



## A2 ACTIVITIES TO REVEAL HIDDEN ISSUES

# The need to prepare – reducing the effects of disasters



## Why use this activity?

If community members think disasters are entirely out of their control (eg sent by God), this activity can help them understand that there are actions they can take to reduce the effects of disasters.



## A brief description

This activity uses a sketch and discussion questions to help people understand that we can reduce some of the causes of disaster and that we can often do a lot to prepare for disasters.



## You will need

An empty cardboard box and a chair.



## Explaining the words we use

**Hazard** – an extreme event which could injure people or damage property and the environment

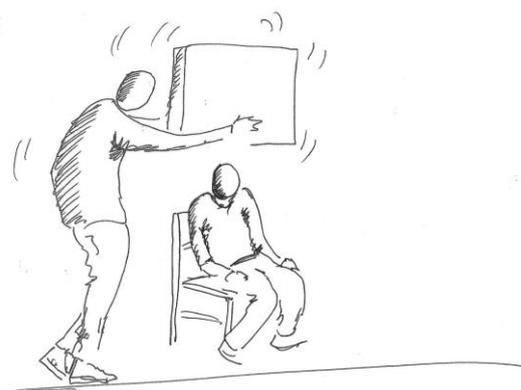
**Vulnerability** – how much people are likely to suffer serious loss, damage, injury or death as a result of a hazard

**Disaster** – a disaster occurs when a hazard affects vulnerable people who are unable to cope with its impacts



## What to do

Before you start the activity, find a volunteer to help you. Describe to them what will happen and give them the choice as to whether they want to volunteer or not.



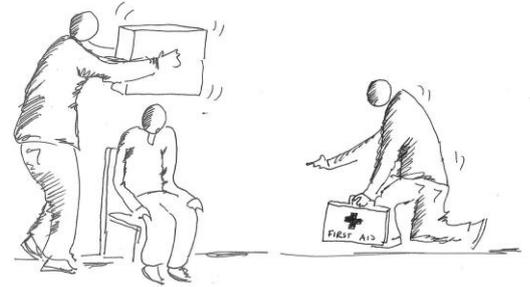
In front of the whole group, ask your volunteer to sit on a chair. Explain that you are going to hold a box above this person's head and that the box is a **hazard**. Tell them that everyone is to pretend the box is very heavy so this person is **vulnerable** if it falls. (The box should *not* be heavy, just pretend that it is.) Explain to the group that if the **hazard** (the heavy box) is dropped on the **vulnerable** person, this will be a **disaster**. Pretend to drop it on their head.

## A2 THE NEED TO PREPARE – HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF DISASTERS?

Now ask the group some questions about the 'falling box disaster':

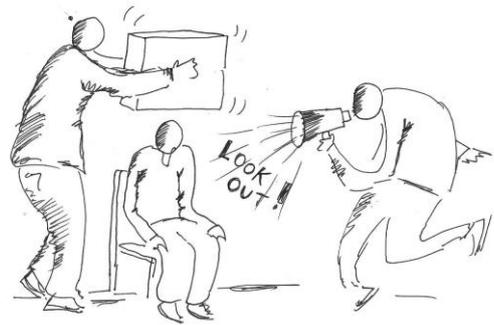
### Respond to the disaster

- What could the group do to help the person once the box has fallen on him or her? (Allow the group to answer, but if they are struggling, you could suggest answers such as: taking the person to hospital; providing care for them; taking a collection to help them.)



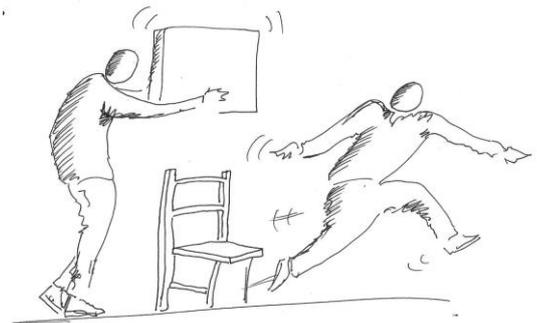
### Preparing for the disaster

- What could be done to prepare for the falling box? (Again, allow the group to answer, but if needed you could suggest things such as: wearing a helmet/hard hat; setting up an early warning system to warn the person and community that there is a falling box; preparing medical aid such as first aid boxes, a clinic or a cycle ambulance; setting up a big net to catch the box if it falls; training people in the potential dangers of falling boxes.)



### Preventing the disasters

- What could the community do to prevent this disaster? (For example, pushing the box away; cutting the box up into small pieces; replacing the big box with lots of smaller boxes; building a platform to permanently support the box; catching the box or moving the person away to safety).



Next, ask the group about the main disasters they face.

- What disasters affect you and your community? If the group is unable to answer, don't suggest disasters, but ask the group what things disrupt their lives or cause loss of life.

A2 THE NEED TO PREPARE – HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF DISASTERS?

Refer back to the box illustration to explore what the community can now do to respond to, prepare for, and prevent those disasters.

For each disaster the group has mentioned, ask:

- What causes the disaster?
- How do people’s actions contribute to making the disaster worse? (For example deforestation, conflict, polluting water.)
- How could the community respond to the disaster when it happens?
- How could they prepare for the disaster?
- How could they prevent the disaster?

Once, you have discussed every disaster type the group identified, encourage some discussion on fatalism.

See Tool A1: Revealing fatalistic beliefs about disasters: information for facilitators.

- Do we see disasters as out of our control because we think they are caused by God, or do we see the opportunities God has given us to reduce the impacts of disasters?



### Finding out more

- Tearfund (2011) ROOTS 9 - *Reducing risk of disaster in our communities (second edition)*  
[http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/roots/reducing\\_risk\\_of\\_disaster\\_in\\_our\\_communities/](http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/roots/reducing_risk_of_disaster_in_our_communities/)
- Tearfund (2011) *Disasters and the local church*  
[http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/disasters/disasters\\_and\\_the\\_local\\_church/](http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/disasters/disasters_and_the_local_church/)

#### Related tools

- A1 – Revealing fatalistic beliefs about disasters: information for facilitators [A1: Disaster risk management-1]
- A2 – Disasters ball game - understanding shocks and stresses [A2: Disaster risk management-2]
- B – Fatalism: can we avoid disasters? (Bible study) [B: Disaster risk management-1]
- B – Noah – lessons in preparedness (Bible study) [B: Disaster risk management-2]
- B – Preparing for disaster [B: Disaster risk management-3]
- B – God of justice and mercy (Bible study) [B: Disaster risk management-4]
- B – God’s provision for the future (Bible study) [B: Disaster risk management-5]
- C2 – Flood-resistant buildings [C2: Disaster risk management-1]

Awareness raising
Children & youth
Climate & environment
Conflict & peace-building
Corruption & governance
Disaster risk management
Discrimination & inclusion
Food & livelihoods
Gender & sexual violence
Health & HIV
Influencing decision-makers
Migration & trafficking
Water, sanitation & hygiene