Risk Awareness and Education on Natural Catastrophes

OECD Stocktaking

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International Conference on Financial Education
Washington, DC
May 7-8, 2008
Stocktaking Scope and Context

- Focus: Public awareness and education on natural catastrophe risk and risk reduction measures
- Scope: 11 OECD countries, China and India
- Complimentary efforts:
  - OECD International Network on the Financial Management of Large-Scale Catastrophes
  - OECD project on financial education and risk awareness
Growing international recognition natural catastrophes are rooted in human decisions

**Natural Hazards** – Environmental phenomena that can negatively impact humans

**Vulnerability** – Human conditions that increase our susceptibility to these hazards

**(Natural Hazard) Risk** – Probability of harmful consequences resulting from the interactions between hazards and vulnerable human conditions

- Movement away from a “culture of reaction”
- Movement towards a “culture of safety”

- Public awareness and education key components
Risk Awareness and Risk Reduction Education - Research on Effectiveness

- Elements that hamper learning
  - Over emphasis on physical science, technical explanations
  - Sensationalism of damage and destruction
  - Over emphasis on emergency response

“Nature is too powerful. Destruction is inevitable. I am a victim and all I can hope for is rescue.”
Risk Awareness and Risk Reduction Education  
- Research on Effectiveness

- Elements that enhance learning
  
  - Personalization of risk
  
  - Emphasis on effective risk reduction strategies
  
  - Building a sense of self-efficacy

“People like me can reduce risk. It is not too hard and it will be effective.”
RISK IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

PUBLIC SECTOR
- Set national risk reduction priorities
- Disseminate risk research and knowledge
- Support risk awareness and risk reduction education programs

PRIVATE SECTOR
- Provide appropriate, effective, and accessible risk reduction tools
- Educate consumers/policy makers
- Advocate for national risk reduction policies
- Support and partner for education on risk and risk reduction

CIVIC SECTOR
- Liaison between technical community, public and policy maker
- Effectively reach public
- Advocate for risk reduction policies

EDUCATION SECTOR (public & private)
- Impart awareness of risks and risk reduction strategies

INTERNATIONAL ARENA
- Raise awareness of national governments
- Integrate disaster risk reduction and development
- Support cross-national learning
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- Public Sector

Some current activities

• Public awareness campaigns/events

• Disaster parks and museums

• Cross-sectoral dissemination of public education material

National Preparedness Day, Japan
Evacuation Drills, Tokyo
Virtual Earthquake Museum, China
Mass disseminated brochure, California, USA
House evacuation sign and education tool, Iceland
Risk reduction education for weather forecasters, USA
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- Public Sector (Education)

Co-curricular education
- China, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and Turkey
  - Education modules added to geography, science, and civics education
  - Student involvement in community risk mapping, and risk reduction activities

Voluntary programs
- Canada, Italy, United Kingdom and United States
  - Cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g. Insurance industry + Red Cross + government agencies)
  - Often innovative, high quality but lower penetration
Effective Risk Awareness and Risk Reduction Education:

Who:
• Targeting of multiple audiences
• Public, policy maker, knowledge disseminators

What:
• Clear, consistent message
• Non-technical language
• Positive, empowering and accurate examples
• Strong emphasis on risk reduction

How:
• Engaging, innovative formats
• Employ a multiplicity of dissemination strategies
Strategies for Scaling Up Risk Awareness and Risk Reduction Education:

- National-level guidelines
- Promote cross-sectoral collaboration
- Encourage community participation and grassroots initiatives
- Integrate in compulsory education
- Improve current programs through assessment and evaluation

A Culture of Safety:

- Increase voluntary and incentivized adoption of risk reduction strategies
- Greater acceptance of compulsory risk reduction policies, where applicable.
Thank You