

**EP
03**

*Emergency
Preparedness
Competency*

Managing an Emergency Response



Distance Learning with UNHCR and the
University of Wisconsin Disaster Management Center

Prepared by UNHCR Emergency Preparedness and Response Section
in collaboration with InterWorks and the UW-DMC

UNHCR

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Self Study Module

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March 2000

UNHCR

Acknowledgments

This course draws on the information and guidelines given in the *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*, Second Edition, the Operations Management System (OMS) Draft Working Papers on a wide variety of topics of particular importance for UNHCR emergency managers, the Workshop for Emergency Managers (WEM) and many of UNHCR's existing training manuals. We would like to thank a number of UNHCR staff who gave their time to be interviewed or made contributions during the development and review of this course, without whose help this text would not exist.

Cover photograph

UNHCR / A. Hollmann — UNHCR compound near the entrance to Katala refugee camp, Goma Region, Zaire, 1996.

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Welcome and Introduction

This distance learning course is about managing programmes in response to humanitarian emergencies. It does not deal in depth with the technical or sectoral details, such as food, water, sanitation or health, but rather with the *management* of the response itself. It supports UNHCR's Career Management System (CMS) as a training aid in this specific competency area. 'Managing an Emergency Response' is one of the competencies required for emergency preparedness. Its code within the UNHCR competency catalogue system is (EP-03). The indicator of success in this competency is shown when the emergency manager **'displays the ability to lead and manage an emergency response to meet its immediate objectives, and leaves behind a sustainable operation with appropriate systems, programmes, etc. after the departure of the emergency team.'**

While the use of key indicators for different sectors is discussed in the lesson on managing information, the course concentrates on management skills rather than on the technical information needed to adequately manage an emergency response. This course should be studied in conjunction with its companion courses, *Contingency Planning* (EP-01) and *Planning an Emergency Response* (EP-02).

The course is divided into three units with three chapters each that deal with the themes of the unit. **Unit One** is devoted to the *specific management context of refugee emergencies in a broad sense*. What are the problems that stem directly from the situation? What are the needs of the refugees or displaced? What information does the manager need to know and what should be done? The unit focuses on management theory as related to mass displacement emergencies, strategies, and analytical techniques, appropriate in the context of international humanitarian emergency response. It discusses management of the resources and capacities needed for the physical response to the emergency. Some key tools for managing the response to a refugee emergency are also discussed.

Unit Two provides some insights from traditional management theory as well as emergency field experience *on ways to prepare yourself to be a better emergency manager*. These chapters discuss ways of thinking and analysing problems presented by emergencies, and show some of the benefits of 'systems thinking' in emergencies. They also present some techniques for managing your own time, since this resource is in short supply in emergencies, and the management of it is a highly personal and self-oriented skill.

Unit Three deals with some of the *key interpersonal tasks of the emergency manager*, co-ordination of programmes, co-ordination of effort, managing conflicts within the operation, and the maintenance and leadership of the emergency management team. The focus of Unit Three is on people-oriented management skills rather than the technical application of the management tools as described in Unit One or the analytical and self-management skills of Unit Two.

This course is not intended to be a recipe book or template for managing refugee emergencies. Every situation is different and a solution that works well in one country or situation may be completely inappropriate in another. While some approaches are suggested in this course, these only represent one viewpoint in relation to specific situations. By considering the underlying factors presented in the course, you should be better able to decide on the best approach for managing your own unique emergency situation when the time comes.

How to Use This Course

Organise Your Study

Self-study is more demanding than traditional classroom instruction in that each student has to provide her or his own framework for study instead of having it imposed by the course timetable. One of the problems with self-study courses is that people begin with great enthusiasm at a pace that they cannot sustain. The best way to undertake this distance education course is to plan your own study schedule over a pre-set period.

The course is designed to take approximately 16 hours to complete. This includes the time for reading, reflecting, and answering the questions in the text.

Pre-tests

The pre-tests included at the beginning of each of the three units allow you to test your general knowledge of emergency operations management. These three tests consist of 20 true/false questions. Taking these tests before beginning each unit should stimulate you to compare your own thoughts about management to those presented in the text. Also, the pre-test allows you to quickly determine how much you already know about the ideas presented here, and can help you to see which parts of the course you can move through more quickly or those you need to spend more time on. If you score very well on all of the pre-tests, it is likely that you do not need to take this course for the purpose of learning new information, although it may be a useful review.

Instant Feedback: Self-Assessment Questions, Exercises and Worksheets

A drawback to self-study is that instant feedback from the instructor or your fellow students is not possible. To address the need for feedback, each chapter has five true/false questions and five multiple-choice questions. Exercises are found throughout the chapters to help you get the most from the materials. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points as a review.

Final Examination

As a final complement to the self-assessment tests and problems which are included in the course text, there is a final examination administered by the University of Wisconsin–Disaster Management Center (UW–DMC). When you have completed all the self-assessment tests and activities to your satisfaction, you may request a final examination package.

Using the REQUEST FOR FINAL EXAMINATION form which accompanies these course materials, you will nominate a proctor to give you the examination and make arrangements for scheduling the time and place. Anyone in a position of educational or academic authority (for example, a registrar, dean, counselor, school principal or education officer) may serve as your proctor. Librarians and clergy are also acceptable proctors. For these UNHCR/UW–DMC courses, your immediate supervisor or someone else of authority in a disaster/emergency management organisation may also be your examination proctor.

The UW-DMC will mail the examination papers with instructions to your proctor who will monitor your taking the test. After your proctor returns your examination to the University of Wisconsin–Extension, it will normally take 1-2 months for grading. Upon successful completion of the exam, the University will record your continuing education units (CEUs) on a university transcript and prepare your *Certificate of Completion*. Your certificate will be mailed to you along with current information about other distance learning opportunities.

Managing the Emergency

Blace border
crossing, FYR of
Macedonia early
April 1999.

*UNHCR photo,
H.J. Davies*



PRETEST — Managing the Emergency



Check T or F to
indicate whether
a statement is
True or False

- T F 1. In fact, there is usually sufficient capacity and time to respond in emergencies. Recent studies have shown that only bulk resources present a significant problem for the emergency manager.
- T F 2. Delays in emergency response are often overdramatised. Even a delay of a week in a large displacement emergency will typically have little effect on the population.
- T F 3. In emergencies, the normal information gathering processes themselves are often disrupted.
- T F 4. Co-ordination in emergencies is less important for UNHCR than for other agencies.
- T F 5. Managing in a mass displacement emergency context can be said to include all of the elements of traditional management theory except for planning.
- T F 6. The 'logical framework' is an important tool for managers as it clearly shows all of the actors involved and helps to determine their capabilities in each sector.
- T F 7. Typically no change in staffing should be required in a field or country office if a large scale emergency breaks out in that country.
- T F 8. Generally speaking, all refugee emergencies are the same in terms of needed resources.
- T F 9. People Oriented Planning is a good tool for longer-term development oriented programmes, but is not usually valuable in emergencies.
- T F 10. There aren't any useful tools for helping the manager plan priority needs over time.
- T F 11. There are techniques for controlling the losses of relief goods before arrival on site, during storage, and after dispatch from the warehouse.
- T F 12. The term 'stock control' implies physical security of goods, maintenance of a record, and occasional validation of that record by physical counts.
- T F 13. Distribution to the beneficiaries is the last stage or link of the logistics chain.

14. Resources are far more important than capacities in managing an emergency response.
15. *Background* and *specific* information in emergencies are similar in nature and similarly collected and analysed.
16. Indicator values are typically compared against other geographic areas, over time, and against an accepted standard.
17. Indicators are less useful in emergencies than in other types of programmes.
18. The crude mortality rate is probably the best overall indicator for use in emergencies.
19. Too much information can be as difficult to deal with as too little information.
20. In practice, monitoring and reporting can be improved by use of indicators, co-ordination of reporting, and establishment of a monitoring network.



Pre-test
Answers

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | F | 8. | F |
| 2. | F | 9. | F |
| 3. | T | 10. | F |
| 4. | F | 11. | T |
| 5. | F | 12. | T |
| 6. | F | 13. | T |
| 7. | F | 14. | F |
| | | 15. | F |
| | | 16. | T |
| | | 17. | F |
| | | 18. | T |
| | | 19. | T |
| | | 20. | T |

Pre-test
Answers



Unit 1

Managing in Emergencies— An Overview



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- The importance of the emergency context on the manager (time, resources, capacity, and information)
- A definition and discussion of emergency management and its component tasks
- Why management of refugee and other population displacement emergencies is particularly difficult
- The key tasks of the emergency manager responding to mass displacement emergencies

The Emergency Context



Example

Kisangani: it sucked us in, took our faith and energy and challenged our personal coping beyond imagination. It was like living an Indiana Jones adventure movie, but more scary and real, more smelly, stinking and dirty. It was hell.

- From an interview in *Refugees Magazine* (Winter 1997) with Kilian Kleinschmidt, leader of an emergency field team helping to locate and evacuate refugees from the jungle.

Fortunately, not all emergencies are as dire or as horrifying as that described above. Nevertheless, in all emergencies, managers face not only the usual management challenges, but also extreme challenges related to the very nature of emergencies. An emergency can be defined as:

... any situation in which the life or well-being of refugees will be threatened unless immediate and appropriate action is taken, and which demands an extraordinary response and exceptional measures.

— *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies, p.4*

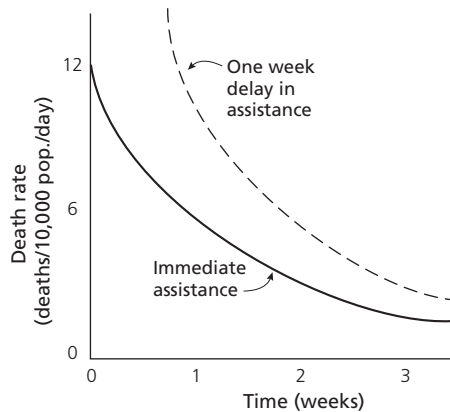
This definition suggests some of the special aspects of the emergency context which present additional difficulties to the emergency manager. These emergency-related issues must be seen as additional to—rather than replacements for—traditional management functions, such as planning, people management, and organisation.

Time, Resources and Capacities Pressure

Emergencies demand immediate action. The need for such action places the emergency manager under enormous pressures. Even a delay of as little as one week in the provision of assistance can have a very large impact on the number of deaths in an emergency. The diagram below shows the general effect of

delaying assistance for one week. The solid line shows a drop in mortality rates immediately after beginning to provide emergency assistance (assuming that assistance is immediately available.) The dashed line shows an increasing mortality rate for the week in which no assistance is provided. Following the provision of the delayed assistance the mortality rate begins to decrease. This model is generalised as it assumes that mortality rates will fall as soon as assistance is available. In reality, the fall in mortality rates often lags somewhat behind the provision of assistance.

Time, however, is not the only resource that is limited in the initial phase of an emergency. Even when an emergency event may have been foreseen, or even planned for to some degree, neither the **resources** nor the **capacity** to deal with it may be immediately available. The diagram at right is also a simplified picture of emergency realities in that assistance is rarely provided in all sectors from day one, but follows a gradual build up as different sectors come 'on line' at different times.



This is particularly true in the initial stages of an emergency, when neither the material resources, nor the capacity to deliver and distribute them effectively may be available. This points out, however, the need for the manager to adequately prepare for possible emergencies through contingency planning (see the UNHCR self-study module, *EP-01 Contingency Planning*, for more information on this topic).

Inadequate Information

Because emergencies are unexpected and demand urgent action, complete information for sound decision making is rarely available to the emergency manager. Thus, while the consequences of the decisions made by an emergency manager are very serious, the information on which the decisions are based may be scarce and unreliable because:

- ◆ The normal information gathering processes are disrupted
- ◆ Observers are, through shock or inexperience, unable to describe what they have seen in a useful manner
- ◆ There are no special structures for collecting information in a format suitable for the emergency manager
- ◆ There is a lack of skilled people with the ability to analyse the information
- ◆ Political biases or sensitivities alter information in order to further specific agendas

These are only some of the factors that may complicate collecting and analysing information in an emergency. The lack of reliable information in emergencies illustrates the critical need for managers to devote the appropriate level of energy to the collection and sharing of emergency assessment information. Chapter 3 deals with the management of information in emergencies in greater detail.

Serious Consequences

As can be seen from the effects of delays and lack of capacity and information as noted above, the decisions (and their timelines) made by emergency managers can have very serious consequences. Unlike many routine management decisions, whose ill effects may be largely financial, poor decisions by emergency managers may lead to unnecessary deaths.

Emergency Response Actors

In a typical emergency there may be a great number of players. Some of these may be completely independent of the primary response organisation, or lead agency, in the response effort. Some agencies and organisations depend on others for funding, yet may still be more or less autonomous regarding day-to-day operational activities. Partners will typically include the UN agencies, the Government, international NGOs, local NGOs, the ICRC, IFRC and National Red Cross or Red Crescent as well as the refugees themselves. The trend is increasingly towards a more diverse range of partners with special teams from donor governments and the military also playing a part. Plainly, co-ordination is a central part of emergency management, and a key skill for the emergency manager. Some of these skills are discussed in Chapter 7 'Thinking (and Acting) Like a Co-ordinator.'

What is Management?

Management is essentially about achieving results—not necessarily through your own efforts directly, but through the handling of resources. An emergency manager is someone who achieves results through handling resources, be they human or material, in an emergency. In practical terms, emergency management for those involved in international humanitarian response involves many other skills and activities, all of which cannot be treated adequately within the scope of this text. Activities such as needs and resources assessment, operational logistics, programming, monitoring, and evaluation, are all important facets of management. For the focused study of *emergency management*, however, it is worthwhile to examine those activities that pertain purely to 'management' as opposed to the several technical and sectoral specialties involved. The efficient emergency manager must have an understanding of all of these sectors, but does not necessarily need to be an accomplished expert in them.

In many areas (administration, protection, programming, assistance sectors, etc.) specialists will be required, but it is the role of the manager to oversee these, plan and organise, and intervene as appropriate in order to provide direction. It is not the manager's job to undertake all necessary listed tasks (in the Checklist), but to see that they are done, through guidance, direction and monitoring).

— Workshop for Emergency Managers Checklist for
the UNHCR Emergency Manager in the Field

While much of this module is presented in a way that is applicable to the lead emergency manager (responsible for overall management of the emergency response within an organisation), all of the points presented also apply to any person who is responsible for achieving results in an emergency, whether they carry an official title of 'manager' or not.

Standard texts on general management theory and practice (as well as the *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*) commonly include four component activities or responsibilities of the manager:

- ◆ Planning (and decision making)
- ◆ Organising and co-ordinating
- ◆ Controlling
- ◆ Leading (and influencing)

The division of emergency management into these four roles must be seen as a loose or general typology as these activities overlap, and will vary from person to person. Every task the manager undertakes will likely include some portion of each of these types of activities.

Planning

Planning, as used in this course, refers to both planning the outcomes of any management task and to the actual route chosen to achieve the desired outcomes. Planning is essential because it defines both the desired outcomes, or goals, as well as the path to be taken to achieve them. If there is no planning, there may be no agreement on the overall objectives. When the goal is not clear, planning to achieve it is not possible.



Tools

The following list of planning actions expected from UNHCR's emergency managers is taken from UNHCR's 'Checklist for the Emergency Manager.' The number of planning tasks is great and the scope of possible activities is wide. (And planning is only one component of the management task!)

Managing the Operation – Overall Planning and Organisation

Action	Annexes
Plan and undertake needs and resources assessment missions. Prioritise needs according to immediate/short/long term.	(a) Excerpt from Needs Assessment Guidelines
Survey the caseload to determine roles, resources and economic activities (People Oriented Assessment).	(a) People-oriented Planning Guidelines
Determine or refine the overall policy (or strategic) objectives and prepare an Operations Plan. Consider arrangements for regularly updating the plan.	(a) Guidelines for Operations Planning (b) Note on Objective Setting IV 3.2 (c) Example Plan
Design and prepare appropriate Gap Identification Charts in order to record operational gaps and needs.	(a) Example charts
Consider durable solutions options for the current operation. Have all the options been addressed? Are the policy objectives geared towards durable solutions?	
Hold regular strategic planning sessions with key personnel.	(a) Notes on strategic planning
Prepare a contingency plan, taking into account possible scenarios which will require serious operational adjustments.	(a) Format for Contingency Planning
Set up links with the UNHCR Office in the country of origin and if necessary meet frequently in order to maintain a watching brief on the possibilities for voluntary repatriations.	
Review the overall country management and co-ordination structure. Is there a satisfactory focal point for refugee affairs within the Government or would restructuring be desirable?	
Establish clear reporting and command channels within HQ and the Field allowing for quick and effective operational decision making.	
Arrange regular meetings with the refugee community including elders, leaders and sub-groups. If you are based in the Branch Office ensure meetings take place in the field, and that minutes are taken and sent to the Branch Office.	
Prepare adequate maps for the operational region giving location and size of camps and UNHCR offices.	(a) Mapping Guidelines (b) Example maps

Despite the need for the planning actions listed above, sometimes the day-to-day demands on emergency managers are so great that planning may be ignored as all energies are focused on resolving immediate problems. While life-threatening issues must be dealt with without delay, forward planning must also be attended to if the manager is ever to escape the crisis response mode. Without planning, performance of tasks will become more difficult and even more time will be needed to resolve future problems which prior planning and practical preparation would have avoided. This further constrains the available time for immediate response leading to a vicious cycle of crisis response or 'firefighting.'

The UNHCR OMS draft working paper, *Enhancing Programme and Project Design and UNHCR 'Best Practice' Planning Methodology*, describes two important new innovations in UNHCR planning policy. These are the incorporation of a modified 'Logical Framework' matrix of planning priorities, and the institutionalisation of 'Best Practice Planning Methodologies.' While both of these concepts are presented for illustration purposes below, a fuller description of these concepts can be found in the UNHCR self-study modules on *Contingency Planning (EP-01)* and *Planning an Emergency Response (EP-02)*.

The Logical Framework as a Tool for Planning

The Logical Framework was introduced in 1969 by USAID, and has since been widely adapted and considered an essential planning tool by many international development and humanitarian organisations (such as CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, GTZ, ILO, USAID, WHO, World Bank, and many NGOs). There are many reference materials and training workshops on this methodology, often hosted by the organisations that use it in a participatory way with their local counterparts.

The logical framework captures, in summary form, the hierarchy of objectives, performance indicators, means of verification, and assumptions/risks of projects and programmes. Once these elements of a programme and project have been defined, the logical framework supports the development of the work breakdown structures, workplans, responsibility charts, and budgets which are necessary for implementation to go forward in a systematic manner...

Agencies have experimented with and adapted this basic framework in response to their own requirements and purpose. For example, in emergency contexts, the design matrix has been used as a work-in-progress tool for capturing design choices made in the context of a dynamic and complex planning environment. The Canadian International Development Agency has, for example, retained the use of the 16 box structure but modified the columns to complement its efforts to introduce results-based management. Other agencies have introduced other changes. The diverse adaptations and usages of the logical framework approach are indicative of its value and flexibility. The fact that software support for the logical framework approach is available in the commercial market is another element in its favour.

— OMS working paper 'Planning in UNHCR's
New Operations Management System

UNHCR has modified the basic Logical Framework from the original by adding an additional column to the matrix to address the rationale for UNHCR involvement, in order to stimulate more careful problem analysis. It has also added a row at the bottom of the matrix to address specific aspects of financial management. An example of the resulting framework, called the OMS Design Matrix, is shown below. Its component analytical columns are described further throughout this text (particularly in Chapter 7 as a co-ordination tool) and in more detail in the self-study module *Planning an Emergency Response (EP-02)*.

OMS Design Matrix Format

Rationale for UNHCR Involvement	Hierarchy of Objectives	Measurable Performance Indicators	Monitoring and Co-ordination	Assumptions and Risks
Overall Problem	Goal of the Operation	Methods for qualitative and quantitative measurement	Methods for assessing performance against indicators	External factors required for success in meeting the goal
Core Problem by Sectoral Areas	Sector-Level Objectives	Description of effects of the core problem	Methods for assessing performance against indicators	External factors required for success in meeting the objectives
Causes	Outputs (specific deliverables)	Description of effects of the core problem	Methods for assessing performance against indicators	External factors required for success in creating the outputs
Related Activities	Activities	Work breakdown	Workplan	External factors required for success in carrying out the activities
Existing Resources	Inputs	Budget	Cash Flow Projections	External factors required for success in providing the required inputs

The UNHCR Best Practice Planning Methodology

The OMS Team at UNHCR has also proposed a new cornerstone support to UNHCR's planning methodology based on analysis of what has worked well in past operations. The idea of careful analysis of capturing 'lessons learned' from past operations as the basis for future planning is a well-accepted idea, but one that still needs attention from emergency managers if it is to be institutionalised in a meaningful way. Another allied idea is that of 'benchmarking' or comparing techniques and methods of other organisations doing similar work as way of constantly measuring your own methods against those being used by colleagues. This technique is valuable at both the personal as well as organisational level.

Organising and Co-ordinating

This role or function can be defined as establishing systems and mechanisms to achieve a given objective, and co-ordinating people and organizations so that they work together, in a logical way, towards the common objective.

Organisation is about pulling the resources you need together, and building a structured unit so that you can achieve the desired goal. This may include simple activities such as organising files and papers on your desk to improve personal performance, or more complex ones such as organising office systems for better work as a team. Clearly the resources can be either material or by people and their skills.

Co-ordination is defined as the harmonious and effective working together of people and organizations towards a common goal. This should result in:

- ◆ Maximum effectiveness
- ◆ Elimination of gaps and overlaps in services
- ◆ Division of responsibilities in line with capacities (skills and resources)
- ◆ Consistent treatment of beneficiaries in terms of protection and services or aid provided

Staffing

Staffing is also a part of organising, and is particularly important in the management of an emergency response. Emergency staffing should start with the identification of personnel needs in relation to the smooth running of the operation. The manager's task goes beyond this, however, to include the selection, hiring, and training of people to carry out their tasks efficiently. Job descriptions are the most common management tool for staffing in an emergency, even though revisions and added responsibilities during emergency operations are the norm.



Tools

UNHCR Field Staffing Requirements

A staffing table should be drawn up as soon as possible. Responsibility for meeting agreed international personnel needs rests with Headquarters. Much will depend on implementing arrangements, but depending on the scale of the emergency, the need for at least the following international staff should be considered in a large-scale emergency:

- ◆ Emergency Team Leader (with one of the senior officers also possible acting as Deputy to Team Leader)
- ◆ International Secretary or Assistant for the Team Leader
- ◆ Senior Protection Officer
- ◆ Protection Officer(s)
- ◆ Senior Programme Officer
- ◆ Programme Officer(s)
- ◆ Sector Co-ordinators, e.g. Community Services, Water, Health, Nutrition
- ◆ Field Officers deployed at the refugee sites
- ◆ Senior Administrative Officer
- ◆ Finance Officer/Personnel Officer
- ◆ Staff Safety Officer
- ◆ Public Information Officer
- ◆ Logistics Officer
- ◆ Telecoms Officer

Particular attention must be paid to the administrative staff. An experienced administrative assistant will be an essential member of the team if a new office is being opened, and in large emergencies experienced finance and personnel officers are likely to be necessary. Without persons with these skills, other staff will have to devote a disproportionate amount of time to UNHCR internal administration at the expense of the refugees. Local administrative staff must be identified and trained, but this in itself requires experienced supervision.

— *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*, p. 293.

