

# **REDUCING THE VULNERABILITY OF NATIONALS ABROAD IN CRISES**

---

Reference handbook  
for the MICIC e-learning course for consular staff



This publication is part of the Migrants In Countries In Crisis (MICIC) Initiative. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.



This publication has been made possible by the support of the American people through the US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any agency of the Government of the United States of America.

## CONTENTS

Introduction and overview	1
Migrants' vulnerability in crises	5
Crises	18
International frameworks	25
Relevant actors	30
Profiling and tracking migrants	45
Improving migrants' awareness	51
Contingency planning	57
Communicating with migrants	69
Supporting evacuations	77
Providing relief assistance	87
Providing recovery assistance	95
Glossary	103



# INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

## WHAT IS THIS TOOL? WHO IS IT FOR?

This manual accompanies the e-learning course on “Improving Assistance to Nationals Affected by Crises Abroad — A Course for Institutions of the Country of Origin”, developed by the International Organization for Migration with the aim to strengthen the ability of the personnel of institutions tasked with supporting and assisting a country’s citizens living, working and travelling abroad to address the specific challenges their nationals face when confronted with crises abroad.

The training targets mainly:

- Consular officials and other government representatives of home countries deployed in posts abroad;
- Staff members of home country institutions specifically mandated to provide assistance to individuals caught in crisis situations while abroad, whether through their work on the ground or at capital level; and
- Volunteers who might support the work of personnel from the two above categories before, during and after crises.

These materials will most often refer to these audiences collectively as “consular staff” – except in cases in which additional precisions are needed.

The groups of actors listed above accrue key responsibilities for the day-to-day life of their nationals in their host locations (e.g. information gathering and dissemination, service provision, direct assistance) and are often among those who operate on the front-line in crisis situations that affect their nationals, and play a key role in reducing their vulnerability in emergencies. Their crisis-related duties include, among others:

- Providing information and advice on potential risks faced by migrants, as well as on a crisis’ potential developments;
- Issuing documentation such as passports, visas, laissez-passer’s and letters of facilitation; and

- Providing direct assistance to those who find themselves in situation of distress.

Many countries of origin also have in place mechanisms that specifically aim to reduce migrants’ vulnerability, including, for instance, emergency cells, delivery of emergency care packs, pre-departure trainings, and/or travel insurance.

Given the trend towards higher international mobility, it is likely that such assistance and support systems might grow increasingly overstretched in the future, as home countries’ staff and resources will be confronted with more requests for assistance, coming from nationals in a broader set of locations. This may particularly affect countries that see large shares of their population travel abroad – and crises situations are particularly likely to trigger heightened assistance needs. The need to promote self-reliance and self-empowerment among their nationals, in anticipation of crises, is essential to decreasing their vulnerability.

This calls for specific capacity development on a number of areas, including:

- Gathering information on nationals abroad in crisis-prone or crisis-affected areas or countries (e.g. number of individuals, their family composition, legal status, living and health conditions, any specific needs);
- Understanding the context in which their nationals live, work and travel (i.e. their exact location, the hazards they face, the resources they can count on or lack – including operating roads and transportation networks, availability of services and assistance, transportation options);
- Increasing their nationals’ awareness of local hazards, risks, resources, as well as their rights and entitlements in normal times and in crisis situations;
- Communicating with their nationals, relevant local actors, and institutions and the general public back home before and during emergencies;

## CONSULAR ASSISTANCE

Consular assistance comprises all help and advice provided by the diplomatic consular corps of a country to their citizens living or travelling overseas. Such assistance may take a variety of forms, including provision of travel documents, assistance for departure and evacuation, support in the case of an accident, incarceration, serious illness or death.

Consular assistance does not supersede the individual's responsibility to seek solutions to one's problems. Should a situation become urgent and/or critical, ideally in anticipation of a potential crisis, a person living, working or studying in the area at risk has the sole responsibility to ensure one's own safety and security – and this could include leaving the area autonomously, as soon as possible, and without waiting for outside assistance.

Generally speaking, in crisis situations, consular officials will take all possible measures to support affected nationals; however, they may not have the capacity in the country (staffing, financial resources, equipment) for a comprehensive, effective intervention. It may take days to reach affected nationals, in particular when they are living and working in, or visiting, isolated areas, when the affected zone is too dangerous or when local infrastructures have been damaged. When no consular representation is available locally, the migrant would need to depend on one's own resources and/or seek assistance from a third party.

These issues are likely to be compounded in countries with limited resources or infrastructure to deal with the increase in demands for services resulting from a crisis.

These materials may also be of interest to other actors who may work in crisis situations affecting migrants, and in particular international organizations and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the country of destination.

- Developing preparedness plans at the foreign post level in order to ensure continuity of services in crises;
- Supporting assisted departures, evacuations and emergency repatriations to the home country or third countries in the case of a crisis;
- Coordinating with other emergency preparedness, response and recovery actors operating in the affected location, and the national authorities of the host State; and
- Issuing emergency identify and/or travel documentation, based on procedure established by each country.

IOM encourages the use and adaptation of these materials to meet each country's specificities and priorities, and in particular their integration, as applicable, in trainings relevant personnel may receive before their deployment abroad.

Each chapter in the handbook accompanies one of the e-learning modules, mostly providing additional details, examples and tools that were not included in the e-learning course due to timing constraints.

## METHODOLOGY

These tools have been developed as part of IOM's efforts to operationalize the recommendations of the Migrants In Countries In Crisis (MICIC) Initiative. They have been developed using a variety of experiences and knowledge gathered by consular corps and foreign services from all over the world – in particular in the context of major crises affecting large numbers of migrants abroad, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2011 floods in Thailand, the uprising in Libya and the Yemen civil strife.

The manual and course present measures, actions and tools that home country institutions can adopt and use in order to improve the assistance provided to nationals abroad before, during and after crises.

## THE MICIC INITIATIVE BACKGROUND

According to UN data, there are today almost 250 million international migrants in the world and tens of millions of people displaced by conflicts, violence and disasters. Many more people move across borders for shorter periods of time, many undocumented, for reasons related to their profession, education, family, security or recreation; these go largely unrecorded by statistical and tracking systems on migration. Increasing population movements at all scales and between all geographic areas are made possible by the increasingly interconnected character of our modern societies, making the world a "smaller" place. The presence of labour migrants, international students, tourists, refugees and expats has become such an integral part of many societies that States and other public and private actors may need to rethink the way they provide

services, opportunities and resources to their nationals and visitors. This is particularly true for institutions of countries from which a high number of international migrants originate.

The presence of a significant number of people living outside of their countries of origin has specific consequences in times of crisis, especially when individuals are undocumented and/or have limited income and access to local resources. Regardless of the type of crisis (whether triggered by a natural hazard, technological accident, or conflict), international migrants are likely to need urgent and specific support and assistance, which may not always be provided or available by the institutional and non-institutional actors of the country affected by the crisis. Recent examples of these situations are numerous: the Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and even more strikingly the 2011 conflict in Libya and the civil wars in the Central African Republic and more recently in Yemen, have all shown that without targeted assistance and support by home country and international institutions, locals, migrants and other foreigners in the area are likely to be seriously affected in times of crisis.

With population movements on the increase and unlikely to be less significant over the next decades, and given a reported increase in disasters and conflicts and an increase in the level of services expected, underlines the resource scarcity, inequalities and environmental change taking place, building a capacity to protect the interests and assist their nationals/migrants in the case of crises affecting abroad should be a concern for all States – regardless of their levels of wealth and/or development; while more wealthy countries might have more resources to assist their nationals abroad, these resources are rarely sufficient to face major crisis situations, given at times, the high expectations of their population, as demonstrated, for instance, by the criticism the British consular corps received for their work in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Over the last years, a number of calls have gone out to make sure that the needs of migrants in crises situations are adequately addressed. Starting in 2011, the United Nations and IOM, in particular through the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, have all discussed ways in which countries could collaborate to develop a better approach to addressing the

issue. This encompassed a variety of measures, including improved protection of and assistance to migrants in crisis-affected areas, enhanced capacity to evacuate people out of affected areas, and to support individuals who had returned to their home countries, as well as better inclusion of migrants in the country's emergency preparedness plans and disaster risk management systems.

As a consequence of these calls, a small group of actors started working to explore and define the issues, look at best practices, collect the evidence base, and propose a set of guidelines to strengthen national and international capacities to address the migrants' vulnerability in disasters through the MICIC Initiative. The group includes governments (the Philippines, the United States, Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and the European Commission), international actors (IOM, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Migration and Development) and research institutions (Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration).

The initiative aims to improve the ability of States and other relevant stakeholders to alleviate suffering, and protect the dignity and rights of migrants caught in countries in situations of acute crisis through more targeted preparedness, response and recovery efforts. It is co-chaired by the United States and the Philippines and its Secretariat is hosted by IOM.

## SCOPE OF THE INITIATIVE: "MIGRANTS" AND "CRISES"

The initiative is limited to addressing the vulnerability of migrants living, working and staying in (or passing through) countries that face major emergencies. There are a number of situations in which migrants might be experiencing hardship as a consequence of their migration status (e.g. documented and undocumented migrants missing at sea; migrant victims of organized criminal groups while on the move); however, the initiative only deals with situations that represent major crises for their host country.

Such crises may include disasters linked with natural hazards (e.g. earthquakes, hurricanes, floods)

## THE 2012 INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION

IOM's background paper for its 2012 International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) on this issue stated: "When migrants' host countries experience crises, migrant populations often have few means to ensure their own safety. In some cases migrants may be unable to leave the crisis area, in others they may be unwilling to leave or unable to access humanitarian assistance, while in others they may seek refuge across borders in adjacent countries. In the latter case, repercussions may spread throughout entire regions, particularly in border areas and neighboring States."

and technological accidents (e.g. nuclear failures, contamination by chemical or biological agents), or situations of conflict (ranging from generalized violence and low-level civil unrest to international armed conflict). In all such situations, it is the country in which migrants are physically present that is experiencing a crisis (as a whole or in some of its parts) – not only the individual migrants or their groups.

Significant differences exist between conflict and disaster situations, in particular in terms of security, access to affected populations and capacity and willingness to operate of authorities and other actors in host countries. The initiative aims to identify options that can guide action under a variety of operational and political contexts.

It is also clear that migrants' specific conditions of vulnerability in crises situations have roots in pre-crisis conditions of exclusion and marginalization, and that the way the post-crisis phase is addressed is key to replicating, reinforcing or reversing such conditions. Pre- and post-crisis phases need to be considered alongside the acute emergency period if one is to actually reduce migrants' specific vulnerabilities.

For the aims of the MICIC initiative, "migrants" include all categories of people who have crossed international borders to find themselves, for a more or less extended period of time, in a different country than their own. "Migrants" therefore refers to migrant workers and their families, business travellers and expats, students, marriage migrants, victims of trafficking and smuggling, regardless of the duration of their stay, reason for their arrival and legal status.

The MICIC initiative does not try to replace existing protection frameworks for refugees or asylum seekers, as they are established through the 1951 refugee convention and regime. However, while refugees and asylum seekers might face specific conditions of vulnerability or be protected through a dedicated regime, the principles and actions that can help reduce migrants' vulnerabilities in the face of emergencies may be very relevant to improving the refugees' safety and security in their host countries, and can complement existing protection mechanisms.

The initiative aims to reduce the impact they may suffer when they are affected by emergencies abroad. Recognizing that individual features (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, physical status, education, employment status), including those linked to people's migration status, contribute to shaping individual needs and capacities, the initiative stresses the need to promote actions that target the characteristics or specifics of the affected migrant groups, as well as to the specific geographical, social, economic and environmental context of the crisis. For instance, business travellers and expats are often well equipped to take care of their needs, including in times of crisis. Should they seek consular assistance, they would be entitled to routine consular assistance depending on needs (e.g. passport issuance, help in contacting family and friends, and transfer funds).



# MIGRANTS' VULNERABILITY IN CRISES

## MIGRANTS' SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF VULNERABILITY

Migrants are often disproportionately affected by crises impacting the place and community where they live, work and stay. They are often more likely to experience hardship, distress, trauma and violence as a consequence of emergencies, and to suffer longer and more severe impacts in the aftermath of a crisis. They are also less likely to access assistance and support, in particular if they belong to particularly marginalized groups. While migrants might also have better options to leave the crisis-affected area and evacuate back home, they are often unable to do so due to financial or administrative reasons, or as a result of logistical issues induced by the crisis itself.

Migrants' differential vulnerability stems from economic, politic, social and cultural factors (determined both in their country of origin and of destination) that shape their status, rights and access to resources, services and opportunities. These factors affect their individual and collective well-being and security in their day-to-day life in their host country, and contribute to determining specific conditions of exclusion and marginalization in emergencies.

Crisis preparedness, response and recovery efforts can help address some of these factors, bridging some of the barriers migrants often encounter when trying to access information, resources and services that are needed to ensure their security and meet their needs in emergencies. Home country institutions have a key role to play in this regard, most often in coordination with relevant entities of the country of destination – through efforts carried out before the migrants' departure abroad (such as by dedicated institutions based in the home country), upon their arrival in the host country (such as by consular corps and emergency cells), and upon their return to the home country, if applicable (by any relevant home-based service provider or assistance entity).

### Language barriers

Migrants, in particular newcomers to a foreign country, short-term stayers and those living in remote/isolated locations, or members of marginalized groups (who have therefore reduced opportunities for interaction with members of host communities) are less likely to understand the local language. Reduced language proficiency limits their access to key information disseminated as part of awareness-raising campaigns, warnings and emergency communications, reducing their ability to take protective measures in anticipation or response to a crisis, as well as their ability to access assistance before, during and after crises.

When a tornado hit the town of Saragosa, Texas, in 1987, most of the 26 deaths were Spanish-speaking migrants who had not been adequately warned due to failures in translating and transmitting early warning message into Spanish. This was aggravated by the fact that migrants' usually preferred alternative sources of information (in particular specific radio stations) that were not always part of emergency communication efforts. Warning messages were translated hastily and poorly and did not effectively reach all their intended audience.

When Hurricane Andrew destroyed much of south Miami Dade County in Florida in 1992, a large share of the affected were migrants of Latin or Haitian origin. Response agencies such as the United States' Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) and Red Cross did not initially have translators and interpreters so were not immediately able to deliver food, medical supplies and disaster grants to the non-English speaking minorities. Migrants from South and Central America were among the worst affected groups.

After the 2011 floods, the Government of Thailand provided relief and relocation assistance (e.g. setting up shelters and providing relief services) to affected migrants. However, obstacles to official outreach efforts meant that many migrants did not know where and how to reach shelters and what kind of services they would be entitled to upon arrival.

Before crises, language barriers can reduce access to information and education resources on hazards and risks management procedures. In disaster or conflict situations, they undermine the effectiveness of early warning and early action procedures and hamper the understanding of emergency communications, potentially leading to increased casualties. Language barriers also reduce the ability of migrants to understand (and be understood by) relief and response workers, reducing the effectiveness of their efforts, and are an obstacle to obtaining information on secondary risks (e.g. future hazards that might be associated with a certain crisis) or on available resources and assistance after crises (including, in particular, psychosocial counselling). Overall, they reduce migrants' ability to access basic service and opportunities.

As it will be shown in following modules, consular staff and other relevant local actors (governmental and non-governmental) can contribute to addressing these barriers by translating and adapting relevant materials and information, both directly and through targeted identification of, collaboration with, and referral to competent professionals and volunteers.

### **Use of alternative media and information sources**

Many migrants with diverse linguistic and cultural background prefer using non-mainstream media for accessing day-to-day information. For instance, they may prefer listening to the television or radio channels from their country of origin and/or in their native language, and may rely on interpersonal communications (word of mouth, often with people from a similar background) as the primary source

to seek and validate information on a variety of topics. Many will refer to their consular officials for accessing and validating information.

As a consequence, these channels are likely to be the most effective options for information dissemination to migrants in emergencies – and should therefore be adequately considered within emergency communication planning. Whenever this does not happen and emergency communications are only delivered through host community's mainstream media and traditional channels, the capacity for comprehensive coverage of the system can be substantially diminished. The integration of local ethnic media, consular and even home country and international information channels (such as, for instance, BBC International, Radio Canada International and *CNN*), within such systems can help bridge these barriers.

### **Administrative and legal barriers to accessing resources and assistance in emergencies**

Legal frameworks of countries of destination do not often include specific provisions for the protection and assistance to migrants in times of crises, but many countries do provide relief assistance, at least formally, without discriminations based on language proficiency, legal status and ethnicity. Access to non-emergency information, assistance, resources and basic opportunities that can ensure people's preparedness and capacity to cope with crises is however often reduced for migrants, as are migrants' options for recovery assistance by host institutions. This is particularly the case for the more marginalized groups, such as undocumented and irregular migrants.

During the 2003 San Diego firestorms, for instance, Spanish-language emergency communication was insufficient, despite the fact that Spanish speakers in the affected areas amounted to about 20 per cent of the total population. These groups turned to Mexican TV channels for news. However, foreign media was largely unaware of the situation and unprepared to coordinate with US authorities to produce and disseminate relevant information. Lessons learned from this event improved Spanish-language response: coverage of the 2007 fires affecting the same area was much more effective.

During the 2011 Tohoku triple disaster, the short-term, automatically-issued warnings for the earthquake were not adequately translated in foreign languages and follow-up information, in particular on the levels of contamination, as a consequence of the Fukushima nuclear accident was neither as good nor as comprehensive as the one provided to the Japanese public. As a consequence, many foreigners turned to their own consular corps and TV stations for information. These sources, however, in the uncertainty due to the lack of clear, up-to-date information, often suggested prudent solutions, including the departure of foreign residents from areas not affected by the contamination. Contradictions between this messaging and the official Japanese communications also reduced overall (and in particular non-nationals') trust in Japanese authorities.

Migrants coming from countries more routinely affected by emergency situations might be particularly aware of specific hazards and behaviours to follow in case of an emergency. This was, for instance, the case of migrants from the Latin America and Caribbean region in the Turks and Caicos Islands; in addition to having directly experienced previous disasters and responses, they were made aware of incoming hazards through communications and information provided by their home country media.

The Thai immigration system includes a series of work permits that limit the holder's movement to specific areas: their holders cannot move out of designated areas without losing the right to stay in the country. After the 2011 floods, with such restrictions continuing to be enforced, many migrants had to choose between staying in affected areas and keep their status or risk losing their status by evacuating. In addition, Burmese refugees were legally forbidden to leave camps and therefore were unable to access assistance and earn income outside the specified area.

During the 2006 Lebanon crisis, hundreds of Sri Lankans camped around their embassy in the hope to obtain an emergency laissez-passer, which then had to be ratified by General Security (the body responsible for all foreigners in Lebanon), in order to leave the country. General Security also released hundreds of migrant domestic workers from prisons and detention centres, declaring an amnesty for all illegal migrant workers on the condition that they leave the country and not return for at least five years.

After the 2011 Tohoku disaster, asylum seekers in Japan were expected to stay in the districts in which they had applied for asylum – evacuating out of an area affected by the tsunami and the nuclear fallout might therefore mean losing the right to have their case heard.

Syrian legislation requires foreign workers an exit permit to leave the country, which can only be issued with the employer's consent (often granted only upon reimbursement of recruitment costs, or based on any other condition established in the employment contract) and upon payment of a fee to immigration officials. This hindered the domestic workers' capacity to evacuate in the face of the post-2011 violence, and represented an additional issue for undocumented migrants, who could not obtain the exit permit at all. Compounding this, Jordan has refused access to Palestinians and Iraqis fleeing from Syrian Arab Republic, preventing them from reaching safety in the country.

"Non-qualified aliens", including some groups of documented migrants (such as those with a Temporary Protected Status in light of the situation of their country of origin), affected by the 2012 Hurricane Sandy in the New York area could not access official cash assistance or unemployment benefits after Hurricane Sandy.

In addition, administrative obstacles to movement might constrain migrants' options for evacuation in times of crisis, thereby increasing their exposure to harm and hardship. This is for instance the case for migrants with work permits or visas tied to their permanence in a certain area or employment in a certain job or with a certain employer. Migrants might also face additional requirements (e.g. a fee, specific documents) to exit or re-enter a country during or after an emergency, or to cross a border into a third country in search of safety.

Consular staff and other home country institutions can play a role through targeted advocacy and supporting solutions in addressing these legal and administrative issues, through diplomatic or more operational channels, as well as by ensuring that migrants have access to the relevant documentation.

### **Limited respect for migrants' rights, exploitation and trafficking**

Migrants are often the target of violations of basic human rights and more vulnerable to exploitation by public and private actors before, during and after crises. Such actions, whether carried out by authorities, employers and recruitment agencies or other actors, can translate in constrained options in the face of emergencies and heightened exposure to conditions of harm and hardship.

Withholding a migrant's documents is a common practice among employers and recruitment agencies, smugglers, human traffickers and corrupt officials and can be part of many legitimate immigration administrative procedures. It limits the individual's capacity to be evacuated out of a given area or country and receive relief/recovery support. While consular assistance (including direct assistance, issuing of documentation, repatriation of remains, information to families back home) can be provided even without documentary proof of citizenship as long as verification can be done on identity and status (e.g. through the citizenship/immigration portal of the country of origin), this might slow down assistance provision, and require the intervention of Consular staff alongside other local service providers.

Underpaying migrants or withholding their wages can deprive them of the means to move out of the affected area or country, or cope with the impacts of a crisis. This can lead them to stay in unsafe areas for fear of losing their earnings. Similar effects are linked with the practice of bondage by debt to an employer and/or a recruitment agency.

Trafficking, smuggling and exploitation of migrants, and in particular of minors, are often magnified in crisis situations. Corrupt authorities and criminals might charge migrants additional fees to leave a crisis area, or may extort them money or involve them into human trafficking schemes.

Lebanon hosted no less than 120,000 domestic workers prior to the 2006 crisis, mostly from Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and the Philippines. The country was not a signatory of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Under a sponsorship system, Lebanese employers withheld the migrants' passports to prevent them from absconding and avoid losing the recruitment fees they had paid to the agencies. While most employers delivered their employees to their respective embassies for safety and repatriation, many refused to let them leave. Many migrants ran away, claiming they were escaping from abusive employers and left without papers or money. Others chose to stay because they did not want to lose their source of income and because they were hoping to receive withheld salaries. Some still considered the situation in Lebanon better than back at home.

Many Myanmar migrants affected by the 2011 flood in Thailand faced particularly dire economic conditions: they had been paid below the legal guaranteed salary and their employers had withheld their wages. In addition, reported evidence highlighted cases in which immigration officials asked migrants up to USD 500 in order to leave the country. Many migrants, in particular those without documentation, resorted to smuggler networks to cross borders to go back home in Myanmar.

During and after the Libyan conflict, starting from 2011, criminal gangs organized smuggling networks to bring non-citizens (in particular nationals of sub-Saharan countries) to other countries across the Mediterranean. Many were promised passage out of the country and into Europe and, though they paid the required fees, they were never actually transported.

In Egypt, at the onset of the civil unrest in 2011, migrants evacuating out of the country were reportedly stuck at the airport by officials who refused to let them pass unless they gave them all they could withdraw at the airport's ATMs. Official representation from the migrants' countries of origin had to be made in order to stop this corrupted practice.

All these forms of abuse reduce migrants' capacity and options to access resources allowing them protection and help in recovering from the shocks.

Reminding authorities of their obligations towards individuals within their borders, increasing migrants' awareness of the potential risks, gathering proof and information, and referring victims to advocacy groups, are all measures that consular staff and other home country entities can pursue in order to address such risks. They can also directly propose solutions to institutional actors of the host country.

### **Lack of local knowledge**

When migrants move out from their place of origin and into a new country, with new social features, institutional setting and environment, they often lose their markers, points of references: it takes them awhile to gain a sufficient understanding of their context in the country of destination and residence. This is particularly challenging for newcomers, short-term migrants and those who live in conditions of physical or social isolation.

This can result in a reduced awareness and modified and/or skewed perception of the severity and distribution of local hazards, such as violence, specific illness (i.e. Zika virus, Ebola), landslides or floods. It can also reduce their understanding of how to react when facing a crisis such as where to find shelter and safety and who to ask for assistance. It can also make them less aware of existing resources and opportunities, assistance institutions, processes and regulations, their rights and how to protect themselves against possible violations, all of which can increase their vulnerability.

Overall, migrants with no previous experience of crises, in particular those affecting their area of destination, seem to consider preparedness and risk management less important than those coming from areas previously affected by similar events.

Consular staff and other relevant home and host country's actors can help overcome some of these issues by raising migrants' awareness on local hazards, resources and preparedness options, including through the development and dissemination of appropriately targeted, multi-language materials and information packages.

A migrant Latino farmworker in North Carolina declared: "The problem when there is a warning is that they announce where the disaster is coming from, but because we don't know the area we go where the disaster is. We don't know our surroundings, we don't know the names of the states, cities and areas the disaster might be coming from; there isn't a way to find it out."

After 2012 Hurricane Sandy, some forms of assistance (i.e. transportation, medical care, crisis counselling, emergency shelter, food, water, medicine and other basic supplies) were available to all affected persons, while others only to citizens and registered migrants (cash assistance for relief and reconstruction). Undocumented migrants were considered eligible if their household included a US citizen (including, for instance, a US-born child). Confusion and lack of knowledge on these principles and on how to actually apply for assistance resulted in a large share of the migrant population not accessing assistance services at all.



After the 2011 Emilia earthquake in Italy, a large share of the affected persons was hosted in publicly-run tent camps. By the time the relief phase subsided, the overwhelming majority of the families remaining in the camps was made up of non-Italian migrants. This was attributed to having reduced access to owned/rented private housing options within their families and/or networks.

### **Lack of social networks**

As people move away from their places of origin and into new communities, their family and community ties may be disrupted. Such ties are key for people to access income, shelter, health, and childcare and education in normal times, and can be even more important in times of crisis, when additional material resources and emotional support might be needed in order to cope with hardship. Availability of and accessibility to such resources and opportunities might be greatly reduced for migrants in areas of destination. This is particularly problematic because migrants tend to rely on such resources more than native groups would – and particularly in situations in which formal provision of assistance is limited, such as in emergencies.

Social support is therefore one of the main reasons why non-citizens tend to cluster together in ethnically, linguistically and cultural homogeneous communities. While this can facilitate the establishment and integration of newcomers in a certain area, it can also lead to isolation in segregated, homogeneous communities, hindering their participation in the host society's structures and communities.

While it is not usually within the consular mandate to help nationals living abroad get in touch with their communities and build social networks, the engagement of consular staff and other relevant representatives of the home government can help connect the migrants in their jurisdiction, strengthening and restoring such bonds. This can take place through a variety of initiatives, such as celebrations and commemorations, cultural events and initiatives, which can also be part of crisis response and recovery.

### **Reduced participation in civic affairs (including emergency volunteering)**

The availability and extensiveness of migrants' social networks is also influenced by their limited participation in community-level organizations and civic activities (including those that are active before/during/after crises) in their places of destination, especially for newcomers, short-term stayers and marginalized individuals. This might be the result of a series of factors, such as:

- The immigrants' lack of trust and fear of being exposed (in particular in the case of undocumented and/or irregular individuals);
- Lack of direct involvement/interest in the circumstances of the community of destination or transit, in which they may feel unwanted or are only temporarily present;
- Lack of resources and time to devote to such activities;
- Limited language proficiency; and
- Lower levels of formal education.

While this kind of activities do not strictly fall under the consular mandate, representatives of the migrants' country of origin (in particular those deployed to host locations in which significant communities of nationals reside) can help support, promote or lead initiatives that can foster migrants' engagement in a variety of domains in their areas of destination, and most crucially to the ones that are relevant to emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

### **Lack of trust in and fear of host country authorities**

The lack of trust in public authorities is the product of long-term relationships between authorities, their representatives and the host communities they represent, and migrant groups, in domains such as law enforcement, service provision, and employment. While deeply rooted

In Germany, about 20 per cent of the native population engages in volunteer work with the fire brigades (at different levels of commitment). Only about 1 per cent of the registered migrant population does. Since fire brigades often are "one-stop shops" for disseminating awareness messages on local hazards and emergency communications, as well as for understanding current situation during emergencies and accessing a variety of life-saving services, the lack of migrant engagement results in their exclusion/oversight from a key communication and service delivery channel.

Following the landfall of Superstorm Sandy in 2012, many migrants restrained from looking for formal assistance due to fear of deportations. This led to a number of migrants, potentially eligible for cash assistance and unemployment benefits, not applying for support. Even families whose children were citizens of the United States – and who were therefore legally eligible for unrestricted assistance – ended up not applying.

During the 2007 San Diego fires, Latinos were reportedly the target of discriminatory behaviours, in particular by the local police forces. Many undocumented or irregular migrants did not receive assistance, and some were apprehended and referred to the immigration authorities for follow-up. The general sentiment among the migrant community was that such incidents prompted a lack of trust for the police. Furthermore, the police fuelled this feeling by setting up checkpoints to identify drivers in cars and impounding cars if no identification could be provided. As a consequence, many migrants stayed put and refrained from seeking assistance from the police – or tried to “help themselves” as much as possible.

Tens of thousands of Latino workers were drawn into New Orleans in the aftermath of 2005 Hurricane Katrina by the employment opportunities created by the reconstruction process. Thousands (in particular undocumented day labourers) decided not to evacuate during the 2008 Hurricane Gustav – for fear of arrest and deportation, especially since the only formal evacuation option available was by bus, and local authorities checked identity documents on boarding. Some evacuees, on the other hand, refused to avail themselves of government-assisted programmes and spent their own money on transportation and shelter, wiping out their savings.

in these normal-time dynamics, it can have specific consequences before, during and after crises. Lack of trust in and fear of local authorities, may in fact shape migrants’ willingness to be involved in emergency drills and preparedness mechanisms. It can affect their understanding and reactions to warnings and communications resulting in a need to validate emergency communications within their community, thereby delaying their departure and/or evacuation, or reduce their willingness to leave and to look for assistance. It may also reduce the migrants’ willingness to engage in efforts to participate in voluntary relief efforts to provide assistance to other affected persons.

Migrants may fear for their physical well-being, their freedom, their ability to stay in a country without facing deportation, or simply feel local authorities lack the capacity to adequately assist them. Involvement of specific institutions in relief efforts (e.g. police and immigration officers), the establishment of checkpoints along evacuation routes, or registration activities in evacuation sites often exacerbate these issues. Previous negative experience with emergency response efforts and institutions can further undermine migrants’ willingness and capacity to follow warnings and refer to mandated institutions for support.

Lack of trust as an obstacle to accessing emergency assistance tends to be highlighted in particular for migrants without legal status and/or in a discriminated minority groups – those who, for instance, are more likely to fear that an evacuation order would lead to deportation or violence, or require them to leave behind unprotected belongings. The willingness to protect an undocumented/irregular member of the family or

of the community might also shape other migrants’ behaviour (including those who might have legal migration status and potentially citizenship of the host country), forcing them to take riskier behaviours than necessary.

Collaboration among home and host country authorities and other humanitarian actors as part of emergency preparedness, response and recovery work can, to some extent, help address migrants’ mistrust. Whenever the actions by these stakeholders are poorly coordinated, migrants’ levels of trust are likely to be further reduced.

### **Lack of consideration in preparedness and response planning**

Preparedness and contingency plans and training of personnel often do not take into account the presence of migrants and their specific needs. Data about number and whereabouts of migrants, particularly in the case of unregistered migrants, available to such stakeholders is often not comprehensive or up-to-date, potentially leading to responsible actors to underestimate migrants’ needs in crises – in particular in domain as critical as evacuations and service provision.

In addition, the presence of migrants often requires that preparedness and response actors take into account the specific needs of a more diverse community. These groups might need, for instance, specific support to reach or get in touch with a distant family, to obtain documentation, assistance to leave the country and others. They may also need the provision of adapted basic services, as a consequence of specific cultural features (e.g. linguistic diversity, food preferences or restrictions,

Thailand does not explicitly include migrants in their disaster management planning and has no dedicated institutional structure in place for dealing with their specific needs in emergencies. During the 2011 floods, the Government set up dedicated shelters for migrant workers, where tailored services (employment placement, return assistance) were being provided. However, institutions did not have sufficient capacity to assist the whole migrant population, which meant that many remained under/unassisted.

The identification of the bodies of foreigners in the 2004 tsunami proved arduous due to the lack of body records and presence of a significant number of unregistered migrants among the victims. No clear procedure was in place, for instance, to collaborate with the Myanmar authorities for verifying the victims' addresses in the country of origin and warn the families. In addition, reportedly due to the lack of available preservation facilities, Thai authorities had to bury corpses before families had been able to adequately grieve, and did not systematically invite distant families to commemorative ceremonies.

After the 1989 Loma Prieta (California) earthquake, Central American migrants were reported to largely avoid public displacement sites. Fenced-off tent areas did not appeal to them due to their willingness to stay close to home in order to protect their belongings; the limited provision of culturally appropriate basic services in such sites, as well previous negative experiences with repressive policies and confinement camps in the conflict-ridden countries they were fleeing from.

religious beliefs). The collaboration among a variety of actors is key to identifying and addressing such needs. Such collaborative efforts also mean involving representatives of home country institutions (usually Consular staff) alongside local emergency management and non-governmental actors: this can allow to support more effective evacuations, provide more adequate shelter, food, health care and non-food items (NFIs), as well as deliver targeted psychosocial and livelihood support.

While they often try avoiding massive involvement of nationals in emergencies by advocating for their early departure in anticipation of crises, home country institutions can play a direct role in emergency operations in case of need, complementing the capacities and mechanisms of the host country's institutions. In addition, they can, on occasion, help raise awareness and advocate on the conditions of migrants with relevant host country, third-country and international

actors, giving visibility to migrant issues as part of preparedness planning and response. They can also support these efforts by gathering and sharing information on migrants' whereabouts and characteristics that, if used by the relevant stakeholders, can help adapt their emergency preparedness and response efforts.

### **Discrimination and hostility**

In non-emergency times, discriminations along ethnic and cultural lines, and in particular against migrants, can result in isolation, persecution and reduced access to basic services and employment opportunities, and can be one of the main underlying factors of migrants' vulnerability. In extreme cases, hostility can translate in violence and xenophobic attacks targeting migrants and their assets, which can lead to "crises" in their own right, such as the series of violent acts that targeted migrants in South Africa in 2008 and in Cote d'Ivoire in 2011.

During the 2011 floods in Thailand, a number of migrants looked for assistance outside the migrant-dedicated shelters the Government had set up. Due to lack of sufficient resources, authorities were reportedly prioritizing Thai citizens over migrant victims whenever it came to allocating space and distributing resources.

Sub-Saharan Africans in Libya faced deeply-rooted racial discrimination well before the 2011 civil war. The conflict only exacerbated such issues, as allegations started circulating that Gaddafi was recruiting ethnic minorities and foreign mercenaries into his armed forces. While this might have happened, in most cases, foreigners were coerced into enrolling with the promise of obtaining identification papers. As a consequence, migrants from Chad, Niger, Mali, Nigeria and other sub-Saharan countries, including women and children, had to face increased stigma, physical and verbal violence and arbitrary arrest by rebel factions. The same held true for non-Arab minority groups such as the Tebu, Tuareg and Amazigh. Arrests and imprisonments also discouraged many more migrants from crossing checkpoints and borders held by armed forces, trapping them into conflict-affected areas.

Latinos felt targeted by discrimination and racism by police forces in the aftermath of 2005 Hurricane Katrina – both in the provision of assistance and in situations in which they had competing claims with native white individuals (e.g. disputes with landlords over a house, with employers over wages or a job).

The 2011 Christchurch earthquakes fuelled some hostility vis-à-vis immigrants, in particular Asian immigrants, who were blamed for the soaring cost of housing throughout the reconstruction phase. Prices went up as a consequence of the destruction of thousands of houses in the quake; however, this was more fundamentally linked with pre-earthquake speculations.

An analysis of preparedness among Latinos and Asian migrants in the United States revealed that they might be more likely to lack financial resources, time and space to stock their emergency kits in anticipation of disasters. As demonstrated by their behaviour during Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, foreign groups in the United States were more likely than native Caucasian citizens to lack transportation options for evacuation, and less likely to have the resources that were needed to leave.

After Superstorm Sandy in 2012, an estimated 27 per cent of affected migrant families fell behind on their rent due to the lack of savings to cope with the period of unemployment.

Crises and the resulting hardship and breakdown of law and order they often lead to, may also represent a trigger for hostility towards migrant communities. Hostility can manifest itself in a variety of acts ranging from de-prioritization or partial exclusion from emergency assistance delivery programmes, to blaming migrants for the crisis or specific violent acts perpetrated by a variety of relevant actors, potentially including other crisis victims and indirectly affected communities, emergency workers. All these forms of discrimination can contribute to reducing migrants' willingness to relocate, be evacuated or look for assistance of any kind in crises, thereby representing another factor of vulnerability.

### **Livelihood insecurity and poverty**

Insecure employment and poverty are not necessarily associated with the fact of being a migrant, in particular when the broader definition of "migrant" is adopted. However, while not all migrants are poor, they recurrently face barriers when trying to earn a decent living in areas of residence. They are often more likely to face conditions of economic marginalization than native/majority groups.

Deskilling, lack of recognition of educational credentials and other administrative barriers, discrimination and language barriers often lead migrants to take jobs that are low-level, informal and under paid. These jobs are often tenuous,

risky, often without long-term guarantees or any welfare/health benefits or long-term security.

Migrants' livelihood insecurity is often exacerbated in crisis situations: interruption of businesses, inability to reach a remote workplace following an evacuation, or, in the case of domestic workers, when the employing family leaves the area due to the crisis, can result in under/unemployment, in particular for unprotected, lowly qualified migrant workers. This can have long-term effects on the poverty level of not only the migrant, but also on their family and, at times, their community of origin, in particular when they depend on the distant migrant's livelihoods for survival.

Lack of financial means can result in reduced preparedness and coping capacity (e.g. no resources to stockpile essential items or resources, no own vehicle to evacuate, no savings to pay for emergency accommodation or medical care, or to buffer against periods of unemployment and hardship, lack of insurance on lost assets). This can result in migrants being disproportionately affected by the economic consequences of emergencies – adding up to even more fundamental risk factors linked with poverty such as quality and location of housing, borderline working conditions: these are key in determining any additional risks migrants face.

In the 2006 Lebanon crisis, migrant domestic workers, and in particular women, faced reduced access to information and services, as a consequence of their segregation in buildings in specific districts of southern Lebanon and of the Shia suburbs of Beirut that were directly targeted by airstrikes.

