

Exploring Disaster Risk Reduction in Higher Education: A Scoping Study



TRAINING AND LEARNING CIRCLE

From an Effort to Turn Local Tsunami Recovery into Regional Disaster Risk Reduction for the Poor



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Editorial Advisors:

Dr. Ian Davis
Cranfield University, UK

Kala Peiris De Costa
Siyath Foundation, Sri Lanka

Khurshid Alam
Independent Researcher and Consultant,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu
International Strategy for Risk
Reduction (ISDR) – South Asia,
Sri Lanka

Mihir R. Bhatt
All India Disaster Mitigation Institute,
India

Dr. Rita Schneider – Sliwa
Basel University, Switzerland

Dr. Satchit Balsari, MD, MPH
The University Hospital of Columbia
and Cornell, New York, USA

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FOREWORD

Implementing HFA

Community based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) has come a long way since it was promoted in the mid 1980s when the main framework was still focused on emergency response. The relevance of CBDRR was acknowledged during the world conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005, as noted in the Hyogo Framework of action (HFA), a document adapted by 168 countries, which calls for the safety of nations and communities. To support the implementation of the HFA, The Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (SU-SSC) and some partners initiated the "training and Learning Circle"(a network of CBDRR practitioners, trainers and learners, which promotes the institutionalization of CBDRR in universities and training institutions in South and South east Asia).

One of the best ways to promote safety of nations and communities is to integrate disaster risk reduction at all levels of education. To advocate for and influence officials and administrators towards institutionalization of CBDRR in Universities and training institutions, the TLC reasoned that a guideline needed to be produced. However, before coming out with a guideline, a thorough investigation of the level of appreciation, interest and accomplishments of these institutions in CBDRR had to be undertaken.

The All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI), a pioneer on CBDRR, is a partner of the SU-SSC in the Training and Learning Circle project. AIDMI conducted a scoping exercise through a workshop on exploring DRR in higher education. Representatives of eleven universities and training institutions from India participated in the workshop. Subsequently, AIDMI developed a guideline for universities on how to integrate CBDRR in their curricula.

This document, which draws largely from the scoping workshop, includes, in addition to the guideline on how to integrate CBDRR in universities' curricula; an analysis of strength, weakness, opportunities and Challenges on Disaster Risk Reduction in higher education; a historical perspective on CBDRR; and, experiences in integrating DRR in the curricula of the Universities represented in the workshop. This document is published as a reference material for universities and training institutions that aim to integrate CBDRR in higher education.

The SU-SSC would like to thank all the Training and Learning Circle partners, aside from AIDMI. The Centre for Disaster preparedness (CDP) and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) provided a venue for the regional sharing and the prevention Consortium funded and provided guidance to the implementation of the TLC. ■

Yiping Zhou, Director,
Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in UNDP

Disaster Risk Reduction and Higher Education

The paradigm shift in disaster management from post disaster relief and rehabilitation to pre disaster risk reduction has taken deeper roots across countries and communities. In the developed countries the process started decades back when various measures for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness significantly reduced the risks of disasters. This has been seen in the sharp decline in deaths and damage, even though monetary value of such damages might have increased due to increased value of assets. In developing countries the process understandably takes longer due to the constraints of resources and capacities at every level. In this context, education, particularly higher education, has a critical role to play.

In a generic sense higher education encompasses the entire gamut of education and research in colleges, universities and other technical and professional institutions across a spectrum of subjects and disciplines. All these institutions contribute to disaster risk reduction in two broad ways. First, they build the capacity of a critical mass of people who would play an important role in disaster risk reduction across sectors. They develop human resources, generate awareness, promote strategic thinking and create the leadership that holds key positions in various sectors. Second, the institutions of higher learning are continuously engaged in research on various subjects, which enrich our understanding of the causes and consequences of disasters. This promotes the development of new technologies, tools and methodologies for better assessment of disaster risks, better mitigation of



disasters, better warning and preparedness and better management in disasters.

Higher education by nature is structured around specialised disciplines that tend to focus *more and more on less and less*. This is important for research and innovation, but nonetheless fragments knowledge into specialised compartments. Knowledge on disaster management is fragmented around so many disciplines and sectors that needs have been felt to integrate them into a unified subject that would impart a holistic view on disaster management and equip students with knowledge and skills to develop professional careers as disaster managers.

Efforts to develop a new discipline of disaster management have been quite recent, but are making important progress. In the United States, until 2004, only one university offered a Bachelor's program in emergency management and three colleges conducted certificate programs on disaster management. Today as many as 170 universities and other institutions of higher learning are offering courses on emergency management, including 8 Doctoral,

51 Masters, 20 Bachelors, in addition to 91 certificate and distant learning courses on emergency management.

In India disaster management education only recently has been launched in a few universities and deemed universities. The experience so far has been mixed – interest and enthusiasm for the courses have not been matched by opportunities for specialised jobs, which is not good for the growth of the discipline. Demand for professional disaster managers has increased due to several factors. These include the enactment of the Disaster Management Act, the creation of Disaster Management Authorities at national, provincial and district levels, the establishment of disaster response and mitigation funds at all levels, increased involvement of corporate sectors in on-site and off-site emergency management plans, the continued focus of international organisations, donor agencies and national and international NGOs on disaster management and the general security environment of the region. The challenge before universities and other institutions of higher learning is to customise courses and design curricula that integrate the fragmented knowledge on disaster management in a manner that would meet the demands of the market across sectors. Institutions like the National Institute for Disaster Management and the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute have to play a catalytic role in nurturing the growth and development of *Disaster Management* as an academic discipline in our institutions of higher learning. ■

P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India

Developing Disaster Risk Reduction in Higher Education: A Scoping Study

The TLC is an extremely useful initiative in India. The Newsletter is exhaustive and includes some useful Recommendations and Plans. However, I would like to emphasise some additional points for effective Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Higher Education and beyond.

1. In India DRR is currently in its nascent stage in terms of policy, practice and expertise in the field. Effective intra and inter University networking can help to develop knowledge base, disseminate knowledge, acquire skills and support, since the DRR requires multi-disciplinary understanding. Guest or visiting lecturer from different disciplines, experts and practitioners from the governmental, non-governmental and bi/multilateral organisations can help filling this gap in the Universities that are running DM related courses. Non conventional teaching activities of these sorts can contribute to an enriching learning exercise for the students. TLC can play a moderator role in this aspect. For instance BRAC University in

Dhaka runs a Master in Public Health (MPH) programme with students and faculty recruited from Bangladesh and beyond. The programme is exceptionally popular with students coming from 15 countries. I was lucky to deliver a lecture for Architecture students there. I was amazed by the students' exposure to real world through hand on real life experience.

2. From the Newsletter I could decipher Mr Alok Raj and others' have emphasised acquiring knowledge and skills through international exposure and overseas education can help to fill the experts and knowledge gap on DRR. This is a good suggestion because I have benefited from such international exposure. However I would still like to add that bringing expertise from abroad to our home Universities could contribute to sealing the gap of knowledge and expertise. This is non-conventional thinking. Every year hundreds of Indian students travel to overseas for education or for search of new jobs. Most of the

time Indian students do exceptionally well in the foreign soil and then go into seeking good careers in the overseas Universities. I know quite a few Indian and South Asian scholars pursuing teaching and disaster research activities in the UK universities and beyond. Tapping these highly resourceful persons could be not only cost effective but also could contextualise DM more effectively for the Indians in comparison to an Expert hired from the West. TLC can once again help to moderate such activities. The first and second points are interconnected.

3. I would suggest initiating national level seminars on DRR in HE Universities, Research institutes, government departments and so on. The seminars will help disseminating ongoing research activities, tapping the resourceful persons for knowledge sharing and teaching in different Universities, initiating awareness amongst various disciplines and academics on DRR and of course education for students. Northumbria University is currently undertaking such initiative all over the UK with some fund from ESRC. PhD students, lecturers, experts from Fire and Police services share knowledge on DM and DRR in order to emphasise their importance in the curriculum of schools, colleges and Universities and so on.

4. I think more DRR initiatives are required in the BIMARU states of India because they are the



2nd India Disaster Management Congress, November 4-6, 2009, New Delhi.

ones plagued repeatedly by natural disasters. These states are currently not represented in the "DRR Education in HE" initiated by AIDMI (with reference to the Newsletter) except couple of Universities from Assam and West Bengal. TLC can once again act as a moderator to initiate useful activities in DM in Orissa, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. (I think AIDMI is already present in Rajasthan). I believe that training and information sharing (although they are not stand-alone activities and can only act as complementary to other activities) can help towards effective DRR.

5. Lastly, being a Researcher I would suggest initiating research and development activities at national and state level in order to enhance knowledge, skills and expertise in the disaster field. More particularly no academic research so far exists in India to suggest how the inclusion of DRR in the curriculum of HE can help reducing disaster vulnerability of individuals and community in the rural and urban areas. Furthermore how can we include community disaster mitigation activities and other researches that had been conducted for over decades by the disaster and development theory and practice in India can

contribute to the curriculum of HE? Still further how disaster education in the HE can act as a means to voice the rights of the marginalised and the most vulnerable in the fast changing economic landscape of India, in which the disparity between the rich and poor are heightening and the issue of poverty, hunger, death and disease are cast aside? Only research activities can lead us to achieve these answers and also pursue this meaningful agenda based on evidence in order to thrust policy change and implementation in India. ■

Dr Nibedita S. Ray-Bennett,
University of Warwick, UK

A Timely Issue on a Timely Topic

This is a timely issue on a timely topic indeed: higher education in disaster risk reduction. India is one of the most disaster-prone countries and a forerunner in the development of community-based responses to disaster. It seems only logical that these experiences culminate in the increased attention for disaster risk reduction in higher education. The issue testifies to an impressive and encouraging record of enhancing higher education on DRR. While this fortunate wind is blowing, it is important to emphasise the quality and ambitions that such education should strive for.