UNHCR has developed a number of standby arrangements whereby suitable staff can be deployed rapidly to an emergency operation. These are:

Human Resources	Typical Tasks
Emergency Preparedness and Response Officers (EPRO)s	Emergency Team Leader
Senior Emergency Administrators (SEA)s	Management of administration in large emergencies
Senior Finance and Administrative Assistants (EFAA)s	Set up and supervise all administrative functions for an Emergency Team
Emergency Response Team roster (ERT)s	Core UNHCR functions: Field, Protection, Programme
Norwegian and Danish Refugee Council Emergency Staff	Field, Telecommunications, Logistics, Base Camp Managers
United Nations Volunteers	Field, Protection
Red R (Australia)	Engineers (physical planning, water, roads)
Radda Barnen (Sweden)	Community Services
Centers for Disease Control (USA)	Health assessment , epidemic preparedness and response, health monitoring systems
Technical Consultants	All technical sectors

More details on these arrangements can be found in UNHCR's 'Catalogue of Emergency Response Resources.'



Tools

The Checklist for the UNHCR Emergency Manager in the Field developed for the Workshop for Emergency Managers contains a section related to managing staff in the field. This checklist is a useful guide for emergency managers as it offers a starting point for establishing human relations systems when in the field.

Managing the Staff

Action	Annexes
Establish fixed meeting schedule with senior staff, heads of work units, all staff, field and/or specific categories of staff each with clear objectives & time limits.	(a) Holding effective meetings
Arrange for all staff units to hold regular and effective co-ordination meetings.	
Discuss job descriptions with all staff, clarify tasks, establish delegated responsibility and ensure back up assigned for important functions.	
Introduce task list system for immediate tasks, either in the form of staff meeting minutes or on a white board.	
Plan regular one-to-one meetings with all staff to review functions and set personal objectives.	
Introduce the 'service oriented approach' for staff so that they receive all legitimate entitlements. All administrative, work environment and security needs should be addressed.	

Action	Annexes
Attend to individual staff welfare with particular attention to rest, MARS, VARI, STAR missions and stress relief.	(a) MARS, VARI & STAR Guidelines (b) Guidelines on the Relief of Stress
Establish rules of conduct, dress and adherence to working hours. Decide on weekend & evening duty roster.	
Review the staffing table. Assess if positions reflect the tasks to be performed. Make recommendations to HQ on proposed changes.	(a) Staffing review forms
Identify gaps in short or medium term staffing taking assignment lengths into account. Consider the use of external resources such as Nordics UNVs, technical standby staff, project personnel, consultants or temporary assistance. Request HQ advice & assistance.	(a) Excerpt from Emergency Catalogue
Decide on composition of a recruitment committee and establish the extent to which you, as manager, need/wish to be involved in recruitment decisions	
Make yourself available to staff (& visitors) while establishing times or ways to indicate that you do not wish to be disturbed	(a) Time management principles
Establish a system, through meetings or a float, to share information with all staff, not forgetting field offices	
Prepare a paper on working & living conditions to complement that of the lead agency, if none exists or if a new duty station. Assign task of updating and dissemination. Send to HQ	(a) Guidelines/Chapter Headings (b) Examples of such documents
Review the security policy & plans. Prepare if one does not exist. Ensure staff are fully briefed on procedures. Meet with local security coordinator	(a) Security Guidelines
Identify arrangements for medical care and policy & procedures for MEDIVAC	(a) Arrangements with SOS
Establish procedures for managing staff documentation (visas, travel permits, drivers licenses, residence permits)	
Look out for conflicts amongst staff, which may affect performance and cohesion, and address these at an early stage. Ensure you are yourself not the cause of conflict/discrimination	(a) Notes on conflict resolution
Prepare performance evaluation reports for all staff and letters of reference for short term or mission staff as appropriate	(a) Models for regular staff, consultants, Nordic Secondees
Identify a training focal point and set out a training plan incorporating proper coaching and guidance for all staff. Submit the training plan to headquarters. Begin staff training	(a) Excerpt from the Training Catalogue
Clearly define roles of Sector Specialists and ensure that their work is effectively coordinated	(a) IOM /FOM on sector specialist reporting

Co-ordinating

The UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies* (p. 58) defines co-ordinating as ‘the harmonious and effective working together of people and organizations towards a common goal.’ As a potential emergency manager you are encouraged to review the Emergency Handbook, particularly the chapter on ‘Field Co-ordination and Site Level Organisation’ where UNHCR’s role in co-ordination of refugee emergencies is presented in relation to other actors on the scene.

In refugee emergencies UNHCR should take the lead to ensure effective co-ordination, if this is not already ensured, including establishing the co-ordinating body.

Whatever the implementing arrangements, a single co-ordinating body should be established for the operation – for example, a task force, commission, or operations centre.

The co-ordinating body will provide a framework within which the implementation of the programme can be co-ordinated and management decisions taken. The co-ordinating body should have clearly defined and well promulgated responsibility and authority.

Where a co-ordinating structure does not already exist, UNHCR should, in co-operation with the government, take the lead in setting up the co-ordinating body and mechanism. This is a crucial component of UNHCR's leadership role. The co-ordinating body may be set up and chaired by the government with strong support from UNHCR, or be co-chaired by the government and UNHCR, or be chaired by UNHCR alone.

Chapter 7, 'Thinking (and Acting) Like a Co-ordinator,' covers interagency co-ordination skills in greater detail.

Controlling

In management terms, *controlling* implies the correction of things that are not going according to plan. Controlling should not refer to the negative ways in which individuals may be manipulated, but to the positive ways in which the manager ensures that the united effort of the responders is moving towards the desired goal. The manager can use a wide variety of tools to control the emergency response programme, but the most common ones are:

Monitoring, in all its forms, which seeks to measure the adherence of the actual programme activities to the plan.

Evaluation, which questions the appropriateness of the goals set, as well as the actions taken and adherence to the plan.

Strictly speaking, evaluation is more of a tool for learning lessons for future programmes than for controlling existing ones. It can still be a useful control function in programmes that run for more than a few months, however, as it can help to prevent the same mistakes being made again. It might be said that monitoring sets out to measure if we are 'doing the job right,' while evaluation measures whether or not we are 'doing the right job.'

Leading

Leading is the process of creating and communicating a vision for the emergency operation and providing the overall strategic framework for actions. This refers not only to the technical aspects of organising people, but also to the psychological aspects of the organisation of people so as to achieve the management goal. It is based both in the ability to give directives to those under your official authority, as well as the ability to influence those who are not directly under your authority. In many emergency situations your ability to **influence** others by your leadership becomes critical since you will often not be in a position of official authority over their actions. The emergency manager, in the role of leader, will be concerned with:

- ◆ Motivation, or the desire of individuals or teams to achieve the goal
- ◆ Morale, or the psychological state of teams which has a large influence on their work
- ◆ Stress, and its potentially negative effects on individuals and their performance

More information on leading is in Chapter 9, 'Managing the Team.'

Summary



Key Points

The context of managing in emergencies does not replace basic management principles but adds new issues to consider when making management decisions.

Elements of the emergency context affecting managers include, lack of material resources, lack of capacity to use those resources, lack of time, and lack of information.

The logical framework is an essential tool for planning emergency operations with partners.

In emergencies, delays can lead to additional avoidable deaths.

Management encompasses planning, organising, staffing, co-ordinating, controlling, and leading activities.

The emergency manager must be concerned with the well-being of the team as well as the overall objectives of the programme or plan.



Self Test

Chapter 1
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. The six components of management as described for refugee emergency managers are unique functions related only to mass displacement emergencies.
2. Planning is less important in situations that are highly likely to change from day to day
3. A delay of a week may have a significant effect on overall mortality rates in a large scale displacement emergency
4. Job descriptions are a common tool for the management of staffing in emergencies
5. UNHCR carries out its protection function in emergency operations primarily by assisting the work of the government, channeling assistance from the international community and co-ordinating the implementation of that assistance.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. The management functions listed by the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies include:
- A** Leading, Directing, Influencing, Correcting, Controlling and Monitoring
 - B** Organising, Directing, Judging, Protecting, Controlling and Leading
 - C** Planning, Organising, Staffing, Co-ordinating, Controlling, and Leading
 - D** Directing, Leading, Co-ordinating, Protecting, Controlling and Organising
7. The OMS Design Matrix is based on the:
- A** Gap Identification Worksheet
 - B** Gantt Chart
 - C** UNHCR staffing tables and competencies
 - D** Logical Framework
8. Which of the following is not part of the organising role of management?
- A** Putting resources together in a systematic manner
 - B** Forming an orderly, functional, structured whole
 - C** Influencing those not under your immediate authority
 - D** Creating the conditions for harmonious action.

**Chapter 1
Answers**

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. C |
| 2. F | 7. D |
| 3. T | 8. C |
| 4. T | 9. D |
| 5. T | 10. D |

Exercise Answer

There are many approaches that the emergency manager can take. As noted above, the emergency manager will normally have a large number of partners to deal with. One of the most effective approaches is to differentiate among the partners in terms of the likely reliability of the information they are providing. Partners who have a long presence in the region affected by the emergency will have good knowledge about underlying developments. Partners with broad emergency experience may be a more reliable source of information on technical measures.

The emergency manager can improve the quantity of information available by making key partners aware of the type of information and the details needed by the emergency manager. Both distinguishing between partners and making them aware of the principal information needs are part of the process of building an information network.

Your answer may have been different, but it should have included some reference to using partners or building a network, rather than trying to do it all yourself.

Managing Resources and Capacities



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- The resource and capacity problems which are typically encountered in emergencies
- One method for prioritising material needs in relation to time
- How to manage available resources more effectively
- The importance of local capacities, and some ways to strengthen them

The Scarcity/Abundance Paradox



Example

The daily co-ordination committee meeting between NGOs, UN personnel, local agencies and allied military officers knew their No.1 priority had to be sanitation. At least 30,000 shovels and other digging tools were required for the 150,000 refugees who had hurriedly fled to the remote mountain valley— an area that in the best of times might be home to a couple of hundred goats.

Priorities are priorities. Make decisions. Don't vacillate. So when the allied military, a major NGO and the United Nations simultaneously offered to procure the tools, the committee didn't hesitate to order them from all three.

And soon, the 30,000 tools began arriving. Rushed off the helicopters, even ahead of food and blankets, bundle after bundle of white wooden handles began piling up in the sunshine along the landing zone. Hearts lifted. It took a day or two, as chopper after chopper disgorged the bundles of wooden manna, before anyone realised that none of the handles had any heads—no shovels, no picks, only shiny wooden handles. Thousands and thousands of handles.

— *Refugees Magazine*, February, 1993
'Lessons Learned from Sudan and Gulf Emergencies' by John Telford

At the beginning of an emergency there may be little or no material resources readily available. In this context, material resources refer to the food and non-food-items that are typically distributed to affected populations, as well as the resources such as transport, fuel and equipment, that are used by the assistance agencies. If financial resources are available, and there is political will to act quickly, large quantities of material may start to arrive within a few days, but it may not always be what is needed most as illustrated in the quote

above. *Even so, it is generally far easier to mobilise materials than it is to create the capacity to deal with them in the field.* This may lead to the situation where there are more materials available than can be immediately used in an effective way.

The most urgently needed materials may be in a warehouse surrounded by material for which there is no urgent need. Similarly, one implementing partner may have transport resources but no relief materials, while another may have relief materials, but no transport ability to bring them forward.

There is increasing attention by donors to the efficiency with which resources are used in emergencies. Problems with the management of resources often attract a lot of attention in monitoring and evaluation missions, as they are physically obvious. Even a casual visitor will soon be aware of large quantities of food or non-food-items being sold in local markets (although this does not necessarily constitute abuse). Problems with the storage of material will also be obvious. The inability to produce up-to date figures for total resources received and distributed will also suggest that management of material resources is inadequate. Such information is needed—not only to reassure donors—but for the manager to know about resources so that s/he can respond appropriately to new crises and plan effectively.

Prioritising Material Resources

Prioritising needed material resources is not always a straightforward exercise. Every emergency response operation is different and every group of refugees may have different needs and available resources.



Question

How might the needs of two similar groups of refugees arriving six months apart be different?

Even similar groups of refugees may have very large differences in their needs because:

- ◆ Their experience of flight may have been very different. One may have left with provisions in anticipation of attack, the other may have fled suddenly, without preparation, or even survived several attacks during flight.
- ◆ The time of year in relation to the harvest and the climatic season makes a difference. One group may have arrived with food reserves fresh from the harvest, when the other may have arrived with nothing. One group may have had to cross marshes and swollen rivers that the other was able to walk across in the dry season. Thatching grass may have been plentiful at the camp when the first group arrived, but may now be impossible to get.
- ◆ The group that arrives later may have far fewer possessions as economic problems may have already forced them to sell their assets, such as cooking utensils, to survive.

The emergency manager must be aware of the actual situation of the refugees and be able to define the priority needs. The priorities should be set by an assessment of which of the refugees' needs poses the greatest threat to life and well being.

Using People-oriented-Planning to Better Determine Needed Resources

Refugees are, first of all, individuals. And, as individuals, they differ from each other. These individuals are also typically members of groups. All refugee groups are not the same and everyone in each refugee group is not like everyone else in the same group. This basic truth often is lost when managers of refugee emergencies have a crisis on their hands and a very large number of refugees with whom they must deal. Emergency managers may protest that even though refugee groups differ, it is impossible to treat each individual differently. There are simply not enough human or financial resources to plan and implement special programs to meet numerous special needs.

This is true, but there are options that lie between the extremes of treating all refugees as if they are the same and responding to each refugee individually. It is both possible—and efficient management—to recognise certain categories of differences that call for different programming responses. Be aware of your own preconceptions, and do not forget that becoming a refugee will more than likely have changed traditional roles. Your task is to assist refugees in adapting to these changes. (See the materials on People-oriented Planning (POP) that are available from UNHCR's Training Section.)

Planning for Operational Needs

Planning for needed emergency resources such as food, water and medical supplies cannot be done in isolation as all of these resources will, in effect, consume other resources such as:

- ◆ Transport capacity
- ◆ Storage space
- ◆ Management time in receiving and allocating the resources

Therefore, it is vital that the resources sent, especially in the early stages, represent the priorities on the site. Some needs are an immediate priority, others will become a priority after a few days or weeks as initial resources are used up, or as the weather changes. The manager needs to consider both priority needs and the time-scale over which they are needed. Obviously, the manager also needs to consider the capacity to make use of the requested resources. (For more information on this topic, see the self-study module *EP-02 Planning an Emergency Response*.)

The **needs** and the **time-scale** can both be shown on a chart which states the differing levels of need against time. One format for such a chart is a time-line gap identification sheet. This shows the expected needs at different times. The timeline for the sheet can either be measured in days or weeks, or in days initially, but moving to weeks or months as we go further into the future.



Example

Planning priority needs for a small refugee influx

Transport capacity is very constrained, so the manager must plan for priority needs. The influx is 5,000 refugees who have arrived with about enough food to last for two weeks. The seasonal rains will begin in about 4 weeks. Families are presently in improvised thatch shelters. There are problems with the water supply. These 5,000 people will need about 75t of food per month.

Delivery priority for refugee needs

Day	Date	Food	Blankets	Jerricans	Plastic sheet	Kitchen Sets
3	21/4/98	–	1,000	1,000	–	–
7	25/4/98	–	1,000	1,000	–	–
14	2/5/98	75 t	1,000	–	1,000	–
28	16/5/98	–	–	–	–	1,000

This approach, although useful, does require some caution in its use.

- ◆ The assumption that supplies can be delivered efficiently, just as needed may be overly optimistic. Many operations may be at the end of a long supply chain that cannot be manipulated in this way.
- ◆ There is a danger that items which are not identified as an immediate priority will be substantially delayed.
- ◆ There is an inherent assumption that all refugees are the same. While refugee families may hold two weeks food on average, some will have none. It is always useful to have at least small amounts of each resource to meet the needs of special cases.
- ◆ There is always the danger that implementing partner capacity to move the required materials may be insufficient. Simply determining the amount of materials to be moved is not a sufficient management response if the capacity to move it is not in place.

Despite these flaws, delivering the needed material in the order of priority can substantially improve the level of service to refugees.

Control Procedures

As well as identifying priorities, planning, and co-ordinating material resources with partner agencies and implementing partners, the emergency manager must also see that they are properly used and controlled. In this context, control means ensuring that the resources are used properly and fairly for their intended purpose. Failure to adequately control material resources can lead to theft, diversion, and unfair distribution. These problems can lead to:

- ◆ Death and suffering for some refugees. When there is unfair distribution, it is normally the most vulnerable refugees who suffer most.
- ◆ A loss of donor confidence in the management of the operation. This may result in reduced assistance or in restrictive conditions on further funding. Even relatively small losses may be enough to jeopardise further donor assistance if the losses become public knowledge.
- ◆ The growth of a corrupt structure within the operation which will sabotage any improvements which threaten their 'take' or profit.
- ◆ Delays in the implementation of assistance because of losses of needed resources or uncertainty about resource levels.

In the management of any refugee emergency operation—even an orderly and well-established operation—as in any other type of management, some losses are unavoidable. Losses are even more difficult to control in the confusion, haste and tension of a typical emergency. While the emergency manager may not be an expert logistician, a basic understanding of logistics issues is key to the larger management issues of co-ordinating policies and procedures with implementing partners and local governments.

Some of the basics of logistics and control of physical resources that the emergency manager must understand are:

- ◆ Customs clearance issues
- ◆ Stock control basics (logistics operations and accounting systems)
- ◆ Distribution control

Customs Clearance Issues

The supplies coming in for the operation may far exceed the scope of the routine arrangements between the authorities and the local UN community. Problems and delays may be avoided by discussing in advance the procedures to be followed by UNHCR with senior officials in the foreign ministry, ministry of finance, customs authorities, and airport and port authorities. The aim is immediate release of incoming supplies.

Arrangements for clearance procedures and duties exemptions must be made in advance.

Arrangements will need to be made with:

- i. The Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA) and airport authorities for priority clearances for relief flights (whether international or national) and waiver of fees. These arrangements include: over-flight clearance; free landing rights, air traffic control and parking; priority handling of aircraft and charges at cost for handling services;
- ii. The ministry of finance and customs authorities for exemption from duties and taxes of goods and services (such as the tax element of landing fees and fuel tax). Ensure the ministry of finance (as well as the CAA) have been advised in advance of planned airlifts for the operation.

UNHCR's co-operation and/or implementing agreement with the government should allow for the duty-free import of all items, provided that they are required for the operation. ... Special duties exemption and customs clearance may have to be developed for the emergency (*UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*, p. 258).

Stock Control

The three main aspects of stock control are:

1. Physical security of the stock
 - ◆ Walls, fences, locks
 - ◆ Guards
2. Maintaining a record of the stock (material handling system)
 - ◆ Entry controls — counting/weighing/checking incoming stock, verification of documents, recording or endorsing delivery shortfalls and informing suppliers of shortfall, ledger-keeping
 - ◆ Stock controls — physical security as described above, stock ledger, updated assets list, regular stock-taking and inspection
 - ◆ Exit controls — authorized signature system, regular accounting of ledger entries
 - ◆ Distribution controls — related to refugee registration system, information campaign for recipients, spot checks at distribution sites
 - ◆ Regular reporting — accurate, up to date, and disseminated to concerned parties
3. Validating the record by occasional physical counts

All three of these are essential for stock control. Implementing partners involved in procurement, transfer and storage of emergency goods will be responsible for their own stock control. As a manager, however, you will need to know what is expected in these areas, and make clear your expectations to partners. In the initial phase of the emergency response, physical stock control can prove difficult, especially if there is no secure storage available.

Distribution

Distribution to the beneficiaries is the last stage of the logistics chain. Over-distribution as well as under-distribution can be a problem, with some beneficiaries receiving more than they are entitled to. One approach that has been unsuccessfully tried in this situation is to reduce the overall scale of entitlement so that if it is believed that most people are registered twice, for example, the ration size could be reduced 50% without adversely reducing the 'real' distribution to each person. The problem with this approach is that over-distribution is rarely spread evenly throughout the beneficiary community. Some families may be registered just once, whereas others may be registered ten or more times. If the ration is reduced in such cases, it is the most vulnerable who will suffer most.

Distribution quality can be improved by:

- ◆ Effective registration
- ◆ Informing beneficiaries of their entitlements
- ◆ Establishing control systems (random checks on the amount distributed etc.)

Managing Capacity

The manager will also need to consider the organisational capacity to use the material resources. If there is no agency or structure to manage a truck fleet, for example, then flying in trucks may not do much to improve the lack of transport. This is an aspect that is sometimes overlooked. The need for an agency to manage the transport fleet can be as big a priority as the need for more trucks.

A comment about the relationship between capacity and emergency response

Capacity refers to internal organisational capabilities which include planning, qualified staffing, structure, systems and procedures, operational guidelines, team work and co-operation, information flow, communication, decision making, administrative support, etc. On the other hand, resources refer to financial and human resources, relief materials, support equipment, tools and facilities.

If capacity is weak, then the emergency response will be weak, even if resources are adequate. Strong capacity, however, can sometimes alleviate resource short-falls by making more effective use of the limited resources available.

Effective emergency management requires that the aspect of capacity be accorded correct priority throughout the different phases of an operation.

— *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*, p. 30.

Assessing Capacities of the Refugees — People-Oriented Planning

The **People-Oriented Planning Framework**, which has been adopted by UNHCR for use in emergencies as well as in longer term programme design is a useful approach to planning for refugee emergencies, and may result in better analysis of the actual needs of the group and its sub-groups. It identifies the differences that have been shown by experience over many years and with many refugee groups to be those that are most important for effective programming. These have to do with the **gender, family status, and age** of refugees. When families are broken up as they often are under circumstances of flight and asylum, the fact that some family members are missing puts extra responsibilities on those who remain. Because these new responsibilities may be tasks for which the refugee is not well prepared, an effective refugee programme should take this into account. For example, when a woman becomes a head of household because her husband is missing, she is faced with carrying out all the tasks and responsibilities that he traditionally bore.

In some cases, these may include activities which she simply cannot do, such as presenting herself in a public place to receive food rations. Or, when a man loses his wife as he flees to safety, he may be completely unprepared to accept roles that he thinks of as 'women's work.' Food can be uncollected or unprepared; refugees can become ill and, even, die, if the way in which food is provided in an emergency situation does not take account of who is—and who is not—among this particular refugee group.

The age composition of a refugee group is also critical in the emergency phase. Unless special effort is made on the part of the emergency managers and the management system, many unaccompanied minors or elderly people for whom no one else is caring will be at extreme risk, not only because of their age but also because of changes in their family status.

Thus, to ignore the gender, age and family profile of any given refugee group and to treat them as if all are 'normal' families can lead to serious inefficiencies in programming and, in more instances than we like to admit, failure to protect or assist certain groups of refugees adequately.

Does this mean that an emergency manager must sit down and consult with refugees before taking a single decision? No, but it does mean that **a central part of emergency management is setting up systems immediately for identifying refugee leaders and for undertaking an assessment of the capacities and resources which the refugees have brought with them at the same time that one undertakes an assessment of what the refugees need.**

Assessing and Strengthening Capacities of Partners

Despite the potential problems, national NGOs generally offer cost effective implementation and the likelihood of continuing involvement even when international budgets decrease. Managers can use a number of strategies to improve the performance of national NGOs including:

- ◆ Encouraging international NGOs to execute programmes in partnership with national NGOs. In this way managers may get the best of both worlds, with the initial expertise of the international NGO and the long term cost-effectiveness of the national NGO.
- ◆ Include national NGOs in training initiatives (i.e. by inviting key staff to Emergency Management Training Programme workshops or similar events).
- ◆ Any newly recruited National NGOs should be provided with additional support to ensure that they have adequate financial controls and that they understand how the financial system works. This can be done through the assignment of a consultant, or through requesting a more experienced partner to help.
- ◆ Giving inexperienced national NGOs secondary roles in the initial emergency response. In this way they will gain emergency experience and the emergency manager will be able to make an assessment of their capabilities.