Volunteer groups formed to assist stranded Myanmar workers in the Thailand floods in 2011 reported access issues for the groups living and working in remote industrial areas, hindering distribution of food and essential items to relief centres within them. Shelters provided by the Government of Thailand to migrant groups in remote areas were largely inaccessible to response actors. This reduced the availability of translation services and psychosocial support, as well as prevented affected migrants from obtaining their newly issued documentation.

Lack of access to main sources of information and media, including the Internet, greatly reduced the ability of migrant minority groups to receive crisis-related information before and after Hurricane Sandy struck in 2012. Local NGOs working with Asian communities in New York organized a door-to-door outreach system in Chinatown to make sure that local residents were adequately notified of warnings and emergency communications.



## Isolation

Similarly to poverty, isolation is not unique to the life of migrants; however, migrants might be more likely to work and live in conditions of social, physical or geographical segregation, and might be less connected to information and communication networks than other groups within a given community.

Migrants are more likely than natives to find employment in low-paying jobs such as rural labourers, workers in industrial parks or domestic workers, which take place in isolated locations or conditions. Migrant communities are also more likely to live in marginal, informal neighbourhoods, which are often less connected to roads and infrastructural networks and more difficult to access (and sometimes less secure) than formal neighbourhoods. In addition, xenophobia, lack of representations and insufficient inclusion within local policies, planning and service provision can also result in social isolation.

In times of crises, this can mean that migrants are not as directly and effectively reached by life-saving information and/or services, whether conveyed through formal or community-based channels. In some instances, isolation might also be the result of lack of resources (e.g. no radio, TV, the internet, phone). Geographical isolation can also reduce the capacity and willingness of responders to access marginal areas to provide emergency services, or the commitment of relevant authorities to assist their recovery.

## Migrants' role vis-à-vis families and home communities

A person's migration is usually the result of a collective decision taken within a household or sometimes a whole community. Migration is part of collective income and well-being strategies. As a consequence, a migrant's circumstances end up affecting much more than just his or her individual well-being: when a migrant's life and/or livelihoods are disrupted in a crisis, families left behind may face a sudden loss of income, assets, and resources. This

is even more significant for families who depend on a migrant's remittances for their survival.

Reduced incomes could result in the family's inability to pay daily expenses (frequently, for instance, the very debt contracted to send out the migrant member). Furthermore, when migrants are forced to return home as a consequence of a crisis, this could result in additional pressures on the resources available to households and communities. The individual migrant's "failure" may therefore expose many more people to hardship and insecurity.

All these reasons could add pressure on the migrants facing emergencies, thus limiting their choices. Due to such reasons, migrants might be less willing to look for safety through evacuations and or to return to their country of origin. The situation is often exacerbated for migrants (and families/communities) who have contracted debts to migrate. Economic losses (due to both loss of life and of livelihoods) can be mitigated through travel/life insurances that might cover for a compensation, including for any lost earnings as well as for the repatriation of the migrant worker. However, countries, employers and individual migrants subscribe to such schemes are a minority.

## DIFFERENT MIGRANTS, DIFFERENT CONDITIONS

Not all migrants experience the same barriers to the same extent; therefore, not all migrants present the same patterns of vulnerability. Characteristics such as gender, age, skill level, family situation, origin and migration status play a significant role in shaping the vulnerability at individual level. This is particularly important in the light of the comprehensiveness of the scope of the MICIC initiative, as it includes documented and undocumented migrant workers and their family members, tourists, students and expats, as well as stateless and displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees.

When Hurricane Ingrid and Tropical Storm Manuel hit the Acapulco region, in Mexico, in 2013, tens of thousands of tourists – many of them foreigners – ended up being stranded in the affected areas. Early warning systems and evacuation procedures did not work effectively, and people ended up being unable to move as roads were cut by floods and landslides and the local airport was operating at reduced capacity. Military planes and helicopters were used to evacuate people to Mexico City – often after hours of waiting without food at (or by) the airport. However, the conditions of migrants working in the local resorts and hotels was even direr, as they did not have access to the specific assistance received by tourists.

After the 2011 floods, many undocumented migrants in Thailand stayed in flood-affected areas due to fear of being arrested and deported by police and immigration officials. Deportation would have jeopardized their future chances of formal employment in Thailand and exposed them to the costs of moving back into the country. Fear of authorities also resulted in undocumented workers recurring to smugglers to cross borders to go back home. Smugglers reportedly charged between USD 80 and 130 per person to guide the migrants along clandestine routes and out of the country, where some faced further exploitation by Thai and Myanmar armed forces officials.

It is therefore important to understand how these individualized features interplay with local economic, social and political systems to determine people's access level to services, opportunities, assistance and representation – and therefore of vulnerability – before, during and after crises.

### **Conditions of vulnerability linked with migration status**

Lack of legal status in a country can be a major determining factor for vulnerability, leading to reduced access to essential services and opportunities, and result in livelihood and personal insecurity and poverty. This situation is magnified in crisis situations, where unregistered and/or irregular migrants might be de facto unaccounted for by emergency management systems of countries of origin and destination, and unable to access preparedness, relief and recovery assistance.

Due to fear of arrest and deportation linked with their status, these individuals often avoid seeking assistance of the public service providers and law enforcement officials, refraining from accessing the judicial system or reducing their movements to the bare minimum. As a consequence, they are way more likely to experience conditions of isolation, exploitation and violation of their basic rights. In times of crises, they are more likely to face risky choices (e.g. losing savings or documentation withheld by employers or recruitment agencies; being exposed to increased risk in affected areas which they are not able to flee; and falling into the hands of smugglers, traffickers and corrupt authorities while seeking informal evacuation options).

### **Conditions of vulnerability linked with employment status**

Specific conditions of employment – often segmented along clear gender lines – also bear the potential for situations of heightened vulnerability. It is the case of living conditions of geographic and social isolation that stems from being a domestic worker (often a prerogative of female migrants) or a labourer in far-off farms or industrial parks (depending on the sector – men or women).

Such workers can be completely unaccounted for by host and home governments and emergency actors due to their location and the unwillingness of their employers to declare them. In addition, certain categories of workers (such as domestic workers) work alone, without regular contacts with colleagues and in locations that are dispersed within a certain community or country. The lack of contacts with colleagues, unions, labour organizations, and even simple acquaintances also exposes them to heightened risk of exploitation.

### **Conditions of vulnerability linked with gender, age and ethnicity**

Individual characteristics, such as gender and age, also shape people's migration experience, both in transit and in the area of destination. They influence, for instance, where, when and how people move, whether people moving can count on any support in the area of destination, what kind of jobs they can access, whether they might be the target of acts of violence, exploitation or abuses. These factors end up resulting in specific patterns of vulnerability in any emergency situation. While these dynamics are not exclusive to migrant communities, they create specific patterns of disempowerment and fragility when coupled with migration status (in particular when people are undocumented or irregular).

90 per cent of the Filipino migrants working in the Syrian Arab Republic before the civil war did not have full, official documentation, whether because their employers withheld their documents or because they had moved in the country in an undocumented manner in the first place. Filipino officials designed targeted campaigns to try to reach out to female domestic workers through radio announcements and leaflets. These efforts proved however not fully effective, both due to the characteristics of the locations where migrants were living (often in the midst of conflict-affected areas) and to the unwillingness of their employer to release them from their jobs.

Men often tend to travel through riskier routes than women and move to places in which they cannot count on much support by social networks – in particular when they prepare the future migration of the rest of the household. They often take or are forced into more hazardous or exploitative jobs and might be forced to take riskier behaviours in order to fulfil their role as the breadwinners. Women, on the other hand, might be way more vulnerable to violent acts, in particular sexual violence, and trafficking, and may be forced into specific forms of forced labour (e.g. as sex workers). In addition, in some countries, women victim of sexual assaults could be accused of prostitution and could face jail time or even stoning. Migrants might also have specific needs linked to beliefs and social conventions (e.g. privacy, willingness to talk to strangers) that need to be taken into account in order to deliver adequate emergency services.

LGBTI migrants often face specific, most often harsher discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. This might include discrimination and isolation within their home and host community, as well as within the migrant groups in the area of destination. On occasions, their decision to migrate might be directly linked with persecution or abuses they have experienced in their country of origin. These conditions might result in reduced access to information, services and representation in times of crisis. Please note that in some countries, same-sex relationships are considered illegal and could lead to long-term detention, or even to a death penalty.

Similarly, migrants that are part of ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic minorities in their country of origin may face specific patterns of isolation, or lack of representation within the migrant groups in their area of destination. Their position might need to be accounted for and reflected in participatory mechanisms (e.g. for preparedness and recovery), as well as in communication and outreach efforts (e.g. early warning, emergency communications). Ethnic minorities may also be more at risk of being trafficked.

Minors, in particular when unaccompanied, also face specific conditions of vulnerability linked with reduced availability of support and networks and increased exposure to exploitation and trafficking. The elderly also face specific conditions of isolation, additional language barriers, reduced literacy and mobility, which all are relevant for preparedness and response efforts.

## MIGRANTS AS ACTORS OF PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

While migrants often present specific conditions of vulnerability, they also possess capacities, skills and resources that can be leveraged to improve crisis preparedness, response and recovery. Creating the conditions for such resources to be used is key not only to reduce migrants' own vulnerabilities, but also to make sure that families, communities and societies back home keep benefiting from migrants' well-being contributions.

Collaborating with migrants and their groups in areas of destination is key to making sure that all resources and capacities are leveraged in the event of a crisis.

Migrants and their organizations, especially the better-established ones, can play a key role in the circulation of information, warnings and communications before, during and after emergencies. This can help increase awareness about potential hazards and emergency procedures among fellow migrants, and can effectively complement other channels of communication to ensure a more comprehensive outreach when it comes to warnings, advisories, preparedness messages and emergency communications. In addition, migrants can identify patterns of impending hazards before official structures and institutions do.

Migrants and their groups can be directly involved in evacuations, search and rescue, distribution of food and NFIs and other relief efforts, and are often more able and willing to provide services to isolated, underserved areas, which again is key to adequately assist not only migrant groups, but also marginalized and isolated populations.

Migrants can serve as interpreters and cultural mediators, which are particularly valuable tasks to deliver emergency information, provide adequate services (in particular health and psychosocial support) and gather feedback from emergency-affected people. This can help reduce the indirect impacts of a crisis often linked with hardship and substandard living conditions in the aftermath of an emergency.

Involving migrants in decisions concerning the post-crisis period is key to ensuring that any impacts on migrants themselves, in host and home communities are minimized. Questions such as: do they want to stay, do they want to leave and then return, and are they hoping for continued employment, will help manage expectations and services required.

In addition, migrants and migrant communities might have access to a series of alternative networks and resources (both locally and remotely) that could greatly help them cope with the impacts of crises, encouraging them and the rest of the community to support each other and bounce back. Ties built to support one another during a crisis may strengthen the bonds within the community long after the disaster has passed. Being able to draw on active and widespread assistance networks for shelter, food and NFIs and emotional support, as well as for loans and help in reconstruction work will reduce their suffering during crises and facilitate recovery. Migrants also may receive direct assistance from their families, host communities, and the diaspora, all of which will improve their capacity to cope with and recover from stresses. Migrants' businesses, in particular those based on trade and exchanges beyond the boundaries of the crisis-affected areas, can prove better able to cope with a crisis' shocks.

The presence of migrants willing and able to work is often necessary to satisfy the extraordinary demand for workers in many sectors that are key to reconstruction and recovery, such as debris removal and restoring buildings, basic infrastructure and basic utility networks. Migrant workers may be drawn into a crisis-affected area

by the opportunities linked with reconstruction by private and public actors; however, such situations may also present risks of abuse and exploitation by employers – and should therefore be attentively monitored by competent authorities. Migrants' arrival in crisis-affected locations and worksites can create competition for existing employment opportunities, housing availability and service provision and potentially lead to additional tensions among different groups and communities, in particular with the segments more likely to be affected by their arrival such as lowly-skilled unemployed and underemployed populations.

Migrants are an important component to the economic and social life of communities of destination and of origin. As the presence of migrants abroad increases, so do their contributions to the well-being of their families and communities in host and home countries. Thinking about "community well-being" and "community resilience" without thinking about the resilience and well-being of migrant groups is plainly impossible.

The full impacts on migrants, their assets and activities, leading, at time to their evacuation outside of their country of residence are not only an issue for the migrants themselves, but also for their families and communities in home and host countries. Sudden loss of a workforce, of their income, as well as the economic and social impacts of the sudden return of a large number of people, can strain the capacity of families, communities and societies in meeting the basic needs of its population and result in the worsening of their living standard and in long-term well-being impacts.

During the 2011 Brisbane floods, migrant community “gatekeepers” (i.e. migrants who possess information and maintain intensive ties and interactions with other migrants) effectively acted as intermediaries between the Australian authorities and the migrant community, adapting warnings and communications to the needs of their respective communities, disseminating warnings, helping rescue and relief agencies identify and reach out to victims through door-to-door safety checks, advocating for their communities with local authorities and supporting the dissemination of relief and recovery resources.

In the Pico Union district of Los Angeles, low-income immigrant workers, many of whom were undocumented Latinos, grouped together to support the common efforts by more than 30 NGOs to deliver assistance after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Pico Union, well off the radar of the media, had been severely damaged, and appeals by local NGOs and churches were not immediately prioritized by officials. This self-help process allowed the improvement of quality and comprehensiveness of response efforts, and ultimately led to the creation of an independent disaster preparedness programme by the NGOs grouped together as the Pico Union Cluster. Eventually, the Cluster joined the official body that the city and county of Los Angeles uses for coordinating NGO response, preparedness and mitigation: the Emergency Network Los Angeles.

Hispanic migrant groups took legal action against the local government of Watsonville, United States, after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, pointing out the insufficient inclusion of minorities in pre-disaster planning, as well as inadequacy of information and assistance provision after the disaster. As a consequence of this, the city hired bilingual workers within its emergency services and trained Latino community leaders as emergency responders in order to improve inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of its disaster planning and management system. A countywide culturally diverse disaster planning team was also set up, in parallel to a number of grass-roots preparedness efforts within migrant groups.

Following Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, the New Orleans Vietnamese community’s tight social bonds were essential in helping survivors find shelter, medical aid, administrative assistance and information (including through own community-based radio stations), overcoming the lack of official preparedness and emergency communications available in Vietnamese. The group’s recovery was much quicker than that of other minority groups affected by the disaster.

After Superstorm Sandy, in 2012, the continuity of migrant business and activities, accounting for 22.4 per cent of New York state’s gross domestic product, was essential to the economic and social recovery of the whole region. In addition, thousands of migrant workers were recruited by businesses and individuals to support early recovery activities, including rubble removal and infrastructure rehabilitation. Up to 75 per cent of these informal, day labourers were undocumented, and many ended up facing further hazards linked to unsafe working conditions and exploitation by employers in order to access the opportunities linked with reconstruction. A survey of 11 workers’ rights organizations conducted by the City University of New York found that, despite increased outreach by the US Department of Labor and the state labour departments of New Jersey and New York, more than three quarters reported the occurrence of wage theft, and 64 per cent reported significant workplace injuries during the cleanup period.



# CRISES

## WHAT IS A CRISIS?

Increased global mobility means that more people are living and working in places where they could be threatened by different sets of hazards than those that affect their place of origin. Man-made and natural hazards affect countries all over the world, triggering crises that necessitate responses not only in the affected countries but also in the countries where affected migrants may flee to. Understanding the patterns of crisis occurrence around the world can help better prepare for, respond to and recover from their impacts.

A crisis results from the materialization of events and processes that carry severe threat and uncertainty for the affected people, communities and systems, and which requires urgent action.

It requires the presence of:

- A threat, a hazardous process or event potentially taking place or actually unfolding;
- The need for some sort of urgent response, in order to prevent and manage the process or the event's impact; and
- An uncertain environment or outcome.

Crises can be triggered instantly (or rapidly) or over longer periods of time. Some are less visible initially but can reach critical status over time, such as repeated droughts, recession or, to some extent, genocides.

Large-scale crises present a critical threat to the health, safety, security and/or well-being of a community or other large group of people, usually spread over a wide area, stemming from a hazardous event, a series of events or a process. They are often characterized by high levels of human suffering, including loss of lives and assets, displacement of populations, and widespread economic damage. They jeopardize the welfare of many and often require interventions that go well beyond the local capacity of any mandated authority.

Crises that are covered under the scope of the MICIC initiative include those that are triggered by:

- Natural hazards: earthquakes, floods, storms, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, epidemics, wildfires, droughts; and
- Conflicts, war and civil unrest: including civil war, generalized violence, and international armed conflict.

The principles and actions covered by this tool are also applicable in a number of other situations, that may require the involvement of consular staff at post, as well as the involvement of host country's crisis managers, to rapidly provide assistance and protect the interest of their nationals in the affected area. Such events and processes can include:

- Man-made hazards and/or incidents: biological, chemical, nuclear and other industrial accidents, plane, ferry and train crashes and/or accidents;
- Financial/economic crises;
- Crises linked with migration enforcement; and
- Large public events which might pose specific information or assistance needs, or that might potentially lead to more specific threats (e.g. elections, sports events and festivals).

The risks that are embedded in crisis situations can be managed through:

- Pre-crisis planning and interventions: efforts to set up systems monitoring and/or anticipating the hazardous events in order to prevent or mitigate their impacts.
- Interventions during the crisis: efforts taking place in response to the hazardous events/process, in order to reduce their impacts on the affected people and systems – including, in particular, to contain its direct effects or address any additional needs incurred as a result of this event.
- Post-crisis interventions: efforts that address the process/event's impacts in order to help people recover from the crisis and overcome its impacts.

It is understood that the array of measures available and used will depend on the type of crisis, its magnitude, damage to their infrastructure and population regardless of the event; however, many principles, structures and mechanisms that will be described in the next sections should be applicable/usable.

## CONFLICTS AND WARS

Conflicts and wars put peoples' lives and security in grave danger, destroy public infrastructures and private properties, disrupt economic activities and provoke population movements. War can be the result of a combination of factors including political conflicts, racial or ethnic discrimination, struggles for power and over resources, religious differences and prejudices, and territorial disputes. Armed conflicts can take the form of war between States,

such as the first Gulf war of the early 1990s, but are increasingly taking place among groups within a country, such the ones that recently broke out in Egypt, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. They tend to result in widespread disruption of communities, livelihoods and infrastructure, massive population displacement and reduced capacity of local actors whose mandate is to ensure the well-being and security of people and communities.

Many conflicts have directly affected non-nationals, among them, the 1980 War between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the 1990 Gulf War, the protracted tensions between Israel and the Palestinian territories, the various civil wars in Libya and Lebanon, the Syrian rebellion, the post-911 US-led war against Afghanistan and the Yemen war. Conflict conditions prove particularly challenging for the provision of assistance, especially given the breakdown of institutions, communication systems, and public order.

In early 2015, two different factions claiming to form the Government of Yemen started a confrontation that soon developed into a full-blown civil war. Foreign State actors and armed extremist Islamic organizations were also involved.

The Houthis, a separatist group, had been active in border regions with Saudi Arabia since 2004. After cyclical periods of low-level insurgency and fragile truces with Yemenis authorities, tensions flared in 2009 and then again in 2011 around the Sana'a Government's unwillingness to address their separatist claims. The situation further escalated in the last years, until the moment when the separatists announced the dissolution of parliament, and the establishment of a revolutionary committee that forced the president into exile.

Separatists and loyalist troops started clashing in March 2015, with fighting soon reaching major cities such as Aden, Taiz and Sana'a, the latter under Houthi control. It soon extended to the whole country. Saudi Arabia and an Arab State coalition started a military intervention with US logistical assistance in support of the deposed government, which was backed up by air forces from a number of countries in the region. This bombing campaign continued until 21 April.

As a consequence of this conflict, over 10 million Yemenis lost access to water, food, and electricity. Access to humanitarian assistance has reportedly been hindered by the Houthi forces, while air strikes further worsened the situation for civilians. There were 100,000 people displaced in the first two weeks alone, part of them to Djibouti and others to Somalia and Oman.

Before the war, Yemen was a destination and an area of transit for migrant workers, in particular those from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, and also from a number of Asian countries. Registered migrants represented about 2.5 per cent of the total population. In addition, the country hosted a significant share of refugees fleeing from war and instability in countries within the region. These groups presented particular vulnerabilities, as many were trapped within the country's borders, without capacity to escape and with very limited options for a return back to their countries of origin. Refugees faced important protection concerns, as returning to their country of origin was not advisable. Most economic migrants were reluctant to return to fragile countries they had left behind, more so since many had already created a life for themselves and their family in Yemen.

Humanitarian access to the affected areas was difficult. Evacuation of foreign nationals was therefore the preferred option; however, it was complicated by a number of challenges, including the loss of functioning institutions and administration in the conflict zone, lack of arrangements for establishing a safe zone for migrants in transit, negotiating landing permits for planes, and clarifying documentation requirements for migrants and families holding multiple nationalities. Preparing the evacuation was therefore extremely difficult.

A number of national and international actors contributed to these efforts: the Saudi Navy, Pakistani flights, Indian ships and planes, Chinese military ships, the Russian military and a Malaysian air force plane were deployed to evacuate their citizens and third-country nationals. Filipinos were evacuated from Saudi Arabia after having crossed the border. More than 50,000 Ethiopian nationals were living and working in Yemen at the outbreak of hostilities, but only about 3,000 asked for government assistance to evacuate out of the country.

From 12 July to 14 August 2006, Israeli forces conducted air and artillery raids against Hezbollah and Lebanese troops. An estimated 1,000 civilians were killed, and half a million were displaced. While Hezbollah had previously stated their intention to abduct Israeli soldiers, the attack on 12 July was surprising and coincided with a large number of affluent Shi'ite diaspora members visiting Lebanon during the summer months.

Lebanon had become home to thousands of foreign nationals over the years and the attacks affected a significant number of non-citizens and dual nationals. Such groups included citizens from Sri Lanka (80,000), Canada (50,000), the Philippines (30,000), Australia (25,000), the United States (25,000), the United Kingdom (22,000), France (20,000) Bangladesh (20,000), Egypt (15,000), India (12,000), Sweden (7,000), Denmark (4,100), Nepal (4,000), Venezuela (4,000), Germany (2,6000), Greece (2,500), the Russian Federation (1,500), Romania (1,200), Armenia (1,200), Ukraine (1,200), Poland (329), Moldova (240), Mexico (216 wishing to be evacuated), Bulgaria (207 wishing to be evacuated), the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000), Ireland (161), Cyprus (102), Croatia (58), Slovakia (56), Peru (50), and Kazakhstan (31). Prior to the conflict, migrant domestic workers alone were estimated between 120,000 to 200,000, with the largest group being Sri Lankan women, followed by Filipino women and Ethiopians.

Approximately 60 foreigners were killed or injured during the conflict, including 17 Syrians. Significant efforts were made to evacuate foreigners, in particular those from more affluent countries. In total, approximately 70,000 migrants were evacuated from Lebanon, both directly to their country of origin and/or through third countries of transit. For instance, the Australian Defense Force evacuated 5,000 Australians and 1,350 other "approved foreign nationals". The French sea and air mission, Opération Baltiste, also assisted dual Lebanese and French citizens, as well as other nationals from Europe and the United States.

Guest workers had severely reduced access to information, social services and evacuation options. This was partly due to language barriers and physical segregation, as many of them, especially domestic workers, were segregated in homes and apartment buildings in the heart of Shia suburbs. The governments of Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Ethiopia lacked the financial and organizational capacity to arrange evacuations for all their citizens. Many of their nationals obtained support provided by Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center and the IOM.

IOM estimates that more than 13,000 foreign nationals were evacuated. In order to support their evacuation, bus convoys to Damascus were arranged and 48-hour visas issued. IOM also arranged relief, accommodation, transportation and repatriation. In total, rich countries contributed about USD 11 million to IOM's evacuation efforts, in an attempt to prevent a possible population flow towards Europe. Support also included ships from Italy and Britain and helicopters from the United States.

Evacuation was particularly hard for domestic workers. Under the sponsorship system, many Lebanese employers withheld passports and refused to let them leave. Many, in particular women, decided to stay since they did not want to lose their income and/or saw the situation in their own country as being worse. Some domestic workers died and many others were injured while trying to escape.

Non-citizens that remained in Lebanon received support from either their embassies or Lebanese NGOs or civil society networks, in particular in the form of health and shelter support, water and food provision and legal assistance. Efforts were coordinated by the Higher Relief Council, which was set up by the Government in the wake of the attacks. The Government also released hundreds of migrant domestic workers from prisons and detention centers declaring amnesty for all undocumented migrants on the condition that they leave the country.

International aid also allowed the support of refugees in the country. An appeal was made for humanitarian aid in late July by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Additionally, a regional Task Force was set up to liaise with Israeli authorities on the specific issue of Palestinian refugees. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East continued supporting 400,000 Palestinian refugees particularly in Ein El Helwa, the camp worst affected by the conflict.

Many displaced fled through the Syrian borders, where an estimated 10,000 people arrived daily during the 33-day conflict. The UNHCR had emergency mobile teams in many of the transit areas in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic while the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society led in registering, accommodating and assisting the displaced.

## NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS

Cyclones, floods, earthquakes and tsunamis can cause massive loss of lives, devastate properties and infrastructure, disrupt public services and deprive communities of their livelihood and their homes. Disasters can also take place as a consequence of technological accidents, either directly attributed to human causes or mediated by the impacts of

natural hazards (e.g. such as a power plant being damaged, electricity being cut after an ice storm).

Disasters can trigger population displacement and result into long-lasting impacts on the economic and social well-being of affected communities. Disasters of some sorts hit almost any country in the world, and, despite efforts to reduce their impacts, they can heavily affect areas regardless of their levels of economic development and political stability.



While collaborating with local actors and institutions might be easier after disasters than after conflicts, local capacities can be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the response and recovery efforts, which can result in local actors' inability to actually cope with the disaster impacts and consequences. Everywhere in the world, efforts to prevent and manage disasters' impacts are likely to be insufficient for reducing the vulnerability of the most marginalized groups, which often include various groups of migrants. Due to the increasing international mobility, a variety of recent disasters have affected large numbers of non-nationals.

## ACTS OF TERRORISM, ABDUCTION OF HOSTAGES AND PIRACY

Acts of terrorism include a variety of purposeful actions aiming to achieve their perpetrators' objectives by creating chaos, fear, apprehension and uncertainty. The most common forms of terrorism include assassinations, bombings, hostage-taking and plane hijackings. Over the last years, maritime piracy (any act of violence/detention/depredation against ships in the high seas) has also been on the rise. This type of crime very often targets foreign nationals or entities.

On 27 October, 2012, Hurricane Sandy, the largest Atlantic hurricane on record, struck the densely-populated East Coast of the United States, hitting New York City, New Jersey, and Southern Connecticut. The storm left more than 130 victims and forced 450,000 individuals to evacuate. Overall, the total losses were estimated at USD 65 billion, the second most expensive disaster (after Hurricane Katrina) in the history of the United States.

Some of the hardest-hit areas contained large numbers of immigrants. The foreign-born population of New York City is the largest of any city in the United States, at just over 3 million people. Of the foreign-born residents of New York City, 51.5 per cent come from Latin America and the Caribbean, 27.5 per cent from Asia and 15.9 per cent from Europe. An analysis of the data from 2000 to 2006 estimated there were 535,000 unauthorized immigrants and 374,000 unauthorized workers in New York City, some 10 per cent of the resident workforce.

20 per cent of the total population of Staten Island and Long Island, among the New York areas most heavily affected by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, was foreign-born at the time of the disaster. Migrants accounted for well over 50 per cent of the residents in specific neighbourhoods. The impact of the storm on their well-being was significant. 40 per cent of the migrants living in affected areas reported economic loss; one in three suffered from damage to home or property. In Staten Island, 60 per cent of the migrants reported damage and 40 per cent were displaced. However, only 22 per cent of those affected applied for relief, due to a lack of understanding of the system in the United States, and only 25 per cent of those who applied actually received assistance.

Language barriers, administrative requirements and lack of organization hindered migrant access to support provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local charities. Many migrants avoided applying, fearing the possibility of xenophobic incidents and prejudice. "Non-qualified aliens", including some groups of documented migrants (such as those with a Temporary Protected Status), could not access cash assistance or unemployment benefits. Other migrants were eligible for benefits because their children were citizens of the United States, but did not apply for fear of arrest and deportation, despite statements from national and local authorities that no immigration enforcement initiatives would be conducted. This resulted in a number of children not receiving assistance.

Migrant communities were disproportionately affected by loss of income and livelihoods due to the physical destruction of homes and displacement. Many migrants employed as domestic workers, for instance, no longer had a workplace. Reduced access to safety nets for migrant workers resulted in widespread unemployment (11 per cent of the migrant community) and economic hardship. 30 per cent of migrants reported falling back on the payment of rents, and there were reports of migrant tenants being abused by landlords (through retaining security deposits or being forced to repair their home in spite of contractual obligations). For the 53 per cent of migrants in the low-income groups, the 50 per cent increase in rents in disaster-affected areas had devastating consequences on the availability of affordable accommodation, and resulted in migrants being more likely to live in unsafe conditions and/or location and overcrowded dwellings in the aftermath of Sandy. This led to further suffering as a wave of cold weather hit the East Coast following the storm. One year after the storm, the media reported that many migrant residents were still waiting for aid, and that non-English speakers were still receiving insufficient information on the recovery process. This sparked collective action and complaints against the State and national governments.

On the other hand, the continuity of migrant business, accounting for 22.4 per cent of New York state's gross domestic product, was essential to the economic and social recovery of the whole region. In addition, thousands of migrant workers were recruited by businesses and individuals to support early recovery activities, including rubble removal and infrastructure rehabilitation. Up to 75 per cent of these informal day labourers were undocumented, and many ended up facing further hazards linked to unsafe working conditions and exploitation by employers in order to access opportunities linked with reconstruction. A survey of 11 workers' rights organizations conducted by the City University of New York found that, despite increased outreach by the US Department of Labor and the state labour departments of New Jersey and New York, more than three quarters reported the occurrence of wage theft, and 64 per cent reported significant workplace injuries during the cleanup period.

On 11 March, 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck the Japanese coastline, triggering a 10-meter tsunami and decimating communities primarily in the north-eastern prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima. The earthquake and the tsunami killed almost 20,000 and affected 370,000 people. In addition, the flood brought inland by the tsunami triggered a failure at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which prompted one of the worst nuclear disasters since Chernobyl. As a consequence, approximately 465,000 people were evacuated. The economic cost of the disaster is estimated at USD 360 billion, possibly the costliest disaster on record. There were 250,000 buildings damaged or destroyed, 4.4 million households lacked electricity and 2.3 million lacked access to clean water in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

At the time of the triple disaster, Japan was home to roughly 2 million foreign nationals. Chinese citizens constituted the largest group, together with citizens of South Korea, Brazil, and the Philippines. The foreign population included approximately 141,774 students, the majority originating from the neighbouring Asian region, most significantly China and the Republic of Korea, and to a lesser extent Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China, Viet Nam and Malaysia.

An estimated 700,000 foreign nationals were residing in areas affected by the crisis, and approximately 33,000 in the three main affected prefectures, 200,000 in the surrounding prefectures and 423,000 visiting the area. The earthquake and tsunami killed 23 foreigners and injured 173. An estimated 470,000 foreigners were reported to have left Japan during the time of the disaster. Many embassies and employers urged their citizens and employees in Japan to leave the country or to at least leave the areas near the earthquake/tsunami zone – or even to leave Tokyo, over the fears of radiation exposure from the stricken Fukushima nuclear facilities.

The phenomenon was worsened by the lack of direct access to quality information for non-Japanese speaking people in the aftermath of the disaster. With governmental institutions not as responsive and clear as they could have been, and with the huge amount of information of various sources and quality circulating, in particular through the social networks, many foreigners ended up resorting to their own national media and institutions for information and advice; what they received from their embassies and media was not necessarily well substantiated. This resulted in a huge loss of workers and students, which had a sizeable impact both on the local economy and on intra-communal relations, with Japanese natives aggravated by the flight of so many foreigners. Local NGOs were key in translating and disseminating messages throughout communities. A number of examples exist, however, of foreigners who decided to stay and contributed to relief and reconstruction, by virtue of their belonging to the community (e.g. through food distributions and sheltering displaced persons)

Many refugees and asylum seekers also chose to leave. However, this posed a difficult trade-off to many asylum seekers, as their demand was often tied to their permanence in a specific area.

Government efforts to track the missing indicate that Japan worked closely with foreign embassies in order to locate missing individuals. They compiled a list of at least 600 missing foreign nationals: this information was provided to the local police and rescue administration.

## LARGE-SCALE CRACKDOWN AND DEPORTATION OF MIGRANTS

Host States can on occasions decide to conduct large-scale crackdowns on migrants in undocumented or irregular status, often arresting, detaining and deporting them, or imposing harsh penalties, hard deadlines or forced separation from employers. This usually results in hardship for the affected migrants. Such actions can also generate major population movements.

Facing such measures can be particularly difficult for those migrants who are well established in their country of destination/residence, as some may have family, including children born and raised in the country. The fear of migration management decisions can, on occasion, be just as effective as an actual measure, leading to widespread fears and population movements even if the actual crackdowns do not materialize.

It should be noted how these are occurrences that affect exclusively migrant groups, even though not exclusively international migrants.

## OUTBREAK OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Epidemics are characterized by the rapid outbreak and spreading of infectious diseases through a community or an area. They can affect more or less large regions, and can even spread across continents (thus becoming pandemics). Over the last years, epidemics have affected lives, health and livelihoods all around the globe.

Affected areas tend to present a mix of specific climatic and environmental conditions, as well as insufficient prevention and health-care measures; however, they can spread to countries with widely

Rumours and fears of deportation among undocumented migrants in Thailand are common, in particular after a deadline for registration is closed and announcements are made on the deportation of those who have not registered. The first mass exodus in Thailand was seen following the 1997 financial crisis. After the crisis, re-registration of migrant workers quickly resumed after complaints from Thai employers.

Following regular registration windows between 2004 and 2010, there were regular rumours of large-scale deportations that generally failed to materialize. In 2012, a report had highlighted that 160,000 Cambodian migrants were facing potential deportation from Thailand. At the time, 56,776 Cambodians had completed the Nationality Verification process, but another 165,654 remained undocumented, mainly due to the difficult and expensive registration process. While mass deportations did not happen, rumours spread through the country: more than 1 million Cambodian and Myanmar people felt at risk of deportation.

In June 2014, hundreds of thousands Cambodian migrants fled Thailand to return home due to rumours of deportation of irregular migrants. The Government of Thailand claimed it made no announcements regarding deportations, while the Government of Cambodia criticized its counterpart for spreading panic. Efforts by the Thai military to facilitate migrants' return to Cambodia might actually have contributed to the panic. By June 2014, over 220,000 Cambodian migrants had returned, mainly voluntarily. While Thailand tried to deny any policy on deportation, the Mekong Migration Network (MMN) reported that thousands of people were deported in June 2014. This was traumatic for migrants and their families who had to flee abruptly and contract debts to finance their returns.

The mass exodus also caused logistical challenges once they had crossed the border into Cambodia. Many took advantage of local government food handouts and free transportation. It was a crisis for businesses in Thailand and for both the government of Thailand and Cambodia. After the exodus, the Government of Cambodia slashed the price of passports to assist migrants to return to Thailand. The Government of Thailand had to make concessions and facilitate Cambodians' return, including the establishment of One-Stop Service Centres for Cambodians.

different economic and public health conditions. Epidemics have created specific challenges for many countries especially when coupled with the recurring fears that they could spread worldwide, such as in the recent case of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), avian flu (N5H1), Ebola and more recently, the Zika virus.

Not only is the migrants' health at risk due to possible exposure to these pathogens in their countries of destination, they may also be unwitting carriers of these viruses, which can lead to discrimination largely due to fear of the contagion. This was the case of individuals who had recently returned from Ebola-affected areas within a region characterized by intense and well-established mobility patterns.

Increasing international mobility is however a contributing factor to the spreading of any disease. As a consequence, limitations of people's movement are common measures States take in response to epidemics, and they have significant consequences on migrants' well-being, livelihood, and security.

## FINANCIAL CRISES

Economic shocks brought about by a national, regional or global financial crisis, such as the 1997 – 1999 Asian financial crisis and the 2007 – 2008 global financial crisis, can have a profound impact on migrants, as it can erode their livelihoods in their country of employment, forcing them to either relocate or return to their country of origin, often limiting their ability to support their families through remittance transfers. The 2007 – 2008 global financial crisis, considered by many economists as the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, resulted in the displacement and loss of employment for thousands of migrant workers. This created additional economic pressures for countries of origin facing sudden inflows of migrant returnees, reduction in remittance flows from countries of destination and the need to assist migrant workers who had experienced exploitation, abuses and impoverishment.

Thailand's economic boom, with double-digit growth between 1987 and 1996, came to a sudden end in 1997. Bangkok was rocked by the Asian financial crisis of 1997. It was not until 2003 that GDP per capita recovered to its pre-crisis level of 1996. At the beginning of 1997, the unemployment rate was 1.9 per cent. With the crisis, the number of unemployed soared to 2.2 million or 6.7 per cent of the labour force of the time. The Government estimated that 1.3 of the 2 million unemployed were migrants from rural areas, mostly from the north-east, and that 75 per cent of them returned home, especially as a consequence of policies encouraging their return to rural areas. The numbers however do not capture those working in the informal sector nor the number of foreign workers.

Part of the Government's response was to send more Thais to work abroad, while restricting low-skilled migrants from coming into the country. Between January and May 1998, the Government forced over 190,000 foreign workers out of Thai factories as part of a plan to replace at least 300,000 foreign workers with Thais. The global financial crisis of 2008 was not as severe, but it still brought about a widespread economic slowdown, with more than 50,000 workers being laid off. Thousands of workplaces slowed production, and 9 million people became eligible for a THB 2,000 (some USD 70) assistance handout. Migrant workers, even those holding regular work permits (about 500,000 at the time), did not qualify for the handout, even though they were often being paid below the minimum wage. Migrants were seen as competitors to Thai workers; their registrations were not renewed, no new workers were registered, and undocumented workers were deported. In Samut Sakhon, it was mainly undocumented workers who were laid off, and for those who stayed, documented and undocumented, the reduced work hours meant many could no longer remit money home, with some even contracting debts for survival.

