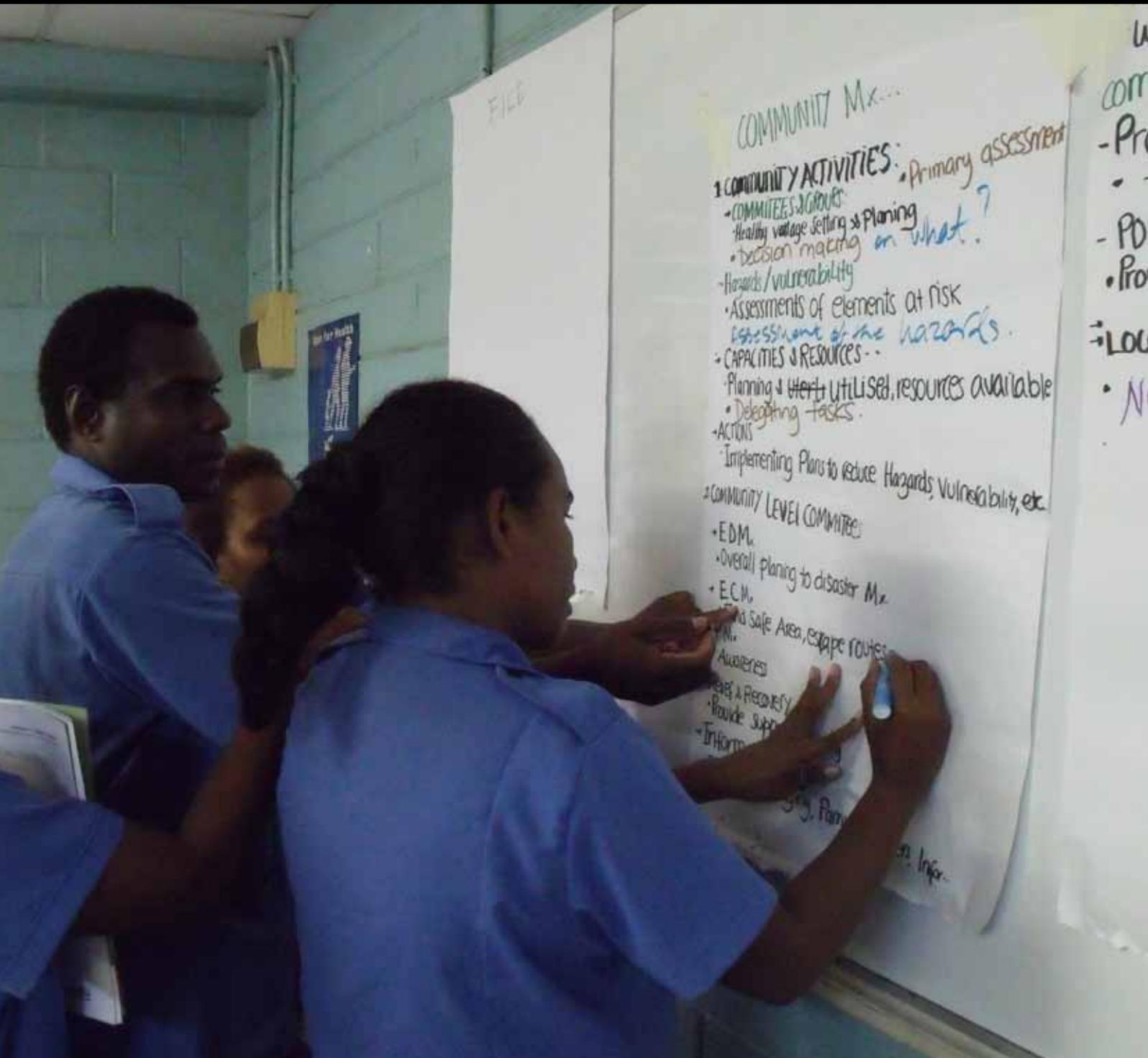


Snapshots

DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Snapshot 68

April 2011



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

The EU EDF 9 B Envelope Project is really making some great strides as we demonstrate in this issue. The Federated States of Micronesia will have Emergency Operations Centres at state level and Chuuk is the first state to complete construction. In addition to this we are continuing with our training programme with the leadership and support of The Asia Foundation/USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and also continuing support for the developing of Joint DRM and CCA National Action Plans.

During April we have also been undertaking preparations for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which is being held in Geneva from 8th – 13th May. A delegation of about 30 people are representing the Pacific with SOPAC contributing 4 including the SOPAC Division Director, Dr. Russell Howorth. We have worked closely with the UNISDR Sub Regional Office and colleagues from Pacific island countries to prepare for the Platform and will provide insights from those who attended in our May issue

For the moment though I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Mosese Sikivou

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New Emergency Operation Centre for Chuuk State and Pohnpei State

Renovation of the Chuuk State Emergency Operation Centre (Disaster Coordination Office) has been completed which was funded by the European Union through the Disaster Risk Reduction Project (B-Envelope) implemented by the Applied Geosience & Technology Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Renovations commenced in the last quarter of 2010 and was completed as scheduled in April 2011 at a cost of US\$67,537.00. The B-Envelope Project Manager, George Beck, was pleased that construction work was completed on schedule and within budget. He acknowledged the professional workmanship of the contractor, PLEC Construction Inc. which is based in Chuuk. The hard work of the FSM National Government, Office of the Environment and Emergency Management, and the Chuuk State Government in coordinating and supervising construction must also be complimented. The project has also supplied office furniture and will install early warning communication equipment.

