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Earthquake Safety
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Earthquake Safety Day National

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Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

Disaster Risk Communication

Disaster prevention and mitigation begins with information and its appropriate dissemination. It is essential to understand the risks as well as compell necessary actions. Successes of commercial advertising and marketing have led to the use of similar communication strategies to convey and convince social, health and environment issues with parallel success. It is therefore desirable to explore the potential application of these tools in the field of disaster management. This paper tries to provide an overview of these much-practised concepts for its application for risk reduction campaigns.

The process of communication can be defined as the exchange of information with a symbolic value and meaning to the receiver of the information (Gutteling et al. 1996). Application of known strategies of communication for risk reduction has led to the coining of a new phrase - Risk Communication. It is the systematic planning of information transfer based on scientific research, to prevent, solve or mitigate the risk. The process demands customized information for specific target groups. Over the years disaster managers have used risk and public communication tools in four distinct areas:

- 1 Informing and education,
- 2 Stimulating behavioral change to take protective measures,
- 3 Issuing of disaster warnings and emergency information, and
- 4 Exchanging of information and common approach to risk issues.

Writings on communication strategies use terminology with overlapping meaning. 'Public Awareness', 'Social Marketing' and 'Risk Communication', are three such terms that might create uncertainty in the context of disaster communication. This paper wishes to avoid in depth discussion of terms but assumes a fair degree of conformity between the terms.

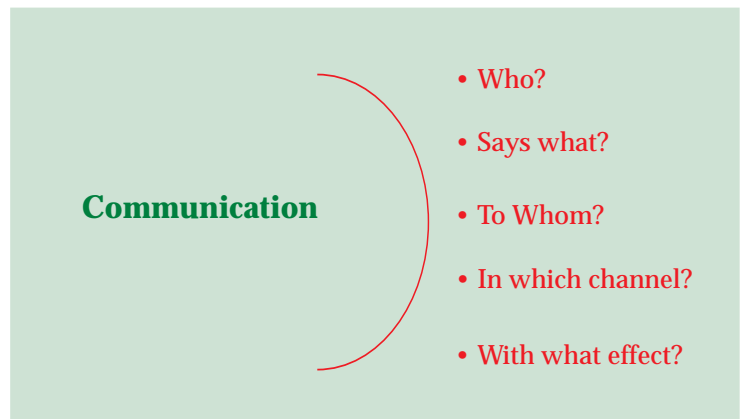
A Communication Model

Of the several models of communication that have emerged, the most relevant for disaster risk communication is that provided by Laswell (1948). This model analyses the source of information, message, audience, choice of media and feedback by the following five questions represented diagrammatically below:

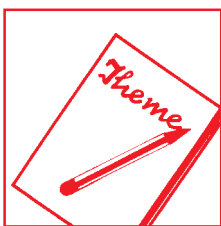
Public Communication Campaigns

Repetition of a message over time using a wide variety of media is an effective technique for reinforcement. Such a long term public campaign needs planning because hasty, uncoordinated, non-comprehensive action will quickly undermine public confidence and confuse those taking part. This may lead to a communication breakdown when a real disaster strikes. Raising awareness of the general public

should not be a one-off activity. Those who develop and implement the campaign should have special expertise in social communication to make it effective. Such endeavors must be collaborative with representatives from other disciplines involved in disaster prevention and mitigation providing necessary information inputs. Thus for effective results of a campaign, it must be properly planned with a realistic timeline, adequate budget and necessary resources for implementation. In short, it should achieve set SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound).



Theme...



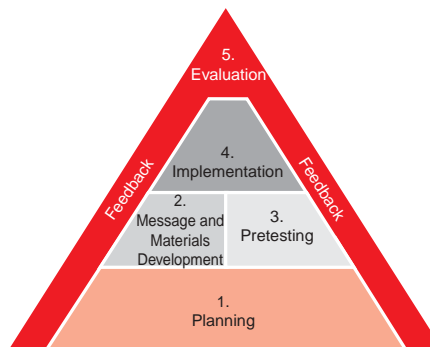
Some Pitfalls in Public Communication

Public information campaigns usually fail for many reasons. Some reasons are set forth below.

- 1 Failure of the planners to include the practitioners in discussion of what is possible,
- 2 Insufficient understanding of the communication process by the implementers,
- 3 Lack of budgetary or other required support,
- 4 Frustrations and delays due to lack of coordination and
- 5 Lack of in-built monitoring and evaluation of the communication project.

Outline of a Campaign

The usual phases in the formulation of a communication campaign are illustrated in the diagram below:



(diagram taken from the book “Hands-on Social Marketing” by Nedra Kline Weinreich)

Assessment is a pre-requisite to setting parameters for the campaign strategy. It involves analysing both the situation and the target audience. Planning of the campaign requires careful research,

- 1 to determine the major factors which led to present conditions,
- 2 to consider the obstacles and hindrances for successful implementation of the campaign and
- 3 to formulate appropriate goals and objectives.

Implementation of a campaign should only be done after having carefully designed the campaign based on the initial research, assessment and planning. The process involves several stages such as developing the message, choosing a delivery mechanism, dissemination of the message, pre-testing, evaluation of the process and the audience impact and finally sharing of experiences through documentation. In this process of campaign implementation the importance of pre-testing, evaluation and documentation cannot be over-emphasized and should not be compromised at any cost of time and resource constraints.

In conclusion disaster risk communication involves more than delivering a message and using communication techniques. It is essentially a process set in motion for changing perceptions and behaviors of the targeted audience. If one is developing a risk communication campaign, it is usually important to consult a social communication specialist in order to design a good and effective public awareness campaign. It is wiser not to attempt it on your own. If the project becomes a success, then one can go a step further in trying to influence a wider audience to repeat and reinforce the message to effect a gradual change in behavior toward creating a safer community.

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Suzanne L. Frew (2002), Public awareness and social marketing in “Proceedings of the in regional workshop in best practices in disaster mitigation”.

Dr Buddhi Weerasinghe (2002), Concept paper on social marketing strategy for AUDMP partners.

Communicating Disaster Risks: Some Convenient Myths



Victims can communicate risk to us if we listen.

DMI PHOTO 2001

A wide range of myths about communicating disaster risks have grown and remain unchallenged by disaster risk reduction and response professionals. Based on Disaster Mitigation Institute's (DMI) Learning Resources (LR) Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activity review in 2002, the following convenient myths are addressed here.