This was a particularly difficult issue for recent arrivals who were already in debt for their recruitment fee. The most vulnerable in the face of the crisis were migrants in the lower economic strata, especially low-skilled informal workers, who comprise a large portion of the workforce. In the 1997 crisis, family, relatives and neighbours (and farm work) became the most helpful safety nets, since migrants had difficulty accessing their assets in the country of employment.

# INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

## INTRODUCTION

Human rights law and international humanitarian law do not explicitly address the rights of migrants affected by crises; while the country they are in is in principle responsible to ensure their protection, not all countries accept this responsibility. In particular, no instrument clearly targets the issue of displaced migrants, at the point that there are doubts on the possibility to apply the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to the situation of migrants, in particular if undocumented. This is largely the rationale for the MICIC Initiative.

However, a variety of legal and policy instruments, at all levels, implicitly define such rights, determining governments' obligations to protect the interests of migrants. Such tools generally aim to increase the ability of duty-bearers (principally State institutions, but also a variety of other subjects identified above) to respect and protect these rights by fulfilling their obligations, and the capacity of rightholders (the migrants) to make their claims. It should be noted that whenever migrants are not in the conditions of actually making claims to obtain protection and assistance, provisions can be made for other actors to advocate on their behalf; this would include, for instance, NGOs, faith-based organizations, community representatives and any other person or entity that can act in solidarity with the migrants). Main principles of human rights law that are relevant to this work include:

- **Participation:** the right for claim-holders to participate in decisions which affect one's human rights; access to information in a form and a language which can be understood.
- **Accountability:** requires effective monitoring of the implementation of human rights standards by duty bearers; monitoring of effective remedies for human rights breaches.
- **Non-discrimination and equality:** all forms of discrimination in the granting of rights must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated; priority to be given to those who are particularly at risk.

- **Empowerment of claim/rights holders:** individuals and communities should know their rights; they should be fully supported to participate in the development of policy and practices that affect their lives and to claim rights where necessary.

## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

International law is relevant for the protection of migrants, including and especially in times of crisis; all migrants, irrespective of their status, are entitled to the full protection of their human rights. Wherever needed, States should, for instance, allow humanitarian access to crisis-affected persons (including in order for other States to provide assistance on their soil).

A variety of declarations, conventions and international frameworks exist that determine the backdrop to the institutional efforts to reduce the vulnerability of migrants in each country. These include instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Migration for Employment Convention, and other rights-based conventions (such as those from the ILO). Countries that have ratified these instruments are obliged to promote and protect the relevant rights; however, they do not always do so.

In cases of armed conflict, international humanitarian law also applies to migrants; the most relevant provisions include the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants, the right of migrants to leave the country in conflict, the prohibition of forced transfers, and departure arrangements.



## **The Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations (1961 and 1963)**

These conventions define status and mandates of representatives of home countries posted abroad, and, while only marginally directed to discipline crisis situations, have a bearing on what consular staff and diplomatic personnel can do in order to assist migrants in emergencies.

The 1963 Convention, for instance, defines a list of consular functions (art. 5), including a number that are particularly relevant in emergencies:

- Protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, both individuals and bodies corporate, within the limits permitted by international law;
- Ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the commercial, economic, cultural and scientific life of the receiving State, reporting thereon to the government of the sending State and giving information to persons interested;
- Issuing passports and travel documents to nationals of the sending State, and visas or appropriate documents to persons wishing to travel to the sending State;
- Helping and assisting nationals, both individuals and bodies corporate, of the sending State;
- Safeguarding the interests of nationals, both individuals and bodies corporate, in cases of succession mortis causa in the territory of the receiving State, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the receiving State;
- Safeguarding, within the limits imposed by the laws and regulations of the receiving State, the interests of minors and other persons lacking full capacity who are nationals of the sending State, particularly where any guardianship or trusteeship is required with respect to such persons; and
- Subject to the practices and procedures of the receiving State, representing or arranging appropriate representation for nationals of the sending State before the tribunals and other authorities of the receiving State.

The Convention also refers to the inviolability of consular premises, and the duty of the host State to take steps to prevent these premises be violated or damaged, including in the case of armed conflict (art. 27 and 31). It also protects the consular representatives' capacity to freely communicate with their nationals in the host country (art. 35).

## **International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families**

This Convention is regarded as the most comprehensive international convention that promotes the protection of migrants and members of their families. However, it has only been signed by 11 countries and 61 parties. It covers persons engaged in paid work overseas—including seasonal workers, seafarers, frontier workers, project-tied workers, itinerant workers, workers in offshore installations, self-employed workers, and specified-employment workers—as well as their family members. Provisions that are particularly relevant to crisis situations include:

- Article 28: it guarantees migrant workers and members of their families the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health, regardless of their employment/immigration status, on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned;
- Article 29: it guarantees each child of a migrant worker the right to a name, registration of birth and nationality. This is important during crisis situations as children of migrants may end up stateless, which might make them less able to access assistance and hinder their repatriation. The same guarantee is stated in Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 7 of the CRC; and
- Article 71: it mandates States Parties to ensure facilitation of the repatriation of remains of migrant workers and members of their families, without however providing for covering the cost of the operation. Settlement issues must also be processed according to applicable national laws and bilateral or multilateral agreements.

## **Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War**

This Convention, adopted on 12 August, 1949, requires State Parties to protect non-combatants or civilians, including migrants and migrant workers, during conflicts and wars, regardless of race, nationality, religion or political opinion. Some of its salient provisions include:

- Article 32: it prohibits the States Parties from causing physical suffering or extermination of protected persons in their hands. This

prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation and medical or scientific experiments not necessitated by the medical treatment of a protected person but also to any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents;

- Article 35: it entitles all protected persons to leave the territory at the outset of, or during a conflict unless it is contrary to national interests. Reason for refusal should be provided; and
- Article 38: it guarantees the right of protected persons to receive medical attention and hospital treatment, practice their religion, and move from dangerous areas to the same extent as the nationals of the State concerned.

### **Domestic Workers Convention**

Adopted on 16 June, 2011, this Convention sets the framework governing the rights of domestic workers defined as persons engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. The Convention, however, has been ratified only by 18 countries to date. Provisions that are particularly relevant to crisis situations include:

- Article 5: it mandates States to take measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence;
- Article 7: it encourages States to include in the migrant workers' written contracts the conditions of employment including of their repatriation; and
- Article 9: it entitles migrant workers to keep in their possession their travel and identity documents.

### **The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030**

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, adopted in 2015 by the UN Member States at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, stands as the global blueprint for all efforts aiming to reduce the impacts of hazards on people, communities and societies over the next 15 years. The Framework explicitly calls for including migrants in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and recovery efforts.

- Paragraph 7 calls governments to engage with migrants (and other local stockholders) in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards for DRR.

- Paragraph 27.h points to the empowerment of local authorities, through regulatory and financial means, as key to allow them to better coordinate with migrants in disaster risk management at local level.
- Paragraph 36.a.vi recognizes that migrants contribute to the resilience of communities and societies and that their knowledge, skills and capacities can be useful in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction.

### **The 1951 Refugee Convention**

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, what rights s/he is entitled to and the legal obligations of States vis-à-vis individual refugees. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention.

Some of the protection obligations the refugees' States of transit or of destinations might need to respect may be relevant to crisis situations – and therefore to the implementation of activities relevant to the MICIC initiative and programme (which aim to cover all non-nationals caught in emergency situations abroad).

### **General Recommendation No. 26 on Women Migrant Workers**

General Recommendation 26 on Women Migrant Workers defines women migrant workers as those who migrate independently or join their spouses or other members of their families who are also workers, regardless of their status. It forms part of 30 other recommendations by CEDAW to clarify and provide guidance on the application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Section 26 includes provisions that have relevance for migrants' protection in crisis situations, requiring the country of destination to:

- Ensure that employers and recruiters do not confiscate or destroy travel or identity documents belonging to women migrants; and
- Protect the basic human rights of undocumented women migrant workers including access to legal remedies and justice in cases of risk to life, cruel and degrading treatment, and deprivation of fulfillment of basic needs.

## Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Convention entered into force in 1987 and includes the following provisions:

- Article 2 requires States to take measures (legislative, administrative, judicial) to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction, without exceptions, whether linked with war, internal political instability or any other public emergency or not; and
- Article 3 requires States not to expel, return or extradite a person to another State where s/he would be in danger of being tortured. Such decisions have to be made by competent authorities.

## Declaration of the Rights of the Child

The Convention aims to protect the rights of all children in the world, as “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth”.

Its article 8 requires States to:

- Respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations; and
- Provide assistance and protection to children who might have been illegally deprived of their identity;

Its article 11 requires States to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.

## Convention on the Rights of the Child

The convention recognizes that children should grow up in a happy, loving and understanding family environment.

- Article 2 requires States to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of their parents, legal guardians or family members; and
- Article 3 requires that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

## Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

While the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement do not explicitly recognize migrants or non-nationals, given the broad and inclusive intent of this document, which has its basis in human rights and humanitarian law, it can be argued that migrants are encompassed in the Guiding Principle’s definition of “persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence”. Questions do remain, however, as to whether temporary migrants such as tourists and business travellers as well as non-resident migrant workers are covered.

## REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Many migration policies at regional levels determine migrants’ right to move into and out of a given country, and give access to key services and opportunities while in the country of destination. Examples include the European Union treaties, such as the Schengen Agreement, which allows free movement between nations. There are also agreements for free circulation of people within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region or in West Africa such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Though ECOWAS’s main mandate is economical/free trade, it addresses free movements of goods and people among Member Countries. Specific policies or agreements might include provisions for recognizing and protecting migrants’ rights, including in times of crisis. This is for instance the case of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

Other relevant instruments include those that set up mechanisms for mutual assistance in crises, including when they do not directly deal with assistance of own nationals caught in countries while abroad. It is the case, for instance, of disaster risk management agreements in the Andean and Centro American regions.

Formal and informal agreements exist among neighbouring countries offering assistance during natural disasters. The aid could come at the onset or in the aftermath of the emergency. International cooperation continues to support Haiti following the devastating earthquake of 2010.



In 2013, the Government of the Philippines negotiated an agreement with Saudi Arabia, providing the standards of protection to domestic workers embodied in the Convention and the Domestic Workers Act of the Philippines. The Agreement also provides for Standard Employment Contracts covering, among others, payment of wages, working hours, rest days and rest periods, and non-withholding of passports. This Agreement aims to protect the rights of both the employers and domestic workers by:

- Defining areas of cooperation between the two countries (adopting a standard employment contract for domestic workers, ensuring that recruitment takes place through legitimate recruitments offices and regulating recruitment costs in both countries);
- Defining mutual responsibilities among country institutions; and
- Instituting a Joint Committee formed to periodically review, assess and monitor the implementation of the Agreement, conduct consultative meetings and make recommendations to resolve any disputes arising from the implementation or interpretation of the Agreement.

The Philippines has signed a similar agreement with Jordan.

Canada and Australia have a Consular Sharing Agreement that allows Canadians to receive consular services from Australian officials in 20 countries where Canada does not have an office and for Australians to seek similar assistance from Canadian missions in 23 countries. The Agreement includes also, among others, provisions related to crisis management.

Specific migrant groups targeted by other policy instruments would be extremely relevant in crisis situations. It is, for instance, the case of Central America's "Lineamientos regionales para la atención de niños, niñas y adolescentes migrantes no acompañados en casos de repatriación", which deals specifically with the situation of the repatriation of unaccompanied minors.

## OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

A number of examples also exist of countries that have developed bilateral or multilateral agreements that either regulate migration flows and define migrants' rights, or that define specific mechanisms for mutual support and collaboration in case of emergencies affecting migrants and other nationals abroad.

Many countries have signed free trade agreements (FTA) that go beyond the simple transfer of goods from one country to the next. For example, some of Canada's most recent FTAs go beyond the "traditional" trade barriers to cover business practices in labour mobility, intellectual property and investments.

# RELEVANT ACTORS

## INTRODUCTION

Though the States of origin bear some of the responsibility for assisting and protecting the interests of their own citizens living, working and staying abroad in times of emergencies, it is the country where the migrants are located that is responsible for the overall protection of all individuals within their territory, regardless of citizenship and status. However, reducing migrants' vulnerability is a much broader endeavour, which depends on efforts by a variety of local, national and international actors, governmental and non-governmental agencies, in home, host and transit countries. All their efforts are framed by a variety of legal provisions and institutional settings that define migrants' rights in normal times and in crisis situations, including obligations and standards that each of these relevant actors have to uphold. This institutional landscape varies radically from country to country (and from place to place) – depending on the international, national and local provisions the relevant authorities have subscribed to.

Migrants travelling abroad must also assume part of the responsibility by taking all possible measures to stay informed, respect and abide by the laws and processes of the country where they are, as well as protect themselves in crises.

## GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IN COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

Collaborating with the relevant institutions in the migrants' country of destination is absolutely essential to enhancing and protecting the migrants' well-being, interests and security. It is these institutions' policies and decisions that largely define how and where migrants live and work and what services they can access in normal times. These agencies also determine whether migrants'

specific needs in emergencies can be met locally and how migrants can be contacted and served in times of crisis. They are the main actors responsible for the coordination and the management of emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

The type and severity of the crisis faced by these institutions will affect their capacity to operate in support of both the local population and the migrants. In conflict situations, for instance, host countries' governmental actors are often directly involved in fighting and violence, or might have reduced access to and/or control of specific areas of the country. Their capacities to assist and protect the affected population, as well as to deliver basic services might therefore be greatly affected as a result. Natural disasters hitting the hubs of the local governance structures (e.g. the capital city, such as in the case of the 2010 Port-au-Prince earthquake), or affect places that are isolated or socially marginalized, in particular in countries that have weak capacities or no effective coordination system in place, local institutional capacities for crisis response can be heavily hampered.

### Emergency management/civil protection

The State in which an emergency is taking place has responsibility for all persons under its jurisdiction before, during and after the crisis period. Coordinating and executing actions that aim to prevent, prepare for and assist populations in emergencies are usually the main responsibilities of emergency/disaster management and civil protection agencies. These institutions can play a key role in reducing the vulnerability of migrant populations. Their efforts are usually coordinated among various administrative levels, with mutually supporting mechanisms and structures at national, regional and municipal levels, which also involve community-based entities, down to the level of workplace or household.

In the prevention and preparedness phase, the main responsibilities of this kind of institutions include

The United States' Federal Emergency Management Authority ([fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov)) has the following priorities:

1. Be survivor-centric in mission and programme delivery
2. Become an expeditionary organization
3. Posture and build capability for catastrophic disaster
4. Enable disaster risk reduction nationally
5. Strengthen FEMA organization foundation

These are pursued through a variety of approaches and measures, including:

- Strengthening preparedness and core capabilities
- Planning
- Public information and warnings
- Operational coordination
- Forensics and attributions
- Intelligence and information sharing
- Interdiction and disruption
- Screening, search and detection
- Access control and identify verification
- Cybersecurity
- Physical protective measures
- Risk management for protection of programmes and activities
- Supply chain integrity and security
- Community resilience
- Long-term vulnerability reduction
- Risk and disaster resilience assessment
- Threats and hazards identification
- Critical transportation
- Environment response/health and safety
- Fatality management and suppression
- Infrastructure systems
- Logistics and supply chain management
- Mass care services
- Mass search-and-rescue operations
- On-scene security, protection and law enforcement
- Operational communication
- Public health, health-care and emergency medical services
- Situational assessment
- Economic recovery
- Health and social services
- Housing
- Natural and cultural resources

the production and dissemination of awareness-raising materials, the maintenance and operation of early warning and emergency communication systems, the preparation of emergency and contingency plans and the establishment of area-based systems to assist affected persons during emergencies (through, for instance, training, procuring and prepositioning, and planning).

In the immediacy and aftermath of emergencies, such institutions usually coordinate, or directly operate, most kinds of life-saving and recovery assistance, including supporting evacuations, operating shelters and distributing essential items, food and water and medications.

It is therefore key that these institutions plan inclusively, accounting for the presence of migrants

among the individuals at risk or affected, and recognizing their specific needs and capacities. In principle, most institutions/agencies of this kind should provide the same levels and type of assistance to all affected persons, regardless of their origin, ethnicity and legal status. However, in order to address migrants' specific conditions of vulnerability, the provision of specific assistance and support may be required – and close collaboration with authorities from the country of origin, can be essential to this aim.

Such efforts could include: (a) overcoming language and communication barriers for the dissemination of awareness, early warning and emergency messaging; (b) psychosocial support; (c) making sure that food, clean water, survival items such

as blankets, sanitation products, shelters and psychosocial assistance are provided in a culturally-sensitive manner; and (d) building trust of migrants in response institutions.

These institutions are often in charge of setting up or leading cooperative, inter-institutional structures that leverage all capacities, skills and experiences existing in a given society or community in order to provide a more effective response to crisis. They are therefore arguably the host country's main partner for the protection of migrants in situations of emergency – engaging with them, including through planning and pre-crisis coordination structures, can therefore be extremely useful for home country authorities.

In the case of specific hazards, some of these responsibilities might be shared with specific institutions (e.g. Fire Brigades; the military, local police).

### Recovery and reconstruction

Facilitating effective recovery and reconstruction of affected areas is key to reducing the long-term and long-lasting, direct and indirect impacts of crises. Recovery might or not be the responsibility of emergency and disaster management agencies, depending on the local institutional assets, but it is always a process that requires coordination with a broad(er) pool of actors (inter alia authorities responsible for planning, labour policies and livelihood support), and it is often dealt with by ad-hoc coordination body.

Recovery and reconstruction support, including addressing situations of population displacement, are often not universally provided to the community of affected persons, and are often more politicized processes than relief provision, requiring longer-term choices and often prioritization among possible beneficiaries for the allocation of scarce resources. Migrants are not likely to have equal access to such forms of support, despite the role they play for the prosperity and vitality of their host communities, as well as for their capacity to recover after crises.

Migrants' inclusion in these efforts is important for their long-term prospects. Migrants in the crisis-affected area (often already very likely to be among the most vulnerable population groups) may be at higher risk of exploitation – by being often hired for underpaid or unpaid, unsafe jobs in debris removal, construction, and restoration of networks and infrastructures that are typical of recovery. It is therefore critical that host country authorities are reminded of their obligations and strongly encouraged to engage with relevant actors and processes, in order to adequately advocate for measures in support of migrants, thus reducing their vulnerability.

### Immigration authorities

Ministerial and departmental-level authorities that deal with migration issues play a key role in determining vulnerabilities that are linked with migrants' status and with migrants' perception of risks linked with their legal situation. They establish policies and regulations on migrants' rights to enter, live in, and leave, a country, and move within its boundaries. Home country authorities can play a key role making migrants aware of the existence of such policies and regulations, and directing them to appropriate offices, as well as advocating on their behalf for more favourable regimes.

A number of measures have been adopted following emergencies by migration authorities around the world to improve migrants' capacity to cope with a crisis including:

- Suspending the enforcement of immigration regulation in times of emergencies and extending the ability to stay in a crisis-affected country despite one's migration status;
- Allowing migrants to legally leave a crisis-affected country despite their migration status;
- Working with neighbouring foreign nations to keep borders open;
- Facilitating communication with appropriate authorities (usually migrants' diplomatic representatives) to issue temporary documentation facilitating international evacuations of non-nationals; and

After the Christchurch earthquakes in 2011, ethnic/cultural advisors established in the City Council, Partnership Health Canterbury, Office of Ethnic Affairs, and the New Zealand Police, in order to help these agencies deliver more targeted support to affected minorities. After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the city of Watsonville, in the United States, appointed an Ombudsperson to improve Latin American groups' access to shelter and longer-term housing options.

The Mexican Instituto Nacional de Migración, for instance, has set up a specialized body entirely dedicated to providing assistance to and protecting migrants in transit through the Mexican territory – the Grupos Beta. They currently have 22 groups operating in 9 Mexican states. These professionals have as a mandate to provide assistance with search and rescue, first aid and awareness raising – helping migrants who face violence, abuse and risks to their physical integrity, regardless of their legal status. They also collect information, for statistical purposes only, which they do not disseminate (not even to other units within their institution), for immigration enforcement purposes.

- Allowing migrants to move within national borders despite administrative, visa-related constraints to stay in specific places – in particular when the location they are supposed to remain in is affected by a crisis.

Such authorities might also be encouraged (or even held responsible) for taking measures to prevent the trafficking of vulnerable migrants. Ideally, they should set-up schemes for the readmission of legal, possibly employed or employable migrants who might have fled the country as a consequence of the emergency.

Collaboration among home country authorities (including consular services) and host country immigration institutions is key to ensuring that migrants have information and the required documentation that is needed to remain in a country and have access to emergency and recovery assistance and services, to leave it (whether to return in their country of origin or move elsewhere), or to re-enter it once the crisis subsides.

### **Labour authorities**

Labour authorities can take specific measures during and after crises that can help reduce the risk of exploitation and the security of affected migrants, facilitating their evacuation/movements by, for instance:

- Inviting recruiters/employers to waive recruitment fees;
- Promoting flexible working arrangements in case of evacuation, both in time and in space;
- Preventing employers from withholding employees identity and travel documents;
- Ensuring migrants are paid the salaries owed;
- Preventing and pursuing exploitation and abuses from employers in the aftermath of crises, when migrants might be particularly willing to take on jobs in risky, unhealthy or financially exploitative conditions; and
- Creating a mechanism to report abuse such as a call centre or an online feedback form.

In addition, labour authorities might play a key role in facilitating reintegration and re-employment of migrants once the emergency has subsided if they are willing to return to the crisis-affected country. Home country authorities can also collaborate with local employment agencies, labour authorities, and immigration agencies in order to help better address the needs of labour migrants affected by crises.

However, action by these actors is often hindered by lack of resources, prioritization of the needs of citizens, and pressures by the public, especially if the perception is that the migrants are taking over the limited number of jobs available.

### **Security, border management and armed forces**

Decisions on border management following crises can be crucial to migrants' availability to escape from the affected country and go back home; facilitating transit, including through bilateral agreement with neighbouring countries, can be key to reducing their vulnerability.

Security forces often play a key role in emergency response – and are even more fundamental actors in situations of conflict or violence. Their presence, however, often discourages migrants, in particular undocumented ones, from seeking assistance in emergencies – in particular in the case when it is border guards or groups in charge of enforcing migration regulations that participate in the crisis response. In a number of instances, corrupt armed forces have reportedly exploited migrants caught in emergencies – taking advantage of their conditions of distress and of institutional vacuums consequent to emergency situations.

Collaborating with these institutions can make their staff better aware of the delicate position they might have towards affected migrants, as well as improve the migrants' trust in these institutions. However, such collaboration may be affected by ingrained cultural differences that in regular time may be accepted but may degenerate during a crisis.



## Service providers (health, food, shelter, education)

In an emergency, all those affected, regardless of age, status or citizenship should have access to the same life-saving assistance – such as shelter, water, food and medication, in order to ensure survival and mitigate the consequences of the crisis. Such services are mostly provided by a variety of host country actors that can all benefit from improved partnership with relevant institutions of the migrants' home countries. This can, for instance, help plan for the linguistic, cultural, economic and social diversity that results from serving migrant populations before, during and after emergencies. Collaborations as part of preparedness efforts might include sharing information on migrants' numbers and their characteristics, translation and interpretation, identification and documentation.

The issue becomes more complex when dealing with longer term support. After a crisis subsides, basic needs will remain and others will become priorities – such as employment, specialized medical attention, mental health care for those still suffering as a result of the emergency, and documentation. Not all countries have resources and structures to provide such all-inclusive packages, in particular to foreign nationals.

## Local authorities

Authorities at municipal, district and in general subnational levels play a key role in determining available opportunities, services and resources in any given place. Policies on urban and development planning, infrastructures, transportation and governance affect the barriers and opportunities migrants encounter in their day to day life as well as in crises. Some local authorities even play a direct role on migrants' status (e.g. such as "sanctuary cities" in the United States; local residency registration) and their inclusion in policy consultation and decision-making processes; these include among others through local councils, at specific hearings, and in the involvement of co-development projects. Depending on local institutional assets, such authorities may also be in charge of, or collaborate to, determining the way service suppliers such as education, health and security actors work at local levels.

This often extends to coordination of the delivery of emergency preparedness and management services; local authorities usually have a direct role in emergency planning, preparedness and

awareness raising – in particular by producing and disseminating information on local hazards, evacuation systems and locations, identifying sites for assembly and assistance, facilitating evacuation by providing transport, keeping roads open and assisting affected persons by providing essential services. Coordination with such institutions is key to improving their capacity to serve affected population including migrants.

## OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

### Third-country governments, regional institutions and cooperation mechanisms

Coordination with intergovernmental and third-country actors can be a key element defining the options available to migrants in crisis situations. Bilateral or multilateral reciprocal consular assistance and representation agreements may be an effective way to address gaps especially in situations where States do not have a diplomatic or consular representation in a crisis-affected country or area, or have limited capacity to assist their nationals. The latter might be, in particular, the case for smaller delegations that have a reduced number of staff.

In these cases, reciprocal agreements for consular assistance and representation can be helpful to address the following:

- Evacuation, transportation, and other assistance;
- Shared use of assets for communication, logistics, shelter and other support;
- Coordination to share information in normal times and in times of crisis;
- Standard operating procedures to request assistance;
- Financial responsibility;
- Advocacy; and
- Routine delivery of consular services.

Even when such agreements are not formally in place, like-minded countries often share information on the delivery of their consular services including crisis management; this formalized form of communication facilitates efforts during a crisis. Third countries can be a key source of information

The African Union elaborated a road map to outline the steps to end the Libyan crisis, calling for the “protection of foreign nationals, including African migrants living in Libya”.

During the Cote d’Ivoire crisis in 2010, the Government of France provided shelters within a military protected perimeter to their citizens and other migrants.

At the height of the Libya crisis in 2011, most migrants fled violence into Egypt (263,554) and Tunisia (345,238). This was made possible thanks to the decision of the governments of Tunisia and Egypt to keep their borders with Libya at least partly open. Ferries to Turkey remained operational most of the time, while the airports of Tripoli and Benghazi shut down for a while. The Hungarian embassy remained open most of the time, and accepted to provide consular assistance to citizens from a wide array of countries (including most of the European countries and Canada).

During the Yemen crisis, starting from 2014, the Russian Federation and India were among the countries that started evacuating their nationals first. This also allowed them to respond positively to the requests for assistance from other governments to evacuate citizens from other countries.

Consular coordination among Member States of the European Union after the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean was effective. Daily conference calls took place between European crisis managers, which resulted in chartered aircrafts being shared between nations. As a result of these efforts, regular coordination and information-sharing meetings took place among the foreign services of European countries – with a specific focus on contingency planning and crisis response.

In Indonesia, after the 2004 tsunami, the British and Australian embassies coordinated their efforts, and conducted joint surveying missions to the heavily affected region of Banda Aceh on Australian aircrafts.

Canada’s Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) are a multi-disciplinary military organization that provides, with the permission of the host country, short-notice deployment to crisis-affected areas (especially in natural disaster or complex humanitarian emergencies scenarios). They also provide stabilization measures to complement those provided by the local government. DARTs are not meant to be the first response team such as search-and-rescue efforts but fill the gap until humanitarian aid becomes operational.

also for migrants directed or living abroad: if their own country does not publish travel advisories and warnings, accessing other countries’ websites and information materials may prove helpful to know more about potential risks and ongoing emergencies. A few useful ones may be:

**United States:** <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>

**Canada:** [www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)

**Australia:** <https://smartraveller.gov.au/>

**France:** [www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/)

**United Kingdom:** [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

Specific sites or agencies also contain information that can prove helpful.

Safer countries bordering the crisis-affected area play a key role in making available the option of international evacuations through their border management measures. This might include decisions on whether to accept or not migrants from the affected country, what kind of status to give to third-country nationals fleeing from a crisis-affected country (on occasions, this might even include considering them as refugees or persons entitled to specific forms of protection –

in particular when evacuation to their countries of origin is not possible).

Similarly, regional institutions may play a crucial role when crises involve more than one country in a region, even more so when they are directly implicated in providing assistance in countries undergoing emergency situations.

### International organizations

International organizations play a key role in assisting crisis-affected populations in many different geographical contexts, but in particular in countries whose governments’ capacities are insufficient to deal with the crisis’ impacts. International humanitarian response, in particular, is coordinated through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). States facing significant pressure can resort to the assistance of the IASC system to better manage relief and recovery efforts. Setting up memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with them in order to define boundaries, conditions and features of joint interventions and assistance before crises can ensure a more effective management of resources when crises strike.

IOM, whose efforts are coordinated with that of the other IASC system members, upon request

The role of IOM and UNHCR in the evacuation of thousands of migrants stranded in Libya was key, in particular in support of nationals of the many countries that did not have the capacity to assist their nationals; in fact, with most of the countries having closed their representations in Libya and providing consular assistance from neighbouring Tunisia or Egypt, their role was essential. Coordination was required both to facilitate people's movement out of conflict-affected areas (using all available transportation options) and to manage assistance to those who reached the borders. Out of an estimated 50,000 Bangladeshi citizens thought to be residing in Libya; more than 35,000 were evacuated with IOM assistance.

of States, provides targeted assistance to non-nationals caught in emergencies while abroad. The work of the Organization is rooted on its Migration Crisis Operational Framework and can tap into a newly established Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism to facilitate timely, efficient and comprehensive responses. IOM's work encompasses: (a) technical assistance for humanitarian border management; (b) provision of emergency consular services as needed; (c) referral systems for persons with special needs, including protection; (d) provision of assistance to vulnerable migrants such as victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse; (e) provision of temporary protection for migrants crossing an international border; (f) organization of safe evacuations for migrants to return home; and (g) reintegration assistance.

States also systematically resort to UNHCR for support in the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees affected by emergencies on their territory. UNHCR, in particular, has a Plan of Action to support States and other stakeholders in identifying, protecting and meeting needs of refugees in situations of mixed migration flows. The application of Temporary Protection and Stay Arrangements Guidelines is directly relevant to crisis situations characterized by mixed migration flows, in which immediate assistance and protection need to take precedence.

Other international organizations play roles that may be relevant when preparing, building capacity for, and responding to situations in which migrants are caught in crisis (e.g. the International Labour Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime and UNICEF).

In addition, international organizations may host or promote conventions and other human rights instruments that protect migrants, including in emergency situations. These include, for instance, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and some ILO Conventions on Migration and Employment.

Despite these efforts, the situation of migrants in countries in crisis is yet to be integrated within a binding, internationally accepted system.

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

### Affected migrants

Those with the greatest stake in times of crisis are migrants themselves and their families directly affected by the crisis. They face specific conditions of vulnerability linked with their socioeconomic and legal status, linguistic proficiency and by the capacity and willingness of local actors to adequately identify and address their specific needs in the face of emergencies. However, they also are key actors for crisis prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and their capacities should be adequately considered in coordination efforts. At the same time, they have the responsibility to take all possible preparedness and response measures in order to ensure their safety in case a crisis occurs.

Identification and inclusion of migrants, especially the most vulnerable among them, is key to adequately planning and carrying out awareness-raising activities, contingency planning, early warning issuing and dissemination, provision of relief and recovery assistance that address their specific needs such as multilingual messaging, culturally appropriate assistance, and overcoming barriers linked with their legal status.

Supporting systems in which migrants are engaged to care for each other and involving their representatives in emergency communication and management can be useful to reach out to, and better serve, migrants, in particular those with irregular status. Wardenship systems may also be important for migrants who cannot access other communication mechanisms. When supporting such systems, factors to consider include:



When the Libya crisis ignited, in 2011, the local Filipino community was mobilized through its wardenship programme, through which a number of community-based leaders had been pre-identified, and had been given an informal mandate to assist other non-nationals in the country. Using the warden-based system was more challenging in the Syrian Arab Republic, as the majority of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were undocumented, which made planning particularly difficult.

- Who to select as warden: factors to consider include knowledge and understanding of the local dynamics, familiarity with, and access to, migrants, respect and trust, gender, relationship with diplomatic and consular posts, language proficiency and communication skills;
- Scope of coverage – i.e. which migrants and/or district fall within the responsibilities of a given warden;
- Scope of responsibilities – i.e. what actions and services a given warden can or is expected to provide; and
- Support to warden and their inclusion in the contingency planning and training activities.

### Local migrant groups and associations

Migrants in their host countries often find support in networks, associations and other groups of people sharing their ethnicity, origin or status. This includes participating in ethnic or hometown communities, worker groups or other peer associations that can provide support and services such as language courses, continuity of traditions and customs, assistance in finding employment, housing, paying medical bills and/or legal assistance, as well as a whole range of other adjustment services. While all these can greatly improve migrants' day-to-day life by providing access to key resources, support and opportunities, such organizations also have an important role in times of crises.

It is within such organization that emergency preparedness and response efforts specific to the migrant communities often take place. They can be essential for developing and disseminating warnings, messages and communications or for

adapting and validating advisories or warnings issued by official authorities – through more or less formal information networks (e.g. phone chains, door-to-door communications, and social media). They play a key role delivering information to the most excluded migrants – those who are not reached by official assistance or who might prefer avoiding contacts with officials.

These organizations also provide key knowledge on composition and whereabouts of the local migrant populations, and can therefore be key to successful emergency preparedness planning evacuation efforts. Their cultural sensitivity and understanding of migrants' needs and preferences, can also be leveraged to improve delivery of relief and recovery assistance – in particular of more culturally-sensitive services (e.g. psychosocial support). Such organizations also routinely play a role in complementing and strengthening the overall preparedness, response and recovery efforts, and should be considered as actors holding resources that are important to the resilience of the whole community within the host country (as well as at destination, following an evacuation).

### Home communities and diaspora groups

Migrants are often part of complex informal transnational networks that link their place of destination with their place of origin, as well as with a number of other locations including in third countries in which other migrants of the same household, community, ethnic or national group are located. Along these networks, knowledge, financial resources and other assets are transferred, often representing a key element of migrants'

In 2005, following hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Boat People SOS provided language interpretation services to affected Asian populations in order to facilitate communication with FEMA workers. The habitual role of this organization is to provide adjustment services to Vietnamese arriving in the United States – however, it mobilized its networks to assist a community of more than 55,000 Asians in the Gulf Coast affected by the hurricanes.

Civil society in the Philippines supports nationals abroad through a number of initiatives. One of them, named Balabal (shawl or cloak), is based on the premise that home communities and migrants can assist each other in crisis situations. This was effective in supporting the Government of the Philippines in assisting their nationals trapped in the Syria Arab Republic.

IdEA is focused on fostering capacity development for its members, as well as, more in general, the diaspora sector. As part of those efforts, IdEA is building an interactive platform that elevates and supports the work of diaspora communities around the world. The Diaspora Map will collect and visualize member organizations' presence and influence. Map will increase exposure and networking opportunities for participants.

The role of NGOs was pivotal in the outreach, rescue and evacuation of stranded migrants in the Lebanon crisis. Caritas Lebanon and a number of National Red Cross/Red Crescent societies stepped in alongside major international organizations to provide documentation to thousands of migrants, and to allow them to move out of the country. Formal identification was then carried out once migrants were safe in a third country. They further supported registration and assistance in reception points and transit locations in third countries (e.g. Cyprus and Malta).

During the Cote d'Ivoire crisis, in 2010, churches offered space for the displaced and a safe refuge for the victims of the racial violence.

livelihood strategies, as well as of the well-being of their households and communities.

In times of crisis, assistance by such networks can prove effective to support migrants' capacity to respond to, and recover from, crises affecting their area of destination. Distant household and community members – whether in home or in third countries, individually or through organized groups – can provide resources that allow crisis-affected individuals to better manage and recover from shocks. Supporting these assistance efforts through improved communication among migrants and the diaspora, dissemination of information on the migrants' situation and conditions, and facilitating transfer of financial and non-financial resources can improve migrants' access to targeted, appropriate aid. Such support is often more long-term than the one provided in an emergency by official authorities, and can result in more sustainable livelihood outcomes for assisted migrants.

Diaspora groups and communities of origin can also effectively advocate for the improvement of migrants' living conditions in their countries of residence, including their integration in crisis preparedness plans, relief and recovery efforts.

While most of the literature has focused on the support provided by migrants to crisis-affected countries of origin, evidence suggests that support and resource transfers are mutual, and also benefit migrants abroad in times of hardship.

### **Non-governmental and civil society organizations**

International, national, and local NGOs can play a key role reducing the vulnerability of migrants before, during and after emergencies. Integrating them into prevention, emergency preparedness and response efforts is key to leveraging all capacities existing in any given community.

Organizations acting locally, such as churches and faith-based organizations, workers' unions and community-based groups – whether explicitly aiming to assist migrants or more broadly address

conditions of needs and vulnerability within a given community – can be key to disseminating information and delivering services such as health, legal assistance, employment and capacity-building to migrants, in particular the most isolated ones. In addition to complementing the public's role in the delivery of basic services and opportunities, they often act as mediators of the relationships between public authorities and migrants, being the entity migrants may approach instead of formal institutional actors. They can give strength and visibility to migrant issues and effectively advocate for their inclusion in policymaking at local and national levels.

These roles become critical in crisis situations – in which civil society actors can help official emergency leaders reach out to migrant communities and adapt their efforts in order to understand and meet migrants' needs. They can also act directly as providers of essential relief and recovery services (e.g. evacuation assistance, shelter, food and non-food distribution). They often have more mobility and a better understanding of the environment than any other out of country/international agency.

Bigger international NGOs can complement efforts by public institutions. This is the case, for instance, of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and other agencies such as Care and Save the Children. This is also the case of networks of civil society organizations (CSOs): at global scale, the Migration and Development Civil Society Network has been an important initiative to connect CSOs worldwide and strengthen their capacity to work with governments and promote policies for the well-being of migrants. The network evolved from years of CSO participation at the Global Forum on Migration and Development and was officially launched in 2014.

Mapping these organizations (together with the ones more directly representing migrant and diaspora groups) before crises can be an effective way to take stock of local capacities and improve the coordination and effectiveness of local responses.

During the 2011 conflict in Libya, which saw 200,000 foreign workers of various nationalities caught within the crisis, Shell made sure internationally deployed employees of all levels were effectively evacuated from the country. Hyundai Engineering Co. and Doosan Heavy Industry & Construction Co., which employed both Korean nationals and a large number of workers of other nationalities, had detailed plans in place to evacuate them all out of the country. LBS, a migrant worker recruiting company, elaborated a tracking platform and other outreach tools to contact the workers it had employed and coordinate their evacuation. This also supported the safe and timely redeployment of workers willing to take up future employment abroad.

