permission or resources are required from other bodies/groups the limited awareness and capacity of the older generation for DRR - particularly those in positions of authority - prevents the children and young people implementing DRR activities. The lack of a sound understanding of the risk environment, or experience of DRR benefits, can result in the relegation of DRR as a non-priority course of action in the community.

Active participation in DRR activities is central to the learning process. Learning by doing is a valuable strategy for engaging children and for generating capacity. Access to funds and resources enables them to plan and deliver projects and programmes that not only develops their own learning but increases their visibility in the community as actors capable of increasing the resilience of the community to disaster. The physical and

visible action positions them as credible actors, challenging cultural norms and pre-conceptions of children as lacking capacity. This visible display of capacity also lays the foundations for engaging in different forms of partnership and dialogue with adults within and beyond the community.

3.3b El Salvador

Policy environment for children's agency

Communities are organised through Community Development Associations (ADESCOs) operating within the local government of the Municipality, itself coordinated by the executive of the Mayor's Office and its legislative body of elected councillors. The case studies suggest that where the Municipal government has experience of positive engagement with children's groups, this can catalyse space for agency at the community level. With little political power and resources devolved to community level, close links with municipal mayor's offices (for example in El Matazano and Canton Alvarez) enable children's groups to access resources and undertake actions that are visible to community members and improve awareness of the potential of children as active citizens. However, the legal mandate for the ADESCO bodies prohibits those under 18 years old from sitting as representatives, often preventing the representation of children's views on community development issues.

Conversely, poor links between children's groups and mayor's offices could be detrimental to the status and activities of children's groups. These may be a result of municipal officials who do not afford high importance to the issues of child agency and representation, or through differences in political affiliation between community and municipal leaders, as demonstrated in the small community of La Montañona. This illustrates the importance of a supportive local government structure in providing the enabling environment for child-centred DRR, as well as the need for children's groups to develop supportive networks outside as well as within their communities.

Unlike in the Philippines, in El Salvador, no children's groups are formally mandated by the national legislative framework, nor linked to the political machinery. This makes them more sporadic and often related to catalytic stimuli from the sectoral arms of government (particularly education and health) or external agencies such as development organisations and NGOs.

Perceptions of child agency

At the household scale the research suggests that cultural factors across the case studies were a major influence on the enabling environment for child-centred DRR. There were marked differences in interview responses of both adults and children between communities in rural locations and those in peri-urban environments. In rural areas, a traditional conception of childhood prevailed, with children not generally involved in household decision-making and not considered adults until they formed households of their own even if they were over 18 years old. Peri-urban areas tended to reflect a more modern conception, with parents giving children more freedom and recognising their role in making decisions relating to the household.

While the vast majority of parents stated that they recognised the importance of children's participation in the community, this was often at odds with formal household decision making structures. Children had little or no say in household decisions, particularly in rural and agriculture-based areas. Gender divisions were also more

dominant, with boys expected to go to school and to help their fathers in the fields and girls to help with domestic labour.

Within the community awareness of the existence and activities of the children's groups among community members was crucial to the perception of child agency. Adults who were not aware were more far more likely to hold negative views, and many adults who were not parents of group members noted the low levels of trust in children and young people in the community. This reinforces the importance of communications and outreach, and the use of networks and champions to link the children's groups with wider community members.

The elaboration and presentation of Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA) provided an important tool to enable child-centred analysis of community risks and to initiate dialogue with other community members on potential responses. However, interviews suggested that in many communities, it also provided a structured interaction that helped to raise awareness with adults of the activities and capacities of children. The role of external 'professional' training was considered critical by adults in La Montañona in enhancing the credibility of children's views during these exchanges. This was also reported by adults as a positive factor in influencing behavioural changes prescribed by DRR activities of the children's groups. Where training events are undertaken by a mix of adults and children, such as in Potrerillos, they present an opportunity to work together and interact, although experience in the case studies suggests careful facilitation is required to ensure that adults do not dominate these events.

