

14 Educational Kit "Riskland": Let's Learn To Prevent Disasters, An Innovative Learning Tool For Children

BACKGROUND

The educational kit, "Riskland" is the result of a joint initiative of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN / ISDR) for Latin American, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF-TACRO). It was developed at the end of 2002, and it is mainly aimed to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; however, due to its success it has been spread throughout the world and exist currently in the following 6 languages: Spanish, English, Portuguese, Creole, Mayan languages, and Nepalese. The Riskland game is currently being translated into more than 30 languages worldwide, including Chinese, Farsi, French, Swahili, Afrikaans, Japanese, Ketchua, and many others.

This game is intended for children between 8 and 12 years of age as a complement to other materials that schools may already have. It is an innovative and didactic tool, easy-to-use for teachers and students. It consists of a brochure named, "Let's learn to prevent disasters", with basic information related to natural hazards and risk reduction, as well as the Riskland game on disaster prevention which through a number of instructive messages help children to understand which practices may be effective for reducing the impact of disasters and which are not appropriate, and as a result, may lead to an increase in vulnerability.

Its content is useful for social studies, natural sciences, studies related to human groups or foreign countries, and the interaction between people and their environment. Riskland game and other activities have been also included in order for children to learn about disasters in a dynamic and enjoyable manner.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to provide Latin American and the Caribbean children as well as the school community with innovative, fun and interactive tools to understand risk management and disaster risk reduction as part of sustainable development. Riskland game's main characteristics are as follows:

■ It is an innovative tool essential to reach a culture of prevention and people's participation in disaster prevention activities. The text and game is very user friendly and didactic and they provide key information on natural hazards and how to prevent disasters. It really reaches the target population.

■ When the goal is to educate children through a

didactic and lucid program, their response is more participative and leads them to become involved in an interesting debate that makes them more critical and conscious about the hazards that could affect them. This is an informative, simple, and fun kit.

■ It stimulates children's interest to better understand the risks that they and their families are exposed to, and to have a better knowledge of the surrounding environment and how people can live in harmony with it. Similarly, when they participate directly and suggest preventive actions, they feel happy and enthusiastic for having contributed to reduce disaster risks.

ACTIVITIES

All material included in this kit was produced by UNICEF-TACRO and the Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), in collaboration with experts on education and risk management issues. Besides, well-known professionals on art and design contributed to the production.

7,000 examples in Spanish (distributed in Latin America), 5,000 in English (for the English Speaking Caribbean) and 3,000 in Portuguese (distributed in Brasil and Angola) and 1,500 in Creole (Haiti) have been printed.

The success of this initiative is due to its flexibility and adaptability to local and specific problems of the communities; therefore, many institutions in many countries throughout the world are constantly asking for permission to reproduce and to adapt it to their own environment.

ACHIEVEMENTS

As of 2002, several institutions, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, among others, have requested authorization to reproduce the kit in a massive way, that is the case of the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies.

Riskland has been used extensively in Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, Cuba and other countries.

The English-spoken Caribbean countries (Jamaica, St Kitts, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Santa Lucia) are actively promoting the use of the kit at schools in order to reach that education on disasters become mandatory for the 125.000 Caribbean students as of September 2004. Financial support has been obtained from private

companies to re-print 200,000 copies. Costa Rica, CNE, National Commission for Emergencies has carried out various activities in relation to the Riskland game, including, the plans with the Instituto Nacional de Seguros (Insurance National Institute) to

- reproduce the kit as a giant electronic game for the Children's Museum.

- to make a re-edition of the kit in order to provide every school with at least two units, which will mean a re-edition of 14,000 copies.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the kit dissemination and the training workshops carried out by the Red Cross Department of Prevention and Preparedness for Disasters, has had a very positive feedback from various regions of the country (Orosi, Limón) as a pilot program in a school in San José and other schools in Guacimo and Siquirres in Limón.

México, the NGO, Redescubre, A.C., is using the kit as part of the children's workshops and keep conversations with the School Emergency Direction (Dirección de Emergencia Escolar) to monitor its application as part of the study program of 15 local schools as of September Tijuana, Ensenada and Querétaro have proposed the inclusion of the kit within the school study program.

LESSONS

- The partnership with other organizations and institutions has produced a positive effect on the promotion and dissemination of the educational kit.

- This kit due to its low cost of production and great repercussion is an innovative solution for low-income communities at risk.

- Learning through play has proved to be more effective than learning through formal methods and programs

- The dissemination of the game should be aimed not only to children but also to their parents. Adults' interest must be positively exploited.

- The kit can be adapted to the specific realities of each community.

- Prevention and risk management should be a cross-cutting topic of school programs

FUTURE

A continued effort to promote the kit among education ministries to integrate it into the school programs should be done taking into consideration the fact that some of them have

already disaster prevention programs in both primary and high schools Riskland kit is a tool that promotes sustainable development, so the partnerships with the private sector are essential to obtain sponsorship by taking advantage of the growing importance of the policies of Social, Environmental and Corporate Responsibility



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Production And Dissemination Of The “Times Of Hurricanes” And “Tremors In My Heart” Radio Serials Related To Disaster Risk Reduction

BACKGROUND

With the objective to raise awareness on disaster risk reduction, in particular in relation to hurricanes and floods, among the Central American population, the International Strategy for Disaster Prevention, UN/ISDR; the Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO); the International Organization for Migrations (IOM); and CEPREDENAC, produced and launched the radio serial (soap opera) called “Times of Hurricanes” in 2002.

