Guidelines for Communicating
Disaster Risk Reduction
Information

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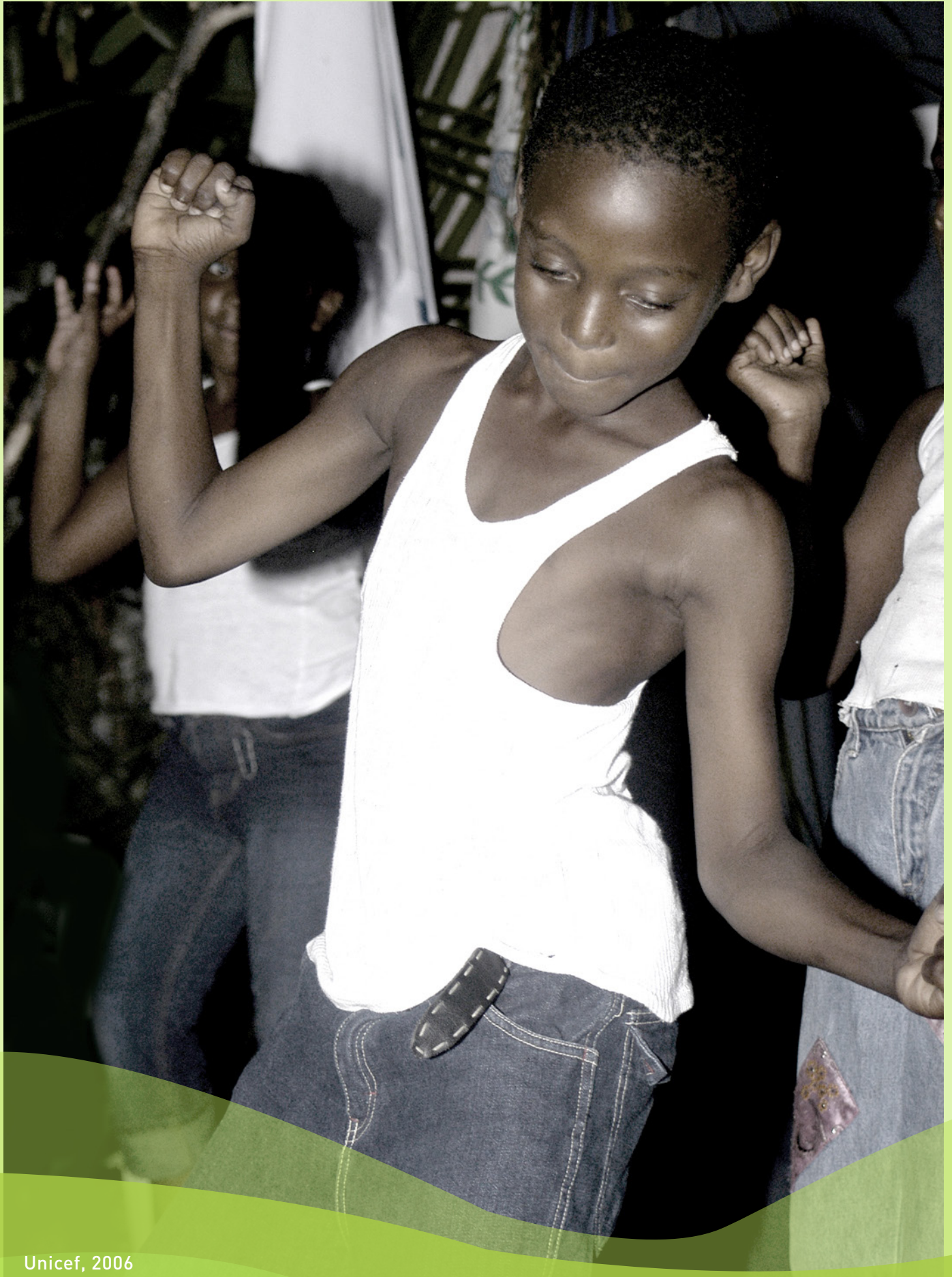
**Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection**

UNISDR
The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Guidelines for Communicating
Disaster Risk Reduction Information

Executive Summary

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) through its DIPECHO programme actively supports disaster preparedness within the Caribbean region by enhancing local capacities to face and respond to the many natural hazards to which is it vulnerable.

One of the elements of the 2013-2014 DIPECHO Action Plan for the Caribbean focuses on improving communication on disaster risk reduction in the region to enable the most at risk communities to anticipate, withstand, adapt and sometimes, recover quickly from disasters. Within this context, the regional project of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) coordinated efforts to develop guidelines for communicating disaster risk reduction (DRR) information based on identified good communication practices in the Caribbean region.

To inform the development of the communications guidelines, a consultation process was undertaken engaging three main stakeholder groups in the Caribbean: DIPECHO partners, National Disaster Management Offices and other regional DRR stakeholders to gather their experiences in communicating DRR information in the region.

The consultations gathered specific examples of effective communication practices:
✓ Developing activities that engage youth in DRR
✓ Enabling technology to support DRR communication
✓ Leveraging the immediacy of social media
✓ Communicating on key dates
✓ Creating innovative partnerships
✓ Micro-targeting communication content
✓ Using alternative channels to communicate DRR information

The communication guidelines presented in this report build on the systematization of good practices on DRR communication in the Caribbean region, by presenting guidelines to expand and replicate the good practices in a systematic, consistent manner. The guidelines aim to support mutual reinforcement of the good practices and enhanced effectiveness. The guidelines also reflect linkages to the work done by DIPECHO partners in Central America and South America, to ensure consistency and harmonization of practices.

Background to the report

The Caribbean region experiences multiple hazards: the region is prone to hurricanes, floods, flash floods, tsunamis, landslides and mudslides. Some islands experience earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The physical risk is combined with socioeconomic factors, such as high population density, fast demographic growth, inequality and great poverty. The combination of these factors results in highly vulnerable communities, with few coping capacities in the event of disaster. Moreover, climate change is likely to negatively affect disaster trends in the region.

In addition, the Caribbean region is at elevated risk owing to the highly concentrated impact of hazards on small and undiversified economies. So-called "SIDS" (or Small Island Developing States) are highly exposed to a range of hazards, but precisely because of their small size, a very large proportion of their total produced capital is at risk. The 2013 Global Assessment Report global risk model found, for example, that certain Caribbean countries could expect to lose more than 30 per cent of their value of their urban produced capital to the wind damage caused by a catastrophic, one-in-250 year cyclone. SIDS are among the countries that contribute the least to carbon emissions but are at risk for the greatest losses due to climate change, including disaster losses, that are projected to increase.

Since 1999, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) through its DIPECHO programme actively supports disaster preparedness within the Caribbean region by enhancing local capacities to face and respond to natural hazards. ECHO was created in 1992 to support humanitarian and civil protection efforts for people in need worldwide. In 2004, it became the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid before integrating Civil Protection in 2010 for better coordination of disaster response within and outside Europe. DIPECHO, Disaster Preparedness ECHO, is a program dedicated to disaster preparedness, targeting vulnerable communities living in the main disaster-prone regions of the world.

