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Inspiring ideas for raising awareness and education

Here you will find some ideas to participate in the 2003 World Disaster Reduction Campaign by awareness-raising, information and education in your school and/or local community.

- Prepare** How prepared is your home to face a hazard? Your school? Your community? Take time to work out your plan and your neighbourhood's plan in case of a disaster.
- Investigate** Get to know the people and processes in your community which deal with disaster preparedness. Locate the relevant resources and share them with the people around you - at work, at school, and on the street.
- Advocate** Have your local authority declare an official Day for Disaster Reduction and use the opportunity to raise awareness at school and in your community. The International Day for Disaster Reduction is celebrated the 2nd Wednesday of October (Wednesday 8 October in 2003).
- Initiate** There is strength in numbers. Start a disaster mitigation and preparedness group in your community which can review risk and vulnerability, looking back at past disasters and planning for future hazards.
- Connect** Share best practices from your community with other schools, towns and villages. Start email discussion groups with others across the world. Invite people to share their stories about disasters and prevention.
- Educate** Learn and teach the difference between hazards and disasters. Identify those hazards that affect where you live, and learn about why and how they happen. Draw on lessons learned from past experiences.
- Reflect** A large amount of our attention and energy is often focused on the time following a disaster and its consequences. This attitude draws attention away from those human activities that put our collective future at risk. Whether it be through sustainable farming practices or maintaining natural geological barriers against hazards, we play an important part in reducing the vulnerabilities in our surroundings. Learn about the man made causes of some natural hazards and reflect on your daily practices to calculate your impact on the environment around you.

Ideas for kids and youth

Make a risk map of your community

You can help your community to realise the risk of a disaster that may happen and take preventative action. One way is to draw up a hazard and risk map of your community. Here are the steps you can follow:

- 1) With the help of your teacher, look up the meaning of the following words: disaster, hazard, and vulnerability. Also look up water related hazards such as floods, droughts, landslides and cyclones.
- 2) Find out from books, archives and ask around in your community what major disasters have happened in your area in the past. Identify hazards (like floods, earthquakes, storms, landslides, volcanic eruptions or others) that could affect your city or village.
- 3) Discuss disasters in your community with the mayor, firemen, the police, emergency personnel, doctors, social workers, and journalists.
- 4) On a large piece of poster paper, draw the most important buildings; schools, hospitals, fire services, houses, police stations as well as potentially dangerous buildings such as factories, fragile buildings, dams, power plants. Use a different symbol for each building. Map out roads, rivers, power lines, sewage works and dumps. Use different colors to show these areas.



- 5) For each hazard, identify how buildings would be affected (a little, badly, completely destroyed) and use a different symbol for each degree of damage.
- 6) Identify where the people are who will need most help in case of a disaster (such as nursing homes, hospitals, nursery schools).
- 7) Discuss possible solutions to reduce the risk.

Send us your story and pictures or other materials so we can share it with the rest of the world!

Make a family plan for disaster preparedness

Your family, and the community where you live may be exposed to natural hazards. A good starting point is to organize your own family plan, making sure that everyone takes part. Here are some of the things you can do:

Look around you. What are the hazards nearest to your home? Could improvements be made to your house to make it safer?

Make a floor plan of your house and mark the safest and quickest way out.

Agree on the following:

- a) A place to meet outside your house (like a public park or the home of a neighbour you trust)
- b) A place to meet if you are ordered to leave your neighbourhood, and
- c) A telephone number to call in case you find yourself separated from your family when a disaster strikes. Learn by heart the phone number of a relative living in some other province, county or district so that your family can find out where you are in the event of a disaster.

Get an emergency kit ready

With the help of your parents, prepare an emergency kit in a single plastic bag, so that you can find it easily in the case of a disaster.

Your emergency kit should include the following supplies:

- A first-aid kit: The first-aid kit should contain, among other things, alcohol swabs, cotton wool, bandages, gauze, painkillers, sterilized water and burn ointment. The Red Cross or your community health centre will be able to advise you about what other items you could include.
- Food and drink: Include non-perishable food supplies like canned food for at least three days. It is better if the food does not have to be cooked. Don't forget a can opener. Remember water, and chlorine to purify it.
- Clothes: It's a good idea for each family member to have a spare change of clothes and warm blankets.
- Other things: Flashlight with spare batteries, paper and pencil, portable radio (with batteries), matches, candles and hygiene items such as soap and tissue paper.

Sources:

- UN/ISDR, UNICEF, *Let's learn to prevent disaster!, Fun ways for kids to join in Risk Reduction*
- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), *Learning about Natural Disasters: Games and projects for you and your friends*, IDNDR 1990-2000
- Emergency Management Australia (EMA)
- Costa Rican National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Assistance (CNE)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)