
Lebanon DREF

(MDRLB007-Arsal Population Movement)

Lessons Learned Workshop Report



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1. Purpose of the Lessons Learned Report

Throughout each project life cycle, lessons are learned and opportunities for improvement are discovered. As part of a continuous improvement process, documenting lessons learned helps project teams discover the root causes of problems and bottlenecks that occurred and mitigate their occurrence in later project stages or in future projects. Data for this report was gathered during the Lessons Learned Workshop in Lebanon

The objective of this report is to gather all relevant information for better planning for future projects or similar events, improving implementation of new projects, and preventing or minimizing risks for future similar projects.

Ultimately, the goals of the lessons learned report are:

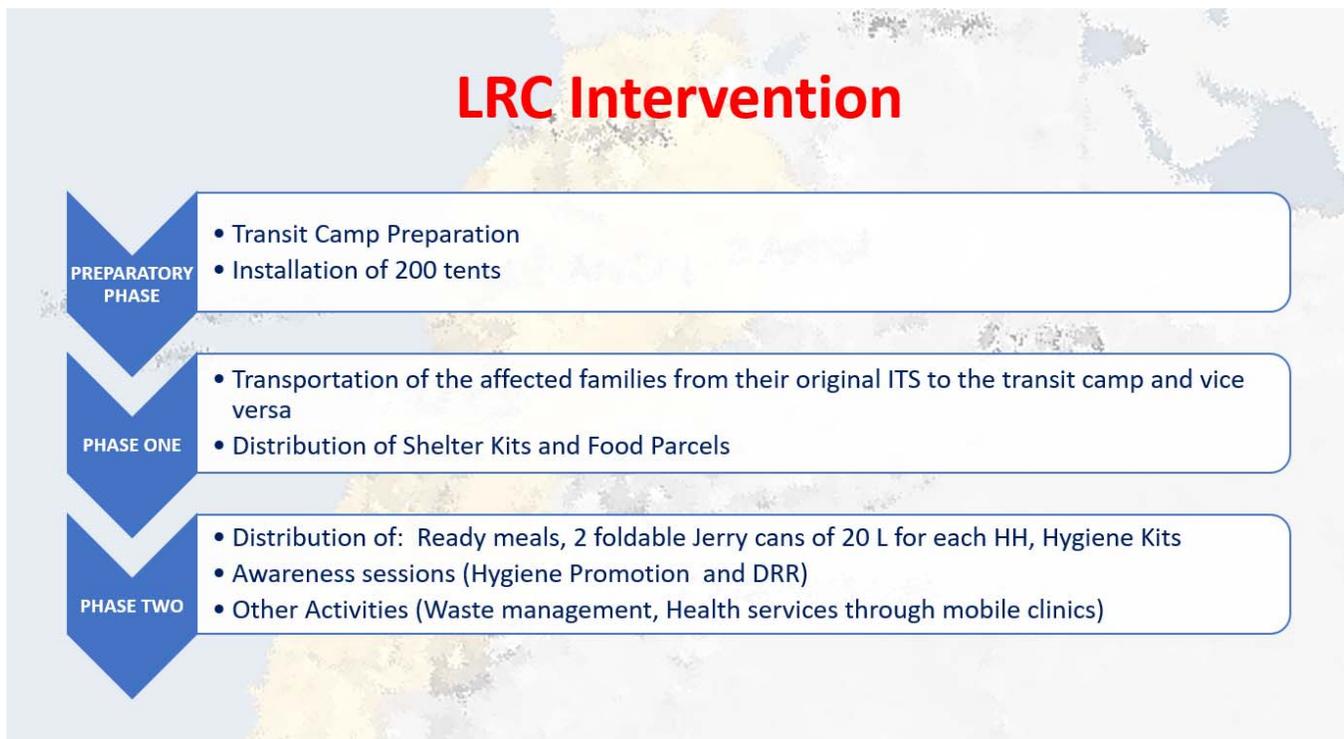
- ✓ List successes to document what went right;
- ✓ Document what can be improved upon;
- ✓ Streamline processes based on this information;
- ✓ Avoiding making the same erroneous actions;
- ✓ Improving on current delivery standards by adopting proven good practice;
- ✓ Contributing to organisational growth and maturity by effecting long term improvements in the way an organisation embeds and shares Project Management best practice;
- ✓ Communicate this information to project management and appropriate stakeholders.

2. Introduction

In response to the decision made by the Lebanese Government to dismantle all informal tent settlements (ITSs) that are built with material other than timber and plastic sheeting, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) in coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), and the Aarsal Municipality decided to support six ITSs (598 households of a total of around 4,000 affected households).

Consequently, a **DREF** has been launched to cover the immediate needs of the affected families (598 HHs).

Since the onset of the decision made by the Lebanese Government, the following activities have been undertaken by the Lebanese Red Cross, through the LRC volunteers and staff.