Summary



Key Points

When emergency resources become available, the problem may change from that of having none to that of having more than can be effectively used.

A key element in the managing of resources in the initial phases of an emergency is the prioritisation of needed items

People Oriented Planning techniques can help improve the identification of priority needs in emergencies

Managers must be aware of the situation (receipts, issues and stock) of the resources provided by the donor community.

Needs should be stated in terms of the time at which they will arise.

Customs clearance, stock control, and distribution control are important activities for managing (controlling) material resources.

The manager needs to consider organisational implementation capacity as well as physical needs.

Failure to control resources may lead to death and suffering, the growth of corruption as well as the loss of donor confidence.

Capacities of implementing partners should be assessed and improved where possible as a regular responsibility of the emergency manager.



Self Test

Chapter 2

Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

- T F 1. Every group of refugees in emergency situations has the same needs.
- T F 2. Most resources that are sent to the emergency will themselves consume (or otherwise tie up) other resources.
- T F 3. With careful material management, losses can be prevented entirely.
- T F 4. Physical security of stock (walls, fences, and locks) will be maximized when used in conjunctions with a good stock records system.
- T F 5. Donors are increasingly concerned with the efficiency with which resources are used in emergencies.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

- 6. Which of the following is a resource that may be consumed by the dispatch of supplies to an emergency?
 - A Transport capacity
 - B Storage space
 - C Management time in receiving the resources and allocation
 - D All of the above
- 7. The People Oriented Planning framework developed by UNHCR advocates the analysis of:
 - A The number and ages of people in the displaced community
 - B Resources based on the capacity of staff
 - C The gender, family status, and age of the people in the displaced community
 - D Implementing partner profiles based on staff gender ratios
- 8. Which of the following are likely to result from inadequate control of resources?
 - A A lack of donor confidence
 - B Death and suffering
 - C Faster distribution of assistance to those with the greatest needs
 - D Control/reduction of corruption in the distribution

9. Asset lists are part of which of the following controls?
- A Entry control
 - B Stock Control
 - C Exit Control
 - D Distribution Control
10. Which of the following is a key tool for managing material resources?
- A Prioritising
 - B Planning
 - C Co-ordination and control
 - D All of the above



Exercise

Exercise

You have the task of inspecting the material handling aspects of an emergency response operation. Prepare a checklist for the general areas you plan to inspect.

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**Chapter 2
Answers**

- | | |
|------|---------|
| 1. F | 6. D |
| 2. T | 7. C |
| 3. F | 8. A, B |
| 4. T | 9. B |
| 5. T | 10. D |

Exercise Answer

Your checklist may be different from this one, but should include at least:

- Entry controls Stock controls Exit controls Distribution controls

Possible Checklist for A Materials Handling System

- Entry controls
 - Counting
 - Weighing/checking
 - Verification of documents
 - Endorsing short deliveries
 - Informing suppliers
 - Recording on ledgers
- Stock Controls
 - Physical security: fences, walls, locks
 - Physical security: guards
 - Stock Ledger
 - Assets List
 - Evidence of stock taking
 - Evidence of asset inspection
 - Test of stock taking
- Exit controls
 - Authorised signatory system
 - Correct recording of issues in ledgers
- Distribution controls
 - Registration
 - Informed recipients
 - Spot checks
- Reporting
 - Up to date
 - Accurate
 - Distributed

Managing Information



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- The typical problems with information in emergencies
- What sort of information you should collect and prioritise
- Why indicators can lead to very effective information use
- The need for accurate monitoring and reporting in emergencies
- Practical approaches for improving your reporting
- Ways to deal with too much information

Collecting Information



Example

The fate of tens of thousands of Rwandans still unaccounted for after the sprawling refugee settlements in Eastern Zaire were broken up in late 1996, preoccupied UNHCR heading into 1998. Many undoubtedly had already died of malnutrition, exhaustion and disease. Unknown numbers perished in the fighting which swept across the then Zaire. But pockets of survivors remain.

— 'A 1997 Review of the Great Lakes Operation,'
Refugees Magazine, No. 109, 1997

Managing information often presents one of the biggest challenges for emergency managers. Too often, emergency managers simply do not know the facts. You must be able to maximise your access to valid information, and manage the information you have in the most efficient way possible. Managing information refers to collecting, organising, analysing and using information effectively.

Emergency managers commonly face three basic information problems:

- ◆ Scarcity of information: Because of the nature of emergencies discussed in Chapter 1, there is often a scarcity of information at the beginning of an emergency response.
- ◆ Reliability of information: What little information is available in an emergency may not be reliable. Sometimes the problem the emergency manager faces is not the scarcity of information per se, but the scarcity of reliable information, as the emergency may give rise to large number of rumours and misinformation.
- ◆ Lack of resources for analysis: Even when the emergency manager has reliable information s/he may not have the skills or resources to analyse it effectively.

Information Types

Emergency managers usually deal with two types of information:

- ◆ **Background information.** This is typically general information about the political, social, military or other situation and developments. This information is usually more qualitative (descriptive) than quantitative (measurable). It is often essential for planning for possible changes in the situation.
- ◆ **Specific information.** This is information that you collect about a specific aspect of the emergency operation. It could be the present number of beneficiaries or the level of water supply in available litres per person. Specific information is more likely to be quantitative than qualitative and is often associated with monitoring activities.

Collecting Background Information Effectively

Background information is best collected through a general screening of a wide range of information rather than a specific search. This process is usually done through a network of contacts. The manager can use this network to select the information which identifies changing trends and matters of concern.

Collecting Specific Information Effectively

Specific information is often needed as a management tool to indicate how well different aspects of the emergency response are proceeding and to identify areas that need management action.

The **FAST** criteria for information collection is a useful guideline although the best way to collect information will depend on your experience and the specific context of your emergency situation:

- ◆ **Focused.** The search for specific information is focused on the specific item of interest. Standard reporting formats may be used to focus on the issue of concern. (While information on mortality rates is of concern, these would probably be out of place in a report on current stock levels in the warehouse.)
- ◆ **Accessible.** The cost of collecting the information, in time, money, and risk, should be as low as possible, and proportionate to its usefulness.
- ◆ **Simple and straightforward.** The data should be collected in a format that can be readily analysed with the means available. Complex processing usually takes so long that information will be out of date before it can be used.
- ◆ **Tight.** One of the key rules of data collection in an emergency is that you should only collect the data that you need and can use. While it may be interesting to know a great deal more, you should concentrate on collecting only the information that you need.

Prioritising Information

You will need to decide what information is a priority for you and your operation. This will normally be a mix of planning and monitoring information. As a manager you can prioritise information collection tasks by including them in your daily to do list. In this way the collection of non-urgent, but important, information will not be overlooked.

Analysing information

In emergencies, information is analysed for two main reasons.

1. To identify underlying trends or factors.
2. To simplify the information in ways which can be readily understood.
Strictly speaking, this is synthesis rather than analysis but the two processes often occur simultaneously.

Analysing information takes resources. The resources used should match the importance of the information.

Indicators

Indicators are measures that are illustrative of the underlying situation. The unemployment situation in a country may be indicated by the unemployment rate, the standard of mother and child health by the neo-natal mortality rate, the wetness of a month by the total amount of rainfall, the sobriety of a driver by the level of alcohol in her breath etc.

Indicators are a very efficient way of summarising and sharing information. These simple numbers can be used to summarise a complex underlying situation. By themselves they may not tell us very much, but they are particularly useful when viewed by experienced managers or used comparatively.



Question

How might indicators be compared?

Indicators can be compared in three ways:

1. **By comparison with other geographical areas or situations.** If the malnutrition rate (when calculated on the same basis) is higher in situation A than in situation B, we can say that malnutrition is a bigger problem in A than in B.
2. **By comparison over time.** If the neo-natal mortality rate is rising over time, this would suggest that there are problems in mother and child care programmes (if all other factors, e.g. the economy, are unchanged)
3. **By comparison with a standard.** In many nutritional surveys, a simple measurement of the upper middle arm of a child can be used as a direct indicator of malnutrition. If the circumference is less than 13 cm, the child is recorded as malnourished. Similarly, indexed reference charts (weight for height, for example) are also used as standards for specific populations. In this case each child is measured against a standard chart and then categorised by his or her relation to the standard.

Because indicators are simplified (and quantified) aspects of the underlying (and probably complex) situation, they can be misleading in some cases. Like any tool, they work best when used with care and for the intended purpose.

Indicators in Emergencies

In emergencies a wide range of indicators are used including:

- ◆ Crude mortality rate (usually expressed as the number of deaths per 10,000 population per day).
- ◆ Under-five mortality rate (usually expressed as number of children under five who die per day per 10,000 children under five in the population).
- ◆ Morbidity rates (the rate of incidence of a disease), usually of the diseases which are the principal causes of death or which threaten an epidemic.
- ◆ Malnutrition rates (usually expressed as the percentage of children under five who are moderately or severely malnourished). Different methods are used to establish these rates.
- ◆ Water availability (litres per person per day).
- ◆ Food availability (kilocalories per person per day).

All of the problems revealed by the other indicators will ultimately appear as increased mortality if allowed to worsen. The crude mortality rate can be used to see if:

- ◆ Conditions in one site are better or worse than another
- ◆ The overall situation is improving or worsening
- ◆ If standards are being exceeded (a crude mortality rate of more than two per 10,000 per day is taken to be a sign that the crisis is out of control)

While the crude mortality rate may often be the best overall indicator, all of the other indicators have their uses. The under-five mortality rate is more sensitive to changes in the situation than the crude mortality rate (because of the greater vulnerability of young children). Although it is more subject to chance effects because the under-five population is much smaller. Unless the population is very large, the crude mortality rate is often a more reliable indicator of the overall situation than the under-five mortality rate.

The other indicators are useful warnings about situations (such as the lack of food or water) which may quickly lead to more deaths. All of these indicators have the advantage that they allow a great deal of data to be summed up in a very succinct format.

Expressing Information as Indicators

Some data, such as the amount of water available to the population, can readily be expressed in numerical terms (in this case the number of litres of water supplied and used per person per day). It is important that standard formats of indicators be used where available. If non-standard formats are used it becomes impossible to compare them directly with other areas or with standard values.



Example

You have just taken over managing a well-established refugee camp. You are concerned about violence against women in the camp, particularly rape and sexual assault. The outreach reproductive health workers in the camp report that many young women have asked for advice and assistance after being sexually assaulted. You are consulting with the refugee leaders and with women's groups in the camp to see how you could begin a programme to control the problem.

In this case the obvious indicator is the number of rapes in the camp, but many of these may go unreported because of the stigma attached. A better indicator might be the number of requests for assistance received by the outreach health workers or by traditional health workers in the community.

The Need for Monitoring and Reporting

The purpose of **monitoring** is to check or regulate performance of the activities as described in the Monitoring and Co-ordination column of the OMS Design Matrix. Monitoring is not the same as **evaluation**. Evaluation asks fundamental questions, often of events in the past, and seeks to learn if the underlying assumptions and overall approach were appropriate. Monitoring deals with the present and begins by asking the question:

What is happening now (description of the overall problem)?

Monitoring is more than simply watching or observing. It implies that we are prepared to take action if certain conditions exist. For example, a Field Office might be asked to monitor potential border crossing points after an outbreak of violence across the border. The question which monitoring seeks to answer for emergency managers is probably more correctly stated as:

What is happening now, and what action do we need to take?

This is relatively simple when the monitor (the person who does the monitoring) has the resources and the authority to take the necessary action; often, however, other possibilities exist, for example:

- ◆ The monitor may only be able to observe part of what is happening, whereas a complete picture can only be built from a number of different sources.
- ◆ The monitor may be able to take some action in response to what is happening, but s/he may not have the resources or the authority to do all that is needed.
- ◆ The monitor may not have the technical competence to determine what action needs to be taken. Although s/he may be aware that an increasing number of refugees are dying from an antibiotic resistant form of diarrhoeal disease, s/he may not know the appropriate response. Simply reporting monitoring results is not a substitute for taking whatever action locally that is necessary. In other words, monitoring alone is not management. Monitoring reports that support management decisions should therefore have several components.
 - What is happening now
 - What action has been taken or is planned to be taken
 - What further action is requested or recommended

Too Much Information

'I felt like I was trying to drink from a firehose.'

— *Overheard from an emergency manager discussing the amount of assessment data and reporting figures encountered during an emergency response.*

One of the impacts of information technology has been a tremendous increase in the number of reports that are written and distributed. With computers and other tools the information can be processed and packaged much more quickly. Other technologies have also led to the explosion of both data collection and sharing. Remote sensing, satellite television news networks, and the Internet all offer huge amounts of information to the manager. Although access to the Internet's World Wide Web is still not commonplace in all emergency response operations, it is only a matter of time before it will be.

An emergency manager is both the generator and recipient of reports. As such, s/he must consider both the quantity and quality of reports. Quality, in this respect, refers to the usefulness of the data presented for those further up the monitoring chain. Reports that contain information of

little use in supporting emergency decision making are low quality reports. Managers who have experience in different levels of the organisational hierarchy will have a better idea of what types of information are most useful. An emergency manager can usually improve reporting through:

- ◆ **Brevity.** Short reports are more likely to be read, and are therefore more likely to be effective for communication. Short reports are more likely to be higher quality as reducing the report to its essentials tends to result in the removal of extraneous low quality information.
- ◆ The use of **structured reporting formats.** Reporting in the same format makes it less likely that the manager will not forget any sector and makes it easier for the readers to find what they are interested in.
- ◆ Placing the **important points in the first half of the first page** to ensure that busy managers who skim the report will at least get the main messages. (This can be combined with structure by putting the main points in an executive summary.)
- ◆ Providing a **table of contents and an index** for long reports. This allows the readers to find the information in which they are most interested.
- ◆ **Explaining acronyms** that are unlikely to be very widely known on their first use.
- ◆ **Where possible, present data in numerical form.** For example, 'the hospital reports that at least 20 of the newly arrived refugees had gunshot wounds' means a lot more than 'many of the newly arrived refugees had gunshot wounds'.
- ◆ **Indicate the source** of information that you have not directly observed. This will give the readers some idea of the likely quality of the information and protect your credibility if the information turns out to be untrue,
- ◆ **Presenting numerical data in tabular, or graphic format,** where possible.
- ◆ **Using photographs** (or even videos) where possible.

An Action Emphasis

Reports are not intended only to communicate the manager's view of the situation, but also to encourage whatever action the manager thinks is necessary. It is all too easy to slip into the 'reporting trap' where emergency managers see their primary role as observing what is happening and simply reporting on it. This may happen when there is pressure from further up the hierarchy to provide frequent information on what is happening.

Response action is what separates the humanitarian worker from the journalist. The journalist is there to record what is happening, the humanitarian worker is there to do something about it. Reports should have an action emphasis. In particular they should indicate:

- ◆ What action is requested from further up the monitoring chain (although the necessary action may seem obvious to the manager on the spot, this will not necessarily be true for a manager further away).
- ◆ What action has already been taken locally (requests for action are always far more powerful when you demonstrate that you are not merely waiting for assistance).
- ◆ What action is planned locally (this information will make it less likely that action taken further up the chain will conflict with the locally planned action).

Practical Approaches

In practice, monitoring and reporting can be improved by:

- ◆ Using indicators
- ◆ Co-ordination reporting
- ◆ Establishing a monitoring network

Using Indicators

As already discussed, indicators are one of the most efficient ways of communicating information about the situation to others. Reporting should be based on standard indicators, so that those receiving the report are able to understand the information as quickly as possible. (See the UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies* for applicable UNHCR indicators.) All the key indicators should be on the first page of the report. Remember, however, that it is possible that indicators may sometimes give a misleading view of the situation.



Question

Can you give an example of where indicators might give a misleading view?

There are many examples. One common example is where there is over- (or under-) registration in a camp. Population figures can sometimes be more than twice their actual value. Such inflated figures will lead to mortality rates (in deaths per 10,000 per day) being underestimated unless the population figure is corrected.

Any factors that might make standard indicators misleading should be stated when indicators are used in reports. When giving indicators, it is often useful to give previous values of the indicators, as many indicators measured over time convey more information and may indicate a trend.

Establishing a Monitoring Network

While indicators can give good quality information in a concise way, they only portray part of the picture. Managers need to look beyond the indicators to see potential problems before they reach the level at which they can be seen in the indicators.

In a very small operation it may be possible for managers to monitor everything themselves, but in most emergencies this quickly becomes impossible. The manager has to rely on team members to report what is happening in different sectors. In this way the emergency team and implementing partners become a monitoring network.

One of the problems with monitoring through other team members is that, when team members are unaware of what is happening in other sectors, they may not understand the significance of what they see.

In one case, NGOs were informed in the weekly co-ordination meeting of the theft of a quantity of treated seeds from an agricultural project close to the refugee camp. The seeds had been treated with a preservative that could not be removed by washing the seeds. A few days later, the NGO's

doctor immediately suspected the seeds when he saw two poisoning cases in the clinic. The stolen seeds were recovered before they could be sold to others.

The basic tool which all monitors need is information about what might be important, what other partners are doing and what potential problems exist. It is only with this sort of background information that monitors will understand whether what they see is normal or exceptional. Regular co-ordination meetings are a good way to ensure that partners have basic information about what is happening so that they can monitor effectively.



Tools

Managing the Operation – Monitoring and Reporting

The following list of actions is proposed by UNHCR in the 'Checklist for the Emergency Manager.'

Managing the Operation — Monitoring and Reporting

Action	Annexes
Establish field mission schedule from BO to the field including frequency, timing objectives	
Design an appropriate field monitoring report. Decide on frequency of submission and assign tasks for completion.	(a) Example field monitoring reports
Establish system to monitor emergency indicators	(a) List of indicators
Decide format and frequency of Sitreps to Headquarters. Assign responsibility to provide inputs and compile.	(a) Format for Sitreps and Guidelines (b) Example Sitrep—General (c) Example Sitrep—Sector
Review how statistics are gathered and maintained. Begin recording on standard format at least and use other formats as required.	(a) IOM/60/94 with format
Identify key local resources of information, including knowledgeable and reliable persons in Government and outside, including, local press agencies, NGOs etc. Arrange to monitor (and if necessary translate) local press and compile in a usable manner.	
Establish radio links with similar nearby operations and agree on exchange information including Sitreps, important programme reports, operations and contingency plans etc.	
Ensure that all important communications are in writing. This allows time to think through responses and ensures that a record is kept. Telephones and satcoms, if overused, can be operationally detrimental. Ensure confidentiality.	
Set up a briefing file for new staff with basic documents. (Extension of file compiled during pre-departure.)	
Review annual reporting requirements and ensure that ongoing data collection allows for ease in annual reporting. Plan well ahead for annual reporting and assign tasks.	(a) Annual Reporting schedule
Ensure adequate monitoring of implementing partner expenditures.	(a) Excerpt IP Recording Manual

Summary



Key Points

Management of information in emergencies is difficult due to scarcity of information, lack of reliability, and lack of adequate time for analysis.

Collection of emergency information should be Fast, Accessible, Simple, and Tight.

Analysing information is facilitated by the use of standard and accepted indicators.

Monitoring focuses on what is happening now.

Monitoring is more than simply observing as it includes the presumption that the monitor will also take action.

Monitoring reports should detail what is happening, what action has been or is planned to be taken, and what further action is requested or recommended.

Managers can improve reporting through brevity, structure, presenting numerical data in tables, and by placing the most important points on the first half of the first page.

In practice, the reporting workload can be reduced by using indicators, co-ordination reporting, and through establishing a monitoring network.



Self Test

Chapter 3

Self-Assessment Questions

Check *T* or *F* to indicate whether a statement is *True* or *False*

- T** **F** 1. Monitoring asks only: 'What is happening now?'
- T** **F** 2. After reporting, the monitor should await a response from the office to whom the report was sent before acting
- T** **F** 3. The crude mortality rate is probably the best overall indicator for refugee emergencies
- T** **F** 4. Reports that contain useful information for decision making are high quality reports.
- T** **F** 5. Reports should be non-judgemental and carefully written to avoid advocating any particular action.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following is not an essential part of monitoring reports?
- A** What happened last month
- B** What is happening now
- C** What action is being taken or is planned to be taken
- D** What further action is requested or recommended
7. Which of the following is not one of the FAST criteria for information collection?
- A** Focused
- B** Accessible
- C** Sophisticated
- D** Tight
8. Managers can use indicators to help them make decisions by comparing the indicator value with:
- A** Other geographical areas
- B** Similar values in the past
- C** Standard values
- D** All of the above

**Chapter 3
Answers**

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. A |
| 2. F | 7. C |
| 3. T | 8. D |
| 4. T | 9. C |
| 5. F | 10. B |

Exercise Answer

There are a number of approaches that you can take:

- ◆ Structure reporting procedures. Devise a standard format reporting form for the sector in question. This form would be more effective if developed in conjunction with the sector manager. This approach may not be suitable for all sectors.
- ◆ Encourage the manager to type the reports, either by ensuring that he has access to a computer, or by encouraging him to learn to type, or providing him with an assistant that can.
- ◆ Improve the manager's understanding of your situation. One effective technique for doing this might be to give him the task of helping you prepare the daily situation report. After some exposure to this, he might have a better understanding of why his present reports are unsuitable

Your answer will have been different, depending on your own experience, but it should have at least included the suggestions to structure reporting and to give the manager a better appreciation of what is wrong with his present performance.

Managing Yourself in Emergencies



Rwanda refugee
children arrive from
Kisangani, Kigali
Airport, 1997.

*UNHCR photo,
H.J. Davies*

PRETEST — Managing Yourself in Emergencies



Check T or F to
indicate whether
a statement is
True or False

- T F 1. In fact, the number of important decisions an emergency manager faces on a daily basis are not significantly higher than those faced by other (non-emergency) managers.
- T F 2. Many decisions faced at the very beginning of an emergency will have long lasting effects on the entire operation.
- T F 3. Emergency managers should not be overly concerned about the acceptance of their decisions by others, as long as they are correct in their analysis of the problem.
- T F 4. Three factors generally describe the types of decisions that managers must make: urgency, quality, and acceptance.
- T F 5. One of the best ways for managers to deal with uncertainty is to make decisions in ways that maintain flexibility and preserve future options.
- T F 6. When you are the manager, your responsibility is to take all important decisions relating to the operation directly and quickly.
- T F 7. The degree of delegation of decision-making by the manager should increase over time as the emergency operation develops.
- T F 8. Ad hoc approaches to management in emergencies always lead to failure.
- T F 9. Systems, structures, and procedures for emergency operations are independent and discrete elements which may each be developed separately to best address emergency needs.
- T F 10. A positive side of ad hoc approaches is that they typically result in faster response.
- T F 11. A negative side of systematic approaches in emergency management is that they typically are highly dependent on the manager, without whom, the operation may grind to a halt.
- T F 12. Once an emergency system is established, it should reduce the decision-making workload of the manager.
- T F 13. If you favour an ad hoc approach over a systematic one, you will likely deal with problems very quickly, but will then become slower as your workload grows.
- T F 14. In setting up systems, it is generally advisable to create new, problem free structures for specific use in the emergency.