ECHO's humanitarian mandate prescribes a focus on saving lives, providing relief and thus assisting the most vulnerable groups. ECHO prioritizes "people-oriented" preparedness measures and, therefore, focuses on supporting strategies and complementing existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural hazards by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond. This increases their resilience and reduces their vulnerability. ECHO's support is a combination of community-based programs and projects at national or regional level that strive to increase resilience in the event of natural hazards. Projects are implemented through a wide range of partners, including local organizations that provide access to the most marginalized and vulnerable people.

The projects undertaken within the framework of DIPECHO align with the European approach to building resilience[1]. The policy of the EU is to recognize that investing in disaster resilience today is

1. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/EU_building_resilience_en.pdf

more cost effective, and more humane and compassionate, than responding to a crisis tomorrow. Accordingly, in 2013, more than 20 per cent of the European Commission's humanitarian funding supported disaster risk reduction. More than 62 per cent of ECHO funded projects included disaster risk reduction activities, reaching more than 18 million people.

The 2013-2014 DIPECHO Action Plan for the Caribbean aims to establish greater collaboration and coordination between partners, allowing programming of common outcomes and the harmonization of practices. Furthermore, it focuses on improving communication and dissemination of DRR key contributions in the region, by capturing evidence of success on how DIPECHO projects have allowed the most at risk communities to anticipate, withstand, adapt and sometimes, recover quickly from disasters.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) is one of the organizations supporting the objectives of the 2013-2014 DIPECHO Action Plan. UNISDR serves as the designated focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster risk reduction to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations and regional organizations. UNISDR is the designated focal point to coordinate reporting on the progress of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, a ten-year commitment signed by 168 countries to reduce disaster risks for a safer, more resilient society. The process of defining the international Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is underway.

UNISDR's regional office for the Americas, based in Panama, supports this and other work in the domain of disaster risk reduction, including a regional project within the framework of the 2013-2014 DIPECHO Action Plan for the Caribbean. One of the components that the UNISDR project aims to address is the improvement of communication and dissemination of DIPECHO disaster risk reduction tools and initiatives in order to develop a disaster risk reduction communication strategy for the Caribbean. The original objective was to develop a strategy to communicate DRR information created within the 2013-2014 DIPECHO Action Plan for the Caribbean. However, based on feedback from the stakeholders concerning the wide range of their target audiences with very different communication needs, it was determined that a report outlining guidelines for communication would be more appropriate than a strategy document as such.

Methodology

Improving communication and sharing DRR information more effectively are key priorities of the 2013-2014 DIPECHO Action Plan for the Caribbean. As such, the development of a communication strategy for DRR for the Caribbean would enable replicating and expanding good practices and success stories.

In this sense, a methodology was developed to capture, for the purposes of systematization, successful communication practices in the Caribbean applied by Caribbean DRR stakeholders. The original aim was to develop based on these experiences a DRR communication strategy. Due to the fact that many target audiences with different communication needs will need to be addressed in effectively communicating DRR the report reflects rather guidelines for DRR communication than a strategy as such.

Step 1. Analyze the information collected in the stakeholder consultation process to identify good practices for disaster risk reduction communications in the Caribbean.

In order to identify existing good practices, a consultation process engaged three stakeholder groups: DIPECHO partners, National Disaster Management Offices and other regional DRR stakeholders to gather their experiences in communicating DRR in the region.

The consultations revealed specific examples of good communications practices in the areas of activities that engage youth, enabling technologies, leveraging social media, communicating information on key dates, engaging in innovative partnerships, micro-targeting content and using alternative channels to communicate information.

In addition the consultation process revealed that nearly all stakeholders expressed a preference for an approach to communications work that builds on existing tools (and offers training on the use of those tools), rather than developing new ones. Most of the organizations reported that they did not have communication focal points dedicated to disaster risk reduction communication. Either communication work was undertaken by a disaster risk reduction project officer (along with his or her many other responsibilities) or, more commonly, the communication focal point was responsible for all communication work of the organization, of which disaster risk reduction information was only one element. These findings suggest that to be effective, the strategy must offer "scalability" to leverage the limited time and attention of those tasked with communications responsibilities.

The consultations also captured information about the regional context in which the communications work is undertaken. The Caribbean region is characterized by:

- ✓ **Linguistic and cultural diversity.** The Caribbean population speaks many languages (English, Spanish, French, Creole, Dutch, etc.) and represents a range of community and societal structures.

- ✓ **Exposure to a range of hazards.** Many of the stakeholders expressed concern that while disaster risk reduction information tends to focus on a dominant hazard, namely, hurricanes, the region is exposed to a wide range of hazards, including tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and landslides.

- ✓ **Small and relatively undiversified economies.** The Caribbean economy is highly dependent on coastal resources, for import of critical staples and for economic outputs, such as the tourism and shipping industries. The lack of economic and capital diversification magnifies the impact of disasters on smaller economies with fewer resources to absorb the consequences of hazards and finance the recovery from disaster.

- ✓ **Variable access to, and use of ICT technologies.** Some areas of the Caribbean rely on Internet-based resources, mobile telephony, social media and the like to communicate DRR information. Other areas lack access to Internet connectivity and must communicate information by other means.

- ✓ **Variations in demography** which strongly influence the use of technology, with youth more likely to engage online and older adults less likely to do so, even when connectivity is available. Roughly two-thirds of the region's population is under the age of thirty.

Step 2. Review of products developed for communication of information generated by DIPECHO Central and South America to ensure linkages and coherence in the overall approaches.

Under the framework of the DIPECHO Action Plans in Central America[2] and South America, efforts were undertaken to improve the communication of DIPECHO-supported DRR work in the respective regions.

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2. IFRC: ECHO and the DIPECHO Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean: Evolution and challenges

Work undertaken in South America[3] was initially aimed at developing a disaster risk reduction communication strategy and ultimately produced strategic guidelines to inform and support communication on disaster risk management. General findings from the consultation process undertaken in South America are listed below:

✓ Communication activities must not be a separate scope of work within DRR projects; they must be fully integrated into all DRR project work.
✓ Project design must clearly identify the activities and indicators of communication work throughout the entire structure.
✓ Communication outputs for decision making and advocacy must be specifically designed in those contexts.
✓ The must be an institutional commitment to communicate DRR work.
✓ A study of risk vulnerability lacking a communication strategy will not succeed.

The communication products in Central America shape communications around five key elements, also presented in a visually engaging online video[4] providing an LAC perspective:

1. Humanitarian action starts before the disaster. The communication guidelines underscore the importance of early warning systems, coordination of stakeholders, drills and other actions to enhance safety in the face of a natural disaster.

2. Humanitarian actions start in the community. Communities are first responders; preparing them saves lives. Communities that had received training within a DIPECHO action plan were able to save lives; online video communicates powerful testimonials of this result.

3. All families have the right to live in safe zones and it is the authorities' responsibility to guarantee this. DIPECHO action plans ensured safe housing for communities in both Central and South America impacted by landslides.

4. Actions taken at community level inspire the national level. The work communicated within the element includes the work done in Paraguay to expand at national level, a local DRR pilot program. Similarly, a community-based early warning system to protect human life from the threat of landslides in El Salvador, developed within a DIPECHO action plan, is being expanded at national level. In Ecuador, work to expand safety in schools in Quito, developed within the framework of a DIPECHO project, is being expanded nationally.

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3. IFRC: Strategic Guidelines for Disaster Risk Management (May 2013-December 2014)
4. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfDqv6GQVzo

5. Unity brings strength. For example, in Nicaragua, within the framework for a DIPECHO action plan, work for safer buildings has yielded tangible results. In the Dominican Republic, organizations working on DIPECHO projects work on a forum for risk management that is regularly consulted by the government, thus allowing their participation and giving them a voice.

