



## **DRAFT LEARNING NOTES**

### **METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES ENGAGEMENT ON DISASTER RELIEF**

**14 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**SALGA HOUSE, CAPE TOWN**

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#### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

South Africa is exposed to a wide range of disasters that impact on various communities. The consequences of such disasters is that social relief is required for victims and often the first respondents are the local community and local government. The objective of social relief includes saving lives, alleviating suffering and restoring stability to communities.

Disaster relief funds play a vital role in the social relief process. The response time in the release and distribution of funds as well as the role players responsible are critical to the relief process. There have been concerns raised with regard to release and distribution of funds, the disaster relief mechanisms and the process of declaring a disaster in terms of processes. It is against this context that SALGA in partnership with the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) planned the Metropolitan engagement. The objective was to discuss the management of social relief within the disaster management context and unpack the support that is offered from the different tiers of government.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE METRO ENGAGEMENT**

The purpose of the engagement was as follows:

- Sharing of experiences on Social Relief in dealing with fires in informal settlements, droughts, floods, xenophobia and the water crisis.
- Knowledge sharing on managing the Social Relief System effectively and efficiently
- Identifying gaps and challenges with recommendations to ensure an Impact Driven Social Relief System

- Deliberating how central Government will ensure that Metros will get undivided support

## **THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **OVERVIEW**

The workshop commenced with a presentation from the Department of Social Development (DSD) explaining their role and the role of SASSA (South African Social Support Agency) in disaster risk mitigation and response. In terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) each national organ of state must determine its role and responsibilities in relation to disaster risk management and assess its capacity to adhere to the requirements of the Act, particularly with reference to setting priorities for disaster risk reduction initiatives and for response and recovery. The role of DSD and SASSA is to exercise reasonable measures to provide expeditious relief intervention including pro-active measures to mitigate the impact of a disaster on vulnerable communities. Other legislative provisions such as the Social Assistance Act, 2004 (Act No. 13 of 2004) and the Fund Raising Act, 1978 (Act No 107 of 1978) were discussed in relation to disaster relief funds.

The Disaster Relief Fund Board was established in terms of the Fund Raising Act No 107 of 1978. The role of the board and the financial provisions allocated for each province was highlighted.

### **CHALLENGES HIGHLIGHTED BY DSD WERE AS FOLLOWS;**

- The Department is in the process of amending the Fund- Raising Act due to the fact that the Fund Raising Act No.107 of 1978 has become dysfunctional over the years, with many parts being repealed owing to the introduction of the Non-Profit Organisation Act No. 71 of 1997. Only Chapter 2 of the Fund Raising Act remains.
- The Draft Amendment Bill seeks to repeal certain provisions of the Fund Raising Act, thus aligning the Act with the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002, PFMA, the Social Assistance Act on issues of Disaster Relief and general provisions of Social Relief of Distress to poor communities.
- The Draft Fund Raising Amendment Bill was published in the Government Gazette for public comments.
- The role and the responsibilities of local authorities/municipalities with regard to the provisioning of immediate relief.
- SASSA to provide a supporting role for relief provided and not be the sole provider of immediate relief.
- The contribution, role and responsibilities of Non-Governmental Relief Organisation.
- The co-ordination and management of donations.
- Verified and confirmed name lists of affected people.

# **THE KNYSNA MUNICIPALITY: LESSONS LEARNT AND THE CHALLENGE OF REBUILDING KNYSNA**

## **OVERVIEW**

Fires started in the early hours on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 in the forestry plantations at Kruisfontein. While fighting the above fire, the Fire Department despatched the Sedgefield Fire Department to attend to a vegetation fire near Karatara, and after that a third fire was reported as burning in the Barrington/ Elandskraal area. Due to the weather conditions and the drought the extent of the fire spread exponentially across the whole KM within hours of the start of the incident.

