

Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA): Basic Concepts and Methodology

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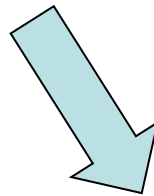
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The Problem

- **Existing** environmental conditions often **exacerbate** disasters
 - Conflict, Deforestation
- **Disasters** can result in **negative** environmental impacts
- **Relief** aid can have positive or negative environmental impact
 - ❖ *Depends on intervention **design**...*

Defining REA

- *A tool to identify, define, and prioritize potential environmental impacts in disaster situations.*
- *Designed for natural, technological, or political disasters*



Natural disasters – focus
of today's presentation

REA Objectives

- Examine the direct and indirect **effects** of disasters and environment
- Understand potential **costs of ignorance** of environmental impacts of disaster response
- Discuss “**good practices**” in designing environmentally-sound disaster responses

Prioritize Issues and Actions

Prioritize issues based on levels of threat to:

1. **Life** L/
2. **Welfare** W/
3. **Environment** E

A **Human-** Centered & Ecologically-Sensitive Approach

Users of REA

- Development professionals directly involved in disaster response operations
 - Expert knowledge is not required: basic knowledge of the disaster management process and little to no environmental background is sufficient

How is an REA different from Environmental Impact Assessment?

EIA

- Designed For **Development** Projects
- Evaluation of potential ENV impacts
- **Developed** in response to **legal** mandate, negligent pesticide use (1970s)
- **Required** for all USAID Projects & FFP EMER > 1 Year
- **Sustainability** is Priority
- Intended to be **Comprehensive**
- **Still** Often Underutilized

REA

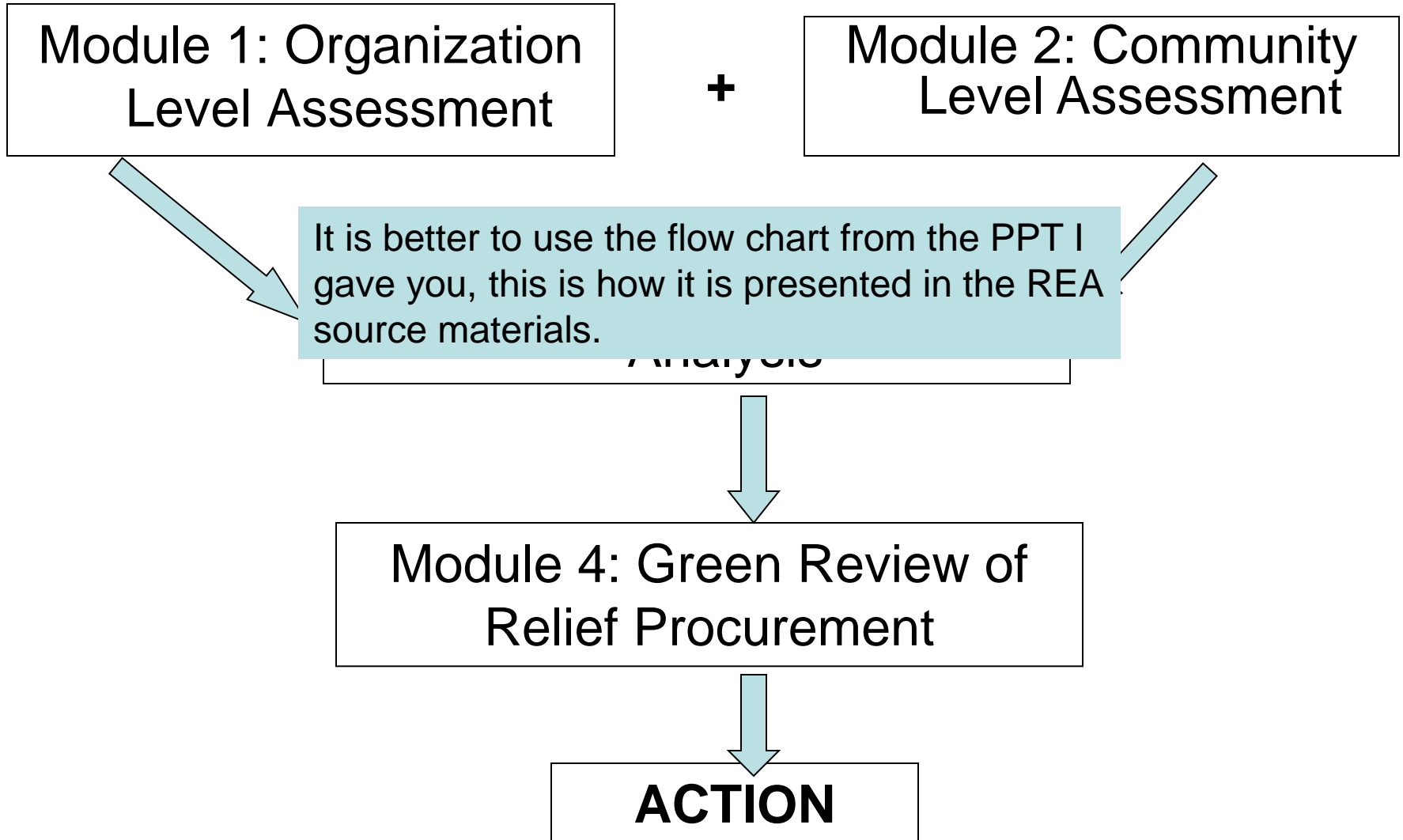
- Designed For Immediate **Emergency** Response
- Evaluation of potential ENV impacts
- **Developed** in response to perceived **need**, NOT legal mandate
- **NOT** Required by USAID or Other Donors
- Priority: **Lives** > Welfare > ENV
- **Timing** >>> Perfection
- Approach **Far** Underutilized

