

Section 2

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT TRAINING

SUMMARY OF SECTION 2

This section identifies which elements of disaster management appear to be distinguishing features from the normal management of development programmes. Suggestions are included for ways to express this focus in the development of an effective training programme.

Management has been defined as the efficient use of resources to achieve a clearly defined set of objectives. Therefore management training has to be structured in such a manner to develop attitudes, skills and knowledge to secure improved performance in the control of relevant resources for any specific task.

Obviously, training programmes all vary in their content according to the process being managed, but there are close similarities in the realm of teaching and learning approaches. Since management training, operating at all organisational levels, is widespread, a vast body of literature has been produced on the 'whys and wherefores' of the teaching process. So it follows that in the initiation of the major Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) it is vital to avoid a redundant exercise that risks 're-inventing many a wheel.'

The need is to explore this body of normal management training experience, which is well embodied in the literature to determine which elements can be readily incorporated into teaching/learning materials. However, on reflection it appears to be more sensible to reverse the question by identifying what is distinctive about disaster management training from routine management training in order to decide, in terms of both content and communication, what needs adding or subtracting.

The particular elements of disaster management training courses that make them distinctive from normal management courses, in, for example, Development Project Administration, can be classified under the following five topics:

- 2.1. International Scope
- 2.2. Disasters Intermittent, Uncertain and Unexpected
- 2.3. Disasters Scale and Scope
- 2.4. Crisis Management
- 2.5. The Life Preserving Function of Disaster Management

It is apparent that the aspects of disaster planning that are distinctive 'special features' of resource management are all related to emergency planning or preparedness.

Other aspects of disaster planning such as mitigation and reconstruction planning need to be 'normalised'. Mitigation planning and implementation is the natural bedfellow of development planning, and ideally needs to be fully integrated into this sector. Thus, any normal housing programme in a seismic area should incorporate aseismic design principles.

Similarly, reconstruction, which can take ten years to accomplish after a major disaster, has to be seen in terms of normal urban or rural development.

Therefore, each of the above topics relates to emergency planning and preparedness. The issues will be considered in the following text, noting certain important implications for training.

2.1. International Scope

Disaster Management Training courses are often international in their focus of interest as well as in the selection of participants and resource persons. There are various reasons for this situation, which include the reality that hazards are rarely confined to tidy national boundaries, well established patterns of international funding of assistance and patterns of international and regional cooperation.

Implications for training programmes

2.1.1 Consider Cross-Cultural Issues

...ideas, attitudes, approach and philosophy are often very different (between diverse cultures)...the way an object or event is understood and defined is often quite different ...situations are culturally defined and modified by our own cultural backgrounds. For we don't just perceive, we learn to perceive. Thus we are, in fact, culturally programmed, much like our computers.

Martin Green

Attention must be paid to cross-cultural factors which can inhibit or enhance the effectiveness of a training programme. Barriers can relate to unfamiliar styles and modes of teaching as well as to hostile or unsympathetic attitudes between participants from countries, or cultures where there are residual patterns of rivalry and mutual suspicion.

However, with all these problems there is potentially a rich reward to be gained from the mixture of cultures participating together in a learning experience.

2.1.2 Be Aware of Language Implications

There may be language barriers to accommodate. This may require that participants be tested for linguistic proficiency as part of the selection process. The language ability of participants will also need to be considered in the selection of course reading materials and in the use of resource persons. Normally, within a workshop focused on a relatively small group there is a need to avoid the cost in time and money of providing two-way translation of presentations.

Where there are language barriers, workshop leaders also need to be aware of the danger in using unexplained acronyms as well as the jargon of the subject. Examples could include 'quick and dirty approach,' 'the project impacted in negative terms on the target group' and 'NGO groups, some being expat PVOs, were in the EOC when the chairman of the NDCC

arrived from the centre to assume control.' It is obviously better to confine terminology to simple expressions wherever possible using examples to make a point clearly.

