Managing spontaneous volunteers in the response and recovery to disasters

ISO22319 - Guidelines for planning the involvement of spontaneous volunteers

Implementing in UK, Chile, Argentina and Kenya
Who are spontaneous volunteers (SVs)

“An individual who is unaffiliated with existing official response organisations, yet, without extensive pre-planning is motivated to provide unpaid support to the response and/or recovery to an emergency.”

• In short, they turn up and:
  • May be suitably qualified & experienced people
  • May be unknown
  • They bring RISK
  • They are not an organised volunteer e.g. Red Cross, so are unlikely to have hazard awareness training
• 3 main parts:

• Provides guidance for the involvement of SVs in incident response and recovery

• Aims to use both official and unofficial resources effectively
Impact in the UK

- ISO22319 has been adopted by the UK (BS ISO22319)
- UK Local Authorities (Somerset, Lincolnshire, Hampshire and Isle of Wight) have developed local plans to manage SVs.
- They have tested the plans by running 3 live exercises involving ~500 officials and SVs.
- 14 UK local government organisations that are actively considering their planning for spontaneous volunteers.
- The UK government established the UK National Committee on SVs (March 2015). That committee tasked the UK Cabinet Office to produce national guidance.
- Authorities claim it has reduced risk (avoiding freelancing) and enhanced engagement with volunteers.
Impact in Chile

- A local plan to manage SVs has been developed in Concepcion province.
- The local plan will be used as a model to develop a national guidance on SVs.
- More than 20 organisations are actively involved in planning for SVs so it strengthened the partnership.
- This work raised awareness in the public of how to respond to SVs and have good practices.
- ISO 22319 is changing the national narrative - organisations are now using the “spontaneous volunteer” term in their disaster management practices.
Impact in Argentina

• ISO22319 has been adopted by Argentina (IRAM ISO22319)

• Workshops and events have been organised to disseminate ISO22319.

• A national guidance will be developed with the Ministry of Security to help organisations manage SVs.

• Neuquén province will design the first local guidance on SVs in Argentina which will be integrated at the emergency local plans.

• A technological platform will be used to support the implementation of a local plan on SVs.
Impact in Kenya

• Working with Kenya Council Of Emergency Medical Technicians (KCEMT) and KEBS (Kenya Bureau of Standards)
• Taking learning from implementing ISO22319 in UK, Chile and Argentina – taking their policy and plans
• Working with experts in Kenya to tailor a policy and plan
Potential for Replication

• We have replicated across different countries and different locations within the same country.
• We look forward to replicating that policy and plan in Kenya (and hopefully in South Korea as well as other countries).
• ISO22319 is available in Spanish, French and English.
• Local plans available in Spanish and English.
• Contact us for more information:

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