Firstly, it is not just a matter of having attention to DRR, education should bring about the right attention to reduce the *vulnerability* of disasters to the vast majority of people for whom disasters compound their 'normal' problems of poverty and marginalisation. A lot of research and education is needed to work out how DRR policies can work for the reduction



of these vulnerabilities. As the issue features, community-based disaster risk reduction bears the potential of enhancing people's voice and their span of control over their own lives.

Secondly, while developing courses for DRR, it is imperative to seek how the rise in disasters today intertwines with climate change. Climate change, as we know now, is manifested in a rise in frequency and intensity of disasters. It is important therefore to explore the commonalities and

synergies in education concerning adaptation to climate change and education on disaster risk reduction.

Finally, we have to acknowledge that disasters pose us for complex challenges that require the involvement of different disciplines and need to be addressed at different levels. We owe it to the victims and survivors of disaster to maximise the synergy, integration and dialogue between disciplines and communities. While the core of risk reduction must be within the communities, this needs to interlink with technical solutions and the crucial role of information technology. The new higher education must produce a generation of disaster experts that can work in holistic approaches and bridge the different levels of disaster risk reduction from the communities, to the national and global levels. ■

Dorothea Hilhorst,
Professor of Humanitarian Aid and
Reconstruction, Wageningen
University, the Netherlands

DRR in Higher Education in India: SWOC Analysis

The recent Kosi floods in Bihar and the consequent losses have highlighted significant gaps in India's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies. Also, wide gaps and grey areas are perceptible in our policies, preparedness and response capacities. In spite of a major paradigm shift from our reactionary culture to that of a proactive approach, prevention of disasters and DRR has not quite got the requisite impetus in the education and academic circles, especially, the higher education. It needs to be reiterated that DRR is not only the responsibility of all stake holders but also the collective responsibility of all those who shape the society and groom the future citizens of the country. Hence, it cannot be left to the government and NGOs alone.

The responsibility of DRR must be shared by of all stakeholders, knowledge seekers and knowledge providers alike. Hence, the importance of educating the undergraduates / graduates who are at the threshold of taking over various responsibilities in the society on the relevance of DRR needs no additional emphasis. Today's students are tomorrow's policy makers, politicians and CEOs and hence it is essential that they are able to appreciate their social responsibilities and contribute towards efforts to reduce disaster risks in whatever they undertake.

We, as a country need to graduate, from being an information centric society to a knowledge centric society, and only then will we be able address the ever increasing threats of natural and manmade disasters. Therefore, inclusion of DRR in higher education



Col Alok Raj, Faculty of Decision Sciences, College of Defence Management, Secunderabad, explains DRR in Higher Education in India.

in India has to be pursued by the policy makers, academia and all those who matter. Higher education in DRR must be viewed as long term investment.

We are today in an era of super specialisation and hence the field of DRR cannot be denied its rightful share of specialists and experts, if not super specialists. Therefore, there is a need to devise strategies to promote DRR as one of the most important disciplines in higher education in India. Hence, in order to generate various strategies, an environmental scan with SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges) analysis of the current scenario can be carried out and strategies devised. Various SWOC are as follows;

Strengths: The strengths of the current environment in India are as follows:

- The disaster management fraternity has been sensitised of the requirement of DRR education at the university level.

- Existence of political will and a paradigm shift in government policies from the culture of reaction to that of disaster prevention and mitigation.
- Experience and exposure to a variety of disasters and availability of credible input on the subject from handling recent major disasters e.g. the Gujarat earthquake (2001), the tsunami (2004), the Kashmir earthquake (2005) and the Kosi floods (2008).

Weaknesses: The weaknesses of the current environment in India are as follows:

- Inadequate government support for the cause in spite of a positive political will to prevent and mitigate disasters.
- Lack of awareness of such a requirement amongst the masses specially at the grass roots levels.
- Thousands of aid workers in India render disaster assistance without any sort of formal education / training.
- Lack of analysis of supply chain management aspects e.g. there is no study that forecast the requirement of aid workers and experts in India against the current and future availability of the same.
- Lack of recognition of disaster management as a major discipline by University Grants Commission (UGC) and hence the lack of requisite support / funds to the universities. Disasters claim thousands of lives and losses worth billions of rupees in India every year. Yet, of the 500 major research projects and 72 minor research projects commissioned and funded by the UGC in 2008, none address disaster management.

- A miniscule number (23) key institutions are offering programmes in higher education in disaster management with still fewer options of courses. A few specific weaknesses of most of the currently offered programmes / courses in disaster management are as follows:
 - o Designed to meet the needs of experts in the field.
 - o Post graduate level except the ones provided by IGNOU.
 - o Either distance learning courses or part time.
 - o Relate to only technology / engineering programmes.
 - o More emphasis on theory of disaster management rather than field exposure and field level training.
 - o Dearth of requisite faculty for implementing such programmes
 - o No campus placements for those qualified in disaster management courses.
- Although media plays an important role in sensitising the masses and covering disasters, not there are no programmes / courses for media in this discipline.

Opportunities: The opportunities in the environment which will facilitate inclusion of DRR in higher education are as follows:

- Availability of reference material, readymade course curricula in the world which can be modified to conduct various programmes in India e.g. those for universities.
- Given the growing magnitude and frequency of disasters in South Asia, the field of disaster management is expanding exponentially. Enough scope and opportunities for jobs exist in disaster management in the environment today especially in UN, INGOs both at home and abroad.

- Excellent case studies can be generated from recent disasters of the Kosi floods (2008), Gujarat earthquake (2001), the tsunami (2004) and Kashmir earthquake (2005) to suit the Indian setting.

Challenges: The challenges to the cause of disaster management in higher education are as follows:

- Mindset of the students / parents that applying for professional courses / higher education in the field of disaster management is not a money spinning option and hence lacks demand from the youth.
- Inadequate job market and lack of media support for this discipline in India.
- Economic viability of running such courses without the support from the government / UGC.

Recommendations: In view of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for incorporation of DRR in higher education in India, the recommendations are as follows:

- Exploit the political will and recent positive shift in the policies of culture of DRR to sensitise and prevail upon the UGC and higher education fraternity in India to incorporate and promote DRR as an academic discipline. A framework for initiation of DRR programmes in the universities can be orchestrated and financial provisions made for conduct of such programmes.
- A study needs to be commissioned to forecast India's human resource requirements of DRR experts / trained aid workers for the medium and long term time perspectives. The aim being to identify the stretch required to bridge the strategic gap between supply and demand.
- There is need to shift to for more full time programmes with increased field exposure / on the

job training rather than conducting purely theoretical programmes.

- The disaster management fraternity should seek to undertake comprehensive case studies based on past disasters in India to generate a knowledge bank and provide requisite course material for orientation programmes relevant to the Indian scenario.
- A balance between technical and social components in DRR programmes in higher education needs to be ensured.
- Organise and promote programmes for the aid workers and media personnel pertaining to DRR.
- In view of increased emphasis on corporate social responsibility, there is a need to encourage corporate entities to have qualified DRR experts / aid workers on their roll.
- To overcome the shortage of disaster experts and faculty in India, the government should encourage Indians to acquire knowledge / qualifications from foreign universities, as an interim measure.

India can not afford to learn from major disasters year after year and hence there is an urgent need to address the issue. The time has now come to take proactive action in unison and include DRR in the course curricula of higher education. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that, DRR programmes are offered in a maximum number of universities and educational institutions in India. This will not only progressively enhance acceptability of DRR as an academic and professional domain but also boost knowledge management in India. ■

Col Alok Raj,

Faculty of Decision Sciences,
College of Defence Management,
Secunderabad, India

Linking CBDRM Across Indian Institutions for Higher Education

India is a country affected by many different natural hazards and disasters: earthquake, tsunami, cyclone, flood, landslide, avalanche, drought and wildfire, to name a few. Disasters cause disruption and loss to all involved, but it is the poor and marginalised communities that suffer most in these situations, having less power to mitigate and recover from the effects. Through Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM), society can become more resilient to disasters, from the bottom up, using local capacities to be able to mitigate the risks of disasters.

For this reason, the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) has coordinated with its partners across the Asian region to create the Training and Learning Circle (TLC) for CBDRM. The aim of this circle is to bring together training institutions across Asia so that they may share experiences and resources, in order to improve the quality and reach of CBDRM training. Universities and institutes for higher education are to play an important role within the TLC, as they are focal points for regional and national education and will have a strong positive effect on national knowledge of disaster risk reduction. Higher education can help to achieve elements of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015's Priority 3: "Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels". Specifically, the three elements of information management and exchange, training and education, and research can be built upon.

Information Management and Exchange

Institutes of higher education can strengthen networks among disaster experts, managers and planners across sectors and between regions, and create or strengthen procedures for using available expertise when

agencies and other important actors develop local risk reduction plans.

In the medium term, they can develop local, national, regional and international user-friendly directories, inventories and national information-sharing systems and services for the exchange of information on good practices, cost-effective and easy-to-use disaster risk reduction technologies, and lessons learned on policies, plans and measures for disaster risk reduction.

Education and Training

Institutes of higher education can promote the implementation of local risk assessment and disaster preparedness programmes in schools and institutions of higher education. They can develop training and learning programmes in disaster risk reduction targeted at specific sectors (development planners, emergency managers, local government officials, etc.).