The language issue has implications in any discussion about definitions. It is important to discuss **concepts**. For example, it is preferable to talk about the need for realistic, affordable safety standards, rather than using restricting terminology or **definitions**, such as the term 'mitigation.' Precise terms such as this may not readily translate into a single word, and a person without English as a first language can rightly be very sensitive to any ethnocentric assumption made in an international training course that a word in one language should be the chosen term when they have no equivalent term in their own language.

2.1.3 Recognise the Assets of an International Focus

International dimensions are not to be regarded as potential liabilities. Rather, they should be seen in a highly positive light as a major contribution to successful training. This is the value of enabling participants from one culture or nation to be exposed to differing perceptions of their situation by outsiders.

Through this process they may be able to see their situation with some objectivity for the first time. The 'view from another country' can also provide comparative analysis and this detachment can be a vital ingredient in a training course that is expansive in nature rather than being a narrow insular experience.

2.1.4 Consider International Dependency and Cooperation

Many national training programmes begin their life with international support in the form of funds and imported resource persons. Whilst these visiting persons can fulfil the 'external window role,' they may have a negative impact by deflecting the need to develop and use national resource persons. It is possible for a form of dependency to develop with the local organisers depending on such visitors, and as a complementary process for the visiting resource persons depending on the courses for their own experience and reputations.

Perhaps as national training programmes develop, local organisers will be wise to retain the international focus, but place more reliance on the use of resource persons from within their own region, with countries that may share common languages and cultures and most important -the same types of hazard.

2.2 Disasters Intermittent, Uncertain and Unexpected

The vast proportion of disasters are marked by uncertainty, contradictory information and ambiguity. That is to say, no matter how large the event itself, no matter how grim the media's reporting of it, critical unknowns affected populations, damage assessment, needs - are prone to serious distortions and contradictory evidence.

Randolph C. Kent

Training courses for disaster management may be unique in comparison with other types of management training in their focus on preparing for an event which may have never previously occurred in the experience of the trainee, and which may even never take place in their future work. There are obvious exceptions: with frequent return hazards which may be seasonal in nature, with flooding or cyclones occurring in an annual cycle. However, there are other situations where the return period of an earthquake or volcanic eruption may be 40-70 years, or longer. In addition to being intermittent occurrences, hazards can be unexpected in their timing, so 'planning for surprise' has to become a key element in effective hazard management.

Implications for training programmes

2.2.1 Include Authentic Descriptions of Disaster Events

The organisers of a training course need to make strenuous efforts to convey, in as vivid a manner as possible, what actually occurs in a disaster. This may be achieved by drawing in resource persons with direct personal exposure to be able to first-hand descriptions of the types of hazard being considered in the training course. Further measures to convey reality may include the use of films, slides and videos.

2.2.2 Build In the Surprise Element

A training course may also benefit from the inclusion of some 'shock tactics' that may to some degree replicate the surprise and disturbance of a sudden disaster occurring. The announced programme may unexpectedly change and an unplanned event may take place which leaves participants in an uncertain frame of mind with a problem to cope with.

2.2.3 Incorporate Routine Hazards in the Content of the Workshop

Although certain disasters will be rare events, it is likely that some of the hazards that a given country or region is prone to will be much more frequent than others. Therefore, in order to build from the experience of the participants, it will be useful to initially concentrate on more common risks. In addition within any society minor accidents or technological disasters will occur continually.

Therefore there may be a value in expanding the scope of the training programme to include routine, smaller scale emergencies such as the management of industrial or technological hazards. Experience indicates that many of the principles and practice of response to regular emergencies are readily transferable to the management of much more severe major disasters. However, the scope of a course will inevitably need to be closely related to the specific responsibilities of participating staff.

2.3. Disasters Scale and Scope

Since any major disaster will affect virtually every sector of a society, it is imperative that any training course is carefully balanced to reflect this broad scope in its coverage.

As noted on page 38 a common failing of many disaster management courses is their bias, and selective scope that relates to the experience or professional field of their leaders and teachers, which can result in a distorted view of reality.

Certain dramatic, well publicised major disasters can also result in the sudden influx of a resources on a vast scale. However, there is also the opposite problem, often associated with long-onset disasters such as droughts, where national and international response is pitifully small in relation to the scale of the problem and late in arrival.

