BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Y Care International’s vision is one of a world where young people are protected from the impact of disasters and emergencies. Over the years it has strived to achieve this by supporting YMCAs’ efforts to respond effectively to the needs of young people following a disaster or emergency. The Disaster Preparedness Planning Guide and Toolkit form part of Y Care International’s ongoing commitment to increasing the capacity of YMCAs to reduce the impact of disasters and emergencies on young people’s lives.

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DESIGN: Ian Dunn Design

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Y Care International would like to thank the staff and volunteers of Liberia and Sri Lanka YMCAs’ national and local branches, for their support and commitment to the in-country piloting of the Disaster Preparedness Planning Guide and Toolkit.
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## List of Acronyms

| CBO       | community based organisation               |
| DP        | Disaster Preparedness                       |
| EM-DAT    | International Emergency Events Database     |
| ICRC      | International Committee of the Red Cross / Crescent |
| IFRC      | International Federation of the Red Cross / Crescent |
| NGO       | non-governmental Organisation               |
| PRA       | participatory rural appraisal                |
| SWOT      | strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats |
| UN        | United Nations                               |
| UNDP      | United Nations Development Programme         |
| UNHCR     | United Nations Refugee Agency                |
| UNICEF    | United Nations Children’s Fund               |
| WAY       | World Alliance of YMCA                       |
| WFP       | World Food Programme                         |
| WHO       | World Health Organisation                    |
| YMCA      | Young Men’s Christian Association            |
In the past decade, 2 billion people have been affected by disasters caused by natural hazards, a figure which in the face of changing climate conditions is set to increase dramatically over the coming years. Disasters resulting from technological hazards such as pollution, and complex emergencies, such as conflict, are also on the increase. The majority of those affected by these disasters are the poorest members of society. Particularly at risk are children and vulnerable young people unable to protect themselves from the impacts of a disaster and without resources to re-establish their lives in its wake.

It is now widely acknowledged that unless we work to reduce the impact that disasters have on poor people’s lives, progress currently being made towards the Millennium Development Goals is severely at risk. Disasters are not unpredictable. The majority can be prepared for by paying attention to seasonal weather hazards and identifying early-warning signs that give people time to protect themselves and their property.

The perception that humanitarian agencies provide the majority of support in the event of a disaster is not an accurate one. It is local people who make up the front line of response, responsible for saving the most lives and property affected.

Supporting communities in their bid to do this is an effective way of minimising the destructive and disruptive power of disasters. The distinctive position which YMCAs hold in their communities and their voluntary membership structure means they are well placed to support and mobilise community members in the event of a disaster. While the YMCA movement is not an emergency response organisation, Simon Pluess of the World Alliance of YMCAs (WAY) has noted: “A movement, unable to respond to the needs of communities in moments of extreme despair, is likely to be considered as irrelevant by those whom it serves.”

It is therefore unsurprising that there is a long history of YMCAs around the world responding to disasters, both in their own and in neighbouring communities. These responses have taken the form of immediate relief for victims through provision of food and shelter, as well as longer-term rehabilitation work through psychosocial support, reconstruction work and livelihoods development. Many more YMCAs would like to respond but feel hampered by lack of capacity and a clear idea of how to act when overwhelmed by events.

Disaster preparedness planning is a process by which YMCAs can ready themselves in advance for events that might affect them. It is a vital way of increasing capacity and enabling YMCAs to respond effectively to the needs of the community when called upon. Being disaster prepared means understanding the nature of risks being faced and recognising the vulnerabilities underlying them. It requires organisations and individuals to identify opportunities for preventing as well as responding to disasters.

This toolkit seeks to support the undertaking of disaster preparedness planning by national YMCA movements, and intends to complement work currently being undertaken by the WAY to establish a global movement strategy regarding emergencies. It is not in itself a new initiative, there are examples dating back as far as 1980 and as recently as 2005 of efforts by the WAY to develop guidelines and policy relating to emergency response and preparedness. All of these documents recognise that YMCAs around the world have a vital role to play in responding to emergencies within their own and neighbouring communities.

Chris Roles
Chief Executive, Y Care International
What is the Disaster Preparedness Planning Guide and Toolkit?
The Disaster Preparedness Planning Guide has been written to support YMCAs through the process of disaster preparedness by providing background information and explanations of what needs to be done. It is to be used in combination with the Disaster Preparedness Planning Toolkit, which contains the tools and activities necessary to put the process into practice. When used together, the Guide and Toolkit provide practical support in developing context specific plans, owned and led by the staff and members of their YMCA. It is not a set of guidelines or procedures to follow in the event of a disaster.

Who is the Disaster Preparedness Planning Guide and Toolkit for?
The Disaster Preparedness Planning Guide and Toolkit is for YMCAs concerned with preparing for and responding to disasters which affect the communities they are part of. The process outlined here is very thorough and YMCAs wishing to follow it would benefit from prior experience of using participatory research and analysis tools. The Guide provides the narrative account of the process to be followed and is a source of information and reference. The Toolkit complements the Guide by providing detailed information on the activities with practical tips on how to gather and document information.

For YMCAs with no past experience of responding to disasters, the Guide and Toolkit will help to identify and analyse issues which may be at first unfamiliar. It will guide the reader through the decisions that need to be made and actions to be taken. Planning does not however replace experience and it is advised that any response plans developed through this process accurately reflect the skills and experience held within the organisation.

For those YMCAs with experience of working in a disasters context, the Guide and Toolkit will provide opportunities to reflect and build on past experiences, ensuring that future efforts are even more effective.

When should disaster preparedness planning happen and how long will it take?
Disaster preparedness planning can begin at any time as long as the YMCA has adequate time to commit to the process. The process itself is cross-organisational, involving a combination of assessment, analysis and planning activities. The amount of time it takes will depend on the size of the organisation, the number of branches involved and the complexity of the issues at stake. Activities within the toolkit will help you to establish what will be involved and how much time will be required, but it is likely to take anywhere between 3 and 12 months to complete.
The different elements of the Guide and Toolkit explained

The Guide is split into two parts. **Part One** provides an introduction to the issues and explanations of technical terms involved. It also establishes principles of disaster preparedness that need to be adhered to. **Part Two** guides readers through each step of the process of planning itself.

There are three types of tools referred to throughout the Guide which are contained in detail in the Toolkit.

- **Understanding in Practice:**

  Referred to in Part One of the Guide, ‘Understanding in Practice’ tools help practically demonstrate issues and concepts being addressed in the Guide. They make use of real-life situations or simulations to bring issues to life and provoke discussion. They should be used as part of initial training to help engage staff and volunteers in the issues and process of disaster preparedness. Most of the tools require group work and discussion so will require a facilitator. Each tool is described in detail in the Toolkit with a list of necessary materials, time guidance and facilitator notes.

- **Participatory Planning Tools:**

  Referred to in Part Two of the Guide, these tools are central to the process of disaster preparedness planning. Based on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools familiar to many YMCA’s they describe methods for gathering and analysing information, prioritising issues and planning activities. They mostly require staff and volunteer participation but some exercises will also involve community members and / or representatives from external partners and organisations. Part Two of the Guide explains when they should be used and why.

- **Templates and Tables:**

  Also found in Part Two, these templates and tables have been designed to help present information in the final written plan and are often linked to the outputs of a Participatory Planning Tool. The templates indicate the type and depth of information that is required for the relevant section of the written preparedness plan. They should be seen as flexible and open to adaptation to suit the circumstances and information gathered. While they do not represent the total content of the final written disaster preparedness plan they have been designed to present a substantial amount of the necessary information. The templates and tables can also be found in the Toolkit.
Part One: Background to disaster preparedness planning
The first part of the Guide is aimed at building understanding about disasters and the reasons for preparing ourselves and our organisations for responding to them.

It is split into two sections:
1) Building the case for disaster preparedness planning
2) The principles of disaster preparedness planning

The first section contains key concepts related to disasters which help explain the theory behind disaster preparedness planning, and which are used to underpin the tools used later in the Guide. The second section goes on present five principles of preparedness planning which define good practice and ensure that we work with a common purpose.