First, that we need to inform the communities about the risks they face and what they can do about it

The most popular and visible myths about communicating disaster risks is that communities don't know enough about their own exposure to risks, what causes it, what they can do about it, and what they can expect from outsiders, which makes them vulnerable. The experience of DMI shows that communities know enough about the risks they face and employ locally crafted, cost-effective, timely, risk reduction strategies to address the root causes of their vulnerability. They share costs, build walls, sell off assets, save for difficult times and transfer their risk to others among them. The recent 50 community long-term recovery survey in Gujarat, India, after the 2001 earthquake by DMI shows high levels of risk awareness among community members across urban-rural and men-women divide.

The community knowledge may not be organized or described in scientific manner as practitioners expect out of every community visits, which often leads to misunderstanding that communities need to be informed about the risks they face and what they can do about it. The community's information gets drowned once the outside world attacks it with its own top-down outside-in information and awareness material. DMI's work in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Delhi and Jaleswar on urban risks with CARE (UK) shows that often outside information displaces community knowledge system on risk management.

Second, promoting awareness about the disaster risk is the main aim of communicating with the communities.

Promoting awareness about disaster risk is only one of the aims of communicating disaster risks with the communities. The community information need priority differs from time-to-time (relief to recovery phase), place-to-place (Orissa to Gujarat), and event-to-event (earthquake to floods).

A recent 'then-and-now review' of 1987 and 2003 drought response by DMI has found interesting trends and gaps between the flow of information at the community level. It suggests that context specific, updated and ready-to-use information that supplements communities' own efforts to mitigate disaster impacts are received with enthusiasm and are actually used. Single-content information starts being neglected while strategic mixing enhances the use of such information. Outsiders must go beyond communicating awareness. Communities want to know, for example, what outsiders can offer them, what resources are available, what other communities are doing to mitigate risks. Often communities wish to know cost of risk reduction and how it compares with cost of not reducing risk. Awareness is only a small part of a range of issues that need to be communicated between outsiders and the communities.

Insight...

Third, that the community needs rudimentary tools, techniques and methods to communicate risk.

The indicator of timeliness for the risk communication is crucial. One of the most important reasons for delays in risk communication practice arises due to our belief that until the information and its technology is simplified, communities will not be able to use it. Our perception and practice about risk communication can adversely affect our decision when we say, "community needs something rudimentary or simple information package to use to communicate risk".



This myth is so convenient that we even underestimate the potential of Information Technology (IT) in risk communication, which ultimately hinders the communities' access to the latest and updated information. DMI's current student-research work with Cranfield University on ICT and Disaster Risk Communication in Bhuj, Gujarat, recommends building up to the use of IT tools with and in the communities for effective risk communication. DMI has observed the gap bridging the process

between the introductions of complex tools and their use at the community level. Case studies of communities using SATphone, V-Sat vehicles, mobile phones, and Talk-back technology for recovery, relief or risk are now increasingly available in South Asia.

Fourth, communicating risk to communities is a one-time low-cost effort.

Risk communication is not a one-time-low-cost effort. It requires ongoing exchange of information, which means both efforts and money. Break-ups in the flow of risk communication can adversely affect the trust-relationship and authenticity of information at the community level. One-time low-cost effort neither helps communities nor the agency. It hardly gives communities an opportunity to share and reflect their views on risk communication practice, so risk communication remain a less important and low priority issue within the community. The impact of risk communication fades away very quickly if not followed up regularly. A review of plans of CBOs and local NGOs indicates that three to five years is a more suitable duration for risk communication initiatives.

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Catch Them Young: Disaster Preparedness in Schools

In 1998 following up on the needs expressed by various schools, a pilot program was designed to undertake disaster preparedness education for the primary school teachers and children. With funding from DIPECHO, a team was set up comprising staff from UNDP, international consultants, the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control, the Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) and the Federation developed the initial material. A pilot program was then undertaken in three disaster prone provinces by the VNRC.

The process involved training of trainers by the Red Cross. These, in turn, trained the primary school teachers, who subsequently taught children of grade 5 and 6. In two years over 10,000 teachers and more than 500,000 children have undergone training. Some 250 schools in 27 of the most disaster prone provinces in the country are involved in the project. Training was given often as an extra-curricular activity in the evenings after school and on weekends. The VNRC book: "An introduction to Disaster Preparedness for Primary School Children" was used as the main text to provide this training. This was accompanied by a colorful easel used by the teachers during their teaching. Much of this project was supported by the American and Japanese Red Cross societies.

The book itself was developed in a participatory and consultative manner. The publication went through several changes and tried to incorporate feedback from school children, teachers and the local education service department. Initially planned in black and white it was published in color to make it more attractive and interesting to the children who would not only use it but also own it. Many other activities, such as dramas, inter-school and inter-provincial competitions followed the training. These were often spontaneously organized by the teachers and schools to compliment the disaster preparedness learning. These activities reached out to a much wider audience through national broadcasts on television. The success of the pilot project led to current replication of this project using DFID funding.

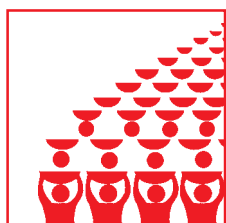
Other public awareness materials were developed as a spin-off from the publication of the book. With funding from UNICEF and AusAID public awareness brochures were specifically developed targeting children and parents in the Mekong delta provinces aimed at trying to reduce the tragic loss of life of children during the seasonal flooding of the Mekong. The books and also posters were developed with the participation of school children. These were displayed in public buildings to reach a wider audience.

Education is a continuous process. These publications are designed to provide practical skill training on disaster preparedness as a part of a child's education, and are currently going through a process of evaluation. They will be revised as required to keep abreast with current disaster management issues and to suit the needs of the children.

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From the grassroots



“Lest we forget” - Learning to Remember - Memorials, Mascots and Safety Days

Memorials, Mascots and Disaster Safety Day campaigns are three tried and tested ways of making some breakthroughs in public communication and education of disaster risks and safety. They stand as reminders of our losses and a caution for possible ones in the future. Here are a few examples:

The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Memorial Center in Kobe, Japan, opened in 2002. It is a marvel of modern technology and Japanese cultural tradition. Situated in a seven-storey high functional building, it houses a museum where the July 17, 1995 earthquake and its impact is recreated with earthshaking sound, light and fury. Several activities are held here, such as screening a movie showing the response of survivors, a walk through a recreated damaged street and an opportunity to see objects gathered from the rubble with mobile terminals providing a commentary on the significance of each object.

Also on display are educational models of liquefaction and seismic resistant features of buildings, special sections for children and volunteer guides drawn from victims' families. All these add value and make the experience emotionally charged and uniquely compelling. One leaves with the conviction that seismic safety is very much needed. The museum is the site of a very moving ceremony each year, held to remember the victims and rededicate the Kobe citizenry and local, prefectural and national governments in their commitment to earthquake safety. It is also a venue for training and research undertaken by the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) staffs, who also give practical advice on post earthquake reconstruction advice. The building also houses regional organizations and UN Agencies dealing with disaster management and reduction like ADRC, EDM, UNCRD, UNOCHA and WHO.

