

LIRNEasia and Sarvodaya

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(L-R) Dr Vin ya Ariyaratne, Executive Director, Sarvodaya, Rohan Samarajiva, Executive Director, LIRNEasia, Divakar Goswami, Director of Organizational Development, LIRNEasia, Na/aka Gunewardene, CEO, TVE Asia Pacific, Dr. Gordon Chow, Lecturer, London School of Economics, Dr. Wilson Baker Jr., Senior Vice President, WorldSpace Inc and S Karunarotne, Sri Lanka National Committee on Large Dams.

LIRNEasia, in collaboration with Sarvodaya launched the first phase of a project to provide disaster mitigation training and last mile connectivity to tsunami-affected villages along the coast of Sri Lanka recently. The research project will assess the effectiveness of training and five different ICT technologies to lay the groundwork for making all 226 tsunami-affected Sarvodaya villages' disaster resilient. This project is funded by the International Development Research Centre of Canada and has partners the Vanguard Foundation, a disaster communication expert from the London School of Economics (LSE), TVE Asia Pacific and the Community Tsunami Early Warning Center (CTEC) at Peraliya. "One of the biggest lessons we learned from the tsunami was how lacking Sri Lanka was in terms of an emergency warning system.

This project seeks to prepare our villages from the ground up to become disaster resilient. When the official warning comes, the villages will be ready to receive them and act on them promptly;' Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, Executive Director, Sarvodaya stated. The first phase will cover 32 tsunami-affected Sarvodaya villages at differing levels of organizational development. Villages will be provided with different configurations of training and information and communication technologies. The ICT's include VS ATs, Disaster Warning Response and Recovery (DWRR) units based on addressable satellite radio provided by WorldSpace. "The current project, driven by civil society organizations, has extraordinary potential for saving lives and restoring a sense of security to the affected people in Sri Lanka and hopefully around the Bay of Bengal," Professor Rohan Samarajiva, Executive Director of LIRNEasia stated.