

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SOCIAL MARKETING

**Dr. Suvit Yodmani, Executive Director,
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center**

Discussions during the past two days have touched on several important topics, one of which is public awareness as prerequisite to popular or public participation and ownership, leading to sustainability and replication.

It is fitting that this very important topic will be discussed during the last session of this workshop, hoping that all of us could be better armed or equipped with new approaches or technology to work with or use to help reduce disasters.

During the very first session we discussed policy, legal and institutional arrangements and we spent much time talking about political will—how to convince politicians and policy and decision makers to act—to become supporters if not champions to the cause of disaster mitigation. There are amongst us here several important and successful politicians and policy makers both at national and local levels, and I hope to hear from some of them during this session, as political will depends very much on people including professionals, business and interest groups. Public awareness is a very relevant and key to creating political will, but sometimes general public awareness will not be enough to convince decision makers to act. Political will that leads to action is needed. Awareness focused on decision makers and relevant target groups needs to be created effectively through social marketing tools which will be explained by two prominent experts: Ms. Susan Frew and Professor Jyotika Ramaprasad.

In applying lessons learned from experience in public awareness raising and social marketing, ADPC has added another dimension to its work. Having had over 13 years' experience as regional technical resource and training center working with technical agencies, during the past 3-4 years, we have been trying to share information with policy makers in the countries by informing and, if possible, involving them. Concretely, in the countries we work with, we try to meet with the leaders to brief them about what we do and what else we could do in accordance with what they need. For example, in my discussion with H.E. Madame Megawatti almost two years ago when she was Vice President, she kindly suggested that ADPC should try to find ways of working with and helping the provinces and local governments in capacity building. In response, we are now working with BAKORNAS and ITB to look for support to provide systematic community-based disaster management training. We are taking the same approach with countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, and will attempt to cover every country in due course. Secondly, we feel that Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Planning and Finance have important roles to play in policy formulation and decision making, so we try to involve ambassadors by first providing them with briefings about ADPC, and then inviting those interested to sit on our Board of Trustees—at present, eight ambassadors are on our 16-member Board. We also invite concerned and keen ambassadors to grace opening and closing of meetings and workshops and making speeches of encouragement—thereby informing Foreign Affairs, eg. On video of AUDMP, U.S. and Indian ambassadors can be seen making speeches. We provided the necessary information. And the Bangladeshi Ambassador will be presiding over the closing ceremony of the two-week Flood Risk Management course tomorrow afternoon in Bangkok, while the American Consul-General in Chiang Mai will join the closing ceremony of the Training for Instructors in Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue and Medical First Responders on Saturday morning 28 September 2002.

Our model of public awareness raising is being implemented with five broad groups of people of equal importance: the political leadership, especially Presidents, Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers, technical and professional (civil service, academia, business, NGOs, UN and other regional and multi-lateral agencies, working with and through government focal points which for Indonesia would be BAKORNAS); foreign affairs and finance and planning ministries; grassroots and local governments (e.g. CBDM, AUDMP, etc.); and legislative branches.

For example, with regards to the legislative branches, last April we organized a workshop for government officials and MP's and senators on policy, institutional and legal framework for DM. In Thailand and invited very experienced and highly respected people like Dr. Britton from New Zealand, General Rosales from the Philippines, Mr. Tom Brennan from USA, and Mr. David Templeman from Australia together with our in-house experts to speak to them on their respective countries' experiences in DM structure and operation of their agencies. Later on, on the 16th of this month, Mr. David Templeman, the Director General of Emergency Management Australia (EMA) was invited back to speak to the Thai senate by the chairman of the senate sub-committee on public participation. Mr. Templeman's speech contributed to last Friday's senate approval of the setting up of a new integrated DM agency—Disaster Prevention and Relief—within a single Ministry, the Ministry of Interior, effective as of 2 October 2002. Up to now, at least four agencies within three ministries were involved in DM. The positive votes by the senate were 102 while negative ones numbered only 35. Prior to the 16th of September, a large and vocal group within Senate wanted to reject the bill to save costs. The lesson learned from here is that often objective and foreign experts tend to be more convincing and influential than local or national sources. But more important still, legislators often have veto as well as positive voting power, and it is imperative to raise their awareness, understanding, and obtain their support.

My point at the outset is just to share some concrete experiences of ADPC during the past few years as part of our lessons learned. We believe there are many ways to raise awareness using social marketing principles and tools to achieve the needed political will, and certainly do not mean to be prescriptive. We certainly do not want to write a Dale Carnegie book on How to Convince Decision Makers to Act – so much depends on the target groups at any one time, in any one culture and environment, and this is where social marketing is so important. I hope that the following presentations and discussions will shed more light on the importance of public awareness raising and social marketing, so that we can all use such tools or strategies to accomplish more effective disaster risk mitigation in order to build safer communities. ADPC is in fact, about to offer a course on this important topic of social marketing.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SOCIAL MARKETING

Suzanne L. Frew, ADPC Consultant

1. Executive Summary

The challenge of creating effective public awareness campaigns, tools and messages require a new customized approach developed through social marketing, a technique that explores the individual characteristics of a specific target audience. By utilizing basic rules long understood by journalists, professionals in risk communications have a framework within which to start their process. Added to this simple framework are specific indicators inherent in the culture and individuals of each community or target audience. These signposts provide rich clues to ways in which to we can move our audiences towards implementing actions to reduce hazard risk—our ultimate goal.

Well-designed partnerships further expand our opportunities for successful communication efforts. Basic principles of public awareness assist us in developing our strategies and tactics. This underlying component of risk reduction is now shifting from the role as an “*add on activity*” into a fundamental component of all elements of a holistic risk reduction practice. Experiences from Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka provide lessons learned that demonstrate these principles.

2. Introduction

Building public understanding of disaster risk poses a challenge to everyone involved in risk communication. Underlying all activities necessary to risk reduction is the need to communicate – a very simple concept, yet one often very difficult to achieve. Even more so is the challenge to sustain our efforts and keep important stakeholders actively interested and engaged in our efforts.

The specific need for effective public awareness methods and tools is understood by those involved in reducing natural hazard risk throughout most of Asia. Many country projects currently underway include components that demonstrate innovative approaches to reaching a wide variety of audiences. Successful approaches range from street dramas and art competitions in Bangladesh to rickshaw signage in Sri Lanka to Earthquake Awareness Day in Nepal. All of these efforts are innovative techniques used as part of a public awareness or outreach campaign effort. Still, the challenges for public awareness effectiveness continue in these and other disaster-prone countries.

It is easy to get caught up in defining what constitutes *public awareness*. This danger limits exploration and possibility. It places unnatural boundaries around a communication requirement fundamental to all risk reduction work. Yet, particularly in funding discussions, a description is often requested. One possible description might be offered as:

the process through which people living in hazard-prone areas come to realize and understand that they live in areas of risk, know the specific dangers that they are exposed to and the warnings that are issued, and know the appropriate action to be taken to protect their lives and minimize property damage.

Each country or each project group might prefer their own concept or definition, one that works best within their own culture. Individualized descriptions are important for taking ownership and ensuring greater success.

While it is well known that the need exists for more effective public awareness, the practice of risk communication faces many roadblocks. In recent years industry professionals began taking a holistic approach, encouraging the incorporation of public awareness as a fundamental component of all risk reduction activities instead of as an “added on” effort. This shift marks an important change to mitigation practices. Practitioners, academics and researchers are all becoming increasingly more active in promoting this practice of weaving the communication efforts throughout the discipline. As this shift

become more commonplace, the opportunities for a broader, more integrated risk communication practice grows.

The use of a customized approach known as *social marketing* has recently begun emerging in the dialogue regarding risk communication and public awareness/community outreach. As definitions exist for this practice in other disciplines such as advertising, a definition for social marketing as it pertains to disaster risk reduction can also be offered:

the process of marketing the risk communications message to our audience by learning the cultural identifiers of our audience and crafting our outreach activities to meet their specific needs in a customized approach.

Social marketing may be thought of as a component of the public awareness development process. Though social marketing practices have long been used in risk communications, the integration of the term into the hazards community is not commonplace. The term's definition becomes a bit blurred. Whether borrowing a term or concept from another discipline and applying to our risk communications process, or creating new definitions of our own, our primary objective is to reduce risk through an informed process. This process involves thorough, thoughtful outreach strategies and tactics. The use of social marketing in this context can help us address our challenges by providing a general framework, new perspectives of context, and different ideas regarding the examination of our audiences.

Many problems compete for attention, funding and commitment in the new millennium. We increase our ability as change agents in our communities when we implement a customized public awareness approach based on social marketing techniques. By gaining a better understanding of our audiences and crafting our messages for them, we increase the odds that they will take action to save lives, reduce property and business losses, and ensure community social and economic sustainability from natural and technological disasters.

3. Why

Today we are bombarded by many serious community problems. The reality is that our risk reduction message competes with many other problems such as water, poverty, literacy, hunger, and air quality—all critical, many on a day to day, hour to hour basis. The criticality of our messages and campaigns are important, but perhaps not one that attracts and keeps attention daily. Yet, we all know, that eventually, the next flood event will happen. And earthquake will rumble through a valley destroying homes and taking lives. A cyclone will sweep in from the sea and set back crop production for years to come. We must find new approaches to communicating the human relationship to the natural and built environment.

We must target our messages to reach specific audiences. One message or approach does not fit all. The *disaster world* is filled with data—data, data and more data. It is often difficult to get accurate data pertinent to our needs, but when we do, the data must be turned into intelligence for our target audience. Risk information must be placed into a context that our audience can both understand and personally relate to. Unless our facts transition into meaningful information to those we are trying to reach, they will not be heard. We will lose out in the message competition.

Turning data into intelligence requires understanding the psychology and conditions of our audiences, our community or communities. This means thoroughly understanding their decision-making approaches in order to make that message one that will can be understood to make a difference for that person individually. While many believe that the goal of public awareness is to get the message out to the audience, I suggest that the real goal to motivate them to action. The process might be considered one of four steps: hearing, understanding, personalizing and acting.

