

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SA-IO) Disaster Preparedness ECHO and Partners Workshop

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WORLD CAFE

Questions for Breakout Groups

Topic: Early Warning | Scenario: Cyclones

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Scenario: Cyclones
Facilitator's Name: ADRIANA LOMBARDO

Question 1A: What EWS Digital platforms exist in your country for cyclones?

Regional

VENTUSKY
engageSPARK
IBT_ACS
ENMETSA
WINDY
ZoomEarth
IHP-Wins (UNESCO Platform Global for flood hazard)
GDACS (Global disaster alert and coordination System)
Copernicus emergency management service
Tv/radio/telecommunication/mobile apps

Madagascar

9-3-0 Hotline
BENGRC (Bureau national de gestion des risques et des catastrophes)
METEO MADAGASCAR - Météo-France
Bulk SMS
Regularly bulletins

Mozambique

DATAWINNER
PRISMA
ONALab (Integrated platform from disaster data)

Lesotho

FEWSNET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network)
Telecommunication

Malawi

ZAULIMI APP
(LOC.IE)/ GROUPS/STREEKT
UNDP. Wawes/Rain
ENVAC from Malawi Civil Mechanism (food assistance; droughts..)

Zimbabwe

Bulk SMS/SIM multihazard)
IOM platform for DRR
Whats app/social groups
FEWSNET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network)

Question 1B: Do they also cover other hazards and risk factors?

Most of the platforms cover the different natural hazards (mainly cyclones and floods).

In addition:

- Bulk SMS/SIM (Zimbabwe) is a multi-hazard platform and it covers bacteriological risks.
- FEWSNET (Lesotho and Zimbabwe) provides early warning and analysis on food insecurity
- ENVAC from Malawi Civil Mechanism (food assistance; droughts..)

Question 2A: What are the key elements, features and information which an EW Digital system should have?**Key elements**

Integration into national system (chain of responsibilities)

Reliability of information sources

Scenario and reporting tools

Access to the tools for local communities

Interconnections with others platforms

Downscaling to local level (gradualism)

Connection to the telephone system for direct information (automatic)

Features

User friendly/ User-oriented

Open sources

Multilanguage

Speed

Accessibility

Inclusive

Interoperability (connection with the different platforms)

Timely and frequently update

Thresholds for alerts

Automation

Geographical coverage (area-affected)

Multiple way to disseminate messages (radio, tv, phone, others)

Information

Immediate map visualization

Immediate info on evacuation sites and what to do

Able to estimate affected area

Able to estimate timeline

Coherent at all level
Be able to capture all alerts/ warnings
Immediate info on evacuation sites and what to do
Automatic detection of cellphone number for SMS
Cascading risk/information
Loss and damages
Number of people to be impacted/ Livelihoods

Question 2B: What are their gaps / limitations?

Limited number of people who receive the message
Difficult to reach people in real time (datawinner)
Data fragmented
Difficult to access for the final users (data is too technical)
Difficult to derive Value Added information for Evidence/based decision
Unique access-point
Data downscaling
Uncertainty of the predicted cyclones (where it will land)
Limited number of words that data covered
The message is not always contextualized to the region
System capped for the deaf and blind and other vulnerable groups
Technology & Connectivity
Timeless (delay on alert)
Not always reliable
Financial and maintenance sustainability of the system
Specificity of geographical area
Harmonization
Nonaligned with national standards
Accessibility at local level (no internet)
Coverage on route areas
Resources to duplicate else where
Duty officer turn over
The track is non representing the risk
Classification of cyclones only wind- based

Question 2C: What technological solutions can be used to address these?

MYDEWETRA as platform common to all (standardize)
Offline solutions
Community-based surveillance (CBS)
Dissemination through CBO et community (working as a hub)
Improving network system/power backup
Private partner engagement with zero rate (ex: education online training during Covid19)
Drones
Wikirumors (<http://staging.thesentinelproject.org/project/wikirumors/>)
Merging digital and no-digital EWS (more resilient)
E-learning platform (with registered webinar)
Communication tech to share warnings (easy to read)
Social Media
Additional layer to translate the info and to disseminate protocol messages

Question 3: What can ECHO and its partners do to improve the EWS Digital platforms?

