



**“What is essential is to realize that children learn independently, not in bunches; that they learn out of interest and curiosity, not to please or appease the adults in power; and that they ought to be in control of their own learning, deciding for themselves what they want to learn and how they want to learn it.”**

~ John Holt (1967), How Children Learn

## Through Children’s Eyes: Disaster Risk Reduction Education for Children, with Children and by Children

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### Introduction

Over the last decade, a number of studies have investigated the benefits of disaster risk reduction (DRR) education programs for children. Although these studies suggest positive outcomes, they are primarily based on the evaluations of adult researchers, such as those undertaken by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and many of them have significant methodological limitations. This PhD aimed to overcome these challenges by conducting rigorous research on DRR education in Bangladesh through the eyes of children. This involved children serving as co-researchers alongside the PhD researcher.

### Methods

The power inequalities between children and adult researchers are inevitable for obvious reasons, namely the age differential, the lack of experience of children in research, and above all, the existing accountability mechanism in academia. In an attempt to effectively minimise the power differential, the study has incorporated child-friendly methods and techniques which are built on children's competencies and interests. Most importantly, in recognition of children's right "to be provided the opportunity to be heard" (UNICR, 1989) and co-researchers' right to communication of research findings, a complete chapter has been written by the child co-researchers (which is also the largest chapter in this thesis). The children have also contributed another substantial section in the conclusion chapter.

### Results and Implications

The PhD project makes a significant contribution to our theoretical understanding of DRR education from children perspectives. It provides evidence to support improvements in policy and practice. The recommendations in the thesis made by the child co-researchers can be used as guiding principles in the design and implementation of CC-DRR-focused participatory education programs. Thus government organisations, NGOs, emergency management agencies, schools, communities and, in particular and ultimately, children will benefit as a consequence of this study.

Most importantly, by bringing children on board as co-researchers, the study provides a framework for empowering children's participation in disaster research. Thus the research also contributes in designing child participatory research methods. Finally, the thesis is also expected to encourage future researchers to empower children as co-researchers and foster their genuine participation in research.

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### Tables and figures

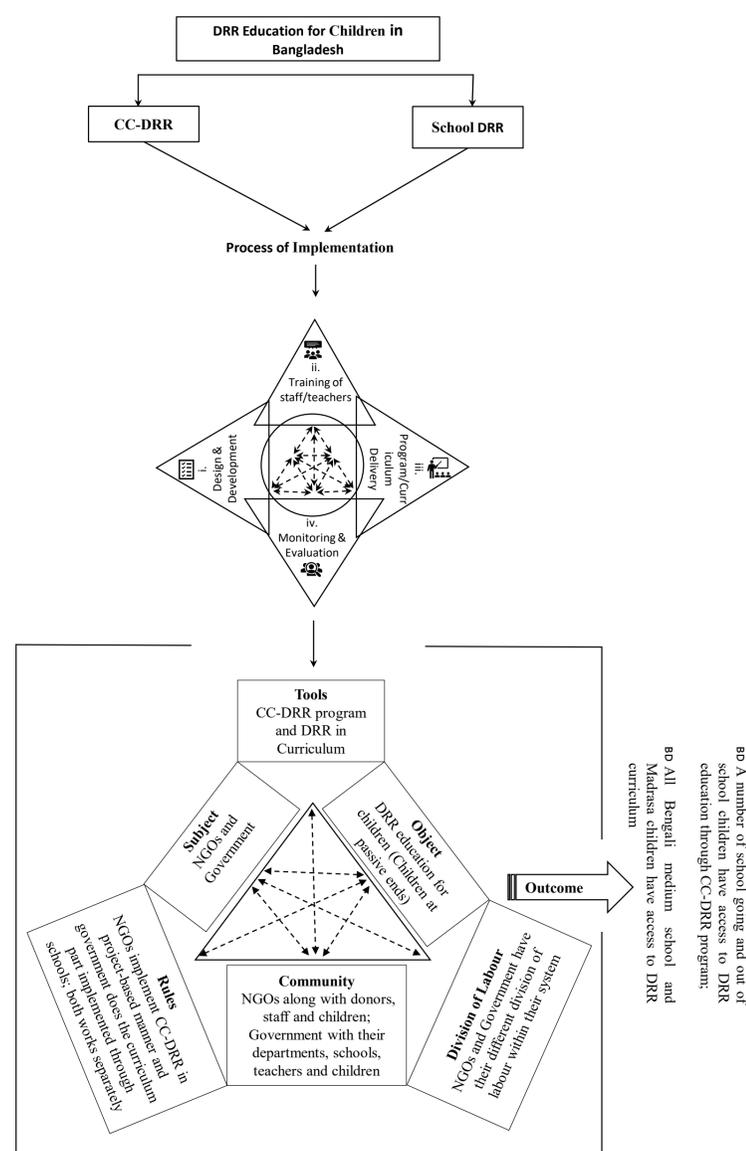


Figure 1: Activity framework of DRR Education for children in Bangladesh (adapted from Engeström, 1987)