

Media Coverage of Disaster Events, Recovery and Mitigation in Afghanistan

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Why Media

- Brings disaster to your living room – you can't escape it
- With real time living pictures and voices – you can't ignore it
- It forces us to ACT



Why Media contd.



- Effective in giving affected individuals and communities a say in disaster discourse
- Effective in mobilizing public and government discussion/response.
- Hold “deliverers” accountable – show us what you have done, the public has the right to know.

Why Media contd.



- Effective in mobilizing domestic and international support for dealing with the aftermath of disaster
- Recall the many days and weeks following the Boxing Day disaster and the public and institutional response

Why Media contd.



- Millions were donated by the public in Britain
- Governments were forced to match public donation
- MOST importantly, media acts as social glue in times of crises, linking all actors with public

Why media contd.



- Disaster prevention? and mitigation? rely upon effective communication – media provide widest and cost effective public outreach
- But can't and shouldn't replace more technical means of communication necessary for coordination and information sharing among diff. actors
- Up to date and credible information saves lives, property, reduce public fear and panic, provide social glue

Key Assumptions about Media



- Awareness raising? Yes and No! Other pressing priorities
- Public education on DP? Long term not possible, resource factor an issue!
- Media interest and resources key to determine response?

Assumptions contd.



- Risk assessment, early warning, evacuation?
Job of key institutions, media pass on info, act as link between providers and recipients of info.
- Assess damage, post-disaster relief ? Not media job! Damage ass. difficult, incomplete, coverage of PDR, point shortcomings/needs

Key Proposed Activities



- Educate public about disasters
- Warning of hazards, impending disaster
- Gathering and sharing of info about affected areas
- Alerting government officials, relief orgs. and public to specific needs
- Facilitate discussion about disaster preparedness and response
- Educate, warn, inform, empower people to take practical steps to protect from ND

What Media can and can't do?



- Prepare public to meet emergencies - supply information, prepare citizens – don't just leave it to media
- Provide mitigation, warning and coping info – not in isolated cases
- Timely communication about disasters lead to appropriate individual and community action – i.e. if they have the choice and resources to act, government must not leave it to inds. and communities.
- Advance warning allows public to prepare for evacuation or ensure better protection at site

What Media can and can't do?



- Guide affected towards locations where safety and help can be found – assuming media has access to this info.
- Tracking missing persons – re-unit loved ones
- Keep the “hope” alive – help is coming, you have not been forgotten! If expectations not met, distrust in actors, disappointment, anger, disengagement

What Media can and can't do?



- Advise people about do's and don'ts of building and maintaining infrastructure in disaster resilient manner
- Initiate and maintain public debate about the most sensible ways to deal with NDs – long term obj. media not good at this.

Mainstreaming Media into DM



- Linkages and networking between media and other actors – working relation, provide reliable info
- Training of media and other actors in meeting the needs of this interface
- Allocate adequate resources to this task

Mainstreaming Media into DM



- Respect media's independence and understand its interest – not ever thing you want from media you'll get.
- Media focus is always transitory, there is always the next crisis to cover
- Fascination with breaking news, old news is no news

Long term goals



- Educational/informational programmes for public, policy makers and interest groups to ensure support for DR programmes
- Awareness raising, education and opinion building to increase recognition of DR in saving lives and property
- Media and public action key to meeting both goals, media can't do it alone

Expected Outcome



- Initiate a dialogue on issues related to the role of media during disaster events
- Generate ideas on a standard code of conduct for print and electronic media covering disaster events