



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TO SUPPORT SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES' EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS



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01.

Introduction.

01. Introduction

The “*Strengthen Integrated and Cohesive Preparedness Capacity at a Regional, National and Community Level in the Caribbean*” project supports concrete actions for an effective early warning system, as well as aims to improve information management and operational capacity for an improved preparedness mechanism for the Caribbean Regional Response. Working with Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Cuba at a national and community level, and with regional early warning and response actors at the Caribbean level, **the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (IFRC) are partnering with the General Directorate of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid of the European Union (ECHO) to reduce the risk of disasters in the region.**

An Early Warning System (EWS) Communications Consultancy was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Barbados and the OECS to lend support to St. Vincent and the Grenadines’ National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). This was necessary after reviewing the Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems Report for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2018, stating that that one of the critical factors that can lessen the impacts of potential hazards is the dissemination of early warnings which affords the public enough time to adequately prepare and take action for an impending natural or technological event. A robust communication system is therefore paramount to increasing the effectiveness of a disaster warning system before and possibly and more importantly during an event. The report identified there is a need to develop new communication strategies that are consistent with the new methods of communication in order to meet the demands of the society. Therefore, disaster risk warning and communication requires an evaluation of communication strategies as some strategies become inefficient. Suffice it to say, these evaluations are not features of the present warning and communication landscape in many institutions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As such, although warning messages are disseminated there is a high probability that they may not reach the entire population. For instance, the methods of communication and types of media used by the older and younger subgrouping in society vary. As a consequence, one general message in a specific format (text) may not be the appropriate form for messages that are intended to reach an entire population. Information must be disseminated in a basic form (language) to improve access and understanding to all persons in society. To build or improve citizen trust a number of community outreach programmes are required. Regular communication and dialogue (Focus groups) presents an opportunity to convince the listening audience of the knowledge and expertise on e.g. disaster management and preparedness. This must be supported by e.g. accurate and timely alerts and warnings data from the lead agency (NEMO) or any responsible agency.

The outputs of the communication’s consultancy were therefore to develop a country-specific, evidence-based communications campaign and strategy and to have targeted radio, TV and social media content produced. To achieve this, the consultant first conducted a desk review of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) work already done in the country

and region around EWS. This was supplemented by work done in Climate Change as these assessments also had findings relevant to the EWS work. At the desk review stage, a number of things began to become clear, the most vulnerable populations included the elderly and populations headed by women. Based on the topography of the island, a large proportion of households are vulnerable to more than one hazard. In terms of reach, television and radio are still useful communications mediums. All communications strategy and material need to be people-centered, with special focus on the most vulnerable. (Appendix 1.1)

Further, following the desk review, Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (Appendix 1.2) were held in country with groups whose input into the Communication Strategy were deemed essential. These discussions gave further insight into the gaps that exist and how to possibly address them. These groups included:

- Members of Community Disaster Organizations
- Persons working in Gender
- An organization representing persons living with disabilities
- Representatives of the Media and Government Media Units

Following these interviews and focus group discussions an overarching country Communications Campaign Plan was written around EWS. This plan focused not only on Early Warning-specific messages, but also was created with the understanding that there are basic knowledge gaps around natural hazards and what to do in the event of a hazard.





02.

Findings

02. Findings

St. Vincent and the Grenadines comprises of the main island, St. Vincent as well of as a chain of 32 islands that makes up the Grenadines. As of 2019, the population was estimated to be 110, 719.¹

St. Vincent, by nature of its geographical location and topography, is vulnerable to a multiplicity of hazards. Not only is the island in the “Hurricane Belt” but different areas of the country are vulnerable to other hazards, including but not limited to: Volcanic eruptions, storm surges, landslides and flooding.

An additional point of concern is that not only are individuals vulnerable, but the majority of households are located in areas vulnerable to either a single hazard or a combination of hazards. Most houses in St. Vincent are located in areas at risk of flooding, landslides or near enough to the volcano that destruction is highly likely in the event of a volcanic eruption.