A Chinese company operating in Libya remitted unpaid salaries for its Bangladeshi workers directly to the Government of Bangladesh' Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training; the Government then reached out to their citizens and their families to ensure they received their money.

## PRIVATE SECTOR

### Employers and recruitment agencies

Since many migrants around the world move for work reasons, employers and recruitment agencies can be key actors to reducing their vulnerability. They often have an advantage locating migrant workers in times of crisis and may be able to communicate important information to and from these individuals, as well as provide precious information to emergency management institutions and consular representatives. Most employers are pivotal to the inclusion of migrant workers and their families in company-based emergency preparedness and management efforts including training, evacuation, providing shelter and assistance delivery.

Employers and recruitment agencies' unethical behaviour, associated with concerns about broken contracts, loss of income, and exploitation of migrants is a vulnerability factor in itself. Documentation could be withheld, wages and other benefits owed to employees may remain unpaid; this might leave migrants in precarious situations, unable to leave the affected area and in need to resort to credit for survival or pay for their return. By allowing migrant workers to leave, reducing their conditions of isolation and avoiding withholding their passports and salaries, employers and recruiters can greatly increase their capacity to cope with an escape emergencies.

Efforts by employers should target all workers, in particular the most vulnerable; although many corporations have systems to evacuate high-level staff, they do not all have adequate standards and

procedures for lower-tiered employees. Providing emergency preparedness information, training and assistance might be a particular issue for smaller and informal employers, who do not employ a large enough number of migrants justifying specific emergency planning and response efforts. On the other hand, consideration of migrants in contingency planning for businesses that employ a large number of migrant workers is key to their continuity and recovery.

Collaboration is however particularly complex with employers who systematically employ migrants in irregular status and refuse to work towards (or actively hinder) their access to services, information and assistance, which makes them even more vulnerable in emergencies. This scenario is often seen among low-skilled seasonal and farm workers.

### Other private sector actors

**Transportation companies and tour operators** can play a key role facilitating evacuations. Airlines and shipping companies, as well as public and private land transportation services, in collaboration with consular officials and/or migration agencies such as the UNHCR and IOM, are key to facilitating people's movement out of areas affected by conflicts and disasters, and can proactively reduce economic and documentation barriers to evacuation by providing special service conditions in times of crisis. Private airlines will however not board a passenger unless they are satisfied with the identity and documentation held by the passenger, even in times of crisis. Tour operators are also key actors in emergency preparedness and response operations specifically targeting tourists. They often represent a valuable source of information on the tourists'

Ships and flights were chartered directly by the Government of Thailand to allow Thai nationals to leave Libya when the crisis ignited in 2011. Similarly, the governments of the United Kingdom, France and Germany chartered flights to evacuate their national tourists out of tsunami-affected areas in the Indian Ocean, in 2004. Major airlines operated flights in order to accommodate passengers interested in returning to their country of departure.

During the 2011 conflict in Libya, Qtel distributed prepaid SIM cards and calling vouchers to people fleeing the country and seeking refuge in neighbouring Tunisia, including many Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Somali, Sudanese, and Pakistani citizens trying to reach safety.

presence and their whereabouts in any given country.

**Telecommunication companies** can help migrants get in touch with authorities in host and home country, as well as communicate with their own household and communities, which can be essential not only for their well-being, but also for planning rescue and evacuation efforts or assistance provision. Such services may be supported as part of more comprehensive efforts towards reestablishing communications in emergency-affected locations. However, it is not unusual in emergency situations for communication towers to be destroyed, overburden or even cut off as part of conflict operations – as was the case in Egypt when the Government temporarily cut all Internet connections. Ensuring that plans include more reliable communication alternative (e.g. satellite phones) is key.

**Media** (including social media) play a key role in the circulation of information. In order to reach out to migrant communities, coordinating efforts with media from the country in crisis and at times, of origin, as well as with community-based broadcasters, is essential. Such actors also are important for translating and adapting/interpreting warnings and communication products. Media also play a role researching information on affected nationals, and circulating it to the society back home. Caution should however be exercised when dealing with a variety of different media channels, as they may disseminate inconsistent, unprecise information, including unfounded rumors, or might pursue specific interests and agendas.

An increasingly important role for communications worldwide is played by social networks. Their capacity to circulate information rapidly and effectively is key to communication in emergencies. Specific products or systems, such as Google's Person Finder or Facebook's Safety Check, can be particularly useful in emergencies, assuming the overall communication system of the affected area

is operational. Other examples of areas of work in which high-tech companies can effectively reduce migrants' vulnerabilities include population tracking and mapping, electronic storage of documentation, and targeted dissemination of information.

**Insurance companies** can play a specific role transferring risks linked with migrants' involvement in emergencies. In particular, insurance mechanisms can be subscribed by migrant workers themselves, their employers and recruiting agencies to cover losses and expenses linked with migrants' inability to work, evacuation and repatriation. This can also facilitate employers' and recruiters' collaboration with crisis management authorities, and make them more able to reduce barriers to migrants' movement. However, in most cases, migrant workers, and in particular low-income and seasonal workers, do not make specific arrangements for insurance (neither travel insurance nor medical insurance). This means that the financial burden of emergency assistance (including evacuation back home) might need to be covered by their employers or institutions of their country of origin.

## ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS

Academics and the research community can hold knowledge that is relevant to preventing, preparing and responding to emergencies, including studies on distribution of migrants, drivers of emergencies and migrants' conditions of vulnerability, relevant practices for the different actors and lessons learned from previous efforts. Research that may be particularly suited to this work includes literature related to disaster risk reduction, disaster management, humanitarian relief, political science, psychology, migration, mapping, ethnography, urbanization and sociology. In addition, research actors can help monitor and evaluate practices and improve understanding of how successful

During the 2007 San Diego firestorms, for instance, Spanish-language emergency communication coverage was largely disseminated through US- and foreign-based TV channels, which allowed for live coverage of the disaster in ways comparable to what was provided to English native speakers. During hurricane Katrina, in 2005, information translated in Vietnamese was broadcasted through a local community-based Vietnamese station.



prevention, preparedness and response efforts have been and how they can be improved.

Universities, and more in general the education systems, also represent a preferential channel to reach out to international students, in particular if they have dedicated offices and staff mandated with their servicing/coordination.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While making decisions and coordinating each of the main areas of work in emergencies is usually the responsibility of a specifically mandated institution of the host country, engaging with all the above mentioned actors that are, to some extent, involved in emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts can be useful to address the specific needs of migrants. Locally identifying all the relevant actors, their mandates and responsibilities towards migrants, as well as their concrete capacities – ideally before crises hit – is key to improving the effectiveness of response efforts.

It is important to reach out to these local interlocutors in order to better assist migrants through all phases of emergency preparedness and response described in the following modules, with a specific emphasis on:

- Involving migrants in emergency preparedness efforts, and improving their preparedness levels;
- Issuing, adapting and disseminating early warnings and emergency communications;
- Supporting people's movement during evacuations; and
- Providing direct assistance to crisis-affected migrants – both life-saving and longer-term – including through the management of evacuation shelters and displacement sites.

Roles, responsibilities, actors involved and their level of engagement might be different depending on the crisis faced. The nature, location and timing of the emergency can affect the capacity of the different actors to actually fulfil their responsibilities. Developing scenarios, looking at who to engage with and how, in the event of various crises that could hit a given area can be useful to strengthen overall preparedness.

Coordination mechanisms, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) among the various actors and for different scenarios can improve mutual understanding and collaboration in emergencies, and can also help highlight areas in which local capacities might be particularly limited and/or challenged. Options and priorities can thereby be identified to involve other relevant actors in order to plan systematically for an efficient response.

While such documents are more likely developed to pool resources and coordinate actions among different institutions, identifying with specific individuals and organizations within the community or within the different migrant groups who can help liaise/coordinate is equally important. Such individuals and community organizations can be involved in emergency preparedness and response efforts through formal coordination mechanisms. When this is not a viable option, however, informal stocktaking exercises that identify who such actors are and allow to store their contacts in common directories, accessible in times of crisis, can be very effective to improve communication and coordination.

Specific institutions, such as businesses/employers, prisons, hospitals and schools, often play a specific role in emergency preparedness and response efforts. They usually have client/audience-based and specific emergency and evacuation plans, which can be coordinated with the broader emergency management system. Such institutions often lack the resources to stockpile food, water and medication and establish a complete, viable emergency preparedness plan; however, their inclusion in bigger networks through which resources can be pooled benefits all parties.

## MAIN AREAS FOR COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ACTORS

### **Disseminating early warnings and emergency information**

Migrants often resort to specific, minority, or informal channels to access or validate information in emergencies. This includes institutional actors of their country of origin (e.g. consular corps, ministry



During Hurricane Sandy, Bangladeshi migrants living in New York referred back to their news sources back home. Taher, editor and publisher of a Bangladesh newspaper, reported that he received calls from Bangladeshis living in the US seeking his advice. An estimated 150,000 Bangladeshis lived in New York and New Jersey (in Coney Island), an area severely damaged by the hurricane.

of external affairs) or media from their country of origin or from third countries (e.g. television, radio, newspaper and social media) where their own language is spoken).

While such channels represent an opportunity for the targeted dissemination of a translated message, it is necessary to make sure that the information provided through all these parallel channels is accurate and consistent with the official warnings and communications being provided internally.

Involvement of the relevant actors in joint working groups, as well as issuance of joint communication products and other coordination mechanisms can help produce clearer, more specific information and a more efficient dissemination of the advisories.

### **Enumeration and identification of migrants**

Relevant institutions, such as host country immigration, emergency management and labour institutions, ministries of labour and foreign affairs of the home country, recruiting companies and employers, remittance transfer companies and local service providers can provide a wealth of information on migrants' whereabouts before and during emergencies. This is key for emergency preparedness and response purposes, in order to properly target and deliver assistance. This is particularly important when dealing with unregistered and/or undocumented migrants in all crisis-related efforts. Even third-country actors can be involved in these efforts – either because their international response teams are included in joint search-and-rescue efforts and part of an information-gathering exercise, or because they will likely accept migrants escaping from a crisis-affected area.

These actors also play a key role identifying migrants, which is particularly important for renewing documentation with the help of the diplomatic representative responsible for the area – and as a consequence for all other domains for which documentation is needed, such as international evacuations, provision of basic and longer-term assistance.

### **Facilitating communications with families back home**

Setting up channels of communications, or at least some mechanism to share information, between migrants and their relatives in home countries is important for the migrants' and their families' well-being. This is often managed through a variety of individual, grass-roots solutions (and increasingly via social networks and their dedicated systems for information sharing). However, in some cases, it might still be necessary for home country authorities to supplement such efforts by setting up a dedicated database and information system providing essential information regarding migrants in affected areas.

Identification of migrants and dissemination of pertinent information to home communities are often the direct responsibility of specific home-country institution (typically the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or MFA) who would also receive queries from families, political appointees, media and community members. These institutions need verified information directly from the crisis-affected area, which they can obtain via host country's reliable interlocutors, own personnel posted in the area, like-minded diplomatic counterparts, as well as on occasions the media and the migrants

The Foreign Service of the United Kingdom coordinated closely with the UK police in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. Despite the lack of an official pre-crisis arrangement, the police service:

- Handled calls to the information hotline for victims and their families;
- Recorded the details of missing persons through an information management system – discussions have taken place on whether to open it up to foreign posts for their direct use or to make sure that the two systems are connected;
- Assisted the safe return of survivors at the airport;
- Gathered evidence for identifying victims, and supported the international victim identification process; and
- Provided support to bereaved families.

When the 2004 tsunami hit the coasts surrounding the Indian Ocean, about 10,000 British tourists were staying in the region, 40 per cent of which as independent travelers. Holidaymakers who were on package holidays could mostly return home on flights chartered by their tour operators (British tour operators, via their insurance, usually repatriate their customers facing emergencies). Instead, most of the independent travellers returned home autonomously or on flights chartered by their Government or the governments of other European countries (e.g. Germany and France). The international airport in Bangkok remained open during this crisis, allowing foreigners to depart on available flights.

themselves. Home and host country mass media often represent the main conduit for local mandated agencies to reach out to migrant families and other implicated individuals in their communities; hence, all communication plans should ensure that such media understand the need to convey relevant, validated and coherent information.

In addition, collaborations with non-traditional crisis management actors may be required to actually manage emergency communications systems, such as hotlines and call centres, that may depend on infrastructure and capacities not directly linked to foreign service/foreign crisis management (e.g. police, health services and fire departments).

### **Facilitating international evacuations**

Host country authorities, diplomatic delegations, airlines and transportation companies, international organizations and third countries are all stakeholders when dealing with out-of-country or international evacuations. Collaborating with them is key for effective work in a variety of respects, including:

- Issuing identity and travel documentation and visa;
- Carrying out health screenings;
- Logistics and general assistance; and
- Transportation.

These efforts can help guarantee that migrants leave a crisis-affected country in a safe and timely manner.

Communication and coordination are particularly important with countries neighbouring the crisis-affected zone, or with third countries migrants may be evacuated to (whether or not en route to their home countries), as well as with other countries

that might collaborate in evacuation efforts. Making sure that borders remain open and safe and that those countries' officials accept the inflow of people (including those entering using temporary travel documents) is fundamental to prevent migrants from being trapped in unsafe areas.

### **Facilitating the delivery of assistance to affected persons**

A variety of actors can directly engage in support of local responses to emergencies, through efforts as diverse as fundraising, provision and distribution of items (e.g. tents, drugs, NFIs) and deployment of staff. In addition to the local emergency management system, such actors may include international organizations and NGOs, private sector and local non-governmental actors and diaspora groups.

In order for them to more effectively contribute, however, it is necessary to make sure that:

- They understand the migrants' specific needs and priorities;
- They are trusted by the migrants; and
- Their actions are coordinated, including with mandated response agencies.

In addition, these agencies can help ensure that crisis-affected persons receive adequate longer-term assistance essential to their recovery and well-being. In addition to a variety of services potentially delivered by such actors in the crisis-affected areas, this may include ensuring the returnee migrants receive reintegration and psychosocial assistance upon they return home, such as services usually offered by local civil society organizations, in partnership with basic service providers, local and national authorities.

Chinese migrants affected by the 2012 Emilia earthquake in Italy received food, money, hygiene products and other items through their Government's official assistance channel, while the Moldovans were assisted by their diaspora in Italy and other European countries.

After Hurricane Katrina, Vietnamese diaspora members from other parts of the United States were keen on helping fellow Vietnamese in affected areas, especially when they realized how serious the hurricane's impacts had been on the local Vietnamese community. Unfortunately, lack of planning, poor coordination and unclear directives limited the options available to would-be contributors, resulted in people missing opportunities for direct engagement and not sending aid, which created much frustration and contributed to limited support to affected groups.

After the Canterbury earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand, ethnic-based associations were active in supporting affected individuals from the different minority groups. These associations had very effective support systems operating across various areas of the city, as well as across the country through sister groups.

Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, the British Foreign Service reached out to the British Red Cross and IFRC in order to provide support to affected British nationals. Despite the limited coordination among relevant governmental entities as part of their emergency preparedness planning, the organization's response included setting up:

- An information hotline to provide advice to callers affected by the tsunami;
- A team of doctors and psychologists who flew to Thailand and visited British survivors in hospitals, and provided them and their families with psychological support;
- A welcome service (manned by volunteers) to welcome returnees; and
- A tsunami support network to further assist affected nationals upon their return home.

# PROFILING AND TRACKING MIGRANTS

## INTRODUCTION

Collecting and compiling information about the numbers, whereabouts and characteristics of nationals living, working and staying abroad is essential to developing and implementing programmes and measures to address their specific conditions of vulnerability through targeted emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts. This information will help the home-country service institutions and other emergency management actors, including relevant entities in the host country, in adapting and complementing the emergency preparedness and response services they provide to better address migrants' specific needs in a crisis.

Generic, aggregate information is often available for identifying main migration routes and destinations, demographic and professional characteristics of migrants and the main risks they face along the routes and in their host countries. A migrant who legally enters a foreign country is usually accounted for by border services, immigration or local authorities either in the form of a visa (when required) or as a tourist or temporary visitor. Even migrant workers whose documents are being held by an employer would still appear in the national immigration registry as being in the country legally.

However, the migrants' sheer numbers, the presence of undocumented and unregistered individuals, the migrants' intense mobility within and out of specific countries and regions – especially in the case of those staying for short periods or only transiting through a given country – and the limited procedures most countries have in place to actually capture movements out of their territory, means that the existing information is rarely updated and comprehensive. Migrants might have entered the country illegally (without visa) or have either overstayed their visa or changed the purpose of the issued visa (for example from a student to a worker, from a worker to being unemployed). Information on such undocumented/unregistered

migrants is often difficult to obtain since most do not register with their host country fearing reprisal or deportation, or their home country for fear the information would be shared with host country.

Dual nationals are also difficult to track as many return to their country of citizenship identifying themselves as locals; however, when they are affected by a crisis in their country of origin/residence, many would seek assistance from the country of their other citizenship for documentation and evacuation purposes. Statistics on the number of dual nationals living/travelling abroad are difficult to obtain, which may affect any emergency preparedness plans.

The final accounting of documented, registered migrants in a specific country is more accurate and helpful in a crisis when countries impose exit requirements (visa or permit). However, countries that impose exit visa/permits may hinder the free movement of migrants and dual nationals in the case of emergency. Even dual nationals who enter their country of origin using the passport of that country and then try to leave with the passport of their other nationality might be regarded as irregular migrants by the country's authorities, thereby potentially facing fines or even detention.

Also, countries that have mandatory military service may block young men from leaving the territory if they are also citizens of that country, even in time of crisis, which might also apply to dual nationals.

In the absence of comprehensive, official statistics, there are a variety of sources of data and information that can support the emergency preparedness and response work of home country authorities. It should be noted that such efforts are likely to be only a minor component of broader responses carried out by the mandated host country agencies; however, they can greatly improve the capacity of the response system to provide targeted assistance before, during and after emergencies.

Consular corps and other home-country based authorities (emigration and border management

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs offers a specific registration system as part of its emergency preparedness and response efforts. Australians are invited to register at embassies and consulates or online. Data on their presence and whereabouts helps embassies and consular posts inform their contingency planning. Registration also includes contact details (a personal e-mail address and/or mobile phone number), through which the embassy can contact their nationals in the event of a crisis, in order to convey key messages, tips, advisories and general information. The information received by registrants will be consistent with what is available elsewhere, through other standard communication channels (i.e. Foreign Office Department at capital, Consular posts' websites, Australian and English language media).

Mexico has a smartphone application that allows easy consular registration of their nationals in the United States. As many of the Mexican migrants in the country possess a smartphone, the application is actually a quite successful option for registering and reaching out to nationals in the country – the main migration destination for Mexicans. However, it is not quite as useful to provide information on the large share of Mexicans who reside in the United States in an irregular manner, who often do not register out of fear of being arrested and deported.

Canada, via Global Affairs Canada, offers a free, voluntary registration service for Canadians travelling or living abroad. The Registration of Canadian Abroad is an online system that represents an easy communication channel to stay in touch with Canadians abroad and alert them of potential emergencies and any planned actions, including evacuations.

institutions, bodies responsible for labour, remittances or communications issues) may collect relevant data as part of their day-to-day service provision duties, while other actors (e.g. employers and recruiters, tour operators and local authorities in host country) might have additional information on migrants.

Identifying, compiling, validating, and sharing this data (as well as collecting new data, should the existing one not be sufficient) is key to providing responses to address the affected migrants' specific needs. Even when incomplete or not fully accurate, this information can be useful to observe trends in, and estimate, the size, composition and distribution of the migrant population, thereby contributing to more effective preparedness and response efforts.

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF DATA ON MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

### **Institutional instruments of the home country**

A few countries keep track of their citizen's presence abroad, through registration (mainly voluntary) and tracking systems for emigration, health, labour, fiscal and education purposes. Such systems require tools and resources that most countries have not developed and invested in.

In addition, many consular posts have their own registration systems (again, mostly voluntary) that are used to provide consular services – e.g. family registries, electoral lists and fiscal registries. These

registrations can represent ready-made sources of information on migrants, their demographic and characteristics, their whereabouts within the host country and occupation. This information can help establish and carry out more effective emergency preparedness and response efforts.

A number of countries have specifically set up travel registration/advisory systems that allow them to be aware of their nationals' presence and whereabouts abroad and maintain communication with them. Such systems can be used to raise their awareness on potential hazards in the country they are in (or they are going to), as well as provide them with useful information in case of emergency. Such systems can be voluntary or mandatory, web- or phone-based, global-level or country-specific.

In emergencies, it is particularly important to have access to information that is accurate and updated, which is not always the case with any of the above systems, especially because it is difficult to keep track of migrants' movement within and out of a host country. A way to potentially address this is to include a feature that automatically deletes the data about a registrant once s/he leaves the country, or based on an "expiry date" selected by the migrant as part of the registration.

While such services are not always used by migrants – due to costs, bureaucracy, unwillingness to "formalize" one's situation or the fear of consequences should their presence be known to home (and potentially host) country agencies such as revenue/taxation, police matters – it is possible to provide incentives for registration. These incentives might include:



When the Government of the Philippines formally established diplomatic relations with the Syrian Arab Republic in 2009, they estimated that the number of Filipinos in the country was between 9,000 and 20,000. Most of whom worked in private households and were undocumented. The Philippine mission in the country started building a database to capture the migrants' presence. In order to do so, consular staff checked the records of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, solicited information from the immigration and labour authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic, and contacted the Filipino Community in the country to reach Filipino nationals working in the Syrian territory. These efforts enabled the embassy to create its database of OFWs, which facilitated their location and extraction at the onset of the 2011 civil war.

- Registration can be required to access consular services or other forms of assistance and information provision by home country institutions;
- Thematic events at embassies and consulates can be organized to promote its use;
- Providing clear information on how data and information will be used;
- User-friendly, easy-to-update design, or simple and responsive application process; and
- Limiting the extent of required information, in particular not making reference to migration status.

Many countries may collect household-level data on their population (e.g. census) asking specific questions on emigration (including for short periods of time) of their household members. All such systems, however, have shortcomings; census, for instance, assume that authorities succeed at reaching migrants, or that the information they provide is accurate. However, many migrant registrants will include their entire family (whether or not all have regular status in the country of residence).

When this information is not routinely collected and compiled, an analysis of requests for services at consular posts may provide an alternative to estimate and profile the local migrant community.

In addition, similar household and community surveys – which do not aim to collect individual information, rather to understand community composition – can be carried out (before, during and after crises) by consular staff and other institutions based abroad, in order to collect relevant information and complement existing databases. Such surveys can be carried out through:

- Field visits;
- Phone interviews;
- E-mail questionnaires;
- Online forms and feedback pages on websites;
- Applications and systems to crowdsource information (including social networks); and

- Social gatherings and events (i.e. national holiday) to advertise existing registration/data collection mechanisms or to register attendees at events, including those hosted by the consular post (e.g. open house).

If such surveys are carried out, it should be kept in mind that they might not be representative of all local migrant groups (and in particular of newcomers), nor reflect the geographical distribution of migrants on the territory. This kind of information management efforts, however, need to be repeated on a regular basis in order to provide an updated snapshot of the local migrant community.

While collecting this information in a detailed, individual manner might be too lengthy, costly and complicated, reaching out to specific representatives of the national community in order to have a generic snapshot of the local community is often a more feasible option, even though it does not necessarily yield precise, encompassing and detailed information.

### Other sources

A variety of other actors can hold significant information, including:

- Immigration/border and other governmental authorities of the country of destination, including local authorities, that might even collect contact details and emergency contacts (including in the home country);
- Centralized and local-level population registration systems and census;
- Special-purpose registers or databases on foreigners (e.g. aliens registers, permits of stay registers or registers of asylum seekers);
- Passenger surveys and border card systems that collect information on cross-border movements;
- Household sample surveys that include questions pertaining to emigrants, even though emigration might not be their main focus;

Mexico provides a variety of options for documented stay and employment to Guatemalan workers. The Government manages a full database with information on the workers' residence in the country, employment details and even their family residing in the country. This information is complemented by special-purpose databases, such as the one that is managed by the Instituto Nacional de Migración's Beta Groups, which collect information on migrants (mostly undocumented migrants in transit through the country) for assistance and support. During the 2007 Tabasco floods, they were among the only institutions to actually have updated information on a large population of "invisibles" which was affected by the floods.

- Border sample surveys;
- Placement and recruitment agencies, both in countries of origin and destination, which might keep track of numbers, professions and location of the migrant workers they have deployed;
- Employers, in particular those employing large numbers of migrants;
- Unions, in particular those relevant to sectors in which large numbers of migrants are employed;
- Migrant groups, organizations and representatives;
- Churches and community centres, both ethnic and faith based;
- Tour operators, hotels, hostels and their organizations;
- Remittance transfers and international communication companies (while their information might not capture presence of individuals in a specific location, it can be useful to analyse trends in their presence and spatial distribution);
- Though their information is usually protected, in a crisis situation, service providers (phone companies, water and energy suppliers, schools, insurance, health care) may be willing to share some of the information they possess on the population they serve. Most of this information could be based on status and not citizenship; however, it could be used by host country authorities to manage emergencies on their territory;
- Non-governmental bodies and international organizations engaging in collection and standardization of data related on migrants' presence, occupation and status. In some cases, such information is systematically compiled in statistics reports that are publicly available; and
- Academic institutions, universities and research centres.

It should however be noted that most of these entities might not share this information with third parties, including representatives of the migrants' home country, citing privacy regulations.

Building a directory with relevant actors, and their contacts, and/or setting up agreements

for information sharing (and use) can help paint a more accurate picture of migrants' presence before a crisis, effectively ensuring that all available information is sourced and captured in preparation of, or during, an emergency.

It should be noted that official databases might provide a less accurate snapshot of the reality, especially since they are unlikely to identify undocumented or unregistered migrants, and monitor the movements of the migrant population. The latter is particularly difficult in areas of high population circulation and mobility (e.g. border areas, inner city, slum areas, regions characterized by free movement agreements); in these cases, such tools might not be reflective of the actual patterns of short distance, short-term movements.

All these sources can help complement official databases managed by the host country; however, these systems are not foolproof and provide overlapping or duplicated information. These systems are likely to underestimate the presence of migrants in irregular situations, as well as of those working informally or living in informal settings (e.g. squatters, those sharing accommodation, transients). Validating this information through cross-checking and further research would increase its usefulness; however, it is not always logistically possible. In addition, understanding whether the information available is (in) accurate is key to effectively using it to guiding practices.

## COLLECTING INFORMATION TO UNDERSTAND THE COMPOSITION OF MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The kind of information to collect with the specific aim of informing and assisting emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts includes a variety of elements that help identify migrants' specific needs and the barriers they might encounter to accessing safety and assistance in the

face of hazards. While knowing numbers, location and basic characteristics might be essential, additional details can help further target efforts.

The compilation of this information in the form of maps and other synthesis instruments can support its analysis and use. Such information might include:

- Contact details, at least of the representatives/ gatekeepers of the main groups and communities (e.g. leaders, heads of households, religious leaders, teachers);
- Number of migrants, and their location;
- Demographics (sex, age) and other specific details such as mobility and medical concerns;
- Occupation and location of workplace;
- Main details of working conditions that might be relevant in crises (e.g. working in isolated locations, working informally);
- Preferred channels of communication (e.g. ethnic or foreign mass media, local formal and informal channels, ethnic and/or faith-based gathering centres, places of worship);
- Barriers to accessing information, early warning and emergency communications (e.g. spatial segregation, social marginalization, lack of access to mainstream media, language proficiency, literacy);
- Mistrust towards institutions and host communities;
- Constraints to evacuation/relocation (including whether their salaries and documents are withheld, they don't have own means of transportation, live in underserved areas or areas that are poorly connected through bad or at-risk roads and infrastructure);
- Level of awareness of/involvement in preparedness and response systems;
- Migration status;
- Specific behaviours in emergencies (e.g. do not evacuate immediately, prefer validating

warnings and information with other members of the community, have nowhere to go)

- Dietary restrictions and requirements;
- Privacy requirements, dress code, etiquette;
- Perception and acceptance of health care and psychosocial support; and
- Religion, rituals, and care of the dead.

## TRACKING MIGRANTS IN EMERGENCIES

Profiling is however insufficient in order to support response efforts in the face of crises; in order to adequately provide services and support, including through evacuations and repatriations, is often necessary to locate migrants. There are a number of measures that can be rolled out by the home country institutions to this end.

- If deemed safe to do so and personnel is available, consular officials and personnel from the diplomatic representation can be sent in the field to gather first-hand information, and potentially to directly evacuate (or otherwise support the evacuation of) migrants to safety.
- Referral mechanisms set up with mandated emergency management/response actors in the country of destination – for mutual information sharing on and service delivery to affected migrants.
- Coordination mechanisms with response actors are also key. These include civil society and community-based organizations, as well as migrant groups themselves. In particular, building contacts with leaders and coordinators of the local migrant communities can turn them into key informants for all emergency management efforts.

After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, representatives from the British Foreign Service (both working in the local embassy/ consular posts and at capital level) were dispatched to affected areas in order to contact affected British nationals and provide consular assistance when needed, in particular when the nationals could not be immediately evacuated or who were in the care of local hospitals.

Thailand's new Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan includes SOPs for the relevant focal points within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate with embassies and consulates of foreign countries in Thailand when a disaster affects foreign nationals. This includes making sure that foreigners can be reached and attended to.

During the Gulf war, Philippine crisis management officials relied on the advice of members of the local Filipino community as they were deeply familiar with the terrain and could gather information much faster because of their knowledge of the language of the host country. The community-level partners served as a key source of intelligence and information and supported the provision of relief efforts, as well as the evacuation of a total of 28,000 workers.

In Sri Lanka, social media and mobile phones are being used to facilitate communication between migrants and consular authorities during emergencies. In order to facilitate tracking (and communicating with) migrants, the Government has established a national database on migrant workers. Workers are registered via the SIM cards (specifically issued to migrants) that they receive upon departure. This system helps reach out to migrants working in isolated areas or in private households.

The Danish Refugee Council kept in touch with displaced migrants in transit through Libya through instant messaging apps. To do so, it provided phones and credit to key representatives of less-connected migrant groups.

LBS Recruitment Solutions Corporation specializes in the global supply of skilled workers. LBS Recruitment produced a geo-locating interface (LBS2 Fil Assist) that uses Google Maps' geolocation technology to locate migrants they deployed. LBS2 Fil Assist facilitated the successful evacuation of 97 workers from Libya in 2011.

OFW Watch is a community service initiative of Mynd Dynamic Team, a business process outsourcing company. OFW Watch will alert the users if a nearby OFW is in trouble and recommend a course of action to take. The initiative also includes a free mobile app that includes functionalities to report abused or missing OFW, locate embassies, consulates and other relevant offices and translate snippets of text, among others.

- Liaising with non-emergency actors such as employers, tour operators, might also be important, as they might have specific, individual-level information on affected migrants.

The development of information and communication technologies offers a variety of alternatives to collect information before and after crises. Social media and instant messaging applications, for instance, can help identify, locate and communicate with migrants.

Social networks are already extensively used by migrants, their families and employers to keep in touch. Many consular services use social media to provide and gather information before a crisis, to plan for emergencies, and during a crisis, in order to keep their nationals informed of the latest developments.

Specific features such as Facebook's safety check or Google's Person Finder can also be replicated, adapted or advertised through the consular post's social media pages or website.

During crises, it can be particularly important to set up systems through which affected nationals can provide information on their whereabouts and ask for assistance. This can be done simply through social networks or websites (e.g. use of information crowdsourcing applications, specific hashtags, geo-localization of posts). Making sure that some mechanisms are activated and advertised can be useful to track people and understand their needs.

## PRIVACY CONCERNS

All data collection and tracking efforts present risks with regards to migrants' privacy and security. The information migrants provide may be confidential and should not be available for any other uses unless permission has been granted by migrants or it is a matter of survival. However, sharing some of the information, in particular if in aggregated form (e.g. generic statistics on local population), with some specific actors (e.g. those in charge of protection, search and rescue, specific assistance including medical evacuations) might be necessary to inform preparedness and response efforts.

Clarity regarding what data will be used for what aims is crucial. In particular, migrants should clearly understand that the information provided will be used only for emergency preparedness, and that it will not be used in any way to alert local immigration, taxation and border service authorities in their host and home country. Unless these assurances are provided, migrants, especially those undocumented and with irregular status in the country, will not avail themselves of this service, thus increasing their vulnerability.

Pre-establishing data collecting and sharing agreements (including for emergency management purposes) and ensuring that the data is collected in a legal, standardized manner across countries and institutions can be necessary to removing practical barriers that could otherwise hinder the effectiveness of emergency preparedness and response work.

# IMPROVING MIGRANTS' AWARENESS

## INTRODUCTION

Most crisis situations (whether natural or man-made in origin) can be anticipated, at least to some extent. Natural hazards tend to occur in specific areas (e.g. earthquakes in seismically active zones, landslides on and around unstable slopes) and in certain periods of the year (e.g. storms, hurricanes, and floods in the rainy/hurricane/monsoon season). Specific sites such as residential neighbourhoods near hazardous industrial facilities can be particularly prone to industrial accidents, chemical spills, fires and explosions. Violence, riots, criminal acts, terrorism and armed conflict may be concentrated in specific regions, routes, neighbourhoods, or periods such as before/after elections, before/after religious celebrations and, in some countries, major sports events. In addition, expected intensity and consequences of the different events can usually be estimated, and to a certain extent, anticipated through specific assessments, past records and scenarios.

In any case, information on future, more or less likely events and processes that might put in danger people's lives and assets, is usually available at different stages before a crisis' outbreak. Raising awareness of the population that might be affected by the crisis on the potential risks they might face, what the adequate responses would be, and what resources and assistance they could count on in order to mitigate a crisis' impact is a key element of emergency preparedness and management, whether it is or not recognized in plans and dedicated efforts.

Migrants, in particular newcomers, those who come from very different environmental and social contexts, those who do not speak the local language or who live in conditions of physical or social isolation, may have limited awareness of the risks they face in a given location. Raising

their awareness in anticipation of a potential crisis should strongly improve their capacity to anticipate its occurrence, and help them avoid, cope with and/or recover from its impact.

There are multiple ways home country authorities can provide their citizens abroad with relevant information, (preferably) before their departure or upon arrival at their destination. Producing awareness materials and messages, setting up channels for reaching out to the migrants abroad, and disseminating information through the relevant channels is a relatively easy and inexpensive step to improve migrants' preparedness.

## INSTITUTIONS OF THE HOME COUNTRY

The role of embassies, high commissions and consulates in the migrants' destinations can be particularly important, as they can more readily develop messages tailored to the specific hazards and risks in the destination and provide guidance on how to prepare.

Consular officials are well placed to gather information on potential threats by liaising with host country authorities and their counterparts at other diplomatic delegations. They can collect and compile relevant information, notify their home countries of potential risks and issue awareness products, advisories and warnings. In addition, based on their knowledge of their local context, as well as by collecting and analysing additional information, e.g. through situation analysis exercises, they can monitor key crisis trends and developments. Variables to observe in order to anticipate crises include a number of different elements.

The websites [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov) and <http://activefiremaps.fs.fed.us> are used by the relevant authorities of the United States to track respectively storms (including hurricanes) and fires. This information is useful for planning, as well as for informing residents in at-risk and affected areas.



For conflicts and violence:

- Increases in crime rates;
- The emergence and activity of military or political factions;
- Acts of terrorism, bomb threats or attacks;
- Kidnappings; and
- Manifestations of xenophobia.

For disasters:

- Increase in reported cases of diseases;
- Water scarcity;
- Food insecurity;
- Seasonal cycles; and
- The evolution of relevant environmental processes (e.g. drought, forest fires).

Drawing on knowledge gathered by staff posted abroad, as well as by other relevant institutions (whether from the country of origin, from a third country or at international level), institutions of the home country can also play a role issuing awareness-raising products.

Travel reports and advisories help inform and encourage long-term prevention and preparedness. While they may include emergency-related information in broad terms, these tools are meant to complement information and/or advisories published by local authorities; they do however represent a useful way to disseminate information and raise awareness of citizens (going) abroad. The information gathered by consular officials and their like-minded consular counterparts when analysed and compiled by the relevant, home-country institutions can be successfully disseminated through dedicated websites, applications,

publications and instant messaging, e-mail or other notification systems in order to increase the general public's awareness on potential risks.

In case the country does not publish or regularly update its travel reports and advisories, it is possible to identify other countries that do, and direct citizens to their websites, materials and channels, in particular if other countries provide information that is understandable to the country's citizens.

## WHAT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE

### Hazards

Information that is needed to raise people's awareness includes:

- What hazards may affect a given area;
- When would such hazards occur (e.g. how long from present day? in a specific month/season? at a specific time of the day?);
- What locations may be particularly affected;
- Are there precursory signs (e.g. any patterns? Any environmental conditions?), and what to watch out for;
- What impacts they have had and may have in the area (e.g. lives lost, health-related issues and accidents, disruption of services or infrastructure); and
- If they could result in secondary effects (e.g. storm leading to landslide and/or flooding, earthquake triggering a tsunami).

The Red Cross suggests the content of an emergency preparedness kit on this website: [www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/be-red-cross-ready/get-a-kit](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/be-red-cross-ready/get-a-kit).

Australia's Consular Services Charter outlines the consular services and assistance that are provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Groups to receive consular assistance include all Australians, as well as Canadian citizens in locations specified in the Australia-Canada Consular Sharing Agreement. The booklet has a section on crisis response, where international crises and emergencies involving Australians overseas might require an exceptional response, such as:

- Those in which large numbers of Australians may have been killed or injured or where there are dangers to Australians, for example terrorist attacks, major accidents, pandemics and natural disasters;
- Episodes of political unrest, as a consequence of which migrants may be advised to leave the country or may require assisted departure or evacuation; and
- Events which cause major disruption and hardship to large numbers of Australians.

All US consulates and embassies, through their websites, provide basic preparedness information on potential hazards and recommended responses in the country where they are located. In Japan, this entails providing information on earthquakes and typhoons. The information includes:

- Basic phrasebooks;
- Main English-language sources of information (including live and pre-recorded information) on the crisis;
- Main preparedness and response measures to take.

For some hazards – in particular natural and technological hazards – some information is likely to be already available, including in the form of maps/atlas, publications and online databases and outreach products. Retrieving and further disseminating this information is particularly important for raising awareness on hazards for which no forecast is possible.

