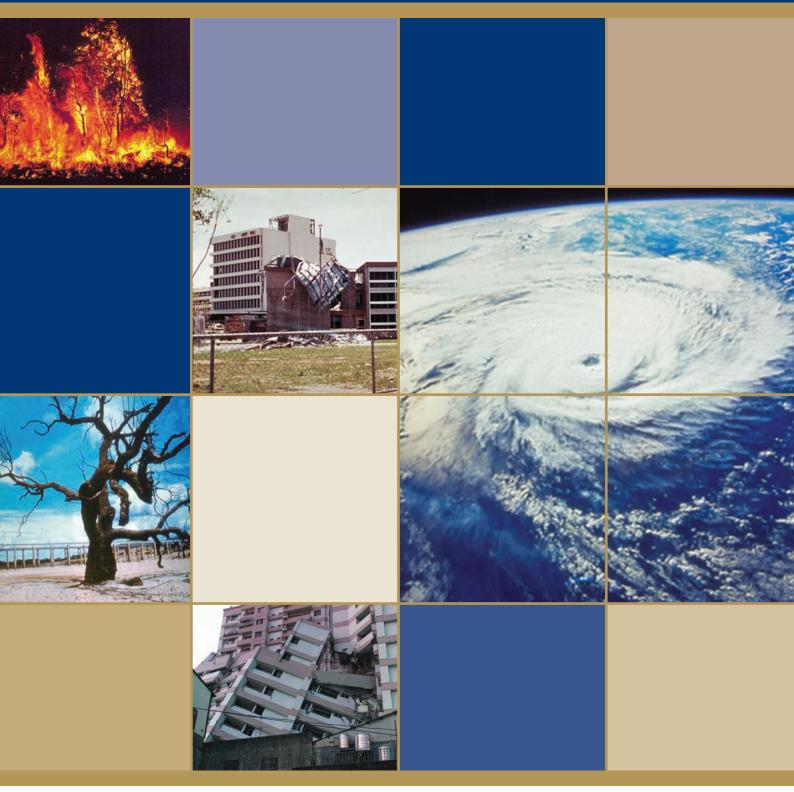Emergency Management Australia

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RECOVERY FROM DISASTER

EMA
Emergency Management Australia

"safer sustainable communities"

ATTORNEY-
GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT

**Emergency Management Australia is a Division
of the Attorney-General's Department**

PART III

Volume 3 — Guidelines
Guide 13

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN RECOVERY FROM DISASTER

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA

COPYRIGHT

Permission to use the document and related graphics is granted provided that (1) the below copyright notice appears in all copies and that both the copyright notice and this permission notice appear, and (2) use of document and related graphics is for educational, informational and non-commercial or personal use only.

In all cases the Commonwealth of Australia must be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication. Examples and quotations from other sources have been attributed to the original publication whenever possible and are believed to fall within fair use provisions, but these portions retain their copyright protection and must not be used without attribution.

Enquiries related to copyright should be addressed to:

The Director General
Emergency Management Australia
PO BOX 1020
Dickson ACT 2602

Or telephone (02) 62665183 or fax (02) 62571490 or email
ema@ema.gov.au

Any rights not expressly granted herein are reserved.

DISCLAIMER

This publication is presented by Emergency Management Australia for the purpose of disseminating emergency management information free of charge.

Emergency Management Australia in consultation with emergency management professionals and subject matter experts exercises care in the compilation and drafting of this publication however, the document and related graphics could include technical inaccuracies or typographical errors and the information provided may not be appropriate to all situations.

In no event shall the Commonwealth of Australia (acting through Emergency Management Australia) be liable for any damages whatsoever, whether in an action of contract, negligence or other tortious action, arising out of or in connection with the use of or reliance on any of the information presented in this publication.

Emergency Management Australia periodically updates the information in this publication. Before using this publication please check to ensure that this edition is the most recent and updated version of the publication.

THE AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY MANUALS SERIES

The first publication in the original AEM Series of mainly skills reference manuals was produced in 1989. In August 1996, on advice from the National Emergency Management Principles and Practice Advisory Group, EMA agreed to expand the AEM Series to include a more comprehensive range of emergency management principles and practice reference publications.

The Australian Emergency Series has been developed to assist in the management and delivery of support services in a disaster context. It comprises principles, strategies and actions, compiled by practitioners with management and service delivery experience in a range of disaster events.

The series has been developed by a national consultative committee representing a range of State and Territory agencies involved in the delivery of support services and sponsored by Emergency Management Australia (EMA).

Parts I to III are provided as bound booklets to State and Territory emergency management organisations, students, community organisations, appropriate government departments for further dissemination to approved users including local government and over 70 countries around the world.

Parts IV and V (skills and training management topics) are normally only issued as training guides in loose-leaf (amendable) form to all relevant State agencies through each State and Territory Emergency Service.

AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY MANUALS SERIES STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Publishing Status
Aug 03

PART I – THE FUNDAMENTALS

Manual 1	Emergency Management Concepts and Principles (3rd edn)	U/R
Manual 2	Australian Emergency Management Arrangements (6th edn)	A
Manual 3	Australian Emergency Management Glossary	A
Manual 4	Australian Emergency Management Terms Thesaurus	A

PART II – APPROACHES TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Volume 1 – Risk Management

Manual 1	Emergency Risk Management – Applications Guide	A
Manual 2	Implementing Emergency Risk Management –	A
	A facilitator's guide to working with Committees and Communities	

Volume 2 – Mitigation Planning

Manual 1	Planning Safer Communities	A

Volume 3 – Implementation of Emergency Management Plans

	Titles to be advised	P

PART III – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Volume 1 – Service Provision

Manual 1	Emergency Catering	A
Manual 2	Disaster Medicine (2nd edn)	A
Manual 3	Disaster Recovery	A/R

Volume 2 – Specific Issues

Manual 1	Evacuation Planning	A
Manual 2	Safe and Healthy Mass Gatherings	A
Manual 3	Health Aspects of Chemical, Biological and Radiological Hazards	A

PART IV – SKILLS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL

PART V – THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING

Key to status: A = Available A/R = original version Available/under Review
D = under Development; P = Planned; R = under Review/Revision
U/R = Unavailable/under Review

CONTENTS

Community Development in Recovery from Disaster

Overview

The Guidelines for Community Development in the Disaster Context have been developed to assist in developing effective post-disaster community development activities. In so doing they incorporate and expand information and knowledge previously available in two EMA publications:

● The Australian Emergency Manual – Disaster Recovery, and

● Community and Personal Support Services Guidelines.

Development of the Guidelines has been overseen by a national consultative committee, representing a range of State and Territory agencies responsible for the recovery of individuals and communities from disaster, through the sponsorship of EMA. In addition, a number of practitioners with management and service delivery experience in a range of disaster events also contributed to the document, through a workshop held at Emergency Management Australia's Institute at Mt. Macedon.

Introduction

A vast array of literature is available on generic approaches and methodologies of community development. The aim of these Guidelines is not to compete with or repeat information which may already be available, but rather to consider the way in which a community development approach can best be utilised to enhance the process of disaster recovery.

The management and delivery of disaster recovery services is based upon the following principles, derived from those approved by the Standing Committee of Community Services and Income Security Administrators in 1989.

