**Promoting Safer Building**

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**Objectives:**

Establish:

1. What has worked well with reference to IEC materials
2. What good communication practices are there?
3. Are we promoting rigorously validated good practice messages?

The group were split into three subgroups with the aim of discussing each of the three objectives above.

1. **What has worked well with reference to IEC materials**

This group discussed the difficulty of reaching consensus and agreement on the technical aspects of IEC materials. It was recognised that the effectiveness of materials varies from one context to another – what is clear and understandable in one place, may be misunderstood somewhere else. It was agreed that a social and anthropological analysis is required, and there is recognition that this is a big gap in the sector.

There were some very good examples of how drama, song and painting had been used in Papua New Guinea.

1. **What good communication practices are there?**

The group focused on the challenges associated with promoting safer building in the immediate disaster response period and then how we can ensure safer building in the long term. The group agreed that currently there is a focus on compliance rather than on behaviour change or buy in and that we need to find ways and means of understanding and measuring buy in.

Much of the discussion focused on the importance of knowing more about how people actually learn in their contexts.

* Who is locally trusted or influential when it comes to conveying messages about building safety?
* What should be their strategy for communication?

Part of the problem in Aceh was that lots of contractors were used so the messaging was not consistent or included. Need for more careful consideration of who the messaging is going to.

The group discussed the need for ensuring that the messaging is not overly technical or ensuring that the level of technicality fits with the level and quality of training that people will actually have.

The group emphasised the importance of strategic targeting when it comes to communicating the messaging. The methodology for designing and delivering messages was thought to be outdated. Often, literature and pictures are used yet there is no engagement with advertising and marketing specialists. Written information and pictures are not working so we should be engaging more with these sectors and seeking out other more strategic ways of designing and communicating messaging.

Overall it was thought that there is the need for the sector to complete context studies that supports increased understanding of the sociological and anthropological contexts and potential barriers or opportunities for communicating BBS messaging, e.g who is the audience? What are the belief systems relating to disasters and how best to respond to them. If disasters are seen as ‘Acts of God’ then unlikely to uptake messages and this would suggest the need to Increase engagement with local religious leaders.

Are we targeting the right people and the right age group? Children could play an important role. Education in schools, educate more on BBS. Are schools following BBS messaging? It gives children a tangible example of messaging.

1. **Are we promoting rigorously validated good practice messages?**

Social, cultural and anthropological analysis is a priority need.

Three points are really important;

1. Getting to the point of no disagreement between agencies relating to the messages which should make sure that there is a common message that doesn’t confuse people or undermine the work that each agency is doing.
2. Get some basic technical info out immediately for those that are building from day 1.
3. The social and anthropological analysis that feeds back to inform that technical information and which is again agreed upon by agencies – constant feedback.

Stop measuring compliance and focus on buy in – how do we get behaviour to change.

Key themes to emerge:

* Context messaging - Social and anthropological analysis (e.g. culture, religion)
* Type of communication – less on posters and more on culturally appropriate media, education and engaging children etc.
* Strategies for identifying the people who can deliver and maintain messaging.
* Not focusing on immediate compliance rather understanding
* BBS needs to be: non-engineered, non-designed, non-compliant
* Further work is needed to understand why weak buildings exist in the first place, what are the root causes of poor construction and materials, the “culture of construction”
* Further focus on the hazards is needed, as the perception of risk here is not well understood
* In many communities there is an acceptance of damage, or of incremental damage, and so preparedness doesn’t relate to strengthening/protecting shelters
* There are plenty of examples of technical work to support the design of the messages, the barrier is rooted in the lack of uptake by people, hence the most important next step is to better understand the social requirements that are needed to get people to take ownership of their own resilience. This will also feedback to the agencies by informing on what is useful to promote, based on the likelihood of uptake by people.

**Feedback in plenary**

A long conversation ensued after each of the three groups had fed back to plenary. There was considerable overlap between the topics of each of the groups. There was clear consensus on the need for the technical expertise of the sector to be paralleled by a social / anthropological / pedagogical expertise that can support the development of materials and techniques that will improve our ability to communicate effectively and appropriately. It was recognised that the validation of technical messages also needs to be speedier and more rigorous – however the lack of skills in the sector relating to effective communication was seen as a current priority.