

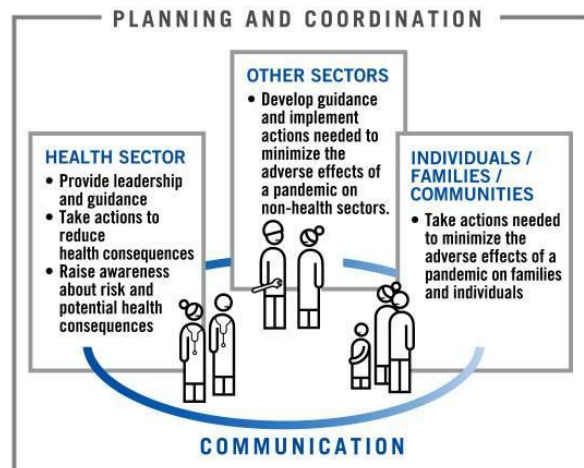


A Check List | Community engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic in Lebanon

Interagency Coordination Protection Working, Contribution by WASH and Health Sectors | March 2020

Introduction

Pandemics are unpredictable yet reoccurring events that can have severe consequences on health, social and economic well-being. In addition to affecting health, they may lead to social and economic disruption, threats to the continuity of essential services, reduced production, distribution difficulties, increase in vulnerability and shortages of essential commodities. While governments and sectors such as health and WASH play a leading, coordinating and guiding role, take action to reduce health consequences and raise awareness about risks, experience has shown that **civil society organizations, families, individuals, communities and traditional leaders** all have essential roles to play during pandemics. The illustration above depicts the **whole-of-society approach** needed to prevent, mitigate and respond to pandemics and highlights some key roles.



Objectives

This checklist provides general parameters for the **role of the community in relation to COVID-19 outbreak in Lebanon in the phase of containment (Phase 3)**, with particular focus on community members who are already mobilized as **volunteers, focal points and within community groups and networks, among others**.

In addition to the community's central role, the checklist emphasizes the **role of NGOs in preparedness efforts** should the pandemic further spread in Lebanon (Phase 4) and calls for **harnessing their expertise and capabilities to help communities prepare and respond**. At the same time, this document is a live one and will be updated and adapted as the situation evolves and depending on the phase the pandemic reaches in Lebanon. It is based on existing guidance and references issued around COVID-19 and on pandemics in general.



Guiding steps for Community Engagement during COVID-19 Pandemic in Lebanon

Outreach

- Update the community with reliable information on COVID-19: what is it, how it is transmitted, how to protect against it and where to get real-time information
- Share key hotlines of MoPH: **01-594459** and of MHPSS services as well as tips to cope with anxiety and stress
- Remain updated on the latest developments by visiting MoPH website, Inter-Agency Dropbox and UNHCR website for refugees¹
- Promote self-referral of symptomatic persons as per referral pathways for diagnosis and **only upon consent**, share information of persons exhibiting symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) to supervisors for follow-up
- Help in containment to prevent increase and promote change of individual practices by developing ways to implement mitigation measures (through change of individual and family practices and implementing community measures).
- Continue to engage in self-identification and referral of protection/heightened risk as per the referral pathways

Focus

- Raise awareness virtually on preventative measures on COVID-19 and other topics
- Focus on certain groups for additional information provision and support such as **older persons, persons with disability, persons with serious medical conditions and their caregivers** with information and provide buddy support, as they may be less likely to access online information due to their age, gender and diversity considerations
- In coordination with case management actors, follow up on other children at risk such as **unaccompanied and separated children**
- Guide **parents with children** on activities they can do with children to keep them busy during this period

Key messages

- Add core COVID-19 messages²

Outreach methods in times of social distancing

- Virtually, through WhatsApp, SMS, phone calls, Facebook and other forms of technology
- Encourage innovative information sharing methods e.g. online daily competitions
- Systematic follow up of certain individuals or profiles (see above), as part of a per or buddy support
- No home visits as part of social distancing except for urgent cases who should be referred through existing channels

¹ (MOPH) website: <https://www.moph.gov.lb/ar/>

IA Dropbox: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c8prp4negm3qwlx/AACa_xU1iBgkLLIVE4zrxQ0oa?dl=0

UNHCR website: <http://www.refugees-lebanon.org/ar/news/275/information-on-coronavirus>, Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UNHCRLebanon>, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRLebanon/>, YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unhcr>

² COVID-19 Key messages:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c8prp4negm3qwlx/AABYKsj8Gsr1ykXWpe_Nt9Kua/COVID-19%20External%20Communication%20Task%20Force/Key%20Messages%20%26%20Q%26A?dl=0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1



Community feedback and response

- Provide insights into community perceptions of the illness and response measures or practices, as well as fears and beliefs this will help in addressing lack of compliance
- Share hotlines, including of protection which people can call for further inquiring and support
- Ensure that engaged community members share such insights during regular yet virtual contacts/meetings e.g. through Skype, WhatsApp, ODK forms, ensure they are documented and shared with Inter-Agency Inform Interventions
- Ensure that the community is engaged in any response measures to be put in place, including in design

Support

- Ensure volunteers, focal points, community groups and networks are trained on COVID-19 awareness and have access to update information (IA coordination email: lebbeia@unhcr.org)
- Provide leaflets to support information dissemination, as applicable³
- Support them with the means to provide remote information sharing to the communities and provide feedback such as phone credits, internet top-ups, etc.
- Avoid their exposure to risks such as by conducting home visits
- Ensure they are aware of how to protect themselves, including through self-care
- Ensure that the community has access to soap and water, gloves, waste management services, transportation, to safe burial teams, etc. and contact IA coordination (lebbeia@unhcr.org), field Sector coordinators and/or service providers (through the existing service mapping)

Duty of care

- Active and engaged community members should stay at home, limit movement and social interaction, as well as practice prevention by maintaining hygiene standards (had cleaning with soap and water, covering mouth with bent elbow or tissue when sneezing or coughing)
- Minimize contact with people, including family and especially with older persons and those with underlying medical conditions, if exhibiting fever and respiratory systems like cough, sore throat and shortness of breath
- Engaged community members have the right to abstain from activities without any implications

³<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid19-stigma-guide.pdf>

UNHCR Website: <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/>, Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UNHCRLebanon>, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRLebanon/>, Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unhcr>

IA COVID-19 Dropbox: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c8ppr4negm3qwlx/AACa_xU1iBgkLLIVE4zrxQ0oa?dl=0

UNICEF Website: <http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/>, Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFLebanon/>, Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uniceflebanon>, YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/UnicefLebanonChannel>

GBV guidelines for reporting cases for non-GBV specialized actors. Available at:

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/5_gbv_reporting_for_non_gbv_actors.pdf. See also: **Pocket Guide: Supporting Survivors for non-GBV specialists.**

Available at: <https://gbvguidelines.org/en/documents/pocket-guide-supporting-survivors-for-non-gbv-specialists/>