First the audience needs to hear our message. This is itself is challenging to obtain the effective information and get it out to the community. Secondly, our audience needs to understand what the message is that we are conveying. This means that our messages, tools and designs require effective communication methods and content. Since much of the disaster information can be technical—whether

describing a building strengthening technique or an earthquake risk map—the message has to be one that transfers knowledge effectively. Thirdly, that message needs to make sense to the person that hears it. If it does not describe a situation that has meaning for him or her, there can be no personalization. This step is perhaps the most critical when our goal is not to inform but to motivate to action. This process of hearing-understanding-personalizing-acting is the one that leads to implementation of risk reduction behavior.

4. The Elements of Social Marketing and Public Awareness

Moving our audiences through this stepped awareness process to the point where we can measure our performance through their action is challenging. Because of this constantly shifting competition of messages, and the necessity for personalization, customization increases in importance. Three key areas for customization are approaches or campaigns, tools, and messages. Often practitioners get caught in the trap of focusing on either the big *strategic* picture or the *tactical* details and do not work on both levels that are equally needed.

An analogy from war might best serve to describe the necessity and differences between strategic and tactical approaches. For this example, let's use the hypothetical *Battle of the Hill*. In order to win the war, it has been determined by leadership that our winning strategy must be to capture an important, well-located hill in enemy territory. The strategy has been set—but not the details. How do we capture it? The tactical experts are called in to determine how the strategy can be carried out. The tacticians begin studying the landscape of the hill in order to move the ground soldiers up to the top of the hill. How high is it? Are there trees for cover? Are there rivers to cross before the climb? Is it barren rock with great exposure to the soldiers climbing? All of these tactical questions must be addressed in order to understand the landscape of the hill, best protect the soldiers on their mission, and give them a chance for the greatest success.

Public awareness and social marketing are much the same. We must understand the landscape and conditions of our community and audiences in order for our messages to get through successfully. Otherwise, our messages, sent out without any knowledge of the landscape, like the soldiers, may die.

Defining Our Landscape

As in our war analogy, risk communication requires us to clearly define our target audience. Often the word community gets used very loosely, without a great deal of thought or research. Doing our research on an ongoing basis increases our opportunities for successful penetration of those we wish to target. This research and understand provides us with needed parameters, decision-making opportunities and ideas for new ways that often we might not have considered. Community means many things to many people—it could be the geographical area such as a city or a neighborhood, a profession, or a group of individuals that represent a subunit within a larger, more defined one. These audiences or communities shift constantly, in subtle and not so subtle ways.

The Journalist's Rules

For many year journalists from newspapers, television and other print and electronic media have been going into the field to develop information pieces to give to their audiences. In doing so, they often use a method for crafting their message that captures the most important elements of what the audience needs to know, and how they can reach them. Five main questions are asked: who, what, where, when, why and how?

These same questions provide a useful structure for developing effective public awareness approaches and tools. How exactly we choose to apply the questions can vary greatly and is only limited by our imagination. The Journalist's Rules is an excellent tool with which we apply our understanding to our audience—gained through our social marketing research—to the development of individualized public awareness messages, tools and outreach campaigns. Yet we must remember to be creative in our thinking, to ask new questions, take risks, even to the point of being willing to fail in our efforts to experiment with new approaches.

Who?

Who are we trying to reach? We need to specify and define our target audience. This very important question requires us to really understand the people we want to reach. This is where social marketing research provides important clues. We must know with whom we are trying to communicate, as every message can not meet the needs of every person.

What?

What do we want them to know or do? Again, we clarity is important. If we are not clear what we want them to understand or do, they will not be either, and it is doubtful that their behavior will change to one that reduces hazard risk. If we are clear, we give them the tools that empower them to explain it to other people. It will better our chances that they will remember our message when making decisions.

Where?

Where do we put our message? And where do we want them to act? This can be useful for us in our public awareness development process and in giving directions. Do we put our brochures in a local store? Or a school? Do we want our audience to make changes to their homes or their businesses?

When?

When do we put our message out? Timing is very important for reaching an audience that will listen. Are there special events in which we could carry a banner in a parade (example), or a time period, for example, just before the beginning of the monsoons or just after school has begun? Timing of our outreach is critical.

This is often called a *window of opportunity*. If there has been an event that recently took place that can give us a “hook” – something that draws the interest of a community that makes them more aware than normal of what we want to tell them. This could be a recent earthquake, fire or flood that has taken place in our own community or one that has received local attention from the media.

Why?

Why do they need to know? Here is our chance to tell them, or remind them, of why they will benefit from this piece of information. Or why they can be hurt or killed if they do not act on the information we are giving them. As with the other W questions, if we know our audience through our social marketing research, we will know what is the most important to them, why it is the most important, and what we can do to help them preserve it. If they are very proud of a new school that has resulted from many hard years of work and effort by the community, our message can be structured to address those hard efforts, and why by strengthening it against seasonal flooding, they will honor and preserve their efforts.

How?

How do we craft our risk reduction message, distribute our message and evaluate whether or not our effort was effective? This is the step that we most often think of when working on public awareness efforts. Yet, often not enough time is taken to research the most effective ways based on a selected audience. Customization is key.

By using a checklist of social marketing indicators to assist us in crafting our messages to the different groups, our success will increase. The lack of this individualized approach is possibly one of the reasons that mitigation efforts have been so difficult to implement in the United States, a country on the forefront of disaster mitigation understanding, policy and research. For many years, outreach was not customized for the individual groups or communities or cultural groups. Today there is a growing effort to change this to reflect more cultural sensitivity, to get away from one message fits all. The same holds true for Asia, and in particular, the efforts of those involved with the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Project.

The Role of Culture

When we look at our target audience—those we most want to reach with our message—we want to know why that audience behaves and communicates the way it does. Often their particular speech and behavior gives the group an identity. Through watching each other, they learn how to behave. They

pass behavior patterns on through many different means of communication such as word of mouth or writing, street drama and art. Their knowledge and behavior patterns pass on through the family structure and through institutions with which they are involved. Cultural identity is passed down through the generations. It is transferred across social networks.

Our world is getting smaller. With an increasingly global economy, cultural characteristics often spread throughout the world where friends, family or business associates might reside, or where economic connections create reason for sharing cultural characteristics. Our world and cultures are not static—urban centers throughout Asia are exploding with rapid population growth and demographic shifts, while the earth's natural environment is changing and our built environment continues to grow in density. We must pay careful attention to these indicators.

Changes may also be based on shifts in local economics, natural events, and political unrest. From one year to the next, even subtle things in our communities can change, such as the emergence of an informal community leader that can help us. We must listen and watch for these changes constantly.

Connecting Culture to Public Awareness

By learning the details of the culture and behavior specific to our audience, we gain needed insight into how to reach them. We learn ways to motivate them into action. By not paying attention to often easily observable indicators, we miss rich opportunities to craft and distribute powerful messages.

Through research, and focusing on the history and culture of the group we are reaching out to, we create a much better chance of identifying cultural similarities and differences. Because outreach work with natural hazards and mitigation is often challenged by limited resources and staff positions, it is essential that we make our efforts efficient and effective.

Social Marketing Descriptors

The importance of culture is often overlooked in public awareness discussions; however, its role deeply impacts our work. Cultural identifiers provide clues that make our job more efficient and effective. Ignoring them is like ignoring a traffic sign. These indicators provide details on social hierarchy, economic issues and lifestyles and decision-making processes.

Cultural identifiers are evident in every community, region and country. By studying these descriptors, we begin to understand the unique characteristics of each different community. We also learn about the roadblocks to expect and the methods that will help us break through them.

In Multicultural Marketing: Selling to a Diverse America, (Marlene Rossman, 1994) the challenges are described that marketers in the United States face, now that the country is rapidly reflecting many diverse population groups from around the world. Rossman's overview of the how we look at our audience, incorporated into many of the key points below, provides a tactical starting point in the social marketing process.

Through selected key indicators, we can build a personalized checklist regarding the psychology and *landscape* of our target audiences. Each jurisdiction, urban or rural, has unique qualities. While many different descriptors can be identified, the ones following provide a starting point for building an accurate profile of our audience. Through these, we begin the process of defining our target *community*.

Exposure to hazards

What particular hazard or group of hazards is our audience exposed to? What are they familiar with through experience? (May be multiple hazards.)

Language

What are the languages used within and among our communities? What are the differences in dialect, regional tone? For example, there are over 30 known languages in the Asian Indian subgroups (India,

Pakistan and Bangladesh) and hundreds of dialects. How many are spoken within our community? Within the same neighborhood?

Time

Time perception varies between different audiences. Is time perceived the same way or differently?

Religion

The religious foundation can dramatically impact decision-making. We need to understand how our public awareness messages, and risk reduction attitudes in general, fit in with our audience's basic beliefs. Religion can impact the way an individual perceives message content, the timing of its delivery and the approach used. When we look to other nations for public awareness examples, it is important that we adjust our strategies and tactics to reflect the religious differences of our target group.

For example, the Philippines is the only Christian nation in Asia, and most are Roman Catholic. Asian Indians are mostly Hindu or Moslem, and this differs between regions and classes. Buddhism and Jainism are practiced in Sri Lanka. Confucianism has major religious influences in Vietnam. As outreach methods are shared, the influences of these religious practices need to be taken into account.

Ethnicity/Race

What role does it play in our outreach message and approach? This could impact the images that are used in photographs or other images in a campaign. It could also impact the particularly types of media that one race is more likely to pay attention to than another is.

Group identification (group think)

How do our audience think – mostly as a group or does it prefer to make its decisions as an individual? College students might desire a different approach than a community organization. It is the use of “we” versus “I” in targeting certain markets, packaging the information and helping the group relate to the information we are providing.

Population changes

Migration patterns are important to watch in understanding the audiences—in a region, a city and even within a neighborhood.

Acceptance of new technologies

What is our audience's relationship with new technologies? Do they trust it or have access to it? Perhaps radio might be the most appropriate method in the rural areas where in the urban area television might be the best approach. This is also an important issue if we are asking them to address new techniques, such as home construction methods differ from local tradition.

Age and generation differences

Are there major differences in the generation's thinking? In our approaches to reach them? In the type of images used?

Formality

Different methods and communication might be needed to appeal to certain ranks or castes within society.

