

**Bangladesh Risk Communication Project
(Partnership of CPP/BDPC/NYU/WB)**

Risk Communication Workshop

1. Introduction

Cyclones pose multiple hazards to communities. Along the coast, the greatest damage comes from massive storm surges as the wind pushes ocean water upon the land. In more elevated areas, especially those with uneven or hilly terrain, there is the danger of flash floods in channels and lower local areas, while the risk of mudslides and landslides is greater in sloping areas as the ground is saturated with water. And, always, there is the risk of injuries and exposure to the elements as the wind can uproot houses and send debris flying. Over the decades, it has been found that, in all parts of the world, many injuries and casualties result because residents are caught unprepared for the cyclone. Many people in threatened areas do not evacuate or wait too long to evacuate. Moreover, there are other protective, risk-reducing actions people can take if they planned ahead.

Social and physical conditions in the community can greatly affect the consequences of the natural hazard. Lower-income communities are often the hardest-hit because they often live in less secure areas, have lower-quality housing, are less likely to be connected to channels of information, have less resources for evacuation or other emergency response, and others. In some cases, as with the Rohingya refugees, there is the added element of being displaced from their areas of origin, leaving the community feeling less able to cope, not sure of what the future holds, and perhaps feeling disempowered. In these cases, the need is greater to increase people's level of confidence to act in the face of extreme weather and reduce their risks.

Gender and social patterns can be a factor, as well. The 1970 Bhola Cyclone, with limited technology to track cyclones and poor early warning system, claimed over 300,000 lives, where the women to men ratio was 14:1. Even with established early warning system, which includes the technology to measure the wind speed and able to predict the direction of a cyclone, Sidr in 2007 claimed approximately 3,406 lives and physically injured over 55,000 people ([source](#)). The casualty for women to men ratio dropped to 5:1. However, the striking point is that even after 37 years women victims still outnumbered men victims ([source](#)).

Given these realities, a Risk Communication Workshop will be organized and implemented at the Kutupalong Refugee Camps in Cox's Bazar. The workshop is an additional element that adds to the ongoing training and programme on Early Warning Systems and Emergency Preparedness being implemented by the Cyclone Preparedness Programme

(CPP). The workshop is being co-designed by CPP, BDPC (Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre), and NYU (New York University).

The objective of the workshop will be to apply a model toolkit developed by NYU for risk communication that prescribes effective strategies for early warning messages, with a special focus on increasing residents' level of confidence in reducing risks and planning for extreme weather. This includes additional focus on situations and priorities of women in the community. Lastly, the workshop should also focus on the special needs of the elderly and disabled. The workshop is designed with guiding principles in mind, including the following:

- community residents can be effective risk communicators themselves, spreading the message to even those most insulated from channels of communication,
- learning to communicate risks makes the resident even more capable to reduce risks and act in effective ways when the situation arises,
- risk-prevention requires residents who feel empowered to act on the risk, which is enhanced when they understand the nature of the risks well, can communicate these risks to others, and can engage in pre-event planning for their families and neighbors.

Much training is already being undertaken by the CPP at the community level, and the EWS programme has already been institutionalized, with success, in the camps. The workshop emphasizes and enhances elements of the training programmes, adding further focus on residents training themselves to understand and communicate risks.

2. Participants

Two workshops were designed. These are as follows:

- Workshop I
risk communication training among Rohingya camp residents.
- Workshop II
train-the-trainer session among CPP volunteers stationed at the camps.

Workshop I is expected to have a minimum of 20 participants, who will be selected some days in advance of the workshop. The details have been presented below:

a. Women: It has been observed that women are more vulnerable to disasters than men. Reasons can be many; responsibility of children, livestock, household, insecurity at shelters, complicated early warning messages, taking the warning lightly and so forth. But it is important to learn the truth from the horse's' mouth. At least ten female Rohingya community members from the Kutupalong camps will be invited to participate in the workshop.

b. Men: Disasters affect everyone, regardless of one's gender, occupation and religion. At least ten male Rohingya community members will be invited.

c. Elderly and Disabled: The elderly and disabled may have special needs and considerations in the face of extreme weather. Efforts will be made to have at least three participants represent the elderly in the community as well as the disabled.

Workshop II will involve CPP volunteers. Participants will be selected by the CPP. The focus is on training volunteers to continue the risk communication training in the future, as well as training community residents to be risk communicators, as well.

3. Facilitators:

In order to guide the groups in Workshop I, four local camp residents from the Rohingya community (two female and two male) will be oriented a day or two before the workshop.

For Workshop II, three members of the CPP volunteer corps will receive an orientation at the same time.

