Jenna MacLeod   March 6, 2023

Module 3 Brief – Three Perspectives on Preparedness

Disaster preparedness comes in many forms through various organizations, policies, and people. At the governmental level, change comes through policies and systems passed at either regional, state, or national levels. In the interview with Chin, he mentioned that the government had passed wireless alert notifications for emergencies so that everyone within the city, even tourists, would receive these notifications in the case of an impending disaster. They also have access to TV and radio notifications that can override the original broadcast to alert as many people and businesses as possible in an emergency. Chin argued that mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery are all essential components, and their job is to ensure that everyone involved in the response is supported to do their part. He also emphasized the importance of warning systems to ensure everyone knows how to respond to an emergency appropriately. The podcast on 9/11 described the impact of this disaster on the country as the government worked to improve their preparedness for such a disaster through increased security measures and other policies.

Businesses rely on the government to be aware of an impending disaster but have a particular responsibility to have precautions and systems in place to achieve proper preparedness. Hinderaker described her role as ensuring that her company is prepared for any potential threat or emergency; this requires her to be aware of the organization's supply chain so that any potential weather incident, road closure or infectious disease could impact their staff or deliveries are understood. She even mentioned how they prepare for holidays as emergencies in the grocery store industry since there is a high demand for food. Her interview emphasizes the need to be prepared for the unexpected and that businesses need to have plans and staff ready to act quickly at the first mention of a warning. This is like Chin's message but also emphasizes the importance of having a plan in place to follow once the warning is issued. The podcast episode with Miller gave an example of this message as they described how the world trade center had done little to prepare for any disaster in the building. Many staff were even unaware of basic infrastructure details such as location and the number of staircases which would have led to an inefficient evacuation in the face of such a time-sensitive disaster.

Finally, the individual/community level of preparedness relies heavily on the government and the business/workplace with which they are associated. Past experiences and personal bias also influence preparedness. Chin described their 'alert SF' system that sends notifications to the phone of those who opt into the service. This often does not reach tourists or others unaware of the system, which requires more thought on the part of the government to ensure that everyone receives the warning. These warnings also give information and directions, which is beneficial as many do not know how to respond individually in a disaster. This was evident during the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as described by Miller, who was in the North tower. He mentioned how some people responded by evacuating after the plane hit while others wanted to wait for directions on what to do. Miller had prior experience with evacuation due to a bombing in the building in 1993, which led him to know the steps for evacuation, which was beneficial but ultimately led to a false sense of confidence since the bombing was much less severe. This podcast pushed the same major points as the prior interviews of the importance of preparedness for the unexpected with warning systems and disaster plans but also described how giving limited information to individuals at risk in a disaster can be beneficial as understanding the intensity of a threat can cause people to freeze or panic resulting in a more inefficient response. Ultimately, all three of these systems must work together to prepare for future threats.