

Module: Public Health Disaster Planning for Districts

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Resource Title: Session 3.b: Rapid Needs Assessment

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Rapid Needs Assessment

Before intervening in a disaster, you need to conduct a Rapid Needs Assessment



 Oxfam International, flickr

Narrated by Dr. Roy William Mayega

Activity 2.3: Rapid Needs Assessment

- ***Problem: Let us work in our 5 district teams. Each team will address one of the following disaster situations and answer the question: What kind of information would you need before you establish a full scale response?***
 - Group 1: Will look at Floods
 - Group 2: Will look at War and Conflicts
 - Group 3: Will look at a Disease Outbreak
 - Group 4: Will look at Drought and Famine
 - Group 5: Will look at a Fire
- Each group will present for 3 Minutes

Objectives of Rapid Needs Assessment

- Has a disaster occurred?
- How many are affected?
- What are the immediate needs?
- Are local resources available?
- What external resources are needed?
- What are the estimated costs?
- Develop a plan of action

Key Activities in Rapid Assessment

1. Planning the visit
2. Initial tasks of the team
3. Field data collection
4. Analysis of data
5. Identification of high risk groups
6. Dissemination of information

1. Planning the Visit

- Compose the assessment team and select a team leader
- Collect background information on the incident
- Determine gaps in information that need to be addressed

2. Initial Tasks of the Team

- Preparation of assessment checklist
- Assessment of existing information
- Timetable for assessment
- Assign tasks and set up communication
- Inform and include local authorities
- Obtain equipment (computers, radios, etc)
- Organize transport, vehicles, fuel, visas, etc
- Inform potential donors and key decision-makers

3. Field Visit and Data Collection

- Information Needs in the Emergency Phase
 - Affected population/Demographics
 - Vital Health information/Health data
 - Food/Nutritional status
 - Environment, Water and Sanitation
 - Shelter & non-food items
 - Resource needs
 - Coordination

3. Field Visit and Data Collection

- Methods

- Visual inspection of the affected area
- Interviews with community leaders, health workers, emergency personnel, individuals from affected population
- Review existing information
- Conduct rapid surveys to fill gaps in available information

3. Field Visit and Data Collection

- Affected Population
 - Size and demographics
 - Vulnerable groups
 - Patterns of movement
 - Socio-cultural factors
 - Ethnicity

3. Field Visit and Data Collection

- Vital Health Information
 - Deaths and their main causes
 - Diseases of epidemic potential
 - Diseases of public health importance
 - Sources of information
 - Hospitals and health centres
 - Local Leaders
 - Response personnel
 - Individuals

3. Field Visit and Data Collection

- Health Care Infrastructure
 - Health personnel
 - Drugs & vaccine supply
 - Background health information
- Nutrition Status and Food
 - Acute malnutrition (children 6 mo-5 years)
 - Micronutrient deficiencies
 - Vulnerable groups: pregnant women, elderly

3. Field Visit and Data Collection

- Environment
 - Water supply
 - Shelter
 - Sanitation
- Resource Needs
 - Human resources
 - Food items
 - Non Food items

Challenges in Rapid Assessment

- Multiple Assessments
- Team Balance – Local, Gender, Culture, Minorities
- Single versus Multiple Focus
- Local Systems and Assessments
- Targeting – what do you need to know?

Key Principles of Rapid Assessment

- Aimed at determining the intervention needed
- Must be completed quickly
- Aimed at identifying priority areas
- It provides baseline data for continuous monitoring and surveillance

Additional Source Information

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