Disaster recovery is most effective when:

● Management arrangements recognise that recovery from disaster is a complex, dynamic and protracted process,

● Agreed plans and management arrangements are well understood by the community and all disaster management agencies,

● Recovery agencies are properly integrated into disaster management arrangements,

● Community service and reconstruction agencies have input to key decision making,

● Conducted with the active participation of the affected community,

● Recovery managers are involved from initial briefings onwards,

● Recovery services are provided in a timely, fair, equitable and flexible manner,

● Supported by training programs and exercises.

The underlying basis of these Principles is a community development approach. Specifically, in the disaster recovery context this is defined as the empowerment of individuals and communities to manage their own recovery. Consequently, individuals and agencies involved in community development in recovery from disaster have a very clear role to support and facilitate individual and community recovery. In so doing positive community outcomes are promoted.

Given that a community development approach is critical to effective community recovery from a disaster these Guidelines aim to inform the full range of government departments, agencies and individuals likely to be involved in the disaster recovery process. However, it is also essential that individuals and agencies responsible for community development activities and initiatives be aware of the broader recovery system in which they operate, and integrate within it.

These Guidelines offer a range of practical information in a number of specific areas, including:

● Desired outcomes for community development in the disaster context,

● Indicators of need to identify when it may be appropriate to resource and promote community development activity,

● Funding and employment of community development officers,

● Management and support of community development officers, and

● A range of specific initiatives and activities which may be appropriate to community development work in a disaster context.

Outcomes of Community Development in Recovery from Disaster[1]

Introduction

This chapter identifies a number of outcomes which provide a measure of the success of community development within a disaster recovery context. In so doing it outlines the ideal for which all those involved in post-disaster community development activities should strive. While generic in nature, the outcomes are based in the context and need evident in a disaster recovery situation, detailed below.

Context: political and social

Depending upon their scale disaster recovery activity tends to be highly political and at times politicised process. This is generally based upon the sudden impact and subsequent disruption which disasters may cause to individual, family and community life. Typically large scale disasters affecting a broad range of the community will attract high levels of interest from politicians, media and the community at large.

Vision – concept of future

In establishing appropriate support for those affected by disasters recovery managers need to be mindful of the context in which they work. Equally, individuals and agencies involved in the establishment of community development programs must be clear about the aim and scope of their activity. While measures and outcomes will differ between events and communities successful community development activities in the disaster recovery context are typically those with a vision for an enhanced future in which the following key areas are addressed:

● Sustainability,

● Social justice,

● Economic/environment, and

● Equity.

In addressing these areas the community development program must support the disaster affected community in working towards achievable and sustainable outcomes. The most effective programs are mindful of the different perspectives evident in diverse communities and work to support, rather than curtail this diversity. They are also relevant to the affected community and evolve through a process of partnership, recognising community expertise and challenging pre-existing inequities. In so doing individual and community ownership of the process and an ultimately successful recovery process is assured.

---

1 Adapted from 'Indicators of Community Well-Being' in *Working Together to Develop Our Communities:: Good practice and benchmarking in Local Government community development and community services.*

Detailed below are the key outcomes which provide a benchmark for the effective implementation of community development in recovery from disaster. By addressing these outcomes in the context of a specific event community development programs will contribute substantially to the empowerment of individuals and communities affected by disaster.

Informed Community

A community that is informed and aware through provision of timely and accurate information.

Access to Services and Facilities

Community members and groups have access to appropriate services, facilities and resources.

Sense of Community Safety

A community in which people feel safe in the pursuit of their daily lives.

Healthy Community

A community which lives and promotes healthy lifestyles, through its primary health care system, preventative health measures and environmental practices.

Participation in Community Life

A community where the development of cooperative partnerships is encouraged and actively promoted.

Sense of Belonging

Pride, care and involvement in the unique, distinct physical, social and cultural characteristics of a community.

Community Cohesion

The capacity of a community to work together with respect for differences among people.

Community Identity

Expression of the life and character of a community through elements of tradition and history.

Economic Recovery

Development of a community's economic capacity.

Indicators of need for Employment of Community Development Officers

Introduction

Together with the Principles of Recovery Management, the outcomes described above provide the basis for effective recovery management in any community affected by disaster. In many instances these outcomes may be achieved through utilisation of resources already available within an affected community. However, in some circumstances it may be necessary to provide additional resources to support the community development component of the recovery process. In particular, the employment of one or more community development workers may be necessary to facilitate a range of activities which will enhance the recovery of individuals and the broader community affected by any given event.

Fundamental to any assessment of community need resulting from a disaster is change to the existing state of community. The challenge for the recovery manager is to determine how much of the community's need is due to the impact of the disaster and to estimate what level of resource is required to support an effective community development approach to the recovery process. Generic issues that may indicate the impact of a particular disaster include:

- Scale of the disaster,
- Number of homes damaged or destroyed,
- Disruption of social networks,
- Psychological maladjustment, and
- Media and political interest.

This chapter details five key areas which provide an indication of the level of need for community development activity and resource support. These are:

- Physical effects,
- Psychosocial/Emotional effects,
- Service capacity,
- Event profile, and
- Relative disadvantage of the community pre-event.

An outline of the key considerations, together with a checklist of key indicators of need, is provided under each of these headings. By considering these and any other issues relevant to the particular disaster a recovery manager should be in a position to make a sound judgement of the need for additional resource support to a disaster affected community, particularly through the employment of one or more community development workers. In addition, these indicators of initial need may also be utilised to inform ongoing monitoring and evaluation of level of community functioning.

Key Indicators

Physical Effects

Overview

Depending upon the type and impact of a disaster the physical impact upon the community may be a key determinant in the community's recovery. The physical impact of events such as earthquake or bushfire will significantly impact upon the capacity of an affected community. Consequently they may be useful indicators of the need to initiate community development activities. However, for events such as shootings or sieges where there is no impact upon infrastructure, housing and other community assets the physical impact of the disaster provides no guide as to whether or not community development activity would be of benefit. Detailed below are a number of key physical effects which may indicate a community's need for support through community development activity.

Indicators

● Percentage of community displaced
● Length of time people are displaced from community
● Loss of infrastructure (physical/social)
● Scale of disaster
● Increase in request for material aid and financial assistance
● Length of time to restore services

Psychosocial/Emotional Effects

Overview

Psychosocial and emotional effects of a disaster are generally more difficult to measure than the physical impact. However, they are no less important as an indicator of the need for community development activity within a disaster affected community.

Indicators

● Apparent rifts within community
● Expression of loss
● Manifestation of antisocial behaviour
● Downturn in economic activity
● Increase in crime
● Absenteeism from school
● General feeling of apathy among community members
● Lack of motivation in workplace
● Increase in alcohol consumption
● Increase in reported incidences of domestic violence, child abuse, assault
● Increase in number of calls to telephone counselling services
● Increase in number of requests for counselling (long term)

Service capacity

Overview

Another measure of the impact of a disaster and the subsequent need for community development activity is the capacity of existing services to meet the additional demands generated by the event.

