

Pilot Testing: Disasters Training for Schools

Background

Asia is the fastest urbanizing region in the world where, at the turn of the 21st century, thirty-seven percent of its population lived in cities; this proportion is projected to rise to more than fifty percent by 2030¹. About half a million people died in natural calamities in Asia between 1992 and 2002. The cumulative statistics of displaced and afflicted persons and families from an aftermath of disasters, one after another, at times compounded by man-made conflict, are utterly staggering. Southeast Asia alone is a world stage of overwhelming events, emergencies and pandemics.

Education in emergencies concerning health, disasters and chronic crises can be life-sustaining and life-saving², anchored on the belief that people, especially helpless children affected by such pressing issues have a right to life and right to living with dignity. The efficient spread of education in emergencies can also begin and be sustained by a competency-based, continuing education and capacity-development program for school heads: principals, administrators, headmasters of Basic Education schools who are directly in touch with their teachers, community stakeholders, local governments and the school-age children under their care.

UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, in a press release expressing that UNESCO stands ready to extend tsunami watch system to the Indian Ocean, on 3 January 2005, said: *“Anticipating, educating and informing are the keys to reducing the deadly effect of such natural disasters. Unfortunately such activities have not been given priority.”*³

“Education for All” means ensuring that all children have access to basic education of good quality. This implies creating an environment in school and in basic education programmes in which children are both able and enabled to learn.⁴

The UNISDR Secretariat and its partners have made disaster risk education and safer school facilities the two key themes of the 2006-2007 World Disaster Reduction Campaign entitled *“Disaster risk reduction begins at schools”*.

This campaign in the school paved the way for pursuing the Hyogo Framework Priority for Action 3: Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels (HFA 3). The campaign resulted to a multitude of

¹ Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, www.adpc.net

² Introduction: Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), UNESCO Paris, 2004.

³ UNESCO Press Release, No. 2005-02. Paris, UNESCO. http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17860&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (Accessed 26 June 2009.)

⁴ World Conference on Education for All, Jontiem, Thailand, 1990

activities that were implemented as well as partnerships established and commitments made by relevant stakeholders. The campaign also highlighted the fact that there were existing practices and activities in some schools/countries relevant to disaster reduction long before the initiation of the campaign. These activities include curricular, co-curricular, community-related as well as activities directed towards ensuring safety of the school facilities.

However, one of the factors that will contribute to the sustainability of disaster risk reduction initiatives in the school as implemented through different approaches and components will be the competency of the school administrator/principal/head master. In the school setting, the principal has both technical and managerial functions. There is a need to ensure that the principal will be able to sustain, maintain and strengthen initiatives related to disaster risk reduction long after the campaign.

It is in this context, the important role of school principals/head masters in the education of school children, teachers and the larger communities in the promotion of healthy schools and the prevention and mitigation of the effects of disasters and emergencies, that a regional training package for school heads/principals have been developed collaboratively by WHO WPRO and SEAMEO TROPED Network in 2009.

The training package is composed of six modules that will address the development of competencies required for the school heads to assume their roles and perform their functions effectively before, during and after an emergency and/or disaster.

Module 1	Conceptual Foundation
Module 2	Planning for emergencies and disasters in the school setting
Module 3	Management of the school as an evacuation/camp site
Module 4	Communication and Advocacy
Module 5	Working with partners and other stakeholders
Module 6	Other concerns in the school setting related to emergencies and Disasters

Rationale

The role of the school heads/principals in disaster risk reduction efforts within the school and within the larger community has been recognized thus a training package to prepare them has been developed. This training package is now ready for pilot testing within the region to ensure its effectiveness in developing the expected competencies. It is in this context that this proposal is being submitted.

Objectives of the Training

Specifically, after completing the course, school heads should be able to:

1. Achieved a better understanding of emergencies and disasters, and their roles & functions in emergencies and disasters
2. Prepare a comprehensive disaster preparedness plan and an educational contingency program for the school.
3. Manage effectively the school when utilized as a site for evacuation and/or other activities during emergencies and disasters.
4. Apply principles of advocacy, communication, networking, and other functions related to their roles in emergencies and disasters.

Participants

The countries to be involved are: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia , Philippines and Vietnam. Each country will have a team of five participants who can serve as national trainers and to be composed of:

- Director/Deputy Director of School Health Department of the Ministry of Education;
- Two principals/ school heads
- The health emergency and disaster focal person from the Ministry of Health

It is highly suggested that the participants should have the facility of the English language to maximize attainment of training objectives.

Tentative date and venue

14-18 February 2011 in Manila, Philippines

Implementing Agency

SEAMEO Tropical Medicine and Public Health (SEAMEO TROPMED) Network in collaboration with WPRO will organize the training to include invitation, travel arrangements and organization of the training as well as secretariat services.

SEAMEO TROPMED Network is a regional cooperation network established in 1966 for education, training and research in tropical medicine and public health under the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization. The mission of SEAMEO TROPMED is to promote health and to prevent and/or control diseases, thus improving the living conditions of people through relevant programmes and

services. One specific objective of the Network is to develop the capacity of individuals and institutions in delivering quality healthcare. The Network operates through the Regional Centre for Community Nutrition in Indonesia; Regional Centre for Microbiology, Parasitology and Entomology in Malaysia; Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration and Occupational Health in the Philippines; and Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine in Thailand. These Regional Centres are affiliated with academic and research institutions which provide the physical facilities, faculty and technical staff in respective Member Countries. A Network Coordinating Office is based in Bangkok, Thailand.