1. BUILDING THE CASE FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

Overview of section
This section provides a background to the issue of disasters. It will explain some of the key terminology being used throughout the Guide and Toolkit. It will also help explain the relationship between disasters, their impacts and the work of YMCAs in order to demonstrate why it is important for YMCAs to be ready to respond to disasters that affect the communities they are part of. The final part of this section will address the idea of disaster preparedness planning and how the process of planning can increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which disaster response can be undertaken.

Objectives of section
On completion of this section, readers will:

- be familiar with the concepts of risk, vulnerability and hazards and how these relate to assessing disaster risk.
- understand the different ways disasters impact upon people’s lives and the relationship this has with the work of YMCAs.
- recognise the value of undertaking the process of disaster preparedness planning.
1.1 Understanding disasters: risks, hazards and vulnerability

What is a disaster?
There are many different kinds of disasters with a variety of causes and effects. The International Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) defines disasters as:

‘a situation or event, which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance; an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering.’

Do you agree with this definition? If not, why not?
A lot of media attention is given to high profile and large-scale events such as the 2004 tsunami, the 2005 Pakistan earthquake or the 2002 famine in southern Africa. However, this promotes the idea that disasters are one-off and unpredictable events, which is not the case.

There are thousands of ‘everyday disasters’ that disrupt lives and cause hardship to millions of people worldwide. ‘Everyday disasters can include:

- seasonal flooding, landslides or mudslides
- localised malaria or cholera outbreaks
- pollution of local water supplies
- drought and failure of crops
- localised conflict

These small-scale disasters regularly affect communities in which YMCAs work; often they do not attract the attention of national or international support. Instead communities and individuals must use their own resources to recover. Over time this can reduce people’s ability to recover quickly and can make them more vulnerable to the impacts of future disasters.

Early warning systems can be both very sophisticated and very simple. For example, complex weather monitoring technology may be used to predict flooding, but a simple rain gauge that shows how much rain has fallen can also suggest when a flood is likely to occur.

Can you think of an occasion where the impacts of a disaster may have been reduced if people had received some warning in advance?
RISK: A Combination of Hazards and Vulnerability

Disasters occur where there is risk. Predicting the scale of disasters therefore requires us to understand risk.

When thinking about levels of risk a simple equation is often used

Risk = hazard x vulnerability

The hazard refers to the trigger of the disaster, this can be a:

- natural hazard, such as an earthquake or severe weather conditions
- technological hazard, such as a toxic spill or pollution
- social hazard, such as conflict

Many hazards are easy to recognise, such as volcanoes, rivers which flood, hillsides prone to landslides. These can be identified by local people using their knowledge and experience. However, sometimes people are not aware of the hazards where they live, especially if hazards are invisible, such as contaminated water, or if hazards have changed over time. This means it is normally necessary to gather information on hazards from a variety of sources.

Hazards alone do not cause disasters; people have to be vulnerable to the hazard before there is a risk of disaster. The more vulnerable people are, the higher the level of risk. Exposure to hazards is an obvious form of vulnerability but people can be vulnerable in different and multiple ways. This may be related to where they live, what they do to earn a living or how old they are. Other factors such as gender, religion, ethnicity, disability can also make a difference to vulnerability.

It can help to think about three types of vulnerability:

- Physical vulnerability – caused by living or working in a hazardous area such as on a flood plain, near a volcano, near a factory etc. Physical vulnerability can also be caused by poor quality buildings, over-crowded conditions and so on
- Financial vulnerability – caused by having few assets, little financial protection such as insurance, and weak or insecure livelihoods
- Social vulnerability – caused by lack of access to healthcare, education and other services. This may also be caused by lack of political representation, discrimination and failures to protect their rights

The vast majority of people affected by disasters are the poorest in society. Often those living in poverty are vulnerable in multiple ways all connected to each other.

Understanding in Practice 1: Natural disasters? – Toolkit p10
This exercise looks at the different types of hazards which cause disasters and encourages participants to recognise the relationship between human actions and disasters.

Understanding in Practice 2: Disaster Impacts – Toolkit p14
This exercise encourages participants to think about the different ways disasters impact upon the community in order to understand the full financial, physical and social consequences.
1.2 The Impact of Disasters

Impact from disasters

The impact that disasters have on communities is widespread and can be very long-lasting. Disasters affect people in many ways. It can be helpful to categorise these ways into three groups:

- Financial
- Physical
- Social

For poor communities the impacts of disasters are felt in addition to long-term poverty issues being faced. Below is a diagram that maps some of the ways that disasters affect individuals and their communities.

**FIGURE 1: Different ways disasters impact people’s lives**

Many of these impacts relate to work YMCAs are already involved in. They are therefore likely to affect the level of need within communities for YMCA services and support. Issues which YMCAs may already have experience in include:

- livelihoods building
- psychosocial support
- provision of shelter and basic needs
- child and youth protection
- advocating for the rights of marginalised children and young people
1.3 What is Disaster Preparedness?

Disaster preparedness means becoming better equipped to cope with risks being faced. It involves understanding and analysing the links between risks, hazards and vulnerability and using this knowledge to take action to reduce the impacts of disasters. Disaster preparedness can be undertaken by anyone; governments, community organisations and even individuals can take vital steps to become disaster prepared.

Disaster preparedness is a process that happens before a disaster happens. There are two key elements to disaster preparedness. The first is about reducing risk through removing or mitigating the hazards and people’s vulnerability that cause disasters.

**Case study:** A community in the Philippines regularly experiences flooding and landslides. Last year when a big storm hit, homes and livelihoods were destroyed and a number of children died when their school was buried by a landslide. As a result the community with the support of a local organisation has undertaken disaster preparedness actions to reduce the risks to their community. One action they have taken has been to replant the deforested and unstable slopes surrounding their village. This reduces the risk of landslides occurring. A second action taken has been to relocate the school away from a landslide prone area to reduce the vulnerability of the children. Combined, these actions reduce the risk of a disaster occurring in their community.

The second element of disaster preparedness is about being ready to respond if a disaster does occur. This is achieved by knowing what is likely to happen, who will need help and what type of support they will need.

**Case study (cont.)** The community has also taken steps to respond more quickly in the event of a disaster. They have established a Disaster Management Committee which is responsible for measuring rainfall. If a certain amount of rain falls in 24 hours then they alert the community that a flood or landslide may occur. This gives people time to get to safety. They have evacuation plans prepared if the floods are very severe. Vulnerable community members have been identified to make sure they are helped to evacuate. The organisation which supports them is ready to hand out health and hygiene kits to prevent disease spreading. It is also ready to provide psychosocial support activities to children to help them cope with the trauma of the event.

Disaster preparedness therefore has three main purposes:
1. Reduce the risk of disasters occurring
2. Increase efficiency of response activities in the event of a disaster
3. Increase effectiveness of response activities in the event of a disaster

**Preparedness planning is the process of gathering information about risks, identifying needs in order to become disaster prepared.**
1.4 Why is disaster preparedness relevant to YMCAs?

A familiar image of disaster response is of large international relief agencies and national emergency services providing assistance and relief to ‘helpless victims’. In reality it takes time for this support to arrive and it is the local community or the ‘victims’ that make up the frontline response, saving lives and property. This is especially the case for events that do not attract the attention of the international community or national-level support.

YMCA can play an active role in supporting communities and particularly young people to cope with disasters through supporting community disaster preparedness activities.

Before a disaster occurs, YMCA can help support: the establishment of community disaster committees, training in relevant skills, educating people about risks and how to prevent them and the development of early warning systems.

In the event of a disaster YMCA can help provide leadership, co-ordination and facilitation skills. In addition, when external organisations are involved, YMCA can provide knowledge of the community and its needs, as well as mobilise networks of volunteers to undertake the work involved. They can also ensure that the rights of children and young people are taken into account by all those involved.

In order to support their communities, YMCA must prepare themselves.

Understanding in Practice 3: Benefits of preparedness planning – Toolkit p14
This activity is a fun way to establish the role of planning in a time-pressured environment.
2. PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING A RELEVANT AND USABLE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Overview
This section introduces the five principles that should underlie the process of developing and implementing a disaster preparedness plan. Each principle will be explained with accompanying practical exercises, to help demonstrate their importance. Ideas will also be provided for how the principle can be adhered to and what it means in practice.

Objectives
By the end of this section readers will:
- be familiar with the five principles underlying the development of a disaster preparedness plan
- be able to demonstrate the importance of these principles in relation to planning and implementing a disaster preparedness plan

2.1 Underlying principles for disaster preparedness planning

The process of disaster preparedness planning is more important than any final plan produced. In order to ensure an effective and successful process there are a number of principles that should be promoted throughout:

1. Participation and local ownership
2. Ongoing learning
3. Commitment to good practice
4. Collaboration not isolation
5. Prevention before response
**PRINCIPLE ONE: Participation and local ownership**

It is important that a range of people participate in the process of preparedness planning for a number of reasons:

1. It helps to increase awareness of the plan, imbed it in the organisation and build commitment for its use.
2. Decisions are based on a range of experience and knowledge, increasing the validity of the plan produced.
3. Skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers are built through taking part, increasing the capacity of the organisation as a whole.
4. Valuable relationships between staff, volunteers, community members and external actors are built through working together.

Disaster preparedness planning does not need to be a technical process only to be undertaken by specialists. Understanding of the local context, the risks being faced and potential coping strategies and responses are often best found within local staff and community members. This knowledge can be gathered through participative methods familiar to YMCAs such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews, ranking exercises and so forth.

In Part Two of the Guide the process of stakeholder mapping will be discussed, but in principle the following groups should be incorporated into the process.

- **National level:** YMCA staff and volunteers, relevant national bodies such as Government disaster committees or relief / development agencies who conduct response work
- **Local level:** YMCA staff members and beneficiaries (this should always include young people), community leadership and relevant local bodies

Promoting participation does not mean that everyone must be involved at all stages in the same way. Some actors may only need to be consulted or informed of plans produced, others may be more active in generating information and making decisions. It is very important therefore that methods and tools are used which enable people to take part effectively.
**PRINCIPLE TWO: Ongoing Learning and Adaptation**

**Learning through doing**
Disaster preparedness planning is first and foremost an exercise in capacity building for the organisation and individuals involved. The tools in the toolkit have been designed to enable people with little previous experience to take active part in their completion, and thereby learn new skills through doing. Any attempt to increase this learning through further peer training and review should be welcomed.

Types of skills which will be developed through disaster preparedness planning include:
- assessment skills for identifying risk and other influencing factors
- analysis skills for reviewing and understanding information
- project development and decision making skills in identifying objectives and priorities
- participation skills through working with a variety of stakeholders

A key element of the planning process is the identification of gaps in organisational capacity and resources. These gaps may relate to knowledge or skills that need to be strengthened. Adhering to the principle of learning means making a commitment to addressing these gaps of knowledge and skill.

**Learning from experience**
Being prepared for disasters requires learning from past experiences and acting on this information. Capturing learning through effective monitoring and evaluation is essential for improving practice and working more effectively in the future. Learning from others is also an important aspect of this. There are many networks involved in disaster preparedness and response. Sharing and gathering learning through these networks is essential to improving practice.

**Adapting and updating**
Changes in the external environment, physical, social, economic or political all affect risks being faced and the way they can be tackled. For example, no one yet knows all the ways that climate change will affect countries and the communities within them. As new learning becomes available it will be necessary to adapt plans and actions to meet changing circumstances.

At minimum a review of the disaster preparedness plan should be undertaken once a year, the dates for which should be included in the original plan as an integral part of the whole process.
PRINCIPLE THREE: Commitment to Good Practice and Relevance of Activities

Adhering to humanitarian principles of good practice
All disaster response work should adhere to humanitarian principles of good practice (see annex 1 for the ICRC Code of Conduct which YCI is signed up to). It is essential therefore that these are taken into account when preparing plans for response. Adhering to these principles increases accountability to beneficiaries and donors and has less chance of causing unintentional harm.

Ensuring good practice in disaster response and preparedness means being realistic about what can be undertaken in light of organisational capacity and experience. Trying to reach too many beneficiaries or undertaking activities not normally undertaken with may mean that objectives and outcomes are not sufficiently achieved.

Making responses relevant to YMCA goals and strengths
YMCA s have their mission, vision and strategic goals. Disaster preparedness and response should, wherever possible, adhere to these. This means value is added to work being undertaken and disaster preparedness and response works towards the same goals for greatest overall impact. Addressing disaster preparedness in the context of the organisation’s strategic priorities means:

- activities build on existing strengths and experience within the organisation
- unnecessary challenges will be avoided in trying to become experts in new areas
- cross cutting themes such as ‘gender’, ‘HIV and AIDS’ or ‘youth participation’ can be more easily integrated
- existing work priorities will be strengthened and not undermined by preparedness activities

Avoiding duplication
It may be that through the course of risk assessment, needs are identified which are beyond the capacity of the YMCA to address. However in many cases there will be other organisations that have the remit and expertise to address these needs. The YMCA should look to complement the activities of these organisations rather than duplicate them. It may also be that the YMCA has expertise they can offer to others. A commitment to good practice must therefore involve looking beyond the internal workings of the organisation by sharing learning and experiences with external actors.

Understanding in Practice 5: But it’s not what we’re good at! – Toolkit p18
This exercise builds on the previous discussion and uses the same case study. Here participants will be asked to consider the relevance of the response originally proposed and think about how it could be improved.
PRINCIPLE FOUR: Collaboration not isolation

When disasters occur people are affected in multiple ways and require a wide range of help and support. It’s unlikely that one organisation alone can provide everything needed, so many organisations provide responses. These organisations need to work in coordination with each other to ensure an effective and efficient response. In order to coordinate effectively, relationships between organisations, communities and governing bodies must be built. An essential element of disaster preparedness planning is the development of these relationships, ready to be put into use in the event of an emergency.

There are many forms that these relationships can take – they may be based on information sharing, collaborating in activity implementation, providing training or technical support, or even funding. It is important that YMCAs commit to building these relationships through their planning process by joining networks and committees, arranging meetings, attending conferences and training, and any other activities that will help to build these vital relationships.

In many countries there are official disaster committees, for response as well as disaster risk reduction (sometimes referred to as ‘prevention’ or ‘mitigation’). In order to access funding and collaborate with other relevant organisations it is essential that YMCAs seek to access these committees and networks.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: Prevention before response

The final principle recognises that preparedness is about reducing the impact before the event as well as after it.

Planning response activities helps reduce impacts in the event of a disaster by increasing the speed and quality of response work. It does not however provide a solution to the problem and should not be considered a substitute for addressing the underlying risks people face.

Wherever possible, hazards and vulnerabilities identified through the risk assessment process should be linked with wider YMCA programmes, or developed into new projects. For instance, through livelihoods development, health and education activities, rights and advocacy work and so on.

There is a strong relationship between the tools that YMCAs uses on a day-to-day basis and being prepared for disasters. Leadership training, developing spaces for youth participation and child protection training are essential to quality preparedness and response. Looking for opportunities to use existing activities to strengthen preparedness and reduce vulnerability is an excellent way of helping to protect YMCA communities and beneficiaries from the impacts of disasters without having to launch a response.

Understanding in Practice 6: How can we stop it happening again? – Toolkit p21
Returning to the case study for the last time, in this exercise it is now a year later and the YMCA is thinking about how they could help to prevent future disasters through their work with vulnerable young people.
Part Two: Producing a Disaster Preparedness Plan
The second part of this Guide introduces the process of disaster preparedness planning. It gives more information about what a plan looks like and what is involved in developing one. It then provides a practical guide to producing a disaster preparedness plan. It will be split into five stages:

1) **Preparation**: getting ready to start by planning who needs to be involved and what you are going to do
2) **Analysis**: gathering necessary information on vulnerabilities and hazards and producing potential disaster scenarios for planning to be based upon.
3) **Response planning**: establishing the aims and objectives of future response strategies based on potential scenarios
4) **Organisational systems planning**: defining the systems for coordination and management. Identifying relevant resources and highlighting gaps to be filled.
5) **Finalising the plan**: compiling the information and writing up the plans. Action planning for preparedness activities, evaluating the process and looking to the future.

Each stage will explain in more detail its purpose and contribution to the final written plan.

Participatory tools (contained in the Toolkit) are referred to throughout the text to help gather relevant information or analyse the issues. In addition, tables and templates are provided to help document findings and results.

