



EARTHQUAKE PUBLIC AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION ACTIONS BY KOERI

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Since devastating earthquakes in 1999, the ability of the Turkish government and communities to manage the risks related to natural hazards has improved greatly. Several measures were taken by both governmental and nongovernmental organizations in cooperation with international organizations to enhance public awareness, preparedness and mitigation. Among them, training modules and materials on disaster preparedness were prepared both for students, teachers and community, earthquake education was included into school curricula, training centers including earthquake parks have been established at cities, and several universities initiated formal programmes related to disaster risk management. Today there is very high awareness of how to prepare oneself for earthquakes particularly among students.

Five year Disaster Preparedness Education Project (DPEP) by Bogazici University, Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute (KOERI) is the first project that aims at raising the disaster awareness of society, local preparedness and first response skills of organisations. Within the project, several training modules and materials such as Basic Disaster Awareness, Structural Awareness for Seismic Safety, Nonstructural Mitigation, Community Disaster Volunteers were prepared. Those are the pioneering publications in Turkish language and are still being used as references for the newly published education materials prepared by Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), Istanbul Seismic Risk Mitigation and Emergency Preparedness Project (ISMEP) and nongovernmental organizations. Today, Disaster Preparedness Education Unit (DPEU) of KOERI continues to develop, supervise and evaluate training programs to prepare and disseminate training materials and to create a pool of trainers within KOERI. DPEU also accommodates the EarthquakePark, where training courses supported with an earthquake simulator. Between 2009-2013, DPEU provided Disaster Awareness training to 17350 students and 875 accompanying teachers from 500 schools. Additionally, a total number of 19750 students and accompanying teachers were trained by the community disaster volunteers in several cities across Turkey. At professional level, 127 trainers were certified.

Since 2010, Natural Disaster Insurance Institution (TCIP) has been collaborating with KOERI to organize seminars and applied training programs to increase public awareness about earthquake risk and insurance. Through Hurriyet Train and Anatolian Fault Line Truck projects, more than 300 thousand people have been approached by touring along 130 settlements on fault lines with the trailer of KOERI, specially designed to simulate earthquakes. KOERI trainers have given more than 400 seminars.

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KOERI continues to play a powerful role in more significant progress in earthquake social awareness and preparedness through national and international projects. Within a recently completed European Project under the Lifelong Learning Program multilingual e-learning products were developed especially for furniture workers and manufacturers about design techniques that are preventing nonstructural earthquake risk inside of building. In a similar manner, DPEU has been preparing a nonstructural earthquake mitigation guideline for use in tourism facilities under a national project supported by Istanbul Development Agency.

Tsunami awareness products that were prepared within the NEAMTWS Tsunami Information Centre (NEAMTIC) project have been translated into Turkish through KOERI's contributions. Educational poster, website/virtual library interface, coastal inundation online course, civil protection good practices and guidelines/poster on hotel evacuation are some of those products.

An ongoing large scale project "Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster Mitigation in the Marmara Region and Disaster Education in Turkey" formed by JAMSTEC-JICA and KOERI intends to broaden the understanding of earthquake disaster nationwide by disaster education through the media. Education materials are planned to be prepared using scientific results of the project.

KOERI and European Geosciences Union (EGU) jointly organized Geosciences Information for Teacher workshop during the 9th Alexander von Humboldt Topical Conference in Istanbul. In the workshop 24 science teachers had chance of listening talks on natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, hydro-meteorological and other hazards from distinguished international scientists working in the Earth Sciences. Hands-on activities for teaching seismology were also introduced by a science educator specialist of classroom experiments.