Implications for training programmes

2.3.1 Establish a Broad Framework for the Training

The workshop content and the choice of leaders and contributors must relate to their breadth of interest and knowledge across a wide spectrum of social, cultural, political, economic, technological and environmental dimensions. Recognising the complexity of the subject and the inevitable limitations of any single person's knowledge or professional discipline, it is clear that one implication will be to develop team teaching as well as group work to encourage a wide view of a complex subject.

Much will depend on the skill and commitment of workshop leaders or moderators in maintaining a balanced and broad perspective. Their role, when confronted with any narrowly focused presentation, will be to restore a balance by introducing the social or political implications of a technical issue or vice-versa.

2.3.2 Train Managers in the Assessment of Needs

The foundation of any successful period of emergency management is likely to be an accurate, rapid assessment of survivors' needs, whether these be social, medical, psychological or economic concerns. This key role will certainly need to figure largely within an effective training course. In

addition to the assessment of needs, there is the necessity of securing the agreement of other interested bodies on the validity of these assessments and communicating recommendations to potential donors. A further management skill that will need to be developed will be the capacity to monitor the changing patterns of needs of the surviving community as assistance is provided.

2.3.3 Train Managers to Make Decisions In Crisis Conditions with a Shortage of Information

There are some problems of Government in which speed of decision is the great thing, in which it is essential that some decision, even though it be not the ideal decision, should be taken quickly ...you do well to ask yourself two questions First - is the damage that would be done by some delay in reaching a decision more serious than the damage that a wrong decision would entail? Second - is the material that is the subject of your deliberation such that a decision found to be defective in practice can readily be amended?

W.S. Morrison, 1943
First Minister of Planning in the UK,
responsible for post-war reconstruction

In normal conditions it is possible to make decisions in a highly systematic manner, but disaster management does not offer this opportunity. Despite all efforts to set up detailed preparedness plans and to assess situations and needs as precisely as possible (as noted above in Item 3.3), it has to be recognised that this may not be possible). The quotation from Herbert Morrison is a reminder that many decisions made in the aftermath of disasters will inevitably be based on inadequate information. This reality introduces a need to use training programmes to assist officials used to management in normal conditions to adapt to a context where they will need to decide on a course of action without delaying matters to obtain the data they would normally require. This skill can probably be best developed through role playing simulation exercises.

2.4. Crisis Management

In normal circumstances managers usually have time on their side and are able to proceed cautiously using the most sophisticated planning tools to arrive at considered, economical decisions. A crisis manager, on the other hand is expected to analyze information (often incomplete and sometimes inaccurate), make decisions and issue unambiguous instructions whilst operating under extreme pressure.

Brian Ward, Director
Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)

Any disaster will result in stress for all who are involved in the process of management, as well as putting pressure on each of the key bodies involved in a management role. Therefore, through the training workshop participants need to be alerted to stress and how to cope (or even better, how to manage) in a crisis.

Implications for training programmes

2.4.1 Focus on Stress Management

Senior management is a highly stressful pursuit in all sectors and in normal conditions, but there are additional elements within the sphere of disaster planning that can add to this pressure, and these need to be anticipated within a training programme. The following factors increase stress:

- dealing with a situation where there are large numbers of distressed people who need care
- coping with other people who have management roles but are unable to cope with the pressure, and who display many symptoms of stress, such as irritation and a failure to perform their normal tasks
- coping with a situation where there can be acute time pressure to make rapid decisions
- making important management decisions with inadequate information
- attempting to manage a situation that is both unfamiliar and unexpected

In designing the training programme it is important, as far as is possible, to prepare individuals to cope with the stress of a disaster, as well as outlining a management approach that significantly reduces pressure on senior staff. There are two ways to approach this in training. Firstly, the programme can include crisis management, or the handling of stress. Secondly, stressful conditions can be deliberately incorporated into the training course. This was discussed under Item 2.2.2. and will be further described in the next Item.

2.4.2 Create Stressful Situations Within the Training Programme, to Train Staff to Cope Under Pressure

Having introduced the subject of stress, it is important to use the training programme to let participants experience stressful conditions and hopefully learn how cope with the pressure.