The Bhugol Park in central Kathmandu, Nepal, houses a memorial monument erected in 1941 to the victims of the great Nepal-Bihar earthquake of 15 January 1934. Built in the shape of a globe and supported by a pillar, it contains papers on debt loans given to survivors for reconstruction after the government agreed four years later to waive interest repayment by victims' families. The base pillar has the names of all victims, a description of the earthquake's impact, relief efforts and a positive note on the need of earthquake disaster reduction. Having fallen into some disrepair, today it has become a focal point for earthquake safety in 1999 during the Kathmandu Valley Earthquake Risk Management Program. The Earthquake Safety Day campaign, held annually on January 15th since 1999, has had the monument as the starting point for the school children's march through the city every year; has been featured on a special first day cover brought out by the Posts Department. It has become emblematic of the campaign. This has further led to similar monuments being rediscovered in Lalitpur and Bhaktapur and other cities within the country, all getting cleaned up and serving as the focal point of local campaigns.

The city of Ratnapura in Sri Lanka experienced major landslides in 1993 that buried 8 people below a mound of large rocks. As part of the Sri Lanka Urban Multi-Hazard Mitigation Project (SLUMDMP) and the inspirational leadership of the then city mayor Ashok Jayawardena, this 'graveyard' site was converted into a **monument to the landslide victims**. Inspired by the Kathmandu experience, it became the start point for a march to the city center under the disaster safety day activities initiated in 2001. Here too, through probing into local history and memory, a monument built to honor those response personnel who perished in the 1948 floods was rediscovered and this became the point at which the march terminated.

There are several other monuments of this kind in other Asian countries and we would encourage practitioners to document and publicize these both within local, national and even regional contexts. Building monuments to remember victims is part of the mourning process, creating deep and strong ties to local memories. It has its 'scare value' and helps make the distant and scientifically complex concept of disaster risk more understandable, reinforcing the realization that 'this could happen to us'. Running safety day campaigns on the anniversaries of remembered historical events increases the acceptability of safety messages and even the willingness of busy public figures to be associated with these events.

Another proven technique in public awareness campaigns for safety is the use of memorable mascots: those that are representative and emblematic of the message or increase its authoritativeness. This draws heavily from the experience of commercial advertising as well as the marketing of a variety of socially significant themes. There are a number of well-developed campaigns using mascots for disaster-related themes.

Smokey Bear, the more than 50-year-old emblem for wildfire safety in the US, was created after a bear was injured in a 1942 forest fire. He has become the symbol and spokesperson for all protective and preventive measures and is widely seen in comic books and on pins, posters, stickers, coffee



Wally Wise

mugs and even shoe laces. He has been successfully adapted by the Indonesian fire fighting and forestry agencies.

Wally Wise, the mascot for the campaign of shelter-in-place against toxic gas releases; is a turtle, naturally associated with withdrawing into his home-like shell. Wally Wise coloring books, stickers and costumes are widely available, while live costume appearances at school parties are organized by his creator the Local Emergency Preparedness Committee in Deer Park city, Texas. Like Smokey Bear, this mascot's popularity knows no bounds, and Wally was adopted and adapted by the local crisis group in Haldia, India.

Lesser known, but equally innovative, are three home-grown examples in Asia. **The Mongolian Eagle** is used by the Mongolian Red Cross Society to communicate messages and be the symbol of their home safety campaign. **The Laotian Buddhist Monk** was developed by CESVI in its project in SAYABOURY on forest fire fighting. **The Muslim Teacher** was successfully used by the Indonesian Urban Disaster Mitigation Project in its earthquake safety educational campaign with school kids.

By consistently using the mascot in all communications during a campaign in a variety of forms including live costume appearances, the mascot comes to 'personalize' and 'brand' the message. Mere sightings of the mascot subliminally 'recall' the message. This therefore becomes an interesting value-added and proven beneficial technique to any IEC campaign on disaster safety.

Associating a local advertising agency with the mascot's development and use has been an aspect in some of these campaigns that can be beneficially replicated at little or no cost. Many agencies like to be associated with socially relevant and useful campaigns and are willing to deploy competent communication professionals as part of their individual skills development and philanthropic social work funded from their own resources. A practical way of making public private partnership work! All these techniques and experiences are powerful ways of making your work more successful.

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ProVention Consortium's Grants Program Supports Youths' Creativity in the Field of Disaster Management

As natural disasters are reversing hard-earned development gains and engendering poverty in so many parts of the world, the ProVention Consortium is reaching out to a particular target audience for action - the world's youth. The Consortium is taking a step toward creating a safer future by encouraging young people interested in disaster management from developing countries to think 'outside the box' and come up with innovative new ideas as they develop creative risk management projects and activities, through a unique grants program managed by the World Bank's Disaster Management Facility.

A call for the research grant's proposal was made late last year. Sixty-five proposals were selected to receive grants based on their potential for making a significant contribution to the field of disaster management. The winning proposals cover a number of unique topics. They include the spread of forest fires due to honey-hunters in South Africa; coastal erosion vulnerability mapping in the Philippines; training youths in emergency preparedness and first aid techniques in Bulgaria and a proposal to study the awareness of earthquake risk among the population of Mendoza, Argentina. Awards have been granted to students and young professionals from 27 countries: Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

The 65 selected projects are to each receive a maximum grant of USD5,000, and are expected to be completed by the end of 2003. Each one is being carried out under the guidance of a mentor who is a professional in the field of disaster management. The collective results of these projects will be disseminated widely in 2004 after they have been completed. The Disaster Management Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, (DMC) in collaboration with the World Bank, is administering the program and hosting a virtual space where the young researchers can network and learn from one another. The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in Thailand and the Cranfield Disaster Management Center in the United Kingdom are partnering with DMC to manage the project in Asia-Pacific and the African-Sub-Saharan regions respectively. For more information visit http://www.proventionconsortium.org/projects/appliedres_press.htm

AUDMP Highlights

NSET-Nepal Exhibits Earthquake-resistant Building Construction Methods

The National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET-Nepal) has launched a demonstration program of earthquake-resistant construction methods in four selected municipalities, namely Vyas, Banepa, Pokhara and Dharan. This is one of the activities under the “Consolidation Phase” of the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Program’s (AUDMP), Kathmandu Valley Earthquake Risk Management Project in an attempt to strengthen and sustain the project’s earthquake mitigation efforts in Nepal.

Screening and selection of a public building as a demonstration case in each municipality is being undertaken. In Banepa, a proposed new building in Shree Chaitanya Multiple Campus has been identified. The analysis and design of the building has been completed and construction has commenced. The construction work is handled by masons who underwent NSET-Nepal’s seismic construction training. Selection for the other three municipalities is being finalized.

