Year 4 Report

CBCRM Learning and Research Network

Coady International Institute
St. Francis Xavier University

IDRC Project Number 100953


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Introduction

The Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) is one of three partners involved in the direction of the CBCRM Learning and Research Network (LeaRN) along with the University of the Philippines (Diliman) and Dalhousie University.

Because of its expertise in community-based development training and its extensive contacts with researchers and practitioners in the South, the StFX component of the project has emphasized training, networking, and research in support for LeaRN activities.

During this final 15 months of the LeaRN project, StFX played a leading role in supporting LeaRN’s response to the tragedy in South Asia coastal communities as a result of the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 26, 2004.

The following report applies exclusively to the StFX component of CBCRM LeaRN activities for the year, February 10, 2005 to May 9, 2006.

Initiatives in South Asia and Tsunami Response

The initial efforts at developing partnerships in South Asia, in particular with the Sri Lanka Centre for Development Facilitation (SLCDF), were tragically diverted by the tsunami that struck the region on December 26, 2004. The StFX Project Leader played a key role in organizing a fisher-to-fisher relief fund in cooperation with the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance in Saco, Maine, Clean Catch in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and the Maine Credit Union Network. A total of over US $140,000 was raised. The first payments to South Asia were wired on January 20, less than one month after the disaster struck and was the first outside aid to reach a number of coastal communities in Sri Lanka and India.

In addition to these fund raising efforts, the StFX Project Leader carefully and thoroughly monitored media and donor agencies reports while keeping in touch by email with community contacts in the affected areas. The Project Leader was also part of a special advisory committee of Canadian social scientists that reports to the office of the Privy Council and other federal government agencies. This committee was coordinated by the Ocean Management Research Network which co-organized a National Tsunami Forum, attended by the Project
Leader, in Ottawa on April 21-22, 2005, From Aid to Capacity Development: Fostering Research Alliances for Medium to Long-Term Tsunami Rehabilitation.

From May 2-5, 2005, the Project Leader visited Sri Lankan coastal communities with SLCDF to assess the effects of the Tsunami and the use of relief funds raised by our group and others. This time was also spent in the planning of a Post-Tsunami Regional Consultation on “Enhancing Resiliency and Livelihoods Towards Recovery” organized jointly by LeaRN and SLCDF.

From June 14-22, 2005 the Project Leader returned to Sri Lanka to help with the facilitation of this regional consultation. The consultation brought together government officials, NGOs, and community organizations from throughout Sri Lanka, and hosted a small number of NGO representatives from India and Indonesia. The Project Leader also facilitated the participation at the consultation of two North Americans, one Canadian and one American, who had be active in raising Tsunami relief funds. A full proceedings of the consultation were published and sent to IDRC on CD-ROM. During this period, the Project Leader also met with officials at the Canadian High Commission in Colombo about tsunami rehabilitation and represented LeaRN at the “Sri Lankan Consultation on Post-Tsunami Research Needs and Opportunities”, a meeting organized by IDRC and Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) – South Asia.

From June 23-24, 2005 the Project Leader met with officials from the WorldFish Center in Penang, Malaysia in order to learn the various post-tsunami projects they had undertaken.

Partially as a result of these efforts by LeaRN, SLCDF and some Indian fishing organizations received further and more substantial funding from international donor agencies to continue the post-Tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Finally from April 17-28, 2006, the Project Leader returned to Sri Lanka and India to hold consultations with SLCDF and a wide variety of government officials and NGOs to develop plans for a long-term approach to the rehabilitation and strengthening of livelihood opportunities.

**LeaRN Proposal Development**

From April 28-30, 2005, the Project Leader participated in the LeaRN assessment workshop entitled, “Re-imagining a Regional Learning Network in CBCRM”, held at Lake
Island Resort, in Binangonan, Philippines. The workshop was attended by LeaRN partners from Canada, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The workshop focused on sharing national experiences and developing trajectories for a continuing LeaRN program. A full proceedings have been published and distributed to IDRC.

From February 23-24, 2006, the Project Leader attended the LeaRN Coordinating Committee meeting in Manila. In addition to the regular members of Elmer Ferrer, John Kearney, and Gary Newkirk, the leaders of the country focus groups were also present. These included: Sim Bunthoeun from the Learning Institute in Cambodia, Imran Amin from Jaring Pela in Indonesia, Truong Van Tuyen from Hue University in Vietnam, and W.P.P. Abeydeera from the Sri Lanka Centre for Development Facilitation in Sri Lanka. LeaRN staff members, Mike Reynaldo and Randee Cabaces were also present.

The first half day of the meetings consisted in a reporting of the main issues and challenges of each of the countries’ represented as developed at the national consultations held during the latter part of 2005. The afternoon of the first day was an open forum with a discussion of lessons learned during the LeaRN project.

The second day started with a discussion of the objectives of the new LeaRN proposal followed by a report by each of the participating country representatives of their specific goals and aspirations for a new, decentralized LeaRN. The afternoon of the second day consisted of identifying key components of the new proposal and developing the next steps for its completion. These next steps are:

1) A brief by each of the partners which provides summary of their organization and highlights of their work (with webpage reference)
2) List of key partners
3) Prioritize the main activities (3) and prepare budget
4) What national support is needed in terms of personnel, equipment, or other in order to do the work
5) Nominate women as collaborator or focal point (with CV)
6) Deadline of March 15, 2006 for the above
7) Resource Centre in Manila will integrate into main proposal
8) Resource Centre will send back to Country Focal Points by March 22, 2006
9) March 31, 2006 submission of proposal to IDRC (using US $)
The complete proceedings of this meeting are available on CD-ROM.

From February 25 to March 2, the Project Leader met with LeaRN partners at the University of Hue to discuss their plans for livelihood development in the Tam Giang Lagoon as part of future LeaRN and other IDRC-funded activities.

Finally, the Project Leader during the period from early March to early May, 2006, was in communication with the Coordinating Committee and LeaRN partners as to the finalization of a new LeaRN proposal to IDRC.

**Travel of Project Leader, John Kearney**

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