



IDAHO REGION II STABILIZATION PLAN



Annex M

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY COHESION

This annex contains guidelines to educate people and communities to become more self-sufficient.

Lead: Mass Care and Human Services Coordinator

Partners:

- School District Superintendents
- College/University Staff
- Department of Health & Welfare
- Private Sector Counseling Organizations

INTRODUCTION

Citizens of a community which experiences a catastrophic, destabilizing event will find themselves having to adjust to a radically different pattern of life. Interruptions of basic necessities, such as easily obtainable food from stores, clean water from a tap, and working sanitation services, can rapidly cause health crises. Interruptions to systems such as travel, trade, electricity, and communication can leave citizens with an overwhelming feeling of isolation and fear. As in nearly every situation a human can experience, education and knowledge are key to successfully overcoming obstacles.

There will be some citizens who are emotionally unable to cope with a catastrophe at a foundational level. They will be utterly helpless, perhaps will not even be able to meet their own basic needs of care. These people may experience a psychological or mental break from overwhelming personal and regional trauma and will require great assistance.

SCOPE

1. This annex is intended to provide guidance in the event of an infrastructure failure. In the event of infrastructure degradation, the traditional educational system and practices may continue in a modified form.

This plan is only activated in the event of a national emergency and attendant local disaster/emergency declarations

2. This annex focuses on adult education (including teens, as appropriate). The curriculum is basic survival skills. Formal education of children in the “three R’s” will take place after the community has stabilized.

POLICIES

1. Upon crises onset, schools will be closed as a necessity until the crisis is no longer acute.
2. School buildings (and other facilities, as needed) will be designated gathering points for their surrounding neighborhoods. These facilities may be used for any combination of education, healthcare, food preparation, meetings, etc., as determined by the Chief Elected Officials.

SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. By architectural design and classroom layout, schools provide an excellent place to begin educating the citizenry. Schools are evenly dispersed throughout communities, can hold many people at a time, and provide easy organization for teaching.
2. Education of children in normal scholastic pursuits will be suspended as schools are used to educate adults and teens on basic survival and health skills.
3. Local government officials will need to locate people with expertise in the subject areas in the curriculum section of this annex.
4. Daycare will need to be provided for children while parents attend class.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum for citizen education in the event of infrastructure failure is basic survival skills. This includes topics in traditional basic skills and disaster psychology/coping.

Traditional Basic Skills

Due to our mechanized and modernized society, basic skills that were second nature to prior generations are a lost art. Fishing, sanitation, water purification, hunting, basic medical care, and even cooking are strange and foreign concepts to many adults. Local government will need to quickly address the pervasive lack of knowledge within the community to prevent hunger and disease. When citizens feel in control of their own health and safety, there is less propensity to civil disorder.

Should traditional medical and long term care resources collapse, additional basic skills will need to be taught. These include caring for the injured, the elderly, delivering babies, etc, as families will have to begin to care for their own.

Disaster Psychology

Due to the exceedingly high level of stress that citizens will be going through, it is imperative that classes also be taught in emotional stability skills such as crisis management, marriage strengthening, anger management, child and elder abuse prevention.

While psychological training for citizens may seem unnecessary, burdensome, or difficult, a person who is capable of many practical skills, but is psychologically destructive or has a mental or emotional break is much more damaging and a drain on resources than a person who has no practical skills, but is mentally and emotionally stable. A community that tolerates abuse and neglect of the weakest members will not be able to be cohesive and stable. These traits and tendencies are in all humans to varying degrees but are generally kept restrained during times of peace and safety. However, they can easily and quickly emerge during times of crisis and prolonged stress. Anti-social behavior, even within a family, is not a private matter. Cruelty and aggression can become rampant quickly and cause cycles of abuse and destabilization. Put psychological education and skills classes second ONLY to immediate health/safety care classes in priority (such as basic medical care and safe sanitation), and ahead of classes such as cooking, food preservation, fishing, trapping, etc.

PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHING

- 1. Teachers.** Local government will need to find many experts in the variety of skill sets. Look beyond “official” sources for experts. Experts in, say, trapping can be found at Fish and Game, but also in the Boy Scouts. Food preservation experts can be found at the extension office, but also in those who consistently win awards at the fair in food preservation categories. Many camping and hiking enthusiasts are also very knowledgeable in water purification. A rule of thumb would be to strive for an expert in each skill set per elementary school in the area. This will ensure good coverage for the community.
- 2. Facilities.** Schools are ideal. They are fairly evenly dispersed in the community, are familiar landmarks, provide a feeling of stability, and provide many areas for teaching.
- 3. Scheduling.** It is strongly suggested that classes be started as soon as possible and be held at least 3 times per week or preferably on a daily basis. Encourage citizens to send an adult representative from their neighborhood or households to the school every day. Try to offer multiple classes each day.