This can best be accomplished through role-playing, simulation exercises or drills, or by creating unexpected situations already described above in Item 2.2. In the use of simulations the directing staff can reduce or increase the pressure through their actions. They can increase stress (by speeding up the

demand for action, or by creating new pressures when staff are barely coping with existing tasks).

In simulation exercises it is also possible to monitor individual capacities to cope with stress, as well as collective abilities of management teams. The feedback from such exercises will be the method to permit participants to reflect on their growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes in crisis management.

To summarise, 'Crisis Management Training' relates to:

- KNOWLEDGE of how our minds and bodies cope or fail under the extra load of stress conditions
- the development of SKILLS in managing whilst under extreme pressure, which differ in some important aspects from normal management processes and
- perhaps the most important capability, the need to develop new, or improved ATTITUDES to tackle problems calmly and methodically despite the external turbulence.

2.5. The Life-Preserving Function of Disaster Management

Disaster and refugee situations are never the place to conduct experiments. Peoples' lives are at stake. Only use well proven ideas/techniques, and if you want to test out a new idea only introduce it in a stable situation.

Moira Hart

One of the distinctive aspects of disaster planning and management is that lives depend on them in a very direct manner, so training has to be regarded very seriously. Special attention must be given to teach participants certain 'fail-safe' management approaches so that 'back-up systems' are available wherever this is possible.

Implications for training programmes

2.5.1 Encourage a Spirit of Commitment and Serious Concern

Poor planning and negligent disaster management can and will cost many lives. Of slightly less importance, there is the question of property protection. If management is weak there can be severe losses which can cause further deaths as well as economic hardship in both the short and long-term.

The implication is the need to take the training process very seriously, and this is best done through the example of committed leaders as well as incorporating detailed discussion on this issue in the teaching programme. This will include the need for various attitudes to be in evidence within any disaster management team such as compassion, social concern, acceptance of responsibility, dependability, conscientiousness and preparedness to become accountable to others.

2.5.2 The 'Life Preserving Function' of Relief Management Links the Subject into the Charitable/Philanthropic Tradition

Many of the leading relief and development agencies began their existence as pure disaster relief agencies, e.g. CARE, OXFAM and the Red Cross. Although most agencies have subsequently expanded their relief role to a broader developmental function, many people are still drawn into such agencies to work in disaster planning through a deep rooted humanitarian concern. This does not, of course, imply that the personnel in governmental or international agencies do not share this social concern, but the issue is more 'institutionalised' in the structure of non-governmental bodies.

The positive implications for training are the existence of deeply committed people who can convey this social concern to an entire training workshop in a highly infectious manner. Agency staff can also, however, bring a questioning spirit as to whether precious relief donations should ever be used to fund anything that is not central to assisting victims. They may be dubious of such activities as staff development or research to improve the agencies' effectiveness.

An occasional underlying scepticism may be expressed which may derive from a naive assumption that 'good intentions are likely to lead to good results.' Adherents of this view may argue that staff training is unnecessary since effectiveness is guaranteed. Such comments can be usefully channelled into highly productive discussions.

Therefore, trainers need to be aware of the various positive and negative expressions of philanthropy, and through their training programme seek to channel social concern away from emotional rhetoric and its frequent bedfellow, a 'hand-out' mentality, to a more systematic approach based on accurate assessment of needs.

2.5.3 Teach Staff how to Incorporate 'Fail-Safe Mechanisms' in Management Tools and Approaches

Following from the awareness that disaster planning is primarily concerned with life-saving activities, emphasis must be placed on contingency planning to provide double protection of all critical facilities.

Examples need to be given which explain how various countries provide 'back-up systems' for all critical facilities, or 'lifelines.' These can include:

- telephone lines to be backed up by radio links
- all copies of disaster plans to be in various locations
- management to continue even if designated staff are unavailable or killed, since all key managers will have designated deputies
- designated powers to obtain alternative 'life-line resources' when normal stocks are inadequate or inaccessible

Having considered examples of such 'fail-safe measures' the training will need to consider how to achieve double protection in given situations, despite pressing resource limitations which often result in there not even being single lifeline resources available.