- 15. Time planning is less important during emergencies than in day to day routine work.
- 16. *Urgent* tasks need to be done immediately, whereas *important* tasks, while not necessarily immediate, will have more serious, long-term consequences.
- 17. The point of managing your time in emergencies is to create a situation in which both important as well as urgent problems can be dealt with.
- 18. 'To do' lists are not useful in emergencies.
- 19. Interruptions are a fact of life which cannot be managed, they must simply be accepted, especially in emergencies.
- 20. Delegation is only effective if you have a competent staff.



Pre-test
Answers

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | F | 8. | F |
| 2. | T | 9. | F |
| 3. | F | 10. | T |
| 4. | T | 11. | F |
| 5. | T | 12. | T |
| 6. | F | 13. | T |
| 7. | T | 14. | F |
| | | 15. | F |
| | | 16. | T |
| | | 17. | T |
| | | 18. | T |
| | | 19. | F |
| | | 20. | T |

Pre-test
Answers



Unit 2

Making Decisions



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- Why taking decisions in emergencies can be so difficult
- The difference between the *urgent and the important*
- A simple model to aid decision making (*the decision cube*)
- Some ways for dealing with uncertainty
- Some simple rules for delegation and decision making

Decisions in Emergencies



Example

As UN Team Leader and Security Co-ordinator, as well as being in charge of UNHCR's operations for returnees and displaced in Kabul, my daily concerns and responsibilities are constantly changing—depending on where the rockets are landing. Do I move our office, or the UNICEF or UNDP offices again? Where are the safe areas? The Turkish Ambassador's bedroom was hit while he was in bed. Will his embassy leave too? Our office safe, containing \$70,000, was stolen by 15 armed men. How will the loss of all our cash affect our program? What's happening on the human rights front? Can the local human rights NGO, which UNHCR is supporting, do something to help?

— 'Life Among the Ruins' by Terry Pitzner in *Refugees Magazine*, No. 104, 1996.

All emergency managers have to take decisions. The decision load varies depending on whether a manager is responsible for just one component or for the whole emergency operation. Making decisions in these circumstances is even more difficult when serious security threats add uncertainty and stress to otherwise routine decisions. The difficulty in decision-making for managers arises from the very nature of emergencies and includes:

- ◆ The large number of decisions that have to be made
- ◆ The time pressure on managers
- ◆ The limited information available for decision making
- ◆ The potentially serious consequence of bad decisions
- ◆ The need for acceptance by other partners

Number of Decisions

In emergencies, the number of decisions a manager is faced with is usually much higher than in non-emergency situations because:

- ◆ Emergencies are times of great change. This means that new systems and new responses are needed. Setting up or establishing these systems usually requires many decisions.
- ◆ Existing mechanisms or channels for making decisions may not be functioning, either because they are overwhelmed or the people concerned are in shock.
- ◆ The dependence of populations on outside assistance implies that decisions, which they would have normally taken for themselves, are now being taken for them.

Of these three factors, the first, the high rate of change, probably requires more decision making than the other two factors. As an emergency response operation develops, the number and gravity of decisions (in terms of their immediate and long-term consequences) will decrease as the rate of change slows and as previous mechanisms reassert themselves and new systems become normalised.

Need for Quality

While many of the decisions that a manager makes will be trivial in relation to the goal of the response, some will have very serious consequences in terms of human death and suffering, or in their long-term impact. Such problems require *high quality* decisions. While it is usually possible to identify those problems with a high need for quality decisions, it is not always obvious. One reason for the reduced number of problems that require high quality decisions as the emergency response progresses is that many of the initial decisions have set the pattern for future actions.



Question

Which decision (apart from protection issues) taken at the start of an emergency response may have the largest effect on the refugees in the longer term?

Many decisions taken at the start of an emergency response operation will have long term effects. The most critical of these is probably the selection of the site for the refugee camp. Often, there may be no choice, and the emergency manager will have to accept a very inadequate site. The decision on the site will have an effect on:

- ◆ Protection (distance from border etc.)
- ◆ Health (water quantity and quality, exposure to health risks etc)
- ◆ Self-sufficiency (rural refugees are more likely to be dependent on outside help if placed in one huge open camp, than they will be in a number of smaller ones)
- ◆ Security (very large camps are difficult to police)
- ◆ The environmental impact of the emergency

In a similar way, the physical layout of a camp, which may appear trivial, can have a large effect on the refugees. For example, isolated and unlit public latrines may lead to more attacks on women. Decisions that are likely to have long-term consequences should always be treated as high quality, even if the short-term consequences appear trivial.

Too Little Time, Not Enough Information

Adding to the pressure of making decisions with potentially serious consequences is the problem that decisions also need to be taken quickly, sometimes based on insufficient or unreliable information. One common problem is that it is often not clear whether the information available is complete or even reliable. The time pressure may mean that there is simply no opportunity to wait for better information. The combination of time pressures and poor information may lead to decisions being taken—which may have serious consequences—which are later seen as being bad choices. These decisions are usually of two types:

1. Decisions which, considering all the then available information and educated analysis, represented a poor choice at the time
2. Decisions that, although based on good information at the time, are later revealed to have been the wrong decision.

There is very little the manager can do about the second type of decision (apart from maximising future choice as will be discussed below), but good management practice should help to reduce the first type of bad decision.

Need for Acceptance

The need for acceptance refers to the need to have others agree with the decisions made by the emergency manager. The need for acceptance is especially critical in emergency response because of the large number of players. The manager often has no direct control over the different agencies involved yet must try to co-ordinate the common effort. Not all decisions in emergencies have a high need for acceptance. The following types of decisions may have a lower need for acceptance:

- ◆ Decisions made by an emergency manager whose experience and skills are widely respected by partners
- ◆ Decisions which are specifically within the competence of the manager
- ◆ Decisions made by a manager with specific competence in that field
- ◆ Decisions which have little effect on other partners (including the refugees)

A Simple Model

Added to the problems of decision making in emergencies is that the average person can only actively consider about ten problems at a time. It is therefore useful if the manager has a way of classifying decisions and some rules for decision making.

Decision Factors

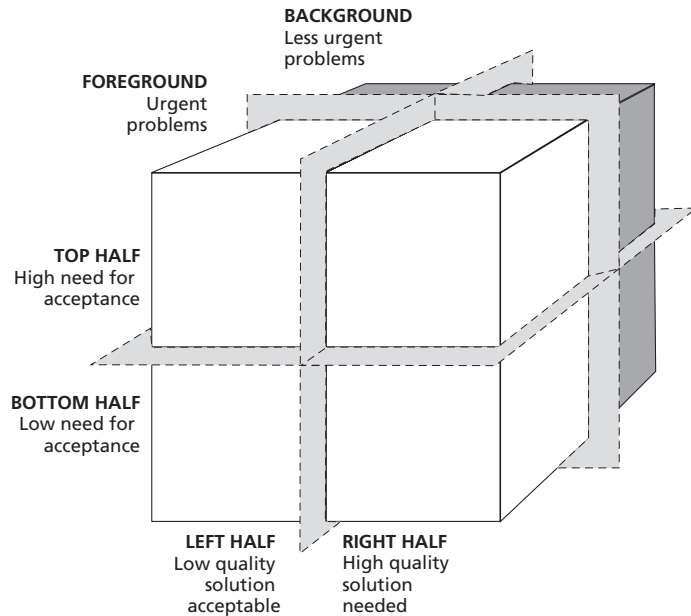
The previous discussion identified three factors that the emergency manager might need to consider in making decisions:

- ◆ Urgent/non urgent
- ◆ High/low quality—that is, decisions which might have serious or long term consequences compared to those which will probably only have trivial consequences
- ◆ High/low need for acceptance—that is, decisions for which the acceptance of those involved is critical

Information quality is also a factor, but it is rarely a useful one for classifying decision types (particularly in emergencies) as the quality of the available information will often not be clear.

The Decision Cube

These three factors, **urgency, quality, and acceptance** can be represented as a cube with eight parts, representing the eight possible combinations of the three factors. The purpose of developing such a model is to allow managers to visualise their decisions and to serve as a memory aid for weighing the three decision factors.



Decision Making Techniques for Managers

One of the factors that a manager needs to control is the number of decisions s/he has to consider at any one time. The manager can limit this decision load by:

- ◆ Prioritising: only considering important and urgent decisions, discarding or delegating others
- ◆ Delegating. Delegation is one of the most powerful tools for limiting decision load
- ◆ Making decisions quickly. If a manager has to make ten major decisions per day and considers each of them for two days, he will have, on average, twenty decisions to consider at all times.
- ◆ Setting up systems which automatically make the same decision when the same problem is faced (through writing-up standard procedures or preparing a manual)

Decision load is only one of the problems which a manager faces. Other problems include :

- ◆ How to deal with uncertainty
- ◆ When to delegate and to whom to delegate
- ◆ When and with whom to consult
- ◆ How to deal with urgent and non-urgent decisions

Dealing with Uncertainty

Inadequate and unreliable information is one of the constant factors in emergencies. Even when information is accurate, the pace of change may make initially good decisions inappropriate in a relatively short time. One technique a manager can use is to avoid, if possible, making choices that severely limit future choices that can be made. This is the technique of maximising future choice and includes such approaches as:

- ◆ Maintaining flexibility in response (for example, ensuring that everyone understands that distribution scales etc. may need to be changed to match changing circumstances).
- ◆ Keeping resources in reserve (for example, not sending all the transport away for one week on a single job).
- ◆ Avoiding committing all resources to one path (for example, purchasing from two or more different suppliers).
- ◆ Building in redundancy and duplication (for example, using two different partners in the health sector instead of just one).

Although inaction (the 'let's wait and see' approach) may appear to be a way of maximising future choice, it usually is not. The consequence of inaction may be that future choice is severely curtailed as available options for preventive management begin to disappear.

When to Delegate

The golden rule of delegation is:

*If someone else can do it, delegate it.
Keep for yourself only those tasks that no one else can do.*

Like all such rules this is too simplistic to apply literally in all situations. In many cases the manager will not be the only person who can do the task, but may be the person who can do it **best**. The manager may decide against delegating some important tasks, even if s/he is not the most skilled, because of the perceived need to maintain control. Delegation can go wrong in two ways:

1. Under-delegation. A manager who fails to delegate will place an increased workload on him/herself, fail to build his/her team and make poor use of available resources.
2. Over-delegation. A manager who delegates decisions, without giving the support those particular staff need to make the decision, may find that poor decisions result.

If poor decisions are made, this is not critical for issues which do not have potentially serious consequences, and if they do not establish long-term precedents. This leads to the general rule for emergencies that:

*The manager should delegate decisions that
are unlikely to have serious or long-term consequences.*

There will always be some exceptions, but the general rule is valid. The manager may also delegate critical tasks, but only to those who have the necessary skills, and only when the manager can provide the necessary support.

To Whom?

The manager has a wide choice of people to whom decisions can be delegated. Traditionally, managers delegate decisions and tasks to the inner team, that is, their own direct staff. Emergency managers also have the option of delegating to members of the outer team, such as implementing partners. This needs to be done carefully because of the risk involved, but it can lead to much stronger relationships within the outer team if the delegated tasks can be agreed on jointly.

With *non-critical* decisions one useful technique is to delegate to the people most concerned. These are often the people best placed to make a good decision as they have the best information and are most concerned about the outcome. This technique may not be appropriate, for example, for decisions about the level of resources to be provided, but may be appropriate for deciding how a fixed quantity of resources is to be distributed.



Example

Delegating to those most concerned

The agency distributing food in a refugee camp had been warned about a possible interruption in food supplies due to low donor response. The agencies working in the camp discussed whether they should reduce the available rations immediately to guarantee distribution over the possible break, or if they should continue full distribution.

They decided to delegate the decision to the refugee leaders, who were provided with the information and, after a week of consultation with the refugees, decided to continue with distribution at the full rate until the rations were exhausted.

When to Consult

It is appropriate to consult when decisions with a **high need for acceptance** are involved. Consultation is the single most effective technique for achieving acceptance of decisions, even when the decision is not what the person consulted would wish. Once people have played a part in the decision making process, they will generally feel more committed to the end result.

The problem with consultation is that it may take more time than is available. The co-ordination meeting is an ideal forum for consultation, but decisions often need to be made quickly before there is an opportunity for a regular or special co-ordination meeting. Managers can deal with the need for consultation under time pressure by:

- ◆ Agreeing overall policies in advance, so that less consultation is needed on the policy aspects of any decision
- ◆ Limiting consultation to the key players
- ◆ Maintaining a transparent management style so that managers will be believed when they explain that they had to act without consulting others

Managers should remember that decisions that have a high need for acceptance may need to be 'sold' to partners afterwards if there is no consultation beforehand. Such 'selling' may take more of the manager's time than consultation would have taken beforehand. The general rule about the need for consultation is:

Managers should consult on decisions which must be accepted by others.

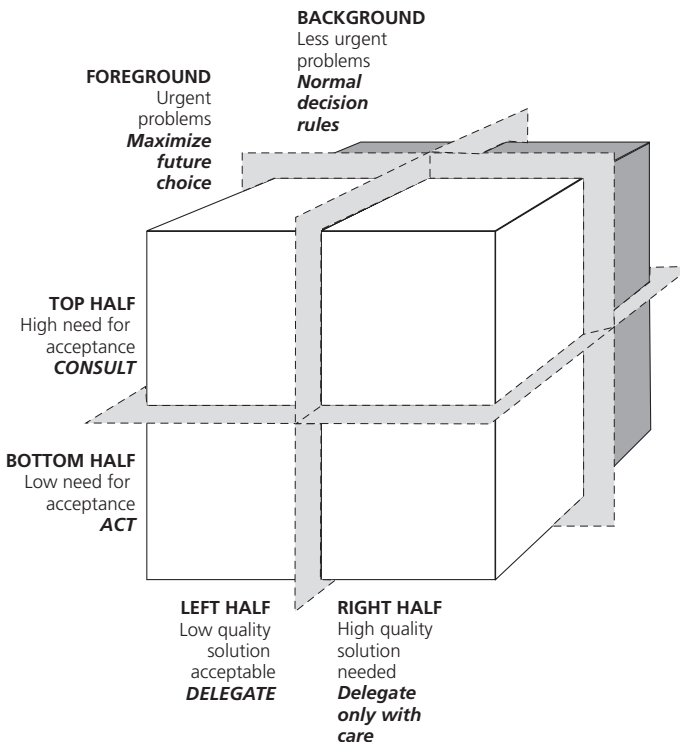
Dealing with Urgency

In emergencies managers have to deal with both urgent and non-urgent decisions. Clearly, non-urgent decisions can be left for normal decision processes. One potential problem is the risk that outstanding non-urgent decisions increase the total decision load on the emergency manager. In such cases it can be appropriate to treat non-critical, non-urgent decisions as urgent ones, just to reduce the overall decision load.

Decision Making Techniques and the Decision Cube

The rules presented above can be shown on the decision cube. Each type of decision suggests its own approach.

- ◆ Low quality: delegate
- ◆ High quality: delegate only with care
- ◆ Urgent: maximise future choice
- ◆ Non-urgent: apply normal (non-emergency) decision rules unless decision overload is a problem
- ◆ High need for acceptance: consult if possible
- ◆ Low need for acceptance: act now, unless you want to use this as an opportunity to improve relationships or team building



Summary



Key Points

Making decisions in emergencies may be difficult because of the number of decisions to be made, the time, information and acceptance constraints as well as the potentially serious consequences.

In emergencies, managers have to make an increased number of decisions per day.

Decisions with a need for high quality are decisions with serious or long term consequences.

Decisions may have negative results because of inadequate information or unforeseeable changes in the situation.

The need for acceptance of decisions is critical in an emergency response because of the number of players typically involved.

The 'decision cube' is a model of emergency decisions categorised by urgency, quality, and the need for acceptance.

Maximising future choice is an effective technique for dealing with uncertainty and urgency.

Emergency managers should delegate low quality decisions, preferably to those most concerned.

Consulting beforehand may be quicker than 'selling' the decision after the event.

Delegation is an important managerial tool. One rule of thumb is: 'If someone else can do it, delegate it. Keep for yourself only those tasks that no one else can do.'



Self Test

Chapter 4 Self-Assessment Questions

Check *T* or *F* to indicate whether a statement is *True* or *False*

- T** **F** 1. Many decisions taken at the start of an emergency response operation may have long term effects.
- T** **F** 2. Even decisions based on good information may later turn out to be seen as bad decisions.
- T** **F** 3. The need for acceptance is not critical in emergencies because everyone is working towards a common goal.
- T** **F** 4. An average person can actively consider about twenty problems at one time.
- T** **F** 5. Delegation to the people most concerned is a useful technique for dealing with critical decisions about the level of resources to be provided.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

- 6. Decisions with a high need for quality are decisions which may have:
 - A** Potentially serious consequences
 - B** Long term consequences
 - C** Serious or long term consequences
 - D** Decisions affecting a number of partners
- 7. The single most critical (non-protection) decision made at the start of a refugee crisis is often:
 - A** The selection of the ration scale
 - B** The selection of implementing partners
 - C** The selection of the camp site
 - D** The policy on the distribution of non-food items
- 8. Which of the following types of decision is unlikely to have a low need for acceptance?
 - A** Decisions made by an emergency manager whose skills and experience are widely respected by partners
 - B** Decisions affecting a number of partners in a significant way
 - C** Decisions made by a manager with specific competence in the field
 - D** Decisions specifically within the ambit of the manager

9. Which of the following factors is not used for classifying decisions on the decision cube?

- A Urgency
- B Need for acceptance
- C Information quality
- D Decision Quality

10. Which of the following would not be appropriate?

- A Delegating low quality decisions to those most involved
- B Treating non-urgent decisions by the normal (non-emergency) decision rules
- C Trying to maximise future choice with urgent decisions
- D Implementing non-urgent decisions with a high need for acceptance without consultation



Exercise

Exercises

A — Scenario: A site must be reserved next week as a planned temporary site for medical and social services. The exact site is not very important so long as it is fairly central. There are two agencies involved in providing services.

Who should decide where the site should be located? Analyse the decision in terms of the factors discussed in the chapter.

Quality:

Urgency:

Acceptance:

Decision-making approach:

Who should make the decision?

B — Scenario: As manager, you receive a report that thousands of refugees have crossed the border and that transport is urgently needed. In the past, similar reports have sometimes been exaggerated. If you send all the transport to collect the refugees, all of the work planned for today—including food distribution and site development—will have to be stopped, but no other agency should be affected.

What decision would you make? Use the factors cited in the chapter to guide your decision.

Quality:

Urgency:

Acceptance:

Decision-making approach:

What decision(s) would you make?

**Chapter 4
Answers**

- | | |
|------|------------|
| 1. T | 6. A, B, C |
| 2. T | 7. C |
| 3. F | 8. B |
| 4. F | 9. C |
| 5. F | 10. D |

Exercise Answers**A —**

Quality: This decision is low quality as the exact location of the site is not very important and it is a temporary site, so there are unlikely to be long-term consequences specifically from this particular decision.

Urgency: The decision is not urgent. Decisions with a deadline are unlikely to be urgent in an emergency.

Acceptance: There is a high need for acceptance as it directly concerns the work of two partner agencies.

Decision making approach: This analysis suggests that this decision can be delegated to a normal decision-making process in a consultative fashion.

Who should make the decision? One approach would be to delegate the decision to the agencies concerned.

B —

Quality: This decision is a high quality decision, as a bad decision will have serious consequences, either for those at the border, or those expecting services today.

Urgency: The decision is urgent, as the trucks will have to be sent immediately.

Acceptance: The decision is a low acceptance one, as no outside agency will be affected by the decision.

Decision making approach: This type of decision is not appropriate for delegation, needs no consultation, but needs urgent action. In such circumstances the manager should try to maximise future choice.

What decision would you make? In this case, the manager took immediate action, sending about 25% of the transport fleet to collect those who were unable to walk. Then the manager set off to make a direct assessment of the situation. This meant that:

- most of the planned work could continue
- accurate information could be collected
- those in worst shape could be transported immediately

As it turned out, little more than one hundred refugees crossed the border and all could be transported with the available transport.

Thinking Systematically



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- Systems, structures, and procedures for emergency management
- The advantages of both 'ad hoc' and systematic approaches to emergency management
- The appropriateness of systems in relation to the scale of the emergency
- Ways in which you can select approaches and establish appropriate systems

Two Approaches to Emergency Management



Example

Although UNHCR had been confronted with major refugee emergencies since the late 1970s, the Kurdish crisis in the spring of 1991 was unprecedented both in scope and in international interest. According to many observers within and outside the organisation, UNHCR staff arrived on the scene of the emergency too slowly, in insufficient numbers, and with inadequate experience.

UNHCR's own review of the operation noted: 'In the Persian Gulf, UNHCR's capacity to act quickly and decisively was limited by the absence of structures, systems and procedures designed to meet the specific needs of the emergency.'

— 'Can a UN Bureaucracy Deal with Emergencies?' by Sylvie Girard, *Refugees Magazine*, No. 91, February, 1993

Systems are designed to streamline decision-making and provide a platform for rapid action. Emergency managers must usually balance two general approaches to management. While these two approaches represent radically different philosophies, neither represents a universally appropriate solution to all emergencies or to the problems of emergency management. Managers facing problems for which there is no existing system can take one of two approaches:

- ◆ The *ad hoc* or 'quick fix' approach of dealing with problems as they arise without establishing a system to deal with them. Managers who use this approach often tend to be very fast decision-makers.
- ◆ Systematic approaches, or approaches to problems which seek to solve problems by establishing structures and procedures to deal with the present problem and any similar one which may re-occur. A systematic approach can be as simple as a memo from the manager telling the staff that any special cases should see the protection officer without a prior interview with the manager.

Systems, Structures and Procedures

Systems, in this context, are pre-defined methods for responding to problems. Systems consist of both structures (which implement the response) and procedures (which define the way in which the response is to be implemented).

Procedures are pre-defined sets of actions, which are used when particular conditions are met. These can be as simple as the steps you take to request leave, or even for dealing with a bomb threat. Procedures do not need to be written down, but may be recorded in terms of institutional memory of 'the usual practice.'

Structures are teams of people who are responsible for dealing with problems when particular conditions are met. Structures may include the emergency response management team, the refugee leadership, the inter-agency committee of medical NGOs, the local authorities, or any other group that can deal with a problem in an integrated way.

The distinction between structures and procedures is not always very clear, as structures often issue their own procedures or are called into existence by other procedures. Procedures deal with the processes by which issues should be dealt with. Structures are the teams that do the processing. This does not imply that structures take decisions in a consultative way, even though this is common. Individuals within the structure may be empowered to deal with particular decisions, in line with the established procedures. Structures and procedures can exist independently of each other, but this is rare—each needs the other to be effective.

- ◆ Where a structure is created without procedures, it is common to find that the first task the structure sets is the definition of informal procedures. These may never be written but only reflected in the practices of the structure.
- ◆ Procedures can exist for use by individuals rather than structures. One example is the procedure for drivers to follow when they have a flat tyre. Even in such cases it would be unusual for the procedure not to call for the involvement of structures at some stage. In the case of the driver with a flat tyre, there will generally be some situations where the driver has to call back to base for assistance.
- ◆ Procedures and structures are at their most effective when they work together.

The careful design of structures and procedures can be used to clarify roles or to support or even develop members of the team. For example, a manager may give prior authorisation to some staff to take decisions of a certain type (for example, the approval of issues from stores up to certain level).

