

## UNESCO IPDC

# STRENGTHENING ROLE OF CR IN DISASTER RESPONSE, RISK REDUCTION & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING

## CONSULTATION & PLANNING MEET

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Venue: Hotel Apollo Dimora, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala



## CONSULTATION & PLANNING MEET REPORT

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Ideosync Media Combine

Between June 1 and 19 August 2018, the state of Kerala was hit by the worst flooding in almost a century. One sixth of the state's population – approximately 5.6 million Keralites – were directly and indirectly flooded.

In the immediate aftermath of the floods, UNESCO supported a Disaster needs assessment for Community Radios, which was conducted in September 2018 by N. Ramakrishnan, Director Ideosync Media Combine. This needs assessment put forward several recommendations for integrating Community Radios within the larger State response mechanism.

This consultation meeting was the first step to take several of those recommendations forward and to institute a mechanism for dialogue between CR stations and the State Disaster response authorities.

The Consultation & Planning meet was organized on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019 in Trivandrum, Kerala in partnership with KSDMA and with support from UNESCO IPDC. The primary aim of the meet was to discuss a framework for integrating the community radio in Kerala's state disaster response plan as well as advocating for their increased involvement in the state's disaster management activities.

The meet started with Welcome Address by Ms. Venu Arora, Executive Director, Ideosync Media Combine. It was followed by Mr. S.R. Yadav, Deputy Secretary, and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting addressing the participants by giving a larger context of Community Radio in India where he spoke about the increase in the number of community radio stations from 1958 to 2018. He spoke about the Union Ministry's plan of increasing the operational community radio stations with 100 new community radio stations starting up next year. In a follow up to this, Mr. Hezekiel Dlamini, Regional Communications Advisor, South Asia shared about the positive lessons learnt from community radios in Nepal where they not only played an important role but also were given equal recognition by the state



Figure 1: Participants at the Consultation & Planning Meet

and district administration authorities at the time of Nepal earthquake in 2005. He further emphasized on the need for periodic training and capacity building of community radio which will lead to establishing of working links and communication channels for community radio to sustain.

Keeping this in mind, the UNESCO IPDC initiative in Kerala strives to strengthen crisis preparedness through capacity building and stakeholder consultations on integrating CR in state’s disaster response plan.

This Consultation meet was successful in bringing together all key stakeholders–Ministry of Information & broadcasting, Wireless Planning Commission from Ministry of Communications, Community Radio stations, Kerala State Disaster Management Authority and Civil Society Organizations, together on a single platform to discuss how the medium of community media can be used for Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation in Kerala.

Mr. Onkar Nath, Assistant Wireless Advisor, WPC, Ministry of Communications explained the whole process of frequency allocation for community radio and addressed some of the challenges faced by the applications in this tedious process, wherein he also told about the limited authority of WPC in terms of taking clearances from Airport Authority of India and The Army. He also recognized the need to have separate frequency allocation for public protection and disaster relief where 390 – 390.75 MHz is proposed to be recognized as the emergency frequency, but the decision is in the pipeline and is still in the queue of decisions to be taken by the Union Ministry.

Mr. Job Zachariah, UN Recovery Coordinator, UNICEF highlighted the need to document the significant role of community radio who worked as coordinate points between the community, rescue team and civil society organizations during Kerala floods in 2018. He went on to highlight that despite the fact that floods in Kerala was unexpected hence no one was prepared for it; the community radio responded in an extremely coordinated manner by live streaming the situation of Kerala so that people residing in the districts which were not hit by floods also are aware of the situation, running a relay of script service by stations among each other.



**Figure 2: Dr. Sekhar L. Kuriakose & S.R. Yadav in discussion with the CR stations on their work.**

Dr. Sekhar L. Kuriakose, Member Secretary, KSDMA emphasized on the utility of community radio and. He also encouraged the radio stations to have a fixed Whatsapp number dedicated and kept in their radio stations; in order to add those numbers in the DDMA Whatsapp group where they will be able to get daily emergency alerts ,weather checks and other disaster related information.

As a follow up to this, all the representatives of community radio stations presented their contributions

during the Kerala 2018 floods. Most community radio stations talked about the success of their live broadcasts in informing communities with accurate and timely information, emergency alerts and rescue sites.