In an effort to build local capacities to replicate such initiative, the retrofitting/reconstruction program is supplemented with two training programs for masons and contractors in Vyas and Dharan Municipalities. Nearly 130 masons and constructors from the respective municipalities and the neighboring villages participated in the training.

Since there is a demand for such training in other municipalities, the curriculum for mass-scale training for engineers, technicians and masons on seismic design of structures and seismic construction of building is currently being developed.

Capacity Building and Public Awareness Creation Placed at the Core During Laos Demonstration Project

During the months of May and June, the Lao PDR Urban Disaster Mitigation Project (LUDMP) actively built capacity and raised public awareness.

Three training courses were conducted, two on First Aid Training with technical assistance from the Lao Red Cross and one on Fire Fighting and Fire Rescue with technical assistance from the Thai Fire Brigade during May 19 to 21 and June 4 to 6, 2003 respectively.

The First Aid Training’s objective was to impart first aid skills to traffic police and fire station personnel enabling them to save people’s lives in case of traffic accident and fire. A total of 16 officers from the Traffic Police Department and 38 trainees from the Vientiane Fire Station and Fire Prevention and Protection Police Department participated in the training programs.

The Fire Fighting and Rescue training course for the Fire Brigade officers of Lao PDR, held during May 26 to 30, 2003 in Vientiane, is a follow-up activity of the Training of Trainers (TOT) previously conducted in Thailand. Its objective was not only to enhance capacity of local fire brigade officers in Fire Fighting and Rescue, but also to increase the number of local trainers in the area for further knowledge and skill dissemination within the country. Adaptation of the course contents from ADPC’s Fire Fighting and Rescue training course was done under guidance of an advisor from the Thai Fire Brigade. Core resource persons for the course were the TOT alumni. A training course on the incorporation of disaster risk issues in land use planning was held during June 24 to 28, 2003 in Pakse, Lao PDR.



Concerning raising public awareness on urban fire risk and road safety in general public and school community, three activities have been organized, viz art competition of primary school children, training on using a Handbook for Urban Disaster to primary school teachers and public awareness campaign launched on 26 June 2003.

AUDMP-making cities safer...



Two training courses on NDM and CBDM organized in Bangkok, Thailand

Following the administrative restructuring by placing all disaster management agencies under one roof in October 2002, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) in partnership with ADPC organized two Training of Trainers (TOT) courses to lay a common foundation and understanding in disaster management for its officers. The two back-to-back training courses—one on Natural Disaster Management (NDM) and the other Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDM) adapted to the needs of the country, was held from June 30 to July 4 and July 7 to 12 respectively.

As part of capacity building program for the stakeholder agency of the Royal Thai Government under the AUDMP's Thailand Urban Disaster Mitigation Project (TUDMP), the training courses are expected to yield development of appropriate skills and knowledge on disaster management applicable to Thailand's disaster situation. Thirty representatives from both DDPM headquarter and its regional offices attended the courses. The trained participants acted as trainers for future training programs of DDPM on these two topics.

Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction for Cities (EVRC) - 3 held in Dhaka

The third course on Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction for Cities (EVRC-3) was held from June 9 to 18, 2003 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It was a collaborative event between ADPC, Bangkok, National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal, WSSI, EMI and BRAC University, Bangladesh. 34 persons participated. Most were from government and non-governmental organizations in Bangladesh with representation from Nepal and Pakistan. The growing concern of seismicity in Bangladesh was highlighted during the course. Professor Haresh Shah of WSSI, Prof Jamilur Chowdhury of BRAC University, Prof. Ravi Sinha from EMI, Amod Dixit and Ramesh Guragain of NSET-Nepal, Dons of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), and the director of the Geological Survey of Bangladesh were on the distinguished panel. ADPC staff reinforced the resource panel. Participants expressed deep satisfaction over the course content and delivery.

New Publications of AUDMP

Production of five new publications of AUDMP is underway. These information products will soon be available in print and on the web at <http://www.adpc.net/audmp/library.html>.

1. Safer Cities 5: Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Sri Lanka: This case study looks at two community-based disaster mitigation initiatives in Nawalapitiya, in Kandy district, central Sri Lanka. It demonstrates a novel experience as state, non-government organizations, local authorities and community groups collaborated to reduce disaster vulnerability of the affected communities.

2. Safer Cities 6: Promotion of Disaster Mitigation in Sri Lanka: It looks at the area of disaster risk communication in disaster management. It captures process, experience and lessons learned on disaster risk communication initiatives implemented under the Sri Lanka Urban Multi-Hazard Disaster Mitigation Project (SLUMDMP).

3. Project Completion Report of the Indonesian Urban Disaster Mitigation Project (IUDMP): The IUDMP, implemented by the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB), has demonstrated a methodology for seismic risk analysis, mitigation and preparedness in the earthquake-prone demonstration site of Bandung. The paper captures experience, highlights and lessons learned of the IUDMP in order to share the knowledge with those promoting mitigation in the respective constituencies at community, city and national levels.

4. Project Completion Report of the Bangladesh Urban Disaster Mitigation Project (BUDMP): The report describes process and experience in disaster mitigation of the BUDMP implemented by CARE-Bangladesh. The BUDMP works in the two flood-susceptible communities of Tongi and Gaibandha Municipalities and has successfully established community-based flood mitigation and preparedness systems to improve the capacity and skills of the communities to manage flood risks and apply mitigation strategies.

5. Disaster Management Contingency Plan of Tongi Municipality: In order to accommodate an effective disaster management and capacity building of Municipal Disaster Management Committee (MDMC) in Tongi Municipality, a one-year Disaster Management Contingency Plan has been formulated with technical assistance from the BUDMP.

Public Awareness has been on the agenda of several organizations working on Disaster Risk Reduction in the region. Organizations have used different medium to communicate and spread awareness on disaster risk. Here we present some of the examples from the region which have been successfully and effectively implemented.

Monuments and Memorials



Sri Lanka, Nepal & Japan

Dramas, Competition, Street Plays



Disaster Safety Day Rallies

Bangladesh & Sri Lanka



**Bangladesh,
Sri Lanka &
Nepal**

Publications



Bangladesh, Vietnam, Lao PDR & the Philippines

Posters



Cambodia, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka & Vietnam

Increasing Awareness Reducing Risk: Disaster Risk Reduction Campaigns in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam

The Disaster Reduction Program for Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam (DRP-CLV) was an 18-month project implemented by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and its three project partners - the National Disaster Management Organization in each of the project country. The project was supported by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Royal Danish Embassy.