- Anchor a community EWS in the national system → advocate and establish partnerships with actors who assist national governments in developing and/or strengthening national EWSs in order to support them in establishing people-centred EWSs that are tailored and closely linked to at-risk communities;
- Translation key message to local language
- Promotion of platforms in local languages
- Harmonization of EW digital platform and other tools
- Identify organizations to support mobile apps to inform populations
- ECHO have to encourage partnership between different platform providers (avoid competition)
- Invest in the capacity strengthening and in continuous training for people and institution to manage the platforms
- GAPS based-investment (funding)
- Foster experience-sharing
- Regional Platforms (linked to national ones)
- Enhance very practical and useful indications (*e.g. this is what is happening; here's what you can do to save your crops*)
- Promotion of feedback systems for people to report and situation analysis
- Social Media content analysis
- Institutional arrangements about the message (Miss behavior)
- Dissemination time more

Question 4A: How can “last-mile communication” be ensured between the early warning and the at-risk population?

1. Organizational and Decision-making Processes Institutionalised

- Functions, roles and responsibilities of each actor in the warning dissemination process specified in legislation or government policy (e.g. national meteorological and hydrological services, media, NGOs).
- Volunteer network trained and empowered to receive and widely disseminate hazard warnings to remote households and communities.
- Community participation to identify preferred mode of communication
- Local HuB (DP groups)
- To be country and context specific

2. Effective Communication Systems and Equipment Installed

- Communication and dissemination systems tailored to the needs of individual communities (e.g. radio or television for those with access; and sirens, warning flags or messenger runners for remote communities).
- Warning communication technology reaches the entire population, including seasonal populations and remote locations.
- International organizations or experts consulted to assist with identification and procurement of appropriate equipment.
- Multiple communication mediums used for warning dissemination (e.g. mass media and informal communication).
- Agreements developed to utilise private sector resources where appropriate (e.g. amateur radios, safety shelters).
- Consistent warning dissemination and communication systems used for all hazards.
- Communication system is two-way and interactive to allow for verification that warnings have been received.
- Equipment maintenance and upgrade programme implemented and redundancies enforced so back-up systems are in place in the event of a failure.
- Sending message to school/committees/FBOs/markets

3. Warning Messages Recognised and Understood

- Warning alerts and messages tailored to the specific needs of those at risk (e.g. for diverse cultural, social, gender, linguistic and educational backgrounds).
- Warning alerts and messages are geographically-specific to ensure warnings are targeted to those at risk only.
- Messages incorporate the understanding of the values, concerns and interests of those who will need to take action (e.g. instructions for safeguarding livestock and pets).
- Warning alerts clearly recognisable and consistent over time and include follow-up actions when required.
- Warnings specific about the nature of the threat and its impacts.
- Mechanisms in place to inform the community when the threat has ended.
- Study into how people access and interpret early warning messages undertaken and lessons learnt incorporated into message formats and dissemination processes.

Question 4B: What examples do you have of local / grassroots / indigenous knowledge and experience being used in this context in your country?

Daily basis sent to relevant institution (Datawinner)

INGCD

Indigenous/local knowledge (weather change, animals behavior, wind direction)

Bird watching signaling high/low rainfall

Color flags/color code/visual signal

Blow horns/flags

Real time- info to communities through text/sms

Question 4C: How can the use of such knowledge and experience be optimised?

- Mapping and documenting of local/indigenous knowledge → formalization
- Interaction/link between this knowledge and scientific/academic word (also for contingency plan)
- Data winner: sending this kind of information to the communities (huge investment)
- Continuous training to the committees
- Covering the transport needs to share and disseminate
- Evidence-based
- Community Disaster Preparedness Plan (CDPP) to incorporate local experience
- Feedback system from the communities
- Acknowledging local knowledge and system enhances communities adoption or new knowledge

Additional Input

- Integration of Anticipatory Actions in EWS
- Connection EW/EA: system has to be effective
- Response to previous disasters analyzed and lessons learnt incorporated into future capacity building strategies
- Warnings Respected: Strategies to build credibility and trust in warnings developed (e.g. understanding difference between forecasts and warnings).
False alarms minimized and improvements communicated to maintain trust in the warning system