

Welcome to the Remote Field Crisis Management course!

The environments in which staff travel and work present a constant risk of security and safety incidents. The majority of these incidents, should they affect personnel, would normally be dealt with and managed through the existing in-country management structure, with support from the Head Office if required.

However, exceptional crisis situations can arise which, due to the nature and severity of the incident or its wider implications for the organisation, are beyond the scope of normal programme management mechanisms or decision-making. As a result of such exceptional events, special coordination and decision-making must be undertaken. Although these events are rare, the successful management of any crisis situation is dependent on the degree of preparedness of the agency, combined with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and communication lines, especially where a coordinated and effective response from many different departments is required.

As the humanitarian sector continues to work in areas where risks require certain levels of remote management, the likelihood is that if a serious incident occurs, expatriates will be unable to base themselves at the locations of the incident. Therefore, senior national staff or staff from the local partner organisation will need to manage parts of any crisis response directly. A good, current example is Syria, where any crisis response to staff abductions in-country would likely be managed remotely by an incident management team in Turkey or Lebanon.

Thus, the objective of this training is to provide senior national staff (who are working in the remote locations) with an understanding of the principles and main aspects of crisis management, but from a remote management perspective. The training highlights the ‘remote’ aspects of this type of crisis management, casting them in light of good practice in crisis management.

The course also includes ‘learning activities’ after each content-based session (see agenda in the course materials). Too often, the knowledge and information that training participants receive doesn’t transfer to improved practice in their organisations. Thus, after each session, there is a ‘learning activity’, each of which is meant to stimulate thoughts and plans amongst the participants for how the information they are learning in this training could transfer into improved knowledge and practice when they go back to their jobs.

The pilot course was run in Antakya, Turkey during 11-12 February 2014 with a mixed group of staff from various NGOs. The materials contained in this package have been revised so that they will be widely applicable anywhere. Thus, it may be necessary to amend various parts of the curriculum in order to make it relevant to the context within which it is being delivered. This is particularly true for the 2.4 CME (Remote Crisis Management Exercise) materials. See more on this below.

Course Materials

The course materials are organised as follows:

* Each session is numbered according to the day (day one or day two) and the session order as indicated in the agenda. Thus, session 1.2 is day one, session two.
* Each session folder contains a Session Brief (SB) and a PowerPoint Presentation (PP); some sessions that have groupwork may have Handouts (HO) as well.
* There is an accompanying Workbook that follows the curriculum closely and is meant to do away with the need to copy the PowerPoint slides for the participants. Most of the materials on the slides is included in the Workbook, albeit not in the ‘slide’ format.

Remote Crisis Management Exercise

The exercise is a simulation of an organisational crisis that develops in layers over a period of time. The scenario will be applied over the course of a half-day to the FCMT participant group (the Field Crisis Management Team) who, in the scenario, are the Healthy Communities field team.

The exercise is punctuated by a series of serials (paper-based interjections) and injects (in-person interventions) which will require action and communication from the FCMT. The methodology is a paper-based methodology that will be tightly controlled by the facilitation team. Such a methodology enables key lessons to be identified efficiently and provides an effective exercise control mechanism.

There is a document in the 1.4 CME folder called ‘Facilitator Briefing for CME’ that outlines all of the elements and materials of the exercise. However, while preparing for the exercise, it is important to note:

* All of the place names from the pilot course have been removed. Thus, these will need to be carefully included in order to reflect the countries/geographies that are relevant to the context within which the exercise is being delivered.
* All of the names are currently names that are relevant to a Syrian response. If these names are not relevant to the context within which the exercise is being conducted, these will need to be changed as well.
* All of the pilot materials are in a separate folder entitled ‘Extra Resources’. If you are running the exercise for a Turkey/Syria remote management groups, these may be useful with since they will require less adaptation.
* Note that there is a working lunch near the beginning of the exercise.

Happy training!