

## **Disaster Needs Assessment**

A disaster needs assessment will help guide implementation of the response. To plan effective response efforts, decision makers need to know:

- Whether or not an emergency exists
- The demographics of the affected population and the number of people affected
- The details of the emergency (cause, location, magnitude of disaster, etc.)
- The condition of the affected population (mortality and morbidity rates)
- The local response capacities and available resources, including organizational and logistical capabilities
- The extent and type of life-saving needs and priorities
- The likelihood of additional future problems or needs

## **Emergency Response Priorities**

Disaster emergency response should address the immediate and priority needs resulting from a disaster by provide basic life support needs such as:

- Drinking water and sanitation
- Adequate food
- Appropriate medical assistance
- Addresses the psychological and social stress caused by the disaster by providing

the victims with psychological and social support.

- Shelter (through housing and clothing) and fuel (for cooking and heating)
- Protect disaster victims from physical violence and aggression

### **Post-Emergency/Recovery Phase**

This major phase comprises of the relief and rehabilitation phases. In this phase communities affected by the disaster are assisted in returning to their proper level of functioning. Typical activities undertaken under this phase include:

- Restoration of essential services and installations
- Long-term measures of reconstruction, including the replacement of buildings and infrastructure that have been destroyed by the disaster.

**Note:** This phase is the most significant, in terms of long-term outcomes.

During this phase, the victims need resources and facilities so as to enable them to return back to their own homes and pursue their occupation so that they can sustain life on their own. *(They are provided with a whole new environment, adequate enough to pursue a normal or at least near normal life). This is called Rehabilitation)*

### **Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Phase**

Rehabilitation involves returning to normalcy thus:

- Repairing infrastructure
- Repairing damaged buildings
- Repairing critical facilities,
- Taking other actions necessary to help the community to return to normal

During this phase, emotional recovery occurs as families and individuals regroup and try to put their lives back in order. Emergency relief measures must be *discontinued* during this phase so that people can begin to regain their self-reliance.

In the Reconstruction Phase, the physical reordering of the community and of the physical environment is done, i.e., people reconstruct housing and other community facilities, and agriculture returns to normal. It may start fairly early and may last for many years. *It is worth to note that the time period for each phase may depend on the type and severity of the disaster*

## **Personal reflection**

1. Critically analyze the activities of each phase of a disaster