



## SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ASIA & EAST AFRICA: EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS

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### Disaster Risk Reduction: Public Education and Advocacy

Disaster risk reduction cannot work if it is not combined with public education and advocacy. This is because a community that has the tools to reduce risk but does not know how to use them remain just as vulnerable to disasters as they were before.

For example, people would not use new evacuation routes and procedures in coastal villages if they are not educated on when and how to activate them. They also need to receive education on the dangers and prevention of various hazards.

In the meantime, advocacy work with stakeholders of risk reduction measures must complement localized mitigation. The International Federation chooses to advocate for risk reduction as long as the messages are framed within the Movement's mandates, the Fundamental Principles and Movement policy<sup>1</sup>.

This is exemplified by Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's role in the national government's disaster risk management system, where the national society is able to support a community-based approach.

Internationally, the Federation has recently launched [the global alliance for disaster risk reduction](#) in partnership with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR). The global alliance lays out the Red Cross Red Crescent's strategic vision to scale up pre-emptive actions to protect life, limit damage and increase resilience in the face of disasters over the next 12 months. It advocates strongly for community-centred approaches in all interventions and policies.

#### Indonesia: Staying in touch with the community

Disaster risk reduction is not limited to building earthquake resistant houses, constructing dikes and so on. It is also about raising community awareness on disaster risks. In Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam province, the International Federation does this by integrating public education and advocacy into its programming.

To raise awareness among people living in disaster-prone areas, which are usually village communities and children in schools, the Movement uses a wide range of methods and tools. Messages are spread through the

**program rumah aman sasaran**

**sasaran**

membantu keluarga-keluarga atau masyarakat mengetahui mengenai prinsip dasar dari sebuah desain rumah aman, membantu anggota masyarakat mengetahui bagaimana menerapkan prinsip rumah aman untuk bangunan 1 atau 2 lantai di daerah mereka.

**proses**

di dalam proses, peserta akan mempertimbangkan aspek-aspek keselamatan berhubungan dengan lokasi desa/kampung, spesifikasi lokasi bangunan akan dibangun, dan disain bangunan itu sendiri.

dengan mempertimbangkan masing-masing prinsip rumah aman satu persatu, peserta akan melihat apa keputusan keselamatan apa yang perlu untuk dibuat dan mengapa. mereka kemudian akan menerapkan ini untuk mendisain bangunan umum yang akan dibangun di proyek tersebut.

setelah proses disain, tim rumah aman akan mengorganisir sebuah pelatihan dengan masyarakat untuk melakukan pelatihan dasar rumah aman supaya orang-orang dapat belajar mengenai ketrampilan membangun dengan cara rumah aman ini.

sebuah bangunan umum akan dibangun itu menunjukkan prinsip rumah aman, dan membantu masyarakat melihat penggunaan prinsip rumah aman di dalam suatu aplikasi praktis.

**12 prinsip rumah aman**

British Red Cross Society  
Jl. Ajuen Jempout No. 18B, Desa Ajuen Jempout, Darul Imarah, Aceh Besar.

British Red Cross Society  
Jl. Raya Banda Aceh - Meulaboh, Panton Kecamatan Teunom - Aceh Jaya

This poster helps to educate families in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia, on the principles of building a safer house. International Federation.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the Federation's advocacy working paper, endorsed by the General Assembly in 2001, on Fednet [here](#).



media such as radio, newsletters, tabloids, and games. Trainings and disaster simulations are conducted on a wide scale in villages and schools.



“Rumoh PMI”, a radio talk programme in Aceh, Indonesia, not only spreads disaster awareness messages, but also opens a two-way dialogue between the Red Cross Red Crescent and the public. Ardi Dahlan/International Federation.

knowledge on prevention, reduction and response to natural disasters but also covers basic information on avian influenza and general health promotion.

