Pre-positioning life-saving supplies to improve disaster preparedness

Overview

UNFPA aims to ensure that, during emergencies, the specific needs of women and girls in the Asia–Pacific region are met by governments, United Nations agencies and key stakeholders. One of the ways it seeks to improve this is through a regional initiative that supports the timely distribution of essential supplies by trained partners.

Since 2015, the UNFPA Asia–Pacific Regional Office has managed a flagship Regional Pre-positioning Initiative, supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Between May 2017-2019, over US$ 1 million of crucial supplies for sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence directly reached almost 84,000 people affected by 28 emergencies across 10 countries.

As of 2019, the Regional Prepositioning Initiative focuses on 11 priority countries: Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tonga and Vanuatu. However, supplies are used across the Asia–Pacific region wherever they are needed most. Supplies are also pre-positioned in regional hubs in Brisbane, Australia, and Suva, Fiji.

In emergencies, an essential component of an effective humanitarian response is ensuring the availability of supplies that meet needs associated with sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence. UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, strategically pre-positions such supplies in disaster-prone countries and regional hubs in the Asia–Pacific region. This has helped UNFPA respond faster, better and more efficiently to humanitarian crises across the region.

When Tropical Cyclone Gita devastated ‘Eua Island, Tonga, destroying 25-year-old Pipiena Tuivai’s home, a UNFPA dignity kit provided essential sanitation, hygiene and protection supplies for her and her children. ©Tomoko Kurokawa/UNFPA PSRO
**PHILIPPINES**
Provisioning temporary reproductive health facilities in the aftermath of the Central Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami

The ravaging earthquake and tsunami that struck Sulawesi province in September 2018, caused severe health problems in the country. The Philippines government and UNFPA worked together to ensure that women and girls became the priority to have access to safe and quality reproductive health services.

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**
Supporting clean delivery after an earthquake

Following the 8.2 magnitude earthquake that struck Sulawesi province in central Indonesia on September 28, 2018, UNFPA with support from the Government of Indonesia, 51 pregnant women across nine communities, who were isolated in the city of Palu, received dignity kits to support their delivery.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**
Dignity kits for women affected by multiple cyclones

The eruption of Mount Ambae volcano in Vanuatu in September 2017 followed by protracted volcanic and seismic activity throughout 2018 led to the evacuation of the entire population of Ambae Island to Tanna Island. As a result, the local authorities requested dignity kits. UNFPA distributed dignity kits to 200 women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, with dignity kits to meet their needs.

Pre-positioning has been a game changer for UNFPA's humanitarian work in the Asia-Pacific region

Having the necessary supplies already pre-positioned in country.

Leaving no one behind

In an individual clean delivery pack to support their delivery. The Papua New Guinea National Health Medical Missions that provided essential antenatal, delivery and postnatal care to 3,500 pregnant and lactating women. UNFPA also established women-friendly spaces in these facilities, including clean delivery rooms.

Helping women affected by the eruption of Mount Amba

The eruption of Mount Ambae volcano in Vanuatu in September 2017 was the worst disaster the country faced in 60 years. Less than two months later, the small Pacific island nation bore the brunt of another major cyclone, Tropical Cyclone Keni, which damaged the 'Eua hospital. UNFPA provided 1,305 reproductive health services in a one-month period.

**SOLOMON ISLANDS**
Improving hygiene and sanitation

The eruption of Mount Ambae volcano in Vanuatu in September 2017 resulted in the loss of lives, displacement of 100,000 residents and major destruction of infrastructure, affecting health facilities.

**VANUATU**
Providing temporary reproductive health facilities in the aftermath of the Central Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami

The eruption of Mount Ambae volcano in Vanuatu in September 2017 resulted in the loss of lives, displacement of 100,000 residents and major destruction of infrastructure, affecting health facilities.

**TOKELAU**
Reoccupying hospitals hit by tropical cyclones

Tropical Cyclone Foa, which hit Fatu Hiva in February 2018, washed the islander's houses away. The Pacific Island nation has faced the direct impact of several recent tropical cyclones, affecting both the infrastructure and medical services in the community.
Pre-positioning has provided new opportunities for UNFPA to advocate for measures to address sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence during humanitarian responses. It has also helped to build trust with governments and other partners. These outcomes assist UNFPA’s work in relation to the humanitarian, development and peace-building nexus.