Summary

The distinctive aspects that need to figure largely in a disaster management course can be summarised as follows:

Training courses are frequently international in nature, resulting in cross-cultural issues.

Training is directed towards the management of situations that may never occur, or if they do can be unexpected in their timing and consequences.

By their very nature all major disasters are vast in the scope and scale of impact, with implications on a wide range of sectors of a given society.

Emergency planning has to operate effectively in a situation where reliable information is a rare commodity requiring decisions to be made on slender information.

Training must recognise that participants will be required to operate under extreme pressure and work within stressful situations.

Disaster management is a close relation of the philanthropic, charitable tradition with its inherent strengths and weaknesses.

Effective emergency planning will have an impact in saving lives and protecting property, within emergency planning the management task will be to provide 'back-up systems' to all essential life saving services.

SECTION 3

WORKSHOP LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY OF SECTION 3

The section concentrates on the attitudes, skills, knowledge and responsibilities needed in the leaders, administrators and resource persons who organise effective disaster management training workshops.

...people selected to do short term training may not be the best performers. The top salesperson is seldom selected to lead the training effort, nor is the best engineer, the most promising executive, or the successful manager. Usually less outstanding persons, who won't be missed if taken out of production, get the training nod. To make matters worse they often are not trained for training others. If they happen to be perceptive and imaginative, have some natural smarts, and are motivated, they may do okay. But if they are not, the result can be training programs guaranteed to put the eagerest of beavers to sleep.

John W. Loughary
and Barrie Hopson

3.1 Separation of Leadership and Management Functions

'Leaders should lead, whilst managers manage.' This cryptic quote emphasises the importance of recognising that a successful workshop is the product of two distinct yet complementary activities. In essence, the leader is concerned to fulfil the educational/ training aims of the workshop, whilst the administrator is concerned with its practical management, so that nothing distracts the objective of the exercise from being reached.

Experience indicates that the two functions are frequently undertaken by the same person, but there are two reasons why this pattern should be avoided at all costs:

Firstly, even in a workshop with few participants there are too many tasks to perform in a short space of time for a single person. (Note the lists of responsibilities set out below if you doubt this proposition!)

Secondly, an even more important reason is that it is better for a leader to remain aloof from such day-to-day problems of accommodation, finance, etc. that are likely to concern participants. If the leader gets heavily involved in such issues (which often result in complaints to the organisers), then these tensions can all too easily spill over into the teaching and learning process. Thus, a good administrator helps the leader by protecting him or her from organisational issues so that they can pursue the all important concerns to achieve an excellent workshop with undivided attention.

The profiles that follow are therefore based on a separation of leadership and administration. In both cases there may be a need for co-leaders or assistant administrators when large workshops are contemplated.

3.2 Profile of Workshop Leader

Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills

Perhaps more than any other factor a successful workshop is primarily the result of good leadership. Thus, leaders have to possess an almost impossible set of personal qualities that support their skills and communication abilities. Most fall far short of the demanding list that follows. This is inevitable, but it is important to be aware of the ideal in order to fill gaps through delegation to a co-leader or resource persons.

The overall leader will need to have a good general knowledge of disasters linked to development and how these subjects relate in operational terms to the functions of the UN and National Governments. John W. Loughary and Barrie Hopson have succinctly made the point that 'Credibility is earned not advertised.'

In addition the leader has to exercise well developed leadership and training skills. An effective leader will, by definition be an accessible person with strong social skills. He or she will be able to create and maintain a relaxed learning environment by rapidly welding a group who may be strangers at the outset of training into an effective team. Leaders will need to be patient, tolerant and possess good listening skills. They also need to be very efficient, capable of working rapidly, resolute yet flexible, experienced in delegation, able to work within a leadership team, far-sighted, reliable, tactful and able to cope with difficult people and stressful circumstances.

Detailed Responsibilities

1. To take overall responsibility for the design, management and follow-up of the training programme. To have the ability and experience to create a varied, stimulating, sequential, balanced learning experience.