Openness to change

Difference between messages – emphasizing benefits and strengths of new approaches versus putting down older, traditional ways. Who supports embracing new ways and technologies? Which age group, educational level? Who will have the most influence?

Formal and informal champions

Who is respected in the specific community you want to reach? Some hold established formal leadership positions and some are those “wise men or women” that people turn to informally for guidance.

Integration of different cultures

Groups that have migrated to new areas or regions either assimilate or adopt local values and behaviors while others add elements of the new culture without abandoning their own traditions. Can we address these in our messages?

Globalization

How “global” has our audience become? Are they being influenced by new ways, traditions beyond their own local community? Has this influence extended out to their nation or internationally?

Historical conflicts

Are there any issues within our target community that we should address appropriately? Are there local conflicts based on religious differences, national wars or international or cross-border conflicts?

Celebrated traditions

Different ways that traditions celebration are excellent ways to get the message out such as through traditional dance, song, theatre, shadow puppets. Can we utilize these in our imagery or presentation?

Community networks

How do relationships work in our target community, particularly in getting the word out or in adopting new risk reducing efforts?

Media

Which media has worked most successfully in reaching out to our target audience? Are there new opportunities to use media? Or new partners?

Once we carefully consider such elements, we can begin the customization of our outreach messages, tools and informational/educational campaigns. All communities have experiences with other critical issues from which we can learn from regarding how our target community responds to public awareness campaigns. We need to properly research our audiences. We need to compare our experiences with those of others to learn about what has worked and what hasn't worked. And we need to try new things.

Partnerships: An Emerging Trend

Public-private partnerships have emerged as an important element in successful public awareness efforts to reduce natural hazard risk. Unfortunately, they are difficult to build and sustain. The right people need to be brought together. A well-targeted initiative from which all partners can benefit must be designed and implemented. A clear framework that helps sustained success for everyone needs to be established. By understanding the underlying and often unspoken needs of the players, identifying limitations and creating new opportunities for all involved, “risky” partnerships can succeed—and be sustained.

Partnerships are more complex than working alone, especially when deciding on the outreach message and the work involved. Partnering poses a threat to the assurance that one group will get its own way. Yet a partnership also creates greater possibilities for many different ways of success. Through their combined efforts, partnerships can develop a clearer picture of the audience for social marketing research. Through combined efforts, more information distribution channels can be opened, more spokes persons can be called upon, and resources provided.

By joining forces with those that often think and act differently, partners embark on a broader, more opportunistic and personally rewarding journey to meet the complex challenges of risk reduction.

Ten Keys to Successful Partnerships

- 1) Define the risks for each partner and participant
- 2) Identify the cultural differences of each partner
- 3) Match the mission of each partner – make it a win-win relationship
- 4) Define and address the rewards and recognition preferred of each partner

- 5) Engage those individuals within each partnering group who can “champion” your outreach efforts
- 6) Define the time critical mileposts or timelines for each partner
- 7) Continually educate each partner on the outreach efforts, developments, success and changes
- 8) Document the successes, problems and lessons learned experienced in the partnership
- 9) Commit partners to spend time together (physically)
- 10) Publicize and celebrate partnership successes

Basic Principles of Public Awareness

As we begin our process of public awareness, and engage in our social marketing research the basic principles can help us in developing our strategies and tactics:

- Involve community
- Customize for audiences – use cultural indicators
- Create effective strategic approaches, tools and messages
- Be creative and take risks
- Create ownership by our communities or audiences
- Incorporate local community perspectives
- Create two-way communications
- Aggressively involve community leaders
- Speak with one voice on message issues (particularly if partners are involved)
- Evaluate and measure performance
- Repeat, repeat, repeat

Celebrating Successes

And perhaps one of the most critical components is to celebrate the successes that we have. This often does not happen. The psychology of celebrating the successful completion of even small steps further strengthens our dedication and creates great good will with those we have involved in the process, particularly our audiences and donor partners.

The old saying that success breeds success is especially true when considering we are dealing with a subject that is often difficult to keep alive on a daily basis. Through this celebration, we attract more people to join our efforts and develop greater interest in those we are ultimately trying to reach.

5. Issues to consider

The following are some ideas to consider and questions to pose at the beginning of a public awareness effort.

Participation—Engaging members of our target communities provides excellent opportunities for direct involvement, greater understanding, and ultimately, more acceptances by those we are trying to reach. Nepal and Indonesia found this with their School Earthquake Safety Program, as did Sri Lanka with its Disaster Safety Days.

Sustainability—As we work on our public awareness efforts we need to carefully choose which manner will be the most long lasting—if this is our goal. Some efforts may only be short term, but usually only as a small step in a much larger plan. As we think about our plan, we can think of ways to build in lasting impact and participation. By getting others engaged and committed we have a much better chance to create a foundation for efforts to build upon. Both Indonesia and Nepal’s project found ways in which sustainability has been addressed, though funding always continues to be an issue.

Knowledge transfer—Mitigation is a difficult concept for many. Changing old patterns to reduce risk often means changing traditional approaches or educating leading individuals on ways in which they can

become leaders. Unless the information is translated into everyday common terms for the average audience, most will not be able to understand how it can apply to them. Political leaders need to understand in terms that they can use and find beneficial for work. This may be quite different from a leader for a non-governmental organization (NGO). Children also need clearly understandable ways and methods that they can use the information.

Media, communications and other tools—When we consider which media to use to get out our messages, we again return to what has been most successful with the audience we are trying to reach. It is important to consider all forms of media when reaching out, not just ones such as newspaper or television. By expanding our methods of communicating we can reach different audiences using different senses, not just visual. While electronic media might be important for some regions, other regions it might be inadequate in its coverage of our audience, particularly in the rural communities or ones where electronic or print media do not reach.

Creative forms of media include more traditional forms of communications that have been used through the centuries for passing on information or stories. Orally based cultures might have great opportunities for the use of oral history, storytelling, dance theatre and puppets. These communication methods actively engage an audience where maps often do not. However, the use of maps, whether paper or electronic or a Geographical Information System (GIS) might be the most appropriate method. Video, CD-ROM and the Internet also work well with interactive audiences, as do interactive exhibits.

National institutionalization—Taking a local effort and making it national requires good infrastructure, good public relations and champions that can take the message forward to apply it to a national model.

Quality control—Making sure that the message is accurate in its technical and social context is essential. Often times in translations, slight variations on wording shifts meaning, not just in technical terms but in what that might mean to a different audience. Keep quality checks on the work in progress as well as after the translation is completed. Quality control becomes more complicated when partners become involved. The quality control becomes even more important, as each partner should be able to approve the work before it is released to the public.

Evaluating and setting milestones—What often gets missed is the method for evaluating how well our efforts have done. By setting up tools for evaluating our work early on in our strategy, we can begin to measure our performance so and make adjustments as needed. By creating a two-way communication flow with our audiences, we begin to work with them more successfully. This can be done through personal interviews, surveys, casual or formal conversations, or many other tools. Milestones or specific times when one steps back to review the work are essential to keep on track with public awareness efforts. These are internal to our team and can be identified early on or throughout the process, as they become evident.

6. Case Studies: Lessons learned from the AUDMP Projects

While many lessons were learned over the years from the varying project, three of them provided specific lessons learned in the area of public awareness.

Bangladesh

- Design in context, reflecting cultures and beliefs
- Ensure local people are the real participants and feel ownership
- Few initiatives do not support the illiterate population

Sri Lanka

- Materials must be developed in the local language, especially with technical terms
- Short educations/training are the best
- NGOs are best in gaining approval with the community

Katmandu Valley, Nepal

- Public awareness must be integrated into all risk reduction activities

- Different audiences require different messages
 - Politicians/decisionmaker- risk reduction is a development issue
 - Community – understanding risk and reduction measures

All projects led to conclusions regarding the continuing challenges faced by the project staffs. These *words of wisdom* included:

- Ensure real participation and ownership
- Create incentives for participation
- Get funding
- Sustain initiatives
- Measure performance

Conclusion

Each community represents an entire universe all unto itself, complex and remarkable. In order to embrace the wide diversity of individuals within our communities, or within the community's neighborhoods, we need to learn who are audience is—who they are, how they think and what impacts their unique decision making process. In doing this we can begin to reach all population segments of a community. This is applying a social marketing approach to a public awareness effort.

By engaging in such a targeted social marketing process, we are better equipped to design customized public awareness tools, messages and informational/educational campaigns. We can more effectively choose our distribution methods and develop strategies that engage the target audiences more effectively.

Our country projects from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal provide excellent examples of efforts that reached the community. While the projects face continuing challenges—be it funding, sustainability or new ways to engage their communities, their replication in new cities have proven that the lessons learned can be successfully applied. For all public awareness projects, our challenge is to continue to work creatively, with open minds to the problems we face, and to realize that our efforts make a difference.

RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH PUBLIC CAMPAIGN UNDER BANGLADESH URBAN DISASTER MITIGATION PROJECT (BUDMP)

Monzu Morshed and Nurul Huda, CARE Bangladesh

Introduction:

Raising awareness through public campaign is the process of bringing together all feasible and practical inter sectoral social allies to raise community awareness of and demand for a particular development program, to assist in the delivery of resources and services and to strengthen community participation for sustainability and self reliance.

The program include education, information, warnings ideally aim to achieve a high degree of self-reliance.

Public Awareness in disaster management is the process by which vulnerable population understands the nature of hazards and their potential for disaster, as well as the appropriate mitigation strategies. Preparedness measures and response efforts to alleviate or totally remove the negative effects in order to save life and property.

From the beginning of BUDMP it has been emphasized on awareness to mitigate flood hazards in two working municipalities and ideally aim to achieve to:

- increase public awareness on flood hazard, knowledge and ability to organize for self reliance
- help people to be motivated to know about their role and responsibilities in flood urban hazard mitigation
- understand and modify community's ideas for what to do during, after and pre flood situation.
- mobilize all available resources at community level
- make safer urban community through utilizing their resources
- make sustainable BUDMP's initiatives
- bring social integrity to face hazardous situation.

