

## RiskPACC workshop report – Eilat case study, 16 May 2024

### Background

The city of Eilat is located on the Dead Sea Transform fault system and is considered at high risk for earthquakes. It is also a remote city with 55,000 inhabitants, and the nearest city is located three hours drive to the north. The MoE and MDA volunteers in Eilat and the nearby villages are trained and aware of the earthquake risk and have information about the required action to mitigate the risk to their households. Yet, it is known that the volunteers are not active in taking action and preparing for an earthquake. The Eilat case study and the current workshop seek to analyze and understand the preparedness of volunteers in the Municipality of Eilat and at Magen David Adom, for earthquakes, focusing on the gap between knowledge about the risk and the actions taken in preparation for it.

### Rational and goals

After holding three workshops in Eilat for the volunteers of MDA and MoE, it was decided to hold a final workshop to summarize the achievements of the case study and the project so far. The workshop goals are:

- To present the participants the results and finding of the Eilat case study and the RiskPACC project, including a review of the technological tools used in the case study, and receive their feedback.
- To have a closing presentation and discussion with the participants regarding the RPAG.
- To have a discussion on citizens' preparedness based on the expert presentation.
- To thank and participants for their contribution to the project activities.

### Participants

The participants in the workshops were 40 adult volunteers of the MoE and MDA from Eilat and the nearby villages (19 males, 21 females). Most of the workshop participants were present in at least one of the previous project workshops. They were invited to collaborate voluntarily, after receiving information about the project and the workshop, and after signing an informed consent form. Facilitators from the MoE and MDA moderated the workshop.



Group photo of the workshop's participants

## Agenda

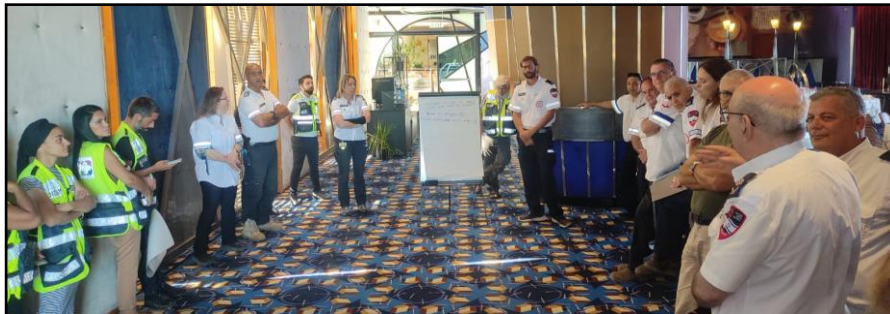
Time	Subject
15:00	Opening and introduction to the workshop
15:10	The RiskPACC project overview and current achievements
15:30	Presentation by Dr. Moran Bodas*, Tel Aviv University, Emergency Management department: "Emergency preparedness – customer point of view – the citizen"
16:45	Interactive session- citizens' preparedness
18:15	Discussion- citizens' preparedness
19:00	Workshop summary

\* <https://english.tau.ac.il/profile/moranbod>

### Methodology- interactive session and discussion

After the presentation by Dr. Moran Bodas about citizens' emergency preparedness, the participants were divided into four working groups (each group was composed of volunteers from different organizations). Two groups were tasked with coming up with a list of disadvantages of using "positive messages" campaigns, and the two other groups focused on the advantages of using those campaigns. Each group presented their conclusions, which were then discussed with the rest of the participants.

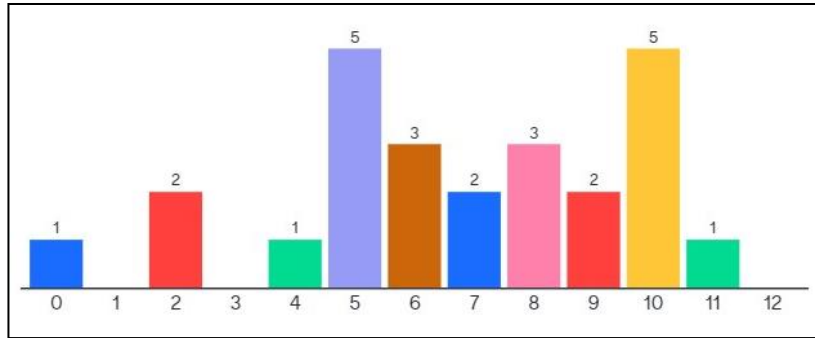
In the second part of the interactive session, the groups were asked to brainstorm ideas for positive-oriented campaigns that could be efficient in Eilat, and to present them to the rest of the participants, followed by a discussion.



