

10 Best Humanitarian Reporting Practices

Communication is core to the entire disaster management efforts. Speaking to Oria Fagan, Public Information Officer at UN-CHOA's Regional Asia Pacific Office, The Column is sharing the ten best humanitarian reporting practices according to UN-CHOA.

1 Get out there

To know and understand the situation properly, communication officers must visit the field, look at the situation directly and get to know who the actors are, providing the officer with access to information.

2 Build network

When a disaster occurs, officers need to know who to get information from. Therefore, they should establish contacts even before a disaster happens.

3 Verify

Communication officers need to verify where the information is coming from, ensure that the information true, and that the source is also credible and reliable.

4 Know the audience

The information disseminated, and the way they are written should be tailored according to the intended audience.

5 Keep it simple

Information should be kept simple so readers can easily comprehend the message. Sentences should be kept succinct, to the point.

6 Source it

The source of the information should be conveyed to the readers, to establish the credibility of the information.

7 Provide the big picture

Informational products, in the form of situation reports or press release should provide the big picture. This informs the audience about the disaster as a whole, as opposed to just describing the situation in one particular area.

8 Use visuals

When presenting information, communication officers can think of ways to make it easier for the audience to decode the message. This includes the use of visuals such as infographics, maps and pictures.

9 Make it accessible

Officers must consider the distribution channels used to reach the target audiences.

10 Remember why

Communication officers need to remember why they are communicating the information in the first place, whether they are disseminating information to raise awareness or encourage people to donate.

INSIGHTS is a special column for guest contributor and does not necessarily reflect or represent AHA Centre's point of view

Nepal Earthquake: ASEAN Lends a Hand

When the 7.8 magnitude Earthquake hit Nepal on 25 April, over 160,000 houses were destroyed, and over 140,000 were partially damaged. But the infrastructure damage does not even remotely illustrate the lives lost, and the people injured. The number of individuals wounded was nearly 14,500 and thousands are still missing.

As the death toll from the earthquake surpasses 7,500 people, it is inspiring to watch the international community unite to provide aid in support of Nepal. The ASEAN Member States (AMS) too felt the devastation that arose from the earthquake. In response, the AMS made a collaborative effort to conduct search and rescue operations. Meanwhile, AHA Centre is continuously updating the situation to the Member States by generating daily situation updates. Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand conducted search and rescue operations in Laitpur, South of Kathmandu.

The overall assistance delivered by the ASEAN Member States as of 6 May 2015:

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
8 military personnel consisting of doctors and paramedics
Established on-going disaster relief fund for Nepal until July 2015

INDONESIA
Pledged US\$2 Million
Personnel to include medical team
Medical supplies
300 tents
Foods
Body bags

MYANMAR
16 personnel including military personnel, ministry representatives, and media representatives
Relief items worth US\$25,000 including:
> 2800 blankets
> 4000 T-shirts
> Food, water, rice, and beans

SINGAPORE
93 personnel including DVI, 60 heavy USAR team and equipment
Initial US\$100,000 through Singapore Red Cross

THAILAND
74 personnel, including those from the military and ministry of health medical team and SAR 300 blankets
Medical supplies
Food and water
Rice
2 water purification systems
Donated approximately US\$3.8 million worth of assistance

Malaysia
48 personnel including 26 members of SMART teams, 20 medical team members, and 2 officials
Relief items

SMART Team (Singapore)
SMART Team (Malaysia) and Thailand - joint forces to recover a body in a Search and Rescue operation in Laitpur, South of Kathmandu NEPAL.
Courtesy of (Moid Arif, MKN)



ASEAN Member States collaboration: SCDF (Singapore) SMART Team (Malaysia) and Thailand - joint forces to recover a body in a Search and Rescue operation in Laitpur, South of Kathmandu NEPAL. Courtesy of (Moid Arif, MKN)

The impact of the disaster on agriculture and food security is expected to be extremely high. Most grocery stores and businesses remain closed. Food stocks are depleting, and shopkeepers are either displaced or heavily impacted. It is evident that Nepal's path towards recovery is a long one. Current priority areas are as follows:

1 Health – Support is needed for surgical procedures, medical equipment, and tents for temporary clinics.

2 Shelter – Around 37,500 internally displaced people living in 58 camps in Kathmandu. Water latrines, emergency shelter and camp management support are needed in camps.