The fire spread to a total of 35 areas across the Greater Knysna from Sedgefield all the way to Brakenhill and across the municipal boundary towards Plettenberg Bay. Evacuation was done in numerous areas across the Greater Knysna area during the first four (4) days of the fire. Focus was on saving lives, evacuating members of the public in excess of 10 000 out of the path of the fire

## **CHALLENGES FACED AT KNYSNA**

- Knysna Municipality did not have the resources for the magnitude of the disaster. They were equipped for 50 people.
- Municipalities do not have the capacity to deal with the distribution of aid and the magnitude of the aid received.
- The storage facilities were not available to store the aid as some were perishables with expiry dates. The Municipality only had storage facilities for their maintenance materials. If aid needs to be stored, who pays for storage?
- There were no SLA's defining the roles and responsibilities which resulted in the duplication of resources.
- There was a lack of support from other Municipalities and when help was offered it was too late.
- There was a lack of co-ordination of NGO's and private organisations that were assisting which resulted in aid being distributed at unofficial points.
- When does relief aid stop?
- There was no communication strategy and requests for aid via social media was problematic.
- Identifying people that were directly and indirectly affected was difficult.
- There were buildings that were uninsured.
- New building regulations affected the rebuilding of some properties.
- There was a lack of Town Planners.

## **LESSONS FROM KNSYNA**

- The establishment of a Resource Management Team (RMT) to establish order to the disaster relief process.
- The recommendations by the RMT to appoint expert aid organisations the distribution of aid or network of organisations to lead a central relief office with all the necessary resources combined with operational teams throughout the value chain.
- Having a demand and supply methodology for the distribution of aid.
- The creation of the resource tracker app for the supply of disaster relief.
- The drafting of a STEAP (Short Term Emergency Assistance Policy).

## **INSTITUTIONALISED RESPONSES TO XENOPHOBIA: CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

The xenophobic attacks in the city of Cape Town was identified as a complex social disaster. The situation was fortunately rescued with no fatalities and the activation of the Disaster Operations Committee within 24 hours assisted in containing the spread on violence. Many displaced victims did not have refugee status. The commitment from all role players including political leaders assisted in diffusing the situation and the provision of sheltering needs. There were others factors however that complicated the disaster operation such as the strong gale force winds that affected the erecting of the temporary shelters and the location of the shelters in outlying areas was difficult to access for the distribution of aid.

## **CHALLENGES FACED AT CAPE TOWN**

- Sufficient security at the relevant sites posed a problem for both staff and the victims
- Diverse nationalities and the language barrier
- Health issues
- The availability of trauma counselling
- The gale force winds that affected the tent structures
- The quality control of food
- The distances that the NGO's had to travel to distribute food.
- The complexity of the family units in terms of privacy was a problem
- Providing medical assistance to displaced infants ,expectant mothers as well as chronic patients

## **COORDINATED RESPONSE TO FLOODS: ETHEKWINI MUNICIPLAITY**

The most common types of floods experienced by eThekweni has been the flash floods which has been on the increase recently. The influx of people to the City exacerbates the problem where people occupy unsafe areas such as river banks. Most Informal Settlements in the City are located at flood plain areas, along river banks or water streams.

### **CHALLENGES FACED AT ETHEKWINI**

<b>INTERNAL</b>	<b>EXTERNAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays with the housing project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dumping and littering of water streams and rivers causing water flow obstruction</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of urgent departmental support during major flooding incidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community reluctance to participate in evacuation processes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient funding for disaster relief programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community resistance to return to their homes after being relocated</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor dissemination of early warning messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theft and criminal activities during flood relief operations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities total dependency on municipality for support during flood incidents</li> </ul>

### **LESSONS LEARNT FROM ETHEKWINI**

- The municipality has a Social Relief Technical Task Team (SC TTT) established under the Disaster Management & Emergency Control Unit.
- The support from political leaders have facilitated the improvements in disaster relief.
- The introduction of a Flood Early Warning System (FEWS).
- The introduction of Flood Risk Reduction Programmes such as widening streams and storm water maintenance programmes.

## PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

- The biggest problem at the occurrence of a disaster is determining resources required and where to source these resources. A typical example was the shortage of fire fighters required to respond to the emergency situation at Knysna. Limpopo volunteered staff but this was done too late.
- The outsourcing of the distribution of aid has its own complexities in terms of where their area of expertise. In the absence of a resource distribution methodology, chaos can prevail resulting in wastage.
- There is certainly a lack of a co-ordinated and integrated approach to dealing with disaster. This is prevalent with in terms of capacity that other metros can offer. Who knows when they should be providing the additional skilled capacity that is required?
- Donation management falls outside the ambit of the Disaster Management Unit.
- The lack of appropriate planning and support offered by the support departments is a challenge e.g. the role of the Health department in examining food.
- There needs to be a co-ordinated response to disaster of any form that clarifies roles and responsibilities of every participant in the rescue and relief process.
- The data bases at the various municipalities are difficult to update which is a requirement to access the relief fund. The methodologies with regard to data base management must be shared for other municipalities to learn.
- The criteria for deciding who should receive social relief is not clearly defined in terms of defining the head of a household structure. The informal settlement structures have complex structures.
- In terms of the SASSA policy of providing relief to the head of a household, the informal settlement structure poses a complexity in terms of the number of families that live in one household structure. How do you provide a relief to a structure that may have different families sharing facilities?
- There is a disintegrated approach from the support departments such as Human Settlements. They have an active role to play in terms to determining the number of households in the informal settlements.
- Support from local political leadership is important in securing the necessary resources and assisting in stabilising communities that are affected by disasters.

## KEY LEARNINGS

### 1. PLANNING

- Planning correctly to minimise the impact of disasters must entail a co-ordinated approach that should be comprehensively documented and communicated within metros and amongst affected stakeholders. The roles and responsibilities of the various spheres of government articulated as indicated in the various acts and frameworks relating to disaster management
- A JOC (Joint Operations Committee) must be set up in order to co-ordinate disaster relief as well as determine capacity required.
- There must be an integrated approach to assistance offered by support departments and by other municipalities and districts.

### 2. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- It is important to share information between the metro's and other tiers of government. The development of the resource tracker application was an example that could be emulated in other metros.
- SASSA has supported the idea that there needs to be an improvement in their stakeholder relations.
- There must be an official that is responsible for communication especially on social media.
- The various committees that are established at metros must have their own communication strategy that they are accountable for.

### 3. RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Budgetary provisions for each municipality must be clear and must include provision for storage facilities.
- If the resources of NGO's and private organisations are to be utilised then this must be documented in the respective categories eg. SPCA for animal relief etc.
- Funding should not only take into consideration disaster relief but funds need to be allocated for disaster risk reduction. Risk reduction contributes to the principle of *"spending now to save for the future"*.

### 4. ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

- SASSA acknowledged that disasters vary from droughts to floods and as an institution they are guided by policy on social relief. Their immediate concern after a disaster is ensuring that people are placed in a safe area. This however is complex

