

Building capacity of Samoa media in disaster management

News

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The UNESCO Office in Apia, together with the Disaster Management Office (DMO) of the Government of Samoa, organized a Samoa Media Disaster Management Capacity Building Workshop in Apia, from 30 to 31 October 2008.

Disasters cause immense economic, social and cultural destruction setting back development and, sometimes, causing or increasing conflict. Within UNESCO's strategy for disaster management and Pacific regional and national disaster risk reduction frameworks, UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector seeks to build the capacity of media organizations to more effectively report on disaster management.

The Apia Workshop was attended by representatives of all Samoa's media organizations: newspapers, commercial and Christian radios, magazines and TV stations.

The objectives of the Workshop were to:

deliver in-depth and latest information about meteorological, hydrological, geological and health hazards, within the framework of the Samoa National Disaster Management Plan;

provide the media with public safety procedures relating to the hazards, with a particular focus on the media's role in the procedures;

start developing a unique disaster management plan for each media organization, especially 'key response' media, including the national radio and TV.

The Workshop took place one week before the Samoa 2008 National Tsunami Drill (organized within the 2008 National Environment Week). The media were provided with comprehensive information on tsunamis, their effects on Samoa, the scope of the national drill and the media's specific role in it.

The large promotion of the Workshop by the media was accompanied by the broadcast of a video about the 2004 Asian Tsunami on both national TV stations.

In 2009, UNESCO plan to continue developing media disaster management skills, particularly through the following activities:

2009 Samoa National Pandemic Drill;

2009 Pacific Regional Disaster Managers Conference (in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission);

2009 Pacific Tsunami Warning Workshop (in cooperation with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission).