



GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CONTEST ENTRANTS

**Tikonzekere Arts
Contests:
Communicating
Flood
Vulnerability
Reduction Good
Practices
through Arts in
Malawi**

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Malawi faces multiple hazards in both rural and urban areas. These include floods, heavy storms, drought and dry spells. Between 1974 and 2019 more than 25 million people have been affected by these hazards which are becoming more frequent, intense and unpredictable. One of the reasons why the pattern and nature of the disasters that follow these hazards are becoming more and more destructive is lack of engagement of the affected communities to talk about how they can adapt to climate change and otherwise what they can do to make themselves less vulnerable to damages and losses from disaster events.

The Tikonzekere Arts Contests is a new tool created in 2019 that aims at engaging people in Malawi to discuss problems that they face because of such disasters through artistic creations that they and others create and share. In this year's initial version of the contests, the theme is “***Communicating Flood Vulnerability Reduction Good Practices through Arts in Malawi***” and the arts that will be used are songwriting, poetry, storytelling, short video creation, photography and drawing. So the 2019 Tikonzekere Arts Contests are focusing on communicating through songs, poems, stories, short videos, photos and drawing what households and communities can do to help reduce their flood vulnerability individually or collectively themselves.

These guidance notes provide background material about what can be done at household and village or township level in Malawi to try to do so and some ideas about how you might want to try to communicate these messages to people with your contest entry. Before discussing some good practices that individual communities and households can do, let's start with a shared understanding of what reducing vulnerability to destructive flood events means:

Destructive Flood Events	Rain and regular small flood events themselves are not bad for people. Think of them like a pair of scissors. Scissors can be helpful as a resource for cutting things but can also be hazardous to you if you get cut by them. Similarly, rains and regular flooding help people in many ways. But when rains and floods become so strong that they cause damages or losses to vulnerable people's property or health or even loss of lives, these destructive floods are a problem needing to be reduced.
Flood Risk	Risk is the potential negative consequences of something happening. Negative consequences only happen when some type of hazard combines with people being vulnerable to such destruction from it, such as the risk of the negative consequences of a boy falling on the pair of scissors. So flood risk is the combination of heavy rains and floods becoming so strong that they become potentially destructive for those people who live in areas and in conditions that make them vulnerable to suffering damages and losses during and after them.
Flood Vulnerability	The boy with scissors is more vulnerable to being injured if he is running wildly down stairs with them uncovered than if he is walking on flat ground with them in a carrying case. Similarly for flood vulnerability, certain conditions make some people suffer worse damages or losses even in the same flood or heavy rain event. For example, children, the elderly, and the disabled are more vulnerable during such events. Some things people do also make them and others more vulnerable.
Flood Preparedness	Being prepared means being ready to do something to reduce vulnerability to negative effects <i>during</i> and <i>after</i> an event, such as having a first aid kit or access to a doctor if the boy falls on the scissors. Flood preparedness actions involve getting ready to respond <i>during</i> and <i>after</i> floods or heavy rains so that negative effects will be less.

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Flood Mitigation	Mitigating means taking action <i>before</i> an event happens to reduce risk, such as teaching the boy not to run with scissors or always keeping them in a protective case. Flood mitigation actions are taken <i>before</i> floods or heavy rains to reduce potential negative effects of floods and heavy rains.
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Source: Adapted by the author from the 2018 DoDMA *Malawi National Training Manual on Disaster Risk Management*, 2014 DoDMA *Malawi National Disaster Risk Management Communication Strategy*, 2018 Malawi Institute of Education *Disaster Risk Management: A Sourcebook for Primary Schools*, & 2013 DoDMA *Disaster Risk Management Handbook*

Local level township or village civil protection committees have some responsibilities for helping households in their areas to be less vulnerable to suffering damages and losses from destructive heavy rains and floods through such flood preparedness and flood mitigation:

Local level Civil Protection Committee Preparedness & Mitigation Responsibilities:

- ☐ Identify appropriate flood mitigation projects and produce village-based mitigation plans, potential funding priorities for them, and resources available for these projects (including community mobilization to undertake prioritized flood mitigation activities and monitoring mitigation activities implemented by communities, government, or NGOs)
- ☐ Periodically assess changes in key problems and risks among vulnerable village households (including mitigating and reporting practices which could contribute to local households having problems when heavy rains and floods occur)
- ☐ Support enforcement of regulations related to environmental management
- ☐ Identify possible evacuation and temporary shelter sites
- ☐ Monitor information on what types of conditions contribute to household risks from different levels of floods and heavy rains, communicate findings to communities, sensitize people on relevant preparedness and mitigation activities, and strengthen local capacity to address such conditions
- ☐ Facilitate community awareness on specific flood warnings and actions to be undertaken
- ☐ Identify land and conditions for those people for whom resettlement is suggested
- ☐ Stock village relief items with security at distribution and storage sites (where possible)

Source: Excerpted from the 2018 DoDMA *Malawi National Training Manual on Disaster Risk Management*

The government and these committees have important roles in reducing flood risk. But flood vulnerability reduction is everyone's responsibility. So the *Tikonzekere Arts Contests* is focused on communicating what households and communities can do to help reduce their flood vulnerability individually or collectively themselves. We hope that you can use as inspiration what you understand based on what you've learned from these committees, others working where you live, or the direct experiences of people you know about actions you can take to best reduce negative flood impacts for yourself and others. And, to help stimulate such creative ideas in you, we've summarized points from a few documents that discuss flood vulnerability reduction good practice communication in Malawi.

Issues & Related Messages for Flood Vulnerability Reduction Communication

Issue 1: People who live in flood-prone areas choose not to follow government advice to relocate or government building codes and standards to avoid negative flood impacts

Communication Objective: to provide adequate and correct information to households, communities, and local leaders, governments, and construction workers that motivate people to relocate or to improve housing and infrastructure standards, maintenance, and usage

Messages:

- Avoid settling in swamp or river bank areas and constructing houses from mud or unburnt bricks
- Move upland to avoid destructive floods [Anthu asamukire malo a kumtunda kuti tipewe ngozi za madzi odza mwadzidzidzi]
- It's possible to move upland but still do farming in your fields in the flood-prone areas [Ndi zotheka kusamukira kumtunda ndi kulima minda yomwe ili mmadera osefukira madzi]

- Encourage people to follow building code guidelines and to build houses with concrete or stabilized blocks and on high ground, elevated areas, or on raised house foundations/homesteads and toilets with concrete slabs of sufficient size and quality
- Construct household storm water drains and community check dams, embankments/dykes, storm drains, and canals
- Develop a community waste management system and organize regular activities to clear drainage canals so that rain water will drain effectively
- Buy financial insurance for personal buildings & property and community property & infrastructure
- It's everyone's responsibility to save lives when floods occur [Ndi udindo wa aliynse kuthandiza kupulumutsa moyo pamene madzi asefukira]

Issue 2: Inadequate knowledge of waterborne disease outbreaks that arise after flooding

Communication Objective: To motivate individuals, households and communities in the uptake behaviors that help them prevent water-borne diseases

Messages:

- Putting chlorine or water-guard in water for household use will help prevent cholera outbreaks [Titsire kolorini kapena water-guard m'madzi ogwiritsa ntchito pakhomu kuti tipewe Kolera]
- General hygiene and drinking clean water helps prevent cholera / waterborne diseases [Ukhondo ndi kumwa madzi osamalidwa bwino kumatiteteza ku matenda otsegula mmimba monga a Kolera]
- Wash your hands with soap always after using the toilet, after changing a baby's diapers, before eating, and before feeding a child [Tisambe mmanja ndi sopo nthawi zonse tikachoka kuchimbudzi, tikatha kusintha thewera la mwana, tisanadye chakudya chiri chonse, kapena tisanadyetse mwana]

Issue 3: People's lack of relevant weather information and preparedness and evacuation plans and negative perceptions towards inaccurate weather warning information from climate change and meteorological services

Communication Objective: to promote positive attitudes and behaviors towards effective preparedness actions and useful climate change and meteorological services information

Messages:

- Don't disregard information about potential heavy rains and floods from the government local leaders and weather experts because this information can help people to avoid negative effects [Tisanyozere uthenga wokamba za kusintha kwa nyengo kuchokera ku boma, atsogoleri akudela kwanu ndi akatswiri a zanyengo, kuti tipewe zotsatira za ngozi zogwa mwadzidzidzi]
- As soon as you hear that your area is likely to be flooded, move quickly to upland areas to save lives and property [Mukamva uthenga wa madzi osefukira, samukirani msanga ku malo okwera kuti mupulumutse moyo ndi katundu]
- Use climate change information and information about what is happening with the weather to help plan and act to improve everyday living conditions [Tigwiritse ntchito uthenga wa zanyengo mmoyo wanu tsiku ndi tsiku]
- Find out what rivers and streams flood in your area, the frequency of occurrence of floods, how fast such floods occur, and how high they usually rise
- Know the flood early warning system in your area (if none exists, recommend to the appropriate authority for the creation of one and participate in giving early warning messages to neighbors)
- Encourage a culture of safety including watching out for rapidly rising water and developing household evacuation plans of how and where to evacuate, contingency plans for what to do in different situations, identified and trained community members as first responders with community boats, and public awareness and education on good practices to reduce negative flood impacts, including education on good food usage, first aid, water, sanitation, and hygiene practices and childhood education about what should be done before and during heavy rain and floods

