

Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment in Disasters Workshop

Bhubaneswar, India

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Workshop Report

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Background

This was the third, and last, pilot workshop for the REA. It was held in Bhubaneswar, India, at the Mayfair Lagoon Hotel, hosted by CARE India and co-sponsored by Sphere India. Planning and logistical support were provided by both the CARE CO office in Delhi and the local office in Bhubaneswar. This support was remarkable for its friendly thoroughness and competence. All workshop needs were met.

The basic three day workshop format was supplemented with an application of the REA through a practical three-day exercise in the area near Bhubaneswar impacted by severe floods two months previous.

The hotel was a remarkable venue for the workshop. Out-of-town participants stayed in the hotel's comfortable accommodations, where the residential rooms were large, the atmosphere was relaxed and amusing with a tongue-in-cheek décor of eclectic sculptures, statues and faux crocodiles creeping out of the lagoon. The conference room proved adequate in the end, although it was a bit crowded on Day 1 when we had the highest number of participants.

The number of participants in the conference room at any one time changed hourly, and ranged from a high of 35 to a low of 20. The average was probably around 24, after the first day. This coming and going proved to be quite disruptive and interfered with the continuity of the program.

The roster of participants and resource people prepared by the CARE staff lists 53 individuals; 15 from CARE India, 2 from CARE USA (including Jock Baker, REA project manager) and 1 from CARE Ethiopia, Samuel Tadesse who was a co-facilitator for the workshop; 16 participants represented as many NGOs; 10 represented various government departments; 3 were from UN agencies; 3 were classified as independent environmentalists; and 1 researcher. But many of the participants attended only one day – or less. Paul Thompson was the lead trainer/facilitator. Charles Kelly, as the lead researcher, was an observer and also facilitated two sessions.

The program

The objectives for the three-day workshop portion of the overall event were the same as previous workshops and were as follows:

At the end of the workshop, participants should be able to:

- Describe the purpose and rationale of the REA
- Describe how disasters and the environment are interconnected
- Be able to implement all four modules of an REA in an emergency situation
- Be able to make recommendations on disaster response programming that take into consideration REA results

A final exam and the participant evaluations completed at the end of the workshop indicated the objectives were met, although the final objective was under emphasized. However, because the workshop was followed by an actual field implementation of the REA, evidence of achieving workshop objectives was quite clear.

The following outlines what occurred in the sessions and notes issues for changes in future workshops.

Day 1

1.1 Welcome and introductions

The welcome and introduction session was preceded by an hour long formal workshop opening in the hotel banquet hall. The session MC was Ram Das of CARE Orissa. Speakers included Charles Kelly, REA lead researcher; Paul Thompson, REA lead trainer; N.M. Prusty, chairman, Sphere India and Director of Emergencies, CARE India; B.B. Harichandan, Minister Revenue & Law; N. Sanyal, IAS, MD, OSDMA, and Prabodh Mohanty, Team Leader, CBERP, CARE.

After tea break, at 11:00, we moved to the workshop conference room. Each participant introduced themselves by describing briefly their experience in either disaster management, environmental programming or assessments. Paul presented the objectives and plan for the workshop.

Paul facilitated each of the following sessions, except where noted.

1.2 The environment-disaster connection

This session intends to set the stage for the workshop by drawing out of the participants their awareness of the linkages between the environment and disasters. Paul introduced the topic with the slides and implemented the mini-case studies provided in the participant's workbook, dividing the participants into 4 groups and assigned Part A of one of the six mini case studies to each group. Each group required 20 minutes to prepare their analysis of the case, about 30 more to report and discuss their conclusions in plenary. As we were running short of time and as the participants clearly had a good grasp of the disaster-environment linkages concepts, we did not implement Part B of the exercise. The discussions proved effective at identifying participant's level of knowledge of the field as well as raising awareness regarding previously unrecognized linkages between disasters and the environment. The session was closed with a short discussion on the cost of failure to recognize these linkages.