Outside of physical and structural vulnerability, exposure to hazards differs across population groups. Previous communications interventions on Disaster Risk Response in St. Vincent have not considered disaggregating population groups by sex, age and ability level and tailoring messages and points of contact to each. This is not necessarily an indictment on previous campaigns, but instead an acknowledgement of how far we’ve come in terms of understanding that mass messages are not as effective as targeted messaging.

Key populations that have been identified for the purpose of this campaign were: Women over 60, Men over 60, Persons working in Disaster Risk Response/Management, Gender Experts, the Media and the Community of Persons Living with Disabilities.²

These populations in particular were chosen for a few reasons; first, it is now understood that women and men are impacted differently by hazards and have different needs in the event of a hazard. Second, it is now better understood that not everyone has the same access to information when we consider preparation activities. Third, it is an expectation that community disaster teams should be able to provide more detailed insight about what is happening in their specific areas. In addition, the media is a key partner in not only distributing hazard and disaster information, but also in interpreting and sharing it in understandable ways. Finally, the community of persons living with disabilities is one of the most vulnerable populations – not only in terms of physical vulnerability, but in terms of socioeconomic exposure to the worst effects of hazards. Focus groups and interviews have also revealed that they are one of the least served population groups in terms of preparation.

A commonality across target groups include a consensus that the population is generally nonchalant about impending hazards. This was countered with the fact that persons are more likely to take steps to prepare in the aftermath of the 2013 floods, which hit the country suddenly. The severity and scale of the impact has made an indelible mark on the psyche of the entire population.

1. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/saint-vincent-and-the-grenadines-population/>

2. IFRC. "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) Survey Disaster Risk Management & Early Warning Systems Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – Overland Magum Community Report – Draft 1 ." KAP/B Report. 2019.

Another commonality is the fact that although persons may be aware of Early Warning Systems as a concept, and also a term that is fairly self-explanatory, they may not be aware of what exactly to look out for.

A Participant in the Media Unit focus group suggested that “an understanding of the channels of communication may be lacking”. It was also suggested in the Gender Experts Focus Group that Early Warning Systems may have different meanings depending on the field people work in.

Tangential to that point is persons believing that although the use of technology in Early Warning is beneficial, that there’s still immense value in community-centred warning, such as coloured warning flags, ringing of bells, sounding sirens and having town criers. Another suggestion made is to have print material placed in commonly-used community spaces such as Clinics and Police Stations.

Participants in the focus group for community disaster teams had a few comments on this including recommending that police flag poles be utilised once more. There were also questions raised about why methods used in the past such as ringing church bells were no longer being used. Suggestions were also made to use colour-coded flags in order to include the hearing impaired.

Participants in the Gender Experts focus group took it a step further with one asking “What happened to the bells? The bullhorns? Why are we not using the old methods?” another person supported this point, saying “The signals usually are very effective - a big bell “Town criers”

Population-specific concerns include the fact that older people in general, are less concerned about potential hazards. Their lived experiences make them less concerned about any risks that they may personally face.³ It has also been suggested that certain subsets of this population may have a higher baseline level of preparation, at least in terms of food and water storage.

Participants in the Media Unit focus group suggested that they grew up seeing the older people they know remain prepared, which included ensuring that water was always stored and that there was a decent supply of non-perishables.

This was supported by an older participant in the Gender focus group who said “I always have water. Water is critical for me.” - “I look around my neighborhood to see if there are empty cylinders/buckets to ensure (my neighbors) are prepared.”

Vulnerabilities unique to older persons include the fact that some may not be able to undertake physical preparation activities. Older men, in particular may suffer from the belief that men are capable of taking care of themselves and as such need not be considered in community preparation. Of particular note is that when they do make it to shelters, there are few allowances made for their specific needs.

