



Disaster Management Community



Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community Consolidated Reply

Query: Conducting Successful Mock Drills - Experiences

Compiled by G Padmanabhan, Resource Person and Nupur Arora, Research Associate
Issue Date: 3 April 2008

From [Sudhir Kumar](#), United Nations Development Programme, Mumbai
Posted 11 March 2008

I work with the United Nations Development Programme, which is supporting 17 state governments in implementing a programme on Disaster Risk Management that aims to reduce vulnerabilities of communities at risk to natural disasters in 176 multi-hazard prone districts.

The project, among other things, support preparation of Disaster Management Plans, which contain preparedness, response and mitigation initiatives required at various levels. Mock drills are conducted at the state, district/ City, block, Gram Panchayat and Village/Resident Welfare Association/ Schools/ Market Trade Association, etc levels to test the plans prepared for different hazards. It also helps to identify the gaps in the plans prepared, test the skills acquired by various task forces and the response time of the different service providers - both government and non government.

While conducting these mock drills in the past we have experienced many impediments. For example during one of the mock drills on the road accident theme, one of the electronic media channels was about to flash it as breaking news. Once mock drill was revealed, the media argued that they should have been intimated in advance to avoid this gaffe. But I feel that the essence of mock drill will be diluted, if prior intimation is given to many people. In another mock drill setting, we kept a few volunteers with artificial blood and injury at mock drill site. The response agency put these volunteers into the passing by vehicles and directed it to the hospital. Again, there was huge argument at the hospital when it was revealed that it is a the mock drill.

While we would all agree to the importance of mock drills to prepare the local community to best respond during an emergency, we must put serious thoughts on the potential panic it can cause as everyone involved may not realize the simulation nature of the exercise.

I request the members to share their experiences implementing mock drill experiences and provide suggestions on the best strategy/way to conduct successful mock drills without any panic.

Your responses will add value to our ongoing initiatives and help us conduct better Community Based disaster preparedness activities.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. K. A. Benny, CARE India, Kanyakumari ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#); [Response 3](#))
2. [Rahul Banerjee](#), Amity Humanity Foundation, Noida
3. [Ashok P. Ghule](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Thane
4. [Rudra Prasanna Rath](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar
5. [Gyana Ranjan Das](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar
6. [Sanjeev Santhosh Peethala](#), United Nations Development Programme, Mangalore
7. [Kailash Ch Pandey](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun
8. [Sanjaya Bhatia](#), Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Bangkok
9. B. K. Khanna, National Disaster Management Authority, New Delhi ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
10. Rajesh Malhotra, Brotherhood, New Delhi ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
11. [Vijay Kumar Ummidi](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi *
12. [Suhel Akhtar](#), Government of Manipur, Manipur
13. [Tanushree Verma](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi
14. [Ashwani Kumar](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Deoria, Uttar Pradesh*
15. [Smriti Shukla](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Kanpur*
16. [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), Consultant, New Delhi
17. [P. D. Mathur](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun
18. [Bibhuti Bhusan Gadnaya](#), Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority, Bhubaneswar
19. [Toms K. Thomas](#), Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Mannuthy, Trichur
20. [Krishna Murtyanagaraja](#), Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Bangalore
21. [Amit Tuteja](#), SEEDS India, New Delhi
22. [Kalika Mohapatra](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bhubaneswar
23. [Shakib Nabi](#), CARE India, Portblair
24. [Navneet](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Rampur*
25. [T. Prabu](#), Lutheran World Service –India, Cuddalore
26. [Sreeja S. Nair](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi
27. [Sanjay S. Patro](#), Society for Employment and Human Resource Development, Noida
28. [Chaman Pincha](#), Beyond Boundaries, Chennai
29. [K.G. Mathaikutty](#), Lutheran World Service – India, Kolkata
30. [A. Sebastian jayaraj](#), SAFAL, Tamil Nadu
31. [Bibhuti Bhusan Gadnaya](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar
32. [Sarat Panda](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gandhinagar
33. [Colonel James Susainathan](#), (retd.) Indian Army, Chennai

**Offline Contributions*

Further contributions are welcome!

[Summary of Responses](#)
[Comparative Experiences](#)
[Related Resources](#)
[Responses in Full](#)

Summary of Responses

Mock drills are essential to prepare local communities to best respond during an emergency and are key instruments for testing the workability of any emergency response plan. The query on conducting successful mock drills witnessed members sending a surge of responses. They share experiences implementing mock drills and provided suggestions on the best ways to conduct successful mock drills.

Exploring the **prospects of mock drills**, respondents highlighted that these drills ensure better and coordinated response during a disaster by making everyone aware of their role and responsibilities. In the Indian context, these drills help reinforce the Incident Command System coming up under each State and District Disaster Management Authority and clarify their roles and responsibilities. Mock drills also help in preparing responding agencies determine what resources would be required and help them carry out a capacity assessment.

Discussants felt that organising a mock drill requires detailed planning about the event and role of each stakeholder participating. They shared that National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA) carries out mock drills in [various parts of India](#) using a three step planning process and has successfully carried out a number of drills.

While talking about planning, members pointed out a unique proposition of systematic selection of task force members according to their competencies before conducting mock drills in the [Andaman and Nicobar](#), this has helped in carrying out successful mock drills. Further, they outlined the importance of planning regular mock drills, and shared an experience from [Mumbai](#), where fire department responded effectively to a fire incident that took place immediately after they experienced a series of mock drills.

Respondents also shared experiences from [Karnataka](#) and suggested adapting a "building block approach" to mock drills, where drills are planned in a cycle, i.e. each building on the experience of the earlier one preceded by extensive sensitisation and preparedness of all stakeholders in partnership with various organizations and community. In **Karnataka**, this approach has helped ensuring better emergency health management. Further, discussants suggested using locally available material and indigenous technologies to conduct mock drills and shared an experience from [Cuddalore and Nagapattinam](#), where mock drills were held using this technique, which helped increase the acceptance level and understanding of the community towards such initiatives.

Further discussants pointed out that mock drills not only help in testing and building capacities of disaster management teams, but also provide ample scope for identifying areas of improvement. For example, in [Orissa](#), although a mock drill alarmed villagers, it demonstrated their capacity to handle such a situation when the teams performed a successful rescue operation and in [Delhi](#), mock drills conducted at various Delhi Metro stations helped in assessing how efficiently various authorities can respond to any emergency. In Balasore district of [Bhubaneswar](#), a planned mock drill ended up providing lessons for improvement. Here members suggested carrying out 'debriefing' after the mock drill to assess parts that went as planned or unplanned and the modifications required. In another experience from [Bhubaneswar](#), after a successful mock drill, the authorities sat to identify areas of improvement in order to ensure better handling of a future emergency. Additionally, in [Gujarat](#), during the drills carried out under the Gol-UNDP Disaster Risk Programme an independent observer helps identifying gaps in mock drills and thus has helped the authorities to improve them.

Although members agreed that the real meaning of conducting a drill might be diluted, by intimating to government departments and the media in advance, at the same time, they strongly felt that in urban scenarios, an uninformed drill might bring unforeseen consequences. In such situations, they suggested conducting "phased" drills- during the first phase provide full information to the relevant authorities and during the second give them less. Members also suggested informing selective authorities like the local police and/or the sub-divisional magistrate to avoid any problems later. For example, in [Delhi](#), 550 schools performing mock drills get properly oriented and authorities are informed before the training and

thus as a result conduct successful drills without stampede. Also in another experience, a member mentioned that an NGO is conducting mock drills in 200 schools across [multiple states](#) after conducting training programmes before conducting mockdrills at schools.

At the same, other members urged to provide no prior information for a mock drill. They mentioned that mock drills are done with two important objectives, one to show the community how well are we equipped with the system that we can mitigate the effects of any given disaster and also to understand our amount and quality of preparedness and learn from it. Therefore, it is necessary to make that environment that it looks really a disaster and not just a drama/ rehearsal.