The Ad Hoc Approach

The *ad hoc* approach is a very natural approach to emergencies. The phrase '*ad hoc*' is Latin for 'to this' and usually refers to one-off measures that are taken to resolve a specific problem. When managers take an *ad hoc* approach, they are trying to resolve a problem immediately, without the delay which setting up systems might take. Despite the somewhat negative connotations of this approach, it does offer a number of advantages



Question

What are the advantages of an ad hoc approach?

The advantages of this approach include:

The speed of response. This is the greatest single advantage that the *ad hoc* approach offers over a systematic approach. Setting up systems takes time, and even when established, consultative systems will generally take longer to reach a decision than an individual manager.

Control. The manager retains direct control over the response. Systems generally imply some dilution of the manager's individual authority. Even when systems are established managers typically retain some types of problems or decisions for their own attention rather than leaving them to the system.

Coherence. Decisions that are made centrally by the manager are more likely to be coherent with the overall policies that the manager is currently pursuing. Emergencies are times of great change, and policies may change rapidly to keep up. Some structures may not be fully aware of the latest policy.

Efficiency. As the manager will generally be aware of activity in other sectors, the manager may be able to combine the response to this problem with a complementary response to another one. For example, the manager might use trucks travelling to the border to collect new arrivals, to transport supplies to the reception centre there at the same time. The lack of structures means that no resources are used for their maintenance and overhead.



Question

What disadvantages can you see in the ad hoc approach?

The chief disadvantages of this approach include:

- ◆ The load which it places on the emergency manager. Every single decision must come to you. Even though you may deal with some problems by delegating them, you must still consider them briefly in the first place. This will place an enormous load on you and may lead to your concentrating on only the urgent rather than important problems
- ◆ Every problem is treated as if it were unique, whereas in reality, many problems are likely to repeat themselves in an emergency, if in slightly different forms. Treating each problem as unique may lead to inequity in that similar problems are treated differently
- ◆ While it is probably true that you will increase your own management skill with every decision you take, others within the management team are losing the opportunity to improve their skills.
- ◆ The whole emergency response depends on the emergency manager. If the manager is experienced and competent, all is good. If not, major problems will result. If the manager is absent (because of illness brought on by the stress of having so much to do), the whole operation may grind to a halt.

Systematic Approaches

In systematic approaches, some problems never reach the emergency manager at all, but are sent to the part of the structure indicated by the standard procedures. Managers strive to resolve problems not by concentrating on the current problem, but by trying to set up systems to deal with the problem, usually without the direct involvement of the manager.



Question

What advantages do systematic approaches offer?

As systematic approaches are the opposite of quick ad-hoc approaches, their advantages and disadvantages are opposite but complementary. The main advantages of systematic approaches are:

- ◆ Once the system is established, the manager's work load can be substantially reduced.
- ◆ All similar problems should be dealt with in a similar way, thus avoiding inequity. Systematic approaches may also be perceived as more transparent as well as more fair.
- ◆ Formal division of responsibility allows the development of specialist skills among new staff. This can reduce the need for staff with a broad range of skills.
- ◆ The quality of the response does not depend on one individual
- ◆ Systems facilitate the change from emergency to care and maintenance operations.

Of course, there are also risks in taking a systematic approach. Some of these risks are:

- ◆ The delays inherent in setting up systems may lead to additional deaths and suffering.
- ◆ Setting up the system will demand resources, including the manager's time. This means that although taking a systematic approach will lead to a lower workload in the long-term, it will give a higher workload in the short-term.
- ◆ Badly designed systems can actually increase the manager's subsequent workload instead of reducing it.
- ◆ Systems inevitably have an administrative overhead. This is usually reflected in the number of staff needed to manage the operation. This can be an obvious problem in small operations. However, the reduced need for highly skilled managers can more than compensate for the overhead.
- ◆ Systems inevitably reduce the flexibility a manager has in dealing with problems.
- ◆ Refugees and other partners may perceive systems as overly bureaucratic.

Selecting an Approach

Managers do not always have a choice about the approach that they use. For many issues the manager is guided directly by agency policy, existing MOUs with other organisations, or already decided upon actions—set, for example, in contingency planning efforts. Widely publicised, and practised, agency policy will help a manager deal with problems in a systematic rather than an *ad hoc* fashion.

There may also be specific pressure against a systematic approach in many cases. The policy of the host government or donor governments, for example, may not always favour the establishment of the structures essential for a systematic approach because of fears that the establishment of such structures might ‘send the wrong signals’ or constrain future options. For example, contingency planning may sometimes be constrained because of such fears.

Due to these pressures and the use of both approaches, it is important that you are able to use both appropriately. Do not rely on one style exclusively, as this will seriously constrain your ability to manage effectively in some cases.

- ◆ If you deal with all problems with only the *ad hoc* approach, you will likely deal with problems very quickly, but will slow down as your workload grows. All the power will be concentrated in your hands and the operation may slow to a crawl when you are absent (or overwhelmed). Outsiders may see you as a ‘take charge’ manager, but your staff may perceive you as insecure. When you eventually move to another post, mission, or assignment, you will leave loose ends behind and a lot of tidying up for your successor.
- ◆ If you deal with all problems using a systematic approach, you will initially be much slower, during the critical emergency phase, in dealing with problems, but may build a strong team which can ultimately function in your absence. Both outsiders and your own staff may see you as a ‘paper pusher’ or a ‘bureaucrat.’

The appropriate approach to any problem will depend on the circumstances. Despite the attraction of systems, they have their disadvantages in terms of initial delays and reduced control. These disadvantages, together with the administrative overhead, mean that the manager must carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of establishing systems to deal with problems. The following table lists some of the factors that are likely to favour one approach over the other:

<i>Ad Hoc Approach</i>	<i>Systematic Approach</i>
Very urgent problems	Less urgent
One-off problems	Likely to be repeated
Chaos	Some existing structures
Very start of an operation	Stabilising operation
First time a problem occurs	Subsequent occurrences
Weak team	Strong team
Very small scale	Medium to large scale
Focus on the present	Focus on the future

It is possible, in some circumstances, to combine both approaches. Using the *ad hoc* approach the first time a problem occurs while, at the same time, initiating a system to deal with the next occurrence is an example of a combined approach. This combined approach is only valid for problems for which a systematic approach would be appropriate. The ability to take the longer-term

view and set up appropriate systems while dealing with problems of the present is the hallmark of the very best type of emergency manager.

Setting Up Systems

Managers will need to set up different types of systems to deal with different problems. Managers usually have the following choices when establishing systems:

- ◆ Setting up a new structure with new procedures
- ◆ Amending an existing structure with new procedures
- ◆ Establishing new or amended procedures for use by existing structures

These choices are in order of generally increasing preference, with the setting up of wholly new structures and procedures being the least preferred. Each structure carries an administrative burden which managers should seek to minimise by trying to use existing structures as much as possible. Amending existing structures, for example, by setting up a new sub-committee, is preferable to setting up completely new structures, but still involves a greater input than amending procedures.

Where possible, managers should strive to meet the need for new systems through the use of existing structures with new or amended procedures. There are situations, for example, where existing structures are dysfunctional for reasons outside the manager's control, where wholly new structures will be the best choice. Having effective and flexible structures is the key to the systematic approach to emergency management.

Inflexible structures may not be able to deal with new or amended procedures, thus forcing the manager to amend the structure or develop a new one. The need for flexibility may mean that setting up systems may be completely inappropriate in situations of very great change. The structures that are available to an emergency manager are of two types:

- ◆ Pre-existing structures, or structures which were in place prior to the emergency response. These can include the local authorities, local NGOs, and all other structures. The emergency manager will have access to many of these, but will rarely be able to set their agenda. S/he may be able to persuade these structures to amend their structure or procedures to better assist in the emergency response. Typically, such amendments include special weekly district meetings by the district authorities to co-ordinate the emergency response.
- ◆ Special co-ordination structures are structures that are specifically established after the emergency. The emergency manager will normally play a large role in setting up these structures.

While special co-ordination structures may offer far more flexibility than existing structures, existing structures are far more likely to have the immediate authority needed to effect change among long established partners. The manager may need to balance the need for flexibility with the need to influence long established partners. Co-ordination structures, and ways to work with them are discussed in the next chapter.

Summary



Key Points

Neither *systematic* nor *ad hoc* approaches are universally appropriate for the management of all emergency responses.

Emergency systems are usually comprised of procedures, which define how problems are to be approached, and structures, which implement the procedures.

Procedures and structures are inter-dependent; they need each other if they are to function.

Both the *ad hoc* and systematic approaches offer advantages to the emergency manager.

The *ad hoc* approach offers speed, control (by the manager), coherence, and efficiency.

The systematic approach offers reduced decision-making pressure on the manager, predictability, development of skills among a wider range of colleagues, and facilitates smoother transition to the care and maintenance phase.

The advantages of *ad hoc* approaches include speed of response, control, coherence and some efficiency gains.

Managers need to decide whether systematic or *ad hoc* approaches are the most appropriate for any particular problem.

Managers can set up entirely new systems, or modify procedures and structures to meet new needs.



Self Test

Chapter 5

Self-Assessment Questions

Check *T* or *F* to indicate whether a statement is *True* or *False*

- T** **F** 1. Managers who use *ad hoc* approaches most of the time tend to be very fast decision makers
- T** **F** 2. An example of a systematic approach could be as simple as a memo from the manager detailing how his staff are to deal with particular cases.
- T** **F** 3. Speed of response is the greatest single advantage of the systematic approach
- T** **F** 4. It is not possible to combine both the *ad hoc* and systematic approaches
- T** **F** 5. Flexible structures are an impediment to the systematic approach to management

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Emergency structures are:
- A** Pre-defined sets of actions used when particular conditions are met
 - B** Pre-defined methods for responding to problems
 - C** A combination of systems and procedures
 - D** Teams of people who are responsible for dealing with particular types of issue
7. Structures and procedures:
- A** Cannot exist independently of each other
 - B** Can exist independently of each other, but not very effectively
 - C** Are one and the same thing
 - D** Can exist separately and each can be used very effectively in the absence of the other
8. An emergency manager who needs to lower her personal workload should favour:
- A** The *ad hoc* approach
 - B** The systematic approach
 - C** A systematic approach if she wants to decrease her long-term workload, but an *ad hoc* approach for the present workload
 - D** A systematic approach if she wants to decrease her present workload, but an *ad hoc* approach for the long-term workload

**Chapter 5
Answers**

- | | |
|------|------------|
| 1. T | 6. A, B, C |
| 2. T | 7. C |
| 3. F | 8. B |
| 4. F | 9. C |
| 5. F | 10. D |

Exercise Answer

There are many approaches that the emergency manager can take. As noted above, the emergency manager will normally have a large number of partners to deal with. One of the most effective approaches is to differentiate among the partners in terms of the likely reliability of the information they are providing. Partners who have a long presence in the region affected by the emergency will have good knowledge about underlying developments. Partners with broad emergency experience may be a more reliable source of information on technical measures.

The emergency manager can improve the quantity of information available by making key partners aware of the type of information and the details needed by the emergency manager. Both distinguishing between partners and making them aware of the principal information needs are part of the process of building an information network.

Your answer may have been different, but it should have included some reference to using partners or building a network, rather than trying to do it all yourself.

Managing Time



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- How to plan your time
- How to differentiate between urgent tasks and important ones in order to better prioritise your time commitments
- Techniques for improving your ability (by increasing your time available) to deal with important tasks
- How to use 'to-do' lists effectively
- How to control interruptions
- The importance of delegation in time management

Time and Tasks



Example

Thousands more people are expected to arrive tonight... The staff is still going, but very tired. I haven't slept since 6:00 a.m. yesterday morning. We are waiting to see what happens tonight. There is nothing more we can do. ...

— Transcript of a satellite telephone call from Anders Levinsen, of UNHCR's office in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reported in *Refugees Magazine*, No. 91, February 1993.

This chapter deals with aspects of personal time management in emergencies. Time is a unique resource. Unlike cash or materials, it cannot be stockpiled, and if not 'used' it simply goes to waste. Time is a very important resource for any manager, but it is a critical resource for the emergency manager. If time is wasted and tasks are delayed, the consequences may be very serious.

Time Planning

Without planning, you are completely at the mercy of what happens during the day. You are no longer a manager, but merely another element of the crisis, swept along by events. The day is probably the most appropriate unit of time to use for short term planning in typical emergencies. Most of the following discussion is about planning the day's work, but the same principles also apply to longer periods. The problem in emergencies is that there may be any number of incidents during the day which require serious consideration. Some of these will be important enough to force the manager to change plans.

Emergencies are filled with large and small critical incidents which constantly change the situation. While this means that the day may never run as planned, it does not mean that planning is not needed. In normal management, the course of a day, even if unplanned, is often fairly predictable. This is not the case in emergency management. Paradoxically, even though emergency

managers are less likely to fully implement their plans than managers in non-emergency situations, it is all the more important that they have one, since the possibility of straying far from important goals and objectives is even higher in such instances.

The normal tool for planning a day (or a longer period) is a diary or calendar. This kind of time planner can be in paper form or in the form of a software programme on a computer. A daily calendar of planned activities can be supplemented by the addition of a to-do list as discussed below. If you are lucky enough to have a personal assistant, you can delegate authority to that person to make provisional appointments within the parameters you set.

The Urgent and the Important

A key issue in emergency management is prioritisation. In order to prioritise your own actions and those of others, they must be weighed in relation to your operation's management goals. One helpful way to analyse these actions is to begin by distinguishing between those that are simply *urgent* and those that are *important*.

Urgent tasks are those that need to be done immediately. For example, it may be urgent that you reply to a request from headquarters before a high-level meeting with donors takes place in three hours time. **Important** tasks are those that will have serious consequences, even if they do not have to be done immediately. For example, it may be *important* that you discuss the plans for the following year with the local authority in order to clarify objectives and build relationships. Important tasks are not necessarily urgent, but have tremendous effect on the overall outcome of the emergency operation.

In emergencies there is a risk that the emergency manager will devote too much time to urgent tasks and have no time left for the important ones. Contingency planning, for example, is an important task that may not seem to be urgent in a situation where an emergency may or may not happen. Similarly, at the beginning of an operation there may be resistance to spending time for planning when immediate action is required. Managing your time, then, should result in a situation where important issues as well as urgent ones can be considered.

One very useful technique is to allocate a block of time during the day during which the manager is not to be disturbed except for grave crises. The manager can then use this block of time for important tasks and those that need concentration. These important tasks are normally the sort of task that cannot usefully be delegated. Many operations will have naturally quiet periods of the day when time can be blocked off without much interruption to other activities. Some managers may choose the late evening for this period, others the early morning. Whatever the choice may be, the precise time will depend on your own 'body clock,' the operation and the external constraints on time planning.

Setting Priorities

Assigning priorities to tasks is a key aspect of time planning. Not all tasks are equally urgent or important. Assigning daily priorities allows the manager to incorporate important, but less urgent tasks into their schedule.

The top priority tasks are not the most urgent tasks, but the most important tasks. The other three priority levels are for tasks that 'must be,' 'should be,' or would be 'good if' done today. It is helpful to separate the most important task from the other tasks. Each priority level can have several tasks of the same priority.



Tools

It is useful to include important but non-urgent tasks such as 'relaxation' or 'exercise' into the task list where they will serve as a continual reminder to the

manager of the need to maintain his/her own effectiveness through these activities.

To-Do Lists

Based on the concept of the priority list above, a more developed *To-Do List* can be made as a daily personal management tool. To-do lists are simple but effective tools for managing and prioritising tasks. These aids simply list the tasks that one plans to do, usually in order of priority. They are probably the single most effective tool for managing in emergencies. They are excellent for reminding you of the necessary but distasteful tasks (such as disciplinary interviews) which you might otherwise be tempted to postpone day after day.

Most people cannot actively consider more than 10 problems at the same time. When you have more than ten problems to deal with, one or more of them will inevitably be forgotten while you concern yourself with the others. As each activity is completed, the activity should be crossed off.

Tasks that are not completed on the daily list are carried forward to the following day *after they have been reviewed*.

In some cases, the tasks may no longer be necessary and may be dropped. In other cases, the priority of the uncompleted tasks may be promoted. To-do lists only work if you have the discipline to maintain them—preparing the list for the following day at the end of each day. An emergency manager's list might have 10 to 20 tasks at the beginning of the day.

To-do lists can seem a bit depressing when you look at the list of tasks facing you each morning. This aspect can be improved if you include a running total of to-do tasks that you have completed since the start of the operation. When you see that you have already completed several hundred tasks, the fact that you have another ten or fifteen facing you no longer seems so daunting.

Priority Levels

1 Most important task

2 Must be done today

3 Should be done today

4 Good if done today

TO-DO LIST

304 tasks completed since 1 May '02

For: Anne Other

Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2002

No.	Completed	Priority	Task
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Review draft contingency plan
2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Prepare itinerary for Ambassadors' visit
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Meeting with refugee leaders
4	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5	<input type="checkbox"/>		

The human aspects of time management are perhaps more complex than the task related aspects. Two of these are discussed below:

- ◆ Interruptions (unplanned visits, or phone calls). Meetings can also be a source of interruption but will be discussed in the following lesson.
- ◆ Delegating tasks.

Dealing with Interruptions

Irregular interruptions, whether they are visitors, telephone calls, or urgent messages are one of the most difficult of the time-wasters to deal with. Interruptions are difficult to deal with for a range of reasons including:

- ◆ The interrupters need to be properly handled to ensure that they are not offended
- ◆ Interruptions may be welcomed by the manager as a sub-conscious way to put off doing a disagreeable or difficult task
- ◆ Interruptions may be a source of valuable information and improve networking
- ◆ An ignored interruption may mean that the emergency manager fails to act in time to prevent a crisis.

The last of these is particularly important. It is simply not possible nor appropriate for an emergency manager to ignore all interruptions. The emergency manager must not only direct his own staff, but must somehow get all of the actors to work towards a common goal. The nature of emergencies is such that serious changes in situations and crises are common. The manager must remain on top of these if he or she is to be effective. At the same time, interruptions may lead to a complete disruption of the emergency manager's programme and a failure to meet personal work objectives. Interruptions can be broadly controlled in two ways:

- ◆ Limiting the number of interruptions
- ◆ Limiting the duration of interruptions

Limiting the number of interruptions is more effective than limiting the duration of interruptions as even brief interruptions can derail the manager's train of thought. Interruptions can be limited in a number of ways including:

Screening. The emergency manager's staff can screen visitors, telephone calls and urgent messages and only interrupt the manager with those that appear to be very important or very urgent. Effective staff will also direct calls and visitors to the staff member most appropriate to respond to the problem rather than directing everyone to the emergency manager. Screening is also important for faxes, emails and other messages as the manager should be informed of any urgent message, but the bulk of routine messages can wait until later.

Time-blocking. The manager can set specific time periods for different types of interruptions. Partners could be told that the manager is generally unavailable for unplanned meetings in the mornings, but can see callers in the afternoon. Headquarters could be provided with the times at which the manager will be more easily reached by telephone for non-emergency calls.

Full appointment system. Under this system all meetings must be scheduled by appointment, without exception. While this is essential in large-scale emergencies, it may not be appropriate in smaller-scale emergencies, especially when communications are poor. The danger of a full appointment system is that the manager may often need to break appointments to deal with new crises. In smaller-scale emergencies, partners may see an appointment system as overly

bureaucratic and 'unfriendly,' and the manager may therefore be excluded from the information network. It is often more appropriate to allocate a part of the day when the manager is sure of being in the office for planned appointments.

Pre-empting interruptions. In this case the manager strives to keep everyone informed of what is happening so that he receives fewer interruptions related to requests for information. If others are used to being contacted by the emergency manager with information, rather than having to contact the emergency manager to get it, this can limit the number of interruptions that the manager receives. Co-ordination meetings are one way in which many unnecessary interruptions can be controlled.

An 'open door' period. The manager can set a fixed time for having an 'open-door.' This is a time when the manager is available to colleagues and implementing partners without a prior appointment. This is particularly useful when there are sensitive issues which others may hesitate to make an appointment to discuss, but might be more willing to raise on a more casual 'just dropping in' basis.

You can also limit the length of interruptions. While this may not be as effective (in some cases) as limiting the number of interruptions, it can be very useful for reducing the impact of interruptions.



Question

What techniques might an emergency manager use to limit the length of interruptions?

There is a wide range of techniques available including:

- ◆ **Delegation.** After speaking to the caller (in person or on the phone), the emergency manager can pass the person on to an appropriate staff member.
- ◆ **Suggesting an alternative appointment.** The manager can offer the caller a choice between five minutes now or more time in a set appointment later.
- ◆ **Setting a time limit.** The manager can limit the length of interruptions by telling a caller how long they have available before their next appointment, meeting etc.

Most of the callers are people whom the manager deals with in an ongoing relationship (and whom the manager may himself interrupt in the course of their work). It is important to remember that the same interruptions that intrude on your work intrude on the work of others. Also, techniques to reduce interruptions that work for the emergency manager will also work for the people with whom s/he deals. One way of making interruptions more effective is by keeping a list of points to be raised with different people. If they call on the manager before the manager calls on them, the manager has an agenda of topics to discuss ready to hand. This is especially useful for phone calls.

Delegating Tasks



Tools

Delegation is one of the keys to effective time management. With effective delegation, the emergency manager has less routine work to do and more time to

concentrate on planned priorities. A manager who can delegate screening callers and routine reporting to his staff has already gained a huge time advantage. Delegation may offer the following advantages:

- ◆ **Faster** emergency response to continuing crises as staff do not need to refer back before acting.
- ◆ The manager has **more time** to concentrate on important matters.
- ◆ The manager's work **becomes less routine** and more interesting.
- ◆ **The staff to whom responsibility for the task is delegated may become more effective** and useful members of the team.

Delegation does not mean handing all responsibility over to your subordinates. The manager retains overall responsibility.

Depending on the situation, delegation can range from: 'Do the job, but...'

- ◆ 'consult me before taking decisions'
- ◆ 'keep me closely informed of progress'
- ◆ 'let me know if you need any help or support'
- ◆ 'let me know how it went when you are finished'

Delegation can only work when you have competent staff. This is why managers should make every effort to develop the staff on their team, even in an emergency. A team member who is not very effective on first arrival, may with experience, coaching and responsibility, become a very valuable member of the team.

Delegation, despite all of its advantages, is not a panacea. Some managers may be reluctant to delegate because:

- ◆ of the risk that the subordinate may fail
- ◆ the manager enjoys doing it himself/herself
- ◆ of the fear that the subordinate may supplant the manager
- ◆ of the belief that nobody can do it as well as the manager

These are some of the most common reasons given by managers for not delegating, but these reasons are rarely valid, especially when you consider how limited delegation may be. In emergencies, however, there may be very good reasons why an emergency manager chooses **not** to delegate some tasks, even when those tasks are not central to the operation. The reasons for this will depend on the exact circumstances but may include:

How well do you delegate?

Do sub-ordinates wanting to know what to do frequently interrupt you? YES NO

Do you set such high (or narrow) standards that only you can reach them? YES NO

Do you work longer hours than your staff? YES NO

Do you sometimes have to do the work of one of your subordinates? YES NO

Do you spend all your time on details rather than dealing with 'the big picture'? YES NO

Are you sometimes described as being 'too contentious' or 'a perfectionist'? YES NO

If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, you may be someone who finds it difficult to delegate.

