

# Caribbean Disaster information Network (CARDIN), University of the West Indies

## Introduction

*“The Caribbean Disaster Information Network (CARDIN) was established in June 1999 to provide linkages with Caribbean disaster organizations, to widen the scope of the collection of disaster related information and to ensure improved access to such material. The project is funded by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).*

*CARDIN in collaboration with its partners seeks to provide a new and dynamic approach to accessing and disseminating disaster related information in a manner that adequately prepares and minimizes the effect of disasters in the Caribbean Region. This has been achieved through the collection, indexing and dissemination of disaster information to produce a comprehensive database which encompasses the English, French, Spanish and Dutch speaking Caribbean ... The Library of the University of the West Indies at Mona, has been selected as the focal point for disaster information in the Caribbean.”*

(Source: <http://wwwcardin.uwimona.edu.jm:1104/members.htm>, accessed 06/11/02) .

<b>Sustainability factor</b>	<p><b>Directly Involved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beverley Lashley, Project Co-ordinator</li> <li>• CARDIN staff</li> <li>• Narrative Annual Report June 1999-June 2000</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The CARDIN project was designed to achieve a set of objectives over a three-year period.</p> <p><u>General Objective:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen the capacity within the Caribbean community, for the collection indexing, dissemination and use of disaster related information serving as a sub-regional disaster information centre.</li> </ul> <p><u>Specific Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish a Caribbean Network to link organisations and create a mechanism to collect disaster related information and guarantee access to it.</li> <li>• Provide a viable source of information to support disaster management policy-making and improve the level of information available to the public.</li> <li>• Strengthen internetworking in disaster information.</li> <li>• Promote use and self-promotion of the system</li> <li>• Deliver user education and training and include outreach facilities</li> <li>• Ensure the visibility of the information network.</li> <li>• To make the information available in the Caribbean's four main languages: English, French, Spanish and Dutch</li> </ul>
<b>Policy environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adherence to rules of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). In this regard each organisation should define its policies regarding IPR, ownership of and access to data and databases.</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional arrangements</b>	<p><u>Roles and responsibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project is co-ordinated by Beverly Lashley. Her functions are as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the day-to-day operations of CARDIN.</li> <li>• Managing and controlling the monetary funding provided by ECHO.</li> <li>• Liaising with regional partners within the network and other related international organisations.</li> <li>• Promoting the activities of the project.</li> <li>• Preparing and producing publications on disaster information.</li> <li>• Coordination the project to create a disaster information database which incorporates records from the English, Spanish, French and Dutch Caribbean.</li> <li>• Representing CARDIN at Caribbean conferences and seminars.</li> <li>• Assisting with the upgrade and design of the CARDIN website.</li> <li>• Monitoring library staff and contacted workers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Recruiting trained professionals.
- Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC is made up of representatives of the following organisations: CLAMED (Centro Latin mericano de Medicine de Desastres), UAG (Université Antilles Guyane), CRID( Regional Disaster Information Center for Latin America & the Caribbean), CDERA (Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency), IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), National Organisations on Disaster, PAHO (Pan American Health Organization), Netherlands Antilles, *IDNDR* (International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction) and UWI (University of the West Indies). The UWI Librarian will chair the committee.
  - The functions of the committee are as follows:
  - Approving the work programme and budget for the network.
  - Allocation mutually agreeable responsibilities for the execution of tasks among partners in the network.
  - Approving proposals developed by the coordinator for submission to donor agencies to secure the necessary resources for support of the network
  - Reviewing progress reports on the implementation of the work plan.
  - The PAC meets twice/year.
- The 1999/2000 Annual report highlighted that a clear statement of roles and responsibilities of national disaster focal agencies and regional organisations needed to be made to insure coverage and avoid duplication of effort.

#### Project design

- It is designed from a standard project framework including objectives that are formed by outputs. It started with identifying the most appropriate network model, the level of participation for each institution co-ordinating mechanisms within UWI.
- According to a 2000 evaluation, the sustainability of the project is assured because it is placed within an institution that is appreciative of the importance of disaster related information to Caribbean development. However, there is *“a lack of clarity in the project documentation regarding the structure and overall expectations (including plan) of this project”*.

#### Coordination / communication

##### Network Model:

The model chosen for the network is a distributed system with the regional nodes, national nodes, coordinating units and collaborating agencies having clear agreements regarding responsibilities and benefits of participation. This arrangement offers the best chances for success of the network because of the involvement and goodwill of all.