Sharing an experience from [Uttar Pradesh](#), where two organizations conducts mock drills and trainings for its staff, members also highlighted the importance of conducting mock drills at organizational level.

Along with the above, respondents provided specific recommendations for 'before' and 'during' the drills to ensure "no panic," including:

Before the Drill

- Conducting different drills for different emergencies based on the vulnerability so the community can find out gaps in their preparation and response and take the necessary steps
- Making available "do's and don'ts" lists for various emergencies to stakeholders before planning a drill
- Involving the community and using local resources and knowledge, so they are able to relate to the drill process
- Keeping the District Administration, local hospital, fire brigade and police station informed of any planned drill
- Preparing a detailed event chart with time and activities (i.e. information of the event, warning dissemination, place of occurrence, effect/impact of disaster, de-warning and de-briefing)
- Preparing a safety plan before the drill (Route Chart, First Aid box at the site, proper search and rescue equipment/information for any emergency contract number, police, fire, health system, revenue control room, and the skilled manpower immediately available in case of a real emergency)
- Ensuring "manageable" community participation, to prevent a real time disaster

During the Drill

- Bringing in the media as part of the mock drill team to disseminate messages on the purpose of the drill
- Monitoring response time, to enable the community to learn how to minimize loss
- Ensuring proper coordination among various stakeholders during the drill
- Having a skilled safety team on standby for any emergency support
- Ensuring proper security arrangements are in place at the mock drill location

Finally, members closed by remarking that **careful planning and implementation** of mock drills can ensure no accidents and most excellent results.

Comparative Experiences

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Selecting Mock Drill Teams (from [Shakib Nabi](#), CARE India, Port Blair)

In a community based disaster preparedness programme, village level task forces are trained on search and rescue, first aid, etc. Mock drills are conducted as one of the capacity building activities. Task force members are selected in a unique way ensuring match between their competencies and what is required for that particular task force and then mock drills are carried out. This systematic selection helped in better coordination during mock drills and ensured no accidents.

Gujarat

Independent Observer for Mock Drills (from [Sarat Panda](#), *United Nations Development Programme, Gandhinagar*)

During the drills carried out under the GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Programme, an independent observer from industries observes the mock drills and gives suggestions during debriefing meeting. His suggestions are taken seriously by the local administration and on basis of this some ground rules have been created for conducting the mock drills. This has added objectivity of the drill and help in improving thus avoiding panic.

Karnataka

Mock Drills: All About Sensitising, Involving and Learning, Mangalore (from [Sanjeev Santhosh Peethala](#), *United Nations Development Programme, Mangalore*)

In Mangalore, under a UNDP-Indian Medical Association partnership a Disaster Management Committee, a network of all hospitals, was created for emergency health management. Along with the Canara Bus Association, bus drivers and conductors were trained, and now buses are placed near to the site of any disaster, and made available for hospitals to use as needed. All the members involved in the emergency management committee are training and go through mock drills, so are experienced.

Maharashtra

Regular Mock Drills Help in Effective Response, Thane (from [Ashok P. Ghule](#), *GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Thane*)

Under the GoI-UNDP DRM programme in Thane, mock drills were conducted at the district and taluka level, all departments cooperated and the community was enthusiastic about this activity. Fire mock drills conducted in this district, later helped the fire department and community to respond effectively and well in time during an actual fire that took place a few months after the mock drill. Read [more](#)

New Delhi

Training before Mock Drills (from [Tanushree Verma](#), *GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi*)

Through the GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, 550 schools are performing "Evacuation" and "Drop Cover Hold" drills. Initially even after informing children about proper practices, there were stampedes and chaos during mock drills. Taking lessons from such incidents, trainings were organised for children and with regular practice and proper training, schools with 1,700 to 2,000 students are now able to evacuate in 2 to 2.5 minutes without a stampede.

Mock Drills at Metro Stations (from [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), *Consultant, New Delhi* and [Sreeja S. Nair](#), *GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi*)

Monitored by the National Disaster Management Authority, mock drills on planting bomb at train depot were carried out simultaneously at various stations of Delhi Metro. This was done to check the emergency response of various agencies involved in disaster management. The exercise assessed how efficiently personnel of various authorities responded, how the police cordoned off the area and how fast the administration was in setting the incident command post.

Orissa

Mock Drills Test Capacities to Fight against Disasters (from [K.A Benny](#), *CARE India, Kanyakumari*)

Red Cross trained village youth in Search and Rescue and First Aid and organized a mock drill where a youth pretended to be drowning in a pond. Trained teams actively demonstrated rescue and first aid

operations. Though it created panic among villagers, but it demonstrated their capacity to fight such situations. These training, saved thousands of lives during super cyclone. This Village Disaster Preparedness Committee, was then honored with President's award.

Mock Drills Help in Better Preparedness, Bhubneswar (from [Rudra Prasanna Rath](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar)

Under the GoI-UNDP DRM programme a district level mock drill was conducted. A group of officials were disrupted by an emergency fire alert during their meeting. Immediately all the officials reached the spot for relief and rescue. The fire was doused and token relief was distributed. Later in a separate meeting the problems encountered during this sort of experience were discussed for diagnosis and some important results come out for better handling of emergencies in future.

Learning Lessons through Mock Drills, Balasore District (from [Gyana Ranjan Das](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar)

Various authorities planned a fire drill in a nine story building. During the drill it was found that, the fire alarm was not working and keys of fire exit doors were not traceable. The exit doors were also blocked by cupboards and racks. Although, staff reached the ground floor, it showed that planning done for fire accidents was far from utility. Based on this experience, precautionary measures were taken to correct safety measures in the building.

Tamil Nadu

Organizing Mock Drills using Indigenous Practices, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam (from [I. Prabu](#), Lutheran World Service-India (LWSI), Cuddalore)

In 2004 Tsunami affected regions LWSI conducts regular mock drill exercises using locally resources and indigenous practices. Focusing mainly on water rescue methods, they use improvised floating aids such as a Banana Stump and lifebuoys made of used water bottles, and encourage the community to use indigenous practices like using bicycles ambulances and coats as stretchers. This has helped increase the acceptance level and understanding of community towards such initiatives.

Uttar Pradesh

Mockdrills at Organisational Level, Noida (from [Rahul Banerjee](#), Amity Humanity Foundation, Noida)

Amity University under the programme of ISO 14000, practice mock drills for fires, earthquakes and other emergency twice a month. In the beginning most of the staff were not aware about do's and don't during an emergency, but a number of training programmes for staff members were conducted along with mock drills. Read [more](#)

Mock Drills for Chemical Disasters (from [Amit Tuteja](#), SEEDS India, New Delhi)

Tata Chemicals conducts onsite and offsite mock drills for its staff and community around. They carried out on-site (internal safety mechanisms) and off-site emergency planning (outside factory premises), and also verified preparedness measures and rectified gaps in their relationship with the District Administration. Now, they conduct drills as per the frequency defined under the regulatory rules.

Uttarakhand

Sharing the Vision and Process of Drill (from [Kailash Ch Pandey](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun and [P.D Mathur](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun)

The government carried out earthquake mock drills in four districts. Several meetings were held with all the governments departments and stakeholders participating in the drill to resolve confusion and answer queries before they had to perform their respective actions. Then an actual drill was conducted, which

went very successful. Almost 1,200 people in 12 villages have been covered under the training and mock drills. Later successful village level mock drills were carried out without any prior information or meetings.