As “First Responders”, the **Lebanese Red Cross (LRC)** in coordination with the authorities and other active humanitarian actors, have deployed 60 volunteers to support in their timely intervention.

Affected families have been evacuated from their Informal Tent Settlements (ITS) and some of them have been transported into the transit camp established by the LRC.

The aim of the transit camp was to provide short-term temporary accommodation for displaced populations pending transfer to their longer term settlement.

200 tents have been installed in the transit camp. Toilets and showers have been installed for the affected population and the volunteers. Light towers were deployed to ensure providing lights within the temporary shelter at night.

Food parcels, ready meals, hygiene kits, blankets and shelter kits were distributed to the refugees.

The **Lessons Learned Workshop** has been conducted with the presence and participation of LRC staff and volunteers from two levels: field and headquarters.

It intended to assess key achievements and challenges, and provide an opportunity to capture the lessons learned surrounding the operation from the involved staff and volunteers of the Lebanese Red Cross.

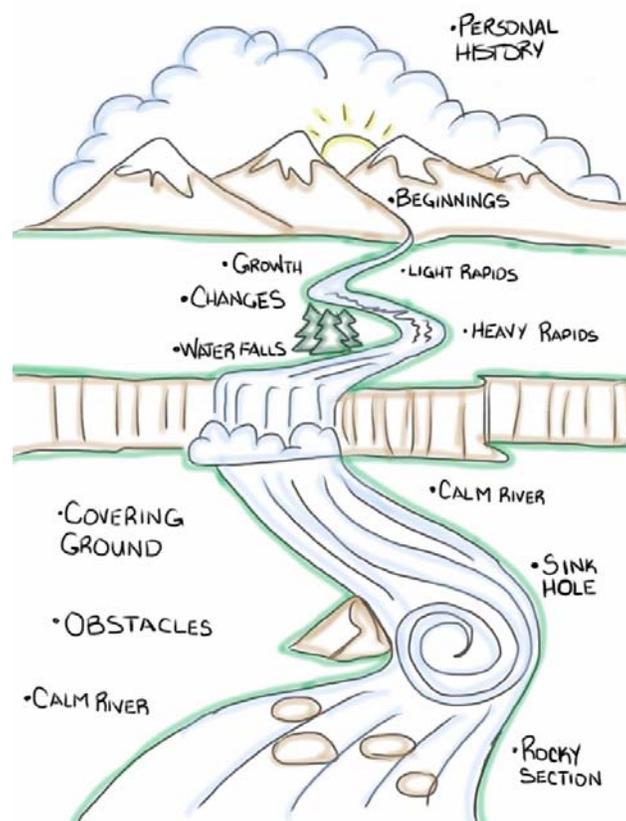
This workshop was also an opportunity to provide recommendations for future DREF operations and contribute with information to the DREF final report.

In this context, the main objectives is to provide qualitative recommendations based on the DREF operation previous experience on:

- 🔍 **How to improve future programming in terms of preparedness or for other future similar events.**
- 🔍 **The Actions that should be avoided if the initiative were to be replicated.**

3. Methodology

River of Life is a group facilitation technique using visual narratives to help people tell stories of the past, present and future. By imagining that people or projects were a river, participants can articulate, using the landscape, water, boats etc., the major events and milestones in their lives or the lives of their projects. The method enables bringing several perspectives together and immediately offers to show the big pictures.



Through the visualization the River can become a compass, a guide as it captures the milestones, failures and successes over time. Also, it offers participants to identify their roles, where they fit in the big picture and where they can make the most impact.

There were nine participants from different departments at field and Headquarters levels (Disaster Management, Logistics, Contingency Planning in addition to two representatives from the IFRC) who provided their feedback to the DREF through the exercise of river of life.

The participants were divided into two groups and started drawing their river life in different stages:

- 1- Drawing the shape of the river of life, from the beginning of the DREF, showing where and why the most of activities took place;
- 2- Posting the challenges that they have faced throughout the DREF and linking those challenges with proposed solutions and recommendations.

Strengths and opportunities

In this phase, the two groups introduced the DREF operation strengths and opportunities under several areas, highlighted by most of the group members, as follows:

Information

- Information sharing through regular meetings (internally and with Partners);
- Coordination mechanism in place across all the LRC departments with respect to the chain of communication;
- Good internal communication within areas and inter-sector communication.
- Briefings and debriefings to provide the information needed to direct deployed resources;

Coordination

- Good relationship with communities and LRC's high acceptance;
- Proper networking with all external stakeholders;
- Coordination with authorities and other agencies built on trust;
- LRC well-positioned as the leading agency for emergencies and as first responder;

Human Resources

- Involvement and engagement of the LRC departments and units as one team;
- Defined roles and responsibilities;
- Strong volunteer base; quick deployment of committed volunteers;
- Field capacity building of the volunteers through cross-training;
- PMER capacity;

Mechanism and tools

- Testing new tools (manuals and SOPs);
- Availability of the frameworks/ pre-agreements with the suppliers;
- Up-to date Suppliers Database;

- Monitoring tools adapted to this specific context (scale-up and adaptation)

Field level

- Activation of Command structure;
- Establishment of the Operations room;
- Availability of the information desk as a Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) practice to receive the transit camp refugees and provide them with information and support related;
- Emergency response equipment;
- Relief items available in stock for distribution.