- ◆ **The manager's desire to stay informed** about what is happening. Some routine tasks such as preparing summary reports may give the manager a very good feel for the overall situation and new developments.
- ◆ **The manager is the only one with the requisite skill or status.** If it is a question of skill, the manager should be training someone else to do the task as well, if possible.
- ◆ **Delegation takes time.** If the task is very urgent, it may be more appropriate for the manager to do it himself/herself rather than waiting to delegate.
- ◆ **Delegation takes too long.** It may take more time to explain the task to a subordinate, together with all the required background information. Again, *if the task is never to be repeated*, it may make sense for the manager to do it herself.
- ◆ **Novel task.** If the task is new, the manager may wish to do it himself/herself to 'get a feel for it' before delegating it. It might be better to delegate such a task under close supervision.

The danger is that an emergency manager can generally find some reason for not delegating in every instance. This means that the manager may become too involved in trivial (but seemingly urgent) activities to manage the whole emergency response. Delegation is a tool that a good emergency manager can use to improve the overall performance of the emergency team.

The golden rule is:

*If there is someone else who can do it,
delegate it. Keep for yourself only those tasks
which no one else can do.*

As with all rules there will be valid exceptions. Whenever there are exceptions, the manager should be satisfied that his/her reasons for making such an exception are valid.

Summary



Key Points

Time is a critical resource for the emergency manager.

Planning your time is essential to avoid chaos.

'Urgent' and 'important' are not necessarily the same.

Allocating a daily time block during which one should not be disturbed is an effective time management technique.

'To-do' lists are simple but extremely effective time management tools.

To-do lists look less overwhelming if they include a running total of the number of to-do tasks completed since the start of the operation.

The impact of interruptions can be reduced by controlling both their number and their duration.

Unless there are very good reasons not to, the manager should always delegate tasks which others can do.



Self Test

Chapter 6
Self-Assessment Questions

Check *T* or *F* to indicate whether a statement is *True* or *False*

- T** **F** 1. Important tasks are always urgent.
- T** **F** 2. It is useful to include 'relaxation' or 'exercise' in the daily task list.
- T** **F** 3. Limiting the number of interruptions is more effective than limiting their duration.
- T** **F** 4. A full appointment system is always appropriate.
- T** **F** 5. If someone else can do it, the manager should always delegate the task.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. A useful technique for ensuring that the manager has time to deal with important tasks is:
- A** Getting urgent tasks out of the way first
 - B** Delegating important tasks
 - C** Setting a daily block of time aside during which the manager is not disturbed except for grave crises.
 - D** Ignoring urgent tasks
7. Which of the following is not one of the suggested priority levels for your 'to do' list?
- A** Must be done today
 - B** Should be done today
 - C** Most important task
 - D** Must be done tomorrow
8. The approach of pre-empting interruptions implies that, as manager, you should:
- A** Keep people well-informed in order to reduce questions
 - B** Interrupt others first, before they can interrupt you
 - C** Set aside specific times for interruptions
 - D** Not allow interruptions

9. Which of the following is not true of interruptions?
- A Interruptions may be a source of valuable information
 - B Interruptions can be ignored until the manager is ready for them
 - C Managers may welcome interruptions to distasteful or boring tasks
 - D Interruptions need to be properly handled to avoid creating offence
10. Which of the following is unlikely to be a valid reason for not delegating?
- A Keeping informed
 - B Delegation takes time
 - C The subordinate may replace the manager
 - D The manager is the only one with the requisite skill

**Exercise****Exercise**

You are an emergency manager. Prepare your daily schedule on the form provided:

- You have a co-ordination meeting for one hour at 10:00.
- You must spend at least two hours working on revisions to the budgets.
- You have a one-hour breakfast briefing with your team at 07:00. This tends to be an informal session during which staff can raise issues of household management (as everyone lives in one compound for security) as well as work issues.
- You have a lunch appointment at 12:00 to brief a visiting embassy team for two hours.
- You need to talk to HQ for about an hour, including call preparation time.
- You are scheduled for two hours of appointments at a time of your own choosing.
- You will go to an NGO party at 20:00.
- You can decide what to do with the rest of the time.

Schedule for **Wednesday, July 15, 2002**

07:00

08:00

09:00

10:00

11:00

12:00

13:00

14:00

15:00

16:00

17:00

18:00

19:00

20:00

21:00



Chapter 6 Answers

- | | |
|------|---------|
| 1. F | 6. C |
| 2. T | 7. C, D |
| 3. T | 8. A |
| 4. F | 9. B |
| 5. F | 10. C |

Exercise Answer

Apart from the times that you were given in the exercise, you were free to allocate your time as you like. The following is one possible plan.

To do list answer

Schedule for **Wednesday, July 15, 2002**

07:00	Team Breakfast Briefing
08:00	Private Time: Budgets
09:00	Private Time: Budgets
10:00	Co-ordination meeting
11:00	Phone headquarters
12:00	Lunch with embassy team
13:00	Lunch with embassy team
14:00	Follow up on co-ordination and phone call
15:00	Other appointments
16:00	Other appointments
17:00	Open door
18:00	Swimming
19:00	Personal matters
20:00	Reading
21:00	Reading

Whatever your plan is for the day it should contain:

- ◆ Some time blocked out as private time (for dealing with important issues uninterrupted).
- ◆ Some time for personal matters (letters home, shopping, etc.).
- ◆ Some time for follow-up on the planned activities.

The schedule includes an open door time. This is a matter of personal taste, but it can be very useful for building and maintaining the team.

Unit 3

**Emergency
Preparedness
Competency**

Managing the Emergency Responders

Daily meeting at the
UN On-Site Operations
Coordination
Centre (OSOCC) in
Kigali, 1994.

*FAO photo/
G. Diana*



UNHCR
**Self Study
Module**
EP-03

PRETEST — Managing the Emergency Responders



Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

- T F 1. Co-ordination is a distinct and separate responsibility from emergency management.
- T F 2. When there is a refugee emergency, UNHCR is the UN agency responsible for co-ordinating the response of the UN system to the emergency.
- T F 3. Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Resident Co-ordinator, and Lead Agency Co-ordinator are all different names for the same type of co-ordination in an emergency.
- T F 4. Micro-level co-ordination is particularly appropriate where complex tasks must be executed as a set sequence.
- T F 5. Effective co-ordination is dependent on establishment of a consensus on the present (emergency) situation, the operational goals and objectives, and the activities and inputs needed to achieve those goals.
- T F 6. Conflicts seldom occur between overall objectives and subordinate sectoral objectives.
- T F 7. Conflicts may occur between the objectives at any particular level.
- T F 8. Even operational partners sometimes have conflicting mandates and concerns.
- T F 9. Personality differences are seldom sources for conflict in emergency operations, since the obvious need for consensus is paramount.
- T F 10. Political factors have no role in relations between operational partners since international humanitarian aid is 'neutral' by definition.
- T F 11. Refugees should be considered as partners in the emergency response operation.
- T F 12. All NGOs function more or less the same in emergencies.
- T F 13. Involving local NGOs may lead to a more favourable public perception of the emergency response in the host country.
- T F 14. Mediation is a friendly or diplomatic intervention, usually by consent or invitation for settling disputes between parties.

- 15. Team building seeks to achieve results through creating a team of dedicated individuals who will motivate one another in achieving the team goals.
- 16. In emergencies, managers often have a very high level of control of the membership of their teams.
- 17. Basic team management theory proposes that teams develop through a set of stages called forming, storming, norming, and performing.
- 18. Most teams that work have team members that trust each other.
- 19. Stress is always bad in emergencies.
- 20. The effect of stress on a person will depend on the person's stressors, supports, personality, and history or previous stress.



Pre-test
Answers

- 1. F
- 2. T
- 3. F
- 4. T
- 5. T
- 6. F
- 7. T
- 8. T
- 9. F
- 10. F
- 11. T
- 12. F
- 13. T
- 14. T
- 15. T
- 16. F
- 17. T
- 18. T
- 19. F
- 20. T

Pre-test
Answers



Unit 3

Thinking (and Acting) Like a Co-ordinator



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- Why co-ordination is so important for the emergency manager
- Current options or models for co-ordination of international emergency operations
- The different levels at which co-ordination can exist
- The three components of effective co-ordination
- Ways in which programmes can be co-ordinated



Example

Bosnia-Herzegovina was not yet at war, at the time. We set out a balance with UNHCR, and we co-operated on that basis. Then the war broke out in Bosnia – but we had co-operated, and we continued to do so. Working together in the same situation was possible only thanks to constant co-ordination. In fact, that co-operation even gave us the possibility to issue common humanitarian appeals to governments.

— An interview with Cornelio Sommaruga,
President of the ICRC, in *Refugees Magazine*,
No. 103, 1996

The Importance of Co-ordination

The ability to institute and manage co-ordination is an essential skill for all emergency response managers. Co-ordination in response to refugee emergencies is the responsibility of UNHCR, especially since modern emergency response relies on the combined efforts of an ever-increasing number of partners. Co-ordination is a vital skill in humanitarian emergencies because of the need to co-ordinate the efforts of various partners with wide ranging capacities and mandates.

Within the UN system the responsibility for refugees lies with UNHCR. Therefore, when there is a refugee emergency, UNHCR is the UN organization responsible for co-ordinating the response of the UN system to the emergency

— *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*, p. 58

Co-ordination of the UN Response to Complex Emergencies

The UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies* (p. 59) lists the following points as likely characteristics of complex emergencies:

- ◆ A large number of civilian victims, populations who are besieged or displaced, human suffering on a major scale
- ◆ Substantial international assistance is needed and the response goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any one agency
- ◆ Delivery of humanitarian assistance is impeded or prevented by parties to the conflict
- ◆ High security risks for relief workers providing humanitarian assistance
- ◆ Relief workers targeted by parties to the conflict.

In these situations, there are typically four model structures or options for the co-ordination of the emergency response. These are generally referred to as:

- ◆ Lead Agency model
- ◆ Resident Co-ordinator model
- ◆ Humanitarian Co-ordinator model
- ◆ Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator model

These four options are defined in the UNHCR *Handbook for Emergencies* (p. 60) as follows:

Resident Coordinator

The Resident Coordinator is the leader of the United Nations country team and is normally the head of UNDP in a particular country. In a complex emergency, the Resident Coordinator may also be designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Lead Agency

One of the UN agencies may be selected to coordinate and this is often the agency which provides the majority of the assistance.

Humanitarian Coordinator

If the emergency is of considerable size a Humanitarian Coordinator may be appointed distinct from the office of the Resident Coordinator and lead agency. The Humanitarian Coordinator normally phases out once the emergency reaches recovery phase and any residual tasks are returned to the Resident Coordinator.

Regional Humanitarian Coordinator

If the emergency affects more than one country a Humanitarian Coordinator having regional responsibilities may be appointed.

Mechanisms/Tools for Co-ordination in Refugee Emergencies

Co-ordination of humanitarian response by multiple parties in a complex operation is one of the key elements of emergency management. In refugee emergencies, UNHCR should take the lead to ensure effective co-ordination. Since the success of this co-ordination will necessarily be based on the trust built between organisations and individuals, the role of external relations with those organisations, bodies, and agencies involved in the overall co-ordination is key. (For more information on external relations see the self-study module EP-04.)



Tools

Co-ordination mechanisms should be based on sound management principles such as the establishment of clear objectives and assignment of appropriate responsibilities and authority. Some mechanisms which support co-ordination are:

- ◆ International instruments and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) which define responsibilities and roles at the global (and sometimes regional) level
- ◆ Agreements and exchange of letters with other agencies, implementing partners and host governments defining roles and responsibilities at the situational level
- ◆ Establishment of bodies for the provision of joint services to co-ordinating agencies such as vehicle repair and maintenance, communications, staff transport, security, etc.
- ◆ Shared and respected codes of conduct
- ◆ Regular meetings of established co-ordinating body
- ◆ Regular reporting and information sharing

In a large-scale refugee emergency, the co-ordinating body will also likely require sectoral sub-committees (water and sanitation, health, food and nutrition, education, etc.) Such sub-committees will be responsible for co-ordinating implementation in each sector and representing the status and needs of each sector in relation to the overall operation. In such cases co-ordination may be facilitated by adoption of operation-wide standards of assistance for each sector.

UN co-ordination mechanisms at field level also include a standing **UN Disaster Management Team (DMT)** in disaster/emergency-prone countries. The DMT may include staff from FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and UNHCR. The DMT is the main mechanism by which UN agencies co-ordinate policies and programs.

In most emergencies, in-country staff supporting the Resident/Humanitarian Co-ordinator are organised into a **Field Co-ordination Unit (FCU)**. This unit may be organised in different ways and under different names, may contain non-UN members similar to the make-up of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and may be supplemented by other special units such as de-mining. In Afghanistan, for example, the FCU meets under the chairmanship of the Head of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan (UNOCHA) and is called the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Co-ordination Committee. In some emergencies, a UN Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination Team (UNDAC) is recruited by the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, formerly DHA) to support the Field Co-ordination Unit.

Co-ordination at the Field/Project Level

At the field/project or micro level, co-ordination takes place through specification of the detailed actions to be taken. Micro level co-ordination focuses on the actions to be taken rather than on the underlying strategy. Although participants should be aware of the strategy and the overall purpose of the co-ordinated effort, this is not always the case. The driver transporting refugees in accordance with a very detailed plan for a refugee move may only be aware of his specific task rather than of the overall plan.

Micro level co-ordination is particularly appropriate where complex tasks need to be executed in a set sequence. Co-ordination is often centralised with actions being initiated by the centre with close control. The advantage of micro-level co-ordination is that you get a more predictable and measured response in a controllable way.

Co-ordination at the Policy Level

At a policy or macro level, co-ordination takes place through specification of the overall approach, strategy or tactics to be used rather than of the detailed actions to be taken. Here the players all work towards the common objective using their own talents as best they can and taking advantage of whatever opportunities present themselves.

With macro level co-ordination, deciding on the detailed actions to meet the objective is effectively delegated to participants. The co-ordinating body concentrates on defining the overall approach and strategy. This approach allows for a flexible response. Once initiated, however, it may be very difficult to control what is happening, in terms of action or budgets, and there may be inconsistency between the ways in which different partners deal with the same problem.

Co-ordination rarely occurs at the purely micro or macro-level. Most co-ordination systems fall somewhere between the two extremes. Co-ordination schemes that tend towards the macro level, however, are usually more appropriate in international emergency response since:

- ◆ Developing (and refining) complex, detailed co-ordinated plans can take a long time.
- ◆ The rapid change that is common in emergencies tends to make plans specifying detailed actions obsolete very quickly.
- ◆ The resources needed to train people to follow a detailed action plan will often not be found in emergencies.

For managers, macro-level co-ordination introduces the need to cope with the lack of control inherent in plans specified by strategy rather than by detail. The risk of inconsistent treatment of the same problem by different partners is one of the major concerns. Another risk is that of uncontrollable budgets as detailed approaches are not specified. While the overall co-ordination mechanism should probably be towards the macro level, one of the most effective solutions is often a combination of both micro- and macro- co-ordination. This mixed-level co-ordination will often take the form of:

- ◆ Co-ordination of the overall approach at a strategic level through clearly specified overall objectives, as advocated in the current OMS papers on planning through adoption of the logistical framework as a co-ordination tool.
- ◆ Co-ordination of specific approaches to repeated tasks though specification of the steps to be taken in the form of pre-set procedures, such as establishment of Extended Delivery Points (EDPs), mass screening protocols, or emergency deployment procedures.

The mix of strategic co-ordination coupled with detailed specification of repetitive tasks to be undertaken is probably the best approach to co-ordinating an emergency response. This maintains the flexibility of the response at the same time as ensuring a controlled and uniform approach.

Effective Co-ordination of the Emergency Response

To co-ordinate an emergency response in an effective manner, you need to establish consensus among the responders on three different points,

- ◆ The present situation
- ◆ The goal(s) and objective(s)
- ◆ The activities and inputs needed to achieve the common goal(s)

Establish a Common Understanding of the Present Situation

Unless you can agree what the starting point is, it is difficult to work towards a common goal. Different perceptions of the starting point will lead to very different assumptions about what actions are feasible or necessary and the desired end-state.

For example, one agency may see the main problem in the refugee population as one of inadequate rations, while another may see it as one of communicable disease. Unless there is agreement on the present situation, it is possible that both agencies might strive to solve the problem as they perceive it in ways that are incompatible. The agency that is concerned about communicable disease control may favour diverting a portion of the ration to be used for hot meals to encourage refugees to attend the medical centre for screening. The other agency may be completely opposed to any reduction in what they perceive to be an inadequate ration.

Using the OMS Design Matrix as a Tool for Co-ordination

The OMS working paper on 'Enhancing Programme and Project Design' proposes that the first column in the OMS Design Matrix (based on the Logical Framework, as discussed in Chapter 1) be dedicated to the *rationale* for UNHCR involvement. The logical framework works best as part of a participatory methodology. The key to its effectiveness lies in using the matrix and associated techniques and processes as a means for involving key stakeholders in the planning process and agreeing what is to be achieved and how. Simply requiring completion of the matrix without ensuring that a participatory and inclusive planning process has been implemented limits the effectiveness of the tool.



Tools

The *Rationale* column (from the OMS Matrix on page 10) details the description of the current problem from the macro level to the specific potential resources that might be called upon as part of the solution. The *Rationale for HCR Involvement* and *Hierarchy of Objectives* columns are expanded here.

In some cases, because of political or philosophical differences, it may be difficult to establish a common understanding of the present situation among all the parties. In such cases it is essential that the different partners are at least aware of how different partners perceive the present situation. Discussion of the categories presented in the rationale column will help elicit these positions from partners.

Rationale for HCR Involvement

Overall Problem

A description of the overall problem the operation is attempting to address.

Core Problem by Sectoral Area(s)

A description of the core problem(s) at the level of the sector(s) which the operation will address.

Causes

A summary of the causes which are resulting in the core problem.

Related Activities

A description of activities currently underway or planned by related actors to address core problems.

Existing Resources

A description of existing or potential resources which are presently being used or may potentially be used to carry out essential activities.

Hierarchy of Objectives

Goal of Operation

A statement of the solution the operation will seek in response to the fundamental problem the operation is addressing.

Sector-Level Objectives

The statement of impact in a specific sector to be achieved in terms of changes or benefits.

Outputs (*specific deliverables*)

A statement of the specific outputs (deliverables) which will be produced as a result of the overall activity(ies).

Activities

A description of the activities that must be carried out in order to produce the output.

Inputs

A description of the resources required to produce the outputs in terms of supplies and materials, non-personnel costs, miscellaneous costs, and agency operational support.

Setting Common Goals and Objectives

Even when there is broad agreement on the present situation, there is still a need to agree on the overall goals and objectives of the emergency response operation, which may be even more difficult than agreeing on nature of present situation. Nevertheless, setting common goals and sectoral-level objectives is one of the most important roles for the manager. For UNHCR-generated programmes, the OMS Design Matrix can also be used for setting goals and objectives. The *Hierarchy of Objectives* column of the Matrix helps clarify the levels within the column (see previous page).

Unless all of the partners can agree on the objectives for an operation it will be difficult, if not impossible, to co-ordinate by using a macro approach. While at first glance the sectoral objectives of any emergency response operation might appear self-evident to the emergency manager, this will not

be true for everyone. One reason for this is that there will be a number of different objectives for any operation. Agreement on the present situation will increase the likelihood of a common perception of objectives but does not guarantee it.

The overall emergency response manager will normally be most concerned about the overall goal for the whole emergency response, but other managers will typically be most concerned about the objectives for their own sector, or their own individual objectives. This can give rise to two sorts of conflicts over objectives:

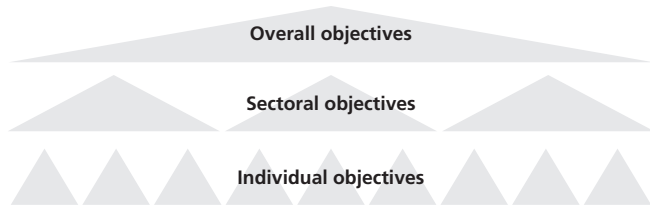
- ◆ *Conflicts can occur between the overall objective at any level and the subordinate objectives at a lower level.* This may happen because sectoral managers regard their sector's objective as paramount. For example, a Medical NGO, based on its medical analysis, may be opposed to the re-siting of the camp for protection issues because of the additional deaths which may occur as a result of the move.
- ◆ *Conflicts can occur between the objectives within any one level.* For example, the partner responsible for education may object to family rations being issued to children rather than to the parents if they feel that the children will be absent from school in order to collect rations. The agency responsible for social services, however, may favour this policy as it allows sick parents to continue to receive the ration.

While the issue of mediation between partners will be covered in the next chapter, many of these types of conflict can be minimised or avoided if objectives are established and agreed in a consultative way. Even though the medical agency may still not favour the re-siting of a camp, they may not object to it if they have been part of the decision-making process and feel that their concerns have been considered.

Agreeing on the Activities

Agreeing on the activities to achieve the objectives as described in the OMS Design Matrix introduces a further area of potential disagreement between partners. Even when there is agreement on the present situation and on the objectives, there are many different activities that might be considered to meet these objectives.

The different activities favoured by different partners will depend on their policies and philosophies, their experience and the impact of the activity on the partner. For this reason, the manager should first seek to get agreement on objectives before discussing how the objectives are to be achieved.



Summary



Key Points

Co-ordination is a key skill for emergency managers because of the complexity of modern emergency response operations.

There are four current options for co-ordination of a system-wide UN humanitarian response in emergencies.

- Lead Agency**
 - Resident Coordinator**
 - Humanitarian Coordinator**
 - Regional Humanitarian Coordinator**
-

Programmes can be co-ordinated at either the micro-level (detailed actions) or macro-level (broad approaches).

It is usually more appropriate to co-ordinate emergencies in terms of broad approaches rather than detailed actions because of the time pressures and the risk of rapid change.

The best approach is to combine both levels of co-ordination through setting broad approaches and establishing procedures for actions which are often repeated.

Effective co-ordination requires consensus on the present situation, the goals and objectives, and the activities to be taken to achieve the sectoral objectives.

Conflict about objectives may stem from either conflict between superior and subordinate objectives or between objectives at any one level.



Self Test

Chapter 7

Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

- T F 1. Micro-level co-ordination is particularly appropriate when complex tasks need to be executed in a set sequence.
- T F 2. Co-ordination through the specification of the overall approach, rather than the details, ensures better budgetary control.
- T F 3. The mix of strategic co-ordination coupled with detailed specification of the repetitive tasks to be undertaken is probably the worst approach to co-ordinating an emergency response.
- T F 4. The first step in effective co-ordination is to establish a common understanding of the present situation.
- T F 5. The OMS Design Matrix is a tool for the co-ordination of programme planning.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following models are current options for co-ordination of complex emergencies within the UN system?
- A Lead Agency
- B Resident Coordinator
- C Humanitarian Coordinator
- D Strategic Coordinator
7. Which of the following is **not** one of the three basic points of consensus needed for effective co-ordination of the emergency response.
- A Setting the activities and inputs for achieving the objective
- B Setting a common goals and objectives
- C Agreeing detailed plans for implementation
- D Agreeing what the present situation is
8. Which is likely to be the most difficult of the three points noted for effective emergency response?
- A Setting the activities to be undertaken to reach the objective
- B Setting a common objective
- C Agreeing detailed plans for implementation
- D Agreeing what the present situation is

9. The OMS Design Matrix:

- A** Is an important tool for presenting the strengths of UNHCR's emergency response to other partners
- B** Is best when used as part of a participatory methodology
- C** Is not well suited to development with multiple organisations
- D** Is useful as a planning tool, but may hinder co-ordination

10. Conflicts in co-ordination of the plan can occur between:

- A** The overall objective and subordinate or sectoral objectives
- B** Between objectives within any one level
- C** Philosophies of the different operational partners
- D** All of the above



Exercise

Exercise

After a sudden refugee influx, 20,000 refugees are camped in temporary sites just inside the border of the country of asylum. The refugees are from one of the factions involved in civil war in the country of origin. This faction is presently in retreat, but there are reports of guerrilla fighting just across the border. The manager is aware that there are very few men in the 16 to 40 age group among the refugee population, but has not discussed the probable reasons for this with partners.