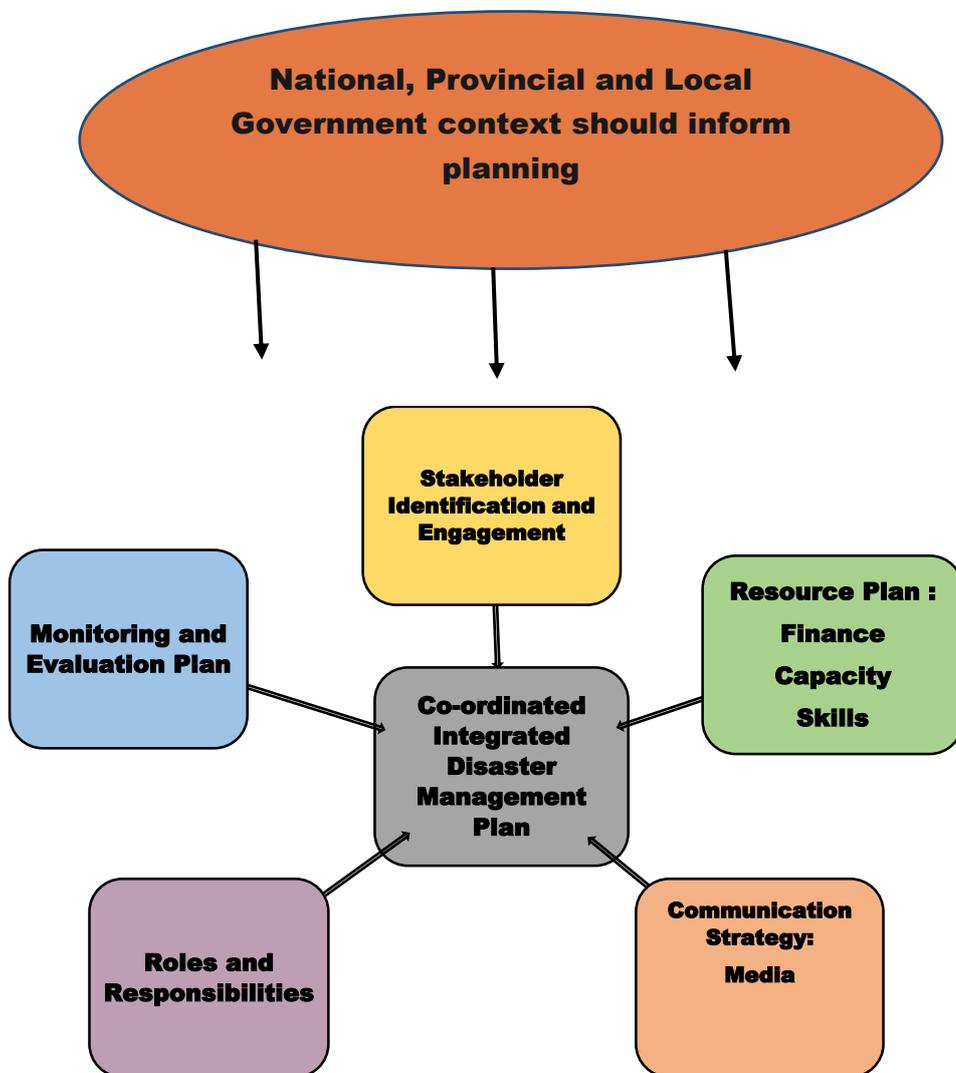
with households varying in number of adults and children .In terms of policy they pay according to a list of names. The payment must balance with the total number of people that are displaced and housed in the area of safety. The gap in this process is that not all households affected by disaster are under one structure. It is the responsibility of the municipalities to relocate people in a way such that names can be verified and there is some level of accountability.

- The documentation from foreign nationals is a problem and SASSA can only assist if they have asylum status. This policy needs to be investigated so that foreign nationals that do not have proper documentation must have a process to follow so that they can legitimately access relief assistance.
- eThekweni Municipality provided positive feedback on their scenario with regards to data bases. The Human Settlements department had an updated data base that describes who owns what and the location. The database is updated on a regular basis via the GIS department which also assists with other challenges such as land invasion. The municipality also confirmed that they had a good relationship with SASSA which facilitated the disaster relief process.

## WAY FORWARD

**RISK REDUCTION PLAN TO BE COMPILED INCORPORATING RELEVANT LEGISLATION FROM THE DIFFERENT SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT.**

## DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR MUNICIPALITIES



- The nature of support from SALGA in relation to Disaster Management for municipalities and districts to be clarified.
- Canvassing support from politicians to form a key role in disaster strategy implementation.
- The funding model for disaster management to be revised in terms of sourcing an equitable share from National Treasury for disaster relief and disaster risk reduction.
- Integrated approach to examine support from neighbouring municipalities and districts and the co-ordination must be reviewed
- Reinforce the current strategies from the Disaster Management Act rather than re-inventing the wheel.
- All strategies must be informed by the IDP
- SALGA to hold future workshops to discuss frameworks that are stipulated by the National Disaster Management Centre.