A Winning Campaign – Public Outreach in Early Warning:

Lessons Learned in Caribbean Small Island Developing States

R3i
Regional Risk
Reduction Initiative

UNDP
Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

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Acronyms

CAP	*Common Alerting Protocol*
CMO	*Crisis Management Office (Aruba)*
DDM	*Department of Disaster Management (Virgin Islands)*
DDME	*Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies (Turks and Caicos Islands)*
DM	*disaster management*
DMCA	*Disaster Management Coordination Agency (Montserrat)*
EC	*European Commission*
EWS	*early warning system*
ITU	*International Telecommunications Union*
OCTs	*overseas countries and territories*
OECS	*Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States*
POE	*Public Outreach and Education*
R3I	*Regional Risk Reduction Initiative*
TMT	*Technical Management Team*
UNDP	*United Nations Development Programme*

Executive Summary

This resource seeks to provide senior management and communication/public outreach and education professionals in Caribbean countries and territories with recommendations, advice and suggestions that can help inform disaster-alerting public outreach and education (POE) activities in each of their countries. These lessons learned have been gleaned as a result of POE activities on the R3I early warning system (EWS) project.

Public Outreach and Education activities for early warning systems based on the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) involved four pilot countries – Anguilla, Aruba, Montserrat and Sint Maarten – primarily between April and September 2012. With a regional communications strategy and over 200 communication products produced in five languages, the *"Stay Safe"* campaign is unique as it is the only known regional, multilingual, multimedia public education alerting campaign for disaster awareness based on primary behavioural actions that may be required during any alert.

The consistent messages, alerts and warnings to the public across many communication media are intended to increase each OCT's capability level in alerting the public in case of emergency. When fully activated, the "Stay Safe" campaign has the potential to impact over 200,000 people living on Anguilla, Aruba, Montserrat and Sint Maarten.

Information contained in this document is a result of final recommendations provided by the public relations consultant under the EC-funded and UNDP-implemented Regional Risk Reduction Initiative (R3I), and interviews with pilot countries and other OCTs.

Recommendations, advice and suggestions are grouped into seven key categories:

- teamwork
- support and buy-in
- public outreach and education strategy
- opportunities to explore
- scheduling/timing
- technical matters
- identifying success

There are also several expectations regarding POE for disaster alerting from the non-pilot countries who responded to this survey. They include:

- guidance on what to communicate and when, particularly when preparedness behaviours are being influenced by an active social media and traditional media environment during any disaster;
- POE capacity building and the local availability of technical tools to ensure project sustainability;
- integrating the *"Stay Safe"* POE campaign into an existing and well-established POE programming.

Introduction

The Caribbean region is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and various natural hazards, including earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. The increasing incidence of such disasters, coupled with the small size of the islands and fragile ecosystems compound their vulnerabilities. Additionally, the location of businesses, settlements and livelihoods in low-lying coastal areas and the sensitivity of the main economic sector, tourism, exacerbate these vulnerabilities.

This resource seeks to provide senior management and communication/public outreach and education professionals in Caribbean countries and territories with recommendations, advice and suggestions that can help inform disaster-alerting public outreach and education (POE) activities in each of their countries. These lessons learned have been gleaned as a result of POE activities on the R3I early warning system (EWS) project.

The Regional Risk Reduction Initiative (R3I)

Like the other small island developing states (SIDS) in the region, the English and Dutch overseas countries and territories (OCTs) in the wider Caribbean region are highly vulnerable to various natural hazards and climate change impacts, and have fragile ecosystems. Settlements are often concentrated in low-lying coastal areas and other hazard-prone locations.