1.3 REA conceptual framework

This session was the most "lecture intensive" of all the sessions. Using the slides, Paul led a discussion about the framework, modules and elements of the REA concept and methodology. Relief to this approach was achieved by dividing the participants into five groups and assigning each one to analyze a key section on implementing the REA from the Guidelines. Each group reported their summary results to the plenary.

1.4 Disaster management context

The topic was introduced using the slides. The participants then played the "Disaster management game" as described in the Trainer's Guide. It was a high energy exercise, except that some teams, "cheated" by writing down the answers to the succeeding section ahead of time. *If this game is used in the future, it needs to be modified to anticipate this behavior.* The session concluded with the presentation on the linkages between disasters and development.

1.5 Basic assessment reporting

Paul asked the participants to work in 4 small groups to discuss the who, why, when, where of assessments instead of delivering this content in a lecture. The results were very satisfactory. He then presented, with slides, the process of assessment, the tools, techniques and methodologies of assessment. Overall the session went well.

1.6 Participant feedback

Because the day got off to such a late start, we did not take the time for the planned participant feedback. However, that was probably a mistake as many participants would probably have been willing to take the time and there was some frustration registered during the day regarding the chaotic atmosphere of some of the sessions.

Day 2

2.1 Review of Day 1

Paul engaged the participants in a discussion of the key points of the Day 1 topics. N.M. Prusty then diplomatically suggested that, based on the at-times chaotic discussions of Day 1, there should be ground rules for participants. The participants generated several points pertaining to taking turns speaking, and not using cell phones. This process was very helpful and the rest of the workshop flowed much more smoothly (and respectfully) as a result, except that use of cell phones actually got worse as the third day wore on.

2.2 Module One: Context statement

Paul briefly presented the purpose of the context statement and the six questions it is based on using the slides. After this discussion, participants reviewed a context statement from the Ethiopia REA field test to examine how a “real one” looks and to compare it to the six questions. However, Paul (and others) didn’t understand the ground rules of developing the context statement that allowed the drafting of a separate paragraph in response to each of the six questions. This led to some confusion that got cleared up by the end of the session.

This session emphasized that the context statement can be prepared by the REA leader before the meeting of the organization group. The purpose of the meeting, therefore, is to develop consensus on the statement. *We need to develop a “model” concept statement that has, among other things, the specified number of paragraphs.*

2.3 Factors influencing environmental impacts

This session is about learning how to complete Rating Form 1. For the exercise, Paul paired up the participants and assigned each pair one of the factors in Form 1. They were asked to identify where they could find the information to answer that factor and to consider the “implication” in the right hand column to see if they agreed with it or had questions about it. The participants

then undertook the exercise in the workbook, averaging the scores of two groups from the Indonesia case study and then identifying the three priority factors.

2.4 Possible immediate environmental impacts of hazards

Paul again explained the purpose and outcome of this element of module 1, using the slides to illustrate how to complete Rating Form 2. The participants undertook the exercise successfully, although the participants had some difficulty grasping the concept of the size of the area, being small, medium or large. Some people wanted to compare the size of the hazard of concern to the entire country. *Additional instruction may be needed to clarify this point.*

2.5 Unmet basic needs

Kelly opened the session with a presentation on the Sphere project and how it relates to REA. It was discussed as a tool to assist with undertaking the analysis of the unmet needs form. Samuel presented the purpose and outcome of the unmet based needs rating form. The exercise was a good problem solving example except the participants went very quickly to filling in Form 3 without demonstrating their analysis of the sectoral information to justify their conclusion.

2.6 Identification of potential negative environmental consequences of possible relief activities

Paul opened the session with the purpose and outcome of this element of Module one, the analysis and completion of Rating Form 4. The participants then implemented the exercise of evaluating a project proposal against criteria of environmental considerations. The exercise was done in plenary and the discussion was very productive.

2.7 Participant experience

One participant volunteered to present his project, which was about implementing an EIA related to construction of the Delhi airport. It was helpful to see the difference between a formal EIA and the quick and dirty methodology of REA.

