

G 05: INVOLVE MIGRANTS IN CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND INTEGRATE THEIR NEEDS AND CAPACITIES



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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

States, employers and recruiters, international organizations and civil society actors have contingency plans and procedures so to react to and mitigate the risks associated with crises. Many States of origin have contingency plans to assist their citizens abroad.

Contingency plans should take into account and integrate migrants' presence, their capacities and potential assistance needs – including by addressing ways to identify and respond to the needs of particularly vulnerable groups of migrants such as migrants with irregular immigration status. Contingency plans should be flexible, actionable and adapted to relevant regional, national or local dynamics. Regularly updating and testing plans can be helpful to identify gaps and weaknesses.

Involving migrants and civil society in the preparation of contingency plans can be useful to identify the need for targeted approaches. Employers and recruiters should develop plans that include migrant workers and their families. Joint contingency planning between emergency response actors and those working with migrants can facilitate resource sharing and common understanding of risks, migrants' profiles and availability of local assets and infrastructure.

Lessons from the Brisbane Floods (2011)

In 2011, severe flooding affected much of eastern Australia, displacing thousands of people. At the time of the floods, Brisbane had a total population of more than 2 million people; almost 30 percent of them were foreign-born and many did not speak English at home.

During the floods the official information on emergency risks was only available in English, leaving many unaware of the risks and necessary protective measures.

There is evidence that minority communities organized their own broadcast channels to fill this gap. The “gatekeepers” of many different migrant communities acted as intermediaries between Australian authorities and other people in their community. They adapted the warnings and communications to the needs of their respective communities and validated the information, in order to increase the confidence of their community in official messages and communications. They also helped disseminate alerts and assisted rescue and relief agents identify and contact victims through door-to-door security controls in their neighborhoods.

CONTINGENCY PLANS THAT ACCOUNT FOR MIGRANTS' PRESENCE

MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Contingency plans that account for migrants' characteristics can facilitate the provision of targeted assistance during emergencies. Such plans, which need to be regularly tested, should include a comprehensive understanding of the migrant population based on community profiles and mobility patterns, particularly in high-immigration areas. While developing contingency plans, it is important to consider a number of factors, including: migrants exposure to risks in their place of residence and work, their geographical isolation from other communities, their access to basic infrastructure and services; migrants' culturally-learned reactions to crises and warnings; what actors may be best suited to communicate and interact with migrants; appropriately stockpile resources to account for migrants' dietary, religious, privacy and linguistic needs.

[Emergency simulation exercise, Australia](#)

Exercise "Stuffed Goose" was organized as a multi-agency exercise involving government departments and agencies, including the Country Fire Service, South Australia Police, State Emergency Service, Metropolitan Fire Service, Local Government, and community volunteers. It involved the simulation of a major bushfire that threatened the township of Murray Bridge, surrounding farms, parks, and significant transport, electricity and water infrastructure. This project was undertaken nationally as part of the Attorney-General's Department's Inclusive Emergency Management with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities Program.

[Emergency planning guidelines for American businesses abroad, United States](#)

These emergency planning guidelines prepared by the Overseas Security Advisory Council are intended to assist representatives of U.S. corporations abroad to prepare judiciously for emergencies. Adequate planning requires an emergency action plan that prevents or minimizes the loss of life, material damage and loss of their functions, and a post-disaster plan that expedites recovery. Effective emergency planning will reduce the vulnerability of American businesses to disasters, and facilitate the U.S. Government role in rendering assistance where possible to all Americans and their families living abroad.

CONSULAR CONTINGENCY PLANNING

STATES OF ORIGIN

Many States have contingency plans for protecting their citizens abroad. Such plans are adapted to the local context in host States and locations. Contingency plans capture a wide range of information, including data on citizens in consulates' areas of jurisdiction, possible crisis scenarios and information on exit routes and temporary relocation sites to support evacuation plans. They should outline the organization of the response structure in case of a crisis, which may include a coordination structure with external actors, including governmental entities, civil society and private sector actors, and international organizations both in the host countries and in third countries. Cooperation mechanisms with other consular missions may also be set-up in advance.

[Wardenship system, Philippines](#)

Involving Filipino communities abroad in times of crisis is one of the most significant features in Filipino consular posts' contingency plans. Filipino community leaders abroad are encouraged to take part in the command and control procedures and structures of the consular post's contingency plans. They are part of the "wardenship" system, wherein each Filipino community leader has to take care of a number of fellow nationals, by at least keeping them informed of the situation and the contingency plans laid out for Filipino nationals. This pre-established wardenship system, connects Filipino migrants to each other and with the Philippine diplomatic and consular personnel. The wardenship system was used in providing assistance to distressed Filipinos in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Japan.

[Joint Contingency Plan for the Nordic Embassies in Kathmandu, Norway](#)

This Contingency Plan is issued for the Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, Finnish and Norwegian citizens present in Nepal. The plan contains advice and directions for emergency situations. The aim of this plan is to give general advice to the Nordic citizens on how to prepare for an emergency situation and what to do when it occurs. This plan has not been prepared by any expected or present emergency situation, but is part of the routine planning done by each mission abroad.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS

MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Crisis or rapid response teams can be established in order to be deployed on short notice in the event of emergencies so to support affected migrants and existing response structures in the country affected by crises. National rapid response teams are multidisciplinary and can include consular specialists and officers trained to initiate consular or humanitarian assistance but also private sector actors. The roles and functions of teams can include updating and maintaining information on citizens in the host countries, gathering intelligence reports and providing local, real-time, independent and credible assessments of the situation. They may also assist in updating and implementing evacuation and contingency plans, and negotiate with host States, States of transit, employers, or other relevant actors to remove barriers in assisting migrants and relocating them to safe areas.

