

Snapshots

DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Snapshot 79

July – August 2012



The Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) through the Disaster Reduction Programme is committed to working with officials and communities around the Pacific to strengthen the ability of countries to protect people as much as possible from the impact of natural and manmade disasters

From the Managers Desk



Mosese Sikivou

Bula Readers!

We've passed the mid-point for 2012 and have developed a few stories from the work we've done over July and August which we hope you will find interesting. These recent months have also seen a hive of activity for us in terms of our preparations for the 4th session of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management and Regional Water & Sanitation Consultations which are coming together this year in Noumea, New Caledonia on 17th – 21st September. We hope to have some interesting results from that meeting and look forward to sharing these with you in our next edition.

In July, SOPAC DRP bade farewell to our Training Support Officer, Vuli Gauna. During his time with the programme he visited a number of Pacific Island countries to assist with the development of national trainers and to implement DRM training courses in support of national capacity building efforts. Vuli recently led the completion and implementation of the new Disaster Risk Reduction course – a major undertaking.

Vuli has taken up a position with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) regional delegation in Suva, as the Regional Disaster Management Programme Manager, and can be contacted at Vuli.Gauna@ifrc.org.

We wish Vuli all the best in his future endeavours and know that his disaster management training expertise will still be utilized across the region in his new career.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition.

Mosese Sikivou

IN THIS ISSUE

- Initial Damage Assessment & Emergency Operations Centre Training in Chuuk State, Micronesia
- Kiribati Hyogo Framework for Action/Regional Framework for Action review completed
- Solomon Islands completes Progress Review for the Hyogo Framework for Action
- Solomon Islands conduct Mass Casualty Exercise to prepare for the Festival of Pacific Arts
- Cook Islands National Stocktake of Interventions for the Disaster Risk Reduction Project Portal for Asia and the Pacific – Mid-term
- Disaster Risk Reduction training begins for Samoa
- Regional Tsunami Workshop and South-West Pacific Working Group Meeting held in Samoa
- New Trainers in Disaster Risk Management for Fiji completed Training for Instructors
- Improving access to clean water in Marshall Islands

Initial Damage Assessment & Emergency Operations Centre Training in Chuuk State, Micronesia

In July, the SOPAC DRP Training & Capacity Building Team a team from the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme (PDRMP), based at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SPC (SOPAC Division)), visited Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia to conduct disaster management training. This was a joint mission with the FSM Office of Environment and Emergency Management (OEEM) to conduct Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) and Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) training for Chuuk State disaster coordination and emergency response agencies. Over twenty participants from a range of government, non-government, local municipality, and private sector entities attended the training.

A team of regional and national instructors led by Ms Kathryn Hawley, Program Director, The Asia Foundation's Pacific Disaster Risk Management Program delivered the training. She was supported by Mrs Jowana Koroitunakelo (Public Service Commission, Government of Fiji), Mr Anthony Blake (Program Manager, Act for Peace), Mrs Oleen Poll (OEEM, FSM Government) and Mr Benito Cantero (Department of Health and Social Affairs, FSM Government). Participant feedback praised the experience of the training team and emphasized in particular the value derived from the sharing of the real-life experiences of both facilitators and participants.

The Chuuk State Government, through the Governor's Office, expressed appreciation to the PDRMP for bringing this training to Chuuk. In his opening remarks, the Chief of Staff, Mr Wilfred Robert, highlighted the timely nature of this training given the recent completed renovations to the Chuuk State Disaster Coordination Center (DCO), facilitated through the SPC (SOPAC Division) with funding from the European Union. Mr Robert reminded all participants that the tools and skills they learn from this training will contribute immensely towards more effective management of the new Emergency Operations Center established within the DCO.



Participants to the IDA/EOC training – Chuuk State, FSM.

The training was made possible by The Asia Foundation through its Pacific Disaster Risk Management Program (PDRMP 2). In her closing address Kathryn Hawley noted the support provided by the FSM Government through the OEEM as this is critical to the success of training at the state level. The OEEM provides guidance through national legislation, plans and programs to the states and through this type of training comes greater understanding of processes and relationships required during times of emergencies and disasters. The Asia Foundation and SOPAC DRP appreciates the support from OEEM in implementing disaster management training throughout the states in FSM.