Concerns specific to men include the fact that they are more physically vulnerable in the event of hazards. Men are usually the ones doing preparations and also the ones who go out

3. IFRC. "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) Survey Disaster Risk Management & Early Warning Systems Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – Overland Magum Community Report – Draft 1 ." KAP/B Report. 2019.

in the aftermath to check on impact. This makes them more vulnerable to primary impacts as well as things like waterborne diseases. EWS messages tailored to them should, of necessity, emphasise the importance of being cautious.⁴

Concerns specific to women are numerous. For one, a disproportionate amount of household preparation falls on the shoulders of women. A participant in the Gender focus group said “Men expect women to do all the preparation.” Some more nuance was added to this when it was discussed that men tend to expect that women will take care of household preparations while they secure the physical environment. It was also noted that men tend to act with less urgency.

Another point of concern is the fact that men and women’s safety needs are different in the event of hazards. Women tend to be more vulnerable to various forms of abuse, especially in shelter situations.⁵

Persons Living with Disabilities are, as previously mentioned, one of the most vulnerable populations. Not only are messages not created with their specific communication needs considered, but different segments of this population have different areas of vulnerability. For example, it will be more difficult for those who are visually impaired to prepare for hazards, and to move to shelters in the event that it becomes necessary. Deaf persons may not be able to hear hazard warnings aired on the radio – and currently there are no allowances made for sign language interpreters on television. Persons with physical or intellectual disabilities will also have different issues depending on community and family support.

A cross-cutting issue for Persons Living with Disabilities is that a large proportion of this population is functionally illiterate. According to the National Society of Persons with Disabilities, this is as a direct result of there not existing schools that cater to them until fairly recently in St. Vincent’s history, plus the societal stigma involved in living with a disability.

An opportunity exists across all populations to strengthen the idea that NEMO is the sole trusted source. The development of inclusive communications materials, tailored to the unique needs of different population groups would be a step in the right direction.

With this in mind, the suggested communications approach is as follows:

Placement	Primary Target
Radio Spots	Men 25-50, Older Men, Older Women, Women 25-50
Television Spots	Men 25-50, Older Men
Print Posters	Women 20-60
Social Media Posters	Young People (16-35)
Social Media Videos	Young People (16-35)
EWS Explainer Handbook	Children & Youth (6-17)

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldfuwXklbDA>

5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldfuwXklbDA&t=10s>



03. Outcome

03. Outcome

If we're to use the increase in responsiveness post 2013 floods as a guide, along with regional best practices and findings from research and the focus groups, Early Warning Messages need to fulfil a few criteria:

1. EWS Messages need to be relatable. Language used must be inclusive and gender-sensitive.
2. EWS Messages must be targeted. Different populations have different needs.
3. EWS Messages must be clear. Persons should be aware of what actions they're expected to take at different times.

With that in mind, the outcomes for each target population are as follows:

3.1. Persons living with disabilities

An inclusive, symbol-based set of messages, supplemented with tailored audio, visual or audio-visual messages. These will run the entire spectrum of EWS, long, medium and short-term preparation actions.

Messages will also be created that emphasize community action in supporting older persons in preparation.

3.2. Older men

A comprehensive set of messages that inform older men about the type of resources and support available to them. Reminders about the importance of adequate preparation and concrete steps that can be taken.

Community-targeted messages that emphasize preparing yourself first then assisting vulnerable populations.

3.3. Older women

A comprehensive set of messages that inform older women about the type of resources and support available to them. Reminders about the importance of adequate preparation and concrete steps that can be taken.

Community-targeted messages that emphasize preparing yourself first then assisting vulnerable populations.

Health-focused messages tailored to the unique needs women have, especially during and after impact of hazards.

3.4. Women

Concrete, budget-considerate, practical ideas for preparation. Emphasis on tiered preparation, activities that can build on each other. Tips specific to caring for family needs. Emphasis on what actions to take to stay safe in the event of a hazard, during and after.

