



THE GLOBAL PRACTICE OF AFTER ACTION REVIEW

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE



World Health
Organization



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAR	After action review	ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ADB	Asian Development Bank	IZA	Institute for the Study of Labour
BAR	Before action review	JEE	Joint external evaluation
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action	LLIS	Lessons Learned Information Sharing
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (United States)	MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
CHS	Common Humanitarian Standard	NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
CLIC	Cumbria Learning and Improvement Collaborative	NHS	National Health Service (United Kingdom)
CPI	WHO Country Health Emergency Preparedness and International Health Regulations	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control	PHE	Public Health England
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	RTE	Real-time evaluation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (United States)	SSH	Society for Simulation in Healthcare
HSPH	Harvard School of Public Health	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IHR	International Health Regulations (2005)	UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction
IHR MEF	International Health Regulations Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Service
		US	United States
		USAID	United States Agency for International Development
		WFP	World Food Programme
		WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Identifying lessons following an emergency response is an important part of any emergency management procedures. The purpose of these exercises is to ensure quality improvement and the strengthening of preparedness and response systems based on learning emerging from previous actions in responding to an emergency or event. Systematic post-event learning will contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and can be a means of sharing innovative solutions on how to tackle emerging public health risks. There are different forms of evaluation and learning following an emergency, and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that Member States conduct after action reviews (AARs) as part of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (IHR MEF) in order to assess the functionality of core capacities and to contribute

and how to improve. AAR can range from quick informal debriefing sessions with team members to larger workshops with broad, multisectoral participation led by facilitators. Importantly, AARs are not external evaluations of an individual's or a team's performance. They do not seek to measure performance against benchmarks or key performance standards but are a constructive, collective learning opportunity, where the relevant stakeholders involved in the preparedness for, and response to, the public health event under review can find common ground on how to improve preparedness and response capability.

This literature review was undertaken to identify and build understanding around principle characteristics of AARs, including their methodologies, formats, planning and roles. It also sought to look at AARs in

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