

Fiji Training Report

Disaster Ready: Crafting a resilient future through emergency telecommunications

Sessions held February to March 2024

Background

From 12 February to 6 March 2024, the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) supported by the World Food Programme led Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) conducted Emergency Telecommunications Training to 76 first responders from relevant agencies. The training focused on effective communications in disaster management as part of a four-session capacity building series across four divisions—Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western. The training was specifically tailored by the Fiji NDMO for first responders involved in disaster management and was funded by Australian Aid and supported USAID.

Disaster ready training in Fiji

When disasters happen, critical communications systems are frequently compromised, hindering emergency response efforts. Recognizing the paramount importance of equipping first responders with the necessary expertise and capabilities to effectively address emergencies, comprehensive training is therefore vital.

In a collaborative effort to bolster disaster preparedness in the Pacific region, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was invited by the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to assist with delivering practical and theoretical training on satellite communications. Each session, comprising a three-day emergency



telecommunications training, was specifically tailored for 76 first responders hailing from the Fiji NDMO Emergency Planning and Coordination Unit, alongside government officials.

The training sessions were organized across four divisions—Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western Fiji. Each session comprised of six modules (see below) that encompassed essential topics such as the fundamentals of efficient disaster management and communication strategies. Practical workshops were conducted, focusing on the utilization of radio communications along with demonstrations showcasing various emergency telecommunications tools.

To facilitate a realistic simulation exercise, the ETC provided satellite phone Push to Talk (PTT) devices and BGAN connectivity devices, along with data subscriptions. The provision of such technology enhances the authenticity and effectiveness of field simulation exercises by replicating the communications challenges and conditions commonly encountered in emergency response situations.

Training modules

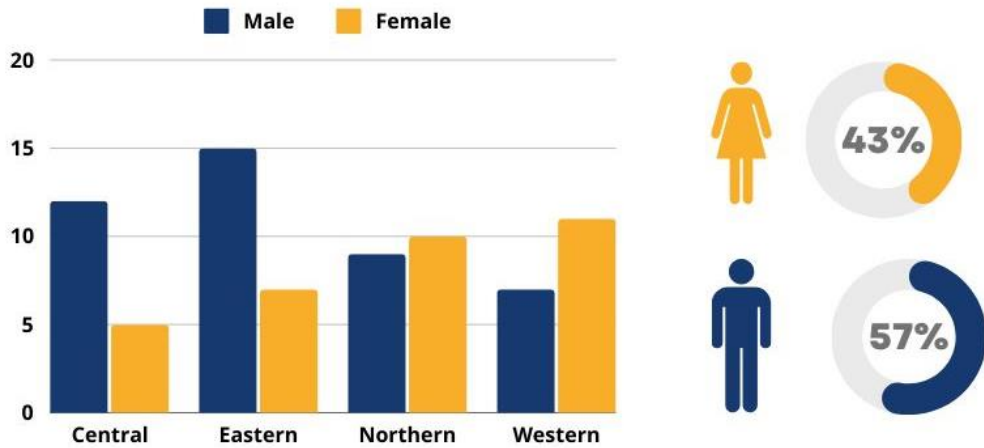


Gender balance

In the realm of emergency telecommunications training, the participation of women is an essential and critical component for comprehensive disaster preparedness and response. The inclusion of women brings diversity of perspectives, broader skill utilization, and stronger engagement with communities owing to women’s roles in communities. It also portrays the promotion of gender sensitive approaches as women and men may communicate needs differently in emergencies.

The overall training comprised of 43% women and 57% men, reflecting the gender inclusiveness efforts made in the run-up to the training. Going forward, the NDMO in collaboration with ETC and other partners intends place even greater emphasis on gender parity in the trainings aiming for equal representation.

Participants by division



Participant feedback

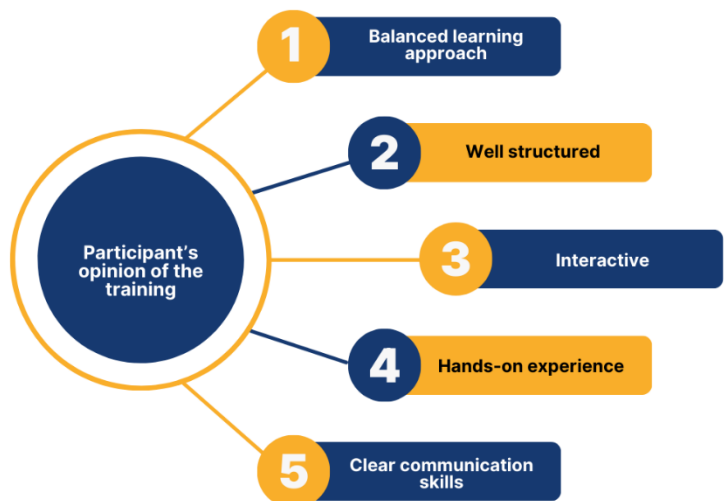
Through a course evaluation survey sent out to all training participants at the end of the training, the responders overwhelmingly praised the training for its effectiveness in meeting the desired objectives. They appreciated the balanced approach to learning, which included a mix of listening, discussion, and engaging activities.

Further, the facilitator's thorough preparation and clear communication skills were highlighted as key strengths, contributing to a positive learning environment.

Participants also commended the facilitator's responsiveness to questions and their ability to foster interactions among participants, providing ample opportunities for engagement and learning.

Overall, the feedback suggests that participants found the training to be well-structured, interactive, and facilitated with expertise.

Key areas of feedback



Post-training evaluation

Post training, participants demonstrated a strong understanding of key concepts in disaster management, including basic radio communications and relevant protocols. They also grasped the complexities of emergency communication networks, including system interoperability and various technologies. The practical sessions effectively complemented theoretical learning, resulting in seamless integration and comprehensive understanding.

Recommendations

Some insightful suggestions for future improvements to the training is allocating more time for field simulation exercises, thereby recognizing the value in practical learning. Participants also recommended increasing diversity by inviting more female participants and first responders. Furthermore, there was a desire for additional training on operating the emergency operations centre, indicating a need for more comprehensive training in this area.

Overall, participants appreciated the facilitator's sharing of knowledge and experiences, the comprehensive training materials provided, and the valuable field simulation exercises leveraged the overall learning experience and preparation in disaster management and emergency communications.



Training facilitators: Fiji NDMO and WFP Pacific ETC

Click [here](#) to view the training video (video credit: Fiji NDMO)

For more information, please contact Fiji NDMO on neocfiji@gmail.com or Pacific ETC on Pacific.ETC@wfp.org | www.etcluster.org

