

### 6.3. Curriculum

The Learn/Practice/Share framework informing The American Red Cross Pillowcase Project has been faithfully followed in the six piloting jurisdictions as, more or less, have the several sections of the original American lesson.

Common to all national societies, save Australia, has been the adaptation of the content of the local hazard section to focus on hazards and disasters most often experienced in the local context. Given its adherence to non-hazard specific content, the Australian Red Cross replaced the local hazard section with a generalized '4 steps to prepare' segment. Another area of content adaptation involved harmonizing safety advice advanced in the program with guidelines laid down by disaster-related arms of government or by the Red Cross national society. Such harmonization has been an important feature of program development in Hong Kong, Mexico and Peru. In the case of the United Kingdom the Pillowcase Project team took advice from the UK Meteorological Office but also benefitted from internal British Red Cross advice.

The coping skills segment of the program has been followed everywhere with the *Breathing with Color* exercise proving exceedingly effective and universally popular (and seen as suitable for wider child stress management purposes). The exercise, *Symbol of Strength*, has generally been less well received, leading to its replacement in two jurisdictions (in Hong Kong with a fable and song sharing activity; in Vietnam with a song or poem that makes people happy and a drawing by children of their favorite possession). It is not clear what cultural and other factors explain why the exercise has proved rather less popular. Given their focus on hazard non-specific psychosocial support in times of risk and loss, the Australian Red Cross Pillowcase Project team was very welcoming of the coping skills exercises; considering them as very much in harmony with growing school sector interest in mindfulness and meditation modalities.

***Recommendation 4:*** *The Pillowcase Project could consider expanding its canon of coping skills activities, adjusted to age and grade level, encouraging contributions from educators in different country and cultural settings, making them available to all program deliverers. This might be achieved by encouraging national society experimentation with alternative activities and/or seeking support in activity development from expert socio-affective educators.*

Given that climate change is seen as exacerbating disaster risk, there is global momentum behind bringing together climate change education and disaster risk reduction education.<sup>1</sup> While the Australian, Peruvian and British Pillowcase Project programs and materials follow the American example by not including coverage of climate change. The Hong Kong and Mexican programs and materials incorporate a climate change focus. As one of the Hong Kong Pillowcase Project team puts it, there is a need 'to let students have the awareness that something is happening day by day that will contribute to disasters in the end'.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, UN. 2015. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*.

**Recommendation 5:** *There is a case for weaving consideration of how climate change exacerbates both the severity and incidence of hazards and disasters into the hazard section of The Pillowcase Project curriculum or at least into follow-up learning materials provided for teachers. This might be achieved by inserting introductory climate change material into Project information sheets and into that section of the program where a local climatological hazard is introduced.*

While ‘learn’ and ‘practice’ are very well-developed dimensions of The Pillowcase Project program - as the children hear about the Red Cross and the Project, consider a local emergency, practice coping skills, determine what to include in the pillowcase, and practice protective skills – ‘share’ remains a relatively poor cousin. While students are encouraged to share, they do not receive practice in sharing and, most importantly, there is no certitude that a follow-through learning space will be made available in which students can discuss what they shared, how they shared it, who they shared it with, to what effect, and how they might improve their sharing next time around. Under the staff and volunteer delivery model, the likelihood of a follow-up session very much rests with the host teacher but reporting-back mechanisms do not look to be in place. Under the team delivery and teacher delivery models there is, likewise, no apparent mechanism in place for students to reflect and report upon their sharing. A significant learning opportunity is, thus, not availed of. Neither, as we will suggest later, is an important evaluation opportunity.