Children who reported positive attitudes of adults often linked this to their experiences of having taken action during emergency situations, particularly Hurricane Stan in 2005, which affected all the case study locations. In Canton Alvarez, this experience was reflected in the widespread recognition and credibility of the children's group by adults in the community. This lived experience of child agency therefore seems to provide an important pathway to improving the perception of adults and creating a local enabling environment.

Motivations for child agency
The main drivers for participation in children's groups as expressed by the children themselves were set around the themes of learning, helping others and interaction, as exemplified by the quotes below:

> "I like learning from others and teaching others what I know. What motivates me is to share ideas" (Female group member in Los Prados).
> "It's nice because whenever we are bored, it gives us something to do" (Female group member in El Coyolar).
> "I joined it [the group] so that I could spend more time with my friends and then I wanted to learn more about risk zones" (Male group member in Palo Grande)

Adult motivations for promoting child agency were not based on being their right, but mostly framed on the potential alternatives of delinquency and gang-association common to much of El Salvador's urban and peri-urban areas.

Networks
This research demonstrates how the interaction of children's groups with networks outside their communities is crucial to their ability to engage with others and undertake DRR activities. Such interactions enable external knowledge to be combined with local experience and capacity, and in turn enable groups to influence beyond their own households and community members. Children stressed opportunities where they had been able to discuss their activities and share ideas with other groups in neighbouring communities as a particularly important, as well as enjoyable, process. In most cases, support networks are developed through schools, health outreach workers, the police, or NGOs, notable here as the case studies built on communities supported by Plan El Salvador. Such network interaction is particularly important for those children's groups in more remote locations for whom interaction is geographically more difficult.

As well as providing support, the presence of a facilitating agency was the driver for mobilisation of children's groups around DRR in many of the case studies. This research considers this catalytic role to be an important part of the enabling environment, as where this was not the case, the catalyst was the experience of a disaster event itself, with few of the preparedness or risk reduction practices in place. Retaining external networks with agencies such as Plan, the Red Cross, or the Catholic Church enabled children's groups to draw on outside expertise for training and resources, as well as opening up potential interaction with policy spaces and actors outside the community.

Links to the local Community Development Association (ADESCO) and its network were also an important linkage to embed the children's groups analysis, priorities and actions within the wider community. In the case of Canton Alvarez, the community recognition of the children's risk committee was assisted by the head of the ADESCO being an ex-member of the risk committee itself. In some cases, different political affiliations between local and municipal officials frustrated these links, including some where activities had begun with municipal networks in support but had fallen away since a change in mayor and party affiliation, such as in El Ciprés.

However, where groups had historically relied on external links alone, such as in El Matazano, this had a detrimental effect on groups in terms of recognition and credibility due to low community awareness of the activities of the children's group. Direct assistance from external actors including municipal authorities or NGOs in some cases had provided children's groups with capacity and resources to self organise and carry out their DRR activities, but left them detached from the wider community members. This highlights the importance to the enabling environment of embedding groups firmly within community institutions and actors.

Champions
While wider networks are crucial for the enabling environment of child-centred DRR, the presence of individual champions was notable in the relative success of children's groups in many of the case studies. Where groups were championed by an actor in a position of power this helped them to gain recognition among community members, make external connections and mobilise resources for implementation of activities. Champions are also crucial figures in providing a reference point for parents regarding the appropriateness of group activities.

In both El Matazano and Canton Alvarez for example, the community health workers were pivotal in making the link and raising the group's profile with the municipal government officials. In Los Prados and Palo Grande, the school director played this main championing role.

School directors often become a key champion, as they hold the power to consent to children's group members to undertake training or attend meetings. Equally, in many communities, they serve as an important link with parents and other adults in informing them of the groups' activities and convincing them to attend related meetings. The case studies also demonstrate the need for continuity when such champions move out of the community, such as the change in school director in El Ciprés.

