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# Libya DREF

(MDRLY002- Population Movement)

## Lessons Learned Exercise Report



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# Contents

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<b>1. Purpose of the Lessons Learned Report .....</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2. Introduction .....</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>3. Methodology.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. General Findings.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Strengths and opportunities .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Challenges.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Top Challenges, Suggested Solutions, and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. Relationship with Stakeholders .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. Captured Lessons from the DREF Operation .....</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1. Purpose of the Lessons Learned Report

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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, bottlenecks that occurred and mitigate their occurrence in later project stages and similar future projects. Data for this report was gathered during a virtual Lessons Learned exercise on 3 February 2021.

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 organizational growth and maturity by effecting long term improvements in the way an organization embeds and shares Project Management best practices;
- ✓ Communicate this information to project management and appropriate stakeholders.

## 2. Introduction

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Following an intensification of conflict in Southern Tripoli, Tarhuna, and Sirt, since 7 June 2020, nearly 25,000 people have been forced to flee their homes, according to the Libyan Red Crescent Society (LRCS) updates and International Organization for Migration (IOM's) Displacement Tracking Update.

In response to the Population Movement, the Libyan Red Crescent (LRCS) in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), decided to support a total of around 2,500 affected households.

Consequently, a [DREF](#) has been launched to cover the immediate needs of the affected families (2,500 HHs).

Starting from the date of the conflict on 7 June 2020, volunteers from the LRCS set out to work and respond to the situation immediately.

The **Libyan Red Crescent** (LRCS) in coordination with the authorities has deployed its volunteers to support in their timely intervention.

The LRCS coordinates with municipalities and local organizations in providing unified lists of the displaced population and contributes by providing shelter items, cleaning, and maintenance of school facilities to be prepared to receive the IDPs

The LRCS has been tracking the movement of IDPs and continued the assessment of their needs. In addition to this, the LRCS has been monitoring the situation in the new shelters and provided advice on protection.

Blankets, mattresses, pillows were distributed to the affected families.

The **Lessons Learned Exercise** was conducted with the presence and participation of LRCS 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 Libyan Red Crescent.

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

A key purpose of this Lessons Learned (LL) exercise is therefore to document the main lessons learned under the DREF operation and to share and use the knowledge derived from experience in order to repeat success and avoid future setbacks. In other words:

- Promote the recurrence of desirable outcomes
- Preclude the recurrence of undesirable outcomes

## 3. Methodology

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All relevant project participants were brought together to review the development process of the DREF operation together in the form of a virtual workshop.

The workshop was moderated by an "external" person who was not involved in the operation. In order to ensure that all topics were covered, two facilitators were also supporting the group discussions, keeping the conversation flowing, and making the session participative to achieve the intended results.

There were nine participants from different departments at field and Headquarters levels (Disaster Management, Logistics, Operations, in addition to the IFRC Head of Country Office) who provided their feedback to the DREF through interactive sessions.

The participants were divided into three groups and started discussions in order to identify the strengths and opportunities and the challenges that they have faced throughout the DREF. The next step was to link the identified challenges with proposed solutions and recommendations, thus ensuring their relevance, applicability, and acceptance by all the stakeholders.

## 4. General Findings

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The participants were able to identify key strengths, opportunities, and challenges from various perspectives as they played various implementational and strategic roles in this DREF response. During the exercise, they were asked to elaborate on the operational/organizational successes and shortcomings that need to be addressed for better operations in the future. The findings have been categorized according to how the feedback related to the context of the DREF operation and its objectives.

### Strengths and opportunities

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

### **Tools and mechanisms**

- Operational central data management office within the HQs.
- Preparedness strategy in place.

### **Coordination**

- Coordination mechanism with the IFRC.
- Good internal communication between the HQs and the branches and externally with the Federation.
- Coordination with the local authorities and other agencies.
- Proper networking with all external stakeholders.

### **Human Resources**

- Involvement and engagement of the LRCS departments and units as one team.
- The readiness of emergency response volunteers is enhanced through the quality of the capacity-building efforts.
- Volunteers' capacity in domestic emergency response.
- The strong team spirit among the staff and volunteers.