The guidelines developed for communication in the Caribbean region take into consideration the work done by ECHO and DIPECHO partners in Central America and South America.

Step 3. Develop DRR communication guidelines based on systematized good practices.

Communication practitioners typically consider the "Who? What? When? Where? How?" of the messaging. To whom are we communicating? What information do we need to convey? When will we communicate our information? Where we will disseminate our messages? How will we share our information? This information was collected from the stakeholders to build out the foundation of the communication guidelines that would leverage the identified good communication practices. Thus, the guidelines consider the target audiences, key messages, communication timeline, communication channels, communication approaches and evaluation of results.

Target **Audiences**

The DRR information created under the DIPECHO Action Plan will be communicated to a diverse set of target audiences (the "Who?" in a communication strategy framework). The task of identifying and prioritizing the audiences is dependent of a number of factors, such as:

- ✓ The nature of information to be communicated
- ✓ The resources available to support communicating the information
- ✓ The audiences most likely to be affected by, or act in response to, the information

The target audiences for the portfolio of DRR information include:

- ✓ Communities at risk for different hazards
- ✓ Special needs groups, such as the elderly, disabled persons, and women – geographically isolated groups, immigrant/minority groups
- ✓ Teachers
- ✓ School children
- ✓ Youth
- ✓ High-level ministers and government officials, development partners
- ✓ Journalists and news media
- ✓ NGO's
- ✓ Donors
- ✓ Emergency responders, medical personal
- ✓ Technical specialists, scientific community
- ✓ The private sector
- ✓ Targeted impacted industry groups, such as the tourism sector

Key Messages

What do DIPECHO partners communicate? DIPECHO partners communicate information about how to mitigate risks, prepare for a disaster, respond to a disaster and aid in recovery. They communicate project-specific information, safe school information, technical information to professional specialists, the proper procedure to respond to early warning messages and advocacy information, among other content.

The stakeholder consultations revealed a strong preference for simplicity in all communications. More than half of the partner organizations that participated in the consultations believe that the most successful communication practice of all is to have simple short and memorable communication with graphics in place of text, wherever possible.

Developing key messages is often a challenge because of the "curse of knowledge", a phenomenon in which the experts know the information they want to convey, but they convey it in a manner as if they were speaking to themselves, not to non-experts. A better way of saying it is to consider the basic principle of defining target audiences: "the communication campaign isn't about you – it is about them".

The director of emergency management for Washington in the U.S. stated "We need to sell disaster risk reduction like we sell Coca-Cola", meaning we need themes, colors, logos, icons and recognizable images so that, when communicated over and over again, people become familiar with the message and understand what it means. It generally takes seeing a message at least six different times before it becomes memorable. The red and white colors and the script font used in the "Coca-Cola" logo are, for better or worse, universally recognizable. Communications professionals need something comparable for disaster risk reduction, targeted to the relevant audiences, within the appropriate cultural context.

Three examples from the Caribbean region illustrate the application of using simple messages. In Haiti and Guadeloupe, the French Red Cross reached target audiences of communities at risk with its message. Plan International reached communities at risk in the Dominican Republic with its "Get Alert" message. In Guyana, the Civil Defence Commission reached its target audience of communities at risk with its message "Guyana, Our Country, Our Responsibility".

Tsunami Smart®

In 2009, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), for example, with input from other stakeholders, developed the Tsunami Smart® Strategy which informs the work of communications focal points who must convey information to various target audiences about

safety from the threat of tsunamis. CDEMA then contributed to a more comprehensive tsunami strategy document[5] that presented the following table of short, memorable messages. CDEMA's target audience was communications focal points in each of the Caribbean member states.

MESSAGES	
Standardized Behavioral Messages	
SHELTER-IN-PLACE	
RESTRICTED AREA	
PREPARE TO EVACUATE	
EVACUATE	
ALL CLEAR	
Earthquake Message	**Tsunami Messages**
DROP	FEEL (a 20+ second earthquake that made you fall)
COVER	SEE (the shoreline recede)
HOLD-ON	HEAR (the sea roar or make a loud noise)
	RUN
	If the sea leaves, so should you.

1- Get informed, 2- Make a plan and 3- Make a kit

The French Red Cross communicates the three key messages of the International Red Cross Societies worldwide (1- Get informed, 2- Make a plan and 3- Make a kit) through a number of venues, such as leaflets in supermarkets and newspapers, supermarket shopping bags, USB key drives and T-shirts. The design was modified to suit the appropriate media. Shopping bags and newspaper leaflets provide sufficient space to show the entire 3-step graphic. For USB key

5. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Tsunami Public Awareness and Educations Strategy for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions. IOC Technical Series No.107. Paris, UNESCO, 2013. See unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002231/223111e.pdf

drives, design used is often the Red Cross symbol alone. Development of short, memorable messages supports another of the identified good practices – using alternative channels to communicate information. Short, memorable messages work best for T-Shirts, USB drives and other means of imprinting and distributing information.

For example, the Red Cross message[6] is simple, memorable and effectively uses graphics:

What makes this an effective message? The graphics summarize what individuals are asked to do, making the message easy to remember, like 1-2-3. And Red Cross volunteers, individuals who are not professional emergency management experts, had input into the development of the messages and the graphics. The target audience for this message was communities at risk throughout Guadeloupe and Haiti.
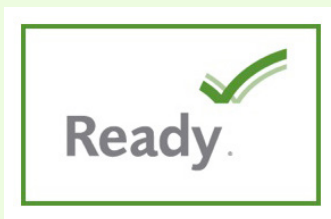
A less effective variation of this message was developed by a government agency[7] (outside of the Caribbean region). The intent was to communicate the need to make a checklist of items needed in a disaster kit and tasks to prepare for a disaster, but "Ready" doesn't convey the message in the context of the check mark graphic. As a result, the graphic has since been revised and improved with the effect that the added text aligns with the existing graphic image. It is still too early to determine if the new graphic is better understood by its target audiences, which is families and households.

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6. This message and accompany graphic appears in various forms disseminated by the Red Cross societies worldwide. For one example, please see http://www.redcross.org/ca/ventura/local-programs-services/get-prepared
7. See www.ready.gov

"Get Alert"

Plan International Dominican Republic designed a slogan and art with the "Get alert"[8] message. This graphic information appears on a "resilience bus", allowing Plan International to make its message visible to anyone who sees the public transportation bus. In addition, walls, visible to everybody in the community, were used to promote and disseminate DRR information. The initial target audience for this message was communities at risk in the Dominican Republic. Plan International replicated this good practice in South and Central America, specifically in Paraguay and Nicaragua.

Plan International, 2012

Timing of Communication

The "When" of communication varies with some communications programs taking place year round, while others are based on seasonal hazards. For example, communicating information about business preparedness in the event of hazards is an "evergreen" topic as this information can be communicated throughout the year. By contrast, communicating information about hurricanes is most effective just in advance and throughout the storm season, starting in June.

Key anniversary dates of disasters are important dates to communicate messages as they offer a window of opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction.