Self-organisation
Children's groups related to DRR are commonly divided into different 'Brigades', covering different aspects of DRR such as environment protection, health and disaster risk management, or different tasks in emergency preparedness such as early warning, evacuation, first aid, or aid distribution. Sometimes this was prompted by an externally facilitated training programme, sometimes from groups themselves, allowing division of responsibility for actions.

In some communities, the DRR groups were self-standing, while in some, DRR work was part of the long-standing youth group activities. This had helped sustain the groups over time, with the Youth group in El Ciprés active since 1998 and tackling a wide range of issues. In El Coyolar and Palo Grande by contrast, the group was established with the school's support in 2006 specifically responding to external input by the NGO Plan El Salvador, but had since made links to other NGOs active in the area. In some areas, the group's calendar of activities was dictated by the seasons. For example in Los Guevaritas, the group's activities and meetings ceased throughout the labour-intensive harvest season.

Sustaining community groups through the evolution of generations of membership emerged from the research as a crucial aspect of the enabling environment for engaging children in DRR. As members graduate out of the groups, commonly as they become adults or high school students, there is a risk that experience, understanding and leadership are not replaced. This reinforces the importance of internal knowledge transfer and an ongoing role for external training.

Sources of and access to knowledge
Access to external sources of knowledge is vital to the enabling environment for child-centred DRR, especially in remote and isolated locations. For example, knowledge of global processes of environment change, including global warming, empowered children to take a lead role in catalysing change in the absence of adult awareness. However, the research also suggests that situating an understanding of DRR within the lived experience is crucial to fostering action. Ideally this can be through well executed training that does not only seek to add external information, but often it is through lived experience of both low impact and extreme events themselves. The impact of Hurricane Stan in 2005 was widespread across El Salvador and within the memory of almost all participants, while more recent flood events in 2009 and 2010 were widely publicised.

Knowledge into action processes

Credibility was central to many of the knowledge to action processes, particularly where the DRR activities required a behavioural change among adults. Examples from El Salvador illustrate the disconnect between opinion and action. Many adults expressed the view that children can act as competent risk managers, but there was much less consistency in following this up by taking the actions that children prescribed in order to reduce risks.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Enabling Child-Centred DRR at the local level

The research and analysis of child-centred DRR in both El Salvador and the Philippines provides a number of common findings and recommendations. The research is based on investigating the realities of child-centred DRR in areas of relative poverty and high disaster risk. It reflects growing dissatisfaction with the ability of top-down approaches to DRR and climate change adaptation based on scientific modelling to respond to the needs and realities of local populations (van Aalst *et al* 2008). The research findings point to a set of key issues which need to be addressed in order to realise child agency and capacity for DRR.

Adult perception of child agency underpins the enabling environment

The research suggests that adult views on child agency have the potential to foster or stifle child participation and contributions to reducing disaster risk. Whilst families value the potential of children as actors within the household they are often not prescribed with individual agency or voice within the home and this is often carried over into the community sphere. Even where adults vocalised support for child-led DRR activities this was commonly contradicted by household decision making structures in which children have little or no voice. However the support of the family for a child's action is a central enabler for child participation and agency

Children need to be seen to be heard

There was considerable evidence that the visibility and experience of children's group activities was a crucial enabling factor in fostering community buy-in. Many adults and even parents of group members were not aware of the DRR activities of the children's groups. Yet where adults had been exposed to or involved in the activities, they were more supportive and there was a significantly higher level of support for child participation in communities with longer standing experiences. Visible demonstrations of children engaging in activities to reduce risks in the household and community provide a lived experience that acts as an important catalyst for shifting cultural understandings to support child agency.

Inclusion and experience generate support

In the early stages of child-led DRR programmes children learn and act more effectively within the parameters that are known to them – the household, neighbourhood, school and community – and with the people with whom they are most familiar. In particular, this research suggests that when parents are excluded from the processes of awareness raising, action and empowerment, they may be less likely to support the motivation or activities of their household members or the facilitating agency (Tanner 2010). Household support provides not only formal permissions for children to participate and engage in activities, but also confirmation to the children that their actions are valued within the community, that their motivations are respected and thus they are empowered to continue in their efforts and advocacy.

