



12TH FORUM EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

ICT Video Conference Room 1, University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus, Fiji

13 - 14 April 2021

SESSION THREE: Impact of COVID-19 and other Natural Disasters on Education

RESOURCE PAPER – MINISTERIAL RETREAT

(PacREF(21) FEdMM.06 Resilience and Education)

(Theme: Building Resilience in Pacific Education Systems)

(Paper prepared by UNICEF, UNDRR and USP-IOE)

Title/Topic	Resilience and Education
Presenting Agency/Unit	UNICEF Pacific
Purpose of the Brief	This resource paper is intended to provide Ministers with some conceptualisations of resilience as well as some concrete examples of activities that could contribute to those concepts. The paper is for Ministers’ reflection as they prepare for the Ministerial Retreat on Building Resilience in Pacific Education Systems as part of FEEdMM 2021.

Background:

“While the resilience of Pacific communities is more and more recognized and credited, it is at the same time deeply vulnerable. This resilience is sustained by indigenous models and frameworks of ecological wellbeing; economic production and distribution: the close spiritual connection between people, land and sea which protects rather than exploits the environment; and the existence of cultural and spiritual values and morals that serve to guide governance practices and strengthen social cohesion and community sustainability. The coronavirus pandemic has revealed the region’s multifaceted risks related, not only to global economic crisis and ecological vulnerability but also, in a positive way, the resilience of Pacific communities”. (Bhagwan et al, From the Deep, 2020)

At the 2018 meeting of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Nadi, which many Ministers from the Pacific attended, participants responded to the question, Sustainable Development and Resilience: Can Education Systems Deliver? In answering the question, Ministers focused on how education systems can be better designed to respond to global concerns such as climate change and migration, and deliver skills development, smooth transitions into employment and cultural and traditional knowledge.

Some reflections on resilience

The following is a collation of excerpts of recent writing on resilience. Whilst some excerpts may be written at the individual level, they refer to the relationships and connectivity of the Pacific allowing the reader to apply at a systems level

From: *We will know we have arrived when we hear the ancestors sing. A necessary reset*

“.....resilience literacies are comprised of core attributes (personal characteristics) and basic competencies (physical/ intellectual abilities) which contribute to an innate ability to adapt or respond to change. It is this adaptability that will enable the Pacific child to thrive within and beyond the schooling experience. Central to the idea of Pacific resilience is a deep spirituality or sense of connectedness. This spiritual-self nurtures self-love and worth and recognises the relationality that underpins all Pacific indigenous values and practices. It reinforces in inherent

connection to land, sky and sea and reaffirms interdependence with all other forms of life, past, present and future.....

Resilience literacies capture the essence of holistic wellness and emotional intelligence critical to mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. They emphasise the inevitability of uncertainty and change, the need for adaptability and the importance of critical and creative thinking for effective problem solving. Essentially, resilient individuals and collectives are empowered with agency and therefore possess and inner strength through self-awareness and confidence in their ability to respond to change.

Frances Koya-Vaka'uta, 2020.

From: Kaveinga – where is the Star Path?

At this critical time, I ask: Where is the star path- the Kaveinga – that once led our people forward and to new destinations? Have we lost the clarity of the star path, our Kaveinga? Where do we find a vision that builds our resilience against our multifaceted challenges?our star path has always been based on our faith (Lotu) and our clans (Kainga). These two starts of Lotu and Kainga are our agents of resilience that have guided us through millennia and allowed us to thrive in isolation in our communities in this expansive Ocean.

Seu'ula J. Fua, 2020

A Woven Approach to Resilient Development

The craft of weaving is one of the world's most ancient technologies and is an integral part of our multi-cultural history....Its basic concept , namely individual strands of material becomes exponentially stronger when interconnected in a systematic way, has timeless relevance.

Resilience like woven material, must be strengthened through the integration of various separate considerations and factors.

Through intentional interweaving of environmental, social and economic priorities, there is greater potential to identify common and cross cutting development priorities that place an unextractable role in defining our ability to withstand shocks and changes.

Ministry of Economy, Republic of Fiji, 2019.

Addressing climate change to the children at a young age is one way of improving the understanding of Pacific Citizenry, the dynamics and processes that would help them build resilient Pacific Islanders now and in the future

Havea et al, 2020

Do existing (education) policies address resilience? Do they ensure that

- Education systems are resilient at all levels through for example, records protection, effective school management committees or flexibility when access is disrupted?

- Education infrastructure is resilient through for example, making sure disaster resistant building standards are met and siting is appropriate
- Education promotes personal resilience through for example, psychosocial support for students and teachers, positive classroom management or student participation.