3 Food – Approximately 70,000 children ages of 6 - 59 months are with moderate acute malnutrition.

4 Lifeline – Internet service is available in the Kathmandu HSA, UN airport reception, UN OSOCC, Deurali HAS and Chautara sub-OSOCC.

5 WASH supplies – Aim to provide assistance to 4.2 million people who need WASH services urgently.

(UNOCHA Situation Report no. 11 as of 6 May 2015)

An unpredictable nature of disasters, like the Nepal earthquake, demonstrates the importance of taking a proactive approach in disaster management, and becoming an advocate for the cause. Disaster management requires collaborative efforts especially amongst countries within the same region. Remembering this, AHA Centre continued to assist ASEAN Member States by providing Situation Updates in an effort to help Nepal on the road to recovery.

The 7th PSC Meeting on ICT: Phase 2

Proper and successful operationalisation of AHA Centre hinges on the reliability of their information and communications technology (ICT) amongst others. With this in mind, a long and continuous-running project funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), was established to create an integrated ICT system for the purpose of strengthening AHA Centre's operational capability.

The first phase of this project concentrated on establishing ICT platforms, systems, and equipment for the AHA Centre. These tasks have been successfully accomplished as today AHA Centre has a fully equipped operations room with highly sophisticated technology.

Continuing on the success of the first phase, the project is now in its second phase with the 7th and final Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting of AHA Centre ICT phase 2 recently held on 12th of May 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Singapore, as the Lead Country for ICT led the live video conference meeting. Participants of the meeting included representatives from the Singapore Civil Defense Force (SCDF), the Japan Management Team of JAIF, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication of Japan.

"Whereas the first phase is more focused on technological equipment and systems, the second phase is more focused on connecting and harmonising AHA Centre's systems with those of the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs)," said Khiam Jin Lee, AHA Centre's Head of Corporate Affairs and Programme Division. Moreover, the second phase also focused on building AHA Centre's capacity in maintaining the operationalisation of ICT system to ensure uninterrupted connectivity.



Live video conference



Yoshiyuki Kihira, Senior Programme Officer JAIF Management Team (JMT) (Left)

This project addressed critical areas that directly affect connectivity:

1. Ensure the sustainability of flow of data and information during disaster and non-disaster situations
2. Ensure the availability and interoperability of ICT infrastructures including hardware and software for both the AHA Centre and NDMOs
3. Facilitate the establishment of an agreed data and information exchange mechanisms and protocols
4. Conduct systems testing through exercises and simulations
5. Undertake capacity development or capacity building for AHA Centre as well as respective NDMOs for issues related to ICT and connectivity

Connectivity is vital to AHA Centre's operations in delivering their mandate as an operational coordinating body.

"This 7th and final PSC meeting marks the completion of the project. I believe both the project and the meeting were successful, the project was completed within two years, and within the assigned budget, overall we have achieved our original objective," said Khiam Jin Lee. "We achieved the desired level of connectivity, undertook capacity building, and laid a good foundation for AHA Centre in becoming a knowledge management hub for disaster management."

About ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.

About the AHA Centre

The AHA Centre is an inter-governmental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of States, from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.

About AADMER

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional multi-hazard and policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resources mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.

One ASEAN One Response

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THE OTHER SIDE

Larry Maramis

Director of Cross-Sectoral Cooperation of the ASEAN Secretariat

Born in Tehran, posted in Bangladesh, North Korea, Pakistan, Nepal, Viet Nam, and Sri Lanka, Larry Maramis has dedicated his professional life as an international civil servant. Sitting down with the current Director of Cross-Sectoral Cooperation of the ASEAN Secretariat, it was evident that the culture, family, and people he encountered over the years helped mould and reaffirm his passion for International Development.

How did your passion for International Development begin?