Multiple States

School Safety Programme: A Unique Approach (from [Amit Tuteja](#), SEEDS India, New Delhi)

SEEDS through its School Safety Initiative in various parts of India has conducted safety training and mock drills in schools in a phased manner. A four day training programme was organised for schools along with mock drills. Based on these experiences, the programmes are now being implemented in over 200 schools in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, more schools are likely to be covered soon in Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. Read [more](#)

Three Step Approach to Mock Drills (from [B. K. Khanna](#), National Disaster Management Authority, New Delhi)

The NDMA is carrying out mock drills using a three-step approach: 1) orientation-cum-coordination conference, 2) presentation of plans by the key stakeholders, and 3) actual mobilisation of resources. This has helped them to carry out 21 structured and accident free drills in 19 states/UTs and 26 mock exercises are in the pipeline for 2008-2009. Read [more](#)

Related Resources

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

Indian Federation for Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC), New Delhi (from [K.A Benny](#), CARE India, Kanyakumari)

Red Cross Building, 1 Red Cross Road, New Delhi 110001; Tel: 91-112- 371-64-24; indcross@vsnl.com;
<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/response/tsunamis/index.asp>

Programmes include promoting humanitarian principles and values, disaster response and community disaster preparedness through various mediums like mock drills

Amity Institute of Disaster Management, Noida (from [Rahul Banerji](#), Amity Humanity Foundation, Noida)

Amity University Campus, Sector - 125, Noida; <http://www.amity.edu/aidm/>

Conducts Certificate courses on disaster management and regular training and mock drills for its staff.

Government of India-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi (from [Ashok P. Ghule](#))

55 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi 110003; Tel.: 46532333; 24627612;

http://www.undp.org.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=163

Reduce vulnerabilities of communities at risk to natural disasters in 17 States of India, conducts regular trainings and mock drills as part of community preparedness activities.

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), New Delhi (From [Kailash Ch Pandey](#), Gol-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun)

Centaur Hotel, Near IGI Airport, New Delhi 110037; Tel: 25655012; www.ndma.gov.in

Under its disaster preparedness activities has conducted mock drills at various levels including schools and the Delhi metro corporation

Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) India, New Delhi

D-11, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 110017; Tel: 91-11-26498371, 41748008; Fax: 91-11-26498372;
http://www.seedsindia.org/our_campaign.htm

Working towards making communities resilient to disasters, they have carried out mock drills for communities and schools across India.

Related Consolidated Replies

Improving Preparedness and Community Participation, from N. C. Vij, National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India, New Delhi (Experiences) Disaster Management Community. Issued 29 May 2007

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/cr-se-drm-29050701.pdf> (PDF Size: 311 KB)

Shares experiences for improving preparedness and community participation levels for efficient management of disasters

Responses in Full

[K. A. Benny](#), CARE India, Kanyakumari (*response1*)

I would like to share my experience while I was working for Indian Red Cross Society in Orissa in one of the coastal villages, where we had Orissa Disaster Mitigation Programme.

As one of the components of the programme, we had trained the village youth in Search and rescue operations, First Aid etc. With the support of the community we had also build a Multipurpose Cyclone shelter in the village.

Once a team of visitors came to see our programme in the village. We wanted to show the visitors and the community about the village's preparedness and effectiveness of the capacity building programmes. There was a pond very close to the shelter. We immediately planned a situation where we asked one of the youth to pretend to be drowning in the pond and then we showing the role of the Search and rescue team and the first aid team lively. This was not shared even with my supervisor and with the other villagers.

As decided, the team of visitors arrived and the village meeting started. When the village meeting was underway under the shelter, suddenly there was a huge cry that came from the pond side asking for rescue and help. As planned the rescue team immediately jumped into the pond and rescued the boy and brought him to the shelter. The visitor team and the whole village was stunned and horrified by the situation. The whole atmosphere was that of a real disaster. There was panic in every body's face. The First Aid team immediately started its role and gave artificial breathing and different exercises. Seeing the improvement with the boy, the visitors and villagers got a relief.

Then when the whole situation was under control we slowly made the secret out that it was only a mock drill to show that how the village is prepared for facing the disasters. Though the whole drill sent a wave of panic among all, but it also demonstrated the capacity of the villagers to fight against such situations.

The courage and skills shown by the team during the mock drill was put to test in reality during the Orissa Super Cyclone in 1999. The team did not differentiate it with a real or mock drill but discharged their roles and rescued and saved about thousands of life in the village. Because of the excellent work done in saving thousands of life in the village, the President of the Disaster Preparedness Committee of the village, then was honoured with President's award.

[Rahul Banerjee](#), Amity Humanity Foundation, Noida

Mock drill is a wonderful practice to sensitize community about preparedness for any disaster. We as a part of Amity University under the programme of ISO 14000 are practicing mock drill twice in a month for different issues like Fire alarming, earthquake and other emergency situation.

Most interesting part is that most of the people who are not aware about the preparedness for disaster before this come out when the alarm rings. This was the situation of the beginning and then we conducted a number of **training programmes for our staff members along with mockdrills**. Even we distributed some printed short material to understand our duty and responsibilities at the time of any disaster.

I think each and every organisation should organise this kind of capacity building programme.

Ashok P. Ghule, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Thane

I am working under DRM programme in thane district, as per our experience in conducting mock drill at district and taluka level it's a good experience. All departments are activated within time; the community are also enthusiastic about this activity.

We took one fire mock drill on dated in September last year at kudos tal wada district Thane. This place is not within municipal corporation area. Later in an actual fire incident in March this year in benjochem at kudos tal wada dist-Thane fire department (Bhiwandi Nizampur City Municipal Corporation) responded within time.

Although **one has to be careful about the planning and implementation**, I think this is real benefit of mock drill, we should conduct mock drill on regular basis.

Rudra Prasanna Rath, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar

Thanks for posting a query like this. The mock drill not only helps us to test the capacity of the teams in involved in disaster management but also gives us ample scopes to identify and underline areas where we can really do well. Last year we had conducted one such mock drill in the district. Where a group of officials sit in the meeting hall discussing other things.

Suddenly a phone came from one of the village that a hut has caught fire and we have to rush to the spot with emergency health care and relief. As soon as the call was received the officials moved in the desired direction with some relief. In the spot we found that a hut just recently build on a make shift basis was caught fire. We did our best to douse the fire as well as distribute the token relief to the affected people.

Later in a separate meeting, the problems encountered during this sort of experience were put to diagnosis and some important results come out, like:

- People have traditional knowledge on fire switching off mechanism
 - Given a chance people can take initiatives to douse a fire with their own attempt
 - The first aid trainings as well as search and rescue techniques comes handy and saves life if people learn the basics seriously.
-

Gyana Ranjan Das, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar

We need to be very careful while organising a mock drill. It requires detailed planning about the event and role of each stakeholder participating in the entire drill.

A drill was organised in Balasore district by the Indian Army in collaboration with village Disaster Management Teams constituted under the DRM programme. It was joint exercise with detailed planning done by the Army unit. It was named as Exercise Sagar Suraksha.

Each scene was created with minute details. A makeshift Medical Relief Centre looked like a real medical centre with all items and equipments kept in proper place and under the actual supervision of a doctor. It looked so real and we had the excellent experience and methodology of Indian Army.

We had organised a mock drill (for fire accident) in our 9-storey office building with a very short notice to all offices /departments located in the building. Unfortunately we found that the fire alarm was not working. The sound of siren was so low that it was heard in two floors only out of nine. The keys of fire exit doors were not traceable. The exit doors were blocked by cupboards and racks. The path was inconvenient to use. With all odds, when staff reached the ground floor, they found themselves on a high land of six feet from they had to jump down (with the risk of injury). This drill showed that the planning done for fire accidents were far away from utility. Precautionary measures were taken after this drill to take corrective measures in the building.

I feel while organizing mock drills, **some times we loose the momentum and jump the steps originally planned**. Some actors "overact" while encroaching upon the role of others. That is the reason why we suggest to have a '**debriefing**' after the mock drill to asses:

- (i) which parts went as planned,
- (ii) which parts went wrong and
- (ii) what modifications are required.

Such documentation would help us fine-tuning future mock drills.