With the agreement of the local authorities, the manager has announced that the refugees will be re-sited on a temporary site some 60km away. Some of the implementing partners are completely opposed to moving to a new site. They argue that the present sites are much easier to service and that the move would result in deaths among the women and children. In any case, they argue that any move should be postponed until the end of the rains in 6 months time.

These partners strongly support the refugees' adamant objections to moving to a new site. The refugees give a number of reasons for being unwilling to move, including the fear of mosquitoes and flooding on the new site and that it will make their repatriation more difficult.

The issue has caused a breach in the previously excellent relations between the manager and the implementing partners.

What has gone wrong?

**Chapter 7
Answers**

- | | |
|------|------------|
| 1. T | 6. A, B, C |
| 2. F | 7. C |
| 3. F | 8. A |
| 4. T | 9. B |
| 5. T | 10. C |

Exercise Answer

At least two things seem to have gone wrong here:

- The manager and the dissenting partners obviously do not share a common understanding of the present situation. The manager sees that there are so many women and children because the men in the military age group are probably fighting just across the border. There is the risk that some of them are taking shelter in the temporary sites between guerrilla attacks just across the border and that the camp will be attacked. Some agencies see the refugees as a group of defenceless women and children who are about to undergo hardship on a bureaucratic whim.
- The manager appears to have announced the decision without prior consultation. While the protection of the refugees is the manager's primary concern and delicate negotiations with the local authorities may have prevented prior consultation, decisions of this type should best be taken in some sort of a consultative process if the manager wants the decision to be accepted.

In this case, establishing prior agreement on the present situation and bringing partners into the discussions of possible solutions might have avoided the damaging breach in relations.

Managing Conflict within the Operation



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- Sources of conflict in emergency operations
- Some of the specific issues that different operational partners and the refugees themselves have in common
- Ways of preventing some types of conflict
- How the emergency manager can help resolve conflicts

Conflict between Stakeholders

This chapter does not deal with the conflict between armed combatants, which has an extreme effect on emergency managers. Security training for those working in conflict areas is offered by UNHCR in other texts and workshops. This chapter is about the types of interagency and interpersonal conflict which often arise in large emergency operations between those who are partners in response to the problem.



Example

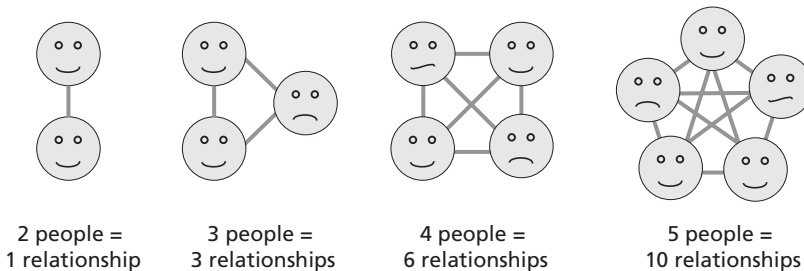
As the 1985 rainy season approached, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) requested that [an] agency shift the manner of employing refugees to a rotational basis, so that as many people as possible would have the opportunity to earn cash before departing for Tigray. Sceptical that a return movement would occur in large numbers that year, and hesitant to disrupt vital programmes by training new workers, the agency declined. General suspicion among international agencies concerning the political motivation of REST, and the somewhat acrimonious working relationship between agency personnel and REST representatives in the camp, likely contributed to this decision.

The issue came to a head one day, however, when a new group of Tigrayans simply turned up for work at the agency compound. A heated confrontation then ensued, which involved the calling in of both COR (the Sudanese Office of the Commissioner for Refugees) and REST representatives from Khartoum to mediate. Eventually, the matter was resolved by compromise: half the original workers were retained, while some new people were accepted for employment. Interviewed later about the incident, the agency's regional administrator commented, 'Our business is saving people's lives, not acting as an employment agency.'

— 'Knowledge and Power: A Critique of an International Relief Operation' by Barbara Hendrie, *Disasters*, Vol. 21, No. 1, March 1997

Conflict between partners is common in emergency response operations. This is not surprising given:

- ◆ The different and sometimes conflicting concerns and mandates of different partners.
- ◆ The number and diversity of partners involved. The more partners, the greater the risk of conflict developing between them. When there is only one other partner there is only one relationship to maintain. When there are two partners, you have two relationships to maintain and they have their own relationship with each other to maintain. With five partners there are ten possible pairings, and in an operation with 20 decision-makers involved, there are 190 relationships in which conflict can occur!



- ◆ The stresses on individuals caused by the long hours of work, poor living conditions, distress at being a witness to suffering etc.
- ◆ The high rate of change which can lead to a situation in which organisational and individual roles are not clearly defined.

Sources of Conflict

There are numerous sources of conflict in a large international emergency response. Conflict between partners can arise because of:

- ◆ **Different organisational priorities and objectives.** The manager can reduce the conflict over these issues by establishing a common objective and ensuring that partners are at least aware, if not agreed on, each other's priorities.
- ◆ **Personality differences.** This is often the most difficult area for managers to deal with. Many personality conflicts are rooted in the value systems of the people concerned. Such value systems are deeply held and are very difficult to change. The manager must try to get the two parties to see each other's good points. If this is not possible, it may be necessary to remove or isolate one or both of the conflicting personalities.
- ◆ **Conflict over roles and responsibilities.** Role conflict is very common in emergency response, particularly between organisations, but also between people. The manager can reduce this by promoting a common understanding of each organisation's role, and by clearly identifying the responsibilities of each organisation in plans and procedures. Role conflict within the inner team can be resolved in the same way.
- ◆ **Different perceptions of the situation.** Sharing perceptions of the present situation and trying to develop a consensus can reduce this type of conflict. Establishing agreement on an initial assessment of the situation is often overlooked in the initial stages of an emergency response. The lack of agreement only comes to light through the conflict which later develops because of different perceptions.

- ◆ **Different 'frames of reference' or cultural differences.** People (and organisations) with roots in different cultures may have radically different views about the way in which society is or should be structured. Obviously it is not possible to agree on a common 'culture' for all partners to an emergency response operation, but conflict can be substantially reduced if there is an understanding of each other's culture.

Conflict is not always negative, however, and can sometimes be a spur to finding better solutions. General acquiescence to a flawed plan, for example, may reduce team stress for those implementing the plan, yet it is still bad management to pursue a bad plan without questioning, analysis and even conflict if that is what is required to correct it.

Implementing Partners

UNHCR traditionally works with a range of implementing partners. All of these partners may have different concerns and different priorities in the emergency response. An emergency manager needs to be aware of these differences to manage the potential conflict in emergency response operations.

Government

The government is the primary partner where there is a functional government. Even where the government plays no overt operational role in the emergency response, it is still the provider of asylum and the guarantor of security for the agencies implementing the emergency response. Governments will have a number of special concerns in any refugee emergency response operation:

State security. Refugee influxes normally imply an unstable situation on the other side of the border. Governments will naturally be concerned about the risk of trouble spilling over into their territory. This risk is particularly acute where the country of asylum has a common border with the country of origin. Even distant countries of asylum can be the venue for attacks on refugees by the security services of the country of origin or attacks by refugees on embassies or institutions of the country of origin.

Impact on the national population and on the state's resources. Every government depends on its national population for support or at least acquiescence. Refugee influxes can lead to both negative and positive economic and social changes. Those who are positively affected may wish to avoid drawing attention to their good fortune, while those ill affected will protest loudly at the presence and impact of refugees.

Political factors. Political reality will play a very large part in the decisions taken by any government. In recent years, in Western Europe, we have seen parties which are in favour of a broad right to asylum harden their stance in response to the electoral success of extreme right wing parties. In many cases refugees may be used as the scapegoat for underlying problems as they are an 'easy target.' These factors may place large stresses on the government and limit the government's ability to act.

The emergency response manager has very little influence over these concerns but can work to lessen them by:

- ◆ Urging that refugee camps are sited at a reasonable distance from the border and that camps are not militarised.
- ◆ Interceding with donors to lessen the Government's concern about the economic impact of a refugee influx.

- ◆ Ensuring that, where possible, the local community also benefits (through the provision of schools, roads and other infrastructure) from the refugee influx
- ◆ Ensuring that as many of the necessary resources as possible are purchased in local markets
- ◆ Educating the national population to the principles of asylum and to the benefits that can accrue for the national economy.

Refugees

Refugees should be considered partners in an emergency response operation. This is often not done, however, because they are all too often perceived as mere recipients of aid rather than as players in their own survival. No one knows more about their situation than the refugees themselves. They will typically have a number of special concerns, among which might be:

Fear of refoulement. Refugees are often afraid of refoulement even when this does not appear to be a real risk. Moves to a new site may give rise to rumours that those boarding the trucks will be returned to the country of origin, rather than taken to a new site.

Internal organisation. Although refugees may have fled oppression in their country, they may still be oppressed in the refugee camp by the political organisations and other structures that have fled with the refugees. These structures may enforce conscription, or run prostitution, 'protection' or other criminal rackets within the camp.

Leadership. The refugee leadership may not be truly representative of the refugees, but may instead represent just one faction, political group, or class. In some cases the leaders may be self-appointed because they are the only ones with the language skills to speak to outsiders. The concerns that the leadership raises may only be the concerns of their class or group.

Heterogeneity. Even when the leadership is representative, there may be some segments of the refugee population which are outside the political mainstream or are isolated in different ways. This could include political or ethnic minorities or marginalised social groups. Refugees in such groups may suffer unfair treatment at the hands of other refugees or the refugee leaders.

Survival. The drive for survival will mean that refugees will do things that may have a negative impact on the overall population, but increase an individual family's chances of survival. Double (or more) registration is a case in point. It is in the immediate survival interest of any one family to try to get as many ration cards as possible, even if it may turn out to be detrimental to the larger beneficiary group as a whole.

The manager needs to be able to communicate effectively with the entire refugee population. Effective communication requires both broad-based communication structures and trust.

- ◆ Communication structures will include regular meetings with the refugee leadership. These should be on a regular, scheduled basis so that the leadership knows they will have a forum for raising their concerns.
- ◆ The manager needs other communication channels as well. These can include meetings with refugee workers in the camp, public notices, meetings with women's groups, and information campaigns through schools, etc. As a general rule, all of the non-refugee implementing partners working in the camp should be used as points of contact with the whole population.

- ◆ Trust may be difficult to establish, especially since the people you are working with may be refugees because they were betrayed by the authority structures in their own countries. Trust can be built up by taking refugee concerns seriously, and by being honest with the refugees. If problems are expected with the food pipeline or other areas, it is essential that they are discussed with the refugees as early as possible.

Other UN Agencies

Other UN agencies have different mandates; therefore, their interests will reflect their particular concerns. In particular, emergency managers should be aware that:

- ◆ Other UN agencies may have long-term programmes that could be adversely affected by some aspects of the emergency response operation. This can lead to conflict.
- ◆ The narrow focus of some agencies may lead to an emphasis on the needs of one group only as opposed to the whole population.
- ◆ Agencies that have been working in the refugee-affected area for some time may have considerable local knowledge and may feel excluded if they are not consulted.

These same problems can reappear in the case of NGOs and other partners.

International NGOs

The number and range of international NGOs is still increasing very quickly. NGOs are often the principal implementing partners in emergency response operations. When dealing with international NGOs the emergency manager should be aware that:

- ◆ NGOs have very different roots. Some spring from religious bases, others may have roots in humanitarian or political philosophies. These underlying bases may sometimes impact on refugee operations in surprising ways. Agencies from some religious backgrounds may have problems with family planning programmes, for example.
- ◆ Different NGOs will need different levels of financial and managerial support. Good financial resources in an NGO do not always go hand in hand with the capacity to execute programmes effectively.
- ◆ Because NGOs have small management teams that are fairly autonomous, the performance of an NGO is often completely dependent on the quality of the management team. Changes in the management team of an NGO can have a surprisingly large impact on the NGO's effectiveness in the country.
- ◆ Some NGOs may only be interested in the high profile initial phases of an emergency response and will withdraw as soon as this is over. This may cause problems for the emergency response manager, in that it may be difficult to attract new partners, or to get existing partners to increase their involvement when an operation is scaling down.
- ◆ NGOs may already have a development programme in a refugee-affected area, or may plan to open a programme to take advantage of their investment in the emergency response programme. This may limit their ability to respond flexibly to changes.
- ◆ NGOs may have pre-existing relationships with local authorities, communities or other local partners. If such relationships are good, they can have a positive

impact on the emergency response; if not, they can create severe problems for the whole operation.

- ◆ International NGOs are often dependent on public donations in their countries of origin for a large proportion of their funding. To attract such donations, the NGOs need to demonstrate that they are playing an effective role in whatever emergency is currently attracting the media's attention. This can place NGO managers under enormous pressure to be a part of an emergency response, and NGOs may offer their services in sectors in which the NGO has no effective competence.

Emergency managers can use a number of techniques to reduce conflict due to these situations including:

- ◆ Although the temptation is to use the partners which need the least financial support, managers should concentrate on how well the NGO will be able to do the job first, and then consider the financial aspects.
- ◆ Managers should encourage and support NGOs to develop and train refugees, local staff, and support local NGOs and other structures. In this way, the manager may be better able to deal with the problems that can arise when resources shrink. Managers should be aware of what existing programmes partner NGOs have in the country and in the region. This will give the manager some idea of what potential resources the NGO can offer, and what possible conflicts the NGO may have between these programmes and the emergency response programme.

Local NGOs

While the number of international NGOs has grown quite quickly, the number of national NGOs has grown even faster. Local NGOs may share some of the attributes of international NGOs, but also have some of their own special sources of conflict:

- ◆ National NGOs can offer cheaper implementation than international NGOs, but will not have the same emergency response experience as the leading international NGOs.
- ◆ National NGOs' knowledge of the refugee-affected area and their access to local structures may more than compensate for their lack of emergency knowledge.
- ◆ National NGOs who have not previously worked with UNHCR or other international organisations may not be aware of how the whole system of agreements and instalments works in practice.
- ◆ While financial irregularities may occur with any implementing partner, some national NGOs may have fewer effective financial controls than other partners do. They may also be unable to repay funds from other sources if funds are misused.
- ◆ The limited financial resources of national NGOs means that they are much more sensitive to late payment of project funds than international NGOs
- ◆ Most national 'grassroots' NGOs are from a development background. In development organisations decisions are normally taken slowly through a consensus. In emergency response, decisions need to be taken very quickly and sometimes without consultation. Making the change between the two approaches may sometimes be difficult.
- ◆ Involving local NGOs may lead to a more favourable public perception of the emergency response operation in the country.

The Red Cross Movement

The **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** acts as a neutral intermediary and aims to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and internal violence by reminding parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law. ICRC activities include provision of food and non-food relief items, health services, water and sanitation programs, restoration of family links, and visits to prisoners. UNHCR may work with ICRC to trace missing family members.

The following information can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.icrc.org/eng/icrc>

The Mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC acts to help all victims of war and internal violence, attempting to ensure implementation of humanitarian rules restricting armed violence

The ICRC's mission arises from the basic human desire, common to all civilisations, to lay down rules governing the use of force in war and to safeguard the dignity of the weak.

The ICRC has received a mandate from the international community to help victims of war and internal violence and to promote compliance with international humanitarian law.

The ICRC's activities are aimed at protecting and assisting the victims of armed conflict and internal violence so as to preserve their physical integrity and their dignity and to enable them to regain their autonomy as quickly as possible.

The ICRC is independent of all governments and international organizations. Its work is prompted by the desire to promote humane conduct and is guided by empathy for the victims. The ICRC is impartial; its only criterion for action is the victims' needs. The ICRC is neutral and remains detached from all political issues related to conflict.

The **International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)** works with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to co-ordinate emergency response and development activities. The IFRC works closely with agencies in the UN system and others to provide emergency assistance while maintaining its operational, financial and political independence. Emergency activities are centred in a Disaster Response and Operations Co-ordination Division in the Secretariat in Geneva. IFRC maintains a system of Emergency Response Units that are structured combinations of equipment, trained personnel and management structures. The IFRC has taken the lead in developing and promoting a voluntary Code of Conduct among NGOs. The Code of Conduct can be found on the World Wide Web at (<http://www.ifrc.org/pubs/code/#code>) the following are the principal points of the code:

The Code of Conduct

Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy

(continued)

5. We shall respect culture and custom
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.

The **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** is an intergovernmental body that was created to ensure humane and orderly migration of people in need of migration assistance. In emergencies, IOM covers a range of activities such as arranging transport, evacuations and returns and providing health care and temporary shelter. IOM may work with UNHCR in the repatriation of refugees. More information can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.iom.int/iom/Mandate_and_Structure/entry.htm.

Dealing with Conflict Among the Responders

When conflict arises, parties to the conflict may use any of a number of strategies to cope with it. These include:

Competition — seeking to satisfy their priorities regardless of the impact on others; this may be replaced by coercion by the party with the advantage of force, or simply by communication when one party uses persuasion to try and win its point of view.

Avoidance — withdrawing from the discussion or group, or by ceasing to make contributions.

Collaboration — trying to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Appeasement — giving in to the other side, even though still disagreeing with their position.

Compromise — being willing to give up something in order to reach a mutually agreeable solution with each party to the conflict.

The best response will depend on the circumstances. Generally, collaboration will give the best result, where the parties to the conflict try for a 'win-win' solution. Where it is not possible for both parties to 'win,' then compromise, in which parties give a little so as to achieve most of what they want, is the next best approach. Compromise may be inappropriate when points of fundamental principle are involved.

The problem with competition is that there will always be a 'loser' as well as a 'winner.' While this might resolve the problem in the short term, like avoidance or appeasement, it often only delays problems for the longer term. The losers may later try to 'even-up the score' by trying to force the 'winner' into 'losing' in some future conflict. Collaboration and compromise are strategies that are much more sustainable than competition, avoidance, or acceptance.

Preventing Interagency Conflict

Conflict resolution can take a great deal of time. Heading-off conflict before it arises is much more effective than trying to resolve it once it has arisen—but preventing conflict from arising in an emergency operation is much easier said than done. As a manager, you can sometimes prevent or reduce the scale of interagency conflict by trying to:

- ◆ Know your partners, their particular concerns, strengths, and weaknesses. A good knowledge of partners will allow the manager to resolve many issues before people can become locked into opposing positions. Study the mandates, and organisational reports of major partners in order to better understand their programmes and the way that they judge success in their operations.
- ◆ Promote a culture of openness and information exchange at co-ordination meetings. This can lead to other partners recognising potential conflicts before they become an issue.
- ◆ Share information about the emergency situation as well as your own response programming with partners as soon as possible. Holding back information about programming decisions will foster distrust among partners who will soon withhold their information as well, resulting in a highly competitive, and ineffective operation.

Mediation

Given the range of partners and the stresses of working in emergency response, even the best manager cannot prevent all conflicts within the operation. Some conflict is minor or may have potentially positive results and can be ignored. Other conflicts may threaten the effectiveness of one or more partners or may even place the whole international operation in jeopardy. One possible way to diffuse these types of potentially serious conflicts is through **mediation** which is a very powerful tool for resolving conflict in these circumstances.

Mediation is a friendly or diplomatic intervention, usually by consent or invitation, for settling disputes between parties.

Mediation is distinct from **arbitration**, which is a much more formal process, where a third party makes a judgement (which may be binding on the parties) on the dispute. When mediating between parties, the mediator is not trying to judge the relative worth of each party's case, but is trying to help them reach a collaborative or compromise solution.

When mediation is used in labour disputes, for example, it is successful about 60% of the time. Even higher success rates can be achieved when parties are less directly opposed to one another than employers and employees often are. For mediation to work:

- ◆ Both parties must want a solution to the conflict.
- ◆ The level of conflict should not be too great. If the parties are already in well established positions, it can be difficult to change them.
- ◆ The mediator should be someone whom both parties respect as being neutral. Authority (natural or legal) is helpful as both parties will want to reach a settlement, but the mediator cannot be coercive.

As an effective and respected emergency manager, you should be in a very good position to mediate between other members. If, however, you find yourself party to a dispute in need of mediation, you will need to respect the need for and even facilitate mediation by a neutral party in order to better manage the operation.

Summary



Key Points

Different implementing partners have different priorities. Knowing these will help the emergency response manager prevent or minimise conflict.

State security, the impact on the local population, and political factors will often be Government priorities in any emergency response operation.

Refugee groups are not necessarily homogeneous nor is it certain that the refugee leaders speak for all refugees.

Refugees' concerns can be met through communication and building trust. Communication must be with more than just the refugee leaders.

Agencies with a narrow focus may not consider the situation of the whole refugee population.

Different types of NGOs have very different roots and driving philosophies.

Changes in the management team of an NGO can radically affect its performance.

Managers can limit the risk inherent in working through NGOs by having more than one possible partner for each sector.

Local NGOs may offer lower cost implementation, but at higher risk.

Conflict is common in emergency response because of the different and conflicting concerns of different parties, the stresses of the emergency, the rate of change, and the sheer number of partners involved.

Conflict can arise because of differing organisational priorities and objectives, personality differences, role conflict, differing perceptions, or different cultural frames of reference.

Parties can seek to resolve conflict by competition, avoidance, collaboration, appeasement, or compromise. Collaboration and compromise are usually the two best strategies for an emergency manager.

Mediation is a key tool for the resolution of non-trivial conflict.

Mediation works best when both sides want a solution, the mediator is a respected neutral, and the level of conflict is moderate rather than severe.



Self Test

Chapter 8
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. The impact of the refugee influx on the local community is of no real concern to the emergency manager
2. Representative refugee leaders speak for all the refugees
3. The performance of an NGO is often completely dependant on the quality of the management team
4. Conflict is always negative in its impact on the team and on finding solutions
5. Mediation can work even when one party does not want a resolution of the conflict

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Which of the following is least likely to be of primary concern to the host government in a refugee emergency response operation?
- A** State security
- B** The refugee ration scale
- C** Impact on the local population
- D** Political factors
7. Effective communication with the refugees requires
- A** Strong leadership
- B** Regular meetings with refugee leaders
- C** Broad communication structures and trust
- D** All of the above
8. Which of the following is true of working with NGO partners?
- A** Managers should encourage and support NGOs to develop and train refugees, local staff, local NGOs and structures
- B** An agency which performs perfectly well in another operation will certainly perform as well in this one
- C** First preference should go to the NGO which needs the lowest level of financial support
- D** Where possible, only one NGO should work in each sector so as to reduce the chance of conflict

9. Which of the following is unlikely to be a cause of conflict in emergency response operations?
- A Disagreements over roles and responsibilities
 - B Differing perceptions
 - C Personality factors
 - D None of the above
10. Which of the following is probably the best approach for emergency managers to use to resolve conflict?
- A Avoidance
 - B Competition, coercion and communication
 - C Collaboration and compromise
 - D Appeasement and compromise

**Exercise****Exercise**

The manager was concerned about the extent of over-registration in the camp. Rations had been cut by 20% two months previously because of concerns about over-distribution. After a re-registration exercise, the total numbers registered were decreased by 15%. The manager was able to get the food-supplying agency to

agree to return to the previous ration scale after the re-registration. This would mean that not only would those properly registered be getting more food, but that the camp as a whole would receive more food than in the previous months.

