



Participant resource
& learning module

Increasing Community Disaster Awareness



Disaster Preparedness Training Programme



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Background and uses

This module is one of nine modules that have been prepared by INTERWORKS for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Disaster Preparedness office in Geneva. This module can be used as for independent study, as a reference guide on the subject, and to provide participants at a workshop training event on this topic. It is intended to accompany the trainer's notes on this topic. Their intended use is global, and they are written for generalists, planners and professionals with disaster preparedness and/or emergency response responsibilities both within the Federation and in the National Societies. Non-governmental organisations interested in disaster preparedness and preparedness planning, government emergency commissions, local disaster committees and civil defence training units may also find these modules useful.

This material can be used as:

- A general reference material on disaster preparedness
- Training and workshop modules and trainer's guides
- An orientation to disaster preparedness for Delegates and NS officers
- A guide for assessing or planning disaster preparedness capabilities

All nine of these modules are revised and updated versions of modules that were initially developed for the Central Asia IFRC Disaster Preparedness Regional Delegation DP project in 1998. This project resulted from recommendations and training needs expressed by Central Asian National Society and Emergency Commission staff attending the IFRC sponsored regional disaster preparedness conference held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from June 24-26, 1996.

The overall aim of the Central Asia DP training project was to support the National Societies in further developing their own structures for preparedness in conjunction with those of the Emergency Committees, Ministries and Civil Defence organisations in each of the five countries in the region. To date, disaster preparedness in the region has been typified by highly response oriented, well maintained and trained Civil Defence organisations; and largely unprepared, and untrained local populations and non-governmental organisations. Disaster management has traditionally consisted of preparedness for efficient and centralised emergency response, not the development of community-based or localised preparedness capacity. The Central Asia DP training programme was one attempt to change this emphasis and was proposed as a starting point from which revisions, and modifications for use on a country-by-country basis were expected and welcomed.

This material is based on a “multi-hazard” approach, and is typically applicable to preparedness in all of the hazard situations represented. However, the specific country context of the readers and trainees will necessitate a focus on the hazard types that are most applicable to their situation. While the modules and accompanying trainer’s notes are written for use at national level workshops, individuals with training responsibilities are encouraged to use and adapt the material for use at more local regions and towns.

The nine disaster preparedness modules and trainer's notes

Disaster Preparedness	Preparedness Planning	Risk Reduction
Increasing Community Disaster Awareness	Disaster Emergency Needs Assessment	Disaster Programme Information and Reporting
Improving Coordination	Improving Basic Training Skills	Project Planning

Acknowledgements

These nine modules and their accompanying trainer's notes were prepared for the International Federation by INTERWORKS, a consulting group with disaster management training and consulting experience in over 60 countries worldwide. Review and critique of these modules were provided by a team of Central Asian disaster management specialists, the disaster preparedness officers of five Central Asia National Societies, the Federation disaster preparedness staff in Geneva and delegates in Central Asia, the Caribbean and East Africa.

Special thanks to the International Federation Caribbean Disaster Preparedness Office for their review and critique of this module (March-April 2000).

Increasing Community Disaster Awareness

Aim and audience

This module provides guidelines, ideas and tips for planning and designing effective community disaster awareness initiatives.

Main points in this module

- Community disaster awareness approaches and strategies
- Common themes in community disaster awareness
- Mediums and messages for communicating effectively with the public
- Basic steps in planning disaster awareness initiatives
- Tips for identifying and analysing the audience which is to receive the disaster message
- Examples and ideas for raising public awareness about disasters and risk reduction options

1. Introduction

1.1 What is community disaster awareness?

Community disaster awareness (DA) initiatives which inform and train local populations about how to prepare for natural disasters and emergencies can reduce a population's vulnerability to specific hazards. These initiatives need not require large financial outlays nor do they require the work of a great number of people. What is required for planning purposes is a DA strategy that is opportunistic in its timing and which is integrated with other local and community development strategies

DA initiatives may consist of individual activities—such as touring villages to conduct earthquake awareness meetings, or posting earthquake preparedness posters at a local library. A second more comprehensive DA approach entails planning a series of coordinated activities—for example, a comprehensive DA campaign may be implemented during a disaster awareness week, when the media publicises disaster messages on the radio, T.V. and in newspapers; schools conduct poster contests and perform disaster drills; and community centres display disaster posters. Yet a third approach, and perhaps the most effective at the community level, is a strategy that integrates DA into broader community health and development goals— in East Africa, for example, attempts have been made to link DP to branch level programmes through Community—Based First Aid (CBFA) programmes. In another case, disaster preparedness activities were conceptualised within Primary Health Care and Nutrition Initiatives.¹

¹ Example noted in “Learning from the Past (Draft)”: *A Look Back at Evaluations and Reviews of Disaster Preparedness Programmes* prepared by John Mitchell for the International Federation Disaster Preparedness Department, November, 1999.

