RediPlan is an emergency preparedness community education program by Australian Red Cross. This evaluation overview refers to REDiPlan in the Adelaide Hills region of South Australia.

A REDiPlan Working Group was established by Red Cross and acted as the Evaluation Reference Group for the project. It had oversight of the evaluation process to ensure the evaluation services were delivered in a timely way. The group consisted of representatives from the Adelaide Hills Council, Red Cross, Country Fire Service and the State Recovery Office, the research commenced in May 2012.

**Key Points**

1. Assess REDiPlan’s **impact** on participants’ level of psychological and physical preparedness for emergencies.
   a) What changes have occurred in participants’ level of emergency preparedness?
   b) What were the triggers for change?

2. Consider whether the way Red Cross delivers REDiPlan is **relevant** and **appropriate** to the range of program recipients?
   a) Does REDiPlan respond to the unique needs of specific communities and their circumstances?
   b) Is the delivery of the program appropriate for vulnerable individuals in communities?
   c) Are there trends in the uptake of the program across the various target groups and why?

3. Determine REDiPlan’s **effectiveness** in developing understanding of local risks and strengthening individual and community coping strategies and community networks in the Adelaide Hills.
   a) What is the proportion of the program’s coverage in the Adelaide Hills?
   b) How many Community Speakers were trained to run REDiPlan?
   c) How many Community Speakers have remained engaged with REDiPlan presentations?
   d) Have the target group been able to access preparedness tools and resources?
   e) Have the target groups improved their understanding of preparedness?
   f) Has the target community increased and/or strengthened their social networks?
   g) Have the target communities continued to develop their community support structures to increase their preparedness after participation in REDiPlan training?

4. Assess the **efficiency** of delivering REDiPlan in the Adelaide Hills area. How does the program delivery of REDiPlan compare to standard information dissemination approaches?
   a) Is it a cost effective approach, and does it provide value-for-money?
   b) How has REDiPlan been integrated into or added value to existing community preparedness education programs?
   c) What is the contribution of other emergency services agencies for REDiPlan training sessions?
5. Determine whether the project has been designed and managed in a way that allows it to be sustainable in the longer term.
   a) Is the program facilitating the dissemination of locally based skills, knowledge and resources to assist communities to prepare for emergencies?
   b) Do community speakers feel supported to continue running sessions beyond the life of the project?
   c) Do community speakers feel motivated to continue running sessions beyond the life of the project?
   d) Do community speakers have intentions to continue to provide REDiPlan sessions and updates?
   e) Do participants have triggers to update their plans/kits on an ongoing basis?

6. In the event of an emergency, assess REDiPlan’s efficacy in promoting recovery.
   a) How has REDiPlan/community education sessions contributed to their recovery following an emergency?

Background

Emergency REDiPlan is the key component of Red Cross’ Household Preparedness program (Outcome 1 of the National Emergency Services Strategy). It is a community information and education program, based upon working in small groups to deliver education household preparedness messages. It is aligned with the six principles of community education programs articulated by Emergency Management Australia. In 2011-12, Red Cross partnered with the Adelaide Hills Council and successfully received funding to pilot Emergency REDiPlan in the Adelaide Hills area. The project rollout was overseen by a steering committee including Red Cross, Adelaide Hills Council, CFS, the Local Government Association and the State Recovery Office (SA). Red Cross in South Australia worked with the Adelaide Hills Council and other key stakeholders to identify people and communities within the Council area that may be more vulnerable to an emergency event. This group included older people, people with disabilities and the socially isolated. New and existing Red Cross volunteers were recruited and trained to become REDiPlan community trainers and conduct community education sessions on disaster and emergency preparedness. The REDiPlan booklet was distributed at these community education sessions. The Torrens Resilience Institute (TRI) was asked to undertake an external evaluation of the pilot REDiPlan community education program in the Adelaide Hills.