The following is a list of activities and tools critical to the success of the network:

- Distributed workloads among the collaborating entities.
- Agreed central coordinating functions such as coordinating the programme of the network, directing the development of the network, and conducting training, organising meetings, supporting activities, publicising the network.
- Adherence to rules of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). In this regard each organisation should define its policies regarding IPR, ownership of and access to data and databases.
- Adherence to agreed standards.
- Central database development (important in an environment where not all participating units have databases accessible through the Web, but unnecessary where links can be established to existing databases)
- Training for network members and users.
- Directory of resources (using a standard format for building the directory)
- Directory of research projects in the area of disasters in the Caribbean.

See <http://wwwcardin.uwimona.edu.jm:1104/members.htm> for diagram of the model

	for the network.
<b>Target Groups</b>	<p><u>Definition of target groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Groups that will benefit from the database are Government agencies, Planning Unit, Statisticians, Policy Makers Researchers, General Public and Students.</li> <li>• For Government Agencies, the information accessed is fed into their National planning for disasters. Training has been carried out among the general public and students (through schools) so that people may increase their awareness of the their options regarding disaster preparedness.</li> <li>• A separate target group can be identified as the organisations that provide the information for the CARDIN database.</li> </ul> <p><u>Relationships with target groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of each of the member organisations (CLAMED, UAG, CRID, CDERA, IFRC, National Organisations on Disaster, PAHO, Netherlands Antilles, and UWI) are required to join the Project Advisory Committee, and hence have an input into the project.</li> </ul> <p><u>ICT Awareness of target groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARDIN runs training seminars for both the member organisations and the potential users of information.</li> </ul> <p><u>Knowledge of the project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The member organisations had an input into the project right from the start.</li> <li>• A lot of public interest was generated via the logo design competition (see <a href="http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/cardin/">http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/pages/cardin/</a> for details).</li> <li>• There is a strong web presence on websites of key importance to disaster information in the Caribbean, such as CDERA, DIPCHO, INDRD (now called ISDR), CPACC, Caribbean disaster readiness manual, CRID, CDMP, UNEP, UN ECLAC, Gleaner online (Jamaican newspaper).</li> </ul>
<b>ICT Technology</b>	<p><u>Technologies in use</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training room at the main library has 15 computers.</li> <li>• Server to host network</li> <li>• Industrial scanner</li> <li>• Computers and printers were supplied to make sure that each partner had the minimum hardware and software needed to access the network.</li> </ul> <p>The UWI had in place the necessary support services for the ICTs. The University run a university wide computer network and has skilled technicians who are part of the overhead costs for maintenance. Many other of the institutes involved have basic computer services for normal day to day operations and are able to communicate via the internet with UWI.</p>
<b>Financing</b>	<p><u>Capital contributions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded by ECHO.</li> <li>• Total budget for period June 1999 – June 2000 was 230,000 Euro.</li> <li>• Total budget for period July 2000 – Oct 2001 was 263,700 euro, of which 63,700 Euro was to be contributed by CARDIN and 200,000 Euro was to be contributed by ECHO.</li> </ul> <p><u>Training resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In period June 1999 – July 2000:</li> <li>• 5x Handouts in Eng + Fre @ 500 Euros = 2,000 Euros.</li> <li>• 2x Training- Seminars @ 6,000 Euros = 12,000 Euros.</li> <li>• Meeting- evaluation = 4,750 Euros</li> <li>• In period July 2000 – Oct 2001:</li> <li>• 30,400 Total budgeted for Training. No further details.</li> </ul> <p>No further financial details available at present.</p>
<b>Project Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project provided a forum for disparate institutions across the Caribbean to share information and communicate. The Project Advisory committee has</li> </ul>

