



مجلس الوزراء المصري
مركز المعلومات ودعم اتخاذ القرار
قطاع إدارة الأزمات والكوارث والحد من أخطارها

National Communication Strategy For Raising Societal Awareness in the Area

of Risk Reduction and Crisis Management

February 2010

Executive Summary



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Introduction

The surprise of crisis, emergencies and disasters -along with its accelerated negative impact on the state's higher interests- requires an integrated system able of providing competent authorities, in charge of monitoring, forecasting, and anticipating crisis, with spontaneous and accurate handling in a timely manner. This system must be efficient, meanwhile, capable to prevent, prepare for, and contain crisis, emergencies and disasters as well as reduce their risks towards minimization of damages to the most possible limit.

Developing the current strategy comes in the framework of fruitful cooperation between the Cabinet, Information and Decision Support Center and different UN organs. In this context, the Egyptian Cabinet, Crises and Risk Reduction Sector signed an agreement with **UNICEF** at the beginning of 2009. The cooperation comes within **UNICEF** mandate for protecting the most vulnerable groups, i.e women and children, specially in crises. The strategy addresses the communicative component relevant to societal awareness raising towards risk reduction, however, message themes focus on three types of crises namely; earthquakes-as primary potential natural disaster, fires, and diseases and pandemics-as two examples of crises classified as manmade. It is worth mentioning that the strategy, from the communicative perspective, is applicable for all types of crises that the country may be vulnerable to.

Strategy Objectives

Following is a list of goals designed to be fulfilled within a year time:

1. Raise awareness level of disaster counter and preparedness among Egyptian society's different strata on a scale of (10%: 90%) in nine months period.
2. Change attitudes towards disasters preparedness, from the negative attitude to the neutral then to the positive.
3. Cause a change in masses' behaviors pre and during the disaster with 60%. This will be conducted by showing wrong behaviors and the right behavior.
4. Build and coordinate relationships with media platforms before, during and after the crisis.
5. Change attitudes of civil society's organizations and private sector towards coordinating and participating in participatory programs for disasters preparedness and rescue during crises.

Strategy Methodology and Design

This strategy was designed through four main phases:

1st phase: Put into effect agreements between competent entities as well as identifying the strategy broad outline (December-February) and identifying data collection methods.

2nd Phase: Collecting data and information (February – April 2009), analyzing the current situation, identifying the target groups and selecting the most appropriate communication tools.

3rd Phase: Data processing (April-May 2009).

4th Phase: Final development of the strategy (June-July) after being reviewed by members of the National Commission on November 24th 2009 and the Media Experts Committee.

Target Audience

1st category: General public

2nd category: Specialized target audience (school and university students)

3rd category: Mass media

4th Category: Participatory programs public represented in the civil society and private sector.

Channels and means used to raise societal awareness towards risk reduction

A range of methods could be used to achieve the required goals. These methods can be divided among using direct channels as promoting training at all levels, and using mass media for public service announcements. Plan implementation steps can be summarized as follows:

Direct communication channels with target audience	Indirect communication channels through usage of mass media
Direct communication and training , either at schools and universities or through activities of civil society.	Social marketing advertisements in electronic and print-media as well as on streets.
Cultural and social channels via Friday prayers and preaching, field visits and female social workers.	Public relations activities, including events planning and establishing ties with media platforms, holding contests, granting scholarships and establishing booths in clubs and universities for the same purpose.
Networking with civil society organizations (on the local and international levels) and the private sector as well as with government institutions concerned with defusing the risk reduction culture.	<p>Direct marketing activities, including developing the interactive communication, using the internet, announcing for the hot line, using press database comprising experts ' data as well as using direct mail with the target audience.</p> <p>Innovative marketing techniques such as Arts and culture exhibitions and dramatization of cartoon characters for children.</p>

Priorities of implementation plan

For the purpose of effecting the national strategy to raise societal awareness of risk reduction and disasters counter, execution procedures must be done at two-levels:

First, long term level: which provides training and instruction to mass audience and specialized target audience;

Second, short term level: which provides communicative procedures that should be enacted during and after the disaster.

First: on the long term (training and instruction to both the general and specific public).

Coordinate with Ministries of Education, and Higher Education to incorporate training programs (components) into their curricula aimed at explaining scientific causations to crisis and disasters outbreak and methods of response. This is in addition to applying physical drills and conducting training to teachers – TOT- on how to teach crises and conduct practical exercises.

- Hold awareness raising training workshops for general public nationwide. This training is to be conducted by Crises and Risk Reduction Sector and Civil Society organizations. Train officials in ministries on how to write press releases and run conferences proceedings, identify official spokesperson of each ministry and train him/her on designing the messages and giving speech before audience during the press release.
- Hold training courses for journalists and daily talk-show presenters on crises objective coverage and news relevant incidents.
- Set up a database comprising contact data of journalists and talk shows presenters to contact them pre and during crises concurrently with establishing a database for experts in different disciplines of disasters and crises to have their commentaries and interpretation for causations and methods of prevention from crises.
- Coordinate with the Ministry of Endowment “Waqf” to train orators in mosques to tackle crises risk reduction relevant issues in a more objective way, evading focusing on divine foreordination, dependency and public sabotage.
- Launch awareness campaigns in print and electronic media.
- Promote cooperation agreement between educational institutions and civil society organizations.

Second: On the short run, during and after the crises outbreak (ordered by importance):

- Prepare the press kit, via the official spokesperson, during crises and disasters along with giving press releases every 12 hours by the competent ministry
- Use direct communication channels with groups likely to be the most hit by crises. Directly communicating with them should be carried out by the Central Operation Room of the Crises and Disasters Sector in coordination with the executive agency in charge, and not rely on mass media or local channels of communication to warn them.
- For purposes of coordinating information published or aired in media platforms, the journalists and talk-shows presenters' database will be used. Database of crises and disasters experts will be used to contact them to have their comments and scientific interpretation.
- Deliver awareness messages in a simple language to be easily understood by average people. This will be through public services announcements in electronic and print-media.
- Using mass media to highlight the voluntary role assumed by civil society organizations and private sector in interacting with the masses and introducing urgent assistance to stimulate more voluntary efforts during crises.
- Issue a monthly bulletin and specialized reports on crises and disasters and send them to media houses to be published or aired in media platforms and on the internet, especially after the crisis or disaster.