A key objective of the PDRMP 2 is to ensure disaster coordinators and first responders across the FSM are equipped with the tools and knowledge to enhance their understanding to more effectively prepare for and respond to disasters. Chuuk is the third state within FSM to receive the IDA and EOC training. The courses were delivered for Pohnpei State in November 2011 and Yap State in February 2012. Kosrae State is set to receive training in November 2012, followed by training for the National Government agencies in Palikir in early 2013 on completion of the new EOC facility which commenced construction in 2012.



Group photo Chuuk State IDA/EOC training.

Kiribati Hyogo Framework for Action/ Regional Framework for Action review completed

The SOPAC DRP assisted the Government of Kiribati in the HFA/RFA review in Kiribati from July 23rd – August 2nd, 2012.

This is the first time that the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action has been reviewed in Kiribati since its adoption by world leaders in 2005. The Secretary to the Office of the President, Mrs Miire Raieta, in welcoming the team stated “the review will provide an excellent opportunity to inform the country on DRM areas that need strengthening”.

The review process involved one on one consultation with key agencies and culminated with a two-day multi stakeholder workshop at the Parliament Complex. Michael Foon, Policy Officer for the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) stated “the input from stakeholders like the civil society groups provides a much clearer status of the HFA implementation and the challenges they expressed are authentic as they experience them in their communities.”

The recommendations gathered during the review have been prioritised by a technical team and endorsed by the Secretariat for funding support through the European-Union funded EDF10 ACP-EU Natural Disaster Facility which is due to commence from 2013.



Group discussing their proposed actions.



Participants at the Multi Stakeholder workshop.

Solomon Islands completes Progress Review for the Hyogo Framework for Action

A three-day national stakeholder consultation was undertaken from Friday 3rd August to Tuesday 7th August for the Solomon Islands HFA Progress Review at the Commonwealth Youth Centre. 50 participants were involved in the workshop and participation included Solomon Islands government agencies, NGO's and community based organisations and private sector representatives. The purpose of the national level review was to assess the Solomon Islands' progress toward implementation of disaster risk management in connection with the core indicators of the HFA and activities of the RFA. The Progress Review was facilitated by the Solomon Islands NDMO and assisted by SPC (SOPAC Division) and UNISDR. The Review presented an the opportunity for Solomon Islands national DRM stakeholders to assess the country's progress toward achieving its DRM goals as articulated in the Hyogo Framework for Action of which the Solomon Islands is a signatory.

The three day stakeholder consultation also led to the development of a draft country implementation plan for the Solomon Islands in connection with the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Facility under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF 10). Furthermore the national stakeholders were presented with a framework for the development of the Solomon Islands joint National Action Plan for DRM and Climate Change Adaptation.

The stakeholder consultation workshop was opened by the Acting Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, Mr. Chanel Iroi. In his opening speech the Acting Permanent Secretary highlighted the need for joint planning around disaster risk management and climate change adaptation and alignment and resilience building across Solomon Islands Government sectors.



Participants at the national stakeholder consultation workshop.

Solomon Islands conduct Mass Casualty Exercise to prepare for the Festival of Pacific Arts

The Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA) was hosted by the Solomon Islands from 1st – 14th July, 2012 and 27 Pacific Island countries participated.

In preparation for the FOPA a mass casualty exercise was conducted at the FOPA village on 12th June coordinated by the Solomon Island NDMO, SOPAC DRP Honiara National Referral Hospital (NRH), Red Cross, St John's Ambulance and the Solomon Island Royal Police Force to test agency interoperability. The exercise scenario involved the collapse of the stage where 100 delegates participating countries were performing. The scenario called for wide spread panic and the need for providing urgent medical attention. A total of 57 performers escaped 'unhurt' while 43 suffered 'injuries'.

The Solomon Islands NDMO and other agencies participating in the exercise were pleased with the outcome of the exercise. In reviewing the exercise outcomes the Director of the NDMO said "we can never really do enough to prepare our national agencies for disasters but exercises such as this go a long way to improving capacity and we need to capitalise on opportunities such as the arts festival". He went on to add "the need for exercising our disaster response roles and responsibilities cannot be understated and I look forward to working with all our local and overseas partners on preparedness activities like this again in the future".



Victim being attended to during the Exercise.

