

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Lessons Direct From Our Partners Across The Region

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES - RAINBOW RADIO LEAGUE

Lessons Learnt:

Always have a contingency plan and be flexible in order to maintain project objectives, timelines and deadlines. Included in this plan must be the ability to secure removable assets, once adequate warning is available.

Beneficiaries

The Public: Men, Women, Children, elderly persons in the communities of, Fancy, Rose Hall, Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, Marriqua, Union Island, Arnos Vale, and Campden Park.

National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO): Enhanced operational capabilities of NEMO and its field officers as a result of the improved VHF emergency radio communications coverage of the archipelago of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

BELIZE - NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCILS, (NAVCO)

Lessons Learnt:

The process of having villagers responsible for their projects was empowering and appeared to shift the culture towards a greater sense of optimism about the future. The lesson learnt is before starting the actual construction work, provide initial training for village workers in the areas of conflict resolution, work practices, elementary bookkeeping, gender issues and leadership. We must ensure that each community has a contractor within the community who will be on the work site each day and who will coordinate the work, set up work teams, and verify that the work is complete and has been carried out correctly.

Beneficiaries

Women holding village chairperson status in two of the four communities. Women chairs played a major role in emergency response. More than half of the community project teams are women. All persons in the communities benefit from the increased resilience.

BARBADOS CITIZENS BAND RADIO

Lessons Learnt:

The Barbados Citizens Band Radio Association, a radio hobby club is mandated to provide island wide communications to link those agencies in the disaster network with radio operations into the central command centre, should any situation necessitate it. The importance of radio was evident in the earthquake tremor during 2010 when within 3 minutes the system shut down because of overload and radios continued to function. The functioning of DEO's district emergency organization is critical as well since they are first responders within their district. Planning and practicing procedures are critical.

Beneficiaries

From 5 – 11 parishes - All residents of Barbados. 100 DEO radio operators (75% male, 25% female) from the 11 parish District Emergency Organizations (DEOs) trained to operate 84 VHF hand held radios and 12 complete base stations. Some of these are ham radio and early warning systems.



BARBADOS AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY OF BARBADOS

Lessons Learnt:

An earth line had to be installed to run from the meter to the solar system. There was no earth there originally and due to that, there were delays with the installation of the solar system. The involvement of more schools, the church and community organizations within close proximity of the ARSB would have been beneficial. This would generate more interest and awareness on how the solar system was set up.

Beneficiaries

Local and regional outreach. The ARSB has embarked on offering a course of study, so that new amateur operators can become involved in the Society. Particularly, more females are pursuing the course.

DOMINICA OFFICE OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Lessons Learnt:

Women and men participated in the training aspect of the project equally and formed part of the team doing the monitoring and supervision since more than 50% of the Village council are women. Women are often well informed of the needs of the community and make excellent radio operators for disasters once given the opportunity and encouragement to undertake the technical training.

Beneficiaries

12 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and 18 Disaster Management Committee (DMC) members at Capuchin and Dublanc/Bioche as well as other areas (30 individuals in total). The training will be facilitated by certified radio operators and instructors.

Approximately 218 residents (51% males and 49% female) who live in and around Capuchin reside in about 90 households. 6% of the villagers are older than 70, of which 42% are females; and 15% are above age 60. About 3% of the population is disabled. There are over 25,000 inhabitants in the other areas stretching from Capuchin to Roseau, which includes Bioche/Dublanc and the communities in the foot print of the repeaters which will also benefit indirectly.



JAMAICA ABACUS

Lessons Learnt:

Where it is not possible for project funding to be disburse in a hard international currency, budgeting should better cater for exchange rate decline and inflation in unstable exchange rate regimes such as exists in Jamaica. More time was needed for setting up, integrating and testing all national and agency networks, especially dysfunctional sites, during the project period after completion of training and equipment delivery.

Beneficiaries

A trained cadre of 360 community volunteers were equipped with the necessary skills and tools to run an emergency communications system. 10 additional communities in Jamaica will have access to emergency communications in the event of a natural hazard impact or other emergency.

From selected project communities, estimated at a minimum of 1,305 men, 1,317 women, 13,123 children, 3,094 elderly and unspecified disabled, with an estimated average of about 1,700 persons per community. General populations of communities range from 1,500 – 3,000.

ST. LUCIA ST. LUCIA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Lessons Learnt:

From an operational perspective for future guidance in similar projects is the importance of pre-project preparation (MOUs, partnerships, functional networks and equipment, etc. with key agencies) and the degree of flexibility allowed to adjust to changing situations on the ground; i.e. the unavailability of key personnel, exchange rate changes, etc. The inherent flaws of funding projects rather than programmes was recognized as a sustainability issue.

Beneficiaries

Improve emergency communication among communities in the 18 districts in Saint Lucia by the installation of 2 VHF repeater systems/UHF that links two-way radio communications.



"It's essential, once a hurricane hits... communication is the key to making sure we understand what is going on"

Barbados High Commissioner
MARIE LEGAULT