
Guidelines and Information for Times of Disaster

A collection of guidelines and information to help the radio producer when planning program content in times of disaster.



Compiled by Africa by Radio

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This is a collection of guidelines and information that helps the radio producer when planning program content in times of disaster.

This collection has been compiled by Africa by Radio with the aim of providing basic information and help for the radio producer on how to react and what to include in programs when disaster strikes in their broadcast area.

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PREAMBLE

Radio lends itself to being a help in times of disaster. It is able to reach across natural disaster areas and is portable enough to be received on small, battery operated radio receivers in various places and conditions.

It is possible to set up temporary, emergency radio stations that operate under an existing radio license, even when existing radio stations may have been closed or damaged by a disaster. FEBC have conducted a successful experiment in this regard, using the Chrysolite, portable studio in a suitcase that FEBA Radio has developed. Used in conjunction with a transmitter, antenna and a generator, broadcasts can be on the air in as short a space of time as it takes to gather the equipment and transport it to an area. Used together with the Galcom solar powered radio receivers, people are soon able to receive helpful information provided to the station by emergency services, as well as trauma and spiritual comfort from a Christian perspective.

Used in conjunction with helpful information, radio broadcasts can provide enormous help and encouragement in a time of disaster.

It is hoped that these guidelines and this information will be a help to your radio station and listeners. They are not intended to be an authority on the various disasters but to provide the basis for programming ideas and to provide practical information if it is needed in an emergency.

You are encouraged to ask relevant, local experts or authorities to check information and add any further information that is relevant to your community.

Please feel free to accurately translate the information into local languages and adapt it to suit your culture.

Kindly advise the AbR Secretariat if you are willing to share that translation with other stations and inform AbR of which language it is translated into and whether the translation is available in script form or CD/DVD etc.

If your station uses the scripts we value your feedback on their effectiveness and any suggestions for improvement, as well as suggestions for other topics.

Your servants in Christ

Africa by Radio Executive

USE OF THE MATERIAL IN SCRIPTS AND PROGRAMS

Due to the diversity of the radio stations using this material, each will have to adapt information to suit their current position and need, as necessary. The scripted information is not intended as an authority on the subjects but information that stations can develop to assist their communities when disasters strike. Stations are advised to seek advice and assistance from local authorities.

This information is taken from printed sources, written for the eye, not for the ear. In its current form it tends to be impersonal and does not create a sense of immediacy, which will hinder it from capturing the listener's attention.

How to Use the Information

This information is not presented in “scripts” ready to be read on air. It must be seen as basic guidelines and information that can be used to prepare the station for disaster scenarios and help the program producer to quickly find useful information in an emergency situation.

Here are a few hints on how the information could be used:

- Rewrite the information to short spots that highlight crucial facts very briefly and distinctly.
- Use the information to assist you to know who to interview and what kinds of questions to ask.
- Take a small section of information and create a dialogue where people discuss what the principles mean for them in their situation.
- A variation on the discussion is to invite experts in various fields relevant to the disaster and have a panel discussion with or without input from the listeners.
- Create a short drama where people live out an aspect of coping with a disaster.
- Invite listeners to write or phone into the programme with their questions.
- Invite listeners to call, write to, or visit the station to tell others how they survived a disaster.
- These ideas can be combined into a longer program, if needed.
- A series of short programs in one or several of the above suggested formats can also be very useful.
- Always remember to be culturally sensitive and relevant when you prepare the scripts in the local language.
- Always be careful to have important facts correct.
- Add relevant local information and flavor wherever appropriate.