Indicators

- Usual information lines broken
- Community requests – for information/meetings etc
- Increased requirement for information on health and safety issues
- Sudden/unexpected/unusual event for the area
- Service disruption

Event profile/scale

Overview

A further, more general indicator of a community's need for community development activity is the overall scale and public profile of the disaster. Large scale disasters may be very public events and the intrusive nature of the public and media attention which they generate may further complicate the recovery process for individuals and throughout the affected community. Consequences of this may include heightened anxiety, both individually and across the community, which may be alleviated through community development activity.

Indicators

- Number of deaths and injuries
- Range of responses required (indicator of scale and need for coordination)
- Point of coordination required
- High media profile
- Degree of dependence on services to meet basic needs
- Constant requests for information to and from community
- Type of disaster
- Unexpectedness
- How prepared community was to face potential disaster

General Indicators of Need

Other, more general indicators that a community development program may be necessary include the following:

- Increased residential property sales
- Increased church attendance
- Increased tensions in community
- Exacerbation of pre-existing community rifts
- Reports from child health services
- Increased need for medical services
- Relative disadvantage of the community pre-event

Process for determining need for Community development officers/additional resources

Overview

Timing of the occurrence of the disaster, together with subsequent political and media interest in the event and the affected community, are critical factors in the resourcing of disaster recovery programs. Availability of and willingness to commit funds will be for a limited period, dependant upon the scale of the event, its impact, the local political situation, etc. These issues are equally critical to the resourcing of community development activities as to any other component of a disaster recovery program.

Assessment of the need for additional resources to facilitate community development activities should be undertaken as early as possible and should include a detailed plan for an extended period.

In a large scale disaster community development activity will typically be required for 12 months or longer. By developing a long term plan for such activities resources can be sought and allocated for the entire program while interest in the event is at its peak. This enables long term programs and initiatives to be planned, providing the affected community with a sense of ongoing support.

Sources of Information

Overview

Information to measure the impact of a disaster upon a community and the subsequent need for community development activity may be sought in a number of ways. In broad terms, a combination of the following two approaches will prove most successful:

● Statistical analysis of service use/uptake, and

● Intuitive assessment of experienced workers/community members.

Inherent in any information gathering process should be an emphasis on utilisation of local knowledge and experts who may be able to interpret the state of the local community. Local government are a key player in this regard, as are other local agencies. Outreach programs, often initiated to assess and address the needs of individuals affected by a disaster, may also provide a wealth of information. Other forms of community communication and consultation may also provide insight into a community's situation.

The following questions are critical and should be under constant consideration in any information gathering process:

● Which groups are vulnerable?

● Why are they vulnerable?

● Is vulnerability attributable to the disaster?

Gathering and assessment of the necessary type and quantity of information enables recommendations to be made to the local Community Recovery Committee (or other relevant managerial body) regarding:

● Employment of community development workers, and

● Allocation of other additional resources.

Management Issues

Introduction

The aim of this part of the Guidelines is to provide a broad outline of the key issues to be addressed in the employment, management and support of one or more community development workers engaged in facilitating the recovery of a disaster affected community. The information is divided into three main sections:

●   Recruitment/selection considerations,

●   Staff management, and

●   Worker self-management.

The first of these sections addresses the range of issues to be considered in the employment of community development workers. Key topics addressed are the roles and responsibilities which a community development worker would be expected to undertake, and the requisite skills necessary to meet these roles and responsibilities. While this information is not prescriptive it provides the basis for a job description for a community development worker appropriate to the disaster recovery context.

The second section provides information of particular benefit to the manager of a community development worker in the disaster recovery context. Key topics addressed in this section are supervision and staff support, as well as consideration of some of the resources which a community development officer may require to effectively undertake their role.

Finally, the third section provides workers with some strategies to effectively undertake their role. Similarly to the remainder of the Guidelines, these strategies are based on the experiences of a range of people who have undertaken the community development role in a disaster recovery situation. As such they provide first hand insight into the multitude and complexity of issues which may be faced by someone employed in a similar role.

Funding sources and strategies

Based on generic community development principles and the Principles of Recovery Management it is most effective for community development workers to be employed by an agency as close as possible to the affected community. Generally this will be either the local government responsible for the affected area, or, alternately, a non-government organisation with a relevant service delivery role in the affected community.

An effective means of employing community development workers in a number of large-scale events has been through the provision of State, local government, community or corporate funding. Regardless of the funding source employment of workers through local agencies has kept the facilitation of community development at the level of the affected area, while provision of additional funding from external sources has reduced the financial burden of the disaster from the local area.

Funding and employment of community development workers may also be undertaken through non-government organisations, service clubs, etc. This has proven particularly successful in situations where a worker has been employed to manage or facilitate a specific project, or to work with a particular sector of the disaster affected community (ie. Employment of a project worker by an industry group to address the needs of workers in that particular industry.)

As with any component of the recovery process, the level of funding required for the community development process, including employment of workers, will largely be determined by the scale and impact of the event. A further consideration is the state of the affected community prior to the disaster occurring. For instance, a community which was undergoing the effects of drought or some other form of economic hardship, may require further support after a flood or bushfire than a community which had previously been thriving.

Depending upon the existing capacity of those agencies responsible for the recovery program within the disaster affected community it may also be necessary for a local community to seek funds additional to worker's salary to facilitate the overall community development process. These funds may be utilised to further support community initiatives and programs.

While funding arrangements and legislation will vary between the various States and Territories, sources of funding for community development activity in the disaster recovery context may include:

● Commonwealth Government,
● State Government,
● Local Government,
● Non-government organisations,
● Service Clubs/community groups,
● Corporate sponsorship,
● Philanthropic organisations, and
● Donated funds.

The development of a funding submission will vary depending upon the type, scale and impact of the disaster, together with the demographics of the affected community. However, there are a number of generic issues which should be addressed in any proposal. These include:

● An assessment of community need, highlighting the relationship between the disaster and the subsequent need,
● An assessment of political and community expectation as a result of the disaster and its impact,
● The positive benefits of expenditure on community development (ie. Reduction in likely future expenditure on a range of other existing services. Prevention versus cure),
● Likely activities and programs community development workers may be involved in and the potential community benefits,

- The positive impact and benefits of community development programs in previous events, and
- The importance of community responsibility for managing their own recovery and the role of community development workers in facilitating this process.

Recruitment/Selection

In general terms the employment of community development workers should follow established best practice in human resource management. However, the requirement to employ people to such a role takes place in the rapidly changing and politically sensitive environment often generated by a disaster. Consequently, there will be pressure on both human resource and recovery management personnel to quickly appoint an appropriate number of people, suitable to the role.

In addition to organisational and political pressures to make early appointments, experience has shown that it is critical to the affected community that relevant personnel be appointed as early as possible in the recovery process. When appointed early community development workers are more readily able to form effective partnerships and working relationships with the affected community. It seems that the closer their appointment to the time of the disaster the more readily they are accepted within the affected community. Conversely, for those appointed a number of weeks after a disaster it has proven far more difficult to establish the necessary rapport with their clients. However, this can be addressed by community development officers being integrated with the community recovery committee prior to commencing community development duties.

The two key attributes for community development positions in disaster recovery are:

- Previous experience and knowledge of community development theory and practice, and
- An understanding of the affected community and any prevailing issues.

However, given the speed with which appointments need to be made and the impact of disasters on a broad range of community members, applicants with all of these attributes may not always be available. Consequently selection panels may need to determine which of these areas is a priority and provide professional development and support to bolster areas of weakness. Another means of addressing this issue is for local agencies (ie. local governments) to transfer existing community development workers into disaster recovery based positions, backfilling their normal role.