#### **Maldives: Dengue and chikungunya prevention goes to schools and communities**

Vulnerability and risk assessments undertaken in the Maldives have shown that chikungunya and dengue fever are potential risks to people on the islands as well as in the capital Male'. Dengue is endemic in the Maldives, with a peak during and after the rainy season. An outbreak of the chikungunya virus reached epidemic proportions across the country from the end of 2006 to February 2007. This outbreak further emphasized the need to provide control measures as well as dengue and chikungunya awareness. To respond to this need, the Federation Secretariat designed an awareness programme which is implemented with the partner national societies, the ministry of public health and the ministry of education. This campaign is in line with the Dengue Strategic Plan of the Republic of Maldives.

In order to achieve a wide reach for the awareness campaign, island communities and schools were identified as suitable platforms for public education and awareness raising. The schoolchildren can learn about the risks as well as prevention and control measures and bring the information home to their parents. Organizing the awareness campaign has required a fair amount of training: close to 150 people have been trained through training-of-trainers (TOT), including community members and teachers. The trainers learn about the diseases, risks and prevention as well as how to bring about positive behavioral change.

An important aspect of dengue fever and chikungunya prevention and control is that it does not require expensive measures but rather correct information and behavioral change. Simply understanding the risks and taking some preventive measures, such as eliminating places for mosquito breeding, is enough to control the spread of these diseases. The awareness sessions have been accompanied by immediate action, such as

One such example is the Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia or PMI) education and advocacy work through community-based action teams (CBAT). These teams are made up of villagers who have volunteered to motivate and mobilize village communities in implementing disaster preparedness and response measures. They are trained and equipped with skills and knowledge in participatory rural assessments, risk mapping and through disaster simulation/drills. With these skills and knowledge, and because they are volunteers from the target villages, the CBAT are driving forces in community trainings, awareness raising, as well as capacity building in disaster preparedness and response.

The topics raised in raising community awareness on disaster risk reduction are not only restricted to



In Maldives, a trainer provides information to schoolchildren on preventing and controlling chikungunya and dengue fever. Valpuri Saalrelma/International Federation.



school clean up days and the schoolchildren have participated in other educational activities. The schools and communities have also made dengue and chikungunya control and prevention plans for this year.

Good education and communication materials are required for effective awareness raising. Educational posters, leaflets and presentations have been produced and distributed to the schools and communities to help the trainers deliver the important messages. The latest addition to these materials is a dengue and chikungunya coloring book to be used by the schoolchildren. While coloring the pictures, children will learn how to prevent mosquito breeding at school and at home.

### Sri Lanka: localizing risk reduction



Disaster risk reduction is a core component of the disaster management plan of Sri Lanka government. The “Road Map for a Safer Sri Lanka” developed in December 2005 promotes a systematic application of disaster risk management focusing on risk reduction and preparedness for response.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has been identified as an important actor in the Road Map, which identifies key roles for the Red Cross Red Crescent in community-based disaster risk management. These roles are in promoting volunteerism, establishing resource centres, disseminating early warnings and public awareness, conducting information, preparedness and mitigation projects as well as in preparedness for response planning.

The risk reduction approach, which SLRCS has initiated, includes improved preparedness of the national society and communities at risk, combined with support for local mitigation measures. The International Federation and the SLRCS are currently carrying out a community based disaster management programme in ten districts. Through public education and information work, the programme will enable vulnerable communities to understand the underlying causes of why hazards become disasters and the resources they can use reduce risk. This will in turn give vulnerable communities a high degree of self reliance.

#### Water safety in Gampaha, Sri Lanka

In June 2007, community leaders, Red Cross volunteers and local villagers gathered on Negombo beach in Gampaha district. Over 200 people watched a demonstration by a Japanese RC water-safety team, which enacted a variety of practical life-saving techniques that the locals had never seen before.

The water safety instructors had flown in from Japan to kick-start the water-safety pilot project that will run in Gampaha over the next three years. By training a network of instructors in life saving, it is hoped that basic water-safety training and awareness would be a fixture in local communities.

To identify vulnerabilities and risks inside the communities, hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments were conducted in several places. Based on the assessments, suitable disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities to reduce the adverse effects of floods, landslides, and epidemics hazards were identified. Emergency response teams will be formed in the villages to provide appropriate training on first-aid, search and rescue and logistics. Hazard early warning messages will be disseminated in the villages and safer evacuation routes will be identified. In the meantime, mitigation activities such as canal cleaning and construction of small bridges will be initiated.