Day 3

3.2 Module Two: Community level assessment

Samuel reviewed the objectives of the community level assessment and then used the slides to present the scope of the issues related to implementing this module. Samuel told the participants that they would be responsible for developing their own methodology for the community level assessment. After presenting the slides, Samuel then distributed a revised checklist/questionnaire as the vehicle to collect information at the community level using PRA methodology. Three participants were then engaged to role play an interview implementing the checklist. It was a good illustration of the process, but the rest of the participants were passive

and some had difficulty hearing the role play discussion. (The exercise in the Trainer's Guide was not used.)

3.3 Module Three: Consolidation and analysis

This is a critical session as it is where all the information from the other modules is pulled together and turned into actionable activities. Paul presented the process, using the slides. Instead of the exercise in the Trainer's Guide, an alternative exercise was implemented, which required the participants to fill in the Issues Consolidation Table and the Issues and Actions Table by using the data from the Indonesia case example.

Gender presentation

Kelly delivered a 20 minute impassioned presentation regarding gender issues as they related to the REA. There was time for only a short discussion.

3.4 Module Four: Green review of relief procurement

This module has a stand-alone quality as the rest of the REA methodology does not depend on it nor does green procurement depend on REA. But it is a very appropriate culminating message to demonstrate an application of the principles of REA. As we were short of time, the session was limited to a presentation of the slides and some discussion.

Future workshops should include a clear example of successful implementation of green procurement practices.

3.5 REA implementation issues

As the "in-house" expert on implementation of REA, Kelly agreed to step out of his role as observer and present his thoughts on the key issues of how to plan, organize and implement an REA process. This was a very helpful conclusion to the workshop.

3.6 Evaluation and closing

Since the project TOR required measuring the pass rate of the participants at the final workshop, a Final Exam was administered, followed by the evaluation. The results of the exam and evaluation are found in Annex 1 of this report. A formal closing to the workshop was postponed until the conclusion of the field-based practical exercise.

Analysis of evaluation results

An evaluation was conducted at the end of the three day workshop. (A separate or additional evaluation was not conducted at the end of the three day practical experience in the field.) Fifteen participants completed the evaluation form. Their collective evaluation is particularly

helpful in identifying those elements of the workshop that seem right and work well and identifying areas that need improvement or clarification.

Regarding the evaluation's first sections (items 1-16) about the workshop's organization, methodology and materials, all categories received an average score of 3.8 or above (out of 5) or an overall average of 4.2. This reflects a relatively high degree of satisfaction. The highest score was 4.6 for "Participants were encouraged to take an active part," and the lowest score was 3.8 for "The program met my individual objectives."

Twelve of the 15 participants felt the course was the "correct" length, 2 felt it was too short and 3 felt it was too long. It is not clear if those that felt it was too long were taking into account the three additional days that were to follow the workshop.

Twelve participants felt there were "just enough participants" and 1 felt there was too few. However, since the attendance fluctuated from a high of 35 on day one to periods with as few as 18 participants, this measure does not seem to tell us much. A "core group" of participants of around 14 or so, remained engaged for most, if not the entire workshop.

Other factors affecting attendance was that it continued over a weekend and invitations went out relatively late, due to uncertainty whether such a workshop could be accommodated. The fact that Orissa had experienced severe flooding only 2 months previously meant that it was difficult for CARE to confirm the arrangements for Bhubaneswar as the venue. The overall level of participation is an indicator that CARE has some committed NGO partners.

In the category of "3 most important things you learned during the workshop, virtually all mentioned "learning how to apply REA or variations of that." Other comments focused on learning assessment techniques generally and linking REA to disasters and the environment.

There were many suggestions for improving the course, all of which are recorded in Annex 1. Some of these suggestions are also cited below under "Recommendations" and all of the rest bear consideration for improving the next iteration of the workshop. Some of the more compelling remarks request that future workshops use local scenarios for the case studies used for the exercises.