...boredom, and hence poor learning, can quickly set in if there is no sense of progress or the activities are not varied enough. Consider the areas in which change may be possible form of communication (writing, listening, reading, talking, watching), size of subgroups, individual work, action vs discussion, location, etc.

David Gauchos

...training is most successful when it is designed as a series of events building on each other.

Water and Sanitation for Health Project (WASH) 1990

2. To stamp his/her personality on the workshop - to provide essential leadership/confidence, etc.
3. To present at least one of the keynote presentations as a way to indicate direction but also to help establish the confidence of the participants.

4. To be available throughout the workshop for discussions with participants - to answer policy queries (not administration matters).
5. To plan in a highly flexible manner.

...think about how much you are going to plan in advance, how much is open to negotiation and how to arrange for this. Which boundaries, e.g. time, your role, the tasks are to be movable and which fixed?

David Gauchos

6. To work closely with the workshop administrator.
7. To establish and maintain the highest possible teaching standards by personal example and through discussion with training colleagues.
8. To monitor the progress of the workshop by listening to the various contributions and observing the participants' progress. To provide continuity to the training programme through an active interpretive role: linking ideas, dealing with contradictory opinions, reinforcing critical issues, identifying gaps and, where possible, filling them.
9. To formulate the aims for the workshop and make certain that they are understood and achieved.
10. To make certain that documentation is made available before, during and after the workshop.

(a) Pre-workshop papers can prepare people BEFORE the event and orient their thinking.

(b) You could provide handouts DURING the workshop to remove the need to present lectures.

(c) Consider what you could provide to help people take their learning further AFTER the workshop, e.g. an address list, a bibliography.

David Jaques

...National trainers can easily become discouraged by the lack of available teaching materials. There is a pressing need to develop high quality common-user teaching packages, including audio-visual aids, of the PAHO/CRED style, for use, with appropriate modifications to allow for local circumstances, in national training programmes.

Brian Ward, Director
Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)

11. Under Item 1.1 page 1 there is a listing of issues that need to be considered in the organisation of a disaster management workshop. Some of these are also noted above. These topic headings, expanded under Item 1.1 are all dependent on effective leadership. They are as follows:

Prepare
Maintain Aims
Remain Flexible
Assess Needs
Become Accountable
Promote Participatory Management
Build Management Teams
Monitor and Evaluate
Introduce Various 'Fail-Safe' systems;

Summary Definition

An earlier definition in this guide described a Workshop Leader in this manner:

The person responsible, at any stage in a course for the management and direction of a given activity. This person would therefore require a knowledge of training, disasters and the management of disasters. But in addition they would require leadership skills.

3.3 Profile of Workshop Administrator

Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills

The administrator must be an experienced manager, preferably in the organisation of mid-career management training. It is vital for the administrator to have a good understanding of the way a training workshop relates to the operations and functions of the UN and national governments. It will be an advantage to have a general awareness of disaster and development planning, but this is not essential. To be effective, an administrator will need to be very efficient, able to work rapidly, experienced in delegation, good in handling finance, reliable, tactful and able to cope patiently with difficult people and stressful circumstances.

Detailed Responsibilities

1. To handle all organisational matters such as finance, accommodation, transportation, arrangements for speakers including payment of fees, audio-visual equipment, hand-outs, exhibition panels, etc.
2. To work closely with all the various bodies involved in the running of an effective workshop sponsoring bodies, funding bodies, conference facility staff, resource persons, administration staff and participating bodies.
3. To have regular coordination meetings with the workshop leader to iron out any emergent problems.

4. To organise a letter to go to each workshop participant prior to the training workshop advising them of all administrative arrangements.

Summary Definition

Under Item 1.3 on page 3 the following definition is given for a Workshop Administrator:

There is a critical need to separate the role and title of the training, or workshop manager (with responsible for the administration of the workshop) from the workshop leader or facilitator (with responsibility for the overall teaching programme). The workshop administrator has the responsibility for all the practical matters of the workshop such as accommodation, finance, equipment, booking resource persons, booking participants, publicity material, photocopying, transportation, etc.