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### STAGE 1: PREPARATION

**Overview**
The aim of this stage is to help YMCAs to establish their process of disaster preparedness planning. It starts by highlighting the end product YMCAs are aiming to produce and introduces the main components of the plan that need to be developed. It goes on to provide guidance on how to plan the process of disaster preparedness planning, with ideas about sources of information to use and activities which need to be planned for. The associated tools will help this planning and contribute towards the written disaster preparedness plan introduction.

**Objectives**
By the end of this section participants will:
- be familiar with the stages of the disaster preparedness planning process and the information or activities required to produce each section of the plan
- recognise who the different stakeholders are, and value the knowledge or experience they may bring to the process at the different stages
- be able to produce a plan for the process which sets a realistic timeline of events and the people and other resources required to complete each stage

**Outputs**
1) Stakeholder map
2) Activity timeline
3) Process planning table

1.1 What you are aiming to produce

At the end of the process of disaster preparedness planning you will need to produce a written document summarising your analysis and plans.

The content and scope of this plan will be unique to the YMCA creating it. However there is an established structure to help ensure sufficient information and analysis about the situation and proposed response is included. Overleaf is an outline of the structure of the final documented plan and what information it should contain.
**FIGURE 2: Outline of Disaster Preparedness Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 3. Proposed response to scenarios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of priority response strategies for YMCA, including thematic area, geographical location and target beneficiary groups (for each scenario)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aim, objectives and response activities to be undertaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of good practice within the response plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 4. Supporting organisational functions**

| Outline of supporting organisation management functions, including: communications, human resources and financial systems |
| Outline of project implementation systems including; early warning, needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation |
| Clear outline of roles and responsibilities for staff with respect to these systems |

**Section 5. Capacity analysis and resource allocation**

| Identification of organisational assets relevant to the response, including human, physical and financial resources, as well as less tangible assets such as relationships with relevant organisations, supporting policies and documents |
| Analysis of gaps in resources and capacity necessary for being prepared and what is required to fill these |

**Section 6. Implementing the Preparedness Action Plan**

| Action points for implementing the plan: including timeline, key tasks, role allocation and deliverables between now the next review of the plan |
| Date of next planned review |

---

**Cover page**

- Name of YMCA
- Authors of document
- Date of production
- Proposed date of next plan update

**Introduction**

- Background to document
- Map of country with YMCA locations marked
- Overview of process undertaken to produce the plan: key participants, methodologies used, timescale, challenges to process

**Section 1. Context building and risk assessment**

- The economic, political and social context of the country
- The history of disasters in the country – causes and impacts as well as responses provided
- The YMCA context – areas of work, beneficiary groups, prior disaster response experience
- Assessment of principle hazards and vulnerabilities of the country, by geographical area or other relevant grouping. This should include conflict as well as natural and technological hazards

**Section 2. Scenario development**

- Identification of high-risk scenarios and an assessment of the type and extent of impact most likely to occur. To include information on key beneficiary groups (including young people)
- Expected responses by other actors in relation to the scenarios – Government, international and national NGOs, CBOs and private sector
1.2 Organising the Process for Disaster Preparedness Planning

Preparing for the process

Before starting disaster preparedness planning you will need to have in place the following:

- A lead person, responsible for coordinating and completing the process
- A supporting committee or working group
- Time and resources necessary to complete the process

An effective process requires pre-planning and time – this ensures that:

- Relevant people and organisations are involved and consulted
- Enough information is available to inform decisions
- Results are shared effectively
- People are aware of the preparedness plan created and how it will be used

The process of disaster preparedness planning should be conducted over a number of months in order to include the necessary meetings, data gathering, analysis and writing of the final plan.

There are five main stages of a disaster preparedness planning process:

1) Preparation: gathering the relevant documents, informing those who need to be involved and organising the necessary meetings, workshops and activities. Reading through the materials and clarifying the methods to be used.

2) Analysis: assessing hazards, vulnerabilities and analysing the risks. Developing scenarios and assumptions on which plans will be based.

3) Response planning: defining the aims and objectives of response strategies.

4) Organisational systems planning: defining the systems for coordination and management. Identifying relevant resources and highlighting gaps to be filled. Confirming and consolidating the plans.

5) Finalising the plan: following up action points and undertaking pre-disaster elements of the plan. Capture learning for planning reviews.

Familiarise yourself with the different stages of the process. Figure 3 (overleaf) provides a summary of the types of activities involved in each stage and what you need to consider in your pre-planning.
![FIGURE 3: Overview of sections and activities](image)

### Purpose and stage of document in written plan sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of stage and section</th>
<th>Link to written section in document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Preparation:</strong> Planning the process and getting things ready to start</td>
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### Types of activity required

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<tr>
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<th>Things to consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Preparation:</strong> Planning the process and getting things ready to start</td>
<td>Identification of process leader and coordination system, Stakeholder mapping, Secondary sources collection and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Analysis:</strong> Using tools to gather information, analysing risks and producing assumptions to base plans on.</td>
<td>To establish the likely sequence of events if a disaster occurs, To predict numbers of affected people and the types of impacts they will experience, To establish the key political, social and environmental issues which affect the risk and implications of a disaster occurring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Response:</strong> Planning the response to scenarios</td>
<td>Identify how other agencies (the government etc.) are likely to respond, To Integrate good practice into plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Things to consider</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Introduction To establish clarity as to: the purpose of the process, the principles guiding the process, the activities involved and resources required, the people involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Analysis:</strong> Using tools to gather information, analysing risks and producing assumptions to base plans on.</td>
<td>Vulnerability and capacity assessment: - Historical risk profiling - Hazard mapping - Risk ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Response:</strong> Planning the response to scenarios</td>
<td>The strategic aim of YMCA response by theme and type of disaster, The level of detail required for the YMCA response, The identity of relevant and relevant components of the YMCA response</td>
</tr>
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### Things to consider

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<td>Proposed response to scenarios: - To Integrate good practice into plans - To Integrate good practice into plans - The strategic aim of YMCA response by theme and type of disaster - The level of detail required for the YMCA response - The identity of relevant components of the YMCA response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 4. Organisational Systems Planning

**Defining the systems and responsibilities for management and coordination, allocating resources and identifying gaps to be filled**

- Identify management and coordination systems including communications, administration, finance
- Establish project support systems including early warning systems, needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation
- Establish responsibilities and roles in relation to systems

## 5. Capacity Analysis and Resource Allocation

- To establish the capacity of the YMCA to implement its plan
- Identify financial, human and physical resources available in the event of an emergency
- Clarify less tangible resources such as relationships with external organisations
- Establish what gaps can feasibly be addressed and how this be done

## 6. Implementing the Preparedness Action Plan

- Turning plans into practice, ensuring that the planning process creates preparedness
- Clarifies responsibilities and roles for activities
- Identifies clear actions to be taken and when
- Provides a checklist to refer to when reviewing the plan next year
- To identify strengths and weaknesses of the process which can be improved next time

## 4. Supporting Organisational Functions

## 5. Finalising the Plan: Compiling information, action planning for preparedness, reviewing the process and looking to the future

## 5. Capacity Analysis and Resource Allocation

- Knowledge and skills mapping
- SWOT analysis
- Asset audit (human, financial and physical)
- Meetings with partners

## 6. Implementing the Preparedness Action Plan

- Compiling information
- Feeding back and checking decisions
- Completing preparedness action plan
- Evaluation
- Writing up preparedness plan
- Sharing with partners and WAY external actors
- Future planning

## Appendices

- Provides a record of data collected
- Includes key information to be referred to in an emergency
- Increases access to templates and internationally agreed protocols
- Reference for more detailed information on subjects covered in the plan

## Capacity Analysis and Resource Allocation

- What is immediately available?
- How can assets be obtained without purchasing them?
- Balancing emergency needs with other programmatic needs
- Matching resources to plans developed
- The importance of external relationships
- Who will support capacity building in this area?

## Implementing the Preparedness Action Plan

- Ideas and action points are not lost from the different activities undertaken
- External partners have the opportunity to review final written plan
- Sharing and encouraging engagement by partners in implementing plans
- How to keep learning fresh
## 1.3 Identifying Stakeholders and Information Sources

The first step is to identify who should be involved in the process and in what way they need to participate. Figure 4 below identifies stakeholders you may want to consider involving.

