

Environmental change, resilience, and disaster response – Alan Mills

Abstract

MapAction, formed 15 years ago, gathers key disaster information, such as which area has been worst affected, where are the most vulnerable people are, and conveys it visually in the form of maps. They regularly face issues of varying data quality, currency, and completeness along with issues of access to the data. MapAction waste precious time at the start of an incident if accurate and authoritative geospatial information is not available.

- Despite all attempts disasters happen, they are often poorly supported and they need resources.
- Information is needed on the extent and intensity of the disaster. This is needed for managing aid, where cash transfers are now very common. There are normally lots of different organisations helping. The aim is to have the right aid at the right place at the right time.
- MapAction conducted its first rapid response emergency mission when the deadly tsunami hit on Boxing Day 2004.
- They provide aid within natural disaster and complex humanitarian disasters such as the Libyan refugee crisis.
- They need as much data as possible which will be overlaid on a basemap (such as health data) however, good basemaps can be difficult to get and errors can lead to incorrect decisions.
- Spending time trying to get good basemaps can be time spent on better things.
- Many relief organisations now have their own maps and systems.
- Source maps can often be a combination of paper and digital with different technologies making it hard to integrate, license issues can further complicate the situation.
- If there is no data for a region Map Action will resort to grabbing what they can or share NMA data (UN-GGIM help with this but it can often take time) or use open sources such as OSM.
- The ideal situation is to have a good basemap on day 0.
- UAV's are increasingly being used but these only provide a single view, not necessarily data that can be queried.
- Social media can provide lots of data but this can often provide a biased view as poorer areas may not have as much access.
- UN-GGIM are holding up the example to aspire to.