

Introduction

Man- Made and natural disasters have led to an increased number of refugees and displaced persons and even deaths worldwide. The needs of these affected populations are centered on common public health concerns such as food, shelter, water, sanitation, prevention of disease outbreaks and the treatment of injury and disease. All these needs have a direct impact on the communities yet meeting these basic needs under emergency circumstances poses unique and management problems, particularly in developing countries. An even greater challenge is helping to restore essential services in post-disaster and conflict situations. Sustainable development can therefore be directly related to the management of disasters. If development is destroyed through either man-made or natural disasters, then sustainable development cannot be achieved.

The purpose of the course

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the learners on disaster management and preparedness in community development.

The specific learning Objectives:

By the end of this Course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the necessary terminologies and identify causes of disasters
2. Evaluate and apply the preventive measures and disaster control methods
3. Analyze the impact of disasters on societies and use the skills to determine the future trends.
4. Apply the skills in humanitarian assistance in case of disasters

DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION OF DISASTERS

Introduction and overview

This topic defines disaster concepts and classifies disasters into natural, manmade and technological

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this topic the learner is expected to:

1. Define the terms used in disaster management
2. Classify disasters into natural, manmade and technological
- 3 Explain causes of disasters

Definitions of Concepts

Disaster

The word “Disaster” is from a French word *Desastre* meaning bad or evil star but in our context, a disaster is defined as: A serious disruption of the functioning of a society, causing widespread human, material, or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected society to cope using only its own resources (UNDHA, 2001)

Some common points which qualify an event as a disaster are:

- Extensive Destruction of Life and Property
- Usually sudden destruction without a warning
- Need for large scale intervention following the event

Difference between disasters and accidents

What separates a disaster from an accident, or incident, is its magnitude of need and of victims involved eg. An airline crash on a building which then collapses is certainly severe and costly, but the number of people affected is relatively small.

A hazard

- This is a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic

disruption or environmental degradation (ISDR, 2002)

- Hazards can include latent conditions that may represent future threats

Disaster Risk:

- Is the relative degree of probability that a hazardous event will occur. $R = F(D, E, V)$ (ISDR, 2002)

- R=Risk
- D=Dangerousness
- E=Exposition
- V=Vulnerability
- F=Function symbol

An active fault zone, for example, would be an area of high risk. The probability of harmful consequences, or expected loss of lives, people injured, property, livelihoods is high.

Disaster risk reduction (disaster reduction):

The conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society