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<b>Registration Number:</b>	<b>ACPM PGD/161/2019</b>
<b>Course:</b>	<b>PGD- PSCM</b>
<b>Course ID:</b>	<b>PGD008</b>
<b>Module:</b>	<b><u>EIGHT</u></b>
<b>Lecturer:</b>	
<b>Assignment Number:</b>	<b><u>08</u></b>
<b>Due Date:</b>	<b><u>31/12/2019</u></b>
<b>Assignment Brief:</b>	<b><u>COURSE WORK</u></b>

## **MODULE EIGHT (8)**

### **1. Describe five major challenges faced by humanitarian logistics system and what are some of the ways on overcoming them.**

Christopher and Tatham (2011) argued that it is quite surprising that until relatively recently the challenges of humanitarian logistics have not attracted serious consideration by the academic community at large. According to Van Wassenhove (2006), logistics is an essential component in any disaster relief effort and it differentiates between a successful and failed operation. Similarly, William (2004) deduced that logistics is critical to the assessment of needs and mobilization of personnel, material, and equipment promptly.

The increased number and impacts of disasters has drawbacks in planning for disaster relief (Murray, 2005). The critical role of humanitarian logistics in the effective disaster relief delivery is becoming well recognized. Its functions include a wide range of activities such as procurement, warehousing, transport, planning, tracking and tracing, customs clearance, as well as preparedness (Bean, Viljoen, Ittmann & Kekana, 2011).

Storage and distribution facilities were at times looted and the whole exercise politicized by the ruling party, rendering some of the humanitarian operations ineffective. Additionally, distribution of food aid has been frequently affected by politics. Directives from the government to release particular commodities to a particular location negatively affected the planned delivery schedules and resulted in the expiry of certain foods.

Some operations were hampered by lack of information and communication technology. Documentation relating to transportation often produced electronically at the point of origin was often only available online at the point of use due to a lack of electronic infrastructure by partner organizations.

The people in charge of humanitarian logistics at WFP and its partners were found to have no formal training in logistics. Many employees began their careers with a background in the social sciences, development studies or law. Few had corporate experience of logistics management.

Poor infrastructure. The road network in South Sudan is primarily comprised of unpaved roads and bush tracks, even during the dry season many of these roads are only accessible by 6x6 all-terrain vehicles, and during the rainy season many roads are impassable.

Security situation. The security situation remains volatile which restricts the movement of personnel and humanitarian cargo. Several key operational areas are only accessible by air and some areas are inaccessible completely due to active hostilities.

Seasonal Flooding. Annual rains between June and October affect the majority of South Sudan's South Sudan Concept of Operations where almost whole areas are flooded and cause difficulties in accessing major roads to the host communities especially in greater bhar el ghazel region, isolating communities in need and hampering humanitarian operations.

The very limited surface transport capacity and unreliable fuel supply creates a challenging environment for all humanitarian actors involved in the response. The extent of these logistics challenges and the impact of the constraints outlined above, create serious gaps in the ability of the humanitarian sector to deliver an adequate response in times of emergency or protracted crisis.

However, the following are the ways in which humanitarian logistics can overcome their challenges in operations.

Through Socioeconomic impact assessment. Potential negative socioeconomic impact of humanitarian operations is undeniable, but it could be reduced. Past experiences and information sharing could be helpful. First, consider what is or is not likely to be needed in the affected region. Often, the economy functions such that it makes more sense for individuals to try to sell donated goods in the markets rather than using them. Second, offer aid that is sustainable by the local communities

Through Humanitarian operations evaluation. Humanitarian operations form a continuous improvement cycle that requires measurement. After a disaster, all learned lessons should be discussed and documented. Tracking the results of the humanitarian operations is particularly important; avoid strategies such as "truck and dump" that fail to document whether the supplies reach those in need.

Through construction of field warehouse that will enable storage in the field and it will be well stocked especially if its approaching the rainy season especially at the flooded locations where humanitarian organizations operate.

## **2. Do you support aid organization improving on performance management rather than developing only reports to their donors? How can it be achieved?**

There are a number of performance management processes, tools and approaches organizations can take to inspire, monitor and manage employees such as Continuous performance management (otherwise known as Agile Performance Management) Traditional annual appraisals (Stuart Hearn, 2018).