On top of the strengths and opportunities, a new practice has been found useful and successful. The volunteers cross-training and deployment to new sites helped the volunteers to test their knowledge and experience on a field level **A practice to be replicated in future similar events.**

Those above-mentioned were considered as positive factors to the success of the operation led by the LRC in response to the Arsal Population Movement.

Challenges

Throughout the exercise and process, the team members were able to identify key challenges from different perspectives, considering it as an opportunity for the LRC to concretely plan for areas for strengthening their National Society more broadly.

Key points around the timeframe of the operation were diverse. Some would be considered as challenges to avoid in future similar events -related to operational areas, while others are to be reminded of when planning for future similar operations.

It was clearly indicated by the participants, that despite the challenges they have faced in implementing the DREF, the LRC, through its mandate and by adhering to the Movement Fundamental Principles undertook the humanitarian range of activities despite the obstacles.

The situation left no option to the LRC to negotiate the type of support to be provided to the affected families, neither the site for the temporary shelter.

Some of these challenges have been highlighted by the participants, converged towards different areas, and were due to:

- Transit camp preparation: A difficult rugged terrain was offered by the municipality of Aarsal and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) for the LRC to build their transit camp on;
- Delay in demolishing the ITSs;
- Delay in removing the debris;
- Inability to deliver the needed quantity of wood for the shelter kit on daily basis the shelter kits were delivered by the supplier four days per week;
- Repeatedly changing of the DREF operation focal point at the field level;

Miscommunication with other non RCRC actors in the field. **Added to:**

- **Delay in submitting the DREF due to:**
 - i) imprecision around the needed information from the onset of the DREF;
 - ii) Confusing instructions given by the involved DREF technical team specifically with regards to the shelter component;
 - iii) lines of communication were not efficiently set among the Movement partners actively involved in the operation;
- **Logistic setbacks due to:**
 - i) delay in delivery the shelter kit;
 - ii) lack of demolition equipment;
 - iii) Community leaders were not fully available to support logistically in the operation since they were busy with the demolition of their own ITS;
- **Context setbacks due to:**
 - i) rugged terrain to prepare for the transit camp;
 - ii) The people reached were focusing on their priorities (demolishment of their ITS) thus not supporting in the operation as needed.

4. Top Challenges, Suggested Solutions and Recommendations

Out of the listed challenges, the following table highlights the **Top 5 challenges** agreed by the group and recommendations shared by the different group representatives whom were engaged in the Lebanon DREF. Please note that ranking has not been carried out by order of importance, as all of these recommendations are important for the working groups.

TOP 5 Challenges	Suggested Solutions
Ambiguity around DREF information and instructions	To establish a Task Force jointly with LRC, IFRC GVA and IFRC MENA RO to discuss the DREF technicalities, to have everyone on the same page;
Inefficient Communication Lines	<p>To define and agree on the most efficient communication lines when dealing with the operations partners;</p> <p>To use one email address and one phone number for external communication;</p> <p>To agree on and assign one Focal point for all involved stakeholders;</p>
Delay in delivering the shelter kits	To have a proper understanding about the donors and partners supply chain;
Miscommunication among the involved authorities	<p>Official paper/ minutes/ agreement/ approval should remain available at the site;</p> <p>To define roles and responsibilities across all involved actors (who's doing what);</p>
Rough terrain	Shelter Assessment and Mapping to be undertaken to explore the potential sites to be used in time of emergency.

Recommendations

- ✓ LRC to enhance its reporting system
- ✓ Meeting minutes to be documented and shared with all involved actors
- ✓ To update the existing supplier's database with their conditions and requirements including the delivery terms
- ✓ Deliverables to be made to the LRC warehouse for distribution

5. Relationship with Stakeholders

The stakeholders are crucial to the successful delivery of any organisational activity. Successful activities are those whose important stakeholders perceive them to be successful. The identification of the right stakeholders and the development of targeted communication to meet the needs of the activity and the expectations of stakeholders, will lead to a higher level of commitment and support from these stakeholders.