Live streaming through social media was also done by the CR stations, and this informed the relatives of people stuck in the floods who had zero network connectivity. Some CR stations Radio Neythal, Radio MACFAST, Global Radio, Radio media Village, Radio Mangalam and Hello Radio actively participated in rescuing people and volunteered in the relief camps by not only providing them with timely information on air, but also supporting communities with food and other emergency support items. Other CR stations like Radio Mattoli started a helpline number for people to call in to seek help in the absence of functional helpline of disaster management departments; they also produced 60 episodes of radio series on rebuilding Wayanad. Radio DC, Radio Benziger, Janvani and Ahalia Radio also shared details of their work.



**Figure 3: Groups presenting their Recommendations on Proposed Framework for Integrating CR in Kerala's Disaster response**

N. Ramakrishnan, Executive Director, Ideosync Media Combine presented the key findings of the Post Disaster Needs Assessment conducted post 2018 floods. The PDNA key findings showed that the community radio stations in Kerala are connected with local administrations but not state administration; and that they have a keen interest in understanding DRR concepts. Based on the findings of PDNA, a framework to integrate community radio in Kerala's State Disaster Response Plan was proposed by Ideosync at the meeting. The framework has a threefold objective: Strengthening Policy actions, Building a Stronger CR Network and Deepening Capacity Building of CR Reporters. The Framework was then discussed among the participants in groups, after which each group presented their recommendations on the proposed framework. The Recommendations on the Framework is attached as Annexure II to this report.

In the afternoon, U.V. Jose IAS, Director, Kerala State Information & PR Division also attended the meeting briefly. As Director of his department, he assured the community radio stations that his department would prioritize providing information to Community radios across Kerala, and committed to providing not just disaster related information but also information related to other government departments, welfare schemes and initiatives beneficial to the community. He further addressed the

issue of lack of recognition given to CR by the Information & PR department as compared to the commercial media which was raised by the CR stations present in the meeting and and promised a follow up meeting with all Kerala CR stations to discuss strengthening collaboration with the community radio. (This meeting took place in September 2019)

In the final session, Ideosync presented a proposed training curriculum for a 5-Day Training workshop for Kerala CR stations. This was followed by group discussion among the participants and their recommendations and suggestions to improve the curriculum were documented. The recommendations on the Training Curriculum suggested by the participants are attached as Annexure III of this report.



Figure 4: Participants discussing the Training Curriculum Design for the Training Workshop on DRR to be organized as part of this initiative.

As a close to the meeting, Joe John George, State Project Officer (UNDP), KSDMA addressed the community radio, civil society organizations as well as the representatives from Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and emphasised the need for coordination between all key stakeholders in order to strengthen the state's disaster response through community media. He encouraged the stations to coordinate with each other and also assured them of KSDMA's support

The meeting concluded with the Vote of Thanks given by Ideosync team, to thank all the participants for their support and cooperation for the consultation meeting, while encouraging all the stakeholders present to understand the significance of the discussed agenda and take equal part in strengthening and integrating community radios in state's disaster response in Kerala.

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Encl: Annexures for the Meet