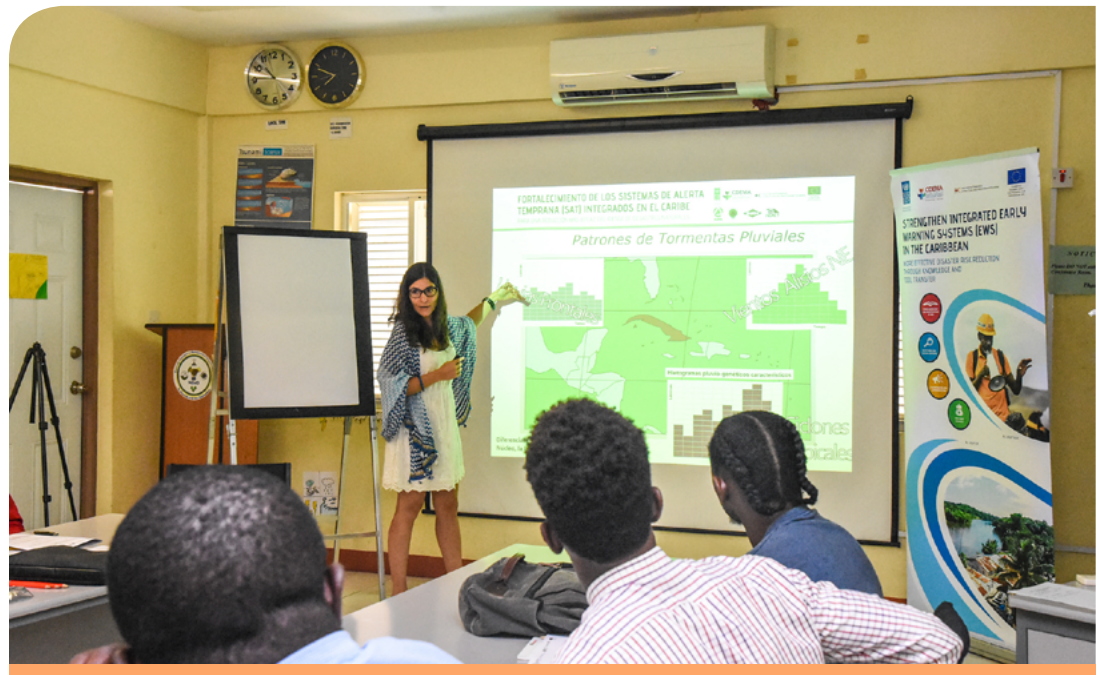
Community-targeted messages that emphasize preparing yourself first then assisting vulnerable populations.

Health-focused messages tailored to the unique needs women have, especially during and after impact of hazards.

3.5. Men

Concrete, budget-considerate, practical ideas for preparation. Emphasis on what actions to take to stay safe in the event of a hazard, during, and after. Tips on securing the wider family.

Community-targeted messages that emphasize preparing yourself first then assisting vulnerable populations.



3.6. The media

Clear, easy to understand messages for all target populations. Relatable messaging on the exact types of possible impacts.

Community-targeted messages that emphasize preparing yourself first then assisting vulnerable populations.

3.7. Persons working in disaster risk response

Strengthening their ability to share clear, easy to understand messages for all target populations. Relatable messaging on the exact types of possible impacts.

Community-specific preparation messages depending on hazard.

Community-targeted messages that emphasize preparing yourself first then assisting vulnerable populations.

3.8. Children (ages 6-17)

EWS Messages should be distributed in easily accessible formats such as workbooks and hand-outs, (colourful illustrations, colouring books 6-10 group). These should be supplemented by in-school education.

3.9. Youth (ages 18-35)

Content created should also have a robust social media/Digital presence. This is to ensure that heavy internet/smartphone users aren't left behind.





04.