## Responses

Information needed to raise people's awareness on possible responses includes:

- Whether to visit or stay in a specific country or region;
- Emergency preparedness measures to take (e.g. travel and identity documents in order, stockpiling of essential items including medication familiarizing with local routes and sites, knowing where are the major assembly points, if any, sanitation and disease prevention).
- Appropriate behaviours to minimize risks in the immediacy of the event (e.g. stay away from crowd, plan departure route, help other vulnerable migrants);
- Potential sources for updated information and warnings, their location or contacts, through which it is possible to stay informed on local developments (e.g. radio, television or newspaper);
- Potential sources of support, assistance and other resources before or after the event (e.g. shelter, medical assistance, food distribution, and transportation), their location and contacts. This shall include dedicated support for specific groups (e.g. children, the elderly);
- Assistance and support migrants entitled to receive by the emergency management system of the host country, and what they should concretely expect from local institutions. This should specifically clarify what options are available to undocumented and unregistered migrants and whether they risk arrest or

deportation when coming out to seek for assistance by local institutions; and

- Assistance and support that can be provided by consular officials (e.g. documentation, communications, and referral to service providers, translators and interpreters).

## SOURCES OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

The information on potential, future crises is key to the whole response system of the country of destination and beyond. Monitoring and forecasting systems exist, and are used to produce and disseminate long- or short-term information on potential hazards and their impacts. Host countries, third countries, international and non-governmental actors are likely to have such information pre-packaged and distributed through publications, websites and multimedia materials. Most countries have institutions or agencies mandated to manage all types of emergencies including disaster management authorities, firefighters, civil protection, the military, and ad-hoc community-based groups. These actors will often produce and disseminate generic or hazard-specific awareness materials and messages.

Such products are a good starting point to develop products that are tailored to the needs of migrants, in a language they most likely will understand. Materials describing recommended actions in the immediacy of a crisis (e.g. leaving the area or the country by safe measures) and clarifying what migrants can and cannot expect from its host government and home government in the event of a crisis are extremely important.

In many countries, local institutions offer specific documents and materials, or set-up structures and plan events to raise emergency preparedness of non-nationals. Collaborating with these

Japan's territory is highly exposed to natural hazards, and the country has an advanced disaster risks management system in place. Part of the efficiency of this system rests on the population's high awareness of potential hazards and the country and communities' emergency preparedness and response capacities. In order to make sure that non-Japanese are also well prepared, governmental institutions at all administrative levels have developed multilingual awareness and emergency preparedness products (publications and multimedia) and organizes targeted emergency awareness events, workshops, and trainings.

In the United States, NGOs often play a key role in assisting migrants during emergencies. The Red Cross has a system that facilitates communications and reunites family members. Local organizations, including churches, can act as safe shelters for migrants, in particular undocumented ones. Not all countries however respect the right to sanctuary in a religious establishment.

A high number of Indians are employed in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has produced country-specific pre-departure orientation manuals for Indian migrant workers in GCC countries, namely, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The manuals contain general guidance and recommendations, as well as specific information and data about the each country of destination, that can help decrease workers' vulnerability in their host location, including by raising their awareness on required documentations, relevant institutions and their contacts, and the country's regulations and customs.

institutions can help produce relevant materials that specifically address the needs of migrant communities. It should be noted, however, that these products and events are not likely to be available for all potential crises, and that in countries in which migrants' presence might not be accepted by the locals –in particular in the case of countries affected by ethnic or religious tensions, local authorities may not wish to reach out to migrants at all. In these cases, it is often within the non-political agencies' mandate to fill the gap left by the non-involvement of official authorities. In any event, collaboration with non-governmental agencies can be crucial to this end.

In addition, relevant information (in particular on options for emergency preparedness and response), could be sourced locally, from actors and institutions likely to be engaged to some extent in the response – often complementing official efforts. These actors might include:

- Churches, mosques, temples and other religious communities;
- Community centers and local schools and universities;
- Community-based and civil society organizations, some of which may have ethnic affiliations;
- Hospitals/healthcare centers.

Creating and regularly updating directories and/or lists of these actors and agencies, enumerating the services they provide and making sure to have accurate contacts can help provide accurate and comprehensive preparedness information. Taking stock of such actors can also help set up referral systems for nationals needing emergency services. Some of these actors may also specialize in providing specific services that could be particularly relevant to migrants – and these should be advertised accordingly.

## HOW TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION

There are a variety of ways and channels available that could be mobilized to communicate with migrant communities, and using a variety of traditional and non-traditional, channels in order to build a comprehensive communications approach is likely to be the an effective solution to reach out to migrants.

Information can be packaged as:

- Text documents, whether printed (such as leaflets, newspaper) or digital (websites, text messaging and e-mails);
- Audio/video materials;
- Pictures and maps; and
- Dedicated trainings, drills and hands-on activities.

Information should be distributed and advertised in a variety of ways, making sure to leverage channels that are adequate to reach out to the target migrant groups. This might include, for instance, making sure that specific mechanisms for dissemination are provided to address the needs of the elderly, the children, the sick and the disabled, the migrants living or working in isolation, but also considering what their literacy level is, and setting up alternative communication protocols in case they cannot read.

Alternatives for disseminating information (including for holding trainings/workshops) include:

- Pre-departure briefing and workshops;
- One-stop shops, employment services, emigration offices in the country of origin;
- Places of arrival (e.g. port, bus station, border crossing);
- Consulate/embassy in the country of destination;
- In specific locations that are key to the community (e.g. community centres, religious establishments);
- Smartphone apps;

- Websites/ mailing list/ social media profiles/ bulk SMS or instant messaging; and
- Ethnic or local TVs/radios.

Social events and receptions organized for the migrant community, including post-arrival orientation events, can be a good option to enhance people's awareness of risks and preparedness measures. It would also be important to engage migrants in discussions regarding potential crisis, communication strategies, emergency preparedness and response issues. Specific events can also be organized to create or support migrant-led, ad-hoc committees all with a plan to inform the migrants.

### Orientation workshops

Many countries of origin hold orientation workshops and courses before migrants' departure or upon arrival in the host country. These courses contain suggestions and information that are relevant to migrants' overall well-being while abroad. The typical content of these courses is meant to empower migrants in their daily life –

but is also likely to be useful in crises. In addition, such courses can be designed to include specific information to raise migrants' awareness of the risks and emergency preparedness. The typical content of these workshops tends to include:

- Local language: Learning the local language, enough to understand and communicate with authorities, the employer or members of the community in the country of destination could prove to be an invaluable asset for migrants especially in the event of a crisis.
- Country-specific information (culture, customs, specific behaviours that might be legal in their country and illegal in their destination);
- “Know your rights” and understand potential right violations;
- Immigration procedures and other relevant laws and regulations, which should be updated in order to reflect the evolution of the local legislation;
- Emergency procedures and emergency contacts; and
- Assistance provided by consular and diplomatic posts.

The Philippines have developed a multi-stakeholder Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS). Filipino emigrants are required to register with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, and attend the PDOS or Peer Counselling Session. The PDOS is for emigrants between 20 and 59 years old, while the Peer Counseling Program is for emigrants between 13 and 19 years old. Presently, the programme is conducted by OWWA and Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and 260 accredited private sector and NGO providers. The present-day PDOS is divided into seven modules covered during a one-day seminar; topics discussed include:

- Migration realities – code of conduct for OFWs, possible challenges when working abroad, “Buhay OFW” (life as an OFW);
- Country profile – laws, culture and customs of the host country;
- Employment contract – rights and responsibilities of OFWs per contract, what to do in case of contract violations;
- Health and safety – HIV and AIDS education;
- Financial literacy – managing earnings;
- OWWA programmes and services and other government programmes, such as the Social Security System and PhilHealth; and
- Travel procedures and tips.

Country-specific PDOS are conducted for Filipino emigrants to address their adjustment concerns in their destination countries (topics discussed are travel regulations, immigration procedures, cultural differences, settlement concerns, employment, social security concerns and rights and obligations of Filipino migrants). While the PDOS programme provided by POEA and OWWA is free, non-government providers charge PHP 100 (approximately USD 2.30) for the service. Since 1983, the PDOS programme has expanded and been supplemented by two other information programmes: the Pre-Employment Seminar, which precedes PDOS; and the Post-Arrival Orientation Seminar, which is a follow-up to PDOS and is delivered in migrants' destination countries. Unlike PDOS, these two programmes are not mandatory and their implementation is less standardized.

The Government of Indonesia implements a Welcoming Programme for Indonesian migrant workers through its Consulate in Hong Kong and the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Taipei. This is part of the government's strategy to disseminate information on living and working abroad. In 2007, attendance to the Welcoming Programme for newly arrived workers was made mandatory with recruitment agencies being required to ensure the participation of migrant workers. In Hong Kong, the Consulate is regularly provided with a list of new arrivals and follows up with agencies when workers do not show up at the information sessions. The Welcoming Programme informs workers about their rights and obligations while living in Hong Kong and in the Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China and also covers topics such as: local culture, what employers should not expect of domestic workers how local institutions can assist them with problems such as employers who refuse to pay wages. In addition, the Indonesian Consulate in Hong Kong also provides cooking, makeup, hairdressing, and language classes to Indonesian citizens as well as an entrepreneurial course to equip migrant workers with new set of skills.

Since 2007, Nepal has implemented a pre-departure orientation package managed and overseen by the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB). The FEPB is chaired by the Minister for Labour and Employment. Its main function is to promote foreign employment and ensure social protection and welfare rights of migrant workers. Regarding the Pre-Departure Orientation, the FEPB is charged with: (a) registering institutions that provide foreign employment orientation training; (b) develop and approve the curriculum; and (c) monitor all orientation trainings. The actual implementation of this programme is entirely in the hands of accredited recruitment agencies. The Pre-Departure Orientation was made mandatory for departing migrant workers in 2004. The Foreign Employment Regulation 2064 (2008), which deals with provisions relating to training, specifies that the orientation should cover the following issues:

- Foreign employment law of Nepal and laws in country of destination;
- The geography, culture, lifestyle and the economic, social and political context of the destination country;
- Language of the destination country;
- Labour, immigration laws and traffic rules of the destination country;
- HIV/AIDS, communicable diseases and sexual and reproductive health;
- Occupational safety and health;
- Easy and safe travel;
- Conduct, treatment and security of workers; and
- Repatriation of earnings made abroad to Nepal in a simple, easy and safe manner.

There are 50 orientation centres that are licensed to conduct the two-day pre-departure orientation. Male migrants pay NR 700 (about USD 10) for the orientation, while female migrants are reimbursed by the Migration Resource Centre.

Indonesia provides pre-departure trainings for Indonesian labour migrants based on the Migrant Worker Placement and Protection Law of 2004, which states that all migrant workers must complete the Final Pre-Departure Briefing, or *Pembekalan Akhir Pemberangkatan*. The same law identifies the National Board for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (BNP2TKI) as the institution responsible for the delivery of pre-departure briefings. The BNP2TKI has approximately 200 instructors. In Jabodetabek (Greater Jakarta), the briefings are usually offered daily in two venues. There are provisions for the delegation of training responsibilities to the provincial level (Ministerial Regulation No. 17/2009) and similar briefings are also offered in 16 provinces in the major sending areas, under the coordination of the Agency for the Service, Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers, a provincial branch established by BNP2TKI.

The curriculum covers:

- Terms of deployment and work contracts (including rights and obligations of labour migrants and their employers);
- Laws (including criminal laws), regulations and customs of destination countries;
- Arrival and departure procedures;
- The role of Indonesian diplomatic missions, and how to access consular assistance;
- Insurance claims;
- Safe banking and remittance channels;
- Health tips;
- Raising awareness of issues such as human and drug trafficking;
- Self-confidence coaching dealing with culture shock, stress, loneliness and professional issues; and
- Procedures to return home.

Labour migrants should receive such pre-departure briefings free of charge and no later than two days before their deployment overseas.

In designing and implementing such orientation programmes, stakeholders should evaluate:

- Whether orientation is mandatory;
- When and where the orientation programmes will be implemented (prior to departure or upon arrival);
- Which other stakeholders should be involved in the roll-out and delivery of the orientation programmes; and
- Whether or not to include family member staying in the State of origin to increase their awareness, and whether they need to participate in person or will be receiving information remotely (e.g. printed documents, e-mails, websites).



# CONTINGENCY PLANNING

## INTRODUCTION

Formulating, regularly updating and periodically testing contingency plans are key elements of Crisis Preparedness and Management.

A Plan is a collection of provisions, arrangement and information that can help an embassy, consulate or other institution tasked with assisting nationals abroad to take decisions and allocate resources timely and effectively in an emergency, in order to minimize loss of life, health impacts and economic losses that nationals may suffer as a consequence of the emergency and to ensure the continuity of the institution's key operations. The Plan is designed to provide information and guidance to embassies or consulates to assist them in their response regarding the safety of citizens before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

Contingency plans should include detailed provisions to guide effective responses to all the crisis scenarios that are likely to affect a certain area. They should emphasize "self-help" measures, all while accounting for situations in which assistance will be needed by people who are not able to respond autonomously. Contingency plans should, among other things, make provisions for situations in which evacuations will be needed; they should provide guidance for nationals to depart by commercial means while they are still available, as well as describe measures to assist those who are not able or not willing to evacuate autonomously.

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a structure with which the embassy or consulate and the Consular Department of the MFA will act should any of the crisis situations occur. The Plan aims to address the following:

1. The means of organising the embassy or consulate's work and safeguarding the staff, premises and information and data (both electronic and hard copy) contained in it; and
2. The methods in which the embassy or consulate would provide nationals with advice

and assistance, including, if necessary, their evacuation.

The plan is usually designed around a few main objectives, including:

- Foreign posts and other relevant home country institutions can continue providing services to their nationals abroad;
- Nationals living or working in the area at risk or affected by the crisis are safe - which also includes consular officials and other personnel working at a consular post or diplomatic representation in the crisis area; and
- Facilities owned and/or managed by the home country institutions are protected.

Such objectives need to be confronted with the challenges of the actual crisis situation and with the limited resources that home country institutions are able to deploy in order to assist their nationals. Contingency planning helps make the best use of these scarce resources in times of crisis.

## PERSONS COVERED BY A CONTINGENCY PLAN

Crisis Preparedness and Management plans should be designed to include all the persons of concern (i.e. citizens in a given area and their dependants). However, following the indications of the plan and accepting (or not) the advice and assistance offered by the relevant embassy or consulate in the event of a crisis is an exclusive responsibility (and a purely voluntary decision) of each national.

While citizens have to be their first responsibility, embassies or consulates can also assist non-citizens, provided it is possible to do so without detriment to their nationals. Such individuals can include:

- Locally hired employees and dependants of the mission;

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

**Over-respond and pare back:** The first few hours of a crisis, and how it is managed, sets the tone for the whole crisis response. When a crisis hits, it is best practice to over-allocate resources initially until the full scale of the incident is clear. This might however not always be possible (in particular if resources are scarce).

**Whole-of-Mission approach:** A crisis is not just consular. The whole Mission should be involved, with staff covering roles that might not be related to their day-to-day job descriptions. The Mission should also look to include family members and other volunteers in the allocation of crisis roles and responsibilities.

**90 per cent preparation:** A good crisis response is the result of excellent preparation. As a rule, the better the preparation, the better the response. This will include ensuring that crisis management plans are up-to-date and tested regularly, and that suitable emergency equipment are available and regularly tested. It is also important that the staff of the embassy or consulate are aware of what actions they should take in the event of an incident. This information can also be provided to citizens to help them to prepare.

**Information management:** Getting on top of information management at the start of a crisis is key.

**Crisis roles and responsibilities:** Every member of the embassy or consulate, as well as any partner, should know what will be expected of them in a crisis, and should be allocated a role to play in the response within a clear coordination and command structure. This arrangement should absolutely identify a crisis manager (and alternate) and a management structure. It is likely that staff will have to be allocated more than one role as many of the embassies or consulates are small, and staff may have to cover the absence of colleagues.

- Other individuals who, through their work or family relations, have established a close association with the home country; and
- Citizens of countries which have a close association with the home country or specific agreements for joint consular assistance in crises.

The Head of Mission has discretion to decide who may be assisted in times of crises. However, all efforts should include the principle of non-discrimination of citizens, whatever their personal situation and characteristics, and legal status in the host country. However, as the government has direct responsibility to ensure that its employees are protected, many contingency plans and evacuation operations prioritize consular staff, and in particular non-essential staff.

## APPROACHES TO PLANNING

In order to achieve the above objectives, a multifaceted approach to planning is required.

Firstly, consular posts need to make provisions in order to ensure the safety of their own staff members, allowing them to work in safety despite the crisis situation. This may include stockpiling food, water, and other key items and asking staff to bring a change of clothes, medications. It also includes stockpiling supplies that are essential to

their work, such as blank passports, ready cash, all the necessary forms, seals, satellite phones and back-up generators. Should staying at the current embassy location not be possible, a remote control centre can be created either at the residence of one of the embassy officials, in a third location within the country or in a neighbouring country depending on security concerns and should the situation warrant it, be evacuated, especially those deemed non-essential (usually families). Locally engaged staff should not commute to their work when their safety could be in jeopardy.

Secondly, consular posts and other relevant institutions/agencies (including crisis management structures located in home and host countries) need to be ready to provide services to their nationals within their territory; this is usually done by informing, assisting, and evacuating nationals at risk or affected by a crisis when warranted and/or possible. Preparing a comprehensive and inclusive consular and/or system-wide contingency plan should help improve the capacity to provide these kinds of direct assistance, thereby reducing the risks to nationals (including embassy staff).

Thirdly, all other relevant actors – such as employers of large numbers of migrants, tour operators, hotels and migrant groups, including ethnic or faith-based organizations – should be supported in their planning for future crisis occurrences. This should include a mechanism for coordination with the diplomatic representation and the host country planning efforts. A clear understanding

of the mandate of the diplomatic delegation and their capacity to assist will ensure a more realistic emergency preparedness plan.

Developing a contingency plan is based on the identification of existing and potential hazards and their possible impacts, as well as all available resources, capacities and response options. It requires making some decisions in advance of a crisis, especially when it comes to coordination and communications procedures, roles, capacities and responsibilities of the different actors involved in crisis response.

Prepared institutions are likely to act more effectively in a crisis, which is important in reducing its short- and long-term impacts on affected populations. While crisis situations can disrupt or overwhelm the consular posts' capacity to serve and assist their nationals, good contingency plans would include mechanisms for mobilizing local and distant capacities (including of other posts in the country and in neighbouring countries, support units in the region and at capital level) and resources in order to mitigate overall impacts.

Contingency plans are meant to be flexible and adaptable instruments. While they can, and should, be detailed in their analysis of potential hazards and their impacts, they should provide instructions and resources that can be adapted to confront situations of uncertainty and hardship.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Hazard profiles and scenarios and hazard rating

Contingency plans need to be developed for all the hazards that might affect a certain area – whether man-made or natural – those more frequent, such as seasonal rains, fires and storms (and, in some locations, terrorist attacks or piracy) and those less frequent but potentially highly damaging, including earthquakes, tsunamis or conflicts.

A description of potential hazards/emergencies, including a historical background, will prove helpful when planning a cohesive approach regardless of its inclusion in a formal, pre-crisis contingency plan.

While many measures are common to any emergency situation, planning might need to include adapted measures to respond to the specific challenges posed by any given hazard, ranging from the sources of information, to the mechanisms for the dissemination of information and warnings, to the response options available and/or needed.

Describing and monitoring the environmental, political and security situation of a country or an area/region provides the baseline information necessary for adequate contingency planning. It should be noted that events and processes taking place in neighbouring countries might be just as relevant (e.g. transboundary impacts of floods or fires, volcanic ash clouds, or fighting extending from a neighbouring country). Scenarios can be built in order to understand a hazard's potential:

### Evolution

- Onset: Are there markers that a crisis will develop over a specific period of time? Will the crisis be triggered by a specific event - such as elections?
- Trigger site/area: In what region/site is the event likely to be triggered, has there been any indication that could point to that – e.g. an escalation of hostility
- Impacted sites or area: What areas are likely to be affected, and how, and how long after the crisis is triggered? How long before services can assist once the crisis is confirmed?

### Impacts

- How many people are likely affected, and how: what kind of impacts would the crisis have on people's lives, health, ability to move;
- What impacts would the crisis have on the people's livelihoods and assets;
- What would the affected population need as a consequence of the crisis;

Like all Australian missions overseas, the Australian Embassy in Seoul maintains regularly updated consular contingency plans that are based on an "all hazards" approach. For the Republic of Korea, the most likely crises that are likely to affect the Australian community include typhoons and associated flooding, transport accidents and, much less likely, a nuclear power plant accident. The impact of such events would likely be relatively localized. The possibility of other larger-scale emergencies, such as a pandemic outbreak or military conflict between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are also covered in their emergency planning because of the potential consequences they might have on the population.

- What impacts would the crisis have on local environment, infrastructures, capacities of the local community and authorities; and
- What impacts would the crisis have on the home and host country institutions' assets, resources and capacities to respond (both local and distant).

### **Challenges for crisis management**

- Can the hazard be forecasted and/or tracked (as in hurricanes); if so, how much time before the event? What are the measures that can realistically be taken before it hits?
- What access issues might be triggered by the events? Are there areas that could be out of reach of assistance or communication systems?
- Will the event have some secondary impacts (e.g. triggering secondary hazards: an earthquake resulting in a landslide or tsunami), and if, so, what could be the impacts and consequences of all of those?
- Are there other specific forms of support that may be required to other external actors, as local capacities for assistance (by locally deployed staff or local governmental and non-governmental partners) may be insufficient or overwhelmed?

### **Vulnerability assessment**

Contingency plans need to consider numbers and location of the groups at-risk that might need assistance. Accessing individual-level, updated and accurate information on at risk and affected nationals is rarely possible. Therefore, it is critical to understand broad trends in the nationals' mobility within a country at different times of the year/week/day, as well as the composition of their local population and their characteristics. This can be done using some of the profiling measures detailed in the Module on tracking and profiling. Information that is especially important for contingency planning includes:

- Where are people concentrated (where they live, work and stay), and in what conditions?
- Are they registered? Have they applied for passports in the past year? Are they known to the diplomatic mission and/or agency? Are they all documented and can they return to the same home country should an evacuation be planned? Will they be permitted to leave – any exit restrictions?

- What are the key communication channels to reach them, and how would they function in an emergency/crisis situation?
- How aware are migrants of the possible risks they face in the area and what approach/responses are they expected/planning to take?
- How will migrants likely behave in response to warnings and advisories, including evacuation orders? Will they have the capacity to understand instructions (language proficiency, literacy, technical understanding, knowledge of the surroundings), a willingness to comply with instructions or will they need specific adaptation, explanation or verification of the information? Who will they verify the information with? Is the source prepared and reliable?
- Will migrants have the funds and access to transportation options, and what obstacles could they encounter when seeking assistance and safety and when evacuating to another region of the country affected (or to their home country/a third country)?
- Do they live with family members, and are they accompanied by people with specific needs related to their age, their physical and mental ability, their health and/or legal status?

Based on the analysis of local hazards, the existing vulnerabilities and potential risks, a scale of the various hazards can be produced, thus defining priorities for planning and preparedness as well as the thresholds that may trigger the different response levels. This information is best compiled well in advance of a crisis; in order to help inform all preparedness measures.

Specific attention should be given to:

#### **Medical cases** – identifying:

- Their needs and what resources are locally available to meet them;
- Whether they suffer from a chronic condition;
- Who pays for their treatment and/or the evacuation;
- Whether they are fit to fly (medical consent); and
- Whether the hospital will release them for non-payment.

#### **Disabled persons** – identifying:

- Their needs and what resources are locally available to meet them;

- Who pays for their treatment and/or the evacuation;
- Whether they are they fit to fly (medical consent); and
- What assistance they will need upon arrival.

#### **Children** – identifying:

- Their age and numbers;
- Existing custody or guardianship issues;
- Responsible contacts in case parents not found (including local social services);
- Whether they have travel documents;
- Whether the host country will let them depart, in particular in the case of dual citizens;
- Whether they should be evacuated;
- Whether they will be met at destination; and
- Who has given consent to their evacuation.

#### **Elderly** – identifying:

- Age;
- Medical issues and mobility concerns;
- Language and literacy issues;
- Whether they are documented; and
- Whether they need to be escorted.

#### **Mental health cases** – identifying:

- Whether they are on medication and have enough with them;
- Whether they are deemed fit to fly;
- Whether they will need an escort; and
- Whether they pose any safety issues (e.g. aggressive behavior).

#### **Families** – identifying:

- Whether they are all accounted for and properly documented to enter a third country;
- Whether they can all travel together; and
- Whether they financially support themselves in a third country.

## CAPACITY ASSESSMENT AND ASSET MAPPING

Assessments should also identify resources and capacities available locally and remotely, including for:

- Shelter, such as open spaces and safe locations – churches and mosques, community

- organizations and centres and NGOs, schools, government offices, sport facilities, depots of tents, lean-to or temporary structures;
- Health care and psychosocial support: doctors, nurses, clinics, hospitals, supplies and equipment, qualified professionals, mental health care facilities;
- Emergency response and search-and-rescue teams (e.g. location, qualifications and equipment);
- Transportations: vehicles (bus, minivans, cars, helicopters, planes, boats, armored vehicles, all-terrain vehicles) and qualified drivers and pilots, gasoline stations, garages for repair, landing strips and other relevant infrastructure;
- Communications, including equipment and personnel trained for its use, alternative to the Internet or landlines such as satellite phones and volunteers trained to respond to additional request for information;
- Distribution of essential items (e.g. food, clean water, tents, first aid kit, search-and-rescue tools, generators, community kitchens – including rosters of volunteers);
- Issuing documentation for migrants wishing to travel, as well as equipment and trained/authorized personnel needed to issue documents;
- Lists of legal service providers (most often lawyers or paralegals); and
- Translation and interpretation services either for translation of document or to communicate with nationals.

The mobilization and use of resources available for crisis planning and response purposes should be coordinated with other actors working within the crisis area (e.g. the host country's emergency preparedness and response, local CSOs, private sector and the nationals' groups and organizations), as well as with other consular posts and institutions in the country or in the region, Emergency Response Teams and other assistance structures at capital level, or third countries with which cooperation agreements might exist.

In their planning process, the embassy or consulate is encouraged to consult with diplomatic missions of friendly countries, especially those with well established working relations in the country. These bodies may be in the position to provide direct assistance, including service provision and evacuation support, to nationals before, during and after crises.



In addition, embassies or consulates are encouraged to seek the cooperation of companies and recruiters working with large numbers of nationals, as well as with international organizations and large NGOs based in the country of accreditation, and that are likely to be engaged for the humanitarian intervention.

In order to make use of all available resources, the information relevant to the delivery of response services should be compiled and shared with all these actors. Compiling directories of contacts, service providers and personnel (including volunteers) that can assist in the event of a crisis is critical.

These mapping exercises must also include financial resources and recourses including emergency funding available at capital).

## MAIN PHASES OF A CRISIS PLAN

Based on the assessment of local hazards, their potential impacts and the whereabouts and characteristics of the persons of concern, the plan should identify different crisis phases (or levels of alert) and define actions that should be taken in response to each by the persons of concern themselves, as well as by the relevant authorities. The plan should set down clearly the “trigger points” (that is the criteria) for moving between phases (escalation and de-escalation) in the different crisis scenarios that are possible in a certain area, as well as a person in charge for determining the activation of the different phases.

The following four phases are usually identified:

### Phase I – “Heads down”

There are internal disturbances (e.g. demonstrations or limited riots), but local authorities (e.g. law enforcement actors) appear to be in a position to manage risks.

During this phase, the Mission should follow developments closely, keep the MFA informed and prepare to implement the measures relevant to other phases of the crisis plan. Staff and nationals should be advised to keep a low profile, pay specific attention to precursory signs of hazards, and limit movement outside of their homes.

Consuls should be in contact with citizens as often as necessary, bearing in mind that communications can be less effective if too much information is provided, or if information is provided too frequently or in an otherwise untimely manner.

### Phase II – “Leave unless you must remain” or “Leave if safe to do so”

The situation has deteriorated and appears to be moving out of the control of the authorities.

Once this phase is reached, consuls should advise citizens (including dependants and non-essential staff of the Mission) to leave while commercial transportation is still available, advice on how to best do so, and prepare for a possible evacuation of all citizens left in the country.

The Head of the Mission should report to the MFA on all developments. In addition, consuls should confirm that evacuation routes, safe sites, exit and disembarkation points, and border crossings (as identified by the crisis evacuation plan) can be used. They should also confirm arrangements to provide assistance to citizens at those points, including by getting in touch with other relevant Missions.

### Phase III – “Get out without delay”

There has been a very serious deterioration in the situation and relevant local authorities appear to be unable to offer protection to foreigners.

During this phase the evacuation of citizens is necessary. Ideally, numbers should be greatly reduced as many will have left during Phase II. In addition, Missions should have already confirmed that evacuation routes, safe sites, exit and disembarkation points, and border crossings can be used and should have received details on the assistance to citizens on arrival at those points from other missions in the region. Direct evacuation assistance, including through search-and-rescue missions, if needed and possible, should also be provided at this stage. However, not all countries will be able to provide it, and many will rely on evacuees presenting themselves at an assembly point.

The decision to evacuate will be made, and details on the evacuation procedures to follow will be disseminated accordingly. Information on expected number of evacuees, their Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA), identity, intentions and final destination

Finland, Norway and Sweden have joint emergency preparedness plans that are activated when a crisis hits their nationals living, staying or working abroad. The plan outlines the responsibilities of the various embassies and consular posts under various crisis scenarios, and in particular what they have to do and are required to provide to nationals of any of the three countries in terms of receiving requests of assistance, providing information, and facilitating evacuation. They include full lists of local actors that can provide basic services in case of emergency. While the plans are in English, they contain information and forms that can be compiled in each language, for ease of use.

The United States has developed a booklet to assist representatives of US corporations abroad to prepare for emergencies. In addition, they highlight specific preparedness measures, on the part of employers in order to reach out, organize and facilitate the evacuation of their employees. In addition to flexibility, coordination with the contingency plans in place and available through the government of the host country is an important component of such plans, as is making sure that the emergency plans adopted are not in violation of local laws.

should be shared with relevant personnel in other Missions and in the MFA who will be receiving evacuees.

#### **Phase IV – Closure of the Mission and withdrawal of staff**

The situation has deteriorated so seriously or rapidly that it poses a direct, real threat to the Mission and its staff. Relevant authorities in the host country are unable to provide protection to the mission's facilities and its staff.

At this stage, the government of the home country will direct their mission represented in the country in crisis to close their mission and withdraw all remaining diplomatic staff. This phase may place concurrently with phase III, while evacuation of nationals is taking place.

The decision to activate this stage of the 'crisis plan' is not a consular/ambassadorial responsibility. While it might be recommended by the mission's staff, it will ultimately be the decision of the National Government at capital – likely a different department depending on the Country.

Often, When a mission closes because of a crisis, either the Mission's staff or staff at capital will liaise with posts from like-minded country to find out who is remaining in the country or in an area and may be willing or able to provide on-going emergency assistance for their citizens who may decide to stay in the country.

## **DEFINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Contingency plans should identify the institutions, and the names, qualifications and contacts information of staff members who are responsible for the different major tasks required as part of emergency response and assistance, as well as alternates and backup procedures. They should define the measures that the individual responsible should take to fulfil his/her mandate in an emergency. It should also include all the actions required by other parties in response to decisions and communication. Plans should be adaptable and flexible, as situations could change very quickly.

The most relevant domains may include:

- Who has the overall decision-making and coordination responsibility, including to declare a crisis and activate the different phases of a plan, and on what elements is the decision taken. This role is likely to be attributed to the head of Mission or Post (ambassador or consul) who can name a second as required. Their responsibilities usually include: dissemination of warnings and advisories; gathering of information; liaising with local authorities and other like-minded missions; and leading the evacuation operations, including of nationals of other countries, once indications have been provided by their respective governments. Are there institutions at capital with which these decisions should be coordinated?
- Who coordinates efforts with relevant institutions at the local level (specific areas in the country, regional coordination mechanisms), as well as with other consular posts that might be contributing staff or resources?
- Who monitors hazards and risks and issues timely updates and warnings?

The Tsunami of December 2004 overwhelmed the capacities to respond of all the countries directly affected, as well as most of the countries of origin of the tourists visiting the area. Even wealthy countries struggled to reach out to and assist their nationals hit by the disaster. Malta was no exception: following the Tsunami, the Maltese consular department was called in to help deal with a crisis the magnitude of which was well beyond the norm and their capacity.

Due to the magnitude of the disaster, and the large number of Maltese nationals caught in the disaster area, consular staff posted in the area before the disaster were supplemented by a team of technical experts deployed from the home country HQ/ Capital: their role was to help analyze the situation and identify outstanding needs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs decided to deploy an additional officer to the disaster area to help Maltese nationals in distress and to assist their Honorary Consul provide consular assistance.

The main objectives of the officer were to:

- Ensure that survivors received swift and adequate care/medical attention;
- On the basis of reliable data, identify fatalities as quickly as possible and assist in the repatriation of remains;
- Provide support to the families of victims who travelled to the disaster area;
- Make arrangements for the timely repatriation of survivors and deceased.

The technical team in Malta provided expert advice to the officer on the ground on how to deal with particular situations as they occurred.

- Who communicates with relevant authorities and actors, both in the host country (e.g. communication between local consular staff and host-country emergency management actors) and in the country of origin (e.g. communication with the MFA and other posts, as well as between crisis cells and the Government or the media)?
- Who identifies, hires and briefs additional personnel that can support consular capacity, including external experts, additional staff, and volunteers?
- Who communicates with focal points within the migrant community and receives the feedback of affected nationals (including through social media, websites and hotlines)?
- Who sets up hotlines for public communication (both in the host and home country) and makes sure they are manned by personnel that has been adequately instructed?
- Who gathers information including, when possible and safe, through field visits, in order to understand whether (and how many) nationals are affected, what their conditions are, what interventions may be needed and initiate consular assistance?
- Who registers migrants and their needs or request of assistance (e.g. medical attention, evacuation, repatriation of remains), migrants' intentions (including requests for repatriation and reintegration assistance), and refers them to relevant service providers whenever needed?
- Who coordinates the direct provision of assistance to migrants, including through distribution of items and services, with the help of local volunteers or humanitarian aid groups?
- Who coordinates and facilitates evacuations?

## STOCKPILES AND EMERGENCY KITS

Preparing inventories and stocks of the equipment needed to respond to emergencies is key to providing services to affected nationals, including by ensuring that local embassies, consulates and other key offices can remain operational. Should key resources and equipment not be available locally (as identified in the asset mapping exercise), specific procurement should take place prior to the crisis. However, these activities have to be carried out based on realistic prioritization of efforts and assessment of available resources.

Key equipment would include the following:

- Communication equipment (plan for as many backup channels as possible):
  - Up-to-date contact list;
  - Satellite telephone with instructions;
  - Extra batteries and chargers for cellular phones;
  - Laptop with spare batteries;
  - Crank-powered radio;
- Drinking water and food (preferably non-perishable);
- Materials for issuing documentation:
  - Blank passports and materials to issue passports or emergency documentation such as application forms, scanner, photocopier;
  - Digital camera;
  - Stamps and stamp pads;
  - Some ways to accept payments (usually passport issuance is a paid service though exceptions can be made in an emergency);
- Vehicles and means of transportation (depending on the context, this might include

cars, vans, bikes, trucks, bus, bicycles, boats, helicopters and so on);

- Maps (both paper and Global Positioning System - GPS);
- Contacts of qualified drivers and pilots;
- Materials for registration:
  - Digital and paper forms for registration of individuals;
  - Digital and paper forms for registration of requests of assistance;
  - Digital and paper forms for surveying affected people's needs;
  - Digital and paper forms for surveying affected people's movement intentions;
- Printed lists of service providers nationals can be referred to, by type of service and with contact details;
- Basic relief items (flashlights with batteries, search and rescue equipment, blankets, first aid supplies, flares, tents, clothes) and all that may be necessary for the staff;
- Other materials (flags, note pads, blank signs and nameplates, felt-tip pens); and
- Cash reserves.

These materials are best stockpiled in dedicated safe spaces and regularly controlled, and renewed/updated as needed for easy access in case of need.

The need for requisitioning specific resources owned by other actors or individuals might also arise in emergencies (e.g. means of transportation);

contingency plans should indicate alternatives and in ways it could be pursued. Individuals involved in the management of the crisis should be adequately informed of the different possibilities.

## MOVEMENT PLAN AND EVACUATIONS

Evacuations, both out of an affected area and/or out of the affected country, are means to reduce the impacts of hazards. Planning and managing evacuations are key elements of comprehensive contingency planning. This is a key element for all levels of planning, whether it involves employees of a consular post, of a factory, or nationals residing in a given area, or the entire country's foreign population.

Based on people's location, the risks they face, their capacity and/or willingness to move, evacuation planning requires identifying:

- Safe locations to which people can move in order to escape the immediate impacts of hazards; these may include:
  - Families or friends in another part of the country, sport stadium, school gymnasium, churches, mosques, shopping centres;

When fighting started in the Syrian Arab Republic, in 2011, many Western governments closed their embassies and advised their citizens to leave the country. However, many foreigners remained in the country, while many others kept arriving in the country, for personal or business reasons.

Some airlines suspended flights to Damascus, while others, such as EgyptAir, Emirates Airlines and Royal Jordanian Airlines, have decided to continue flights conditional upon the ever-changing security situation. The rebels targeted the Aleppo airport directly, as it was being used to fly air support missions to the Government and bring supplies into the city. As a result, passenger flights to the airport have been suspended.

For foreigners who could not leave by air, the most secure land route from Damascus was Road 1, which led directly to Beirut. An alternative route took citizens south to Jordan via the M5 highway, however crossing dangerous areas where recurrent clashes had taken place in the past.

Foreigners and nationals in the eastern half of the country would likely head to the Kurdish areas in the northeast through Road 7 and the M4 motorway, exiting through Turkey. However, frequent fighting near the Iraqi borders, and the substandard road infrastructure would make the trip too hazardous.

In the northern rebel-held areas, the preferred evacuation method was to simply take the most secure road straight to the Turkish border. For foreigners on the coast, the best option seemed to be to leave by boat. As an alternative, they could take the M1 motorway north to Turkey's Hatay province or south to northern Lebanon. Both of these borders were used heavily for smuggling supplies to the rebels, so clashes are frequent.