1.2 Planning disaster awareness for maximum impact

Planning disaster awareness and disaster preparedness activities in isolation from people's daily lives and everyday concerns will rarely succeed. This is because people's interest in disaster preparedness fades if it has been a long time between disaster events. Therefore, disaster awareness activities will have the greatest impact when they are integrated into broader programme strategies that seek to alleviate everyday community problems and hazards—such as basic health care, water scarcity and potability, sanitation concerns such as garbage collection, employment and community based first aid.

While it is a fact that a community may be exposed to various natural and technological hazards, oftentimes, the reality of the situation is that people may not see the practicality of disaster preparedness suggestions and messages when they are trying to provide for themselves and their families in difficult and harsh economic environments. While this module focuses specifically on disaster preparedness awareness messages, it is important that National Societies explore ways to integrate these messages into a more holistic community education approach. In the Caribbean for example, some National Societies have assisted in the creation of community management committees which ultimately will take responsibility for carrying out DP activities and also for addressing other identified community needs—such as conflict resolution and garbage collection.² National Society staff and volunteers with formal responsibilities for community disaster awareness gain greater credibility with residents and find it easier to discuss DP topics when they become more involved in the life of the community.

2. Disaster awareness themes and communication tips

2.1 Themes

Community DA activities generally relate to one or more of the following themes:

- The potential disasters, emergencies and hazards specific to a region, and their effects
- Low-cost measures local populations can take to prevent and prepare for disasters and emergencies
- Measures the government and official emergency and disaster managers are taking to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters
- Official disaster public warning and information systems, evacuation routes, temporary shelters and how and when this information will be communicated

2.2 Communication tips

DA messages vary based on the audience and the specific medium to be used (i.e. brochure, poster, newspaper advertisement). DA planners must understand their primary audience—i.e. those who will receive and act on the DA information. In addition, planners should follow some basic disaster communication guidelines, which include:

² Comments and suggestions offered by Keith Ford, International Federation regional Caribbean disaster preparedness office (April 2000).

- The nature and potential of the risk
- The human and physical elements that are most vulnerable or most-at-risk
- Safety actions to prevent and prepare for a potential disaster
- Safety and survival actions to take when the disaster is occurring
- Safety, survival and recovery actions to take after the disaster has occurred
- Official sources to contact for additional information

DA announcements should give the audience a sense of control. In addition to being told about the risk, it is very important that they are provided with practical actions that they can take to withstand and reduce the impacts of the hazard. Information should be presented in simple, non-technical and non-scientific jargon. Messages should be direct and brief. Graphics should be used purposefully to reinforce and illustrate main points of action. Ideally, different disaster organisations should deliver consistent DA messages on how to prepare for and what to do after a disaster.

3. Planning public education initiatives

Proper planning is the key to launching successful DA initiatives. This section covers the following steps for planning a DA effort.

1. Define the purpose and objectives of the DA initiative
2. Select and analyse primary audience(s)
3. Form a DA planning team
4. Form collaborative community partnerships
5. Schedule the time and location of DA events for maximum impact
6. Brainstorm potential activities and resources
7. Determine the proper medium or format
8. Develop, implement and monitor the action plan

In addition, Annex 1 contains a worksheet to use as a planning guide for DA activities.

3.1 Define purpose and objectives of the DA initiative

Planning should begin by outlining the general purpose and objectives of the DA initiative. It should be determined whether the initiative consists of an isolated activity, a series of activities, or a coordinated DA campaign. The *purpose statement* outlines what you hope to achieve, while *statements of objectives* offer specific, measurable details. For example, if the purpose is to increase children's knowledge of fire-safety practices in the home, then one specific objective might be to arrange for a local fire fighter to speak at three local schools within the next six months. Another specific objective might be to get the local Red Cross/Red Crescent Society and civil defence authorities to co-sponsor a contest for children to create fire-safety posters during an official *Fire Awareness Week*.