Research

Institutions of higher education can strengthen the technical and scientific capacity to develop and apply methodologies, studies and models to assess vulnerabilities to and the impact of geological, weather, water and climate-related hazards, including the improvement of regional monitoring capacities and assessments.

Many institutions in India run programmes specifically on disaster

management or as a part of other courses, helping to train professionals and those who wish to pursue the topic in future careers. This document presents an overview of educational programmes offered in India on disaster risk management and serves as a platform for a discussion of how educational institutions in India may better collaborate to reach shared aims. It gives the reader a glimpse of the disaster risk management educational context and provides the groundwork for a discussion of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that can be worked upon by a united group of these institutions in the future. A table is provided at the end as a rapid summary and comparison of programmes to help readers compare various initiatives and identify areas for increased collaboration.

This product has been created by the AIDMI as a contribution towards the efforts of the Training and Learning Circle, a support system for trainers and educators on disaster risk reduction in South and Southeast Asia. The report draws heavily upon the proceedings of the December 13, 2008 workshop in Ahmedabad where institutions with higher educational programmes in disaster risk management discussed mutual interests and opportunities for collaboration and working towards shared goals. In addition, key findings from the background research done by the AIDMI team have been incorporated. ■



Dr. C. N. Ray, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

In my experience, most higher education in disaster management course curricula omit the disaster-planning component. One of the solutions for overcoming low levels of interest and registrations in these courses could be to integrate them with ongoing courses already in demand. However, this should not be viewed as a complete solution and a substitute for full-time professionally run disaster management higher education programmes in the country.

National Workshop on Higher Education in Disaster Management in Indian Universities

The AIDMI-AMA Joint Center for Disaster Management organised a daylong workshop on "Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction: Disaster Education in Universities of India" on December 13, 2008, at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA), Ahmedabad, India. In total, eleven key national and regional universities offering higher education on disaster management in India attended the event, including representatives from the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) and the AMA. The event benefited from excellent regional input on training and learning from Mr. Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Regional Programme Coordinator, and Capacity Building for Sustainable Recovery and Risk Reduction, Bangkok. The stated objectives of the event were to:

- Share, discuss, and promote disaster related higher education initiatives in India



Mr. Mihir R. Bhatt, Honorary Director, AIDMI and Mr. D. J. Radia, Honorary Treasurer, AMA commences the workshop with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp.

- Explore the possibility of influencing policies to enhance performance and impact
- Organise and take necessary follow-up actions

Mr. D. J. Radia, Honorary Treasurer, Ahmedabad Management Association, welcomed the invitees on behalf of the AIDMI-AMA Joint Center for Disaster Management. He opened the discussions by stating the brief history of AMA's engagement with the AIDMI. He mentioned that since 2002, AIDMI has collaborated with the AMA to reach out to the corporate sector and generate awareness towards disaster mitigation. The joint center seeks to raise corporate social responsibility awareness with regard to humanitarian assistance. Since 2002, the center has organised a number of joint programmes such as trainings on scientific awareness for school teachers; thematic workshops, seminars and consultations on disaster risk reduction; a lecture series on a variety of topics such as climate risk adaptation and micro-finance; and Training of Trainers (ToTs) on Emergency Medical Response. ■



Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction: Disaster Education in Universities of India, December 13, 2008.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Higher Education

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Mihir R. Bhatt. He prefaced his speech by saying it is not possible to find anything that the late Dr. Vikram A. Sarabhai started and did not succeed. AMA is one of the examples of the great vision that the late Dr. Sarabhai had. "Late Dr. Vikram A. Sarabhai always believed that management is not only about businesses, but also about the way we manage our lives," he said.

He explained that the focus of any AIDMI interventions in India and in the region is on both action and learning. He briefly narrated the history of AIDMI's involvement in working with universities in India in providing curriculum review support to the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Pondicherry University and others. He then shared AIDMI's role in establishing disaster management centers in the Anna University of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and Mumbai University in the state of Maharashtra, including training and capacity building inputs. "The TLC initiative provides us an opportunity to consolidate our Indian experience on higher education in disaster management. TLC in India, plans to work with a number of congenial universities in India that have already made remarkable achievements in this field and stand as models of excellence in India," he said.

He pointed out that the experiences and lessons on advancing higher education for Disaster Risk Reduction are scattered among a number of key players in India, such as the University Grants Commission¹ (UGC) of India, the National Institute for Disaster Management, UN agencies, INGOs, local NGOs, and



Mr. Mihir R. Bhatt, Honorary Director, AIDMI, introduced the workshop and discussed the long-standing demand for quality higher education in disaster management among the young students and mid-career professionals in India.

key universities in India. In order to achieve high standards for higher education in disaster management, it is important to make sure that training and learning efforts feed into each other. He explained that the TLC does not intend to set up similar courses or duplicate the efforts already being made, but to support the growth of such initiatives by the means of networking and knowledge sharing.

"AIDMI's primary concern is about the distance between young students at school, college, and PhD levels and risk faced by the poor and vulnerable at community levels. We must help these students come closer to disaster victims," he said. "This is not a new

idea, but it is not done adequately," he added. He elaborated further that among students, we prefer students that are more likely to do action on the ground – with women, dalits, tribals, and minorities, including those from the marginalised or informal sectors. "Most of the literature available on disaster risk for education purposes is written by outsiders. There is very less material about DRR in India by Indians. "I encourage you to think of innovative ways of working with each other. We are a small group and we can remain small. Depending upon the need, we can also expand. But the central question is what can we do together so that we have a nationwide impact," he said. ■

¹ The UGC was formally established in November 1956 as a statutory body of the Government of India through an Act of Parliament for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India. In order to ensure effective region-wise coverage throughout the country, the UGC has decentralised its operations by setting up six regional centres at Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bhopal, Guwahati and Bangalore. The head office of the UGC is located at Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg in New Delhi, with two additional bureaus operating from 35, Feroze Shah Road and the South Campus of University of Delhi as well. For more information please refer to: <http://www.ugc.ac.in/about/genesis.html>.

Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction: A Historical Perspective

Mr. Sanny Ramos Jegillos began by sharing his experience from his first assignment as the lead consultant of UNDMTP in India. He pointed out that at the time of his first visit to India in 1992 there was not a single university in India offering higher education on DRR in India. "I am happy to see quite a number of universities now offering DRR-related courses in India. I am also happy to see efforts of AIDMI in influencing donors, UN agencies, national governments, and universities to ensure that voices from the ground are heard at the highest levels," he said.



Mr. Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Regional Programme Coordinator, UNDP, Bangkok, explains that the design and delivery of higher education programmes on disaster management in India has to be rooted in Indian reality.

He explained to the participants that the CBDRR approach has a lot to offer to universities and training institutions in the region. He mentioned the key role of the Government of India, the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), and the National Center for Disaster Management (NCDM) for launching a series of courses on disaster management in India in the mid 1990's. He pointed out that in 1994-95, the United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme (UNDMTP) recognised and incorporated CBDRR approaches in ongoing training programmes in India. He further explained that in the 1990's the hazard science approaches dominated most of the disaster management thinking. "I distinctly remember ground breaking contribution by AIDMI in those days about 'Understanding Vulnerability.'

"It is equally important, if not more, to focus on vulnerable conditions and vulnerability reduction measures," he said. "In 1994-95 concepts of gender, social litigation, transparency and accountability, relief standards and

many such important issues were never a part of discussions in disaster management communities," he added. Mr. Sanny pointed out that it would help us think through the future of higher education for DRR in India if we ask ourselves two questions: who should benefit from these initiatives immediately and who in the long-run? What skills do we need to impart to meet challenges of disaster response and risk reduction in the future? He pointed out that we have seen thousands of aid workers or practitioners working in the 1999 Orissa super cyclone, 2001 Gujarat earthquake, 2004 Indian Ocean

tsunami, 2005 Kashmir earthquake, and now in 2007-2008 Bihar floods. We must remember that a majority of these aid workers have not benefited from any sort of formal DRR education. "Should not they?" he asked.

He highlighted the importance of needs assessment for targeting students depending upon the future requirements of the humanitarian sector. He explained that DRR education in India should be rooted in the Indian reality. "During my education in the Philippines, teachings on economics were based on the economic theories of the rich and developed country, which was completely irrelevant," he said. Similarly, "teachings on ensuring efficiency in plastic production was completely irrelevant as the Philippines was not producing any plastic," he added. "Maybe Indian literature would have been more appropriate," he remarked. "We must recognise the fact that communities themselves are the real owners and initiators of community-based approaches. From our experience in the past, we know that less intense but more frequent disasters are always managed by the communities themselves." ■



Dr. Aaradhana Salpekar, Professor and Head of Sikkim Manipal University, New Delhi Centre, explains that there is a clear need to understand the impact of disaster learning courses on disaster management.

Higher Education in Disaster Risk Reduction: A National Experience

Whilst the higher education in DRR is still in its relative infancy compared with other developed countries, it rapidly expanding, and the results are already clearly visible.

Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medicine, and Technological Sciences, Gangtok

Established on the World Environment Day on June 5, 1981, The Indian Institute of Ecology and Environment (IIEE), New Delhi partners with the Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medicine, and Technological Sciences in order to offer a two-year Distance Learning Master of Science (M. Sc.) degree in Disaster Mitigation. The course is designed for meeting the demands of the growing needs of experts in the fields of disaster mitigation. At the end of two years, based on the examination criteria and results, the M. Sc. Degree is awarded by the Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medical and Technological Sciences, Gangtok.

