COMMUNITY RADIO
Tool for Community-Based Disaster Management

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Article from FMYY, Japan

The Japan International Cooperation Agency Hyogo (JICA Hyogo) / Disaster Reduction Learning Center (DRLC) , the Combine Resources Institution (CRI) and AMARC-Japan Working Group organized two workshops on community-based disaster management utilizing community radio (CR) in Central Java, Indonesia. One workshop was held on 2-3 August, 2009 in Timbulharjo Village, Bantul, Yogyakarta. The village was hit by a massive earthquake in May 2006, which killed 300 people in the village. Another workshop was held on 4-5 August 2009 in Sidorejo Village, Klaten, Central Java, which is located on the famous volcano Mt. Merapi and thus is always facing the risk of volcanic eruption and landslide. The community radio station, 'Angkringan Community Radio' in Timbulharjo Village and 'Lintas Merapi FM Community Radio'in Sidorejo Village, operates in each area. Each workshop was attended by more than 40 participants representing local community radio broadcasters, other community radio broadcasters in Indonesia, the national and local governments, NGOs, JICA Indonesia and the mass media.

The workshop was conducted from June 2009 to January 2010 as part of a pilot project being conducted to raise community awareness of disaster risk reduction utilizing community radio broadcasts by JICA Hyogo/DRLC, CRI and AMARC Japan. The goals of the project are as follows:
(1) Capacity building of the community in disaster management
(2) Capacity building of the community radio broadcasters in disaster management through on-air and off-air activities
(3) Evaluation of Disaster Management Audio Materials for Community Radio Broadcasting (DMAM) produced by JICA Hyogo/DRLC and the AMARC Japan Working Group, and input to it regarding the contents, wrapping and delivery.
(4) Development of audio materials and programs for disaster alerts and disaster risk reduction to be broadcast in local communities.

The following activities are being promoted to achieve the goals in Indonesia and Japan by January 2010.
(1) Community Workshop (August 2009) including Preliminary Workshop (July 2009)
(2) Implementation of a Community Radio Program for disaster alerts and disaster risk reduction (from August 2009 to November 2009)
(3) Implementation of off-air activities by community radio broadcasters and community members (from August 2009 to November 2009)
(4) Publication of a handbook on how to utilize DMAM in community-based disaster management (from October 2009 to January 2010)

At the community workshop held in August, the participants shared the results of the usefulness of mapping potential community vulnerabilities, which was dealt with at the preliminary workshop, and then produced their own audio programs on disaster risk reduction in accordance with their community needs in consideration of the DMAM. The programs utilized various features, such as traditional music and comedy sketches to attract listeners in the community. The workshop gave the community radio broadcasters an important opportunity to discuss with community members the role of community radio in raising community awareness of disaster risk reduction, and possibilities for expanding disaster management activities beyond radio broadcasts to off-air activities, such as disaster memorial events or song contests on the theme of disaster reduction.

Since finishing the workshop, the participants from community radio stations have been producing new audio programs to raise community awareness of disaster risk reduction, and CRI and the community radio stations are measuring the impacts of broadcasting such programs. In addition, they are planning off-air activities such as traditional singing contests based on the theme of early warning systems for

disaster.

The knowledge and experience gained from adopting community-based disaster management measures utilizing community radio, based on the results of the workshop and follow-up activities, will be shared with the world through the publication of the handbook "How to Produce DMAM for Local Communities" in January 2010.

About DMAM

The Disaster Management Audio Materials for Community Radio Broadcasting (DMAM) which was produced by JICA Hyogo/DRLC and the AMARC Japan Working Group contains, on a single CD-ROM, 193 audio materials and transcripts in 9 languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Chinese, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese and Tagalog) for broadcasting on community radio stations when four types disasters occur (earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and floods). Just insert the CD-ROM in the computer and launch a browser. From there, community radio stations can easily provide disaster related information to their listeners and local communities. This resource can be downloaded from www.drlc.jp/dmam.

Article from Sarvodaya

Communication and Early Warning

Globally disasters have a more visible face than ever, as has been observed over the past decade. Socio-economic development has not taken into consideration the ecosystem impacts and hence has made the human population more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters. A communication system based on socially accepted values and processes, and grounded in the socio-ecological environment of the community could have greater effectiveness and longevity. The role of technology, policy and institutions is to enable the development of such "living" communication systems.

