

OL 345 Assignment Five Discussion

Online Learning: OL 345 Community Based DRR Training.

Center for Sustainable Development. <https://csd-i.org/disaster-risk-reduction-online-drr-training/>

Assignment Five. Survey of Activities for Use During Disasters

Interestingly, one of the biggest challenges in disaster risk reduction is a lack of knowledge on the part of community members about the potential for disasters, where they come from, and how to act in preparation for disaster, at the onset of a disaster, during the disaster, and after the disaster.

Each one of these actions are inextricably connected to the action preceding it and the action that follows.. So to discuss evacuation also includes discussing portions of preparation and planning prior to and recovery after an evacuation.

In Assignment six we will be looking at community engagement – which also will include consciousness-raising about these issues. In the resources below you will see that there is a lot of discussion about getting sound information out to community members – including the use of street theater, posters to be hung on walls around the community, maps of flood prone areas to be placed in a prominent position in the community, handouts, workshops to discuss the different issues, and of course practice and drills in things like evacuation.

As I mentioned last week there are many different kinds of disasters for people to prepare for – some of them are immediate like an earthquake or a flash flood – but for the purposes of this course I'm using a flood that builds up slowly in a floodplain. By investigating past history of flooding in the community, and combining that with meteorological data, a community should be able to determine that a flood is building and when it might become dangerous. Sometimes they will receive flood information from a government agency. In reviewing the documents below, people centered early warning systems can be based upon the community collecting their own data on rainfall and the rate at which a river is rising to determine a safe time of evacuation.

Community-based evacuation teams can provide long-term consistency in - for example - maintaining an evacuation center and making sure that it is stocked with safe water. They can also provide immediate assistance in forewarning community members of an upcoming flood through a designated radio station or through megaphones in the community itself. They can check to make sure that people are indeed heeding to the warnings (there are many reasons why people don't want to leave their homes – which include a lack of understanding of the disaster – a disbelief in the warning – and a concern that valuables will be lost or stolen if they leave their home). They can make sure that people are prepared to evacuate and have collected valuables such as important documents. And they can provide assistance to people that need help such as the elderly - or disabled members of the community.

So this week we will be analyzing if an evacuation plan is appropriate for your project, and which of the documents below will best suit the specific context that your community finds itself in. Some of the documents below are highly technical and may best be suited for a regional situation or in an urban situation. Others are better geared to provide information directly at the community level.

We will also be looking at search and rescue in a flood situation. If your evacuation team has done their job and has made sure that community members have evacuated to a safe evacuation center – search and rescue in an ideal situation may not be necessary. However, if an elderly person was accidentally left behind, or if a farmer was cut off from the community by the rising flood as he returned from his farm fields, or if a person was reluctant to leave their home – search and rescue may be necessary. So there will need to be careful collaboration between the evacuation team and the search and rescue team in order to determine that all heads are accounted for – or someone is missing.

Also, we don't want members of the search and rescue team to become victims. So this will mean that they will need to be carefully trained (probably by an expert), they will need to routinely go through practice drills so that they stay in top form over an extended period of time, and they will need basic equipment which will allow them to conduct search and rescue missions safely and effectively.

I'm viewing this assignment as being more of a general survey than identifying highly specific solution oriented activities. And the reason for this is that some of your projects won't need evacuation nor search and rescue components – and the contexts found in different communities for disasters vary greatly.

Consequently I'm viewing this assignment as being more of an introduction to these concepts – and if you find that they are appropriate for your projects we can refine the information over the next three assignments to best fit your community's needs.

Assignment 5 Resources

Evacuation

Mercy Corps: Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction – Good Practice

<http://un.org.np/node/10601>

Manual: Local Flood Early Warning Systems

https://www.preventionweb.net/files/29230_29230gizphilippineslocalfloodearlyw.pdf

Flash Flood Risk Management – the Training of Trainers Manual

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/icimod-flash_flood_risk_management.pdf

Flood warnings | ClimateTechWiki

<https://twitter.com/search/Flood+warnings+|+ClimateTechWiki>

Search and Rescue

Mercy Corps: Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction – Good Practice

<http://un.org.np/node/10601>

GTZ: Manual on Flood Preparedness Program for Provincial and District Level Authorities in the Lower Mekong Basin Countries

http://www.adpc.net/v2007/programs/dms/Publications/FEMS/Flood_09.pdf

Good luck—I look forward to hearing about your project—please move on to Assignment Four.

Sincerely,

Tim Magee

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