



Innovative and tailored public awareness and public education

Evidence shows impacts of disasters can be substantially reduced if communities are well prepared, ready to act and equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management. Public awareness and public education (PAPE) campaigns utilise a 'two-way communication' approach, which includes tailor-made and contextualised messages and activities to target specific groups such as youth, elderly, people with disabilities and vocational groups. Effective PAPE campaigns for disaster risk reduction help local communities gain skills and knowledge to make informed decisions on how to reduce their vulnerability to disasters, improve their capacity and adapt their livelihoods to withstand current and future risks, and demand greater action and accountability from those responsible.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a long tradition of working with communities to increase their safety and resilience through awareness campaigns, participatory learning and informal school-based interventions. However, it was identified that the effectiveness of those implementations/approaches in urban contexts need to be improved especially with regards to behaviour outcomes. Thus, innovative approaches through PAPE campaigns have been piloted in four countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Viet Nam) to enable people to analyse their risks and change their behaviour.

Particular attention was given to community engagement in planning, designing and conducting the public awareness and public education activities through the recognition of local expertise, knowledge, and the involvement of youth groups in developing guidelines.



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Step by step process

STEP 01

Facilitate orientation of innovative public awareness and public education activities for disaster risk reduction for Red Cross staff and key stakeholders

STEP 02

Design qualitative and quantitative research methodologies adapted to the urban context

STEP 03

Train Red Cross Youth and Volunteers on data collection methods using digital devices

STEP 04

Conduct research

STEP 05

Analyse data and share result with local communities

STEP 06

Design of public awareness and public education interventions using participatory methods

- Identify aims and objectives of public awareness and public education activities
- Identify target group
- Create key messages and slogans
- Identify communication channels and activities for public awareness and public education campaigns
- Design the monitoring evaluation and learning plan

STEP 07

Develop campaign tools e.g. social media, audio and video materials, games and competitions, performance and art, publications

STEP 08

Implement public awareness and public education led activities by Red Cross Youth and Volunteers

STEP 09

Analyse impacts and lessons learned

Building Urban Resilience in Southeast Asia

The Building Urban Resilience in Southeast Asia initiative, funded by the European Commission for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), enables Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners in Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Viet Nam to build the capacities of National Societies, local government, school teachers and children, Red Cross Youth and Volunteers through a coherent regional strategy drawing on good practice and innovation. The action emphasizes gender equity and social inclusion of poor, vulnerable people, including people with disabilities and older people.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in partnership with Finnish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Lao Red Cross, Cambodian Red Cross, Viet Nam Red Cross, and Philippine Red Cross, bring to the project extensive experience in school safety, public awareness and public education, and risk mapping, with strength in peer to peer support and learning.

“After participating in the dissemination activities, my behaviour has changed. When the rain comes, I turn off the electricity and phone and don't go out during the rain. Before, even though there was a storm, I was still watching television. Also, I have stopped burning candles on the floor and use a candle cup instead.”

Ms. Korng Lat, 50 years old,
Villager from Saesen Village, Cambodia

“I find that these public awareness and public education dissemination activities are useful because people are more aware of risks and vulnerability. We are now increasingly aware of precautionary measures to protect ourselves from different hazards. We have never known this before. I have observed that villagers start to pay attention and follow instructions. Before, they were negligent with these things.”

Mr. Toch Song, 63 years old,
Deputy Village Chief, Saesen Village,
Cambodia

“I was involved in the public awareness and public education campaign as a participant. I found it very useful especially for people with disabilities and the elderly - our priority target audience in the community. The campaign helped us know how to be safe and ready in case of a disaster. I want to be a part of reducing the risk of disaster and their impact on vulnerable people.”