The R3I was a four year project (2009-2012) funded by the European Commission (€4.932m) and implemented by UNDP's sub-regional office for Barbados and the OECS with the objective of developing the local capacities for disaster risk management of the beneficiary territories, namely Anguilla, Aruba, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, and Turks and Caicos Islands by:

- Increasing capacity in hazard mapping and associated vulnerability assessments, to further be incorporated into spatial information systems to inform planning and development processes
- Developing a regional early warning system (EWS) pilot for the OCTs, based on the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) automated alert protocol for warnings
- Building capacities in response, rescue and recovery through the use of risk assessment and mitigation practice in order to shorten recovery periods
- Strengthening local disaster management structures and capacities in terms of tools and best practices to support comprehensive disaster risk management schemes

- Enhancing cooperation and coordination between the OCTs, with documentation and dissemination of best practices

By emphasizing intra-regional learning and sharing of tools, knowledge and best practices, the R3I has enhanced the territories' individual and collective capacities to predict and prepare for disasters, thus improving resilience and reducing risk and subsequent loss. During 2011-2012, a team contracted under the R3I collaborated to provide support in policy, design, integration, training and public awareness by evaluating existing alerting systems in the OCTs, recommending new technologies and policy frameworks, as well as procuring and implementing technical support and development. Another expected outcome was developing and implementing a POE campaign in Anguilla, Aruba, Montserrat and Sint Maarten, and making the results available to the remaining project beneficiaries.

The "Stay Safe" Campaign

The *"Stay Safe"* campaign is unique as it is the only known regional, multilingual, multimedia public education alerting campaign for disaster awareness based on primary behavioural actions that could be required during any alert.

When simultaneously activated by all four countries, the *"Stay Safe"* campaign has the potential to impact over 200,000 people living on Anguilla, Aruba, Montserrat and Sint Maarten.

A regional Public Outreach Implementation Plan (Strategy) was developed based on site visits, extensive research, media analysis and consultation with 54 stakeholders on the four islands. It incorporated research on the public environment including demographics, surveys, studies, census results and knowledge on the local culture, traditions and languages.

The Plan consists of short- and long-term strategies, messages and recommended products and provides direction to the early warning/alerting system (EWS) outreach and education campaigns on four island countries, each distinct in their EWS readiness levels, culture, languages and people.

In addition to developing the Strategy based on five standardized response actions, the Public Relations Consultant, in collaboration with the pilot country focal points and their POE Managers, created 225 written and electronic marketing/communication tools in five languages (Dutch, English, French, Papiamento, Spanish,) for four countries.

The products were developed in conjunction with a team of over 29 professional communication associates including translators, translation reviewers and coordinators, website and graphic designers, web programmers, video producers, printers, and an Assistive Technology Expert (for sign language interpretation, the hearing impaired and the

disabled). Countries in the pilot project also worked together to identify five local artists (one for each language) to contribute voice-overs in the 13 animated *"Stay Safe"* videos produced.

Key marketing/communication categories were produced in a variety of communication mediums, formats, and sizes. They include posters, brochures, fact sheets, website sign-up button, public alert sign-up websites, stationary (black and white, colour), videos, PowerPoint presentation templates, retractable banners, bumper stickers and Quick Response (QR) codes.

Given the limited POE budget, cost-saving options were employed to print only necessary products and to provide electronic dissemination through four country web holding sites as an alternate means of distribution to pilot countries. Of the 225 products, 136 products were primarily printed materials, 46 were electronic materials, 35 products were marketing collateral, four country web holding sites were developed, as well as four regional marketing products.

Annex 2 identifies URL addresses for the a) multilingual country websites b) the *"Stay Safe"* YouTube videos and c) the web holding sites for downloadable *"Stay Safe"* products for each country. Please note that branded "Stay Safe" country-specific products are now the property of the respective pilot countries. Copyright permission must be sought for their use in the public realm.

Public Outreach and Education products were produced primarily in languages selected by each country as follows:

- Anguilla: English and Spanish
- Aruba: Dutch, English, Papiamento, and Spanish
- Montserrat: English, French, and Spanish
- Sint Maarten: Dutch, English, French, and Spanish

Methodology

Information contained in this document is a result of final recommendations provided by the project's public relations expert in the September 2012 Group D Final Report on Briefings, Training and Public Education. This resource is also informed by interviews with pilot countries and other Caribbean countries and territories two months after the project officially ended. The list of people interviewed can be found in Annex 1.

