

CRANFIELD DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CENTRE

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING UP YOUR EXPERIENCES IN THE MANAGEMENT OR OBSERVATION OF DISASTER RELIEF OR RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE

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Disaster relief and reconstruction aid organisations are beginning to recognise the importance of training in the highly complex business of decision making for emergency response. Yet although the activity itself is well established, study and documentation of the process is not. To advance our collective stock of knowledge in this area, to help you to crystallise some of your own thoughts and experience, and to help in our mutual training effort, you have been asked to prepare a document for use in a forthcoming training course or seminar. These notes are intended to help you in the process.

Form of the Document

The document may take the form of a descriptive report, an evaluation study or a commentary on some aspect of disaster preparedness, relief or reconstruction. Generally, your report should focus on the work of the organisation with which you are associated for disaster purposes (for example, as an employee, volunteer or committee member). However, if you are lucky enough to be able to take a more Olympian view, you may compare and contrast the experiences of different organisations, or perhaps the same organisation reacting at different times or in different places.

If you have had first hand experience of a disaster - either as a victim or as an organiser of aid - draw on your personal knowledge as much as you are able. One moment of direct experience is worth more than a decade of conjecture.

In so far as it is practicable try to write up the material which you have so that it can be shared with people who work for organisations other than your own. In other words, try to bring out the essential truth of the events or circumstances which you describe, but do so in a way which ought not to threaten those whose status appears to make them responsible for the events which you report. In general, omit the names of individuals. If necessary, you may invent fictitious names to give human personality to your report.