Factors Considered in public awareness under BUDMP:

The following factors are considered in order to undertake public awareness program:

- National policy: Public information is defined based on in depth and comprehensive understanding of a country's socio cultural and politico-economic contexts.
- Community experience of disaster: Intensified programming at selected pressure points
- Indigenous coping mechanism of community: For self-sustaining process.
- Expectancy and dependency factors, which may have led communities to become over dependent on government and non-government assistance.
- Education level, customs and beliefs of community: Carefully planned and cost for feasibility so as to ensure that demand created in the mobilizing process is met.
- Both bottom up and top down approach are followed
- Community relevant messages: Considered basic community needs in pre, during and post disaster situation.
- Avoid community's sensitive messages.
- Applied easy communicable media.
- Considered cost effectiveness of project resources.
- Involvement of MDMC, ensure civil society and community participation

Factors considered in articulation of public information in BUDMP:

With a view to conduct effective public awareness program it is prime need to articulate effective public information, which is very much relevant with the objectives of the project. Considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints, BUDMP imparts footsteps regarding public awareness program. Through consultation with all level of project partners BUDMP articulates public information as following consensus points:

Use symbolic but easy to understandable to community
 Easy language
 Attractive but not funny
 Realistic and easy to understand
 Followed national broadcasting system
 Replicable: uses various means of conveying the same message
 Highlights problems but information was solution oriented
 Target audience worthy

Activities Undertaken in BUDMP for Public Awareness:

Activities	Target Audience
Dissemination of project output (e.g.- R & R Map and Contingency Plan)	Municipality Office Bearers and Community
Printed Visual Aids (Poster, brochure, paper cap, placards, festoons etc.)	Mass people
Periodic Publication (News Letter, Wall Magazine, Disaster Awareness Booklet)	Municipality, Civil Societies, Other professional, Government Officials etc.
Cultural events (Drama, Folk songs, Art & Essay Competition, debate, Art Exhibition, Rally, Fashion Show etc.)	Mass people, Student
Simulation and Dummy Show piece	Municipality Office Bearers, Volunteers and Mass people
Sharing Experiences (AGM, Different Meetings e.g.- Municipality Chairmen Association & Workshop etc.)	Key Disaster Players, Other Professional and Community
Display (Signboard on Rickshaw, Official letter head pad/envelop, Billboards & wall painting)	Mass people, Other professional and Government and Non Government Officials
Civil Society Training & Student Orientation	Civil Society, Students, Guardians & Teachers
Audio Visual Aids (Use Cable Network, Movie Hall)	Mass people
Video documentary films	International community, National intellectuals and community etc.
Cross Visits	Other Municipality Officials, PNGO Staff

Effectiveness Measures:

After disseminating each public information in the media, BUDMP monitors very closely its' effectiveness, acceptability, sensitivity to the community. It is very pleasing matter for BUDMP that no sensitiveness found regarding the matter, even nobody undervalued the initiatives. On the other hand BUDMP can conclude following ways regarding effectiveness of public awareness:

- Initiatives were useful to the targeted audience
- Impact of the initiatives were encouraging
- Initiatives in large scale might have more impact than what have done under BUDMP
- Vulnerable populations in the targeted areas know about urban hazards.

Difficulties/Constrained encountered:

As because public awareness program is exclusively designed for public, it contains some limitations also. In the conduction of public awareness program, BUDMP faces some difficulties/constraints as follows:

- Few initiatives (cultural events, video documentation etc.) are very much expansive
- Longevity of awareness items (poster, signboard & wall painting) depend on the community's motive
- Some items are time consuming e.g.- debate and art competition
- Very difficult to control people in some items like drama, songs and poetry competition.
- Few initiatives do not suit with illiterate people, e.g.- poster
- For some initiatives it needs approval from the authority like school program, teachers' training, movie hall message dissemination etc.
- Few initiatives creates traffic jam in the road e.g.- rally
- Faced embarrassing situation when some participants asked for honorarium in training

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SOCIAL MARKETING: EXPERIENCES OF KVERMP

**Amod Mani Dixit, Mahesh Nakarmi, Shiva Bahadur Pradhanang, Sriram Singh Basnet,
Bishnu Hari Pandey, Jitendra Bothara, Kiran Pokhrel, Bijay Upadyay, Ramesh
Guragain, Brian Tucker, Laura Dwelley Samant,
National Society for Earthquake Technology**

Approach adopted for Public Awareness and Social Marketing

- Raising public awareness was one of the objectives of the Kathmandu Valley Earthquake Risk Management Project (KVERMP).
- We did realize that there was very little knowledge in Nepal on earthquake risk and preparedness despite a long history of geological studies. The living memory of the last devastating earthquake of 1934 almost faded with the society, and the lessons of the more recent 1988 earthquake was not being propagated or respected.
- Awareness raising targeted all sections of the society: from officials and decision-makers at the central government through the municipal authorities and communities in the municipal and village wards. It also targeted the influential members of the private sector, and international community and representatives of donor agencies resident in Kathmandu Valley. Influential organizations abroad concerning Kathmandu Valley's earthquake risk were also specific targets of our awareness-raising program.
- The awareness-raising programs of KVERMP tried to cover different sector because all sector have responsibilities of disaster risk reduction.
- Students, teachers, parents, and school management systems were specific target groups. Similarly, the awareness-raising program included activities targeted towards professional engineers, architects, geologists, medical personnel, insurers, and masons.
- KVERMP covered only the Kathmandu Valley. However, many of our awareness raising efforts influenced much larger area.
- All available and affordable means of awareness raising, e.g., radio; public lecture, pamphlet, fliers, publications and so on were considered as the awareness materials. Later, we could add exhibition, shake table demonstration, drills and simulations, and study visits to the retrofit also as awareness raising tools.
- Awareness raising was regarded much more than transferring of knowledge and information; it included also internalization of the knowledge and ultimately its ownership and use, as much as possible, in day to day life.
- Raising awareness was, in fact, a crucial component of every activity under KVERMP. Every activity we undertook was shaped to raise the awareness of different groups - government officials, media, international agencies, etc.
 - Specifically, our emphasis in developing the earthquake scenario was not in producing precise, technically sophisticated results, but in involving all key institutions in developing and understanding simple technical results.
- The objectives of awareness raising were different for the different target groups.
 - At the level of decision-makers and politicians, the objective was to convince them that disaster risk reduction is a development issue, and it is achievable even in a developing country such as Nepal.
 - At community level: the objective was to enable them to understand the risk and to identify possible measures that could be taken to gradually reduce it. To create public demand for risk reduction was another objective.

Scope and Method of Awareness Raising and Social Marketing

Activities undertaken are listed in the following Table. Some of the main activities are described below.

Earthquake Safety Day (ESD):

At NSET's request, Government of Nepal declared January 15 (or 16) as the Earthquake Safety Day of Nepal, and established an Earthquake Safety Day National Committee (ESD NatCom) for observing the Day annually throughout Nepal. ESD NatCom draws representatives from all emergency response organizations and critical facilities management. The Hon. Minister of Science and Technology chairs it.

- Establishment of ESD NatCom has provided the basis of sustainability.
- ESD is the culmination of earthquake risk management works implemented in the country in the preceding 12 months, and allows taking stock of the achievements and shortcomings.
- So far 4 ESDs have been organized. The ESD program typically has been 7-10 days, including:
 - i. Symposium of Experiences in disaster Risk Reduction, (usually participated by scientists of the region),
 - ii. Awareness speech by the Minister Science & Technology in the morning,
 - iii. Earthquake Safety Day Rally passing through the streets,
 - iv. National Meeting with participation of dignitaries,
 - v. Annual press conference on NSET efforts in Earthquake Risk Management Action Plan Implementation
 - vi. Earthquake Safety Exhibition with
 - a) Shake table demonstration,
 - b) Real scale model of earthquake-resistant construction,
 - c) Exhibition of historical photographs of past earthquakes,
 - d) Organization of exhibits by 35 institutions on aspects of earthquake disaster response and preparedness. About 10,000 persons visit the exhibition typically.

Public talks about Kathmandu Valley's Earthquake Risk

Throughout the course of this project, we gave lectures about Kathmandu Valley's earthquake risk. We sought invitations at such gatherings as meetings of Rotary Clubs, the Scout Jamborees, IDNDR-Day activities and trade association meetings. Giving such talks not only informed the public about the Kathmandu Valley's earthquake risk, but it also gave us feedback on the concerns and perceptions of the public, which helped us tailor our public awareness campaign subsequently.

The extent of this activity increased several times over during project implementation.

Radio/TV Programs

NSET and Sagarmatha, the local non-profit and highly respected FM Radio Channel collaborated to air weekly programs on Earthquake Safety. The program is successful and continued till date.

Increasingly, NSET management and professionals are invited by national and international radio/TV channel to deliberate on aspects of earthquake risk in Kathmandu.

Engineering students in building inventory and vulnerability assessment

Last year, we conducted building inventory and vulnerability assessment with the involvement of about 100 students of different engineering colleges who learned during the process

significant aspects of earthquake vulnerability analysis of existing building. This aspect is usually not included in the traditional curricula of engineering studies

Impact of Awareness Raising Activities

NSET did not carry out specific survey to estimate the impact of KVERMP awareness-raising efforts. Limited survey undertaken in 1998, about 12 months after the start of KVERMP to assess the level of awareness and the readiness of Kathmandu resident's to invest in earthquake risk assessment showed high level of awareness as well as readiness. The study itself does not allow the credits to KVERMP. However, there are several evidences that indirectly show the tremendous positive impact of KVERMP process in raising earthquake awareness in Kathmandu Valley and in Nepal. Some of these are listed below:

- In the last part of KVERMP there was a sharp increase in the number of request for lecture on earthquake risk of Kathmandu and ways to reduce it from various communities and organizations including VDCs, municipalities, professional groups, business community, international agencies, UN agencies, academic institutions, and NGOs/INGOs. Such requests are constant nowadays.
- There has been a sharp increase in the number of earthquake-related articles in print media. The topic is covered in electronic media also very frequently.
- Many of the producers of construction materials (steel, bricks, cement) refer now to the earthquake hazard for marketing their product as giving earthquake-resistance.
- Greater demand for the implementation of the national building code in construction. Earthquake Safety Forum – a technical committee devoted to earthquake safety enhancement of new constructions, and drawing members from various institutions, has been established. It is assisting municipalities in charting out regulation for incorporating seismic code provisions into the building permit process.
- The health sector disaster preparedness and emergency response plan considers MMI IX as the worst-case scenario to base the plan.
- Tremendous increase in the respect on NSET. Likewise, the perceived responsibility has also increased. NSET continued to be a member of several specialized committees created by the government.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs implemented a JICA-sponsored project for earthquake disaster mitigation planning for Kathmandu Valley during 2001-2002. This is the direct impact of NSET's KVERMP.
- There is an increase in the number of request for technical assistance for the construction/retrofitting of public and private schools. Agencies that assisted communities to construct school building now approach NSET for technical assistance in increasing numbers.