I suppose the context in which I grew up played a large role. I can vividly remember the 1960s, when so many changes occurred throughout the world. In the 1960s there was the decolonisation period, there was also the Cuban missile crisis, and it was also the height of the cold war. I still remember the time when I

was living in the United States, and we had to do bomb shelter drills. Moreover, my father was also a diplomat. All these things played a role as to who I am and what I do now. They are why I got into international civil service. Over the years, I saw how important community building efforts are, and I was exposed to so many disasters occurring and learned how they can wreak havoc in any community.

What was your background like as an international civil servant?

It has been a while, but in the early 1980s I joined the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and before that I was United Nations (UN) volunteer in Sri Lanka. The latter, especially, gave me a better understanding about the importance of community development and community-based organisations, as well as the importance of international exchanges at the community-level.

Did you become somewhat involved in disaster management programs through your time with the UN?

Yes, through the UNDP, I was posted in different places like Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. These places are extremely vulnerable to disasters, so not only did I begin to familiarise myself with how the UN

works early on in my career, I was also involved in many disaster management programmes.

Throughout your education and career you were posted and have lived in many different countries. Did you ever feel disconnected from your roots?

Yes. The early Indonesian diplomats used to serve longer periods outside of their home country. Those days I had to stay in public schools and adapt to the culture and language quickly. Public schools are quite tough, so I had to quickly learn how to survive. Because of that, it became more and more difficult to be an Indonesian. I wanted to be myself. I lost a bit of my cultural identity. I was the son of a diplomat. Having to study in public schools, I had to know how to continuously adjust, adapt, and assimilate.

Your work is closely related to humanitarian work. What was the catalyst that made you realise you wanted to be a humanitarian worker?

There wasn't any particular catalyst because it was more of a natural progression. I didn't realize in one day that I wanted to be a humanitarian. I think the question should be more about why did I decide to be

a "multilateralist"? Given the difficulties of nation building, I believe there are so many things that could be done for the world. There needs to be a global system that could address these global problems.

In general, I have always wanted to be a do-er, I wanted to shape things, and contribute substantially to things. And I suppose being a humanitarian is an important aspect of being an international civil servant. I was in the UN for so long, and there was just a logical progression in becoming a humanitarian stemming from my desire to do something for the world.

Or maybe there's no such thing as humanitarian work.

I think that is a great point, because no matter what you do, there is usually some humanitarian aspect to it. I just try to keep pushing that ball - where I can be influential. When I cannot be influential, I will learn from others.

2 THE OTHER SIDE is a special column where we interview professional players in disaster management. Crafted with light discussion and casual manners, THE OTHER SIDE captures the human side-up, close and personal.



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THE COLUMN

AHA CENTRE NEWS BULLETIN

One ASEAN One Response

VOLUME 5
2015

On This Edition

ARF-DiREx 2015

MONTHLY DISASTER OUTLOOK

AHA CENTRE ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management



REGIONAL SUMMARY

Affected Houses 1,200, Affected Agriculture 5,000 Ha, 6,900 Affected Population, 5,500 Displaced People, 8 Death, 12 Injured People

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Natural disaster reports were regularly recorded in the ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINET) www.adinet.ahacentre.org. Only significant disasters that fulfil the following criteria will be recorded in ADINET: 1. More than 100 people affected, and 2. Involving more than 1 subdistrict.

DISCLAIMER: The use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown are not warranted to be error free or implying official endorsement from ASEAN Member State. SOURCE: Basemap is from global administrative area information is generated from many sources including NADMO, International Organization and news agencies.



ACE CORNER

PROFILES

The Column heard from ACE Programme participants as they reflected on their experience, what they learned, and their advice for future ACE Programme participants.

ACE CORNER is a special column dedicated to report the activities of the current ACE Programme.

ACE Programme is a 6-month leadership training in disaster management, held by AHA Centre with participants coming from ASEAN Member States.



When you joined the ACE Programme, what were your goals or objectives?

Wirinda: I wanted to learn as much as I can about disaster management and build a solid relationship with other ACE Programme participants.

Pisuth: My main goal in joining the ACE Programme was to obtain the ASEAN - ERAT certificate. In fact, the programme starts soon - I'm looking forward to it. I truly want to become an ASEAN-ERAT member.