An effective performance management system requires commitment and dedication from the human resources department and managers and employees. Below, we'll explore why we should have employee performance reviews at work (although not outdated and ineffective annual appraisals), how performance management is changing and the overall importance of performance management to organizational business success.

Organizational performance management helps to boost employee engagement and productivity. Engaged employees stay longer, actively involve themselves in the workplace and produce better results. Improving levels of employee engagement is key to boosting productivity and maximizing ROI. Performance management, done well, is a vital tool for having engaged employees unlike an organization that deals in report development to the donor.

Organizational continuous performance management creates an ongoing dialogue and an atmosphere of trust, support and encouragement unlike where an organization rely on developing a donor reports which only create relationships between the employer and the donor.

It also helps develop a relationship between employee and organization. If an employee is aware that their manager and the business cares about what they are doing and is dedicated to helping them do better and progress their career they are far more likely to engage with the organization unlike an organization that only develops a donor reports and didn't considers its employees' performance.

Organizational performance management helps to create employee development strategies. Continuous performance management means you are proactively developing employees by covering their development needs. With regular catch-ups, you can pursue continuous performance improvement, as you frequently meet to discuss each employee's performance, possible development opportunities and development plans. By combining this with flexible personal development objectives, businesses can cultivate talent in a way simply not possible with once or twice yearly performance conversations.

Having a consistent understanding of your employees' abilities, an agile platform that allows you to regularly shift priorities and focus on new areas of development produces an environment where your workers are constantly moving in a direction that provides the maximum possible benefit to your organization. By failing to consider the importance of performance management, the employee-business focus can become misaligned, goals can become irrelevant and employee potential squandered.

Organizational performance management allows for the exchange of feedback. The importance of feedback in performance management cannot be overstated. Employees want feedback and they want it regularly. They need (and deserve) to know how they are performing and how they can improve. Furthermore, they should have the opportunity to give feedback on their company and management unlike developing donor reports only where the feedback is basically on reporting aspects.

Organizational performance management creates clarification concerning SMART goals. It is surprising and rather worrying to hear that studies have shown around 50% of employees aren't clear on exactly what their role within the workplace is or what long or short term goals they are trying to achieve unlike an organization that develops reports to donors as they follow donor rules and regulations as well as following deadlines only.

Organizational performance management processes can eliminate ambiguity and confusion about goal setting. Having regular, future focused conversations through continuous review helps to ensure employees are clear on everything they are supposed to be doing and what is expected of them unlike an organization that only concentrates on developing reports to the donors.

The process also ensures management is in touch with the work being delivered and able to identify when performance is dropping off as a result of lack of job clarity.

However, the following are the ways in which an organization can achieve a good performance management process.

Communication. Performance management systems succeed when communication is authentic and transparent. organizations should utilise an open door policy and encourage clear lines of communication throughout the organisation.

Setting of effective goals. Goal setting needs to be just. Goals can't be too easy, or employees won't feel satisfied most people enjoy a challenge. They want to be stretched and to develop new skills. Equally, however, goals that are too challenging can be demotivational. Employees will burn out trying to accomplish them, or they won't try at all, believing them to be impossible.

Effective goals should be set collaboratively, between manager and employee. They should be SMART and tracked regularly. On top of this, regular meetings should be held to discuss goal progress and what can be done to support the employee in this respect.

Managers engagement with the process. Sometimes, bad managers happen to good performance management systems. The reality is, no performance management system will be successful if the people involved don't invest in the process, or willing to make it succeed. If employees sense their managers are apathetic about the performance management system, they will mirror this attitude. Managers need to take control and lead by example.

Collection of right performance management data. Traditionally, performance management has focused on data. It used to be the norm to use performance ratings. Unfortunately, there is a big problem with performance ratings. Studies have found them to be far from motivational and they have been shown to impact performance negatively. Other examples of performance management data include stack ranking systems, which keep employees in a permanent state of stress and promote unhealthy competition between employees.

This isn't to say all performance management data is bad. It's the type of data you collect that matters. Rather than placing a heavy emphasis on your employee's performance and what they are doing wrong, it is best to shift your attention to the bigger picture. How often are employees and line managers meeting to discuss performance?