One of the worst places to be stuck within the country was in the centrally located Orontes Valley. Roads leading south-west to Lebanon and north to Turkey were largely blocked. Ideally, one should have proceeded west to the coast along Road 50, trying to avoid checkpoints and ambushes. A good knowledge of the area was helpful to this end.

The situation has been evolving slowly as the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the rebels have been caught in a war of attrition and no signs of an imminent collapse on either side. The situation could however change at any time, which would likely lead to a further increase in movements.

As a standard operating procedure, all Philippine Foreign Service posts abroad are mandated to formulate and regularly update crisis contingency plans for the Filipinos working and residing in their respective areas of consular jurisdiction. The Contingency Plan shall contain, among others, the following items:

- Country profile;
- Political and security situation;
- Current political climate, including threats to political stability;
- Data and profile of the Filipino community;
- Area coordinators, including their contact information;
- Details on the implementation of the contingency plan;
- Evacuation centers;
- Exit points and alternate evacuation routes;
- Composition and functions of the crises management and security committee, including contact information of posts' officials and personnel;
- Support network;
- Registration system;
- Resource inventory; and
- Budget requirements.

The contingency plan shall include the procedures for the temporary evacuation of Filipinos to safety zones, including to protect them until their repatriation to the Philippines is possible, in times of civil unrest, war, natural disasters and pandemics. It shall also include roles and responsibilities of Foreign Service personnel, and attachés/representatives of the different partner agencies. Posts shall undertake representations with the employer and/or concerned authorities of the host government to facilitate the repatriation of overseas Filipinos, including the issuance of exit visas/pass and waiver or reduction of immigration penalties and other fees. In addition, a coordination office is also established to facilitate the implementation of the contingency plans, especially if the evacuation and eventual repatriation of Filipinos caught in crisis situations would involve several Philippine diplomatic and consular posts.

- Other sites managed, owned and identified by host government response agencies, private individuals and companies, other governments and NGOs/civil society to be used as evacuation facilities;
- Facilities managed by authorities of like-minded countries;
- When nothing else is possible, consular posts and adjacent yards/courts may be an option; however, this might not always be possible, depending on the nature/location of the office and on the number of affected nationals;
- Sites to which people might move or be moved to in order for them to access assistance, which should be equipped to support the presence of a significant number of guests;
- Exit points to leave the country (ports, airports, stations, border crossings);
- Evacuation routes leading to safe sites, evacuation sites and exit points, identifying the shortest/cheapest ones and including multiple alternatives, should routes be damaged, closed or be severely congested – facts that should be duly flagged through the scenario development; and
- Means of transportation to the safe locations and evacuation sites, exit points and of departure out of the country.

As part of this kind of planning, transportation agreements could be developed with the different actors involved, keeping in mind that flexibility will be needed because:

- People might or might not have access to own transportation means;
- In emergency situations, authorities in the affected country might commandeer public and private transportation and prevent independent movement of civilians; and
- Airline and international transportation companies might cease service or be completely overbooked, in which case official or international repatriation using private and/or alternative means of transportation might be needed.

Specific procedures for helping stranded migrants access transportation options, evacuation centres and/or exit points may be necessary. Migrants might be “stranded” because of the following of the following:

- They might be living or working in segregated locations, or in sites that have become isolated as a consequence of the crisis;
- They might have little knowledge of evacuation procedures;
- They might not trust, or fear contact with, local authorities;



- There might be administrative barriers preventing their movement;
- Their documents may not be in order or their salaries withheld, limiting their ability and willingness to leave; and
- They may not be willing to leave their home.

Contingency plans should identify in what situations and under what conditions evacuations can take place safely, what is required from the evacuee himself/herself and what groups will benefit from evacuation assistance. Moving is not necessarily the safest options under all scenarios and for all potentially affected individuals; alternative solutions may be safer, at least in the short term, such as taking shelter locally, in a hotel or at home or with friends, for instance.

Whenever the closure and/or evacuation of consular posts and embassies is ordered, it is advisable to inform nationals in the country of the change of venue, indicating options and alternatives that may be possible. Unless the urgency is imminent, non-essential personnel will be sent home first; this requires identifying personnel that is core to the functioning of the post and establishing clear order of priority for evacuation assistance. When the area near the embassy or consulate is directly in the danger zone, a satellite location to provide services can be identified; this can be the residence of an embassy official or a hotel away from the affected area, or a location in a safe compound. In extremely dangerous situations, coordination can take place from a different area or country.

Evacuation plans should be regularly revised and updated as a number of variables (such as route status, construction work and traffic regulations) might change the possibility of implementing their provisions.

## PREPARING INDIVIDUALS

No matter how efficient and comprehensive the contingency plan is, empowering individuals and groups to respond autonomously is essential for mitigating the impacts of a crisis on their lives. Raising awareness among nationals of their obligations and responsibility as individuals, members of a family, employees at a workplace and members of a community is very important.

Firstly, this requires raising awareness on existing contingency plans, including the limits and mandate of each agency.

All the consular staff, workers in the foreign post and their families, as well as identified volunteers and stakeholders, should be aware of the content of the contingency plan, as well as his or her corresponding tasks. Information and directives on this could be included in briefings and training courses. This learning process should be supported by regular drills. Drills can be carried out in the form of tabletop exercises or in situ, taking into account local conditions, such as congestion (e.g. rush hour) and bad roads. Such efforts should specifically target personnel that has just been hired or appointed to a new location; transient workers rotating among different posts need to be reminded of emergency procedures, in particular as the details pertinent in one country may not be relevant elsewhere.

Individual migrants, their groups and/or representatives, employers and recruiters should also be made aware of the existence of the plan, as well as of the existence of other relevant preparedness arrangements carried out by other agencies or to be implemented at workplace or community level. To the extent these details can be disseminated with external parties, these actors should be particularly made aware of what these arrangements entail in terms of responses and available options for information dissemination, assistance, and possibly an evacuation in emergency. Drills and reminders are key to ensuring that migrant and other relevant actors are prepared and capable to respond effectively in a crisis.

As part of awareness-raising exercises, it can be useful to produce shorter executive summaries that include only the essential information and necessary responses for the different stakeholders. However, (parts of) contingency plans could be considered sensitive materials and might not be available for full dissemination. This also requires supporting the individual's capacity to respond.

Key measures include:

- Gathering information before departure on the destination, as well as specific knowledge on potential hazards in a given area/period. Travel advisories websites of the different countries provide a good source of information for all travellers, regardless of citizenship.

- Registering and providing accurate contact details in an existing official tracking and warning systems of the home country, such as those provided by the Consular division of most countries. Ideally, this should be done online, in order to allow for effective information sharing with capital and other missions; however, should it not be an option, registering in person with the local consular services is an option;
- Understanding what kind of services will actually be provided by the host country institutional representatives, their employers and tour operators, as well as by their home country institutions in normal times and in case of emergencies, and what these actors cannot provide;
- Understanding the warnings, what they entail and how to react/where to go in the case one is issued;
- Identifying how to get in touch with main service providers in the country, such as firefighters, police, rescue services when the services exist and knowing what the alternative is should these services are not available – non-existent or destroyed during the crisis;
- Having individual, family, workplace- and school-level preparedness plans is particularly important – and can be supported through local-level awareness-raising efforts, even as the crisis unfolds. These plans should include:
  - Deciding where/how the family would travel and where they would reunite if separated;
  - Ensuring that each member has travel and identity documents, contact information for other family members, friends, local services, and pocket money to ensure their safety until they can be reunited again;
  - Some alternative communication channels should main communications channels be disrupted;
  - Identifying a safe haven within a building or an area (keeping in mind the type of potential crisis);
  - Exit routes should an evacuation be advised, and means of transportation; and
  - Stockpiling supplies – what is needed for a few days or longer, depending on the type of crisis.
- Water for a few days (4l/day/person) and if too heavy, water purification tablets;
- Essential clothing, including a good pair of walking shoes;
- Valid passports, visas and other important documents (bankbooks, insurance policies, family certificates, immunization records, medical information), and copies stored separately from the originals in case of loss;
- Cash (possibly in an internationally-accepted currency, both small notes and coins for public phones) and credit/bank cards. Please note that credit/bank cards can be an issue when electricity and Internet connectivity is down. The amount of cash needed is subjective, but a lot of cash on hand could lead to being targeted. Distribution of currency among the family members would limit the amount lost in case of a robbery;
- Non-perishable foods, pre-cooked (considering special needs and infants);
- First aid kits and specific medical supplies, personal hygiene items (including items such as mosquito repellent);
- Batteries and lighter, torchlight;
- Blankets;
- Portable, crank-powered radio;
- Duct tape can help secure broken suitcases, make splints in an emergency and support sprained ankles; and
- Something to read.

## MONITORING

Equally important is a thorough post-crisis analysis and/or debriefing of how well the plans worked and how effective each component was. Similar review exercises should also be carried out for the drills, in order to identify and address potential shortcomings of the plan, especially since it has been tested in real-life situations. For more details, refer to the last chapter.

As part of such preparedness efforts, it is key to also prepare emergency kits (aka fly-away/go bag), which should include:

# COMMUNICATING WITH MIGRANTS

## INTRODUCTION

Information and good communication strategies are key to guide an effective emergency response by individuals and institutions. Before, during and after the onset of emergencies, institutions in the migrants' countries of origin play an important role disseminating vital information, tips, advisories and warnings to migrants and response actors in the affected areas, as well as to migrant's families, media and the general public in the home country.

Recognized and mandated agencies in the country of origin, especially services provided by the department or ministry responsible for Consular Affairs represent a reliable dependable system able to reach migrants registered as living/travelling in communities abroad. They can help communicate precautionary information and early warnings, as well as information on any ongoing emergency. These warnings will often be published and/or supported by the Consular Division or other relevant institutions of other like-minded countries, as well as official channels in the country of destination. In addition, leveraging social and local media can help reach migrants abroad. Migrant groups often trust their home institutions over other sources of information (e.g. mainstream media, host institutions), and might look specifically for information provided by such actors to validate the warnings and information they receive through the mainstream emergency communication channels. In addition, home country institutions may be in the position to contribute to local warnings and communications systems by providing additional information that would be of specific relevance to the migrants.

Consular corps and other institutions mandated to assist their nationals abroad, often represent a fundamental source of first-hand information for affected migrants, their families and communities in host and home countries. They often represent a hub for information gathering, packaging and dissemination, including communications/liasing with host country officials and institutions.

## COMMUNICATIONS IN EMERGENCIES: AIMS AND FEATURES

The aims of communication efforts in emergencies are to:

- Gather and disseminate accurate knowledge on hazards, their potential impacts, available options for assistance;
- Issue and disseminate instructions and recommendations for at-risk or affected persons – what to do, where to go, how to stay safe;
- Avoid and/or address the circulation of rumors and false information;
- Gather information on the affected persons' status, their needs and specific concerns (medical issues, separation from the family, mobility issues) and circulate them among relevant stakeholders; and
- Issue calls to action to the various relevant actors (institutional and non-institutional), in home and host locations, to meet the needs of people affected by the emergency.

All these objectives can be best met by a well-prepared, well-rehearsed emergency preparedness -system, through which potential hazards and risks, relevant sources of information and potential options for assistance in emergencies can be pre-identified, and messages and instructions pre-formulated. These elements should be part of comprehensive contingency planning, both at the consular post and at capital level.

The messages, warnings and communications provided in emergencies should be:

- Easily understood: simple and provided in a language the migrants are most likely to speak. Highly technical/scientific language may not be understood, especially in times of emergency. However, messages should convey a clear understanding of what is going on, what could happen, and how they could be impacted;

An estimated 700,000 noncitizens were residing in areas that were in some way affected by the Tohoku triple disaster in Japan, with approximately 33,000 residing in the three main affected prefectures, 200,000 in the surrounding prefectures and 423,000 visiting the area. The earthquake and tsunami killed 23 and injured 173 noncitizens. An estimated 470,000 foreigners were reported to have left Japan in the weeks following the disaster.

Many migrants lacked access to translated, up-to-date and comprehensive official information for non-Japanese speaking people in the aftermath of the disaster. With Japanese governmental institutions not fully responsive and comprehensive, and with the huge amount of rumors and information circulating, in particular through the social networks, many foreigners turned to their own national media and institutions for information and advice. The information they received from their embassies and media did not always correspond to the one disseminated by Japanese sources. Embassies and employers urged their citizens and employees in Japan to leave the country or to at least leave the areas near the earthquake/tsunami zone. Some foreigners were advised to leave areas as distant from the nuclear facilities as Tokyo for fear of radiation exposure.

- Comprehensive and updated regularly or as needed;
  - Accurate and factual, highlighting precisely what actions are recommended and why, what services can/cannot be provided at a given time, what is (not) known about migrants and their situation at a given moment;
  - Action-oriented, focused around clear measures and direction that can minimize risks;
  - Timely, in order to trigger effective reactions; and
  - As consistent as possible with the information provided by other channels (official and non-official in home and host countries) so that different messages are mutually reinforced and validated.
- Where to access relevant resources, service providers and networks;
  - Names, contacts and addresses of relevant actors (the consular division at post and at HQ, as well as, depending on the crisis, local service providers, hotlines, and emergency services of the host country). However, indicating the contacts of other actors might not be advisable without their consent: directing all registered migrants to one office or facility could hinder its capacity to work effectively;
  - Debunking inaccurate information;
  - Specifics on culturally and socially appropriate or illegal behavior in a given country; and
  - Where to access more detailed or updated information and how to provide information and feedback. Any information, even though unverified, can prove useful in emergencies (for responders, affected persons, and their families and communities).

Information that might need to be transferred to migrants at risk or affected by crisis includes:

- Clear explanations as to how the crisis situation is expected to unfold (it might not be possible for all situations, in particular for those that cannot be monitored or forecasted);
- Preparedness information: what to do and what not to do, where to go, and who to contact, what items to have available and take with in case of emergency, how to register with the local mission, how to apply for travel documents, including visas for non-citizen family members in the event of a crisis;
- Early warning information (including maps and graphics about risk areas, evacuation sites, potential assistance facilities). It should be noted that some of this information (e.g. escape routes, evacuation sites) might be sensitive in conflict situations and might not be disseminated widely;
- Recommendations and step-by-step action plans. This might include recommending migrants to leave the area if they feel unsafe, if possible well before the situation explodes, as evacuation routes become easily inaccessible during an emergency;

In addition, messages that specifically target migrants should cover information on access to dedicated assistance, whether provided by governmental or non-governmental actors.

In the event of a crisis, communications channels are likely to be severely limited. It would be advisable to pre-identify a wide array of information sources and communication channels that are likely to still be functioning, even in a limited capacity, in emergencies. Landlines, in particular, are more easily destroyed, while cellphone networks might be overloaded. Satellite phones may be a viable option in countries where a network of migrant representatives/wardens/gatekeepers is in place.

Channels that can be leveraged to deliver information to the migrants include:

- Information services managed by consular staff at post or with the help of home country authorities (including callcentres, hotlines, mailing lists, briefings and focal point meetings);

- Physical locations in host country such as consular post, religious and social centres, ethnic and community-based services;
- Phone calls and SMS;
- Local/ethnic radios, including web radios;
- Mainstream media of the host country and the country of origin;
- Websites and social media – with the caveat that there have been instances where information shared on social media caused additional risks to specific individuals especially more vulnerable migrants such as in cases of forced marriage or escaping an abusive relationship;
- Instant messaging and smartphone notifications;
- Information dissemination networks internal to the migrant group (e.g. communication trees, local alarm systems, door-to-door communication). However, it should be kept in mind that these networks can be disrupted when their members (who have no official position and therefore no additional protection in crises) leave the areas without notifying anyone; and
- Ad-hoc mobile networks.

In addition, it is critical to have protected channels of communication between relevant authorities in host and home countries such as host country crisis management unit with the country's consular representative, the home country consular division crisis management unit with the consular division at post etc., to ensure prompt and accurate sharing of information. In a crisis, many Consular officials of like-minded countries will also keep the channels of communication open in order to better serve the migrant population of the area.

Should the consular post have managed to maintain communication capacities, opening some communication channels for the use of the migrants themselves might help them communicate directly with their families. However, this is a solution that should be used only as a last resort when no private alternatives are available.

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR DEVELOPING EMERGENCY MESSAGES

### Do's

- Use simple, non-technical language. People in stressful situations have a difficult time understanding and remembering complicated information.
- Include only factual and verified information.
- Provide clear instructions on who needs to do what, when, how and why.
- Include sincere expressions of sympathy and concern for those affected by the crisis. Using personal pronouns such as "we" and "our" helps create a sense of solidarity with the affected community of nationals.
- Detail the positive measures/interventions taken by the response actors.
- Be clear about what can or cannot be done. Being precise and clear about the mandate and limitations enables migrants to make appropriate decisions and hopefully avoid unnecessary hardship, and can prevent unnecessary suffering to their families and communities.
- Acknowledge uncertainty, but explain the steps the institution has taken to verify information and get answers.
- It is appropriate to remind migrants that they are not alone in this situation, especially when an entire country is in a state of emergency.
- Make sure that messages are consistent and verified.

### Don'ts

- Assign blame or finger-point to deflect criticism.
- Attack or antagonize people, organizations, the host government, and the media.
- Use judgemental and patronizing statements.
- Be defensive and offer excuses. However, it is usually appropriate not to provide details that would require the disclosure of protected information.
- Ignore or inadequately counter erroneous information and rumors circulating in the media.
- Jeopardize the safety of workers and migrants by leaking sensitive, personal information that could affect their well-being, such as during hostage situations.
- Promise what you or your agency cannot deliver. Making promises on behalf of a third party is not recommended unless you have worked with them for some time and what is being asked is certainly within their mandate.
- Never talk on behalf of another agency or government level. Never include statements from other agencies unless consent is provided and the information is adequately validated.



Filipino community leaders are encouraged to take part in the command-and-control procedures and structures of the contingency plans. They are part of the “wardenship” system wherein each Filipino community leader has to take care of a number of Filipinos, by at least keeping them informed of the situation and the contingency plans laid out for Filipino nationals. These leaders and their respective organizations are considered the effective conduits of information and instructions that need to be disseminated to the Filipino community in times of crises. The “wardenship” system connects Filipino migrants in the same location to each other and with the Philippine diplomatic and consular personnel. These pre-established networks help identify migrants who cannot, for various reasons, access diplomatic and consular services and information in times of crisis and facilitate their access to humanitarian and other assistance offered by the Government of the Philippines and by humanitarian organizations. The warden system was used in providing assistance to distressed Filipino diaspora members in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Japan.

## DEVISING AN EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Developing an emergency communication plan will make it easier for institutions to gather and disseminate information before, during and after crises. A country-specific communication plan will help consular authorities and other relevant institutions deal with the need for information of migrants, the media and the general public and hopefully minimize the adverse consequences of a crisis. Even if they are not formulated before a crisis hit, developing clear mandates, structures and directives in place can still be useful to ensure effective, consistent emergency-related communications.

Emergency communication plans are recommended for institutions located (or responsible for the intervention) in crisis-affected areas, as well as those based in the capital or in home countries. Each set of actors might have different responsibilities: capital/centralized location may be better placed to manage communications with families, home country media and communities, while those located in the crisis-affected areas may be directly responsible for communicating and gathering feedback from affected nationals, assuming they have access to a workable communication system.

A comprehensive communication plan should consider the following elements:

- Identify the various target audiences that have a stake in the situation, and define priority groups for the different types of communications (e.g. affected or at-risk migrants in the crisis area; next of kin concerned for the safety of their family members; the general public).
- Identify the primary interest/concern of the different groups concerned, and what kind of information they will need (e.g. affected migrants will need warnings, instructions, information about available assistance; next of kin will need information about their relatives). It should be noted that, generally speaking, in order to protect the privacy of individuals, permission to share information should be granted. Permission can be granted through the migrant registration system, or through a dedicated form to be filled when the person visits the embassy/consulate or a local humanitarian agency, or verbally over the phone. Not everyone in a crisis wants his/her distant family aware of his/her whereabouts.
- Identify relevant and trusted sources of information. This might include accessing official information provided by host government institutions, or sourcing and validating information through community channels or employers. This may also require staff members posted in the crisis-affected areas to collect first-hand information by travelling within the crisis affected area; however this should be done only if their safety can be assured.

With the objective of reducing hardship faced by migrants during the first week in the new country, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Employment and Welfare has partnered with Sri Lanka’s leading mobile solutions provider Dialog Axiata to provide an exclusive connectivity solution for expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. These migrants receive a special SIM card issued by the Foreign Employment Bureau via its counters at the Bandaranaike International Airport. The Expatriate Worker SIM card will provide the user with concessionary tariffs for calls to Sri Lanka and communication within the middle East region. The prepaid SIM connection has been customized for those living and working in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The SIM will have a local number and will have the best rates to call Sri Lanka and for calling within each country. Dialog will also provide a free initial reload of 5 Saudi Arabian riyals for SIM issued to Saudi Arabia, while a free 10 dirhams reload for UAE SIM will be given for migrant workers to call back to Sri Lanka. In addition, any call made to the Sri Lanka Embassy hotline will be free of charge.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) of the Government of the Philippines jointly adopted a crisis alert system that serves as the basis for emergency repatriation and deployment restrictions. DFA, in consultation with the Department of Health, may 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 situation in a specific destination and impose or lift travel bans. In accordance with the established protocols on international relations, the Crisis Alert Levels, with their respective indicators and deployment status, are as follows:

**ALERT LEVEL 1 (Precautionary Phase):** It is issued when there are valid signs of internal disturbance, instability, and/or external threat to the host country. Filipinos are alerted to take necessary precautions.

**ALERT LEVEL 2 (Restriction Phase):** It is issued if there are threats to the life, security and property of Filipinos arising from internal disturbance, instability, and/or external threat. Filipinos are instructed to restrict non-essential movements, avoid public places, and prepare for evacuation. DOLE only allows returning OFWs, with existing employment contracts, or a group of OFWs under special circumstances, to go back to their host country.

**ALERT LEVEL 3 (Voluntary Repatriation):** It is issued when violent disturbances or external aggression occur in a limited area. Overseas Filipinos are enjoined to return to the Philippines upon employers', or if not possible, government's expense. DOLE shall impose absolute deployment ban.

**ALERT LEVEL 4 (Mandatory Repatriation):** It is issued when there is a large-scale internal conflict or full-blown external attack. The Government of the Philippines shall undertake mandatory evacuation procedures.

- Develop messages that you want to convey to each of your target audiences. This might also include adapting/translating official warnings provided by the host country authorities.
- Identify the best mean and/or channel(s) to deliver your message(s) to your target audience (e.g. phone hotline, TV and radio interviews and announcements, press statements, posts in social media).
- Determine the frequency and timing needed to get your key points across and attain your communication goals. Brief individuals and media regularly. Keep in mind that timeliness is key for effective warnings, and that different media might have different production/broadcast times and deadlines. Be mindful of information provided by the media as they may have other sources of information that may not support what is being said by officials.
- When possible, assign specific responsibilities (sourcing information, verifying it, packaging it and delivering it through/to the designated media) to different staff members and identify alternate responsible staff members or criteria for the reattribution of responsibilities should the main responsible not be available. This clarifies responsibilities, prevents a single staff to be overloaded and ensures continuity of main functions in emergencies. Make sure that relevant counterparts (within the media, the general public and other relevant stakeholders) can clearly identify and contact them.
- Clearly identify only one officially appointed spokesperson who will communicate the messages to the media. The spokesperson should be credible, knowledgeable, articulate and accessible at all times. Limiting the number of spokespersons will ensure consistency of messaging. Communication strategies should ensure that the spokesperson in host country, talks to services/media in host country while the spokesperson in home country speak to services/media in home country, again for consistency of messaging and better availability of the spokesperson, taking into account time differences.
- Identify (if possible, well in advance) the contact details of the various media outlets and their representatives. Identify contacts in relevant response institutions within the host country and international systems, as well as within key institutions of the country of origin.
- If it is relevant to the actual context, identifying and supporting community-based communication networks can be an effective way to reach out to migrants. Creating directories of relevant civil society and community-based organizations, including multiple contacts for their representatives, and identifying and appointing “wardens”, “gatekeepers” or area coordinators within the migrant communities can help.
- Create an inventory of available communication skills (including interpreters and translators), equipment and resources, and support and assist staff and counterparts (including, in particular, representatives of migrant groups and civil society organization) as needed.

The Maltese Foreign Service has specific procedures and a designated spokesperson to manage all the relationships with media in the event of a crisis – with other officials clearly required to refrain from commenting and providing information. The spokesperson is in constant communication with the relevant counterpart within the consular post responsible for the affected area, in order to make sure that the information given to the public is as precise as possible. This process has however often been hindered by the disruption of communication channels with affected areas.

## HOTLINES AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Making sure that migrants, their families and other relevant individuals can obtain information, provide feedbacks and request assistance in emergencies is also strongly recommended. Providing a variety of options for these groups to contact, when appropriate, relevant institutions in host/home countries, and setting up follow-up and/or referral mechanisms with relevant institutions, helps ensure that migrants can access targeted assistance and that their families' information needs are met effectively. Hotlines, web-based contact forms, web-based information crowdsourcing tools (such as Ushahidi maps), social media pages and dedicated physical locations can all be useful.

Ensuring that the intended users are aware that these mechanisms exist is key to allowing target migrants, families, communities and media to actually use them. This can be done before the crisis, as part of awareness-raising campaigns (before departure or upon arrival) on emergency preparedness and response, or by including relevant information in emergency communications.

### Hotlines

Establishing a hotline is a helpful measure in the event of a crisis. Disseminating the contact details (such as numbers and web links) and the services the hotline can provide (information on required actions, identification of individual migrants) as part of pre-crisis awareness campaign will ensure that it is used when a crisis occurs. Making sure that the hotline has adequate infrastructure and sufficient trained staff (including often volunteers who have just been rapidly briefed) to operate is also key, as such structures are likely to receive a huge quantity of calls, 24/7. This is likely to be the case whether the hotline is established to serve people in the crisis-affected areas or to provide information to their families and the public in the home country. For hotlines established in the home country, working together with other institutions that routinely carry out similar efforts (such as emergency call

centres – 911, police and health services) can be useful to provide an effective service without duplicating efforts. As these structures are often cost-free for the user, setting up viable agreements with the phone service providers or the institutions providing the infrastructure is essential.

When receiving a call, a standardized approach will ensure that accurate information is provided to or collected from the migrants or their families. This is particularly important when the hotline is manned by volunteers. Standard messages and FAQs can be pre-developed, in particular to report on what authorities (home and host countries) are doing, and details about an evacuation that might be planned. Procedures should also be in place to redirect queries that cannot be answered through standard information to particularly qualified/trained professionals.

Information can be collected through pre-developed forms or questionnaires, to be filled by the hotline worker by hand or on an application, if sufficient resources are available. These forms should include the following:

- A call back phone number, in case that line is dropped (verification needed);
- Full name (with spelling properly verified);
- Date of birth, citizenship, passport information when available;
- Composition of family or group;
- Location; and
- Any specific concerns, such as health issues and small children.

Migrants should be asked to provide a description of the services they require, as well as an idea of the conditions they are currently living. Other information as to location of permanent residence, or authorization to discuss situation with family, could be added in order to complete the interview.

### Feedback and complaint mechanisms

While it might not be a realistic option in the immediacy of a crisis due to limited capacity to allocate resources other than to relief efforts, setting up mechanisms that allow migrants to

In the wake of the 2011 triple disaster in Japan, a 24-hour/365-day telephone service called “Yoriso” hotline was established to serve the needs not only of Japanese citizens, but non-residents/migrants as well. The hotline service evolved into a One-Stop Consultation Support Project for Social Inclusion, which offered direct assistance for emergency cases and consultation services for problems experienced by non-Japanese residents.

The British Foreign Service opened an emergency telephone number for people concerned about friends and relatives in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. The number was advertised widely on television and radio, in newspapers and on the Foreign Service website. It soon could no longer handle the volume of calls that were being received as it exceeded their capacities. In accordance with a draft service level agreement, the London Metropolitan Police Service took over some of the call handling, only to find that its call-handling capability was also insufficient to deal with the 11,000 calls per hour that the service was receiving. Some callers used the number to make non-urgent enquiries such as those related to travel advice. Most of the interest was in casualty numbers, which could initially not be established with confidence. No official information was released on this until the consular authorities were able to provide verified data – over one week after the event. Access to the information was difficult to obtain from local authorities.

The British Embassy in Bangkok opened an incident centre starting on the day of the disaster, which was staffed by a combination of available high commission officers including consular, their spouses and other family members and volunteers. It included a call centre with eight dedicated lines, from which they handled a large number of enquiries from the public. On 27 December 2004, the Embassy received 10,608 calls, of which 6,452 (61 per cent) were answered.

provide feedback on crisis response and assistance being received, their unmet needs and their comments and complaints and grievances related to the response process is essential in order to gather intelligence on the evolution of the crisis as well as to better target response efforts. Explaining the specifics of the humanitarian or consular assistance may prove valuable. In any case, recording their grievances is important as it allows authorities to follow-up on migrants’ complaints at the end of the crisis, including upon the migrant’s return to the country of origin. These complaints can also be part of a “lessons learned” exercises. These mechanisms might imply:

- Establishing a physical or virtual “complaint box” where migrants can express their needs and feedback;
- Offering the option of anonymity and complying with data protection principles and policies;
- A fair and transparent verification process done by knowledgeable experts;
- Follow-up in terms of assistance and redress; and
- Establishment of a mechanism to monitor the follow up to a complaint and the information of the migrant, as required.

## Mobile applications

Mobile applications, websites and social media can provide people with the flexibility to access or download information as they need it. They can also represent a useful tool for monitoring migrants’ presence and whereabouts; however, the fact that they allow anonymous access to the information may prove useful when trying to reach out to migrants who are not willing or able to register through official channels.

Mobile applications tend to be widely accessible given the prevalence of smartphone and their relatively reduced costs. They represent a relatively simple way to potentially reach out to a variety of users. Applications can include features such as:

- Phone tracking capabilities through GPS;
- Automatic identification of closest assistance providers based on GPS coordinates and navigation;
- Notification of warnings and news relevant to the area in which the user is;
- Information download for offline information storage and use;
- Storage of digital copies of the IDs and other relevant documents;

Large numbers of Indians are employed abroad in low-paying and low-skill jobs, many living and working in poor insecure conditions. Many face exploitation by recruiting agencies, including retention of passports and related documents by employers, withholding and delaying of wages and other entitlements by employers, access to health care, detention and deportation.

In order to provide support services to persons planning on working abroad, the Indian Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has set up an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC). The Centre acts as a one-stop shop, meeting the needs of these workers. Through the OWRC (potential) emigrants can seek guidance/assistance on a variety issues. The OWRC operates a 24/7 helpline to provide information to emigrants and their families. The number is toll free from India. The helpline also receives complaints or grievances, which are referred to relevant services and attended as rapidly as possible. The Centre’s website ([www.owrc.in](http://www.owrc.in)) also provides information that would be relevant to a variety of emigration-related matters and receives complaints and grievances.

The Indian Embassy in Oman launched a mobile app called MigCall for the benefit of Indian workers in Oman and other countries of the GCC. The initiative aims to help Indian workers seek assistance whenever needed, particularly in emergency situations. The app is available on the Google Play Store in various Indian languages, such as Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Bengali, as well as in English. Once downloaded, the app can be used offline in absence of internet connection. The app automatically downloads helpline numbers in India and country of residence; it also provides helpline numbers of passport services, counselling services, local police numbers and hospital numbers. It also allows to send an SOS message to an emergency number chosen by the user in an emergency situation. The App also provides location and GPS navigation to the nearest Indian Embassy office.

The Philippines' DOLE and OWWA have launched, in partnership with Microsoft Philippines, a computer training programme for OFWs. It aims to provide OFWs information technology training and access to technology that will enable them and their families to communicate through the Internet. The Tulay or Bridge Education Program is a part of Microsoft's Unlimited Potential, a global initiative aimed at providing technology and skills for individuals. OFWs and their families learn the basics of computer applications such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel, as well as Internet and e-mail use at the Community Technology Learning Centers (CTLC). Through the programme, the OWWA Computer Training also aims to teach OFWs skills that will enhance their work competencies, thus increasing their value in the workplace, or help them when pursuing a career in the country upon their return. The OWWA Computer Training for OFWs also aims to address the primary issue of family disintegration. It is hoped that the project will mitigate problems arising from OFWs' prolonged separation from their families by increasing their ability to use technology to connect and communicate with loved ones at home. OWWA Computer trainings are also provided in some key cities outside the country where OWWA offices are located. The CTLCs being maintained and operated by DOLE-OWWA are located at the OWWA Central Office, OWWA Satellite Office in POEA, OWWA Regional Welfare Office,s as well as OWWA overseas posts in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), Hong Kong, Taichung (Taiwan Province of the People's Republic of China), Rome and Milan (Italy).

- Feedback mechanisms to allow migrants to share information and facilitate a two-way communication; and
- Translators and currency converters.

## COLLECTING AND SHARING INFORMATION

Mechanisms should be set up for the various actors that collect information on affected individuals and their situation to share it with other relevant actors. While institutions based in the crisis-affected country are likely to be the ones gathering first-hand data and information, information on specific individuals might also need to be communicated by families in the home country, employers and recruitment agencies. Establishing

a comprehensive process to gather and share information can improve the system's capacity to respond to a crisis.

However, this also poses privacy concerns, and ensuring that consent is granted before information is disseminated is key to respect the rights of the individuals involved. Sensitivity of data also depends on the specific crisis context; in war-torn countries or in situations in which migrants have been kidnapped, for instance, disseminating information on people's identity, their whereabouts and situation might expose them to heightened risks.

Within hours of the news of the crash of the MH17 flight in 2014, the Australian Foreign Service activated an Emergency Call Unit and publicized its details using social media along with other more traditional channels. This emergency number allowed people to call if they feared for the safety of family and friends. Consular staff in the area of the crash as well as those in nearby countries (particularly Poland and the Netherlands) tasked with collecting information on the ground, which was then collated and compiled by staff at the Crisis Centre. A specific consular case management officer was assigned to the families.



# SUPPORTING EVACUATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the orderly, safe evacuation of all residents, including migrants and natives, from areas at risk or affected by an emergency is key to reducing casualties and suffering as a consequence of the crisis. Evacuations might entail widely different operations depending on the context: driving a car or taking a bus out of an area at risk, a ferry or flight to another country, or a combination of different options, both taken autonomously by affected persons and assisted by host and home governments. In any case, facilitating and assisting the evacuation of migrants living and working in the area, including diplomatic representatives, is primarily the responsibility of local authorities. However, helping nationals leave the affected area (and eventually leave the country) is also a key responsibility of consular corps and other relevant institutions of the country of origin. When their capacities are overwhelmed by the events and the demand for assistance, they can request the support of third countries' consular representations, rapid response teams and emergency response systems, as well as that of the international humanitarian system.

The presence of trained staff such as consular representative and/or members of other crisis management institutions in the affected area is key in assisting distressed nationals. Keeping a foreign post open until there are no more nationals to serve in a particular area (according to the principle of "last man standing") is recommended but not always possible, especially if some migrants are refusing to leave. As an alternative, a satellite consular post can be established in another location, in the same country but outside the

crisis-affected area, in a neighbouring country or via a regional or home country-based coordination centre. In case the entire personnel of the post need to be evacuated from the crisis-affected country, consular assistance could be provided by colleagues of like-minded missions who chose to remain in the country of disaster (if operational) a while longer.

## PROVIDING RELEVANT INFORMATION

Ensuring people receive timely, updated information is key to an effective and safe evacuation. Evacuation is not always the safest option as it requires moving within a crisis-affected area and finding the means to depart, which is not always possible. Monitoring the local situation as it evolves is important as it is a prerequisite to providing accurate information regarding:

- Whether to evacuate or rather stay in a safer location (workplace, hotel, home);
- Whether evacuation assistance will be provided (especially assisted evacuation or international departures), what kind of assistance will be provided and who will be entitled to receive it;
- What documents will be required to leave;
- What migrants can carry (maximum weight, specific items, number of pieces of luggage);
- When to evacuate and from where (in particular when evacuation operations will take place at a specific time or from a specific place that needs to be reached);
- Where to evacuate to (gathering area, evacuation sites, exit points, border crossings);

When Houthi insurgents seized political power in Yemen in January 2015 and confrontations among factions escalated, many foreign embassies immediately shut down and evacuated their staff. The Philippine Honorary Consulate General in Sana'a remained open to facilitate the safe return of an estimated 700 Filipino workers to the Philippines. The Philippines enacted the same policy during the Arab Spring upheavals in Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Egypt, even extending assistance to non-nationals who were left stranded in the conflict zones.

In the event of hostilities affecting an area where Fijian nationals live or work, the Fijian embassy in the United Arab Emirates recommends their citizens (until further notice) to:

- Minimize movements, in particular after dark;
- Stay away from crowded areas; and
- Stay away from unfamiliar environments.

- Whether options/alternatives or obstacles exist to evacuate assets and belongings;
- What means are suggested for the evacuation, and what routes are suggested in order to reach the evacuation sites safely, emphasizing the importance of personal safety. It is important to keep in mind, however, that conditions can change quickly and people on the ground, including affected persons, would have a better idea of the latest developments; and
- What options are available for assisted evacuation, in particular for those who do not have access to private transportation, are far from the capital or an evacuation point or whether specific evacuation assistance should be provided when the best solution is to stay put and/or find a local safe refuge.

The elements to monitor when determining the content of these messages include:

- Security situation and its evolution;
- Status of transportation infrastructures (e.g. are roads destroyed or damaged, are there congested roads);
- Existence and functioning of transportation services (e.g. private or public transportation companies); and
- The actual presence on the ground of actors working to provide services, in particular in evacuation centres and shelters.

This information can be further enhanced and targeted using what is known of the migrants' whereabouts and conditions, for instance by gathering and validating data through formal registries or tracking and advisory systems, migrants' direct feedback and (when conditions are appropriate) field visits by relevant local staff.

## WORKING WITH RELEVANT ACTORS TO PROVIDE EVACUATION OPTIONS

The efforts that will be required on the part of home country governments will greatly vary based on the crisis context. In some cases, people in the crisis area (including migrants) will only need local transportations; in another, they might need to leave the country, and require assistance doing so. In less frequent cases, full-fledged evacuation operations may need to be organized and carried out by home country institutions for the benefit of their nationals in crisis areas. In all these cases, however, collaboration between host and home country governments and other actors, both governmental and non-governmental, will be required.