4. CPP Directors:

Project team members will include Muhammad Saidur Rahman and Laila Kabir, director and senior officer of BDPC, and Raul Lejano, professor of environmental education at NYU. The team will be led by CPP Director Ahmadul Haq and Deputy Director Hassanul. In addition, the RRRC Director will also be invited.

5. Pre and Post Surveys

In order to comprehend the level of understanding of the participants on the existing early warning system and their opinion on evacuation during disaster emergency period, a pre-survey will be conducted before the workshop as per the format prescribed by NYU (with minor modification to suit the Bangladesh rural context). The same survey will be conducted after the workshop in order to measure, compare and analyze the learning from the event. Two days before the workshop, participants will be trained in how to administer the survey and important things to note (e.g., for some, the survey questions may need to be read aloud and answers recorded by the facilitator; also, surveys are supposed to be answered individually, and the group cannot answer questions together and cannot compare answers).

6. Workshop Design

6.1 Workshop I

If time permits, lunch can be served prior to the workshop.

The Workshop will begin with an address of welcome by Mr. Muhammad Saidur Rahman, Director of Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre, with a brief introduction of the project and objective of the event. That will be followed by a short presentation on Bangladesh vulnerabilities to cyclones and the present early warning dissemination system by the Director of CPP.

6.1 Group Work: Application of the Toolkit (Total 2 - 2.5 hours)

Two Groups will be formed immediately after the initial presentations. The composition of the groups is as follows:

Group A: Women

Group B: Men

6.1.1 Step 1: Experience sharing (20 min)

(See page 2 and bottom of page 13 in the Tutorial.)

An important part of empowerment-based workshops is to have participants take a step back from their immediate situations and reflect on it, reflect on reasons people may feel disempowered and unable to act, and offer ideas about how to motivate people to take more control over their safety and health.

Facilitators of Groups A and B will lead their respective groups in a discussion of three themes:

- i. Experiences (problems and other issues) during recent typhoons or strong monsoons.
- ii. Reflecting on the issue of how some refugee families may feel disempowered; how displacement can make people feel that they have no control over their fate, their surroundings, etc.
- iii. Exchanging thoughts on how to encourage or convince other residents that they have to be active in understanding and reducing risks from extreme weather.

The facilitator can prompt the discussion around the last item by saying something like: "Imagine you talk to a family who just feels helpless. The parent says that there is nothing they can do, and if the cyclone damages their house, there is nothing they can do... What can you tell this family to encourage or convince them to be more active, to take action?"

A facilitator should record or write down the main ideas offered on themes i, ii, and iii for sharing with the larger group later on. She/he should also try and keep everything under 20 minutes.

6.1.2. Step 2: Sandbox exercise (20 minutes)

(See pages 7-9 in the Tutorial.)

The sandbox is simply a pile of earth or sand, in a plastic bin, that can be shaped to look like hilly terrain (or coastal terrain, depending on where the workshop is). Onto this, the participants will place small plastic houses or pebbles to represent homes. They will then slowly pour water (best to use a watering can or can with holes at the bottom) on top of the earth until some of the earth gives way, until channels and lower areas get flooded, resulting in some of the houses being washed away. If this is done outdoors, it does not even need a plastic bin and can be simply done on the ground. A CPP or other team member can use a phone to video record this in case the group wants to show it later.

Three things can be noted:

- channels and low elevation areas can be quickly flooded (flash flood), damaging houses.
- after extended rain, the ground underneath the house can give way (mudslide) if it is on a sloping area.
- after extended rain, mud and earth from uphill can carry the house away (mudslide) if it is on a sloping area or directly downhill of a steeply sloping area.

The optional exercise has three purposes. The first is that it can help people realize that the hazard (floods, mudslides) is not a mysterious thing, that they can better understand the nature of the risk, and that it is not just an abstract idea. Secondly, it may give ideas about how to sense impending danger by looking at the surroundings (e.g., mud starting to flow). The third is that such an exercise gives one a sense of having control over a situation, literally taking matters "into one's hands".

6.1.3 Step 3: Necessary Elements of a Warning Message (30 minutes)

(See pages 5-6 in the Tutorial.)

Facilitators will simulate a situation where three warning flags have been hoisted at the camp.



The group will have a short discussion of what this means.

They will then have a longer discussion about what kind of more explicit message they can give a resident who comes to them and asks them to explain what the risk is, if they are at risk, and what they can do about it. Two kinds of risk will be discussed: (i) the risk from having the house torn apart by the wind (and related risk of being injured by flying debris), and (ii) the risk of a mudslide (either the ground under the house starts slipping, or mud from uphill starts flowing onto where the house is).

Facilitators will talk about the need for the messages to include some necessary elements:
who is at risk (and if the recipient of the message is at risk)
where the risk is greatest (and if the location of the recipient's house is risky)

what the risk is (a description of possible mudslide or flash flood)
what actions can be taken (advice to give families that ask).

