



**WHO Tools
for
Field Emergency Response**

Progress Report October 2001

**World Health Organization
Department of Emergency and Humanitarian Action
Emergency Health Intelligence and Capacity Building**

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The World Health Organization is becoming more and more involved in rapid response both in complex emergencies as well as in the aftermath of natural disasters. Rapid response requires the deployment of several instruments, some of them the same in any circumstance. Therefore the Department of Emergency and Humanitarian Action (EHA) made an inventory of the pre-packaged tools and/or systems for rapid response that exist within WHO. An attempt was also made to identify tools currently under preparation or only planned, so to identify gaps that need to be filled.

This paper provides an overview of the results, and will be used for program development within EHA, as well as for program promotion with Country and regional offices, technical departments and external partners. A table attached carries more details on what is available, in which stage of development is the package, what is needed at country level, what - in our view- should be on standby at HQ or RO, how should each tool be maintained, what are the resources needed, and the funding requirements.

Part 1: Pre-packaged tools

EHA Bibliography

Several bibliographies related to EHA have been compiled over the last years, with the aim to provide information on publications and articles for easy reference. Some of these bibliographies have been posted on the website www.who.int/disasters, including a bibliography with 100 articles distributed to all WRs during the second Global WR meeting, the bibliography for the Emergency Health Library Kit (EHLK) and the Virtual Library for Disasters available on CD-ROM.

As a next step, EHA-Geneva will make an inventory of what exists, where the bibliographies are located and in which format. A mechanism needs to be set up to ensure regular updating of the bibliographies.

Methods also need to be identified to make them widely available either on www.who.in/eha/disasters or through CD-ROMs and diskettes.

The Emergency Health Library Kit (EHLK)

The EHLK is a collection of some 150 essential documents and publications on best health practices in Emergencies and is intended to provide technical guidance to agencies operating in the field.

The English version is available since 1999. To date 85 kits have been distributed. It is continuously being updated in collaboration with the technical departments at WHO HQ, inputs from the field and EHA staff. The costs of the kit (US\$ 2300) are covered by a revolving fund, where purchases are debited and credited.

In crisis situations at least a kit should be made available to the WR of a country in need, and ideally all CAP countries should have at least one kit in the WHO offices. Kits will be placed on standby at each RO, through the revolving fund, to facilitate distribution and rapid response to requests. Different financial arrangements need to be identified to have kits within the MoHs.

On a on-going base available literature in official WHO languages is identified, i.e. French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. EHA circulated a proposal among donors requesting funds to set up the entire kit in these languages, as well as for translating into other/national languages which are spoken on a large scale, e.g. Bahasa, etc¹. With the Colombia University, NY, EHA is developing material and methods to facilitate the use of the EHLK as a tool for coordination.

More information on the EHLK and how to order can be obtained through eha@who.int.

Health Library for Disasters (HELID) CD-ROM

Together with PAHO and external partners, WHO produced this CD-ROM with over 400 publications on best public health practices for humanitarian assistance and disaster reduction. The 2001 version of the HELID, which contains publications in English, Spanish and French, is being distributed to various international agencies, universities, NGOs, donors, etc. So far approximately 3000 CD-ROMs have been distributed. The content is also available on internet at <http://www.helid.desastres.net>. In 2002 preparations will start for an updated version.

The CD-ROM can be requested by e-mail from eha@who.int and costs US \$ 20 for requests from developed countries.

Rapid Health Assessment Protocols (RHAP)

In 1999 WHO published the "*Rapid health assessment protocols for emergencies*", to assist those involved in the rapid assessment determine the immediate and potential health impact of emergencies and to assist in planning appropriate response. The book was developed in collaboration with CDC - Atlanta, CRED - Brussels, MSF, ICRC, and the National Institute of Health in Finland. The RHAP are widely marketed as a WHO publication.

After two years of use in the field EHA has started revising the protocols for a new edition. The book is part of the Emergency Health Library Kit, and will be posted on the website as well.

The current version of the book can be ordered from the WHO marketing and dissemination department by e-mail: bookorders@who.int.