Conclusively, the above are just a few reasons why performance management is as essential now as it ever was and how it can be achieved in an organization. Some tools are motivational and techniques (such as stack ranking) will leave your employees demotivated and disengaged. It's important to remain up-to-date with performance management trends and to frequently interact with your employees to find out how you can improve your performance management system to get the most out of your team.

### **3. Describe the scope and importance of humanitarian logistics.**

Humanitarian Logistics is a specialized area of logistics, which gives emphasis particularly on arranging the delivery and warehousing of supplies during natural calamities or sudden emergencies to the affected areas, communities and people, who actually need the help.

But, whenever we talk about logistics, people always have this thought in their minds that logistics is for the commercial purposes, how it can help the mankind. And, seriously, this thought process here has to be broken. Of course, logistics can prove out to be one of the most vital tools in relief and disaster management.

Keep Logistics tools prepared beforehand. Whenever we hear the news of any natural calamity, whether its earthquake, landslide, flood or tsunami, we sigh, wondering how those affected are coping with this.

The truth is we can't avoid natural calamities or control the nature, but we can keep the tools of logistics ready beforehand to cope with any untoward situation or help people across the globe.

Sector's key players. Humanitarian logistics or relief operation management involves people from diverse backgrounds in terms of culture, purposes, interests, mandates, capacity, and logistics expertise. In this sector, key players can be categorized as follows: governments, the military, aid agencies, donors, NGOs, and private sector companies.

Rising need for humanitarian logistics. Nowadays the need for humanitarian logistics is increasing rapidly also because of climate change, natural disasters, population growth, conflicts etc. To cope with this, many humanitarian organizations are coming up with the idea of expanding their work and collaborating with the private sector. It will give a new dimension to this logistics sector.

Skills required. Different types of soft skills of management with functional logistics skills are required in humanitarian logistics. Within these two major skills, four groups of skills can be distinguished: general management skills, problem-solving skills, interpersonal (people management) skills and functional logistics skills.

Problem Solving Skills include problem identification, information gathering, problem analysis, information sharing and problem solving. Interpersonal skills include listening, oral communication, written communication, people management, meeting facilitation, negotiation, stress management, human resources management, and leadership. Functional logistics skills include legal, customs, import, and export, transportation management, inventory management, warehousing, purchasing and procurement, forecasting, reverse logistics, port/airport management, and logistics information systems.

E-logistics will save a lot of problems. With the emerging competition for funding among major relief organizations, the heads of logistics tend to each fight their own battles with little collaboration. In order to overcome this situation, e-logisticians are required for getting the job done under the most adverse and extreme circumstances. Common training and the use of tools like e-learning would open up the possibility of creating a cadre of logisticians in the field, and so promote standardized logistics practices and in country logistics capacity.

Way Forward. We can see a great opportunity for advancement of the field and of the humanitarian mission if the institutional knowledge is disseminated in an organized way. So, the time has come to strengthen the infrastructure of humanitarian logistics and expertise in technology and resources



with the help of corporate and academic communities as this sector requires extreme requirements in terms of timeliness, affordability, and oversight. However, the following are the importance of humanitarian logistics in operations.

Designing of evacuation routes (capacity and potential weakness). Humanitarian logistics have a big role in designing routes and routines for evacuation especially when there is an emergency either in health or conflict more specifically for South Sudan case.

Assessing potential sites for logistic bases. Supply distribution centers (food, medicine, tools), fuel distribution points and shelters. Humanitarian logistics in South Sudan is managed by WFP logistics cluster who controls the fleets for many of the NGOs in South Sudan hence they are responsible for the movement of goods and services within South Sudan through air shipment or road convoy.

Location study and management of emergency warehouses. The logistic cluster is responsible for the assessment of the location in which fleet is scheduled to be delivered.

Determine the capacity of ports and airports to handle emergency supplies under different scenarios. The humanitarian logistics are responsible for determining the capacity of the ports and air strips where humanitarian assistances are to be dropped.

Determining alternative transportation routes such as waterways. In respect to the water transportation means in South Sudan, the humanitarian logistics organizes movement of cargo through motor boats the designated locations where no road passage.

Establish procedures and formalities for the arrival of emergency consignments. Humanitarian logistics are concerned of putting together and obtaining all documentations for clearance from the authorities concerned in the country especially from the security organs to enable smooth movement of the supplies to the intended destination.