Roles/Responsibilities

While there are a number of generic roles and responsibilities for community development workers there are also a number of issues specific to the disaster recovery context. In particular, the community development role in disaster recovery may need to use different processes from regular community development, requiring a more reactive approach than in some settings.

The overall aim of a community development position in the disaster recovery context is detailed below, followed by some of the key roles and responsibilities. A number of considerations, such as the specific features of the disaster and the affected community and the employing agency may necessitate amendment to the list.

Aim

To identify assess and plan to meet the needs of the affected community.

Objectives

To facilitate:

- A process of community consultation ,
- Prioritisation of the needs to be addressed,
- Provision of services to disaster affected individuals, families and the community,
- Availability of timely and accurate information to the whole community in multiple formats,
- Sharing of information between all key stakeholders and the employing body,
- Availability of culturally appropriate services to families and individuals,
- Community participation, self-determination and self-healing,
- Identification and utilisation of existing and emerging community communication networks,
- Utilisation of local services where possible, and
- Community wishes in regard to rituals, symbols and anniversary events.

To effectively address this aim and objectives it is imperative that one of the first tasks undertaken by community development workers is to develop a workplan for their role in the affected community. Key components of the workplan include appropriate strategies, activities, timelines and performance indicators to meet the objectives.

Skills

Community development work in a disaster affected community is invariably a complex task, requiring a high level of maturity, together with highly developed interpersonal and organisational skills. In addition to these fundamental requisites the following skills should also be sought in anyone undertaking such a role:

- Demonstrated understanding of community development principles,
- Well developed mediation and conflict resolution skills,
- Group facilitation skills,
- Capacity to interact and work with a broad range of groups within the affected community,
- Good report writing skills,
- Appropriate information technology skills,
- Ability to work independently, under limited supervision, and as a member of a team within a broad range of contexts, and
- Creativity, flexibility and initiative.

Management

Supervision/Staff Support

In addition to the usual requirements of Occupational Health and Safety and Industrial Legislation the following specific issues require consideration in managing community development workers in a disaster recovery context:

● Understanding of the disaster and its impact,

● Awareness of stress indicators,

● Well developed structures regarding roles & responsibilities/accountability, with the capacity for flexibility. (i.e. Regular team meetings and management of expectations between Manager/Workers),

● Flexibility of conditions to allow staff time off/time out,

● Clearly delineated boundaries on worker responsibilities,

● Professional supervision (task and process regular and planned),

● Access to ongoing training,

● Personal and team debriefing, utilising appropriate processes and models, and

● Regular briefing and debriefing of key operational and community issues.

Establishment of an advisory group may also provide a useful means of support for community development workers. Such a group should be made up of practitioners with a range of relevant backgrounds who would meet regularly with the community development worker(s) as a sounding board for new ideas and approaches. The advisory group should also be in a position to provide up to date advice on community development practices, assist in the development of networks and provide professional debriefing support.

Resources

In addition to standard/generic office requirements the community development worker employed in a disaster recovery context may need a range of additional resources. These are likely to be determined by a number of factors including the type of event, geographic location, accessibility, etc. These may include the following:

● Appropriate telecommunication equipment (i.e. mobile phone, uhf radio, etc.),

● Access to funds, including petty cash and project budget local intelligence and information,

● Information technology (i.e. Laptop computer),

● Administrative assistance,

● Business/Calling cards,

● Local community resources, (i.e. street directories, community directories, etc.),

● Directory of existing local and recovery based services,

● Disaster recovery literature/resources (i.e. emergency management plans, recovery management literature, etc.) (Note: the EMA library may be a useful resource for information),

● Background information from other disasters (to assist in program and project development and funding submissions), and

● Access to outside expertise on a variety of topics (including community development workers with experience in previous events).

Worker Self Management

Critical to the success of any worker undertaking the community development role in a disaster recovery context is effective self-management. Disaster affected communities and affected individuals may be extremely complex and will provide community development workers, regardless of their level of experience, with a range of challenges, both professional and personal.

The following considerations are provided as an informal checklist of self-management strategies, based on the experiences of community development workers in a number of previous disaster recovery situations.

- Initially assess:
  - ➤ Scale of job to be done
  - ➤ Issues relevant to the disaster and the affected community
  - ➤ Support/supervision structures,
- Be aware of OH&S principles,
- Recognise that self-care is required,
- Establish reasonable working hours (flexible). Keep a record,
- Build in regular review of hours/conditions (monthly),
- Take account of personal life & needs (family, friends etc.),
- Ensure time and resources for Peer Support/Professional support/Supervision/ Mentoring – and promote benefits of such to others,
- Be clear and up-front about core business/roles and responsibilities and what is NOT included in the job with everyone,
- Review and confirm performance, job description, work plan and strategic plan regularly,
- Acknowledge that the position is a "role" and not a person, to try and avoid resentment and jealousy from community members/volunteers who don't get paid/have cars etc,
- Ensure the worker identifies and undertakes rituals appropriate to their own involvement in the recovery process. E.g. participation in anniversaries, celebrating milestones,
- Use opportunities for written reflection,
- Identify and develop networks/partnerships with key individuals and groups within the affected community, and
- Never compromise personal safety.

Evaluation

Overview

A wealth of information exists regarding evaluation models and processes. The information contained in this section details some considerations which may be important in the context of community development in disaster recovery.

In community development the process is often considered as important as the outcomes. In this context, evaluation is useful:

● As a management process to monitor performance, assess the value of existing programs, determine the need for new programs and, if necessary, to reposition programs in a changing environment,

● As a learning tool for those who have performed the task as well as those new to a position,

● As a validation of what has been undertaken,

● To give credibility to community development as a tool for disaster recovery,

● For obtaining continued funding, and

● For gaining new funding.

Given the nature of community development activity in the disaster recovery context there is a need for qualitative as well as quantitative measures. The qualitative can often be quantified e.g.

● Number of people who attended an event, and

● Number of people who expressed satisfaction with their involvement in an event.

A further difficulty is in developing comparative data on what might have happened if a community development process had not been put in place.

Revisiting the outcomes is important in measuring the process. Consequently the process has to be monitored regularly and the desired outcomes may change over time.

Framework

In planning an evaluation of community development in a disaster recovery context the following major areas should be considered:

- Contextual issues,

  e.g. timing, local and other politics, resource availability,nature and scope of the disaster, sensitivity

- Desired outcomes,

  what were you working towards in developing particular strategies?

- Strategies,

  use and balance of formal/informal approaches

- Performance indicators,

  what are they and how might they be measured?

- Data sources,

  diaries/information records/activity sheets can be used for multiple purposes -handovers

  mapping impact of interventions

  reflective practice

- Findings, and

  gaps/outcomes achieved (what worked & what didn't)

- Recommendations,

  whom are they for? what is their purpose?