### Figure 4: Potential stakeholders for the disaster preparedness planning process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>YMCA management</th>
<th>YMCA staff</th>
<th>Other YMCA people</th>
<th>Gov. bodies and leadership</th>
<th>Coordinating bodies and specialised institutes</th>
<th>International and national NGOs / organisations</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Staff and Board</td>
<td>Administrative / programme staff</td>
<td>Government departments and ministries</td>
<td>National co-ordinating bodies (disaster management), universities societies</td>
<td>International agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Staff and Board</td>
<td>Regional Government</td>
<td>Regional co-ordinating bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>YMCA management staff and Board members</td>
<td>Field and project staff – coordinators, youth workers, YMCA volunteers (in particular young volunteers)</td>
<td>Local community leadership, Local Government</td>
<td>Community disaster committee, Local service providers – police, health, fire-fighters, social work etc</td>
<td>Local NGO branches, CBOs</td>
<td>Community members (men and women, young people and children), associations – women, business, farmers etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not all stakeholders need to be involved at all stages of the process. Nor should they be expected to participate in the same way. For example, community members may be asked to participate in the analysis stage through the use of participatory data collection methods (such as Participatory Tools 4 and 5). In contrast an expert from a university or government department may be invited to attend a meeting, sit on a steering committee, or provide written input into an assessment.

Participatory Tool 1 (below) will help you to identify who your stakeholders are and how you want them to participate.

⚠️ **Participatory Tools 1: Stakeholder mapping – Toolkit p24**

This tool helps to identify the different groups and individuals who need to be involved. It also helps to plan how they need to participate.
1.4 Planning the Activities

Once you have mapped out your stakeholders, the next step is to create a timeline for your activities. To help you identify potential activities, Figure 3 (p24–25) provides an overview of how the five stages of the disaster preparedness planning process relates to each section of the written disaster preparedness plan. The types of activities required to complete each stage are listed here. Activities in **bold** have a corresponding tool in the Toolkit to support them. Participatory Tool 2 will help you to map out the activities you need to undertake, where they need to take place and when.

When planning your activities, if you have undertaken this process before, then think about what worked well, or what could be done better this time. Each time the plan is reviewed it should build on new learning and experiences, so make sure that this is incorporated into the planning process.

▲ **Participatory Tools 2: Establishing a timeline of activities – Toolkit p26**
This tool helps participants to establish the activities they need to undertake and the order to do them in. This builds on the ‘stakeholder mapping’ tool.

The Process Planning table (Templates and Tables 1) should be used to document your intended process – this should combine information about activities, stakeholders and any resources required. This table will act like any project plan you would normally use to manage a project.

■ **Templates and Tables 1: Process planning table - Toolkit p48**
This table will help you to draw together the information that you have collected about activities, stakeholders to produce a plan of action for your Disaster Preparedness Planning process.
STAGE 2: ANALYSIS

Overview of stage
This stage will help you to complete sections 1 and 2 of the written preparedness plan (see figure 2). It starts by identifying the type of information needed to build up your country and YMCA context with tools to help you to collect and present this information. It goes on to look at how to assess and rank vulnerability and risk in the communities where you work before turning this information into scenario descriptions that can be used for response planning in the next stage.

Objectives
By the end of this stage, participants will:
- be familiar with a number of tools suited to collecting and analysing data in a participatory way
- be able to assess levels of risk and vulnerability, and identify priority situations which the YMCA should plan for
- be able to produce a number of scenarios and support the assumptions they are based on using evidence from earlier data collection exercises

Outputs
1) Country and YMCA context
2) Analysis of risks and vulnerability
3) Risk prioritising matrix
4) A number of scenario descriptions

2.1 Context Building and Risk Assessment

Understanding the situation is essential to developing an appropriate preparedness plan. There are five main aims for this section in the written disaster preparedness plan.

1) To build up a picture of your country’s economic, socio-political and environmental issues relevant for later planning decisions
2) To identify and provide information on past disasters and responses to them
3) To provide background information on the YMCA itself – its size, its experience and key areas of work and its target groups
4) To provide more detailed information on the vulnerabilities, hazards and capacities relevant to disaster risk
5) To assess level of risk, and identify which risks should be planned for by the YMCA

All the information collated in this section of the disaster preparedness plan provides the basis for planning in advance of a disaster occurring. However any information on beneficiary needs and numbers included here does not replace information collected in the event of a disaster. Needs assessment and baseline data gathering still need to be included as a part of all response plans.

2.1.1 Country and YMCA context

The country and YMCA context is the first piece of analysis included in the disaster preparedness plan. This information establishes a general picture of risks facing the country, key events and other factors affecting risk, such as the political and economic climate and other social factors. The role of the YMCA should also be described here, with details about where it works. The information should be a mix of statistical facts and descriptive information.

Information should be collected through secondary research (see figure 5 opposite) and also participatory activities. Participatory Tool 3 provides an excellent starting point for thinking about what to include in the context, it will also help participants think about the inter-connected nature of disasters, the YMCA and the country.

A template which identifies the type and range of information required for the context can be found in the Templates and tables section of the toolkit (p49).
2.1.2 Vulnerability and risk assessment

Vulnerability and risk assessment is central to the analysis process. It provides the necessary baseline information for identifying relevant preparedness activities and developing scenarios for response plans to be based upon. It is here that you identify who is vulnerable to disasters, what risks they face and how they will be affected. (You may want to review the beginning of Part One which provides an introduction to the concepts of hazards, risk and vulnerability which this section is based on.)

Input from local branches and community members is essential for this stage. Participatory techniques to collect information should be used wherever possible.

FIGURE 5: Useful sources of secondary information

1. **Internet**: UN organisation websites (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, WHO), World Bank, Government websites, online libraries, online clearing-houses
   - Reports
   - Data and statistics
   - Journals
   - Evaluations

2. **Other organisations / actors**: Research institutions, meteorological office, private sector / business suppliers, networks or coalitions of organisations
   - Needs assessments and baseline surveys

3. **Libraries: local, university, government etc.**
   - Journals and magazines
   - Books
   - Newspapers
   - Maps
   - Relevant data and statistics

---

**Participatory Tools 3: Building a country context – Toolkit p28**

This activity will enable participants to gather the information needed to complete the country context template found in Templates and tables 2 of the Toolkit.

**Tools and Templates 2: Country context template – Toolkit p49**

Use the information gathered through Participatory tool 3 and secondary research to fill in this table.
Participatory Tool 4 uses participatory mapping to gather information. It's a popular tool in disaster management because it is very visual and allows different types of information to be gathered in one place from a variety of people. It helps participants to think about what might happen in the future. Participatory Tool 5, is designed to capture knowledge of what has happened in the past so this can be learnt from too.

The amount of information you collect for your assessment and its level of detail will depend on the time and resources available to you. Even if time and resources are limited it is important to try and include different groups in this process. Different vulnerabilities and risks faced by different groups should be highlighted so that plans take these into account.

### Participatory Tools 4 and 5: Vulnerability and risk analysis – Toolkit p30-34
These two activities work together to build a picture of the risks present in the local community. Historical Risk Profiling allows participants to chart hazards which have affected communities in the past, while community based vulnerability and hazard mapping looks at present risks and areas of vulnerability. The information gathered in these tools can be used to fill in Templates and tables 3 and 4.

When writing your Disaster Preparedness Plan the information should be presented in a summarised format. Templates 3 and 4 can be used to help summarise information gathered through the analysis process. More detailed information can be included as annexes for reference if necessary.

### Templates and Tables 3 and 4: Historical profiling matrix and summary matrix of risks identified – Toolkit p51-52
Tables 3 and 4 relate closely to Participatory tools 4 and 5, providing a format for presenting historical risk profiling and also for presenting a summary of risks that have been identified through the vulnerability and hazard mapping.

#### 2.1.3 Risk assessment
If you have identified a large number of risks through Participatory tools 4 and 5 it is unlikely that you can plan a response for all of them. This will require you to prioritise the risks by those most essential for the YMCA to prepare for and be ready to respond to.

A simple way to prioritise the risks is through assessing the likelihood of a disaster occurring and the level of impact it is likely to have. Based on this a ‘risk score’ is created, and the potential disasters with the highest score are followed up. Figure 6 (opposite) provides an example of this system.