The project focused largely on capacity building, pilot project implementation and program development. Disaster risk communication and public awareness raising were the central activities. The rationale behind having risk communication as a core activity was an expressed need in the three countries.

At the end of the project, a five-year program on disaster risk communication was developed by each project partner informed by the knowledge and experiences gained from the DRP-CLV project. Short-term strategies were also developed enabling Cambodia and Vietnam to implement a community-based public awareness project in selected communities at risk from flooding and drought. Public safety and disaster risk reduction was integrated in school curriculum of grades 3-5 in selected schools in Vientiane.

CAMBODIA: Protecting Livelihoods

The main partner in Cambodia was the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM). Strategies used included training followed by actual 'doing' in the field, reflecting and generating lessons to improve project implementation. The community-based public awareness was conducted in Prey Veng province - one of the poorest provinces suffering from regular floods and droughts.

The first task undertaken was to facilitate **participatory research** in the affected communities. National, provincial and district level officers of NCDM were trained in the use of Participatory Risk Assessment (PRA) tools. Following the training the officials had to apply these tools and collect data from two drought and two flood-affected communities. This data helped them to:

- 1 determine people's attitudes and behavior related to hazard risks,
- 2 identify behavioral changes that could prevent or mitigate disasters and/or their effects, and
- 3 consider how people could be influenced to change behavior accordingly.



Analysis of the findings by the government officers showed that there was a high level of awareness of the hazards and preparedness. People were ready and keen to follow affordable mitigation measures. Women were thought to be able to benefit from training on human and animal healthcare. A need to provide information and training relevant to diversification of economic activities, including crop production, was also recognized. People followed advice as long as they believed it to be accurate and held great faith in information from local authorities, elders and monks. TV and radio were popular mediums.

Subsequently, two **risk communication messages** and mediums were developed for the pilot test. A poster was used to create awareness on the risk to livestock if they were not vaccinated, symptoms of three diseases to aid diagnosis and remedies that could be made from locally available resources while waiting for a vet. The purpose was to create intentions to vaccinate animals and administer correct remedies if they fell ill.

A leaflet was printed containing information about the planting calendar to raise awareness and understanding of seasonal changes and when to plant certain crops in order to reduce crop loss. The purpose was to create intentions to change the time of planting certain crops and encourage

conversion to short-term rice. The method used for building awareness was through interpersonal contact with a commune official trained as a community educator.

Pre-testing of a dummy poster and leaflet was done during two training sessions given to the community educators in January in the two disaster-prone areas of Prey Veng and Sithor Kanda. Training included one day of fieldwork testing the materials in communities. The poster was revised on the suggestions of the community educators and community members and was finally approved by MAFF in January 2003.

The campaign itself involved the distribution of the final posters and leaflets to over 150 families in each of the 22 villages in 22 different communes in February (11 villages each in Prey Veng and Sithor Kandal). Each family received one poster and one leaflet. The community educator explained the poster and leaflet to each group of 40 people within the 120 families selected. This was followed by an open discussion forum. To test the level of understanding of the information contained in the poster and leaflet, the group was evaluated using questions drafted by the community educators. House to house visits were conducted to ensure that the messages were passed on to other family members. Posters were also distributed to ministerial district offices, placed in public places and in schools to expand the target audience.

In december 2002 the Regional Programs Director of ADPC facilitated a strategy development workshop which formed the basis of the government's five-year plan on disaster risk communication.

Evaluation and Impacts:

The final evaluation of the project reported:

- 1 People liked the posters and found them relevant and 'realistic'.
- 2 The leaflets were more difficult to understand and they relied on explanation by the community educator.
- 3 The NCDM showed responsiveness to community demands for information on a fourth disease and prepared a leaflet about symptoms and remedies, which was distributed through community educators at the time of the evaluation.
- 4 To make it a sustainable effort, community education within normal responsibilities of commune committee officers was included.
- 5 Community educators showed a good understanding of the poster and leaflet and their ability to explain it.
- 6 The message of the poster concerning the importance of vaccinating animals seemed to be universally understood and people were able to recall the information on symptoms to diagnose animal disease.
- 7 In most villages there was intention to act on the message and vaccinate animals.
- 8 Many people said they intended to try the remedies if their livestock fell ill.
- 9 In about 70% of the villages there were individuals who said they would follow crop-planting advice. Although many people wanted to change the crops they had planted and grow short-term rice, access to water and other factors outside of the control of the project presented obstacles.
- 10 In many villages, children who could read seemed to be able to understand and explain the leaflet to their families.
- 11 There were requests from Kandal province for access to the leaflet as people thought it was particularly relevant to local seasonality.
- 12 The poster and leaflet were reviewed by a public awareness expert.
- 13 The poster was awarded a score of 3.96 out of a maximum of 5 for overall content and structure and 4.8 for message.



LAO PDR: Creating a Culture of Safety

The overall strategy in Lao PDR centered on the development and testing of teaching materials and teachers' guidelines on disaster management for primary schools (grade 3-5). The main partner was the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC). NDMC implemented the project in partnership with the National Research Institute of Educational Science (NRIES) which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The DRP-CLV Program supported the capacity building of officers working for NDMC and NRIES to develop skills needed to plan, develop and test teaching materials and teaching guidelines on disaster management.

Disaster Risk Communication in Schools

Development of curriculum, supplementary materials and teachers' guidelines for grades 3 to 5 responded to a government priority of creating a culture of safety in Lao society. The project provided an opportunity to develop materials and test these materials. Revised materials were then to be included in the national curriculum. The main motivation to develop school curricula was the issue of sustainability. It was felt by the NDMO that traditional public awareness campaigns produced a great deal of interest for a period, but that interest could rarely be sustained for a long time. With the successful implementation at the primary level it was proposed to extend the same to secondary and tertiary education. Since the idea and need for such an initiative came from the government itself there was a strong sense of ownership of the process and product.

The project benefited 225 children from three schools in Vientiane and another 800 at eight schools through ADPC's Lao Urban disaster mitigation project.

Developing the Curricula

An initial **needs assessment** workshop was conducted, which was attended by 38 people including NDMO and NRIES staff, teacher trainers, school directors, teachers and representatives from the road safety department and fire brigade. The main objective was to evaluate the current social science curriculum on hazards.

Through a **process of consultation** the curriculum developer designed the outline of content suited to each grade for each topic. Nine topics were decided for inclusion: fire, flood, drought, road safety, epidemic, drug control, pollution and social conflict. A draft of the training materials was brought out by December 2002, which was discussed by the NRIES and NDMO. The team simultaneously developed tests to evaluate the materials and the teaching guidelines.