Overseas Preparedness and Response Team, Philippines

The Overseas Preparedness and Response Team (OPRT) was established by the President of the Philippines to formulate policies and programs to respond to natural disasters, civil unrest, armed conflicts, and other crises in foreign countries affecting overseas Filipinos. The OPRT reviews and formulates contingency plans, and maintains a pool of crisis management, and technical experts and trained personnel. When overseas areas with a significant concentration of Filipinos are hit by a crisis, it authorizes the deployment of rapid reaction teams or the dispatch of additional personnel to reinforce Philippine Embassies and Consulates. The OPRT also includes a monitoring mechanism that regularly gathers and updates information on the identities and locations of overseas Filipinos particularly in crisis-prone regions.

Consular Crisis Management Division, European Union

The European External Action Service (EEAS) Crisis Response System (CRS) covers crises which may affect EU security and interests occurring outside the EU, including those affecting the EU delegations or any other EU asset or person in a third country. It equally covers crisis occurring inside the EU if those have an external dimension. Part of the Crisis Response Department of the EEAS, the Consular Crisis Management Division has two roles: assisting the Presidency to coordinate consular policies across the EU (e.g. travel advice, issuance of consular guidelines); and to assist the Presidency and/or Lead States to coordinate action in times of crises. The EU Situation Room is the first point of contact for all information on crisis situations. It is a permanent stand-by body that serves as a situation information hub for all relevant stakeholders from the European institutions.

CRISIS ALERT SYSTEMS

STATES OF ORIGIN

Alert systems that monitor crises in host States and direct authorities to act based on the intensity of the crisis provide certainty for authorities and for citizens abroad. Actions corresponding to the level of crisis may range from voluntary restrictions on travel, voluntary return, or mandatory evacuation or return.

Messaging Alert System for Citizens Overseas, United States

The Messaging Alert System for Citizens Overseas Tool (MASCOT) is a dissemination method for country-specific information, messages, travel alerts, travel warnings, worldwide cautions, and fact sheets both in the United States and abroad. It is available through the Consular Consolidated Database and used by overseas posts and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Directorate of Overseas Citizens Services to send e-mail messages to U.S. citizens who are registered with an overseas consular section and/or have enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

Crisis Alert System, Philippines

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippine Government jointly adopted a crisis alert system which serves as the basis for emergency repatriation and deployment restrictions of Filipino nationals abroad in the event of instability, external threats or conflict affecting a specific destination. In consultation with the Department of Health, DFA may also impose Crisis Alert Level in times of pandemics and other medical hazards. Based on the Crisis Alert Levels, DFA can issue a travel advisory, which is a notice on the prevailing peace and order situation in a specific destination and impose or lift travel bans.

CONSULAR CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Contingency planning is a key process that consular posts can undertake to prepare themselves to respond effectively to an emergency and assist affected nationals in their area or country of jurisdiction. Contingency plans should include detailed information, provisions and arrangements to guide effective responses to possible crises in order to minimize loss of life, health impacts and economic losses for nationals and to ensure the continuity of the institution's core operations. Formulating, regularly updating and periodically testing contingency plans are key elements of crisis preparedness and management.

IOM developed a consular contingency plan tool that can be used by consulates and embassies to collect and analyze the necessary information and formulate a response plan with available resources.

The tool at a glance:

1. Contact information of the Foreign Post	This section should include basic contact information about the foreign post for which the plan is being compiled and for other relevant institutions (the embassy in the country, other foreign posts in the country or region, and the capital's foreign service).
2. Introduction and objectives of the plan	This section should include basic information on what the plan covers, and what its objectives are.
3. Area/country risk profile	This section should include basic information on the area or country covered by the plan that is relevant to emergency preparedness.
4. Profile of the local community of nationals	This section should include basic information on the size, composition and characteristics of the local community of nationals.
5. Crisis scenarios	This section should identify possible crisis scenarios that could unfold in the area.
6. Roles and responsibilities	This section should identify the organization of the response structure in the case of a crisis. This means identifying the key responsibilities that need to be covered as part of the response.
7. Evacuation plan	The plan should identify safe sites, exit points and evacuation routes and provide basic information on their location and characteristics (including services evacuees should be able to receive at different locations).
8. Phases of the crisis and responses	Contingency plans should identify triggers (events that mark the activation of different levels of response) and phases (periods in which different kind of responses are expected by the different actors of the plan).
9. Logistics	This section should identify the requirements of items and materials that the foreign post will need in order to implement the plan. This allows to create stockpiles of essential items that can be accessed in case of need.

A complete version of the tool in [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Russian](#) and [Spanish](#), as well as additional resources for consular preparedness are available on our website.

The Guidelines in Action present implementation examples and tools to support the operationalization of the MICIC Initiative Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster. Practices and tools may be relevant for one or more stakeholders. Find more examples of practices in the MICIC Guidelines and in the online Repository of Practices on our website.

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