Awareness Raising Strategy	Partnering institutions	General public	School Children	Teachers	Municipal Authorities	Professionals	Decision Makers	Policy Makers	House Owners	Masons, Technicians	Donors	Remarks
POLICY INITIATIVE												
Earthquake Safety Day												ESD became sustained because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister MOST chairs the ESD Nat Com 28 members including NSET 4 ESDs completed successfully Wonderful target audiences
<i>National Meeting</i>					√		√	√			√	
<i>Symposium</i>					√	√	√					
<i>ES Rally</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	
<i>Earthquake Safety Exhibition</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
<i>Shake table demo</i>	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
<i>Street Drama</i>		√	√									
<i>Essay & Poem Competition at national scale</i>			√									
<i>Art Competition for Kathmandu Valley School Children</i>			√									
EARTHQUAKE SCENARIO & DAMAGE ACTION PLANNING PROCESS	√				√	√	√	√			√	Involvement of stakeholders in preparation, and them identifying doable actions made it very useful.
PUBLICATIONS												
<i>Earthquake Scenario of KV (Nepali, English)</i>		√			√	√	√	√	√		√	Strong Convincing Tool

Awareness Raising Strategy
<i>KV Earthquake Risk Management Action Plan</i>
<i>Flier, Poster, Video</i>
<i>Calendar</i>
<i>Manual for Earthquake-reconstruction of school buildings Protection of Educational Buildings Against Earthquakes</i>
<i>Bhaicha; a comic book</i>
<i>FAQ on Earthquakes</i>
LECTURE/SEMINARS, ORIENTATION PROGRAM ON EARTHQUAKE RISK MANAGEMENT
<i>Rotary/Lion Clubs</i>
<i>International agencies, agencies resident in Kathmandu</i>
<i>Flier, Poster, Video</i>
CONSULTATION TO HOUSE OWNERS
<i>Friday consultation to owners</i>

Public Awareness and Social Marketing

Partnering institutions	General public	School Children	Teachers	Municipal Authorities	Professionals	Decision Makers	Policy Makers	House Owners	Masons, Technicians	Donors	Remarks
					√	√	√			√	
	√	√	√						√		
	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Focused on non-engineered constructions
			√			√	√			√	
	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
	√										About one program per month
										√	About 6 programs per year
	√	√	√						√		
	√										Very successful program

Awareness Raising Strategy
COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS
<i>To school teachers, pa community leaders</i>
<i>To residents of municipal ward</i>
PAPER PRESENTATION NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
<i>To school teachers, pa community leaders</i>
<i>KV Earthquake Risk Manag Action Plan</i>
<i>Flier, Poster, Video</i>

Public Awareness and Social Marketing

Partnering institutions	General public	School Children	Teachers	Municipal Authorities	Professionals	Decision Makers	Policy Makers	House Owners	Masons, Technicians	Donors	Remarks
	√										Specially before and during school retrofit programs
	√			√							Specially during the establishment of Ward Disaster Management Committee
					√						
	√										Specially before and during school retrofit programs
					√	√	√			√	
	√	√	√						√		

Lessons Learned

- Establishment of the Earthquake Safety Day helped much in awareness raising. There is a tremendous opportunity for replicating the successes of our School Earthquake Safety Program. We are now working very closely with the Ministry of Education and its subordinate agencies. The response received from various institutions of the replication cities of Pokhara and Dharan has been very positive. It is necessary now to initiate a planning process to identify optimal programs for the cities for earthquake risk management. Given financial constraints, NSET has developed a strategy to link the earthquake risk management activities with its other programs such as the Environmental Mapping program for the municipalities (NSET has been implementing such mapping programs for municipalities with financial support from RUDO South Asia).
- There is a marked increase in the level of awareness on earthquake risk and possibilities of preparedness among the general public of Kathmandu Valley thanks largely to the implementation of KVERMP. A simple survey of 1500 households, carried out by GHI and NSET-Nepal showed a relatively high level of felt-need for seismic safety. Obviously there is a shift in attitude from the traditional fatalistic approach to that of action.
- Representatives of the business community, especially those producing construction materials such as bricks and steel, and those producing/trading in supply of emergency materials are increasingly interested in working with NSET-Nepal to learn more about their role in disaster management and emergency response planning.
- Training programs organized by NSET-Nepal for the media representatives during the past two years have a positive imprint in the quality of coverage on the media. There were more than 12 interviews aired through the radio, more than 4 TV interviews and chat programs. Total coverage of KVERMP and IDNDR Day activities during the past two years by the national print media exceed 200 items.
- Scenario and action planning process helped propagate pertinent suggestions and advice from the science of seismology, earthquake engineering and geology to administrators, decision/policy makers and the common man. It helped create gradually a demand for a practical use of science in disaster mitigation.
- Awareness raising became part of all project components. Raising awareness was originally stated as a project objective, but as we worked it became clear that raising awareness was, in fact, a crucial component of everything we were doing. Every activity we undertook was shaped to raise the awareness of different groups - government officials, media, international agencies, etc.
- As an additional note, we were surprised to find that release of the results of loss estimates did not create any panic in the population. It rather made a larger part of the society wanting to improve the situation. This leads us to believe that the traditional belief of possible generation of panic should not be used as an excuse for not releasing information on risk.

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS STRATEGY FOR DISASTER MITIGATION: EXAMPLES FROM SRI LANKA

Lionel Hewawasam, Center for Housing Planning and Building

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the strategies applied for awareness creation in Disaster Mitigation and discuss lessons learnt by SLUMDMP, the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Program (AUDM) Project of Sri Lanka. The introductory remarks of the paper explain the situation of overall process of Disaster Management in Sri Lanka at the time of commissioning the project activities, which was during the latter part of 1997. Further, it highlights the nature of the behavior of the vulnerable communities on pre, during and post disaster situations. The government intervention in disaster management had been a reactive approach. The stakeholder participation in disaster management process has not been a coordinated effort. Everybody has been working within his or her own domains.

SLUMDMP intended to create a healthy environment through the application of effective public awareness mechanisms for the successful implementation of its activities during the Demonstration and Replication Phases. *Disaster Mitigation* was a new concept for almost all the stakeholders and vulnerable communities. Therefore, awareness creation on this particular theme had been a must at the very beginning of project activities in the country.

The target group selected for the public awareness programmes was a heterogeneous crowd in which different groups of personnel represented with different levels of age; income, social status, education etc. In addition to the reason indicated above, the target group was selected with such a wide variety due to several other reasons, which are given below;

- (a) Responsibility and commitment of stakeholders differ from each other
- (b) Sustainability of Public awareness in disaster mitigation efforts in long term operation

Sri Lanka Project considered the needs and characteristics of the audience prior to training the target groups. The effectiveness of public awareness activities carried out by the Sri Lanka Project contributed to the successful implementation of its activities and in some cases the vulnerable communities started thinking in broader sense of initiating structural mitigation related activities, which are of course beyond the limits of the projects.

The problems encountered and the lessons learnt during the project period can be looked at in two different angles viz. (i) common problems and lessons and (ii) project specific problems and lessons. These lessons are highlighted and discussed with concluding remarks of this paper.

Introduction

At the time of commissioning the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Programme (AUDMP) Project, i.e. SLUMDMP, in Sri Lanka, disaster response, which is falling within the purview of post disaster recovery phase, has been popularly practiced by most of the stakeholders involved within the whole process of Disaster Management. The reason for such limited approach could be a situation that has been mistakenly understood or implemented by them. Activities or programmes related to pre-disaster risk reduction phase have not been implemented or undertaken on macro scale other than activities carried out or programmes implemented individually by relevant stakeholders in isolation on different disaster situations.

The disaster relief offered by the Department of Social Services through district and divisional administrative network created a narrow-minded vision or understanding among the general public who are vulnerable to natural disasters that it was the only possible solution on the occurrences of disasters. The temptation of the vulnerable communities to receive disaster relief either from the government or Non Governmental Organisations (N.G.OO) deviated themselves from a lifestyle linked with disaster preparedness. The reason for the creation of such a situation could be the non-existence or lack of awareness creation initiatives amongst vulnerable communities.

There are lots of stakeholders functioning within the overall process of disaster management in the country. Lack of coordination among them is the most unfortunate situation. On the other hand, responsibilities have not been vested in any organization in most of the cases such as floods, landslides, cyclones, droughts etc. other than the coastal protection, which is being governed by the Coast Conservation Act. The absence of a legal framework for disaster management hinders to a certain extent the possibilities of creating awareness amongst vulnerable communities. This leads to a situation where the vulnerable communities cannot understand to whom they should speak to when they are in a specific disastrous situation.

SLUMDMP Intention

So, *what was intended* at the very beginning of SLUMDMP, the AUDMP Country Project in Sri Lanka? At the very inception of SLUMDMP, it was intended to create a healthy environment to work with the people vulnerable to natural disasters through launching public awareness programmes. This was planned out with a view to carrying out the successful implementation of SLUMDMP's Demonstration Project related activities in Ratnapura Municipal Council (RMC) area and subsequent replication of success stories in Nawalapitiya Urban Council (NUC) area and Kandy Municipal Council (KMC) area. SLUMDMP was aiming at developing effective strategies, which would help to reach broad objectives of the project in sustainable manner over a period of long-term operation.