What is the most memorable activity during your time in the ACE Programme so far?

Pisuth: I think the Project Management training in April was the most memorable. I believe the content of the training could be applied outside of the Disaster Management field as it is relevant in many contexts.

Wirinda: The recent Japan trip was the most memorable to me. I was impressed with

how strong and resilient the country is having faced many difficult times. I deeply admire Japan's efforts in coordinating the private sector, the NGOs, and the public sector to manage disasters.

Do you think that the ACE Programme enhances the ability of ASEAN Member States (AMS) to manage disasters in a more collective and collaborative manner?

Wirinda: I think it does help build a collective and collaborative approach to manage disasters. This is because the ACE Programme helps build relationship and a sense of camaraderie among participants from different AMS. We have been on this journey together for more than four months; I am confident that we will keep in touch and help each other in the future.

Pisuth: We shared many experience and knowledge through the ACE Programme. This knowledge comes from different perspectives, and I think this will help us to manage disasters in a more collaborative way in the future.



Can you share with us how you decided to join the ACE Programme?

My: I found out about the ACE Programme while working for the local NDMO in Viet Nam. Last year, they appointed two officers to participate, and this year they appointed my colleague and I.

When you joined the ACE Programme, what were your goals or objectives?

Hoang: I had three main goals; firstly, I wanted to improve my foreign language skills. Secondly, I wanted to forge good relationships with people from other ASEAN countries. Lastly, I wanted to improve my knowledge on disaster management, as well as my leadership skills. I believe I achieved all of these goals.

You have had a number of field visits, such as the ones to Padang, Aceh and Japan recently. What were the takeaways from the visits?

My: Earlier this month we went to Aceh and Padang. There, we saw the damage the tsunami and earthquake made in the community. I was emotionally affected after seeing the names of people who passed away, and hearing the prayers for them on the speaker. I learned that

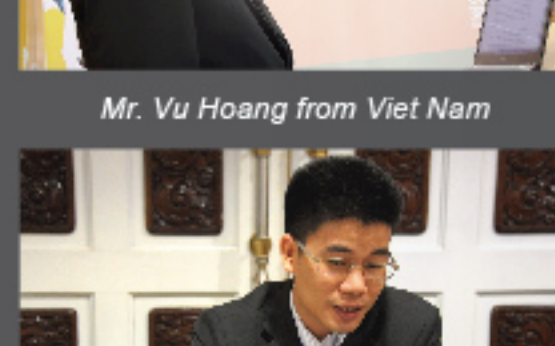
there is a need for not only a good disaster management system, but to also encourage others to advocate in preparing for disasters. Based on what you have learned, how do you think we can bring awareness and become an advocate for disaster management?

Hoang: Personally, to become an advocate for disaster management, I have to enhance my knowledge in the field. I must keep learning by taking part in training courses on disaster management. Upon learning, I can disseminate knowledge I have gained about preparing for disasters, and ways of mitigating them. Essentially, gaining knowledge is important to gain credibility as an advocate.

To close, do you have any advice for the next batch of ACE Programme participants?

Hoang: Don't forget to keep in touch with the friends you make along the way, keep good relations with them.

My: My advice for them is to work hard and to keep learning. If they are willing to learn, they can do just about anything. It is also important for those in the disaster management field to have the will to help people.



This month, The Column explored the importance of being an advocate for disaster management, especially in the ASEAN region, sharing information and experiences about humanitarian reporting practices, and the importance of information and communications technology (ICT) amongst others.

Advocacy helps people to see themselves as agents of change within their own communities, it encourages the importance of building awareness in regards to disasters, and it helps mobilise people when disasters occur.

On this edition, we cover in our news highlight, the recent ARF-DiREx, which allowed ARF Participating Countries to improve their civil-military coordination in responding to disaster situations.

Moreover, our news story saw the wrap-up of the 7th and final Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting on ICT Phase II, as well as the efforts ASEAN Member States offered to Nepal following their recent earthquake disaster.

Our ACE Corner this month highlights ACE Programme activities that continue to help participants broaden their knowledge on disaster management through training sessions, as well as field visits to Aceh, Padang and Japan.

