



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Regional Office
for Southern Africa

Resilient schools
and disaster
risk reduction
education

Massive Open Online Course
Focus on the African region

Photo credit: Sophie Garcia



This course aims to strengthen disaster risk understanding and management, by providing adequate training on resilient schools and disaster risk reduction education, in the context of Systemic Risk and in accordance with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

Why a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on resilient schools and education?

Education is central to building society's resilience to hazards. Hazards such as floods and earthquakes become disasters when society lacks the ability to cope with them. Disasters are occurring at an alarming frequency and with increased severity in the Southern Africa region. Along with climate-related crises, disasters create humanitarian and development challenges. The education sector has a key role to play in addressing these challenges and in preventing hazards from becoming disasters. This role is best fulfilled through resilient schools and disaster risk reduction education.

Disasters have a major impact on children and youth, teachers, school staff, and education systems in general. Studies of disaster trends and the consequences of climate change suggest that each year, more than 175 million children are likely to be affected by climate-related hazards alone. If the impacts of other latent hazards (such as geohazards and biohazards as well as environmental, chemical, technological and social hazards) are added to these estimations, securing resilient schools and education becomes fundamental in order to assure the right to education, while reaching the major targets and objectives of the entire 2030 Agenda.

The COVID-19 disaster has served to reveal the systemic nature of risk and highlights the exposure of educational systems to all hazards. Its unprecedented cascading effects have impacted all sectors and levels of our economies and societies. Even prior to the pandemic, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015) and the Global Assessment Report 2019 (GAR) conveyed the reality that in an ever more populous, networked, and globalized society, the nature of risk have changed, to such a degree that it now surpasses established risk management institutions and approaches. The education sector has a key role to play in addressing these challenges and in preventing hazards from becoming disasters.



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For instance, UNESCO has estimated that over 290 million students are out of school due to COVID-19.

Aims and objectives

It is in this context that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through its Regional Office for Southern Africa, is offering the present MOOC on Resilient Schools and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Education, to support ministries of education, related stakeholders, practitioners, and other interested parties, on the different elements aiming DRR and Safe Schools. **This MOOC focuses especially on Africa and aims to strengthen disaster risk understanding and management, by providing adequate training on resilient schools and disaster risk reduction education, in the context of systemic risk, and in accordance with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.**

Aims

The overall aim of the MOOC is to strengthen the capacity of the education sector and local communities to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters through disaster risk reduction (DRR) education, school disaster management, and the provision of safe learning facilities.

The objectives of the training program are as follows:

1

To strengthen the understanding of resilient schools and DRR education, in the context of systemic risk and in accordance with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

2

To increase the capacity of policy-makers and planners to integrate DRR into the development and/or revision of national, regional and local disaster risk management plans for the education sector.

3

To develop capacities among planning authorities, architects, engineers, builders, and school community members who make decisions about site selection, design, construction and maintenance (including safe and continuous access to the facility), to improve the resilience of learning facilities.

4

To enhance the capacity of stakeholders and practitioners, in local communities, to support schools in their management of DRR.

5

To increase the capacity of teachers, educators, and curriculum developers to integrate DRR education into curricula, classroom delivery, and assessment, as well as increasing these capacities in non-formal education.

6

To highlight the importance of multi-hazard assessments of the three pillars of the comprehensive school safety framework (CSSF), and reinforce the capacities on technical and non-technical tools.

7

To highlight the importance of planning for and during emergencies, and introduce some of the particular challenges the education sector face in emergencies and recovery.

8

To support the development of action plans for the implementation of the CSSF.



Who is the course aimed at?

Resilient schools and DRR education are relevant to everyone. From learners and teachers, to decision-makers at ministries of education, actions toward securing resilient schools and DRR education are important and valuable. In this sense, the course is aimed at education planners notably, but also at everyone within the education and disaster management communities who would like to deepen their knowledge of the comprehensive school safety framework.



What you will learn in each module?