Checklist

Detailed below is a checklist of key considerations for development of evaluation processes of community development in disaster recovery:

- Effectiveness,

- Perspective – Consumer, community, worker's perspective,

- Range of evaluations – effects of intervention/program for individuals/groups/ community done in conjunction with other services/interventions,

- Community ownership of the evaluation processes (subjective),

- Process – how we did it – and the outcome,

- Ethics – who does it, when you do it, who sees it, who decides,

- Longitudinal studies – consider the long term,

- Feedback to community – consider appropriateness of timing/type of feedback,

- Quantitative and qualitative approaches,

- Evaluation Tools should be in place at the outset (through databases),

- Evaluation should be ongoing and inform future interventions,

- Development of appropriate tools (e.g. debriefs & questionnaires, surveys, data analysis),

- General approach – Formal and Informal,

- Maintenance of flexibility – to changing competencies of community,

- Ensure stakeholders are included: victims, Emergency Services, Business communities, general community, and

- Independence in evaluation process.

Appendices – Community Development Initiatives/Activities

The following appendices are provided as an insight into some of the practical aspects of community development in the disaster recovery context.

Appendix A provides a summary of key messages learnt by a number of workers in community based roles following the Port Arthur Shootings. Its focus is on two extremely important requirements, which underpin any community based recovery activity;

● Understanding of the pre and post disaster community, and

● Establishment of effective working relationships within the community.

Appendices B and C detail more specifically a number of case studies, outlining the implementation of community development projects in several communities affected by disaster.   They are provided as examples of the implementation and success of community development projects in a disaster recovery context.

Finally, Appendix D provides a pro forma example of a workplan, utilised to strategically plan a disaster recovery based community development program.

Numerous examples of successful community development initiatives undertaken in communities affected by disaster could have been described in this section. The three events from which the information in these appendices has been derived were chosen to provide an insight into the variety of events to which such strategies may be applied (i.e. shooting, flood and fire).

Appendix A: Port Arthur Shootings – 28 April 1996

Reflections of Community Recovery Coordinator, Community Development Officer and Counselling and Personal Support Workers

Background

The Disaster

In working within a community during their recovery from a disaster it is important to look at the context in which services are being provided, particularly the type of disaster the community has experienced. At Port Arthur, the disaster was a man-made event, in which many people were affected, but there was only minimal physical infrastructure damage. Therefore the main focus of the recovery process was on the emotional, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of the community (as well as the physical recovery of those injured). Tangible things like 'bricks and mortar,' which may have provided the community with more physical signs of movement through the recovery process, were not a part of the community's recovery needs. This is not to say that the recovery process might have been 'easier' if the re-building of infrastructure was required, but its absence changed the emphasis of the community's need and therefore the work to be undertaken.

The Community

It is also important when considering the disaster context to gain an understanding of the affected community, both before and after the disaster. Communities have their own characteristics that make them unique and it is important to become familiar with these things as they impact on the community recovery process. These characteristics include: both official and informal leaders within the community, the local 'gate keepers' and the various groups that exist, along with the way these groups relate to each other.   It is these characteristics that give communities their unique shape and dynamics and it is possible that that the unique nature of a community can both influence and be influenced by the recovery process.

For example, if recovery messages given by official leaders suggest that the recovery process is over or that there are no problems in the community this has the potential to force the recovery process 'behind closed doors'.   Alternatively, the recovery process can influence the pre-existing structures in a way that power shifts occur and new structures and new leaders emerge. These changes may occur a number of times throughout the recovery process, and it is important as a worker to be able to identify the impact of these changes, to work with new agendas and direction that may come with such changes and support the relative skills and ability of the people taking on new leadership roles.

A key aspect of supporting a community during this time of accelerated change is to provide a sense of certainty and security as soon as possible. It is important for workers to identify positive strategies that support a sense of normality in the community. This is particularly important in terms of supporting existing key organisations in the community who have played a key part in the community's structure prior to the disaster. For example, although the local council and local school may be affected by the disaster, thereby reducing the capacity of these organisations to respond to the incident, it is important to identify new strategies to support these agencies to take a lead role in the recovery process.

Community Expectations

For workers who may be going into a community for the first time following a disaster, it is important to note that the community may have established expectations of the worker's role. For example, the 'welcome' a worker receives upon arriving in the community may depend on the relationship the community has established with the organisation they represent.

It is also important to gauge the community's expectations of the recovery process and the worker's role in supporting that process, as this may be very different from the worker's or organization's perception and yet is it is the most important starting point.

A key part of this process will be ensuring that strategies and activities developed are addressing issues that are seen as important by the community. Therefore, whilst it is important to gain an appreciation of the types of actions that have been utilised in other recovery processes, it is also important to note that they are not recipes that can be transplanted across all recovery processes.

Additionally, rural communities are by their very nature resourceful, independent and protective of their people and services. As a new worker, it is important to recognise the need to earn the trust and an understanding of the value of the workers role by the community.

Coordination

Coordination is integral to supporting an effective recovery process. A key part of this is ensuring that service providers have a clear understanding of the roles of the various organisations and workers involved and ensuring clear formal lines of communication are established between these agencies and workers.

This applies to all services provided in the disaster affected community: specific recovery services, mainstream services working in the community prior to the disaster, both based or on a visiting basis along with the recovery experts often called upon to provide advice immediately following a disaster. These individuals and groups each bring with them their own agendas, organisational structures and personal interests. The capacity of the recovery workers to communicate with and coordinate these services effectively will greatly influence their overall capacity to provide an effective recovery service in the affected community.

Support

It is important to acknowledge the pressure linked with working as a recovery worker. This pressure can be a mixture of personal beliefs and commitment to the role, but there is also community pressure associated with being a 'public face' of recovery with an identified role in supporting the recovery process.

While peer support and open communication are important in sharing and alleviating this sense of pressure, a key component of working effectively in the recovery context, particularly over the longer term, is a worker's capacity to access appropriate formal support. This includes formal mentoring along personal support strategies. Where possible, it is particularly beneficial to seek these services from an objective source, removed from the recovery context.

Community Development

The importance of community development as a process to supporting a community through the recovery process cannot be underestimated and yet this process is not always fully understood by key stakeholders. Therefore it is important that workers identify methods and opportunities to educate key stakeholders about a community development approach to recovery and demonstrating the potential benefits of working in this way. The capacity to inform people and to gain their support and 'trust' for this process will significantly assist the perceived credibility of workers on the ground.

The effectiveness of community development lies in the adaptability of such a model across a number of areas including community, cultural and economic development. A range of strategies may be implemented in taking a community development approach.

Community Development Initiatives

1. Tasman Camps

The Tasman Camps were one of the major initiatives developed in response to the shootings and were established to provide families with an opportunity to spend time together in a recreational and social environment. The camps were developed in response to reports that many families were showing some signs of stress in the months following the shootings and that many of these people had expressed a desire to 'take time out,' away from the Tasman Peninsula. Community development and personal support workers also realised that due to the lower socio-economic status of the community a break or holiday would not otherwise have been possible for many of the affected families.

The camps were developed as a joint initiative between the Tasman Council and the State Government's Department of Health and Human Services. Ten free weekend camps were held at a venue approximately 1.5 hours drive from the Tasman Peninsula, on a property with cabin and catering facilities and a range of recreational activities on offer. Personal support staff attended the camps to assist with coordination of camp activities. While no formal 'recovery' activities were programmed, some informal discussions about the shootings and recovery did occur and were supported by these workers.

Funding covered all costs for the camps, including: camp fees, catering, transport and insurance costs. The camps were advertised widely throughout the community and places were provided on a 'first come first serve' basis. However, local service providers also referred a number of families with specific needs, who were given priority when allocating the camp places.