An editorial calendar is a tool to plan for content to be communicated through difference channels, such as social media or radio programs, for example. The use of the calendar ensures that information is regularly communicated to target audiences. The use of an editorial calendar can also plan for communications on key dates while remaining sufficiently flexible to allow for the development and dissemination of information about current threats and hazards, as they arise. An editorial calendar can be an effective tool to ensure that communications are regularly scheduled, to ensure that key audiences remain informed and engaged in DRR. It can also allow for more efficient use of the time and resources of the communications team, as editorial calendars can be integrated with web and social media platforms, even pre-scheduling and automating content for distribution. Free templates for editorial calendars can be found on the Internet.[9] An editorial calendar might also include a daily reminder to check the available online tools, such as the DIPECHO Facebook page, for new content that can be more broadly disseminated or adapted and repurposed.

Post-disaster communication informs people with timely safety information and longer-term communication following major disaster is helpful in mobilizing resources.

9. http://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/10/18/content-strategy-editorial-calendar/

Channels of Communication

"Where" partner organizations communicate their messages include traditional channels such as broadcast media (radio and television), amateur radio, print media, websites, door-to-door campaigns and in person community events. The selection of which channel(s) to use to communicate information is dependent of the resources available and the target audience for the particular message. Older populations, for example, are more likely to get their information from the radio. Younger age groups are more likely to use the Internet, where connectivity is available. New technology offers opportunity for greater engagement and scalability; however, these channels may not be available to everyone.

Radio communication

Nearly all stakeholders emphasized the importance of communicating by radio in the region. Radio is critical to reaching geographically remote areas, disabled persons with visual impairments and older populations that are less likely to use the Internet, even if Internet access is available. The following are suggestions for consideration with respect to radio communications:

✓Short, targeted messages are most effective for the radio channel. The Civil Defence Commission in Guyana, for example, broadcast messages of 30-45 seconds in length over the radio, making the information easy for listeners to remember.

✓ The use of vivid, descriptive language in radio broadcasts can be helpful for listeners to envision the information being communicated. For example, instead of giving a generic description of a tsunami hazard, a radio broadcast might communicate that in a tsunami, waves can reach 30 meters in height. This type of visually descriptive language allows the listener to imagine what he or she cannot see and makes the content more memorable.

✓ Repetition is critical on radio communications. A listener may need to hear a message six or more times before being able to recall the key information being communicated. It might be considered inappropriate to repeat a single message throughout a written document; in radio communications it is essential.

✓ When DRR professionals are speaking or interviewed on radio, it can be helpful to remember the "re-set" concept. The entire audience will not likely listen to the complete broadcast of the radio program from beginning to end. For that reason, radio news announcers often "re-set" by repeating and picking up key information (example: "We were just discussing safety precautions to take in the event of a hazard, including having an adequate supply of safe drinking water. Let me share with you another example of why this is important..."). This practice allows listeners who are just tuning in to the broadcast to quickly get oriented to what the program is about, so they can benefit from the remaining broadcast without feeling lost because they missed the introduction.

Social media channels

Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and the like (which can all be accessed on mobile devices) also provide a number of advantages for rapid, scalable communications, such as:

✓ Integration. Social media platforms can be integrated with other communications channels, such as websites, to allow for "click-through" access. Increasingly, they are being integrated within traditional news media operations as when, for example, CNN International broadcast Twitter feeds of breaking disaster news or newspapers integrate Twitter and other social media feeds into their print and online content delivery during disasters. Indeed, the possibility for such integration allows emergency management agencies, NGO's and other organizations to partner with journalists to communicate information in ways that could not have been achieved even five years ago.

✓ Engagement. Social media platforms allow for the creation of online communities of interest where users can subscribe to social media channels providing information that is relevant to them. They may also contribute their own content to the platform to share with other users. They may also initiate content creation as when, for example, they are near a hazard and can provide reporting of information from areas not accessible to others.

✓ Evaluation mechanisms. Social media platforms collect robust data on user patterns that be analyzed allowing for evaluation of communication practices. Content can be revised to reflect user preferences as measured by social media engagement, and publication of information on social media channels can be timed to achieve maximum visibility. Statistics are readily available as to the number of viewers, the amount of content shared with others, links clicked-through, the locations of the viewers, etc.

✓ Automation. Content can be developed for dissemination through social media platforms and then scheduled for release at certain times, allowing communication focal points to develop content in advance and have a "pipeline" of content ready for distribution.

A successful social media strategy takes the following issues into consideration:

✓ Effective engagement requires dedicated time and effort to create and share content. Users will quickly lose interest in social media platforms that are not regularly updated.

✓ Social media communication requires technology savvy to ensure that platforms and apps remain up-to-date.

✓ It is important to have an organizational policy for the use of social media platforms. For national emergency management offices, this often requires compliance with government policies for the use of social media by public agencies.

✓ An editorial strategy can be helpful to ensure that the content is engaging and encourages others to contribute. There should be transparency on the guidelines for contributions and the penalties for non-compliance. For example, if a user contributes information that is inappropriate or inaccurate, the social media administrator may choose to ban that user from contributing in the future to ensure that accuracy of the platform information for all other users.

Mobile telephone communications

Direct communication through mobile phone engagement can provide immediate contact and scalability through the following means:

✓ Immediate contact through SMS (text messaging)
✓ Varied channels of contact in addition to messaging, such as Quick Response codes, Bluetooth, mobile advertisements, applications and voice and mobile Internet applications
✓ Sharing for viral distribution, as users can readily forward mobile communications to other mobile users or upload the communication to social media platforms and websites
✓ Engagement as mobile users can provide immediate feedback and confirm the efficacy of the communication
✓ Access to areas not served by conventional landline and Internet technologies
✓ Portable access to populations being evacuated or displaced by hazards
✓ Low-cost delivery of content
✓ Infinite scalability to an unlimited number of users
✓ A framework for short, memorable, distinct messages as mobile communications does not allow for lengthy communications
✓ Vehicle for contributions to DRR communications from communities as smart phones often have cameras and video capability, allowing users to communicate and widely share disaster and hazard information

However, certain expertise is required to make use of this technology, such as:

✓ Platform development costs – mobile communications take place across various platforms and operating systems, such as Apple, Blackberry, Windows, Android, etc. so the development of applications must be targeted to these platforms to allow all users to participate

✓ Additional web design and development considerations. So-called "mobi" websites are designed for the smaller screens of mobile phones. Professionals who develop websites often use "responsive" designs allowing the website to be viewed in the correct way depending on the

devices chosen by individual users, such as tablets and different-sized smart phone screens as well as conventional desktop computer monitors.

✓ Consideration for the needs of persons with disabilities. Technologies exist to allow access to mobile devices for the blind or visually impaired, for example, in which the software can read the content of a mobile site to the user. However, care must be taken in the design of such sites to ensure that information presented in graphical image form can be "read" allowed by the use of appropriate descriptive tags for such imagery. More rigorous testing of such sites is recommended to ensure full accessibility to persons with disabilities.

✓ The need for contingency in the event of a failure of cellular telephone towers during a disaster. Redundant communications channels are always advised to ensure a back up should a primary channel fail. This is also true for mobile communications that rely on physical infrastructure that can be damaged or destroyed in a severe disaster.

Where feasible, mobile and smart phones can be effective and low-cost communications channels. They are particularly effective for reaching youth and younger adults.