Message

04. Message

4.1. General messages/messages for community teams to share

- ◆ Take 5 to Prepare – 1. Gather your documents 2. Have at least 2 sets of batteries for your emergency radios 3. Have at least 3 days supply of water and food stored 4. Call at least 4 friends and relatives to ensure they're also prepared 5. Follow NEMO for all updates. (Need to include know location of nearest emergency shelter)
- ◆ Ensure you have at least three days' water stored (recommendation as to the specific number and types of containers)
- ◆ Ensure all important documents are stored in a waterproof, dry area.
 - Zip it: Put all your documents together in a waterproof bag, then put that bag into an easily accessible area.
- ◆ When you hear/see hazard warnings, don't wait to prepare.
- ◆ When you hear/see hazard warnings, share them with someone else.
- ◆ 3 is the key when going to a shelter:
 - Bring 3 days' supply of clothing
 - 3 days' supply of food and water
 - 3 days' supply of hygiene products
 - All medication and supplements you may need.
- ◆ When going to a shelter, ensure you carry at least 3 days' supply of food.
 - Bring enough toiletries and hygiene products to last at least 3 days
 - Carry any baby formulas, medications, etc.
 - Messages specific to the elderly
- ◆ NEMO is the trusted source for all hazard/disaster information.
- ◆ If you're going to a shelter, go BEFORE the hazard hits.
- ◆ If you live in a vulnerable area, find shelter/stay with family or friends. (We need to always encourage sheltering at homes of family and friends as first option)



4.2. Persons with disabilities

- ◆ If you see or hear an advisory get in touch with your community disaster representative.
- ◆ Look and listen out for the tiered warnings: (Need a simpler word to replace tiered).
 - Green: All is fine, ensure all documents are stored safely. Ensure water is stored. Know location of nearest emergency shelter.
 - Amber: Hazard is 2-3 days away, have documents close to hand, get emergency supplies and be prepared to move to shelter.
 - Red: Hazard is imminent. Head for shelter with supplies and documents. (This should be written to also encourage them to seek shelter with with friend and family



4.3. Older men

- ◆ There's no shame in needing help to prepare. Ask for help once you hear about an advisory.
- ◆ Remember to bring at least 3 days' supply of non-perishable food and water in the event of needing to go to a shelter.

4.4. Older women

- ◆ There's no shame in needing help to prepare. Ask for help once you hear about an advisory.
- ◆ Remember to bring at least 3 days' supply of non-perishable food and water in the event of needing to go to a shelter.

4.5. Women

- ◆ When you are made aware of an advisory, tell someone you know.
- ◆ In the event of an imminent hazard, secure all documents and extra clothing
- ◆ Remember to bring at least 3 days' supply of non-perishable food and water in the event of needing to go to a shelter.

4.6. Men

- ◆ Be cautious when making preparations for hazards.
- ◆ Stop and wait before going out after hazard impact.
- ◆ Be cautious when going out post-hazard. (Create hazard-specific warnings)

4.7. The media

- ◆ Don't hesitate to contact NEMO for clarity on any advisory released.
- ◆ NEMO and other government agencies are the only trusted sources.





05.

Method

05. Method

If necessity, messages should be distributed using multiple methods, for two main reasons:

1. Different populations get information in different ways.
2. Using multiple methods is the surest way to reach a large audience.

5.1. Radio

- ◆ Daily PSAs for 3 months emphasizing different activities for preparation, as well as looking out for other members of your community.
- ◆ 3x weekly PSAs for 3 months about the type of resources available around preparation.
- ◆ Daily time stamps run for 6 months with Early Warning Tips around news broadcast time.

5.2. Television

- ◆ 3 month run of 15-sec Early Warning tips around news broadcast time.



5.3. Print

- ◆ 3 print posters for display in Health Centres, Community Spaces and Schools targeted at EWS activities targeted at women (some targeted at men should also be included as they also have a presence at these places even though it might not be as much as the women we also need to reflect a gender balance).
- ◆ 3 print posters for display at Police Stations, Community Spaces and Bars targeted at EWS activities targeted at men. (some targeted at women should also be included as they also have a presence at these places).
- ◆ 2 visual print posters explaining warning symbols for low-literacy populations, placed at Health Centres and Schools for the Disabled.