Facilitation is a crucial enabling factor

The case studies support the assertion that:

> "Without this facilitation, it is apparent from the research literature that children and youth generally feel powerless and excluded from the adult realm of political processes." *(*Mitchell *et al,* 2009: p14).

The research demonstrates that children are capable actors, but they need stimuli and support. There was a common perception that realising the potential of children is necessarily a guided and supported process. This may come through community based sources such as schools, health centres or adult-led disaster groups, or through external interventions by NGOs and CSOs. This catalytic role is an important part of the enabling environment, allowing children's groups to draw on outside expertise for training and resources, as well as opening up potential interaction with policy spaces and actors outside the community.

Facilitation is also crucial in preventing parallel processes between adult and children's groups, with case studies demonstrating the challenges and benefits of opening spaces for children's participation and representation within (sometimes formally mandated by) adult-led groups. External training to children from those perceived to be technical experts, such as municipal officials, was regarded by adults as providing greater credibility to children's opinions and actions.

Children working together generate agency and action

Facilitation needs to go beyond training and knowledge, and support analysis, debate, prioritisation and action at community level, as well as dissemination of learning. This recognises the multiple modes of child agency, as analysers, communicators and mobilisers for risk reduction as well as implementers of actions themselves (Tanner 2010). The ability to transform training and knowledge into action is lost without the support of others with common and shared knowledge and agency. The group structure provides opportunities for children to come together on a regular basis with a common purpose to plan and deliver action - this structure and accessible support and guidance is vital to turn knowledge into action.

Safe spaces for child-adult exchanges build trust and recognition

Holding training events with a mix of adults and children provides an important route to common ownership of the DRR agenda. It is essential that training and awareness of DRR policy and practice is delivered community-wide. Creating opportunities for presenting work to parents and adults in the community, such as the outcome of VCAs, raises awareness and fosters buy-in through creating spaces for dialogue and exchange of ideas. Creating safe spaces for engaging with authority figures represents an important part of a child-sensitive enabling approach. Children are often overwhelmed by the notion of authority, so bringing officials into spaces where children feel secure, such as facilitated workshops, is important. The creation of formal spaces for informal engagement between government institutions and children allows adults to be exposed to the children as they learn, discuss and debate, building recognition of the agency and capacity of children and seeing the potential of engagement. Designing facilitation and activities which allow children to participate in spaces that create dialogue and exchange with adult actors should therefore be a priority for facilitating agents.

Community development and existing programmes are starting points for action
A marked distinction could be found between communities where children's groups had worked to link DRR to wider community development issues, both domestically and by using networks and champions. Where existing programmes such as health and education are seeking to meet the basic needs of child welfare and improve well-being, it is important that the contribution of these programmes for DRR is communicated and understood; as children and communities see the multiple benefits of their action, they are motivated to continue and strive harder to achieve the common goals. Focussing early activities on nationwide campaigns builds links with the municipal and village councils who bear the duty to deliver.

Individual champions are often the difference between success and failure.
The most advanced and stable groups were encountered in communities where the groups worked with authority figures in the community who already commanded the respect and trust of both children and adults, especially ones not subject to political influence and repeated change in personnel. Often these were individuals whose roles directly pertained to child welfare such as school directors or health workers. Whilst also working as a link between outside networks and facilitation, authoritative champions also provided a reference point for parents regarding the appropriateness of group activities.

Groups need to engage with wider networks to access resources and policy spaces
Engaging with actors beyond those who are 'familiar and safe', such as their peers and family, requires significant and sustained effort on the part of the group and its support structure. While children may be part of this effort, it will also require other actors to advocate on their behalf. Wider support networks enable groups to exert influence beyond their own households and community members, as well as interact with others. These networks were often developed through schools, health workers, and NGOs rather than enabled by government structures. Where groups were well linked with municipal government, child groups accessed opportunities to exchange with peers, attend municipal wide training and secure resources to undertake actions that are visible to community members. The relationship also provided potential access to higher level policy spaces.