The benefits of the camps were that families were able to spend time together as a family and also to connect, or re-connect, with other families from the local community. The camps were very popular with approximately 8 – 10 families attending each weekend. Evaluation of the camps provided very positive feedback from attendees.

2.   *Additional Community Development Initiatives*

In addition to the Tasman Camps program there were many other community development programs initiated. A number of these are summarised below:

● "Aussie Host" Program – Tourism is an integral part of the Tasman Peninsula community and its economy. With the Port Arthur Historic Site a major tourist attraction in the area, tourism operators were presented with a major challenge following the shootings. In response to this challenge the "Aussie Host" program was initiated to provide training for those working in the tourism industry. It was implemented in a joint effort between the Tasman Council and local tourism providers, to ensure best practice in working with tourists throughout the area.

● Supporting childcare programs – work was undertaken to support those childcare programs already existing on the Peninsula. In addition, local associations were supported in their efforts to establish alternate forms of care, including day care in the home.

● Establishment of an Online Access Centre and Community Radio Station – one of the key needs arising from the shootings was the need to improve local community access to information. This resulted in a joint community effort to develop an online access centre and a community radio station for the local area. Based in the school grounds the project was supported by community development staff from the Tasman Council together with a significant amount of support from the local district high school.

These and other strategies provided a range of opportunities to support both the recovery process and also the sustainable development of the community for the future. Indicative of their success is that many of these services continue today, through the continued efforts of community groups and some ongoing support from the Council.

Appendix B: East Gippsland Floods, June 1988

Background

As a response to the floods of June 1998 the Victorian Department of Human Services provided funding to the Shire of East Gippsland to appoint four Community Development Officers (CDOs) to work across that area during the recovery process. The appointments were for a period of twelve months.

Although appointed to address the issues arising from the flood, the CDOs were very aware of the social, economic and environmental effects of the drought, coupled with the impact of low commodity prices, which had further exacerbated the financial hardships experienced by the community of East Gippsland.

The Community Development process adopted involved moving on from the destruction and losses caused by the disaster, ensuring community needs were addressed, and developing future plans. As part of this process a number of projects were undertaken. A number of these are outlined below.

Community Development Projects

1.   Community Planning Forums

Purpose and Aim

The CDOs initiated community forums to reinvigorate the local communities to take control and plan for their own futures.

The forums aimed to encourage self reliance within the communities, by empowering individuals and groups to plan and manage actions designed to assist their community's recovery from the floods, and explore future development opportunities.

By achieving an initial high level of community involvement and ownership, the issues and goals as identified by the participating communities, could continue to be addressed into the new millennium

The forums provided an exciting and creative opportunity in which people participated in the development and implementation of strategies that addressed:

● Education and adaptation to change,
● Economic development,
● Structural adjustment,
● Natural resource management, and
● Social issues.

Description of forums

The CDOs held Community Planning Forums titled Local Management of Change (each forum being two days duration) in nominated communities within East Gippsland between February and July of 1999. These forums accommodated up to 30 participants each, and attempted to be inclusive of all groups within each community.

After the conclusion of these individual community-planning forums, the CDOs held a larger Shire wide forum. The participants from each of the community planning forums were invited to attend the Shire wide Forum with the aim to recognise commonalities of issues between these communities, and develop a combined voice.

Nomination of Communities

The CDOs utilised the following criteria to identify and differentiate communities:

● Rurality,
● Remoteness,
● Tourism, and
● Prior community planning/expressed eagerness to participate.

The nominated communities were:

● Omeo/Swifts Creek combined,
● Gelantipy,
● Orbost,
● Lakes Entrance,
● Bemm River, Cann River, and Mallacoota combined,
● Delegate River,
● Meerlieu/Bengworden combined,
● Swan Reach,
● Lindenow,
● Paynesville/Eagle Point combined, and
● Shire wide forum.

The CDOs believed that following the hardships of the drought of 2.5 years and the disaster of the June floods, East Gippsland's communities were continuing to experience a sense of disorientation and disequilibrium as a result of those events. Those sensations appeared to enhance the communities' ability to address change.

Recognising that a window of opportunity existed for adaptive learning to occur, the CDOs constructed and ran the community forums which challenged individuals and communities to take a hard look at their future, and supported them in using change for their advantage, rather than become its victim.

The community development process recognised that:

● As a result of the many changes in the economic landscape; some individuals and communities would have to modify the functions they perform,
● Many groups and communities had expressed a need to voice their needs and aspirations,
● Groups who were feeling dislocated and disenfranchised needed to have the opportunity to participate,
● The interests of those communities most affected by poverty and insecurity needed to be addressed,
● Whilst the future could look bleak for some of the smaller communities, there were a number of strategies that could be adopted to bolster their survival chances, and
● The communities could not be assumed to be socially cohesive, but often consisted of diverse and competing groups.

Very often the voice of the rural communities was left to a few prominent citizens. Those citizens often appeared overloaded, thus restricting the time they had to converse with the people they represented, thereby reducing their understanding of the breadth of their community's issues. Therefore representation from those communities needed to be widened to accommodate the range of interest groups and issues.

Workshop Facilitation

The workshops were facilitated by Bruce McKenzie, Executive Director of the Centre for Systematic Development (CSD) at the University of Western Sydney.

CDOs were responsible for:

● Planning, implementing, attending and evaluating all of the community forums held within their area of operation,

● Supporting the outcomes of the forums, and providing assistance with the development of proposals for funding for the communities future development, and

● Reporting back the issues as requested by these community groups to the East Gippsland Action for the Future Committee, as well as the East Gippsland Planning and Development Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Committee. The CDOs saw both these committees as having an important role in supporting the communities' potential future development.

In initiating the forums the CDOs needed to be aware:

● of the presenting community issues,

● of remaining sensitive to perceived conflicts of interest, power struggles, and exclusive practices,

● that community groups and individuals had stated on many occasions that they believed that their community lacked future direction, and some had expressed their belief that their community may not have a future,

● that many people appeared to be waiting for a solution from Government,

● that the forums may not include all groups viewpoints within those communities, and

● that collaborative structures needed to be developed and adopted.

Outcomes

All workshops aimed to develop a shared vision and some common goals for each community's future development, which were documented as that community's Corporate Plan.

With the group's approval, these Corporate Plans were utilised to gain support and advocacy for the community's identified issues and goals, by being forwarded to:

● The East Gippsland Flood Recovery Committee,

● The East Gippsland Action for the Future Committee, and

● The East Gippsland Planning and Development Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Committee.

The following are examples of the outcomes achieved in specific community planning forums.

Bemm River – East Gippsland

Bemm River is a small community comprising approx. 70 full time residents, who live in a geographically isolated area, in far East Gippsland, Victoria. The community of Bemm River had been severely affected over a few years by the closure of the local school and timber mill, the effects of the drought, the pub burning down, and then the floods in June 1998.

The community appeared to be very divided, and did not appear to be able to agree, or work together on any action. Since local government amalgamation, the community felt alienated from their local government, and believed that they did not have access to the information and support that they needed.

After the floods, the CDOs were appointed, and they visited the Bemm River community. Several members of the community discussed their idea for developing a community centre, as the community did not have any community facilities.