Under the category of "any other comments," the participants were very supportive of the value of the experience and reflected satisfaction. Their additional recommendations for improvement are on target and will be incorporated in future changes.

For the overall rating of the course, 2 participants rated it "excellent," 9 rated it "very good" and 4 as "good." There was a correlation between those that ranked it "good" on this item and who ranked many of the presentations low (usually a 3) on the attribute of "value to my work."

Each session was rated in terms of "quality" and "value to my work." No session scored below 3.4, and several sessions scored in the 4.2 – 4.4 range. There is a message to the facilitators here to especially strive to sharpen the sessions that scored below 4.0.

Analysis of final exam

Twenty participants took the final exam. There were 10 questions, each worth 10 points and a bonus question, also worth 10 points. The test required written answers to all questions. See Annex 2 for a copy of the Final Exam.

The following are the results of the final exam:

- 6 scored 110%
- 1 scored 105%
- 5 scored 100%
- 1 scored 95%
- 3 scored 90%
- 1 scored 80%
- 1 scored 75%
- 1 scored 50%
- 1 scored 45%

In summary, the average score was 94%; the mean score was 100% and 18 out of 20 passed the exam, equal to 90% of the participants.

Recommendations for future REA training

1. The preceding account of each session includes some recommendations specific to that session. They are not repeated in this section of overall recommendations.
2. In addition, the evaluation results in Annex 1 include a section on suggestions for workshop improvements. These should be considered in future modifications to the REA training.
3. At the Oslo workshop, there were a number of complaints about the confusion caused by workshop materials being distributed through three documents. These materials were significantly reorganized for the India workshop, but still participants complained that they had to go between two documents. We need to reconsider what it will take to create the optimum presentation of the materials.

The following recommendations were made by Kelly and should be incorporated in future REA training materials (not including the Guidelines):

4. Establish ground rules in workshops at the beginning of the first day, emphasizing “no cell phones” would be acceptable.
5. Try to incorporate local case study material information where possible.
6. The 10 step process of the REA as a flow chart posted in the conference room was not adequate. It needs to be bigger, better placed and referred to more frequently.
7. Be clear about the objectives and outcomes of the training workshop combined with implementing the field practical use of the REA. Provide more information about the practical application earlier in the workshop.

8. Participants seem to want copies of the PowerPoint slides. Perhaps next time they can be included in the training materials or on a CD (as they were for Oslo).
9. Many of Kelly's recommendations regard details of the materials that have already been or will be incorporated into those documents, but don't require repeating here.

Practical field exercise

The training event was advertised as a six day event, with the final three days consisting of applying the skills learned in the first three days. The management of this segment, however, was turned over to workshop participants to demonstrate that they could in fact learn the basics of REA in the workshop and apply them to a real disaster situation.

The floods that impacted Orissa state two months before the workshop provided the context and the field sites for this aspect of the training. The three-day exercise followed the structure of the REA. First, the participants were divided into four teams of around 5 individuals, each group representing part of the composite "organization" undertaking the REA, and then each team visiting a different village to implement the "community level" assessment.

Day One of the practical exercise consisted of the four teams implementing the five elements of the Module 1, Organizational Level assessment. This was completed in a little more than half a day. The second part of Day One was spent in planning the community assessment, including agreeing to the questionnaire/checklist to be used for the focus group meetings. This questionnaire was based on Samuel's version, but tailored to the specific case of Orissa.

Day Two started with the departures from the hotel to the four villages surveyed for the community level assessment. In fact the four villages consisted of two pairs, each village being a few hundred meters from its partner in the pair, and the two pairs being several miles apart in different districts. The trip required about 45 minutes for one pair and 2 ½ hours for the other. The community level assessments, including a transect walk and focus group meetings, generally lasted about 2 ½ hours. Each group filled out the questionnaire form after leaving the villages.

Day Three was the implementation of Module Three, Consolidation and Analysis. This was managed by the two co-facilitators of the practical exercise and was greatly facilitated by CARE staff who prepared electronic templates for the consolidation and analysis forms. This process required almost the entire day and included the preparation of recommendations based on the results of the analysis.