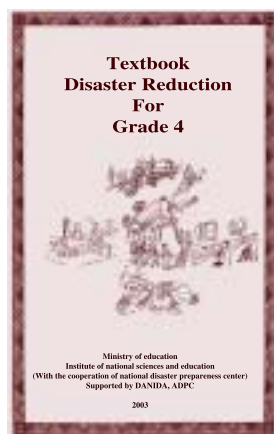
The **pre-test questionnaires** were reviewed in February to ensure that the questions were clear enough for children to understand. An agreement was made between the NDMO and NRIES on how the pre-tests and post-tests would be conducted.

Pre-tests were carried out with a sample of students from each class in three schools. Some problems were experienced because the children in grade 3 could not read so the designers had to explain the questions to them. The results varied greatly across grades and schools.

The teachers were also consulted to get feedback on the new materials at the same time the students were tested. All of them thought that the new materials would be useful. They also thought this would increase awareness and knowledge of the children on disaster management. The teachers' manual was printed and reviewed by NDMO and MOE. Teachers were given training on disaster management and an orientation on the teachers' guidelines. Disaster Management training expanded their knowledge of the range of hazards and what to do to 'protect' themselves from disaster effects.

The materials were tested in lessons and afternoon activities during March and April. Teaching activities were followed by tests so that responses could be analyzed with pre-test results to identify knowledge changes as indicators of the effectiveness of materials. The questions had been modified after the pre-test experience in order to make them easier for the children to understand.

The curriculum developers visited schools to monitor delivery of lessons and activities, interviewed teachers and asked about problems. They reported that the new materials excited pupils, however, they said they found it difficult to get critical feedback from the teachers, who, liked everything.



The DRP-CLV project provided a rare opportunity for curriculum developers from NRIES, NDMO staff and teachers to get together and develop curriculum and teaching materials. The NDMO, NRIES, directors and the teachers involved all brought different perspectives and expertise to the process.

The school directors and teachers were able to give input about the specific needs of the different grades. ADPC's curriculum development specialist oversaw critical activities in curriculum development and testing.



Evaluation and Impact:

- 1 Disaster management was thought of as an important subject for schools as the children were exposed to hazard situations in every day life.
- 2 Suggestions were made by the director of NRIES that the disaster management material could be integrated into national curriculum or human development plans.
- 3 There was a general feeling that road safety, drugs, fire, social conflict were of particular relevance to primary school children in Vientiane.
- 4 Education in schools was being extended to families and this was a bonus as more people were being educated and made aware of the risks in society.
- 5 Teachers observed that the education was bringing about a change in children's behavior resulting from lessons and games on garbage disposal. Children from grades who were being taught about pollution were telling younger students to throw waste in dustbins.
- 6 The teachers' guidelines gave teachers new ideas on teaching methods, including games and songs.
- 7 Nearly all the classrooms visited had pictures displayed on various disaster management themes that were drawn by students during lessons and afternoon activities.
- 8 Children could name all the hazards, answer questions about preventing road accidents and fires, and explain the consequences of floods. For example, turning lights and irons off before going out, smoking is harmful, playing cards and fighting are not good, burning rubbish causes air pollution, don't litter, don't throw rubbish near the river; don't drink and drive, causes and effects of drought; and effects of betting and stealing.
- 9 Comparison of scores of the pre-test and post-test showed a positive increase in awareness among the children across the three grades.
- 10 This pilot project was an important step in NDMO's long-term strategy of communicating disaster risk through formal education.

VIETNAM: Protecting Life

The project partner in Vietnam was the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control. The Vietnamese government already considers disaster mitigation an important priority, but the focus on disaster preparedness to complement disaster relief, and within disaster preparedness on non-structural measures such as disaster risk communication could be reinforced by such attention.

Central Vietnam is highly prone to water related disasters, which cause enormous loss of lives and livelihood and make sustainable development almost impossible. The project built disaster risk communication capacity among government officials and the target communities. It also worked to create preparedness among the target public for storms and floods through the use of a creative campaign. The campaign itself was based on secondary and primary research.

Following the priorities laid out in the national action plan on disaster management, the Department of Dike Management Flood and Storm Control (DDMFSC) concentrated in community-based public awareness and in developing its short and medium term strategies. Similar strategies were used in both Cambodia and Vietnam. Mentoring and doing became the most effective tool to train government officers.

Armed with theoretical knowledge and practical experience gained from the DRP-CLV project, the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control developed its five-year program on disaster risk communication. This would not have been possible without their successful implementation of a pilot project in a lagoon in Hue among the boat people.



Prior to the implementation of the project research was conducted to first identify vulnerable target groups. **Primary research** was then conducted using a more traditional quantitative research approach - a formal questionnaire survey. An independent consultant assisted ADPC and the project partner to design a community-based public awareness program. The first target audience comprised farmers and fisher-folk who live in Central Vietnam's lowlands and lagoons and along its coastline. The objective was to increase knowledge (awareness and recall) and understanding and create the intent to act in the face of disaster.

Strategy development workshop: Armed with the results of the research, a workshop to design the public awareness campaign was held. Attended by key people from the national and provincial level, a three-month public awareness campaign was drafted.

Implementation: A pilot project was implemented in two hamlets - Trung Chanh and Luong Qui Phu in Loc Dien commune. Two kinds of posters were produced - one that described the impact of storms and floods and one on protective actions to be taken at each warning level. These posters were tested at the communities and their feedback was incorporated in the finalization of the posters. To instil recall, three songs were composed, one by a professional artist, and the other two by community members. These songs were regularly played in the hamlets over the public address system.

The success of the pilot project both in Cambodia and Vietnam is owed to the dedication and commitment of the community educators. They enjoy a high degree of trust and respect in these two countries and they are the most important link in a community-based public awareness project.

Following the implementation of the pilot project, 405 families understood the warning signals and are able to protect their lives.

Evaluation and Impact

- 1 There is evidence that the posters and tables of warning signals together with interpersonal contact with local educators were an effective means to raise awareness of the impact of storms and floods and the need to be prepared.
- 2 People found the material relevant and easy to relate to their own experiences.
- 3 The use of songs was a particularly effective way to complement the message and help people remember. Initial results showed some people could remember what actions to take. There was evidence of intention to act on signals concerning not going to sea and prepare for evacuation.
- 4 There was further evidence of people taking action to prepare for a storm.
- 5 Many villagers could sing the song and remember pictures in the posters and leaflets warning them of wind speed.