Within the context of sustainable development, these activities can be part of a community action plan, which communities networking with relevant stakeholders in Sri Lanka can implement and continue.

### Operational Highlights

#### In Indonesia:

- A tabloid called Rumoh PMI that raises community awareness on disaster risk reduction is distributed in seven districts and four cities (The PMI, Federation and Irish RC). A newsletter with disaster mitigation topics is distributed to target communities of Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya (British RC).



- A radio talk show programme is run (Irish RC). Representatives from PMI and other Movement partners take part as key speakers. The PMI creates various public service announcements to be aired on TV and radio stations (Danish RC and Irish RC).
- The PMI implemented a public education and advocacy programme through CBAT (American RC, British RC, Danish RC, and German RC). The PMI started the programme in August 2007 across 17 villages, targeting approximately 430 communities (British RC).
- Three information, education and communication (IEC) booklets on disaster preparedness were distributed to 80 teachers across 11 schools nationwide (Danish RC). A game similar to “snake and ladder” with a focus on disaster response was produced.
- The IEC materials on avian influenza, containing information on basic hygiene in handling poultry, is tailor made to different target audiences i.e. housewives, children, poultry breeders and sellers (The Federation and PMI).
- Manuals, caps, bags and posters raise awareness on safer building (British RC). Training is conducted for communities, with the hope that the knowledge will remain even after the project has finished.
- Manuals and guidelines for PMI board members, staff and volunteer leaders, and training materials for volunteers finished in August 2007 will be presented at the PMI’s national annual meeting end of 2007.
- The PMI conducts disaster simulation/drills. An integrated community-based risk reduction programme is ongoing four districts of Aceh province, targeting 150 communities (American RC). To raise awareness, PMI facilitated a community in Tibang to conduct earthquake/tsunami disaster simulation.
- Danish RC supported 15 drills in communities nationwide. It involved the participation of villagers, the government disaster coordination unit (Satkorlak), PMI disaster response unit (Satgana), CBAT, and even PMI board members.

#### **In Sri Lanka:**

- The SLRCS and the Federation Secretariat is assisting the government to develop an early warning system on the north eastern coast of Sri Lanka. The project strengthens disaster preparedness and response capacities of coastal communities. It will recruit 2,000 community volunteers who will help disseminate cyclone warnings, conduct evacuation, rescue, first aid and emergency relief work in the coastal districts and operate the radio communication network.
- Red Cross Red Crescent partners completed 1,289 houses in Sri Lanka in July 2007 alone. September 2007 will see a string of handing over ceremonies as 845 houses from 11 completed sites will be handed over to beneficiaries during the month.
- The Federation secretariat, in partnership with USAID and American Red Cross, will soon commence a massive water supply project that will lay 309 km of pipelines. It will cover five towns or communities along the coastal belt of Ampara district, with a total population of an estimated 93,000. German Red Cross will fund and carry out work on 82 of the 309 km of pipeline.
- On health infrastructure development, Red Cross Red Crescent partners are implementing 75 projects under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the ministry of health of Sri Lanka. The work includes new building construction, renovation, refurbishment and equipment. Up to 22 of these projects are completed, while 24 are ongoing, 27 are planned and two are on hold for security reasons.

#### **In Maldives:**

- Under an awareness programme, 147 people have been trained under training-of-trainers on dengue and chikungunya prevention and control.
- In addition, 156 community volunteer have been trained in dengue and chikungunya prevention and control.
- Information, education and communication materials were disseminated across the country. Poster sets – each set contains four posters with specific messages – 30,000 leaflets and 8,000 coloring books were distributed to the islands and to Male’.
- The Federation secretariat’s awareness raising activities cover 11 island communities as well as the capital Male’.
- Vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA) have been conducted in the Maldives.

***For more details and news stories, photos and all operational updates related to the tsunami, visit:***  
<http://www.ifrc.org/tsunami>