While the overall purpose of an initiative may be to raise public awareness, specific objectives will depend on the nature of the target audience. In the previous example, schoolchildren might be taught about the dangers of playing near lit kerosene lamps. Homeowners, on the other hand, might be encouraged to purchase smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. For each audience, the following two questions must be asked:

1. What does this specific audience need to understand?
2. What action can they take?

3.2 Select target communities and primary audience

Each National Society should understand which communities and regions in their country are most vulnerable to disasters. Community disaster awareness activities can then be targeted to these communities and regions. Selection may be based on the location of a community in a highly vulnerable and hazard prone zone, its accessibility in the event of a disaster, its disaster history and its local resources. Once the priority communities have been identified, specific strategies can be developed for addressing them.

There are many ways to categorise different segments of a population. Each situation requires a different type of segmentation. Categories of primary audiences include:

- Labourers in specific occupations
- Children
- Teachers
- Women heads-of-household
- Village leaders
- Businessmen
- Teenagers
- Heads of families
- Senior citizens
- Professional groups

Because resources are limited and not all audiences can be reached, DA planners need to prioritise which audience will receive the message. For example, planners may decide to target those most at risk such as schoolchildren, older adults, physically or mentally impaired individuals, or people with limited literacy skills.

3.2.1 Analyse primary audience needs and preferences

Once the primary audience has been identified, planners should try to learn as much as they can about its particular needs, preferences and characteristics. The more that is known about the primary audience the better the message can be designed, delivered and timed. To ensure maximum impact, it helps to know the following:

- What people make up this group? Are they children, adults, senior citizens, students, homemakers, business executives, blue-collar workers, single, married?
- What are the special characteristics and needs of this group? Consider such factors as age, education and literacy levels, gender, occupation, motivations, cultural and social interests, activities, and preferred entertainment options.
- What does this group already know about disasters?
- From what sources does this group typically get its information: newspapers, television, radio, mail, town meetings, word of mouth?

- Who are the most influential voices for this group: their teachers, parents, kinsmen, leaders? Are there other people in this community that this group listens to and respects (e.g. elders or clergy)?

Information on the primary audience can be obtained from a variety of sources. Ideally, face-to-face interviews or meetings should be arranged with representatives of the audience. When this is not possible, secondary sources of information can be useful. For example, if the DA initiative is singling out young school children, DA planners can speak with the children's teachers. Other sources of information include local social service agencies, schools, neighbourhood and community groups, religious establishments, the local fire department, local newspaper and radio stations, the civil defence official in the community, and others who have conducted DA activities. The primary audience will be more receptive to the message if the message is tailored to their situation.

3.3 Form a planning team

If one is tasked with planning a DA initiative, s/he might start by making a list of anyone and everyone who might be interested in joining the planning team. Next, one might consider what each person has to offer including expertise, volunteer time, organisational skills, contacts and professional networks, sponsorship, and financial support. Finally, those who would be of most use, who would be dedicated and who would work well together, should be invited to join the team.

The individuals on a DA planning team need not be emergency management professionals. While the team might include firefighters or civil defence officials, it can also include teachers, respected community officials, businesspeople or leaders, and concerned parents and volunteers. Involving people with different backgrounds and experiences has many advantages including:

- Access to a wider range of ideas and perspectives
- Sharing work responsibilities among several people
- Expanding the network of potential contacts, supporters and sponsors

The team must consist of enthusiastic supporters who can help plan and promote the DA effort. Ideally, someone from the primary DA audience should be on the team or be available to advise the team. In small countries it may initially be necessary to form a planning team at the national level to ensure cooperation in the field. Quite often community organisations vie for limited resources and are more likely to compete than cooperate unless the planning process is sanctioned at the national level.

While it is important to have at least two or three people on a core planning team who can provide leadership and continuity throughout the planning and implementation effort, other members can rotate in and out as appropriate. Some may only be available for the initial planning meetings or for helping out at the actual event. Some, who are well-connected in the community, might be engaged early on to assist with contacting and gaining the support of influential and well-resourced friends and acquaintances in government or business.

