

TURKEY / SYRIA REMOTE SITE MANAGEMENT AND REMOTE COORDINATION

KEYWORDS:

IDPS, REMOTE MANAGEMENT, SITE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT, CROSS-BORDER M&E, EMERGENCY CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMMING, ONLINE METHODS OF CAPACITY BUILDING, MOBILE TEAMS

CAUSE OF DISPLACEMENT	Syrian conflict
DATE OF EVENT CAUSING DISPLACEMENT	2011 - Ongoing
PEOPLE DISPLACED	90,000 in 2018
PROJECT LOCATION	Gaziantep, Turkey
PROJECT DURATION	2011 - Ongoing
NUMBER OF PEOPLE TARGETED BY THE PROJECT	90,000 in 2018
CCCM COORDINATION MECHANISM	CCCM Cluster activated



SUMMARY:

This case study describes how remote coordination and CCCM remote operations were effectively applied in the case of Gaziantep, as one of the most advanced good practice case study.



Displaced families in Atmeh, North West Syria.

CONTEXT

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The North Syria Cluster system is remotely operated from Southern Turkey – mainly the city of Gaziantep, where the cross-border humanitarian community is based. The CCCM Cluster is based in Gaziantep with frequent trips to other border towns. The team is composed of a Cluster Coordinator, Cluster Support Office and two Information Management Officers.

Due to insecurity, conflict induced crises trigger a humanitarian context which to a various degree implies remote coordination/management. Such contexts are also strongly correlated to the proliferation of informal sites and settlements. This aspect determines the need of adapted methods of CCCM cluster coordination and partner implementation to be applied.

Operating from Southern Turkey in Gaziantep, the Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM) sector has been active in Northern Syria since 2013, first as a working group and then as fully activated cluster in 2014.

Between the 26th of February to the 3rd of March 2018, semi-structured discussions were conducted in Gaziantep with CCCM Cluster members and stakeholders which included the implementing agencies. Results of these discussions are presented in this case study such as, what needs to be established with regards to how remote coordination and CCCM remote operations that were effectively applied in the case of Gaziantep, as one of the best good practice case study.

PROJECT

IMPLEMENTATION

PART 1: Ensuring effectiveness of coordination in a remote coordination context

1.1 Set up active membership agreements and systems: Traditional and Non-traditional members

The CCCM Cluster operating from Gaziantep, Turkey in Northern Syria, counts 138 members (71 active) composed of international, national and Syrian NGOs and UN Agencies amongst its membership, all committed to the core principles CCCM principles of service delivery. The Cluster agreed to ensure a multi- sectoral response to assist and protect camp-based populations and to make all efforts to identify durable solutions. Additionally, partners agreed to ensure the identification of areas hosting high concentrations of IDPs in Syria for use by cluster members and the wider humanitarian community.

To ensure that the CCCM has a coordinated understanding of the needs, services and sector coverage in each IDP site and to ensure that issues are followed up in a timely manner, the cluster has created a focal point system. To the extent possible, there is a general focal point and a sector specific focal point for each IDP site.

The general focal point is charged with updating the cluster on general matters and gaps. This includes new movements, issues related to camp residents, plans for service provision and liaising with other service providers who may wish to work in that IDP settlement. For planned camps, the focal point is also the member directly responsible for the management of the camp. Principally the general focal point reports the population of their site to the CCCM's IDP Sites Integrated Monitoring Matrix (ISIMM). As the CCCM cluster team coordinates most multi-sector aid delivery in camps and informal settlements ranging from site set-up to specifically services related to tent distributions, infrastructure development (of various type including WASH) and stocks. This is done in collaboration with the relevant clusters. While these activities are coordinated

directly by the cluster, for the remaining activities such as food, education or health, the CCCM cluster has designated an agency as the service focal points per camp cluster (a multitude of sites grouped together geographically). They have the responsibility of delivery oversight/coordination of the specific sector services per a specific area against needs/population size. The agency is usually the largest service provider of that specific sector but does not have the responsibility of covering the entire need but rather oversight and connecting with the relevant cluster.

1.2 Ensure partners set-up functional M&E systems and third-party monitoring

In the case of Syria, the local organizations with the best access (which normally correlates to being able to reach the populations in greatest need) are also the organizations that represent the greatest risk to their international partners. These organizations and their personnel are moving in extremely insecure areas. By nature, they are interacting with armed groups; this interaction is required in almost all instances to secure and maintain humanitarian access. Therefore, these organizations are also most likely to experience the loss or diversion of goods and cash when operating in the conflict zone. They are the least likely to be able to do follow-up Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) or to provide the necessary documents to comply with the requirements of their international partners (such as vetting local providers, documenting transactions, and getting multiple quotes for potential services or inputs).

A robust M&E system featuring compartmentalized layers of monitoring and verification, combined with independent third-party monitoring, is recommended as a good practice for cross-border M&E and remote management in general. Though difficult due to security concerns and the inability of M&E experts to work in Syria, efforts to conduct long-term impact evaluations should be increased to measure the qualitative effects that emergency cross-border programs are having on civilian populations and overall conflict dynamics.