A process was designed to initiate a consultation process that would enable all of the community to have input, and provide opportunities for the community groups to work together. The CDOs provided community learning opportunities, connections to external support networks, and facilitation for public meetings, workshops, surveys, and community consultations.

The community achieved:

- Skills development for many people who were committed to continue working on behalf of Bemm River's progress,
- Increased confidence and ability to engage with government, organisations and companies,
- A detailed final document for a community centre, which was well supported by the community,
- Architect plans and models completed and approved by the community,
- A successful presentation to local government and philanthropic trusts, and commitment of funding,
- Commencement of building the community centre, and

    A group was formed called 'Friends of Bemm River' which consisted of hundreds of people who regularly visit the area. This group has already raised substantial funds towards the project.

(Source: Cheryl Purcell Bemm River)

Tambo Valley (Swifts Creek/Omeo) – East Gippsland

The communities of Swifts Creek and Omeo had been very affected by the decline in the timber industry and commodity prices, drought, population loss, the prevalent sheep disease OJD, and then the floods of June 1998. These communities were also geographically divided by a mountain range, which flowed into a community division, and those from "above the gap or below the gap" did not appear to work together constructively.

The CDOs worked very intensively with the Tambo Valley communities.

High Country Development Group.

This group formed as an initiative of the Community Forum, which was developed and organised by the CDOs, and held in the Tambo Valley Feb. 1999.

The High Country Development Group was made up of a wide range of community members from both above and below 'the gap'. They continued to meet once a month after the Forum, (averaging 12 participants per meeting) to discuss current issues that they felt were affecting the community.

The Land Use Consultancy was then conducted in the Tambo Valley, which was a component of the previous coalition government's 'Farm Aggregation Scheme' and was seen by the group as crucial to the future development of viable options for individual and community survival.

An initiative of the High Country Development Group was to present 8 written submissions to the Land Use Consultancy, as well as speaking individually on each subject.

The areas covered included: social issues, low level road access, filling of Lake Omeo tourist project, research farm, branded products, group marketing, quality assurance programs, alternative farming practices, and tourist opportunities.

This High Country Development Group evolved into two main interest groups, one around farming issues, and the other around tourism issues. With the farming group, progress in involvement in the 'Wool 2010' initiative was seen as a positive step to future wool growing viability for the area.

With the tourism group, a re-vitalised interest and community participation in the Omeo Business and Tourism Assoc., as well as the High Country Festival events program were seen as positive outcomes for this community. The High Country Festival is being supported and developed by the community to become a major attraction for tourists and their associated spending in the area during the 'off season'. The festival is held in summer, and provides a focus for showcasing the historical and cultural values of the area.

As part of the support provided after the floods, the Swifts Creek Street Scene was allocated $105,000 for street beautification. The CDO appointed after the floods, liaised with the shire project officer to ensure the community were included in the project from its inception. The CDO worker facilitated three public meetings; the first meeting was to get community ideas on what to change within the boundaries described by the project officer. The second meeting was to involve Vic Roads, shire and community with regard to additional roadwork e.g. roundabout in Main Street. The third meeting was to show the plans and call for community comment prior to the commencement of any work. This was a successful exercise in public relations with this community, and most residents felt that they had input, and therefore felt ownership of what was proposed.

The CDO's role in the community was seen as a facilitator to the local and broader community. Some issues within groups were resolved by this third party involvement, and the CDO was often requested to undertake this role, often facilitating between groups or even towns.

On occasions the CDO was required to provide personal support to individuals and community groups, to other agencies or government departments.

(Source: Laurie Hiscock – CDO East Gippsland Shire)

2.   Mother Christmas (BASIC)

Background

Following the involvement of the CDOs in the allocation of relief resources after the floods, the CDOs became acutely aware that many people through out East Gippsland were not going to be able to celebrate Christmas as they were experiencing poverty.

The CDOs initiated discussions with the Bairnsdale Area Social Issues Committee (BASIC) with a proposal to expand the Mother Christmas Appeal. The Mother Christmas Appeal usually raises funds and distributes hampers to approximately 100 people prior to Christmas.

The main concern with the distribution of hampers was the possible reaction of recipients, given the tenacity of people to survive hardships and their pride, which may prevent them accepting 'handouts'.

Outcomes

CDOs supported the BASIC Mother Christmas fund to extend the distribution of Christmas hampers to flood affected families. The CDOs raised approximately $14,000 through a variety of sources. The CDOs, together with BASIC, the CWA and the Farm Field Officers purchased goods, packed and distributed hampers to over 400 people through out East Gippsland.

The CDOs discussed with potential recipients the allocation of hampers in a sensitive and open manner. There was only one family who refused the hamper and said that they couldn't accept it. Many families expressed their thanks and were delighted that they would now be able to have a Christmas dinner. Indicative of community acceptance of the project were the many letters and articles of thanks and appreciation sent from individual recipients and community groups to the CDOs and the local newspaper.

3.   Health and Social Issues – Men's Health

Background

At the time of the floods in the East Gippsland region the number of male deaths in the under 30 age groups was around 5 times greater than the number of female deaths. This difference in the rate was higher than that for Victoria, which was around 3 times greater. 37% of these deaths were as a result of suicide and 13% as a result of other accidents. (Reference The Health Status of People Living in East Gippsland May 1998.)

The CDOs noted the continuing issues for men's health, especially in relationship to the rural male/cultural issues, which appear to prevent men from seeking assistance for mental and/or physical health issues.

Many women in the outlying communities had expressed their concerns for their partner's health, especially in relationship to the stress of coping with the drought, floods, and low-income levels.

At this time the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service had implemented a Men's Health Project primarily based around the regional centres. The CDOs liased with the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service and undertook to provide this initiative with further support, to expand the project to reach the area's smaller, isolated communities.

Outcomes

The CDO's worked with The Far East Gippsland Health Service, Buchan Bush Nurse Centre, East Gippsland Community Road Safety Council and Cann River Bush Nurse centre to seek additional funding and expanded the program to:

- Buchan/Gelantipy – 65 attended
- Cann River – 60 attended
- Marlo – 45 attended
- Delegate River – 20 attended

Topics covered on these evenings included:

- Physical health/lifting techniques and bad backs,
- Drink driving and driver fatigue,
- Stress management, and
- Healthy lifestyles and heart issues.

Doctors, physiotherapists and other local professionals presented these issues along with Tommy Hafey, a former AFL football coach and well known sportsman, who focused on the issue of motivation. Because of the shortage of local doctors in rural and remote areas it was important to have a doctor attend these evenings. This was an excellent opportunity for men to meet with a doctor informally and consequently feel more comfortable in the future discussing their health issues with him.

4. Farming Issues – Farm Planning and Succession

Background

At the time of the floods the average age of farmers throughout East Gippsland was 58 years of age, while the Tambo Valley average was 63. This indicated that many farmers were well beyond retiring age, and had not planned for their retirement.

As a result of the lengthy drought and financial hardships coupled with the workload imposed by prolonged hand feeding of stock, many people's ability to make decisions that affected their future had been seriously impaired.

As many farmers had yet to address those issues the CDOs believed that there would be increased pressure on farm planning services in the following year. The CDOs gained the agreement of Centrelink and the Gippsland Rural Finance Counsellors to work with farmers to assist them in succession planning.