Need for Community Radio in Sri Lanka

In risk communication situations, there is a constant tension between providing accurate information and providing information quickly. It is essential to have an appropriate communication system in place both to reach victims of the disaster and to communicate with the world. Sarvodaya was able to plan relief work effectively due to its existing large network, comprised of 34 district centres and 340 divisional units. Yet it is necessary to have a professionally designed communication system to deliver accurate and timely information.

More importantly, Sarvodaya is of the strong opinion that the voice of the tsunami-affected communities were not sufficiently heard in the planning and policy-making processes that followed the disaster. Unless their views, opinions, and aspirations are taken into serious consideration by the decision makers at the highest levels, we will not be able to fully recover from this tragedy and build a new Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya will, as an important element in its post-tsunami development plan, explore possibilities for new technologies, such as ICT and community radio, to promote a dialogue between communities as well as between communities and policy makers.

Purpose of "SARVODAYA TALK"

The overall objective of Sarvodaya community radio is to promote a fair media culture based on community journalism among the diverse communities across Sri Lanka. The mainstream media tends to conform to political views even though it tries to give the impression of being community radio. Also, community media allows for area-specific problems to be addressed. It also to gives previously voiceless people a voice, allowing the sharing of experiences (not in a one-way information flow but through provisions that allow listeners to improve the quality of the programmes through their feedback).

The process involved establishing five mini studios in strategic areas on the island, along with some volunteer training on content production (a large emphasis was placed on training both the paid workers and volunteers). The final step involved quality checks and uploading from Colombo. At the

moment, it is illegal to have a private FM line for broadcasting in Sri Lanka due to security concerns. Therefore, a web-based solution is being used for now. The audience of the radio programs consists of ordinary citizens all around Sri Lanka who are interested in the work of Sarvodaya. However, people that are affiliated with Sarvodaya would likely be more inclined to participate in this venture right now. Sarvodaya radio will be used as a disaster early warning dissemination system, and during non-emergency situations, will be used for conveying news about the latest developments in the work of the organisation and good governance work in villages (independent of any party politics).

Lessons from ICT Research

Sarvodaya's Last Mile Hazard Information Dissemination Project (2005-2006) aimed to explore strategies for effectively and credibly disseminating emergency warnings to the largest number of people in Sri Lanka in the shortest possible time. As an action research initiative, this project aimed to study, experiment and understand which information and communication technologies (ICTs) and community mobilization methods will work most effectively in disseminating information on hazards faced by Sri Lankan coastal communities, such as tsunamis, coastal erosion, cyclones, drought and floods. The first phase was focused on dissemination strategies. This included testing different ICTs to deliver timely warnings to local people immediately at risk, and building community capacity to respond to such warnings rapidly and systematically. Different combinations of ICTs and community mobilization were tested out in 32 participating villages in the eastern, western, northern and southern coastal areas of Sri Lanka. The project identified a number of warning strategies to include in the scope of its research and experimentation.

Case Study

Sarvodaya began using satellite radio to disseminate early warnings as a pilot project in early 2005 and 2006. The satellite system functions by linking the Sarvodaya Moratuwa Centre to the Sarvodaya community centres in each district and then to the Disaster Management Committees in the villages. The system works with the coordination of a specially trained Information Communication Technology (ICT) specialist from the Sarvodaya head office in Colombo and another ICT official from the Sarvodaya community centre based in the villages.

On 12 September, the Sarvodaya Early Warning Centre based in Moratuwa received a disaster alert through the media and the disaster management centre at 6.00 pm. After the information was verified, the news was disseminated to the Sarvodaya branches using three main channels: satellite radio, SMS alerts and mobile phones. One hour after the earthquake, the first disaster alert was broadcast via satellite radio. Then SMS alerts were sent to the village Information Communication Technology (ICT) guardian. The village ICT guardian then disseminated the message to the community. The villagers who had participated in a tsunami evacuation drill using this methodology and technology found it easy to follow the protocol. After 1.5 hours, a second alert was disseminated through the same means. The advantages of the satellite radio system is that it is a dedicated line for early warnings where alerts are sent to any radio channel which has satellite link facilities. However, on 12 September, the transmission of mobile short messages (sms) was found to be very useful for the Sarvodaya officers involved in early warning efforts. Most alerts were disseminated via short messages.