Another approach is one which integrates disaster awareness planning into broader community development and community education goals. In the Caribbean example given

earlier, some National Societies have assisted in the creation of community management committees which ultimately will take responsibility for carrying out DP activities and also for addressing other identified community needs—such as conflict resolution and garbage collection.

3.4 Form collaborative community partnerships

3.4.1 Opportunities for collaboration

One of the first tasks of the planning team is to identify potential collaborative community partnerships with other organisations, groups and agencies. Women's groups, teacher's associations, official emergency managers, fire fighters, community and voluntary organisations, businesses, corporations, foundations and the media all can help disseminate information, sponsor an event, provide space for an upcoming activity, underwrite the production of materials, or provide other much-needed resources. The planning team might begin by making a list of potential partners, what they might contribute, and how they will be contacted.

Potential partners need to know specifically what it is they are being asked to provide. They also might be more inclined to participate if they know what benefits they might derive from the partnership. Such benefits include:

- A forum for discussing and resolving community problems
- The opportunity to foster good community relations
- Increased awareness of the hazard by community residents
- The opportunity to improve the working relationships between government and civil society
- Local and collective ownership for resolving community problems
- Increased visibility in the community
- The opportunity to build organisational capacities and other skills
- Networking opportunity
- Increased positive media coverage, credibility and visibility
- An opportunity to contribute to the well-being of the community

3.4.2 List of potential partners

The following are all potential partners for supporting a DA initiative:

- Television stations
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Local community centres and groups
- Religious organisations
- Youth clubs, students' (hostels) dormitories
- Village elders
- Women's clubs, organisations
- Trade enterprises, associations
- Banks and credit unions
- Health centres, hospitals, clinics
- Sport clubs

- Libraries, cinemas, theatres, circuses
- Utility companies
- Newspapers, magazines
- Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies
- Civil Defence
- NGOs
- Fire brigade

3.4.3 Partnering with local businesses or corporations

All organisations have a vested interest in protecting their employees and facilities in case of a disaster. Businesses depend on their employees and on their customers for their survival and profit. Local businesses and industries may be interested and willing to distribute information to protect their employees and customers and, as a result, reduce potential liabilities. Companies recognise that employees who are prepared for disasters at home will be less likely to be absent from work following a disaster—when businesses may need them most.

Large corporations and businesses might be willing to make “in-kind” contributions of expertise, time, facilities or equipment. A corporate partner can also help with the cost of printing materials or underwriting a special event. It is also possible for National Societies to work out some kind of mutually beneficial exchange with service industries (see insert below.)

Community-based DP partnerships in Jamaica

The Jamaican NS is involved in an initiative whereby it has an agreement with a number of large hotels and a well-established insurance company. The idea is that the NS will give training to hotel staff in emergency preparedness and response with respect to earthquakes. In return for the training, the hotels would donate the receipts of one week's room rent to the Red Cross. In turn, the hotel would benefit from reduced insurance premiums because their staff had been trained. In theory, the insurance company stood to gain as potential claims from the hotels ought to be less if they had practised mitigation.

Source: "Learning from the Past": A Draft Report: A Look Back at Evaluations and Reviews of Disaster Preparedness Programmes prepared by John Mitchell for the International Federation Disaster Preparedness Department, November, 1999.

The following are additional ideas for partnering with local businesses or corporations:

- Encourage local utilities (telephone, water, electric, gas) to include periodic emergency preparedness and mitigation information in customer bills or newsletters
- Encourage large businesses to distribute disaster preparedness information to and hold disaster preparedness workshops for all employees
- Ask them to print hazard and basic preparedness measures fact-sheets and brochures
- Ask local vendors to hang a poster or distribute brochures to customers

Finally, companies involved in the manufacture, storage and disposal of chemicals have a moral and often a legal responsibility to inform the surrounding community of the danger

posed by their daily activities. Quite often, however, companies are reluctant to do this as they fear a public outcry. By working with these companies and bringing them into the mainstream preparedness and risk reduction planning process as it may be possible to work out solutions and compromises. The insert below provides an example of a chemical and industrial risk reduction programme which creates community partnership between government, industry and community-based organisations.