Pre-positioning allows UNFPA to respond faster
Nationally pre-positioned supplies are readily available to implementing partners in an emergency, whereas those procured in the aftermath of a response often take weeks to arrive.

Even in countries where UNFPA is currently not pre-positioning supplies nationally, the close partnership between UNFPA and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has enabled supplies from the regional supplies warehouse in Australia to be on the ground within 48 hours of a government’s request for assistance.

Pre-positioning as part of preparedness efforts improves the quality of a response
Pre-positioning supplies enables customisation for the country context before an emergency. For example, dignity kits can include culturally appropriate clothing in suitable sizes.

Many of the priority countries face regular emergencies, and UNFPA has received feedback from affected communities on what they need most during disasters. These lessons on supplies can be built into the preparedness phase of the disaster cycle, to improve the quality of supplies available in the acute phase of a response.

Pre-positioning reduces transport costs
Transporting supplies by sea freight as a preparedness activity is significantly cheaper than air freighting supplies in the acute phase of a response. For example, during the flood response in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, transport of dignity kits from the supplier to the end beneficiary cost $1.50 per kit. In contrast, the cost of air freighting dignity kits during the acute phase of the response was quoted at more than $12 per kit. It also reduces carbon emissions.

National pre-positioning allows a response in crises that UNFPA would not otherwise be able to engage in
Governments across the Asia–Pacific region have invested significantly in humanitarian preparedness, but do not always have the capacity to fully respond to sexual and reproductive health needs. National pre-positioning of supplies can provide an entry point for UNFPA to support in this area, even when there is no formal request for international assistance.

Having supplies available in a country means that UNFPA can support small-scale responses for which a response might not have been feasible without pre-positioned supplies.

In areas where access to affected communities is compromised because of conflict, it is vital to have supplies pre-positioned that can be immediately used whenever temporary access is granted to humanitarian actors.

Pre-positioning strengthens partnerships
Pre-positioning has enhanced governments’ views of UNFPA as an essential humanitarian partner in the Asia–Pacific region.

Having supplies immediately available has given UNFPA a seat at the table when developing response plans. This enables UNFPA to advocate for the needs of women and girls beyond the provision of supplies.

The benefits of trust with governments, humanitarian actors and partners enable UNFPA to achieve greater results across the humanitarian, development and peace-building nexus in the Asia–Pacific region.

Pre-positioning has improved the speed, quality and efficiency of humanitarian responses

Humanitarian context and challenges

The Asia–Pacific region is the most disaster-prone region in the world. Nearly 45 percent of the world’s natural disasters occur in the region, and 95 percent of all people affected by a disaster in 2016 live in Asia-Pacific. Mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change are huge challenges facing all countries in the region, especially Pacific Island nations. The region is also home to a number of protracted crises and long-running conflicts resulting in large refugee and displaced populations.

The UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office works with UNFPA Country Offices in the region to assist governments and civil society partners to reduce disaster risk, and prepare for and respond to emergencies. This is in line with the unique mandate of UNFPA to address sexual and reproductive health, and prevent and respond to gender-based violence during humanitarian crises.

Building capacity

In order to ensure the effective management and use of sexual and reproductive health supplies in emergencies, the Regional Prepositioning Initiative also supports capacity building initiatives across the priority countries. Between 2015 and 2018, 200 people from UNFPA, governments and partner organisations across eight countries completed humanitarian logistics training, and more than 60 people attended workshops on humanitarian preparedness and gender-based violence in emergencies.

Papua New Guinea Family Health Association deliver UNFPA’s Reproductive Health kits to remote communities around Lake Kutubu, during the Papua New Guinea workshops on humanitarian preparedness completed humanitarian logistics training, organisations across eight countries Between 2015 and 2018, 200 people initiatives across the priority countries. Initiative also supports capacity building emergencies, the Regional Prepositioning and reproductive health supplies in management and use of sexual
In order to ensure the effective capacity Building

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