

—on the ROAD TO SENDAI

Visions and voices for a new global disaster framework



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TITLE OF SUCCESS STORY: Simulations are testing grounds for Disaster Preparedness

Agencies names, address and focal contact person: Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society, Andhra Pradesh State Branch; Secretary, Indian red Cross Society, Tamil Nadu State Branch

"The simulation activity is a very good exercise as we come to know how well we are prepared for the disaster. It also motivates other members of the community to participate in disaster risk reduction trainings." B Krishna, Sarpanch, Nidzur village, Andhra Pradesh



THE PROBLEM: *(Please specify the geographical location, issues and background to the project)*

The coastal communities of India are most vulnerable to floods and cyclones and these unprecedented disasters wreak havoc for the communities who are completely dependant on agriculture and the sea for their livelihood. The Indian Red Cross Society, with the support of the Canadian Red Cross, has been training communities at preparedness for emergencies. Usually when disasters strike, local communities do not know what to do. It was a good thought to train them in rescue, first aid and other support so that precious lives could be saved. Simulation exercises are a good test for these learnt skills. They provide a realistic insight into the capacities of communities to deal with emergencies



THE ACTIVITIES

Simulation exercise is one of the methodology for assessing the community's capacity in pre, during and post disaster response. The Disaster Risk Reduction programmes being implemented in coastal villages of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu carry out simulation exercises regularly as a test for the community and other stake holders. It is a way to also assess the impact of the program in building community resilience. This knowledge of the community is also pivotal in improving preparedness levels, response mechanism and capacity of the community in the planning for the future programmes. Simulation exercises were recently held in 11 villages of 6 districts in Andhra Pradesh and 13 villages of 5 districts in Tamil Nadu. Approximately 150 people including men, women and children participated in the exercises from each village and some more were observers.

THE OUTCOMES

The communities were very happy to be part of these simulations. It helped them gauge their strengths and weaknesses and also identify gaps in trainings and /or equipment required for search and rescue and first aid. The exercise also turned out to be a major motivating factor for community members who have not participated in the trainings. In every village communities were divided in to different teams for Early Warning, Net working, Coordination & Tracing, Evacuation, Search & Rescue, Logistics & Shelter Management, First Aid, Health, Hygiene & Watsan, and Livestock / Asset Management. Apart from being a ground test, the simulations proved beneficial as operational skills of the communities improved and helped in increasing the awareness levels of the communities regarding disaster and preparedness.

WAY FORWARD

The way forward is to involve more communities in disaster risk reduction trainings and subsequently to organize such simulation exercises.



Indian Red Cross Society



CANADIAN RED CROSS CROIX-ROUGE CANADIENNE