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Humanitarian Aid

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SA-IO) Disaster Preparedness ECHO and Partners Workshop

Johannesburg, 28 - 30 June 2022

WORLD CAFE

Questions for Breakout Groups

Topic: Early Warning | Scenario: Conflict

Guidelines

- 3 sessions of 12 breakout groups are scheduled to be held on the afternoon of June 29, 2022. Each group will discuss 3 different topics (Early Warning Systems Digital Platforms, Anticipatory Action, and DP in Urban contexts) under two different scenarios (Cyclones, and Conflict) – ie each group will undertake 6 discussions.
- Given the large number of participants, every topic / scenario group is to be duplicated, so as to allow a meaningful group size. It is foreseen that there will be approximately 10-12 participants per discussion group.
- Each topic/scenario discussion will last 45 minutes. Participants are going to migrate every 45 minutes throughout the 3 sessions until they have covered all six topics and scenarios,
- There will be 15-minute breaks every 90 minutes (ie after two discussion sessions), for separate lightning talks.
- Participants will be assigned to their first group, and to the groups they subsequently migrate to. These groups will observe the following criteria: (1) No individual organization is represented twice in each group, (2) Gender equality, (3) rotation between the group is based on individual migration, meaning the groups do not remain the same when moving from one topic to the other,
- Facilitators will remain in their initially assigned topic/scenario, and thus discuss the same topic/scenario with six visiting groups
- Facilitators will be guiding the same discussion with the different groups, based on a set of pre-defined questions,
- Facilitators may wish to pre-identify a note taker before the start of the workshop, or assign him/her from each group,
- Facilitators are expected to bring their own laptops,
- Flip chart will be provided,
- Time keeping is extremely important to ensure that all questions are covered under each topic/scenario
- Facilitators and notetakers are expected to capture answers for all the questions,
- Facilitators and notetakers of duplicated groups are expected to combine their collected answers into one file on the evening of June 29th,
- Facilitators of duplicated groups are expected to summarize the key findings and put them in a PPT (template provided) on the evening of June 29th,
- Facilitators of duplicated groups will have to agree who is presenting on the 30th the key findings with the PPT.

Topic: Early Warning
Scenario: Conflict



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Facilitator's Name:

Question 1A: What types of EWS digital data systems exist in your country, for conflicts?

Mozambique:

- *INSO / ACLED / Aldebaran (alerts and reports)*
- *WhatsApp groups*
- *Group Access & Security (UNDSS and WFP)*

Zimbabwe:

- *Social media but with high level of politization*
- *UNDSS sharing specific alerts*
- *Human Rights lawyers' association*
- *Website Kubatana – Context updates*
 - *Is closing now*
- *Embassies to their employees/nationals*

Madagascar:

- *G4S (private company funded by GB) – Sharing information on security context*
- *UNDSS*
- *Social media*
- *Embassies*

Other:

- *Religious channels*
- *Ad hoc WhatsApp group*
- *Hotlines (for reporting information)*

Per order of mentions:

1. *Social media (including WhatsApp groups)*
2. *UNDSS alerts and recommendations*
3. *Dedicated security actor (INSO, G4S, etc) – Mapping, alerts, platforms*
4. *Embassies alerts and recommendations*
5. *Media and civil society (including religious channels)*

Question 1B: What are the key elements, features and information which an EW Digital system should have, to be adapted to conflict settings?



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Key features:

- Verification of sources and centralization of the information
 - Actor in charge of moderation should be credible, neutral and capable of balancing out all the information
- Time-sensitiveness
- Need for a mix system (one for real-time information such as WhatsApp group and one for verified information through a credible actor)

Key information:

- Target group
- Target areas/Safe areas
- Recommendations/Guidelines
 - Need to go through actors that has the capacities to elaborate these recommendations – pre-existing structures or authorities' networks?
- Where to get additional information

Question 1C: How can such systems be best used to promote DP in conflict settings?

Would be different in “official conflict”, recognized as such, and potential conflict (political tensions for upcoming elections for instance)

Depends on the target for this: community level or entities/structures?

Cross-cutting:

- Rumor-tracking through a dedicated focal point to then be able to decide what can be shared publicly or not
- Mapping of vulnerabilities areas to have a plan in case these areas are affected
- Working with local languages and translating systems

Social media:

- Issues:
 - Need to be cautious with the information that is shared there
 - Difficult to rank the emergency/significance of the information shared
- On WhatsApp group, systematization needs to be organized, with selected participants and reporting channels – Comes down to who is moderating these groups with sharing policies

Media & Civil society:

- Community consultation that needs to be regular and not just during tensed context in order to build trust/peace dialogue



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- Having a network of media that can share the information – Careful with political sensitivity and neutrality though

Question 2A: Who should manage the data and how?

Central or local?

Local level is more important as the different regions can be pretty different from one another in the same country

Through authorities or not?

- External actor dedicated to the task (INSO for instance) – Usually perceived as more neutral
 - Trustworthy NGOs (Red Cross for instance) can be in a good position to do so when perceived neutral – Depends on the context
- Authorities could be complicated in some contexts due to neutrality – Need for independence of the information – Governments might not communicate in some conflict issues due to political reasons
 - Would still need to be involved at some stage
- Coordination between authorities and different actors necessary

How?

- Coordination mechanisms such as platforms/clusters between actors
- Confidentiality for the sources – Thinking about how to protect the informants
- Filtering people receiving sensitive information
- Through community networks that NGOs are building with some guidelines
- Writing can be sensitive in conflict settings
- Ranking of the type of information can be done through the data management

Question 2C: What technological solutions can be used to address these?



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- Online platforms
 - Can also be complicated in conflict when internet is shut down
- Automatic alerts to some people
 - Could work in some conflict context but maybe not for acute risks in countries that are usually not in a conflict context
- Reporting app with level of alerts
- Monitoring the attacks on the system for cyberwarfare

Question 3: How can “last-mile communication” be ensured between the early warning and the at-risk population?

Possible issues:

- Dependent on each context
- Phone coverage might be missing in some context
- Focal points might not be available anymore
- Internet can be shut down

Possible solutions:

- VPN can be used sometimes if internet is not shut down but just blocked
- Having phone companies sending SMS to users – Although it might be the first thing getting destroyed during an attack
- Radio
- Using the local networks

Question 4A: What examples do you have of local / grassroots / indigenous knowledge and experience being used in this context in your country?

Drums in Malawi

Whistle or horns or shouts in Madagascar

Having key people transmitting the warning

Radio within some villages in Lesotho

Social-cultural organizations that are working in conflict prevention and could alert in signs of conflicts



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Question 4B: How can the use of such knowledge and experience be optimised?
Having the community being part of the discussions Using social-cultural organizations Dissemination of information on existing EWS

Additional input
ECHO could support on trainings to have focal points to manage these EWS Capacity-building and experiences sharing