Sanjeev Santhosh Peethala, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mangalore

This is one of the areas, which is an issue of concern for all emergency response agencies, administrators and facilitators alike.

In this district we have realised that it has more to do with "sensitisation" of the people and all organisations that may get involved either being a part of the process or being involved in it because they were present near/at the site of the mock drill/exercise. Taking this into consideration, we have used the "building block approach" to mock drills/exercises where drills/exercises are planned in a cycle, each building on the experience of the earlier one preceded by extensive sensitisation and preparedness of all stakeholders in partnership with various organisations/agencies etc. The partner organisations/agencies take up sensitisation and preparedness measures in their area of influence and assisting in contributing to overall preparedness.

For focused sensitisation, and building up the building blocks we needed someone to take responsibility and ownership. This was done by making the committee overseeing the planning and conduct of the mock drills/exercises a multi stakeholder committee. This committee has membership from all sections of society.

We have been using this strategy (extensive sensitisation of all stakeholders, building block approach and representation of all stakeholders in the committee) since some years and have seen that it has been successful not only in reducing the impediments (other than the real time problems that crop up during the mock drills/exercises) but has also prepared people for mock drills/exercises with the community members willing to bear with some hardship for some period of time, panic among the community being reduced to the minimum, hospitals willing to take in dummy patients and false news of a disaster being flashed being totally eliminated.

Some of the examples of the partner members building up on the building block approach is the Indian Medical Association, South Canara Chapter. It has constituted a Disaster Management Committee which is a network of all hospitals for emergency health management during disasters either planned (such as mock drills/exercises) or unplanned. The Canara Bus Association has sensitised its entire staff (drivers, conductors etc.) and has agreed to place buses nearest to the site of any disaster at the disposal of the authorities when requisitioned by the Regional Transport Authority. Even if the buses are on regular route duty, it has been agreed that the trip would be terminated at a point nearest to the site of the accident away from the sphere of influence of the disaster (so that the people traveling in the bus would not become victims) and the buses would be sent to the site of the disaster to evacuate people to pre-determined safe areas.

Despite all the efforts there are instances when people felt that they were put to unnecessary hardship because of the mock drill/exercise, there was no prior information etc. But these are some of the hardships the community has to put up with if it aims to make itself resilient.

[Kailash Ch Pandey](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun

We have conducted first ever district level earthquake mock drill supported by Uttarakhand Government and guided by National Disaster Management Authority in four districts of State. This was huge event and all concern ministries of State Govt. had taken participation.

To conduct a mock drill, one has to make integrated planning for process. In my opinion, the briefing about the vision and process of drill must be shared with those people or departments, who may directly or indirectly associated with the drill, as it is new concept for more of us. We are reactive not proactive in nature and the mock drills are all about the proactive action to ensure our preparedness level and mitigation strategy to counter and minimizing the affects of disasters.

We did several meetings with the all departments, personnel and other stakeholders who were supposed to be taking participation in drill, before the proceeding. We were organizing that huge earthquake drill first time and it was entirely new subject particularly for line-departments and even for community. Due to those meetings all confusion and quarries had been resolved and every one got stand-up for their respective actions. We had not declared the date and time of drill to people, but the orders been issued to all to be prepared for any catastrophe as district Chamoli comes under Zone V and considered most the vulnerable districts to all form of disasters.

We had covered almost 1200 people of 12 villages as affected community, all line- departments officials and staff, like police, fire, health, food and supply, water, electricity, revenue, RTO, NCC, NSS, local NGOs, Paramilitary and local volunteers at village level as responders.

The drill was conducted on 8th May 2007 and it was considered very successful exercise by State Government and NDMA. The concept of mock drill as I mentioned above is fairly new particularly for administration. The purpose to conduct pre-meetings was just to create some sort of sense toward their responsibilities, particularly for those who were not believed in preparedness and mitigation measures.

After that exercise, village level mock drill was conducted in village Masson of tehsil Chamoli in the district on International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction dated 10 Oct 2007. This time we did not informed any one, just went their and created a drama of earthquake struck and fire with the help of women SHGs of the village. The local authority, concern departments and related people were informed by different medium. They all had come without any problem and responded promptly. There was no confusion regarding mock drill in this time. So, one has to clear the concept of mock drills to the people, if it is organizing first time.

These are my observations and experience of mock drill conducted in hills.

Sanjaya Bhatia, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Bangkok

I want to share some guidelines developed by me on conducting of mock drills in schools and an article on mock drills in schools. To view the guidelines click: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res11030801.doc> and article click: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res11030802.doc>

My suggestions are:

- The most important aspect is that we have to conduct **different drills for different emergencies**.
- A "Do's and don't's" for various emergencies should be available to the stakeholders and they should understand what it means.
- No one should run or panic, even during the mock drill. Everyone should be alert and they should take it seriously. Mock drills are known to cause casualties if not taken seriously.

B. K. Khanna, National Disaster Management Authority, New Delhi (response 1)

I am Senior Specialist with NDMA who is responsible for conduct of tabletop and mock exercises on various types of natural and man made disasters at the state and district levels. We also conduct mock exercises on chemical (industrial) disasters in more than one MAH at a time. So far we have conducted 18 such exercises and many more are in the pipe line. For details see our web site www.ndma.gov.in

You must understand that mock exercises are of two kinds, one to check the response where no intimation is given, but the key person in the department is informed just at the nick of time so that there is no panic situation. The other kind is to check the systems and coordination aspects where response is not that important but to check whether everybody has been taken on board who matters in management of the disaster.

You can have discussion with me whenever I am in Delhi and not out conducting a table top or mock exercise. My contact is 9911297972.

We will be happy to have your organisation on board for Disaster Risk Management project

Rajesh Malhotra, Brotherhood, New Delhi (response 1)

I would like to thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas on the issue of conducting mock drills. I strongly feel that no amount of classroom teaching or workshops can match up to the practical part of it all (Mock drills). In India we need to conduct Genuine, authentic and effective mock drills at regular intervals. It will be worth remembering that in addition to the natural causes, man made (Read purely India specific causes) are posing a great threat to our safety and security.

Vijay Kumar Ummidi, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi*

Let me at the outset appreciate for sharing your concerns.

In my opinion, there is no best way or a strategy to conduct mock drills and avoid panic. The strategy should be situation specific. Some of the preparedness initiatives before the drill help in avoiding such panic and arguments. We take this opportunity to share some of our experiences in conducting mock drills in Delhi.

Yes, a similar opinion may be shared that from this side as well that the essence of the drill may get

diluted when you intimate the departments / media in advance. But, in an Urban scenario like Mumbai and Delhi, if it is not an informed drill, you need to be careful for an unforeseen consequences.

However, during the initial phase, conduct the drills under intimation to the concerned departments and the media (the decision to be taken by your authorities about involvement of the media), about the **time and date** so that the departments concerned become well aware of the essence of the drills. A debriefing soon after the drill on the participation of the responding agencies and their duties and their response with men and material ensure seriousness of the drill.

During the next phase, the drills can be conducted "**under intimation about the drill**" but not the "**date and time**" of the drill. At a later stage, you may plan for a drill without any intimation about the drill and also date and time. However, the responding agencies need to be communicated well in advance that a drill will be held without any intimation. But, I do not suggest a drill without any intimation. In an urban scenario like Mumbai, It can create chaos like the one you have experienced. It may also lead to confusion and chaos when your drill relates to terrorist attack and bomb explosions.

Some amount of panic is bound to take place and you need to be prepared for the extreme case scenario. For example, in a crowded market place, if you are conducting a drill on terrorist attack, there is a possibility of stampede and traffic jam. While stampede can be disastrous for your drill, traffic jam test the preparedness of your traffic cops on how they will make alternate arrangements and manage the whole situation. If the Police are intimated in advance about the drill, they can make some arrangements to avoid panic. Secondly, you can make an announcement in the market place just before the drill or during the drill or soon after the drill depending on the kind of scenario emanating over there. Take the market trade association into confidence and also identify key people to be intimated in advance so that panic situations could be avoided. In your scenario if the top brass of the traffic cops and hospitals were taken into confidence probably the arguments could be avoided.