A five-year disaster risk communication campaign strategy was developed for Central Vietnam based on the experience of the pilot, secondary research, information provided by ADPC on pilot project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion and Synthesis:

The evaluation of the DRP-CLV project concluded that the risk awareness campaigns in the three countries were successful. Apart for raising risk reduction awareness in the target communities and audiences, the program supported the capacity building of different officers at different levels of the National Disaster management Committee to develop the skills needed to plan, implement and monitor public awareness campaigns. This allowed formal training, technical assistance to complement a 'learning by doing approach', which simultaneously contributed to strengthening the institutional capacity of the national disaster management systems. It also facilitated increased interaction among officers at all levels in the government and directly linked them to the communities at risk. Also, the project increased the NDMO's access to disaster management information through

donation of books and technological support which enhanced the partners' access to information on the Internet. The project was also able to build on the trust, support and commitment of individual consultants, NDMO and often people, who volunteered to work to achieve the project objectives.

For more information on the project visit <http://www.adpc.net/drp-clv/index.html> or write to Imelda Abarquez, Project Manager, DRP-CLV.iabarquez@dpc.net

Select Internet Resources

<http://www.benton.org/>

Benton Foundation, a Washington-based organization, specializes in area communication and media ownership. The website contains documents on strategic communication, a listserv on the mass media, workshops and public events announcements, the Foundation Library and links to related sites. A number of information resources on communications policies and on how to use communications technology more effectively are available on the site.

<http://www.id21.org>

id21 aims to bring recent UK based development research findings and policy lessons to policymakers and development practitioners worldwide. The online collection contains several policy relevant research digests on critical global development issues, drawn from leading UK based economics and social studies departments and think tanks, and from a wide range of NGO research departments and consultants. The site also maintains an electronic newsletter that provides regular updates of the latest additions to the online collection. A search for documents related to 'disasters' gives 36 hits.

<http://www.socialwelfare.gov.lk/floods>

Information on the emergency operations of the 2003 Sri Lanka floods and landslides is hosted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Sri Lanka. This informative site provides up-to-date situation summary by district and divisional secretariat. In addition, it give figures on the number of relocated families, the number of people in welfare camps, the health and education situation, the assistance received by the Government of Sri Lanka, daily updates from UN agencies, NGOs and donors, contact information, maps, photos and the disaster history.

http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/rev_index.htm

The Humanitarian Charter for Minimum Standards in Disaster Response under the Sphere Project launched in 1997 is presently undergoing revision, to add or clarify standards, introduce a new section on Food Security, update the indicators and guidance notes as needed, enhance linkages between sectors, iron out inconsistencies, faults and important omissions from the first edition, incorporate cross cutting issues, and undergo a robust and widespread process of engagement among practitioners in each sector leading to consensus on the second edition. A draft of the revised version is available for public comment on the web or by e-mail to sphere@ifrc.org

New Pages on ADPC Website

<http://www.adpc.net/casita/default.html>

Capacity Building in Asia using Information Technology Applications (CASITA) project is part of the existing Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Program (AUDMP). It aims to build capacity on modern disaster mitigation tools and is targeted at reducing disaster vulnerability of urban regions in Asia. It will do so by providing support to the institutionalization of academic courses on disaster mitigation in existing urban planning curricula at university level, thus provide Asia with young urban planners knowledgeable of modern disaster mitigation tools. The site provides links to participating universities, project activities and will soon provide an internet-based platform for E-learning.

<http://www.adpc.net/drp-clv/index.html>

Disaster Reduction Program for Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam (DRP-CLV) program started its implementation in January 2002, with financial support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Royal Danish Embassy, and implemented by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). The site is an archive of all the information from the project and aims to provide a platform for information sharing.

World Wide Web Sites...



Recent Publications

These publications may be of interest to our readers. ADPC Library can offer assistance in locating them.

Communicating in a Crisis: Risk Communication Guidelines for Public Officials. United States Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2002, SMA 02-36412002. 96 pages. Copies may be obtained from the US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental health services administration. Mental Health Services clearinghouse, 800 989264. Available online at www.riskcommunication.samhsa.gov/riskcomm.pdf

Sound and thoughtful communication can help public officials prevent ineffective, fear-driven, and potentially damaging public responses to serious crises. This primer was written for public officials on the basic tenets of effective communication, with special focus on the media. There are steps that public officials can take in advance of any incident to better prepare communities, risk managers, elected officials, public health officials and other to respond to the management challenges of crises and disasters.

Disaster Nursing and Emergency Preparedness for Chemical, Biological, Radiological Terrorism and Other Hazards. Edited by Tener Goodwin Veenema, August 2003, ISBN 0-8261-2143-8, Springer Publishing Company, 600 pages US\$ 79.95. Order online from http://springerpub.com/books/nursing/pub_2143_8.html

This comprehensive textbook will prepare any nurse to provide effective care under disaster conditions, including natural disasters and disasters caused by biological, chemical and radiological agents. It contains vital information on disaster planning, post-disaster restoration of basic public health, media and interagency communications, and the treatment of physiological and psychological effects. It also covers present day threats like bio-terrorism surveillance systems, early recognition and detection of biological events, mass immunization plans, and the effects and treatment of chemical and radiological warfare agents. It is replete with case studies, helpful key messages, learning objectives, study question and relevant Internet resources.

Information and Communication Technologies in Teacher Education: A Planning Guide. Edited by P. Resta, UNESDOC. Available online UNESCO documents (2002). The Publication is available for free at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001295/129533e.pdf>

This book provides resources to help teachers, educators, administrators and policymakers

better apply ICTs to teacher education programs. It begins with the premise that the teaching profession is evolving from an emphasis on teacher-centered, lecture-based instruction to student-centered, interactive learning environments, and that ICTs is key in this transition. The authors state that designing and implementing successful ICT-enabled teacher education programs is the key to fundamental, wide-ranging educational reforms.

Risk Communication and Public Health. Edited by Peter Bennett and Kenneth Calman, February 2001, 296 pages £24.95. Order online at: <http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0-19-850899-9>

This new paperback edition of Risk Communication and Public Health brings together a wide variety of perspectives on risk communication, from the health professions, academia, campaigning organizations, government and its advisory committees, independent consultancies and think tanks. It should be of interest not only to those involved in risk assessment or communication but to anyone interested in the role of science and the media in the political process, and how one bit of 'the system' is responding to demands for greater openness and participation. While each chapter is self-contained, the discussion moves progressively through: an introduction to risk communication as a topic of research studies of prominent cases and the lessons to be drawn from them contributions to the wider debate about procedures, power and institutions proposals for promoting 'good practice' in risk communication, in Government, the Health Service and elsewhere.

Facing Up to the Storms: How Communities Can Cope with Disasters - Lessons from Orissa and Gujarat. The book is available online at www.christianaid.org.uk/storm or copies may be requested from mary.todd@virgin.net

This new publication was published on 7 July 2003. It illustrates how communities can stop a crisis from becoming a catastrophe. This disaster management book identifies how people even in the poorest part of the world can survive disasters if they are involved in all aspects of managing disasters from response to prevention. Case studies based on first-hand experiences of local agencies funded by Christian Aid prove that this works.