In the first and second year, the IIEE Delhi dispatches materials and assignments to all the enrolled students and annual written exams are conducted during the months of July and February in various part of India. All the admitted participants have to submit a Master's thesis on relevant topics such as risk assessment for example to complete the course. The total fee for the two-year distance learning Masters' Degree Programme is Rs. 25,700. The course is delivered in the form of counseling, lessons, guidance, assignments and research papers.

"The main thrust of any distance learning programme is on the institutional setup. Without adequate

and efficient institutional setup it becomes almost impossible to run any run any distance learning programme," said Dr. Aaradhana Salpekar, Professor and Head of Sikkim Manipal University, New Delhi Center and Director, Indian Institute of Ecology and Environment (IIEE), New Delhi. She further elaborated that the major drawback lies in the fact that being a distance-learning programme, our students do not receive any practical training or field exposure. Our target audience is mainly those practitioners who need an academic degree in disaster management to move up the ladder in their own organisations or those who want to begin their career in disaster management. Thus, the course is available to graduates from any discipline.

Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management (JTCDM), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai

"TISS has a very long history of responding to crisis in different parts of the India. TISS worked with refugees in Kurukshetra, Haryana in 1947 and since then has responded to



Mr. Mahesh Kamble, Assistance Professor, JTCDM, points out that recognition and support from UGC is crucial in developing new and sustaining existing higher education programme on disaster management in India.

numerous disaster events in the country until now," said Mr. Mahesh Kamble, Asst. Professor, Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management. "This first hand practical experience and exposure of the field reality gave the required credibility to TISS to launch and run the disaster management courses," he added. In order to consolidate this valuable past experience of the institute, the Jamsetji Tata Centre for Disaster Management (JTCDM) was established in 2006 with a grant from the Jamsetji Tata Trust. The center was inaugurated on May 6, 2006, by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. The main aim of the JTCDM is to develop responsive and skilled professionals who would be capable of dealing with a range of disasters in their various faces, and would possess the proficiencies to formulate and implement integrated disaster prevention, preparedness and response plans.

He explained that the MSc/MA in Disaster Management Programme was launched in September 2007, the first of its kind in the Southeast region. He pointed out that the institute is offering this course without any

Please visit <http://preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/academics/> for detailed information on disaster related academic programmes offered worldwide. The site also offers an opportunity for any academic institution to advertise their courses. Similarly, the PHREE-way website also lists some DRR academic courses primarily offered by African universities. For more information please visit <http://www.phree-way.org/resources/teaching-and-learning/africa>.

support from the UGC of India. The course has been designed after a rigorous desk review and research work on similar programmes in India and outside by the institute. The working paper on Curriculum Building in Disaster Management published by Janki Andharia and Sunil D. Santha of the JTCDM in 2007 captures the process of evolving a Masters' Programme at TISS. The paper includes key findings of the desktop review involving twenty-three key institutes and departments offering courses in disaster management.

The curriculum of Master's programme at TISS comprises of three courses: first, foundation courses; second, core courses; and third, concentration courses. The foundation courses are common for all the centers at TISS to help students gain basic understanding of Indian society. The core courses aim at strengthening students' understanding of disasters,

Pondicherry University

Pondicherry University's Department of Ocean Studies and Marine Biology offer a M.Sc. in Coastal Disaster Management at their centre at Port Blair, Andamans. The course is a 2-year Masters degree and teaches disaster management in a more specialised field. Teaching and methods include lab practicals, internships and examinations. For more information please visit <http://www.pondiuni.edu.in/>

vulnerabilities, capacities, and development. Lastly, the concentration courses provide an opportunity to develop specialist knowledge and skills in key areas of disaster management based on the current demands and trends in the humanitarian sector. In addition, students have to meet fieldwork requirements in different work settings and complete a research

dissertation. The programme has successfully enrolled 14 and 25 students in the first and second year respectively from the fields of Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Environment, Social Sciences, and the Army. Both fresh and mid-career professionals have been applying for admission.

Currently, the course is being managed by one professor and five assistant professors with active support from an advisory board including practitioners and academicians from institutions across the county. The approximate cost of completing the M.Sc./MA in Disaster Management from the institute is Rs. 2,00,000. In the end, Mr. Kamble highlighted the following key challenges faced by the institute:

1. No faculty/staff positions are supported by the UGC
2. Running entirely with external support, sustainability is a serious concern as the fee structure is not affordable to many interested students
3. Retention of faculty members and need for multi-disciplinary experts
4. Balance between technical and social components and need of concurrent field work placements
5. Academic calendar vs. disaster intervention and ethical considerations in disaster research

The number of disaster events in India and Asia is annually on the rise. The complexity and pressure of emergencies in the near future is likely to increase. According to the UN, more people are killed in developing Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Bangladesh compared to developed countries of the West. There is a clear need for India to gear up to meet future challenges in terms of protecting its people and economy from both natural and man-made disasters.



"Based on my principle research interest in floods, droughts, and annual damage to Indian economy, I suggest that higher education in disaster management initiatives in India (along with other high frequency disasters such as earthquakes and cyclones) should focus more on researching and developing risk reduction methods for ongoing floods and droughts in India. The higher education sector needs to undertake a detailed needs assessment to understand current trends in disaster management and market forces to help students find appropriate jobs. Many joint activities among and across universities are possible. This may include, mapping the demand and supply situation, curriculum reviews, forging research partnerships, and policy advocacy without excluding communities".

Mr. Anupam K. Singh, Department of Civil Engineering, Nirma University of Science and Technology

In addition to the M.Sc./MA in Disaster Management, the institute also offers a number of other qualifications for disaster management such as M.Phil/PhD and Diploma in Psychosocial Care and Support in Disaster Management. The course structure of the MA in Social Work programme in TISS was revised in the 2006 to give an opportunity to the students of MA in Social Work to go for the thematic concentration on "Disasters, impoverishment, and Social Vulnerability". The diploma Psychosocial Care curriculum aims at

The Saurashtra University is planning to set up a higher education course on disaster management. The university has prepared a draft course curriculum to set up a course on Disaster Management and Disaster Planning as one of the regular offerings at the university. The course is likely to be managed by the Department of Sociology incorporating key principles and approaches of the social sciences. The Saurashtra University has already introduced a paper on Sociology of Disaster and Disaster Planning.



Prof. Hemixa Rao, Department of Sociology, Saurashtra University, Rajkot.

equipping students to gain detailed and comprehensive perspective for providing psychosocial care; plan and execute disaster mental health projects; carry out disaster research; and train psychosocial workers who will serve as specialised service providers during emergencies.

University of Mumbai's Times Center for Disaster Management, Mumbai

The University of Mumbai's Times Center for Disaster Management is a joint initiative of Times Foundation and University of Mumbai. This Center aspires to be an apex academic institution for capacity building in disaster preparedness by running both short and long-term courses and research projects. The Center aims to provide various theories and practice-based skills to interested citizens and professionals dealing with disasters. The center commenced its activities by offering the following three-certificate courses: (Currently, the center is not offering any post graduate diploma courses.)

Post Graduate Certificate Course on Environment Management and Disaster Mitigation:

The course provides a scientific understanding of types, causes, frequency, magnitude and effects of natural environmental and man-made disasters at different spatial and temporal scales. Knowledge on appropriate technical skills to monitor, manage and mitigate hazards as well as skills to

assess roles and responsibilities of government authorities and institutions form an integral part of the course design. The current intake capacity on this certificate course is about 30 and costs about Rs. 1500. The course duration is 5 months. The delivery methods include lectures, project work, and field visits. The

performance of the students is assessed based on written examination (with 60% weight) and the quality of fieldwork report and research dissertation (with 40% weight).

Certificate Course on Disaster Counseling:

The course is designed to provide an insight into the basic skills required to help people deal with grief and loss. The course covers issues such as addressing vulnerable populations, empathy, care of the caregiver and so on. It helps empower volunteers to deliver their best, without any claims to take the place of the professional counselor. The course duration is for five months and the intake capacity is about 30. Rs. 1500 is charged as course fees to applicants. The education prerequisite is standard XII at the entry level. The

Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) University

The Gandhi institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) offers a Master of Technology degree in Structural Engineering and Natural Disaster Management, via the Civil Engineering Department of its Institute of Technology. The course is in 4 semesters lasting for 2 years. For more information please visit <http://www.gitam.edu/default.html>

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha (GGSIP) Vishwavidyalaya University

The Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha Vishwavidyalaya (GGSIP) University offers 2 courses related to Disaster Management: Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation, and an MBA in Disaster Management.

GGSIP Option 1: Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation

The diploma course is run through an affiliated agency - the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS). The IRCS has taken up the task of training a cadre of qualified trainers who would be academically and practically trained. It is introducing a 1-year part time course on Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation at its National Headquarters with its affiliation to the GGSIP University.

GGSIP Option 2: MBA Disaster Management

The aim of the course is to provide full-time postgraduate education in the principles, procedures and practices of Disaster Management within an international context. This is to enable for reducing disaster risks as well as improve the delivery of post-disaster assistance to promote effective recovery. The course runs each weekend for 2 years and includes practical work, tutorials and research, and is assessed via term papers, reports with viva voce and a dissertation. For more information please visit <http://ggsipu.nic.in>.

course is delivered through methods such as role-plays, simulations, lectures, project work, and field visits. Assessment criteria include quality of fieldwork report and research dissertation. "Following the recent terror attack in Mumbai, we received a large number of applications for the certificate course on Disaster Counseling, people feel that they need counseling skills to help their neighbors, relatives, and friends. As a result, we went beyond our original intake capacity of 30 and enrolled 40 participants this year," said Dr. Gita Kewalramani, Coordinator, University of Mumbai's Times Center for Disaster Management, Mumbai. "We also received a demand from the Airtel, one of the largest telecommunications providers in India for training its staff in disaster counseling," she added.