The last item is best discussed by having participants actively suggest possible actions:
e.g., if they live on a slope, decide to evacuate, and where to evacuate
e.g., even if not on a steep slope, if they see mud starting to slide down the hill or
their home starting to tilt, to then decide to evacuate.

6.1.4 Step 4: Constructing Warning Messages (30 min)

(See pages 10-12 in the Tutorial.)

After explaining the concept of the abovementioned topic, facilitators will request each of the participants to play the role of a responsible neighbor, who has just received an early warning from a CPP volunteer. They will be asked to personalize, localize and dramatize the message in their own language to convince his/her neighbor to evacuate to shelter immediately.

In the second part of the exercise, the facilitator will play a role of a community member, who is determined about staying back home under an emergency situation. The participants will be asked to convince the facilitator in a group, while the facilitators will express doubts regarding early warning message and conditions of the shelter. This is expected to develop a sense of unity among the community for not leaving any member behind during a catastrophe.

6.1.5 Step 5: Final Message (30 minutes)

Once the abovementioned exercises are completed, each group will produce a final early warning message with the help of their facilitators.

6.1.6 Step 6: Presentation/ Reporting by Group Facilitators (20 min)

The early warning messages generated from the group work will be presented by the facilitators followed by an open discussion session.

6.1.7 Step 7: Survey (10 minutes)

A version of the earlier survey will again be filled out by each participant.

6.1.8 Step 7: Certificates/badges (optional)

A small certificate (or laminated badge) can be provided each participant that says she/he finished the risk communication workshop.

6.2 Workshop II (1.5-2 hrs)

The second workshop will be for CPP volunteers only. It will have the same format and steps as Workshop I, except that this time, the discussions will be on how the CPP volunteers as facilitators would guide residents and new volunteers along the steps. For example, in the sandbox exercise, how would they guide the group so that they identify where the problematic areas are for flash flooding and mudslide. This workshop is a "train-the-trainer" session. As such, it will not take as much time as Workshop I, especially since the group is already familiar with the EWS programme. CPP volunteers are encouraged to read the entire Tutorial.

7. Addressing Challenges

The challenges that are apprehended and the way those will be addressed are presented below.

7.1 Women may not open up under male leadership

Given the rural context of Bangladesh, women may not speak freely in front of men regarding their problems. As such, a female facilitator will moderate Group A.

7.2 Literacy level

With majority of the participants did not go to school at all or dropped out of school after class 1 or 2, it is quite difficult to obtain the desired output from different exercises. To address this challenge, facilitators have been selected from teaching background and trained by BDPC, who will apply their skills to get the maximum out of these groups.

7.3 Hesitation to analyze

Community people may not open in front of the local government representatives or criticize the early warning messages in front of the CPP volunteers. Therefore, the recipients of the messages will be in different groups from the CPP volunteers and local government leaders.

8. Conclusion

Final remarks will be made by the CPP Director and BDPC Director, thanking all the participants.

9. Site Visit

Project team members can briefly walk around some of the homes at the campsite, noting conditions of the houses, soil conditions, sanitation, etc.

The findings of the groups will be presented by each facilitator in front the Director of CPP, who will later share the output with national level stakeholders in order to bring a change in the texts of the early warning messages at community level. The workshop is expected to help the participants empower themselves and culturally accept and own the early warning messages.

A national level validation meeting will be held to share the findings of the local level workshop with the stakeholders from Cyclone Preparedness Programme, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and Department of Disaster Management and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

9. Workshop at a Glance

Date :
 Time :
 Location :
 Venue :

9.1 Participants

SL	Participants	No. of Participants
1.	Workshop Participants	
	Community Members Male (6 including 1 disable) and Female (8 including 1 disable)	14
	Students Male (2) and Female (2)	4
	CPP Volunteers Male (2) and Female (2)	4
	Local Government Male (1) and Female (1)	2
	Total Workshop Participants	24
2.	Workshop Facilitators	4
3.	Guests and Organizers	
	CPP Directors, Officers and Leaders	8
	BDPC	4
	Total Participants	40

9.2 Workshop Structure:

Time	Event	Moderator
05 min	Address of Welcome and Objectives of the Workshop	Mr. Muhammad Saidur Rahman Director, BDPC
15 min	Presentation on Bangladesh Vulnerabilities and Present Early Warning Messages Dissemination System of CPP	Mr. Ahmadul Haque Director, CPP
1.30 hr.	Group Work	
1 hr.	Sharing findings from the group work and discussions and agreement	Group Facilitators Director, BDPC
30 min	Remarks by CPP Volunteers and Leaders	Director of CPP
10 min	Vote of Thanks	BDPC
	Lunch	