**Recommendation 6:** *Curriculum space, in the shape of a follow-up ‘show and tell’ session should be made available for students to discuss and reflect upon their sharing experiences. In the case of staff/volunteer delivery, the host teacher could facilitate the follow-up session. Additional benefit would accrue from having parents join the session to discuss disaster preparedness steps taken in the home in the wake of their child’s Project experience.*

Curriculum opportunities for reinforcing and extending student learning following lesson(s) vary across the seven participating jurisdictions. In the originating country, the United States, each hosting teacher receives a small teaching kit (*The Science of Safety*) with three lively activities for the science classroom. In the case of Australia, pre-existing *RediPlan Preparedness Program* materials have been distributed to teachers covering readiness for emergencies, evacuation procedures and emergency signage, the roles of emergency workers, and emergency kit contents (differentiated materials for grades 1-3 and 4-6). Curriculum follow-up materials for teachers are not distributed in Hong Kong although teachers could use the take-home *Workbook* as a springboard for further curriculum consideration. In both Mexico and Peru, the availability of follow-up materials to the Project lesson is being subsumed under larger ambitions for curriculum integration, in the latter country at a very advanced stage (see *Scalability* sub-section below). Under the teacher-led approach adopted in the United Kingdom, the rich learning materials made available for the lesson, especially through the hazard fact sheets, provide ample scope and resources for extending and deepening learning as the teacher sees fit.

The American Red Cross Pillowcase Project materials include an *Educational Standards Report* that essentially maps out in great detail the points of alignment between the Project and the grade 3, 4 and 5 national curriculum and its stated standards of achievement. Of the piloting national societies, only the British Red Cross has followed the US example by systematically listing in discrete (one page) documents links to subjects in the UK National Curriculum and the learning objectives thereby addressed. In the case of the Australian Pillowcase Project, staff and volunteers are alerted through training materials to points of connection with the Australian curriculum that should be shared with teachers who also receive email guidance on curriculum links. The clear sense is, as a member of the US Pillowcase Project team puts it, that curriculum linkage documentation is so far being 'used primarily as a selling tactic' for purposes of achieving 'buy-in'. While the promotional leverage of curriculum alignment documentation is an important asset to be exploited in achieving entrée to schools, there is a strong case for using such a resource as a springboard for working with teachers on means and opportunities for embedding The Pillowcase Project more deeply in the curriculum by highlighting cross-curricular windows of opportunity for reinforcing/extending disaster preparedness learning.

***Recommendation 7: Each participating national society should develop discrete curriculum linkages documentation (covering curriculum content, learning outcomes, learning approaches) for both promotional and curriculum development purposes, using it not only to achieve buy-in with schools but also to open dialogic opportunities for the further embedment of disaster preparedness learning across and through the school curriculum. The documentation should highlight the ways in which both the Project lesson(s) per se but also any follow-up learning units and materials dovetail with and help realize the goals of the (national or local) curriculum.***

In building a fruitful and developmental relationship with teachers and schools and in developing the interface between The Pillowcase Project and the school curriculum, a clear enumeration of the knowledge, skills and attitudinal (dispositional) learning outcomes of the Project looks to be important. Yet, across the seven participating jurisdictions no thoroughgoing tabulation has been attempted. Rather, at best, a short list of learning outcomes is laid out with knowledge, skills and attitudinal outcomes undifferentiated. American Project materials list seven learning objectives. Australian materials list four learning objectives as well as some 'general capabilities' with additional objectives identified for each of the lessons of the follow-up *RediPlan Preparedness Program* for years 1-3 and 4-6. United Kingdom materials list five general learning objectives with an additional three hazard-specific learning objectives for each of its hazard resources. There is so far no listing of learning objectives in the Hong Kong, Mexican and Peruvian materials. All that said, the learning materials of each national society are full of implicit but, as yet, unarticulated learning outcomes. *Table 1* represents the fruits of an exercise by the researchers to codify, first, learning outcomes that are clearly laid out in Project documentation, second, learning outcomes that are implicit in the learning approaches and materials but not clearly stated, and, third, learning outcomes that might be considered given the recommendations in this report.

