Lessons from Past Emergencies

FOR THE LAKE CHAD BASIN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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RECOMMENDATIONS PACKAGE
For the Lake Chad Basin Emergency Response

About the Recommendations Package

WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division (OSE) has gathered lessons from earlier emergencies and developed a set of recommendations applicable to the context of the Lake Chad Basin. The below summary offers information on potential challenges and practices that have proved useful in past emergency responses. A comprehensive database of recommendations gathered from Lessons Learned Exercises can be found on the OPweb: http://opweb.wfp.org/llearned/.

Ensuring well-informed coordination

- At Operational Task Force meetings, functional areas should be consistently represented at the Director or Deputy Director level to ensure that swift decisions can be made when needed.[CAR 16]
- Prepare Notes for the Record (NFRs) of Strategic Task Force (STF) meetings for future reference and disseminate operational information related to key strategic decisions taken during these meetings. [Syria 12]
- Continue the good practice of designating the Regional Director as Corporate Response Director for an emergency. Increase the capacity of Regional Bureaux to assume the Corporate Response Director function.[CAR 16]
- Ensure general awareness of principles of humanitarian civil-military coordination in general, and their application by WFP in emergencies specifically. Consider incorporating this information in WFP emergency training programmes.[Haiti 10]
- Ensure readiness to deploy experts in aviation coordination, both for civilian and for civil-military aviation coordination.[Haiti 10]
- WFP should deploy a dedicated Food Security Cluster Coordinator during a CR so that other technical staff are not used to fill in as the coordinator.[South Sudan 12]; [CAR 16]
- The use of a dedicated SO should be considered to fund the Food Security Cluster.[South Sudan 12]
- For cargo air transport, the Logistics Cluster funded and used the service of a dedicated aviation officer from UNHAS. This arrangement proved to be effective in managing and prioritizing the air transport requests coming from service users.[South Sudan 12]

Deploying and retaining the right people

- Continue to deploy experienced regional national staff at the onset of emergencies. Incorporate the significant strengths of national staff into deployment planning while prioritising staff wellbeing following large shocks.[Haiti 10]
- In high security risk environments, CO senior management positions must be staffed with longer-term personnel. There must also be clear designations regarding the criticality of CO staff, for the purposes of evacuation, strategic planning, and deployment.[CAR 16]
- WFP needs to consider conditions for national staff to ensure they are retained and not moving to other agencies.[South Sudan 12]
- At the onset of an emergency, ensure sufficient capacity for Finance and Administration support functions. Note that this finding has emerged in earlier LLEs.[CAR 16]
- Ensure emergency-specific medical services and partner agreements are identified and communicated to staff, for example by inclusion in information packages.[Haiti 10]

Crafting inclusive and dynamic programmes

- WFP should adopt a culture whereby the Programme Unit, through VAM, provides provisional estimates that can be used for planning. These can then be refined once better information or assessments are done. Seasonality should also be factored in during the planning phase and thus influence the timing and choice of transfer modality.[South Sudan 12]; [CAR 2016]
- WFP needs to ask more gender specific questions in the post-distribution monitoring, and pay particular attention to monitoring assistance for extremely vulnerable groups.[Darfur 06]
- Given the complexity of implementation and need for prioritization of nutrition activities in large-scale emergencies, ensure the early deployment of a nutritionist to support CO and field-based nutrition personnel. Further, ensure that WFP Programme staff are aware of nutrition and HIV imperatives in emergencies.[South Sudan 12]
- Deploy gender experts in addition to protection specialists, as they cover separate functions.[Syria 12]
- Create a regional Humanitarian Policy Advisor role that supports Country Offices in addressing Accountability to Affected Populations, Protection, Conflict-Sensitive Programming, Principled Humanitarian Action, and Gender.[CAR 16]
- Include crosscutting themes as standing items on Operational Task Force meeting agendas, and include reporting on the issues in internal sit reps so that gaps can be identified more easily and support can be provided accordingly.[CAR 16]
- Ensure that a Protection Officer is deployed rapidly at the onset of an L3 emergency with an integrated mission – particularly in the case of a protection crisis. The Protection Officer should help WFP staff understand the protection dimensions and their impacts on beneficiaries, and capacitate staff to integrate Protection in programming.[CAR 16]
- Add Gender and Protection analysis to Cash and Vouchers feasibility studies for preparedness and refine at the onset of a crisis.[CAR 16]
- WFP's VAM unit must ensure that they participate in all Integrated Food Security Phase Classification processes, especially in the analysis and review process, and consistently seek to take the lead.[CAR 16]
- High-level WFP management and VAM should be involved in all data assessment and analysis systems to demonstrate strong inter-agency engagement and presence and to ensure that the food security information is detailed and reflects different levels of need.[CAR 16]