May be some amount of sensitization could also help avoid this panic /arguments. If a meeting of the concerned officers of various responding agencies is conducted in advance of the drill, either hospital authorities or any other department will not come for an argument. Even if any one of the staffs who are not aware of the drill tries to argue, you can redirect them to their own higher authorities.

Involvement of media have its own merits and demerits. The awareness about preparedness initiatives is spread through media and some times they may argue over the drill for not intimating about the drill as happened with you. Since most of the media is looking for explosive and breaking news, the drills may not suit some of the media. You are in a position where you can have media as one of your friendly list of contacts and may be invited for coverage under intimation to them. May be a bit of sensitization also helps in coverage of the event (in confidentiality) without making any arguments.

Ultimately what need to ensured (in my opinion) through these drills is that in case of a real incident the agencies respond in a coordinated effort to reduce the intensity of the incident. Everyone is aware of their role and responsibility. These drills help in reinforcing Incident Command System that is being brought in place under the Disaster Management Authority of your state / district and refresh their roles and responsibilities. The drills also helps in preparing the responding agencies with necessary equipments and man power or at least make them realize that the existing capabilities need to be updated. The drills also give give an opportunity to the responding agencies to use some of the skills unutilized so far.

With these few words of our experience, we wish you a well managed drills.

[Abha Mishra posted this response on behalf of Navneet, if you wish to contact Mr. Navneet please write to him at abha.mishra@undp.org]

Suhel Akhtar, Government of Manipur, Manipur

Your basic question was about the anger and exasperation expressed by the electronic media and the hospital. While your point is valid that prior information to too many people about a mock drill might dilute its effectiveness, it is also true that the purpose of mock drill is to prepare the community to face a disaster. This purpose cannot be served until the community is taken into confidence. We in India are slowly becoming aware of the need for community awareness and therefore it will take some time before stakeholders in the community start taking such mock drills as part of the training. In such a situation, it shall be better if at least some responsible community actors are taken into confidence before any such mock drill.

For example, if the media could have been taken into confidence, they could have become a part of your mock drill team and then transmitted the whole message and purpose of the drill on the TV. Similarly at least the Medical Superintendent and the Casualty Medical Officer of the hospital should have been taken into confidence, so that a mock drill may not cause harm to the real patients. I will also advise that the local police authority or sub divisional magistrate should invariably be informed before any such drill, so that later on no unnecessary problems occur. The essence of mock drill is to instill confidence in the community, and initially, this confidence shall be acquired by informing people in advance that such a drill is being planned. Otherwise, such drills may lead to scepticism on the part of people, who may not respond in an actual emergency, thinking it to be another mock drill.

Tanushree Verma, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi

I am working as DPO for West Delhi where there are 550 schools out of that 177 are MCD schools while others are Government Schools, Public Schools etc Today, most of them are performing mock drills. We initiated the process of two type of drill specially in school, "Evacuation drill" and "Drop Cover Hold Drill" with students.

In first few drills as Vijay rightly shared every body was well aware about the drill. The students got properly oriented along with class teacher who would evacuate from which side. After evacuation, proper counting of students also got done but those few well intimated drills were quite time consuming and near stampede was also noticed in few cases.

Even after taking all precaution, we observed in one school that one student who was physically handicapped was ignored and everybody left him behind. This happened when evacuation drill was going on in MCD schools without training (First aid, Fire fighting, Search and rescue). So we organised training in all the school and slowly all Government school along with 100 MCD school got covered where students got trained about various lifting methods. Now again we have organised drill in the same school and it was found that with regular practice and proper training, schools with the strength of 1700-2000 students are evacuating in 2 mins to 2.5 mints in proper way without stampede.

Principals are organising it instantly without any information to student who are now able to perform drop cover hold also. Beside that they are learning to operate fire extinguisher during training programme

So, my observation is that the first few drill needed to be informed one .Once it become regular practice than we can have it without notice specially in organised setup.

In east Delhi in a school during fire incident around 1700 students evacuated the school in 2 mints without any stampede as they were performing regular drill. This type of drills are happening in whole Delhi.

I am also sharing a few photographs also for the same. (<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res11030803.JPG>; <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res11030804.JPG>; <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res11030805.JPG>)

Ashwani Kumar, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Deoria, Uttar Pradesh*

Based on our experiences I think the following suggestions could help conduct successful mock drills:

- Mock drill should be based on past disaster. So that community is able relate and find out gaps of activities.
- Use of local resources and knowledge must be part of the mock drill, so that community is able to understand the use of local resources.
- Monitor the response time. So that community is able to perform accordingly to minimise their losses.
- Planned response by team based on the predefined SOPs. So the community is able to understand planned response by selected volunteers for effective result.

But to ensure a successful mock drill without creating panic the following safety points may be adhered to:

- A Safety plan before mock drill (Route Chart / First Aid box at the site, proper search and rescue equipments / Information for any emergency contract no.- Police, Fire, Health System, Revenue Control Room / Skilled manpower etc. for immediate community support in case of real emergency)
- Manageable community participation- too large crowd could lead to real time disaster
- Pre information of higher authorities like DM, SP, CMO, SDM, BDO, PRI's members only- even if they are not involved in actual drill
- Preparation for 2nd group of safety skilled team for any emergency who don't participate but support during emergency
- If possible prepare date, place and time wise mock drill plan and make it is available to administration.

[Abha Mishra posted this response on behalf of Navneet, if you wish to contact Mr. Navneet please write to him at abha.mishra@undp.org]

Smriti Shukla, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Kanpur*

I have already conducted 9-10 mock drills in my city at school/college level and at ward level. In my view:

- First of all it should be advertised in news paper about the date and place of mock drill in so that everyone can be aware of the programme.
- Before conducting mock drill all the participants should be properly trained in their field to avoid any type of inconvenience during mock drill.
- They all should be very clear about their work, they should response within time.
- All the team members of different teams should be properly dressed so that they can differentiate themselves as to which team they belong to.
- Involvement of everybody is very important in the teams of mock drill whether it is he or she, young or old, so that community members can realize their role during disaster.
- All the viewers and outsiders who are not in mock drill should be asked to maintain patience during mock drill.
- All the resources available at the place of mock drill should be used properly so that community comes to know about the use of different resources.
- All the check post of different departments should be clearly visible as fire department, police department, medical, civil defence, EOC at the place of mock drill so that community could be aware of as to where they should inform first .
- There should also be one theme during mock drill which can clearly minimize the gaps of past disasters in the area.

These tips would help in minimizing the panic/untoward incident that could happen during a mock drill.

[Abha Mishra posted this response on behalf of Navneet, if you wish to contact Mr. Navneet please write to him at abha.mishra@undp.org]

Abhishek Mendiratta, Consultant, New Delhi

Mock terror and chemical attacks were carried out simultaneously at various stations of Delhi Metro to check emergency response of various agencies involved in disaster management.

Monitored by the National Disaster Management Authority, the mock drills were carried out simultaneously at Rajiv Chowk (terror attack), Chawri Bazar (toxic gas release), Rithala (bomb blast at parking area) and Shastri Park (call about planting of bomb at train depot) at around 6:15 am.

The Metro system anywhere in the world is a lucrative target and we decided to carry out the mock drill here to review the efficacy of various agencies like Metro, district administration and police in such scenarios, a mock exercise on disaster management is conducted in the Capital which used multi-hazard situations to review efficacy of state and district administration in responding to the problem.

At Rajiv Chowk station in Connaught Place, a mock attack was carried out by four persons attired in CISF uniform opening fire and throwing grenades at the passengers platform.

