***Silvya Bolliger***

***¿’MODULE 2 ASSIGNMENT***

1. Explain how having effective leadership help mitigate the effects of disasters.

2. Development can either increase or decrease the vulnerability of a community, true or

false. Explain your answer

3. What are the four levels of input needed for disaster preparedness? Explain your answer

4. Why are gender issues important in the disaster preparedness plans?

6. Describe how volunteer organizations have assisted your country in the latest disaster

1. Explain how having effective leadership help mitigate the effects of disasters.

Leadership under stressful situations and crisis is specifically crucial to the efficiency of the response. Clear instructions for a common objective need to be shared often with the team, ensuring that every team member does not have doubts on its tasks and that every person has the potential, knowledge and means to carry out its responsibilities. In this way, the response can be more effective and reach people in order to help alleviate the consequences of a disaster on a family or a community.

Negative leadership is harmful and can cause unnecessary and unfair sufferings. For example the President of a country in emergency can decide to direct all assistance only to areas with presence of a specific ethnic group, leaving the other groups without subsistence.

An effective leadership needs to be well informed and be open to information coming from all sources, including or especially from the respective team members. In this way, the leaders can make appropriate decisions that are based on needs, rights and analysis. Having access to information leads to better choices, especially for the vulnerable people who will benefit from mitigation of the effects of disasters.

Communication is key at all hierarchical levels. Often leaders need to report to their own leaders and the person needs to count on other people for information and support. To mitigate the effects of disasters, an effective leadership needs to have an accessible line of communication with different people and entities. For example a good leader leads productive governmental entities, supporting and strengthening public institutions so that they can engage in large scale disaster preparedness actions.

2. Development can either increase or decrease the vulnerability of a community, true or

false. Explain your answer

Development can indeed increase or decrease vulnerability of communities. If well implemented, development actions have a great potential to decrease the vulnerability of a community, as well as on individuals and societies.

If development actions are implemented in an organized matter, with proper access to information and appropriate planning, communities can strengthen their capacities, build their knowledge and therefore decrease vulnerability. For example if the vulnerability of a community is lack of early access of information on the imminent risks of floods, early warning systems can be installed, a disaster risk management committee should be set up and community training conducted. In this way, the vulnerability of a community would be reduced.

Humanitarian aid, on the other hand, has a higher risk of increasing the vulnerability of a community, in particular if assistance is provided as a sole mean of subsistence during a prolonged period of time. It is aggravated if the humanitarian action does not have a well purposed link with development initiatives and if no clear exit strategy is defined. For examples local markets can crash and self-reliance can erode, if there is oversupply or overdependence on assistance.

3. What are the four levels of input needed for disaster preparedness? Explain your answer

The four levels where input is needed to formulate an effective disaster preparedness plan are community, departmental, national and international level.

At community level it is essential that community members are prepared, trained, informed, that they have access to tools and instruments that can prepare them best to prevent or face a disaster.

Many contexts also need to rely on the availability of inputs for disaster preparedness at departmental level, as generally countries are subdivided into regions or departments, who also have responsibilities to formulate and implement disaster preparedness plans and actions.

The national level is essential, as its inputs (resources, legal instruments, technical assistance to the local levels, etc) are key to prepare and protect its citizens. In the first place, if a country has a good DRM law, it also has the potential to make its implementation effective, by allocating the necessary resources and ensuring that the law is diffused at different levels and that it is implemented in the territories.

At international level (bilateral, regional, continental or worldwide) there can be a multitude of actions that can take place and initiated by leaders of different countries. International initiatives such as the Sendai framework or regional platforms for DRR give countries the opportunity to comply with international standards and even obligations.

All 4 levels need to work in a coordinated and communicative way, they need to be in line with each other and not contradict laws, messages, instructions and actions.

4. Why are gender issues important in the disaster preparedness plans?

The potential consequences of a disaster have different impact on gender and age groups. It is essential to study gender issues when formulating a disaster preparedness plan.

Women and men represent great potential to contribute to a differential disaster preparedness plans and need to be taken into consideration with focus groups, individual dialogues, statistics and perceptions.

Gender issues must be considered in policy, strategy and plans. It is important that gender equality is promoted in its implementation.

Different population groups have different humanitarian needs when a disaster occurs. But they also have different capacities that can be strengthened, different responsibilities to handle and different roles. Gender mainstreaming is strategic.

More and more organizations that work with disaster preparedness and response, have formulated gender policies, guidelines and specific monitoring systems to ensure that the different needs of men, women and members of LGBTI groups are considered.

Governments should be encouraged to include gender concerns and needs in their planning.

The capacities of women and men should be strengthened accordingly, so that disasters are handled with resilience, which is also a terminology that can have different meaning according to gender.

Women and men can be assigned specific roles in a disaster preparedness plan, and it is important that these roles and identified in times of calm and that women have clarity over their specific roles and contribution.

5. What is the relationship between preparedness and mitigation?

While preparedness for disasters relates usually to mechanisms to warn or forecast a disaster and plan the appropriate response (evacuation routes, food supplies), mitigation is more related with and structural investments but also non-material actions such as training that can protect lives, livelihoods and mitigate the effects of a disaster.

Disaster preparedness, according to the Red Cross Movement, has three main elements:

* Forecast and warning systems
* Precautionary measures as a result of warnings
* Organizing and strengthening capacity for response

There is a strong relationship between preparedness and mitigation in disaster risk reduction. The two concepts go hand in hand and should be implemented at the same time. They are complementary, for example while a preparedness action can be training people to know how to act inside a building during a disaster, a mitigation activity can include ensuring that infrastructures have building codes in accordance with the context. Preparedness plans can include mitigation mechanisms.

The assignation of appropriate resources, including financial one is also very important when conducting disaster risk reduction.

6. Describe how volunteer organizations have assisted your country in the latest disaster

In Colombia, volunteer organizations are abundant and contribute to projects and initiatives related with disaster. I will take the example of EU Aid Volunteers and how they are currently contributing to a project that responds to emergencies and disasters. The project is a multi partners consortium that aims at responding to emergencies with an integral, multi sectorial action that includes activities of health, protection, water and sanitation and food security.

EU Aid Volunteers were selected for this project in Colombia by its partners through a lengthy process of applying to promote or host the deployment of European Volunteers. EU Aid volunteers were selected according to their profiles and experience, as well as, obviously, the need of the project. However the efforts were worth it as the contribution of these team members is very valuable.

In this case, the volunteers are professionals experienced. For example EU Aid Volunteer specialist in monitoring and evaluation contribute to gathering, processing and analyzing information useful to formulate recommendations and make appropriate adjustment to the emergency project. Additionally, I recently travelled to rural areas of Colombia with the European volunteer of this project in charge of communication. The project was assisting victims of an emergency. He contributed to producing and diffusing communication products that were useful to give visibility to the impact of humanitarian action in a disaster.