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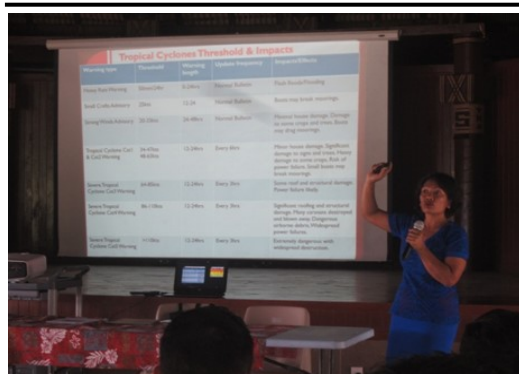
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Cyclone 'KAREN' Scenario Table Top Exercise for the National University of Samoa



TC Karen table-top exercise for NUS in progress

A Cyclone Scenario Table-Top exercise for the National University of Samoa was conducted on the 23rd of June, 2016, facilitated by DMO officers, ACEO Muliagatele Filomena Nelson, Lepale Aussie Simanu and Karen Medica who were also the evaluators, and Malia Pisi with Fetalai Gagaeolo who also played the role of the NEOC during the exercise. The exercise was an avenue to simulate the activation of the University's Disaster Management Plan by playing out their roles in preparation for response actions in the event that it eventuates and require activation of the campus facilities as an evacuation centre.

The evaluation of the exercise looked at how the staff and management of NUS would carry out their roles as outlined in their DMP, how well they would understand their assigned roles and how effective their means of communications will be not only amongst themselves but also with the National Emergency Operations Center during cyclone response operations. The level of awareness of the Disaster Response Team was also evaluated in terms of preparedness, response and early recovery functions so that individual performances could be improved and trained wherever and whenever needed.

Simultaneously the exercise also focused at evaluating the level of preparedness of the University when required for activation as an Evacuation Centre to accommodate displaced people from villages within the vicinity of the University location. The exercise started off with an overview of the National DRM Framework presented by ACEO Muliagatele Filomena Nelson. It was a productive exercise in the end with a lot of recommendations *Continued on next page.*

...raised to fill the gaps noticed in the plan as well as to improve the performance of the DR team and positive feedback from the participants of the exercise was also received. Some of the recommendations included having the NUS DRT be trained on Evacuation Centre Management and having simulation exercises conducted often to familiarize the staff and management with their roles and responsibilities not only in responding to cyclones but in the management of facilities used for Evacuation when required.

Leadership, Teamwork and Preparation—a recipe for managing disaster

by Karen Medica



Team Debrief during operations

Training and good preparation can help us to get ready for the advent of a disaster. I am employed by the Australian government to work with the DMO during the 2016 cyclone season. At the beginning of April, I came to learn about the importance of leadership, teamwork and good preparation, in the lead up to Cyclone Amos. The cyclone was initially predicted to pass Apia, however during the last few days the warnings from MET alerted Greater Apia of the likelihood of this cyclone making landfall in Apia.

The Pacific has experienced a number of cyclones over the past year and I think the message of early preparation along with strong leadership and good teamwork is well established now. I personally watched the DMO spring into action early. An early meeting of the DAC was called and the National Emergency Centre was subse-

quently activated in sufficient time before the arrival of the cyclone. Staff were assigned to a 24/7 roster and everyone cooperated to ensure response agencies and development partners were ready to launch into action, if required.

Cyclone Amos made landfall in Apia late on Saturday evening. At this time the NEOC had been fully activated for some time, telephones and other communication channels were monitored constantly. Supplies had been pre-positioned in coordination with Samoan Red Cross and ADRA. DMO's A/CEO was able to direct the DMO staff, drawing on her many years of experience and wisdom of responding to disaster.

As an outsider from Australia, the reality of climate change and natural disaster can be daunting. During that weekend in April, I was able to witness how local resilience, a phenomenon constantly promoted by the DMO leadership and encapsulated by the Fa'a Samoa approach could be well used to respond to a pending emergency. We worked hard over that weekend but we all learnt a lot too, especially about the value of strong leadership, teamwork and good planning.

Samoa invited for the First Regional Technical Meeting for the Advancement of School Safety Workshop in Suva, Fiji.

The Pacific Coalition for the Advancement of School is an initiative to strengthen the region's commitment to protect children's rights to safety and survival, to educational continuity, to safeguard education sector investments, and build a culture of safety in the face of natural hazards and climate change.

The workshop brought together 31 participants from Ministry of Educations and the National Disaster Management Offices. It engaged the participants in a dialogue on successful experiences in developing safer school environment, integrating risk reduction and resilience into school curricula in the region. Pacific Island countries participated in this initiative were Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, ...*Continued on next page.*

Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu & Vanuatu. Samoa was represented by the Seniro Diaster Management Officer, Malia Pisi and Faataui Solofuti from the Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture.



