IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?
DELIVERING AID IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT POST-SANDY

Samantha Penta - Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware
Jennifer Lazo, Office of Emergency Services, City of Berkeley
INTRODUCTION

- October 29, 2012- Superstorm Sandy hits the New York area
- 80,000 NYC Residents without power
- Power not restored until 11/18/12
- How was this different?
• How do agencies “typically” deliver aid post-disaster?
• What challenges do an urban environment hold?
• How can we learn from these issues to plan for future urban disasters?
METHOD - DATA

- Observation/Participant Observation
- Interviews
- Documents
- Practitioner Experience

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Photo Credit: Sam Penta, DRC
METHOD - ANALYSIS

• Assumptions Regarding:
  • Disaster Environment
  • Conditions Encountered
  • Aid Delivery Procedures
  • Change in Approach over Time
  • Challenges
FINDINGS

• Three issues highlighted in Sandy experience
  1. Lack of situational knowledge
  2. Procedural challenges
  3. Challenges in the physical environment
• Importance of access and functional needs considerations
• Role of Social Media

Photo Credit: Sam Penta, DRC
FINDINGS: KNOWLEDGE AND PROCEDURAL CHALLENGES

• Training and Procedures for “Typical” Disasters
• Mobile vs. Fixed Distribution of Goods
• “There is no optimal delivery method in Urban areas”
• Responder from across the country
FINDINGS: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- The Streets of New York
- Looking Up
- Visual Damage
- Getting Out

Photo Credit: Michael Schor, Reuters
FINDINGS: SOCIAL MEDIA

Steve Kastenbaum
@SKastenbaum

HELP NEEDED NOW. Elderly residents in Far Rockaway at 7-11 Seagirt Ave, many on upper floors, been stranded for days alone. #CNN #Sandy

Alex Silverman
@AlexSilverman

Situation deteriorating rapidly in Rockaways. People coming into unheated shelter cold and wet. Spoke to elderly man rescued from his apt.

CEO Future Legend
@THEUGC

9 days later still no power, gas, people are homeless hungrey frustrated ontop of #Sandy now snow nice day to take off Red Cross & Fema
CONCLUSION - SUMMARY

- Reconceptualizing Remoteness
- Training and Planning for Urban Environments
- Incorporating access and functional needs issues into basic plans

Photo Credit: Sam Penta, DRC
CONCLUSION:
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Social Media as one type of solution

• Information Gathering and Integration into Response

• Reconnaissance and Aid Distribution Procedures