REPORT ON THE HAZINFO DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP INDIA

Sharing Knowledge on Last-Mile Warning: Community-based Last-Mile Warning Systems

IDRC CRDI Sarvodaya

LIRNEasia
Learning Initiatives on Reforms for Network Economies

ALL INDIA
DISASTER MITIGATION INSTITUTE

Natasha Udu-gama
Project Dissemination Manager
Last-Mile Hazard Warning System (HazInfo)
LIRNE*asia*, Sri Lanka
udu-gama@lirne.net

OVERVIEW

This report presents a summary of the "Sharing Knowledge on Last-Mile Warning: Community-Based Last-Mile Warning Systems" workshop which took place at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, India on 19 November 2007 from 9:30am - 4pm. The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) and LIRNE*asia* jointly organized the workshop. This workshop proved to be an ideal venue for the dissemination of findings from the "Evaluating Last-Mile Hazard Information Dissemination" pilot project in India through an intimate gathering of practitioners, private sector, international organizations, local NGOs, and government.

The primary objectives were:

- Obtaining feedback on the findings of "Evaluating Last-Mile Hazard Warning Dissemination: A Research Project",
- Exchanging lessons learned from end-to-end hazard detection and alerting systems that serve grassroots communities in India,

- Merging knowledge from India to develop practical solutions for communicating risk information to rural communities
- Analyze and determine methodologies for measuring the performance of Community-based Early Warning Systems
- Commencing dialogue on the development of a regional last mile warning system.

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

This workshop proved to be one in which the participants engaged well throughout the duration of the day's proceedings. Participants showed great enthusiasm for the subject of the workshop and the findings presented by LIRNE*asia*. The presentations and discussions were well on topic and discussions were fruitful and highly informative. As expected, discussion topics were not relegated to their individual sessions, rather, discussion on the overall topic of community-based early warning systems and the particular role of the HazInfo pilot project dominated all sessions.

Media attention was much higher than in the previous workshop in Bangladesh, due to having a public relations manager for this event. Press kits were prepared and distributed to journalists who joined the workshop proceedings throughout the day. Media outlets such as MINT publications (Wall Street Journal) and *Indian Express* were just some of the up to seven outlets that interviewed LIRNE*asia* on the HazInfo pilot project.

Session Title	***Presenter***	***Title and Comments***
Inauguration Opening Remarks	Mehul Pandya, Risk Reduction Transfer Initiative Coordinator, AIDMI, dmi@icenet.co.in, Natasha Udu-gama, udu-gama@lirne.net	
"Long Last Mile" Video Screening		The video provided a sound basis for the audience's understanding of the workshop's main topic, "Evaluating Last-Mile Hazard Information Dissemination" pilot project.
Opening Address: "Elements of a community-based warning system"	Dr. Rohan Samarajiva, Executive Director, LIRNE*asia* Samarajiva@lirne.net	Reviewed the basic elements of a community-based early warning system. The disaster cycle, early warning chains

		(standard vs. HazInfo), reasons for this type of system, overview of HazInfo results and implications for regionalization.
Session I – Methodology Preparedness, Training and Community Organization	P. Prasad Chief Consultant Welfare Organization for Rural Lean Development (WORLD)	"ICT Application in Community-Based Early Warning System". Mr. Prasad gave an overview of natural hazards in Andhra Pradesh. His primary point was that WORLD has found a huge gap in the dissemination of hazard information from the *mandal* level to the villages despite wireless and other ICT communications systems available to the national and state level systems.
	Mr. Menake Wijesinghe, Program Director, Sarvodaya Community Disaster Management Centre Menake_Wijesinghe@yahoo.com	Discussion Sarvodaya's role in the HazInfo project particularly in terms of formulation of methodology, participation in training, community organization and preparedness.
Session II – Transmission of Warning to Local Levels	Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya Ekgaon Technologies pvt. Ltd. vijay@ekgaon.com	Mr. Aditya gave a thorough overview of the communications policies governing dissemination of hazard information. He explained the key acts and policies and how and why they sometimes enable and disable appropriate hazard information dissemination to those that require the information most – the last-mile. He claimed that LIRNE*asia* and Sarvodaya would not be able to implement a pilot