Target Audience

The very basic question, which anyone can ask is the nature of the target audience. It was a heterogeneous audience composed of people with different levels of age, education, social status, income, etc. with gender balance. The public awareness strategies of SLUMDMP were placed on a broader perspective and a sense with a view to accommodating the following four categories,

People vulnerable to natural disasters within project areas

People responsible for creating disastrous situations due to human activities

People involved in planning and implementation of disaster mitigation related activities/work who are also directly or indirectly associated with vulnerable communities

Personnel involved in training, education, public awareness and dissemination of information related to disaster management.

People vulnerable to natural disasters within project areas: Local community and residents' groups living in the areas prone to floods, landslides, high winds, lightning etc. were considered under this category.

People responsible for creating disastrous situations due to human activities: People involved in gem mining industry, earth filling contractors, craftsmen, sand miners, construction contractors, property developers, workers involved in the Plantation Sector, Housewives of families seeking building approvals from the Local Authority etc. were taken into account under this category.

People involved in planning and implementation of disaster mitigation related activities/work who are also directly or indirectly associated with vulnerable communities: Urban Planners, Politicians, Administrators, Professionals (Architects, Engineers, Town Planners and so on), Land use Planning Officers, Environmental Development Officers, Technical Officers, Search and Rescue (SAR) parties, Members of Community Based Organizations (CBOO) and NGOO, representatives of security forces, representatives of Insurance Companies, Health workers attached to Local Authorities, Draughtsmen, Lawyers, Surveyors etc. were included under this category.

Personnel involved in training, education, public awareness and dissemination of information related to disaster management: Trainers in Disaster Management, Undergraduates, University Lecturers, Academic staff of Training Organizations, School Teachers and School Children, Media personnel, Buddhist Priests and Moulavies of Islamic Religion etc. were included under this category.

Reasons for the complexity of the Target Audience

What were the reasons, which influenced the selection of such a wide array of target audience? This has happened due to following reasons:

- Urban Disaster Mitigation was a new concept at the inception of SLUMDMP activities in Sri Lanka
- Responsibilities and commitment in disaster mitigation efforts of stakeholders differ from each other
- Public awareness is to be used as an instrument for sustainable urban disaster mitigation

Urban Disaster Mitigation was a new concept at the inception of SLUMDMP activities in Sri Lanka: Sri Lankan community had been misguided on or they did not understand the scope and the volume of overall disaster management process during the period of commissioning of SLUMDMP activities. The public at large was traditionally governed by a reactive behaviour in response to disasters. Relief activities undertaken by the Department of Social Services were the only consideration.

Responsibilities and commitment in disaster mitigation efforts of stakeholders differ from each other: The politicians and administrators are mainly involved in decision-making and policy formulation. They always look at the non-structural perspective of the whole story of disaster management. The role of technical personnel and professionals (specially engineers and architects) are directly related to structural component of the theme. Community members should have a generic awareness on the importance of structural, less structural and non-structural mitigation. They resist changing of their attitudes and traditional behaviour. Planners are directly involved in urban and physical planning. Therefore, they must have an awareness on all three components.

Public awareness to be used as an instrument for sustainable urban disaster mitigation: Awareness creation among school teachers, school children, trainers and academics was carried out with an important long-term objective of integrating disaster mitigation aspect in the curricula of schools and universities. Sri Lanka experience is that educating school children would be more effective in bringing the message across the society. This would result in further education that leads to undertaking research at undergraduate or post-graduate levels.

Design, Formulation and Effectiveness of Awareness Programmes

Design and Formulation:

Studies were carried out with a view to assessing needs and identifying characteristics of the audience prior to the commencement of public awareness campaigns and programmes. Formal and informal methods were applied in this exercise. Meetings, interviews and discussions were conducted with the

vulnerable communities, politicians, administrators and other relevant stakeholders. In some cases (e.g. school children and teachers, academic staff of University of Moratuwa), formal meetings were conducted to identify needs and/or requirements of the relevant groups.

Effectiveness:

The public awareness activities carried out by SLUMDMP helped to a great extent to its success and opened avenues for other activities beyond expectations. Some of the examples are given below:

- Two, Community Based Organizations (CBOO) have been formed as a result of awareness creation among the residents' groups in Dolos Bage and Soysa Kelle in Nawalapitiya Urban Council (NUC) area. Presently, these two CBOO are involved in structural mitigation activities related to landslides with the assistance of other governmental and non-governmental organizations, which is an activity beyond the objectives of SLUMDMP.
- School children of General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.), Advanced Level (A/L) classes were motivated by teachers to carry out assignments and projects on themes related to natural disasters. Some selected projects done by students are now being edited with a view to publishing and distributing as examples to other students.
- Formation of "Disaster Safety Circles (DSC)" in all the schools (125 students, representing 25 in each) in NUC area.
- Representatives of NGOO who participated in the Awareness Courses conducted by SLUMDMP were motivated to establish the Disaster Management National Forum (DIMNAF), which has a membership of about 180 throughout the island and is functioning as the umbrella organization of local NGOO. DIMNAF was motivated to initiate and involve in disaster mitigation activities in the country through its network by associating with the public awareness programmes organized and conducted by SLUMDMP.

Lessons Learnt and Concluding Remarks

Difficulties and constraints, which have been experienced by SLUMDMP created opportunities to learn some lessons in creating awareness on natural disaster mitigation among relevant stakeholders. The lessons learnt in this area of activity are listed as follows;

- Public awareness campaigns/programmes should be designed and implemented to suit to the level of understanding of the selected target audience.
- Teaching materials should be prepared or made available in local language(s) prior to commencement of orientation seminars to create awareness among the general public. Language ability of the resource persons should also be considered.
- Short courses and seminars with more visual presentations were the popular programmes.
- Successful sessions could be held without the payment of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), which had been an attractive incentive to encourage participation in programmes conducted by some other agencies.
- Sufficient faculty of resource persons should be available for successful implementation of public awareness programmes.
- Working together with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOO) in the implementation of public awareness programmes is one of the successful strategies.
- Employers are not willing to release their employees for long duration programmes.

- A Glossary of Technical Terms related to Disaster Management should be prepared and made available for the benefit of resource persons and target audience as well.
- Limited or non-availability of local funds to continue public awareness programmes.
- Winning the political will and support is mandatory for a successful public awareness programme.

Public awareness campaigns/programmes should be designed and implemented to suit to the level of understanding of the selected target audience: A generic programmes is not suitable taking the target audience as a whole. As previously mentioned, the audience was of a heterogeneous composition. Therefore, the level of understanding differed from each other. Looking at the prevailing situation, different forms of presentation techniques had to be applied in different programmes. Visual presentations were very effective in this exercise but there was a lack of sufficient materials at the very beginning of these programmes. SLUMDMP realised this situation and attempted to collect visual materials available in the region and within the country. Orientation seminars in natural disaster mitigation is not possible by using regionally available materials to a certain extent due to two reasons;

- Regionally available materials are produced in English and other foreign languages
- Some of the disaster related examples cited in those materials were not entirely relevant to the Sri Lanka case.

Teaching materials should be prepared or made available in local language(s) prior to commencement of orientation seminars to create awareness among the general public. Language ability of the resource persons should also be considered: At the time of initiating public awareness programmes by SLUMDMP, there was a shortage of teaching materials/aids prepared in local language(s). Resource personnel were forced to develop their own materials but they had a problem of developing them in local language(s) without the help of a translator. Translators should also be knowledgeable about the disaster management jargon. The language ability of most of the resource persons was mostly in English. In some cases, lectures and presentations were made in English Language and translated by a translator. This is a time consuming exercise. SLUMDMP had to spend additional time and resources to prepare lesson/teaching materials in local language(s). This matter should be seriously considered at the very initial phase of project planning because it needs sufficient funds and time for preparatory activities.

Short courses and seminars with more visual presentations were the popular programmes: It was observed in most cases that there was a reluctance among the people to participate in programmes long duration. The most ideal approach would be to have one day or half day programmes. The target audience at grass root level of the vulnerable communities had to leave their daily income generating activities, which is unbearable with their living standard. The feed back of this segment of target population was that they could spare maximum one day for attending this kind of programmes. They appreciated very much the presentations of local language(s) with leaflets and visual materials.

Successful sessions could be held without the payment of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), which earlier had been an attractive incentive to encourage participation: The employed categories have been used to the practice of being paid a daily allowance or subsistence (per diem) by training organizers. A lot of training and awareness programmes has been conducted with this facility over the years in Sri Lanka. Therefore, SLUMDMP has had bitter experiences in some cases at the very inception of conducting awareness programmes where participation was not very satisfactory. However, SLUMDMP was able to change the situation through close deliberations with relevant employers and maintaining good public and interpersonal relations with relevant participants.

Sufficient faculty of resource persons should be made available for successful implementation of public awareness programmes: The availability of limited number of resource persons and trainers hindered the smooth implementation of public awareness programmes. As stated elsewhere, disaster mitigation is a new subject for which the number of trained resource persons available are very limited. It was observed that even some of the past participants of ADPC courses were not contributing their support to conduct awareness programmes and other relevant training, due to numerous reasons.

Working together with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOO) in the implementation of public awareness programmes is one of the successful strategies: Working with NGOO is one of the strategies to approach the grass root level people of the vulnerable communities. There are financially sound NGOO, which are handling community-based projects effectively in the country. These NGOO have developed very close links with people. SLUMDMP could make use of those links to approach grass root level communities vulnerable to natural disasters in the implementation of its public awareness programmes.

Employers are not willing to release their employees for long duration programmes: Full time residential courses were not possible since the employers' unwillingness to release employees for such courses. Strategy applied in such cases was to conduct short courses or sessions with least number of days that could be utilized for the purpose preferably weekends and public holidays.

A Glossary of Technical Terms related to Disaster Management should be prepared and made available for the benefit of resource persons and target audience: It was observed that the disaster management terminology is difficult to understand. Even those conversant in English find it difficult to understand the Terminology explained in English, at the first instance. Technical terms are not available in local language(s) to use in awareness creation. A glossary of technical terms related to disaster management terminology should be prepared and made available prior to commencement of awareness programmes. It is the understanding of the author that similar sets of glossaries are now being prepared by SLUMDMP and National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) to overcome this difficulty in awareness creation in disaster management in local language(s).