**Table 1: The Pillowcase Project Learning Outcomes**

<b>Knowledge/Understanding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners know of the work of the Red Cross and understand its core mission</li><li>• Learners know about the various hazards and disasters, natural and human-caused, that occur or are likely to occur in their locality, and their causes and effects; also that each locality has its own distinctive and seasonal hazard profile</li><li>• Learners know what items they must have packed, prepared and easily accessible in the event of an emergency</li><li>• Learners have an understanding, grounded in practice, of basic safety measures and procedures (immediate actions, escape routes, safe meeting places, following emergency escape route signage) to be adhered to should an emergency of whatever kind happen</li><li>• Learners understand the importance of following adult instructions and of calm and orderly movement during an emergency</li><li>• Learners should be aware of the roles and functions different people and groups fulfill during an emergency</li><li>• Learners are aware of who to contact for advice and assistance in the event of an emergency</li><li>• Learners know about disasters and the disaster preparedness work of children and communities in other countries (particularly countries and communities engaged in The Pillowcase Project)</li><li>• Learners understand what is causing climate change and how climate change is increasing the severity and frequency of hazards</li></ul>
<b>Skills/Capabilities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners possess the practical skills set to protect themselves and those they are with in times of hazard and in moments of emergency</li><li>• Learners have the ability to cope with and moderate their stress levels in times of emergency, and more generally</li><li>• Learners have the ability to explain clearly to their peers and also to adults why it is important to be prepared for emergencies and what the work of the Red Cross is in that regard</li><li>• Learners are able to act, alone or in concert with peers, as advocates for emergency preparedness in their homes and communities using argument, persuasion, questioning and by suggesting or demonstrating practical steps to be taken for better protection</li><li>• Learners have the ability to calm and reassure peers who are worried about hazards threats and during actual times of emergency</li><li>• Learners are able to describe and critically appraise their emergency preparedness sharing and advocacy efforts</li></ul>

- Learners have the ability to ask questions and seek information about hazards, disasters and emergencies

#### **Attitudes/Dispositions**

- Learners appreciate that emergencies are often unexpected and that a state of constant alertness and vigilance is important
- Learners develop an attitude of steady confidence and of assured self-efficacy regarding their ability to prepare for and act in emergencies
- Learners appreciate the importance of having an emergency kit to hand, that it might it might save their lives and make surviving the emergency more comfortable
- Learners feel confident about expressing and sharing their anxieties and fears about hazards and disasters
- Learners care about and empathize with those who are worried about hazards or who are currently facing hazard and disaster
- Learners embrace the importance of being individually and collectively prepared for hazard, disaster and emergency
- Learners develop the enhanced sense of community togetherness that is vital in preparing for emergencies and living through emergencies
- Learners place great store on meaningfully contributing to home and community safety and resilience.

We will shortly be discussing Project monitoring and evaluation and the point will be made, bearing repetition, that effective and meaningful evaluation has to be set against a clear understanding of aspirations, intentions and objectives. It may well be felt that the learning outcomes enumerated above are too many in number and some too elusive or ungraspable to evaluate, but an evaluation needs to be clear about which learning outcomes are being evaluated and the data collection modalities finessed to measure the realization of those outcomes.

***Recommendation 8:*** *The Pillowcase Project teams in each participating country should include a comprehensive list of knowledge, skills and attitudinal learning outcomes in the materials they put out. This could be a useful promotional tool as well as developmental tool. It may be prudent to differentiate between primary and secondary learning outcomes under each heading to avoid any sense of overburden, the primary learning outcomes being the focus of evaluation of student learning.*

The Pillowcase Project has an admirable local focus and places great weight upon having children consider hazards of local relevance and upon having students advocate for disaster preparedness at home and in their own community. The British teacher-led experience, while equally local in orientation, resulted in some teachers capitalizing on student interest that the Project was happening in several countries to encourage exploration of the hazard and emergency landscape of those other countries. The interest and excitement so generated speaks to a 'glocal' approach to the Project in which

localism is married with looking outwards into the wider world. It should not be forgotten in this regard that there is a long history of educational psychological research saying that children are at an optimal level of interest and curiosity concerning other countries and cultures between ages 9 and 11.<sup>2</sup>

***Recommendation 9:*** *Electronic communication opportunities should be availed of so that students can engage in peer-to-peer enquiry, discourse and exchange of views about hazards and disasters, respective local hazard/disaster landscapes and home and community disaster preparedness and action in their own and sister Pillowcase Project schools.*