1.3 Set-up Policies

The cluster coordination team agreed with cluster members and donors to prioritize:

- Establishment of policies with regards to camp establishment
- Required parameters for any tent distribution activity
- Establishment of a unique site list and methods of reporting new sites
- Levels of engagement in camp management activities with regards to different types of sites and management structures present, irrespective of the partner intervention in a camp like setting
- Establishment of roles and responsibilities of IDP committees

The rationale of policies and guidelines were reflected in a unique booklet the CCCM developed in Arabic and English.

1.4 Ensure policy is supported and monitored through Information Management (IM) tools

Given the remote context, informal settlements and spontaneous camps were reported as a mushrooming phenomenon for purposes wider than humanitarian although stated as such. To limit their proliferation and to have an overview of locations of sites and services and figures, the ISIMM was created.

1.5 Ensure capacity building mechanisms exist

Partners reported that physical interaction with staff on the ground is not possible and that several systems and online platforms were set-up with regards to capacity building and technical guidance. These vary from partner to partner and are composed of a lengthy induction periods in parallel with coaching systems, online training sessions, online resource centres. Most partners explained that frequent if not daily interaction with staff on the ground coupled with online methods of capacity building was the most effective.

PART 2: Remote Management

2.1 Set-up site information systems

Having the ability to provide information to the extent described has strongly positioned the CCCM Cluster with respect to cluster members' coordination commitments and has facilitated their adequate CCCM implementation with respect to multi-sector service delivery in camps. Additionally, by establishing such a system in a remote context, the cluster coordination team has obtained the ability of direct oversight of the humanitarian situation in camps and to coordinate a multi-sector response remotely.

Partners reported that having such systems in place which they are actively contributing to with regards to having data collection teams as part of CCCM activities, has improved targeting methods and facilitated defining the operational design of CCCM programs.

2.2 Establish CCCM roving teams and allocate (geographical) area-based coordination roles: Adapted CCCM activities to the remote context

Outputs of CCCM implementation by partners include:

- Multi-sector responses in IDP sites
- Monthly needs assessments in camps
- Site renovations and improvements to key infrastructure
- Promotion of participatory management structures
- Training on camp governance and/or protection mainstreaming for Humanitarian Actors
- Promotion of equal access to goods and services in IDP camps to all residents
- Equip and train emergency responders and IDP committees in IDP sites
- Implement tailored livelihood activities designed to enable HHs to restore their assets and leave IDP sites for better solutions
- Assisting site residents in the closure of IDP sites with emphasis on collective centres in school buildings
- Tracking and sharing IDP movements and analysis of displacements trends.

These are achieved through a combination of direct camp management where formal camps are established and in most cases through CCCM roving multi-functional teams active in informal settlements. All those spoken with reported that an insecure conflict affected context triggers the existence of informal settlements and consequently require a CCCM remote management implementation modality.

The roving teams cover a multitude of sites within geographic proximity, thus also acting as CCCM area (or camp cluster as defined in the Gaziantep context) focal points. The methodology of the roving teams is an adaptation of the CCCM Collective Centre and Urban Displacement living Outside Camps (UDOC) approach to the Gaziantep context which entails among other aspects the empowerment of local community-based structures to self-manage while functioning as the link between the needs on site and the humanitarian community.

The teams are composed of five to seven team members which carry out a multitude of activities such as but not limited to:

- Identifying existing governance structures and focal points for sites
- Set up of CCCM coordination structures in collaboration with appropriate community-based structures
- Ensuring through CCCM coordination that relevant responders are mobilised towards providing relevant sectoral assistance to those identified as very vulnerable
- Ensuring the relevant Protection and Shelter responders are aware and act with regards to HLP issues
- Conducting data collection
- Monitoring service delivery at site level to ensure that there are no gaps or duplication of activities
- Establishing community engagement mechanisms
- Establishing feedback mechanisms
- Initiate site infrastructure improvements and maintenance, mainly implemented through Cash-for-work (CfW).

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- The CCCM cluster coordination team frequently issued data regarding displacement and relevant up to date information.
- Given the policies of the cluster with regards to site establishment and oversight of multi-sector interventions, many partners preferred to comply with coordination requirements.
- The large Humanitarian Fund allocation also had a significant impact on coordination contribution.
- The CCCM Cluster was invited to general briefings at both country and regional levels, to provide briefings on the humanitarian situation and remote response in northern Syria.

CHALLENGES

- Inability to be present in the field due to security concerns which lead to a remote presence and having to develop context-specific tools which required translation into a local language.
- A lack of grassroots and field knowledge.
- Proliferation of informal sites with no risk assessment.
- High staff rotation leading to challenges to understand the tools that were developed.
- Challenges to implement Monitoring & Evaluation tasks remotely.
- Information communication was challenging, in particular between implementing and lead agencies in regard to stated capacities and soft skills.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Development of context-specific tools that are translated into a local language to address the issue of remote presence. Vital to have internet access in order to develop WhatsApp and Skype groups and be able to respond to call and questions from the field.
- It is essential to conduct trainings in the local language to address the lack of grassroots and field knowledge.
- Develop an online needs-based IDP sites reporting tool, develop IDP sites establishment and management guidance notes.
- Reach out to the donor and humanitarian community to further influence the random destruction of tents and the continuous advocacy on the needs to ensure that camps should remain the last- resort.
- Expansion of the cluster “reach-out mechanisms” and train the non-traditional actors on basic coordination approaches and establishment of solid monitoring mechanisms.



Child-friendly activity at a reception centers, North West Syria.