Whether a grand-scale evacuation is carried out or not, host and home country governments need to work together with their nationals in the crisis area in order to ensure that they are provided accurate information and encouraged to leave the area as early as possible (ideally before the crisis) and using all means locally available. This is an option as long as airports, ports and train and bus stations remain open and functioning. It may require people to leave for the first available interim destination out of the area at risk or affected. In order to support these independent departures, home country representatives may need to provide enhanced and flexible consular assistance (e.g. issuance/renewal of identity and travel document, financial assistance and money transfers), as well as information on available transportation options, routes and possible destinations, and information on the services available in areas of transit and/or destination.

The Government of the United Kingdom's representation in the Maldives at the time of the 2004 tsunami could have been done by an honorary consul; unfortunately, he was on holiday at the time of the disaster. Many British nationals were spending their Christmas holidays on the islands on 26 December, when the tsunami hit. The British High Commission in Colombo sent an experienced officer to the islands on 27 December, who was joined shortly after by a Military Intelligence Liaison Officer from the UK Ministry of Defense. With the help of local authorities and tour company representatives, they located the Britons, extended consular assistance, visited those in hospitals and helped evacuate those who wanted to leave. By 30 December, all British nationals who wished to leave the Maldives had departed.

Should the crisis reach a stage where ordinary public transportation systems are no longer operational or adequate to ensure the safe departure of their nationals (in particular when a significant number of nationals are in a crisis zone), alternatives to assist their evacuation by other means may need to be provided. This might entail a direct engagement of resources and personnel from the migrants' country of origin, which would directly provide evacuation services – if local security and access conditions allow for it. Whether this takes place or not, their collaboration with other relevant actors (in host countries and beyond) will be essential to set up and manage the relevant logistic arrangements.

Such actors might include:

- Host country public and private local and national transportation companies (including taxi and minibuses);
- Host country crisis management actors;
- Private airlines and shipping companies;
- Private sector actors (employers, tour operators, hotels and their representatives);
- The military of the home country, provided host countries grant the permission to enter the airspace/territory and land to military vessels and personnel – otherwise this could be seen as an act of aggression;
- Other relevant institutions of the home country and/or of third countries able and willing to provide evacuation services; and
- International organisations and NGOs.

Coordination arrangements with such actors can be set up as needed after the onset of a crisis, but activating mechanisms that have been set in place as part of pre-crisis preparedness plan is often more effective. Pre-crisis agreements allow a clearer understanding of processes and resources and help smoothed and facilitate the whole procedure.

Due to the effort required to organize and support mass evacuations, close cooperation between mandated agencies of host, home and third countries is always required. It is usually consular staff of all the missions posted in or around the crisis areas that will help play this role. Additional financial

resources, expertise and diplomatic assistance may also be provided through collaborations with other representations in the country or region, as well as with institutions working at capital level. A smooth flow of information among these various institutions is important in order to maintain a clear understanding of the situation and facilitate an efficient delivery of services.

In addition to the actors required to provide transportation solutions, similar coordination mechanisms can be set up with governmental, community-based and international actors that work in crisis-affected areas and can facilitate the management of evacuation sites and the provision of basic services. Identifying all existing resources and options for the provision of these services (transportation, information, emergency sheltering and basic services) will reduce a crisis' impacts. Pre-crisis contingency plans and asset mapping exercises should capture all these options.

Employers and recruiters are important stakeholders. In addition to being legally mandated to evacuate their workers under the legislation of some countries (e.g. the Philippines, RA 8042), they are likely to have direct channels of communication with and access to the workers and know their employees, whereabouts, as well as have contingency and evacuation plans in place to assist their workers. This would complement publicly-led efforts to assist and evacuate nationals in emergencies. When employers hinder the workers' movement by withholding their documents and salaries, or refusing to cooperate with relevant authorities, the agency's proactive negotiation and cooperation to all response efforts is vital.

Migrants and travellers might also have purchased travel insurance that might cover the costs of an evacuation from a crisis area, and tour operators (in particular those that are part of international networks and associations) may also have specific provision for assisting and evacuating tourists in the event of an emergency. These options are worth exploring prior to the crisis.

The Philippines' Crisis Management and Security Committee (CMT) is tasked with ensuring adequate support for crisis managers in the orderly evacuation and shelter of migrants to safer grounds, or their repatriation. It comprises personnel from different government agencies, including the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Labor and Employment, Interior and Local Government, which can assist the CMT in the preparation and implementation of evacuation plans for Filipino nationals.

When the fighting between Gadhafi's security forces and rebels intensified in February 2011, the Vinci Construction Grand Project, a French-led construction project in Libya, quickly activated its emergency evacuation plan. All its foreign workers were brought to safety in a guarded and well-equipped site in Tripoli, while arrangements for their emergency repatriation were finalized. Repatriation plans were coordinated with recruitment agencies, which played a key role updating the workers' families and home authorities on developments. Within 10 days, Vinci managed to organize and facilitate the transit of its foreign personnel out of Libya thru a chartered plane that flew them to Paris, France.

The company managed to arrange with Libyan immigration authorities the departure of its workers without the required exit visa. Upon arrival in Paris, migrant workers were provided accommodation while onward flights to their respective home countries were arranged.

This kind of efforts was repeated by many of the big multinationals operating in Libya at the time of the crisis. However, tensions were created by the fact that these companies rarely had plans and resources in place to assist the evacuation of their Libyan employees alongside foreign workers.

## Local transportation

It is important to provide information on available transportation options to safe locations, meeting areas and exit points to ensure that as many people as possible can leave autonomously. This might also include identifying and raising awareness on available informal options within the community of nationals (other fellow migrants owning/renting a car, for instance).

However, it is possible that nationals who are not able to leave the crisis area on their own might require assistance to move out of the area and into meeting areas/exit points or evacuation shelters. This might require the assistance of local authorities and include organizing alternate transportation options. For those unwilling to leave, they assume the responsibility of their decision though, in some circumstances, local authorities may force their departure.

Consular posts and other representations of the migrants' home countries often have very limited capacity to provide this kind of services locally (potentially limited to using their few official cars/vans to organize targeted transportation services, which may however need to be used for emergency cases only). However, local staff can usually coordinate with local service providers (transportation companies, privates and emergency management actors involved in evacuation assistance) and third-country actors (if applicable) in order to organize the necessary services.

Keeping track of nationals' location, whether they are in need of specific assistance or have encountered specific obstacles trying to reach designated areas, could help officials inform them of the evacuation efforts carried out by local institutions and actors. This information can be collected through staff members' field visits (if the

security situation allows for it), as well as through feedback with members of the community, non-governmental organizations involved in the relief and private sector actors in the crisis areas. Such information should identify any national unaccounted for, and/or his/her last point of contact for further search-and-rescue efforts.

## Long-distance transportation

In the case of evacuations out of the crisis-affected country, the same principle of providing information and support to encourage and assist people's early and independent departure applies. Working with airlines and other companies to provide longer distance and/or out-of-country transportation options can however be needed to ensure the evacuation of people. This would include using available commercial flights, ferries and trains. Assistance may include providing financial and logistical assistance for nationals to book tickets and cover the cost of temporary accommodations, or chartering flights or ships, which, while complex and expensive, could be an effective option when large numbers of evacuees wish to leave the country. As an alternative, and provided permission has been granted by the host country, using the capacities of home country institutions such as the military (including the navy) can also be useful.

Cooperation with third countries is particularly important to this extent. Coordination mechanisms for joint evacuations would enable the safe departures of more nationals from different exit points, at different times and on different vessels; if possible, this should be formalized as part of pre-crisis negotiations and arrangements.

Both in the case of government chartered and of military transportation, evacuation support has the added value of showing the interest and direct

As the Israel–Lebanon conflict intensified in July 2006, the Government of India asked the Indian Armed Forces to help evacuate its citizens at risk from the conflict zone. Of the over 10,000 Indian nationals in Lebanon, almost 2,000 were at risk. Neighbouring Sri Lanka and Nepal, which lacked military resources, also requested the Government of India to help evacuate their citizens. Altogether, over 2,200 nationals of these countries were caught in the conflict zone. As part of the Indian Navy Operation Sukoon, the country sent 4 ships containing approximately 115 tons of aid from the Governments of India and Cyprus: medical supplies, clothing and blankets, antiseptics, food, baby formula and canned goods. Some evacuees went to Cyprus while some returned directly to India through the Suez Canal. Overall, approximately 2,280 were evacuated: over 1,800 Indian nationals (some without valid documents), 379 Sri Lankans, 69 Nepalese and 5 Lebanese. This was one of the largest evacuation operations conducted by the Indian Navy since World War II. After the evacuation, the task force remained stationed in international waters off the coast of Lebanon, monitoring the conflict, and on standby to assist remaining Indian nationals in Lebanon, as needed and possible. The vessels left for their home ports on 10 August 2006.

After the Indian Ocean tsunami, many European nations looked into chartered flights for evacuating affected nationals. Sweden sent out 20 flights, Germany 11, and France 10; unfortunately, many of these flights came back half empty, as many people had flown out using scheduled flights, flights chartered by tour operators or insurers and flights offered by other countries.

engagement of the home country government for its nationals. As these efforts are complex and expensive, they need to be supported by:

- Timely, accurate and verified information shared among the home government, the consular staff in the affected country and the affected nationals, in order to ensure that the options provided actually meet the needs of migrants in the crisis area;
- Travel documentation especially to replace those lost, damaged or inaccessible;
- Logistics and distribution of food and other items evacuees might need while they wait for a transportation option out of the country, if adequate plans have been made;
- Coordination with local transportation systems that allow nationals within the affected country to travel to a specific exit point; and
- Arrangements to increase their personal safety and that of their family members, including specifically the children – however it should be noted that guaranteeing individual security is an impossible task, especially in crisis areas.

International evacuation efforts might also help relieve some pressure on local response systems, in particular at early stages of the response when large numbers of affected persons are wishing to access limited assistance. One of the consequences when a large number of people are trying to leave at the same time is the congestion of the transportation systems and facilities, in particular airports, harbors and other exit points such as border crossing. This can require specific assistance sites and/or systems to be set up in such locations in order to cater to the needs of the incoming evacuees. Information and coordination with local institutions is a must.

In case home countries (and other third countries) are engaging in relief efforts of the crisis-affected country, it is possible to ensure that the two systems (humanitarian aid and those mandated to assist their nationals) work in parallel; again, effective information sharing among the relevant actors is essential.

## ADDRESSING THE BUREAUCRATIC ASPECTS OF EVACUATIONS

Preparing an evacuation entails a great deal of bureaucracy and procedures in home and in host countries. It is almost inevitable that evacuees will be forced to wait for hours, even days, before they can be evacuated. Some wait at home, others at camps or evacuation sites, or at an airport or seaport, while their respective governments arrange safe departure. Taking care of the bureaucratic processes needed to assist people's movement is a daunting task and requires patience, funding and access to resources.

Evacuations often require:

- A well-thought-out emergency preparedness plan;
- Negotiating exit rights for migrants in the affected country;
- Political clearance of the evacuation at capital level;
- Negotiating clearances from other countries (such as for airspace/territory/water access) to carry out the evacuation. Working from capital and through diplomatic channels to reach out to foreign countries, in order to secure entry



In December 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed the Vietnamese embassies in Libya and in Egypt to ingather information on the situation of Vietnamese nationals in the country and to prepare a plan to evacuate them if the situation worsened.

In February 2011, when the tensions escalated in Libya, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam established a Steering Committee on the Evacuation of Vietnamese workers in Libya, headed by the Vice Prime Minister, chaired by the Minsiter of Foreign Affairs, with the Minister of Invalids and Social Affairs as vice-chair, and with the participation of the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of War Invalids and Social Affairs, Ministry of Transportation, Vietnam Airlines. Five inter-agency working groups were set up and sent to Egypt, Tunisia, Greece, Turkey and Malta to cooperate with Vietnamese embassies, local authorities and international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR in order to arrange shelter and food provision to Vietnamese workers fleeing Libya. They also negotiated with the authorities of the various countries to grant entries to those who did not have passports and/or visas.

The frontline headquarters were formed in Djerba, Tunisia, to coordinate the evacuation activities. This location was the main destination of Vietnamese workers abandoned by their employers, as it was the closest to the Tuniso-Libyan border with an airport able to support landing and taking off. Seven flights (plus three flights from Egypt, Turkey and Algeria) were conducted by Vietnam Airlines carrying their national workers back home. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia worked to issue over 100 clearances to both Vietnamese and foreign aircrafts.

The Vietnamese Embassy in Libya helped evacuate Vietnamese workers in dangerous areas, such as Benghazi and Tripoli, and requested the Libyan authorities to allow exit to those who did not have passports and exit visas. The Embassy gathered the remaining workers still stranded in Libya to provide food, medicine and rapidly transported them out of the Libyan borders.

and transit of evacuees on their territory may be more effective than addressing these issues at the local level;

- Securing landing and take-off rights for flights, and similar permissions for seaports – both in the crisis affected country and in third countries vessels might transit through;
- Providing assurance to immigration authorities in third countries that migrants will not remain in their territory any longer than the time that is strictly necessary. The hope is that the third country will be willing to provide temporary shelter and processing facilities, in specific sites or through specific short-term arrangements. This might also require pre-identifying or organizing further transportation options; and
- Identifying medical cases, minors and other persons with specific needs while meeting the specific provisions for their transportation and evacuation.

When possible, resources should be set up to identify, register and assist evacuees, and to ensure that they meet the legal, health (fit to fly) and other requirements to leave the country. Travel manifests would facilitate the authorization to depart and tracking the movements of migrants.

In any case, when possible, adopting a “no questions” policy regarding migration status of a foreign national in the host State should make these efforts more inclusive and effective.

Clearly identifying evacuees that may need specific attention (elderly, sick or disabled) will help prevent potential conflict, tensions and delays.

In addition, the pre-determination of criteria for evacuation may be needed to address specific cases:

- Deciding on family members of a migrant without citizenship status in the home country, wishing to be evacuated together, including in the case of children born abroad and not declared to home country authorities (therefore with no proof of citizenship), spouses or children of a migrant without citizenship in the home country;
- Locally engaged staff of a consular post; and
- Family members of a child who would have specific evacuation rights due to their citizenship of a third country but who do not have the same rights themselves (e.g. migrant members of a child born in a country of the European Union).

Different countries (including third countries evacuees would be directed to) will have different regulations (and some flexibility) to address these cases. However, it can happen that such conditions will greatly hinder evacuation operations if no clear guideline is issued. Strict application of immigration regulations (e.g. only allowing the departure of a national child, without the rest of his/her family) often result in unwillingness to evacuate.

The evacuation of families, as well as of non-accompanied minors, is always more complex. It is good practice not to separate nuclear families (parents and children); however, it is not always possible. In these cases, the presence of experts on matters such as legalities, procedures (for citizenship and passport applications) and key to understanding potential risks.

Operation Ramp was the name given to an Australian Defence Force operation to support the evacuation of over 5,300 Australians and over 1,300 foreign nationals from the Lebanese ports of Beirut and Tyre during the 2006 Lebanon War. The evacuation was led by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Australia chartered 17 ships, 22 Australian aircrafts and over 470 buses. Initial evacuations prioritized families with children and the disabled, who boarded a British warship already in the port of Beirut. A task force of 96 people was deployed to support the evacuation, including:

- A command element;
- Two evacuee processing teams;
- Liaison officers;
- Movements officers;
- Health specialists from various units; and
- Linguists.

The European Commission facilitated the repatriation of the foreigners who fled Libya into Tunisia during the Libyan crisis. The Commission launched a humanitarian air and sea bridge with European boats and airplanes for the repatriation of third-country nationals (mostly Egyptians) to their places of origin. The Commission also deployed a civil protection team to the border between Tunisia and Libya, which helped IOM, UNHCR and the Tunisian authorities organize the transport and other logistics for the safe return of foreigners to their home countries.

In March 2010, scores of migrants fled their homes in Libya, trying to reach the Tunisian border. Most did so without assistance from their consular representatives. Unfortunately, many were stopped at the border by the Libyan immigration authorities since they did not carry their passport nor did they have the required exit visa that is typically secured and processed through the migrant's employer. They also lacked the permit to enter Tunisia. Coordination among the government representative in host, home and third countries may have prevented such obstacles.

Later, the Government of Tunisia established an air bridge between Libya and Tunisia and a "tent city" near the border that served as a transit centre for migrant evacuees.

Coordinated action among the institution carrying out the evacuation with consular corps and other local representatives, in the affected country or in third countries, can make the process more efficient. The presence of specialized staff members of these institutions at evacuation sites, exit points and/or border crossings and at entry points of third countries can be an effective way of addressing potential issues as they arise.

Equipping evacuees with valid documents and ensuring they comply with immigration requirements is essential. This includes ensuring that evacuees have valid identity and travel documents from their country of origin, as well as any visas and permits, including exit visas, as well as entry visas and any other documentation that might be required in order to enter a third country. Raising awareness among potential evacuees on what documents they will need in order to prove their eligibility is essential, as the migrants have the individual responsibility to ensuring they (and their family members) comply with such requirements.

Even at advanced stages of a crisis, it is important to retain the in-country capacity to issue relevant travel documents, including temporary documents and laissez-passer, which can be used in an emergency. As these documents are issued as a rule by Consular officials, they should be on hand either at post, and (if possible) at evacuation sites, exit points, entry points in third countries

or on board the evacuation vessels. Trained staff will need access to the relevant materials (which should be part of stockpiled emergency supplies) and information (which often requires granting them access to centralized registries and databases to verify citizenship and previous issuing of other documents).

Opening up temporary consular posts in relevant locations (both within the crisis-affected country and in neighbouring and third countries) can also help. Such efforts can be carried out jointly with representatives of the host country or third countries. They should include personnel specifically trained for assessing, referring, or addressing cases needing specific attention (e.g. unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking or slave labour).

## ADVOCACY AND MEDIATION

Whether a direct intervention to evacuate migrants is needed (and possible) or not, the advocacy role of the representatives of their countries of origin with host government authorities, employers, recruiters and other relevant actors will greatly improve the migrants' ability to move autonomously or to access evacuation assistance.

In 2013, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic facilitated the departure of Filipino migrants by waiving their exit visa fees. Likewise, the cooperation between the Filipino Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Immigration counterpart in Japan allowed for simplified issuance of visas for Filipino nationals, allowing them to visit their family members injured during the tsunami in 2011. During the 2011 Libyan crisis, Tunisia temporarily waived the entry visa requirement for migrants being evacuated out of Libya and into the country.

Advocacy and pressures through diplomatic channels and mediation activities can aim to obtain:

- Temporary suspension of the enforcement of immigration regulations (including arrest, detention and deportation) by the host country authorities, in the attempt to encourage migrants in irregular situations to come forward for assistance;
- Temporary suspension of existing regulations preventing migrants from moving freely in the host country (e.g. as they might not be allowed to leave their area of residence or employment), as well as preventing migrants from looking for different jobs;
- Waiving exit and entry requirements (such as visas) in host and transit countries, as well as any fees and penalties related to exiting a country and overstaying visas, or taxes and fees that would normally be due for moving out of or into a country;
- Waiving or reimbursing recruitment fees migrants might still owe; and
- Setting up mechanisms to provide financial assistance to evacuees waiting for their salaries.

Tapping or initiating local, bilateral and multilateral diplomatic communication channels with host and third country, when possible jointly with like-minded missions, can help achieve these objectives. Support or direct action from the relevant institutions at capital could also improve the effectiveness of these efforts.

On occasions, mediation and back channeling with non-traditional actors (e.g. non-governmental parties involved in a conflict, local leaders, and elders' councils) might be needed in order to guarantee some level of safety and access to assistance to migrants in the crisis area.

Efforts are greatly hindered when host countries have limited capacities and/or the breakdown of their governments and public service institutions (such as those providing basic care, the police and the military), as well as, on occasion, when self-serving and/or corrupt officials take advantage of the situation.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Sufficient financial resources and funding should be available in order to support evacuations efforts and the evacuees. Certain groups usually have sufficient or dedicated resources to support their needs during a crisis, for example tourists, especially those travelling as part of organized tours, and expats, businessmen or migrant workers who have subscribed to specific forms of insurance. However, it is very likely that large groups of the assisted populations, and in particular low-skilled, low-income migrant workers and their families, as well as migrants with irregular status or working irregularly in the host country, might not be covered by any dedicated support mechanism or have access to sufficient savings to cope with a crisis, including to pay for an international evacuation.

Transportation costs in crises are often extremely high, due to the high demand for services and the scarcity of options available, as well as the risks involved in travelling to, through and out of crisis areas. Resources will be needed to cover for local and long-distance transportation costs (including vehicles and other vessels, fuel, operators, tolls and other taxes).

Additional resources might be needed to negotiate migrants' release from employment and/or recruiters, as well as to cover fees and taxes that might be due to public sector actors including host and third-country immigration institutions (e.g. fees for issuing exit/entry visa). Negotiations between home country and host country agencies responsible for the movement of individuals in and out of their territory could help obtain more affordable prices for individual evacuees (e.g. through the bulk issuing of visa), even though the contrary may also be true, in some cases: as soon as it becomes known that a government may shoulder some costs, these costs may rise significantly.

Evacuations and repatriation are likely to entail significant costs for the evacuees themselves, as well as for their countries of origin as a whole. Providing financial assistance to nationals in distress abroad

(e.g. through consular representations) may be warranted to help finance their trip and any other expenses related to the evacuation. Employers and recruiters should be expected to provide financial support to their clients, depending on the availability of resources (locally or at capital). In addition, the home government may need to set aside additional emergency funding to finance the evacuation operations. International assistance (from international organizations or development banks) can help in this regard.

## DIVERSITY OF EVACUATION BEHAVIOURS

Once an evacuation is organized and the relevant information is disseminated, not every migrant in the crisis area will actually want to be evacuated. Evacuations back to the home country are not usually mandatory, and even countries that issue evacuation orders are not likely to be able to enforce them. Different migrants in the crisis area will react in different ways to evacuation advisories, depending, among other things, on:

- Their access to, understanding of, and trust in, the information they receive;
- Their trust in local and home institutions;
- Their culture;
- Their sense of obligation and commitment to an employer or a way of life; and
- The pressures they might feel from their family or home community.

In addition, migrants might be more or less capable or willing to actually move out of crisis areas and into evacuation sites, shelters and assembly points as a consequence of their location, access to private and public means of transportation, local family and community situation, available funds or alternatives to official evacuation assistance.

It is important to accept that many migrants will find it difficult to leave everything behind; many might have done it before and be reluctant to go again through the experience. They might be particularly unsure about evacuating out of the affected area if the choice to go home is not possible or desirable, and the only viable alternative is an evacuation to a third country. In addition, migrants might actually arrive in the area during the crisis (or because of it), despite advisories indicating the contract. If persuasion does not work, there is little that home governments can do to prevent this kind of movements.

Information on people's intentions, preferences, barriers and expected behaviours in evacuations can be collected as part of profiling exercises to help inform preparedness planning. It is also important to understand whether people might require certain conditions to be met before they can evacuate (e.g. evacuate only if relatives or material goods are evacuated with them, only able to evacuate on a certain date/time) and their intentions might change as the crisis unfolds. In addition, gathering information on people's resources and abilities can help set more informed priorities for the planning process.

Dealing with migrants who resist evacuation and repatriation even after an alert for a recommended evacuation has been issued can create difficulty for the home country authorities. The need to respect the freedom of choice of all migrants may affect the home country government's mandate to protect the interests of their nationals abroad. Provided their decision does not infringe on host governments' orders for a mandatory evacuation, migrants have the right (and the obligation) to decide what they do and then assume the consequences of their personal decisions. Consular officials should inform them about (and direct them to) assistance and service providers available locally, and keep them informed of the crisis developments, but they should not interfere in their decision to stay where they are.

Many Filipino domestic workers in the Syrian Arab Republic were undocumented or irregular. An exit clearance (ranging from USD 3,000 to 5,000) was required for them to be able to leave the country and be repatriated. Unfortunately, some employers in the country demanded to be reimbursed the costs of hiring their domestic workers before allowing them to leave the country. The Government of the Philippines paid these employers instead of the migrants who could not pay for the exit clearance.

In 2011, IOM was requested by 45 countries to help evacuate their nationals from Libya. Bangladesh obtained a loan of USD 45 million from the World Bank to finance evacuation and reintegration of nationals out of the country. Countries like India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand contribute to a dedicated migrant welfare fund to assist migrants in crisis. Lessons from the first Gulf crisis in 1995 led to the creation of the Repatriation Fund in the Philippines in order to shoulder the costs of bringing home migrants away from danger in crisis areas.

During the Lebanon war of 2006 and the Arab Spring revolts that swept the Middle Eastern and North African countries in 2011, many migrant workers refused to abandon their jobs and return home. They would rather “try their luck” in these countries than go home without a job and income. Particularly resistant were migrants who had been in the same job for a long time and had established a good working relationship with their employers or felt duty-bound to their employers. A number of them believed that their employers would be able to keep them safe during crisis, perhaps even better than their government. Some employers raised the salaries of their migrant workers, while others reportedly filed trumped-up charges to discourage their employees from leaving. Doctors and nurses kept on working in hospitals in Libya amid the ongoing civil war.

Measures that have proven effective in encouraging migrants to leave a crisis area include:

- The dissemination of credible, targeted and updated information on the evolution of the crisis situation, and on the risks of staying behind sustained throughout the crisis situation. This information should be delivered through channels migrants know well and trust;
- Moral persuasion/pressure exerted by co-workers, friends and family members;
- The possibility that travel insurance would cover or not losses and expenses (if the migrant does not comply with official advisories);
- Assistance in extracting migrant workers from their contractual obligations towards an employer without legal repercussions;
- Suspension of administrative barriers to movement within the host country and out of it, as well as temporary suspension of immigration policies;
- Assistance in securing workers’ rightful compensation and gratuity pay from employers; and
- Assistance in finding an alternative job/livelihood at home or redeployment to safer countries.



# PROVIDING RELIEF ASSISTANCE

## INTRODUCTION

The emergency management systems of many countries hosting large numbers of migrants explicitly state that first response and life-saving assistance should be provided regardless of people's origin, race, or legal status. However, linguistic and cultural diversity, background and migration experiences, as well as, at times, the migrants' lack of trust towards local institutions (including emergency management services), can result in reduced access to a wide range of services that are essential in a crisis. These include both life-saving services, such as food and water distribution, emergency shelter, health care, and transport out of affected zone, and those that are important in order to reduce any longer-term impacts (psychosocial, housing, and livelihood assistance) following a crisis. When these specific needs and conditions are ignored in emergency assistance efforts, migrants can end up being de facto discriminated.

The States affected by the crisis bear the main responsibility for providing assistance to all affected persons on their territory (whether they are citizens or non-citizens), hence accounting for the specificities of migrant groups in crisis preparedness planning and response is key to reducing the impacts they might suffer. However, authorities of migrants' home countries in charge of protecting their interests abroad, including in crises, can play a variety of roles to improve their nationals' access to assistance in a crisis:

- They can collaborate with the host country actors in order to help adapt their work to the presence of migrant groups in the crisis area;
- They can encourage trust between the migrants and the host country institutions involved in emergency preparedness and response efforts; and
- They can supplement host country's institutions' efforts by providing assets and direct support to their nationals in the affected areas, as well

as by providing expert assistance to address the migrants' longer-term specific needs, such as psychological counselling, reconstructive surgeries, neonatal care and legal assistance.

## INFORMING THE EFFORTS BY HOST COUNTRY ACTORS

Information on the specific characteristics and needs of migrant groups can be provided by consular staff and other relevant home country authorities to the local institutions and other entities in charge of emergency assistance, with the aim to inform service provision efforts and make them more targeted and culturally sensitive.

Relevant information on affected migrants should include:

- Language: spoken, read and written;
- Location of residence and employment;
- Demographic composition of the groups (gender, age and any other specific feature, such as average size of families, likelihood to live with elderly dependants or children), as well as detailed indications for individual cases requiring targeted assistance;
- Religion, when applicable – however, it might be perceived as a sensitive topic in some contexts;
- Working and living conditions, including their coverage by insurance and welfare schemes, if known;
- Dietary restrictions, whether related to culture, religion or health reasons;
- Greetings and speaking etiquette, other key customs;
- Privacy requirements (e.g. for planning accommodation or use of public spaces/lavatories in shelters);
- Trust issues, if any, with institutions (i.e. police officers, immigration) and/or other groups within the host community;

- Stances towards health care and psychosocial support;
- Care of the dead, including individual preferences, requirements and customs of the migrants, as well as ability of the home country institutions to preserve and repatriate remains and their family notification protocols; and
- Community life, existing social groups and organizations, specific districts where individuals from the migrant group tend to aggregate.

This information can be collected before the emergency through dedicated profiling exercises, as well as during/after the emergency through rapid assessments. Consular staff can support and participate in such efforts, in case host country institutions carry them out, or conduct them themselves, and share the information with relevant host country institutions. In many instances, insights based on their knowledge of the migrants' community, even if unsupported by dedicated data collection, can be sufficient to inform responses.

In addition, direct feedback on needs and comments/complaints received by the consular corps and in general by home country authorities can also be conveyed to response actors in the host country, for their review and possible action. This can help such institutions better target assistance and response efforts, for instance by helping identify communities that have been underserved due to social or geographic isolation, cases of human rights violation or discriminatory behaviours or of provision of inappropriate assistance. Consular staff can establish mechanisms for gathering feedback/comments on assistance, unmet needs and barriers to accessing support as part of their emergency response measures.

All actors involved in emergency response can make use of this kind of information, including mandated national and local institutions of the home country, non-governmental response actors, institutions and communities in the country of origin, and the diaspora and migrant groups willing to provide support to affected migrants.

In addition, referral systems can be established in order to refer nationals in need to relevant local experts and service providers for further assistance. Such systems can be managed at the consular post level. Their establishment can be simplified by pre-identifying options available locally, giving access

to alternate kind of assistance (e.g. transportation, food, shelter, health care, psychosocial support and legal assistance, interpretation and translation) and setting up and sharing dedicated registries/databases. Assistance providers can include local governmental and non-governmental entities, individual professionals (both based in situ and in remote locations) and international organizations.

This information could also be used to help advocate with host country authorities, the international community and other local actors in order to improve emergency response and relief services to the migrants.

## CONSULAR POSTS PROVIDING INFORMATION ON RELIEF SERVICES

Consular posts should hold a variety of information that can be useful to migrants affected by crises in the area. Each post should have within their reach an updated list of competent medical doctors and specialists, hospitals, entities such as shelters, soup kitchens and food banks, lawyers and NGOs where migrants could be directed to when in need. They should also have lists of contracts within each local agency that may be contacted should an emergency arises: it could be with the Ministry of the Interior or Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Border authority, the local chief of police, airport officials or airline representatives.

Collecting and updating this information is usually part of a consular contingency planning, as well as routine provision of non-emergency consular assistance. Such information can be disseminated to nationals in the crisis area in order to help them make more informed decisions.

Such information should cover:

- National and local emergency response protocols in the host country;
- Location of emergency shelters, temporary or permanent, safer zones within the region, assembly points and exit options;
- Access to food and water distributions, as well as actors in charge of the operations (and their contacts);
- Access to distribution of essential items such as blankets, phones, flashlights and batteries;

When Côte d'Ivoire was shaken by civil unrest in 2010-2011, many migrant workers, in particular from Mali and Mauritania, sought safe shelter in their Embassies. While this allowed them to avoid the violence, conditions in these Embassies became very dire, and their respective home governments had soon to turn to their international counterparts for assistance in supporting their evacuation.

The Canadian embassy in Haiti was damaged by the 2010 earthquake. The main compound was relatively safe, and a few Canadians were allowed to enter it in order to find shelter and access to basic services. However, resources available were very limited – getting safe water, food, access to bathrooms to accommodate the surging number of occupants was not easy. Canadian consular staff could not return to their apartments and ended up staying at the compound, mainly outdoors and providing consular assistance the best they could. In the following days, rapid response teams were sent from Ottawa to complement local capacities.

- Transportation options (private and public);
- Medical assistance including private physician, hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, dispensaries, and distribution of medications;
- Legal assistance; and
- Psychosocial assistance including mental health facilities and specialists.

Migrants, in particular those who are not proficient in the local language or not familiar with the local systems (tourists, newly arrived migrants), may need support navigating the local bureaucracy in order to access services (e.g. identifying the relevant authorities, compiling modules, producing the right documentation). Collaborating with relevant host country authorities to create migrant-friendly, translated application procedures and modules can make assistance more accessible. This kind of joint efforts by the local consular staff (or of government representatives deployed in situ from the home country) and host country authorities and service providers can also help improve migrants' trust towards local response actors.

In case referral systems have been established, they can be effectively used to direct nationals to relevant local service providers and professionals.

## PROVIDING DIRECT ASSISTANCE

While direct provision of assistance is not as common as information circulation, advocacy and mediation, there are a variety of ways home country institutions can provide direct assistance to nationals affected by crisis overseas. Some include activities that overlap with efforts carried out by local response actors, others are functions that can be exclusively carried out by the home country institutions. It should however be highlighted that such assistance can at best complement

local responses, and that all efforts should go into allowing nationals to provide for themselves (including by leaving the evacuation area).

The official premises of embassies and consular posts, including the official residence, may be used as a safe haven in evacuations and, potentially as an evacuation or transit site – and they have been, in fact, used by nationals (individuals or small groups) fleeing violence and persecution in past crises. In many cases, they will need to host staff (and their families) on a 24/7 basis in emergencies in order to accommodate the surging demand for services, as well as to prevent risks linked with commuting to and from work.

These sites are very rarely able to host large populations, in particular for longer periods of time, and it should also be noted that the evacuees' presence may interfere with the capacity of the post to operate and provide services to all other nationals in the crisis area. However, they can be included in local asset mappings as part of emergency preparedness planning. In this case, they should be adequately planned and stockpiled for hosting evacuees in emergencies. This may include stockpiling food, water, cots and medications. It also includes stockpiling supplies that are essential to their work, such as blank passports, ready cash, all the necessary forms, seals, satellite phones and back-up generators.

Foreign Service posts or any other building in which consular services are being provided can become hubs for the direct provision of relief assistance to affected nationals. In the short term, this option could include first aid services and distribution of basic relief items. However, more dire cases, large numbers of victims and longer-term needs would most likely need to be referred to available external facilities. In particular, they can be used to set up communication hubs to allow nationals to have at least some limited contacts with their relatives back home.

Rapid deployment teams of many countries are able to provide more specialized assistance once they are operational, helping with the delivery of emergency health care and the distribution of food, water, tents and other NFIs. Posts and other structures can represent an option to establish coordination and operational centres.

Setting up alternate, temporary and mobile response centres (including for the delivery of normal-time consular services), in key locations (such as evacuation shelters, border crossings, exit points, as well as in third countries, should security conditions require it) can increase the reach of the services provided. In cases in which staying at the current location becomes impossible, all the basic functions can be transferred to an ad hoc remote control centre created either at the residence of one of the embassy officials, in a third location within the country (e.g. a hotel) or in a neighbouring country depending on security concerns.

Local staff can facilitate people's registration and the delivery of goods and services. An alternate registration system may need to be set up presuming that the ordinary registers for consular services are not available or are not necessarily adapted to cope with the surge of clients needing specific emergency assistance. Registries could be set up in order to capture complaints and grievances with the understanding that, unless they can help immediate delivery of emergency assistance, complaints will be addressed once the critical phase is behind.

The post's staff may need to work with the assistance of local volunteers; these could include same country nationals living in the area, as well as family and friends of the consular staff. These volunteers should, if possible, be trained preemptively or at least through just-in-time briefings. Depending on the work they would concretely perform, they might need to obtain security clearance. In any case, it should be noted that, while consular officials carry diplomatic immunity and insurance in carrying out their duties, volunteers, wardens and even some mission staff do not have the same privileges, which means that additional arrangements might be needed to cover the risks embedded in their work (e.g. accident, responsibilities).

It is particularly important to clearly define and advertise criteria for prioritizing services and assistance, and that these are respected both by consular staff and emergency volunteers. Home

country institutions will usually give priority to benefit their nationals, and, in some instance, of foreigners who might be covered by relevant agreements for joint assistance, or whose home country missions do not provide services. The delivery of services to the rest of the population at large is the responsibility of local governments and, when warranted, home country government, and humanitarian agencies. This may create tensions in host country communities, which can potentially be managed by raising the awareness of members of the host community about other existing options for assistance, as well as by clearly defining respective mandates.

## Documentation

Issuing national travel documents is a core consular responsibility, and some consular services actually issue a variety of identity documents, such as national cards, citizenship and birth certificates. These functions gain additional importance in emergencies, as the verification of the identity might be essential to accessing relief and recovery assistance, as well as to leave the country.

Both can be essential in order to ensure nationals are able to access assistance and/or leave the country in crises. In addition, immigration authorities of the host country might require the assistance of consular staff and other home country personnel when renewing or issuing relevant documentation to the benefit of migrants (e.g. entry or exit visas, work permits). This is particularly the case in emergency situations, in which demand for this kind of services might be overwhelming and alternative protocols might be established in order to facilitate migrants' stay in or departure from the country. Also, laissez-passer can also be issued by some international organizations.

Ensuring that affected migrants have a way to renew their IDs is key to facilitating their access to local assistance, as well as to allow them to evacuate abroad. Many countries also issue interim travel documents, usually in order to address urgent issues that might affect their nationals while they do not have their travel documents available. Such documents can effectively be used in emergencies.

Trained staff, with authority to issue travel documentation, and equipped with the necessary materials (papers, blank passports, camera, stamps, tampons), including access to verifiable information on the nationals' identity, such as registries and



centralized databases, should allow for the rapid issuance of travel documents. This last point is key, as the identity of nationals must be confirmed to the satisfaction of officials before any travel document can be issued and an assisted departure can be organized. Verification of the identity of the evacuee will, in any case, be required before he or she is allowed to board a flight or vessel out of the country, in order to avoid fraud, identity theft and usurpation of status.

Additional documentation facilities might be established as part of emergency response at key location, either within the affected country (such as the consular post itself, evacuation sites, border crossings, exit points) or in neighbouring or third countries (such as border crossings, displacement management facilities).

In addition, the engagement of consular staff can help ensure that travel documentations are not withheld by employers or recruiters; passports belong to the government that has issued them, and that government's representative has the right to demand its return.

### Family reunification

Many migrants come from "split households", families divided due to work location, and many more migrant households are further split in the face of crises, when part of the family returns to the home country. In addition, migrants have reduced access to local social networks. For migrants and their relatives, family separation is particularly important to address.