To close this sub-section, we turn to the question of taking The Pillowcase Project to other grade levels and, by extension, to the question of curriculum progression. From national societies in some piloting jurisdictions there is considerable interest in involving older and younger students in the Project approach. The Hong Kong evaluation report (17-18) states a preference for two sets of materials in the second Project round, i.e. one set for primary grades 1-3 and one for primary 4-6 with activity and materials differentiation (simpler materials and activities for the former and more-diversified and in-depth materials for the latter). The Australian team envisions a program widening and extension resulting from cooperation with the broader emergency management sector involving interlinking primary and secondary grade levels within a broader setting of community engagement. The Mexican team has a somewhat similar ambition, wanting to take the program to more senior grades and involving adult learning. Peru, as we shall see shortly, is concentrating on widening the provision of disaster preparedness at grades 3 through 5 while involving parents in the learning process. The British team is actively exploring a toolkit approach for grades 3 through 6 with different learn/practice/share pathways and with differentiation and options for students of different ages, within which The Pillowcase Project lesson would figure.

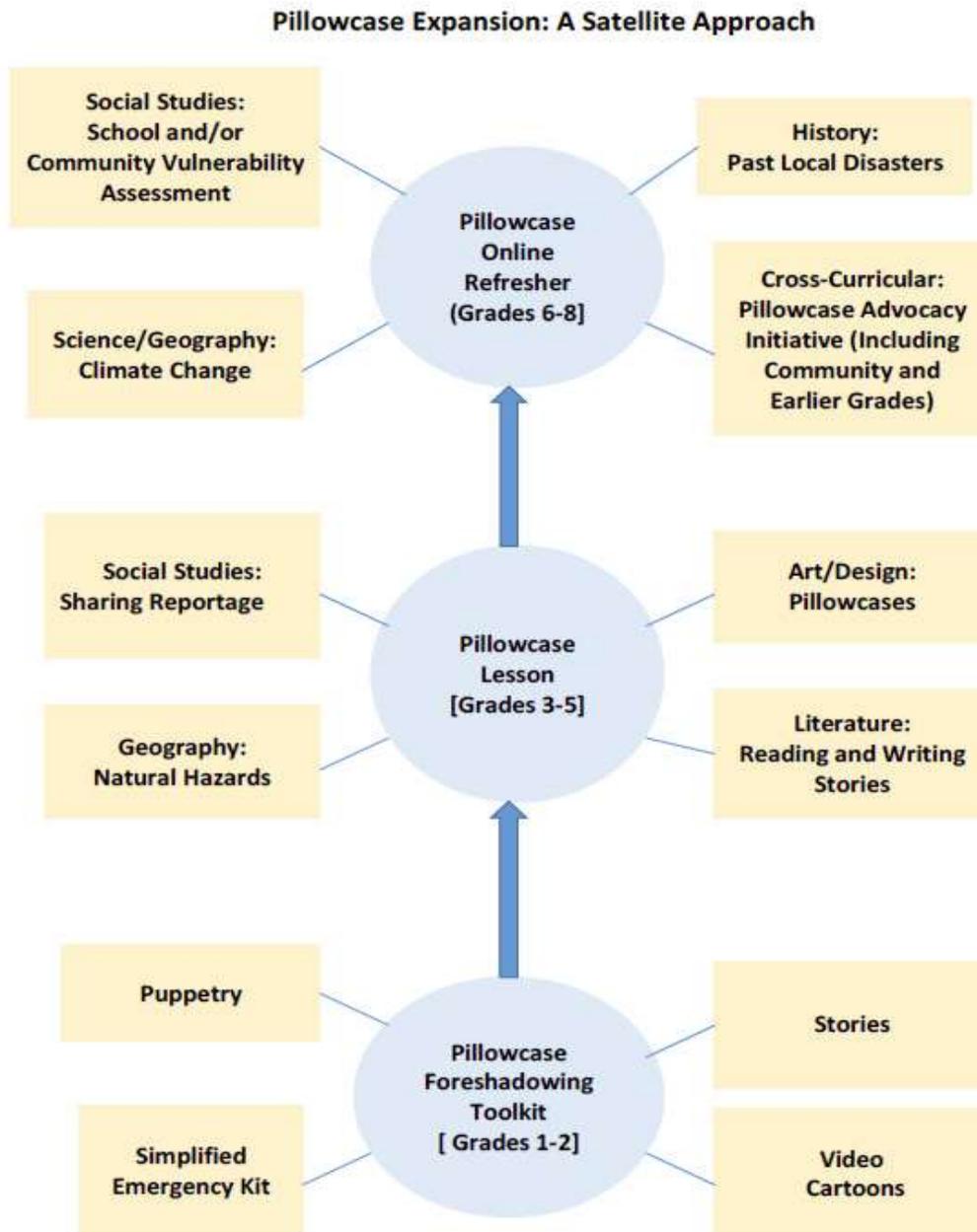
There is good case for foreshadowing disaster preparedness learning in grades 3 through 5 by making available learning opportunities for grades 1 and 2, opportunities that develop preliminary, age appropriate, understanding of ideas and acquisition of skills that will be built upon through further Pillowcase Project encounters. There is a very good case, too, for providing learning activities and materials fostering a widening and deepening of knowledge, concepts and skills sets beyond grade 5 so capitalizing upon the greater readiness and inclination for proactive engagement in school and community that comes with greater maturity. As one of the Mexican Pillowcase Project team puts it, 'we would like to expand (the Project) getting more technical, deeper, for older students'. A solid impression emerging from conversations with the Australian, Mexican and Peruvian teams is that senior students, resistant to being led, can be Pillowcase Project leaders, helping with projects for primary students while also providing a proactive nexus in taking forward disaster preparedness initiatives straddling classroom, school and community.