Post Graduate Certificate Course on Crucial Issues in Disaster Management: The course aims to give an understanding of important concepts and issues in the disaster management cycle. The current intake capacity of the course is 30 and the duration of the course is three months. The examination of the certificate course is held in two parts: a written exam (with 60% weight) is conducted. The rest, 40% of the weight, is on a research project. The fee structure is the same as the other certificate courses.

The average length of these certificate programmes ranges between 3-5 months. On average, about 4 hours of lectures are conducted per week. The faculty is drawn from various departments of the University of Mumbai, such as the Department of Geology, Department of Economics, Department of Health, and Department of Applied Psychology. The center has planned to follow-up these certificate courses with a Diploma Course Disaster Management and eventually a Degree Course. In addition, the center also organises



Dr. Gita Kewalramani, Coordinator, University of Mumbai's Times Centre for Disaster Management, explains that universities with higher education programmes in disaster management are often well-placed to respond quickly and meeting the urgent demands from both victims and state authorities.

training workshops for imparting practical skills like emergency medicine, communication and others.

The main strength of these certificate programmes is an inter/multidisciplinary team of faculty with the University of Mumbai. Links with national and international organisations such as the Times Foundation, BMC, MMRDA, Life Supporters' Institute of Health, Sciences, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), New York-Presbyterian University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell were mentioned as one of the strengths of the center. Dr. Gita also mentioned the inherent strength of the core faculty in GIS and state-of-the-art technology in mapping at the University of the Mumbai as one of the core and distinct strengths. The following key challenges faced by the University of Mumbai's Times Center for Disaster Management were shared.

- Being a virtual center is an inherent constraint
- Part-time course
- Meeting expectations from a diverse profile of mid-level professionals
- Financial constraint to expand the number of courses and intake capacity

- Lack of follow-up study options for the students
- Lack of core team managing the courses seen as an additional responsibility

Anna University, Chennai

The Center for Disaster Mitigation and Management (CDMM) at the Anna University was created in 1996 in response to the call of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The center draws faculty from various departments such as a Civil Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Physics, and Media Sciences to run its activities. "Since, the faculties are primarily from the technical departments social science approaches are not well integrated in the activities of the CDMM," said Dr. Arul Aram, Assistant Professor, Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai. In addition to the CDMM, the Anna University also has a Center for Disaster Multimedia Research and a Center for Climate Change and Adaptation Research that adds value to the activities of CDMM. He further elaborated that the following elective subjects are available at the post graduation level, via the University's CDMM. The CDMM also takes up selective consultancy projects such as creating the Landslide Atlas of India and development of EWSs against Landslides.

1. Remote Sensing and GIS for Disaster Mitigation and Management in M. Tech. (Remote Sensing)
2. Disasters and Mitigation in M. Sc. (Environmental Science)
3. Disaster Resistant Structures, Wind and Cyclone Effects on Structures, and Aseismic Design of Structure in M. E. (Structural Engineering)

Dr. Arul Aram then presented the Science Communication initiative of the Anna University on the Media and Disaster Management. "The initiative is aimed at understanding

and strengthening the crucial role of media in various phases of disaster management starting from prevention to relief, response, and long-term recovery," he said. "However, it is not easy to train media people that are always busy covering hot stories," he added. The elective paper on media and disaster management is provided as an option for the M.Sc. (Science Communication) students. These students are trained to communicate varied scientific knowledge as science communicators. About 20 students from B.Sc, BE, B.Tech are appearing in this three-credit programme this year. The learning methods include PowerPoint presentations, group discussions, and field visits to disaster-prone areas.

In the end, he concluded that if a good number of M.Sc (Science Communication) students get



Dr. Arul Alam, Assistant Professor, Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai, explains that effective disaster management resources a multi-disciplinary approach. A fine balance between technical, management, and social sciences perspectives should be maintained.

placements with reputed disaster management institutions and NGOs in India, there is a strong possibility that the university will make this course compulsory instead of offering it as an elective. Another possibility

is to provide more financial support to these students so that they carry out their research dissertations in disaster management themes and also do internships with disaster management institutes in India. ■

Release of "Institutionalising Disaster Risk Reduction in Schools: Lessons for South Asia" Publication

Following the inaugural session, one of the recent publications on "Institutionalising Disaster Risk Reduction in Schools: Lessons for South Asia" by AIDMI was released by Dr. Raj Gopal, Director, IGNOU Regional Centre, Ahmedabad and Mr. Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Regional Programme Coordinator, and Capacity Building for Sustainable Recovery and Risk Reduction, Bangkok. The publication focuses on the following key topics:

1. Institutionalising Disaster Risk Reduction in Schools
2. Protecting and Educating Children in India: A Safer Schools Campaign
3. Stakeholder Perspectives on School Safety and Needs
4. Working Together for the Elimination of Child Labour
5. Do Safe Schools Interest Insurers?
6. Inclusion of Disaster Management in School Curricula: Lessons for South Asia



Dr. Raj Gopal, Director, IGNOU Regional Centre (left) and Mr. Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Regional Programme Coordinator, UNDP, Bangkok, release the publication.

7. Understanding and Mitigating Disasters at the Community Level through School Safety

The publication is a part of the National Campaign on Child's Right to Safer School. AIDMI initiated the campaign

to promote school safety after more than 900 school children were crushed to death in the 2001 Gujarat earthquake. The campaign aims to reduce hazard-induced losses in schools by increasing awareness, developing school-specific disaster preparedness plans, promoting structural and non-structural safety measures, and insuring school children, teachers and administrators against several types of accidents. The campaign utilises international standards and has so far covered schools – and the people inside them – in the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, and Tamil Nadu. The campaign has enjoyed the support of several government departments, NGOs, universities, research institutes and private businesses. The success of the campaign in these states has encouraged AIDMI to expand its campaign to Rajasthan, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Bangladesh. ■

Higher Education in Disaster Risk Reduction: A Regional Experience



Dr. Raj Gopal, Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Center, points out that 'openness' and 'flexibility' vis-à-vis eligibility criteria might help promoting and popularising higher education programmes in disaster management in India.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

"Every year thousands of students from India is enrolled in our disaster related courses making the IGNOU the most popular destination for higher education in disaster management," said Dr. Raj Gopal, Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Center. "Unlike other universities, intake capacity of the IGNOU is not limited. IGNOU is the largest education material producer and supplier in India," he added.

In accordance with the university's general policy of 'openness' and 'flexibility' vis-à-vis eligibility criteria, all graduates are eligible for admission and no admission tests are necessary. And completion of an academic programme (Degree, Diploma or Certificate) requires successful clearing of the assignments and term-end examination of each course, and the project work, wherever applicable in the programme. In addition to the self-instruction print study materials, IGNOU also uses audio-video programmes and teleconferencing

methods to guide the students. The qualifications offered by IGNOU are as below.

Postgraduate Diploma in Participatory Management of Displacement, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (PDPMDRR): The Post-Graduate Diploma Programme in Participatory Management of Displacement, Resettlement and Rehabilitation is a joint initiative of the World Bank and IGNOU. It aims to build the skills of development practitioners, resettlement and rehabilitation officers, field staff, and technical experts in participatory methods of managing concerns and issues of displacement and working for satisfactory resettlement and rehabilitation of those displaced by development projects. The programme targets government officials, private sector project employees, technical experts, NGOs, and industrial establishments.

Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Management (PGDDM): The aim of the PGDDM is to provide knowledge to the learners on disaster

preparedness, mitigation, and rehabilitation and to enable the learners to equip themselves with disaster response techniques, risk assessment and vulnerability analysis, including communication skills and skills pertaining to emergency medical response. Graduates from all the disciplines can participate in this course and the course must be completed in a minimum period of one year and a maximum period of four years.

Certificate in Disaster Management

(CDM): The Certificate in Disaster Management Programme aims at providing knowledge to the learners in the areas of disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation, relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. The programme is of use to: NGO functionaries and volunteers; military, para-military, police, home guards, civil defense personnel; and professionals such as geologists, scientists, meteorologists, engineers, foresters, fire-service personnel, administrators, government and public sector undertakings officials, rural development functionaries, urban government officials, primary health centers functionaries, etc.

Bhavnagar University

Following the 2001 Gujarat earthquake the State Government of Gujarat requested all the universities to contribute and initiate academic programmes on disaster management. In response, the Bhavnagar University launched the one year full-time Post Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management (PGDDM) in 2004 in the department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management, perhaps the first of its kind in India. The course aims at

creating skilled disaster managers in the country and contributes to humanitarian sector growth in India on firm professional grounds. This 32-credit PG Diploma course is offered to graduates from any discipline with a minimum of 45% to apply. The selection process consists of a written test, group discussion, and personal interview. The focus is on disaster managers, decision-makers, and coordinators expected to work in disaster related fields. The course primarily targets fresh graduates, professionals, government officers, NGO representatives, and corporate executives. The intake capacity of the course is 30 students per year.

One of the key highlights of the PGDDM at the Bhavnagar University is that it is rooted into the core management perspectives and approaches. The faculty uses a wide range of teaching methods such as case studies, field visits, project work assignments, internships, lectures, training and so on. The assessment method is a mix of concurrent monitoring/rating of project reports, assignments, internal written tests,



Dr. Vedant Pandya, PhD, Associate Professor, Bhavnagar University, explains that the lack of higher education options in disaster management in India results into a very low bargaining power for students.

class participation, and semester end written examination. "We are very proud that the Bhavnagar University has a very large pull of learning resources on disaster management such as journals, reports, publications, books etc. and are willing to share them with anyone who has interest in disaster risk reduction," said Dr. Vedant Pandya, PhD. Associate Professor, Bhavnagar University.