Access to policy spaces and long-term cultural shifts lead to sustainable child groups
Issues of the sustainability of child agency are based in groups themselves but also in supporting structures within and outside the community. Building partnerships and networks within and beyond the community appears to be critical in sustaining children's participation, including links with formal institutions to access and mobilise resources. Community structures can help sustain the enabling environment through providing policy spaces where children's voices can be heard in village committees or school planning boards. An accessible champion within the community can provide an important anchor point for children, parents and the wider community.

This anchoring can also sustain groups as members graduate out of the groups to ensure that experience, understanding and leadership are replaced. This reinforces the importance of internal knowledge transfer and ongoing training for DRR across scales

and a need to engage those who are outside the scope of standard organised groups, including those out of school.

Importantly, there was a significantly higher level of support for child participation in communities with longer standing experiences, and especially where former children's group leaders are now in local executive positions or indeed parents themselves. This suggests that just as awareness and behavioural change around DRR will be carried into adulthood, investment in child participation is a multi-generational mission.

4.2 The role of decentralisation

In filling the implementation gap between policy and practice, decentralisation is often viewed as a governance solution, enabling localised and appropriate risk reduction measures that respond to local situations. However, although it poses a number of opportunities it remains a system that requires investment from the national level in making it work for those most at risk in the local areas. The research identifies 4 key issues for decentralisation in engaging children in DRR.

First, the research found strong support for the decentralised approach to DRR on the basis of local appropriateness. While decentralisation is limited in El Salvador and the country relatively small, in the Philippines there is significant heterogeneity across regions and islands;

> "...because each region is unique. It is relative; the implementation is not always the same to all. There are traditions and rules in certain areas that should be followed" Provincial DepEd representative, Surigao Del Norte, Philippines.

Decentralisation can enable DRR at the local level to recognise the heterogeneity of the community (including children), through community-based risk assessment and the identification of locally relevant risk reduction actions - policy or practice (van Aalst *et al*, 2008; Reid *et al*, 2009). This need is reflected in the outputs of risk identification activities with both children and adult groups where it was clear that the conceptualisation of risk is influenced by a range of factors, including age, experience, knowledge, occupation and role within the domestic sphere and wider community (Tanner *et al,* 2009). Local level institutions also support community mobilisation through their ability to embed historical cultural norms and values concerning intra-community cooperation (Allen, 2006).

Second, decentralisation enables greater coherence across sectors at the delivery level. At the municipal and village level, policies come together from across formal institutions with the potential to deliver holistic programmes of community development that incorporate activities and programmes that contribute to DRR at the local scale.

> "The most useful measures to protect children's health are also fundamental in reducing risks from potential disasters –such as adequate drainage, waste removal and proper sanitation" (Bartlett 2008)

In the Philippines the new DRRM Act, whilst abolishing a separate committee with responsibility for disasters at the village level, mandates the mainstreaming of DRR action through the Village Development Council and therefore situates it as a central

component of village plans providing the opportunity for child-centred policy and practice to be embedded in local plans.

Third, given the cross sectoral nature of DRR, as noted above, decentralisation and opportunities for child engagement should not focus on the specific DRR policy sector alone. Despite a lack of explicitly coherent or devolved child-centred DRR policy in either country, the role of policy within other sectors can provide an institutional framework for local action. In the Philippines, for example, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) annual national coastal clean-up campaign was delivered through schools via a national level partnership with DepEd; at the municipal scale the Pamugsay Festival in the Camotes Island - which raises awareness of sound management of coastal resources - was delivered by the Pilar National High School through the municipal government's Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP). A blend of cross-sectoral top-down policy drivers and locally driven programmes of action that deliver relevant and context specific messages and action provide a range of policy drivers for mobilising children for DRR.

