

Forecasting to Communication to Action: Enabling Institutions to Manage Storm Surge Risks (Phase II)

Coastal Literacy Workshop

1. Introduction

Cyclone and storm surges are perceived differently by the group who work on it and by the ones facing the dire consequences of it. To the people at the coastal belt, the reasons causing the disaster i.e. the wind speed, the maps, the shelters are rather secondary since the primary concern is surviving during the event and making it back to a stable condition. In the rural areas of Bangladesh, the roles and responsibilities differ by gender. Women are mostly responsible for taking care of children and livestock, whereas men tend to work outside. As a result women and men react differently in times of emergency.

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 ration dropped to 5:1. However, the striking point is that even after 37 years women victims still outnumbered men victims ([source](#)).

Given the above situation, a 'coastal literacy workshop' will be organized by BDPC and NYU, in cooperation with the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) in Barguna, a district that was devastated by Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009. The objective of the workshop will be to apply a model toolkit developed by NYU for risk communication that prescribes more effective strategies for early warning messages with a special focus on women and disabled community. The workshop aims to help improve the text of the early warning messages disseminated by Cyclone Preparedness Programme at the community level. It intends to provide relevant and comprehensive messages on disaster preparedness to enable the at-risk community better handle crisis and empower them in general.

2. Participants

The workshop is expected to have a minimum of 24 participants, who will be selected at least a week 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.

Eight female community members from the AylaPatakata Union, with family and children, will be selected as participants of the workshop. Within the group, five of them (63%),

including a disabled person, will be ones who did not leave their houses during Sidr/ Aila. The remaining three respondents will be those who have evacuated to a shelter during the emergency period.

b. Men: Disasters affect everyone, regardless of one's gender, occupation and religion. Six male participants from the same Union will be selected for the task. Among them four (66%) members will be ones who did not evacuate to a shelter, including a disabled person. On the other hand, the remaining two members will be someone who have evacuated during the emergency period.

c. Students: It is said that children are the quickest learners and the generation that has been under the spell of climate change since birth. One can only predict how intense these cyclones and storm surges are going to be in the near future. It is important to learn the perspective and demand of these children regarding the early warning system for cyclones. Four school students (two male and two female) will be selected for the workshop.

d. CPP Volunteers: CPP volunteers have been working for dissemination of early warning to the community people for years. Putting their lives at stake, these volunteers have saved many. It is important that their views are reflected in the improved early warning messages. Four volunteers (2 male and 2 female) will be selected for the workshop.

e. Local Government: Government has local institutions at the district, upazila and union levels known as Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) that function as per the national framework, Standing Orders on Disasters. Two members (1 male and 1 female) from the AylaPatakata Union Disaster Management Committee will participate at the workshop for sharing their opinions.

3. Facilitators:

In order to guide the groups, three school teachers (2 male and 1 female) will be oriented a day before the workshop. The teachers, being local and socially respected, will be given the crucial responsibility of facilitating the group works and reflecting the views of the respondents in the early warning messages.

4. CPP Directors:

Directors and high officials from CPP will travel to Barguna to attend this thought provoking and interactive workshop. They are expected to provide input during the event and take the output from the application of the toolkit for an effective change in the early warning messages and dissemination process.

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.

6. 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 hours)

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

Group A: Women

Group B: Men

Group C: Students

Group D: CPP and Local Government Officials

Every group of participants will follow the following steps

6.1.1 Step 1: Ice breaking and Experience sharing (30 min)

Facilitators of Groups A, B and C will request the participants to share their experience of Sidr/ Aila. Participants who have stayed back home during the cyclone will explain their reason for doing so, while the rest will share the reason for evacuating. The aforementioned groups would be asked to list and share the pros and cons for both the situations. Group D will brainstorm on the same issues from the perspective of the community people.

6.1.2 Step 2: Understanding and improvement of the current early warning message (30 min)

Facilitators will simulate a situation where flags have been hoisted for danger signal # 7. They will share the current early warning message with the groups in which few of the key elements (sender, recipient, guidance, location and description) are absent. The group members will be asked to explain what they understand from the message and identify the key missing elements.

Once they have done so, with the help of the trained facilitators, the participants will be requested to formulate an early warning message that would prompt them to evacuate or

take immediate action. The participants will incorporate the key issues from the discussions in Step 1 (and lesson 5 of the Toolkit) to formulate the new early warning messages.

6.1.3 Step 3: Personalize, Localize and Dramatize (30 min)

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.

6.1.4 Step 4: Final Message

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

6.1.5 Step 5: Presentation/ Reporting by Group Facilitators and Discussions (30 min)

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

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

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 : 03 October 2017, Tuesday
Time : 10.00 am to 2.00 pm
Location : AylaPatakata Union, Barguna
Venue : Purakata Shelter Girls' High School

9.1 Participants

SL	Participants	No. of Participants
1.	Workshop Participants	
	Community Members Male (6 including 1 disable) and Female (8including 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	