This is particularly the case for minors especially in cases of long-distance evacuations. Unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable to sickness, isolation, exploitation and trafficking. In order to support tracing and reunification efforts, home country institutions can:

- Ensure that registry systems on nationals in the area (often set up for the purpose of the provision of consular assistance) include information on all family members;
- Deploy specialized teams on the ground to collect information and identify cases in which specific attention would be needed;

- Set up systems to collect and match information (hotlines, websites, and explore the possibility of heavily using all relevant social media) on family members or refer them to the appropriate reunification services and potential sources of information;
- Set up accessible tracing services, which include lists of names, information on hospital patients, sought persons and relevant contacts (with consent of those concerned). Interested migrants could access these lists directly on a webpage or publish their own data and search details; and
- Collaborate with specialized organizations that provide family tracing services. The Red Cross' family reunification service, for instance, can help find separated family members and potentially provide information on distant relatives.

### Victim identification and repatriation

Identifying migrant victims in crises usually requires liaising with local police and hospitals, as well as with relevant home country institutions and with international victim identification teams/mechanisms. It is a process that can last much longer than the crisis itself, and may require the deployment of specialized professionals, in particular when visual identification is not an option.

In these cases, remains can be identified using their dental records and/or fingerprints, assuming that their prints are in a database, as well as through their DNA. Such processes however require the creation of a central repository of samples and information, which are often provided directly by the families looking for their relative. For DNA identification, for instance, as a rule, the samples of three family members are required to make a positive match. Such databases will most likely be established at capital and compiled through the effort of a variety of personnel, both at post and in the home country, depending on the location of the families.

Preparedness efforts can help identify next of kin and establish protocols to contact them, including responsible entities and individuals.

About 30 British professionals were involved in victim identification processes after the 2004 tsunami in Thailand. Eight months after the disaster, 1,600 bodies remained unidentified: the Government of Thailand estimated that it would take another two to five more years to complete the task as DNA testing remained the only available option to identify the bodies.



During the repatriation of thousands of Filipinos out of Libya in the first quarter of 2011, Philippine schools owned and operated by Filipino diaspora in the country were transformed as temporary gathering areas and evacuation centres. Doctors, nurses, and other Filipino medical personnel who chose to remain in Libya during the crisis served as volunteer medical officers for medically distressed Filipinos. This phenomenon of Filipinos helping each other even across countries is a Filipino custom called “bayanihan”. Translated loosely, it means communal unity doing communal work. This social practice enables Filipinos to reach out to other Filipinos especially during extraordinary circumstances.

The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) is a federation of trade unions and registered under the Societies Act, 1955. It is the oldest National Centre representing the Malaysian workers. The unions affiliated to MTUC represent all major industries and sectors with approximately 500,000 members. The MTUC has been active in protecting the rights of migrant workers in Malaysia. MTUC runs Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs), or drop-in centres, in Penang and Kuala Lumpur/Selangor. Through the MRCs, migrant workers and members of their families can receive counselling, legal assistance and dispute resolution, and information, education and training. MRCs also engage in organizing migrant workers through the formation and strengthening of networks and migrant associations. In 2014, 24-hour information hotline numbers were established.

MTUC is also active in pursuing complaints against companies for labour rights abuses, such as unpaid wages, no rest day, inadequate accommodation, unfair dismissal, medical insurance issues, compensation for injury, and the withholding of identity documents. In 2012 and 2013, MTUC provided legal assistance to migrant workers and handled 22 complaint cases involving 122 claimants, which resulted in over USD 56,000 in compensation. This was achieved through action in labour courts, the industrial relations courts, and through direct negotiations.

The Global Legal Assistance and Advocacy aims to establish country-based networks of legal experts and counsellors that can extend voluntary legal assistance to Filipino victims of illegal recruitment and human trafficking, as well as members of Filipino communities overseas who are suffering legal injustices in relation to their status (immigrant or employment-related). The legal assistance includes representation in courts and other tribunals, drafting and filing of legal documents, and provision of legal counseling, among others. The networks of legal experts are in charge of providing a forum for advocacy and lobbying efforts aimed at advancing the interests of overseas Filipino communities in their respective countries of employment or residence. The programme also aims to establish a permanent fund for the purpose of providing pro bono legal services on site to Filipino workers in countries where there are no existing institution or organization that provides such service. The fund shall serve as complementary to existing government funds for legal assistance to OFWs.

The remains of the identified victims will then to be repatriated, as per the family’s wishes and according to international regulations and local exit protocols. The issuance of a death certificate and permission to exit the country is the responsibility of host country governmental agencies. Efforts by the consular representatives in the host country can be useful to remove bureaucratic obstacles when repatriating remains, and their mediation is key to facilitating the task of the bereaved families.

Details on paying the cost of repatriating remains should also be ironed out as part of emergency preparedness.

### **Visit to affected individuals**

When possible, visiting affected individuals either at the evacuation sites and assembly points,

hospitals, even in detention centres, may prove helpful to gather feedback on migrants’ access to assistance and unmet needs.

Many of the consular staff might have skills to support nationals in these situations (e.g. trainings on dealing with situations of distress in general, legal training) and can be enhanced through targeted training in order to increase local response capacities. However, it is not always advisable for consular staff to provide specialized professional assistance due, in part, to liability issues, lack of jurisdiction, conflicts of interest, and mostly due to a lack of formal specialized training, thus a referral to expert professionals should be the preferred option, with the migrant’s permission.

At the time of the Israel–Lebanon conflict in 2006, the government of Egypt estimated the number of Egyptian nationals working and living in Lebanon at around 300,000. The Egyptian embassies in Beirut and Damascus established hotlines and a crisis management group in order to assist their nationals. Although only 5,000 workers were registered, the two embassies coordinated the evacuation of around 14,000 people back to Egypt. With routes pre-cleared by Israelis authorities, the Foreign Ministry sent many military aircrafts, using a disused runway that was still undamaged. Military aircrafts brought aid, food, as well as medicines, which were delivered to a newly established temporary hospital in the south. The planes returned to Egypt with both Egyptian and Lebanese evacuees. Navy frigates also shipped tons of drinking water from Alexandria. With the help of their embassy, between 3,000 and 4,000 Egyptians avoided the USD 1000 fine due to violation of Lebanese immigration law

## COLLABORATING WITH OTHER LOCAL ACTORS

Coordination with relevant actors in the crisis areas will help maximize effectiveness and mutual support of response activities and reduce duplication of efforts. Integrating the services provided by or through the consular posts within a broader response mechanism is important to ensure that the specific needs of crisis-affected nationals are met, as part of a more effective, community-wide response. A variety of local actors, including community-based groups and local migrant associations, provide core emergency services, and in many cases, non-institutionally mandated actors have unique functions that might be essential for migrants affected by a crisis.

On the one hand, it is important for consular authorities and other relevant home country institutions to engage with mandated actors and work proactively to be involved in emergency response coordination mechanisms (meeting, briefings, decision-making and communications procedures). It is important for home country authorities to recognize and support the variety of actors that play a role in assisting migrants during the emergency (e.g. NGOs, faith-based organizations, migrant groups), and ensure they are also directly involved in such coordination mechanisms, or at least are made aware of their processes, decisions and concrete work.

## FACILITATING THE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

While the responsibility of managing an emergency, including the logistics of the response, lies with mandated host country institutions, consular staff and other relevant actors from the home country also play a key role in ensuring that relief goods and specialized professionals can actually reach the affected areas. Many countries have legal frameworks in place for receiving foreign assistance in times of crisis; however, when this is not the case, an ad hoc agreement could be negotiated with the government of the affected country. This might include:

- Facilitating access to diplomatic and consular personnel from States of origin to visit, identify, and provide assistance to their citizens;
- Securing simplified customs procedures for importing relief goods;
- Expedite visa regimes for emergency professionals;
- Arrival and departure rights for cargo flights and ships (fly-over, landing and take-off rights); and
- Agreements on compliance with local health regulations.

The Netherlands has a Calamity Fund that offers financial compensation to travellers whose holiday is discontinued due to unforeseen calamities. The Fund is financed by a compulsory extra EUR 3 charged on all holiday packages. Dutch victims in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami were assisted financially through the Fund: the Government of the Netherlands (and its taxpayers) did not need to further finance the assistance packages.

The Indian Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has established the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in the 43 Indian Missions across the world where there is a significant overseas Indian population. The ICWF's goal is to provide on-site welfare services on a means-tested basis in the most deserving cases including:

- Boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in the domestic sectors and unskilled labourers;
- Extending emergency medical care to the overseas Indians in need;
- Providing air passage to stranded overseas Indians in need;
- Providing initial legal assistance to the overseas Indians in deserving cases; and
- Covering for airlifting a deceased Indian's remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased in cases in which the employer/recruiter/sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost.

Overseas Indian workers deceived by unscrupulous intermediaries in the host countries, runaway house maids, those who become victim of accidents, deserted spouses of overseas Indians or undocumented overseas Indian workers in need of emergency assistance or any other overseas Indian citizens who are in distress are the main beneficiaries of the Fund. The Fund is utilized to meet the expenditure for airlifting the remains of overseas Indian citizens to India on a means-tested basis, on the recommendation of respective Heads of Missions.

The ICWF is funded through budgetary support from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, funds raised by the Indian Missions by levying a nominal service charge on consular services and through voluntary contributions from the Indian community. The Fund was used in 2011 to help repatriate nurses stranded in Libya.

The Philippines' OWWA is an attached agency of DOLE. It is fully-funded by a mandatory membership fee (USD 25) per contract for migrants going abroad as temporary workers. Among other services, OWWA's members are entitled to insurance and health care benefits. A member is covered with the following insurances for the duration of his contract:

- Life insurance;
- Partial disability and dismemberment benefits;
- Total disability benefits; and
- Burial benefits in case of the member's death.

## FUNDING

Setting up an emergency fund can help bear the costs of an emergency intervention. Many countries have disaster/emergency funds that can be mobilized, including when disasters affect nationals living or travelling abroad.

Others require nationals going abroad to subscribe to mandatory insurance that would cover the costs for evacuation and repatriation of the remains.

It should be noted that funding mechanisms should also be identified to cover the need for longer-term assistance provision, including to the victims' families.

# PROVIDING RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

## INTRODUCTION

Supporting affected migrants, their families and communities in the aftermath of a crisis, through short- and long-term interventions is necessary to avoid negative, long-lasting well-being impacts. Providing longer-term recovery assistance requires taking into account each migrant's situation, as determined by his/her intentions, capacities, and priorities, whether they plan on staying in or returning to their host country, once the crisis has subsided, rebuild a life in their home country or re-migrate elsewhere.

Recovery processes usually require longer-term engagement on the part of relevant actors and tend to be more politically sensitive in nature than the emergency response. They require identifying specific needs and priorities of crisis-affected migrants, weighing them against those of the rest of the collectivity – in home, host and third countries. Recovery processes require mediating multiple, very different interests, allocating scarce resources in support of specific individual and collective projects. Recovery assistance is an often overlooked and underfunded component of emergency and risk management efforts.

Migrants may struggle disproportionately in order to recover from a crisis compared to nationals in the affected country. This is largely due to the fact that migrants are not always entitled to financial support, employment benefits, livelihood and housing assistance, medical care and long-term psychosocial support. Even in countries that recognize migrants' full right to assistance during crises, once the emergency has passed and life returns to normal, business resumes and migrants can face specific administrative and legal barriers, restrictive immigration regimes and a lack of representation and visibility in local decision-making processes.

The set of agencies and other actors dealing with recovery is often different than those in charge of emergency preparedness and response, and usually

includes a much broader variety of development-focused stakeholders. These activities may also involve representatives of the migrants' home countries (whether posted abroad or based at HQ/capital) mandated with the protection of the interests of their nationals. They also play a role in ensuring migrants' effective recovery and long-term well-being – whether migrants decide to stay in (or return to) the crisis-affected country, to go back home or to move elsewhere in search of new opportunities.

## UNDERSTANDING MIGRANTS' NEEDS, SKILLS AND INTENTIONS

Gathering information on the migrants' need, socioeconomic profile (including their skills), level of indebtedness, access to in situ and distant social networks and intentions to move in the short and longer term is key to inform recovery efforts for all actors in home, host and third countries.

Such information can be collected as part of a variety of response efforts that is routinely carried out during or after emergencies, including:

- Crisis impacts and needs assessments;
- Information management related to service delivery in affected areas;
- Recording of requests for specific services or assistance;
- Displacement tracking; and
- Registration of nationals as part of evacuation operations or post-arrival assistance.

However, such efforts might need to be adapted in order to gather this kind of information, which is particularly important for assisting migrants' recovery.

This information, in turn, can help:

### ***Plan for further population movements***

- Do migrants want to return to the affected area once the crisis subsides?
- Do they want to relocate to a third country?
- What are the diplomatic/administrative/economic/logistical measures needed to support them?

### ***Identify and support potential employment opportunities for crisis-affected migrants***

- What does the migrants' skill profile look like?
- How does it match with employment opportunities available in the areas they want to stay in/move to?

In addition, this also requires reflecting on the following aspects:

- As non-citizens, would migrants have access to welfare benefits should they not have immediate access to employment?
- Would they qualify for training opportunities provided as part of routine or recovery-specific programmes?
- Would they qualify for medical, educational and psychosocial support?

***Match migrants with, and/or refer migrant to relevant actors*** such as recruiters, job placement agencies, institutions offering adjustment services in their destination, as well as local actors offering psychosocial support and social or community networks.

### ***Identify needs that may be still unmet***

- Would migrants qualify for victims' assistance packages from the host and/or home country?
- Would migrants have access to sufficient or dedicated financial resources and administrative assistance in order to support their repatriation or re-migration projects?
- Are additional professionals needed to provide adequate support, legal assistance and/or vocational trainings?

### ***Understand the potential risks migrants face in their home and host communities in the aftermath of the crisis***

- To what degree are they free to choose whether they want to stay or relocate?
- Are relocation efforts safe for the migrants involved?

- Will migrants – regardless of whether they decide to stay, to go back home or to relocate – have sufficient access to employment and income to support their dependants?
- Will their return cause additional pressure on the family or impoverish their community in the home country?
- Would specific support they might receive be regarded as a privilege by other members of their home community?

The involvement of all migrants, including their families and the most marginalized within the migrant community in these information-gathering activities is essential. Understanding culture, perceptions and priorities of their relatives and of other members of their home communities might also be important to plan recovery processes, as it might help uncover collective projects, priorities and challenges that need to be taken into account in this kind of efforts.

## **ASSISTING MIGRANTS RETURNING HOME**

Home country institutions and other relevant actors can set up a variety of efforts to assist migrants and their families once they return back home as a consequence of a crisis. In some countries, returning nationals may qualify for return and reintegration packages, in addition to ordinary delivery of services and assistance, irrespective of the length of their stay abroad. This may also apply to dual citizens evacuated to their second country of nationality, assuming their other nationality is recognized. However, specific forms of assistance might be in place for particular categories of crisis-affected returnees. Tourists, for instance, might qualify for compensation or assistance via their insurance providers; migrant workers might have access to specific reintegration or re-emigration programmes. Institutional capacity to actually roll out such programmes, however, will heavily depend on the number of crisis-affected nationals and on the extent of their assistance needs and on the services available locally.

Services and assistance that might be needed by returning nationals after crises might include the following:



- Health care;
- Psychosocial assistance;
- Career advice, vocational training and employment support;
- Welfare benefits, including cash disbursements, for unemployment and disability, or to cover the costs incurred in the crisis (e.g. lost income, costs of evacuation and return);
- Financing and loans;
- Shelter and longer-term housing;
- Access to schools and other education services, and recognition of skills acquired abroad;
- Legal assistance (including for instance to recover unpaid wages or assets and property in host States);
- Assistance to obtain identity documents and citizenship (e.g. temporary documentation, citizenship for children born abroad, provided they are entitled to receiving citizenship);
- Tracing and communicating with missing family members; and
- Targeted services for particularly vulnerable migrants such as women, children, victims of trafficking and other persons experiencing trauma.

A dedicated agency (or different agencies than those that have been involved in assisting migrants abroad during crises) might be responsible for coordinating assistance provision to returning migrants. Efforts by crisis managers and, to some extent, consular corps in the crisis-affected, transit and neighbouring countries can potentially ease their return and their life back home.

These actors can help provide migrants with information on options available upon their return to their home country (or direct them to relevant sources of information); this is key for migrants to make informed decisions for or against repatriation.

In addition, once the migrants have left the host country, such institutions can direct migrants

to local experts able to assist them with any outstanding issue with banks, insurances, employers, governmental authorities (e.g. fiscal or labour) and any other relevant local actor operating in the crisis-affected country. On occasion, they can even play a direct advocacy role with these actors on behalf of their nationals.

These efforts can help ensure that:

- Migrants are able to recover their belongings and all assets left behind;
- Migrants have access to efforts to search missing individuals and support family reunification processes (typically carried out by institutions such as the local police or international entities such as the IFRC);
- Migrants receive formal recognition by the relevant host country authorities (e.g. the country's education institutions confirming the national's enrolment in a specific programme in order to support skill recognition processes); and
- Host country institutions have access to information that may be relevant for the response and recovery process (e.g. migrants' identity and circumstances, the losses they suffered as a consequence of the crisis), provided this is compatible with privacy regulations.

Lastly, consular staff in the affected country and other home country representatives could be mandated to reach out to, and mediate, with other actors (e.g. international organizations, private sector actors, foreign States) responsible to support and carry out return and reintegration operations.

Academia, international organizations and the private sector also play an important role in monitoring and evaluating of the effectiveness of these programmes.

India has set up a pension and life insurance fund scheme called Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana for overseas Indian workers who possess a passport that is classified as Emigration Check Required (ECR). The objective of the fund is to support overseas Indian workers save by contributing to the fund, via a specific, approved bank account, and supplementing those savings through the governments' contribution.

Such funds allow migrants to:

- Save for their potential return/resettlement and reintegration;
- Save for their retirement; and
- Obtain a life insurance cover against natural death during the period of coverage.

The government contribution is for a period of five years or until the return of workers in India. Male and female overseas Indian workers with ECR passport and aged between 18 and 50 years who are emigrating overseas or have already emigrated overseas on employment visa are eligible to join the scheme.

During the Libya crisis, a Chinese company operating in Libya and employing a significant number of workers from Bangladesh remitted unpaid salaries for its Bangladeshi workers directly to the Government of Bangladesh's Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

When Libya entered a period of civil conflict in February 2011, there were approximately 63,000 Bangladeshis in the country, mostly working as unskilled and semi-skilled workers. About half were repatriated through a joint effort by IOM and Biman Bangladesh Airlines (the national carrier). The World Bank offered a loan to the Government to reimburse IOM for repatriation costs already incurred, ensure the continuity of further repatriation activities, and provide a one-time cash grant to returnees as a transitional safety net measure.

Before the departure, migrant workers were identified and surveyed with regard to their intentions to return back home. On-site consular services were organized by the IOM, upon authorization of the Government, including the issuance of emergency travel documents to workers who had lost their travel documents. Upon arrival in Bangladesh, the Government had organized facilities at the airport to register about 4,000 returnees per day, bus transportation to the central bus terminal for returnees and had provided each returnee 1,000 Bangladesh taka (BDT) for transportation to their home. In addition, immediate medical care, food and water distribution, immigration support and additional foreign exchange facilities were set up at the airport.

IOM also established a cash transfer system to cover return cost and support families' livelihoods. This included setting up:

- Public information campaign to inform the returnees about the programme and the documents necessary to file the application, including the need for a personal bank account;
- Database of all returnees registered at the airport;
- Payment system to deliver the BDT 50,000 that were awarded to each returnee or its family, which included verification of the documentation and a physical visit of the applicant;
- Monitoring and grievance and redressal system.

According to IOM's assessment, 54 per cent of the migrants used the grant to pay off the initial cost of migration; 20 per cent to invest in business and 10 per cent to cover family expenses. Only 11 per cent used the money to re-migrate.

Following the return of migrants from Libya, IOM led a variety of activities to support their return and socioeconomic reintegration in their home communities. This included:

- Provision of temporary accommodation;
- Provision of essential food and NFIs;
- Provision of health care (directly or through referral mechanisms);
- Strengthening the bonds between returnees and host communities; and
- Supporting the rehabilitation of productive infrastructures.

Some 125,000 community members, including returnees, benefitted from the programme.

## ASSISTING FAMILIES AND HOME COMMUNITIES

Migrants' relatives and members of their communities of origin still living in the home country may also need specific forms of support. They might be affected directly (e.g. through the loss of a relative or of the income he or she was generating before the crisis hit) or indirectly (through for example loss of income opportunities and reduced access to services following the mass return of migrants from a crisis area).

Consulting with them as part of reintegration and/or recovery efforts, would ensure that post-crisis assistance packages include measures that also take into account their material and social/emotional needs. This can help support overall community cohesion, enhance acceptance of returnees and avoid tensions and conflict within communities over scarce resources.

Some of these forms of assistance, and in particular those that take place in the crisis-affected country, could require the direct engagement of crisis managers and consular staff or of other institutions specifically mandated with the provision of assistance to nationals abroad. They include:

- Facilitating the travel of bereaved family members to crisis-affected areas. This is not always immediately possible in all crisis situations, as crisis-affected countries are not always in the condition of receiving and accommodating more people, and due to heightened secondary risks (e.g. epidemics, lack of food and clean water, violence, presence of unexploded ordnances). However, it could prove useful to identifying the remains of family members who were victims in the crisis and helping relatives obtain closure and support their emotional recovery. When warranted and allowed by the relevant institutions of the crisis-affected area, supporting logistical arrangements for these people, often shortly

Within the Philippines' complex system for assisting returnees, a couple of specific programmes exist for livelihood support.

The Livelihood Development Assistance Program provides grants for livelihood assistance to returning OFWs. From 2011 to 2014, it has served more than 15,000 beneficiaries and has funded income-generating activities as diverse as *sari-sari* stores, beauty parlors, rice trading, machine shops and furniture-making business, to the benefit of undocumented OFWs who have returned to the country. Applicants include various groups whose members have migrated in an irregular manner (e.g. possess expired visa or permits to stay, have no travel documents whatsoever, have valid but inadequate visa, have employment contracts that were not registered). All applicants are required to follow a Small Business Management Training and Financial Awareness Seminar to prepare them in managing a small business enterprise. Selected applicants receive a business enterprise start-up kit worth PHP 10,000 which consist of the materials of their proposed business.

The Balik Pinay! Balik Hanapbuhay! Program was created to enable women OFW returnees to start and operate small-scale businesses/livelihood activities. The programme consists of skill trainings and distribution of starter kits. Priority is given to women OFWs who are displaced by hostilities and conflicts in their host country, or victims of illegal recruitment and trafficking, and other distressed and displaced women household service workers.

after a disaster has hit or a conflict has ended, requires coordination among local authorities or crisis managers and/or personnel serving in the affected country.

- Providing photographic evidence of the deceased family member's body and details about the circumstances of his/her death, upon request of the relatives.
- Providing psychosocial counselling to the bereaved (including long-term support) is a key element of people's integral recovery. Enabling migrants' family members to seek out information on available resources and services, and setting referral mechanisms for the provision of care can be initiated by agencies involved in crisis management efforts. This should include having specific protocols in place to target children, the elderly, disabled persons and groups with specific assistance needs.
- When warranted, organizing memorials and/or social events for affected people and communities might be central to individual and collective recovery.

## ASSISTING MIGRANTS WILLING TO STAY IN PLACE OR RE-MIGRATE

The income earned by a migrant is often so necessary to his/her family's and community's well-being that s/he may decide (or be forced or pressured) to remain in a crisis-affected area in order to keep working. In many cases, crises open up income opportunities linked with the reconstruction process, and offer therefore reasons to stay in, or return to, a crisis zone. Other reasons, such as the fear to leave the country, or the lack of trust in local actors, might result in migrants remaining in place. In many cases, migrants may return home in the direct aftermath of a crisis but will seek opportunities to re-migrate to the crisis-affected country as soon as they can or will look for opportunities elsewhere. In all these cases, making sure that migrants receive pertinent information and/or assistance can increase their security and improve the odds of their migration project.

Providing migrants detailed updated information on available opportunities and risks in the different locations will help ensure that their post-crisis

The United Kingdom has been delivering assistance packages to nationals affected by crisis abroad since the 2002 bombing in Bali. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, it provided victims and families with a package that covered:

- Health care costs for seriously injured people;
- Emergency medical treatment and evacuation to the United Kingdom;
- Luggage costs for those killed or injured;
- Counselling, if not already covered by the National Health System;
- Repatriation of bodies or mortal remains;
- Travel to the site of the incident for two family members, including local travel and insurance; and
- Accommodation at the site of the incident for the time needed to issue death certificates and assist with memorials.

Australia offered a similar package, including:

- Flights to Australia from tsunami-affected areas;
- Flights within Australia for families of victims being treated in an Australian hospital;
- Accommodation and living expenses for those travelling on the above flights; and
- Funeral expenses in Australia, and related travel, accommodation and living expenses for immediate family members.

In March 2013, the Government of the Philippines established a One-Stop Shop Processing Center (OSSPC) to assist a significant number of Filipinos deported from Sandakan by Malaysian immigration authorities. Though most of the Filipinos deported had migrated into Malaysia in an irregular manner, the OSSPC eventually facilitated their safe and legal return to Malaysia. The OSSPC provided a range of services to the deportees, including transient stay, passport services, birth certificate issuance, trainings and reintegration services, such as livelihood, capability-building, and entrepreneurship skills, and referral for local employment.

A onestop shop was set up by the Government of Cambodia to facilitate the massive repatriation of workers from Thailand after the heavy floods in 2011. The centre for Cambodian migrants provided them with identity documents, established passport-issuing counters at the borders and reduced passport fees from USD 12 to USD 4.

decisions will be made in a more informed manner. Consular corps and crisis managers are usually well placed to collect and provide the information in an easily accessible and centralized format. Their information can come from various institutional and non-institutional sources in the home, host as well as in third countries. In so far as possible, information by consular corps should always clearly identify the original source of the information, so that migrants interested in a specific programme or opportunity can follow up accordingly.

Re-migration or migration to a third country can be supported through advocacy and diplomatic work, with governmental and private sector actors, aiming to open up avenues for safe and legal migration. This might include, for instance, identifying receptive employers who would hire and/or (re-)hire affected migrants; seeking the support of recruitment companies who could waive recruitment fees; or enlisting the help of foreign governments so that they offer more flexible immigration procedures in order to facilitate their (re-)entry (e.g. through multiple-entry work visa, or specific employment schemes that would be open to migrant workers).

Quickly providing migrants with relevant documentation is also essential.

Home country agencies involved in crisis management (including of consular staff) can play a useful role sharing information on available recovery programmes and opportunities stemming from the reconstruction process with their crisis-affected nationals. Referral of migrants in need to relevant experts available in the migrants' area of destination can be key to support the provision of:

- Legal assistance;
- Psychosocial support;
- Employment and vocational trainings; and
- Health care, including specialized medical services.

Promoting the visibility of migrant issues with local institutions and actors and ensuring migrants (at the very least those with regular migration status in the home country) are formally entitled to accessing existing recovery opportunities such as shelter support, loans and housing replacement and reconstruction services can be essential.

In order to do so, it would be necessary to ensure that migrants are aware of visa renewal procedures, and the importance for them to maintain a regular status despite the disruption in local immigration systems and related obstacles to issuing or renewing visas. Advocating for additional flexibility with the host country authorities in order to allow migrants to have their visas extended automatically or via simplified/expedite procedures, on a temporary basis and based on humanitarian reasons, would help support those who stayed during a crisis and wish to remain and contribute.

Specific actions may be required in order to protect migrants' rights throughout the recovery process, as post-crisis realities are often characterized by reduced law enforcement, exploitation and abuse, including in most activities related to reconstruction efforts. Providing information to migrants on the risks they face as a consequence of exploitative practices and abuses, and ensuring the relevant institutions in home, host and third countries are aware of such issues can help prevent such episodes.

Migrants might also need assistance to recover lost assets, including property and unpaid wages. Ensuring they have access (even remotely) to local experts and redress mechanisms that the host State might have set up to this aim (or that might otherwise be mandated to cover such issues) can be key to facilitating the restitution of assets and properties to migrant victims.



## EVALUATION OF PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Post-crisis periods also present significant opportunities to evaluate emergency preparedness and response procedures and capacities. Collecting information from affected migrants, host and home communities and institutions, including local actors in the crisis-affected areas can be important to improve existing systems.

This requires:

- Developing clear objectives related to the effectiveness of crisis responses as they pertain to migrants as a distinct population with specific characteristics and needs;
- Oversampling migrant populations in evaluations that assess the overall crisis response to ensure that enough migrants are included in any surveys, with the caveat that they might be overly critical of the efforts carried out by home and host country actors;
- Involving migrant groups and civil society organizations that work closely with migrant populations in evaluation exercises;
- Considering the short-, medium- and long-term impacts of crisis response on migrant populations, including needs related to repatriation and reintegration; and
- Articulating lessons learned and making recommendations to improve crisis response for locals including migrants.

Information that can be relevant includes:

- To what extent has the adverse effects of the crisis been mitigated by the interventions?
- How were the intervention (pre and post crisis) taken and were they appropriate to address the needs of the migrant population? How can they be improved? What were the problems, obstacles, and challenges encountered?

Information the migrants might provide include:

- How did the migrants (and other groups in the host community) react to the crisis? What were recurrent reasons for confusion? Did they know what they were supposed to do? How were they informed? Was there general panic, and what caused it? How did it affect the evacuation and response efforts, and how could it have been prevented?

- Did the migrants express a desire to stay behind even during the crisis? If so, why was it the case? Could they actually do so?
- Did (migrant) leaders and representatives act effectively during the crisis? What problems did they encounter?

Information the employers could provide include:

- How did the employers behave before, during, and after the crisis?
- How did the crisis affect the way employers treated their migrant workers?
- Did the employers pose an obstacle to responding to the emergency? Did the employers hinder the ability and desire of the migrants to seek safe haven?

Information the consular staff and crisis managers could provide include:

- How was the crisis situation assessed at the beginning? Was the crisis anticipated?
- What mechanisms were utilized to disseminate information and to communicate with the migrants before, during, and after the crisis?
- Was there a contingency plan specific to the emergency? What was lacking in the contingency plan? How can it be improved?
- How can a similar crisis be better anticipated in the future? Was the alert system effective? How can it be improved?
- Was the crisis management team effective? Was the team set up in a timely manner?
- What problems were encountered in the evacuation or repatriation process? Could these problems be avoided? How?
- What would be your recommendations to improve crisis management at post, in host country and at home? What resources are needed to improve crisis management capability? What training would be needed to improve the capacity of crisis managers?

Information other actors could provide include:

- Was the public sufficiently informed and/or updated? Was the media supplied the appropriate information? Was language used an issue?
- Were the families of the migrants informed of the conditions of their loved ones?

The results of these assessments should be shared among institutions in host, home and third countries, in order to support broader institutional learning.



# GLOSSARY

*Please note that this Glossary refers to the terminology as it is used exclusively in this manual and course. It does not attempt to suggest standards or define meanings beyond their scope.*

**Actors:** see >stakeholders.

**Asylum seeker:** any person who is seeking international protection, but whose claim for >refugee status has not yet been finally decided by the competent authorities of the >country of destination.

**Citizen:** a native or legally recognized subject or national of a State. This does not automatically coincide with birthplace, as not all countries grant citizenship to people born on their territory. Depending on the countries, this may or not be linked with place of birth. People can be citizens of more than one country – however countries exist that do not recognize dual citizenship.

**Civil society:** international, regional, national, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs); migrant and diaspora networks, organizations, and groups; religious and faith-based organizations; workers' and employers' organizations; think tanks; academics and researchers and their institutions, whether based in >countries of origin, >countries of destination or >third countries.

**Conflict:** situations in which there is resort to armed force between two or more States, or in which protracted armed confrontations occur between governmental armed forces and the forces of one or more armed groups, or between such groups arising on the territory of a State.

**Consular staff:** any official representative of a State and its government in the territory of a different State.

**Contingency plan:** a document that analyses potential >crises threatening a community, business, or society and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate >responses to such events and situations. It provides for organized and coordinated courses of

action with clearly identified institutional roles and resources, information processes and operational arrangements for specific >actors at times of need.

**Country experiencing a conflict or disaster:** see >host State, also referred to as "country experiencing a crisis" or "country experiencing an emergency".

**Country of destination:** the State where a >migrant is living or working and that is at risk of, or experiencing, a >conflict or >disaster in the whole or part of its territory.

**Country of origin:** the State of citizenship of a >migrant. See also >citizen.

**Crisis:** a >conflict, natural or man-made >disaster of a magnitude that demands a significant humanitarian response by authorities of the >country of origin, of >country of destination, or by the international community.

**Diaspora:** persons from the same >country of origin as >migrants who are in States other than the State of origin. When a distinction is made between migrants and diaspora (and their groups), migrants is referred to the individuals living, working and staying in an area affected by a >conflict or a >disaster, diaspora is referred to all persons from the same country of origin living outside the affected area, including in a >third country.

**Disaster:** a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. A disaster is natural when it is triggered by a >natural hazard, man-made when it is triggered by a >man-made hazard.

**Disaster risk:** the potential losses in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services that could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period as a consequence of >disasters.

**Disaster risk management:** the process of using administrative directives, organizations and operational skills, capacities and resources (including financial resources) to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of >hazards and the possibility of >disaster.

**Disaster risk reduction:** the concept and practice of reducing >disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of >disasters, including through reduced exposure to >hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

**Displaced person:** a person who is forced to leave his or her usual place of residence and/or work due to a >crisis. It can refer both to a >migrant or a >citizen in any crisis-affected >country of destination.

**Domestic worker:** a >migrant working within the >employer's household, performing services for individuals or their families, such as providing care for children and elderly dependants, housekeeping, and household maintenance.

**Documented migrant:** any >migrant who has the documentation required to enter, stay and work (or study) in a >country of destination.

**Early warning system:** The system needed to generate and disseminate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities and organizations threatened by a >hazard to prepare and to act appropriately and in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of harm or loss.

**Emergency:** see >crisis.

**Emergency actors:** specialized and non-specialized >stakeholders that have responsibilities and objectives in serving and protecting people and property in >emergency situations.

**Emergency management:** the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of emergencies, in particular >preparedness, >response and initial >recovery steps.

**Employer:** a person or organization that employs one or more >migrants.

**Evacuation:** the planned or unplanned, assisted or spontaneous movement of people or assets from an area at risk of, or affected by, a >crisis, on a temporary base and for reasons of safety and protection.

**Evacuation route:** any land, air or sea route, whether identified or not in a >contingency plan, people can take in order to evacuate.

**Evacuation site:** any place, whether planned or unplanned, managed by governmental or non-governmental >emergency actors, to which people and assets >evacuate or are evacuated, in order to ensure their safety in the face of a crisis.

**Exit point:** any site through which people affected by a >crisis can leave a country and/or a crisis-affected area within the country.

**Hazard:** a dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**Host State:** see >Country of destination.

**Human trafficking or trafficking in persons:** is the act of recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking can occur within a country or between countries. The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (known as the Palermo Protocol), establishes a global legal framework that criminalizes all forms of trafficking in persons, prescribes serious penalties, describes specific victim protections, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of governments.

**International organization:** intergovernmental organization. For the purpose of this training, international non-governmental entities are not included in this category.

**Man-made hazard:** a >hazard originating from technological or industrial conditions, including accidents, dangerous procedures, infrastructure failures or specific human activities, that may cause loss of life, injury, illness or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**Migrant:** any non-citizen who is present in a country to live, work, study or transit, regardless of: (a) the means of or reasons for entry; (b) legal status; or (c) length of or reasons for stay.

**National abroad:** see >migrant.

**Natural hazard:** a natural process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**Preparedness:** the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from potential >crises.

**Private sector actors:** >employers, >recruiters and service providers, regardless of their size. They may include multinational corporations, medium and small companies, or individual employers. Private sector service providers include companies providing services such as telecommunications, transportation, or financial services.

**Receiving country:** see >country of destination.

**Recovery:** the restoration and improvement, where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of communities and individuals affected by >crises.

**Recruiters:** professionals who look for, or solicit, >migrants to work for an >employer. They or may not work through a recruitment agency.

**Refugee:** a person who meets the eligibility criteria in the refugee definition provided by relevant international or regional refugee instruments, UNHCR's mandate, and/or national legislation. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is a person who is unwilling or unable to return to his or her country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. Other international instruments or domestic laws may broaden this definition, e.g. to include threats to life, safety or freedom resulting from indiscriminate violence or other events seriously disturbing public order.

**Relief:** see >response.

**Resilience:** the ability of an individual, community or society exposed to >hazards to resist, absorb, adapt to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner.

**Response:** the provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a >crisis in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.

**Sending country:** see >country of origin.

**Stakeholders:** any number of States of origin, host States and States of transit and their institutions, private sector actors, international organizations, and civil society.

**Stateless person:** a person who is not considered to be a national by any State under operation of its law; he or she has, for all intents and purposes, no citizenship or nationality.

**State of origin:** the State of citizenship of a >migrant.

**State of transit:** a State to which migrants may flee other than the >State of origin.

**Third country:** any State different than the >State of origin and the >host State.

**Unaccompanied or separated child:** a minor who has been separated from both parents and other relatives and is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

**Undocumented migrant:** a >migrant who does not have the documentation required to lawfully enter or stay in a >country of destination, whether he or she has entered the country without documentation, has entered lawfully and has subsequently lost his or her rights to stay in the country, or has overstayed the period for which his or her visa had been issued. Migrants whose documents are being withheld by an employer, while they may not have their documentation physically available, are not considered undocumented.

**Vulnerability:** the likelihood of an individual, community or system to be negatively affected by a >hazard.

**Warden:** a private individual, not employed by a >country of origin or its missions, but volunteering (often at the request of a mission's representative) to ensure the dissemination of information (such as on safety and security measures, entitlement to rights, available assistance) to, or the coordination of, local migrants of same nationality in a specific area before, during or after a crisis. Wardens can be organized in more or less structured networks.

[micicinitiative.iom.int](http://micicinitiative.iom.int) - [micicsecretariat@iom.int](mailto:micicsecretariat@iom.int)

**MICIC** Save Lives  
Increase Protection  
Decrease Vulnerability  
Improve Response

---

MIGRANTS IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS INITIATIVE