Dr. Pandya explained that in India we have a very limited number of universities offering higher

education in disaster management. Availability of limited options at the disposal of students often result into a very low bargaining power. More choices are needed to empower students to ensure continuous quality improvements in the field of higher education in disaster management in India. He pointed out that the AICTE² and UGC hold a key for developing and sustaining professionally managed disaster management courses in India. A policy framework is needed to evolve, govern, and regulate higher education programmes in disaster management. Currently, the disaster management higher education initiatives in India are at an early stage of evolution and are scattered. The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) analysis on the current scenario of disaster management higher education in India shared by Dr. Pandya is as below:

Strengths: Exposure to a variety of disaster situations in India, voluntary tradition of disaster responses, large number of willing public-private higher education institutions, wide range of community-based, right-based, and scientific/technical approaches in practice.

Weakness: Lack of national policy and monitoring mechanism for governing these courses (making them incomparable), lack of common platform, underutilised research capacities, low awareness levels, low or inadequate support from the government, lack of follow-up services such as job placements.

Opportunity: Disaster management in higher education as an emerging

"Based on the field experience and learning from several higher education initiatives for disaster management in India it appears that the demand from the humanitarian sector does not match the supply of professionals from Indian universities. One way of addressing this mismatch could be more focused efforts on placing students in disaster management agencies and in real disaster situations. Many of the disaster management higher education curricula do not adequately cover issues of discrimination based on gender, disability, and age. Both livelihoods and risk transfer measures should be made a part of standard course curricula.



Prof. Sadhnaben Adhikari, Placement Coordinator, S. P. University

² All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) was set up in November 1945 as a national level Apex Advisory Body to conduct surveys on the facilities of technical education and to promote development in the country in a coordinated and integrated manner. To ensure the same, as stipulated in the National Policy of Education (1986), AICTE is vested with statutory authority for planning, formulation and maintenance of norms, standards and, quality assurance through accreditation, funding in priority areas, monitoring and evaluation, maintaining parity of certification and awards and ensuring coordinated and integrated development and management of technical education in the country. For more information please refer: <http://www.aicte.ernet.in/AboutAICTE.htm>.

Disaster Management within Other Courses

Ambedkar University, Aurangabad
Ambedkar University offers an M.Sc. in Environmental Science, in which there is some focus on Disaster Management, such as the module 'Environmental Disasters and Risk: Planning and Management'. For more information please visit www.bamu.net.

Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) University Ahmedabad's Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) University has a number of courses in which Disaster Management is an elective module. The Postgraduate Diploma in Construction and Project Management is one such course. In

addition, there is a module 'Risks and Disasters' within Environmental Economics, and 'Disaster Resistant Housing Technology' within the Housing and Project Management course. For more information please visit <http://www.cept.ac.in>.

Institute of Rural Management (IRMA)

The Institute of rural Management (IRMA), Anand, runs a Postgraduate and Fellow Programme in Rural Management (PRM and FPRM, respectively). These courses cover many concepts that are linked to Disaster Management, such as Natural Resource Management and Development concerns. For more information please visit <https://www.irma.ac.in>.

Nirma University

The University's Institute of Technology has many engineering degrees, ranging from Undergraduate to PhDs and Advanced Diplomas that have GIS as a key element and address its implications for Disaster Management. For more information please visit <http://www.nirmauni.ac.in/it/index.asp>.

Saurashtra University

Saurashtra University offers a Certificate in Disaster Management via its sub-regional Indira Gandhi National Open University study centre. For more information please visit <http://www.saurashtrauniversity.edu>.

and unexplored area, an opportunity for scientific documentation of disaster management processes and outcomes, strategic alliances with leading universities and institutions in other parts of the world.

Threat: Poor or ineffective disaster mitigation results, scarcity of professionally qualified disaster management experts, and dependence on foreign experts and literature.

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda through its Department of Geology has been offering the Post Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management since 2007. The first batch of 20 students was enrolled in July 2007. The initiative targets graduates from different disciplines as well as government functionaries, NGO professionals, military, paramilitary, police, Home Guards, and civil defense personnel. The course fee is Rs. 16,000 and the course

duration is 12 months (2 semesters). The current intake capacity of the programme is about 20 students per year. "The intake capacity of the course has been reduced due to practical problems of placement cum project work. We are also facing reduced number of application this year due to lack of good job prospects

and hike in the fee structure," said Dr. Tiwari, Professor of Geology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat, India. The course objectives include:

- Provide comprehensive knowledge to the learners on disaster preparedness, mitigation, and rehabilitation,



Dr. K. C. Tiwari, Professor of Geology, The M.S. University, Baroda, explains that lack of suitable employment opportunities is one of the key challenges that the Post Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management at the M.S. University faces.



Mr. Ninad Zala, Professor, Post Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management, Anand Institute of Social Work, explains that in order to deliver effective disaster management education at the highest level, both theory and practice should be combined.

and enable the learners to carry out risk assessment and vulnerability analysis

- Generate community awareness, and strengthen institutional mechanism for community mobilisation and participation in disaster management
- Create greater awareness about effective disaster response in various emergency situations, including communication skills.

The course uses a variety of delivery methods such as lectures, practical labs, seminars, and multi-media shows, including six weeks of placement training and project reporting. The assessment method is twofold: 50% of the weight is on student placement performance and the rest, 50%, is given to written theory examinations. The following key challenges facing higher education sector of India in promoting disaster management education were shared:

- Lack of employment prospects attracting less students may result into a long gestation period in shaping these initiatives
- Being a multi-disciplinary subject, identifying an apt and experienced faculty remains one of the major concerns

- Lack of state-of-the art facilities and infrastructure to impart practical trainings

Anand Institute of Social Work, Gujarat, India

The Shri Ramkrishna Seva Mandal, which has a very long-standing presence (established in 1954) and history of responding to disaster-development concerns, manages the Post Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management (PGDDM) at the Anand Institute of Social Work. Based on its past experience and the disaster situation in Gujarat, India, in 2006 the institute decided to launch the PGDDM. As the institute also offers a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (B.S.W.) and a Master's Degree in Social Work (M.S.W.) since 2004, links between social science approaches and disaster management approaches is one of the strengths of the PGDDM course. The PGDDM is a self-financed programme. The admission into the PGDDM is open to graduates from any discipline with at least a 40% marks. However, the students from B.S.W. and M.S.W. are preferred. The current intake capacity of the course is 20 and the course fee is Rs. 15,000 as per the university rules.

The course requires regular attendance in lectures and 80% of presence in fieldwork (a minimum of 16 hours per week). The course uses a wide range of teaching methods and tools such as lectures, field visits,

project assignments, and multi-media tools. The assessment methods include concurrent classroom tests, quizzes, debates, etc. In addition, mid-semester and semester-end written exams are conducted, including Viva-voce.

"Many of us who teach these courses at the university level are neither full/professionally trained in disaster management nor carry a qualified academic degrees in disaster management from a recognised university. Thus, there is a clear need that these courses are encouraged and supported so that we can have a brand new stream of expert professional in India," said Mr. Ninad Zala, Professor, Post Graduate Diploma in Disaster Management, Anand Institute of Social Work, Anand. Mr. Zala concluded his speech by highlighting the following key challenging features of the disaster management higher education in India:

- Disaster management higher education initiatives are not well integrated into the mainstream higher education system with the exception of a few initiatives.
- Dearth of trained and skilled education personnel
- Absence of model curriculum at the UGC level
- Non-standardised course curricula and courses across the country
- Lack of public awareness and affirmation from a larger society. ■



"Media professionals should understand the fundamentals of disaster prevention, disaster response, disaster risk reduction and the impact of these disasters on the poor. Most media professionals are trained on how to write, interview and face the cameras, but very few are trained to analyse disaster situations on the ground in a scientific manner. A lot of work is needed to persuade media professionals to acquire basic knowledge of disaster issues on the ground."

Dr. Arul Aram, Anna University, Chennai

Key Conclusions and Recommendations

While there is not much knowledge or analysis of higher education initiatives on disaster management in India and South Asia, recent experience and new ideas from this study are intended to update and optimise practices in this field in India and outside. The 10 key conclusions from this study are summarised here.

1. An Emerging Discipline

The history of formal higher education courses on disaster management in India is not very long. Most processes and initiatives have been discussed and shaped in the past decade. Higher education in disaster management is an emerging area in India. This results in a lack of uniformity in design and delivery mechanisms of various courses. This should not be perceived as a weakness but a learning resource. A shared platform between universities, state actors, and humanitarian research and training organisations could help identify issues and challenges to address systemic gaps in policies and practice. Though full-fledged Master's in Disaster Management are not yet common offerings in universities of India or in the region, disaster risk reduction is emerging as an academic discipline.

2. Linking students and disaster victims

The distance between students perusing higher education in disaster management and the poor and vulnerable facing risk at the community levels should be bridged. A number of innovative methods and techniques are available to ensure that students gain first hand experience on how communities deal with disasters and what efforts can strengthen communities own efforts.



The workshop brainstormed on diverse experiences of higher education initiatives in India and came up with most useful conclusion and recommendations.

3. Relevance of CBDRR

Community based approaches in dealing with disaster have special relevance to a county like India. National and international non-governmental organisations are at the forefront of CBDRR in India. Their key approach is to complement efforts to prevent and modify hazard occurrence with measures that reduce vulnerabilities and increase people's capacity to face hazards. Agencies working on CBDRR strive to strengthen local capacities by actively engaging local institutions and at-risk communities in risk identification and reduction processes. In such a context, it is important that the higher education disaster management courses, including technical courses in India integrate and further develop CBDRR approaches.