Finally, many communication professionals recommend making content available across as many channels as possible, allowing users to choose which platforms and channels they use to access information. The Association of Caribbean States, for example, gathers information it creates over each quarterly period and publishes it to a newsletter for those who lack access to other types of technologies.

Approaches to Communication

This section of the report presents suggested approaches (including actions and possible partners) to implement good communication practices. It is intended as a starting point for stakeholders to consider approaches that have been effective in communicating DRR, with the possibility for the imagination and creativity of the Caribbean stakeholders to build upon.

"How" partners communicate is dependent of their local resources and the target audiences they seek to reach; partner organizations communicating with younger populations are more likely to use social media. Those communicating with older groups tend to use radio. The first communication practices in the table presents examples how to directly engage Youth and indirectly engage the other stakeholder groups influenced by Youth (teachers, family members, etc.).

Good Communication Practice: Utilize Activities That Engage Youth		
Purpose	**Possible Partners**	**Suggested Approaches**
Engaging Youth ensures that they will mature into adults with awareness of DRR Engaging Youth has multiplier effects as the Youth engage their families and friends	Ministries of Education Schools Youth groups Church and community groups NGO's	Distributing school-based curriculum materials educates Youth Campaigns can offer activities contribute / create DRR relevant content, such as drawings, for example, actively engaging them in DRR learning rather than passively lecturing to them Playing games can inform youth about DRR in an entertaining way Contests can engage Youth, such as a singing contest to stimulate creative ways to inform about climate change and disaster risk Offer youth the opportunity to volunteer, such as aiding those affected by disaster or assisting in creating safe structures in hazardous areas Distribute comic books and other age-appropriate materials Offer youth specific, age-appropriate training, such as first aid, for example Provide a platform for youth to contribute testimonials as to their accomplishments (completing a first aid course, for example, or assisting a disabled person)

Enabling Technology to Support DRR Communication[10]		
Purpose	**Possible Partners**	**Suggested Approaches**
Validating information source, facilitating access	In-house staff	Simple, URL's for websites are easier to remember (such as www. weready.org) and are less likely to be confused with other sites providing information from unofficial sources. They also help in search engine rankings and in attracting visitors to the site.
Encouraging contributions		Establish dedicated space on websites and online platforms to allow users to contribute and comment

Leveraging Social Media		
Purpose	**Possible Partners**	**Suggested Approaches**
Gather information	Other agencies, private sector, NGO's, community groups	Monitor the conversation on social media platforms to gauge areas of interest relevant to DRR
		Encourage users to contribute content to partner sites, particularly in remote, inaccessible areas
		Tailor communication based on feedback
		Provide links to share relevant information for other DRR actors
Share information	All actors	Publish regular, short, memorable information, such as preparedness information, training opportunities, weather forecasts

Communicating on Key Dates		
Purpose	**Possible Partners**	**Suggested Approaches**
Commemorate events	General public, news media	Schedule events and communications on anniversary dates of significant disasters
		Provides an opportunity for survivors to share their stories and heal
		Provides an opportunity for those who did not experience the disaster to learn from it and the hazards that remain
Acknowledge key thematic dates	All actors	Communicate information on key thematic dates, such as the International Day of First Aid, International Day for Volunteering, etc.

10. Certain of the elements suggested in this approach may be more effective for specific target audiences Enabling technology to support DRR communications and leveraging social media, for example, might be more effective for younger adults, urban populations or those with Internet access.

Inform news media, government agencies and other actors	Journalists, NGO's, all	Recruit volunteers or find other means to build communities of interest Provide news media briefings on a date when journalists will be in need of relevant DRR content and there is a window of opportunity to raise awareness

Creating Innovative Partnerships

Purpose	Possible Partners	Suggested Approaches
Create partnerships for distribution of DRR materials	Distribution platforms, such as news media or telecommunications providers	Partner with telecommunications companies to disseminate timely information on safety Partner with cultural groups to share DRR information at community events that will be well attended Partners with groups serving disabled persons to create information about DRR safety for persons with disabilities
Create partnerships for the creation of DRR materials	Expert sources	Partner with groups in the private sector to create information about business continuity in the event of a disaster
Create partnership to access resources	All actors	Resources could be in the form of in-kind contributions (publishing costs for example), monetary contributions, volunteer labor, etc.

Micro-Targeting Communications Content

Purpose	Possible Partners	Suggested Approaches
Deliver highly customized information to very specific niche audiences	All actors	Communicate DRR information to health and safety personnel, scientists, engineers, building and construction industries, schools, hospitals, professional societies, etc. to engage communities in DRR relevant to their area of interest

Using Alternative Channels to Communicate DRR Information

Purpose	Possible Partners	Suggested Approaches
Communicate DRR information to reach people through the broadest possible range of channels	All actors	Print T-shirts with DRR information, posters, USB drives, etc. Publish DRR messages in public areas that are mobile and visible, such as buses Embed DRR information in cultural events or the broadcast of novels over the radio

Elements to be Reflected
in a Communication Strategy

This section provides guidance on the main points to be addressed in a communication strategy:

- The general and specific objectives of the communication
- The target audience to receive the information
- The content of the information to be communicated
- The methods, tasks and tactics to communicate the information
- The expected results against which success will be measured
- The method of evaluating the outcomes of the communication
- The budget available to support the communication strategy

Sample Structure

A sample structure can be helpful to see how the guidelines can be implemented for a specific communication effort. Below please see an example how to strengthen the awareness at the community level targeting different audiences:

Strengthen community knowledge on DRR using existing tools and methodologies for reducing the vulnerability to risks				
Task	**Output**	**Expected Results**	**Timeframe**	**Budget**
Develop a radio story and broadcast it	Radio story	Make the communities aware of tools and methodologies to reduce their vulnerability to hazards	Depending on the availability of free broadcast time	Production costs
Create a photo exhibition to be displayed in parks and shopping centers	Photo exhibition	To contribute to the communities' base of knowledge about risk and how to reduce it	Suggested during the month of October	Print, venue & catering costs
Create a puppet workshop	Puppet workshop	To disseminate information, especially to children, about community preparedness	To be defined based on pre-school/ kindergarden schedule	Material & transportation costs

This table can serve as a template to structure key inputs to a communication strategy, to ensure that nothing has been overlooked and verify consistency between the messages, the medium, the time frame

(the "Who?" "What?" "Where?" "When?" and "Why?"), the inputs required for communication. Another example, from a communication strategy designed to reach a target audience of small business owners and their employees follows below.

Communicate information to the local business community about the risks of climate change, the need for safer community development practices and the importance of insurance to cover the hazards to which businesses are exposed				
Task	**Output**	**Expected Results**	**Timeframe**	**Budget**
Determine the level of employment provided by small businesses in the community	Specific data and numbers showing how the community depends on resilient small businesses for its local economy	Specific figures as to the percentage of the population that works for small businesses and an estimate as to their economic output	Depending on the availability of the economic development agency staff	Free consultation with economic development agency
Conduct a small business focus group	Assess the needs and constraints of small businesses	To better understand the resources businesses have for retrofitting buildings in areas at risk for flood and the level of commercial insurance they have to cover those risks	January - March	Student interns to support the work
Communicate information about small business vulnerability to climate change and flooding	Press release with facts and figures about economic losses due to flooding in the past and how those losses are forecast to increase in the future	To raise awareness about how the risks are increasing for small businesses	May anniversary of 2010 epic floods	Consultant fee
Use and enhance social media	Extract messages from the press release for broadcast on Twitter and Facebook	Broader dissemination of hazard information particularly to younger, more tech-savvy adults who work for small businesses	Hurricane season, June 1 – November 30	Consultant fee

The above example captures certain of the good communication practices (leveraging social media, communicating on key dates) and seeks to implement them using certain of the recommended guidelines. These structures can be modified and adapted to suit different needs. For example, the second structure addressed the budget issues for a communications strategy that supported a local emergency management agency, but could not use the agency's staff to perform the work.

