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| **Floods situation in the Bekaa – Lessons learnt workshop report with recommendations and action points** |

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| **Objectives of the workshop** |

As proposed by the Emergency Task Force, field participants of the flood response in the Bekaa during the winter of 2019 participated at a lessons learnt workshop. The workshop pursued the objective of

improving emergency response, preparedness and coordination in the Bekaa through a collective, participatory identification and analysis of lessons learnt from the recent floods response in the Bekaa.

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| **Summary of agreed-upon actions** |

* Establish a small but participative working group to enact recommendations, with priority to:
  + Establish geo-split,
  + Adapt tools,
  + Adapt SOPs for Emergencies – while keeping what works.
* Establish an intersector calendar of regular actions including trainings and refreshers.

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| **Introduction and preliminary reflections** |

Bekaa interagency teams have responded to a series of emergencies of different characters in the last three years, including:

* Massive evictions in Zahle in the spring of 2017,
* The Riyak airbase eviction, during most of spring and summer of 2017,
* A series of deadly fires in 2016 and 2017,
* Smaller flood events,
* The July – August 2017 Arsal battle and subsequent forced displacement,
* Massive floods in the Bekaa in 2019.

From a general perspective, the following analysis can be drawn of these emergencies as well as the response to them, in terms of predictability and preparedness:

* Of these emergencies, fires, floods, the Arsal battle and massive floods were, to a variable extent, predictable. At the same time, events such as the Arsal battle and massive floods have been also one-off events – or at least, in the case of massive floods, events which have occurred only once, to a similar extent, in the last fifteen years. Events that are both predictable and recurring are fires, smaller scale floods and other weather events such as snowstorms – those already covered with current SOPs for emergencies.
* Events such as Zahle and Riyak evictions where, as such, non-predictable. However, an analysis of trends in the country and in the Bekaa show that similar, medium-range events affecting thousands of refugees and thus beyond the scope of the Emergency SOPs have a degree of likelihood justifying specific preparedness and contingency.
* Whereas the range of events can, somehow, be predicted, their nature is not predictable. Bekaa teams have been forced time and again to prepare response tools that are fit for specific events. Flexibility and adaptability of tools, as well as adequate delegation to field teams, is a key element of effective response.

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| **Current tools** |

Interagency teams presented current preparedness and emergency tools in the Bekaa, including:

* SOPs for emergencies (covering recurrent, relatively small scale fires, floods and other weather events),
* Contingency plan for a refugee influx, in the framework of national contingency plans,
* SOPs, Task Force and Whatsapp group for evictions,
* Tracking and reporting tools, including for individuals and families during evictions, and for assessment results as well as assistance delivered.

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| **Work in groups, lessons learnt and recommendations** |

***Group 1: Coverage, efficiency and effectiveness of protection and assistance***

* **More effective liaison with local NGOs:**
  + Mapping of local NGOs and ensuring their inclusion at the planning stage,
  + Assess capacity and contingency stock of local NGOs prior to emergency,
  + Identify local NGOs as secondary providers to support in emergency response.
* **More effective use of relocation sites:**
  + They should be considered as last resort, as they may create or exacerbate protection problems to refugees. Their capacity should be assessed and brought up to standards beforehand. It is important to conduct protection assessments in secondary relocation sites – as it was done by Protection actors during the emergency.
* **Coordination:**
  + It is important to enhance coordination with key players also considering municipalities, ISF and LAF. A good practice was the inclusion of MSAs in key municipalities during Task Force meetings. Good coordination with law enforcement (ISF and LAF) is necessary in particular as regards relocations. This was considered a good practice during the floods.
* **Flood prevention:**
  + It is important to link municipalities to donors to help them on prevention activities, such as solid waste management and cleaning of drainage channels
  + It is also important to increasingly involve refugees in prevention such as on cleaning of drainage channels. These could be done through cash for work projects.
  + Improve waste collection and availability of sufficient number of bins.
  + Prioritize ITSs which are highly vulnerable to floods in terms of prior assessment and prevention.
* **Communication with refugees and other flood-affected:**
  + Improve level of detail on messaging, including on hotlines, information on relocation sites and service providers in specific geographic areas. SMS communication to refugees previous to flood events was considered a good practice
* **Commitment to reporting**
  + Humanitarian actors should update data in timely manner so as to avoid further verification exercises and visits to affected sites and reduce assessment fatigue.

