Adaptation to climate change

A new power plant was planned in Germany at a site on the banks of the river Rhine with good transport links. As the site had never flooded, it seemed to be an ideal location. Scientists then modelled future precipitation and flood scenarios and calculated the probable risks. They concluded that due to climate change, the site could well be under water in 50 years or so. That spelled the end for the project and may well have averted a major industrial disaster in 2060 or thereabouts, because the project developers were prudent and looked ahead.

Climate researchers agree that climate change can no longer be averted in the coming years and is likely to cause more frequent storms, precipitation and flooding. The commitment to tackling climate change should therefore not focus solely on its causes. Strategies are needed to adapt modern societies to a changing climate. The German Committee for Disaster Reduction is leading the field both nationally and internationally, pooling knowledge and forging links to international organisations and national partners, always with the goal of improving disaster risk reduction wherever vulnerability exists.

Please support our work:
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The DKKV in profile:

- Members: from politics, administration, science, business, media and relief organisations
- Membership: open to institutions, companies and individuals, subject to approval by the general assembly
- Remit: advisory services (national and international), thematic/strategic development, networking, knowledge management
- Bodies: general assembly, executive board, operational advisory council, scientific advisory council
- Funding: membership contributions, project funding and donations
- International framework: United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

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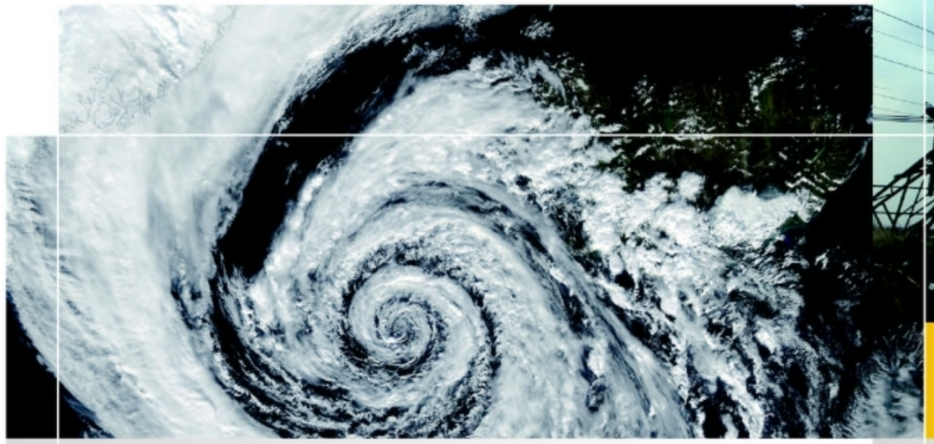
DKKV:

Germany's National Platform and Competence Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction

DKKV
Deutsches Komitee Katastrophenvorsorge e.V.
German Committee for Disaster Reduction
within the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)



The DKKV:
pooling disaster reduction expertise

The small cylinder-shaped monitoring device, supplied by Germany, sounds the alarm: rumblings have been detected deep within the Merapi volcano. With an eruption perhaps imminent, a warning immediately goes out to the surrounding villages, allowing local people to move to safety. Here in the Philippines, German technology and a tried and tested early warning system stop an eruption from escalating into a disaster.

No one can prevent volcanic eruptions, earthquakes or hurricanes – but we can take precautions and mitigate their catastrophic impacts. The German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV) is the national platform for disaster reduction in Germany, pooling a wealth of expertise and experience from many different disciplines. Researchers, policy-makers, the business community and disaster relief experts work together within the DKKV to help make Germany and the wider world a safer place.

The challenge:
more disasters on a larger scale

Lothar, Martin, Kyrill, Emma. Severe storms are sweeping Germany more and more frequently, toppling electricity pylons, blowing off roofs and uprooting entire tracts of forest. The onslaught is over in just a few hours, but it leaves a trail of devastation. Although there are generally very few human casualties, the economic damage is immense: in the case of Kyrill, for example, it amounted to more than 4 billion euros.

Natural disasters are likely to occur far more frequently in future and cause mounting damage. Disasters are already affecting the lives of more than 200 million people a year, which is equivalent to the entire population of Germany, France and Great Britain. The economic losses in 2008, for example, totalled some 150 billion euros. By comparison, Germany provided 5 billion euros in development aid that year.

The DKKV:
a national platform and competence centre

Hydrologists can predict the likely progress of flood disasters with astonishing accuracy. Using the data collected, disaster reduction experts can then determine the height of the mobile flood protection barriers required, for example. The insurance industry relies on this information as well: it is adapting its insurance provision for property damage to the flood levels predicted for the future.

The German Committee for Disaster Reduction pools these synergies and is working to ensure that policy-makers, industry and administration translate the findings of disaster research into practical measures. Its aim is to transcend the boundaries between scientific disciplines and countries and utilise the benefits of integrated disaster risk management. The DKKV therefore plans to expand its network further in the coming years, for it thrives on its members' visions, expertise and commitment to change.

The challenge:
Disaster risk reduction in practice

In a primary school in Honduras, twenty children are seated quietly under their desks. They are practising how to protect themselves effectively in the event of an earthquake. They know not to run out into the street, where they could be hit by falling masonry, but to crawl under the desk. These children understand how to keep safe, but many people do not.

The DKKV is therefore working with its members to educate everyone about the risks posed by natural disasters and how to protect themselves.