Therefore, it is essential to build and maintain robust relationships and maintain an appropriate level of communication to stakeholders. If key stakeholders are committed to the success of the activity and fulfil their responsibilities to contribute to its success, the organisation will achieve additional value through:

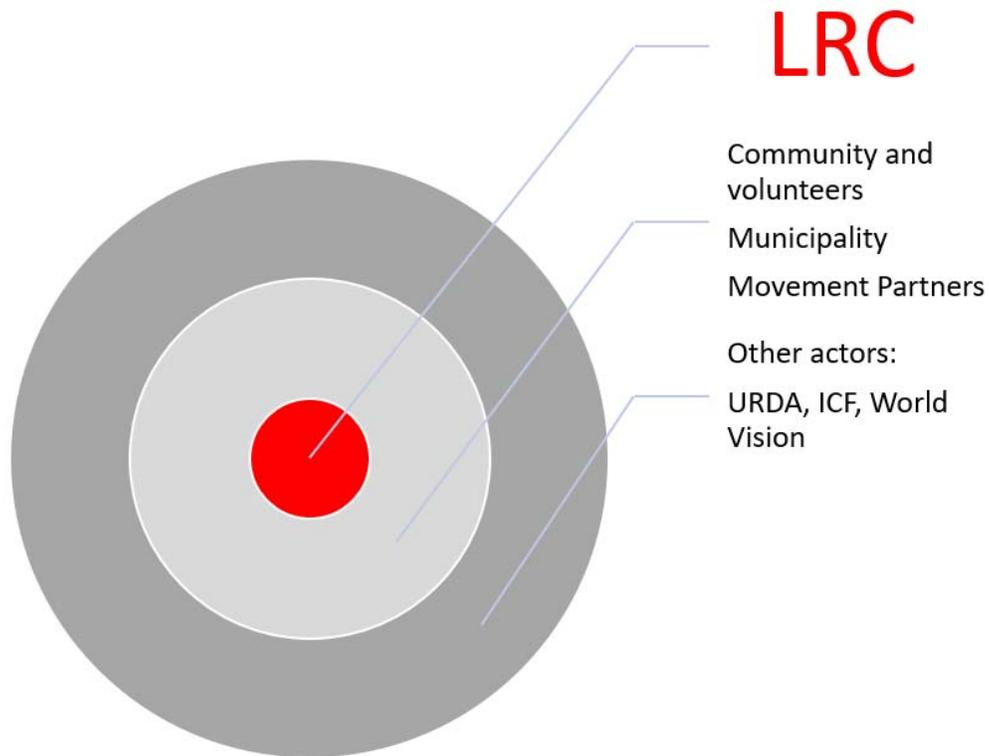
- ✓ higher chance of on time/on budget delivery;
- ✓ ability to achieve business strategies more effectively.

On Time/on Budget Delivery

Delays to implementation of activities usually occur through:

- non-involvement through high levels of support and receptiveness;
- advocacy with peers in the organisational hierarchy not provided for survival of the activity;
- resources promised at the beginning of the project are no longer available or not supplied when needed;
- Non-performance of the supplier or failure to fulfill its obligations; other people-related issues.

During the stakeholder's exercise, few stakeholders have been identified. The group was asked to place the stakeholders in the circles as per the *below graph*. The ones placed close to the centre are the ones that they consider having a strong relationship with, some on personal level and others on business level.



Few recommendations were put forward for improvement as follows:

- ✓ To enhance and better organise the cluster/ coordination meetings;
- ✓ To document and share the minutes of meeting with the shelter cluster members.

In conclusion, if stakeholders are more engaged, and the roles and responsibilities are well defined, there is less chance that some related issues will negatively impact the progress of the activity. Delays to the work will incur additional expenditure and impact the budget.

6. Captured Lessons from the DREF Operation

<u>Successful aspects to replicate</u>	<u>Challenges to avoid</u>
Internal coordination among all the departments	Sharing very preliminary information based on verbal discussions with the personnel at the field
Regular meetings with all the stakeholders	Absence of agreement on who's doing what
Cooperating and coordinating with the local authorities	Absence of the official approvals and minutes of the stakeholders meeting at the site
Maintaining the good image of the National Society, well-positioned as first responder	Several focal points are assigned for the same task with different contact details
Acceptance of the local communities that has been further enhanced by integrating CEA practices	To offload the in-kind donations at the field
Volunteers cross-training and deployment to new sites	

7. Workshop Photos







Looking at the response to Aarsal Population Movement, the LRC found the previous Lessons Learned Workshop conducted for DREF MDRLB006 (Extreme Weather Condition) very helpful in guiding them on how better to plan and implement the activities by putting the recommendations into practice.

During this workshop, the various recommendations proposed by the participants, interestingly show the desire for improvement for better response to future events.

The challenges identified from this paper will be of value to those involved in developing response measures and to strategic responses to man-made or natural disasters, or to meet unforeseen events.

By offering insight into the controlling stage in the disaster response in particularly in the Middle East and North Africa region, a real-world example is unravelled from which other countries and disaster management professionals can take advantage.

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