

Role-play in Tuvalu: the role of community in disaster response and opportunities for awareness raising among youngsters

Tobermory on the Isle of Mull in Scotland saw the first pilot of a brand new interactive role-play called The Disaster Masters. The Disaster Masters follows in the footsteps of Raid Cross and Operation Amphibian, taking its participants through a three-hour role-play on the theme of Climate change and Disasters.

The Girl Guides in Tobermory took the roles of Red Cross aid workers and inhabitants of Tuvalu. Tuvalu is a small group of islands in the South Pacific; it has been identified as one of the most at-risk countries due to rising sea levels. Some predictions speculate that Tuvalu will become completely submerged under water within the next 50 years.

In the scenario the islanders of Tuvalu experience extreme flooding and both the islanders and the aid workers must work together to complete a number of tasks in the aftermath of the disaster.

The aim of the exercise was to get the young people thinking about what would happen if a disaster happened on the Isle of Mull and what role the local community would play in

responding to it. The scenario is also an excellent way to raise awareness of the increase in weather-related disasters and the challenges this poses to communities around the world.

The Disaster Masters involves the participants in a number of different activities such as first aid and treating the 'wounded', to building emergency shelters, using radios and bridge building. The last activity in the role-play sees the islanders and the IFRC working together to assess the communities' needs in the short-term and in the long-term for the rebuilding of the island. Girl Guider Trudie Hamilton really enjoyed the experience saying, 'Learning in a fun way helps us to remember better and we saw how disaster affects whole communities'.

Karen Halperin, Sally Dempsey and Gill Allbutt from the British Red Cross who designed the activity would like to thank the Girl Guides in Tobermory for allowing us to run the activity with them and Tataua Pese from the Tuvalu Red Cross for all the support and advice he has generously given to the development of the activity.

The team would love to hear from others who would like to be involved in piloting 'The Disaster Masters'.

This activity, which explores the effects of climate change on communities, can be easily adapted to use case studies involving disasters in other countries. The Disaster Masters is also a good vehicle for use in Peer Education.

If you would be interested in running this activity please contact Gill Allbutt gallbutt@redcross.org.uk