**World Environment Center's
Local Accident Mitigation and Prevention Program**

The World Environment Center's (WEC) Local Accident Mitigation and Prevention (LAMP) Program manages financial and environmental risk by facilitating better industry and community organisation to prevent or mitigate the impact of accidents. By working closely with government, industry, and community leaders at the local and national level, LAMP helps at-risk communities improve assessment and communication of industrial and other risks, develop emergency preparedness plans, and improve emergency response skills. Target communities are selected based upon the risk of man-made disasters to human life and property. Primary consideration is given to sites where flammable or toxic chemicals are produced with secondary consideration given to sites at-risk from the storage and transport of those chemicals. In addition, the evidence of previous community, government, and industry participation is taken into account in the selection of target communities. Once sites have been determined, LAMP focuses on the local level initiatives and works with industry groups, civil servants, regulatory agencies, and community leaders that are committed to minimising the risks of technological disaster. In Veracruz, Mexico, the LAMP program's aim is to reduce the incidence and impact of major industrial, hazardous materials transport or other technological accidents and disasters in selected urban areas. Program activities included:

- Risk assessments of chemical plants and industrial complexes
- Chemical emergency preparedness and accident prevention (CEPAP) training
- Community awareness and training seminars
- Mock emergency drills involving local response teams
- Training in industrial fire safety and the control of hazardous materials incidents

Source: World Environment Center, Local Accident Mitigation and Prevention Program Web Site, (LAMP) <http://www.wec.org/iedslamp.htm>

3.4.4 Partnering with community organisations

Community organisations can be valuable partners in a public outreach initiative. Community organisations include youth clubs, Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, NGOs, law enforcement organisations, women's groups, veterans groups, religious organisations, etc.

Although community organisations cannot always provide financial resources, they often can provide people—an equally important resource. Often, members of these groups want to become involved in helping their community in a variety of ways. Each group has its own network that can help extend the reach of the disaster awareness activity. Some ideas for community partnerships include:

- Work with local school parents to incorporate a disaster preparedness workshop into one of their meetings
- Work with local school teachers to incorporate disaster preparedness messages into their lesson plans
- Sponsor a children's poster contest highlighting the steps to take in the event of a specific emergency or disaster
- Work with local organisations to present a disaster preparedness and mitigation workshop at one of their meetings
- Organise a display booth on disaster preparedness at an annual event, festival or fair
- Set up a display poster with brochures at the local library or community market
- Ask war veteran groups or youth clubs to assist with planning and setting up a disaster awareness booth or stage at a fair, festival or market

Partnering with Schools

Contact with schools is strongly recommended as these are institutions with various outreach programmes which can play an effective role in disseminating disaster awareness messages. Parent teacher associations can serve as one good vehicle for reaching residents. Students can take part in a poster competition or be encouraged to participate in a hazard hunt around their homes and communities and present their findings in the school or at a special event for families.

3.4.5 Partnering with the local media

Media partners can disseminate preparedness and mitigation messages through an article, editorial coverage or donated advertising space. Media contacts need to be cultivated early on and occasionally nourished and renewed.

3.5 *Schedule the time and location of DA assets for maximum impact*

3.5.1 Timing and location

When scheduling a DA event, it is important to select a time and place that encourages attendance and will best capture the attention of the intended audience. Generally, DA events should not be planned near or during holiday periods as they will compete for attention. The location for a DA event should coincide with a place where your primary audience commonly visits, works or plays.

3.5.2 "Piggy-back" on other events

Rather than organise an entirely new event, one can profit by "piggy-backing" on someone else's event. For example, DA planning teams might decide to coordinate their event with local festivals, fairs, town meetings, market days and community gatherings. The planning team may also approach a local health clinic and ask them to distribute flyers or brochures to their visitors. The idea is that efficiency and cost-savings can result from grafting your DA message or event onto an already ongoing effort or event.

3.5.3 Plan annual events

The chance that a DA activity will have an impact can be increased by making it an annual tradition. Many countries and communities, for example, have a disaster awareness week when many groups and organisations disseminate disaster awareness and community preparedness messages.

3.5.4 Disaster seasons

Some disasters are cyclical and are associated with specific seasons. For example, wildfires are likely to occur in the summer - autumn period. Severe flooding usually occurs in the spring. When potential disasters are seasonal, the pre-season period is a time when people are receptive to hearing messages related to preparedness: clean-up, warnings, possibility of evacuation, etc.