The "attackers" also then managed to partially switch off the lights at the platform, with complete darkness prevailing in station control room.

The idea of this exercise was to assess how personnel of DMRC and CISF responded, how efficiently police cordoned off the area and how fast the administration was in setting the incident command post

P. B. Mathur, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Dehradun

I appreciate that you have raised a very important question "Conducting mock drills without any panic". I think it depends on region to region, community to community and most important how serious we are about our safety. I would like to share my experience when last year (in 2007) NDMA organised a mock drill related to earthquake preparedness in 4 districts of zone 5 of Uttarakhand state (my district was Bageshwar), the district administration was very excited/ enthusiastic, all the line departments were also in the same way because they had already prepared their action plans for any natural calamity, but the problem aroused when we informed the community. We use all the methods to aware the community (by posters, by cable network, by news papers, by banners, by conducting several meetings etc). We put all the efforts to make it successful.

We conducted this drill in 6 Gram Panchayat's (total 28 villages) of 3 blocks and total 1476 persons participated in the drill. But the problem aroused when we use the artificial dummies (injured as well as dead) shown buried under the debris. The community started to blame district administration "You Are Putting Dead People In Our Village/ Area, You Will Be Punished By God, For Any Mishapp You People Will Be Responsible". They were not ready to accept that this is a rehearsal/ or artificially flavored and most important this is for their safety, but as I quoted earlier it depends on community to community, region to region. The media supported and appreciated the district administration. In hilly state the community is very cautious about their tradition/ custom, So you inform them prior to this practice in advance or not, they will be act as an inert gas.

The media participated whole and heartedly in this drill and their role & participation should be appreciated, but its community who are hardly worried about their safety- as they always ready to blame

district administration/ state administration- whether you informed them prior to drill by any means. **I think media play their role very well (my experience says).**

The drill should always be conducted without information (**taking media into confidence**) and as I said earlier, it depends on community-to-community & region to region.

ONE MOST IMPORTANT THING "DISTRICT BAGESHWAR GOING TO ORGANISE AN ANOTHER MOCK DRILL ON 24TH MARCH 2008.

I hope that will be another success without any PANIC.

Bibhuti Bhusan Gadnayak, Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority, Bhubaneswar

While I was working in Cuttack district of Orissa we had organised a Mock drill involving the District Administration, Medical, Indian Railway, police personnels as the Rail way track is dividing the city equally. Further the mock drill is the essence of the disaster preparedness. While conducting the Mock drill you must remember certain things:

- All must be informed properly that it is a mock drill, so that it will reduce the panic
- All the stake holders must be coordinated properly
- Government machineries must be well communicated
- The District administration must be well involved
- The presence of District Magistrate will add to your effort
- Intimate the nearest Hospital authority accordingly
- Ambulance must be ready on site
- Fire brigade must be on site
- The involvement of NCC/Scout must be ensured
- The media must be intimated for coverage (print and electronic). It will add for generating wide social awareness

Remember the involvement of all the stakeholders is important in mock drill. These are the certain guidelines, which may be helpful to organise a mock drill in your area.

Toms K. Thomas, Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Mannuthy, Trichur

Mock drills are very important in preparing community to mitigate various disasters. However, a few things are important. I feel:

- Drills should be done at frequent intervals: making this happen is an important challenge. The drills need to be made attractive and enjoyable to the community.
 - It is important to make sure the drills are community based. Community based drills means the people involved are from the community and community resources are utilized. Not external resources.
 - The drills further should strengthen the community mechanisms available for disaster mitigation and it can facilitate community to be better prepared.
 - Identifying the right team to perform mock drills is of very important. And the drills should not be done for a mass. It should be arranged for a special focus groups and should educate the group on the mechanisms for disaster mitigation. The drills in a way is a means to extend the mechanisms to the larger community group.
 - It may be good to involve the community groups like school children, scout and guides etc. to be participants in this. Drills also needs to be imparted after a series of intensive technical training.
-

Krishna Murtyanagaraja, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Bangalore

Its a good topic to share. It is a fact it is difficult to conduct the mock drill in industries / high raise buildings/ industries unless they are well trained. According to my experience in industries/air port/school in Bangalore city:

- Repeated briefing
- Train the people.
- Do's and don'ts.
- Special attend to children/ pregnant & disabled.
- Needed not inform for hazardous / block spot areas (it is there need)
- Finally commitment / discussion / where it wrong / learn from the past / correction & evaluation.

Mock drill & preparedness is must. It helps in efficient mitigation both in man made + natural disasters. Each disaster is experience & lesson and to be handled situation basis. Learn each time; it is not arithmetic or not even statistics.

K. A. Benny, CARE India, Kanyakumari (response 2)

Its nice to know the experiences from different corners of the country on mock drills. I don't know I feel some where that some of the community members have also reflected on the accidents rather that disasters. I believe there is a hair thin difference between accidents and disasters. But I understand that both of them lead to emergency situation.

Off late I hope, we should differentiate between disasters and accidents or else we might loose spirit of the goal.

Amit Tuteja, SEEDS India, New Delhi

Glad to know that you have raised this query, which is the need of the hour in today's scenario. Mock drill is a practical tool used for evaluating the Disaster preparedness, also including the coordination amongst various agencies, and time taken to respond to respective communities.

Mock drills can be conducted in various sectors like Rural, Urban, Industrial, Schools etc. with different purposes. But the generic steps are more or less same. Following are the basic steps to carry out the mock drill:-

1. Define Objectives
2. Building Scenarios
3. Conducting drills
4. Sharing outcomes

The objectives provide the overall scope of exercise with reference to industry, community, agency etc. For Ex – One Chemicals based Organization wants to check the On site (Internal safety mechanism) and Off site emergency planning (Outside factory premises), verify the preparedness and rectify gaps, in association with District Administration.

Scenario building decides the particular event, with reference to the Hazards and Operability study (HAZOP). I would like to explain it, in continuation of the above mentioned objective pertaining to one chemical organization. For example – Incident of leakage of Ammonia/ Chlorine gas from storage tank. Duration of drill can be decided mutually by Organization and District administration.

Conduction of drill is very vital and important. It should be handled with adequate care. Here the roles and responsibilities of concerned persons should be very specific, to take the prompt steps. In case of On site emergency check, other than the plant safety and operations staff, HR and Administration have to play a key role in head counts as well as communications outside. And specially, in case of the Off site mock drill, role of District officials are very crucial. (like DM, Police Commissioner, Distt Supplies Officer,

Chief Medical Officer, Transport Officer etc). Here we should not forget the surrounding residents. They should well aware of all the scenarios and precautionary measures. In order to avoid panic they should be given handouts and proper training as well. In case of Bhopal disaster, people didn't know in which direction they should move. Actually at that time in India, there was no rigorous mock drills concept, outside the plant.

Sharing outcomes is equally important as other steps. Here we come to know about all the loop holes/ grey areas, like emergency declaration alarm was not audible in particular area/ village. In other words, this step is just like a mirror, which shows us where we stand right now in terms of preparation. It also helps in further planning, in order to better organize resources.

In India, at national level, NDMA has done commendable work in terms of conducting mock drills in various Parts of India. They conduct table top exercise, drills and experience sharing workshops. Recently they also conducted the mock drills in Delhi Metro stations as well.

In the industrial sector, industries like Tata Chemicals, IOCL have done remarkable job. They conduct mock drills as per frequency defined under the regulatory rules. Although currently only 20% industries are carrying out the off site drills in association with local administration.

In case of school safety, SEEDS India has done wonderful job. They have conducted the safety training and mock drills in schools in a phased manner, through initiatives like Gujarat School Safety Initiatives (GSSI), School Earthquake Safety Initiatives Shimla (SEIS) and currently also working in Orissa and Andamans etc in the same stream.

These were my views and experiences on this subject. Hope this helps.