Other organisations or government departments may have conducted risk assessments for the country. If this information is available, you can use it to help produce your own risk assessment. However these may only look at risks on a national level. Risks can also be prioritised at the local community level, which may require additional analysis.
### FIGURE 6: Risk assessment example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disaster</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence (1-5)</th>
<th>Scale of Impact (1-5)</th>
<th>Risk Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flooding in the Eastern region</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbreak of conflict in capital city</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquake in Northern region</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Look at the example of a risk assessment in figure 6 (above). In this example, the likelihood of flooding is very high, and is expected to have a moderately high level of impact, giving it an overall risk score of 7. Compare this to ‘risk of conflict’ which is neither likely to happen or expected to have great impact. The likelihood of an earthquake is very low, but the level of impact it would have is very high, giving it a score of 6. Many experts argue that when the potential level of impact is very high then it should be planned for, even if the likelihood of it occurring is extremely low.

This is a very simple way of prioritising risks and it may be that there are other factors that need to be included in the assessment process. For example, you may want to prioritise planning for risks in regions where there is YMCA presence to respond. There may also be localised risks identified which would be better addressed by the YMCA taking preventive measures, as opposed to planning for a response. Participatory tool 6 provides a method for establishing criteria for assessing risks to help set out priorities.

▲ **Participatory Tools 6: Risk ranking – Toolkit p34**

In this tool participants can use the criteria included in Figure 6 (see above) and their own knowledge and experiences to set priorities about which risks need to be planned for.
2.2 Scenario development

Having established the priority risks to plan a response for, the next step is to write a scenario for each one that provides more details about what is likely to happen.

Scenario development is a very common tool used for disaster planning. The idea is that the scenario describes a predicted future event with enough detail for a response plan to be based upon. It requires you to draw on the information collected in the analysis stage to create a story reflecting what would happen in real life.

This means it should contain:

- general information about the disaster, location and scale of the event
- a timeline of expected key moments (early warning indicators, initial impacts, secondary impacts, responses from community/other organisations)
- break-down of implications for different groups
- expected actions of various organisations and who they will target

No one expects the scenario descriptions to accurately predict everything that would happen but they should still contain enough detail for a full response plan to be based on. In the event of the disaster occurring, the plan would need to be adapted to meet the exact circumstances.

Template 5 outlines the information you need to include in your written scenario. It does require awareness of what other organisations are likely to do in that event so will require external discussions to establish this. Scenarios are likely to be written at a national level but local branches may want to elaborate them for their local context.

Templates and Tables 5: Scenario description template – Toolkit p53
This table provides a template for participants describe a potential event, its impacts and the predicted responses of others.
Stage 3: Response Planning

Overview
This stage of the Guide relates to Section 3 in the final written plan and focuses on turning your analysis into working plans. It first focuses on establishing relevant response strategies and developing objectives and activities before considering how to ensure they meet good practice standards.

Objectives
By the end of this section participants will be able to:
1) Identify relevant response aims and produce SMART objectives for proposed scenarios
2) Produce clear activities which reflect objectives
3) Justify plans in relation to coordinated response plans, good practice and international codes of conduct

Outputs
1) Problem analysis
2) Responses ranked by suitability and priority
3) Scenario based response plans with aims, objectives and activities

3.1 Establishing your response strategy

For each scenario you have developed a corresponding plan now needs to be designed which responds to the impacts and needs of affected people described in the scenario.

Before establishing what type of response strategy you are going to implement (e.g. distributing food / non food items, providing a service, offering training or advocating on behalf of any of the groups involved) there are a number of questions which you will need to be able to answer and justify.

1) What needs are you intending to address through your response (remembering you can’t address everything)
2) Who is your response going to focus on? Is there a specific group you have identified as vulnerable and in need of assistance? What criteria will you use to identify your beneficiaries: age, gender, ethnic group, location, level of poverty?
3) Where will you focus your response? Is it across the whole affected area or restricted to specific locations?
4) How many people do you intend to reach? Will they be direct or indirect beneficiaries?
5) Who will you work with and how will you work with the communities in question?

When answering these questions you will need to use the information contained in the scenario description and relate it to:
- past experiences in emergency response or related activities (successes, challenges and lessons learnt)
- areas of expertise and good practice
- strategic thematic interests of the organisation
- target beneficiary groups

When a priority response strategy has been established check against the following:
- Is the plan relevant to the mission of the organisation?
- Is it realistic and within the capacity of the organisation to undertake?
- Does it duplicate response activities by other organisations?

This may require you to share your initial plans with other relevant organisations to get their feedback on possible points of duplication.

Participatory Tools 7: Problem tree and response ranking – Toolkit p36
This is a two-stage activity is designed to help you answer the questions listed above in a systematic and participatory way. It will first help you identify the needs and issues arising from the scenario, and then prioritise the type of response most suited to addressing these, while remaining relevant to your organisation’s goals.
3.2 Setting Aims, Objectives and Activities

Once you have established the type and scope of response you want to undertake for each of the scenario descriptions, a more detailed plan should be prepared. This plan should include an aim along with a clear set of objectives and key activities.

Your aim should provide an overall view of what your response wants to achieve. Ideally it should include information about the target group and the type of support you intend to provide.

**Example aim:** To support the psychosocial needs of young people living in temporary shelters as a result of damage to their homes and communities by the recent earthquake.

Your objectives should clearly relate to the aim and state exactly what your response is going to do. In order to make this very clear, your objectives should be SMART (see Figure 7 below.)

**FIGURE 7: SMART objectives MUST be**

- **Specific** – describe an action, behaviour or achievement that can be clearly observed.
- **Measurable** – have a measure, number percentage or frequency attached to the action that makes it possible to monitor success. It must be possible to collect this information; measures which can’t be tested should not be used.
- **Achievable** – be within the capacity of the organisation / project to achieve, within the given timescale and resources available. The objective should also give an indication of how it will be achieved – the method, tool or resource being used.
- **Relevant** – clearly relate to the overall aim and be relevant to the organisation’s experience, strategy and mission.
- **Time-bound** – have a length of time or deadline attached to the activity.

**Example objective:** Within two months, 500 young people will have had access to psychosocial counselling through a peer-support network.

This objective is SMART because it is:
- **Specific**: ‘access to psychosocial counselling’
- **Measurable**: ‘500 young people’
- **Achievable**: ‘through a peer-support network’
- **Relevant**: works towards the aim of supporting psychosocial needs of young people
- **Time-bound**: ‘within two months’

The number of objectives depends on the size and scope of your response. Ideally you should have between 2 and 5 objectives.

Your activities need to work towards meeting your objectives. There should be a logical link made between the two. Using the example objective given above, activities to achieve this may include:

**Example activities:**

1) Train 25 young people from within the displaced community in peer counselling techniques
2) Each trained young person talks to 20 young people in their location about their situation and provides support to them

Your activities should provide a clear picture of what you are going to do; make sure they are specific about numbers and locations and easy to follow. Keep in mind the assumptions that you have made in describing the scenario and any challenges you might face. Be clear about why the activities you have developed are the best way of responding to the situation and using available resources.

**Tables and Templates 6: Response Plan template – Toolkit p54**

Following on from completing the Scenario Description template, you can present your response plans in Templates and Tables 6.
3.3 Good practice in Response Plans

Now that the outline of your objectives and activities has been established this is a good time to review them to ensure that they adequately take into account the principles established in part one and meet good practice standards.

Below is a checklist of ways to help you incorporate good practice and learning into your planning.

1. Refer to the ICRC code of conduct (see annex 1) and consider how the principles of humanitarian practice are being adhered to
2. Review evaluations from past experiences in similar or related areas; include lessons learnt and recommendations from these into your planning (this may require talking to other organisations)
3. Check that youth and community participation is addressed specifically in your objectives and activities
4. Discuss and share your plans with other organisations involved in emergency response to gain their feedback and ensure against duplication

Outputs
1) Matrix summarising plans for supporting functions and systems
2) SWOT analysis of human resource capacities
3) Tables documenting financial, physical and human resources

4.1 Supporting programmatic and organisational systems

Once you have identified what you want to do, you must then focus on how you will do it. The supporting functions or systems you currently have in place for needs assessment, project coordination, finances and monitoring and evaluation may not be suitable in the event of an emergency response. For example, different people may need to be involved in decisions and implementation and you might be operating under constrained circumstances. There may also systems that you do not currently have at all, such as a system for early warning monitoring and when to act.