LIRNEasia, 12 Balcombe Place, Colombo 08, Sri Lanka
v: + 94 (11) 493 9992, + 94 (11) 267 1160 | f: + 94 (11) 267 5212

		such as HazInfo in India because need for a strong interface with a local (governmental) institution.
	Natasha Udu-gama, LIRNE*asia*	"Transmission of Warnings to Local Levels: HazInfo Experience". Outlined the differences between a traditional alerting system and HazInfo. Explained the HazInfo input applications and terminal devices, Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), Calculation of certainty and efficiency and results from HazInfo in determining the most effective methods for transmitting warnings to communities.
Session III – First Responder Action	Suresh Mariaselvam Coordination and Networking Associate Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre (TNTRC) suresh@tntrc.org	Gave an overview of TNTRC's aid coordination and community capacity development in disaster risk management in Tamil Nadu. Explained the role of village information centers, community radio and ICT initiatives by sector in obtaining most effective "last-mile" connectivity.
	Natasha Udu-gama, LIRNE*asia*	"First Responder Action in HazInfo". Explained "first responders" in the context of HazInfo then gave descriptions of first responder roles and methods of dissemination.
Session IV – Determination of Hazard from National Level	Nuwan Waidyanatha, HazInfo Project Manager, LIRNE*asia* Waidyanatha@lirne.net	"Determination of Hazard from the National Level: Sri Lanka Experience". Drew

		comparisons on government action between Dec. 26, 2004 and Sept. 12, 2007 and described how the HazInfo pilot might help in structuring a national early warning system to be effective throughout the EWS chain.
	Dr. K.J. Ramesh, Advisor, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India kj.ramesh@nic.in	-Push-through technology: Geneva Technologies works with WorldSpace Corp. to enable alerts to be sent in up to 24 languages. - 24 State government levels have a toll-free calling number
Session V: Next Steps	Dr. Rohan Samarajiva, LIRNE*asia*	"Roles of policymakers, regulators, private sector and civil society". Organizational problems must be solved for EW technologies to be fully realized. Early warning must be complemented by preparedness, evacuation plans, etc. Reiterated the need for the government to take the lead in providing early warning. Private sector and civil society can support and strengthen.
	Mehul Pandya, AIDMI	"Lessons for Early Warning from Tsunami Evaluation". Discussed AIDMI's role in the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
	Mihir R. Bhatt Honorary Director All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) dmi@icenet.co.in	Discussed whether early warning is early enough or not. He then went on to talk on designing an early warning system and developing a strategy for an EW system saying that it

		must be an iterative process – an organization cannot have a prototype and just "do", it must be simultaneous. Bhatt spoke of having a "pre-mortem" – declaring a failure prior to a launch of an early warning system.

Media Coverage

- Press kits were prepared for up to 15 journalists that included copies of all the presentations and electronic copies of LIRNE*asia*'s presentations.
- Several journalists joined the HazInfo workshop during its proceedings over the course of the day.
- Between 6-7 media interviews followed the workshop proceedings, including one for NDTV and a Hindi channel.
- Questions brought up by media:
    - Who is following through in India, where all the focus has been on hazard detection and monitoring?
    - Do you realize that getting such a system operational in India will be extremely complex because of center-state issues, etc.?
    - Are there plans to do a pilot in India?
    - Plans for more dissemination?

Recommendations to the Organizers

- Workshop sessions should be reorganized in a different manner since discussions and guest presentations do not tend to follow the proposed pattern of discussion.
- Ensure that the partner organization is equipped with necessary technical equipment (such as computer, recorder, etc.) for timely and accurate proceedings.
- Start the workshop at a later time. Nine o'clock start times are difficult in several parts of Asia.
- Ensure moderators are aware of their roles in chairing sessions – especially in keeping strict times.