This MOOC is structured around the comprehensive school safety framework (CSSF), and is divided into eight modules aiming to provide a wide-ranging overview of the challenges and opportunities to ensure resilient schools and DRR education. Each module consists of presentations, lecture notes, a reading list, and related resources such as videos, reports, and case studies. **A description of each module is provided below:**

MODULE 1

School safety planning and implementation in the context of systemic risk and in accordance with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda

This module covers, the impacts of hazards on education systems, schools, learners, teachers, administrative staff and local communities. The contribution of school safety in securing both child rights and human rights, is discussed alongside its links with the major frameworks shaping the 2030 Agenda (such as those established within the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement). Similarly, the module explores the current international and regional institutional architecture supporting the resilient school agenda, both politically and technically.

This module introduces the CSSF, which provides a comprehensive approach to reducing the risks posed by hazards that threaten the education sector. The module starts discussing major concepts related to resilient schools, such as risk, hazards, exposure, vulnerabilities, capacities and resilience. Then, the module explores the goals and purpose of the CSSF, and identifies the different parties involved in the framework at the national, regional, district, and local levels. This includes analysing the enabling policy environment that facilitates the CSSF's planning, implementation and monitoring. The module presents the components at the core of the CSSF and introduces its three interlinked pillars which are investigated further in modules 3, 4, and 5 respectively: safe learning facilities, school disaster management, and risk reduction and resilience education. Finally, the role of children in building resilience is discussed.

Introduction to the comprehensive school safety framework

MODULE 2

MODULE 3

Safe learning facilities (pillar 1 of the CSSF)

Module 3 presents the elements related to the first pillar of the CSSF: safe learning facilities. It describes the components of the physical environment and discusses the elements that make a school facility safe. It starts by concentrating on new schools (which need risk control) versus existing schools (which need risk reduction), and providing guidance on the components and actions to be considered in each of these contexts. The module then highlights the importance of community-based approaches for safe school construction and maintenance. It ends by discussing the key areas of overlap between pillars 1 and 2 of the CSSF, such as building maintenance and green school practices.

MODULE 4

School disaster management (pillar 2 of the CSSF)

Module 4 presents the elements related to the second pillar of the CSSF: school disaster management. The module focuses on three of the major elements of this pillar at the school level: the disaster risk management plan, standard operating procedures and contingency planning. It ends by discussing the key areas of overlap between pillars 2 and 3 of the CSSF, such as school drills.

Quality DRR education can provide life-saving and life-sustaining information and skills that protect students and communities during and after emergencies.

It can also bolster resilience and promote recovery. This module introduces the concepts and synergies between education for sustainable development (ESD), education for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and education for conflict risk reduction. It presents the different dimensions of ESD and DRR education and the different stages at which they are integrated into the curriculum (including pedagogies, teacher education and assessment).

The module also discusses the importance of non-formal DRR and resilient education. It ends by exploring the key areas of overlap between pillars 3 and 1 of the CSSF, such as structural and non-structural safety education.

Disaster risk reduction and resilience education (pillar 3 of the CSSF)

MODULE 5

MODULE 6

Multi-hazard assessment methodologies

This module introduces a variety of methodologies that are used to assess the level of safety in each of the CSSF's pillars, and that encourage progress towards resilient schools and DRR education. To start, the concept of a multi-hazard approach to safety is explored. Then, the module showcases the comprehensive school safety assessment suite (CSSAS) and its tools. Then, there is a special focus on the VISUS methodology (which stands for 'Visual Inspection for defining Safety Upgrading Strategies'), providing an understanding of the phases and outcomes of its implementation. The theoretical aspects of VISUS and the multi-hazard characterization are explained. Module 6 also discusses different strategies that could be developed to upgrade the safety of learning facilities.

Planning for education in emergencies

Module 7 analyses the importance of meeting the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural hazards and instability. It discusses the necessity of securing a provision for education in emergency situations in education planning. The module begins with an introduction to emergency response through planning in education, and to the foundational standards of education in emergencies (EiE). Then, it describes the various components to be taken into consideration when planning for EiE, such as 1) access and learning environment; 2) learners, teachers and school staff; 3) curriculum and learning; and 4) assessing and securing management capacities.

Module 8 is dedicated to determining realistic short, medium, and long-term goals for integrating the CSSF, or elements of it, into policies and plans in the education sectors of individual countries. It explores the key characteristics and elements of a good CSSF plan and the key phases of the planning process. Finally, the module presents the targets and indicators for measuring CSSF implementation and its links with the Sendai Framework and the SDG monitoring progress schemes.

Action planning for CSSF country implementation



