

Disasters And Earthquake In Chile

Posted on October 11, 2019

Mitigation

Mitigation, also known as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), involves eliminating or reducing the consequences or likelihood of a hazard. The aim of mitigation is to reduce the degree of effect of the disaster on society. Several mitigation factors in Chile reduced the human losses during the earthquake. The Emergency Management Team was taught about the “preparedness culture” or “earthquake culture” that has developed in the country as a result of the history of regular earthquakes. The “culture” proved to be beneficial during the 1960 earthquake. The generation that survived the 1960 earthquake had a belief that it was safer to move to higher grounds as soon as possible whenever there was a large earthquake (Franco, G., & Siembieda, W, 2010). The people around the coastal areas knew through previous information and exercises shared about earthquakes in the past that it is safer to move to higher grounds. As a result, the casualties in coastal areas were low because the people moved to higher ground and acted independently.

The community spirit of the people of Chile is another factor of cultural mitigation. The Chilean people shared resources such as shelter and food during the disaster. The people shared shelter, water, and food in Constitución before receiving outside government resources. The method used to deliver food in Chile mitigated the potential shortage of food after the disaster. The food was stored in boxes in a distribution warehouse. The national government and ONEMI distribute the boxes to the largely affected areas (Sandoval, V., & Voss, M, 2016).

Response

The location and other various factors influenced the initial response to the 2010 Chile earthquake. The parties involved in the response are the national government, the Chilean Red Cross, and the community. The resources available determined the response during the earthquake (Coppola, 2015).

Local/Community Response:

The response of the locals and community during the days of the earthquake depended on individuals within the community, local first responders, and local resources. The different locations had variations in the duration taken before receiving outside help. The initial local government response focused on providing food, medical support, and search and rescue. However, fire stations in some places, such as Concepción, were damaged, hence significantly jeopardizing the response. Also, the looters in Concepción who barricaded the streets reduced the effectiveness of the fire department by

limiting access to areas that needed help. According to fire officials, some ambulance and fire personnel left during their shifts to check on their property and family (Davis, I., & Alexander, D, 2015).

According to the reports received by the Emergency Management Team, the residents within the impacted areas performed independent actions in response to the earthquake. The residents assisted victims by providing shelter and food, first aid, and rescue for those trapped in the damaged buildings. The initial community response was critical and vital since there was little communication with government agencies such as ONEMI in the impacted areas.

The Chilean Red Cross Response:

The Chilean Red Cross was not considered a “main player” in disaster response and preparedness before the 2010 earthquake, their role was primarily on paramedic emergency response. The disaster preparedness of the Chilean Red Cross has been increasing since the year 2006. The damaging effect of the disaster was larger than anticipated, according to the Chilean Red Cross. The National government invited the Chilean Red Cross to senior-level meetings three hours after the earthquake. However, the Chilean Red Cross ceased its participation after three days because it did not receive useful information to help it respond effectively. The Chilean Red Cross instead focused on regional and local activities. The national government did not assist the Chilean Red Cross in its focus on local activities. The immediate priorities of the Chilean Red Cross were to provide temporary housing, help people, and assess impact. They helped in basic recovery by distributing water, food, and tents. The officials of the Chilean Red Cross assessed the needs of the people and later delivered basic food as well as other items. The first assistance that most of the families in Constitución temporary housing came from the Chilean Red Cross (Esnard, A. M., & Sapat, A., 2014).

The National Government Response:

The initial response of the National government was characterized by a lack of situational awareness and confusion. The outgoing president of Chile was reluctant to involve the military in the response. The president took long to declare the disaster a “catastrophic event” and use the military during disaster response. The delay in deploying the military to assist security and local law enforcement resulted in looting. The emergency committee was formed to oversee the recovery and response at the national level after the new government assumed power. The committee’s goal was to use the help of government officials to oversee recovery and response. The military was a key player in the response strategy of the committee’s plan. The first role of the military was to assist local law enforcement in impacted areas and control looting. The second role was to assist with temporary housing construction, debris removal, and logistical support (Franco, G., & Siembieda, W, 2010). The military provided administrative control to enable the accomplishment of its roles. The military coordinated with other organizations and ministries in its operations. The army controlled the

operations and established order. For instance, they took control of food provision and the erection of field hospitals.

Capacity Of Chile

The history of disaster in the country contributed to the early development of disaster management policies, legislation, and institutions. The worker unions and authorities implemented measures for disaster risk reduction, such as the identification of disaster-prone areas after the 1928 Talca earthquake. The Chile earthquake in 1939 necessitated the implementation of construction standards that are earthquake-resistant. The Valdivia earthquake in 1960 resulted in the debate about efficient coordination among bodies involved in disaster response, planning and preparedness, and relief that resulted in the ONEMI creation in 1974.

The country has a regulatory framework, such as institutions and laws, that enable the management of the disaster. ONEMI is the primary technical agency in Chile for disaster management. The mission of the ONEMI agency is to coordinate, plan and implement response and preventive actions against disasters and emergencies caused by human and natural actions. Each level of administration, such as communal, provincial and regional administrative levels, must have the Civil Protection Committee (CPC) according to ONEMI guidelines. The various CPC have representatives from private and public agencies (Sandoval, V., & Voss, M, 2016).

The Management Model Applied In Chile

The centralized model was applied during the 2010 Chilean earthquake. The centralized model enables the national government to bring all the bodies involved in disaster management into one organization, facilitating coordination. The centralized models of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) influenced the operations of disaster governance (Cárdenas-Jirón, 2018). The teams that played a key role in disaster management were the Red Cross Management, volunteer management, and medical services. The teams operated effectively to manage the disaster because the coordination of the teams was centralized.

Conclusion

The location of Chile on the Pacific Ring of Fire, which is susceptible to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, makes the country vulnerable to natural disasters. This is evident from the series of earthquake disasters that have hit the country in the past. The 2010 [Chile earthquake](#) had a magnitude of 8.8, hence causing substantial destruction. The appropriate application of the disaster cycle in Chile enabled the disaster to be contained. The disaster cycle applied includes mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The level of preparedness Chile had assisted in overcoming the adversity. Chile utilizes state infrastructure, such as the regional, provincial and municipal

authorities, in response to emergencies such as earthquakes. The ONEMI played a key role in executing, planning and coordinating responses, alerts, preventive action and reconstruction efforts after the earthquake.

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