WHO Handbook for Emergency Field Operations

This handbook is a management and reference tool for WHO staff working in complex emergencies and is based on the experiences of staff in the field. A pilot copy of the handbook was distributed to WHO staff in 1999. Feedback was received from the field. The on-line version is being reformatted at HQ by EHA for easier access.

EHA-Geneva is revising the handbook and an updated version will be available on the web towards the end of 2001. Both hardcopies and CD-ROMs will be produced. The new version will be made available to all staff working in emergencies, both at country, regional and headquarters level.

¹ WHO evaluation of the humanitarian response in East Timor " *The appropriateness was somewhat limited by the English language of the books which is not widely read in East Timor*" pointed to the need of having guidelines readily available in local languages.

WHO Emergency Essentials

Based on the Handbook for Emergency Field Operations, the WHO manual, input from both the field as well as from technical departments in WHO-Geneva, a little A5 size booklet is being prepared. This booklet is to assist WHO personnel and other public health professionals in the field when an emergency occurs. After inclusion of peer reviewer's comments, the booklet will be printed, plastified and widely distributed.

EHA-Geneva will make the booklet available at regional and headquarters level for all public health staff working in emergencies.

Requests for copies can be send to eha@who.int

Templates for reporting

In order to streamline exchange of information between the field and regional and headquarters level, consultants travelling to the field will receive diskettes with templates of situation reports which will facilitate their reporting. They will provide standard requirements of information needed, indicators for the assessment, what actions WHO is taking, contact information, etc. These templates will also be placed on the website for easy reference and downloading at regional and country levels.

Some templates already exist on diskettes as part of the Handbook for Emergency Field Operations, but need to be reviewed and expanded. A pilot edition is expected to be ready by December 2001.

Requests for copies can be send to eha@who.int

Humanitarian Health Country Profiles

For staff travelling to the field, EHA-Geneva is planning to prepare diskettes containing the latest health and other emergency-relevant information on the country of assignment. The same information will be available on the website, however providing this information on diskettes allows for easier access and reference. The desk officers at EHA-Geneva will ensure that each consultant travelling to the field receives this profile for his/her country of destination.

This work is still in progress. For more details contact colombo@who.int

SUMA

The Supply Management Program, a project to manage humanitarian relief supplies in the aftermath of a disaster, started in 1990 in the Americas. Training material and trainers are available. However, the materials need to be adapted to the needs of different regions. Promotion material, including a video is available but needs to be updated and reprinted/ordered to have enough quantities available for wide distribution. A basic SUMA Kit (laptops, generator, office supplies) and identification material are needed at each regional office where staff has received training, to be ready for rapid response as the needs arise.²

More information is available on the website:

<http://www.disaster.info.desastres.net/SUMA/>

² SUMA is now being globalized. With the support of Fundesuma (the Latin American NGO responsible for all SUMA activities), a pool of trainers will be build among MoH, NGOs and UN agency, for further capacity building and rapid field deployment

Part 2: Kits

Health supplies kits

Currently several 'health' kits are available for rapid distribution.

1. the *new emergency health kit*, last updated in 1999, is the first response in emergency situations. Each kit provides drugs and medical supplies for 10,000 people for 3 months. The full content of the kit is available at www.who.int/disasters. This Kit can be obtained from the supplier "IDA", in the Netherlands.
2. the *Italian Trauma kit*, consisting of kit A, containing drugs, and kit B, containing medical supplies and equipment, to treat 100 people affected by trauma. This Kit has been developed by the Emergency Response Team of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The full content of the kit is available at www.who.int/disasters. Kit A can be obtained through the supplier "IDA" in the Netherlands, Kit B can be obtained through the supplier "Meg" in the Netherlands.
3. the *Italian diarrhoea and cholera kit*, consisting of kit D containing drugs, and kit F, containing medical supplies, to treat 100 people affected by diarrheal diseases, including cholera. This Kit has been developed by the Emergency Response Team of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The full content of the kit is available at www.who.int/disasters. Kit D can be obtained through the supplier "IDA" in the Netherlands, Kit F can be obtained through supplier "Flechaker" in Germany.
4. the *water testing kit*, used on several occasions by WHO, among others during the response in the aftermath of the earthquake in Gujarat, India. This kit is not on stock but rapid delivery is possible through the supplies department at WHO.
5. the *Mental hospital kit*, used by WHO. This kit is not on stock but can be ordered for \$150 through WHO's supplies department
6. the *Reproductive Health Kit for Emergency Situations*. Information on this kit is available on the web-site of the Department of Reproductive Health and Research <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health>. The Kit can be ordered through the UNFPA at www.unfpa.org