Finally, speaking to Larry Maramis on The Other Side, whose knowledge in the International Development realm is all-encompassing, it was clear that advocacy requires passion, and the will to not only teach, but learn.

We hope that this month's bulletin inspires people to become advocates of disaster management.

If you wish to share some stories / articles / blogs / comments with us to improve the bulletin, please drop us a message at comm@ahacentre.org, and we will do the rest.

The Column is a monthly news bulletin from the AHA Centre - capturing the latest activities from the organisation.

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) recently participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum - Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF-DiREx). Conducted from 24 to 28 May 2015, ARF-DiREx, co-chaired by Malaysia and the People's Republic of China (PRC), allowed the AMS to review and discuss their disaster response plans and capabilities.



The focus of the ARF-DiREx was to test civil-military effectiveness and coordination in responding to large-scale disasters, and synchronise efforts toward supporting the effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) as a common platform for disaster management in the region. The exercise helped identify issues related to civil-military coordination as it delivers humanitarian aid at the strategic- and operational-level through Table Top Exercises (TTX) and at the tactical-level through Field Training Exercise (FTX). It also drew lessons learned from the exercise through the After-Action Review (AAR). "The AHA Centre not only participated in the TTX and FTX, but also in the AAR", said Mr. Amel Capili, Head of Operations at AHA Centre.

- Managing mass casualties, Receiving and distributing aid as well as humanitarian assistance, Catering to special needs of vulnerable population, i.e. women, children, and disabled individuals, Managing consular assistance for foreign tourists in the disaster area, Sharing information and coordinating with foreign embassies, Managing media officials and controlling information outflow, Coordinating the role of international and local volunteers

Typhoon INDERA was said to be the biggest typhoon to ever hit Malaysia, with 200 kph wind speed. The assessment of disaster impact was as follows:

- Human: More than 10,000 people displaced. Many are injured and some are still trapped in collapsed buildings. Shelters and buildings: Emergency shelter and camp management, including water and latrines support are identified as a priority. Public and lifeline infrastructures: Most areas do not have power and water supply. Logistics and transportation: KLIA airport remains open. Economy and livelihood: Impact on agriculture based livelihoods and food security is expected to be high due to the flooding.



In response to the situation, the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT) were mobilised to the affected site at Timah Tasoh and Chuping. The team consisted of ten members from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and the AHA Centre. Moreover, other than sending officers to the affected areas, ASEAN Member States also deployed their assets and resources.