3.4 Profile of Resource Person

Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills

Any assistance provided in disasters, can only be useful if it is based on correct views or assumptions of what actually occurs during the emergency period. If the assumption is wrong, the assistance may well be misdirected, unnecessary, inappropriate or simply duplicate what is already available.

E.M.Quarantelli

The main function of resource persons is to maintain technical standards at a high level throughout the workshop through their contributions, and to communicate the factual knowledge that Henry Quarantelli correctly states as being essential in the development of effective policies. In practical terms, they will provide assistance to the training process by leading sessions, assisting in group activities and assessing work assignments.

Resource persons need the unusual combination of good training ability matched with technical skills at a very high level in various aspects of disaster management. They also need to rapidly grasp the problems faced by participants, understand their needs and assist them to resolve their problems.

The following common problems may occur in securing effective resource persons, particularly when running 'in-country training courses':

- There is often considerable difficulty in locating local leaders and resource persons who are:
 - highly experienced in these topics
 - respected by the course organisers
 - able to communicate effectively in a training session
- Sometimes there is a 'political' obligation to select a resource person from each of the collaborating agencies even though this can result in the selection

of resource persons with very shallow credentials. Therefore criteria needs to be developed that will anticipate this problem so that resource persons are selected purely on the basis of their experience and capacity to teach, not on account of artificial political criteria, or that each participating body has to contribute a requisite number of persons.

- Resource persons tend to be selected from the centre rather than from regional locations. This results in a bias that can give undue importance to perceptions of hazards or disasters from the capital city as opposed to local view points.
- When resource persons are chosen the criteria is often very narrow, with excessive emphasis on technical capabilities. There is also a tendency to choose people for a single reason such as their status, position, field experience, local awareness. However the need is to find persons with a range of credentials linked with an aptitude to teach.
- There are often cultural barriers in relation to the sex or age of resource persons. In many countries, women would not be selected for such a role, and in many others there is likely to be some prejudice against selecting younger persons, say under 35 years old, for such a role, especially when the organisers are from an older age group.
- In some contexts training has very low status so local experts feel that it is 'below them' to contribute to a training course for mid-level management.
- Senior academics who frequently regard themselves as part of the elite of a given society may see their role as strictly confined to research, with teaching confined to communicating to post-graduate students. This can result in their unwillingness or inability to communicate to a non-technical audience. (Alas this problem is not confined to developing countries!)
- There can be an over-reliance on foreign expertise, therefore a procedure is needed to gradually reduce the use of foreign experts as local or regional resource persons take on an increasingly active role. So it is vital to place reliance on the training programme to help create an indigenous training capacity.
- Obviously, in many countries it will be highly unlikely to find someone immediately with the range of knowledge and skills noted below to bring to a training workshop. But it is necessary to have a target to aim towards, so that such resource persons could be qualified and available in perhaps three years of an active training programme. The emphasis will be to take active measures to nurture local expertise rather than passively accept or assume its deficiency.
- As one of the key planning requirements before a workshop, it is necessary to create, and regularly update a 'resource inventory' of national (and possibly regional) resource persons, with full details of their respective specialisations and availability. This search will need the help of government staff, NGO staff, academics, research institutions, management training institutes, etc.

Detailed Responsibilities

1. To assist in the management of the training by providing support to the leader and continual assistance to the participants, whatever their level of experience or proficiency.
2. To be able to lead sessions, run training exercises, chair group activities, synthesise and summarise at the conclusion of sessions and constructively critique the presentations of participants.
3. To look for resource persons with a balance of
 - technical and field experience
 - theory and practice
 - international, national and local knowledge
 - disaster experience and training skills
 - knowledge of government and non-governmental agencies
4. Whilst having an excellent knowledge of a given area of subject expertise, to be interested in related disciplines and to be able to comment intelligently outside their chosen field.

Summary Definition

A knowledgeable person able to provide 'content' drawn from their wide experience of the subject under study. Such persons may be workshop facilitators or they may retain a more passive background role to be consulted by participants as required.

