

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE MANAGEMENT - By Dr Elijah Chingosho

The various air disasters we have witnessed on the continent clearly point to a need for aviation stakeholders to have an emergency response plan that meets international standards. As the regulatory regimes continue to come up with stringent requirements in this field, it is crucial that operators deal with the experts and be prepared for the worst. In a situation of disaster our clientele expects us to show case tested professionalism. More importantly, a major disaster should not signal the death knell of our organisations.

For this reason, AFRAA, in collaboration with Kenyon, a leading world organisation in emergency planning and response management, held a workshop for airlines and other stakeholders of the aviation industry on 14 – 15 July 2008 in Nairobi. The workshop is in response to inadequate responses following a number of accidents on the continent. The workshop was well attended by 36 participants from 14 airlines and other stakeholders of the industry.

Major Areas Covered

An emergency is destabilizing by its nature and represents a threat to the future of an airline. The workshop was an important forum for the sharing of ideas and expertise particularly in the critical area of family and survivor assistance following an airline disaster.



Robert Jensen, CEO of Kenyon International



Executives of AFRAA and Kenyon after the Workshop in Nairobi.

Among the areas covered during the workshop were as follows:

- The need for an emergency response plans as well the aviation disaster response planning industry standards. Also covered were modalities of setting the goals of successful response plan
- The regulations pertaining to family assistance and survivor issues including ICAO stipulations particularly the Montreal Convention, European Regulations and regulations in certain countries
- Producing Emergency Procedures Manual including the drawing up of the emergency procedure organisation and the roles and job descriptions of post holders.
- The command structure of an airline emergency response organisation including the command centre responsibilities
- Accident investigation and technical support
- Airport response including accident station responsibilities and airport response family and survivor assistance
- Family assistance (manifests, call centres and notification) and family assistance site response.
- Family assistance briefings, events and services and special assistance teams
- Media relations and corporate response issues.
- Insurance, legal and finance issues
- The required exercises, drills, crisis leadership and thriving in chaos.

Kenyon and AFRAA Partnership

Following the successful workshop, AFRAA and Kenyon have already opened discussions on coming up with a partnership arrangement which will enable airlines to benefit from discounts when receiving services from Kenyon. Some two airlines will be holding free courses on handling an emergency following a draw conducted at the end of the workshop and it is planned that more such collaboration will enable African carriers handle disasters better than they have done in the past..

Conclusion

The workshop was very important in highlighting the critical areas that stakeholders need to deal with concerning a possible emergency. The importance of planning, training and exercises and drills and the need to professionally deal with family assistance was highlighted as these issues could determine if an airline could survive an emergency or collapse as has been the case with some carriers on the continent.

The relatively small size of our airlines does not meet the standards for economies of scale and bargaining power in the Industry. We therefore need to cooperate to compensate for our small sizes, achieve economies of scale and optimum costs.

Training and Human Resource Development by Dr Elijah Chingosho

In the current challenging operating environment characterized by fierce competition, credit crunch, brain drain, high operating costs and others, it is tempting to forget the importance of training and human resource development.

It is critical that this aspect be given top priority as it is through talented and highly trained people that our organizations will be able to weather the current and future storms. It is therefore important to remind ourselves why human resource development is critical for the survival and viability of our organizations.

Training and human resource development is critical in increasing the expertise of employees at all organizational levels. It facilitates the expansion of the horizons of human intellect and an overall character of the people. It also helps in inculcating the culture of team work, team spirit, and inter-team collaborations. It helps to develop a learning culture within the employees.

We need to develop a learning culture in our organizations as the rate of change is so rapid that unless we keep up or we are ahead, we lose our competitive edge. Training should facilitate the development of a culture of continuous improvement, customer focus, safety culture and high productivity. Training also facilitates the development of a safety and security culture and a healthy working environment through building self-motivated employees, and relationships which are particularly critical in the aviation industry.

Through training and development, an organization should be able to develop leadership skills, motivation, loyalty, better attitudes, and other aspects that successful workers and managers typically exhibit. Good leaders will ensure that individual goals align with organizational goals. Through effective and relevant training, an organization gets more effective decision making and problem solving capabilities. Training helps in understanding the vision, mission and values of an organization and carrying out its policies.

Visionary leadership arising from training and development improves the morale of the workforce, hence their productivity and ultimately profitability of the organization. The current challenges are such that it is not surprising to see people very demoralized and pessimistic about their

future and that of their organizations, which is a recipe for poor performance. Training and development helps to build the upbeat perception and feeling about the organization.

Training and development facilitate the optimal utilization of human resource thereby also helping the employee to achieve the organizational goals as well as their individual goals. Leaders should help employees in attaining personal growth.

In its tireless efforts to strive for high quality service in human resource development, AFRAA will continue to develop the skills of member airline's employees as well as the know-how and expertise of airline managers.

With globalisation, liberalisation, consolidation, partnerships and the like being the current buzz words coupled with breathtaking advances in the electronic field, it has become essential to equip the airline manager with appropriate skills, know-how and expertise to be able to effectively manage the complex challenges which confront the industry.

AFRAA will continue to work closely with the International Airline Training Fund (IATF) to offer courses for free on topical subjects. IATF has a pool of highly qualified instructors whose expertise has

been of immense benefits to participants of member airlines. In this regard, collaboration will continue with the IATF to offer joint programmes. The Association will also organise workshops, seminars and conferences where prominent speakers will be invited to lead discussions on topical issues.

To assist airlines in their restructuring programmes as well as improving their operational efficiency and productivity, AFRAA has a number of highly experienced and capable consultants with proficiency in all areas of airline activities.

The Association also offers customised training on request. This entails offering courses at an airline's base and tailored to its specific needs. This makes the training very competitive especially where an airline is training a large number of its personnel.

The venues for the courses have been carefully selected for ease of accessibility. For improved security of candidates, the courses will be conducted at airline premises/training schools with affordable hotel accommodation close to the venue.

Should you wish to learn about AFRAA's training programme, please visit the AFRAA website at www.afraa.org.



Emergency planning and response workshop, at AFRAA HQ in Nairobi, Kenya