

# REA Training Report

## REA Training – Lowveld Center for Life Long Learning White River, South Africa

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### Overview

This report covers a three day REA workshop held at the Lowveld Center for Life Long Learning (C4L) near White River, South Africa. The training was financed by USAID/OFDA through a grant to CARE, and conducted by Interworks and Benfield Hazard Research Centre from 29 to 31 July 2005. A follow-on Trainer of Trainers workshop was held at the same facility from 1 to 2 August 2005 and is the subject of a separate report.

A total of 24 individuals participated in the REA training, of 42 who originally applied. Of this number, 12 persons passed the learning evaluation test (75% correct answers or better) at the end of the REA training. A list of participants is attached.

In summary,

- Over 80% of the participants rated the workshop “very good” or “excellent”.
- Over 90% felt there was the correct number of participants.
- Participants were generally split over whether the workshop was too short or the correct length (48% of responses, each).
- The issues of the workshop being too short and not allowing enough time for exercise also came out in the participant comments (see below).
- Concerns were also expressed about workshop venue and accommodations (also see below).

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## **Challenges and Issues**

The C4L workshop encountered a number of challenges and issues which are summarized below.

### SAA Strike

A number of participants were not able to attend the REA workshop because of a strike by South African Airways (SAA) the last week of July. The net result was a drop-out of four to six accepted participants and an uncertainty up to the first days of the workshop as to who would actually make it to the training site.

The SAA strike also prevented Prasad Sevekari, the Interworks co-trainer for the REA workshop, from arriving as planned on 26 July. He eventually arrived, after considerably difficulty, on 30 August. As a result, most of the organization and training for the REA segment was done by C. Kelly, with Prasad taking responsibility for leading the later ToT segment.

As Prasad was bringing all the workshop manuals his delay meant that participant's manual was not available for the first part of the first day of the training. The participant's manual was eventually printed locally and distributed during the latter part of the first day of the training. Participants were provided with the Guidelines for Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment when Prasad arrived. In the future it may be more expedient to have the training materials printed locally if possible.

### South African Visas

A number of workshop applicants needed visas to enter South Africa. Difficulty getting a visa meant that two to three accepted participants could not attend the workshop. It is likely than an earlier announcement of the workshop and earlier acceptance of participants would have minimized this problem.

### Community Assessment

A local consultant was hired to assist in organizing the community level assessment (CLA) exercise. The date of the exercise was switched from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the workshop because it was not possible to conduct the activity on Sunday (the 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop day).

The CLA field exercise went well despite uncertainties on the day of the exercise due to a local funeral. However, the time needed to travel to and from the exercise location, together with a stop on the way back (see below), extended the time envelope for the CLA beyond what would have been needed if a field trip had not been involved. This "time overrun" resulted in a slight shortening of sessions in the rest of the workshop.

### Workshop Location and Facilities

C4L is an established training facility located in a semi-urban area between Nelspruit and White River, South Africa. The somewhat isolated nature of the facility provides a calm and focused environment for learning. As is typical for such facilities, accommodations are "sharing" with 2-3 persons per lodging building with each building containing one bathroom.

That lodging at C4L would be on a sharing basis was noted in the workshop flyer. Some participants either specified they wanted single accommodations at C4L, or opted for more costly commercial lodging near the training site.

In future use of the C4L facility, the option (and costs) of staying on the C4L campus or at neighboring commercial establishments should be provided in the announcement flyer. The availability of lodging options addresses participant comments about accommodations at C4L.

A number of participants needed to stop by a bank or store during the workshop. Opportunities to do this were limited to the CLA exercise. Many commercial facilities in South Africa abide by “housewife hours”, and are not open in the evening or weekends. Future use of the C4L facility should include a “mid-day” excursion to White River or Nelspruit to allow participants to shop or conduct other personal business.

#### “Not Enough Time”

As with almost all previous trainings, a number of participants indicated that they felt there was not enough time provided to adequately complete the workshop exercises or the whole training (see below). The second half of the training was more rushed than originally scheduled, in parts due to the extended time taken for the CLA (and shopping visit) and the need to change the schedule to accommodate the CLA.

Still, there was a contrast between the five working groups in the workshop. At least one group was usually able to complete an exercise in less time than initially provided. Another group appeared to have considerable difficulty in working through written instructions and simulation updates, and was at times not able to complete an assignment even with an extension of time<sup>2</sup>. (The initial time provided for an exercise was usually extended depending on how well all the groups were doing at completing the exercise.)