IIEP, 2015

Resilient Development means providing children and families with what they need to better prepare for and better manage crisis and recover from them more rapidly. It requires addressing the underlying drivers of inequity and fragility that cause environmental, economic and social deprivation and stresses. It means bridging the arbitrary divide between development and humanitarian assistance, integrating risk factors such as climate change into programming and strengthening systems that can anticipate as well as absorb shocks in the event of disasters.

UNICEF, 2016

Resilience can be defined as the capacity of a linked system to experience shocks while retaining essentially the same function, structure, feedbacks and therefore identity. How much disturbance can the system – people, infrastructure, resources and environment -accommodate while still maintaining its basic structure, capabilities and capacity to function?

Systems often fail in unpredictable ways, but resilient systems continue to function despite the challenges.

Kerner and Thomas, 2014.

Summary

- A study on building resilience in small islands states identified good governance and equitable and inclusive social development as key requirements for building resilience (Lewis-Bynoe, 2014) with education contributing to both. The same paper noted that although inherent vulnerability from size and geography cannot be changed, the ability to quickly recover from and withstand external shocks can be strengthened.
- This leads us to consider both, the resilience of the education system - its’ ability to “bounce back” from external shock and continue to provide quality and relevant services, and resilience through the education system – how curricula and approaches to teaching and learning build resilience in the young people it is educating.
- In the study *It is getting hot: Priority areas for climate-resilient and climate-smart education systems* (UNICEF, 2019), there is a call for education agencies to identify both immediate and long terms climate risks, assess vulnerabilities and exposure of children and the system and prioritise and implement actions and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these. The need to enhance data and improve the evidence base to identify solutions and acquire funds was considered a priority. The CADRI tool on capacity assessment and planning for Disaster Risk Management has a specific module on the education sector to support risk analysis including cross cutting school location, hazard and vulnerability data.

- Mitigating and responding to disaster and emergencies is not an explicit outcome in the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF). Perhaps, because in many of our countries, policy decisions and operations in response to disaster and emergency are managed by a national agency with that mandate. Education agencies are however often at the forefront of such responses with communities looking to schools and school leaders as key components in keeping people safe and informed and supporting community resilience. There is an opportunity for some concepts of resilience and disaster mitigation and response to be explored through the PacREF in terms of both systems (enabling environments) and the development of resilience in learners (curriculum relevancy), if this was a priority of countries.
- Considering the range of natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics our region has responded to over recent years, it is timely for Ministers to return to the question from the 2018 conference and consider how, both collectively and nationally, education systems can in themselves be resilient and contribute to resilient communities.
- As well as providing excerpts of recent writings on resilience, the paper shares frameworks and tools that have been used regionally and globally to support understanding of and developing resilience; particularly in education and finally, some concrete examples from the Pacific region of actions taken.

Examples of Frameworks

Frameworks provide a structure to guide the development plans, policies and other tools. Examples of frameworks relating to resilience and education are provided below. These include general DRR frameworks and those more specifically focussed on education.

1. The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (SPC et al 2016)

The FRDP states that “national and regional resilience to disasters starts with empowering all persons within communities to respond to disasters and climate change, rather than only those traditionally or culturally changes with leadership responsibilities. Therefore, active engagement of diverse groups is a priority to build resilience”. This statement is reinforced through a reminder that all stakeholders from different sectors, organisation types and levels of governance need to be involved if you want to build resilience. Human resource development through education, training, community workshops and other activities, are “central to building resilient communities who can more effectively participate in risk-reducing initiatives and protect the interests of their most vulnerable people.



2. **The Comprehensive School Safety Framework** (GADRRRES, 2017) has the three pillars of (1) Safe Learning Facilities, (2) School Disaster Management, and (3) Risk Reduction and Resilient Education. The framework is intended to guide national agencies in developing plans and policies to reduce the risk of all hazards to the education sector. It aligns to the Sustainable Development Goals; with respect to education SDG 4.1 on universal access and participation, 4.7 on Education for Sustainable Development and 4.a on school infrastructure. The Framework also aligns to the Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (see below).

Pillar 3 on Risk Reduction and Resilience Education calls on national agencies to review curricula with consideration to the integration of Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Change and using a child centred pedagogy to promote students real life experiences in learning to support applying knowledge and therefore developing new skills, including resilience.

3. **The UNICEF Pacific Education Programme**, as part of the response to COVID 19, supported a number of countries in developing contingency plans for their education sectors. Through reviewing a number of global and regional documents, the team identified the following areas for consideration in plan development:

- i) Education Contingency Planning and Coordination
- ii) Safe school planning

- iii) Continuity of Learning
- iv) Communication, Accurate Information and Psychosocial Support
- v) Monitoring and Evaluation of Education Delivery and Assessment of Learning
- vi) Education system resilience.