Limited or non-availability of local funds to continue public awareness programmes: This is a very vital issue and also a lesson learnt. The provision of local funds from the National Government or Provincial Councils is very essential to continue public awareness programmes. This is a non-recoverable long-term investment, which cannot be considered in a country facing an economic crisis. The only strategy that can be applied is to link these public awareness programmes with other national and/or provincial level programmes for which local funds have been provided. NDMC, Sri Lanka, being the national focal point of disaster management activities should undertake the responsibility of providing local funds. SLUMDMP could divert not for creation of public awareness but for training in disaster mitigation to its National Partner Training Institute (i.e. Centre for Housing Planning and Building - CHPB) to continue through the annual training plan of CHPB, which is being carried out on fee levying basis. This strategy would be applied beyond the project implementation period.

Concluding Remarks: Winning the political will and support is mandatory for a successful public awareness programme: This is the most important lesson learnt by SLUMDMP not only for a successful implementation of public awareness campaigns and programmes but also for all the activities related to its objectives as a whole. The initiatives and commitment of local political leadership in the efforts of Ratnapura Demonstration Project and Kandy and Nawalapitiya Replication phases of SLUMDMP should be thankfully and gratefully endorsed in concluding this paper.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOLS: EXPERIENCE FROM SRI LANKA

Lionel Hewawasam, Center for Housing Planning and Building

ABSTRACT

Awareness creation through involvement in schools was mainly carried out with three types of programmes. (i) Public awareness campaigns (ii) Seminars conducted for the creation of awareness among school children, teachers and parents (iii) Short training courses conducted for schoolteachers

Public awareness campaigns: The public awareness campaigns undertaken by the project were aimed at direct involvement of school children in taking the disaster mitigation message across the vulnerable societies. The Procession conducted on the Disaster Safety Day at Ratnapura, Ballet produced on the theme of Disaster Mitigation, Tele Drama produced to explain the importance of listening to early warnings, Art, Poster and Essay Competition on the theme of the natural disaster situation conducted among students of the schools in the project areas and Art and Poster Exhibition held in Ratnapura, Nawalapitiya and Colombo are the successful campaigns carried out by the project.

Seminars conducted for the creation of awareness among school children, teachers and Parents: These seminars were orientation workshops mainly connected with the projects and assignments undertaken by the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) students within the Competence Based Learning Programme. Teachers and parents also participated in these seminars and they were also held outside the projects areas. Some of the seminars were organized for school children as a part of other important events such as World Habitat Day related activities, Educational Development Programme in Mahaweli Zones etc. Hazard specific awareness leaflets were also distributed among participants of these seminars.

Short training courses conducted for school teachers: These (3 day) short courses were conducted as Training of Trainers (TOT) to deploy them to train G.C.E. (Advanced Level) students to undertake Projects and Assignments related to natural disaster phenomena, under the Competence Based Learning.

Development of links with the then Ministry of Education and Higher Education: SLUMDMP initiative to create awareness among schoolchildren was a formal arrangement made with the assistance of the then Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education suggested to link these awareness programmes with the new educational reforms implemented by the government and requested SLUMDMP to collaborate with the National Institute Education (NIE) with a view to formulating a suitable strategy in this effort. Project preparation and implementation and Assignments entrusted under the Competence Based Learning Programme of the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) students was one such programme introduced under the new educational reforms where SLUMDMP had an opportunity to integrate disaster mitigation subject to enable the students to select topics related to this theme for their Projects and Assignments. This strategy worked well and SLUMDMP was able to implement a successful programme within the school system a great extent.

SLUMDMP approach was firstly to train teaching staff of G.C.E. (Advanced Level) classes and then to use them as trainers to train the students. During the Demonstration Phase of the project, NIE started the Competence Based Learning Programme with the assistance of SLUMDMP. Funds and resource input were given by the project and NIE supported in organizing the awareness programmes initially in the districts where the Demonstration City and the Replicating Towns are located. Once these activities were completed, NIE took over the sole responsibility of continuing this programme with its own resources citing a good example of sustainability. However, SLUMDMP continued to provide resource persons required for those programme conducted by NIE. SLUMDMP with the assistance of NIE, applied formal training methods and used training tools and equipment to conduct training and awareness courses for teachers and students. However, the project experienced a few problems and learnt several lessons during the process of awareness creation through involvement of schools. These problems and lessons are highlighted in this paper with a view to identifying possible approaches to address them in the future.

Introduction

Natural Disaster Mitigation concept is not well accommodated within school or university curricula of the Education System yet in Sri Lanka. Man and Environment related topics are being taught in school with more emphasis on protection of natural environment. However, natural disasters being part and parcel phenomenon of the natural environment is not dealt with in detail within the teaching process at school level. The integration of natural disaster mitigation into school curricula needs a considerable thinking in the policy, administrative and institutionalization efforts. There are traditionally taught subjects in the school system in which this theme could be integrated. (E.g. Man and Environment, General Science, Social Studies, Geography etc.) Revision of existing curricula is needed for this integration. Present day requirement is to consider this matter by policy makers of education system and others involved in curriculum development. The lesson materials and documentation relevant to this theme published in local language(s) are not easily accessible by schoolteachers and students. The teaching staff of schools should be trained on this subject prior to awareness creation among school children. The resource base that can be used for awareness creation should be geographically spread and numerically increased since the target group would be large. The other important fact is that students are tempted to listen to subjects outside the normal syllabus, which usually concentrates on subjects that will be taken up for testing.

Nature of the Programmes

The public awareness through the involvement of schools was carried out in a broad sense with a view to accommodating several segments of educational community such as educational administrators, teachers, students and parents. The policy makers in the field of education were also involved in the capacity of resource persons. The educational administrators played the role of facilitators in this effort. There were three types of programmes conducted in creating awareness through involvement of schools;

Public Awareness Campaigns

Seminars conducted for awareness creation among school children, teachers and parents
Short training courses conducted for school teachers

(i) **Public Awareness Campaigns:** The Public Awareness Campaigns undertaken by Sri Lanka Urban Multi Hazard Disaster Mitigation Project (SLUMDMP) were aimed at direct involvement of school children in taking disaster mitigation message across the vulnerable communities. There were several events/movements organized in this respect.

Disaster Safety Day organized at Ratnapura Demonstration City:

Disaster Safety Day at Ratnapura was organized as a public event in association with the Ratnapura municipal Council (RMC), Provincial Council of Sabaragamuwa Province, Provincial Education Department in Ratnapura and Open University of Sri Lanka. A monument was erected in the landslide site at Helauda in Ratnapura Municipal Limits to mark the event and it was declared open by Hon. Asoka Jayawardane, the then Chief Minister of the Sabaragamuwa Province on an invitation of the then Mayor of RMC. A public meeting was also held after the opening ceremony with a view to commemorating the members of sixteen families who sacrificed their lives to the landslide that occurred at this place in 1994.

There were several other activities coupled with the Disaster Safety Day event. They were:

- March to Dharmapala Vidyalaya
- Conference (Awareness Programme) at Dharmapala Vidyalaya
- Cultural Show on the theme of Disaster preparedness
- Giving away of prizes to the winners of Art, Poster and Essay competition
- Art and Poster Exhibition in Ratnapura Town Hall

All the above activities were carried out with the participation of school children in the area. Ratnapura Disaster Safety Day organized within the Demonstration city of SLUMDMP, was a provincial event

conducted on similar lines as the National Earthquake Safety Day held annually in Kathmandu, Nepal.

"Of an Event Foretold" (Kumarilage Kathawa), a Tele Drama produced for use in awareness creation

SLUMDMP produced the above Tele Drama in the local language with the intention of creating awareness on the importance of disaster preparedness and positive response to the early warnings related to natural disasters by vulnerable communities. This was telecast by the National Television (Sri Lanka Rupawahini Corporation), which has an island wide coverage. The sponsorship to telecast the Tele drama was from the Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation. This Tele Drama was submitted for First Asian UNESCO/INPUT workshop organized by the Himal Association of Katmandu and was selected for screening at the workshop, which was held from 25 to 28 November 2000.

This Tele Drama is being used in disaster mitigation training and public awareness programmes as a visual teaching material. Additional copies of the Tele Drama have been distributed among other agencies, which are conducting disaster management related training and public awareness campaigns in Sri Lanka.

Art, Poster and Essay competition conducted among students of schools located in Demonstration City and Replicating Towns (Ratnapura, Nawalapitiya and Kandy)

Art, Poster and Essay competition among students of schools in Demonstration city and Replicating towns was organized and conducted by SLUMDMP with the assistance of respective directors of the Provincial Education Departments. At the very inception of project activities, SLUMDMP initiated this programme at least to have an introduction and orientation on disaster mitigation concept among students of schools located within the project towns. This competition was conducted at following levels:

Essay Competition –

Students of G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Classes

Students of G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) Classes

Art and Poster Competition –

Students below 12 years of age

Students above 12 years of age

The objective of this activity was to conduct an orientation programme for school children to study and reason out the theme of natural disasters as an extra curricula activity.

Art and Poster Exhibition held in Ratnapura, Nawalapitiya and Kandy

An exhibition was organized to be held with the art and posters submitted by students of schools in project towns. A panel of judges selected the suitable art and poster works of students for the purpose of exhibition. Conceptualization of natural disasters from the point of view of students could be presented to the vulnerable communities of project towns through this effort. At present, this exhibition is permanently placed at the CHPB premises.

Awareness programmes conducted through Media (TV, Radio and Newspapers) for the benefit of school children

SLUMDMP intended to create awareness on natural disaster mitigation among schoolchildren through media. This was not possible unless building awareness among media personnel prior to implement such programmes. Therefore, at the first instance SLUMDMP conducted awareness programmes for media personnel. Afterwards, SLUMDMP was able to deliver some awareness programmes such as live discussions through radio and television and motivate journalists to publish newspaper articles on the importance of disaster mitigation and preparedness for the benefit of schoolchildren parents and teachers. Several live discussions were conducted through the School Service of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting

Corporation in this respect. Furthering this effort, publicity was also given through media about other programmes conducted by SLUMDMP.