### **Field level**

- LRCS's high acceptance by the communities.
- Access to people and communities in need.
- The stock of relief items is being maintained for timely distribution.
- A beneficiary registration and identification system are in place.

Those above-mentioned aspects were considered as positive factors that yielded the success of the operation led by the LRCS in response to the Population Movement.

Notably, the coordination with authorities at all levels was seen as very successful. In particular, the learning about how relationships with the Ministry of Social Affairs were built and sustained over time should be well captured for future replication. Moreover, the engagement with local authorities at national and district levels played a major role in enhancing the National Society's image and the people's perception.

In addition, the capacity of the trained volunteers of LRCS involved in the emergency, trust, and acceptance of the NS was a key factor that sustained the success of the DREF interventions

Finally, other key factors of success are LRCS' image, preparedness, and response capacity, through prepositioning of relief items, strengthening the capacity of its volunteers through continuous training, and strengthening existing coordination mechanisms with local authorities and partners.

## Challenges

Throughout the exercise and process, the team members were able to identify key challenges from different perspectives according to their roles in this response.

Primarily, it was indicated by the participants that despite the challenges they have faced in implementing the DREF, LRCS assumed its role and undertook the humanitarian range of activities despite the obstacles.

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

### Human Resources

Key points around the **human resources** element 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.

One of the identified challenges is associated with the difficulty in communicating with the Operations Focal Person assigned by the Federation due to his lack of local contextual knowledge on one hand, and to the language barrier on the other hand.

On-time and quality recruitment of the "Operations Manager" was a major challenge in the operation. Hence, revising the recruitment system is recommended, with particular attention to the language barrier.

Staff turnover was another challenge, which could be internally tackled by the NS. This has impacted the National Society Development (NSD) element of the operation, associated with conducting the full training sessions repetitively to the newcomers.

### DREF / Operation

The team involved in designing and planning the intervention was not involved in the response, and another team was assigned for the implementation.

The assumptions and risks were not properly identified during the intervention's planning phase. The main risks that were overlooked were the power outages and closure of ports that negatively affected the timely arrival of shipped relief items.

In addition, the spike in the prices due to a severe shortage of diesel, and currency fluctuation.

In response to the previously mentioned challenge, an Operations Update was produced and published to highlight the changes in the budget impacted by the poorly identified assumptions.

Another factor contributing to the challenges in implementing the DREF operation was travel restrictions, which, combined with internet outages, made internal communication with the branches difficult, as well as the failure to share information and updates on a regular basis. It was discovered that the items distributed in each package were in some cases insufficient for large families. Another factor to consider when planning for the future distribution of household items.

### Beneficiary targeting

The beneficiary selection criteria set for this intervention were not well-defined. Objective vulnerability criteria should be in use in close coordination with local authorities/representatives to ensure accountability and minimize social interests.

### Procurement

A critical challenge in the relief interventions was the delays in the relief items related to the currency fluctuation which should be thoroughly reviewed and regulated for future operations.

## 5. 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 who were engaged in the DREF Operation. 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	<b>To establish a Task Force</b> jointly with LRC, IFRC GVA, and IFRC MENA RO to discuss the DREF technicalities, to have everyone on the same page;
Inefficient Communication Channels	<b>To define and agree on the most efficient communication lines</b> when dealing with the operations partners;

	<p><b>To use one email address and one phone number</b> for external communication;</p> <p><b>To agree on and assign one Communication Focal point</b> for all stakeholders;</p>
Delay in delivering the shelter kits	<b>To have a proper understanding of the donors and partners supply chain;</b>
Miscommunication among the involved authorities	<p><b>Official paper/ minutes/ agreement/ approval should remain available at the site;</b></p> <p><b>To define roles and responsibilities across all involved actors</b> (who's doing what);</p>
Rough terrain	<b>Shelter Assessment and Mapping</b> to be undertaken to explore the potential sites to be used in time of emergency.