Resilience building is supported at systems, school and individual level through this framework. The education systems and schools can build resilience through strengthening policies, preparedness and response guidelines beyond short term events and pay attention to the longer-term building of resilience. The addition of training and guidance on contingency planning with the inclusion of mental health and psychosocial support are important to give confidence in the systems ability to respond to and recover from disaster. Importantly, ensuring communities are mobilised and part of the system, particularly at school level and building on the concept of reciprocity – the sharing of knowledge, skill and support to preparing for and responding to disaster. When learners are away from the classroom, it is important that other ways for connecting with their peers and teachers can be found to help maintain the social and emotional support that schools also provide.

In responding to disaster, students can also be supported to develop resilience¹. This can be developed through a planned and well-articulated continuity of learning programme. Such a programme should not simply replace the intended classroom learning but use the context of the experience. This will allow learners to develop new knowledge on what is happening around them and new skills that relate both to tasks that need doing and intrinsic skills such as self and time management. It will also provide learners with an opportunity to reflect on the values and attitudes that are important in their community in being resilient to disaster and disruption in their community.

4. The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** has the following priorities for the education sector:

- i) Understanding disaster risk
- ii) Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
- iii) Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience
- iv) Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response.

These priorities include activities such as ensuring multi hazard assessment and plans are undertaken at national and local levels with simulation of responses carried out, developing and maintaining resilient infrastructure, developing the capacity of teachers and students to participate in disaster risk reduction and building teacher capacity to develop, resource and deliver risk reduction and resilience as part of national learning programmes.

5. **Attributes of resilience** in a social-ecological system, such as education where the system is open to external shocks, were outlined by Kerner and Thomas as:

Attributes of Resilience

Stability	Adaptive Capacity	Readiness
Enabling Traits: Leadership and Initiative		
Single points of failure	Response Diversity	Situational
Awareness		
Controllable Degradation	Collaborative Capacity	Simplicity
Resistance	Connectivity	Preparedness
Balance	Abundance/Reserves	False
subsidies		
Dispersion	Learning Capacity	Autonomy

In this model, stability refers to the degree to which a system can continue if disrupted. Adaptive capacity is the ability of a system to reorganise and reconfigure as needed to cope with disruptions without losing functional capacity and system identity. Readiness refers to how quickly a system can respond to changing conditions. The attributes are grouped by category for ease of organisation but actually feature in some way across all categories. What might be the attributes in a Pacific context and what categories of attributes would be supportive to the resilience building of our education systems?

For Ministers consideration:

Ministers are invited to note the concepts of resilience and disaster risk reduction as presented and attempts at the global and regional levels to develop risk reduction strategies and to build resilience in national systems, particularly in education, to withstand impacts of external shocks such as pandemics and natural disasters.

Annex 1: Examples of Actions and Strategies from Pacific Education:

The following table shares examples of the type of strategies that are happening in Education ministries around the Pacific to build resilience.

Building Resilience of Education Systems		Building Resilience through Education
National and Provincial Offices	Schools	
<p>Policies that integrate DRR and Resilience including responses to pandemic.</p> <p>Business continuity of the Ministry and provincial/regional offices - enabling decision making</p> <p>Continuity of schools and learning programmes</p> <p>Communication strategies</p> <p>Standard operating procedures and guidelines that maintain currency</p> <p>Data collection and analysis on risk to inform planning and decision making (including WASH and other relevant intersectoral data)</p> <p>Nationals school construction standards and strategies, based</p>	<p>Community consulted plans for schools that are regularly updated and disseminated with regular ongoing contact with families during times of disruption.</p> <p>Capacity building of school leaders to respond to disaster/disruption and support their teachers, learners and communities.</p> <p>Staff wellbeing - consideration to plans for sharing loads, lines of communication and support.</p> <p>Concept of back-ups and geographical shifting of teachers to cover for those most effected.</p> <p>Capacity building of staff to develop and implement learning programmes during times of disruptions through a range of modalities and systems of deliver, assessment and feedback.</p> <p>Short and long term considerations including the use of trial days to test and pilot initiatives aimed at increasing education system resilience</p> <p>Capacity development of teachers to support student wellbeing</p>	<p>Knowledge – integration of causal factors of disaster, mitigation and adaptation in learning programmes eg ESD, Science, social science (village structure etc).</p> <p>Recognition of skill development with child centered and lead learning eg- decision making, critical thinking, problem solving, dealing with conflict</p> <p>Developing attitudes and values that support resilience through student leadership opportunities and programmes such as “buddies” or Tuakana/teina, eg empathy, kindness, respect, humility, cooperation and collaboration. unity of thinking and action, reciprocity.</p>