- Be prepared with a survival kit (containing a battery-operated radio, flashlight, emergency cooking equipment, candles, matches, and first aid kit) and stockpiled water and food such as with community granaries and cereals stored in bags for easy carrying during evacuation
- Encourage a culture of saving money for emergencies and a community bank with community financial resources able to be mobilized for early action and response when destructive floods occur

Issue 4: Poor management of catchment areas, poor farming practices, and deforestation

Communication Objective: to motivate people to use and promote appropriate agriculture, forestry, and resource management practices in water catchment areas to reduce negative flood impacts

Messages:

- Plant trees and care for the environment so that the trees and the soil can better hold rainwater and reduce negative effects of floods [Dzalani mitengo ndikusamala chilengedwe kuti muchepetse kuchuluka ndi kuopsa kwa madzi osefukira]
- Implement initiatives to increase tree and vegetation cover (e.g., plant trees and elephant grass and avoid cutting trees or reeds along river banks, plant vetiver grass on farming lands to reduce soil erosion, encourage crop cover through agro-forestry, and create community woodlots/forests)
- Farming close to river banks increases the chance of losing your crops, agricultural tools, and other property during flood events [Kulima m'mbali mwa mtsinje kumawonjezera katundu yemwe angatayike madzi osefukira akafika]
- Encourage and use good land management practices and create and enforce by-laws against bad practices (such as cutting trees; farming on river banks, steep slopes, and hills; moulding bricks along river banks; and overgrazing and bush fires)
- Raise livestock or pets such as ducks that can survive floods

Source: Excerpted from DoDMA 2014 *Malawi National Disaster Risk Management Communication Strategy* & 2013 *Disaster Risk Management Handbook*; 2018 Malawi Institute of Education *Disaster Risk Management: A Sourcebook for Primary Schools*

How You Can Craft These Messages into Effective Conversation Starters

From the above suggested messages, your own experiences, and news of recent events, we hope you have great ideas for accurate and relevant messages to include in your contest entry. But research shows that people have reasons why they do things the way that they do them and aren't likely to enthusiastically decide to change based on just a list of messages. They may be encouraged by more creative messages to engage in discussion and decision-making. This often involves a logical progression of steps in which they first get motivated to try a new way of doing things, then decide they have the intention to try it, and then finally take the action of trying it. For each of these steps, there are factors that can prevent them from progressing toward taking action and ways of communicating messages that might help to overcome them. The following notes provide background on processes involved in how communicating about good practices can encourage such discussion and action.

Factors to Overcome in Communicating Vulnerability Reduction Good Practices

Motivation: People generally don't change their behavior unless they are motivated by a belief that there are potentially significant negative consequences of continuing to behave the way they have already been behaving. For this to occur, they must be aware that the risk is real for them and perceive that the risk is sufficient enough that changing behavior is worth considering.

▪ **Critical awareness:** As people are often already generally aware of the risks that they face, messages that only tell them about these risks can fail to motivate them for various reasons. They may understand that people in their situation face that risk but believe that there are some reasons why it won't negatively affect them or their loved ones significantly. This includes believing that flood protection dykes or other structures or actions will adequately protect them from negative effects. It also includes believing that livelihood, service access, or other benefits of not changing

outweigh the potential flood event negative consequences. To overcome these factors, messages can depict criteria by which some people are more likely to experience negative flood effects than others.

▪ **Risk perception:** If they are critically aware of considerable potential negative effects on their loved ones, they still may not be motivated due to various factors. Maybe they don't believe that the potential negative effects are important enough to fix relative to all else that they need to spend time and money on fixing. Maybe changing this behavior is not acceptable to discuss or do in the local culture. Or maybe they don't actively participate in decision-making that would be required to change this behavior. To overcome such factors, messages can encourage discussion participation, ways of acceptably discussing what might be considered taboo if done in other ways, or why these potential negative effects are likely to be relatively high in the ranking of importance to address.