Pilot countries were requested to provide feedback on positive aspects of the project's POE experience, the challenges encountered, and provide advice and guidance to other countries who would like to improve their public awareness in disaster alerting.

Other Caribbean territories were asked to pose their questions about POE, the perceived POE gaps in disaster alerting in their country, and what specifically they would like to see documented from the POE experience with the pilot countries.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

These recommendations are a combination of ideas, suggestions, and comments proposed to guide current EWS countries and potential new pilots. Comments from pilot countries, and expectations from non-pilot EWS OCTs have also been included. Broader recommendations regarding the project itself and its regional implications can be found in the Final Contractor Report on R3I Output 2 (Lot 1 & Lot 3 Deliverables) dated 24 September 2012.

Recommendations, advice and suggestions in this guide are broken down into seven key categories:
•   teamwork
•   scheduling/timing
•   support and buy-in
•   technical matters
•   Public Outreach and Education strategy
•   Identifying success
•   opportunities to explore

A separate section will outline some POE expectations from non-pilot OCTs.

> **Successful Communications for New EWS OCTs include:**
> •Factoring in POE at the same time the EWS system is being developed in each country
> •Identifying national and POE priorities
> •Consulting stakeholders to identify resources and individual champions so as to leverage POE strategies
> •Developing a POE Strategic Plan
> •Implementing POE activities with accountabilities and realistic timelines
> •Ongoing consultations in support of long-term EWS public information and education activities to increase EWS awareness in each country
> •Timely and regular measurement and evaluation of POE activities to feed this information back into a new POE strategic planning cycle.

1. Working with a Team

Collaboration strengthens capacity building

Collaboration among individual team members and organizational units successfully signalled the capacity building that took place throughout the OCTs during the year-long EWS project. Participants included, among others, the UNDP Barbados and the OECS R3I team, EWS consultants and project team members, TMT 2[1] members, R3I national focal

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1Technical Management Teams (TMTs) were formed for each R3I project output by disaster managers (focal points) whose countries had particular interest in the related activities and the R3I project team. They helped to design and prioritize the activities to best meet the needs of all beneficiaries. TMT 2 represented Output 2 on EWS.

points and OCT communication/POE officers. The enthusiasm and passion of participants to debate issues, to find common ground, to learn and bring forth new ideas and concepts, is to be recognized and highly complimented.

Develop a strong communications decision team anchored in trust
Goodwill, information-sharing, humour and openness were several hallmark characteristics which resulted from weekly meetings of the POE Communications Working Group. The Group was chaired by the PR expert and members included country focal points and communication/POE officers, a UNDP R3I team member, and the EWS Project Coordinator.

It is hoped that EWS pilot countries will continue to build upon this trust with all communication officers fostering the bonds that were formed to facilitate information-sharing of ideas and resources. It is also hoped that if new countries come on board, the current EWS group of pilot countries, including the communication officers, could mentor them and provide them support.

2. Scheduling and Timing

Early activation of POE involvement
Include country POE experts (i.e. disaster management or stakeholder organizations), and consultants where necessary/feasible, at the beginning of the entire EWS implementation/improvement process to help shape the initiative and provide feedback. POE needs to be considered at each point of an EWS project.

Ensure adequate planning, production and implementation cycle
To ensure an effective POE campaign in five languages, plan and allocate sufficient time to develop and implement the campaign, and schedule launch activities. The initial *"Stay Safe"* launch date also coincided with the start of hurricane season when all OCTs were focused and resources were already allocated to implementing hurricane public outreach activities in-country.

Staff workload should also be considered as POE campaigns require focused activities, quick feedback and decision-making in a short time period alongside regular work assignments. It is also important to consider the role of translation reviewers who may have more than one role in the process.

Therefore, depending on the strategy, the languages needed and the number and type of products, it is recommended that for first-time implementers, the public outreach and campaign development and implementation cycle be projected to take between four and six months.

3. Building and Maintaining Support and Buy-In

Building capacity through expertise and local knowledge
This was achieved by having an experienced PR expert and team lead the effort, foster understanding about international best practices, and facilitate and integrate communication between stakeholder agencies and OCT communication officers essential to ongoing POE. Coaching on POE concepts and collaboration was also deemed valuable amongst stakeholders.