Another advantage of using a template such as the examples presented here, is that they may be updated and repurposed as needed, continuing to serve as a tool for future communication strategies, while preserving a record of past ones.

Evaluation

Assessing the results of communication work is important to modify the messages, channels, tools and approaches as needed to inform the target audiences. There are a number of ways to monitor and evaluate the outreach of communications such as:

- ✓ Volume of DRR awareness and education content disseminated
- ✓ Number of DRR communications that are picked up by the news media
- ✓ The number of page views, Facebook "likes" and re-tweets as provided by Web analytics
- ✓ Measures of the "viral" nature of content, or the extent to which online communications are shared by e-mail forwarding, link sharing and the like.
- ✓ The number of individuals and organizations signing up for newsletters or attending community DRR events.
- ✓ The number of partnerships developed

However, exposure does not equal effectiveness. The ultimate measure of success in communicating DRR information is the extent to which behaviors changed as a result of increased education and awareness. Did the communication campaign result in safer public practices and better preparedness? These results are subtler and more difficult to measure. Surveys can be developed to assess behavioral changes following a communication campaign, but such methods can be time-consuming and costly, which is why quantitative measures of engagement such as website page views, for example, can be used as a proxy for measurement. More page views presumably mean more individuals changed their behavior as a result of being informed or made aware of risks.

Concluding Thoughts

Communications is essential to the work of disaster risk reduction. Efforts made to identify hazards, develop early warning systems and the like are of no value if the communities for which these resilience measures are intended remain unaware of them. At the same time, the organizations responsible for emergency management operate under demanding conditions and will never have sufficient resources to meet all of their needs.

The DRR communication guidelines allow DRR stakeholders to build on existing experiences and good practices in order to integrate communication strategies into DRR projects and initiatives

By implementing communication practices already demonstrated to be effective in the Caribbean region, DRR stakeholders can better disseminate the results of their work on disaster risk reduction. The communication guidelines in this report are intended to ensure systematic implementation of identified good practices to increase the effectiveness of DRR work performed by DIPECHO partners.

The DIPECHO partners are provided with tools and content that can be adapted and repurposed as needed to achieve communication goals. Integrating the communication guidelines into DRR project plans ensures that communications will receive the priority it deserves and the communities, disabled persons and other target groups will get the information they need to ensure safer, more resilient societies.

Annex: Successful Communication Practices in the Caribbean Region

Annex: Successful Communication Practices in the Caribbean Region

In addition to the good communication practices mentioned in the report, this Annex provides additional experiences that emerged from the stakeholder consultations demonstrating innovative and creative ways to communicate disaster risk reduction information in the Caribbean region.

Activities that Engage Youth

Successful communication practices that engage youth have multiplier effects as youth can engage their families and others in the community in DRR.

Department of Emergency Management (DEM), 2013

◉ The Department of Emergency Management in Barbados finds school initiatives to be a good communication practice because students are not just passively listening to lessons, but actively contributing and participating (such as making drawings about disaster risks, for example). In this regard, the DEM offers for example school tours to engage children in DRR activities.

◉ The NGO Protecting Through Education (RET) advocates for systematizing its communication practices by going beyond the printed material, generating ways that are driven by young people.

a) As part of the CORELAC network, the NGO supports the initiative[1] called "Voices for Resilience Latin America and the Caribbean" for example, which aims to promote, highlight and position the voice of children and young people in decision-making and implementation of actions in situations that affect them on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and social risk in the region.

b) Protecting Through Education also shared that one of its main methodologies for the communication is the "Days Playful-Educational Information and Empowerment for Youth in DRR", in which youth learn how to identify hazards, use risk management to mitigate the threats and communicate this work to their communities and local authorities. The experience has been that active engagement is a more effective communication practice than passive listening.

◉ Along these lines UNISDR and UNICEF developed a board game called Riskland[2] for youth to learn about disaster risk reduction while playing an entertaining game. This is an important tool, available in many languages that partners may adapt and reprint.

◉ The Spanish Red Cross developed TE MALÉ, an educational board game that conveys messages that help children understand how some actions can reduce the impact of disasters, while others can increase their vulnerability.

German Red Cross, 2012

1. See video online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=tJll-vNa3wQ
2. http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/2114

◉ The French Red Cross offers an inspiring example of engaging youth through successful communication, in the form of its song contest, titled "Spice It Up – Sing for Preparedness"[3]. The French Red Cross, together with the National Red Cross Societies of Grenada and Barbados launched a song competition within the framework of the 8th DIPECHO Action Plan for the Caribbean. "Spice It Up" aimed at raising awareness on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction through the stimulus of cultural creativity and youth volunteerism. It also presents an opportunity to promote local talent on the national and the first winning song[4] was performed at the 7th Comprehensive Disaster Management conference in December 2012.
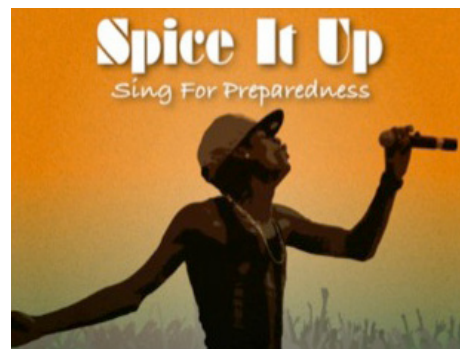
◉ World Vision International[5] engages youth by communicating information on action steps, specific things that they can do, such as pray for those affected by disaster, donate aid to help those in need and work in the community so that people impacted by disaster are not forced to migrate, particularly if violence becomes an issue in the aftermath of a major disaster.

◉Youth can also be engaged by the opportunity to offer testimonials to their work in the DRR arena. World Vision International, which communicates disaster risk reduction information to youth groups, offers a case study of a girl in Panama who participated in a first aid training course with her church group. While on vacation with her family, she observed a boat as it was capsizing and was able to save 28 lives, by calling for help, getting the people out of the water and administering first aid. Now she is very excited to tell other youth groups about her experience and the importance of preparedness and first aid training. Her testimonial is delivered as she speaks to groups at various DRR awareness events and online with a photograph and her words.

◉ With the support of DIPECHO and UNESCO, the Thematic Committee for Public Awareness and Education in Haiti developed Ti Joel Nan plaj, "Ti koze sou sounami" (Tsunami preparedness communication strategy in Haiti), a comic book to disseminate tsunami awareness messages to school children in an entertaining manner. The main character, Ti Joel, is beloved in Haiti because of his concern for educating the public about different hazards.

Enabling Technology in the Service of DRR Communications

The stakeholder consultations revealed a number of successful communication practices that made effective use of technology to advance DRR work.