Finally, stronger decentralisation of both mandate and resources to the community level is required to make this happen. For example, budgets for disaster prevention are minimal at municipal level in both countries and the skills, knowledge and political buy-in for delivering DRR are weak. The creation of new cross-scale DRR frameworks at national level need to be supported by decentralisation of resources alongside training and capacity building to permit their implementation. DRR and community planning at the local level needs strong support from higher levels of governance, particularly where higher level plans are dependent on aggregating lower scale plans. It is important that the lowest levels of duty bearers are enabled to carry out effective planning. Officials from higher scales of governance should support community/ municipal planning providing technical input and facilitating community and child engagement.

Engaging children in DRR remains constrained by lack of finance, skills and knowledge, both around the need for and processes of delivering DRR and how to enable and support child engagement in planning and decision-making. The role of external agencies in building the capacities and agency for DRR amongst duty-bearers remains fundamental to the success of decentralised DRR and child participation in both the Philippines and El Salvador.

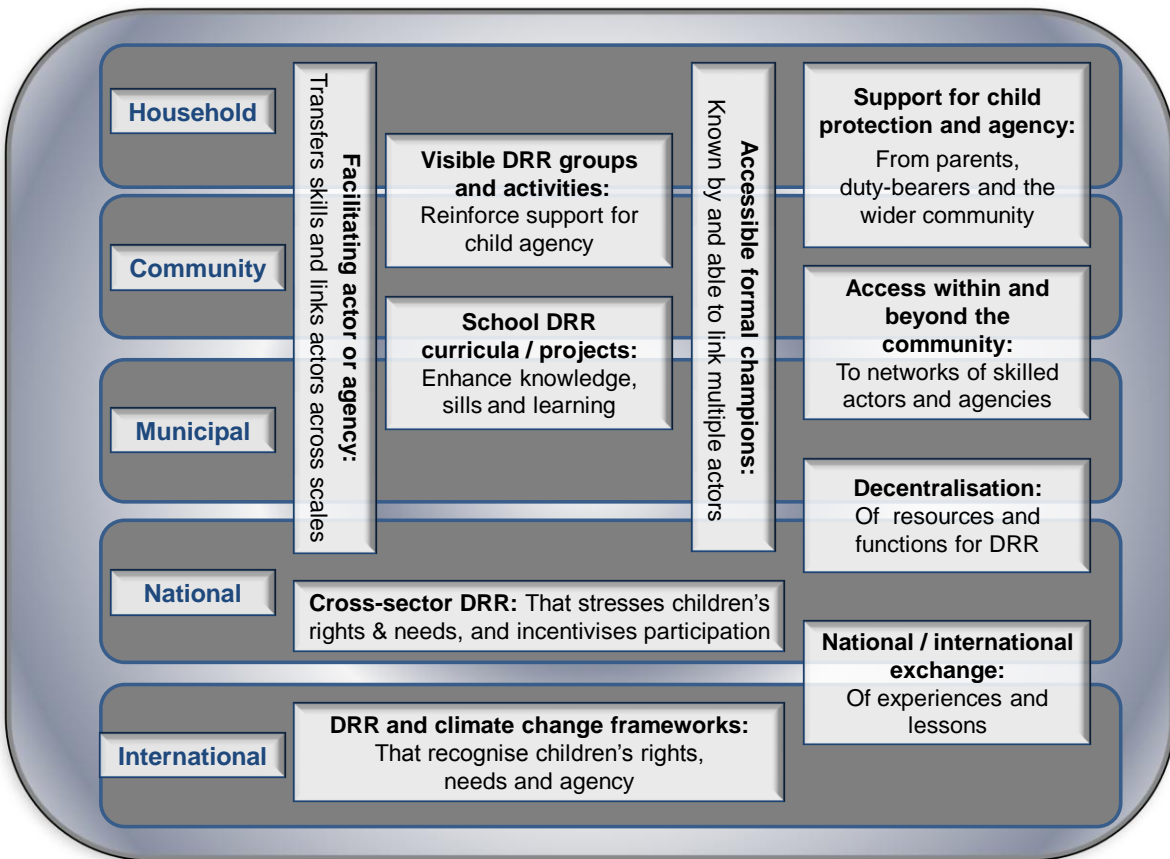## 4.3 A Model of an Enabling Environment for Child Agency in DRR

