

# Engaging in the ASEAN school safety initiative (ASSI)

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Myanmar Red Cross Society teaches disaster risk reduction techniques at a primary school in Ayeyarwaddy delta, 2013 / Felix LaFramboise / MRCS

## Background

In May 2013, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management endorsed the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative (ASSI) to be one of the flagship projects of ASEAN in the areas of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. It is a multi-stakeholder initiative, which endeavours to make schools safer by applying and maintaining common standards to school buildings and facilities, conducting teacher and student trainings, school management and planning for disasters. Supported by the AADMER Partnership Group (APG), the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative brings together several organisations and ASEAN Member States, under the leadership of the ASEAN Secretariat.

In the past several years, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from Southeast Asia have been implementing a wide range of school-based activities in areas such as disaster risk reduction, first aid, hygiene promotion, health promotion, road safety, and water and sanitation. The activities are run through their Disaster Management and Health programmes. Furthermore, the Southeast Asian Youth Network<sup>1</sup> of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies of ASEAN countries committed in August 2015 during their annual meeting, to take a more proactive role in contributing to school safety.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), a membership organization that consists of 189 National Societies worldwide, has echoed their commitment alongside National Societies in Southeast Asia, to scale up their engagement in school safety at a regional and global level. The IFRC will reinforce the ongoing work of National Societies in their role as auxiliaries to local authorities, and with ongoing collaboration with National Disaster Management Offices and Ministries of Education. Such commitments include the participation of the IFRC as a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for School Safety as well as the voluntary statements from the IFRC Stakeholder Group, as well as the Children, Youth and Child-Centered Organizations Group at the 6<sup>th</sup> AMCDRR in Bangkok in 2014. The IFRC also made a technical presentation at the ASSI workshop in Jakarta in November 2014, and hosted the Asia Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS) strategic meeting in May 2015 in Bangkok.

## Goal

Children in ASEAN countries are more resilient to disasters and have a safe and secure learning environment, through an enhanced contribution of Red Cross Red Crescent to the ASEAN School Safety Initiative.

## Our contribution

In line with the mandate of National Societies in their respective country as an auxiliary to local authorities, and in line with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent, areas of contribution are as follows:

1. Implement joint activities with ASEAN Member States and partners, building on the auxiliary role of National Societies and the community-based network of youth and volunteers, to strengthen the School Safety Initiative in ASEAN.
2. Harmonize Red Cross Red Crescent school safety initiatives with guidelines established by ASEAN Member States; including the Comprehensive Framework for School Safety as well as the existing ASEAN guidelines for School Safety.
3. Promote the Public Awareness Public Education (PAPE<sup>2</sup>) Guidelines and its key messages to ASSI partners, enhancing joint learning processes, improved knowledge and information management as well increased use of new technologies and innovative approaches.
4. At the invitation of ASEAN Member States and school safety partners, actively participate in national and regional-level consultations to share experience and tools in promoting school safety, including active participation in ASSI-related technical meetings and workshops.
5. As a member of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS), support the ASEAN Member States in the alignment process of the ASSI with the new Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as the future Sustainable Development Goals.
6. Promote peer-to-peer collaboration among National Societies, public authorities and external partners.

7. Seek funding from our local and international partners to contribute to the ASSI in collaboration with ASEAN Member States and technical partners.
8. Document the Red Cross Red Crescent contribution to school safety in ASEAN, periodically reporting on progress to the ASEAN Member States through the Prevention and Mitigation Working Group Mechanism.

## Call to ASEAN Member States

**In order to support our contribution, we are requesting that ASEAN Member States:**

1. Recognize National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Southeast Asia as a key implementing partner for the operationalization and expansion of ASSI, in particular through their technical expertise in disaster management as well as health and care, and the 1 million of community-based volunteers and 4 million youth engaged through their networks.
2. Enhance the in-country partnership between National Disaster Management Offices, Ministries of Education, National Societies as well as other technical partners, with the aim of promoting a comprehensive School Safety Framework.
3. Recognize the Red Cross Red Crescent contribution to School Safety as part of the ASEAN School Safety Initiative, in particular in the documentation of its progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Southeast Asia Youth Network (ASEAN Countries + Timor Leste) is the official Red Cross Youth network and platform for Southeast Asia Youths as a whole (youth practitioners and youth volunteer leaders) with a role of promoting the youth empowerment and development for service delivery into community resilience through peer to peer learning and regional youth initiatives aiming for a positive change.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on PAPE, visit <http://gadrrres.net/resources/public-awareness-and-public-education-for-disaster-risk-reduction-key-messages>



### For more information, please contact:

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