◉ The Association of the Caribbean States (ACS) uses technology to expand access to information. ACS decided to incorporate an online publishing platform, ISSU, as part of its general communication services. ISSU is software that publishes magazines online such that readers can flip through the "pages" exactly as if they were holding a paper magazine in their hands. This platform does not require additional software add-on's, such as an Adobe .pdf reader, as ISSU opens directly in any web browser. This approach allows groups that lack access to social media, software add-on's or other technology to access ACS's materials. The ACS publishes at least one ISSU magazine each quarter collecting all of the information that ACS has generated and making it available in one place. ACS also favors an "Omni-Access" approach to technology: communicate information across all platforms and let the users choose according to their own needs. Some will choose Facebook; others will choose e-newsletters. The important thing is that they have choices and will not lack access to information for not having the right mobile device or advanced software.

◉ The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has made a substantial amount of informative material available around the campaign of getting the Caribbean region disaster-ready, at www.weready.org This approach solves more than one challenge: simple, short URL's are not only easier to remember, they are less likely to be confused. Easy-to-remember URLs reduce the risk that someone transposes letters and arrives at a phony website set up by cyber-criminals. Finally, a memorable URL may help drive traffic to the website, making communication easier for everyone.

◉ World Vision International has a dedicated place on its mobile websites for youth to file "I-Report" with video from their mobile phones of disaster-impacted communities allowing for greater engagement and participation, timely reporting and raising awareness. World Vision International also finds that another successful communication practice is to have websites and social media platforms specifically designed for use on mobile devices. In addition to offering the benefit of portable communication, should a community have to evacuate; it addresses a barrier that may exist for lack of access to technology. Many households in the region that lack desktop computers have mobile devices.

Leveraging the Immediacy of Social Media

Successful communication is a two-way street as the UNISDR's communication team observed, "The most important difference between communication and information is that communication has feedback. There is no generic communication; we must establish public receptiveness." Unlike broadcast media, which speak "at" their audiences, social media afford the opportunity to "listen to" the others, allowing for information gathering, response and more specific tailoring of communication based on feedback.

◉ UNISDR has developed an iphone application to assess the safety of a schools[6]. This application is supporting a Global Programme that serves as a preliminary assessment and monitoring step to help locate vulnerable schools. This application enables the users to assess the schools in their vicinity. This assessment data will further be available to the UNISDR and its partners for creating awareness about the disasters prone areas / schools.

◉ The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) in Jamaica, which is exploring the use of social media as an important tool in emergency management for its immediacy and its engagement. ODPEM does not always have to dispatch teams into a community to gather information; it can listen to the conversation on social media platforms. Social media could be an even more powerful platform when combined with other ICT technologies. Jamaica's ODPEM is using fiber optic technologies to use cameras and stream images of hazard-prone areas over social media platforms.

◉ ODPEM also finds that Facebook[7] shows promise to engage audiences. They can see during the hurricane season an increase in the number of visits to their Facebook page and page "likes" indicating that people are going to the page for information about storm forecasts.

Communicating on Key Dates

Many of the partners achieve success by communicating key disaster risk reduction information around key anniversary or thematic dates.

International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) –
Step up Campaign (13 October)

Since 1990 the world is celebrating the International Day for Disaster Reduction[8] (IDDR) in October. During the first 10 years, the General Assembly designated the second Wednesday of October in order to raise awareness on how people and communities are reducing their risk to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of DRR. The Day furthermore aims at encouraging every citizen and government to take part in building more disaster resilient communities and nations. Since 2009, the 13 October was designated as the date to commemorate the Day.

6. https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/unisdr-school-safety-assessment/id786074863?mt=8
7. See https://www.facebook.com/ODPEM.JA
8. http://www.unisdr.org/we/campaign/iddr

The Day is promoted by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction which started in 2011 the "Step Up initiative" focusing on a different group of partners every year: Children and Young People (2011), Women and Girls (2012), people living with disabilities (2013), and Older People (2014).

In the Caribbean, many DRR stakeholder use this day to raise awareness on disaster risk reduction related issues at regional, national and local level.

World Humanitarian Day (19 August)

The World Humanitarian Day celebrates the spirit that inspires humanitarian work around the globe. The Day raises public awareness of humanitarian assistance worldwide, recognize people who risk their lives to help people in need.

A yearly global campaign is led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In 2014, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners continue their ground-breaking campaign[9] called **The world needs more...** which is the first-of-its-kind project that turns words into aid.

World First Aid Day (second Saturday in September)

The World First Aid Day is celebrated annually on the second Saturday in the month of September. Marking the Day, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched in 2014 the first-ever recommendations on the international harmonization of life-saving practices. These recommendations are intended as a guide for people in charge of the development

of first aid training, and can be adapted to disasters or mass casualty situations. They are also meant to facilitate the dissemination of life-saving practices, since it has been proven that fatalities and the severity of accidents significantly decrease with widespread public knowledge of first aid. On this Day public events are designed to demonstrate the benefits of first aid training for safety.

International Volunteer Day (5 December)

The Red Cross also organizes public events for the International Volunteer Day[10] to attract more volunteers for both first aid training and disaster risk reduction training (to identify key hazards and prepare for them). The International Volunteer Day is a chance for volunteer-involving organizations and individual volunteers to promote their contributions to development at local, national and international levels.

International Day of the Girl Child (11 October)

Since 2012, the United Nations marks 11 October as the International Day of the Girl Child[11]. The day promotes girls' human rights, highlights gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the world. The Day recognizes the ways in which girls can be marginalized in society and to prioritize girls' rights as a key development issue.

In this context, every year on October 11, Plan International releases a report[12] focused on girls in disasters. The report provides comprehensive information with detailed statistics on prevention and risk management for raising awareness about the vulnerability of girls.

UNDP Haiti communicates disaster risk reduction information on key anniversary dates, when there is a window of opportunity for people to be more receptive to this information. These include January 12 - the anniversary of the earthquake; March 1 – International Day of World Civil Protection; May 7 – the anniversary date of the Cap-Haitian Earthquake, which measured 8.0 on the Richter

10. For more information about the International Volunteer Day, please see http://www.unv.org/what-we-do/intl-volunteer-day.html
11. http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/girl-child
12. http://plan-international.org/girls/reports-and-publications/all-reports-en.php?lang=en

Scale; and October 13 – International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR). For example, Haiti's Civil Protection Agency, with the support of UNDP Haiti, used the occasion of Civil Protection Day in 2012 to launch its annual program "Civil protection is everyone's responsibility". The significance of the date and the announcement captured the attention of local and global (such as Reuters) news media. To further the synergies of communicating DRR information on this date, the Haitian Red Cross used March 1 to refresh its communications material on its first aid training program. And various other DIPECHO partners, such as CDEMA and UNDP, joined in events beginning on March 1 to communicate information about Haiti's Seismic Risk Plan for the northern part of the country.

This practice is a success on many levels: journalists are already likely to focus on the anniversary date opening the door for editorial coverage on disaster risk reduction communications – a more forward-looking approach to preparedness, rather than an exclusively backward-looking approach on losses. And for those who did suffer losses during the disaster anniversary dates, engaging the survivors by communicating information about activities and programs that prepare and protect can be constructive and healing for them.

Innovative Partnerships

Organizations report successful communication experiences enabled by innovative partnerships, a practice that should be systematized across the region.

◉ In 2012 following Hurricane Sandy, the Jamaican Red Cross partnered with the local telecommunications provider and the Health Ministry to send out text messages advising of appropriate health precautions following the hurricane (such as information about safe drinking water after the storm). The Red Cross considered this to be a major success, as partnerships with telecommunications providers have been relatively rare.