The B-Envelope project is also funding the renovation of the Emergency Operation Centres in Yap, Kosrae and Pohnpei States. A ground breaking ceremony was held in Pohnpei on 18 April 2011 to mark the commencement of construction phase that was attended by senior Government officials from the National and State Government. The construction work is expected to be completed by the end of this year which will improve the infrastructure and strengthen the capacity of the Pohnpei State Government in coordinating and managing disaster related work.



Newly renovated Chuuk State Disaster Coordination Office





Pohnpei State ground breaking ceremony



A national Emergency Operation Centre will also be built at the National Government complex in Palikir. Architectural and engineering plans for the national EOC are being finalised and tenders for construction work is expected to be launched in May 2011. The Emergency Operation Centres in all States including the national EOC will be outfitted with early warning communication equipment. A total of Euro 1.4 million is allocated under the project to support the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia to upgrade infrastructure and strengthen early warning systems in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Progress on the Marshall Islands Joint National Action Plan

In late March 2011, a regional Mission Team comprised of SPC (with representation from both SPC Pohnpei and SOPAC's DRP), SPREP and the World Bank travelled to the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) with an aim to progress the development of a Joint National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management. The Mission followed on from the review of RMI's Disaster Risk Management National Action Plan (DRM NAP) and the development of a National Climate Change Policy Framework, both of which occurred in November 2010 and highlighted the need to address risk holistically in the RMI. The RMI government were therefore keen to follow the path of other Pacific Island Countries (Tonga, Cook Islands and now Niue) in integrating and mainstreaming their approach to risk management with a Joint National Action Plan (JNAP).

The Mission Team worked in partnership with the RMI's Chief Secretary's Office and the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC). OEPPC were instrumental in garnering national support and ownership of the National Climate Change Policy Framework, in part by engaging heavily with youth via a climate change slogan campaign. Consultations on the Climate Change Policy were undertaken with the Council of Chiefs and the Women's Annual Conference. The Climate Change Policy also gained support as it was translated into Marshallese. The groundwork for raising the profile of action on climate change, and incorporating the climate change elements into a national action plan had therefore already taken place. The Mission Team worked alongside RMI government stakeholders in merging the existing DRM NAP with priorities from the National Climate Change Policy to develop joint goals and objectives – and therefore an integrated and holistic approach to risk management.

A draft JNAP Matrix was developed over the course of the Mission and presented to RMI's National Climate Change Committee, and to a National Stakeholders Workshop – the latter included participants from national and local government, NGOs, the private sector and civil society. Both meetings were well attended and were heavily driven by the RMI government, including the presentations justifying why a JNAP is the best path to follow. Much of the presentation material was presented in Marshallese, which ensured a high level of understanding of participants and also ensured a high level of national ownership and a genuine Marshallese flavour. Constructive feedback from all participants resulted, which greatly strengthened the content and direction of the draft JNAP Matrix.



Follow-up actions from the Mission include refinement of preliminary JNAP costings, which were also developed over the course of the Mission, incorporation of Workshop input into draft JNAP Matrix and editing of the existing JNAP text to reflect the emerging financing and institutional arrangements. Discussions on dates for return engagement are also underway.



Climate Change Week and Joint National Action Planning in Cook Islands

The Government of Cook Islands hosted a week long workshop from 28 Feb to 4 March 2011, with the main objective of advancing national preparedness for the impacts of Climate Change and Disasters in Cook Islands. The workshop combined a number of key ingredients to addressing these impacts including: an overview of Climate Change and Disasters; Joint National Action Planning (JNAP); options for Climate Change (and DRM) Institutional Arrangements; development of a Climate Change Policy; and the development of a proposal to the Adaptation Fund for implementing the JNAP.

Participation of the workshop included representatives from: Outer Island Administrations; Ministries; Civil Society; scientific community; regional agencies and international development partners. The workshop was a joint initiative of the Office of the Prime Minister, the National Environment Service, and Emergency Management Cook Islands, supported by a range of regional and international partners. The following statement was made by the workshop participants to the Prime Minister of Cook Islands:

“We believe that our approach to climate should be likened to a well made ‘vaka’ – the institutional arrangements representing the canoe; the tide and the currents representing the uncharted changing weather patterns; the ‘ama’ representing the enabling policy and legislation; the ‘kiato’ representing the financial resources needed to hold the entire structure together; the ‘oe’ representing the National Action Plan giving us direction; and the people paddling the canoe representing the human resources required to move us forward. Currently our ‘vaka’ is weak – it is poorly designed, our paddlers are few, and we are at the mercy of the ocean currents and in danger of capsizing”.