For these reasons we propose a satellite approach to expanding The Pillowcase Project curriculum (see *Figure 2*).

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<sup>2</sup> Greig, S., Pike, G. & Selby, D. 1992. *Earthrights: Education as if the Planet Really Mattered*. London: WWF/Kogan Page. 62-3.

**Figure 2**



For grades 1 and 2 a toolkit would give teachers the opportunity to developing initial understandings of safety and emergency needs and behaviors. Age appropriately, it would utilize puppets, stories, songs and fables, video cartoons and other modalities as well as familiarize them with a simplified emergency kit. The toolkit would be for teachers

to utilize in anticipation of students experiencing Project lesson(s) in the following three years. At grades 3-5 the current Project lessons would be offered by host teachers under the staff/volunteer delivery model and team delivery model and also by teachers under the teacher-led delivery model who, briefed in advance, would offer additional lessons dovetailing with and taking forward the intervention. In the example given under *Figure 2*, the teacher would offer the following satellite sessions: one or more Art and Design lessons for the decoration of pillowcases; a Social Studies lesson devoted to student sharing and reflection on how they used their Pillowcase Project learning at home and outside of class with lessons drawn on how to be an effective disaster preparedness advocate; Geography lessons furthering knowledge of hazards and disasters; and Literature lessons in which students read and discuss stories about emergencies and write and share their own tales. The *Figure* then suggests for grades 6-8 a Pillowcase Project online refresher lesson to be done in class or by each student at home with follow-up in class. The refresher would be accompanied by four cross-curricular satellites: Social Studies lessons given over to undertaking a school and/or community vulnerability assessment with results shared with the community; Science or Geography lessons on climate change; History lessons exploring past local disasters; and lessons across any of a number of disciplines in which students plan, prepare for and undertake advocacy in the community or with early grade students (an opportunity to become Pillowcase Project champions). Such learning opportunities at grades 6-8 offer one way of more fully aligning The Pillowcase Project with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, something we will come on to shortly (pp. 92-4). Learning objectives for The Pillowcase Project would be laid out for each of grades 1-2, 3-5 and 6-8 to meet the need for clear curriculum progression.

***Recommendation 10:*** *The Pillowcase Project Teams in each participating jurisdiction should consider pursuing a satellite approach to expanding the Project curriculum through the provision of a toolkit of curriculum materials for both early grade students (i.e. primary grades 1-2) and senior primary students (i.e. primary grades 6-8) thereby providing for disaster preparedness learning progression and reinforcement through the primary grades. The materials could be produced economically and made freely available to teachers in each participating jurisdiction.*