**Draft Conflict Sensitivity tips for COVID-19 aid responses in Lebanon**

Refugees and host communities basic physical and psychological needs are significantly increasing.

These needs are much greater than most NGOs available resources. Yet, numerous NGOs and newly established initiatives have been responding to the emergency crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and having social and economic repercussions.

These emergency responses are saving lives of many families of all communities.

However, NGOs are facing various challenges, not only due to the scarcity of resources, but also related to the team capacities and safety needs; the measures taken by local authorities; coordination between different actors; and many more stakeholders.

These challenges, at times, are contributing to fuelling tensions between refugees’ communities themselves, and with their host communities.

**From both grassroots perspective and conflict sensitivity approach, the following tips were developed as a first draft based on several exchanges and discussions that occurred in the field with NGOs and local communities’ members.**

These tips are meant to serve decision makers, project managers, and field staff when planning or executing emergency responses during the COVID-19 crisis. **Although these conflict sensitivity tips are not considered final,** they may serve to highlight observations and lessons learnt already obtained from the field. **We hope to refine these tips during the upcoming Lebanon Conflict Sensitivity Forum meeting with all our partners.**

**Conflict Sensitivity Tips:**

* **Voucher System:**
* It is recommended to adopt a voucher system instead of food baskets or hygiene kits distribution whenever applicable, which can contribute to:
* Avoiding crossing checkpoints with physical materials by recipients or NGOs, which reduce tensions at checkpoints and with municipalities.
* Avoiding conflicts between recipients in camps when distributing visible materials to few selected families.
* Protecting field staff and recipients from potential COVID-19 infection transmitted by materials and boxes.
* Supporting local businesses, and hence expanding the numbers of aid recipients.
* Supporting selected markets and suppliers to improve their precautionary and disinfection measures when receiving vouchers.
* **Coordination between NGOs:**
* Forming field emergency networks in each governorate (especially for Tripoli in North Lebanon) between active actors to coordinate different interventions and joint capacity buildings.
* Matching and comparing distribution lists between NGOs (as it is happening to a good extent in Beqaa) to avoid duplication and save resources.
* Planning for joint distribution campaigns between different NGOs when working in the same area to avoid gaps.
* If an NGO is not specialised in emergency response, it is recommended to channel aid provided to their recipients through other mechanisms, NGOs or initiatives.
* Reviewing NGOs aid selection criteria within emergency networks to ensure meeting emerging needs, transparency and best coverage.
* **Planning and Execution:**
* Communicating challenges with the local communities and showing highest level of transparency with them.
* Informing families about the safety and precautions measures ahead of the distribution date (e.g. interaction with the staff) to ensure a better protection for them and for the field staff.
* In case of material distribution, and in areas where families can move around, it is recommended to distribute baskets outside the camps (unless the whole camp is covered).
* If recipients are supposed to cross check points, tips and recommendation of how to deal with the situation should be provided.
* When an NGO resorts to municipality police (or other official bodies) to accompany a distribution mission, it is recommended to meet up ahead with the appointed officers to present the distribution plan and mitigate potential negative implicit messages.
* **Coordination with Municipalities:**
* Arranging meetings with municipalities as a committee representing several NGOs.
* Coordinating with existing local emergency initiatives, that might help as entry points to coordinate with the municipalities.
* Channelling support provided to the host communities whenever possible through the municipalities.
* Resorting to the trust built between some NGOs or UN agencies with certain municipalities.
* **Capacity Building:**
* Providing field staff members and local volunteers with necessarily online emergency response trainings.
* Preparing field staff members for the possible reactions of recipients caused by safety precautions, prior to distribution day (e.g. reactions of elderly people or children).
* Providing staff especially those working in the field with mental health support.
* **Miscellaneous:**
* Urging protection agencies, healthcare institutions and mobile clinics to provide quick COVID-19 tests that are conditional to accept any domestic violence case in a shelter.
* Urging UN agencies to act fast to respond to the increasing needs.
* Preparing joint analyses and response reports, and sharing them with donors to ensure maximal flexibility and adaptability.
* Assessing/Considering the number of smart phones or laptops in a family when providing online activity (e.g. education and women empowerment at the same time) to the family to avoid tensions.