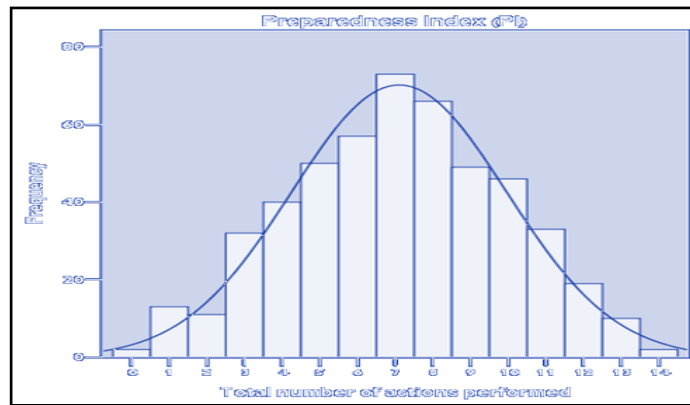
Group discussion presentation

### Results

During Dr. Bodas' presentation, he shared a list of 12 action items for household preparedness for earthquakes. The list was published online by the Home Front Command on its official website, and in several TV campaigns. This was followed by an anonymous vote (using the mentimeter.com platform) by the participants on how many of the action items they had performed in their households. The results for the group were as follows:



Dr. Bodas then presented the results of the same question from previous research with participants who are not affiliated with emergency organizations:



It can be seen that, on average, more actions were performed by the workshop participants compared to the research results. Nonetheless, many participants still did not perform many of the needed actions, even though they are aware of and being trained about the risks and the possible measures to mitigate them.

### Discussion

With regard to the preparedness action items, according to Dr. Bodas, it is evident that among people who are involved in emergencies and civil protection, compliance and obedience to instructions are higher, which could explain the difference. Dr. Bodas also mentioned the earthquake that struck Eilat in 1995 (7.2M), causing damages and resulting in casualties. This event might also motivate the residents of Eilat (and the workshop participants among them) to be more proactive when it comes to earthquake preparedness specifically. Dr. Bodas' explanation for the still-present lack of adherence to performing more actions is that the campaigns are not effective enough, even though they have been improved. Communication with the public takes place, but the goals are not fully achieved. One reason for that, according to Dr. Bodas' research, lies in the fact that most citizen preparedness campaigns are based on fear. Fear is not a feeling humans are willing to hold for a long time, so the natural response to those campaigns is to ignore them quite quickly, and this is why they fail. In his research, Dr. Bodas found three types of preparedness campaigns that are more effective: campaigns that use incentives, campaigns that use positive messages and empowerment, and campaigns that are based on the creation of social norms. In the following discussion, one example of a very effective campaign was the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) campaign in MDA recently. In the campaign, the emphasis was on positive messages ("a defibrillator

is a life-saving device"), empowerment ("you can save lives", "learn how to assist your loved ones in emergencies") and positive stories of events when the defibrillator was used and practically saved the patient's life.



Group discussion presentation

In the interactive part of the workshops, the groups identified the following issues with using positive messages in preparedness campaigns:

- False sense of security: Positive messaging might lead people to underestimate the severity of potential risks or the importance of preparedness measures.
- Risk of not being taken seriously: If the messages are optimistic, they may fail to convey the seriousness of the potential risks.
- Potential for trust issues: Individuals may perceive positive messages as manipulative, leading to distrust of the campaign.
- Unrealistic expectations: Positive messages may create expectations about the effectiveness of preparedness measures, leading to disappointment if those measures fail to mitigate the impact of the disaster, and in turn to distrust.

On the other hand, several positive effects of positive messages in the campaigns were mentioned:

- Motivation for action: Positive messages emphasize the benefits of preparedness and can encourage individuals to take proactive steps to prepare for disasters.
- Empowerment: Positive messages empower people by focusing on their ability to be helpful in certain situations.
- Engagement: Positive messages are more engaging, capture the attention of a wide audience, and encourage participation in preparedness activities.
- Reduced fear: Optimistic messages generate less fear than pessimistic ones and promote a sense of control.
- Child-friendly: Preparedness needs to be associated with a positive feeling, especially when children are involved.

In terms of practical ideas for positive campaigns, several options were discussed:



- Minimize the burden associated with preparedness and emphasize it in the campaigns.
- The importance of having “influencers” involved in the campaigns, especially when planning social media campaigns.
- Use real stories and examples of individuals successfully preparing for and recovering from disasters.
- Offer practical resources (checklists, guides, toolkits, etc.) to help people prepare effectively.
- Use a variety of communication channels (social media, websites, community newsletters, local media, etc.) to reach a wider audience.

