

Sample Business Continuity Plan for Community Groups

This Business Continuity Plan (BCP) outlines strategies to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies affecting [Community Group Name]. It ensures the continuity of critical services, the safety of members, and the effective support of the broader community.

1. Prepare for Emergencies
 - a. Risk Assessment
 - i. Identify potential risks such as natural disasters (flooding, extreme heat), infrastructure failures, health emergencies, security threats.
 - ii. Use tools like local risk registers or interactive maps to assess risks specific to your geographical / thematic area.
 - iii. Evaluate the likelihood and impact of each risk and prioritize.
 - iv. Share risk information with your community to build awareness.
 - b. Emergency Plan Development
 - i. Create a tailored emergency plan addressing key risks and detailing procedures for evacuation, communication, and resource allocation.
 - ii. Define roles and responsibilities for staff, volunteers, and members.
 - iii. Ensure plan includes business continuity to maintain critical ops.
 - c. Volunteer Management
 - i. Draft a volunteer handbook outlining roles, responsibilities, and emergency protocols.
 - ii. Set up communication channels e.g. WhatsApp for rapid updates.
 - iii. Use collaborative tools like Google Sheets for scheduling / task coordination.
 - iv. Conduct regular training and drills to ensure all understand their roles.
 - d. Resource Preparation
 - i. Identify and secure resources e.g. safe spaces, transportation, and equipment.
 - ii. Stock emergency kits with first aid supplies, water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, and PPE.
 - iii. Establish partnerships with local organisations to share support.
 - e. Communication Strategy
 - i. Identify official sources for emergency information.
 - ii. Plan outreach methods, bear in mind language barriers, potential power outages, offline mechanisms etc.
 - iii. Join local networks to coordinate communication efforts with other groups and authorities.
2. What to Prepare

- a. Essential Supplies
 - i. Maintain an inventory of critical supplies, including:
 1. First aid kits and medical supplies
 2. Food and water for at least three days
 3. Flashlights, batteries, and portable chargers
 4. Personal protective equipment (PPE)
 5. Important documents in waterproof containers
 - b. Facilities and Equipment
 - i. Designate safe spaces for shelter or operations during emergencies
 - ii. Ensure facilities have backup power sources and secure storage
 - iii. Regularly inspect and maintain equipment to ensure functionality.
 - c. Community Support Systems
 - i. Identify vulnerable individuals and plan specific support measures
 - ii. Engage members to assist with rapid response / resource mobilization.
 - iii. Establish mutual aid agreements with neighbouring organizations.
 - d. Financial Preparedness
 - i. Set aside emergency funds for unforeseen expenses.
 - ii. Ensure adequate insurance coverage for properties and activities.
3. Managing During an Emergency
- a. Activation of Emergency Plan
 - i. Assess situation and activate emergency plan based on criteria.
 - ii. Notify emergency services and relevant local authorities e.g. EPT.
 - iii. Mobilize volunteers and resources as outlined in the plan.
 - b. Communication and Coordination
 - i. Disseminate accurate timely info through established channels.
 - ii. Coordinate with local authorities, emergency services, other groups
 - iii. Maintain clear incident log to track actions, decisions, resource usage.
 - c. Supporting the Community
 - i. Use local knowledge to identify unmet needs
 - ii. Report them to emergency services.
 - iii. Offer resources, such as buildings or supplies, for community support.
 - iv. Organize and direct residents to relevant resources and services.
 - d. Managing Donations
 - i. Clearly communicate acceptable donation items / drop-off process.
 - ii. Label and organize donated items,

- iii. Maintain an inventory for efficient distribution.
 - iv. Collaborate with other organizations to manage excess donations.
- 4. Monitoring and Reviewing Responses
 - a. Real-Time Monitoring
 - i. Assign a team to monitor and provide updates to decision-makers
 - ii. Use feedback from volunteers and members to adapt responses
 - b. Post-Incident Review
 - i. Conduct a debrief with all stakeholders to evaluate the response.
 - ii. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
 - iii. Update emergency and business continuity plans from lessons learnt
 - c. Regular Plan Reviews
 - i. Schedule plan reviews every 6-12 months or after significant changes in the community or operating environment.
 - ii. Test plan through regular drills and simulations to ensure effective
- 5. Additional Perspectives
 - a. Community Engagement: Raise awareness of risks and preparedness measures through workshops and training sessions. Encourage community participation in planning and response efforts to build trust and resilience. Share insights and best practices with local networks to strengthen collective preparedness
 - b. Combating Misinformation: Verify and share accurate info from reliable sources. Educate community on identifying and addressing misinformation, particularly on social media. Collaborate with organizations specializing in mental health support, hate crime prevention, and trauma recovery
 - c. Property and Staff Safety: Implement security measures to protect properties and facilities, such as securing vacant buildings and reducing fire risks. Provide legal and pastoral support for staff and volunteers facing threats or stress during emergencies.

The six stages of the risk assessment process are:

Contextualization:

- **Understand the Environment:** Summarize factors that influence the assessment of the likelihood and the impact of risks in your specific context
- **Consider Influencing Factors:** Geographical, socio-economic, operational.

Hazard Identification and Allocation for Assessment:

- **Identify Potential Hazards:** List all that could impact the organization e.g. natural disasters, health emergencies, technological failures, and human-caused events.
- **Assign Responsibilities:** Allocate to relevant team members for detailed assessment.

Risk Analysis:

- **Evaluate Likelihood:** Assess probability of each hazard happening within 5 years.
- **Assess Impact:** Determine potential impact of each on operations, including human welfare, economic costs, environmental damage, disruption to essential services.

Risk Evaluation:

- **Combine Likelihood and Impact:** Use a risk matrix to combine the likelihood and impact scores, resulting in an overall risk rating (e.g., low, medium, high, very high).
- **Prioritize Risks:** Rank risks based on overall ratings to prioritize which risks need immediate attention and which can be monitored over time.

Risk Treatment:

- **Develop Mitigation Strategies:** Identify measures to reduce likelihood or impact of high-priority risks e.g. creating emergency plans, training staff, securing insurance, or investing in infrastructure improvements.
- **Implement Controls:** Put in place the necessary controls and procedures to manage identified risks effectively.

Monitoring and Review:

- **Regular Reviews:** Schedule regular reviews of the risk assessment to ensure it remains current and relevant - done every two years or after significant changes.
- **Update Plans:** Revise plans based on latest risk assessment findings.
- **Learn from Incidents:** After any emergency or incident, conduct a debrief to identify lessons learned and update the risk assessment and plans accordingly