Assessing and acting upon security risks

- It is important to have an early and robust WFP security presence familiar with the context, the language and programme criticality, particularly in cases where national staff are directly impacted by the crisis and need support and protection.[CAR 2016]
- Streamline security briefings during deployment to large-scale emergencies. Consider conducting briefings in Headquarters or supporting offices, and include standard security information and checklists in staff pre-deployment packages.[Haiti 10]
- Surge capacity for Security Officers must be a priority in a CR environment, particularly those of a high security level.[South Sudan 12]
- The importance of consulting with security should be borne in mind when expanding operations and establishing offices and warehouses.[South Sudan 12]
- Provide Security Officers with orientation and training on the programme itself, to broaden their understanding of the specific requirements in the context of programme delivery.[Syria 12]; [CAR 2016]
- Add Area Security Coordinator (ASC) duties to the ToRs of all professional staff serving in field locations, and provide relevant training or sensitization on assuming such roles.[Syria 12]
- Make the provision of armoured vehicles part of SOPs for high-risk operations. In addition, make Emergency Trauma Bags available for use in these environments. It was suggested that one EMT per Land Cruiser would be ideal.[Syria 12]

Establishing internal and external information flows

Setting up a well-functioning reporting mechanism

- At the onset of an emergency, establish an in-country information coordination system – perhaps similar to that used by the Supply Chain Working Group – to ensure that all relevant focal points (i.e. Donor Relations, Information Management and Public Information Officers, etc.) use consistent information and figures.[CAR 2016]
- While appreciating the standardized reporting templates and schedules, at the outset of a fast-paced and complex emergency response HQ, the RB and the CO should work closely together to ensure that reporting requirements are appropriate, feasible and well understood.[CAR 2016]

Communicating with the public

- In complex emergencies with high reputational risks, it is important to deploy an experienced Public Information Officer from the onset.[CAR 2016]
- Public Information Officers with video and photo skills (and equipment, if necessary) should be deployed for emergencies with limited media access.[CAR 2016]
- Immediately designate or recruit a national PI Officer (or in their absence a local language speaker) to implement WFP local messaging activities, and inclusion of that Officer in Senior Management, Programme and Logistics planning and meetings.[Haiti 2010]
- Prioritise social media and resource it appropriately in an emergency.[Syria 12]
- In order to ensure consistency, only CD, Regional External Relations Officer and EC/DEC should be authorised to deal with donor representatives at the field level. Emergency Coordinators in each of the COs, already liaising with donor focal points in their respective

countries, will also continue doing so. Any donor requests at the field and regional level should be referred to Regional External Relations Officer or HQ External Relations Officer.[Syria 12]

- Explore developing financial and pipeline thresholds that would trigger a 'forgotten emergency' campaign strategy along the lines of 'C.A.R. can't wait'.[CAR 2016]

ICT equipment

- A stock of VHF radios, GPS and satellite phones (Thurayas) should be held at the logistics hubs for call forward as these items are generally unable to be imported by staff.[South Sudan 12]
- Management of radio rooms for the security of humanitarian workers should remain under the management of the ETC and not be handed over to United Nations missions, as discrepancies in radio protocols and the language barrier between humanitarian workers and military personnel could impair communication.[South Sudan 12]
- Incoming TDY staff, especially those in sudden onset emergencies, should be encouraged to deploy with equipment (laptop, mobile phone, etc.) from their originating CO.[South Sudan 12]

Facilitating Logistics, Procurement and Administration

- Continue the use of the Supply Chain Working Group/Dashboard in large-scale emergencies.[Syria 12]
- Ensure planning for sufficient staff and resources to manage custom clearances at international entry points and land-borders.[Haiti 10];[CAR 16]
- Disseminate standard SOPs and Requests for Quotations (RFQ), etc. to save time at the start of an emergency response, to be subsequently tailored to the specific context of the emergency.[Syria 12]
- Ensure harmonization of trucking fleets to ease procurement of repair parts.[CAR 16]
- For large emergencies requiring high commodity volumes, enter into long-term commodity purchase contracts from selected origins.[Syria 12]
- Upon the activation of an L3, hold high-level briefings with relevant customs and government officials in the region to discuss operational requirements on behalf of the humanitarian community – either through bilateral engagement, or through the Humanitarian Coordinator or WFP's Executive Director (WFP being the Logistics Cluster Lead).[CAR 16]
- Introduce or make more widely known specific guidelines on how to operate in environments where no banking facilities or cash suppliers exist, or where banks are weak.[Haiti 10]

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