REA Methodology

REA is based on four modules, each with specific tasks focused on:

- Disaster **context**
- **Disaster-related factors** which may have an immediate environmental impact
- Nature and scope of **environmental impacts of disaster**
- **Unmet basic needs** of disaster survivors that could produce adverse impacts on the environment
- Negative environmental impacts of **relief efforts**

REA Modules



REA Module 1: Organization Level Assessment

- Focuses on critical environmental issues from the perspective of government, non-government and private relief organizations.

Module 1: Organization Level Assessment
Task 1: Context Statement
Task 2: Factors Influencing Environmental Impacts
Task 3: Environmental Threats of Disasters
Task 4: Unmet Basic Needs
Task 5: Negative Environmental Consequences of Relief Activities

REA Module 2: Community Level Assessment

- Focuses on critical environmental issues from the perspective of communities affected by a disaster
- An understanding of priority issues from the community's perspective is **critical** to relief efforts

Module 2: Community Level Assessment
Task 6: Community Assessment Summary Form (information collected from communities/secondary sources).

REA Module 3: Consolidation and Analysis - Putting it all together

- Goal: prioritize environmental issues and **actions**

Lives > Welfare > ENV

- Four principal types of actions:
 - Modification of existing relief/recovery efforts
 - New relief activities needed
 - Additional information needed
 - Advocacy for disaster survivors required

Module 3: Consolidation and Analysis
Task 7: Consolidate the Issues Task 8: Identify Critical Issues and Actions Task 9: Prioritize Issues and Actions Task 10: Environmental Consequences of Relief Activities Review

Module 4: Green Review of Relief Procurement

- Focuses on materials and services needed for relief efforts to ensure they have the least negative environmental impact
 - Waste reduction
 - Recycling
 - Energy efficiency

Green Procurement: Life Cycle Analysis

Life Cycle Analysis:

- What raw materials must be extracted to make the new item?
- What are the pollution and social impacts of making it?
- What materials and energy are needed to operate it?
- What is the impact of its disposal?

Relevance of REA to Food Security/Development Programs [to be expanded]

- Disaster situations shed light on critical social, economic and environmental issues:
 - REA provides baseline information on these issues and informs actions to help beneficiary populations recover more quickly
 - Helps ensure good planning so that relief efforts don't cause "problems that development will have to fix"
- Highlights the need to build resilience and disaster mitigation efforts into development programs

REFERENCES

Kelly C. Guidelines for Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment in Disasters. Benfield Hazard Research Center, University College London and CARE International. April 2005.

A Comparison of IEE to Rapid Environmental Assessment for Disasters. Erika J. Clesceri USAID/DCHA/FFP.