	<p>drawn people from a number of institutions mention elsewhere. One of the challenges was to establish ground rules that would define the responsibilities and obligations of members and the centre. Also to establish common operating standards. This included such basic activity as finding a common vocabulary and generating a disaster related thesaurus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst the forum for communication is predominately electronic digital the project relies on manual collection of data. Past processes had generated a wealth of paper-based information, stored in a variety of locations across the Caribbean. Students of UWI therefore were involved in the collation and input of this data onto the database. This human input was key to making the project work and suggests a valuable lesson regarding the transition of a paper process to a digital one. It is then kept up to date electronically by the various institutions involved, but it was the backlog that needed special attention.</li> <li>• One problem with the project process is that no documents explicitly state what outputs will be achieved.</li> <li>• The proposed date on the work plan for completion of the bibliography was December 1999. This deadline was not met as insufficient records had been submitted by organisations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key linkages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CARDIN had to make linkages across a number of Caribbean countries. There were differences between institutions. For instance in Jamaica the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) is a government institution and therefore tied into the national planning for disaster preparedness. In Guyana, UAG is an academic institution and CARDIN has had to specifically plan the link to national disaster plans.</li> <li>• As mentioned before, the advisory committee of the project is comprised of representatives of the following (local and national) organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLAMED- The Latin American centre for disaster medicine.</li> <li>• UAG- Université Antilles Guyane</li> <li>• CRID- Regional Disaster Information Centre for Latin America &amp; the Caribbean</li> <li>• CDERA- Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency</li> <li>• IFRC- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</li> <li>• PAHO- Pan American Health Organization</li> <li>• Netherlands Antilles</li> <li>• UWI- University of the West Indies</li> <li>• National Organisations on Disaster, which includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) [Jamaica]</li> <li>- National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) [St.Lucia]</li> <li>- National Emergency Relief Organization (NERO) [Grenada]</li> <li>- Office of Disaster Preparedness (ODP) [British Virgin Islands]</li> <li>- National Emergency Management Office [Belize]</li> <li>- Central Emergency Relief Organization [Barbados]</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Links with information sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of June 2000, CARDIN had collected over 9000 records from the following sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAREN- Caribbean environmental database</li> <li>• CDERA- Caribbean disaster and emergency response agency</li> <li>• CLAMED- Latin American centre for disaster medicine</li> <li>• CRID- regional disaster information centre for Latin America and the Caribbean</li> <li>• PAHO- pan American health organisation</li> <li>• NATHAZ natural hazards in the Caribbean</li> <li>• NATCAT national library of Jamaica catalogue</li> <li>• Sir Arthur Lewis community college</li> <li>• St. Lucia solid waste management authority</li> <li>• Other libraries in Jamaica: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office of disaster preparedness and emergency management</li> <li>- Natural Resources conservation authority</li> <li>- Planning institute of Jamaica</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of agriculture</li> <li>- Scientific research council</li> <li>- Jamaica information service</li> <li>- Kingston and St. Andrew parish library</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However, the non-participation of member has had a negative effect on the project due to its reliance on their submission of records. Part of the reason for this is limited staff capacity within member agencies, both with regards to numbers and information management training.</li> <li>• A questionnaire was sent out to 40 members in conjunction with a project evaluation. The response was poor. Reasons for this included original link person had left and no-one else had enough knowledge to respond; their level of involvement was felt to be too low to be able to respond; and people just had not got around to answering it yet.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediaries</b>	Response from intermediaries to a recent evaluation questionnaire has been poor due to their limited capacity in answering the questions for various reasons.
<b>Capacity</b>	<p><u>Capacity of target groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions needed training in managing information and CARDIN have produced a training manual “organising disaster information units”.</li> <li>• Training programmes are run for those organisations that provide the information for CARDIN.</li> <li>• Seminars are run frequently for various organisations such as schools, the police, and other disaster organisations. These seminars create an awareness of the project and alert the public about how to use and access disaster information, to prevent or alleviate further destruction of our environment and to prepare for disaster related emergencies.</li> <li>• Language has been a barrier as having 4 language groups often makes communication difficult between agencies.</li> </ul> <p><u>Capacity of Project staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited technical capacity as the project co-ordinator has to both implement and manage the project.</li> <li>• Translation of the documents has been slow as CLAMED was unable to translate the documents at the point they were initially required. An outside translator was therefore used.</li> </ul>
<b>Development benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general public benefits in two ways. The first is a direct benefit, from the training seminars given by CARDIN. These training seminars not only give the participants the capacity to access disaster information, but also give a broad understanding of the world wide web. They are trained how to access disaster information, which in itself is an obvious benefit, but in doing this they learn vital skill about access information in general from the internet.</li> <li>• The second way that the public benefit from this project is indirect. Due to CARDIN, all the key organisations involved in disaster management have access to vital information, this means that they can carry out their jobs with more confidence and competence.</li> <li>• Although the objective of CARDIN is focussed on disaster preparedness, there have been interesting and useful unexpected outcomes from the project. The training of schools and institutions in the handling of data (in this case disaster related information) has built capacity in these local institutions. Teachers have reported that they learnt how to surf the internet and find information relevant to any subject.</li> </ul>
<b>Anecdotes</b>	