5.4. Social media

- ◆ 2 30-sec graphic videos on tiered steps to preparation – from easiest to most difficult.
- ◆ 10 Short informative graphics on hazards and real impacts, distributed via Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, 2 posted per week on rotation
- ◆ 5 EWS-specific graphics, distributed via Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, 3 posted per week on rotation
- ◆ 3 graphics on low-literacy materials, distributed mainly through Facebook and WhatsApp. 3 posted every 2 weeks on rotation.

All material should also be shared with executing partners.





06.

Support

06. Support

6.1. Budget

- ♦ \$18,000 USD to be spent on the following
 - \$5,500 USD on creating material (Radio PSAs, TV PSAs, Handbook Design, Posters, Social Media Graphics)
 - \$2,500 USD on printing and shipping of printed material.
 - \$10,000 USD on placement (radio, TV, social media ads)

6.2. Measurement and evaluation

Measurement will take the form of:

- # of television spots secured
- # of radio spots secured
- # of time stamp slots secured
- # of physical placements of posters
- # of handbooks distributed

Social Media Measurement:

- # of interactions with content
- # of shares of content
- # of partner shares of content

N.B. These measurements will be taken from NEMO controlled mediums.

6.3. Partners and sponsors

- TV Stations
- Radio Stations
- UNDP
- Other Government Agencies
- Red Cross

6.4. Infrastructure

- Existing broadcast networks
- Social Media Pages of NEMO and Partners
- UNDP
- WhatsApp Groups of various community groups



07.

Appendix 1.1 - Focus groups

07. Appendix 1.1 – Focus groups

Facilitator – Jean-Pierre Kavanaugh

7.1. Communication strategy & action plan for dissemination of early warning system (ews) messages

October 29th, 2019

Name	Organisation / location	Contact no
Trevor Huggins	Georgetown (North Central Windward)	(784) 451-1354 / 497-0654
Elvina Abraham	Rillan Hill (South Leeward)	(784) 528-5474
Veronica John	Georgetown (North Central Windward)	(784) 492-3649
Everol Price	Rosebank (North Leeward)	(784) 593-4594
Jean Pierre Kavanaugh	Consultant	(876) 827-7467
Adam Bellingy	Orange Hill (North Central Windward)	(784) 498-1299
Rochelle Baptiste	Owia / Georgetown (North Windward)	(784) 531-4909
Cyril Doyle	Barrouallie Red Cross (Kingstown)	(784) 533-6148
Heather Stewart	Girls Guide Association (Kingstown)	(784) 434-3975
Colin Ferdinand	Red Cross (Kingstown)	(784) 495-5534
Sonia Millington	Spring Village (North Leeward)	(784) 430-8320
Elna Michael	Fancy District Community (North Windward)	(784) 454-6032
Emily Ryan	Colonaire (North Central Windward)	(784) 492-0795
Garvin Seymour	Dickson (North Central Windward)	
Irene Cornwall	Colonaire (North Central Windward)	(784) 457-6318

Facilitator – Jean-Pierre Kavanaugh

7.2. Communication strategy and action plan for early warning system messages

Meeting with Gender Representatives

Fisheries Conference Roo - Wednesday, October 30, 2019.

Name	Organisation / location
Lafleur Quammie	Gender Affairs Division
Arlitta Scott	MOHWE
Porsia Haywood-Cottle	Child Development Division
Nichola Evans	NCCP
Jeanie Ollivieare	Marionhouse SVG
Beverly Richards	NCW
Barbara Charles	Gender Affairs Division
Akisha Yearwood	Ministry of Education

Facilitator – Jean-Pierre Kavanaugh

7.3. Communication strategy and action plan for early warning system messages

Meeting with Information Units

NEMO Conference Room - Wednesday, October 30, 2019.

Name	Organisation / location
Jennifer Richardson	API
Symich Olliverre	API
Marla Nanton-James	Media Unit, MOE
RoseMarie Lewis	Media Unit, MOE
Shanika John	MOHWE
Percy Ferdinand	MOHWE
Rhonda Sutherland	Ministry of Agriculture