3.5.5 Post disaster activities

Public awareness of a disaster is highest following a disaster. For example, the entire world was attentive to the risks associated with nuclear power after the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident in May 1986. Many local communities used this event as a way to publicise the dangers, risks and preparedness measures associated with nuclear reactor plants in their own vicinity.

Disaster Awareness Week in Fiji

Fiji is a country that has experienced several destructive cyclones in its history. Cyclone Oscar in 1983 and cyclones Eric and Nigel in 1985 caused a total estimated damage of US\$1,234 million. In 1993, cyclone Kina resulted in losses exceeding US\$300 million. Flooding associated with these cyclones left thousands of people homeless, damaged a large percentage of crops and ruined infrastructure and private property. In a country such as Fiji, where resources for large mitigation projects are limited, comprehensive public disaster preparedness becomes very important as a risk reduction strategy.

Every year, therefore, the Fiji Red Cross and other concerned organizations and groups join together during "Disaster Awareness Week," held just before the beginning of cyclone season, which extends from November through April. Messages emphasized during this week include: health, personal safety, preservation of food, construction of shelter and effective utilization of available resources. During the week, radios are broadcasting disaster preparedness messages, daily newspapers carry articles highlighting the effects of previous disasters, schools hold writing contests on the theme, "How to Reduce the Impact of Disasters," and NGOs and the Fiji Red Cross assist in the distribution of pamphlets, brochures and calendars.

Adapted from "Disaster Awareness Week in Fiji," by Rishi Raj, Ministry of Infrastructure, Samabula, Fiji, *Stop Disasters Newsletter*, No. 14, July-August 1993, p. 19.

3.6 Brainstorm potential DA activities

Generally, prior to developing a DA initiative, the planning team should spend some time brainstorming ideas about the kinds of activities and mediums they might use to deliver the message and information. For example, if the purpose is to increase the level of awareness among children ages 7 to 10 about home fire safety, a list of brainstormed ideas might include:

- Presentations in the school by local fire fighters
- Inclusion of disaster preparedness topics in teachers' lesson plans
- School game-quiz
- A "disaster preparedness" clown at the local circus

- Hosting a poster contest where children create posters with disaster preparedness messages
- A disaster preparedness colouring book
- Song to be played on the radio
- Cartoon on television
- Posters to hang in markets, libraries, and other public places
- TV program on disaster preparedness

After brainstorming a list of ideas, the planning team can more carefully consider a range of options. This broad approach is a more effective way to begin as opposed to choosing the first idea that is suggested. Once a generous list is developed, ideas can be evaluated according to a set of criteria. These criteria might include:

- Can the activity be completed in the given time-frame?
- Is it affordable (or, can the resources be found)?
- Are the necessary people and volunteers available?
- Will the activity reach the greatest number of people in our primary audience?

3.7 Select the communication medium and activities

3.7.1 Communication mediums

Each primary audience will respond differently to various presentations and methods of information dissemination. If resources allow, it is best to vary the format of the message and communicate it in more than one way, and more than once. If the planning team knows its audience, it will be easier to select the most effective means of reaching them. If the planning team does not know the habits and preferences of their intended primary audience, this information must be researched. Once the message has been created and a medium selected, it is best to test it on people who are representative of the target audience and get their critical feedback.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential mediums:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Fact sheets | • Talks or presentations | • Community gatherings/meetings of various kinds |
| • Brochures | • Theatre and plays | • Presentation or lessons in school |
| • Newspaper articles or advertisements | • Emergency drills and exercises | • Existing government programs (e.g. health education programs), which include short informational pieces on preparedness and other disaster-related matters |
| • Booklets, leaflets | • Shopping bags | |
| • Posters | • Telephone directories | |
| • Bookmarks | • Matchbox covers | |
| • Gameboards | • Special information displays, for example, at libraries or major stores | |
| • Radio and television | | |
| • Cartoons | | |
| • Photographs | | |

The insert below provides an example of a multi-faceted cyclone awareness campaign organised by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

Comprehensive community cyclone awareness in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh RC implements the following public awareness activities along the cyclone prone coastal areas, in support of its Cyclone Preparedness Strategy:

Public awareness through volunteers: As part of their training, RC volunteers in the affected communities learn ways to contact, motivate and disseminate cyclone preparedness awareness in their communities.