Day Three concluded with a closing ceremony. Jock Baker, Paul and Kelly made some closing remarks and a short presentation was made by a representative of the Orissa government. Certificates and group photos were handed out to all participants.

Future directions

After the six-day training event, Jock Baker, Charles Kelly, Samuel Tadesse and Paul Thompson met in Mumbai to reflect on the overall experience, consider the implications and initiate plans

for future plans for the implementation of REA. The central observation made regarding the Bhubaneswar experience was to recognize that it may not be a dependable model for the future core approach to training REA. Although it was a very fruitful experience, it was recognized that six days may have been too long for some participants and that running the workshop right through the weekend may have been a burden and limited participation. In addition, it seems unlikely that we can regularly find venues that have just experienced a recent disaster and that are willing to insert arranging for and participating in an REA training event on top of responding to the disaster.

A possible alternative to implementing REA training in conjunction with disaster response is to limit the overall training to five days and to integrate a realistic simulation that will substitute for the actual field experience.

18. What are the 3 most important things you learned during the workshop?

- Organize an assessment
- Community assessment
- Consolidate an assessment

- REA means and objectives
- Relationship between REA and disaster mitigation
- How REA helps in sustainable natural resource management

- Four modules of REA
- Green review of relief procurement
- Disaster related factors influencing environmental impacts

- Environmental concerns in response mechanisms

- The systematic approach to REA
- The possibility of doing this quickly
- The need for proper training of the team

- You have to remain focused on your purpose and not get sidetracked
- Read and follow the directions
- REA is not all that complicated
- Advocacy for the environment/poverty connection is necessary even in emergencies

- Saving lives through environmentally appropriate ways (green procurement)
- Building up context statement
- A) disaster cause environmental imbalance b) environmental factors cause disaster, c) relief causes environmental imbalance

- Factors influencing environmental impacts
- Organizational assessment
- Environmental assessment

- Participation
- Time management
- Respect to suggestions

- REA concept
- Context module
- Rating and its use

- About REA (Introduction) conceptual framework
- About the cycle of disaster assessment process
- About the 4 modules

- Methodology
- Analyzing the concepts
- Facilitation

- Relationship of environment and disaster importance.
- Use of green procurement
- Need of organization as well as community assessment in REA.

- Contextual linkages of REA with disaster management
- Doing REA in disaster affected area.

- Taking faster decision on complicated issues.
 - The concept of REA.
 - The process of conducting REA.
-

19. What suggestions do you have for improving this course?

- Situation specific case studies must be given in more than three ????
- Evaluation sheet maybe provided at the end of each chapter
- According to the policy of our country, Sphere standards may be slightly changed
- Two or three reputed consultants opinion before answering to questions as case studies maybe included
- More time to be given for answering the questions put by participants
- Models of REA outcomes maybe showed during the time of workshop
- In the context of my understanding some portions of the course ??? quite cumbersome (Rating form at factors influencing environmental impact)
- To build in these modules into the Community Based Disaster Management modules and have a comprehensive module
- Good edit of training document to highlight critical points is needed
- The constant changing from book 1 to 2 was sort of avoidable by better organisation of the document
- Might want to work on making materials foolproof in order to produce desired result consistently. Feedback on confusing points from participants could be very helpful.
- Please include emotional needs as basic unmet needs.
- The issues mentioned in the workbook, i.e., from a different area so sometimes it confused us in order to understand the issues and do the exercise. So if the issues taken from the local areas it could be more easier.
- If both the exercise on the workbook and Guidelines could compile in one book it will be more easier for the participants.
- It should be residential. No substitute arrangements. Government agencies need to participate. More local illustrations.
- More emphasis may be given on community assessment forms (summary) and guidelines.
- After implementation of the process and REA utilization in the field may be discussed in detail.
- Examples may be given from the local situation.
- Different kind of exercise should be there in between the sessions, rather than having one kind of exercise for 3 days.
- More stuffs for in-depth understanding.
- If we can provide examples for each disaster, which is relevant to the country will be important. For example, we can go for drought, fold, etc., separately.
- Participant profile was heterogeneous. Homogeneity should have been desired and addressed adequately.
- The training could have been more interesting, maybe blending in a different way could have been helped.