## ANNEXURE I: AGENDA OF THE CONSULTATION & PLANNING MEET

### Consultation & Planning Meeting

Venue: Hotel Apollo Dimora, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

<b>AGENDA</b>		
09:00 am- 09:30 am	Registration	
09:30 am - 9:45 am	Welcome Address and Agenda Setting	Venu Arora, Executive Director, Ideosync Media Combine
09:45 am - 10:05 am	CR in India – The Next Phase	S.R. Yadav, Deputy Secretary (CRS), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
10:05 am - 10:25 am	Role of CR in Disaster Response: International Best Practice	HezekielDlamini, Advisor for Communication & Information (South Asia), UNESCO
10:25am-10:45am	Spectrum Allocation and Reservations for CR	OnkarNath, Assistant Wireless Advisor, WPC
10:45 am - 11:15am	Planning for a Coordinated response: State Plans and Expected Role of CR	Dr. Sekhar L. Kuriakose, Member Secretary, KSDMA
11:15am-11:30 am	<b>TEA/COFFEE BREAK</b>	
11:30 am -12:00noon	PDNA and Proposed Framework for Strengthening CR Response in Kerala	N. Ramakrishnan, Executive Director, Ideosync Media Combine
12:00noon- 01:00 pm	Group Work: Recommendations for Framework for Kerala and National plans	All partners and participants
01:00 pm - 02:00 pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>	
02.00 pm -03:00 pm	Presentations of recommendations and suggestions from groups	Representatives of groups
03:00 pm - 03:30 pm	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
03.30 pm - 03:45 pm	Glimpses of Training Curriculum: Workshop for CR stations	Venu Arora & AmarpreetChawla Ideosync Media Combine
03:45 pm -04:15 pm	Discussion on suggested curriculum for Training Workshop	Open House
04:15 pm -04:40 pm	Radio: A People's Medium Working with Information Department	U.V Jose, IAS Director, I & PRD
04:40 pm -05:00pm	Forming Networks: CR, Civil society & State Departments. Next Steps	Joe John George, State Project Officer (UNDP), KSDMA
05:00pm-5:15pm	Vote of Thanks	SurabhiJha Ideosync Media Combine

## **ANNEXURE II: Recommendations on the proposed Framework**

### **Strengthening CR Policy**

1. All CR stations (existing and new) must be registered with KSDMA & DDMA via online portals and whatsapp no on their website; where all emergency/disaster alerts can be provided through those medium. CR stations to also share their geo-coordinates with KSDMA in order to get information on the vulnerability of their station in any situation of disaster.
2. Advocating for a sub policy for CR stations in disaster prone areas like Idukki, Malappuram and other tribal and coastal areas; which includes special privileges of – single window application system to fast track the procedure, larger area for reach of station, switchable and mobile transmitters and ease of doing business.
3. A Steering Committee of people from different thematic areas involving CR stations should be created which meets regularly to discuss on the strengthening of CR stations.

### **Capacity Building of Community Radio**

1. CR stations should be provided training by SDMA on technical aspects of pre emergency / post emergency broadcast plan and station's response plan; training on Multilingual programs and personnels in CR station also should be encouraged at regular intervals.
2. A Standardized SOP/Emergency Broadcast Plan to be prepared by KSDMA for training of CR stations on DRR.
3. CR stations should have established links a Statelevel agency like SDRF or Insurance companies for Risk Reduction/transfer mechanism in order to ensure some means of security in case of damage to their station in disaster situations.
4. CR stations must create a vulnerability map of their own CR station and strengthen and prepare for a resilient response during Disasters
5. CR stations must play a vital role in connecting their communities with accurate and timely information from all quarters including Government departments as well as civil society .

### **Strengthening Networks**

1. CSOs should be encouraged by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to set-up CRS in vulnerable / marginalized areas in order to establish communication channels in such areas.
2. E-magazine for CR station can be published annually; which can be run by a well networked CSO with contribution from each CR station in the e-magazine. This will act as a publication for, of and by the CR stations. It can also be made in a form of information management application.
3. The state and district administration should provide financial support to CR stations for creating an emergency response kit for their stations.

### **ANNEXURE III : Recommendations by CR stations on Proposed Training Curriculum for Training Workshop on DRR**

In a group discussion among the participants in the meeting on proposed training curriculum for 5-day Training Workshop on DRR, their recommendations were divided in two categories:

#### Technical Training of Community Radio

1. Measures to be taken for Data Safety and Privacy.
2. Alternate Playlists which can be used for Broadcasting.
3. Strategies to run a community radio station with minimum equipments.
4. Understanding on technological aspects of community radio.
5. Using Social Media to promote the work of community radio.
6. Need Based Content Generation with details on radio formats for programmes.
7. Proposal Writing and Budgeting.

#### Thematic Area Training – on DRR

1. Understanding Disaster Risk Reduction terminologies.
2. Journalistic approach and skills for radio reporters to be followed in disaster situations.
3. Generating radio programmes on disaster related information.
4. Information on health issues that occur as a result of disaster situations and how to create content on this for radio.



#### ANNEXURE IV: PARTICIPANT LIST FOR THE CONSULTATION & PLANNING MEET

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