Outcomes

A retirement scheme offered for farmers by Centrelink was being pursued by many farmers and was to be completed by December 1999. The CDOs were very active in providing information and organizing educational forums, which assisted farmers to develop farm business plans and prompted them to seek financial counseling which would assist in their future planning considerations.

Appendix C: Blue Mountains Bushfires – Christmas 2001/January 2002

Background

The Christmas 2001, January 2002 bushfires resulted in the destruction of 12 homes and a further 2 rendered uninhabitable. Subsequent research found that 300 gardens were either destroyed or severely damaged during the disaster.

As the gardens were not covered by insurance, many residents could not replace lost plantings valued at thousands of dollars per affected property. For many this also represented many hours of work, in some cases more than 40 years of gardening effort.

Community Development Projects

1. Community Garden Recovery Project

Background

In response to the significant impact experienced by those people whose garden's were destroyed a project was proposed to assist in their recovery. The project sought funding to employ a coordinator and administrative assistant. This was provided through Rotary International which had launched an Australian wide appeal asking Rotary, Rotaract and Probus to contribute to the project. The grant was forwarded to Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, which agreed to auspice the project.

Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the project was to promote a sense of belonging to a strong, resilient and caring Blue Mountains community in a spirit of neighbour helping neighbour, making and strengthening friendships during real adversity. An additional goal of the project was to bring people together and provide opportunities for all community members, young and old, to be involved.

Project Committee

A project committee was developed which consisted of representatives from Rotary, Red Cross, Blue Mountains garden clubs, St. Vincent de Paul Society and Blue Mountains City Council. The project committee met fortnightly to ascertain progress and to offer support to staff.

Project Components

The project offered personal support through a range of material and practical assistance, including:

● Garden Shed packages (including tools) were provided to residents who lost both homes and gardens,

● Practical assistance was provided by way of linking residents who lost their homes and gardens to garden clubs for ongoing plant supplies and design advice, which continued beyond the life of the project. Many residents commented that this contact provide them with valued personal support at a time when the demands of rebuilding their homes was overwhelming,

● Gala Plant Day – a large quantity of replacement plants were available for selection by all residents who had lost their gardens. Volunteers manned each plant variety, young volunteers carried plants to cars . It was evident to all residents who participated that plant contributions came from a wide section of the community and the extent of the volunteerism promoted a sense of belonging. The chance to come together for this day provided the opportunity for residents to meet again in a spirit of repair and renewal,

● Information kits and Earth Works Course available to residents. This provided information about environmental protection, increased awareness of private landholders whose properties bounded onto national parks and community land which effected catchment areas, recognition of weeds, advice on bush friendly gardens whilst minimising fire hazards etc,

● Major garden clean ups – linking elderly and vulnerable people to volunteer organisations, and

● Developing strengthened links between the Neighbourhood Centre, schools, service organisations and local government.

Outcomes

Through the facilitation of these practical initiatives CDOs contributed to not only the restoration of properties, but also to the overall well-being and recovery of many of the residents affected by the fires.

Appendix D: Community Development Officers Workplan

Purpose:

To work with the disaster affected community(s) in a manner which supports and encourages community self-reliance and empowerment, and where possible will add to the sustainable social infrastructure of communities.

To support and assist in the design, implementation and evaluation of a range of strategies and actions that will lessen the social/health impact of the disaster on communities and individuals.

Methodology proposed:

All community development work undertaken is to be done in a manner, which empowers individuals and communities in the management of their own recovery.

Goals	Indicators	Activities	Responsibility	Time-frame
1: Produce an assessment of the community's needs, the capacity of the community to address those needs and additional support required	Level of contact with key individuals and groups within the identified area. Number of projects identified which will assist in the recovery process	Collect information regarding the nature of the impact of the disaster on affected groups, their immediate and likely issues, to assist with planning the recovery process. Collect information regarding the nature of the impact of the disaster on community organisations to assist with planning the recovery process. Present a clear understanding of the current level of action, resources available, capacities within the community and current community development initiatives etc. Support and develop community proposals that address the longer-term recovery needs of the affected communities.	CDOs in conjunction with affected communities and agencies involved in recovery.	
2: Ensure all stakeholders receive relevant, up to date and useful information which expands their knowledge and skills throughout the recovery process	Number of articles added to community newsletters. Extent of liaison with people in the disaster affected areas and Community Recovery Team leaders to establish community information needs. Number of community meetings/ Barbeques/forums organised and held which provide information and contact with key agencies. Number of residents in attendance, number of key services participating. Number of fact sheets and relevant information packs distributed to individuals and groups.	Develop and produce regular articles for community newsletters and information "Fact Sheets" pertinent to individual and community needs. Assist in the organization, conduct and evaluation of meetings and forums in response to community information requests.	CDOs in conjunction with Recovery Centre's Community Education Facilitator and Recovery Team Leaders	

Goals	Indicators	Activities	Responsibility	Time-frame
3: Coordinate and provide access to services for all affected residents in a fair and equitable manner.	Level of access to services achieved, number of referrals etc.	Link people to services including financial assistance through government grants, personal and practical assistance, counselling and outreach services for disaster affected communities and to people displaced from their community.	CDO in conjunction with affected communities and agencies involved in recovery	
4: Identify the most vulnerable groups within the communities and address strategies to meet their needs	Number of neighbourhood activities which address the needs of vulnerable groups (i.e. children, Public Housing Tenants, residents who rent, and the elderly).	Activities focusing on children to include : • Facilitated playgroups with workers experienced in trauma • Information for parents re: their children's needs after a disaster and recovery processes • School talks for parents • Activities after hours and through the day • School holiday activities • Support for parents to access practical assistance Activities focusing on the elderly to include: • Practical support such as information, house cleaning, garden clean-up and rebuilding, support to get handymen • Access to talk • Access to all information available to other families • Case examples of accessing info. In paper • Involving other services. Activities focusing on Public housing tenants to include: • Information about temporary tenancy issues • Planning to go back – what needs to be done	CDOs in conjunction with Recovery Team Leaders and the support of relevant community organisations	

Goals	Indicators	Activities	Responsibility	Time-frame
5: Celebrate success by recognising the achievements and acknowledging the efforts of groups and individuals	Numbers of recovery/social/celebratory events or activities by area. Level of community support for events Reports Recorded contacts Media coverage/clippings	Assist community members to organise and hold social and celebration events in response to community requests that are inclusive of all those affected Encourage community participation in existing recovery events. Encourage local community members to become involved in leadership roles in local issues and activities. Facilitate the recognition and rewarding of all the activities that have assisted in the community's recovery process, e.g. volunteers.	CDOs in conjunction with Recovery Team Leaders	
6: Gather data and learn lessons that can be used to make communities more resilient	Number of practical recommendations made which can be used for future recovery processes, which will enhance the potential impact of future assistance. The extent of access to and distribution of relevant information to individuals and communities.	Collect information regarding the nature of the impact of the disaster on affected groups, their immediate and likely issues, to finalise the development of the Community Development Recovery process. Ensure within the rebuilding process that individuals and communities have the best knowledge on means of planning for protection against the occurrence of similar events in the future.	CDOs in conjunction with other relevant organisations and Recovery Team Leaders	

www.ema.gov.au