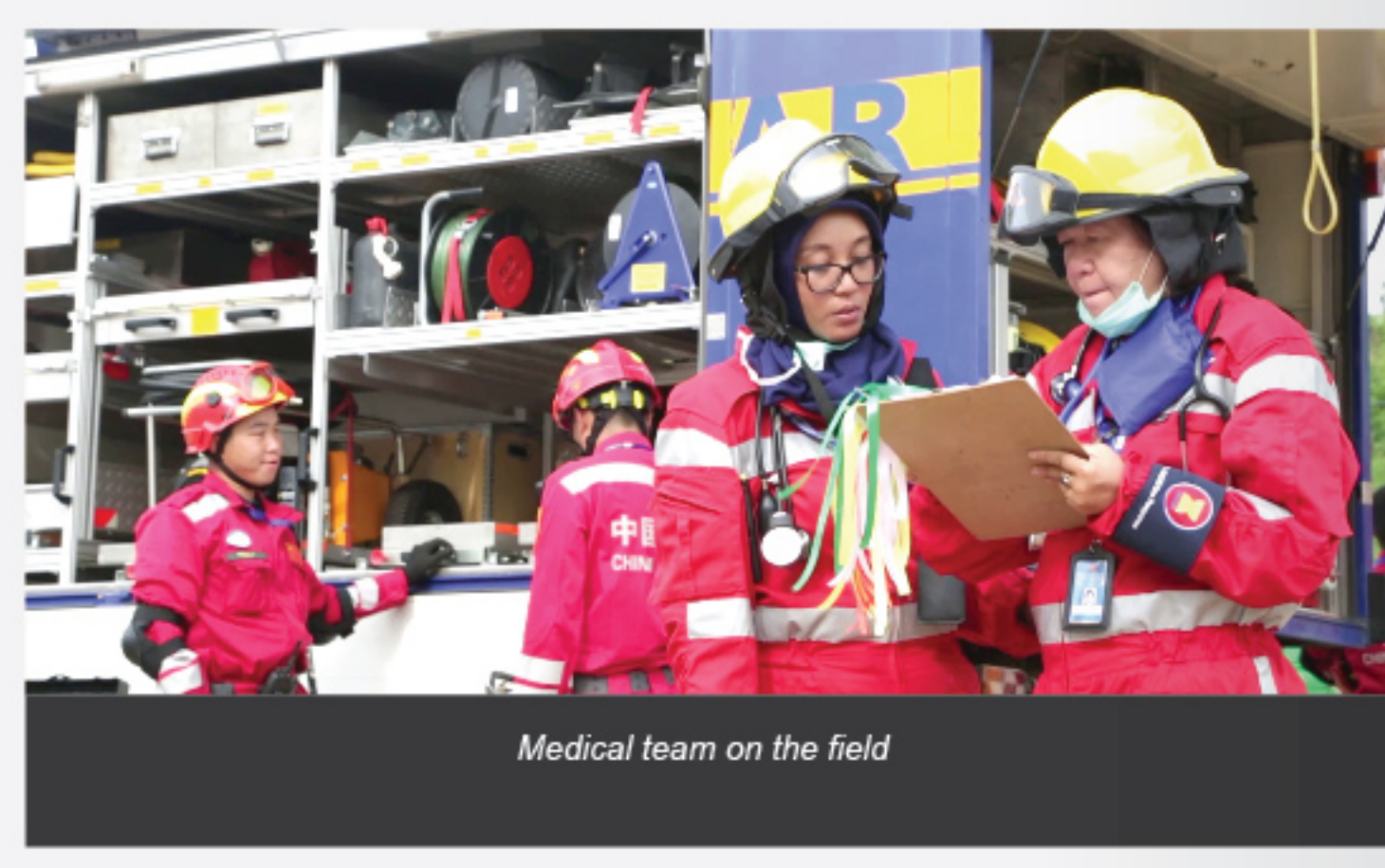
The ARF-DiREx TTX was highly practical and realistic, with elements of surprise that allowed responders to react in an unhearses manner. Core capabilities selected by the ARF-DiREx 2015 TTX Working Group, serving as the foundation for development of the exercise objectives and scenario, included:

- Early warning, Initial response, Communication, Coordination mechanism, Integration of exercises, Civil-military coordination, Public information and warning, Consular

The purpose of the exercise in general was to measure and validate performance of the above capabilities.

The operation was split into two groups; one group, which also consisted of ASEAN ERAT members, was on the ground providing information straight from the ERAT, and the other group is the In-Country Coordination Team (ICCT), which was based in the International Organisation Coordination Centre (IOCC) located at the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) of Malaysia.

The well-organised and impactful ARF-DiREx 2015 was successfully conducted. Participants from AHA Centre felt that the scenario given was highly realistic. It is hoped that the exercise will help ASEAN Member States and other relevant agencies to be more prepared for future disasters.



ACTIVITIES

ACE CORNER Communications Training

"Communication is core to disaster management. It affects the way people respond to the situation, it influences the donor's response, and impacts how the situation is perceived by the public," so says Orla Fagan, Public Information Officer at United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) Regional Asia Pacific Office. Because of this, ACE Programme participants recently took part in a six-day communications training.

During the first two days, the training focused on international humanitarian system communications and reporting from speakers Orla Fagan herself, and Eva Modvig, Humanitarian Reports and Communications Officer at UN-OCHA. Here, participants learned to develop press releases and even simulated a real-life press conference.



Key takeaways from the session with the UN-OCHA trainers include: 1. Improved reporting practices lead to more effective responses, which ultimately can save lives. 2. There are different products for the different phases of an emergency cycle, and it is important to understand which product applies to which phase. 3. Roles and responsibilities in reporting need to be clearly defined prior to and during an emergency response. The subsequent four days, participants met speakers from Cohn & Wolfe, a global communications and public relations agency, about communications during disaster situations.