***Group 2: Preparedness***

* **Existing resources:**
  + Human resources - have an emergency core group responsible to respond to emergencies after working hours and during weekends per agency and on rotational basis as to retain staff) and possibly have local NGOs as back up in case of inaccessibility.
  + Develop a group of 5 members in key settlements of refugees following AGD approach, capacitate them and train them to be able to respond and train tenants.   
    Mapping of agencies’' capacity on yearly basis ahead of any emergency.
  + Coordination with key municipalities beforehand on needs, resources available, mitigations risks.   
    Have a pre-approved list of relocation sites ready on yearly basis as to do immediate response in the field and possibly prepare and rehabilitate them to fit all criteria’s needed per sector. (at least minimally)
* **Existing tools**
  + Unified tools for assessment (one link that includes a drop down list of type of emergency that develops the related assessment accordingly) to avoid confusion. Tools need to be easily and quickly customizable in the field.
  + Development of distribution SOPs per sector under each sector working group for harmonization and to avoid duplication.
  + Updating emergency SOPs on yearly basis taking into consideration staff are contractual.
  + Conduct training and capacity building for all actors involved including OVs, MSAs, and field staff on tools.
  + Include geo-split and translation of tools to Arabic including dissemination of leaflets.
  + Tools to be reviewed per sector for verification and any update needed on yearly basis or after an emergency.
* **Risk reduction analysis**
  + List of sites who might be always affected in certain emergencies due to location… and develop an SOP for response specific to them (possibly relocation prior to emergency …)
  + Status of assets, inventory and capacity per key informal settlement on yearly basis to follow up on sector needs.
  + Risk Analysis and reduction measures prepared ahead taking into consideration protection measures and then follow up with monitoring, reviewing and reassessing for better response as to have a preventive approach rather than reactive.

***Group 3: Standard workflow of emergency response***

Clarification: the standard workflow for an emergency is defined by the Emergency SOPs, which are applicable to small-scale emergencies. Unless there is a decision by Interagency coordination according to the process below, Emergency SOPs remain applicable as default and without need for further notice or confirmation. The below is applicable for a medium-scale emergency, similar to the 2019 floods. It will be integrated with the current Emergency SOPs to conform a single document with two annexes: smaller emergencies (current emergency SOPs) and medium-scale emergencies (the below instrument).

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***Group 4: Coordination, complementarity, participation and consultation***

* **Responsibilities**
  + Establish or formalize clear geo-splits per sector, with operational responsibilities, taking into account the possibility of integrating different sectors in the same actor.
  + Establish a geo-split for RNA / other needs assessments, taking into account the capacities of the different actors.
  + Properly disseminate the geo-splits.
  + Undertake regular trainings for the RNA.
* **Coordination & Communication (stakeholders: INGOS, local NGOs, MSAs, authorities…)**
  + Coordination with key municipalities and training for municipal police, MSAs…
  + Enhance coordination among agencies on distribution through SOPs per sector.
  + Coordination with existing emergency cells at municipality level and community level and identify existing actors able to assist in case of inaccessibility..
  + Update stock lists on monthly basis using the ActivityInfo tool and include a user friendly platform including Arabic version for local NGOs to be able to update as well. Sectors need to be informed of their respective capacity to respond, on the basis of stocks, and take the necessary preparatory action.
  + Translate procedures, SOPs, minutes of meetings and similar key documents into Arabic.
  + Sectors who are members of the TF have the responsibility to disseminate minutes and information and enhance sector participation in the TF, including through feedback from the sector. At the same time, Interagency team will regularly distribute TF minutes to the Interagency to ensure proper information.
* **Accountability (warning & predictability)- Refugees**
  + Raising awareness on possible risk mitigation measures (shelter, protection, BA, Health, WASH…) possibly through the groups created per settlement for dissemination of information and providing a sense of responsibility and independency.
  + Equip with all needed leaflets.
  + Send warning SMS in case emergency is predictable to all refugees for preparedness.
  + Having a common meeting point for refugee groups in case they are allocated as first responders maybe through MSAs as well (example: municipality hall)
  + Hotline responsive 24/7 and rotational basis for staff.
  + Capacity building and raising awareness on mental illness and psychosocial support for all agencies and frontliners.

*6 May 2019*