Cook Islands National Stocktake of Interventions for the Disaster Risk Reduction Project Portal for Asia and the Pacific – Mid-term

A mid-term mission for the Cook Islands DRR Projects Portal was undertaken by SOPAC DRP in the Cook Islands from the 13th to 16th August this year.

The Asia Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Project Portal (<http://drrprojects.net>) supports information access and analysis about current, proposed and past projects to avoid duplication, identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration and the exchange of experiences. Improved planning, collaboration and coherence on DRM and CC initiatives in the Cook Islands are expected outputs for the use of the DRR Project Portal.

The mid-term mission included a meeting with partners and stakeholders on the 15th August to review the data collection, issues and challenges, check data entry online and progress documentation and the manual. The discussions focused on progress, challenges, solutions and next steps for the second half of the project term.

The follow up on data collection with progress and issues reconfirms that access to project information is a big challenge. The data collection plan was reviewed, more stakeholders within the Government sectors were identified and possible improvements for details of the data collections with next steps were identified and agreed.

Discussions on the ICT requirements were progressed in additional meetings with the ICT department to identify and reconfirm future online information for the Cook Islands DRR Project Portal and its integration into other websites and portals such as the Cook Islands Government website with different Ministries, Pacific Disaster Net, Pacific Climate Change Portal and others.



In addition to the mid-term meeting it was decided that the planned HFA review workshop on Thursday morning, 16th August 2012 would be a good opportunity to link activities and presenting the portal as well as demonstrating its benefits to a wider audience and additional stakeholders.

Another mission to the Cook Islands is currently planned to take place before the end of October.

Relevant documents linked to the work on the Cook Islands DRR Projects Portal can be found through the following Pacific Disaster Net web links:

http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/SOPAC_2012_Snapshots_77.pdf

http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/SOPAC_2012_Snapshot_78.pdf

Disaster Risk Reduction training begins for Samoa

In July, the new Disaster Risk Reduction course was delivered in Apia, Samoa - the first time the course has been delivered at a national level. Participants representing 19 different government and non-government agencies attended the three-day training which introduced the key concepts and principles of risk reduction. The course used examples from Samoa to guide participants through the process of identifying risk through hazard assessment, vulnerability assessment and risk analysis. Key risk reduction measures were introduced and risk reduction best-practice was discussed.

Participants noted that the course provided them with a good understanding of disaster risk reduction and how it fits in with national and agency disaster management plans. Participants commented that at the end of the course they were in a better position to progress disaster risk reduction within their own ministries and organisations. There was significant positive feedback about the use of examples relevant to Samoa. Ms Filomena Nelson, Samoa's Principal Disaster Management Officer, delivered a presentation on risk management in Samoa, discussing their risk management framework, how risk is identified and how risk reduction measures are implemented in Samoa. Participants also commended the practical examples of risk reduction shared throughout by the Senior Disaster Management Officer, Vaito'a Toelupe.

The Disaster Risk Reduction course will continue to be rolled out across the region with seven more countries scheduled to host the training before May 2013.



Participants in the first Disaster Risk Reduction course in Apia, Samoa.



Understanding Risk through an exercise.

Regional Tsunami Workshop and South-West Pacific Working Group Meeting held in Samoa

A regional workshop on Effective Tsunami Disaster Reduction Implementation Progress in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and Proposed Enhanced Products under the Pacific Tsunami Warning & Mitigation System (PTWS) was successfully held in Apia, Samoa from 12 to 13 July 2012. It was followed by the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Working Group on Tsunami Warning and Mitigation in the South-West Pacific Region.

The objective of the workshop was to discuss and provide guidance on the responsibilities upon PTWS Member States contained in the PTWS Implementation Plan, specifically with regard to tsunami risk assessment and reduction, tsunami detection, warning and dissemination, and tsunami awareness and response. The workshop provided the opportunity for the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (Hawai'i), which provides warnings and advice to countries in this region and beyond, to introduce and obtain feedback from countries on proposed enhanced products under the PTWS.

