

Information Management

Disaster preparedness and response depend on gathering, analyzing and acting on timely and accurate information before, during and after disasters. Community disaster committees should pre-determine what information they need, how it will be collected, who will collect it, who will analyze it and how it will be integrated into a timely decision-making process. Community needs to develop procedures and mechanisms for obtaining, analyzing and responding to early warning information related to hazard detection, forecasting and alerts. Once a disaster strikes, Community disaster management committees must conduct initial assessments that are timely and that inform emergency responders about critical and immediate life-saving needs.

Early Warning Systems

The purpose of early warning system is to detect, forecast, and when necessary, issue alerts related to impending hazard events. Early warning needs to be supported by information about the actual and potential risks that a hazard poses, as well as the measures people can take to prepare for and mitigate its adverse impacts.

Early warning information needs to be communicated in such a way that facilitates

decision making and timely action of response organizations and populations at risk. All too often, those who need to heed early warning alerts have little faith in the warnings. When developing public early warning systems, planners must account for the public's perceptions of warnings, their experience related to reacting to warnings in the past, and general public beliefs and attitudes regarding disasters and public early warnings. Community disaster committee's efforts to build these capacities should complement local indigenous capacities and knowledge related to disaster early warning and alert.

Resource Mobilization

A Community Disaster preparedness plan should spell out the policies for acquisition and disbursement of funds, use of outside equipment and services, and emergency funding strategies. Community disaster committees should develop strategies, agreements and procedures for mobilizing and acquiring emergency funds, supplies and equipment in the event of a disaster.

Public Education, Training and Rehearsals

An essential part of a disaster preparedness plan is the education of those who may be threatened by a disaster. Community disaster preparedness must be supported by public education campaigns, training of response teams and rehearsals of

emergency response scenarios. Rehearsals invariably expose gaps that otherwise remain overlooked. Rehearsals are most effective when they are system wide and engage as many of the disaster response players as possible. Rehearsals also keep the plans fresh, during extended periods of time when no disaster strikes.