Once you have identified what you want to do, you must then focus on how you will do it. The supporting functions or systems you currently have in place for needs assessment, project coordination, finances and monitoring and evaluation may not be suitable in the event of an emergency response. For example, different people may need to be involved in decisions and implementation and you might be operating under constrained circumstances. There may also systems that you do not currently have at all, such as a system for early warning monitoring and when to act.

This is a list of areas that you will need to plan for:
1) Early warning and raising the alarm
2) Needs assessment and response coordination
3) Human resources
4) Finance
   1. Processing and managing funds
   2. Obtaining funds
   3. Budgeting for your response
5) Monitoring and evaluation
6) Child and youth protection

Set up working groups made up of relevant staff and / or volunteers to address the different areas. It is essential that the right people participate in this planning. Staff who take part in this will be able to learn through their participation, increasing their ability to put plans into action in the future. If senior managers or a consultant make these decisions on their own, this learning opportunity will be missed. There may be overlaps between different groups. Below are some suggested discussion points for the working groups to address.
Discussion points for Organisational Systems Review

Early warning and when to act

- What events, activities or situations could you use to indicate that a disaster may be about to happen? Where is this information available from (think about joining relevant groups, monitoring websites, accessing national / regional early warning systems, community level monitoring systems)?
- Who has responsibility for monitoring these indicators and who should they report early warning alerts to?
- What resources are required to monitor early warning?
- What are the criteria for launching a response, and who decides when it is the time to respond. Whilst this may be clear for a fast onset hazard such as an earthquake, if the impacts are felt more slowly, due to conflict or drought, this may be less clear.

Emergency needs assessment and response coordination

- Who will manage the needs assessment? (National and local levels)
- What methods will you use to establish the exact scope and need for response? (Think about information you need to collect and from what sources? Can you access information collected by other organisations? There are lots of online sources to help with this. The ICRC has toolkits for emergency needs assessment in French, Spanish and English)
- Are you familiar with the WAY emergency protocol and what is required to launch an appeal through the World Alliance?
- Who will write the project proposal and the budget?
- Are you aware of WAY emergency appeal templates, and what information is required to complete them?
- Who will be responsible for implementing and managing the activities – think about this on a national and local level

Human resources

- What will your human resource requirements be – will you need to recruit new staff, or change current staff’s job roles, will you need to request support from other YMCAs?
- If you intend to recruit, do you have systems capable of rapidly employing people?
- Line management – can you use your current management structures or will a different reporting line be needed?

See additional information on p38

Finance

a) Processing and managing funds

- Do you have financial systems that allow you to rapidly accept and process large amounts of money?
- If in a worst-case scenario the banking system were to fail, would you still be able to make cash transfers? How?
- Do you have rules about transporting cash, or signing-off funding requests that would need to be more flexible in an emergency?
- Do you have secure places to keep money and important documentation?

b) Obtaining funds

- If you have access to emergency funds within your YMCA, are there rules about what it can be used for, or how much?
- Do you have funds available within your own organisation to support response activities whilst funds are being found elsewhere? How would these be accessed?
- Do you know about external sources of funding locally or internationally you could target?

See additional information on p40

c) Budgeting for your response

- Do you have up-to-date information on costs relating to travel, key materials, staff time which can be accessed quickly in the event of an emergency?
- Are you familiar with the WAY emergency appeal budget template?
Monitoring and evaluation

- Who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation and collecting data (take into account completing bi-weekly situation updates, taking photos and collecting case studies)?
- Do you already have a system which could be adapted for use in an emergency? Will you need to include additional sources of information or data collection methods?
- How will beneficiaries be involved in the monitoring process?
- Where will data be stored – can you store sensitive data and information securely?
- How will you ensure that information being collected feeds into situation report updates and also helps to improve the response activities you are implementing?
- Are you aware of the ICRC code of conduct (see annex 1). How will you use your monitoring to ensure that this code is adhered to?

Child and youth protection

- Do you have a child and youth protection policy in place and does it consider emergency situations?
- What additional risks may vulnerable children and young people be exposed to in the event of an emergency and how can you help to protect them?
- Are there any other organisations with specialist knowledge on child protection you could coordinate with?

If undertaking a response to social unrest or conflict you may need to think about security issues, and how to manage risks faced by staff and volunteers.

It is likely that during this process of reflection and discussion you will identify ideas which need further work to achieve, requiring the input of resources or training to make them work. These should be noted and form part of plans for implementing the plan – discussed further in Stage 5.

It is also important that decisions from the working groups are shared with others, the participatory tool below provides a straightforward way of sharing and summarising outcomes from each of the working groups.
4.2 Organisational capacity and resource availability

Response plans must be backed up with adequate resources; human, financial and physical. This section focuses on how to identify resource needs for disasters, where there may be gaps in these resources and how these should be filled.

4.2.1 Human resources:
People are central to any emergency response.

1) Numbers are important when it comes to delivering services quickly, so it is important to map not just the staff you have, but volunteers and members too, all of which have an important role to play. Having a clear picture of how many people there are and where they are located will prove very valuable to your planning and response strategy.

The membership structure of YMCAs is a very strong asset. Many relief agencies rely on local volunteers but do not have access to local networks or have the necessary local knowledge to work with them effectively. YMCA members have experience in volunteering and a proven commitment to supporting their community. If you want to partner with other organisations this is a very valuable asset you can bring to the partnership.

2) Skills and knowledge are the other elements that add to your human capacity and also need to be mapped. These include:
- technical skills and knowledge (such as knowledge of hazards, humanitarian codes of conduct, emergency needs assessment, first aid and so on)
- general skills (such as managing volunteers, logistics, youth participation, contacts and networks)

If you have found particular gaps in skills and knowledge required by your response think about ways you could address this. Would training help or will you need additional staff, volunteers or members? Try to think about where these skills and knowledge lie outside your organisation. Do you have a partner who could help you with this or are there organisations locally you could approach?

Pick out a few key skills or areas of knowledge you think are essential to the response and map these against people. The practical exercise below will help you to do this in a straightforward manner.

The templates and tables include:

- Templates and Tables 8: Staff and volunteers chart – Toolkit p57
  This is a simple table for you to input your staff and membership numbers into.

- Participatory Tools 9: Mapping staff knowledge and skills – Toolkit p40
  This tool focuses on identifying knowledge and skills available within your staff, volunteers and members and which areas may need strengthening.

- Templates and Tables 9: Human resources SWOT chart – Toolkit p58
  Leading on from Participatory Tool 9, you can use this table to build a picture of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in your organisation in order to best map and target areas of vulnerability within the organisation.
4.2.2 Financial resources:
Before you go ahead with any response you need to know how it will be paid for. Being clear about internal funds available within your organisation as well knowing where funds can be accessed externally will greatly speed up your ability to respond with confidence. Table 10 contained in the tools section should be filled in using the following questions to prompt you.

- Do you have money that can be allocated to response activities, that does not detract from current project funds? How much?
- Do you have funds available to pre-finance a response, before funds are received from external sources? How much?
- How much could you expect to receive in donations from members / local branches to fund an emergency response?
- How much can you expect to receive in donations from other YMCAs? If possible try to contact your existing partners to find out if they have funds available for emergencies and what terms they attach to these.
- Are funds are available locally? Who are they from and how much is available? Find out whether you need to be official partners with an organisation or coalition of organisations to access their emergency money? Also be clear about what procedures are there to request funds.

![Templates and Tables 10: Financial resources table – Toolkit p59](image)
This is a simple table to present financial assets and resources.

4.2.3 Physical resources
Physical resources will also be required to implement a response. Some of these may be readily available and others less so. Table 11 contains a suggested list of physical resources. You will need to add to this with any resources relevant to your specific response plans.

Where you have identified gaps you may wish to acquire these in advance of a disaster happening, in which case this action point should be included in your preparedness action plan. Before doing this think about:

- Where you would get them from?
- Do you have to pay for them?
- Could they be donated by members or by other organisations as ‘in kind’ donations?
- Would you be able to borrow them?
- When do you need to have them?