Under IOC's Intergovernmental Co-ordination Group for the PTWS, the regional Working Group for the South-West Pacific exists to review and evaluate national capabilities and make recommendations for the provision of end-to-end tsunami warning and mitigation services. The Working Group also promotes and facilitates tsunami hazard and risk studies, the establishment and upgrading of seismic and sea level stations, data and information sharing, training and capacity building, integration of tsunami awareness in school curricula, and development and dissemination of public educational materials. The Group is comprised of representatives from Member countries and territories of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The three-day event was attended by representatives from twelve Pacific countries who made a number of recommendations to further develop and strengthen their tsunami disaster risk management capabilities. The event was held just prior to the 14th Session of World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Association V (RA V) Tropical Cyclone Committee (TCC) for South Pacific and South-East Indian Ocean also held in Apia, Samoa from 16 to 20 July 2011. Participant's attendance was supported by SOPAC DRP, IOC, WMO and the Government of New Zealand.

New Trainers in Disaster Risk Management for Fiji completed Training for Instructors

In early July, the SOPAC based Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme (PDRMP) and Fiji's National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDMO) successfully trained 18 new Disaster Risk Management trainers from various government and non-government agencies. The training is part of an effort to increase the pool of trainers to ensure the NDMO is able to meet the increasing demand for DRM training.

The training was facilitated by experienced trainers from Fiji (Public Service Commission, Act for Peace, SOPAC and The Asia Foundation) and the Cook Islands. Participant Niumaia Masere said "the experience and knowledge of the facilitators were evident in the way they deliver their units and we are very fortunate to have been taught by them".

At the completion of the five day course, trainees were satisfied with the contents of the training. Kaie Nawasa from the Commissioner Western's Office stated that the training had enhanced his training skills and he is now better prepared to develop training materials, deliver them effectively and also conduct assessment. Also attending the course was Steven Noel, Senior Training and Awareness Officer from the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office. Steven says that he now feels more confident to deliver training as a result of his participation in this course.

Fiji NDMO's Senior Training, Education and Awareness Officer, Mrs Shakuntla Kumar thanked SOPAC for their support in developing additional trainers to add to an existing cadre of national trainers, who will become facilitators of future DRM courses.



Improving access to clean water in Marshall Islands

Ebeje is the fifth most densely populated island in the world. Located in the Kwajalein Atoll (the world's largest atoll), made up of about 99 islands surrounded by a massive lagoon, the island has a population of about 15,000 living in an area of 80 acres. The island's earlier name was "Ebeje" which according to elders meant "making something out of nothing", a sentiment that best describes the lifestyle of the people living in an environment with limited resources.

Among the many challenges the people face, water and sanitation, is probably the most difficult daily hardship with only 18% of the households having access to fresh water. The situation is critical with an average of about 10.3 people per household. The Disaster Risk Reduction Project (B-Envelope) funded by the European Union and implemented by SOPAC DRP installed 250 rainwater catchments targeting households that were most vulnerable. This will ensure more people have access to clean drinking water and increase storage capacity.

On Majuro, the situation is not as bad, but is also serious, with worse affected areas such as Arrak and Laura where the majority of households do not have water storage putting pressure on the Laura water lens. Results of the household water survey indicate that only 50% of the houses surveyed have their own rainwater tank with about 1% receiving water from the reticulated supply. The project has recently contracted All Solutions Inc. to supply and install 580 rainwater catchments for houses on Majuro. This will be in addition to 350 rainwater catchments that have already been installed. The Project Manager, George Beck, stated that "rain water is the main source of drinking water in the Marshall Islands. While we have supplied and installed 930 water tanks in Majuro there is still a lot more to be done to address water and sanitation issues in Marshall Islands. When we provide clean water we reduce the pressure on their health facilities"

The project has also supplied a sewerage truck to Majuro Water and Sanitation Corporation to reduce the risk of contamination of the Laura water lens and a water truck to ensure efficient distribution of freshwater. It has also assisted the Environmental Protection Agency in water quality monitoring through training and supply of test kits.

Speaking on behalf of the Government of Marshall Islands, Chief Secretary, Casten Nemra, stated that "Water and sanitation issues is an urgent priority of the Government. Through this project and with other development partners we have addressed households that are most vulnerable but it will require a concerted effort from all partners to tackle the many challenges.

The Government is very much appreciative of the support of the European Union in the water sector and other interventions". The total assistance for Marshall Islands under the B-Envelope project is €1.6 million.





Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC)



Postal Address: Private Mail Bag, GPO, Suva, Fiji Islands

Street Address: Mead Road, Nabua, Fiji Islands

Tel: +679 338 1377 Fax: +679 337 0040

E-mail: s.zoll@sopac.org

Web site: www.sopac.org