Figure 2: Key Elements of an Enabling Environment for Child Led Disaster Risk Reduction

Figure 2 represents key elements of the enabling environment for child-centred DRR across scales. While a child-centred approach is underpinned by supportive international frameworks, this study found that local level of support at household level from parents and from duty-bearers presented a critical enabling factor. Support and permission from the household reinforces children's sense of their own agency. The local visibility of children's role in DRR actions helps to foster both parental and wider community support, with children's groups providing a structure for activities and an entry point for facilitating actors or agencies. Together with school curricula and projects, these enable children to transform their knowledge and skills into action.

Where DRR was engaging with children's needs and agency, a formal champion plays an important role in reaching across and beyond the community, advocating on their behalf and linking with municipal officials and wider networks. This champion should be someone in authority known and trusted by the children, parents, community institutions and government bodies. This access beyond the community is crucial in enhancing skills, learning from others, and enhancing local credibility, while also assisting in mobilising decentralised resources for DRR. Such decentralisation can help build local

DRR knowledge and provide access to technical expertise at the lowest level of governance, as well as providing budgets for locally appropriate implementation.

Finally, effective child-centred DRR is underpinned by the existence of national DRR policy that recognises the need for reducing the vulnerabilities and engaging the agency of children through integration of DRR objectives into a range of policy areas, including health, education, social policy and land use planning. Engaging children in this policy arena requires spaces for citizen participation in related decision-making processes.

5. Key Messages for Policy and Practice

While national politicians have signed up to take responsibility for disaster risk reduction and official legal structures are in place, the reality on the ground is that the functioning and coordination of DRR often remains weak. This research reinforces the need to focus concerns on the implementation gap in translating policy into practice.

Knowledge, understanding and political buy-in must be ensured from the international level down to the sharp end of disasters; the communities and the local government units. Children have a role to play in communicating disaster risk, sharing knowledge around the drivers of risk at the local level and engaging in planning and delivering DRR actions that reduce risk, not just for children, but for their families and communities too. Figure 2 in 4.3 sets out the idealised environment for children as active agents in DRR at the community level, but achieving this requires both cultural shifts and political sensitisation of children's capacities and their right to be engaged in decisions that affect their well-being and futures - not just in DRR policy spaces but across sectors and scales.

To create an enabling environment for child-centred DRR key actions can be taken across scales both in the policy arena and within child-centred DRR practice:

- ✓ National DRR frameworks should resource decentralised training and capacity building programmes across sectors to provide duty-bearers with the skills to engage effectively with communities, including children, in risk assessment activities and DRR planning and programmes
- ✓ Decentralised duty-bearers should have access to specialist technical and scientific knowledge available at the national or regional scale to enhance programmes and plans for DRR
- ✓ At the municipal level DRR officials should identify individual champions who operate at community level but whom are part of formal institutions and can act as bridges between children and local government structures
- ✓ Schools should be enabled to go beyond 'teaching' and 'awareness raising' to act as a central catalyst for DRR action at the community level. Outreach and knowledge exchange programmes in catchment communities - working through local students - can increase the reach of DRR learning and create spaces for child-centred community-level action
- ✓ Decentralised DRR training should avoid selective processes and deliver training at the point closest to the community, bringing children and adults together in co-learning and knowledge sharing spaces
- ✓ Where possible children's groups should be integrated or developed as 'branches' of existing institutions rather than developed outside policy and practice spaces.
- ✓ The entry point for child-centred DRR should relate to the priorities of the specific community and are likely to originate in 'alternative' policy arenas e.g. health
- ✓ Children who are supported to come together need to be visible as capable agents early on in the process, to build trust in their activities and shift perceptions to value children as active agents, this means they need to be resourced, enabled and supported to be seen.

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