◉ The National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) in Saint Lucia believes partnerships for content development is a successful communication method that should be systematized. For example, the Saint Lucia NEMO office has a partnership with the National Council on Disabilities to develop and disseminate relevant content[13]. The partnership offers a number of benefits: the credibility of association with the partner, the access to expert information and the ability to drive traffic to the NEMO website from audiences that are accustomed to getting information on the partner site, allowing some cross-promotion of readership.

◉ The Disaster Emergency Management Agency in Barbados partners with cultural venues that are

13. See Volume I of the national emergency management plan at http://nemo.gov.lc/home/DisasterManagement/NationalEmergencyManagement-Plan/GeneralInfo.aspx

offering entertainment events (such as concerts, expositions, etc.) to communicate disaster risk reduction messages.

◉ The French Red Cross uses an earthquake simulation minibus in Guadeloupe. People stand on the plate that moves like an earthquake and begin to understand the risk and the need to prepare. Communication activities that engage and entertain are more effective and draw more people in, enhancing the ability to negotiate partnerships with other groups (to provide for example food and drink during the simulations).

◉ The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management in Jamaica address businesses[14] as a key stakeholder for its communications work, alerting businesses about the important to plan for disasters. ODPEM provides information to businesses online on different types of hazards that could affect the business continuity. Partnerships with businesses provide different opportunities. One can be to possibly mobilize additional resources for disaster risk reduction work and engaging businesses beyond passive consumers of information.

◉ A number of partnerships exist with academic and scientific partners to communicate disaster risk reduction information in the Caribbean region, such as, for example the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology. The University of West Indies, which offers a graduate study program in disaster management[15], communicates information on climate change impacts and disaster risk reduction and serves as a resource partner to partners in the region.

Micro-Targeting Communications Content

◉ The UNDP Haiti communicates disaster risk reduction information to carefully selected groups for engagement. For example, UNDP communicates information[16] about resilient construction and reinforcing and retrofitting existing structures to builders and the construction industry. Those groups are seeking very specific information and once they have it, they can be educated with other types of information, such as personal preparedness, for example. Another example of highly focused communication concerns the targeted activities UNDP offers for scientists and engineers, such as a forum and accreditation for earthquake and tsunami technical needs. However, this "micro-niche" is served from a broader offering of communication tools and content put together for customization and adaptation to the needs of individual groups, such as engineers.

◉ The Caribbean tsunami communications strategy, provide another such example. The strategy pro-vides a number of tools[17] that can be adapted for local needs and for distinct audiences by the Public

14. http://www.odpem.org.jm/DisastersDoHappen/TypesofHazardsDisasters/Hurricanes/ProtectYourselfFromHurricanes/HurricanePrecautions-forSpecificGroups/HurricanePrecautionsforBusinessOwners/tabid/295/Default.aspx
15. http://www.uwi.edu/drrc/events/09-11-12/MSc_in_Disaster_Management.aspx
16. http://www.ht.undp.org/content/haiti/fr/home/operations/projects/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/plan-de-prevention-seisme-pour-le-grand-nord-dhaiti/
17. http://weready.org/tsunami/index.php?Itemid=40=40=com_content=article

Awareness and Education officer. The tsunami communication strategy recognizes the changing role of a communicator from "implementer" to "leverager" and the resulting need for more partnerships and resource coordination to share information at high efficiency and low cost. Recognizing the distinct communication needs of different partners, the strategy focuses on building long-term awareness with a range of stakeholders rather than handling crisis communication during a disaster. The strategy is sufficiently broad to cover a variety of needs, but offers specific tools to address very specific, targeted groups.

Using Alternative Channels to Communicate DRR Information

One of the challenges of communication in the Caribbean region is that many areas are remote and lack access to modern technologies.

⦿ An example in terms of communication in an emergency situation provides the Dominica Office of Disaster Management employs an "indigenous early warning system" in Dominica communities, where communities have distinct, unique technologies to convey information on specific risks. For example, the fishing communities have special conch shells to blow that sounds information to warn about a unique, pending hazard. Different villages use different tools (fishing villages use conch shells, for example).

Partners have found that the rich cultural tradition of the Caribbean can be a medium to communicate DRR information while engaging and entertaining audiences.

⦿ In Cuba, CARE includes artists (musicians, comedians, painters, actors) to be part of awareness campaigns that disseminate measures to take to prepare and respond before, during and after a hazardous event.

⦿ DIPECHO partners in Haiti all find that the rich cultural experience of the country offers the opportunity for effective communication practices of sharing disaster experiences through cultural media, such as concerts and poetry readings.

⦿ UNISDR reports a successful communication practice in the broadcast of disaster risk reduction stories over the radio in both the Spanish and English languages. People in rural areas join together and listen to the radio stories, allowing all communities to take part in the event.

⦿ Guyana's Civil Defence Commission (CDC) provides an example of good communication practices which links alternative channels to communicate information. In 2013 and 2014, Guyana launched a public education campaign on disaster risk reduction, which included the following components:
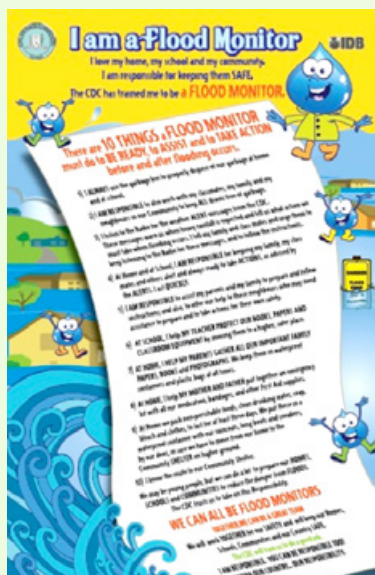
1. A 20-minute documentary, "Guyana's Reality Check" that was broadcast on television to raise awareness of flood risk, global warming and climate change.

2. Short (90-second) animations on television communicating key information to prepare for flood hazards.

3. Short (30 and 45 second) radio messages to provide information and guidance on climate change, flood preparedness and response, prevention and mitigation and safety.

4. A national school program, establishing flood monitor teams, giving the children important tasks to perform at school, at home and in the community, as well as authority, responsibility, recognition and guidance to perform the tasks. The program was linked to the International Day for Disaster Reduction 2013, dedicated to disaster risk reduction and persons living with disabilities.

5. The design of a newsletter template for CDC with the intention of publishing at least two newsletters each year.

The campaign focused on the centering theme of "Guyana, our country, our responsibility" in all communication materials to reinforce the need for all individuals, families, schools, communities and companies to accept and take ownership of the flood risk by taking actions towards flood mitigation and prevention. The campaign received coverage from major news media[18].

As video has been shown to be an effective tool for communication of disaster risk reduction information, UNISDR called for select experiences and good practices that illustrate, through video testimonials, the visible results of interventions, produced through the DIPECHO framework, and their impact on beneficiaries.

For the production of these testimonials, UNISDR partners with national and local television in Cuba and Dominican Republic as well as NTN24 through their programme "Cli-Max". Involving media has many benefits, for example disaster risk reduction information are broadcasted to a broad audience in an understandable language.

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18. See, for example http://www.guyanatimesgy.com/2014/10/13/disaster-risk-reduction-is-everybodys-business/