

Assessing Disaster Risk



All too often the news is filled with disasters, some happen far away, some are right on our doorstep. This exercise is based on how real international non-governmental organisations assess a disaster and work out the appropriate response. The following pages contain real questions that INGOs and government agencies will face in times of emergency. Why don't you try to answer them?

The purpose of this exercise is for you to produce a comparative piece of work. The aim would be to look at how two different places in the world were able to deal with the same type of disaster. For example, the recent flooding in the UK of December 2015 could be compared to the flooding in India in November 2015.

You don't have to use flooding, it could be earthquakes, Tsunamis etc. You may want to look at disasters such as the Ebola outbreak and how different countries responded to this. You could also look at disasters which are not natural, such as the impact of conflict.



Consider this!

- Consider how the nature of the hazards will vary dependent on its' location.
- Consider how Earth hazards do consist of a variety of interdependent and interconnected activities and processes
- Consider how physical geography and human activity are interdependent and their interaction can produce hazards
- Consider how the impact of such hazards varies over time and given location.
- Consider how populations and environments respond in a variety of ways to hazards
- Consider how the management of hazards results in opportunities and challenges

What are the main hazards types affecting this community?

Hazard Assessment

What warning signs or signals were available, if any?

The disaster has just happened. What is the initial assessment?

When have disasters occurred?
When was the last disaster before the present one?

What areas of the community were affected? To what extent?

Are there any trends? eg frequency/intensity of hazard increasing or decreasing?

Vulnerability Assessment Part 1: What was the impact of the disaster on the community?

Have a group discussion about the disaster you are looking at. Concentrate on **WHAT HAPPENED** during the disaster. What were the critical items that were missing?- information, tools, services etc
Record your responses under the following areas.

HUMAN

What was the impact on life and health?

SOCIAL

What is the impact upon family life? Social events? Leadership?

CONSTRUCTED

What was the impact upon houses, roads, bridges etc?

NATURAL

*What was the impact on natural resources?
(such as water, forest, grass, animals?)*

ECONOMIC

What is the impact upon livelihoods or financial situation?

Was there a lack of knowledge, skills or basic services?

Vulnerability Assessment Part 2: Why did the disaster have this impact on the community?

Is there any shortage of or restricted access to natural resources?

Was there any weakness in house construction, or poor location of buildings?

Were there any social divisions, or groups not functioning or lack of leadership?

Are there any shortage of income, savings or credit facilities?

Capacity Assessment

HUMAN

What skills or knowledge were particularly useful in the community?

SOCIAL

What social groupings and leadership structures were especially helpful?

1. Have a group discussion about the **POSITIVE** aspects of the response to the disaster. What went well? Record your responses under the five headings.
2. Were coping mechanisms used in previous disasters used again or not? Why?
3. Have there been any schemes or projects to reduce disaster risk? Have they succeeded or failed? Why?

CONSTRUCTED

What buildings, roads and bridges were useful during the crisis?

NATURAL

What natural resources were drawn upon?

ECONOMIC

What financial coping mechanisms were used?

Action Planning

What actions could the community take now which would help it cope better if the same, or a similar hazard appeared in future?

Which actions could be taken without outside help?