

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN JAPAN AND VIETNAM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH EDUCATION FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In 2010, the world's population aged 5 to 24 reached 2,132,130,000 people, accounting for 30.9% of the world's population (United Nations, 2011). Equipping this number of people, who will be the owners of their countries' future, with knowledge on disasters, skills to cope with and overcome disasters and behavior to disaster preparedness through school education will help a great deal to reduce disaster impacts. Moreover, this will be a quick information sharing channel as children and adolescences disseminate what they learn from schools to their family and community members. In addition, if children start learning about disaster-related issues from their childhood and continue learning for their life time, they will form a culture of safety, which will be useful for the society in long-term.

Education system in Japan and Vietnam and its relationship with education for disaster risk reduction in the two countries are investigated in this paper as lessons learned from Japan are believed to provide suggestions to better Vietnam's education system in general and education for disaster risk reduction in particular. The study aims to (1) characterize the education system in Japan and in Vietnam; (2) point out weaknesses and strengths of the education system of the two countries to their education for disaster risk reduction in schools; and (3) discuss potentials to integrate education for disaster risk reduction into the current education system in Japan and Vietnam.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was done through a three-month survey from October to December in 2010 in Maiko high school in Japan and a one-month survey at Phan Sao Nam and Chu Van An secondary schools in Vietnam in September 2011. Main methods used were questionnaire survey, interview, class observation and literature documentation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study has found that the current education system in the two countries has some points that hinder the promotion of education for disaster risk reduction. For example, while education for disaster risk reduction has not been systematically incorporated into the curriculum guidelines, the current centralized education system in the both countries makes schools difficult to find room to integrate disaster issues into the current curricula. Potentials to integrate education for disaster risk reduction into the current educational system are also made through the study. In Vietnam, local education program (*Chương trình giáo dục địa phương*) and extra classes are flexible time for local schools to conduct their own activities based on the local issues out of the program designated by the Ministry of Education and Training. Schools therefore can use the time of those classes for disaster education. In Japan, the case of Maiko high school can be used as an example on how to make a course specifically for disaster education. Moreover, the "Period for Integrated Study" (*Sogoteki na Gakushu no Jikan*) and model of selective subjects are potential for disaster education to be implemented.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study has pointed out characteristics of the education system in Japan and Vietnam and its relationship with education for disaster risk reduction in the two countries. Possibilities to integrate education for disaster risk reduction in school curricula in Japan and Vietnam are found. In short, to disaster-prone countries like Japan and Vietnam, school education for disaster risk reduction will need to be realized as early as possible to make disaster risk reduction visible.