

Do You Have the Necessary Skills and Knowledge?

It is no exaggeration to say that the quality of assistance depends on the staff and volunteers. Aid organizations are responsible for all the staff and volunteers who work for and with them, whether paid or unpaid, in terms of giving them the necessary training as well as managing and supervising their work.

Also, staff and volunteers are expected to follow the rules and to maintain appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

Newspaper headlines read "Crisis in replacing tarps" and "Secondary victimization concerns with rainy season beginning." There is a rapid increase in the need for tarps to protect homes until damaged roofs can be repaired, but tarping work involves significant hazards. To ensure safety, you should leave the work to trained personnel. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, June 11, 2017]

Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

No prior training

People at an evacuation shelter



Did they wash their hands?

I have an upset stomach...



Hot meal preparation volunteers



Is this ok?

I have no clue because we didn't get any training on hygiene management!

Our daily tasks can often be directly useful in assistance provision. Preparing meals for disaster survivors would be one such example. However, when cooking in an evacuation shelter where many people are gathered, you need to be careful about food poisoning and other food safety issues. Responders should familiarize themselves with this before starting their aid activity.

Check List

- ✓ Do the individual responders understand the purpose of the aid activities, the activity content, and the code of conduct they must observe as determined by the organization?
- ✓ Have the individual responders received training or other support from their organization to improve their abilities and knowledge necessary to perform the tasks?
- ✓ Have the disaster survivors evaluated the work of the responders as effective, including their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors?



Best Practice Cases

2019 Typhoon Hagibis

Acquiring Skills and Protecting Both Survivors and Responders

Emergency Phase

Peace Boat Disaster Relief (PBV)



Floorboard removal at a house preservation workshop ©PBV

Peace Boat Disaster Relief (PBV) conducts training for aid workers and volunteers during non-disaster times. As some relief and response activities involve dangerous work, PBV aims to ensure people's safety by providing them with the skills they need. They also share knowledge on how disaster survivors can be connected to appropriate compensations, including taking photos of property damages and understanding the Disaster Relief Act as well as non-disaster-specific public support systems.

In their post-flooding relief work, PBV held a workshop for neighborhood associations in flooded areas entitled "House Preservation Workshop for Everyone." They also donated materials and equipment necessary for removing walls and floors and established a mechanism that enables ongoing activities within the community.

When engaging in efforts to restore houses, PBV tries to communicate well with the survivors who had asked for help on their homes. They assess the conditions and provide assistance tailored to the risks, vulnerabilities, and needs.

Responders' Wisdom

- The organization itself has extensive experience and could dispatch people with sufficient knowledge to the aid site.
- With the general volunteers, they provided training and distributed manuals in advance to general volunteers before sending them to the aid site.

Kumamoto Earthquake

Listening as Assistance

Reconstruction Phase

Keicho Net Key Station



Listening Volunteer Training Course ©Keicho Net Key Station

Keicho Net Key Station implements aid projects aimed to deepen mutual understanding through listening to people's worries and anxieties. In times of disasters, staff who have honed their listening skills will listen to what the disaster survivors have to say so that they can safely vent their worries.

To develop human resources, the organization holds volunteer training courses during non-disaster times. People of all ages and backgrounds have taken the course and are involved in supporting disaster survivors. These supporters learn how to engage in discussions with each other while respecting everyone's opinions, and this improves the quality of assistance they can provide when disasters hit.

As an aid organization, Keicho Net Key Station participated in information sharing meetings held in each region and obtained information. They connected people to specialists and experts when issues were identified, thereby contributing to solving underlying problems.

Responders' Wisdom

- When collaborating with other organizations, they had these organizations take the listening training course so that the quality of assistance could be improved while also protecting the listeners' mental health.