Cyclone drills & demonstrations: These are frequently held by the volunteers and local people and attended by many villagers in affected communities.

Staging dramas: To raise awareness in villages prone to cyclone disasters, National Societies have engaged experienced dramatists to stage a drama depicting the significance of preparedness. Over 200,000 people have witnessed these dramas.

Posters, leaflets and booklets: These are regularly distributed to people in coastal areas. A special directive on evacuation, interpretation of warning signals, and instructions to fishermen have been published and distributed throughout the cyclone affected communities.

Film/video shows: Documentary films/videos on disaster and preparedness are shown in the coastal villages in cooperation with the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and the Films and Publication Department of the Government.

Publicity campaign: Immediately before the cyclone season, a publicity campaign is organised with the government officials, NGOs and the local public to familiarise and create awareness on Cyclone Preparedness.

Radio/television: Before the cyclone season begins, arrangements are made with national T.V. to telecast films relating to disaster preparedness. Special features on disaster preparedness are also broadcast over Radio Bangladesh.

Source: CPP At a Glance, Cyclone Preparedness Programme, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

3.7.2 Activities and events for raising disaster awareness

Each disaster awareness initiative and activity is distinct and should be tailored to the particular population and primary audience. DA planning teams can benefit from studying the DA experiences and ideas of others. The following lists can be used to stimulate creative thinking among the planning team about how they might deliver DA messages and information.

- Create displays in public buildings or gathering places to portray past disasters and responses
- Set up markers to remind residents of past incidents
- Arrange tours to show local officials key locations, such as high water marks
- Ask the local telephone company to include emergency information in its annual directory, e.g., maps showing floodplains or the location of emergency shelters
- At times of seasonal risk, ask utility companies to include “stuffers” with their bills, identifying hazards and instructing citizens what to do when disasters strike
- Ask employers to distribute risk information brochures to their employees
- Post seasonal information in a variety of places—on milk cartons, bread wrappers, shopping bags, etc.

- Create a speaker's bureau to guarantee that any service organisation, parent-teacher group, or church group can learn about emergency planning
- Get your local mayor or governor to declare a Disaster Preparedness Day or Week. Each year, plan local events around this day (or week)
- Hold a poster contest for local students to design posters with preparedness messages. Invite an elected official and a member of the media to serve as judges. Sponsor a ceremony announcing the winner to provide an opportunity to promote your messages to a wider audience

3.8 *Planning community disaster awareness strategies*

Planning and implementing the actual DA strategy requires the use of basic project management skills. Once the broad objectives are set and the primary audience identified, planners should consider the detailed tasks and steps to implement the activity. The planning team also needs to identify required resources, develop a budget and locate the funds to implement the initiative. Useful planning tools include Gantt (or Bar) charts, action plans and project budgets. The module, "Project Planning," provides useful guidelines and tools for doing this planning.

Annex 1—Planning Worksheet

This worksheet can serve as a disaster awareness activity planning guide. Refer back to the module if you need more information on how to complete a specific section of this worksheet.

I. Title of disaster awareness initiative or activity:

II. Target community (or communities):

III. Purpose:

IV. Specific objectives:

V. Main disaster themes to include:

VI. Primary audience and characteristics:

- Age range:
- Locations where they most often frequent:
- Cultural, social activities that they are involved in: Where do these activities take place?
- Preferred modes of receiving information:
- What do they know about the hazard and the risks associated with it?
- Literacy/education level:
- List other characteristics here:
- Where might I go and with whom might I speak to get more information on this primary audience?

VII. Planning Team

List everyone and anyone who might be interested in planning and implementing this activity, and what role they might play. Who should contact them and invite them to be on the planning committee?

VIII. Collaborative community partnerships

Brainstorm (discuss) a list of potential partners. Use a table like the one below to define specific roles for each partner.

Name of person or organisation to involve	What would their role be? What input might they provide?	When to bring them into the process
e.g. Local firefighter	Speak at schools, park fire truck in front of library to draw attention to the display inside	At specific points in the planning process and during the event itself
e.g. Local civil defence	Participate on planning committee	Throughout the entire process

IX. Communication mediums and formats

What mediums will I use for communicating the disaster awareness message?

Who will I involve in critiquing and giving feedback on this activity and any public education material produced?

