Older persons and crisis management

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Emergency support provided to older persons during the second Lebanon war in Israel

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Case A – The Second Lebanon War

Background

On Wednesday, July 12, 2006 at 9.00 a.m., the Hisbula attacked an Israeli army patrol near the northern border. Four soldiers were killed and two kidnapped. The Israeli army retaliated followed by a mass missile attack by the Hisbula on the Israeli cities and settlements in the north. Many people left the area and moved in with friends and relatives in the center and south of the country, yet many stayed, among them mainly the elderly and the disabled. Those who remained had to leave their homes and stay in shelters. They needed support such as food supply, medications, special equipment and other personal needs.
The situation

- Older persons stayed in shelters for weeks
- No food supply - supermarkets and stores closed
- No medications - pharmacies closed
- No personal and home care - care givers left
- Shortage of special equipments - Flashlights, blankets, etc.
- No public transportation
The response - Quick and efficient

ESHEL – The association for planning and development of services for the elderly in Israel – Responding:

❖ Needs survey
❖ 13,000 kits (Flashlights, tooth brushes, radios…)
❖ Food supply (7,000 meals a day)
❖ Respite program
❖ Equipment for the shelters
What made it possible for ESHEL to provide quick and efficient assistance?

- Information
- Flexibility
- Financial resources
- Local associations for the elderly
Case B – The Gaza War

In 2005 Israel disengaged from the Gaza strip and the Hamas group took full control on ruling this area. After the disengagement terrorist groups and the Hamas fired rockets from time at I Israeli settlements near the border of the Gaza strip. In the beginning of 2008 there was a serious escalation in the shooting of Qassam rockets on the I Israeli towns and cities near the Gaza strip. In September 2007 Palestinians fired more than 220 Qassam rockets in one week. The rocket attacks caused casualties to the civilian population as well as damage to property.

On December 2008 Israel started to attack the Palestinian militants by air and later on the ground. The war lasted for about three weeks. During the war the Palestinians managed to fire more than 600 rockets and 200 mortars rockets on Israeli towns and cities. Some people left the area, but most of them staid among them most of the elderly and the disabled.
Emergency Support Program to the Elderly and the disabled – The “Community Assistant”

- 185 Case managers were recruited in 27 southern locations in the first days of the war
- The case workers had some kind of previous contact with aging population
- The workers were employed for one month
- Before they began to work, they went through a short training course
The task

- Preparing the list of old adults
- The case managers made home visits to the elderly on the list
- The case managers provided the following types of support:
  - Emotional support (Pressure, anxiety, loneliness)
  - Emergency needs
  - Living needs (Home care, medications, food, equipment)
What are the major advantages of NGO's?

- Flexibility
- Autonomy
- Credibility
- Voluntarism
- Ideology
- Honest broker