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TT 1.3B: Pan Island Preparedness (Scenario B: Flooding)

Background

Your disaster risk reduction (DRR) organization is leading a flooding preparedness project on Pan Island, a country in the Atlantic Ocean. It is a low-income country. Heavy monsoon rainfall often causes extreme flooding. The country's main economic activity is farming, but some families also get important income from illegal logging in areas around the capital, Rad. This illegal logging has increased the risk of landslides and mudslides during the wet season.

You expect the month-long rainy season to start next month. Informal settlements are very vulnerable to flooding and mudslides. Many people have been displaced in recent years. Coastal communities often live in areas with hazards. For example, many people live in houses built on "banked" land reclaimed from the sea. This makes them vulnerable to flooding.

Pan society is divided strictly according to social status and gender. It is difficult for organizations to get information from and about vulnerable groups. This makes it difficult provide the right help to people. Cellphone coverage is very high, but few women own a phone. The project coverage area has 7,890 households. You have some information about the numbers of men and women but no data on the age groups nor how many people have disabilities.

Your DRR organization is well known in Pan. It has worked there for 15 years and has well-established partnerships in the country, especially with regional and national governments.

Project activities

You will offer training on flooding preparedness to 200 DRR focal points from local disaster management committees. These DRR focal points will then share information in communities and work with them to map hazards in their area. The trainings will explain:

- How households can prepare (e.g., by securing essential documents)
- How to conduct community mapping
- How to plan an evacuation

Almost all the DRR focal points are male, because more men in the communities are literate and few women applied to participate. These male focal points will be responsible for sharing information with households and helping them develop household evacuation plans. The DRR focal points are also leading community hazard-mapping activities. You know that few women have actively participated in these in the past.

The project also offers small repair and reinforcement projects for vulnerable homes and structures. The male focal points will be deciding which households will receive this help. They will help give out the materials.

As part of the project, your organization has developed an early warning system with the regional government. It sends information and alerts via short message service (SMS). Your organization has also set up several evacuation centers. It was difficult to find space for the centers, so your organization had to choose locations without community input. Many are long distances from Pan communities. Most community members will be able to manage these distances because they are used to walking long distances to markets. Evacuation centers can get very crowded. They do not have facilities for people with disabilities.

Your organization has found evacuation center volunteer managers who are eager to support. They have already been trained through the project. They will also help give out emergency non-food items in case of a disaster. However, they have not been trained on staff conduct and how to direct program participants to support services, but they are very knowledgeable about DRR.

In the past, there were rumors that sexual exploitation and abuse were a problem at evacuation centers operated by your organization. You are not sure if the rumors were true, because your organization does not have a way to formally collect feedback from program participants.