Keep classes relatively short. Short, frequent (daily) classes are preferable than long infrequent ones. Encourage the citizens to practice and to seek out ways to use their newfound knowledge for neighboring households who could not make it to the class. This is a subtle way of encouraging the citizen to not only be self sufficient, but also to begin to think outside of themselves and reach into the community.

4. Curriculum. Citizens will be in various stages of need: some might know how to cook, but not how to take care of an elderly person, while others might know how to fish but not to trap. Offering a variety of classes will help establish an excellent pattern of learning and growth which will be necessary for a modern, helpless, “instant gratification” society to transition to a stable community post-event.

Do not assume any level of competence already exists in the citizens, but assume that all levels of competence can be achieved in the citizens. This means to start classes at the most basic levels, and increase the education and training well past the “citizens are civilians...the real experts will come take over”. Your citizen group **must** become your expert group as quickly as possible. The greater the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills your citizen base has, the more resilient, and therefore stable, your community will be.

5. Public Information. The local government should start each daily session with a brief information overview of the current status of the community (such as needed skill sets, communication with the state or federal government, status of food or water, etc). Then the group should be dismissed to go to the various classes offered.

BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

Offering education is not just to ensure that water is made safe to drink. It will also be providing necessary **external** stability and emotional support until the citizens begin to find their mental, emotional, and physical equilibrium. There will not be enough mental health professionals to manage the trauma and anxiety that citizens will be feeling. However, we can provide an expedient process to begin the healing of the citizens during this time so that the job of building a stable community is facilitated. This can be done through routine, reminders (of pleasant life), encouragement, and education.

School is one area of life that all citizens understand and have experienced. It is familiar. Sitting in a “safe” schoolroom surrounded by the scents and brightly colored letters posted on the walls, with chalk boards and desks, will help the mind reach back to a time when life was not fraught with trauma and anxiety. From that point of emotional safety, with educators teaching valuable skills in an orderly and organized fashion, the citizen can begin to recover. This will provide an invaluable place for the citizen to begin to rebuild his or her emotional and mental resiliency, while at the same time building the community by creating a well educated and competent citizen base.

The schedule and practice of going “back to school” will also help neighbors reconnect. It will provide a safe atmosphere for neighbors to relate to each other without suspicion or resentment. The local school should become almost an “educational block party”, where neighbors come to be taught, to find answers, and to receive whatever the local government has for them, be it information or quantities of rice or beans.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

In the aftermath of an event, people will be overwhelmed with so much that needs to be done. The concept of a schedule, of a routine, will provide immense psychological comfort. The comfort of a daily schedule of “get up, go to work, come home, have supper, watch tv” will be broken. There is peace in routine, and that peace will be utterly devastated.

By providing this regularly scheduled and organized “work”, we will be helping our citizens during their fragile “adjustment reaction” phase as they begin to understand the magnitude of what just happened and how life will be different. That is why it is imperative to start the congregating at the school at regular times as soon as possible after the event, while people are still psychologically malleable and before permanent mental and emotional trauma set in.

Additionally, beginning classes as soon as possible after the catastrophe will hopefully ensure that citizens reach a level of self sufficiency at about the same time that the readily available supplies of food, water, and fuel in the community begin to run out. By seizing the opportunity to train citizens immediately, the citizens will be mentally and emotionally ready as the reality of a “new normal” becomes apparent.

PREPARATION

- _____ Locate schools in each community
- _____ Identify alternate community meeting/education facilities should schools be unavailable
- _____ Identify candidate instructors for classes (see subjects in “Response” section following)
- _____ Create an appendix for each subject, with instructor list and source materials

RESPONSE

_____ Identify/contact instructors for traditional basic skills including the following:

- _____ Gardening (Appendix 1)
- _____ Wild plants for food and medicine (Appendix 2)
- _____ Cooking (Appendix 3)
- _____ Food Preservation (Appendix 4)
- _____ Water Procurement and Purification (Appendix 5)
- _____ Safe Home Heating (Appendix 6)
- _____ Safe Sanitation (Appendix 7)
- _____ Hygiene in Austere Situations (Appendix 8)
- _____ Basic and Intermediate Medical Care (Appendix 9)
- _____ Basic obstetrics (Appendix 10)
- _____ Infant Care (Appendix 11)
- _____ Eldercare (Appendix 12)
- _____ Hunting (Appendix 13)
- _____ Fishing (Appendix 14)
- _____ Trapping (Appendix 15)
- _____ Basic Fire Fighting (Appendix 16)
- _____ Expedient Weather Forecasting (Appendix 17)

_____ Identify/contact instructors for disaster coping skills including the following:

- _____ Crisis Management (Appendix 18)
- _____ Marriage Strengthening (Appendix 19)
- _____ Anger Management (Appendix 20)
- _____ Child Abuse Prevention (Appendix 21)

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**Appendix 1 – 20: [in development—
to be maintained in a separate binder]**

DRAFT

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