Without political and bureaucratic buy-in, POE is ineffective
Effective POE requires political and bureaucratic buy-in and support. If key decision makers are not in agreement with the importance of educating the public and are not willing to support that awareness, it is unlikely that EWS POE will be successful. Further, there must be a budget allocated to continue POE activities when external support ends.

Consistent, long-term POE effort for best results
Once the EWS is operational, authorities need to continue supporting, maintaining and expanding or strengthening the system. Likewise with POE. A soft or hard EWS launch is just a small first step in building public awareness for the system in the country. Consistent, sustained efforts in long-term outreach and educational strategies are necessary, accompanied with financial resources for implementation and evaluation.

Dedicated POE managerial and administrative capacity needed
Building long-term outreach requires dedicated managerial and administrative capacity to develop ties with the community. It is essential to identify, leverage and coordinate stakeholder involvement and special events/campaigns.

Keep stakeholders involved Aruba outlined the difficulty of keeping internal and external stakeholders engaged in the POE effort, particularly when large natural disasters have never before occurred on the island. Pilot Country Sint Maarten also noted the difficulty and the resources and time required to keeping stakeholders involved. In cases when it is a challenge to persuade or convince stakeholders that public education on behavioural emergency response is beneficial, some strategies could include highlighting other events that are occurring in the area, incorporating scientific information and being creative as part of the ever-changing approach to POE implementation.

4. Technical Matters

POE increases awareness and drives technology demand
An emergency warning system based on a Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) provides

a common platform so that a country can integrate regionally, communicate worldwide and yet still maintain independence by using the country's own EWS features. According to Montserrat, the POE program, coupled with the emergency system redundancy, allowed citizens to be aware of the technologies available to receive information, and where to access additional information. Prior to the

"Stay Safe" campaign, islanders only knew about emergency sirens. Afterwards, they regularly inquired about how to receive emergency alerts using SMS.

Advanced alerting technologies could disadvantage some populations

A note of caution was sounded by Montserrat, who reflected that by focusing on SMS messaging and a web-based sign-up system for alert warning (accessible by phone and by internet), was that it is possible for vulnerable stakeholders, such as the elderly and the economically challenged to be alienated because they do not have access to the technologies needed to either sign up using a smartphone or computer.

Introduce alerting options in a timely manner

The *"Stay Safe"* Campaign advocated email and SMS alert sign-up options on four newly created EWS websites, each offered in five languages. These websites are the cornerstone products on which this short-term POE campaign was based. The assumption was that SMS, as an alerting tool, would be operational in time for the *"Stay Safe"* launch.

As such, the SMS option was added and programmed into the 20 web pages and a SMS reference was included in most of the video scripts, and other POE promotional material. However, with only two weeks before the scheduled June 2012 launch date for the "Stay Safe" campaign, it became evident that EWS pilot countries could not seal agreements with local telecommunication carriers to actualize the SMS option prior to launch.

The Communications Working Group then reaffirmed that SMS be made operable in three of the four OCTs as soon as possible. A decision was made to launch the campaign, and inform citizens that SMS would be available soon, which consequently created some pressure for a solution to be found.

While some may argue that this pressure to be innovative and raise the bar is a positive development, there is another side of the issue. Sint Maarten stated that countries should ensure their alerting options are operational before promoting them to the public. Montserrat echoed this, stating that although it was a joint decision of the

Communications Working Group to continue promoting SMS, continuing to do so without operability raised expectations amongst the public that this technology would be available to them. This situation led to a key lesson – project and technical development and POE need to be inter-related and coordinated from initial project conception.

Build in redundancy when choosing alerting technologies
Montserrat recommended that in the event of an internet or electrical failure, it would be advantageous to have secondary technology option(s) available should there be a breakdown in primary mechanisms. For example, battery-operated or hand-cranked radios could be used as a reliable back-up by most of the population if the internet goes down.