[Kalika Mohapatra](#), United Nations Development Programme, Bhubaneswar

Mock drill is a simulation exercise of our preparedness for any type of event. It could be event or disaster. This is basically a dry run or preparedness drill. As we conducted various mock drills at various levels with a **pre-described events**. The **detailed event chart** should have time and activities i.e. information of the event, warning desensitization, place of occurrence, effect/impact of disaster, de-warning and de-briefing. First few instances it should be informed one, because most of the players are not aware about the mock drill and their role in disaster management. Community, Disaster Management Team members and other service providers (could be govt and any other source) should involved in the mock exercises, otherwise it will be useless. After few exercises you may have mock drill with information to few important stakeholders.

You may have table top exercise before conducting actual mock drill in the field, which will provide ample opportunities to the stakeholders for preparation and help the DMT members in familiarization of their role. One round of briefing is essential to the major players of the mock drill. There should be few **observers** for any kind of mock drill, whose responsible would be to observe the entire event and provide feedback to the team. **De-briefing** is one of the most important activities, where every body would release the important of mock drill, some times new ideas are coming from the community or the end users. Experiences of mock drill should share with others for improvements in preparedness plan.

After experiences of mock drill we may conduct it with limited information to check the response time and effectiveness of our preparedness. It is basically develop the confidence among the disaster managers or players.

If we follow the above procedure we may avoid confusion and panic, able to conduct the mock drill in a systematic manner and others can learn from it.

Shakib Nabi, CARE India, Portblair

I think we are going through a very important phase of discussion regarding conduction of successful mock drills.

I work in a community based disaster preparedness plan in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India. One of the program focus areas for us is the formation of the village level task force and their capacity building on various aspects like early warning & communication, search & rescue, first aid, temporary shelter management, trauma counseling etc. Apart from several other activities mock drills is one of the capacity building input given to the task force members.

I would like to share with you some of the aspects related with the same by going a step backward. While selecting the task force members, we ensure a match between what is the competency required for being an efficient member of a particular task force members and the expertise of the person. This came out during several rounds of discussion with the community. I strongly feel that if the selection process is carried out in a systematic manner, the level of effort required in capacity building goes down drastically.

I would also like to add that we are still working on this process and waiting for some practical result to share with the larger community.

B. K. Khanna, National Disaster Management Authority, New Delhi

I decided to reply again to some of the queries and elaborations, which some friends have given from their experience. At NDMA, we conduct mock exercises in three steps. First step being the Orientation-cum-coordination conference where the aims, objectives, participants and how the table top and mock exercises would be conducted. This also includes the nomination of state and district nodal officers for the mock exercise. Step two is the presentation of plans by the key stake holders and also painting of different scenarios and soliciting the responses of the concerned stake-holders as per their laid down SOPs and any variations which they may like to adopt. The discussions are elaborate and productive. Any inhibitions, which they had, gets cleared. The most important part is coordination between various government and non-government organisations and volunteers, which come on the common platform. Step three is the actual mobilisation of resources, men material, communications and their employment at the correct time and in correct proportion. The most important resource is the community, which takes part in an overwhelming manner, be it in South, East, West or North India. The media also has never let us down and has played a positive role in spreading general awareness.

It is seen to be believed the response of the community even the differently abled persons, Institutional stake holders, NGOs, Para military forces, army, navy, coast guard and Airforce etc.

One of the aims of the mock exercise is to reduce the panic and that can be achieved only by repeated conduct of mock exercise. The media must be given the requisite bytes and be allowed to do their transparent reporting and no spoon-feeding like issuing the press releases, which very few reproduce.

I am presently also in the midst of a cyclone disaster mock exercise in three districts, two in Tamil Nadu and one in Puducherry. The response of community especially women has been tremendous.

We can proudly say with all humility that we have conducted 21 mock exercises in 19 states/UTs and 26 mock exercises are in the pipeline for next year 2008-2009. Any individual or organisation, especially NGOs who want to take part in these initiatives are welcome to contact me.

Navneet, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Rampur

Please find the some of suggestions to conduct a successful and panic free mock drill.

- Firstly a meeting should be conducted with Committee members and support agencies to discuss and draw the plan and strategy for mock drill.
- Each Team should be well aware about response plan and should be ready with all the necessary equipments. And also publish in the news paper about the date and place of mock drill.
- Inform the community members and agencies in advance to avoid any panic.
- Ensure security arrangements for the location where the mock drill has to be conducted.
- All the members must be properly trained about response action and they should have confidence during mock drill.
- Before mock drill sensitization is must for the participants and the community members for their involvement.

[Abha Mishra posted this response on behalf of Navneet, if you wish to contact Mr. Navneet please write to him at abha.mishra@undp.org]

T. Prabu, Lutheran World Service –India, Cuddalore

“Practice makes a man perfect”- I will like to supplement our organization mock drill experience in Tsunami affected areas. Lutheran World Service –Inda (LWSI) is working in community based disaster preparedness project in Tsunami affected areas of Cuddalore and Nagapattinam districts in Tamil Nadu. We are also facilitating our operational community to conduct mock drills exercise regularly. From this experience I want to register some of our good practices.

Improvised floating aids and using of Indigenous Practices in mock drills- In all our mock drills, we use locally available materials more. For example, In Tamil Nadu Flood and Cyclone is one of the frequent occurrences, so we are mainly focusing on water rescue methods. In most of the mock drill programmes the communities using Improvised floating aids such as Jerry can, Banana Stump, lifebuoy made of used water bottles, etc. We encourage our community to use their indigenous practices like cycle and coat as an emergency ambulance and stretcher.

Gender balance approach - Women is more vulnerable in disaster situations. In Tsunami context also more women lost their life due to their vulnerability. One of the cause of this much causality because of their cultural sensitivity and cultural practices like long hair, wearing sari, etc. So in all our DMT teams consist of equal number of women’s and we seen in our mock drills they were actively participating (Particularly in water rescue). Most of the time women are available in home compare to men. So women participation in mock drills is much required.

Sreeja S. Nair, GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, New Delhi

A mock drill was conducted within the premises of the Delhi Metro railway stations, to train the staff against a possible attack by terrorists.

The drill was monitored by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which used multi-hazardous situations to review the efficacy of the Metro staff, police and medical facilities in such eventualities.

The drills were carried out simultaneously at Rajiv Chowk (terror attack), Chawri Bazar (toxic gas release), Rithala (bomb blast at parking area) and Shastri Park (call about planting of bomb at train depot) at around 6:15 am on 14th february 2008.

UNDP Delhi team can share more information regarding this Mock Drill.

Sanjay S Patro, Society for Employment and Human Resource Development, Noida

Points of concern raised are very pertinent in the overall development context and more so with respect to disaster management. You could possibly try informing the rural people about the positive aspects of this exercise. Such information dissemination could be done through active means like nukkad natak (Street Play) rather than the conventional means. Such an exercise has borne results in the past in states like Haryana and Rajasthan. Please note that the information dissemination is only about the need for greater awareness of the benefits of the drill and is not meant to divulge drill details at any cost which could jeopardize the very essence of the drill.

Wish you all the best for the next mock drills exercise.

K. A. Benny, CARE India, Kanyakumari (response 3)

It's great that we have good experiences to share with, on mock drills and opportunities in excelling in it. However, I feel that mock drills are done with two important objectives, one to show the community how well we are equipped with the system that we can mitigate the effects of any given disaster and also to understand our amount and quality of preparedness and learn from it.

Therefore, it's necessary to make that environment that it looks really a disaster and not just a drama/rehearsal. While doing mock drill except for certain preparedness, it should be done as it is a panic situation. Then only the organisers will get to know that what are the gaps in the drill and also build confidence and capacity amongst the community to face and act accordingly. For example, if the ambulance or medical team is already present in the site then what type of rehearsal are we doing? In the real situations sometimes you don't have any support services in place. These facilities in the real disaster situation have to be contacted and it takes its time to reach the site. Now if the ambulance and Medical team comes from a different place then we can really show the community as to how much time it takes for the medical relief to reach a place and what should be done in that period. So my question is are we doing something in a given prepared/conducive situation or should we show the real drill to the community in case of any disaster?