Possible ways to deal with the challenge of mixed skills and capacities in future workshops include:

- Better participant selection to focus on individuals with disaster and/or assessment experience, even at the expense of fewer total participants.
- Screening of participants at the start of the training to identify individuals who may face challenges in accomplishing the rapid assessment process.
- Ensuring that each working group has at least two persons with rapid assessment background.
- Emphasizing that the workshop is intense and involves simulations requiring rapid decision making.
- Extending the length of the training to accommodate individuals with less appropriate backgrounds.
- Changing the training day to allow more time for exercises and run each exercise into a break (e.g., coffee, lunch) so that those who complete the work earlier do not have to sit around and wait for the others to finish.
- Having the trainer not leading the session participate in a slower group to provide hands-on guidance.

#### “Self-Dispatched Participants”

Six individuals self dispatched themselves to the REA workshop, five arriving unannounced on the evening before the start of the training. A decision was made to allow all six individuals to attend. In retrospect, and given issues which arose during and after the training, several of these individuals should not have participated in the workshop because of a lack of appropriate background and experience.

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<sup>2</sup> Language may have also contributed to some of the delay, as not all participants were native English speakers. However, the same situation developed in the Nairobi training, where all participants were fluent in English.

### Financial Support

Two policies were developed on scholarships for the workshop:

1. Project support for participants would be limited to food, lodging, training materials, training facilities and travel to and from the Nelspruit bus station or airport and specifically not include other travel to and from C4L or South Africa.
2. Local costs (as indicated above) for NGOs and local South African organization participants would be covered to the greatest degree possible.

The justification for a relatively high level funding for local costs was based on:

1. The high cost of travel to South Africa for individuals coming by air<sup>3</sup> and a need to lower the total cost of the training for these participants, and,
2. To encourage participation by South African community level organizations and researchers.

The two policies were generally well understood and accepted. However, three cases did arise where one group asked for funds for their return trip after the workshop. After consultations with C4L (as host of the training) a decision was made that these requests could not be granted<sup>4</sup>.

### **REA Training Evaluation Results**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Average Score</b> (23 responses or as indicated)	Rating Range: Strongly Agree: 5, Agree: 4, Neither Agree or Disagree: 3, Disagree: 2, Strongly Disagree: 1
1. Subject matter was adequately covered	4.5 (22 responses)	
2. Content was suitable for my background and experience	4.39	
3. Program was well-paced	3.96	
4. Training materials were relevant	4.68 (22 responses)	
5. Participants were encouraged to take an active part	4.76	
6. The program met my individual objectives	4.43	
7. Program was relevant to my job	4.65	
8. I would recommend this program to my colleagues	4.57	
9. I feel prepared to conduct an REA	4.35	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	Rating Range: 5=excellent to 1=poor.
10. Lecture method	4.52	
11. Facilitation team	4.68 (22 responses)	
12. Small group sessions	4.43	

<sup>3</sup> Several participants came from East Africa (e.g., Sudan, Kenya). Future REA training is planned for this region, a decision was made to not defer these individual's participation as there was no certainty this training will take place.

<sup>4</sup> In two cases, the individuals involved rode to Johannesburg with the training team, a beneficial arrangement in terms of navigating Johannesburg in the evening.

13. Simulation Exercises	4.45 (22 responses)	
14. Meeting space	4.13	
15. Overall organization	4.26	
16. Other participants	4.29 (21 responses)	

Length of workshop:

Correct 48%  
 Too Short 48%  
 Too Long 4%  
 (23 respondents)

There were Just Enough 91%  
 Too Many 9% participants.  
 (23 respondents)

What is your overall rating of this course?

Excellent 48%  
 Very Good 35%  
 Good 9%  
 Fair 4%  
 (23 responses)

Suggestions or comments by participants for improving the course

*Comments Provided at the End of Workshop*

- Give a more concrete overview of the REA at the beginning.
- Take more time for the REA exercises, less on the beginning parts.
- A little more time to do the simulations since (we) are still in the learning process.
- Lengthen/extended period for the course.
- In the future, the course must take at least two to three weeks in order for the people to become fully educated.
- More time for fieldwork.
- Need to include/add more time for participants CLA case study/field work.
- More time and specification.
- More time for exercises.
- Pacing – day 3 quite rushed.
- Can it be done in 3 days well?
- Time was short, especially when filling in the forms.
- Change groups/seating during sessions.
- Avoid training during the weekend.
- Could be conducted during the week-days.
- Improve accommodations facilities for the participants.
- Accommodation needs improvement. Sharing rooms and bathroom facilities was distressing.
- Change venue. (Mentioned twice)
- Please the organizers have to get us pens, folders and other working materials. (Same request mentioned three times.)
- Make sure white board markers work.
- May I suggest that each module must have clear notes – hand outs on paper copy for step by step. Not only power point alone

- More case studies for different types of disasters
- Hire an editor – both manuals full of typos (version 4?).
- By far, the best!
- Focused.
- Overall the workshop course was very interesting and an eye opener.
- It was more loosely linked to the environment than I expected.
- Seemed more like a disaster needs assessment which incorporates environmental concerns.