Violence Against Women: The Health Sector Responds. Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and the Program for Appropriate Technologies in Health (PATH) 2003, ISBN 9-2751-2292-X 114 pages, order code: OP 12 Price: US\$22.00. Order copies from sales@paho.org

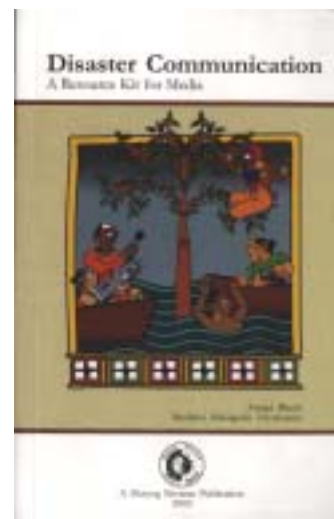
Bookmarks...



This book highlights the results of the recent evaluation of the project that was launched in 1995 to address violence against women in Central America. It includes numerous insights by health workers, school teachers, police and court officials, women's advocates and other community leaders regarding the effectiveness of the project's approach. Most revealing of all, however, is the voices of the women themselves, as they describe living with violence and the community's response to their needs.

***Disaster Communication: A Resource Kit for Media.* Amjad Bhatti and Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, 2002, ISBN: 9-6987-0200-8 ITDG-SA and JRC, Colombo, 260 pages. For copies write to general@itdg.slt.lk or jrc@rdpi.com.pk**

Traditionally, the media has been confined to playing the critic of the humanitarian response by government and non-government sectors in the realm of disaster management—they, in turn, criticize the media for sensationalizing human misery. But due to the awareness created by the UN-IDNDR, the media's role in achieving the objectives of risk reduction is slowly being recognized. Information and communication are now treated as pivotal in decision-making, opinion-making and perception changes at all levels. There also are high expectations from the media to play a supportive role in disaster risk reduction. Risk communication is considered essential for hazard-prone communities by the new approach. However, in order to be effective, enormous capacity building is required.



Disaster Communication: A Resource Kit for Media, written by two promising South Asian activists, addresses the issue of capacity building and the improved coverage of disaster and risk issues in South Asian media. It primarily focuses on print media, though electronic media professionals may find it useful. “The book provides the media with better understanding of disasters and their causes. It shows how to adopt a more progressive approach to gathering and presenting news that could stimulate more effective actions”, declare Bhatti and Ariyabandu.

Disaster Communication advocates a ‘process-oriented’ approach to disaster reporting, where disasters are considered the result of vulnerability caused by a flawed development process. Disaster risk reduction is perceived as part of the unfinished agenda of development. Event-driven reporting is ‘passive’ journalism, while process-based reporting contributes to ‘active’ journalism, say the authors.

The media can help by educating the public about risks and hazards, transmitting forecasts and warnings, and challenging policy makers and disaster managers to improve their performance.

As a watchdog, the media can make it ‘expensive’ for a government to be callous and lethargic about impending-disaster-risks, suggests the book. It can conduct surveys to inform the public that disaster management should be drawn into mainstream development planning.

The media also needs to be very sensitive when reporting on disasters and risks. Accuracy in narrating facts should be the hallmark of such reporting. Journalists should remember that the information they are transmitting has a strong bearing on the response of at-risk communities.

The book provides a critical assessment on current reporting practices in South Asia. It declares that the South Asian media largely perceives a disaster as an event of nature, which carries elements of drama, misery and sensation. It highlights the recurrent biases in disaster reporting; e.g. a preference for urban disasters over rural ones, high coverage of politicians, and projection of disaster-affected people as helpless victims.

The writers have not forgotten to mention the challenges journalists face. There is no on-the-job-training for working journalists, they say. The journalists also face obstacles when accessing information. During disasters, governments may conceal information that could expose negligence on their part. This secrecy leads to inaccurate reporting.

Book review...



This informative book is divided into six chapters. The contents include: definitions and disaster risk management approaches, disaster perceptions, the process approach to reporting, overview of current reporting practices in South Asia, guidelines to adopt a new approach within the organizational context of the media and South Asia's disaster situation. The annexes include disaster terminology, disaster statistics for the region and the Tampere Declaration on Disaster Communications. Case studies support discussions throughout the book. The inclusion of a comprehensive list of resource organizations is what makes it a handy guide for journalists involved in disaster reporting.

Zubair Murshed works with the ADPC as Training Manager. He can be contacted at: mzubair@adpc.net

Dear Readers

We are pleased to bring out this issue of the Asian Disaster Management News focusing on Disaster Risk Communication. This is a priority theme and the focus area of our recently completed 'Disaster Reduction Program for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam' funded by DANIDA. On pages 12 to 17 we have reported the results of the project. We are grateful to DANIDA for part financial support for the production of this issue of the newsletter.

Communicating to people at risk about the threats they face, educating them on protective actions and motivating them to act for their own safety are challenging tasks. For those of us organizing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programs or public safety promotional campaigns, the paradoxical question remains: Why is it so difficult to get people to recognize risk and take safety precautions which are in their own interest? This is easier to understand when we look inside ourselves and recognize our frailties. How many of us do not wear helmets while riding a two-wheeler or fail to put on seatbelts while in a vehicle? How many of us continue to smoke, though we are well-educated on the risks of lung cancer? How many of us cross a busy road instead of taking the pedestrian bridge or underpass? In educating for safety, therefore, we will have to deal with the dichotomy between how we think and act.

What this ADMN newsletter tries to cover is some good practices that we can learn from. The main theme article by Ambika gives an overview on disaster risk communication, which can translate into actions and changing behavior, while Mihir's article challenges the common myths of disaster communication. Other articles in this issue bring you experiences of successful programs and initiatives in disaster prone countries of South and South East Asia implemented by agencies in the region and ourselves. A book review and several other information sources are included to complement the usefulness of this theme.

As announced in our Oct-Dec 2002 issue about the World Bank and the ProVenton Consortium's

'Applied Research Grants Program', we are glad to announce that the program is underway (see page 7). Out of the sixty-five young researchers receiving the grants, 34 are from South, South-East and East Asia. ADPC is happy to be associated as a partner. We wish the grantees success and look forward to their innovative work.

Last but not the least I would like to thank my colleague Dr Buddhi Weerasinghe who provided advice on the overall production of this issue. We sincerely hope this issue will be useful and relevant to your work. As always, we are interested in your views.

Loy Rego
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Theme for Forthcoming Issue of the Asian Disaster Management News

**Coping with Water Related Disasters
(July-September 2003)**

Asian Disaster Management News

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We acknowledge all our partners in this region who shared with us their public awareness materials and photographs.

Editor's corner...



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