

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India

Title of initiative:	Capacity Building for Local Level Action on Early Warnings in Tamil Nadu
Countries primarily supported:	India
Duration:	From 1 December 2005 to 31 December 2006

Objectives

This short-term initiative carried out by UNDP India and the Government of Tamil Nadu in Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu, complements the medium-term initiative to be implemented in the 13 coastal districts of the state under the United Nations Recovery Framework in India.

The main objectives were:

- Institutionalization of Early Warning Systems within Disaster Management Committees and Disaster Management Teams;
- Strengthening dissemination mechanisms of early warnings to communities;
- Development of procedures for local level action and overall coordination, with special focus on local governance structures;
- Assessment of the “best technical” process to support dissemination of early warnings within the targeted communities.

Achievements

The initiative completed a pilot testing of technological options as well as community-level training in one of the worst tsunami-affected districts of the state. The project benefited the community with enhanced exchange of information with relevant local authorities and strengthened dissemination mechanisms of early warnings.

- **Institutionalization of Early Warning Systems within Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) and Disaster Management Teams (DMTs)**
 - A coordinated network was formed with the disaster management bodies of the state, district and the village, which formed the basis for institutionalization of early warning system within DMCs and DMTs.
 - A consultation workshop was organized in Chennai, in April 2006 for the government officials, the civil society organizations and the community representatives.
 - A district level consultation meeting was held in Cuddalore in May 2006.
 - The training of trainer (TOT) program on “Early Warning: Use and Practices” was organized for government departments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community members in July 2006. A total of 33 key resource persons were trained in the workshop. The two-day training program focused on the five major hazards (cyclone, flood, tsunami, drought and epidemics) and the early warning systems suggested to be employed to mitigate the risks.
 - A training manual “Early Warning: Use and Practices” has been developed for the trainers and published. The manual focuses on early warning for the above-mentioned five major hazards.

- **Strengthening dissemination mechanisms of early warnings to communities**
 - A study was undertaken to map the existing early warning systems (present level of risk knowledge, existing dissemination and communication systems, degree of monitoring of warning messages and response capacity) in Tamil Nadu.
 - A public address (PA) system was installed in 55 locations in Cuddalore district for effective dissemination of the warning messages.
 - The Very High Frequency (VHF) wireless radio system was installed in 55 locations.
 - Two local NGOs, Indo Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) and the Centre for Rural Education and Economic Development (CREED) have organized 80 training programs in Cuddalore district for 2,559 members from the community on the significance and application of early warning systems.

- **Local level action and overall coordination, with special focus on overall governance structures**
 - Stakeholders including local administrative bodies, resource agencies, techno-social institutes, development organizations, community based organizations and vulnerable community participated in the process of planning and the implementation of the early warning systems.
 - Emphasis was given to build the capacities of women.

- **Assessment of the “best technical” process to support dissemination of early warnings within the targeted communities**
 - A study was carried out to compare various technological options of community-based communication for disseminating early warnings as well as their cost. The study resulted in the identification of 3 viable technical options namely VHF, Satellite Radio and Radio Data Systems, which was documented and shared with the state administration.
 - The VHF Transmitter technology has been piloted in Cuddalore as mentioned before.



Photo 1: Mock drill



Photo 2: Capacity building programme



Photo 3: Consultation workshop

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