Publication of a News Letter – "Vipath Puwath" in local language

The publication of a News Letter "Vipath Puwath" in local language is the other strategy applied for awareness creation. A lead article on disaster related subject and current information about disaster situation was included in each publication. Copies of the News Letter were circulated among stakeholders, participants of courses related to natural disasters, school children, teachers, parents and disaster management related organizations.

Publication of Hazard specific awareness leaflets

The publication and distribution of Hazards specific leaflets is another initiative of SLUMDMP in awareness creation through involvement of schools. Awareness Leaflets on Floods, Landslides, Cyclones and High Winds and Lightning have been published and distributed among school community. In addition, these leaflets have also been used for other awareness programmes conducted by SLUMDMP.

Re-establishment of Environmental Circles (ECC) formed in the schools located in project areas as Environment and Disaster Mitigation Circles (EDMCC)

The formation of ECC in schools has been initiated under the environmental development programme of the Central Environmental Authority. The Divisional Environmental Officers have been entrusted with the supervision of these circles. SLUMDMP, during its replication phase, initiated activities to establish disaster mitigation circles in schools located in replicating towns. Instead of establishing two different circles, ECC have been re-established as EDMCC.

(ii) Seminars conducted for awareness creation among school children, teachers and parents: Seminars conducted for awareness creation among students, teachers and parents were of a formal operation linked with the school education system of the country. These seminars were orientation workshops mainly connected with the projects and assignments undertaken by the G.C.E.(Advanced Level) students under the Competence Based Learning Programme, which is a new activity introduced under new educational reforms. Teachers and parents also participated in these seminars and they were also held in districts outside the Demonstration and Replication Project areas. Some seminars were organized and conducted as a part of other national events such as World Habitat Day related activities, Educational Development Programmes in Mahaweli Zones etc.

(iii) Short training courses conducted for schoolteachers: These training courses were formally arranged with the assistance of the then Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the National Institute of Education (NIE), Sri Lanka. Three (03) day training courses were organized and conducted as Training of Trainers (TOT) with a view to deploying them to train G.C.E. (Advanced Level) students to undertake projects and assignments on subjects related to natural disaster phenomena, under the Competence Based Learning Programme. SLUMDMP strategy and approach were firstly to train teaching staff of G.C.E. (Advanced Level) classes and thereafter, to use them as trainers to train the students.

SLUMDMP being a project outside the education system of the country, there was a requirement of obtaining the necessary approval from the educational authorities to initiate awareness building through schools. On the other hand such approval was a necessity because disaster mitigation was not included as a subject or a unit of a main subject in the school curriculum. The initial step in this exercise was therefore, to develop links with the educational authorities.

Development of links with the then Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)

SLUMDMP initiatives to create awareness among schoolchildren had to be formalized and arrangements in this respect were made with the assistance of the then Ministry of Education and Higher Education. SLUMDMP had deliberations with the MEHE with regard to this matter and ultimately agreed to the

suggestion by MEHE to link these awareness programmes with the new educational reforms implemented by the government. MEHE requested SLUMDMP to collaborate with the National Institute of Education (NIE), with a view to formulating a suitable strategy in this effort. Project preparation and assignments entrusted under the Competence Based Learning Programme of the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) students was one such programme introduced under the new educational reforms where SLUMDMP was given an opportunity to integrate the disaster mitigation subject to enable the students to select topics related to this theme for their assignments and projects. This strategy worked well and SLUMDMP was able to implement a successful programme within the school system to a great extent.

The Competence Based Learning Programme was at a standstill and the NIE was awaiting outside assistance and the NIE obtained necessary approval to link with SLUMDMP and implement this programme. Funds, design of awareness courses and resource input required were provided by the SLUMDMP and the NIE supported in organizing the awareness courses initially in the districts where the Demonstration City and the Replicating Towns are located. Once these activities were completed, NIE took over the sole responsibility of continuing this programme with its own financial resources in other areas of the country, citing a good example of sustainability of this operation. However, the two project partner organizations, National Building Research Organization (NBRO) and Centre for Housing Planning and Building (CHPB) continued to provide academic support by way of making available resource persons required for those programmes. SLUMDMP proudly highlights this work since it could link its awareness creation through involvement of schools to a national level activity, which will ultimately become a sustainable operation.

Lessons Learnt and Concluding Remarks

Difficulties and constraints, which have been experienced by SLUMDMP in building public awareness through involvement of schools, opened up opportunities to learn some lessons. Some of the problems were directly connected with the administrative and organizational structures of the relevant organizations. Obtaining approvals from authorities concerned, organizational activities at school, district and provincial levels, priorities of relevant outside organizations etc. were the barriers experienced during the whole process. The Lessons Learnt in this area of activity is given below:

Public awareness through involvement of schools need collaboration with Education Policy and implementation related organizations: Projects working outside the prevailing education system of the country need to collaborate with educational policy related organizations. This is essential to approach the educational system and have long-term implementation machinery with a view to integrating the project theme (i.e. natural disaster mitigation) as a subject in the school curriculum.

Orientation programmes for students, teachers and parents at the very initial phase is a necessity: Natural disaster mitigation is a new concept to school environment although issues related to man and environment have already been accommodated in the school curriculum. Therefore, planning for strategies to have an orientation of natural disaster mitigation had been a prime requirement within the whole scenario. Conducting the Art, Poster and Essay Competition was the strategy planned in this respect.

Teachers should be given training on subject areas falling within the purview of Natural Disaster Mitigation prior to designing, developing of curriculum and implementing of Public Awareness Programmes within the school culture: The traditional subjects and related curricula do not provide opportunities for students and teachers to master the subject disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, reconstruction etc. There was a requirement of training for teachers to fill this vacuum. TOT has become a primary need prior to commencement of school awareness programme for which SLUMDMP could react successfully. This was essential in the joint efforts of designing and implementing school awareness programmes and orient the students to think in line with natural disaster mitigation.

Agencies functioning outside the formal educational system find difficulties to deliver their programmes directly to the school community: The direct intervention into teaching and learning exercise by outside agencies is not possible within the prevailing school/education system in the country. Any organization that seeks such an intervention should obtain the formal approvals from the relevant

authorities. It is revealed that this situation creates administrative problems and is time consuming due to deliberations in convincing the decision makers on the importance of the relevant subject matter. SLUMDMP spent a lot of time (more than 03 months) in this effort.

The integration of new themes/subjects into school curriculum is an essential requirement for the students to motivate themselves and involve in activities related to the theme: There are limitations for students to study themes/subjects outside the prevailing curriculum. Priorities of school children directly connected with the school curriculum and target at the final examinations. The heavy competition for university entrance based on the results of G.C.E. (Advanced Level) prevents school children from the involvement in other subjects or activities outside the normal subjects selected for the examination. Almost all students spend additional hours outside the normal school hours for studying these subjects. Therefore, integration of new themes/subjects into school curriculum is essential to overcome this problem.

Inadequate or shortage of lesson/visual materials, information leaflets etc. in local language(s): This is one of the obstacles experienced in this area of activity. The lesson learnt out of this obstacle is that sufficient lesson/visual materials should be developed and made available before the commencement of school awareness programmes. Resources and facilities for translating the existing materials published in English and other languages are inadequate at the local level but they are essential. These are strongly needed for effective and sustainable operation in awareness creation through involvement of schools.

Resource persons need to be further developed and increased in number: There is only limited number of resource persons available in the country to deal with subjects related to natural disaster management. It is also observed that they need further development and enhancing of their knowledge. Facilities available locally are limited and there are fund constraints for them to participate in regional courses conducted in other countries.

The role of media in creating awareness in disaster mitigation for school children is at a minimal and nominal scale: The role of media in awareness creation on natural disasters among school children is at a minimal scale. There are two reasons for such a limited approach.

- Prioritization of programmes by the management of the media organizations
- More opportunities are given to programmes based on subjects taught in schools aiming at examinations

Media on priority basis is publishing programmes of popular and attractive topics. Management of the media organizations look for more profit through publishing topics related to important and difficult subjects, which are being taught in schools aiming at different examinations.

A Glossary of Technical Terms should be made available prior to the commencement of school awareness programmes: A Glossary of Technical Terms is an essential educational tool required at school level awareness creation. Disaster Management terminology is somewhat difficult to understand in local language(s) without a Glossary of Technical terms. Both students and resource persons face this difficulty. It was observed that there were differences of explanations given in local language(s) for the Disaster Management terminology by different resource persons in different sessions. Resource persons involved in awareness creation and training have obtained their local and foreign training mostly in English. Therefore, they find it difficult to conduct sessions in local language(s) without a uniform set of terminology published in local languages(s). Realizing the gravity of the need SLUMDMP has initiated work on the preparation of a Glossary of Technical Terms.

Concluding Remarks

Small projects with limited scope also can contribute to national level programmes for successful implementation. SLUMDMP is a small project with a limited scope. Initially, its activities were limited to the Demonstration City at Ratnapura in the Sabaragamuwa Province and two replicating towns namely, Nawalapitiya Urban Council area and Kandy Municipal Council area in the Central Province. The public awareness through involvement of schools was started in project towns and subsequently expanded to respective provinces and other areas outside the project related provinces. SLUMDMP

intended to build awareness among the school community and disseminate information related to the importance of natural disaster mitigation to the older generation using school children as animators. At the very initial phase, SLUMDMP realized that this effort should be linked with the formal school system if it should be sustainable in the long term, even beyond the project period. This effort was ultimately successful and SLUMDMP could link a city level activity to a national level educational programme and hand over for continuation by the relevant authority (i.e. NIE).

It is revealed that **further training is necessary to strengthen the existing resource base** and the problem, which as can be seen, is the funds constraint for both local and overseas training. Localization of regional courses would be one of the solutions to overcome this problematic situation. The next question that anyone can raise is who or what organization will undertake to follow up these activities once the country project has completed its activities. In the case of SLUMDMP, public awareness through involvement of school has already been handed over to NIE. In this area, there is still a need to update knowledge of resource persons and others involved. A network of project countries could support each other for sharing of experience for which a funding arrangement should also be made available. The question, which can be tabled for discussion and for a fruitful reply, is that who is prepared to provide such funding in this respect.