In 2002, 46 community radio stations in Central America broadcast the above radio serial; and in 2003, during a new campaign, 86 radio stations broadcast it free of cost in all the 6 Central American countries. In addition, several NGOs such as Red Cross and IFRC, used it as an innovative training tool. It is currently being transmitted by a number of broadcasting stations in Central America and in other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as Cuba, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

The “Tremors in My Heart” radio serial was produced in 2003 after the great success of the first radio serial, and at the request of the public and radio stations to produce more similar kind of educational radio soap operas. The following organizations participated in this effort: UN/ISDR, PAHO/WHO; UNDP; and CEPREDENAC. This innovative training and public information material presents experiences and stories related to earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions, with emphasis on risk management, public health and migration issues.

Both of the above productions reinforce the notion of risk management in an organizational setting and encourage broad social participation for disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development.

The radio serial format was selected taking into account that:

- Radio is the most important and popular mass medium in Latin America and is appropriate for communication with a diverse public and can reach large numbers of people who, for the most part, live in remote rural areas and use the radio as their only means of communication.

Both radio serials were designed for use as

awareness raising tools via radio broadcasts by local, regional, nationwide radio stations or through the Internet. They have also been used as an innovative tool for risk management training workshops as well as an instrument for the educational system.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were:

- To produce alternative and innovative tools to support the development of educational processes for the disaster prevention and preparedness, in particular related to hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions.

- To plan and develop a strategy for the use and dissemination of the radio serials, with the involvement of public and private institutions, local governments and organizations and entities that work with or interested in disaster reduction.

- To reinforce the notion of risk management in an organizational setting and to encourage broad social participation and policy stances for sustainable development.

In a crosscutting way, awareness was also created regarding the dangers of irregular migration in the aftermath of natural disasters (hurricane Mitch) as well as on gender equality and the role of women in disaster situations in rural areas. In addition, the stories include a set of key recommendations and advise on public health issues, with the objective of improving the disaster preparedness and response in health sector.

ACTIVITIES

The activities include.

- Production of radio serials under the technical guidance of professionals of UN-ISDR, PAHO-WHO, UNDP, IOM and CEPREDENAC. The executive production of the radio serials relied on the expertise of renowned professionals in the areas of communication and artistic execution.

- A testing workshop was organized in disaster prone communities, to incorporate the comments of the community people as well.

- Preparation of guidelines for the use of "Times of Hurricanes" and "Tremors in My Heart" radio serials, with the participation of the Latin American Catholic Communication Organization, OCLACC., the Latin American Radio-phonetic Education Association, ALER; the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP; the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UN/ISDR; and the Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization.
- Planning and development of a dissemination and outreach strategy with the involvement of public institutions, local governments, radio broadcasting organizations, community, local and nationwide radio stations, etc.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Inter-agency participation both in the production and in the planning and development of the dissemination and use of the radio serials
- It is an instrument providing support for training processes that can be adapted to the diversity of countries in the region.
- Excellent response to and ownership of the radio serials by organizations and institutions in the Latin American countries.
- The radio serials have been broadcast in a number of countries in Latin America including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Argentina, among others. They have also been used for training purposes and in workshops held in different countries via NGOs, institutions and organizations.
- The Times of Hurricanes was also translated into local languages on Mozambique, Africa, by GTZ.
- Based on the success in Central America, several institutions in the English Speaking Caribbean are producing a similar radio program in English to be used in the Caribbean islands.

LESSONS

- Radio broadcasting is a broad spectrum and highly accessible medium because it allows communication with a diverse public and reaches remote rural areas whose only means of communication is radio
- The radio serial format is interesting and easy to understand; it can be disseminated through

radio broadcasts and used as a supplementary tool in workshops focussing on disaster issues and in the formal education system.

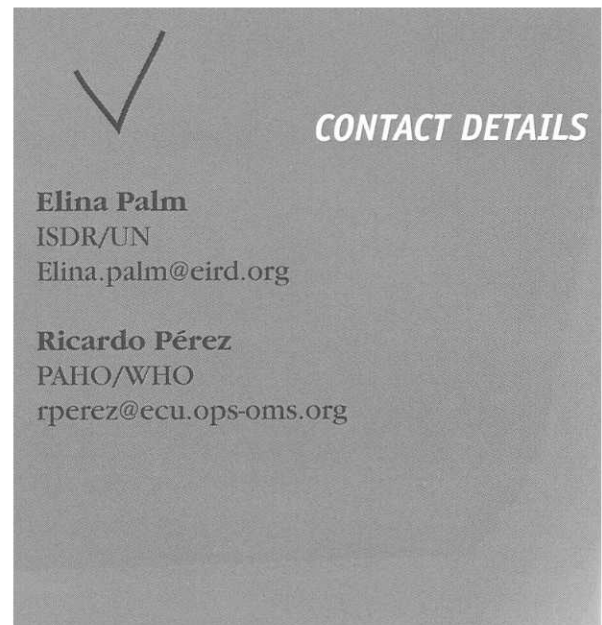
- The radio serial dissemination campaigns have shown that it is possible to ensure the cooperation of radio stations at the regional level.

- Inter-institutional collaboration has maximized and multiplied the impact of the radio serial production, dissemination and distribution.

FUTURE

- To carry out a broader strategy for the dissemination and use of radio serials and the user's guide in the Latin American countries, taking into account the major risk factors in each country and locality.

- To make greater efforts to promote the radio series among the ministries of education of the different countries so that the series may become part of their educational programs, and also among public and private radio stations, NGOs, collective groups and women's organizations, churches, etc.



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