![Beware of stockpiling; some specialist relief agencies gather essential relief items in advance of an event, this is known as stockpiling. However YMCA’s should only consider acquiring additional disaster related assets if there is a very clear and immediate need and if it will not take away from providing resources required by your core activities. Instead plan for how these could be acquired efficiently in the event of an emergency through purchasing, donations or borrowing.](image)

![Templates and Tables 11: Physical resources table – Toolkit p60](image)
This is a straightforward table for presenting physical assets.
STAGE 5: FINALISING THE PLAN AND GETTING PREPARED

Overview
The final stage of the Guide focuses on finalising and producing the written preparedness plan. It is therefore concerned with drawing together information from all parts of the process, identifying key learning and priorities, and agreeing action points. In addition, this stage provides support for evaluating the process and capturing learning for next time. The last part of this stage encourages thinking about what comes next, thinking how the plan can be used to build agreements and partnerships with other organisations both within and external to the YMCA network, and what it means for your organisation’s approach to disaster management as a whole.

Objectives
By the end of this stage, participants will:
- be able to establish an action plan which maps activities and identifies responsibilities needed to get the organisation ready to implement their response plan if necessary
- be committed to implementing the action plan and have clear deadlines and indicators for success
- be able to summarise their findings from the planning process into a written plan

This final stage in the disaster preparedness planning process is about reflecting on all the planning work you have done and pulling it all together into a written plan which can be shared both within and outside your organisation.

Outputs
1) Action plan for implementation of preparedness activities
2) Written-up Disaster Preparedness Plan
3) Evaluation of process

5.1. Compiling the information

Over the course of your preparedness planning information will have been gathered and produced in a number of locations by different people. It is important that all the information is brought together and reviewed, before the final document is produced.

Start by reviewing the process plan created during stage one to check that all intended activities and outputs have been completed and are available for review. Gather all data into a central location ready to be reviewed. You may want to do this by way of a workshop, where information can be presented to stakeholders to give them a full view of the process. This also presents an opportunity for questions to be answered and any problems resolved before the plan is drafted.

If a general workshop is not possible make sure time is allocated for follow up questions to be asked and for data to be checked with those who originally produced it.

5.2 Reviewing the process

A workshop situation also provides an ideal opportunity to gather feedback on the process of disaster preparedness planning for your evaluation. The participatory tool below has been designed to help you with evaluating the process and capturing learning for future preparedness updating exercises.

_particles_ Participatory Tools 10 and 11: Evaluating the process – Toolkit p42-44
These two tools are designed to help you evaluate the process in a participative and simple way. Participatory Tool 10: The Evaluation Bus looks at the different stages of the disaster preparedness planning process to identify strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. Tool 11: Hitting the target considers the underlying principles of disaster preparedness planning and how well the process and final product adheres to these.
5.3 Action planning

Throughout your planning process future actions, tasks and resources will have been identified for follow up. These need to be compiled into an action planning matrix. This matrix which should include information about responsibilities and monitoring will help to map out how the preparedness plan becomes a reality.

It is important that this action plan is agreed to by key stakeholders to ensure that action points haven’t been missed and that everyone is committed to their roles and motivated to act upon the issues.

“Make sure that one of the action points included is the date when the preparedness plan will be updated.

5.4 Finalising the Written Preparedness Plan

Now that the planning activities have come to an end, it is time to finalise the written plan that documents the information you have gathered and decisions that have been made. The written plan is important because it offers an easy way to share your thinking with partners and other relevant organisations. It can also act as a reference tool for you in the event of a disaster, and as a basis for future preparedness planning.

Templates, tables and examples have been provided to help you present your information and decisions in concise formats. These can all be found in section three of the accompanying Toolkit. You may wish to adapt these formats to better suit the information you wish to present. The suggested structure of the report can be found in Figure 2 on page 22 of the Guide.

Before signing off the written plan, it is a good idea to get feedback on it. A review panel made up of internal and external people is a good way of doing this. Ideally this group will provide different perspectives and expertise for finalising the document. Suggestions that you can’t follow up at this time should be documented to help feed into future preparedness planning activities.

- Templates and Tables 12: Preparedness action plan table – Toolkit p61
  Use this template to chart the actions that need to be completed in order to put the Disaster Preparedness Plan into place.

  Here you will find an outline of the basic structure for a disaster preparedness plan. Whilst the details will vary from organisation to organisation, this list provides a starting point outlining key areas that should be included in the plan.
5.5 What next?

5.5.1 Sharing and communicating your plan
Now that you have completed the preparedness planning process and have a written plan you can start to think about how this can be built on in the future. There are something basic things which you can do:

1) **Share your plans with your regional alliance.**
   In the event of a disaster they are likely to be the first people you inform so make sure they are clear about what you intend to do in advance. Discuss with them ways that they can support your plan, either through raising awareness across the region or through technical and coordination support.

2) **Upload your plan to the WAY extranet.**
   This will mean your plan can support YMCAs going through the same process and also introduce your plans to YMCAs who may not know much about your work otherwise.

3) **Inform your YMCA partners about your preparedness plan.** Many YMCA International Partners are interested in supporting capacity building initiatives. Discuss with them what they can do to support your response plans and ongoing preparedness activities. They may be interested in providing resources or technical support now, or commit in advance to supporting you in the event of a disaster.

4) **Share plans with other local or national organisations and agencies.** Your plan could offer a starting point for discussions for coordination or future support. It will also help to ensure that your plans are taken into account of wider planning activities.

5) **Maintain relationships developed through the process.** A valuable outcome of disaster preparedness planning will be the relationships built through its process. These relationships may be with communities and leaders, external groups and organisations and even internal relationships between colleagues. It is important these are maintained and built on for future successes.

5.5.2. Prevention before response
Being a disaster prepared organisation is a great step to take towards the aim of reducing the impact of disasters on young people’s lives. It is not however the end of the story, as we know that prevention is a much more effective strategy than response.

Where vulnerabilities have been identified, start to think how principle five ‘prevention before response’ can be put into practice. Are there ways that the YMCA can support the communities themselves to become more prepared and less vulnerable to the hazards that they face? The information collected through this process offers very valuable needs assessment data for future project development. **Don’t forget to use it.**
**ANNEX 1: ICRC CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Code of conduct** for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

**Principle commitments:**
1. The Humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

**FULL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Principles of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

1: The Humanitarian imperative comes first
The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. As members of the international community, we recognise our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations, is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility. The prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster. When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

2: Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone
Wherever possible, we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs. Within the entirety of our programmes, we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate. In implementing this approach, we recognise the crucial role played by women in disaster prone communities and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our aid programmes. The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy, can only be effective if we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for such equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.

3: Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint
Humanitarian aid will be given according to the need of individuals, families and communities. Notwithstanding the right of non-governmental humanitarian associations (NGHAs) to espouse particular political or religious opinions, we affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions. We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.

4: We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy
NGHAs are agencies that act independently from governments. We therefore formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government, except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy. We will never knowingly - or through negligence - allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments. We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of
donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor. We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by concerned individuals to support our work and recognise the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

5: We shall respect culture and custom
We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

6: We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities
All people and communities - even in disaster - possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local NGHAs as partners in planning and implementation, and co-operate with local government structures where appropriate. We will place a high priority on the proper co-ordination of our emergency responses. This is best done within the countries concerned by those most directly involved in the relief operations, and should include representatives of the relevant UN bodies.

7: Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid
Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.

8: Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs
All relief actions affect the prospects for long term development, either in a positive or a negative fashion. Recognising this, we will strive to implement relief programmes that actively reduce the beneficiaries' vulnerability to future disasters and help create sustainable lifestyles. We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. We will also endeavour to minimise the negative impact of humanitarian assistance, seeking to avoid long-term beneficiary dependence upon external aid.

9: We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources
We often act as an institutional link in the partnership between those who wish to assist and those who need assistance during disasters. We therefore hold ourselves accountable to both constituencies. All our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency. We recognise the need to report on our activities, both from a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness. We recognise the obligation to ensure appropriate monitoring of aid distributions and to carry out regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance. We will also seek to report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact. Our programmes will be based upon high standards of professionalism and expertise in order to minimise the wasting of valuable resources.

10: In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects
Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will co-operate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.
Y Care International is the international relief and development agency of the YMCA in the UK and Ireland. It works in partnership with YMCAs in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East to empower young people and their communities to find alternatives to a future of poverty and disadvantage, and to build lives and communities marked by hope and positive change.