Objectives of the Evaluation:

Gauge the levels of preparedness in the target community;
- Assess the levels of behaviour change in REDiPlan participants;
- Explore the barriers and triggers of the target group to take action to increase their level of preparedness;
- Consider the program’s effectiveness;
- Contribute to best practice in the emergency management context.

Design

The evaluation consisted of a number of activities that aimed to answer the evaluation questions including:

- An evaluation of the community education sessions that included a survey of participants before and after the community education session (Pre and Post community education survey) as well as observations of the key issues and questions raised by the participants.
- Follow up telephone survey two months* after the community education session to enquire if the participants had undertaken any activities to improve their preparedness after the education session.
- Follow up telephone survey nine months* after the community education session to determine if the participants had sustained any of their preparedness activities.
- Telephone survey of stakeholders.
- Telephone survey of community educators. Note (*) In the data provided by Red Cross several of the two month follow up participants were not necessarily followed up at nine months and several of the nine month follow up group had not been surveyed previously. This is important to note when comparing the data reported from each stage of the evaluation.

Methodology

The evaluation team in consultation with Red Cross developed the surveys used in this project, as no existing validated tools were found that met the specific aims of this project evaluation.
To enable consistency in the application of the survey forms the evaluators met with Red Cross volunteers, who would be administering the surveys, to discuss the forms and the formatting of the questions. Feedback was provided and where appropriate changes were made to the forms and questions. Red Cross personnel undertook contact and recruitment of the participants. All contact information and surveys remained confidential.

All surveys were undertaken with permission of the participant either face to face or over the telephone. All participants were given the opportunity to refuse to participate.

Telephone surveys with key stakeholders and community educators were undertaken by the Torrens Resilience Institute. Permission to access these groups was gained through Red Cross. Set questions were developed related to the key deliverables and pre-tested. All participants were given the opportunity to refuse to participate or not answer any of the questions.

Key Findings

Results from the evaluation indicate that the REDiPlan community education program accessed the more difficult to reach members of the community, who may not have attended other emergency service public education sessions.

- The findings from the pre and post surveys of those who attended the REDiPlan sessions show that, immediately following the education session; there was an increase in knowledge related to their environmental risks, the sources of real-time emergency information and the need to have a plan. The findings from the two and nine month surveys show that not only was a broader range of risks identified but that this knowledge appears to have been sustained over time.
- The evaluation indicated that while overall this group was already reasonably prepared for an emergency, almost all participants intended to increase their preparedness. Some areas of preparedness are exposed as requiring further activity. A similar number of participants stated at both the two and nine month stage that they had an emergency plan, both before and after the community education session but this proportion had not increased over the project time frame. Among those who were motivated to develop a plan approximately half used the REDiPlan booklet. There was an increase perception of level of preparedness over the nine month period of the evaluation.
- Barriers to preparedness were given by participants as: having a lack of time, having busy lives, having enough information already, others will assume the responsibility, complacency and having actual experience of past hazards. Barriers to not talking to others about preparedness assistance related to: caring for others within the community and relying on existing community arrangements.
- Triggers to preparedness were attending the sessions and receiving reminders of the issues. Emergency preparedness and knowledge was observed within many participants regarding bushfire prevention; the REDiPlan sessions opened up new areas of knowledge that was retained regarding other risks and hazards.
- Individuals such as family, self and neighbours were identified as being important in emergency preparedness activities, such as the development of a plan. A greater proportion of individuals in the nine month survey group had cited neighbours as emergency assistance sources than those in the two month group, who favoured family and self.

Recommendations

- Red Cross planning and coordination with the participating emergency service organisations is undertaken well in advance of REDiPlan community education sessions to assist the other participating emergency organisations to schedule speakers.
- If there are limited resources planning could focus on a priority target group of the vulnerable members of the community living in the most high-risk areas. This is to ensure that both REDiPlan and other emergency service resources are going to the most at risk group.
- Red Cross could promote more effectively the broader aim of REDiPlan that incorporates preparedness for personal emergencies as well as emergencies that may impact on the wider community.

More Information

For further information about the evaluation, please contact the Red Cross Research Unit at research@redcross.org