### Recommendations

- ✓ IFRC to assign DREF focal points familiar with the local context
- ✓ To allocate budget for communication assets
- ✓ To include the possible currency fluctuation in the risk assessment
- ✓ To update the existing supplier's database with their conditions and requirements including the delivery terms
- ✓ Beneficiary selection criteria to be well defined

## 6. Relationship with Stakeholders

The stakeholders are crucial to the successful delivery of any organizational 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 with stakeholders. If key stakeholders are committed to the success of the activity and fulfil their responsibilities to contribute to its success, the organization will achieve additional value through:

- ✓ higher chance of on-time/on-budget delivery;

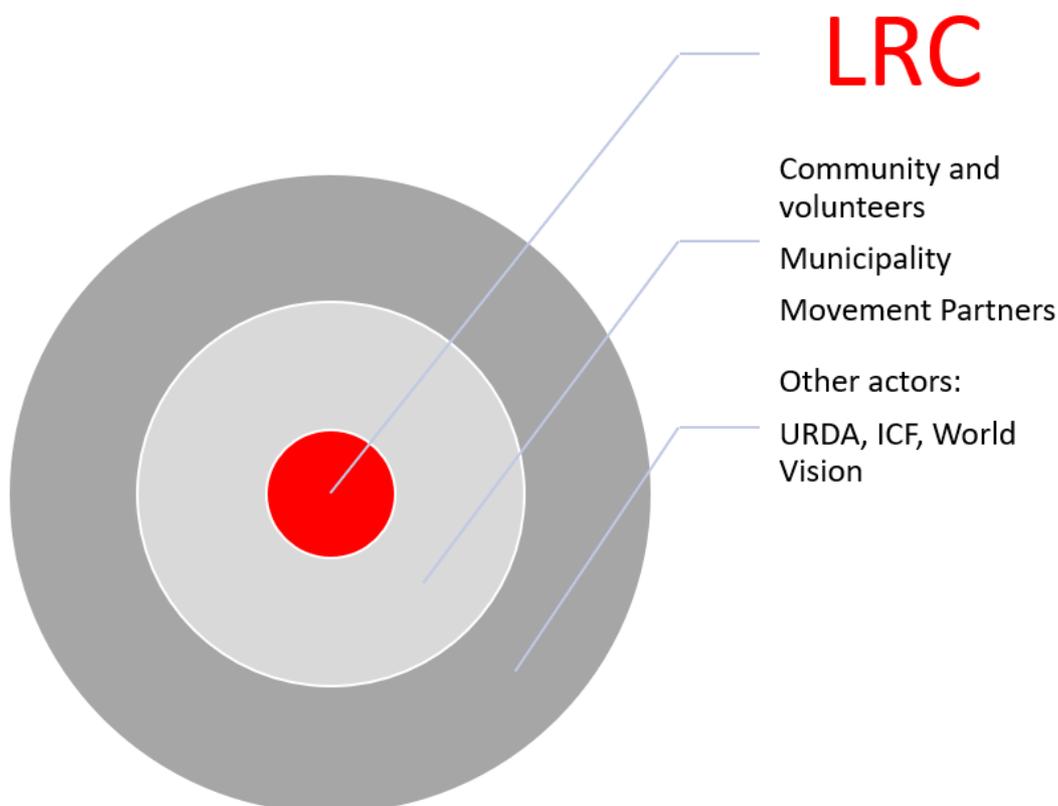
- ✓ ability to achieve business strategies more effectively.

## 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 organizational hierarchy not provided for the 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 fulfil 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 a personal level and others on a business level.



**Few recommendations were put forward for improvement as follows:**

- ✓ To enhance and better organize the cluster/ coordination meetings;

- ✓ To document and share the minutes of the 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.

## **7. Captured Lessons from the DREF Operation**

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<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 the first responder	Several focal points are assigned for the same task with different contact details
Acceptance of the local communities that have been further enhanced by integrating CEA practices	To offload the in-kind donations at the field
Volunteers cross-training and deployment to new sites	

Looking at the various recommendations proposed by the participants, interestingly show the desire for improvement for a 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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