



Philippines

CSS country implementation snapshots

The Philippines: Institutionalizing School Safety through Legislation, Structures, and Regional Leadership

Comprehensive School Safety Implementation Snapshot (research conducted as part of an evaluation of GADRRRES in March 2025).

Disaster Context and Vulnerability

The Philippines is among the most disaster-prone countries in the world. According to the INFORM Risk Index and the World Risk Report 2024, it consistently ranks within the top 10 countries most at risk of disasters. The country lies in the Pacific Ring of Fire and the Western Pacific typhoon belt, experiencing around 20 tropical cyclones each year, along with frequent floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and landslides. These recurring hazards significantly affect school infrastructure and disrupt learning continuity. For instance, Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in 2013 damaged or destroyed over 4,500 schools and displaced nearly 1.4 million children from classrooms.

Education System and Policy Commitment

The Philippines has one of the largest education systems in Southeast Asia. As of 2023, the Department of Education (DepEd) oversees more than 47,000 public schools, serving over 28 million learners across basic education levels (kindergarten to Grade 12). The net enrolment rate for primary education exceeds 95%, and the literacy rate for youth (aged 15–24) stands at over 98%, reflecting significant progress in expanding access to education.

Recognizing the need to protect these educational gains from disaster risks, the Philippine government has prioritized education resilience through policies and legislative action. A pivotal development was the enactment of the Children in Emergencies (CiE) Law in 2016, which institutionalized support systems for children before, during, and after emergencies. The law mandates risk-informed school planning, psychosocial support, and accountability mechanisms, forming the legal backbone for school safety programming in the country.

Institutional Structures and Leadership

DepEd's establishment of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) reflects a deep institutional commitment to school safety. This dedicated service coordinates planning, monitoring, and implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) initiatives within the education sector. It works alongside regional and division-level DRRM coordinators to cascade policy, training, and monitoring tools to schools nationwide.

The DRRMS works closely with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), local government units, and schools to promote localized DRR planning, hazard mapping, simulation exercises, and emergency preparedness. These actions reflect a coordinated, all-hazards approach aligned with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF).

Civil Society and Development Partner Engagement

International NGOs such as Save the Children and Plan International, alongside local civil society organisations, have partnered with DepEd to pilot DRR initiatives and develop Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. These include child-centered hazard mapping, modules for children to develop school disaster management and contingency plans, and emergency simulation toolkits. Community engagement strategies ensure that learners, parents, and teachers are co-creators of school safety solutions.

Several projects have focused on hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas, recognizing that disparities in infrastructure, teacher deployment, and internet access heighten vulnerability.

Regional Collaboration and Global Advocacy

The Philippines has demonstrated consistent leadership in regional and global advocacy for school safety. It has been an active proponent of the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative (ASSI) and the Asia-Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS). The Philippines has been actively engaged in regional initiatives, contributing to the development and implementation of the ASEAN Common Framework for Comprehensive School Safety.

At the country level, the Philippines has endorsed the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) and has aligned its national programming with its all-hazards approach. Through regular participation in platforms like the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR), the Philippines continues to advocate for child-centered risk governance.

Looking Ahead

The Philippines demonstrates how robust legal frameworks, institutional leadership, and regional cooperation can drive sustainable, system-wide improvements in school safety. The establishment of DRRMS, mainstreaming of DRR into curricula, and clear mandates across education governance levels provide a replicable model for other countries.

Nonetheless, persistent challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to resources, bridging national and sub-national coordination, and addressing the unique risks in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Going forward, continued investment in evidence generation, inclusive planning, and regional knowledge exchange will be essential to scale the gains made and further embed school safety within the education development agenda.



Global Alliance for
Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience
in the Education Sector



Webpage: [🌐 GADRRRES](https://www.gadrrres.org/)

E-mail: gadrrres@gmail.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/gadrrres>