Meeting participants

Successful Execution of CDCRM, Village Response Teams Training and Simulation Exercises for Matafaa & Faleaseela, Lefaga, Satufia Satupaitea and Vailoa Palauli (ADRA-CDCRM Villages)

In response to the irreversible impacts of disasters, amplified by climate change, Samoan communities therefore need to stay aware and be prepared at all costs. In light of this, the Government through DMO has developed the CDCRM toolkit, a resource designed to support a standardized approach to building DRM capacity at the community/grassroots' level. The toolkit is ideal and user-friendly for all respective implementing agencies in the delivery and execution of all disaster and climate risk management programmes for communities.

ADRA, one of the implementing agencies/NGOs dedicated to conducting Community Disaster Preparedness programmes has successfully delivered the CDCRM toolkit at 3 of their 4 proposed villages, with financial support from USAID, under the management and coordination of DMO, the leading agency in ensuring effective coordination and management of programmes in Samoa, to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and human induced disasters at all levels. These villages in-

clude

Faleaseela and Matafaa, Lefaga; Satufia, Satupaitea and Vailoa Palauli.

The series of CDCRM activities included the development of village disaster and climate risk management plans (VDCRM) which are all logged down with DMO/NEOC; the delivery of the standard CDCRM Toolkit training for selected village members; formulating village action plans that not only identifies their specific vulnerabilities to climate stressors and effects, but more importantly outlines how they will respond as a community using the resources available to them. In addition, extensive Village Response Teams (RT) Trainings were conducted, that was primarily facilitated by DMO, in collaboration with the Meteorology Division and other DAC Response Agencies such as FESA, Police, Red Cross, Faataua le Ola, MOH and MWCSO.

RT Trainings gave the communities the opportunity to identify their roles and responsibilities that had to be incorporated in their respective village plans.



Village members after the simulation debrief

The final component of the training looked at conducting simulation exercises to test the village plans and to evaluate the roles and responsibilities of the trained response teams. The overall output results of the programme has been fruitful and diverse considering the immense support and participation shown by the specified village councils and their communities from all age groups, and the active participation of people with special needs.

It is envisaged to basically have all the 361 villages in Samoa trained on disaster preparedness and climate risk management utilizing the CDCRM toolkit for the purpose of building their resilience, increasing their knowledge and capacity, so that they are well prepared to act as the first line of response to counter common disaster risks that they are extremely exposed to.



Village Response teams before the drill

DMO joined the Two Samoas- Post Cyclone Season 2015-16 Meeting in American Samoa



The two Samoa's post cyclone meeting was held in American Samoa at the Homeland Security Office for one day and a half. It was the purpose of the meeting for the two countries to share information, experience and identify gaps in the operations during the cyclone season 2015-16.

The role of media during a disaster was one of the main issues raised from Samoa's side with a recommendation from DMO for a press secretariat to be on duty during any operations to coordinate a whole of government response to media, and to optimise the external dissemination of accurate and timely information.



Members of the Samoa Meteorology Office together with Malia Pisi of the Disaster Management Office

DMO presented on the Early Warning System (EWS) in place and the progress of the CDCRM programme. Apparent from the meeting,....*Continued on next page.*

...there is a need for both countries to share information on Disaster Risk Management hence the recommendation for DMO and Homeland Security to have its own platform in future meetings for this purpose. The next meeting for the two Samoa's will be the pre-cyclone season meeting to be hosted by Samoa later in the year.

World Humanitarian Summit *Turkey, Istanbul*



Samoa's Delegation to the Summit

DMO's A/CEO, Filomena Nelson reflected on her May visit to Istanbul to attend the World Humanitarian Summit. This historical Summit involved 9,500 delegates drawn from governments, humanitarian agencies, development partners, multi-development banks, private sector organizations, NGOs and research institutes. An eclectic audience came together to commit to action and advance work on five core humanitarian responsibilities. These core responsibilities included: (1) Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflict; (2) Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity; (3) Leave No one Behind; (4) Change People's Lives from Delivering Aid to Ending Need; and (5) Invest in Humanity.

The Samoan delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, the Honorable Fiamē Naomi Mataafa who also co-chaired a high-level roundtable on women and girls. Samoa's contribution to the Summit was to highlight the impact of climate change and disasters in this country and advance its commitment to enhanced resilience and capacity to adapt and reduce risk. The Samoan approach emphasized a 'whole of society' and 'whole of government' approach that aligns with our Pacific SIDS neighbours, as well as members of the Alliance Of the Small Islands Developing States (AOSIS).

At the Summit, commitments to international agreements were underscored, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster

Risk Reduction and the Samoa Pathways Agenda. Both the aforementioned agreements are linked to Samoa's new sustainable development strategy "Accelerating sustainable development and creating opportunities for all (2016-2020)". A further contribution of the Samoan delegation was to emphasise the critical role of the community in disaster risk management, including women, people with disabilities, youth and the elderly, coordinated through village-based mechanisms.

NEW RECRUITS



NAME: Lepale Aussie Simanu

DESIGNATION: Principal Community Disaster Preparedness Officer (CDCRM)

Past Posts:

Jan 2005: Inspection Officer (Lands) MNRE

Dec 2012: Senior Land Administration Officer (Lands); MNRE

Feb 2014: Principal Sector Policy and Performance Monitoring Officer; Water Sector Coordination Unit - MNRE

Jun 2016: Current post

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