- After covering disaster-environment interface the full subject of process of REA should be covered through lecture.
- This will help participant to get a full picture.
- Having achieved the above, I feel participants will better appreciate each module and form.
- Form wise exercises/case studies should be taken after completing full picture.

20. Any other comments? (If you need more space, please use the back.)

- Six days is a long program. We will try to condense it. (Note: *this person noted at item 16, length of seminar as “too short”*)
- Can we have different types of case studies please?
- The four module chart should have been up on the wall always
- The “rules” of participation was a very good idea and helped remove the chaos of day 1.
- Excellent job. Stayed on time very well. Food, accommodations excellent. Very well open to input. Clear explanations, well written materials. Good job of keeping the group on track. Please be patient with participants as all are learning this for the first time. It’s not as clear to us as it is to you.
- Great work! Thanks a lot!
- Facilitation was very nice.
- Some disturbances were there because of the ??? participants.
- The facilitators may take more time on the formats which are to be understood by participants.
- Sometimes the sound system created a hindrance.
- Some energizer in between the course to make the participants more active.
- The design should be such that it binds (?) all the participants to the maximum extent.
- Even though the REA is contextual we need more clear methods, without considering the disaster as a whole, we have to specify the disaster and relevant examples, which were successfully managed.
- Serious concern can be noted that number of participants went down every day. In particular, participants from government, donor agencies and UN agencies who would be carrying it forward should have had their presence. A similar kind of workshop can be planned again and interest/awareness should be generated.

21. What is your overall rating of this course?

Excellent
2

Very good
9

Good
4

Fair

Poor

Please rate the individual workshop sessions

5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Average 2 = Poor 1 = Unacceptable 0 = Does not apply

Session No. & Title	Quality AVE. SCORE	Value to my Work AVE. SCORE
1.1 Welcome & Objectives	4.2	3.4
1.2 The environment – disaster connection	4.3	4.2
1.3 REA conceptual framework	4.4	4.1
1.4 Disaster management context	3.9	3.8
1.5 Rapid assessment in disasters	4.3	4.1
2.2 Module One: context statement	4.2	4.0
2.3. Factors influencing environmental impacts	4.2	4.0
2.4 Environmental threats of disasters	4.2	3.9
2.5 Unmet basic needs	4.4	4.0
2.6 Potential negative consequences of possible relief activities	4.3	3.9
2.7 Participant experience		
3.2 Module Two: community level assessment	4.3	4.1
3.3 Module Three: consolidation and analysis	4.2	3.9
3.4 Module Four: green review and relief procurement	4.4	3.8
3.5 REA implementation issues	3.9	3.6

Annex 2: REA Workshop Final Exam

Name (optional) _____

Email address _____

Results _____

Questions:

1. What is an example of a secondary disaster effect on the environment?
2. Identify the four modules of the REA.
3. Poverty was identified as one underlying cause of disaster. Please name another underlying cause of disasters.
4. Identify at least one purpose of conducting disaster assessments.
5. What kind of information is included in a Module 1: Organisational Level Context Statement? (Give an example)
6. Rating Form 2 is about Environmental Threats of Disasters. Identify one example of such an environmental threat.
7. If disaster survivors have unmet basic needs, why might they turn to the environment to satisfy some of those needs?
8. If your organisation made plans to implement a relief activity and then discovered there were negative environmental consequences, what should your agency do?
9. Identify one information gathering technique appropriate for the community level assessment.
10. Identify one outcome of Module Three: Consolidation and Analysis.

Bonus Point: 11. Give one example of a disaster relief product or material that would meet the green procurement criteria.