4. Balancing different perspectives

Most higher education programmes on disaster management in India and outside are either rooted into science and engineering institutes (Civil, Environment, Geology departments) or social science departments.

Currently, there are two initiatives where these programmes are rooted into management perspectives. This includes the university of Bhavnagar and the Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) University. It seems that there is a growing recognition among the universities that effective disaster management requires a multi-disciplinary approach and specialised courses need to integrate basic knowledge and skills from other perspectives as well.

5. Targeting

There might be a need for revisiting the target audiences of these courses. It seems that most of these courses are aiming to producing decision-makers. It is equally important to focus on field practitioners and produce highly qualified field workers. Students, the students that are more likely to do action on the ground—with women, *dalits*, tribals, and minorities, including those from the marginalised or informal sectors—should be preferred. Also appropriate strategies should be

designed and implemented to ensure gender balance. Most of the disaster management practitioners working in India, Asia, today have not benefited from any formal higher education in disaster management. It is crucial that these higher education programmes on disaster management find suitable ways to include them so that they benefit from past and recent academic developments in disaster management. Such field workers carry a wealth of real experience on the ground dealing with disasters. The academics and other students could also benefit from such experiences.

6. Understanding the demand side

India has a very limited number of universities offering higher education in disaster management. Availability of limited options at the disposal of students often result into a very low bargaining power. As a result, the real demand remains hidden. More choices are needed to empower students to ensure continuous quality improvements on the parts of universities. Similarly, a collective understanding and clarity on target audiences of these courses is somewhat lacking. A demand survey of the current and potential employers of these students could help improve understanding of market forces to shape new, and strengthen existing initiatives to match the market demands.

7. Support and Sustainability

Given the current context of disasters in India, higher education programmes on disaster management are increasingly relevant and are in demand. However, it is crucial that these programmes are recognised and supported financially by the Union

University Contributions to DRR in India Beyond Higher Education Initiatives

Universities in India have been making a variety of contributions to the DRR sector in India. One such example is that of University of Mumbai. The University of Mumbai has been working on a number of issues with the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) such as the Mumbai Emergency Management Exercise (MEMEx) and creating a Basic Database for Geospatial Analysis. Similarly, following the July 11, 2006 Mumbai explosions killing at least 200 people on crowded commuter trains and stations, the Mumbai University initiated a project called the MumbaiVOICES to influence Mumbai's disaster planning process based on citizen concerns and voices. Such initiatives and partnerships between the universities and local authorities are worth taking note of and replicating in other cities of India.

Grant Commission³ (UGC) of India. Currently, UGC curricula models do not include disaster management as a subject. This could be a potential barrier to the growth of DRR related courses in India universities as this leaves a very remote possibility for any university in India to be funded with a grant from the UGC to setup and establish higher education courses on disaster management. The current cost structure of most of these programmes is self-financed making it almost impossible for many potential students to afford. Both, AICTE and UGC hold a key for developing and sustaining professionally managed disaster management courses in India. There is a strong feeling among universities that a proper policy framework is needed to evolve, govern, and regulate higher education programmes in disaster management.

Key Recommendations

1. Set up a Task Force on higher education in disaster management in India for 3-5 years to consolidate and analyse Indian expertise and experience

to influence relevant key national bodies such as UGC and AICTE.

2. Design and develop faculty development programmes for building capacities of the faculty who run these courses.
3. Conduct an impact evaluation on the use of these courses in day-to-day life as well as the professional careers of the students.
4. Organise a high-level meeting with vice-chancellors of key universities in India.
5. IGNOU has been actively involved in setting up study centers at the specialised disaster management organisations in India so that students benefit from both academic and practical inputs. More models of similar design could be set up across the country.
6. There are a number of other areas in which this partnership could perform very well: these include internship/fellowship programmes, field placements, action-learning research projects, training, seminars, and joint publications. ■

³ The UGC has the unique distinction of being the only grant-giving agency in the country, which has been vested with two responsibilities: 1) that of providing funds; and 2) that of coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education. One of the core mandates of the UGC is monitoring developments in the field of collegiate and university education; disbursing grants to the universities and colleges. Another key mandate of the UGC includes advising the central and state governments on the measures necessary for improvement of university education.

Guidelines for Universities to Integrate CBDRR

As the practice of disaster risk management expands in South Asia, demands for better-established links between research and practice are increasingly met by universities in the region. This issue of *southasiadisasters.net* provides a unique view on programmes currently offered in India and calls for an integration of numerous relevant fields of study. University departments that focus on humanitarian studies, economics, resource management, education, and public administration may utilise the approaches discussed in this issue for guidance in bringing together their approaches in support of disaster risk management. The following guidelines are suggested for adaptation to specific department contexts and are intended as a generic guide to help universities take steps toward integrating a DRR focus in their department.

1. Identify If a Focus on DRR is Relevant to Your Institution:

- Identify potentially relevant faculty and departments.
- Determine if the faculty or researchers have an interest in doing work on DRM.
- Find out what resources will be necessary and if these are accessible.

2. Build a Critical Mass of Interested Persons to Explore Your Options:

- Form a committee from among those with interest.
- The committee can guide the process of developing a DRM focal centre by identifying potential structures and needs.
- Conduct a SWOT analysis to identify your organisation's comparative strengths and opportunities.
- Assess future needs and activities and if your institution is capable of fulfilling these.

- Identify structures that may be appropriate for your institution.
 - Should you host a resident student programme, a distance learning programme, focus on research alone, or something else?
 - Will you offer a degree or certificate?
 - What will be the criteria for completion?
 - Identify the level of specialisation that would be appropriate.
 - Will you focus on general disaster management and preparedness?
 - Will you focus on technical aspects of specific hazards or will your focus be social?
- ### 3. Make a Plan
- Use the information gathered to design a course curriculum that builds on your institutions strengths.
 - Contact potential partners to make arrangements for internships and other exchanges.

At the December 2008 workshop on CBDRR: Disaster Education in Universities in India, participants identified several topics where educational institutions (universities, NGOs, etc.) are well placed to make important contributions. Some of these are shared here to assist those exploring the possibilities of integrating DRR into their educational institution.

Research and Evaluation

- Conduct cost-benefit analyses for incorporating DRM in specific urban and rural development programmes.
- Review traditional coping mechanisms and their application and effectiveness in current hazards.
- Develop and publish historical and current hazard and disaster

data to inform public decision making.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of select local and national DRM projects implemented since the 2005 disaster management act and those under the Ministry of Home Affairs 2002-2007 DRM programme.
- Conduct social and financial risk analyses.
- Develop technology for better risk assessment and early warning.

Education and Training

- Provide core education for the growing number of professionals working to address disasters in the country.
- Provide specialised training on hazards, disasters, government response systems, and risk management options to professionals in the field.
- Provide training to teachers and school administrators on preparedness and evacuation plans.

Public awareness and Networking

- Hosting an annual national or state-wide forum where researchers can network and showcase research on DRM.
- Contribute papers on current research to existing publications on DRM.
- When disasters strike, raise public awareness about the complexities of disasters and their response through editorials about the "back story" on disaster risks.
- Develop texts for primary and secondary schools and specialised texts for higher education.
- Publicly discuss the importance of DRR for development in India to make a case for the UGC to financially support DRM research in universities. ■

Disaster Risk Management: Higher Education Programme Summary

In this final section, the courses directly based on Disaster Management have been put into a table so that their details can be viewed more easily in comparison with one another. Courses from institutions that are not primarily based on this topic have not been included in the table. Note that a hyphen is shown to note when information was not available or apparent.

Institution (Year of Start)	Course Name	Eligibility	Primary Target	Duration/ Yearly Intake Capacity	Teaching	Assessment	Total Fee (Rs)
Bhavnagar University (2004)	Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Management (PGDDM)	Graduates from any discipline with a minimum of 45% of marks	Fresh graduates, professionals, government officers, NGO representatives, and corporate executives.	1 year/30	Case studies, field visits, project work assignments, internships, lectures, trainings and so on.	Mix of concurrent monitoring/rating of project reports, assignments, internal written tests, and class participation.	18,000
IGNOU (2005)	Postgraduate Diploma in Participatory Management of Displacement, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (PGDMRR)	Graduates from any discipline	Government officials, private sector project employees, technical experts, NGOs, and industrial establishments.	1 year/Not limited	Self-instruction printed study material, assignments, audio-video programmes, and teleconferencing.	Successful clearance of course assignments and term-end examination, including project work wherever applicable.	5100
	Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Management (PGDDM)	Same as above.	Same as above.	1 year/ Not limited	Same as above.	Same as above.	3400
	Certificate in Disaster Management	Same as above.	NGO functionaries and volunteers; military, Para-military, police, home guards, and civil defense personnel.	6 months/ Not limited	Same as above.	Same as above.	1400
Maharaja Sayajirao University (2007)	Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Management (GDMM)	Graduates from any discipline	Government functionaries, NGO professionals, military, Para-military, police, Home Guards, and civil defense personnel	1 year/20	Coursework, labs, seminars, field work, projects / placements	The assessment method is twofold: 50% of the weight is on student placement performance and the rest, 50%, is given to written theory examinations.	16,000
Sikkim Manipal University (2005)	M. Sc. in Disaster Mitigation	Graduates from any discipline	Fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.	2 years/ Not limited	Counseling, lessons, guidance, assignments and research papers	Annual written exams and thesis	25,700