Chaman Pincha, Beyond Boundaries, Chennai

May I humbly add that practice may make both women and men perfect? May I also make a gentle suggestion to look into the gender sensitivity of our language. Language does shape our thoughts and vice versa. When women are not visible in what we say and write, to that extent their interests too are marginalised. In several policy documents, including disaster management act, (for example, it uses Manpower, Man Days etc.). MAN is still used as a term assuming it conveys the notion of women. Sorry, it does not. So can we include gender concerns in the way we use language in discussion, reports and documents?

K.G. Mathaikutty, Lutheran World Service – India, Kolkata

It is good to see that the subject matter is getting popular after the initiation of Community Based Disaster Management Preparedness (CBDMP) system. Till 1999 the Mock Drills were conducted, perhaps by Defense, Fire Force and other such units.

In order to conduct any Mock Drill successfully, it is important that the actors of the drill are fully understand own the purpose of the exercise. Also the equipments and accessories used in the drill should be familiar to the users and readily available for use at all times.

From the experience of facilitating CBDM mock drills in over 500 communities, where LWSI initiated CBDMP in Orissa, Assam and Tamilnadu, the success of the mock drill depends on the commitments of the major and direct stake holders of the drill. Right from the selection of volunteer for Disaster Management Taskforces and the quality of motivation and skill training imparted to them will also contribute the success of the initiative. While using very locally available and easily accessible materials for first aid, rescue and evacuation in the CBDM, following the local practices and cultural friendly communication system for spreading the warning messages among the community members will certainly have maximum impact.

The success of the CBDM mock drill also depends on how far the purpose of the mock drill has achieved. The purpose is also to make the concerned community members familiar about the system. So gathering maximum number of the community members to witness the mockdrill is also important. This will enable the community as a whole to respond and behave positively, if and when any hazard occur in the area. Also to consider the useful suggestions from the extended stake holders for further improvement in the initiative.

There should be more mock drills in any community to enhance the community capacity and to reduce the vulnerabilities, which are identified during the mock drills and addressed them. This process will enhance the capacity and reduce the vulnerability and thereby reduce the risk of disaster.

[A. Sebastian jayaraj](#), SAFAL, Tamil Nadu

I am writing from a totally different approach base. What [Prabhu](#) has suggested from the disaster preparedness triangle is equally valid and thus it makes a sense of being careful towards any such disasters in the coastal zone.

We also need to catagorise the ultimate reach and the short-term reach. Like for example the needs of the children in facing the disaster is more of a fun than being adherence to escape from the place where they stand or live. But for the elders in the community, are equally responsible for vacating the children from the place on a fast track. So what is required at this point of time is to react to the needs of the catagories who are going to face the disaster in any mode. As you have seen in the rain at Tamil Nadu, there are several incidences of Electric shocks and effected in death of more than 20 people. I think we need to develop a palliative preference for the series of inductive, periodical courses for the community on disaster preparedness on a day today basis here forth.

Until then we are helpless to face the new disasters, which may anytime affect the humane.

[Bibhuti Bhusan Gadnayak](#), GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme, Bhubaneswar

I want to share herewith the report of the 11 October Mock drill report conducted at Cuttack Railway station for your reference. To view click: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res11030801.doc>

[Rajesh Malhotra](#), Brotherhood, New Delhi (response 2)

I am in total agreement with the thoughts put forth by [Mr. Sebastian](#). The only hitch seems to be our attitude towards concepts like safety, prevention, precaution etc. Its time we started giving importance to concepts like safety and security for all and acted in time to ensure the same.

Sarat Panda, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Gujarat

Mock drills and simulation exercises are indeed the key instruments for testing the workability of any emergency response plan. To share some of Gujarat's experience, mock drill was perceived as some sort of "Nautanki" by the local administration and the community at the village level to begin with. Line departments at the district and Block level were doing mock drills for the sake of doing it. One can clearly see lot of unprofessional while these drills are conducted, viz., rescuing a victim or giving a mock interview by a community members; seriousness was missing.

These issues have been identified by the independent observers and discussed during the debriefing meeting. Keeping independent observers is a must that would add to the objectivity of the drill. In Gujarat, we are using independent observers from industries and their suggestions are taken seriously by the local administration. On the basis of the suggestions, Instructions have been issued by the concerned authority to follow some ground rules while conducting the mock drills. And with three four rounds of drills, the scenario has been changed. Now a Talati, a Mamlatdar (Tehesildar) or an Additional Collector (district level) realizes the importance of a mock drill and all the line departments including the community are conducting accordingly and gradually they are inching towards perfection.

Mock drill is just like writing skill, which improves only with practice. One has to ensure the mistakes are not repeated each time the drill is conducted; positive needs to be appreciated and taken forward.

The impediments as mentioned are obvious such as media wrangle or for that matter misunderstanding with any other stakeholder. As we all know, mock drill has never been a part emergency planning exercise. Hence, to begin with it would always be better to go for an informed drill. This would not only sensitize the stakeholders on the relevance and seriousness of a mock exercise but also orient the key stakeholders about their specific roles and responsibilities. Once they are through, uninformed drills should be conducted. This would prevent panic and contribute positively towards addressing deficiencies in response planning as well. Local Information department may be involved while issuing press notes. In Gujarat, media now understands what a mock drill is. They no more use sensational headlines while covering a mock drill feature/story they used to do earlier. Sensitization by the local administration has helped.

James Susainathan, (Retd.) Indian Army, Chennai

It was heartening to read [Prabhu's](#) response on utilisation of improvised floating aids for mass evacuation of people affected by floods. This methodology I have been advocating during the training sessions in Cuddalore and Nagapatinam districts. In fact simple mats or *pai* made of bulrushes or reed could be used as a float. A simple mass evacuation device called a raft with Jerri cans as buoys can be used for carrying larger number of people.

Another location where mock drill was conducted in collaboration with the Block Development Officer (BDO) and collector was the Thiruvalluvar district by pan loyola at Pulicat. The mock drill was conducted at the twilight spilling into the night, which threw a number of lessons. I had conducted training programmes at multilevel i.e. to the community, the panchayat leaders, teachers and community level workers which enabled them to maintain their levels and address the tasks pertaining to them. The highlight of the training was the BDO was present during both the days training which compelled all panchayat leaders to attend and learn. What we learn is the co-opting of the district administration in any of the community building activities will fetch results. One of the lesson learnt was updating the records for the team and utilisation of reserves to fill the void due to moving away. We will be in a position to share the lessons learnt. Prabhu had done an excellent job of training his people and I feel proud to be associated, we conducted the training programme.

With regards to the children they are the best copy cats and imitators of the elders. They have an excellent memory due to which they should be dovetailed into the various teams. We organized a children's day programme during 2006. One of the competitions was with available resources which was jumbled and positioned was to be utilised by the teams. The children used their ingenuity and prepared floating expedients .in a village named pachayankuppam in cuddalore the children compelled their parents to attend our training, hence your target audience should be children focused.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community in India at se-drm@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "Re: [se-drm] Query: Conducting Successful Mock Drills - Experiences. Additional Reply."

Disclaimer: *In posting messages or incorporating these messages into synthesized responses, the UN accepts no responsibility for their veracity or authenticity. Members intending to use or transmit the information contained in these messages should be aware that they are relying on their own judgment.*



Copyrighted under Creative Commons License "[Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/)". Re-users of this material must cite as their source Solution Exchange as well as the item's recommender, if relevant, and must share any derivative work with the Solution Exchange Community.



Solution Exchange is a UN initiative for development practitioners in India. For more information please visit www.solutionexchange-un.net.in