Intention: If people's critical awareness and perception of the risk are sufficient to be motivated to change behavior, they still may not intend to change because they don't think that they can do anything to effectively reduce the risk that they perceive. For them to have the intention to change behavior, they must believe that there are actions that can be taken that will reduce the negative effects and that they as an individual or group is capable of effectively taking such actions.

▪ **Response Efficacy:** Many people think that the power to take effective action for reducing the risks that they face lies with the government, the church, elders, or some other powers. So, although they are motivated to have the risk reduced, they prefer to wait for those others to take action. Even if they believe that they could make a decision about what to do themselves, maybe they don't have enough information about what is causing potential negative flood effects and what actions could be taken that they believe would actually help reduce them. Messages depicting underlying problems and specifically what can be done by households or communities to reduce these problems can help.

▪ **Self or Group Efficacy:** They may believe that a helpful action could be taken but that they as individuals or groups don't have needed knowledge or ability to do it. Messages showing how people with locally available materials and knowledge could take the recommended action can be helpful.

Action: Finally, even if people have the motivation and the intention to change their behavior, there are still some reasons why they may not change that are specific to the people's location and culture. Reasons can include people simply delaying action because they are not ready to do what they have decided to do until a later time. There also may be something specific about the message about recommended actions to take or whoever is giving it to them that makes them want to wait for clarification from a trusted source about when or how to take such actions.

Source: Excerpted from 2015 Alexander et al Integrated Disaster Risk Management

Finally, for your contest entry to effectively communicate in a way that engages people into wanting to embrace the messages that you're giving them, some suggestions from the Red Cross:

Key Ingredients for Effective Risk Communication

1) Well-crafted messages

a) **Use everyday simple language:** For entries using words, avoid using complex terms in favor of using the type of words that your target audience would use to talk about these things themselves

b) **Promote effective action:** Research shows that people are more motivated by positive examples than by fear. Provide positive imagery of recommended behavior and do so in a way that encourages people to solve their problems. If you do use words or images for something that has gone wrong, make sure that this is clearly indicated as what can be addressed through recommended actions so that your message inspires people rather than makes them feel more helpless. Make the messages specific with accurate examples of what can be done broken into small manageable steps.

c) **Be clear & consistent:** Say such things as what the hazards are (visualizing heavy rains and floods), what damage they do (depicting expected negative effects at home, at work, at school, or elsewhere - physically, economically, communally, or otherwise), how they have affected them

previously, when such problems are expected to take place; what your target audience can do before, during, and/or after heavy rain and flood events to improve the situation and reduce these negative effects; how complicated &/or costly doing such things is; and what they need to do or have to begin

2) Powerful imagery: Even for people who read and write well, effective imagery in pictures, actions, or words often helps people to remember well. When people are able to visualize what's happening through effective imagery of the effectiveness of flood vulnerability reduction actions, they are much more likely to be motivated than when they read a list of what they're being told to do.

3) An engaging and compelling tone:

a) Be engaging: Reducing flood vulnerability often involves people thinking about things that they would rather not think about. So effective communication materials need to be engaging, attractive, interactive, and possibly also fun, humorous, surprising, or musical so that the message is better embraced and remembered than a written 'to do' list would be.

b) Be compelling: People tend to like to do what they think others are doing. So it can help to draw attention to what some people are already doing rather than what people are not doing. As people like to have role models to help them believe that change can be done and is worth trying, showing what others are doing in good practice examples provides them with role models to follow.

4) Adapted to best fit the audience: Try to understand how your target audience might think about the local flood and heavy rain conditions that they actually face, the related vulnerability reduction practices that are locally possible for them, and local experiences with these conditions and practices. Then use the three ingredients above to communicate this with them in the type of language and/or images most likely to motivate them to remember and communicate these messages with others.

Source: Excerpted from the 2011 IFRC *Public Awareness and Public Education for Disaster Risk Reduction: A Guide*

Based on the above suggestions, please see the Call for Submissions for the specific storytelling, poetry, songwriting, video, or photo contest that you wish to enter. Based on those instructions, create and submit one or more original entries that effectively communicates one or more of the previously mentioned messages or other messages that you believe are important about what people can do to help reduce potential losses or damages from destructive heavy rains and flooding. We look forward to your entries and hope you enjoy creating them while contributing to a culture of safer living with heavy rains and floods in which more people happily embrace saying *tikonzekere*!

