

DYNAMO Education & Outreach Abstract

Public outreach is an important component of any field campaign, particularly when the field campaign is in a foreign country. Establishing trust; informing the local communities about the presence of “odd looking” instrumentation; offering opportunities for local meteorologists to learn; and engaging the public in the science that is being conducted - all have many benefits to those who are involved. The Public Information Program (PIP) that is outlined below was designed specifically for the DYNAMO (Dynamics of the Madden-Julian Oscillation) field project that took place in the Maldives from 1 October 2011 - 31 March 2012.

Several areas of outreach and communication were developed for the DYNAMO PIP including digital media and printed materials for the general public, and targeted education events at schools in the Maldives. The digital media materials were available globally for anyone with internet access and included a public information website, Facebook posts and Tweets. Printed information was available at event locations and research sites. Targeted educational presentations were given to school groups in the Maldives, including one teacher’s workshop.

The Maldives Meteorological Service (MMS) was very instrumental in arranging the school visits for the DYNAMO outreach efforts that took place from October 1 - October 14, 2011. The outreach events were largely organized by the MMS. Several attempts were made to contact schools on Addu Atoll and Malé, however nothing developed from those attempts. Having a local source to connect with others in the community is beneficial; the MMS played a crucial role in the outreach events in that they were the catalyst to access the school system.

In all, five school presentations were given, including a workshop for high school science teachers and four presentations given to students in 6th-12th grades, some of their teachers, and parents. Two of the schools were on Addu Atoll, while the other two were located in the capital city of Malé. We reached over 215 students, and close to 40 teachers, many of who attended the workshop. The school presentations were given by Alison Rockwell, Eric DeWeaver of NSF, and Courtney Schumacher of Texas A&M University. Alison also gave the teachers workshop presentation.