

About the recipients of the 2009 UN Sasakawa Prize for Disaster Reduction

The 2009 laureate for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is geologist Dr. Eko Teguh Paripurno, as was unanimously decided by the jury for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. Additionally, five organizations actively involved in disaster reduction are awarded Certificates (two Certificates of Distinction, three Certificates of Merit). All award winners significantly contributed to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, a globally adopted plan to further Disaster Risk Reduction. The decisions were taken following a selection process involving careful deliberation and a thorough review of the submitted material.

Laureate 2009

Dr. Eko Teguh Paripurno, Indonesia

Dr. Eko Teguh Paripurno was selected as this year's laureate for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. Dr Paripurno is the Director of the Research Center for Disaster Management of the University of National Development in Yogyakarta and consultant to local and national governments as well as to various civil society organizations. In these roles, Dr Paripurno is significantly contributing to reduce disaster risk in Indonesia, one of the countries most vulnerable to multiples hazards. The recommendation for the Award followed the jury's assessment of his lifetime contribution and his outstanding commitment to reduce disaster risk and build capacity at the community level in Indonesia, one of the countries most vulnerable to multiple hazards.

Dr Paripurno is both scientist and practitioner, and has hence opened new paths in an outstanding career combining sound science and its application for public safety, appropriate technology and advocacy for mobilizing resources. He has worked in the area of science, technology and society without losing touch with the community. Dr Paripurno demonstrates life long learning and ties together technical and community level experiences in risk reduction. He has contributed to legislation, and has helped to establish policies which guide the development of strategies and good practice. This work has been put into operation in Indonesia where it supports disaster risk reduction for a number of different hazards, reaching from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to floods. He has played an active role in awareness raising and advocacy with strong support for the commitment to public education and media involvement.

Examples of his work include a deep involvement in actions taken in the aftermath of the Yogyakarta earthquake of 2006, which killed nearly 6000 people. Moreover, he has been with working with communities located near the Merapi Volcano, Egon Volcano and Kelud Volcano. Dr Paripurno has worked consistently in the field of community based disaster risk management in Indonesia for more than fifteen years. He has contributed directly to capacity building through his involvement in more than 750 local disaster risk

management projects in 20 provinces in Indonesia and has indirectly reached thousands of people.

Dr Paripurno has demonstrated a deep personal commitment and enthusiasm throughout his life, steadily broadening his own expertise and expanding his influence to meet the needs of communities and of his country for improved Disaster Risk Reduction.

Certificates of Distinction

Development Workshop France (DWF), France

The French Non-Governmental Organization Development Workshop France, active in Central and South-East Asia and Africa, is one of the awardees of the Certificate of Distinction. DWF was founded 35 years ago and can look back on a long history of Disaster Risk Reduction. Earthquake resistant construction techniques have been disseminated since the very beginnings of DWF, and since the late 1980s the organization has worked on cyclone resistant reconstruction. Experiences gained and strategies developed in Vietnam were applied to develop the 'Safe House' programme together with the British Red Cross in Aceh, Indonesia addressing long term community-based safe construction needs. After the cyclone Nargis disaster in 2008, DWF has most recently devised and implemented the 'Safer Schools' programme in partnership with Save the Children in Myanmar. Activities of this programme include strengthening of school buildings as well as raising awareness for safer schools and homes by educating school children, their families and the communities at large. Furthermore, technical skills amongst community builders are being developed.

Jeunesse en Mission Entraide et Developpement (JEMED), Niger

Jeunesse en Mission Entraide et Developpement (JEMED), a Non-Governmental Organization in Niger, was selected for one of the Certificates of Distinction. Since its establishment in 1989, JEMED has focused on assisting pastoral communities in Northern Niger to maintain a semi-nomadic way of life and adapt to their increasingly challenging environment. Climate change, resulting in a growing number of droughts, and increased environmental degradation have led to worsened food insecurity and severe threats to the livelihoods of the pastoralists. By means of a participatory approach, JEMED is empowering the pastoral communities on risk reduction and educates them on sustainable ways of adapting to the impacts of climate changes. Initiatives reach from providing water resources by digging wells, via cereal and animal fodder banks to health and nutrition education. These approaches bore fruit during the 2004/5 drought and food crisis in Niger: beneficiary communities had 30-50% lower animal loss than non-beneficiary communities and were able to recover from the crisis much quicker. JEMED cooperates with local governments and the Government of Niger and is currently working in a consortium with other NGOs on a country wide Disaster Risk Reduction programme.

Certificates of Merit

Tehran Disaster and Mitigation Management Organization (TDMMO), Iran

TDMMO, established in 2005 and affiliated to Tehran Municipalities the Government of Iran, focuses on Disaster Risk Reduction in the megacity of Tehran. TDMMO's projects include the preparation of groups of volunteers by providing training and equipment in order to respond with basic technical and medical first aid to the community within their neighbourhoods after disasters such as major earthquakes. Numerous volunteer groups have been set up so far and all important mechanisms and procedures have been put in place in order to increase the disaster response capacity of the entire city.

Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS), Pakistan

Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS), an affiliate agency of the Aga Khan Development Network, specializes in community-based search, rescue and disaster response and has trained more than 34,000 community volunteers. In the wake of the 2005 earthquake in Islamabad and Muzaffarabad, its search and rescue as well as assessment and response teams actively and successfully participated in the post-earthquake operations.

International Research Centre on El Niño (CIIFEN), Ecuador

The interagency mechanism CIIFEN has been operating since 2003 and devotes its work to climate modeling to improve early warning with respect to the El Niño phenomenon, the building of information systems and the training of scientists and industry experts. CIIFEN's products are used by decision-makers in planning, prevention and preparedness activities in order to reduce climate risks and are also valuable for capacity building and education.

The Jury wishes to commend the candidates, many of whom demonstrated dedication, innovative approaches and it was particularly pleased to see the many instances where outreach, extension and networking initiatives were being actively and aggressively pursued in spite of significant resource (and governance) challenges and constraints. UNISDR sincerely hope that these awards will stimulate further efforts in the field and most importantly contribute to the full implementation of the Hyogo Framework and mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction.

Interview with Laureate Dr Eko Teguh Paripurno

Dr Eko Teguh Paripurno is this year's laureate for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. Dr Paripurno is the Director of the Research Center for Disaster Management of the University of National Development in Yogyakarta and consultant to local and national governments as well as to various civil society organizations. In these roles, Dr Eko Teguh Paripurno is significantly contributing to reduce the risk of natural disasters in Indonesia, one of the countries most vulnerable to hazards reaching from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to floods.

1. As this year's recipient of the Sasakawa Award, could you outline the work you are doing in Indonesia to build community capacity and resilience related to natural hazards?

I attempt to take the role as catalyst and facilitator for mutual learning and practices in enhancing awareness, knowledge and skills required for attaining resilience to disasters based on a sound risk analysis.

2. Why are training and knowledge building especially effective measures to render communities less vulnerable?

I believe that series of trainings, internships, mentoring and experience-sharing within and among different communities and other stakeholders serve as the most effective and inexpensive measures in enhancing awareness, knowledge and skills to establish resilience to disasters. I am grateful that I am surrounded by my fellow community members from disaster prone areas. It makes it easier for me to facilitate the mutual learning and experience-sharing among the communities in question.

3. How do you train community members, politicians and other stakeholders?

It all begins with learning. Learning is basically a process in building the trust that everyone can play a significant role in collective risk reduction efforts. The learning takes place by enabling community members, politicians and other stakeholders to play their significant roles in disaster risk reduction. Communities play their role through a series of adapted practices, while politicians play theirs by means of pro-risk reduction policies they make, etc. This reconfirms that disaster risk reduction is everybody's business.

4. What have your biggest achievements and successes in empowering people been so far?

I feel that I really have succeeded when some communities in disaster prone areas and all stakeholders are fully empowered and have the capacity to rely on their own resources to implement disaster risk reduction efforts as part of their daily lives.

5. In which ways were you involved in actions taken in the aftermath of the Yogyakarta earthquake of 2006, which killed nearly 6000 people?

During the emergency relief stage, I led the Research Center for Disaster Management of the University of National Development in Yogyakarta by organizing dozens of voluntary medical doctors and paramedics to carry out a mobile clinic programme to pay visits directly to the affected people who could not make it to the general or the field hospital. Afterwards, we also organized thousands of university students to do their field work courses helping in the implementation of the following activities: post-earthquake damage and loss assessment in collaboration with the Bantul district government, provision of basic needs to the earthquake-affected people, facilitation of the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in the district of Bantul (Yogyakarta Special Region province) and the district of Klaten (Central Java province). Furthermore, they assisted the Sleman district (Yogyakarta Special Region province) in the development of disaster risk reduction programmes on rehabilitation and reconstruction.

6. How are you planning to invest the award money?

I am planning to make use of the award money by promoting learning and practices in disaster risk reduction in a number of areas prone to volcanic eruptions, such as the Mt. Kelud area in East Java and the Mt. Egon in East Nusa Tenggara, and a number of other areas that have escaped our attention. Additionally, I would like to initiate a community centre for learning related to disaster risk reduction.

7. What are your future plans for furthering disaster risk reduction?

My future plans include contributing to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action by means of promoting investments that are more locally-based, make use of local resources and knowledge and that facilitate disaster risk reduction as an inclusive process. In Indonesia, every island and ethnicity has their own ways of practicing disaster risk reduction.

8. Why is linking climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction indispensable and what do you consider the way forward in this issue?

Climate change has inevitably a direct and indirect influence on the level of risks through the changes of the characters of hazards as well as the changes of the capacities and vulnerabilities of communities. Community adaptation to climate change should become

an important agenda of disaster risk reduction in the future. This can be achieved by re-assessing changes of the characters of hazards and the possible emergence of new hazards as well as re-assessing the capacities and vulnerabilities of communities.