<p>on national building codes, that are “future proofed” and risk-informed, guiding future planning while providing guidance for temporary learning spaces and WASH provisions immediately following disasters.</p> <p>Guidance protocols for multipurpose schools that may also function as evacuation centres (e.g. extra sanitation facilities, water storage, night lighting, clean-up protocols, reopening checklists).</p> <p>School focussed infection prevention & control (IPC) guidelines, IEC materials.</p> <p>Dedicated budget lines for contingency response that can be reallocated to preparedness in last 3 months of financial year</p> <p>Explore scope for disaster risk insurance policies for school facilities</p> <p>Emergency HR protocols to allow redeployment of staff to disaster affected regions in times of emergencies</p>	<p>School level programmes to support student wellbeing through consistent and regular messaging.</p> <p>Ensure independent water and power supply/storage to provide continued functionality during times of disaster.</p> <p>Adaption of national construction guidelines to factor in local risk contexts and increase/decrease provisions accordingly.</p> <p>Explore scope for school level parametric disaster risk insurance for schools policies to allow quick pay out of cash after disaster events.</p> <p>Setup school level emergency response committees who can take action to protect school assets and personnel when cyclone/flood warnings are issued.</p> <p>Response committee focussed disaster drills to test response plans and allow for adaption and improvement.</p>	<p>Application of ‘three star school’ approaches to improving WASH in schools and involving children in understanding importance of water, sanitation and hygiene.</p> <p>Ensure environmental education is linked to practical examples that can be demonstrated through schools.</p> <p>Training for students on swimming, first aid, survival skills.</p> <p>Disaster drills and simulations</p>
---	---	---

Disaster simulation exercises to test response plans		
--	--	--

References

Bhagwan J., Huffe E., Koya-Vaka'uta F. and Casimena A. (2020) *From the deep*. Pasifiki voices for a new story. PTC, Suva, Fiji.

Cahill H., Beadle S., Farrelly A., Forster R., Smith K., Building resilience in young people.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/resiliencelitreview.pdf> 2nd Mar 2021

CADRI (unknown). Capacity assessment and planning tool for disaster risk management.

Retrieved from: <https://www.cadri.net/en/cadri-tool-en> 3rd March 2021.

GADRRRES (2017) *Comprehensive School Safety Framework*. Retrieved from

<https://gadrrres.net/resources/comprehensive-school-safety-framework> 25 Feb 2021

UNESCO - IIEP, IBE, PEIC (2015), Policy, where do we want to go? Retrieved from:

http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/booklets/planning_booklet_3_0.pdf

Johansson-Fua, S. (2020), Kaveinga – where is the star path? In *From the deep*. Pasifiki voices for a new story. PTC, Suva, Fiji.

Kerner DA, Thomas JS. (2014), *Resilience Attributes of Social-Ecological Systems: Framing Metrics for Management*, in Resources. 2014; 3(4):672-702. Retrieved from

<https://doi.org/10.3390/resources3040672> 23 Feb 2021

Koya-Vaka'uta, F.C (2020). We will know we have arrived when we hear the ancestors sing. A necessary reset. In *From the deep*. Pasifiki voices for a new story. PTC, Suva, Fiji.

Lewis-Bynoe, D. (ed.) (2014), *Building the Resilience of Small States: A Revised Framework*,

Commonwealth Secretariat, London. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.14217/9781848599185-en_26 Feb 2021

Ministry of Economy, Republic of Fiji (2019), NCCP 2018-2030. Retrieved from:

http://fijiclimatchangeportal.gov.fj/sites/default/files/documents/FIJI%20NCCP%202018-2030_0.pdf 2nd Mar 2021.

SPC, SPREP, PIFS, UNDP, UNISDR, USP (2016), Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, SPC, Suva, Fiji.

UNESCO - IIEP, IBE, PEIC (2015). Safety, resilience and social cohesion, a guide for education sector planners. Retrieved from:

http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/booklets/planning_booklet_3_0.pdf 2nd Mar 2021.

UNICEF (2016), Risk informed education programming for resilience. Retrieved from:

<https://www.unicef.org/media/65436/file/Risk-informed%20education%20programming%20for%20resilience:%20Guidance%20note.pdf> 26 Feb 2021

UNICEF (2019,) It is getting hot: Call for education systems to respond to the climate crisis.
Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/it-getting-hot> 03 Mar 2021