

EMT COUNTRY COORDINATION CELL TRAINING



Strengthening Country Coordination of
Emergency Medical Teams



Coordination in Emergencies

Disasters and disease outbreaks can occur at any given moment and in any place in the world—often wreaking havoc and seriously disrupting and threatening lives in communities. In order to reduce the avoidable loss of life and the burden of disease and disability, coordination is key.

Uncoordinated medical team deployment during an emergency can significantly disrupt national emergency coordination plans which can lead to the depletion of national resources and in some cases unnecessary disabilities and death.



Photos: WHO/ Francisco Guerrero



EMT Initiative

The WHO Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) Initiative has been working to help improve the timeliness and quality of health services provided by national and international Emergency Medical Teams. Part and parcel to this, is the need to build the capacity of national health authorities to lead the coordination of the emergency response of EMTs through a coordination cell.



Photo: WHO/ Chantal Claravall

In an effort to build capacities across countries and regions, the WHO EMT Secretariat brings together between 20-30 individuals from various national governments and organisations for an intensive week long course on EMT Coordination.



Photos: WHO/ Francisco Guerrero

The core purpose of an EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC) is to ensure that the overall response of EMTs (both National and International) best meet the excess healthcare needs that are a result of the emergency or from damage to existing capacity.





Photo: WHO/ Francisco Guerrero

“

National Emergency Medical Teams are usually better placed to provide immediate assistance, strengthening these EMTs capacity to respond to emergencies and giving countries the tools to coordinate this response have become core objectives of the EMT Initiative.

Dr Ian Norton, Manager of the Emergency Medical Teams Initiative

Mentoring

The first part of the intensive course consists of individual and group exercises that allow participants to exchange ideas and provides them with an overview of the EMT Initiative and the concepts and significance of an EMTCC.

Groups then enter into an interactive mentoring exercise where they apply the EMTCC concepts through a case study and with close mentorship from the members of the EMT Secretariat and the EMTCC trained network.



Simulation



Once participants are equipped with the key concepts and mentored through various situations, they are then challenged to **apply their learnings from the first days through a simulation exercise**. Participants are grouped into teams and are challenged to **assess, establish, operate, and deactivate an EMTCC** following a Category 5 Cyclone in an island nation.

As teams arrive in the imaginary island of Namuna, they are faced with their first challenge—coordinating the arrival of EMTs and establishing an EMTCC. Here teams apply the EMT registration and screening process to the country context and facilitate appropriate EMT access to equipment, supplies and medication from the start of operations.

