

Steps in Community Disaster Preparedness Planning

1. Community Disaster Awareness/Sensitization meeting
2. Formation of Disaster Management/Response teams
3. Training of the Disaster Management/Response teams
4. Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment
5. Identification of disaster response mechanisms/Strategies
6. Documenting a Community Preparedness Plan
7. Disseminating the plan to all stakeholders
8. Public education, training, rehearsals and regular review of the plan

Community Disaster Awareness/Sensitization meeting

Community disaster committees should organize public awareness/sensitization meetings to apprise their communities of Disaster Management. The sensitization meeting should be as inclusive as possible. The community should be informed of the impacts of disasters on their livelihoods, lives, property and environment.

Formation of Disaster Management/Response Teams

1. Disaster Assessment Team
2. Early Warning Team

3. Disaster Response Teams

4. First Aid Teams

5. Search and Rescue Teams

Training of the Disaster Management/Response Teams

All the disaster management teams need to be trained on their roles and responsibilities. Regular trainings should be organized for the teams to update and refresh their skills on their roles and responsibilities. The teams should be engaged in regular mock drills to rehearse their roles and responsibilities.

Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

This is the responsibility of the Disaster Assessment Team. The team should come up with hazard, vulnerability and risk maps of the community. The team should come up with base maps indicating vulnerable populations and hazard prone areas in the community.

The team should engage the whole community and other stakeholders as much as possible. The team in consultation with other stakeholders should establish standard assessment procedures. Assessment is a process, hence continues throughout the disaster cycle (Disaster to Development Continuum Model).

Identification of Disaster Response Mechanisms/Strategies

This is the responsibility of the community disaster coordination committee and disaster response teams. This is a participatory process hence should engage all the stakeholders in disaster management in the community. This process is based on the hazard, vulnerability and Risk maps established by the Assessment teams.

The community should be actively involved to enable the development of locally appropriate and acceptable strategies. This process is also continuous because hazards, vulnerability and risks may change their characteristics.

Documenting a Community Preparedness Plan

Documenting the plan should be the last thing after extensive assessments and response mechanisms have been identified. Planning process should actively engage many stakeholders as much as possible. The plan is just a tool, planning does not end here, Community disaster preparedness planning is a continuous process.

Disseminating the Plan to All Stakeholders

The plan needs to be disseminated to all stakeholders. It helps in justifying the existence of the plan as well as appraising the stakeholders of their roles and responsibilities.

Public education, training, rehearsals and regular review of the plan

The community should be trained on the contents of the plan and their roles and responsibilities. System wide rehearsals should be conducted to help stimulate the plan into community day to day activities. The plan should be regularly reviewed to keep it up to date

Personal reflection

1. Explain using relevant examples the elements of a disaster preparedness plan
2. Outline the Steps in Community Disaster Preparedness Planning