Institution (Year of Start)	Course Name	Eligibility	Primary Target	Duration/Yearly Intake Capacity	Teaching	Assessment	Total Fee (Rs)
Mumbai University (University of Mumbai's Times Center for Disaster Management) (2006)	Post Graduate Certificate Course on Environment Management and Disaster Mitigation	Graduates from any discipline with a minimum of 45% marks	Fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.	5 months/30	Field visits, research, lectures	Written examination (with 60% weight) and the quality of fieldwork report and research dissertation (with 40% weight)	1500
	Certificate in Disaster Counseling	Standard XII	Psychologists from various specializations and students likely to be involved in disaster counseling	5 months/30-40	Lectures, role plays, simulations, project work and field visits, including verbal and non-verbal skills training	Dissertation and field work report.	1500
Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha (GGSIP) Vishwavidyalaya University	Postgraduate Certificate Course on Crucial Issues in Disaster Management	Graduates from any discipline with a minimum of 45% marks	Fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.	3 months/30	Lectures	Written examinations	1500
	Postgraduate Diploma in Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation	Graduate	Fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.	1 year/35	Weekend classes, seminar and project work	Examinations, assignments	27,500
	M.B.A. in Disaster Management	Graduate + 1 year experience	Graduates and mid-career professionals.	2 years/50	Practical, seminars, research and project work	Examinations, dissertation, reports, assignments and viva voce	1,00,000
Pondicherry University	M.Sc in Coastal Disaster Management	Science Graduate with 50 % marks	Fresh science graduates	2 years/30	Project work and labs	Examinations, assignment and reports	8000
Tata Institute of Social Sciences (2007)	M.Sc/M.A. Disaster Management	Graduates from any discipline	Fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.	2 years/20	Field work, internships, lectures, research etc.	Fieldwork reports, dissertation, written exams, and viva voce.	2,24,888
	Postgraduate Diploma in Psychosocial Care and Support in Disaster Management	Graduates from any discipline	Fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.	1 year/20	Theory courses, skill workshops, field internship, field practice	Exams, monograph, viva voce etc.	57,644

TRAINING AND LEARNING RELATED ACTIVITIES OF AIDMI



Disaster Preparedness for School Safety, December 13, 2008.



Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction: Pilot Training Programme on School Safety, December 23, 2008.



Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction: Micro-insurance for Disaster Risk Reduction, December 29, 2008.



Emergency preparedness & school safety, October 5, 2009.



School safety, SSVK, September 15, 2009.



Safer schools programme, Sardar Patel University, September 19, 2009.



ToT school safety, Puducherry, September 22, 2009.



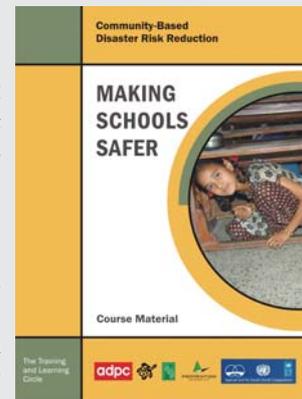
Reducing Rural Risk's: A Social Approach, December 1–7, 2009.

TRAINING AND LEARNING CIRCLE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Why Create a Knowledge Product on Making Schools Safer?

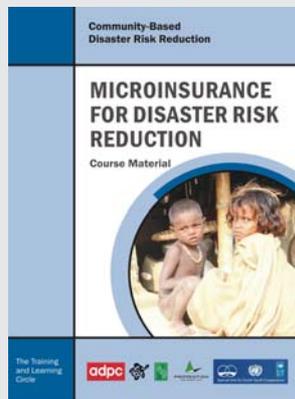
As part of wider efforts to expand local options for disaster risk management, AIDMI recently conducted a review of training materials used by agencies participating in the TLC network. The range of materials now available demonstrates important progress in the past five years but a number of gaps remain. Based on these gaps, AIDMI is developing a series of knowledge products that can be used by training institutions in the network to address key issues of CBDRR, as suggested by the TLC's key objectives, activities and outcomes.

CBDRR for safer schools was identified as one of the key gaps in terms of training materials; AIDMI has produced this module to address this unmet need. Much of the content for the module has emerged from AIDMI's experience with the Child's Right to Safer Schools Campaign. This experience began in 2001 after the Gujarat earthquake and has now seen wider acceptance in India and in other countries. These experiences and good practice have been consolidated into this module to increase the level of disaster education amongst teachers, children and the community.



Unsafe schools are a reality. In developing countries like India, schools are often located in vulnerable areas and unprepared to respond to emergencies. In recent years, India's schools have sustained many catastrophic incidents: a fire led to the deaths of over 400 people – about half of them students – at a school's prize giving ceremony in Haryana in 1995; the Bhuj earthquake caused the deaths of 971 students and 31 teachers in Gujarat in 2001; a fire at the Lord Krishna School in Tamil Nadu took the lives of 94 children in 2004; thousands of students and teachers were killed, injured or otherwise affected in the 2004 South Asia tsunami; and 15 children and 3 teachers died in a boat accident during a school picnic at Kerala in 2007.

These tragic events represent a few major hazards to which school children are susceptible; these and other hazards pose a regular threat. The promotion of disaster awareness, preparedness and mitigation in schools across Asia has enormous potential for diminishing the occurrence and impact of such emergencies. In the end, it is parents and school children that can make schools safer. It is our intent this knowledge product will help trainers across the region extend safety with teachers and households in poor and disaster-prone areas.



Why Create a Knowledge Product on Microinsurance?

AIDMI has conducted a review of a selection of training materials from participating agencies in the TLC network, and has identified a number of gaps in the subjects covered. Based on these gaps, AIDMI intends to develop a series of knowledge products that can be used by training institutions in the network to address key issues of CBDRR, as suggested by the TLC's key objectives, activities and outcomes.

As microinsurance for CBDRR was identified as one of the key gaps in training material, AIDMI has produced this knowledge product. Training modules are designed to increase the level of awareness about microinsurance amongst organisations. They emerge from AIDMI's experience with its Afat Vimo (disaster insurance) work in India and in the region.

In India, personal, household and small business assets are often unprotected against disasters. The costs for relief and rehabilitation often rely on aid; but support from outside entities is often unpredictable – leaving the damaged assets of the poor difficult to replace and making recovery difficult. Groups that fail to recover are more vulnerable to subsequent disasters. Insurance covers many losses but is often unavailable to the poor due to the high transaction costs. Microinsurance is one of a number of methods that has emerged to allow the poor to access risk transfer products. Microinsurance puts cash into the hands of people so they can better lead their own recovery. Microinsurance has emerged in a policy environment that has made recent progress towards disaster risk reduction. Recent insurance regulatory reforms within the Government of India and the dedication of global donors have contributed to the advancement of microinsurance for the poor.

The promotion of microinsurance across India and Asia has enormous potential for offsetting economic losses faced by the poor. The knowledge product on microinsurance will help trainers to promote a culture of risk management within their organisations and with those whom they serve.

More details of the knowledge product developed by TLC on 'Making Schools Safer' and 'Microinsurance for Disaster Risk Reduction' can be found at (www.aidmi.org) website.

CONCLUSION – BUILDS ON LOCAL ENERGIES

Rapid urbanisation and the impacts of climate change make it an urgent priority to build human capital in disaster-exposed areas. Students and professionals need to acquire appropriate skills for research, management and consultancy in organisations engaged in managing disaster risk, adaptation to risk from extreme climatic events and recovery from disasters.

Despite the enormous volume of knowledge and learning on disaster risk management which has been generated over the last decades, translation into action has often remained limited. The multi-disciplinary nature of disaster risk management further complicates effective sharing of knowledge and application between the broad range of scientific disciplines that contribute to the generation of knowledge on hazard, vulnerability and risk. Many observers therefore urge for a more effective, action-oriented and user-driven approach to risk knowledge management, research and learning.

Academic institutions have a key role to play in developing new disaster management curricula for the next generation, as well as



providing short courses for policy makers and a wide range of other professionals whose daily decisions influence the level of disaster risk we all live with. Artificial barriers between scientific disciplines need to be overcome and disaster management taught in a more holistic fashion, taking into consideration the contributions of both natural and social sciences. Multi-disciplinary research, as well as better linkages between research and practice should be encouraged and fostered. Disaster management should also be integrated more consistently in related academic fields such as urban planning and architecture studies for instance.

The ProVention Consortium actively promotes closer collaboration between academic theory and field-level practice as well as the strengthening of southern-based academic courses and applied research.

The Training and Learning Circle initiative, which facilitates knowledge exchange and networking between trainers and educators for disaster risk reduction in South and South-East Asia, has brought together hundreds of disaster management experts in India and in the Philippines over the past two years with a view to integrating community based disaster risk reduction into regular academic and training programs.

By providing opportunities for educators to share experiences and tools, this initiative builds on local energies and commitments to strengthen disaster management capacity in the region. Initial results from this South-South initiative are encouraging, and there is scope for further growth. More trainers and teachers need to join hands, break silos and inspire their students to build safer, more resilient communities. ■

Maya Schaerer,
ProVention Consortium, Geneva

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Note: This issue of southasiadisasters.net is prepared by AIDMI with major contributions from Mehul Pandya, Sam Collins, Tommy Reynolds and Manish Patel.

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ALL INDIA DISASTER MITIGATION INSTITUTE

411 Sakar Five, Near Natraj Cinema, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad-380 009 India

Tel: +91-79-2658 6234/2658 3607, Fax: +91-79-2658 2962

E-mail: bestteam@aidmi.org, Website: <http://www.aidmi.org>, www.southasiadisasters.net