Common Needs Assessments and humanitarian action

Description

Tweet

by Richard Garfield, with Courtney Blake, Patrice Chatainger and Sandie Walton-Ellery. HPN Network Paper No.69, January 2011

â??Five years ago, the field of needs assessments resembled a tower of Babel. Each agency had its own unproven survey forms and made their own assessments based on little field-based information. At times there was little discussion between agencies about what constituted the major needs and the best response monitoring approach in a particular emergency.

Funds for emergency humanitarian action have doubled each decade during the last 30 years. Meanwhile, the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative and humanitarian reform call for greater accountability and effectiveness on the basis of evidence. Without assessing the needs of those affected more accurately, accountability and effectiveness will not be possible. But assessments are often completed far too late, and provide far too little useful information, to guide funding decisions or provide a comparative base for monitoring during recovery. At its best, a common inter-agency, inter-sectoral needs assessment helps to develop a better joint understanding of needs, capabilities, and appropriate response.

Network Paper 69 summarises the basic characteristics of a Common Needs Assessment (CNA), reviews experience in using assessments in recent years and highlights the problems encountered. This paper demonstrates what CNAs can achieve, details their limitations and provides an overview of steps to address common problems. It hopes to produce better, more useful and more timely assessments, contributing to improved humanitarian response.â?•

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. humanitarian aid
2. needs assessment

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