Mr. Joel Astada, 33 years old,
Villager from Barangay Doña Imeldas

“I have been involved in the public awareness and public education campaign since the beginning of the project. I have engaged in various parts of the activities such as being an administrator of the Facebook page and a dancer in the Flash mob. What impressed me most is how people change their perspectives and behaviours as we rolled out our campaign. For example, now people know that toothpaste should not be applied to burnt skin and that they will not have to pay a fee for calling 114 to reach the fire brigade in case of an emergency. I myself also learnt a lot from these hands-on experiences, such as the four behaviours for fire safety, the different fire extinguishers to use for different sources of fire, and the difference between Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for infants versus adults.”

Mr Huynh Quoc Viet, 25 years old,
Red Cross Youth Volunteer, Deputy
Secretary of Youth Union of Ghenh
Rang ward

Success story

The public awareness and public education (PAPE) campaigns in the four countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Viet Nam) were carried out by well-trained Red Cross Youth and Volunteers to enable people to analyse their risks and contribute to behaviour change. The campaigns targeted different audiences through key messages in various communication platforms such as radio and television broadcasts, Facebook, flash mob, village meeting, going door-to-door with awareness raising materials, video presentations, puppet shows, etc.

In Cambodia, the PAPE campaign not only strengthened the link between schools and communities, but also empowered young men and women, boys and girls, to take the leading roles as positive change agents at the city level. Red Cross Youth and Volunteers participated in collecting information for the activity baseline, in the organisation of events, the dissemination of key messages at community and city levels, and the implementation of the endline survey. To maintain the progress made so far, Cambodian Red Cross aims to develop the capacity of their volunteers to continue implementing PAPE activities after the project ends.

In Laos, a Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey was conducted in five urban and semi-urban villages to find out the community knowledge and awareness gaps concerning disaster risks and hazards. Key PAPE messages were designed based on the survey findings. The campaign, led by well-trained students from these five villages, were disseminated through various activities such as school gatherings including the participation of parents; school events; parades and door-to-door visits with awareness raising materials. It is estimated that overall at least 25,000 people were reached through these activities.

In the Philippines, the PAPE campaign targeted specific groups such as youth, people with disabilities and the elderly. During the participatory workshop with the target groups, key messages were collected and appropriate platforms to disseminate these messages were defined. Video presentations and puppet shows were presented as the best ways to engage the target audience in Disaster Risk Reduction Management activities. It was the first time that Red Cross Youth and Volunteers participated in PAPE activities and applied the PAPE guidelines in practice.

In Viet Nam, a tailored communication campaign was designed, implemented and monitored by local Viet Nam Red Cross chapters and Red Cross Youth. The campaign focused on the needs of the community which had been identified during the baseline survey. A Facebook page was set up by and for young people as the main platform to share information and messages related to safer behaviours. In less than three months, the page reached more than 35,000 people. One of the main activities which generated awareness of public interest in the campaign and Facebook page was the organization of a flash mob in the centre of Quy Nhon city. More traditional activities targeting the families were also implemented such as broadcasting key messages through Ward's radio and mobile loudspeakers, distribution of flyers and theatre performances.

Lessons learnt

- Peer-to-peer learning and opportunities to share experiences among the four National Societies to pilot and adopt the new approach to harmonize the methodology to engage with the community.
- The public awareness and public education guideline have been applied in practice.
- Various stakeholders were involved as part of the implementation.
- Advanced planning was ensured to measure the cost-effectiveness of the programme by comparing the ratio of the people reached versus ratio of expenditure.

Challenges

- A longer timeframe is needed to adequately measure behavioural changes within the community.
- More expert technical support is required to enable National Societies to take ownership of the public awareness and public education process.
- Scaling up the impact will require more financial and human resources.
- More attention on finding a balance between participatory approaches and bringing the experts in is needed.

Ways forward

- Training and follow up of the public awareness and public education approach is important to ensure the sustainability of the project.
- National Societies should be encouraged to apply the participatory step-by-step process when developing public awareness and public education initiatives.
- Advocate for the allocation of resources to implement more public awareness and public education activities.
- Develop partnerships with the academia and the private sector.



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