Disaster Risk Reduction in Tourism
Phi Phi Island

Role play for implementation of the APELL 10-step Procedure.

Scenario: We find ourselves in Phi Phi Island in the middle of March 2007. The tourist season is reaching its peak, hotels are fully booked and the whole tourist industry is well prepared to receive the 10,000 tourists who will be staying in the area.
Approximately 2,000 extra workers are employed at this time to handle the extra services. A majority of these work in the hotel and restaurant industry. Even the hospitals and police force receive extra personnel during the tourist season.

On the 25th of March, the bureau of meteorology has observed, via weather satellite, that an unseasonal low-pressure system is building in the Indian Ocean. The storm season is normally over by this time and the low-pressure system is judged to both diminish and to take a more southerly path towards Indonesia.

This is mentioned in the local Phuket weather report on the evening of March 20th. Local government officials and heads of the tourism industry show little or no interest in the evening news and weather report.

Hotel bars and restaurants are fully booked by pleasure-seeking tourists, a hot night of partying at the disco starts with music, good food and beverages.
The planning of tomorrows tourist excursions are made during the early evening. Diving trips to be planned to Maya bay , one of many highly praised diving locations. Furthermore, three dive boats shall travel to Loh Samah. In addition to that, tourist boat travel to historical landmarks, the market in Ton Kay bay, etc.
The number of tourists out on excursions, and exactly where they are from day to day, can be hard to estimate. A wide range of activities are available and the number of tour operators is constantly increasing.
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The Andaman Water festival 2007 at the Phi Phi Island has started this week and many people have gathered there. It is estimated that about 6 000 people will visit the festival. A large number of temporary restaurants have been erected in the festival area.

At the city hall, work is at high speed this night. Tomorrow at lunchtime the Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Tourism are coming to visit Patong with their entourage. Included in the entourage is Mr. Wanchai CHAOWANAPANJA.
The purpose of this visit is that an international hotel chain wants to expand and invest in Phi Phi Island. The main tourist target group is Greece and they intend to compete with India as a destination for Greece tourists especially.
This expected expansion has raised interest from the central government authorities in Thailand. The need for national investment in the form of infrastructure, power to the Pier, medical care and municipal services in general is extensive.
In the city hall, local officials are fully occupied with the final planning process and have asked not to be disturbed.

By the beach, some late-night strollers think that the wind is increasing to a concerning level.
Those who happen to listen to the late night news hear that the weather will continue to get worse. Strong winds over Phang Nga are approaching.

On the morning of the 27st of March, the winds increase dramatically, a tropical storm has formed in the Indian Ocean, travelled into Indonesia and is predicted to hit Java with full force.

People in Phi Phi Island are not as concerned as the area lies outside the normal tropical storm belt.

During the afternoon however, it is clear that the weather conditions have changed radically. In the Andaman See, the tropical storm has beed classified as a class 4 on the Saffir-Simon scale.
The weather reports are now sending extra transmissions warning that even Krabi will be hit by the storm. Strong winds rise during the night, and people in Phi Phi Island are advised to stay indoors.

On the morning of the 27nd of March, catastrophe is a fact. The tropical storm has reached Phuket and especially Phi Phi Island. The storm is still classified as a class 4 according to the Saffir-Simon scale. This means that the wind-force is between 210 - 249 km/h.