Participants tested their presentation skills, learned about story-telling, and about the use of social media from speaker Lyle Closs, Chief Operating Officer of Cohn & Wolfe Asia-Pacific.

To complete their communications training, participants visited a prominent Indonesian television station, SCTV, to deepen their understanding of live news broadcast.

Field Visit to Aceh and Padang

In 2004, a day after Christmas, one of the most devastating tsunami resulting from a 9.1 magnitude earthquake hit Aceh, Sumatra, with other countries including Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Maldives and Somalia also affected. A little short of five years later, Sumatra faced another devastating earthquake, with the worst affected area being in Padang.

Now, more than a decade after the 2004 tsunami, ACE Programme participants visited the worst affected areas, Aceh and Padang, for a field visit, to learn directly from previous disaster experiences.

In Aceh, participants saw the community projects, community evacuation routes, as well as the local tsunami museum and evacuation buildings. Thailand ACE Programme participant, Wirinda Srisuwan, said, "It was an eye-opening visit. It reminded me of home, Thailand, as we were heavily affected by the tsunami as well."

To further understand the 2004 tsunami, participants engaged in an academic session with the Tsunami and Disaster Mitigation Research Centre (TDMRC) of Syiah Kuala University, to learn about tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction.

From Aceh, the participants flew to Padang, where they went to the Local Agency for Disaster Management to listen to Mr. Dody Ruswandi of the Indonesian National Board for Disaster

Management (BNBP), a focal person during the Padang earthquake, as well as Ir Zulfatno Msc of the West Sumatra Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) about local policies and their existing early warning system.



Japan: Field Visit and Leader's Talk Session

Lying along the Pacific Ring of Fire, Japan is highly vulnerable to earthquakes. Japan has survived a list of devastating earthquakes including the Kobe earthquake in 1995, and the Great Sendai Earthquake in 2011. Yet, the country is perhaps one of the most well-equipped nations to handle them. As one of the best disaster-prepared countries in the world, there are many interests from the international community to learn about Japan's disaster management system.

Participants travelled to Japan from 10-16 May. The purpose of the trip was to learn of Japan's disaster management system based on their experience to understand how countries can be better prepared in handling disaster situations.

Participants visited Minamisanniku, one of the worst affected areas of the 2011 Sendai earthquake, and learned that many of the residents are still living in temporary housing. En route to Sendai from Minamisanniku, as participants stayed overnight at Ishinomaki, they received an unexpected wake-up call by a 4.5 magnitude earthquake. "Some of the participants headed straight for the exit door. But I noticed that many of the Japanese

people looked so calm," said Amir Shah Noor Ahmad, Malaysian ACE Programme participant. "I realised fully then that the country is very well-prepared in the case of disasters. Even the buildings were designed to anticipate earthquakes."

In Sendai, participants saw disaster management from two different perspectives; an academic perspective through a presentation with the International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS) at Tohoku University, and a governmental perspective about relevant policies through a presentation by the Miyagi Regional Bureau of Reconstruction.

"Field visits give participants a visualization of the effects of natural disaster in any given community," said Janggam Adhityawarna, AHA Centre's Head of Delegation for the Japan trip. "It is important for them to see the findings of past disaster experiences." This was why participants visited the museum for the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution in Kobe.

To close the week-long trip, participants engaged in a memorable Leaders' Talk Session, with speaker Mr. Taro Otsuka, Chairman of Otsuka Warehouse Co Ltd, a company that offers warehousing and truck transportation services covering pharmaceuticals, chemicals, foods and beverages. The company also operates in real estate and insurance businesses. "I was very impressed with Mr. Taro Otsuka. He was incredibly professional, yet friendly and relaxed. I was very inspired," said Duong Duc My.

"Overall, I think it was a very successful trip; all the activities combined helped broaden participants' understanding of disaster management," said Janggam Adhityawarna. It is evident that the field visits, projects, and training sessions ACE Programme participants take part in shapes them to become leaders as well as advocates of disaster management.