To coincide with the new ration cards, the manager decided to change the distribution system from distribution via the leaders to distribution directly to groups of families without the intervention of the leaders. Because of the short lead-time before the distribution, the refugees were only give one day's notice of the change of system before the first distribution.

When the first distribution under the new system took place, it had to be abandoned because of rioting. The manager could not understand why people were rioting when they were going to receive more food than they had previously. The refugee families who had been served before the riot erupted had been very complimentary about the increased ration.

What has happened and what should the manager do?

**Chapter 8
Answers**

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. B |
| 2. F | 7. C |
| 3. T | 8. A |
| 4. F | 9. D |
| 5. F | 10. C |

Exercise Answer

It is not entirely clear what has happened, but there are a number of key factors:

- Inadequate communication with the refugees. One day's notice is not really adequate to inform people fully about changes to anything as central to their survival as food rations.
- The community is not homogeneous. Although the camp as a whole is getting more food, as are individual families, someone is losing out. The refugee leaders had control of the overall distribution previously and presumably traded rations or used them to reward their supporters. The riot may have been organised by the leaders through their supporters.

As the equitable distribution of rations is a humanitarian principle the manager has very little room for manoeuvre in terms of negotiation with the leaders (who would deny any responsibility for the riot in any case). The best tactics for the emergency manager would be a combination of:

- Communication, informing the refugee community as a whole as to the benefits of the new system and giving time for the message to sink in.
- Collaboration, looking for a solution with the leaders, which leaves the new ration system in place but which meets their need to exercise authority or patronage in other ways.
- Control, requesting the host government to provide a sufficient police presence at the next distribution to deter any further rioting.

Managing the Team



Learning Objectives

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- Reasons for using a team approach
- Team roles and responsibilities
- The effects of stress on the performance of individuals
- How you can minimise stress related problems within your team

Team Roles and Responsibilities



Example

I'm very proud of our staff. We are getting better and better at dealing with emergencies, but this one is a totally different animal from the rest. It's a long-range emergency, so we've got to put as much decision-making capability as possible in the field, and trust in our managers.

— Douglas Stafford discussing the emergency in Sarajevo, quoted in *Refugees Magazine*, No. 91, February 1993.

Team-Building Approaches to Managing Daily Operations

Agreeing on the present situation, objectives, and activities is essential for co-ordination of the overall emergency response programme. The manager may try to do this either through control strategies and/or team building techniques.

Control strategies consist of using the manager's personal power and influence to control the behaviour of partners. This power can have many roots: legal, financial, and even the power that flows from the manager's charisma, knowledge, or connections. In some societies, the manager's power may flow from his or her age or position.

Team building seeks to achieve results through creating a team of dedicated individuals who motivate each other towards achieving the agreed objective.

The second of these strategies, team building, is usually more appropriate in managing an emergency response, due to the large number of actors involved, and the lack of direct control authority over most of them. Even a manager with enormous personal power would find it very difficult to maintain an operation efficiently on the strength of that power alone. Team strategies are usually much more efficient for managing emergency response operations. The

complexity of emergency response operations means that any manager who tries to control everything directly would very likely run the operation very inefficiently. The huge number of decisions you would need to take directly would inevitably lead to delays.



Tools

During the building and delivery stage of an emergency response, the team should be performing and producing to full potential. For this to happen, the emergency manager must be aware of the problems, conflicts and differences that now may become apparent (if they haven't already appeared) and deal with them promptly. Challenges to good team management might include:

1. A high percentage of non-UNHCR staff with rapid turnover of team members (UNVs, Nordic roster staff, etc.)
2. A large team requiring constant adjustment to staffing tables to cover absences on leave, sick leave, mission to different sub-offices, up-country areas, etc.)
3. Team conflict, development of 'clans', personality clashes, cultural differences, etc.
4. Complicated staffing situation making it difficult to consolidate team
5. Integration of an expanded team (e.g. staff from the existing office, consultants etc.)
6. Poor team discipline. Having to deal with rebels, cowboys etc.
7. Burnout in your team members
8. Medivac cases where living conditions are very poor.
9. Team members unwilling or reluctant to accept changes to their role, responsibilities or even the location of their deployment (e.g. from one camp/region to another as happened in Kenya)

Practical Tips and Advice for the Emergency Manager

Keep morale up

Consolidate the team (new arrivals, non-UNHCR staff, existing branch office or UNDP staff etc.). Provide Support. Motivate. Encourage!

Protect and look after the team. Enforce strict adherence to security procedures. Ensure that living conditions are acceptable and insist on appropriate leave/time off/R&R etc. for all staff including yourself.

Be ready to provide or arrange for 'critical incident' stress debriefing for team members if necessary.

Stay available. Listen and listen again! Be consistent and just in your attitude.

Do as you would be done by. Set a model for your team. Balance workloads and monitor stress levels. Observe what causes stress in different team members and attempt to deal with stress risk proactively.

Facilitate team member contact with family (fax, radio, etc. in remote locations). Try to include some relaxed, informal team-building activities, e.g. a meal or a drink together—when the operation allows.

Get the job done

Continue to further define or redefine team member roles and responsibilities as well as your expectations as the operation develops. Remind all staff of the need for flexibility in an emergency response.

Institute a system of regular, structured meetings and briefing sessions to ensure effective flow of information. Plan, address problems as they arise and make appropriate decisions based on a team-based problem-solving approach.

Establish and enforce clear rules of conduct and insist on accountability.

Emphasise the importance of tools (e.g. tasking lists) and on seeing them through to the end. Everyone must follow these procedures if they are to work. Use whiteboards for tasking lists (don't rub out jobs performed—cross them off until the list is completed). Hold daily tasking meetings with follow up meetings for accountability.

— 'A Practical Guide for Emergency Managers' from the UNHCR Workshop for Emergency Managers

Building the Team

In this course we have already highlighted many aspects of the manager's work which can be used to build or strengthen the team. Team building is often a slow process as it takes time for the levels of trust to develop which are essential for good teamwork. In emergencies, team building can happen quite quickly as the stresses of work and the shared objective provide many occasions in a single day during which team members have to rely on each other.

One of the problems that emergency managers often face is that they have little or no control over the membership of the team. Whatever influence the manager may have on selecting the staff assigned directly to him or her, s/he will have almost no influence whatsoever on selecting the members of the wider operational response team.

Team Formation

Teams generally develop through a process of

Forming, during which the team members first begin to see themselves as part of the team.

Storming, during which there is conflict within the group to establish the various roles (leadership, etc.).

Norming is when the team develops a common set of expectations of what constitutes acceptable group behaviour.

Performing, at which time the team begins to put all of its energies toward performing as the team structure is now established.



Tools

While this process is not universally applicable, it is still a useful model for the processes that have to take place for a team to work effectively. In emergencies, new members of the team will pass through some form of these processes before becoming an effective team member. New team members will need to learn to see themselves as part of a team. They will need to establish their own role (and others will need to adjust theirs to allow for the new role). They will need to learn the group norms. In emergencies, managers can help to speed up these processes with some of the following actions/techniques:

- ◆ Emphasising team membership through team social activities and through fair treatment of all team members
- ◆ Briefing new arrivals on team norms, so that they are less likely to make errors in this regard
- ◆ Assigning new members a mentor from the team, so that they learn team norms quickly and get some assistance with establishing their role
- ◆ Clearly establishing the role of new team members and getting agreement and support from those whose present roles will be most affected
- ◆ Checking that new arrivals are adjusting well, both through direct contact with them and through feedback from other team members

None of these are ideal or perfect solutions, but they can help new arrivals to assimilate more rapidly and maintain overall team effectiveness.

Roles and Responsibilities

While much of the advice on team building has been directed towards the 'team manager,' s/he is often a member of other teams as well. The same techniques that will work for the team manager will also work for other members of the team.

Managing a team in an emergency can be very demanding. It is extremely difficult for any one person to be good at all the different tasks needed to manage a team. The best teams work not because the manager has all of the necessary skills but because all the team members work together to make the team function as well as to achieve their individual goals. The activities that keep the team functioning are sometimes called 'team maintenance.'

All team members have a responsibility to spend some time maintaining the team. Teams only work when their members want them to, when they both give their trust to other team members and behave in an honest and trustworthy way themselves. In particular, team members can contribute to team maintenance by:

- ◆ Putting the interest of the team as a whole ahead of their own individual interests
- ◆ Considering the impact of any possible action on other team members before carrying it out
- ◆ Supporting team members who are weak in particular areas
- ◆ Facilitating the introduction of new team members

Stress

Stress is one of the biggest threats facing the emergency manager and the relationships among the emergency team. Stress may lead to the collapse of individuals or the whole team effort. The reasons why stress is such a high risk in emergency response operations become clear when we look at one of the many definitions of stress.

Stress is the body's response to a threat or a changing situation. It arises because of gaps between a person's perception of the demands placed on them and their perception of their ability to cope.

Looking at the definition it is easy to see why emergency response operations can be so stressful:

- ◆ The high rate of change in emergencies, the levels of threat in a chaotic or unstable situation
- ◆ The perception of the demands placed on the emergency manager and the team, together with feelings of inadequacy which might result from the inability to resolve all the problems encountered

Types of Stress

Stress can either be *acute* or *chronic*. Acute stress is related to an individual traumatic event, such as the death of a colleague, an assault, etc. The physical signs of acute stress are often very obvious. Chronic stress is stress resulting from continual demands being made on a person's ability to cope. Chronic stressors include:

- ◆ Working long hours
- ◆ Living in poor accommodations
- ◆ Having an inadequate diet

- ◆ Separation from friends and family
- ◆ Living under constant threat, of violence or attack
- ◆ Uncertainty about the future
- ◆ Living in situations of low trust
- ◆ Powerlessness or feeling that one has no part in decision making
- ◆ Role conflict, either at work or at home, uncertainty about what is expected

Many of these stressors are common in emergency response operations. The manager may be able to do little about some of them but others are under the control of the manager including:

- ◆ Making adequate personal accommodation and diet a priority
- ◆ Involving other team members in decision making
- ◆ Clearly setting out what is expected from each team member
- ◆ Ensuring that people take their leave
- ◆ Building a strong team and encouraging mutual trust

Other factors are under staff control, although the manager may need to encourage team members not to work unreasonable hours, to take appropriate security precautions, etc.

Good Stress and Bad Stress

Stress is not always bad. Stress is our bodies' natural defence against situations of change or threat. When we are under stress, as for example when we have to meet a deadline, we can work harder and do more.

As stress increases, our performance improves up to a point. After this critical level, increasing stress reduces our performance quite quickly. Rapidly we reach the stage where a little more stress causes 'burnout' and we cease to perform.

The stress that leads up to the critical point is 'good' stress, once the critical point is reached, any further stress is 'bad' stress. This curve is not static nor always predictable. The exact response to stress depends on how much stress we have previously undergone and how much support we get from our support network. A level of stress that serves to motivate one person will cause another to burn out.

Stressors and Supports

Each person is subject to different stressors. These stressors can be related to either work or the personal life of the individual concerned. Similarly, individuals receive support from a wide variety of sources such as friends, family, and work colleagues, be they supervisors, subordinates, or fellow team members. Managers also have a role to play as a support for their staff. The effect of stress on the individual will depend on both the level of stressors and supports, as well as the individual's personality and experience of stress so far. Emergency managers should note that:

- ◆ Resistance to stress is highly individualistic, depending on both the previous history of stress, and the individual's personality
- ◆ The normal support structure of friends and family will often not be immediately available in emergency operations, especially for expatriate staff. The manager should try to build a cohesive team so that team members can form part of each other's support network.

Life-events

One long-term study examined the effects of a number of different events on individuals. They rated the stressfulness of different events as shown in the table on the right. Some of these stressors are work related; others are related to family or personal life.

The authors of the study that produced this ranking suggested that anyone who had to deal with events with a total score of 200 or more in a single twelve month period had a 50% chance of encountering a serious illness in the next year.

The scores related to the changes listed at the bottom of the table—responsibilities, residence, living conditions, social life, and sleeping and eating habits—are typical of working in emergencies. The total of these scores is 123—already more than half of the number predicting the potential for serious stress-related illness.

The study was of the general population, and not specifically of those working in emergencies. While one might expect those who opt to work in emergencies would have far greater tolerance to some of the stresses related to change, the stressors will still have some effect. Maintaining stable living conditions for the emergency response team and paying attention to factors like food and accommodation will help to minimise these effects.

Event	Rating
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Detention	63
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired at work	47
Retirement	45
Business reorganisation	39
Gain of new family member	39
Change in financial state	38
Death of close friend	37
Change in line of work	36
Changes in responsibilities	29
Change in living conditions	25
Change in residence	20
Change in social life	18
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13

Social Readjustment Rating Scale: Holmes TH & Rahe RH

Effects of Stress

Too much stress is indicated by:

- ◆ Exhaustion
- ◆ Stress related illnesses including back pain, headache, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, skin disturbances, sexual problems, and insomnia and other sleep disturbances. Stress is also related to ulcers, respiratory or lung diseases, and has been linked by some researchers to cancer. Even breaking your leg is more likely if you are under too much stress as people become more accident prone under high levels of stress
- ◆ Self-defeating or irrational thoughts (discussed below)
- ◆ Behavioural symptoms including marked changes in behaviour, alcohol and tobacco abuse, and sexual promiscuity.

Many of these symptoms may also serve as stressors, further increasing the stress on individuals and their team members. This can lead to a vicious cycle of building stress. Self-defeating or irrational thoughts are of particular concern because of their impact on the team as a whole. Such negative or irrational trains of thought may include:

- ◆ Over-generalisation. For example, holding that ‘all refugees are thieves’ after a single isolated theft.
- ◆ Dichotomous reasoning, where everything is seen as one of two extremes, black or white, with no shades in between. For example, holding that all refugees from one area are—without exception—good, honourable, and trustworthy; while those from another area are all evil and treacherous.
- ◆ Magnification. Making a mountain out of a molehill. For example, a staff member might demand that his driver be severely disciplined for some very minor infringement of the rules.
- ◆ Arbitrary inference. Purely random events are seen as evidence of some wider conspiracy. For example, a sector manager may see the team leader seen talking to one of her subordinates and conclude that this is evidence of a plot against her
- ◆ Procrastination. Putting off work endlessly

The reason that these types of responses are so important is that they can have a very damaging effect on the team as a whole. The refugee experience is a very stressful one for both humanitarian workers and refugees—for whom the experience is generally much more stressful. Many of the above symptoms of stress can also be seen in refugee communities.

Effective Actions to Limit Stress

Because stress is an inherent part of an emergency response, it is not possible to eliminate it. Indeed, it would not be responsible to do so. If you felt no stress, you would not feel the pressure to take decisions quickly or to give your best effort. It is necessary, however, to limit stress to the range where it contributes to, rather than reduces, performance.

Individual team members use a variety of techniques to cope with stress. Although alcohol and tobacco abuse may be ultimately self-destructive, they may help individuals cope with stress in the short term. Deep relaxation techniques, avoidance, self-nurturing, and building a support network are all techniques which individuals can use to reduce their stress level. Avoidance of stress creating situations can sometimes create further stress, but may be appropriate for insoluble problems. Emergency managers can use the following approaches or techniques to help individuals feel more like team members and to help their teams better deal with the stress of emergency situations.

Participation and Co-ordination

Participation in decision making is one way in which people feel more in control of their own lives. The discussions related to the decision will help lessen stress by reducing the level of uncertainty about the future. Involving team members in the decision making process can also increase their perception of their own worth and thereby reduce the gap between their perceptions of the task and of their ability to carry it out.

Leave

Mandatory or voluntary absences for the relief of stress are very important. Although going on leave can itself be slightly stressful, it may allow team members to make contact with their broader support network of family and friends or to engage in self-nurturing. Self-nurturing is essentially treating yourself to rest, relaxation, a special meal, a massage, or whatever you enjoy.

Support

One further way in which managers can reduce the effects of stress is by encouraging team members to act as each other's support network. Managers can encourage this by supporting social activity within the team and by making the team a supportive, rather than a competitive, environment. The manager, or a team member with the requisite interpersonal skills, should pay special attention to new team members (because of the stress of the changes they have just undergone) and to team members who may be affected by events at home or traumatic experiences at work.

Segregation

Clear segregation of work and non-work time can help people cope with stressful work situations. It is extremely stressful being 'on call' 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While this may be necessary at the very start of an emergency, a good emergency manager will soon set up systems so that there is not a need to be permanently on call.

Some individuals, however, feel more important or needed if they work long hours, seven days a week—even if the conditions do not warrant such hours. Emergency managers should try to introduce one day off a week in the first month of the operation and then move toward a five day work week. While there will be some officers who will have to work on weekends, this should be done on a rotating basis so that the task is shared.

One of the problems in some emergency response operations is that they attract publicity. When the field office is within easy flying distance of the capital city, weekends likely will bring official and unofficial visitors. Managers need to set up mechanisms so that such visitors can be received without disturbing or overburdening the team. The manager may need to meet the more important visitors, but could leave the bulk of the tour to a staff member assigned to the task. Other team members may often be glad of the 'exposure' which conducting such visitors on a tour may bring.

As well as having work and non-work time, there needs to be work and non-work space. In many emergencies, the office and the living accommodations are initially the same. The manager should ensure that separate work and living spaces are provided as quickly as possible.

When team members all live together in one compound, the manager needs to encourage the clear delineation of public and private space. The lack of privacy inherent in shared accommodations can be very stressful for some.

Teams and Stress

Many of the above management approaches to relieving stress are based on a team approach to making decisions and solving problems. Although teams have their disadvantages (they are slower to act than individuals, they sometimes result in the need to conform, etc.), the support that team members can provide in stressful environments means that teams may be far more resilient than individuals would be on their own.

Managers need to make the investment in building and maintaining their teams. While having a great deal of technical knowledge about emergencies is important, the most successful emergency response managers are often people who can build strong teams in an emergency context

Summary



Key Points

Managers can seek to co-ordinate work through control strategies or through team building.

Team building is normally the most appropriate co-ordination approach for emergency response operations.

New team members will need to go through forming, storming and norming before they start performing.

All team members, not just the manager, are responsible for building and maintaining the team and making it work.

Stress is the body's response to a threat or changing situation.

Stress arises because of gaps between a person's perception of the demands placed on them and their perception of their ability to cope.

Stress can be either acute or chronic and can be caused by work or non-work factors.

A limited amount of stress is good and can improve performance.

Too much stress is bad and can cause burnout.

Excessive stress can cause exhaustion, disease, irrational thought patterns, and behavioural symptoms.

Building a strong team is one of the most effective steps that a manager can take to control stress.



Self Test

Chapter 9

Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

- T F 1. Emergency managers can usually decide whom they want on their teams.
- T F 2. Only the manager is responsible for maintaining the team.
- T F 3. Stress is one of the biggest threats facing the emergency manager and the team.
- T F 4. The effect of stress will depend in part on the personality of the individual.
- T F 5. Participation in decision making can reduce stress.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

- 6. Which of the following is not an example of a control strategy that managers might use to control day to day operations?
 - A Financial power
 - B Knowledge based power
 - C Team building
 - D Legal power
- 7. Managers can speed up the assimilation of new members by:
 - A Letting them 'fight for their own corner' so that they are respected by the other team members
 - B Assigning mentors to new members
 - C Allowing new members to 'sink or swim'
 - D All of the above
- 8. Emergency response operations are often very stressful because of:
 - A The high rates of change common in emergencies
 - B The high levels of threat in chaotic or unstable situations
 - C The gaps between the team's perception of the demands placed on them and their perception of what they can achieve
 - D All of the above

9. Which of the following is not a chronic stressor?
- A Uncertainty about the future
 - B Working long hours
 - C Witnessing the death of a colleague
 - D Living in poor accommodations
10. Which of the following might result from stress?
- A High blood pressure
 - B Cardiovascular disease
 - C A broken leg
 - D All of the above



Exercise

Exercise

You have just arrived to take over an emergency response operation after the previous manager was killed in a traffic accident. You are shocked to find that the situation is far worse than you feared. The inner team members are still working 12 to 14 hour days 7 days a week although the crisis has eased somewhat.

They sleep three or four to a room in the building that is used as the office during the day. Accommodations and food are of a low standard. Many staff have not taken leave for some time as they, like you, were rushed here from another crisis. This is your third such crisis this year and you are feeling tired rather than enthusiastic. There are eight other members on the team, including:

- A very close friend of the former manager who was with him when he was killed. She was wearing a seat belt and received only minor injuries in the accident. She returned to work immediately after the accident.
- A colleague who has just learned of his parents' death at home. He is unable to travel for the funeral (his duty as the eldest son) as he is a former refugee from that country and cannot return.
- A colleague who has become very difficult to deal with, appears to be drinking to excess and has recently insulted the local authorities.
- Two colleagues who have been transferred from another very difficult emergency operation during which they witnessed the violent death of 20 refugees.
- Two colleagues who are on their first emergency assignment, but seem to be performing well.

Which of team members worry you the most in terms of stress? What should you do?

**Chapter 9
Answers**

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. C |
| 2. F | 7. B |
| 3. T | 8. D |
| 4. T | 9. C |
| 5. T | 10. D |

Exercise Answer

You should be worried about all of your staff.

- The colleague with the alcohol problem will probably need to leave in order to avoid complete burnout and prevent further problems with the local authorities.
- Both the car crash survivor and the man who lost his parents need to take leave as soon as possible. While these absences may leave the programme under-staffed in the short term, they may prevent long-term damage to the people concerned.
- You need to bring the working hours under control.
- You need to separate living and working quarters.
- You need to improve the accommodations and food.

All of these points are fairly obvious and fairly straightforward. The real point of this question was to see if you noticed that the emergency manager—the person you were asked to ‘play’—is probably very close to burnout himself/herself. The manager is in a new situation and has been shocked by it. He or she is tired rather than enthusiastic.

It is much easier to recognise the danger signs of stress in others than it is to recognise them in ourselves. Always remember that you also can suffer burnout from too much stress.

COURSE EVALUATION

**COURSE: EP-03
Managing an Emergency Response – UNHCR**

Date you finished the course: _____

What is your present position? _____

How many years have you spent in disaster-related work? _____

How many years of formal education do you have?

- 0 to 6 years 7 to 12 years 12 to 16 years more than 16 years

How was the content level of this course?

- too difficult about right too easy

Was the course material relevant to your work?

- yes no

How useful were the self-assessment tests to you?

- very useful OK not useful

How valuable was the total course?

- very valuable of some value not valuable

Additional comments: _____

Please copy and return this form by mail or fax, or e-mail the information to:

University of Wisconsin–Disaster Management Center
432 Lake Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA
Fax: 1-608-263-3160 E-mail: dmc@engr.wisc.edu

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This exam must be proctored (supervised) just as it would be for a course taken on campus. Generally, proctors do not charge for this service. In all cases the academic department offering the course must approve the choice of proctor. Qualified proctors include university or college registrars, deans or counselors or professors; high school principals or counselors; directors of educational services at universities, other educational organizations, correctional institutions or the armed services; certified librarians in a supervisory position; or the delegated officials at university testing centers. Students residing outside of the United States may also request, as their proctor, a local director of educational services or an officer of the United States embassy or consulate. Please copy this form as needed.

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Student Information:

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Mailing Address _____

Proctor Information:

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Title _____

Organization _____

Complete Mailing Address (Please provide street address, in case courier service is used.)

Phone Number OR
Email Address _____

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