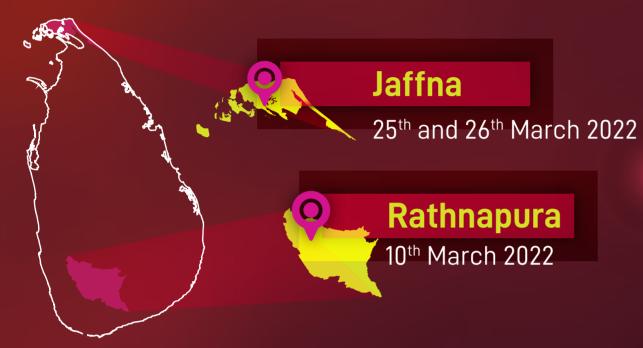
Hearing the voices that matter

Incorporating citizen's perspective on pandemic preparedness and response in Sri Lanka

March 2022, Sri Lanka

How did the project engage local communities?

Two community engagement workshops were held in Rathnapura and Jaffna to incorporate a citizen's perspective on pandemic preparedness, with a focus on multi-hazard scenarios.



A simulation-based training workshop to mimic real life disaster scenarios

Scenarios addressed local knowledge and skills on multi hazard preparedness, mitigation, and response

Participants worked in groups to share their knowledge and develop a community driven action plan Which members of the community contributed to the research?

For each workshop

75 community participants

- Community-based organisations
- Grass root level public health workers
- Local youth
- Local women groups
- Local disaster management practitioners

Who organised the workshops?

Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka (National Dengue Control Unit, Anti-malaria campaign, Disaster Preparedness and Response Division), University of Huddersfield, UK, Universities of Peradeniya, Colombo, Moratuwa & Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement



What did the communities tell us about ways to improve pandemic preparedness at the local level?



- Incorporate village based early warning mechanisms through grass root level community networks
- ii. Include community leaders to impart local knowledge systems
- iii. Utilise existing public health community support groups to communicate preparedness messages
- iv. Strengthen village committees for a cohesive plan to boost preparedness



- i. Define the role of community leaders in response strategies to ensure timely coordination
- ii. Use existing community channels to improve risk communication
- iii. Link grass root level public health workers and CBOs to identify highly impacted areas and initiate swift response
- iv. Enhance community mobilisation during response by continuous engagement with communities during preparedness phase



- . Use a bottom up approach with community centered solutions for short- and long-term recovery plans
- Utilize local resources, both human and logistics, rather than rely on recovery plans made elsewhere.
- iii. Build a local knowledge platform on indigenous solutions





For more information, visit http://www.pandemic-mhew.org

What else did the research team learn through the workshops?

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- Simulation-based training was successful in proactively engaging grass root level community workers and the community to voice their concerns and experiences
- Community centered strategies are important in every step of the disaster cycle, promoting local knowledge and firsthand experience in multi hazard scenarios
- It is vital to encourage a working relationship between the grass root level public health workforce and the community to build trust, mutual understanding, and coherence during disaster response

Partners