The above mentioned suppliers can be contacted through WHO's supplies department.

Brindisi warehouse:

The Brindisi warehouse in Italy, has in stock several kits for rapid delivery that can be mobilized by WHO and Italian NGOs. Twelve new emergency health kits are on permanent stock in the warehouse in Brindisi, Italy, which is sufficient for 120,000 people for 3 months; 5 complete sets of the trauma kit are on stock; and 12 complete sets of the diarrhoea and cholera kit are on stock This amounts to be the minimum needed in stock based on possible needs and space. After each dispatch these kits are replenished. Furthermore, additional kits of these three types are kept in stock by the suppliers mentioned above.

Rapid Response Operational kit

In 2000 WHO's department of EHA identified the need for this kit that would consist of:

- *Technical set*, including a electric generator, solar energy equipment and adapter
- *Communication set*, including a satellite phone, mobile phone, GPS, and hand-hold radios
- *Data processing set*, including a laptop, printer, and camera
- *Accommodation set*, including a bednet, camping equipment, medical kit, and WHO identification material
- *Mini office set*, including supplies such as paper, folders, envelopes, pens, and a calculator

This kit has not materialized yet, as EHA wants to make sure that it is fully compatible with what used by the UN (especially WFP) and NGO partnerse. After that, funds will be needed to purchase the items and preposition several kits at regional level and in Geneva for WHO staff and consultants travelling to the field Their precise number will depend on expected needs and storage space available.

Replenishment of these kits will be maintained on a revolving stock basis.

Rapid Epidemic Response Operations kit

This kit, developed by the departments of Communicable Diseases and Surveillance (CDS) and EHA for use in disease outbreaks, specifically Viral Haemorrhagic Fever, consists of three parts:

- Medical supplies, including protective clothing and material for sample taking
- Communication set, including computer equipment, satellite telephone, handhold radios
- Mini office Set-up kit

This kit is not in stock. CDS-HQ can inform where to purchase the kit. Only protection material is maintained in stock at HQ for epidemic response missions.

Office kit

The purpose of these kits is to be able to immediately set up an office when needed either at sub-regional level or within a country. The Handbook for Emergency Field Operations contains several lists, both in hard copy and on diskettes, illustrating the basics needed for this purpose.

In 1995 as part of a proposal "Enhanced capacity for emergency preparedness and response" a list of immediate operational support 1st line supplies was developed. This list is similar to the list of communication equipment as part of the rapid epidemic response operations kit.

The content of this kit needs to be updated, using the existing lists from WHO and other UN agencies.

Part 3: Staff

Rosters

1. Many EHA staff maintain informal rosters of consultants. A consolidated roster is available on EHA's shared drive. These rosters need to be structured and expanded with experienced staff identified at HQ and regional level for rapid deployment to countries/regions in need. Name, CV's could be ordered along different operational criteria: Nationality, Experience, Expertise, Language skills, Availability, etc. This should be done in collaboration with EHA staff in Geneva, the regional offices, and other UN agencies, as well as with some of the major NGOs. PAHO has developed a data base system which could serve as a base for developing a global accessible system.
2. A list of administrative personnel able/willing to travel on short notice to crisis situations to immediately assist in setting up offices was set up in collaboration with CDS. This list need to be reactivated and updated at HQ and with input from the regional offices.
3. United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) trained personnel within WHO at country, regional and headquarters level needs to be identified. At the same time at HQ level EHA needs to keep track of the schedule of courses given, and have standing slots for WHO staff.