

Disaster preparedness expertise utilized in Puna, Indonesia, Philippines

October 3 2014



Effects of storm surge on Kapoho, Hawaii Island, from Iselle.

With natural disasters making more frequent headlines, the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center (NDPTC), a research and training center at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), is doing its part to assist devastated areas ranging from Puna on Hawai'i Island to Indonesia and the Philippines.

The NDPTC is led by executive director Karl Kim, a professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning in the College of Social Sciences. Kim was recently named to a three-year term as chair of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC). In this capacity, Kim leads the consortium in development and delivery of training and educational programs to help safeguard the nation against natural and

man-made hazards and threats.

In the days following Iselle's landfall in August, members of the NDPTC visited Puna to assist in surveying the area and deploying a damage assessment tool that was developed as part of one of its training courses in partnership with private business and public sector agencies, including state, county and federal governments.

"The Puna assessment focused on impacts in three primary areas – community, wind/weather and coastal flooding. Although a minor storm by the time it made landfall, it is obvious that there had been extensive damage to homes, infrastructure, public facilities, agriculture and businesses," said Kim. "Iselle also brought home the value of [social media](#) as a form of communications that proved to be a lifeline for many first-responders as they dealt with the aftermath of the storm."

The NDPTC was the first to develop a FEMA-certified training program that uses social media as a tool to assist in [disaster preparedness](#), response and mitigation efforts. The program provides participants with hands-on training on current tools, methods and models to effectively utilize social media to disseminate information, monitor, track, measure and analyze social media traffic during disaster preparedness, response and recovery phases.



NDPTC visits Kinahrejo village in Mount Merapi region of Indonesia

NDPTC also recently visited the Visayas region of the southern Philippines, ancestral and cultural home of thousands of Hawai'i Filipinos. The area was devastated in November 2013 by super typhoon Haiyan, one of most destructive storms in modern times. It left thousands dead or missing in its wake, and had an incalculable impact to loss of property and livelihood. The findings, which examine the ongoing recovery efforts and assess how storm victims, including children, are coping with the only the most basic necessities of daily living available close to a year after the catastrophic event, will be aired in an Emme's Island Moments documentary, "Haiyan ... After the Storm," in November.

A team of UHM faculty and graduate students led by NDPTC's Karl Kim and Dolores Foley of the Urban and Regional Planning Department also recently delivered a series of workshops to emergency managers, first responders, and others working on disaster risk reduction in Indonesia. The workshops provided participants with insights into international best practices in the field of disaster science and is part of a three-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

The NDPTC will integrate the information obtained from the Puna, Haiyan and Indonesia visits in its research in areas such as urban planning, environmental management, and hazards such as storms, sea level rise, volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. The lessons learned at these locations will be relevant to future efforts related to response, relief, short- and long-term recovery, capacity building and resilience

strengthening.



Ardy Ferdianto, a resident of Kampung Melayu in Malaysia, shows the dramatic effects of flooding.

Provided by University of Hawaii at Manoa

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