Choose translators carefully
Over the course of the project it was found that special care was needed to obtain and use professional translators in each language, who are familiar with the subject area, how the language is used internationally, and with the idiosyncrasies and cultural differences in each country.

5. Public Outreach & Education Strategy

Introduce and build behavioural messaging
Common behavioural strategies proposed in the POE Communications Plan e.g. Shelter-in-Place, Restricted Area, Prepare to Evacuate, the Evacuation Planning Guide and All Clear introduced common messaging and information that was adapted to the local context. The development of fact sheets using these five standardized responses for the public to use in ANY emergency was an original element of this project; one that had never been done before. Long-term success will require consistent use of these five standardized messages so as to build a stronger correlation between public awareness and emergency responses.

Know your audience and be strategic
A regional POE Communications Strategy must provide a framework for all islands yet also take into consideration each island's unique identity and culture. It is expected that POE in each country will be slightly different. Aruba stated that the *"Stay Safe"* bumper stickers, for example, were not a successful promotional item in the country. It was later discovered that Arubans typically do not like to put stickers on their cars, despite the fact that the bumper stickers were static cling and did not leave a residue.

Following POE questioning for the EWS Strategic Communications Plan, Montserrat recognised that the population diversity on the island had been slowly changing and that a

> **CMO, Aruba and DMCA, Montserrat:**
> Know your audience. Be strategic. Know your island's culture and language then choose the right combination of communication tools and communication media for the best results.

multilingual approach was needed to provide communication materials in both French and Spanish. This had not been considered prior to this project.

Need to ensure consistency

Ensuring consistency in terminology, messaging, tone and branding for POE products is a key function of the POE Officer for continuity and message reinforcement.

Choose POE launch date wisely and match launch event with community preferences

The timing of any POE launch is important and considerations should include type of hazard, time of year and local activities taking place that may conflict or diminish the attention. Sint Maarten recommends choosing the right type of launch for any POE campaign. An appealing campaign for the public might be enhanced by using a local personality or children rather than relying on political dignitaries or government figures.

6. Identifying Success

Access and communication with a new stakeholder group

Aruba found that community outreach efforts led to many people coming to the Crisis Management Office to sign up for emergency alerts because these citizens (many elderly) did not have access to a computer at home.

Stronger community ties

By implementing the *"Stay Safe"* POE campaign, Aruba was able to build stronger ties with a new community stakeholder group.

Evaluate communication tactics and tools

Evaluation of *"Stay Safe"* campaign tools and activities will be challenging until certain campaign and analytic methodologies have been implemented in each country, and at least one or two months of data or activity have been accumulated. Disaster agency capacity, political buy-in and support and insufficient understanding of the communications process could also attribute to the challenge. Deeper evaluation and analysis can be obtained by studying and monitoring behavioural changes, and conducting Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) studies.

CMO, Aruba and DMCA, Montserrat:

Build in feedback mechanisms to measure output and evaluate the success of campaign communication tools, and ultimately the communications strategy. Mechanisms such as website counters, poster viewing in high traffic areas, the number of media stories/interviews and click-through website button counters will help determine future POE direction (and budget).

Focus on POE despite other priorities

Public outreach and education becomes successful through iterative and incremental development. POE systematically improves through repeated cycles (iterative) and in smaller portions at a time (incremental), to take advantage of what was learned during development and implementation of earlier parts or versions of the POE Communications Strategy. At each iteration or evaluation of various aspects of the Strategy, modifications are made and the Strategy is revised.

Even though there are many other country and budgetary priorities, OCTs need to continue implementing POE *"Stay Safe"* strategies, tools and activities to build public awareness of the new system and the key emergency response actions.

7. Opportunities to Explore

Use more social media

Montserrat suggests that social media, particularly Facebook, be used as a POE communications medium as it is easily monitored and evaluated. The use of social media in POE alerting and promotion is complex and requires a social media guideline or policy, resources, monitoring and regular updates. It was recommended as an add-on option in the EWS Communications Plan.

More R3I promotion

Montserrat recommended that more promotion of the R3I project regionally could have strengthened POE EWS activities in each of the countries. POE validity, significance and value-added requires ongoing political support. Regional promotion about this value-added can encourage country enthusiasm for the project in both the pre-launch and ongoing activities.