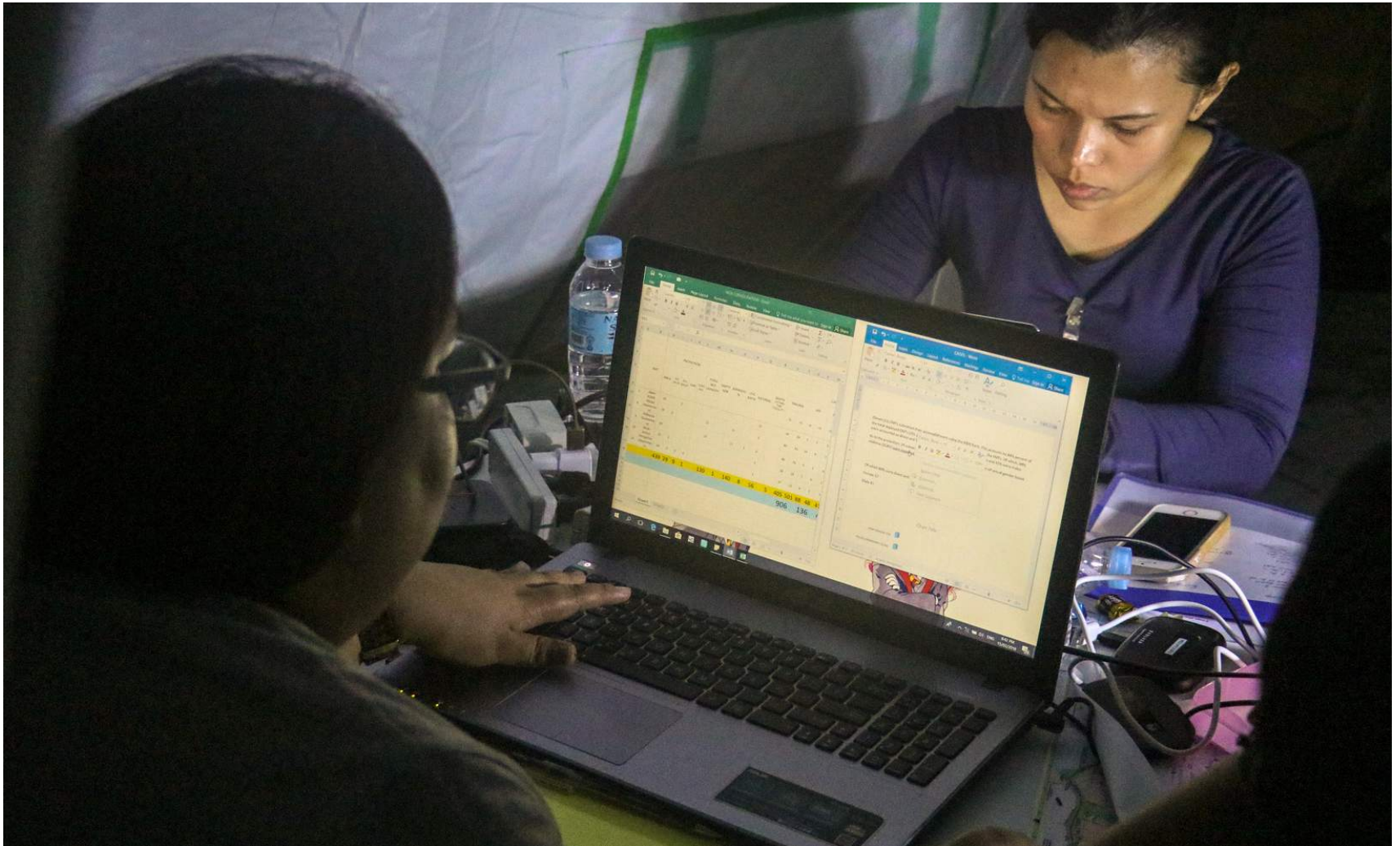


Photos: WHO/ Faizza Tanggol



Photos: WHO/ Francisco Guerrero





Photos: WHO/ Faizza Tanggol

In the EMTCC, simulated in tents, participants then begin evaluating the situation, set up reporting structures using template reporting forms, and find ways to recognize opportunities and anticipate coordination needs of EMTs.

Quality Improvement

Teams are then challenged to conduct field visits to the EMTs accepted for the response. Here they walk through the main planning considerations and learn to recognize areas of technical concern that may require further attention in order to meet agreed international and national minimum standards. This particular exercise also allows participants to hone their interpersonal skills when dealing with EMT counterparts in the field.



Photos: WHO/ Francisco Guerrero



Photo: WHO/ Chantal Charavall

PARTNER COORDINATION

Teams also join organized meetings where they learn to construct appropriate **liaison channels for integrating the EMT community into the emergency coordination architecture.**

Participants then learn to apply effective interpersonal and negotiation skills in coordinating with other response actors as they work towards a common goal.



Photo: WHO/Faizza Tanggol

As the response turns into recovery, teams are then advised to begin ensuring the efficient transition of responsibilities and deactivating the EMTCC.

As the simulation progresses complexities are abound on the fictional island of Namuna. Apart from meeting and coordinating the EMTs, the participants are then confronted with the daunting task of **managing the information and communicating how it is being handled** in a simulated press interviews and conferences



Photo: WHO/Francisco Guerrero



Photo: CRIMEDEM
 Photo: WHO Faizza Tanggol
 Photo: WHO/Francisco Guerrero

By the end of the course, participants learn to recognize the pivotal role that the coordination cell plays in facilitating the effective use of EMT's during each phase of operations

“

We are working to ensure governments are able to lead the coordination of Emergency Medical Teams, especially in countries often burdened by outbreaks and natural disasters.

By having a network of trained national staff as well as international and regional support staff for an EMTCC, we will see a significant reduction in avoidable disabilities and deaths in emergencies."

Ian Norton, Manager
EMT Secretariat