*Comments provided at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Day<sup>5</sup>*

- Please again don't talk your English fast. Remember, English is not even my second language is my fifth language.
- Field trip should be scheduled so that people do not have to go back to class after a field trip.
- Needed more (time) for the CLA.
- Transition of facilitator needed to have been done better.
- Try not to spend time with self-evident questions and answers.

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<sup>5</sup> 5 of 11 comments about the need for more time for training have not been included as this point is represented in the overall workshop feedback.

### Rating of Individual Workshop Sessions

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

Session No. & Title	Session Content (23 responses or as indicated)	Instructional Methods (14 responses or as indicated)
1.1 Welcome / Introductions	4.68 (22 responses)	4.43
1.2 Disasters and the Environment	4.62 (21 responses)	4.31 (13 responses)
1.3 Overview of Disaster Management	4.48 (21 responses)	4.31 (13 responses)
1.4 REA Conceptual Framework	4.35	4.36
1.5 Rapid Assessments in Disasters	4.57	4.92 (13 responses)
1.6 Module 1: REA Context Statement	4.43	4.57
1.7 Factors influencing environmental impacts	4.57 (21 responses)	4.36
2.1 Simulation Launch – SimEx 1 and SimEx2	4.26	4.21
2.2 Environmental Threats of Disasters	4.48	4.5
2.3 Unmet Basic Needs	4.61	4.71
2.4 Negative Environmental Consequences of Relief Activities	4.36 (22 responses)	4.5
2.5 Reports/ Discussion	4.22	4.29
3.1 Module Two: Community Level Assessment	4.61	4.57
3.2 Module Three: Consolidation and Analysis	4.5	4.6 (15 responses)
3.3 Module Four: Green Review of Relief Procurement	4.43	4.29
3.4 REA Implementation Issues	4.52	4.57

### Participants List

#### Participant Information – C4L REA Training – 29-31 July 2005

#	Name	Email	Organization
1	Dane Fredenburg	dfredenburg@crsert.org	Catholic Relief Service/Emergency Response Team, Nairobi
2	Ephraim Kiragu	eakiragu@cwsea.org	Church World Service, East Africa
3	Desmond Pyle	<a href="mailto:des.pyle@ru.ac.za">des.pyle@ru.ac.za</a>	Rhodes University, South Africa
4	Sammy N. Mutua	<a href="mailto:smutua@cwsea.org">smutua@cwsea.org</a>	Church World Service, East Africa
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	Elsharief		
6	Simon Munthali	<a href="mailto:smunthali@awfsa.org">smunthali@awfsa.org</a>	African Wildlife Foundation, South Africa
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23	Mary V. Mukwavi	<a href="mailto:mary_mukwavi@wvi.org">mary_mukwavi@wvi.org</a>	World Vision Zambia
24	Khanyi Ellen Uamusse	<a href="mailto:lusito@webmail.co.za">lusito@webmail.co.za</a>	Lusito Labomama, South Africa

### Three Day REA Workshop Agenda - July 29-31 2005 – C4L/Nelspruit South Africa

Note that the CLA field exercise was switched from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> day as the 3<sup>rd</sup> was Sunday.

29 July (Friday) (Day 1)	30 July (Saturday) (Day 2)	31 July (Sunday) (Day 3)
0830 Introduction & Overview 0915 Disasters & Environment 10:30 <b>Coffee/Tea</b> 10:45 Disaster Management 11:45 REA Conceptual Framework	0800 Departure for fieldwork 0900 - Fieldwork – REA community level assessment - Jerusalem 1230 – Return	0830 SimEx 1 & 2 Cont. 0915 Report & Discussion 1000 <b>Coffee/Tea</b> 1015 Environmental Threats & SimEx 3 1100 Unmet Basic Needs & SimEx 4 1145 Negative Environmental Consequences & SimEx 5
1245 Lunch	1230 Lunch – Tabulate Field Results	1230 Lunch
13:45 REA & Disaster Assessments 1515: <b>Coffee/Tea</b> 1530 Module 2: Community Level Assessment Review 1645 Day 2 Fieldwork Instructions 1715 Team field-work planning	1330: Debrief on fieldwork 1415: CLA data exercise 1445: Module 1: OLA <sup>6</sup> & Context Statement 1515: <b>Coffee/tea</b> 1530 Factors Influencing Environmental Impacts 1615 Simulation Launch	1330 Discussion of results & OLA 1415 Module 3: Consolidation & Analysis 1445 Exercise: Consolidation & Analysis 1530 <b>Coffee/Tea</b> 1545 Presentations & Discussion 1650 Module 4: Green Review 1730 Learning Evaluation & Workshop Closing

<sup>6</sup> OLA=Organization Level Assessment, CLA=Community Level Assessment

	1630: SimEx 1 & 2 (start)	
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All times are approximate.