Liz Koteka (Office of the Prime Minister) speaking to workshop participants on the importance of mainstreaming risk management in to planning and finance processes

The main message here is that for real progress to be made in addressing climate change and disasters, a holistic and multi-faceted approach is required, rather like the building and functioning of a ‘vaka’. SOPAC and UNDP Pacific Centre were able to support the development of key components of the ‘vaka’ through the JNAP process (the ‘oe’), as well as through providing interim arrangements for the establishment of a Climate Change (and DRM) unit within the Office of the Prime Minister.

Disaster Management Training for Final Year Nursing Students

Over the past three years the Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) has been advancing a new strategy to promote more community involvement in disaster risk management. With support from the SPC Applied Geoscience & Technology Division's (SOPAC) Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme (PDRMP) the SI NDMO has been able to conduct disaster management training courses for 3rd year nursing students at the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE). Over the past 2 years more than eighty nurses, who are now serving in different parts of the country, have received similar training during their final year at SICHE. This year an additional sixty-one final year nursing students completed the 5-day training alongside participants from other selected agencies including Education, NDMO, Red Cross, World Vision and St Johns Ambulance. The PDRMP courses delivered were Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) and Initial Damage Assessment (IDA), which are part of a suite of disaster management courses developed through on-going programmes implemented by The Asia Foundation (TAF) with funding support from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

“The most significant aspect of this training is our ability to capitalise on our strong relationship with the health sector for this disaster risk management training to be included into the SICHE School of Nursing and Health Studies curricula”, says the Director of the Solomon Islands NDMO, Mr. Loti Yates. “It is a lot for the students to take on in addition to their final year formal nursing curricula. At present the disaster management training is being conducted during the mid-term break, requiring additional commitment from the students. However, each year the trainers continue to see great interest and enthusiasm exhibited by the students as they recognise how very relevant these courses are to their field of study”.

The decision to provide this training was simple – as it provides the students with solid practical knowledge in disaster risk management. In their nursing roles they will provide integral links between national government arrangements and the communities in which they will work. Having knowledge of disaster risk management concepts will value add to the roles they will assume in the health sector, and assist the National Disaster Management Office in taking disaster management and risk reduction measures right down to the grassroots level.

Mr. Loti Yates adds that effective disaster risk management is more than just having national arrangements in place. “Everyone needs to take a more proactive role, ensuring key partners are not only fully sensitised to the national disaster arrangements but



3rd year nursing students identifying their roles in disaster risk management during the training at SICHE in Solomon Islands

trained in essential aspects such as post disaster assessments. Understanding disaster terminology, which is covered in the Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) Course, is critical to alleviating misunderstandings when called to undertake national duties, particularly during times of response. Disaster management is everybody's business". "The NDMO has a coordinating role, as the human and physical resources to respond during disasters come from a range of agencies, including the Ministry of Health. If the custodians of such resources are not fully aware of their roles in the national arrangements, coordination can and will be a difficult task", adds Mr Yates.

This initiative between the Solomon Islands NDMO and SPC-SOPAC in taking disaster management training to the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education has been well received by the health care preparedness community. Following on from this year's SICHE courses the Solomon Islands NDMO has been approached to conduct 3 more similar trainings for tertiary institutions before the end of 2011.

Disaster Risk Management Training For Local Municipal Government Officials Lautoka, Nadi, and Sigatoka

The Fiji NDMO in collaboration with the SPC/SOPAC-based Pacific Disaster Risk Management (Training) Program (PDRMP) delivered a second round of Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) training for local government officials from city and town municipal councils located in the south-western part of the main island Viti Levu. Participants to the 3-day course were from the Lautoka City Council, the Nadi Town Council and the Sigatoka Town Council, as well as the Nadi and Lautoka Rural Local Authorities; the Sigatoka, Nadi and Lautoka Fire Stations; the Lautoka Police, and staff of the national Disaster Management Office – Suva.

A number of outcomes were achieved during the training, which included:

- assessments of hazards in the three municipalities;
- determination of levels of vulnerability that exist for each municipality;
- analyses of the levels of risks for priority hazards in each of the municipalities;
- consideration for mainstreaming disaster risk management into municipal plans and budgets;;
- need to strengthen district level disaster risk management committees by including representation from municipalities and the business communities;
- agreement on the need to formulate municipal disaster plans.

The Fiji NDMO will conduct similar training for the rest of the Western division municipalities (Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki and Vatukoula) and for the Northern division over the next couple of months.



Upcoming Events

- 8th – 13th May: Pacific Delegation attends the Global Platform for DRR, Geneva.
- 10th – 12th May: Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) Course for Western Division Municipalities, Fiji.
- 18th – 27th May: Disaster Management (IDM) and Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) training for Samoa Police and Disaster Management Office (DMO), Samoa.
- 17th May: Signature of disaster risk reduction agreements between SPC and the Wallis & Futuna, Wallis.
- 23th – 27th May: Initial Scoping Visit for development of Nauru NAP, Nauru.
- 6th June: GIS Training through PNG DRM Mainstreaming
- Launch of tenders for construction of Federated States of Micronesia National Government Emergency Operation Centre.



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