Allocation of local distribution centers and beneficiaries' distribution points. Humanitarian logistics are concerned of identify and allocate the distribution centers where there is easy accessibility by all the beneficiaries who are in different locations after carrying out assessment.

Assessing of needs (places, amount of people and needs). Humanitarian logistics is concern together with the humanitarian emergency relief headed by United Nation Office of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) is responsible for carrying assessment for the targeted population in a specific location to enable easy data analysis and ratio determination as well as demands of the population in the area.

Planning of relief aid distribution networks. Humanitarian logistics is concern of identifying some agency who will help in facilitating the distribution of supplies as well as sharing compounds with other agencies on ground. For instance, the case of South Sudan where it's of war tone area and some locations become un accessible because of poor roads.

Deployment of vaccines, food and supplies delivery to hospitals. Humanitarian logistics is concerned in delivering medical supplies to the locations with the help of the health cluster in the country.

Warehouse management (classification, storage and commission processes). The humanitarian logistics especially for the South Sudan context managed by WFP logistics cluster is concern of the way in which supplies sent as cargo are packed including their weighing arrangement and storage capabilities.

Planning of systems for record keeping, control and monitoring of supplies inventory. Humanitarian logistics are concerned keeping proper records of cargo received and delivered to the designated location. This is in relation to local and international shipment of humanitarian goods and services as well as equipment.

#### **4. According to you what do you think are the way forward of improving the Humanitarian logistics which seems to have been left behind by the for-profit organizations.**

Through developing a basic frame work to model the demand based on historical data, past experiences and most likely scenarios after analysis by developing as disaster design: type,

magnitude, location characteristics and other defining attributes which will enable humanitarian logistics improves their interventions.

Through inventory planning and control. An adequate inventory levels are critical given the high uncertainty of delivery lead times for relief supplies. Inventory prepositioning is a suitable strategy to face uncertainty, especially when local supply might be very limited.

Through processing standardization which helps in facilitating regional cooperation, but effort should also be placed on decentralized models of smaller coalitions among neighboring cities or countries with similar characteristics. Economies of scope in established emergency response systems support joint operations; and partnerships with multi-location and international corporations bring flexibility, robustness and agility to the supply chain.

Through Consolidated donations so they can be classified and then redistributed, or reassign them to local organizations (e.g., churches, Salvation Army, etc.) who are equipped to deal with these donations. These organizations can either identify those items that can be used or sell some items to raise funds for relief efforts. Always enforce planning, communication and collaboration for in-kind donations processes.

Through Collaboration among organizations. Governments should play a leadership role in determining what critical resources the region needs and achieving coordination among the NGOs and all related organizations.

Through understanding of regional political, economic and socioeconomic conditions. Awareness of the local conditions is crucial for the success of the humanitarian operations. Arrange cultural awareness training programs to create opportunities for a given organization to meet with others that have previously worked in the region.

By utilizing local capacity and capabilities. First, find out what capacity is already in place. Using local capacities and assets (e.g., local volunteers, mules, carts, etc.) offers the added benefit of giving community residents dignity and opportunities to participate in the response and recovery operations.

Through constant communication. Information from and communication with the people in the field, right where the disaster took place, is critical. Information and communication emergency systems should be built in advance.

Through Socioeconomic impact assessment. Potential negative socioeconomic impact of humanitarian operations is undeniable, but it could be reduced. Past experiences and information sharing could be helpful. First, consider what is or is not likely to be needed in the affected region. Often, the economy functions such that it makes more sense for individuals to try to sell donated goods in the markets rather than using them. Second, offer aid that is sustainable by the local communities (e.g. provide the parts needed to fix a donated water pump). Finally, keep tradeoffs between the short-term effectiveness of the response and the long-term impacts in good balance.

Through Humanitarian operations evaluation. Humanitarian operations form a continuous improvement cycle that requires measurement. After a disaster, all learned lessons should be discussed and documented. Tracking the results of the humanitarian operations is particularly important; avoid strategies such as “truck and dump” that fail to document whether the supplies reach those in need.

Humanitarian organizations should be measured not only in terms of efficiency and effectiveness but also outreach and public perception.

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