More regional promotion for EWS

This project concentrated solely on POE for individual countries and lacked the advantages of adequately promoting it regionally. Despite this, limited promotion occurred outside the scope of the project during the December 2011 Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Conference and the May 2012 R3I meeting in the Cayman Islands. There is great opportunity for future projects to better promote the initiative regionally and internationally.

Shareable repository of best practices/lessons learned in disaster communications and education

Based on feedback from many of the 54 stakeholder interviews including focal points and OCT communication officers, there is a strong need and desire for a sharable, easily accessible repository of best practices and lessons learnt in disaster communications and education, particularly those that are relevant to the region. Some informal research was completed but it is recommended that a separate project be established to provide further guidance to OCTs and their communication/POE officers.

Public Outreach and Education Expectations from non-Pilot Countries

Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies (DDME)

Present Situation

- Consistency in existing public education communications and timing is lacking.
- No strategy or planned approach for different target audiences exists. Instead, isolated activities on individual disasters focus POE on "the next time" rather than "preparedness."
- Interested in understanding the barriers to communications.
- Want to see legislation clearly outlining responsibilities of communication professionals during an emergency to ultimately strengthen the role of the disaster communications understanding and accountability throughout the media, private sector and the public.
- Need legislative and political support for communications to gain the public trust.
- Desire for POE capacity building.
- Want to evaluate POE activities to learn what is needed to effect a change in behaviour.
- Want to see feedback to measure performance.

Expectations From This Resource

- Inform on behavioural aspects: what to communicate and when. Social media, smart phone and media chatter during crises makes the information field muddy, and rich with rumours.
- Provide lessons learned, challenges.
- Show how POE can be improved.
- Shared mechanisms and methods applicable to the local country and not include high-tech answers if these programs are not available in-country.

Virgin Islands Department of Disaster Management (DDM)

Present Situation

- Comprehensive POE efforts date from at least 1994. It includes POE outcomes and outputs within the Performance Management Framework, and covers television and radio programming, Facebook, Twitter and the website.
- Legislation is in place to support POE and EWS usage, testing and activation.

- Capacity exists within the national Disaster Management Office to develop, implement and monitor the POE programme.
- The island is currently implementing a face-to-face POE survey. Results are expected to be posted on the DDM website in December 2012.
- A social media survey of all Caribbean islands is also in progress covering how social media is being used in disaster risk reduction. More islands are required to get a better sample size. Results will be posted on the DDM website.

Expectations From This Resource

- How to overcome the challenge of integrating the *"Stay Safe"* POE campaign into well-established programming.

Annex 1: List of Interviewees

The following persons generously provided comments and advice which informed this publication.

Aruba
Jaime Donata
Director
Crisis Management Office

Montserrat
Billy J. Darroux
Director
Disaster Management Coordination Agency

Sint Maarten
Paul T.C. Martens
Head, Section Disaster Management
Sint Maarten Fire Department

Turks and Caicos Islands
Allison Gordon
Interim Director
Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies

Virgin Islands
Sharleen DaBreo
Director
Department of Disaster Management

Annex 2: Resources

The multilingual country websites developed can be found at:
http://www.anguilla-alerts.net/
http://www.aruba-alerts.net/
http://www.montserrat-alerts.net/
http://www.sint-maarten-alerts.net/

The 13 Stay Safe videos can be found on YouTube at

http://www.youtube.com/user/staysafeca/
videos?flow=grid&view=1

**The four web holding sites with specific country products available
to download will continue to be live for a period of two years, ending
December 2014.**
http://kynthiaart.com/ews/anguilla/
http://kynthiaart.com/ews/aruba/
http://kynthiaart.com/ews/montserrat/
http://kynthiaart.com/ews/sint-maarten/

**Please note that branded *"Stay Safe"* country-specific products are now
the property of the respective pilot countries. Copyright permission must
be sought for their use in the public realm.**

This project is financed by the EU and implemented by UNDP